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# Washington Association of Conservation Districts

## Five Things to Know

October 1, 2020



## Five Things WACD Wants You to Know

### 1. Orca Recovery Day is just around the corner

October 5 to November 5 is when Orca Recovery activities will be going on. [See the Orca Recovery Day \(ORD\) video!](#) The actual day with limited in-person activities will be October 17. This year, Orca Recovery Day (ORD) is being held through [EcoChallenge](#). Learn how to create a team and get started at <https://vimeo.com/290638030>. Check out the ORD resources available at <https://orcarecoveryday.ecochallenge.org/about/resources>.

### 2. WACD Board adopts virtual meetings and electronic voting

In September, the WACD Board of Directors adopted a board resolution that includes virtual meetings as acceptable ways for the Association to meet. The resolution also clarified that voting can be done by in-person and electronic methods. These steps were taken to reassure members that decisions and voting at the 2020 WACD annual conference – which will be held virtually – will be valid actions.

### 3. How to support WSCC budget packages

Last week, the Conservation Commission released [fact sheets on the operating budget and the capital budget](#). We encourage conservation districts to express support for those budget proposals. To that end, we have a [sample support letter available](#) to help you in drafting your own letter. Letters of support should be submitted before October 30.

### 4. Plant Materials Center sales are recovering

PMC Sales Manager Jess Oman is taking new plant orders daily! Sales are almost caught up to where they were this time last year. Hopefully that continues since there are a lot of nice plants still available.

This is good news in two ways. First, you can make quality native plants available to your customers and for restoration projects. There are still plenty of plants left so now is the time to get your order in. Second, sales revenue helps to reduce your WACD dues. PMC sales provide \$75,000 a year for the operation of WACD so your dues are already being reduced by plant sales.

### 5. Election changes, discussion, what's next?

The Conservation Commission has adopted some changes to conservation district elections. A [summary is posted on their website](#).

Last Saturday, 76 people from our conservation community talked about challenges we face with conservation district elections and ideas we can carry forward. That session was facilitated and recorded. [A summation of the meeting and a link to the recorded meeting are available](#).

So what's next? Resolutions at area association meetings! We know some resolutions will speak to issues directly or indirectly related to conservation district elections. We hope you will participate in discussion of the ideas that will be brought forward at area meetings in October!

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## For Christmas, give the gift of Envirothon!

*From our friends at the Washington Conservation Society*

### Dear Conservation Family,

We ask you to consider designating the Washington Conservation Society as your [AmazonSmile charity](#). Donations created from purchases made October 1, 2020 thru January 31, 2021 will go toward supporting the [Washington State Envirothon](#). AmazonSmile has the same products, prices, and services as the Amazon you know, and they will donate 0.5% of the price of eligible purchases to the WCS.

Recent budget cuts, COVID19, and other challenges have put the amazing Envirothon education program at risk. Please join us in supporting this wonderful and worthwhile program by [giving the gift of the Envirothon for Christmas!](#)

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## Fall/winter schedule

As is the case every year, fall is a busy time for WACD, members, and partners!

- **October** –
  - October 2: WSCC [election training webinar](#)
  - [Area meetings](#) (area associations of conservation districts)
    - October 7: Northwest Area Association work session
    - October 13: North-Central Area Association
    - October 15: Southwest Area Association
    - October 20: Northeast Area Association
    - October 21: Northwest Area Association
    - October 28: Southeast Area Association
    - October 29: South Central Area Association
- **November** –
  - WACD committee meetings
  - WACD work session on legislative priorities
  - WACD Board of Directors meeting
- **December** –
  - November 30 through December 2: WACD annual conference and business meeting
  - December 3: WSCC [regular meeting](#)
- **January**
  - January 11: [State legislature convenes](#)

## Executive Corner

Dear weblinx,

While my column today may be taken personally by some, or may be taken to heart by others, I am not aiming my thoughts at any individual. Instead, I'm stepping back and trying to understand the larger dynamics that were in play on Saturday. There are some lessons that I can learn from the fascinating interplay of ideas and people during Saturday's [Zoom meeting on conservation district elections](#).

I thought that it was productive but it hit some rough spots along the way, at least to me. I detected some friction as particular points of view collided. Clearly, we hold a very wide spectrum of attitudes and beliefs! I heard some misinformation and some emotional responses, too.

As I reflected on Saturday's event, I concluded that by the end, we were moving forward. There were positive outcomes. That is an amazing thing considering that we imperfect beings discussed imperfect ideas using imperfect language! I'm not unhappy about Saturday's meeting but I'm sure we can learn to do better.

