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Washington Association of Conservation Districts

Five Things to Know - July 9, 2020

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Executive Corner

Dear weblinx,

We get to enjoy **two** new year celebrations: the new calendar year on January 1 and the new fiscal year on July 1. Both of those moments are perfect opportunities to make sure your conservation district has a plan to work more effectively with your legislators.

Conservation district success across Washington State is founded upon people and funding. People provide expertise, capacity, and focused energy. Funding is the fuel that helps to convert human capabilities into meaningful, valuable, and

Five Things to Know

1: Phase 3 authorization for in-person public meetings

As of Wednesday, the Governor and state legislative leadership extended the Public Records Act and Open Public Meetings Act waivers through August 1st. One modification made was to authorize public agencies located in Phase 3 counties the option of holding public meetings in person in addition to hosting the meeting remotely.

There are several requirements for the in-person option that are laid out in the [proclamation](#). A note of caution: the proclamation was not written in a manner easily understood! For additional resources, we direct you to [MRSC](#), the [Conservation Commission's website](#), or your [Regional Manager](#).

2: Special session looking less likely

Governor Inslee and House Majority Leader Pat Sullivan (2nd in House Leadership) went on record last week saying a special session will likely not occur before 2021, while Republican leaders reiterated their belief in the need for a special session to reduce spending sooner rather than face deeper reductions

meaningful, necessary, and valued actions that affect our land and water, and our creatures and communities.

Both of those foundation pieces - people and funds - come together when legislators craft and move bills that help to support conservation district work and the funding necessary to accomplish that work.

We're all familiar with [limiting factors](#) in a biological sense. An obvious limiting factor in our Washington State conservation delivery system is relationships with people. Your relationships with people in your community - with vendors, with agencies, with customers, and with legislators - are critical for your success. In this context, legislators are a keystone species in our conservation delivery ecosystem.

As we enter a new fiscal year, there is no better time to reach out to your legislators than today!

Tom Salzer
exec@wadistricts.org

Please let us know when your board will meet

Reminder: WACD would like to know when your conservation district board will be meeting! WACD can

later.

There is currently an estimated \$8.8 billion budget deficit projected out to 2023, with about \$3 billion available in state reserves. Coupled with additional uncertainty over future economic impacts from COVID-19, as well as the question of potential federal assistance, the Legislature will eventually need to act. On his own authority, the Governor can order state agencies to reduce spending by specific percentages. Preliminary numbers being talked about are in the 10% to 15% range but those are postulated numbers that come with a lot of unanswered questions at this time.

WACD will be looking to protect investments in voluntary conservation efforts and conservation districts if a special session is called. We are also staying as informed as possible on the budget reduction conversations happening inside state agencies. We will continue to stay focused on keeping our membership informed.

3: Plant Materials Center had a good year

Total revenues were \$1,212,433 which exceeded the budgeted amount of \$1,144,550 and last year's revenue of \$1,194,607. Offsetting the higher revenues were increased expenses. Some of the more significant increases this year were for packaging, an IRS tax expense for 2018, and staff and field wages. Staff wages were higher in part due to refilling the vacant Crew Leader position and field wages were higher largely due to a 12% increase in minimum wage. Overall expenses were almost \$1,155,000 this year. Net Income was \$57,465 this year which is down from \$188,685 last year.

4: Conference Planning Team making progress

The CPT met again this week to discuss issues and opportunities relating to the WACD annual conference. One idea that surfaced was a week-long conference schedule with Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday devoted to topic-focused sessions, Thursday for the Conservation Commission meeting, and Friday for resolutions and for the WACD business meeting. This could avoid creating overlaps in topics that can divide the attention of conference attendees. Stay tuned for more as the CPT continues to work on the annual conference in July and August.

5: Submit election comments

Don't miss your chance to express your thoughts on proposed changes to conservation district elections! In late May, the

best represent your when we are able to stay in close contact with you. Board meetings help us do that.

Please include [Ryan](#) and [Tom](#) in your board meeting distribution list!

Conservation Commission posted [proposed changes to conservation district elections](#). The public comment period is now open and WACD encourages you to submit your comments to the Commission. The link to do so is <https://www.formstack.com/forms/?2726604-JfwJs6JKCL>. There are also opportunities to participate in public hearings on August 6th and August 11th.

