

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend. This is Jim Burke with local news and commentary for Thursday, August 22, 2024.

A mandatory water conservation notice has been lifted by the City of Port Townsend after the successful repair of the main water transmission line and the subsequent refilling of the City Lake reservoir. A voluntary conservation notice remains in effect. The City expressed appreciation for everyone's efforts to conserve water during this crisis.

What follows is an update on the 2620 Road fire. As of yesterday, August 21, the cooler temperatures and occasional light showers have presented firefighters with an opportunity to make line advancements while fire activity is lower. In some areas of the fire, we have been able to begin mop-up efforts. In other areas of the fire, crews will continue to create and strengthen existing lines.

Mop-up is a term used to describe an important step when fire fighters remove burning, smoking, and smoldering material near the firebreak. Crews use water, hand tools, and equipment to cool hot areas. This helps to reduce the chance of fire moving into un-burned fuels which can also reduce smoke in the area. These efforts should lead to an increase in the containment over the next few days.

There are 273 personnel assigned to the 2620 Road Fire. Equipment resources include wildland engines, water tenders, dozers, and various types of excavators and logging equipment. To help support firefighters, a mobile kitchen and a shower facility are now on site. The outpour of support from the local community has been felt by all and we are extremely grateful, they say. With the increase in personnel and fire vehicles, roadways in and around the fire can easily become congested and cause serious delays. Please use caution when driving through these areas. Fire Management also reminds the public to please stay out of the fire area while fire crews work. The roadways immediately adjacent to the fire remain closed.

Air Restrictions: As crews continue to work on the 2620 Road fire a Temporary Flight Restriction (TFR) remains in place over the fire which is in effect 24/7. Penalties for flying in a restricted air space can carry significant fines in excess of \$30,000. Please remember that if you fly, we can't.

Weather: The weather pattern continues to bring scattered showers with minimal accumulation across the area. Strong outflow winds from passing storms can cause erratic changes in wind direction and have an impact on fire behavior. Morning weather continues to be hazy early, clearing mid-day, and gusty evening winds.

Duckabush Road and Mt. Jupiter Road (2620 Road) remain closed except for residents on these roads.

From the *Washington State Standard*: As ballot counting wrapped up Tuesday night, Dave Upthegrove, a Democrat, led Sue Kuehl Pederson, a Republican, by just 51 votes – of 1.9 million cast – for second place in the Washington state lands commissioner primary. It's one of the closest results in a race for statewide office in Washington's history. If the outcome holds, it means Upthegrove will scrape by into the general election and compete against Republican Jaime Herrera Beutler. But the slim margin will require a mandatory hand recount, which Secretary of State Steve Hobbs is expected to order by today

[\(https://washingtonstatestandard.com/2024/08/20/with-51-vote-margin-washington-lands-commissioner-race-heads-toward-recount/\)](https://washingtonstatestandard.com/2024/08/20/with-51-vote-margin-washington-lands-commissioner-race-heads-toward-recount/)

Also from the *Washington State Standard*: Kittitas County has embarked on a noteworthy, federally-funded project to thin forests and clear brush along two-lane roads in the area around Cle Elum, Roslyn, and Suncadia. These roads would be the only escape routes for rural homeowners, hikers, and campers were another big wildfire to break out nearby. Darren Higashiyama, emergency management coordinator for the Kittitas County Sheriff's Office, said, "We are in a fire-prone area. We have dodged a lot of bullets, but luck is not a plan."

One challenge can be convincing private property owners to allow for cutting and clearing of flammable vegetation along the edge of their land. Kittitas County Fire District 1 Chief Brandon Schmidt said, "We're not going to clearcut. Some people are worried about that and how it will look." (no doubt)

(<https://washingtonstatestandard.com/2024/08/21/keeping-the-flames-at-bay-when-theres-just-one-way-out-in-a-wildfire/?amp%3bhmact=yU24zxeZ47N2IyW0Qdv3dq479aBLYJ2np5d-dwyBcrA%3d&%3bemci=19e25c5e-3a60-ef11-991a-6045bddbfc4b&%3bemdi=e122bad0-9560-ef11-991a-6045bddbfc4b&%3bceid=553235>)

KPTZ 91.9 FM brings you local news Monday through Friday at noon and 5 PM and at noon on Saturday. You can contact us at news@kptz.org. I'm Jim Burke. Thanks for listening.