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Washington Association of Conservation Districts

Five Things to Know

November 5, 2020

1. Register now for the WACD annual conference

Registration is now open for WACD's 2020 statewide annual conference. The [conference home page](#) has all you need to know about the conference. Our desired registration deadline in three weeks will give us time to compile the list of folks who can vote at the business meeting.

[If you generate at least one sponsor](#) your conservation district's registration fee will be waived or refunded. There are also opportunities for partners to join for free to show the wide coalition of folks who engage with, and support, local conservation districts. [Our partner list is growing](#) and if you have suggestions, please do [pass them along](#).

As a reminder, the WACD President and WACD Vice President officers are up for election this year.

2. Thank you for Commission budget support letters

The State Conservation Commission's budget proposals are important and we thank the many conservation districts who have expressed support. The Southeast Area Association of Conservation Districts also [adopted a resolution](#) in support of the Commission's budget asks. The next step is seeing what the Governor chooses to include in his proposed budget. Once that happens, we'll be able to begin identifying gaps to address in the upcoming [2021 Legislative Session](#).

3. PMC COVID issue resolved, sales down slightly

COVID-19 – Last week we reported that one person on the crew tested positive for COVID. She and her husband have completed a 10-day quarantine, were retested negative, and will return to work in accordance with the PMC's COVID response plan. We are pleased that they are well and will be returning to work. Going forward we will continue to be vigilant in personal distancing, masks, sanitation, and monitoring everyone's health.

Sales – Since last week's update sales increased from \$787,000 to \$794,500 so not a big sales week. That total includes one \$2,500 cancellation. Our current sales figure is down from this time last year slightly but it is still possible we can catch up. One reminder is that on November 18 we will hold a zoom meeting roundtable for CD plant sale staff to discuss planning and conducting plant

sales in the time of COVID. The Zoom link is available below.

4. Elections and legislation

What a crazy election season! – No matter which way you lean, this has been, and continues to be a wild ride. We'll have more when the dust settles. Meanwhile, we've added a temporary section on elections to the [Members page](#) (password **password removed**) to share some insights.

We are watching four races particularly closely:

- **Brian Blake**, D-Aberdeen (Chair of House Rural Development, Agriculture, and Natural Resources) appears to be struggling to retain his seat.
- **Dean Takko**, D-Longview (Chair of Senate Local Government) appears to have lost his seat.
- **Sharon Shewmake**, D-Bellingham (Vice Chair of House Rural Development, Agriculture, and Natural Resources) appears to be defending her seat but the final results are not yet in.
- **Ron Muzzall**, R-Oak Harbor (incumbent) and **Helen Price Johnson**, D-Clinton (challenger) are in an exceptionally tight race for the Senate 10th Legislative District (largely Island County).

We are increasing our level of discussion with the State Conservation Commission as we get closer to the 2021 Legislative Session. WACD's lobbyist is already engaged with various legislators as we ramp up to session. We are now posting legislative updates on the [WACD Members page](#). You might also notice regular updates about COVID on that page, too!

5. WACD committee meetings in November

WACD will hold committee meetings in November before the annual conference. All are welcome to participate. Staff is coordinating with committees and resolution sponsors. The Finance Committee and the Legislative, Bylaws, District Policies Committee must provide a recommendation to the membership at the annual business meeting (either do pass, do pass as amended, or do not pass).

All adopted resolutions are available on the [Members page](#) and the resolutions destined to go to the statewide business meeting are listed on the [Annual Conference page](#).



Executive Corner

Dear weblinx,

I'm afraid that my column is especially long this week. My mind has been full of thoughts about participation and this topic deserves more words than usual.

We're all busy. Family, kids, work, managing property, trying to maintain relationships in a distanced world. It all seems like it takes more and more time each day.

This became more evident to me as we worked through supporting six area association meetings in October. We had hoped that participation by conservation district supervisors would be high. There was no travel involved so the virtual meetings should have been a great time saver for folks. But what we saw instead was reduced participation.

People's participation is the essence of good governance. - Narendra Modi

I can't talk about reduced participation without calling out the awe-inspiring dedication of many conservation district supervisors. These people give their time and energy when none of us seem to have enough. They choose to get involved. They choose to show up. I always feel honored to be in a meeting with our great conservation district people!

Consciously or unconsciously, every one of us does render some service or other. If we cultivate the habit of doing this service deliberately, our desire for service will steadily grow stronger, and will make, not only for our own happiness, but that of the world at large. - Mahatma Gandhi

Nevertheless, I can't let go of my deep concern about participation. Why? Because participation by conservation district supervisors is at the very heart of our grassroots-driven organization. Here's the logic chain:

- Without grassroots input, WACD can't know what is most important to members.

