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Five Things to Know

August 27, 2020

1: Reminder: It is WACD annual awards time!

It is time again to harvest your great achievements and successes! WACD's Annual Awards Program is now available. Please contribute a nomination for an outstanding member of Washington State's conservation community who deserves recognition. There are nine awards, from volunteers to new supervisors to local cooperators large and small. Nominations are due to Lori McLaughlin by October 30th and winners will be announced in coordination with the WACD annual conference.

2: A peek into the future (budget packages)

In the next few weeks, the Conservation Commission will be submitting to the Office of Financial Management the decision packages that many district supervisors and staff helped write. These budget packages detail potential funding for the 2021-2023 state biennium. These decision packages will be evaluated by the Governor's office as part of the process of drafting a budget to present to the new Legislature. Once the Commission's part in this process is complete, WACD will work with conservation districts in September and October to support funding these necessary conservation efforts. Such support is usually communicated through letters of support from districts, partners, and local cooperators. Many of you were not around in 2018 so we thought this peek into the future would be helpful. Expect more details soon!

3: WACD Plant Materials Center sales down, hope remains

The WACD PMC has not published a new sales report since August 11th but a new one is being prepared. As of 8/11/20 the PMC has booked \$338,564 in sales for FY 2020-21. Sales were \$582,401 last year on 8/14/19 and they were \$497,252 on 8/16/18. We think it is likely that some customers and some projects are waiting to see what happens in the fall with the coronavirus. In the meantime, we are reducing spending and increasing marketing.

4: Request for suggestions for webinars with agencies

The recent webinar we hosted for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife was well received by WACD members. A suggestion was made to have video conferences like this more regularly. We seek your suggestions for agencies (or even specific departments within agencies) that your conservation district would enjoy visiting with. One key purpose is to help you build relationships with agency folks so that when you need their help, they already know you and what you do. Please send your suggestions to Ryan.

5: Video conferencing training

With all six area association meetings likely to be held electronically this October, WACD staff is committing ourselves to helping each district grow more proficient at using video conference technologies. Our goal is for every attendee of an area association meeting (as well as the WACD annual conference) to be familiar with how video conferencing software works before the start of those meetings. WACD staff will be setting up regular office hours for folks to drop in (virtually!) and spend the time necessary testing software and learning all the bells and whistles. We will also proactively reach out to districts and to those scheduling special appointments, ensuring anyone who wants to participate will be able to do so.

Executive Corner

Dear weblinx,

Each week as we begin to tie a ribbon around this weekly newsletter, I pause to reflect on the past week. Those reflections are the fuel for my entries into this column.

This week I'm reflecting on perception vs. reality, and surprisingly, that morphed into some thoughts on active, effective listening skills. I think that we often get a little bit mixed up between what we perceive to be true and what is objective, factual truth. I would like to say that I'm aware of this because of my science background but the truth lies much closer to home...and that's a teaser for the ending thoughts in this week's column!

"Perception is not reality, but, admittedly, perception can become a person's reality (there is a difference) because perception has a potent influence on how we look at reality." Source: Psychology Today

Clearly, perception — which is based on sensory information — is not the same as reality. Reality is based upon that which is real and factual, not what is imagined.

"...we believe what we perceive to be accurate, and we create our own realities based on those perceptions. And although our perceptions feel very real, that doesn't mean they're necessarily factual," Source: Well and Good

The point here is that in our daily lives, what we perceive to be real and true is what guides our beliefs and our actions. Indeed, your thoughts become your reality.

It should come as no surprise that what you perceive may be very different than what someone else perceives. That holds true in how we perceive ourselves vs. how others perceive us. Ultimately, how others perceive you becomes your reputation. For example, you may see yourself as standing up for what you believe in but others may perceive this behavior as aggressive or overly stubborn. If that's how people see you, that guides their reactions to what you do and say. In this context, how people perceive you becomes the frame by which your judged, even when that frame doesn't match your view of yourself.

Let's bring this out of the realm of articles and hyperbole and into the present. We have some topics this year that touch on deeply held beliefs. (And as noted above, our beliefs control our reality.) One such topic is conservation district elections where we have a spectrum of beliefs and desires among our members. Another topic newer but no less contentious: the broad issue of diversity and inclusion.

