

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Lily Haight with local news for July 22, 2020.

The Jefferson Land Trust is currently in the process of applying for two grants to permanently protect wildlife habitat and farm land in Port Townsend.

At a city council meeting on July 20, Sarah Spaeth, who is the development director for the Jefferson Land Trust, presented these two major conservation goals to council members.

The first is a \$1.2 million project to protect what is called the Quimper Wildlife Corridor. The Land Trust is seeking a \$610,000 grant through the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program to acquire about 57 acres within the Quimper Wildlife Corridor to preserve the wetlands that serve as stormwater retention and wildlife habitat.

The Quimper Wildlife Corridor is a 3.5 mile greenbelt of native forest and a series of wetlands stretching across the North Quimper Peninsula. It serves as habitat for more than 130 bird species and other wildlife. It also includes Cappy's Trails, which is an extensive network of trails that provides access for community members to walk and ride bikes.

In January of this year, the Jefferson Land Trust reached out to more than 100 landowners in the Quimper Wildlife Corridor and received promising responses from about 40 of them. With the grant funding, the Land Trust could acquire and permanently preserve many of these parcels, which connect habitat and serve as trail buffers. As a Land Trust, the organization is legally obligated to maintain and protect these acquired parcels forever.

The Land Trust is also applying for a \$440,000 grant through the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program Farmland Preservation account to purchase a conservation easement at the 77-acre Natembea Farm in Port Townsend.

Natembea is a cooperative farm project located on Discovery Road in Port Townsend. Devon and David Cohn purchased the land in 2016 and since then it has become an incubator for small agricultural businesses. It is home to farmers Lacey Allred of Sweet Seed Flower Farm, Logan Fields of Heartwood Nursery, the Bowman's Goat Farm, and several others.

A conservation easement will protect the agricultural soils and productivity, wetland habitat, and scenic character of this farm, which is the largest farm in Port Townsend. According to City Manager John Mauro, the city will be writing a letter of support for each project to help the Land Trust with the grant applications.

The Port commissioners will vote today to approve an interlocal agreement with the City of Port Townsend. The agreement with the city will allow both the port and city to collaborate on public works infrastructure projects.

Most recently, the city and port partnered to install a carrier pipe at the Jefferson County International Airport, while the runway was being resurfaced this spring. This new agreement sets up the city and port for future partnerships like that, said Steve King, the public works director for the city. The agreement establishes a protocol for cost estimating and reimbursements at the administrative level and allows the port and city to share resources, and partner to construct infrastructure or perform maintenance on both city and port facilities.

The city council unanimously approved a resolution authorizing the city manager to sign the interlocal agreement at their meeting on July 20. Port commissioners will vote on the agreement at their 5:30 meeting today.

The PUD began removing wooden utility poles along Water Street in downtown Port Townsend on Monday. The removal of the poles is part of the PUD's undergrounding project, which is a partnership with the city of Port Townsend. The power lines from these utility poles were moved underground earlier in the year. Traffic will be moved to a single lane as crews remove the poles, working block by block. The work is expected to take five days to complete.

Republican candidate Jodi Wilke announced on July 18 her withdrawal from the race for a seat in the state's House of Representatives. Wilke, who is a resident of Jefferson County, was running against incumbent Steve Tharinger, who represents the 24th legislative district.

She announced on Facebook that she is withdrawing "for personal reasons" that prohibit her from "putting in the kind of effort the race deserves."

Wilke's name is on the ballots that were mailed to Jefferson County voters last week, but in her withdrawal announcement, she backed the other Republican running against Tharinger: Brian Pruiett, who lives in Clallam County.

Democrat Darren Corcoran of Elma is also running along with Tharinger and Pruiett.

And that's it for today's local news. KPTZ 91.9 FM brings you local news at noon Monday through Saturday and at 5pm Monday through Thursday. You can contact us through news@kptz.org. I'm Lily Haight. Thanks for listening.