- When WACD doesn't know what is most important, we can't lobby effectively for your interests.
- If we're not effective, support for conservation districts diminishes.
- If support for conservation districts wanes, funding for districts gets reduced.
- If funding gets reduced, conservation districts must cut costs through staff reductions or program reductions.
- If cuts are made in your conservation district, less service is provided to your community.
- With less service comes less awareness of the need for conservation and the important role of conservation districts.

If that logic chain is even close to the truth, then reduced participation represents an impending death knell for conservation districts and our long-standing, effective, awesome conservation delivery system in Washington State. I find this deeply alarming.

All change starts with a distant rumble at the grassroots level. - Tom Coburn

I think, though, that I'm asking myself the wrong questions. This may be less about participation and more about being slow to recognize that we are living in a time of transformation. We may not completely grasp that we haven't quite caught up to the changes that are going on.

Transformation is an ongoing process that tends to appear ordinary, when, in fact, something extraordinary is taking place. - Suzy Ross

Transformation is systemic change happening to us at the generational, operational, and spiritual levels.

At the generational level, we have enjoyed a long and stable team of conservation district supervisors for many years. We are seeing some folks choosing to break free of the burden of governing local conservation districts. At the same time, newer folks are coming into our conservation district system, choosing to take on the important work of governance. When people change, culture and expectations and needs change.

Culture does not change because we desire to change it. Culture changes when the organization is transformed – the culture reflects the realities of people working together everyday. - Frances Hesselbein

At the operational level, COVID kicked us all in the shin, requiring substantial changes in how we operate. For the most part, we've all been feeling our way forward as best we can, trying to find ways to effectively reach and serve our customers and to manage employees and operations. If it wasn't for COVID, some of the things we routinely do now might not have become part of our work lives for many more years. Change hit us suddenly and we were not entirely prepared for it.

Change is the law of life and those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future. - John F. Kennedy

Spiritually, I think this is where the circle comes together for me. What I am seeing is a tug-of-war between the increased busy-ness and challenges in our everyday lives vs. the critical investment of

our hearts and minds in the larger work where our accomplishments benefit others. This touches on values. It also touches on value.



Personal values change as generational changes occur. Core principles that your grandparents held onto changed a bit in your parent's generation, and changed again in your generation. The younger folks coming into our system are different than our well-established folks, and this will be the case with their children and so on. As a culture consisting of conservation district people, partners, and customers, the values we have cherished are inexorably changing.

Value is also a factor. This is different than core values. I'm talking about how much an individual finds a personal sense of value in investing her or his limited time and energy in the larger goal of helping the community. We see declining membership in most organizations, even in churches. There is a distinct trend away from group activities and toward more individually focused activities.

I don't think that I am painting a very rosy picture, and yet, I do think there is a positive path forward. However, the path I see requires that we embrace some changes in our thinking.

First, and most important, we must find ways to touch the hearts of the people who volunteer to do the awesome work of governing their conservation districts. We have to find out what is important to them. We must know what they value so much that they give up time they could be spending with family and friends, on hobbies, or on their business. If we fail to reach our people at this level, we simply fail. We will fade away and become insignificant if we can't discover and honor and celebrate what causes our people to give more of themselves to our cause.

In life, we leave a legacy to our children, we leave our footprints wherever we travel, and we leave our fingerprints on every heart we touch. - Pat Patrick

Second, when faced with generational change and culture change, we have three choices: fight against it, ignore it, or embrace it. Fighting against change is ultimately futile because as our human generations cycle, our warriors for the status quo also cycle out. Ignoring change sentences us to a slow drift toward mediocrity and insignificance. Embracing change is the hardest of these choices but it is the only viable way to not only survive but to thrive in the new

conditions we face.

It is not the strongest or the most intelligent who will survive but those who can best manage change. - Charles Darwin

Third, we need to check our assumptions at the door about how we support our conservation district boards and how conservation districts serve their customers.

Decades ago, our system worked by meeting with people in their kitchens and at their convenience. Now our system functions largely in a 9-to-5 world where we expect people to take time out of their work lives to participate in conservation district activities. In our busy, busy world, I think that we might be asking too much of those who volunteer their time and too much of those who grant us permission to work on their land. We must make these interactions more convenient for those we serve instead of expecting them to meet our needs.

Leaders honor their core values, but they are flexible in how they execute them. – Colin Powell

Fourth, and last: we need to be reminded that we operate as a collective. A collective is "a cooperative enterprise" and when people operate collectively, it results in something "done by people acting as a group."

Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much. - Helen Keller

We aren't just a group of individuals that comes together from time to time to swap stories or to complain about this or that. Our superpower comes from gathering our people from all walks of life and from all parts of our state, integrating their wonderful differences to focus precious energy on the most important and urgent needs of our conservation district community. That requires commitment and flexibility. It requires that we be able to listen to other ideas – sometimes scary, threatening ideas! – and to give those ideas an opportunity to flower and to influence us. Sometimes, we may have to let go of our individual wants and desires in favor of strengthening our conservation collective.

We have two ears and one tongue so that we would listen more and talk less. - Diogenes

That's what our annual statewide conference is really about. It's what area association meetings are about. It's what your regular conservation district board meetings are about. It's what your daily interactions with board members, staff, customers, partners, and vendors are about. We succeed when we bring all of our resources and talents and thinking to bear on our most pressing problems.

Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision. The ability to direct individual accomplishments toward organizational objectives. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results. - Andrew Carnegie

You may disagree with all or part of what I've written. I may have ruffled some feathers with this column. My purpose is to persuade you to pause and think about about how you perceive our conservation delivery system, and to stimulate your thinking about where we may be headed if nothing changes.

"Yesterday I was clever, so I wanted to change the world. Today I am wise, so I am changing myself." - Jalaluddin Mevlana Rumi

Please do think about how your conservation district can better serve people at all levels in your conservation district operation. Take a look at your internal operations and habits. Take a look at how you work with customers. Think about what others need and try to take a step closer to meeting those needs.

We make a living by what we get, we make a life by what we give. - Winston Churchill

I promise that WACD will do the same. We are challenged by all of the same things you face. WACD has had a regular merry-go-round of executives. And with our president and vice president being limited to serving two years, our system guarantees that our leadership also rides the merry-go-round. It is tremendously hard to envision a strategic direction, gain support, adopt it, and implement it in the very limited time we've had with individuals in our leadership positions.

Turnover can be one of the most expensive problems at a company. - Shawn Achor

Here's a really odd and disturbing observation and it's something that many conservation district managers will recognize: district staff often last longer than board members. While not universally true, it's a pattern I have seen repeated in conservation districts across the country.

Let's take that observation one step farther into somewhat more uncomfortable territory: who maintains the culture of our conservation districts? Some folks will say the board of supervisors. Some will say the staff. The reality I see is it takes all of us, working over time in both harmony and discord, to not only maintain the culture of a conservation district but also to change it. It is a collective effort, a partnership in which different desires and needs and values blend together to hold onto the best aspects of a district and to make better the things that need changing.

If we are to preserve culture we must continue to create it. - Johan Huizinga

That's the reality for WACD, too: it takes all of us to figure out what to keep and what to change. It's not an employer vs. employee thing. It's a shared recognition that what we do together has tremendous value, and an acceptance that we should always seek ways to do better. It is owning the idea that continual improvement is something that we honor and celebrate instead of fearing.

Improvement begins with I. - Arnold H. Glasow

And it's difficult! We all like to hang onto what has worked in the past. When conditions get more difficult, that's where we go: we revert to behaviors and beliefs that served us in the past. The problem is that today's conditions aren't the same as when those behaviors and beliefs worked for us. They are different and we are different. That means we can't always count on what we did before to work in today's conditions.

I'll close with this request: take a look in the mirror. Ask what it is that gives you so much emotional fulfillment that you give your time and heart to your organization. Then ask if you are getting that from your work with your organization. If the answer is no, you have some choices to make. Some of us like to fight for something and some like to fight against something. Ultimately, faced with a gap between what you need and whether you are getting what you need, this becomes a personal choice for each of us: fight to make it better or fight to keep things the way they are.

In the long run, we shape our lives, and we shape ourselves. The process never ends until we die. And the choices we make are ultimately our own responsibility. — Eleanor Roosevelt

I hope a few thoughts in this week's column stimulated some reflection. Our conservation delivery system and our conservation community faces an uncertain future. When we walk together toward keeping the best parts of who we are and how we operate while seeking to improve the other parts, we succeed.

As we journey together, please remember that WACD hears you and is here for you.

Yours in conservation,

Tom Salzer, Executive Director

exec@wadistricts.org

More from the WACD Plant Materials Center...

October Financials – Lori McLaughlin has completed the financial reports for October. Since it is still relatively early in the fiscal year there is not yet a lot of activity to report on.

