



**SALISH SEA
INSTITUTE**



Sharing Science, Policy, and Ecosystem Learning Across the Salish Sea



Goodbye, Summer. Hello, Fall.

As we say our goodbye to the summer of 2023, we're grateful for the many sunny days and warm weather. We're also excited to share some news of a busy fall.

The Salish Sea Institute is working on two white papers focused on the Roberts Bank Terminal 2 expansion proposed project. Look for announcements about their release in our [Emerging Issues series](#) and related webinars.

This mega-project proposed by the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority has captured our attention as it would occur in a highly important ecological area for migratory birds and other wildlife, including juvenile Chinook salmon. The environmental impacts that would occur during and after construction are significant to several Salish Sea species, including Southern Resident killer whales that are already in peril. In addition to environmental concerns, there are threats to Treaty rights and more. While economic incentives are strong, the opposition to this project is also strong, coming from scientists and environmental groups in BC and WA, labor groups, the Lummi Nation and some First Nations. This project demonstrates the challenges of managing an international ecosystem with a growing economy while striving to protect iconic species that are also important economically and culturally.

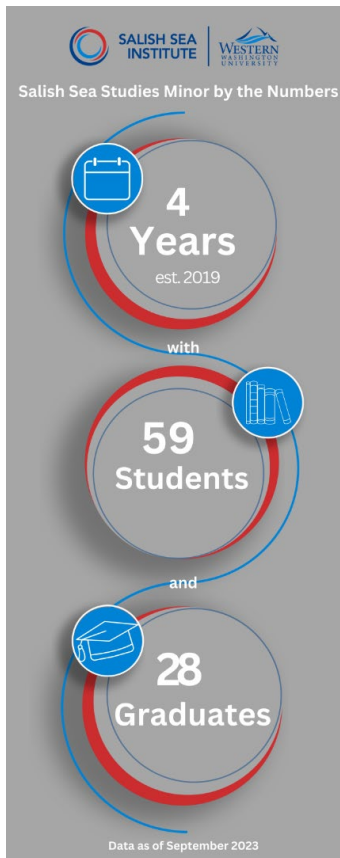
New Salish Sea Map from Stefan Freelan

We're happy to share the [newly-updated version of Stefan Freelan's map of the Salish Sea and Surrounding Basin](#) and Surrounding Basin. Not surprisingly, it looks very similar to the [2009 version](#) but with some crisper lines and higher resolution that allows enlargements to be made. Please contact salish.sea.institute@wwu.edu to request print copies (limited supply).



Salish Sea Studies

Since the [Salish Sea Studies minor](#) was launched in 2019, we've seen tremendous growth and we continue to reach more students every quarter in programs ranging from Humanities to a variety of science majors.



SALI minor and student employee, Tabitha Hellman, is representing the Institute and the SALI minor at the Associated Students Information Fair, taking place September 26-27 from 11am-2pm in the Viking Union. Come by to say hello and pick up a sticker or a poster!



Salish Sea Institute staff will be at the Skagit Valley College Majors Fair from 10:00am - 1:00pm on Thursday, October 19 at the Mt. Vernon campus! We will be talking with prospective transfer students, advisors and faculty about WWU and the Salish Sea Studies minor.



[Make a Donation to Support Salish Sea Studies](#)

Watch Sea Doc Society's Fishing for Dragons Video



Join Dr. Joe Gaydos on a journey deep into the Fraser Valley where he must battle a prehistoric creature that also happens to be North America's largest freshwater and anadromous fish! Joe is a member of the Salish Sea Institute's [Advisory Board](#).

Tokitae's Passing



Along with many here in the Pacific Northwest and around the world, we were greatly saddened to hear that Tokitae (stage name Lolita), known to the Lummi Nation as Sk'aliCh'elh'tenaut, passed away on August 18th at the age of 57. Affectionately known as Toki, she was a Southern Resident killer whale and member of L-pod. She spent 53 years in the tank at the Miami Seaquarium. For years, Lummi Nation, Friends of Toki, Orca Network, and others fought for her release and return to the Salish Sea. Earlier this year an agreement was reached and plans were underway for her to return to her native waters. However, in August she passed from what was believed to be a renal condition.

To the Lummi Nation, the Southern Resident killer whales are their "relatives under the waves". Lummi tribal members traveled to Georgia to pick up Toki's remains. In accordance with tradition, her remains were "taken by boat to a sacred spot to be spread in a traditional water ceremony," according to a Lummi Nation statement.

The day before Toki died, all three pods (J, K and L) were socializing in a Superpod off the west side of San Juan Island. This type of gathering has been rare in recent years, and is often thought to be a social ritual that marks a significant event in their community. Many believe that the whales were welcoming Toki home.

Update on the Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference



Salish Sea
Ecosystem
Conference

The Salish Sea Institute will no longer be the administrative home for the Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference due to its increasing size and attendance. Work is underway to identify options for a new host organization for future Salish Sea Ecosystem Conferences. Due to the extended lead time necessary to secure a venue, and the need to complete the analysis that the Puget Sound Partnership has underway to assess and recommend a sustainable path forward, **there will be no Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference in 2024.**

Please reach out to Todd Hass at todd.hass@psp.wa.gov or 360-280-1588 with questions or suggestions.

