

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Steve Evans with local news for August 26, 2021.

The sun rose this morning at 6:21am and will set this evening at three minutes past eight, giving us three minutes less daylight today than yesterday as we start to close in on the autumnal equinox 26 days from now. For you clammers, crabbers, and mariners out there, there's a low tide at a little after one this afternoon of 2.1 feet, with a high tide of 8 feet coming at about sunset. The wind is predicted to be out of the west at about 10 mph by late afternoon, and for the first time in months there is a greater than 50% chance of rain at about 6pm, although that chance quickly drops to 19% by midnight, according to the Weather Underground website.

Whatever amount of precipitation we receive is sorely needed. That's clear from a simple walk in the woods anywhere on the peninsula, where many of the ferns are turning brown, native shrubs like ocean spray are withering, and the leaves of all the wild rhododendrons are hanging limp. Despite robust snowfall and a resulting snowpack in the Olympic Mountains that as of early March was at 169% of normal, the unprecedented heat waves and protracted drought that has afflicted all of the western United States has left most of Washington State, including all of the Olympic Peninsula, in what the state Department of Ecology declared a "drought emergency" on July 14. The only areas excluded from that declaration were Seattle, Tacoma, and Everett, where water storage was deemed sufficient to meet human and natural needs through the summer.

Six of the nine water systems in Clallam County are now under some form of water alert, according to a recent article in the *Peninsula Daily News*, and the Clallam County Public Utility District has been forced to begin trucking water into the Island View Water District, a small district of 33 accounts normally served by Olsen Creek, which has all but dried up. The water there is being trucked in from neighboring Clallam Bay/Seki Water System, which itself is subject to a Stage 3 water alert, which restricts outdoor water use.

Meanwhile, the Dungeness Water Users Association issued a request last week for all of its users to cease all unnecessary uses of irrigation water and asked residents to use well water whenever possible for livestock and essential domestic purposes. Upstream of all diversions, the Dungeness River last Friday was running at just 55% of its 92-year average for that date.

There are currently no water alerts for Jefferson County, and a call to the PT Water Resources Asset Manager for information about the status of Port Townsend's water supply was not returned in time for this broadcast.

A second Asian giant "murder" hornet nest has been located just two miles away from Whatcom County site where the first nest in Washington State was found last October. The Washington State Department of Agriculture plans to eradicate the nest this week. Native to southeast Asia and parts of the Russian Far East, the invasive *Vespa mandarinia* is the world's largest hornet, known by the popular epithet "murder" hornet not only because of its ability to deliver a large amount of potent venom through its quarter-inch long stinger, but because of their capacity to utterly destroy entire hives of honey bees by decapitating all of the workers and then consuming all of the honey.

One Japanese entomologist described the sting of the Asian giant hornet as feeling "like a hot nail being driven into my leg." The Wikipedia article on the hornet explains that, in addition to the cytolytic peptides common to many bee and wasp venoms, *Vespa mandarinia* venom contains a neurotoxin named mandaratoxin. And while the sting of a single hornet is unlikely to kill you unless you are allergic, multiple stings can be fatal, and allergy greatly increases the chances of death. But the greatest threat presented by the hornet is not that to public health, but the one presented to agriculture which depends upon the honey bee to fertilize the crops upon which

humanity relies. Volunteers throughout northwestern Washington are working with the state Department of Agriculture in a citizen science program, setting bottle traps for the Asian giant hornet in their back yards. You can find information on becoming part of that program on the Washington Department of Agriculture website (<https://agr.wa.gov/hornets>).

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. This is Steve Evans for KPTZ Community Radio News. Thank you for listening.