

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Diane Walker, back in town with your local news and commentary for Tuesday, July 22, 2025.

Good news for folks who were hoping to visit Hurricane Ridge this week: The mountain lion who attacked a 4-year-old child on Sunday near the Victoria Overlook has been located and dispatched as of yesterday morning. According to the *Peninsula Daily News*, rangers began searching for the cougar immediately following the incident. A canine team joined the search at about 5pm on Sunday and the cougar was located shortly afterwards. As of yesterday morning, the child was still undergoing treatment for injuries at a Seattle hospital trauma center.

The "do not drink" water order that was in place for Port Angeles residents on Sunday has been lifted. The order was put in place after an oil tanker truck overturned off Highway 101 last Friday, rolling down an embankment and spilling an estimated 3,000 gallons of petroleum products into Indian Creek. The creek flows into the Elwha River, which is Port Angeles' primary source of drinking water. After the crash, the city shut down water treatment processing and advised locals to limit their water use. At the time, its reservoirs had enough water for up to 24 hours without a disruption to normal service.

On Sunday morning, the city told water utility customers, both in and out of the city limits, not to drink the tap water amid ongoing state testing that was taking longer than expected. While the order was in effect, the city distributed free bottled water for drinking and cooking, and distribution sites were quickly met with long lines of residents, according to the *Washington State Standard*.

The driver of the truck, who was charged with negligent driving, was taken to a local hospital and is now recovering at home. The overturned tanker was removed from the creek early Saturday morning, and cleanup crews from the Department of Ecology deployed containment booms to limit the fuel's flow, along with absorbent materials to mop it up. Despite their efforts, however, the fuel spill is reputed to have destroyed hundreds of juvenile salmon, bottom-feeding sculpin, and lamprey. Washington State governor Bob Ferguson, who visited the site on Sunday, bemoaned the setback to restoration efforts for the Elwha and called the incident heartbreaking.

The Port Townsend *Leader* reports that the city's efforts to rebuild the kitchen structure at Chetzemoka Park have hit a snag. The city received only one bid for the project, and it came in \$90,000 over budget. After lengthy discussions with the bidding contractor, the city has elected to reject that bid and rebid the project, eliminating some of the work, and taking a phased approach to some of the features originally included.

The kitchen space, which had been reservable, was closed during the pandemic, and then not re-opened due to concerns about its structural integrity. In 2023 the city's Historical Preservation Committee recommended demolition, with the condition that the building's craftsman style appearance be duplicated when it was reconstructed. The city now anticipates the project will be put out to bid again this fall, with a construction date expected in the spring.

If you haven't yet acquired your enhanced drivers license, you may wish to do so: a new Republican-backed initiative requiring people to provide proof of citizenship as part of the voter registration process has begun circulating, according to the Port Townsend *Leader*. Under the proposed measure, one would need to present an enhanced driver's license, enhanced identicard, passport, or birth certificate at a county auditor's office when they first register. Existing voters would have their registrations canceled if they fail to produce such proof by the November 2027 election, when the changes would take effect.

The measure is intended to complement an executive order issued by President Trump that seeks to make states require individuals to show proof of citizenship to register. That order, which threatens to cut federal funding to states that do not comply, is currently blocked by a legal challenge.

And finally, the section of hiking trail around the Kah Tai Lagoon that starts at Kearney Street and runs to the first bridge will be closed for reconstruction this week until Saturday, July 26. A detour route has been established that runs along Sims Way, according to the Port Townsend City Facebook page.

KPTZ 91.9 FM broadcasts your local news Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday at noon and 5pm. You can contact us at news@kptz.org. I'm Diane Walker. Thank you for listening.