Pacific Region check-in was well attended

This week, peers from across the [Pacific Region](#) joined Ariel Rivers (National Association of Conservation Districts) for a check-in across the entire Pacific Region. Washington was well represented with Doug Rushton, Alan Chapman, and Tom Salzer participating. It became evident that we are all hampered by COVID-19 restrictions no matter where we live, but all of our organizations remain focused on positive service delivery and on supporting our communities to the extent we are able.

Pacific Dues Contributions FY 2020 (as of July 7, 2020):

State	Dues FY-2020	# of State's Members	% of State's Members	Dues FY-2019	Dues FY-2018
Alaska	\$1,825.00	5 of 12	41.67%	\$2,156.00	\$2,060.00
American Samoa					
California	\$9,565.00	25 of 93	26.88%	\$16,582.00	\$11,230.00
Federated States of Micronesia					
Guam	\$775.00	1 of 3	33.3%	\$775.00	\$775.00
Hawaii	\$850.00	17 of 17	100.0%	\$850.00	\$850.00
Idaho	\$17,587.00	41 of 51	80.39%	\$18,646.00	\$15,478.50
Northern Mariana Islands					
Oregon	\$17,683.25	28 of 46	60.87%	\$14,801.00	\$13,752.00
Palau					
Washington	\$24,729.00	39 of 46	84.78%	\$27,103.00	\$24,257.50
Grand Total	\$73,014.25	156 of 274	39.4%	\$80,913.00	\$68,403.00

The screenshot above during the Zoom call shows the status of NACD dues paid by conservation districts in each state in the region. WACD encourages conservation districts to support their national association.

More from the WACD Plant Materials Center

- COVID-19 Update** - The PMC continues to stay abreast of all of the COVID-19 regulations that have been published. Unfortunately, the infection rate in Skagit County has increased this week due to an outbreak at a Mount Vernon nursing home. One person on the PMC weeding crew has been quarantined for two weeks because a son whom he lives with tested positive. One PMC staff member has been out due to a cold and will get tested before returning to work.

- **Giant Asian Hornet** - Surely everyone has heard about the Giant Asian Hornet, or Murder Hornet, by now. It is an introduced species of hornet that was first observed in British Columbia, then observed in Blaine, and most recently found in Bellingham. It appears to be moving south which puts it on a path towards the PMC. There has not been a sighting in Skagit County yet and the Washington Department of Agriculture has started a trapping program which the PMC is involved in. The weeding crew was informed about it and told what to look for while in the field. They already knew about watching for other ground nesting bees while out in the field since you don't want to tangle with them either!
- **Inventory / Sales Computer Program** - Inventory has been coded and entered into the new nursery inventory / sales program. It is up and running and looks like it is going to be a big improvement over what we were using.
- **Life Goes On** - One of the big field activities this week was *Root Wrenching*. This is a practice that reduces soil compaction in the root zone. It uses the root pruner but with a larger blade. The pruner is set up so that the larger blade travels through the ground below the plants roots. It does not cut any roots (hopefully) but instead fluffs up the soil resulting in less soil compaction. This helps to develop better root systems. Promoting better root systems means that we can provide stronger plants that have better survival when planted in their permanent sites.



Space is still available in the NACD July 2020 U&C Webinar – Urban Agriculture Conservation Program

The NACD Urban and Community Conservation webinar scheduled at 12:00noon-1:00pm Eastern time on July 16, 2020 will feature the Prince George's Soil Conservation District's Urban Agriculture Conservation program. With an NACD grant, the SCD launched the program in 2018.

Learn how the District worked with partners in Prince George's County, Maryland to expand opportunities for agriculture through urban farm legislation and a property tax credit for landowners engaged in urban agriculture activities. In addition, District staff will introduce a brief history of urban farming in Prince George's County, explore a few successful urban farm enterprises and the opportunities and challenges they face, and share a preview of what's on the horizon.

These popular webinars, held on the third Thursday of each month, are sponsored by The Scotts Miracle-Gro Foundation in partnership with the NACD Urban and Community Resource Policy Group.

There is no cost to participate, but space is limited. Registration will be accepted on a first-come, first-serve basis.

To register, go online at <https://nacdn.net.z2systems.com/eventReg.jsp?event=654&>. If you have difficulty, send an email to deb-bogar@nacdn.net.

