

Hello again. This is Derek Firenze with your local news and commentary for Thursday, February 1, 2024 on KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington.

Yesterday, local breakfast and brunch restaurant The Cup in Port Townsend reopened after a week-long closure due to a fire. The fire started in the early hours of January 22 when the restaurant was closed and was thankfully small enough to be contained without causing significant damage, but the business did suffer smoke damage as well. Thankfully, one of the owners came in bright and early and discovered the blaze, using a fire extinguisher while waiting for the fire department to arrive.

East Jefferson Fire Chief Bret Black noted that most of the damage was isolated to the utility room and that it was a pretty short incident. Due to the extended closure to repair, however, every day set the business back, so the owners have posted a sign outside asking for donations. They don't have anything set up online at the moment, so those who would like to help need to swing by in person and maybe get the only eggs benedict in town available on a weekday.

The Recovery Cafe continues to add new ways to support the community based on the belief that everyone deserves love and belonging. One of their most recent projects is called "Just Blankets". It's a simple idea: they've put a large container outside the cafe which ideally will always have blankets available for those who need them. Those who would like to support the project can bring blankets by 24 hours a day and simply drop them off in the box.

Next we have some sad news on the Salish Sea. The Center for Whale Research has announced that the youngest member of the Southern Resident Orca J pod, named J60, is missing and presumed deceased. KPTZ recently reported on this birth, and it's heartbreaking to have to follow it up so soon with this story. On January 27, researchers conducted a survey of J pod in the San Juan Channel and during the encounter, photos were obtained of all other members of the pod, including all potential mothers for J60, but J60 himself was not seen. Given his young age, it is extremely unlikely that J60 was off on his own for the entire duration of the encounter. There were two possible mothers for the calf, and this would have been the first observed birth for either female. The mortality rate for young calves, especially those born to first time mothers, is very high in the southern residents. This is due both to the generally poor nutritional status of southern residents, and the transfer of toxins from mother to calf during gestation and lactation. The southern residents need abundant, large Chinook salmon if they are going to be able to raise their calves to maturity, and keep the population going.

Thankfully, there are people out there working to save those salmon. In huge news from the Jefferson Land Trust, they recently completed the permanent protection of an extraordinary 155-acre property in the Salmon Creeks watershed. Blaise Sullivan, Jefferson Land Trust's Conservation Coordinator, made clear the significance saying, "This is such an important project – not only because of the property's size and location, but because of the full mile of Salmon Creek that runs through it."

The property contains not only that full mile of Salmon Creek; six tributaries also stream down steep forested slopes that lead eventually into Discovery Bay and into the Strait of Juan De Fuca: the home waters of a threatened summer chum population. Before the Land Trust acquired the property, it was managed for large-

scale timber harvesting, and bears signs of earlier clearcuts. It was also at risk of residential conversion. Now that the land is protected, these threats have been eliminated. This is good news for the water quality of Salmon Creek, because the landscape's extremely steep slopes make the creek and its tributaries vulnerable to erosion and degradation, which often results from upland clearcutting. Assessments found that the health of the six tributaries on the property had been degraded due to a previous clearcut in the 1990s and now one of the top priorities for the property will be to restore these tributaries to create better conditions for water quality. Going forward, the property will be managed by the Land Trust as a nature preserve: a place where salmon, birds, bears, and other wildlife can forage, shelter, migrate, and thrive forever.

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