

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Diane Walker with your local news and commentary for Tuesday, July 28, 2026.

Due to hot, dry weather and increasingly hazardous field conditions, the Jefferson County Fire Marshal and Jefferson County Fire Chiefs have declared a High Fire Hazard, effective immediately. Under High Fire Hazard conditions, the following restrictions will be in effect:

- All recreational burning and campfires are prohibited
- Outdoor burning remains restricted
- Target shooting outside established gun ranges is prohibited
- Exploding targets and incendiary ammunition are prohibited
- Charcoal briquettes are prohibited, except when used in a commercially manufactured barbecue at a residence
- The discharge of fireworks is also prohibited

Hunting remains permitted in areas that are otherwise open.

If conditions worsen, they may raise the Fire Danger Level to VERY HIGH, which would restrict all wood or charcoal cooking. If we reach an EXTREME Fire Danger Level, all burning of any kind, including gas or propane barbecues and appliances will be restricted.

Please take these restrictions seriously. If you see smoke, an unattended fire, or suspected unauthorized burning, call 911 immediately. To keep informed about current Fire Danger Levels, visit www.ejfr.org, follow East Jefferson Fire Rescue on Facebook and Instagram, or call them at 360-385-2626.

With an already limited snowcap in the Olympics and seasonal forecasts calling for warmer-than-average conditions, Jefferson County PUD has implemented a Stage 1 Water Advisory across all of its water systems. Designed to raise awareness, encourage smart water use, and prepare customers before more significant conservation measures become necessary, the advisory is activated when regional drought conditions, groundwater monitoring, and other indicators suggest there is a potential for future water shortages. It is important to note that a shortage is not likely in the near future: this is an advisory, not a restriction.

At this stage, customers are simply encouraged to be mindful of their water use. Small conservation habits practiced by many customers can help preserve groundwater supplies during the highest-demand months of the year.

The PUD recommends the following water-saving practices:

- Water your lawn early in the morning or late in the evening to reduce evaporation, and only water when your landscape truly needs it. And if rain is in the forecast, skip watering for the day.
- Fix leaks promptly. A dripping faucet or leaking toilet can waste hundreds of gallons of water over time.
- Use a broom instead of a hose. Sweep driveways, sidewalks, and patios instead of rinsing them with water.
- Run full loads. Wait until your dishwasher or washing machine is full before running a cycle.
- Take shorter showers. Trimming just a few minutes off your shower can save several gallons each day.
- And finally, turn off the tap. Don't let water run while brushing your teeth, shaving, or washing dishes.

Numerous Native American canoe families were hosted at Fort Worden and the Jefferson County fairgrounds last weekend by the S'Klallam, Lower Elwha, and Jamestown tribes as part of the 2026 Paddle to Medicine Creek Nisqually Potlatch. Canoe landings occurred throughout the day on Saturday at the beach near the Port Townsend Marine Science Center, with participants coming ashore to share in ceremonial songs and dances.

According to Washington State Parks, the Canoe Journey is a sacred ceremony to the Coast Salish People, and such landings are a large-scale community event, requiring many volunteers to help canoe families, shuttle tribal elders and carry people and gear from the landing site to camp sites. The final landing of the journey, to be hosted by the Nisqually Indian Tribe, is set for July 31.

And finally, if a man named “Sergeant Allen” calls to say you missed jury duty and demands that you pay a fine RIGHT NOW or you’re going to jail, hang up. The Jefferson County Sheriff’s Office reports that while Sergeant Allen is a real member of their team, no member of their department would ever call people and demand money, whether for jury duty or for any other imagined or real criminal activity or dereliction of duty. If there’s an actual issue with jury duty, you’ll get an official letter in the mail.

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.