*[All communication has two parts: a sender and a receiver. The sender has a message he or she intends to transmit, and s/he puts it in words, which, to her/him, best reflect what s/he is thinking. But many things can intervene to prevent the intended message from being received accurately.](#)*

As I thought about language and my own self-knowledge that I don't always convey what I intend and I don't always hear what the other person meant, I started to dig around for knowledge that would give me better perspective. I say this because it almost sounded at times as if [we were speaking entirely different languages](#). What one person saw as an opportunity another saw as a threat. Something positive was seen as something negative. A statewide issue was really just a local issue.

I detected more than one instance of a statement not being heard the way it was intended. A few times there seemed to be very emotional, shoot-from-the-hip responses as the conversational temperature rose.

*The Two Main Types of Misunderstanding: The speaker is not aware that they are being misunderstood. The listener is unaware that they are not understanding what was intended.*

I was not the only person who started to react emotionally to some of the interactions. During and after Saturday's meeting, I received several comments from folks who were either upset with some statements, or were surprised (and sometimes upset) that ideas about reaching more people in their community were raised, or worried that the points being discussed would end up becoming a one-size-fits-all system that every conservation district would have to follow. I think it's safe to say that in this meeting, we managed to touch a lot of sore spots.

An important point is that we didn't create those pain points, not on Saturday. We uncovered some things that have been irritating folks for a long time. As those deeper issues were unintentionally poked and prodded, people reacted and voiced their feelings.

Is that bad? No. Was it comfortable for everyone? No. I begin to wonder how we can draw a line between being direct and honest vs. coming across as aggressive or offensive. It's an invisible, dynamic line so I think it will take all of us to detect it and to help each other do better when we inadvertently step over it.

As I pondered this I also thought of the second of WACD's proposed ten core principles: ***"We serve people with dignity and respect, acting with integrity and operating with transparency and accountability to all."*** Dignity and respect can be hard to demonstrate when you feel offended or frightened! Transparency is hard when you feel threatened. Living up to a principle like this is going to be hard work, especially when we want to react in the moment instead of taking a step back and pausing to catch our breath.

As one of the hosts of the Saturday session, one of the takeaways for me is: turn off the chat box when we are discussing difficult issues. The chats turned into a substantial distraction that really got in the way of truly hearing each other, at least at times, and at least to me. It's hard to listen deeply and intently when your eyes are reading chat comments and your fingers are typing responses.

Another aspect of our work together on Saturday surfaced for me: the idea that maybe we were engaged in a [continuous improvement process](#) but we had not identified it as such for everyone in the meeting. Perhaps this helped to feed the ideas of some folks who thought that the group was

heading toward unwelcome, unwanted solutions that everyone would have to implement.

*[If you've ever heard of lean, kaizen, Six Sigma, or DMAIC then this will sound familiar, as continuous improvement is based on similar principles and forms a key part of both of those practices.](#)*

Four steps in a continual improvement process are:

1. **Plan:** Identify an opportunity and plan for change.
2. **Do:** Implement the change on a small scale.
3. **Check:** Use data to analyze the results of the change and determine whether it made a difference.
4. **Act:** If the change was successful, implement it on a wider scale and continuously assess your results. If the change did not work, begin the cycle again.

In our conservation work, we are more familiar with the concept of [adaptive management](#) but continual improvement has some strong similarities. The terms are a bit different in process improvement but in the end, it amounts to much the same thing.

So that is the second big takeaway for me from Saturday: we could have done a better job of identifying that this was really brainstorming to find some significant improvements that could be supported by many in our conservation community.

Lots of learning for me from Saturday and I know I'm not alone. As always, [I welcome your feedback](#). You help me grow and improve, something I believe I need to do every single day!

Tom Salzer, Executive Director  
[exec@wadistricts.org](mailto:exec@wadistricts.org)

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## More from the WACD Plant Materials Center...

**COVID-19 Update** – Skagit County remains in phase 2 and all employees remain healthy. Four new cases of COVID have been reported in Skagit County in recent days for a total of 1,111 cases so far. The PMC will remain vigilant in adhering to all required protocols and regulations.

**Crop Insurance** – The PMC has been looking into a new crop insurance program geared towards nurseries. Crop insurance has not been practical for most nurseries in the past. After much research it has been decided that the new program will work and that it is affordable. We have received the okay to proceed so the application process has begun.

**Search for Crew Leader** – As mentioned in a previous update, our crew leader Herminia Sanchez has gone back to school and a replacement is needed before harvest starts. If anyone knows an experienced bi-lingual ag crew supervisor looking for a full-time, permanent position with benefits let them know.

**Life Goes On** – Fall seed planting has begun. The large majority of the plants grown here are propagated from seeds that are planted in the fall. These are species with seeds that are dormant.