These two topics are sparking reactions that span a wide range of perspectives. I use the word "sparking" because there is often some heat in the statements I hear. People on one side believe the other side is misquided or just plain wrong. When that belief gets communicated, we stop being able to hear each other. If we can't hear each other, we can never come to agreement.

"We should be able to disagree about policy without labeling our political opponents illegitimate or refusing to work with them on any terms short of their capitulation." Source: Negotiation and compromise as core constitutional values.

That can be very frustrating because we each want to hold onto what we believe. We resist changing our own perspectives. I sometimes find it very challenging to let go of my belief that I'm right (of course I am!) and to quietly open my heart and mind to other ideas. "When you are involved in a problem, just shut up and listen" might be the best advice Mom ever gave me. Mom taught me that active listening is crucial in defusing the tension that sometimes emerges when we are talking with someone who doesn't agree with us.

Mom's words are a more down-to-earth version of Stephen R. Covey's Habit 5: Seek First to Understand, Then To Be Understood. (If you haven't read Covey's The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People I recommend it highly. It has been one of the most enlightening and accessible books on personal improvement I've ever read.) I think I was about 12 years old when Mom uttered her golden wisdom to me so she was well ahead of Covey!

This concept is fleshed out in more practical terms by the Government of New Zealand in Positive conversations and reaching agreement. That article has helpful perspectives and actionable steps that are fairly easy to follow.

OK, let's bring this topic home. My reality is based on my perceptions which are based on my life experiences, so my perception is different than yours. My personal reality shapes how I hear what is said and how I respond, but I can exert some control over my reactions by following Mom's great advice: "just shut up and listen."

The next time that strong beliefs and feelings are feeding statements that create more warmth in the room than you may be comfortable with, you might want to try my mother's advice: "just shut up and listen." Thank you, Mom!

Tom Salzer, Executive Director exec@wadistricts.org

More from the WACD Plant Materials Center...

COVID-19 Update – The PMC continues to adhere to all of the workplace COVID regulations. Skagit County remains in phase 2. There has been a total of 992 cases since the beginning with 22 deaths and 90 hospitalizations. Seven new cases have been reported in the past couple of days. Along the way there have been an ever-increasing myriad of ag workplace regulations. The PMC continues to keep abreast of them, largely thanks to the Washington State Farm Bureau who have done a great job of notifying members of new regulations and working with Olympia in finding workable solutions for ag employers.

Marketing - Lori and Jess are working diligently on marketing. The customer data base is categorized into marketing segments such as Conservation Districts, Agencies, Tribes, Non-Profits, Nurseries, Foresters, Municipalities, etc. They are finding new potential customers within those categories and reaching out.

Accounting Review – In accordance with policy, the PMC is conducting a review of procedures this year. Larson Gross, our accounting firm, is conducting the review. Lori is busy providing them with the records they have requested. Larson Gross will provide a report when finished.

Life Goes On – By August most of the plants have grown to size and attention turns to getting them to go dormant. We do this primarily through drought stressing. Irrigation is withheld unless plants start to get too crispy looking. We were making good headway until it rained last Friday. Now the dry weather is back and hopefully it remains dry until the plants are on their way to dormancy induction. The attached photos don't highlight how well the plants are looking, but they do show how beautiful the sky was Monday morning!

As usual, please contact the PMC with your questions. PMC staff are happy to field your requests and concerns.





Shop Amazon Smile to Support WCS

Become a member, donate, or support the Washington Conservation Society at no extra cost to you by purchasing goods through Amazon Smile. Amazon Smile is a website operated by Amazon with the same products, prices, and shopping features as on Amazon.com. The difference is that when you shop on Amazon mile, the Amazon Smile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price of eligible products to the charitable organization of your choice.

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More from the WACD Executive Office...

Area Association meetings – The basic list of dates for fall meetings of area associations is now posted on the Our Area Associations page in the WACD website.

Almost final: WACD's Olympia office is moving – This week was partly consumed by final packing and the moving of smaller boxes and supplies. Tomorrow (Friday), a local moving company will haul the larger items to the new office and Tom will fill the small holes that have accumulated in the walls of the old office. On Monday, Ryan will do the final walk through with the property manager and turn in our keys.