A few things to point out include PMC Revenues on Plant Sales. As of October 31, they were at \$34,527 and this time last year they were \$26,770. As usual plant sale revenue this time of year is almost exclusively live stakes sales. Another bump in revenues came from a refund from the IRS on all taxes paid for in 2018, plus interest, which was \$20,556. The IRS said that we did not owe any taxes that year even though the accountant stands by their determination we did. Hopefully the nature of that disparity can be determined before the next return. Income tax may not be an issue anyway if sales are negatively affected due to COVID restrictions.

A few expenses worth pointing out include Accounting which was at \$3,675 on October 31, compared to \$400 this time last year. That increase is due to the financial review underway this year, plus some charges for consulting. There will be additional charges for the review coming. Seasonal Labor is up 7% but that is pretty good since minimum wages have increased 12% since this time last year.

Live Stake Harvest Continues – Demand for live stakes continue and so does the harvest. A 4-person crew has been able to keep up with demand. In addition, a customer has requested that we lift and ship some non-dormant plants, which we will do. They cost more and the customer had to sign a waiver that the PMC is not responsible for any increased mortality due to early harvesting.

Life Goes On – Fall is here in all of its glory. Preparations for harvest continues even as we work to obtain, process, and plant all of the seeds needed for fall sowing. Fortunately, there is going to be a dry spell and we should have adequate conditions to plant seed on Monday. However, that will not be the last of the fall sowing! We are still getting additional seed for Pacific Crabapple and a couple of native rose species. Hopefully there will be some dry weather later in the month to allow fall sowing to be fully completed and the seed drills cleaned up and put away.



Give the gift of Envirothon!

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

More from the WACD Executive Office...

November 9: WACD Board of Directors work session – The WACD Board of Directors will meet on November 9 in a work session to discuss: legislative priorities, legislative communication strategies, possible bylaws changes, and the Board's 2021 meeting schedule. We expect that WACD's contract lobbyist will be present to assist the Board on the legislative topics. Please do share your conservation district's legislative priorities with [your Area Director](#).

November 16: WACD Board of Directors meeting – The WACD Board of Directors will meet on November 16 to conduct regular Association business. This meeting would normally be held in conjunction with the WACD Annual Conference but this year, we felt that we could provide more value to conference registrants if we held the regular meeting early. Meeting information will be announced on the [Board of Directors Meetings page](#) two weeks before the board meeting on November 2nd, per WACD procedure.

November 18: Plant sale roundtable – On November 18th, WACD will host a roundtable for conservation districts who will be holding, or wish to hold, a plant sale. [Jessica Oman \(WACD PMC Sales Manager\)](#) will facilitate a sharing session with conservation districts about delivering a plant sale in the face of COVID restrictions. We'll open the Zoom line at 9:30 am and the roundtable will begin at 10 am and last for an hour.

- <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84097521151?pwd=Nk9PNHMwK1hpam9oMGVYWVWFpNHVHdz09>
- Meeting ID: 840 9752 1151# | Passcode: 045250#
- Dial by your location: +1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

November 21: CD elections web meeting – The conversation about CD elections continues on

Saturday, November 21 from 9 am to noon. The meeting objective is to collect CD input on options for potential changes to CD elections. Participation by CD supervisors and staff will ensure that Commission members hear from you. Your input will be shared with Conservation Commission members to help inform their discussion and potential action on CD elections at their public meeting on December 3, 2020.

- [View the agenda](#)
- [Register for this Zoom meeting](#)

Help us with our history of WACD presidents – Thank you to those who helped us update the [history of WACD presidents since 1942](#) under the History tab on the Members page.

We continue to add content to the [WACD Members page](#) (password **password removed**). Most recently, we've added a [history of WACD presidents since 1942](#) (Members page under the History tab) but we could use your help connecting names to conservation districts. Please [let us know](#) where we can fill in some gaps. Remembering those who came before us honors their contributions and helps us to remember we are part of a much larger community that exists in support of conservation districts and the people they serve.