They require a cold, moist period (winter) in order to break that dormancy so that they can germinate. So far, over 3½ miles of 8-row seed beds have been planted. That number will increase to 8½ miles before fall is over.



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### More from the WACD Executive Office...

**More about computer threats** – Last week we mentioned protecting yourself from bad things that can infect your computer. This week we learned that the State of Washington is under attack. Read more: [State agencies fighting cybersecurity threat](#) | KIRO 7 News and [Officials: Washington being targeted by phishing campaign](#) | The Seattle Times.

**Central Region Commission Member** – For 2020 there will be one district-elected position on the Conservation Commission up for election this year: the Central Washington district representative. [Visit the Commission's website for more information.](#)

**NCPP** – The **National Conservation Planning Partnership** has published an update on their activities. [Find it here.](#)

**Tilth Conference** – Check out the [Tilth Conference schedule](#). Registration closes November 1 so there is still time to [sign up for this event](#).

**Reminder: WACD awards due October 30th** – [WACD's Annual Awards Program is now available](#). Please nominate an outstanding member of Washington State's conservation community who deserves recognition. Nominations are due to [Lori McLaughlin](#) by October 30th and winners will be announced in coordination with the WACD annual conference.

## 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.

### Conservation Community

- [Reminder to Submit Nominations for Hugh Hammond Bennett Awards by October 1](#) | National Conservation Planning Partnership
- Job: [Employment Opportunities: Finance Specialist](#) | Palouse CD
- Job: [Area Foresters](#), Puget Sound region
- Job: [Position Opening: Engineer-In-Training](#), Snohomish CD
- Job: [Livestock Conservation Planner, Clark Conservation District](#) (temporarily closed for applications, reopening around September 30, 2020)
- Job: [Riparian Habitat Stewardship Coordinator, King Conservation District \(Renton, WA\)](#)

### Fire

- [WA can't contain epic wildfires without state, federal help](#) | Crosscut

### Pandemic

- ['None of Us Are Immune': Growing Number of Elected Officials Diagnosed With Covid-19](#) | Route Fifty

### Invasive species

- [Officials confirm 3 new sightings of Asian giant hornets](#) | KOMO News

### Economy

- [Minimum Wage Rising in 2021](#) | NewsRadio 560 KPQ
- [Surge in consumer spending eases state budget challenges](#) | HeraldNet.com

### Agriculture / Forestry

- [Candy Mountain Becomes Washington's 16th American Viticultural Area](#) | NBC Right Now
- [Biden's CSP expansion could face Hill resistance, staffing questions](#) | Agri-Pulse
- [Pandemic may boost demand for real Christmas trees](#) | capitalpress.com
- [Cover Crops: Let's Pay Farmers to Protect Our Water](#) | Sightline Institute
- [Conservationists defend forest thinning in north-central Washington](#) | capitalpress.com

### Reaching and serving more people

- [Inequality, Equality, and Equity](#) | Psychology Today
- [National Native American Heritage Month](#)

### Climate and Weather

- [Northwest winter looking cold and wet because of La Niña](#) | The Olympian

## Leadership and Management

- [The difference between a mob and a crowd](#) | Management Issues
- [5 Ways Leaders Can Offer Encouragement And Emotional Support On A Remote Team](#) | Trello
- [Three Positive Psychology Practices for Our Troubled Times](#) | Psychology Today
- [The Surprising Quality of the Most Powerful Leaders](#) | Psychology Today

## Communication

- [Do Liberals and Conservatives Even Speak the Same Language?](#) | Psychology Today

## 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](#)

### Resources and Publications

- [District directory published by WACD](#)
- [How to subscribe to Conservation Commission news \(PDF file\)](#)
- [SCC/CD shared photo gallery](#)
- [NACD publications - find them here](#)
- [Post your district job to NACD's website](#)
- [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."*

### DEI resources for those who are ready to learn more

- [Center for Diversity & the Environment](#) - Check out their [articles](#) and [videos](#).
- [Coalition of Communities of Color](#) - See their [research and publications](#) plus a
- [Tool for Organizational Self Assessment Related to Racial Equity 2014](#)
- [NACD statement on diversity, equity and inclusivity](#)
- [Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#) | East Multnomah SWCD (and see their page on [discussion group resources](#) designed to facilitate conversations)



- [Diversity, Equity & Inclusion](#) | West Multnomah SWCD
- [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion](#) | North Cascades Institute
- [Equity & Inclusion](#) | Pierce CD
- [Managing Unconscious Bias](#) | Facebook
- [Training materials \(free\)](#) | Hollaback!

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## **WACD hears you and is here for you!**

**We welcome your [feedback](#).**



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1219 11th Ave SE, Olympia, WA 98501