

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend. I'm Jim Burke, with your local news and commentary for Tuesday, January 9, 2024.

Jefferson County Emergency Management issued two NIXLE alerts, one Sunday and one yesterday.

The first, issued Sunday at 2:47pm, read as follows:

Storm Warning above 2000 feet, heavy snow expected. Total snow accumulations of up to 12 inches.

A Blizzard Warning above 2000 feet, blizzard conditions expected.

Total snow accumulations of 12 to 28 inches.

Winds gusting as high as 60 mph.

Olympic mountains and valleys, including Hurricane Ridge, Amanda Park, and Quinault.

For the Winter Storm Warning, from 7am Monday to 4am this morning.

For the Blizzard Warning, from 4am this morning to 10am Wednesday.

Travel could be very difficult. Widespread blowing snow could significantly reduce visibility. Strong winds could cause tree damage.

The affected areas, of course, are the Olympics. If you must travel, keep an extra flashlight, food, and water in your vehicle in case of an emergency. Travel should be restricted to emergencies only. If you must travel, have a winter survival kit with you. If you get stranded, stay with your vehicle.

Then at 12:47 yesterday another NIXLE alert was issued:

Coastal Flood Warning, significant coastal flooding expected. Inundation of 2 to 3 feet above ground levels possible along shorelines and low-lying coastal areas.

For the High Surf Warning, dangerously large breaking waves are expected in the surf zone.

On the North Coast and Central Coast zones of the Olympic Peninsula.

For the Coastal Flood Warning, from 6am to 2pm Tuesday (today).

For the High Surf Warning, from 7am Tuesday to 10am Wednesday.

Significant coastal flooding due to high tides and storm surge is expected.

This is expected to lead to numerous road closures. Low lying property including homes, businesses, and some critical infrastructure may be inundated. Shoreline erosion or damage may occur. Breaking waves can sweep people off jetties and docks and into dangerous seas. Life-threatening surfing conditions and significant beach erosion can be expected.

Strong low pressure is expected to move just north of the region Tuesday, which, when combined with strong onshore flow and large breaking waves is enhancing the coastal flooding threat Tuesday.

Take the necessary actions to protect flood-prone property. If travel is required, do not drive around barricades or through water of unknown depth. Turn around; don't drown.

Inundation above ground level refers to the height above the Mean Higher High Water level.

Everyone should remain out of the water due to life-threatening surf conditions.

Stay off jetties, piers, and other waterside infrastructure.

Due to high winds yesterday evening, the 8:30pm sailing from Port Townsend and the 9:10pm sailing from Coupeville were cancelled. That alert was sent out yesterday at 7:56pm, just in time.

Low tides will cancel one or more sailings from Port Townsend and Coupeville in January. Please see our Tidal Cancellations table for a complete list of affected dates and departures.

On Tuesday, January 9, the 5:15pm and 6:45pm sailings from Port Townsend and the 6:00pm and 7:30pm sailings from Coupeville are cancelled due to tidal conditions.

There will be a 7:00pm sailing from Port Townsend and a 7:45pm crossing from Coupeville.

Thursday, January 4, the Washington State Ferry System (WSF) released their Service Contingency Plan (<https://wsdot.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2024-01/WSF-Service-Contingency-Plan-2024.pdf>), which provides a transparent outline of how they plan to add service – sometimes temporarily – when there are available vessels and crews to do so. They said not to expect full, permanent restoration on all domestic routes until they receive the first new ferries in 2028. There will be times, however – including entire sailing seasons – when WSF may be able to run additional service on one or more of the unrestored routes. Restoration of international service to Sidney, British Columbia, is projected for 2030.

A replacement to their COVID-19 Service Restoration Plan (<https://wsdot.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2022-03/WSF-COVID19-ServiceRestorationPlan.pdf>), this new plan also details how they intend to make service decisions during unplanned and/or emergency disruptions. It will guide them as they manage maintenance of an aging 21-boat fleet with schedules that currently require at least 15 vessels to be in operation.

KPTZ 91.9 FM brings you local news Monday through Friday at noon and 5pm and at noon on Saturday. You can reach out to us at news@kptz.org. This is Jim Burke. Thanks for listening.