

The Current

News for January 2023



From Our Community



Ways of the Whales Workshop

January 14 2023

10:30 - 5:00

Each year, the Whidbey Island-based nonprofit, Orca Network, offers a great educational opportunity: the Ways of the Whales Workshop. This year's agenda includes:

• **Keynote Speaker: John Ford**

"The Cultural Lives of Killer Whales: A Mixed Blessing"

• **Panel on Southern Resident Orca Research, Featuring:**

- Deborah Giles, Wild Orca – Health Monitoring Program
- Monika Wieland Shields, Orca Behavior Institute – Habitat Use
- Michael Weiss, Center for Whale Research - Orca Aerial Observation
- Joe Gaydos, SeaDoc Society – Health Index
- Kim Parsons, NOAA - Genetics
- Linda Rhodes, NOAA – Microbiome Analysis

[Whale Workshop info and registration](#)



WA State Ferries Community Meeting



Winter 2023 Virtual Community Meeting Series

In 2023, the WA State Ferries (WSF) has planned two rounds of community meetings to engage and inform the public.

During the winter virtual community meeting series, WSF staff will give a brief presentation on the status of the Service Restoration Plan, ongoing hiring challenges and successes, and updates on new vessels, terminals, and other projects. Participants will be able to ask questions and provide comments during the meeting.

There are two meetings to choose from, Wed, Jan 11 at 12:30 or Thurs, Jan 12 at 6:00.

Both January meetings will cover the same material and are designed to give participants the option to join the meeting that best fits their schedule. Members of the public can participate in the meeting from a laptop, desktop or mobile device, but advanced registration is required to participate.

[**More info and registration for WA Ferries community meetings**](#)

2023 Penn Cove Musselfest

Save the Dates: March 3-5



This popular Whidbey Island tradition is back in 2023!

Stay tuned for more event details.

In the coming weeks, information and tickets will be available via Coupeville Historic Waterfront. Reminder that many events sell out!

Port of Coupeville Projects

Wharf Repairs & Island County Broadband

As reported in last month's newsletter, there are many wharf repairs already underway – and more are planned. To read more about these, please visit our website:



[Current Port Projects](#)

Fiber Optic Broadband Project

The Port of Coupeville conducted a Broadband feasibility study (through an awarded CERB Grant in 2020) to determine the need for high speed internet in Central Whidbey. The study clearly showed sections of homes that were vastly underserved.

In 2021, the Island County Board of Commissioners and Port of Coupeville partnered on a grant, utilizing .09 RCED Funds, to conduct the grant application, project management, and partnership with an Internet Service Provider (ISP) to build a fiber optic Internet system to cover approximately 1000 homes. A grant application was submitted to the Public Works Board (PWB) to build such a system, and the Port of Coupeville was awarded \$4,842,933.41 in grant funding to build last mile fiber located south and outside the incorporated area of Coupeville.

The system being built is called a Lit System, and this means that after it is constructed (even though the management and maintenance contract is with one ISP) other Internet Service Providers may also compete over the same system. This is an Open Access Network and it's a requirement of the PWB grant. This produces competition between ISPs and insures a competitive rate and speed offering for the communities that the system serves.

The Port of Coupeville hired Petrichor LLC, as consultants to guide the us through the project phases. This fall the Port completed the additional paperwork requested by PWB and executed the contract for this project. The Port is ready to move forward.

Next Steps:

- Port and Petrichor staff to drive out the project area with Astound staff to determine the preliminary design and updated construction cost estimate.
- Commitment by Port and an ISP to draft an agreement for a 15-year management and maintenance of the system.
- Port to issue Request for Proposal (RFP) for design based on construction drive out. RFP process takes a minimum of four weeks.



Two Coupeville Wharf Businesses For Sale

Change is in the air on the Coupeville Wharf. The Cove cafe and Penn Cove Outfitters are both for sale!

If you are interested in more information, please email: thecoveonpenncove@gmail.com

Upcoming Events

Port of Coupeville Board Meetings
Zoom Conference Call. For instructions on participating, visit the Port website here: <https://portoc.org/commission-meetings/meeting-agendas/>

Wed, Jan 11, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Port of Coupeville Commission Meeting,
To participate, see instructions above.

Wed, Jan 25, 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.
Port of Coupeville Commission Meeting,
To participate, see instructions above.

Wed, Feb 8, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Port of Coupeville Commission Meeting,
To participate, see instructions above.

Wed, Feb 22, 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.
Port of Coupeville Commission Meeting,

Native Plant Sale

The Whidbey Island Conservation District's (WICD) annual Native Bare Root Plant Sale is an excellent opportunity to save on native plants for your home landscape, working lands, and restoration projects.

Online ordering has begun with pick up in person February 25th at Greenbank Farm.

[**WICD Plant Store**](#)

To participate, see instructions above.

Save the Dates:

Tues, Feb 21

**Whidbey Island Conservation
District Plant Sale**

Historic Barn A @ Greenbank Farm

Fri & Sat, March 3rd & 4th

**Island County Master Gardener
Foundation Gardening workshop**

Historic Barn A @ Greenbank Farm

Fri, April 28

Greenbank Garden Club Plant Sale

Greenbank Farm

Stay updated on all of our upcoming events
by checking our [events calendar](#).

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P.O. Box 128, Greenbank, WA 98253-0130
Phone: (360) 222-3151; Fax: (360) 222-3484



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