Please use Ryan's and Tom's cell numbers for contact until we can get new phones connected in the new office.

New 2020 Summer "The Resource" publication from NACD – Once again our national association has outdone themselves with a great report. We appreciate the inspiring report on Latino Conservation Week by the Inland Empire Resource Conservation District (California). Find it on pages 28 and 29 in the Summer 2020 edition of NACD's The Resource.



Links to what we are reading

Below are links to interesting items we are reading. Disclaimer: inclusion of these links in this newsletter do not imply official WACD support or endorsement of particular positions or information. Some news sources may be behind paywalls.

Jobs

- Farm Resource Specialist, Pierce Conservation District
- Livestock Conservation Planner, Clark Conservation District

- Job: Riparian Habitat Stewardship Coordinator, King Conservation District (Renton, WA)
- San Mateo Resource Conservation District Seeks Forest Health and Fire Resiliency Project Manager
- Stevens CD seeking Natural Resource Technician

Conservation and conservation districts

- New Nisqually Land Trust Executive Director Brings Deep Appreciation of Watershed | Nisqually Valley News - "Jeanette Dorner, the current executive director of Mid Sound Fisheries Enhancement Group with a lifelong background in Nisqually Watershed protection and restoration projects, was recently named the new executive director of the Nisqually Land Trust."
- USDA Updates Conservation Provisions for Highly Erodible Land and Wetlands | NRCS "The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) published its final rule on determining whether land is considered highly erodible or a wetland, integrating input from the public and making updates in accordance with the 2018 Farm Bill."
- See Washington Conservation Districts on Flipboard for some recent news clippings that mention conservation districts.

Environment & Natural Resources

- Salmon Snake River salmon runs see big rebound from 2019 | Washington Policy Center -"Data from fish passage at the Snake River dams show that the Spring Chinook run at Lower Granite Dam – which is the farthest upstream – was about 30 percent higher than 2019. The Fall run is expected to begin in the next couple weeks."
- Fire Evacuations remain in place as Palmer Fire burns more than 17,000 acres in Okanogan County | FOX28 News - "Evacuations remain in place as the Palmer Fire in Okanogan County continues to burn more than 17,000 acres. According to Northwest Incident Management Team 6, a cold front brought gusty winds to the area on Monday, August 24, which tested fire lines. However, contingency lines held strong and the fire didn't exhibit any major growth."
- Fire It's essential Mill Creek watershed be protected from fire | The Union-Bulletin (Walla Walla) - "A wildfire anywhere in this region would be of grave concern. It would easily spread given the recent extreme high temperatures that have left forest land dry. But if a wildfire were to start in or spread to the Mill Creek watershed in the Blue Mountains it would be far, far worse — it would be a disaster that would linger throughout the Walla Walla Valley for well over a year."
- Fire Washington fire officials say new satellites are 'game-changer' for fighting wildfires | KING5 News - "Launched in 2017, the satellite brings you those high definition images of California's wildfire smoke you see on the news. But the satellites, built by Lockheed Martin outside of Denver, Colorado for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration do so much more. 'Once those satellites were online, it's been such a game-changer for us,' said Josh Clark, fire weather meteorologist for the Washington Department of Natural Resources, the state's largest firefighting agency." - (Editor note: See GOES-West images at https://www.star.nesdis.noaa.gov/GOES/conus.php?sat=G17)
- Fire Crews battling 18 large fires across Oregon, Wash. | KATU News "Right now, there are 18 large fires burning 90,000 acres across Oregon and Washington. According to the Northwest Interagency Fire Coordination Center, 16 of those fires are burning in Oregon."

