

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Diane Walker, with your local news and commentary for Tuesday, September 30, 2025.

The Bear Gulch and Tunnel Creek fires are starting to slow, thanks to cooler, damper weather, but Bear Gulch is still over 20,000 acres and Tunnel Creek is nearing 600 acres. After a brief rest, Brinnon Fire department personnel have been reassigned to the Lower Sugarloaf Fire burning just 5 miles north of Cashmere. That fire has grown to over 39,000 acres but is now 38% contained.

Jeffco PUD has good news for the Kala Point community: their water system's failed well pump has been replaced and the Stage 3 water use reduction has been officially lifted. Fortunately, Kala Point is part of the larger Quimper Water System, the PUD's biggest service area, and surrounding wells were able to support Kala Point during the outage.

Wellhead pump replacements are rare, as these components often serve reliably for decades. But when they do fail, repairs come at a cost. In this case, replacement is estimated to total more than \$120,000, and replacing the pump was no small task. The failed equipment – a 50-horsepower inline submersible pump – had to be removed along with hundreds of feet of drop pipe. For perspective, when connected vertically, the full assembly reaches nearly three-quarters the height of the Seattle Space Needle. Once the pipe and pump were removed, PUD crews took advantage of the pump's absence to thoroughly clean and treat the well. Replacement of the well components took a full day and an additional day of testing was needed to ensure all components functioned as intended, with full service restored just yesterday, September 29.

Two people and a dog were rescued by East Jefferson Fire Rescue from a sinking vessel near the Port Townsend ferry terminal early Sunday morning. One person sustained an ankle injury and was transported to Jefferson Healthcare. Once the rescue was effected, Port of Port Townsend staff worked with the fire department to anchor the vessel and deploy absorbent booms around the vessel and along the shoreline. City staff and local volunteers were later mobilized to help clear away all the boat contents which had washed onto the beach in front of the Tides Motel, before the tide rose and carried the detritus out to sea, but still: be careful walking that section of the beach.

The City of Port Townsend has been awarded a \$350,000 grant from the State of Washington Recreation and Conservation Office for a new, inclusive playground and picnic shelter at the Port Townsend Municipal Golf Park. The City has committed a 30% match for the \$500,000 project, which includes all planning and construction costs. The Golf Park, a 59-acre city-owned park in the heart of Port Townsend, is managed under a 22-year lease by the Friends of the Golf Park, a non-profit group who, over the last two years, have added a restaurant, an 18-hole disc-golf course, and a variety of family-focused activities, including summer camps and monthly Sundays in the Park events.

The new playground is being modeled after the highly successful JUMP! Playground at H J Carroll Park in Chimacum, the first fully-accessible playground in Jefferson County, and will feature universal play equipment designed for people of all abilities, a large parking lot, and public restrooms. The playground will be easily accessible via bike trails and footpaths and is situated along a public transit route, ensuring access for families

across the community. The City anticipates the construction of the playground in spring and summer 2026 with an opening in the fall of 2026.

The Jefferson County Fire Marshal has announced cancellation of the countywide ban on recreational fires. Starting October 1, recreational campfires and charcoal cooking will again be permitted, but land clearing or debris burning is still not permitted. The county fire danger rating will also be lowered to Moderate on October 1st, but conditions can change quickly. Always burn responsibly and have water and tools ready to fully extinguish your fire.

And finally, just a heads up: The speed limit on the section of highway 20 between U-Haul and the Rainier Street roundabout has just dropped from 50 miles per hour to 40 miles per hour, making the limit from Chimacum High School to the Rainier Street roundabout a consistent 40 throughout. Pay attention to the change and drive safely.

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.