More from the WACD Executive Office

- **Remember to comment on Part 1 of Strategic Plan** - Recently, the WACD Board of Directors approved sending draft **mission, vision, and priorities** (MVP) statements to members and partners for review and comment. The strategic plan will be built in two parts, each with three elements. The first part forms the foundation for the action-oriented second part of the plan. MVP statements will be formally adopted at the September 15th Board meeting. Learn more and submit comments through the [WACD website](#).
- **June Board of Directors meeting minutes (draft) available** - Secretary Amy McKay has approved the distribution of the draft minutes of the June 23rd meeting of the WACD Board of Directors. Find them on our website at <https://wadistricts.org/board-of-directors/>.
- **Slack usage continues to increase** - The Washington Conservation Society's Slack account, managed in partnership with WACD, is seeing increased usage. We now have 74 members and there is plenty of room for more people. Request your Slack invitation today at <https://bit.ly/waslack>.
- **Next regular WACD Board meeting September 15th** - Topics planned for the September Board meeting include: formally adopting the first three elements of the strategic plan (mission, vision, priorities) and approving the final three elements (goals, actions, scorecard) to go to members and partners for comment; and reviewing financial reserves and related policies.

Links for our members and partners: what we are reading!

Some news sources may be behind paywalls. Please let us know if an item is of interest but not available to you.

Jobs

- [Pend Oreille Conservation District seeking district manager](#)

Natural resources, agriculture

- [Judge Rules in Favor of the American Farmer Over California's Prop 65 Labeling of Glyphosate](#)
- [As wildfires flare up across West, research highlights risk of ecological change](#)
- [Drought Leads To Disaster Declaration For NW Counties](#)
- [Newhouse: USMCA Comes At A Crucial Time for the American Economy](#)
- [Grizzly bear reintroduction plan in North Cascades scraped by feds](#)
- [McMorris Rodgers bill would speed dam licensing, designate hydropower as 'renewable'](#)
- [How House version of ag spending bill would impact rural America](#)

- [Editorial: Women in agriculture finally get recognition](#)
- [Search finds no wolves in South Cascades](#)

Operations news

- [Government Finance Officers Association: How to Eliminate Paper and Save Time and Money](#)
- [Unemployment taxes could nearly triple by 2022 in Washington due to COVID](#)

Diversity / equity / inclusion

- [Vancouver City Council vows to fight racism](#)
- [Clark County Council to join listening sessions on systemic racism](#)
- [A Letter to My White Male Friends of a Certain Age](#)

Pandemic news

- [Inslee to revise COVID-19 rules for farms](#)
- [Washington businesses now required to turn away customers without fask masks](#)
- [ICMA: Coronavirus Crisis Response - Resources for Your Community](#)
- [Tribes enter key wildfire time with coronavirus looming large](#)
- [Tracking the novel coronavirus in the U.S.](#)
- [Here is your risk of getting the coronavirus during various activities](#)
- [More than a fifth of Americans live in counties with new highs in coronavirus cases](#)
- [Ferocious US surge adds 1 million new coronavirus cases in 28 days to hit 3 million](#)
- [Where U.S. coronavirus cases are on the rise](#)

State government news

- [Politicians get pay raises, state workers get furloughs](#)

Technology

- [This Free Noise Canceling App Mutes Background Noise on Your Conference Calls](#)
- [Working Remote? These Are the Biggest Dos and Don'ts of Video Conferencing](#)

Partners and Associations (suggestions welcome)

- [National Association of Conservation Districts \(NACD\)](#)
- [NACD Pacific Region page](#)
- [National Conservation District Employees Association](#)
- [National Association of State Conservation Agencies](#)
- [Washington Association of District Employees](#)
- [Washington Association of Land Trusts](#)
- [Washington State Conservation Commission](#)

Publications

- [District directory published by WACD](#)
- [NACD publications - find them here](#)

Other

- [Oregon Farm Bureau Rural Road Safety video](#)

A brief diversion from the barrage of difficult news

For those of us of a certain generation, the emergence of the Beatles during a difficult time in our country was a welcome diversion from those difficulties. As drummer Ringo Starr celebrated his 80th birthday this week, we thought that some of our members might enjoy a trip down memory lane in a [compendium of photos of Ringo through the years](#). Ringo's trademark phrase is "peace and love." Especially during these challenging times, we echo that sentiment for each and every member of our community.

WACD hears you and is here for you!



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711 Capitol Way South, Suite 707, Olympia, WA 98501