

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Diane Walker, with your local news and commentary for Tuesday, February 10, 2026.

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Preparations appear to have begun for the county-managed makeover of Port Townsend's Memorial Field. According to the *Leader*, the makeover will include replacing the fence, installing new gates, and installing a new scoreboard and football goal posts. Construction is expected to begin in December and is expected to take about a month or two. Apparently the fence, which was built in 1947, needs replacing in order to prevent deer from grazing and defecating on the field, getting stuck in the soccer goals, and damaging the playing surface. Preparations now underway include finalizing the design, developing bid documents, surveying and monitoring, obtaining permits, putting the project out to bid, and hiring contractors. Funding for the project comes from a \$345,000 Recreation and Conservation Office grant from the state and a \$148,000 match from the county.

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Frequent travelers on US Highway 101 will be pleased to hear that WSDOT crews have now completed their construction efforts on the highway. Designed to improve fish passage and habitat along creeks on the Olympic Peninsula, the work involved removing six aging culverts under the highway that fish were unable to navigate. New bridges were built at five of the locations, while the sixth just received a larger culvert. Replacing these outdated culverts with new structures opened up a combined 15 miles of potential fish habitat.

The project, which has been estimated to cost \$144.8 million, began in the summer of 2023 and required excavating entire sections of roadway while keeping people moving. The project also included rebuilding stream habitats, installing native plants, logs, and root wads in the stream to provide refuge and resting areas for fish.

When the weather is warm and dry enough, crews will return to make a repair to the roadway near Blyn. Until that time, travelers are encouraged to reduce their speed to 35 mph in the Blyn area near Chicken Coop Road.

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The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has announced that the Olympic marmot is being considered for the endangered species list. About the size of a house cat and weighing 15 pounds or more before they enter their 8-month hibernation in the fall, marmots have bushy tails, live in burrows, communicate by whistling loudly, and are very gregarious and social mammals.

Found only in the alpine and subalpine meadows of the Olympic Mountains, mostly above 4,000 feet, marmots began to see a decline in population due to rising temperatures in the 1990s and early 2000s and are now estimated to number between 2 to 4,000 animals. With non-native coyotes providing the other main threat to the marmots, reintroducing wolves to the Olympic Peninsula could prove helpful to protecting the small rodents, according to John Bridge, president of Olympic Park Advocates. Wolves do not tend to hunt at alpine elevations and would control the coyote populations, which roam from lowland to alpine elevations. To learn more about the Olympic marmot, visit [tinyurl.com/mrdxuy5v](https://tinyurl.com/mrdxuy5v).

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The Deputy State Fire Marshal warns us this week about Lithium-ion batteries. According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, there were over 25,000 incidents of fire or overheating involving

lithium-ion batteries between 2017 and 2022. Additionally, the Federal Aviation Administration has observed a rise in lithium battery fires on U.S. flights, with 89 incidents in 2024, representing a 16% increase over 2023. If you do have equipment that uses lithium-ion batteries:

- Choose devices that have been certified by a reputable testing laboratory.
- Always use the charging cords provided with the device.
- Avoid charging devices under pillows, on beds, or on sofas.
- Unplug the device or battery once it is fully charged to prevent overcharging.
- Use only batteries specifically designed for the device, and
- Store batteries in a cool, dry place, away from flammable materials.

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And finally, Jefferson County PUD has announced a planned outage for Quilcene tomorrow, February 11, while they replace utility poles in that area. The outage will cover Claybanks Road, Linger Longer Road, Leadville Avenue, and Muncie Avenue.

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