- Fire Smoke from California, Colorado wildfires has blanketed skies all the way to Kansas | The Sacramento Bee - "Wildfires raging in California and Colorado have blanketed most of the West in smoke, which has reached as far away as Kansas, the National Weather Service says. Lightning-sparked fires have burned more than 1.1 million acres in California and killed at least seven people, CNN reported. More than 13,000 firefighters are battling hundreds of blazes."
- Fire To Manage Wildfire, California Looks To What Tribes Have Known All Along | NPR -"...with wildfires raging across Northern California, joining other record-breaking fires from recent years, government officials say tackling the fire problem will mean bringing back "good fire," much like California's tribes once did."
- Climate New King County climate plan calls for 50% cut in emissions by 2030, 80% by 2050 The Seattle Times - "King County would aim to cut greenhouse gas emissions in half by 2030 and by 80% by 2050, while it simultaneously pushes to prepare for the inevitable disruptions of climate change, under an updated climate plan proposed Thursday by County Executive Dow Constantine."
- Climate <u>US officially joins global trillion tree planting initiative</u> | The Hill "The U.S. chapter of the One Trillion Trees program, launched Thursday, aims to plant at least 855 million trees by 2030. The goal of the initiative is to try to pull carbon out of the air through reforestation. though scientists have said planting trees isn't a panacea and that the U.S. will also have to significantly reduce its emissions to mitigate climate change impacts."

Agriculture

- Potatoes WA potato industry averts worst case scenario during pandemic despite \$1 billion loss | iFiberOne - "The state's potato industry has lost \$995,000,000 due to the pandemic, but the seemingly stratospheric figure is the better scenario, according Chris Voigt of the Washington Potato Commission."
- Invasive species Washington State Department of Agriculture Virtual Press Conference TVW - "WA State Department of Agriculture gives an update on Asian giant hornets in Washington."
- Wine Great Northwest Wine: Chateau Ste. Michelle celebrates 20 years of Eroica Riesling -The Spokesman-Review - "The program continues to evolve. Early on, Loosen was told by some at Ste. Michelle that historic Cold Creek Vineyard near the Hanford Reach was the company's top site for riesling...The fandom for Eroica prompted Ste. Michelle Wine Estates to establish eroicawine.com, and there are now five wines in the lineup that includes the slightly sweeter Eroica Gold, the Eroica Ice Wine and the rare and collectible Eroica Single Berry Select."
- Agritourism Washington farmers to ask Inslee to allow fall activities | KING5.com "A group of Washington farmers will meet with Governor Jay Inslee's Office Wednesday to ask the state to change the current coronavirus mandate around agritourism. The farmers sent a letter to the governor and a revised plan explaining how they can open and operate safely, adding that fall actives are when many farms make most of their revenue for the year."

Diversity / Equity / Inclusion

 5 Powerful Ways to Take REAL Action on DEI (Diversity, Equity & Inclusion) | Center for Creative Leadership - "People need new ways to think about and talk about diversity. Leaders need new skills to enable equity and inclusion in the workplace. And organizations need

- scalable ways to ensure that their diversity & inclusion initiatives avoid common mistakes and are solid and sustainable."
- Policies, Practices, and Programs for Advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion | D5 Coalition -"To support leaders in their efforts to take meaningful action to address diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in their organizations, D5 commissioned JustPartners, Inc. to identify the most effective policies, practices, and programs to advance DEI."
- Diversity and Inclusion Initiative: A Step By Step Guide | TSNE MissionWorks "In this quide for nonprofit organizations is a step-by-step approach – in seven phases – to achieving diversity and inclusiveness in the nonprofit workplace. The guide offers practical advice for creating a better work environment through a more diverse and inclusive organization."
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Framework | IGS Innovative Growth Solutions "The following table summarizes best current practices in each of the key performance areas in diversity, equity, and inclusion. While no organization has implemented all practices in every area, this model enables organizations to evaluate their current state and plan improvement strategies." - PDF document
- Floyd's death sparks new activism among communities of color | AP News "The climate of racial reckoning that has emerged in the United States since Floyd's death has reinvigorated Native Americans, Asian Americans, Latinos and other people of color to fight back against the racism and discrimination they also have experienced for decades."

Washington State government

- Washington state auditor and lawmakers target 'unauditable' local government districts | The Seattle Times - "The number of unauditable governments has declined to 15, down from 40 in May 2019, the auditor's office said last week. With audits underway in some of those 15 governments, that number could drop even further."
- Good news on state tax collections in July | Washington Research Council "Yesterday's monthly report from state's Economic and Revenue Forecast Council (ERFC) on general fund revenue collections brought good news...The full Economic and Revenue Update is available here."
- After 16 years of refusing state audit, Pierce County drainage district finally relents | KING5 News - "With increased pressure from a new law, a Pierce County drainage district featured in a KING 5 investigation submitted to a required state audit."
- Commission seeks habitat, access funding for increasingly outdoor-oriented public; wrestles with possible COVID-related cuts | ifiberonenewsradio.com - "The Fish and Wildlife Commission, on Friday, approved \$17 million in budget requests for needed enhancements to manage fish and wildlife in Washington state. Commissioners also provided a list of potential service cuts, while pointing out the counterproductive nature of such cuts should statewide elected officials adopt them."