Recent news from NACD

- [NACD announces transition to virtual annual meeting format for 2021](#)
- [NACD Statement on Gray Wolf Delisting](#) | NACD
- [California districts team up to create a statewide forestry committee](#)

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. Especially interesting items are marked with a star:



Conservation Community

- **Podcasts!** [Palouse Pulse Podcast](#) | Palouse CD **AND** [Rocks to Roots Podcast](#) | Spokane CD
- [New Rule Makes Enhancements to Environmental Quality Incentives Program](#) | NRCS
- [NACD Announces Launch of District Grants Application Period](#) | NACD **AND** [NACD announces launch of district grants application period](#) | hpj.com
- [National Conservation Foundation announces new logo and fall fundraising campaign](#)

- [Call for Nominations: Olin Sims Conservation Leadership Award](#) (due by October 23)
- Jobs: [Skagit CD seeks a Forester](#)
- Jobs: [Multiple opportunities to join the Palouse CD!](#)
- Job: [Clark CD Seeks Livestock Conservation Planner](#)
- Job: [Skagit CD Seeks ACEP Liaison Project Position](#)
- Job: [Thurston CD Seeks Habitat Specialist](#)
- Job: [Jefferson County CD Seeks District Manager](#)
- Job: [Area Foresters, Puget Sound region](#) **AND** Job: [Area Forester and Forest Stewardship Program Coordinator](#)
- Job: [Riparian Habitat Stewardship Coordinator, King Conservation District \(Renton, WA\)](#)

Agriculture / Food

- ★ [Washington health board moves ahead with manure rule](#) | capitalpress.com
- [2019 ARC, PLC payments out; sign-ups for 2021 now open](#) | WAWG
- [Washington Supreme Court: Farmworkers to get overtime pay](#) | AP News
- [A Handy Guide to the Most Popular Apple Varieties and Their Uses](#) | The Daily Meal
- [Alternative Farming Systems Information Center](#) | NAL | USDA
- [Regenerative grazing: Land restoration, one paddock at a time](#) | capitalpress.com

Climate / Weather

- ★ [Looking Forward And Backward: A La Niña Winter And Dry Conditions That Fueled Northwest Fires](#) | Northwest Public Broadcasting
- [Soils offer solution to climate change, expert says](#) | capitalpress.com

COVID / Health

- [Two-week Okanogan County COVID incident rate continues climb](#) | Okanogan Valley Gazette-Tribune
- [Washington tops 1,000 new coronavirus cases in single day for first time since July](#) | king5.com
- [US coronavirus cases break global daily record, and experts warn it will only get worse](#) | CNN
- [State leaders facing 2nd wave resist steps to curb virus](#) | AP News
- [Coronavirus task force warns new Covid-19 cases are increasing 'exponentially' in weekly state reports](#) | CNNPolitics
- [The 'dose' of coronavirus a person gets may determine how sick they get; masks could help](#) | CNN

Endangered species

- [10-29-20 NACD STATEMENT ON GRAY WOLF DELISTING](#) | BARN OnAir & OnLine 24/7/365

- [Washington to manage wolves within borders after fed action](#) | Tri-City Herald

Diversity / Equity / Inclusion

- ★ [2012 Race, Ethnicity and Gender Profiles](#) | 2012 Census of Agriculture | USDA/NASS (or [jump straight to the Washington State data](#))
- [Hoh Tribe partners with SpaceX to get online, but rural demand remains high](#) | Crosscut
- [Healthy Soils Healthy Communities](#) — Soil and Shadow

Fire

- [Investigate West: Nearly 1 million Washington homes are at risk from wildfires; here's why we're not winning the fire fight](#) | The Spokesman-Review (Thank you to Lee Hemmer for this link!)
- [Washington Prescribed Fire Council](#)
- [Land Managers Can't Burn the West Fast Enough](#) | Route Fifty

Fish

- ★ [Study finds salmon survival rates same with, without dams](#) | capitalpress.com
- ★ [New research reveals flawed approach to salmon recovery programs](#) | WAWG
- [Fishing group goes to court over Washington state salmon management](#) | The Seattle Times

Governance

- [Guide to unauditible governments: October 2020 update](#) | Office of the Washington State Auditor

Health

- [What Are "Awe Walks?"](#) | Psychology Today
- [These three words are the secret to life, according to Alan Alda](#) | Considerable
- [Is It Possible to Be Too Much of a Positive Thinker?](#) | Psychology Today

Invasives

- [Like Movie Alien Pods, Murder Hornets are Extracted](#) [VIDEO] | 1027 KORD

Management / Leadership

- [What is KAIZEN™](#) | Kaizen.com
- [Kaizen - Gaining the Benefits of Continuous Improvement](#) | Mind Tools
- [Kaizen Creates a Culture of Continuous Improvement](#) | Lean Production
- [What it Takes to Lead Through an Era of Exponential Change](#) | HBR
- [How Antagonism Unfolds as a Trait of Narcissism](#) | Psychology Today

Water

- ★ [Washington state prepares to adjudicate Lake Roosevelt water rights](#) | capitalpress.com

Partners and Publications

*This content has been moved to the WACD ["For Members" page](#) for the sake of brevity. Use the password **password removed** to access the Members page.*

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