

This is Casey Dolan with your local news and commentary for Wednesday, August 2, 2023 on KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington.

At approximately 3:30 pm yesterday, a passerby reported a brush fire in the area of Beaver Valley Road and Peat Plank Road. East Jefferson Fire Rescue responded, finding the brush fire being pushed uphill by the prevailing winds. Within 30 minutes, the fire moved south, covering an estimated three acres. Firefighters with East Jefferson Fire Rescue, Brinnon Fire Department, Quilcene Fire Rescue, Naval Magazine Indian Island, North Kitsap Fire Rescue, the Department of Natural Resources, and numerous other agencies were actively engaged in the fire suppression efforts.

The residents of ten homes approximately one-half mile south on the east side of the road had been advised to evacuate. Deputies from Jefferson County Sheriff's Office assisted with the evacuation. Those evacuation orders have now been canceled. Beaver Valley Road had been closed but was opened at midnight and the fire was entirely contained. Crews remained on the scene overnight to combat hot spots. According to East Jefferson Fire Rescue, no injuries or major property damage was reported. The cause of the fire has not been officially determined.

An 8-year-old was attacked by a cougar last Saturday while camping at Lake Angeles. The child suffered minor injuries and the cougar stopped its attack after the child's mom yelled and screamed at it, according to Olympic National Park officials. The child was attacked at 6:30pm and officials quickly responded to the scene. After assessing and stabilizing the child's medical condition, the family was taken back to the trailhead. The child was then taken to a local hospital for further evaluation.

Remaining campers in the area were evacuated and Lake Angeles and Heather Park were closed to the public until further notice. Olympic National Park Wildlife Biologist Tom Kay is quoted in numerous news reports that "out of an abundance of caution, the Lake Angeles Trail, Heather Park Trail, Switchback Trail, and the entire Klahhane Ridge Trail are closed until further notice." Park law enforcement and wildlife personnel specializing in cougar tracking were dispatched to the cougar's last known point at 5am Sunday. The cougar will be euthanized and removed from the park for a necropsy, if found.

State behavioral health privacy protections prohibit officials from saying whether or not a Sequim man has been civilly committed after being accused of first-degree murder of his 53-year-old mother, Teri Ward of Sequim, who was found dead May 19, 2022 in her home from multiple sharp-force injuries. Bret Allen Kenney, 35, was deemed incompetent by state medical professionals in late May and unable to stand trial after about six months of evaluation at Western State Hospital in Lakewood. According to court documents, Kenney's incompetency means he cannot assist in his own defense and is unlikely to regain competency in a reasonable period of time.

Clallam County Superior Court Judge Brent Basden ordered Kenney's admission into Western State Hospital on June 24, 2022, and he was admitted on December 19 for "psychiatric stabilizations and the development of skills to adequately participate in a legal trial," according to court documents. With Kenney found incompetent, Basden agreed to dismiss the charges without prejudice on June 7, allowing prosecutors the possibility to refile charges if Kenney is deemed competent. He also requested a civil commitment evaluation to gauge if Kenney could be committed to the hospital.

A press release from Commander Navy Region Northwest alerts the region to some upcoming earthquake and multi-hazard response exercises on August 8 through August 10. Participating installations include Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, Naval Base Kitsap, and Naval Magazine Indian Island. Various procedures, including damage assessment, evacuation plans, disaster preparedness, recovery and consequence management plans, will be included as part of the tests. Exercise activity that might be observed include messages played over the Navy's emergency notification loudspeaker system and increased emergency response vehicle and personnel activity. The Navy says that it "aims to minimize impact to the public as much as possible during such exercises."

KPTZ 91.9 FM broadcasts your local news Monday through Friday at noon and 5pm and at noon on Saturday. You can contact us at news@kptz.org. I'm Casey Dolan and I thank you for listening.