

Hello again! This is Derek Firenze with your local news and commentary for Thursday, August 3, 2023 on KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington.

If yesterday's brush fire on Beaver Valley Road wasn't enough of a warning, the Jefferson County Fire Marshal and Jefferson County Fire Chiefs issued a declaration of high fire hazard in effect until weather conditions change. This declaration does not affect or change the burn restrictions in place and currently all outdoor burning is banned in Jefferson County. Instead, the declaration is intended to inform the public about the current fire dangers due to the extremely dry weather and vegetation conditions we are experiencing in our area. A high fire hazard is defined as a period of hot, dry weather accompanied by low fuel moistures, a.k.a. dry grasses and the like, where fires start quickly, spread furiously, burn intensely, and are difficult to control unless they are successfully attacked when the fires are small. As we saw yesterday, it is during these periods that wildland fires can be expected, and fire growth will be accelerated. On the bright side, however, our community showed compassion yesterday as local social media groups were filled with offers of safe pasture for both people and farm animals in need of evacuation.

Speaking of community coming together, the Jefferson Land Trust has partnered up with the Olympic Housing Trust to examine the potential of developing affordable housing for local food system workers on a portion of the Chimacum Commons property. In 2014, the Land Trust purchased a 15.7-acre agricultural property in the heart of Chimacum, right around the corner from the Chimacum Corner Farmstand. They called this property "Chimacum Commons" and had a threefold vision for the project: 1) to protect this valuable farmland in Chimacum Valley's agricultural corridor, 2) to conserve and restore the 625 feet of Chimacum Creek salmon habitat running along the property's western border, and 3) to find a partner willing to build and manage affordable and ecologically sound housing for food system workers on the portion of the property most suited for development. This project initially succeeded on two important fronts – the farmland was protected and the salmon habitat was improved. However, finding a partner willing to develop and manage the food system housing proved to be a challenge.

Enter the Olympic Housing Trust. This nonprofit housing provider serves Jefferson and Clallam counties and aspires to use a variety of tools to ensure affordability. The group is also currently working on housing in Port Townsend with what is known as the Dundee Hill project. To begin to sort through this new challenge in Chimacum, the team at Olympic Housing Trust is seeking input in the form of a survey from food industry workers in particular, due to the acute need for farm worker housing. This includes those who work in the local food system through not only farms, but grocery stores, restaurants, food distribution, etc. If you work in food at some level, your input would be of great value, and they also ask everyone to please share this survey with your local farmer. That survey can be found at https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf9OEEDFmPNuxfdlY2uVeu9aus5RbFgUw8Qes8x6z_am05Z8Q/viewform.

In literary news, Port Townsend is starting a new chapter with the opening of Winter Texts Bookshop in the upstairs mezzanine of Aldrich's Market. Owner Conner Bouchard-Roberts, who runs a small press under the same name, previously operated a bookstore out of The Green Room bar in The Castle, and continues his journey filling shelves in unlikely locations in the space that used to house Uptown Cutlery. While the new bookshop has been open for a few weeks, a grand opening gathering of sorts is scheduled for Wednesday, August 9 at 6pm featuring a smorgasbord of talented writers and artists sharing their work to help bring this

bookshop into reality, including yours truly. And if that wasn't enough self-promotion, I'll also be hosting the Spoken Open, an all-ages open mic for spoken arts like poetry, comedy, and storytelling at The Nest in Uptown tomorrow, August 4 with sign-ups starting at 5:30pm and the mic heating up around 6.

KPTZ 91.9 FM brings you local news at noon and 5pm Monday through Friday and at noon on Saturday. You can contact us through news@kptz.org. This is Derek Firenze. Thanks for listening.