Pandemic

 The office, as you know it, is dead | CNN - "The health crisis has forced millions of Americans to abandon their offices in favor of working from home, for better or worse. Now there are signs this may not be a short-term phenomenon, but more of a permanent shift in favor of remote work even after a Covid-19 vaccine is in place."

- No plan for a return to the office for millions of staff | BBC "The BBC questioned 50 big employers ranging from banks to retailers to get a sense of when they expected to ask employees to return to the office. One of the main reasons given for the lack of a substantial return was that firms could not see a way of accommodating large numbers of staff while social distancing regulations were still in place."
- 'A lot of variables': New research into popular gaiters highlights challenges of testing mask safety | Washington Post - "But amid heightened concerns about the efficacy of gaiters, other experts are now pushing back against the characterization that such face coverings may be "worse than nothing," as one of the Duke study's authors told CBS News."
- Washington State DOH COVID-19 Data Dashboard (Editor note: if your browser blocks) cookies and scripts you'll have trouble viewing this. The site works fine (albeit a bit slow to load) with typical browsers such as Google Chrome, Microsoft Edge, and Mozilla Firefox.)
- Coronavirus in the U.S.: Latest Map and Case Count | NY Times "At least 1,213 new coronavirus deaths and 38,733 new cases were reported in the United States on Aug. 25. Over the past week, there have been an average of 42,078 cases per day, a decrease of 22 percent from the average two weeks earlier."
- The pandemic threatens how we naturally grow and benefit from relationships | CNN "To keep up relationships, emotional closeness and trust during this time, stay in virtual touch as much as possible, Dunbar suggested. And remind your loved ones, 'I'm still here and thinking of you.' "

Management and Leadership

- A Guide to Managing Your (Newly) Remote Workers | Harvard Business Review "In response to the uncertainties presented by Covid-19, many companies and universities have asked their employees to work remotely. While close to a quarter of the U.S. workforce already works from home at least part of the time, the new policies leave many employees and their managers — working out of the office and separated from each other for the first time."
- 23 Essential Tips for Working Remotely | Inc. "Follow these tips to keep your whole team's productivity and morale high."
- 6 Ways to Support COVID-Weary Employees | Harvard Business School Working Knowledge -"We live in an incredibly interconnected global community. So disease threats such as COVID-19 need to be recognized as part of the current work-scape and systematically addressed,' says Harvard Business School Assistant Professor of Business Administration Ashley Whillans, who co-authored the article, 'COVID-19 and the Workplace: Implications, Issues, and Insights for Future Research and Action,' with 28 other researchers." and "Lowcost, light touch interventions can improve conditions for employees."

Proof that we read widely!

 Multilayered Cylindrical Triboelectric Nanogenerator to Harvest Kinetic Energy of Tree Branches for Monitoring Environment Condition and Forest Fire - Pang - 2020 | Advanced Functional Materials - Wiley Online Library - "Forest fires present a great threat as they can rapidly grow and become large, resulting in tragic loss of life and property when occurring near occupied land. Here a self-powered fire alarm system based on a novel multilayered cylindrical triboelectric nanogenerator (MC-TENG) that can produce electrical power for the detection sensors by harvesting the kinetic energy of moving tree branches in a forest is presented."

Partners and Publications

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 Conservation Society and AmazonSmile for WCS
- Washington State Conservation Commission

Publications

- District directory published by WACD
- How to subscribe to Conservation Commission news (PDF file)
- NACD publications find them here
- Washington State Data Book | Office of Financial Management "The Washington State Data Book presents, in one reference document, a diversity of information on Washington, its people, economy, and government. The information is obtained from state and federal agencies as well as private business."

WACD hears you and is here for you!

We welcome your feedback



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