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Washington Association of Conservation Districts

Five Things to Know

January 7, 2021: Welcome to the new year!



Help us to know what you want!

We would appreciate your help in understanding what is most important to you in the 5 Things newsletter. Is it too long? Too short? [Please take a few minutes to answer nine survey questions!](#) It's anonymous so your forthright responses will be most helpful.

1. WACD scholarships to NACD annual conference

WACD will cover the registration to the NACD Annual Meeting for one district supervisor from each of our 45 conservation districts!

To take advantage of this, your district needs to send the name of the board supervisor and his/her email address to [Ryan Baye](#) by January 22nd.

For more information about the NACD annual conference, visit NACD's conference website (<https://events.bizzabo.com/NACD/home>).

Potential conference highlights include: a presentation in part by **Laura Johnson** on district

communications, a session hosted by **Pierce CD** on two of their projects (Floodplains by Design and a new carbon credit program), and the inauguration of NACD President-Elect **Michael Crowder**.

2. Winter harvest going strong at the WACD PMC

As of January 6th the PMC is on schedule, having harvested and processed 631,000 plants. The crew has been lifting and processing over 30,000 plants per day on average which is what we typically shoot for, but this is not a typical year. The processing line has been reconfigured to allow for 6' spacing between work stations which resulted in the elimination of two much-needed stations, so a side table was added. We weren't sure if this would noticeably reduce the production rate but we seem to be holding our own. One area that is running behind schedule is shipping. So far, the PMC has shipped 207,000 plants. The reason that shipping is slower this year is that customers are not requesting as many plants for earlier in the season. The total quantity of plants to ship this year will probably be comparable to recent years, which means there are going to be a lot of plants being shipped later in the season, which could create a backlog.

3. Viewing 2021 legislative updates by WACD

During session, WACD prepares weekly legislative updates for the benefits of our membership interested in Olympia activities during legislative sessions. These are written on Mondays, looking at the legislative activity from the week just passed and what we expect in the week ahead.

This year, we will not be emailing out those updates. Instead, they will be posted on the Members page of the WACD website, under the [Budget/Legislative Tab](#). Please [contact WACD staff](#) if you do not have current access to that portion of our website.

4. Keep us informed for maximum effect

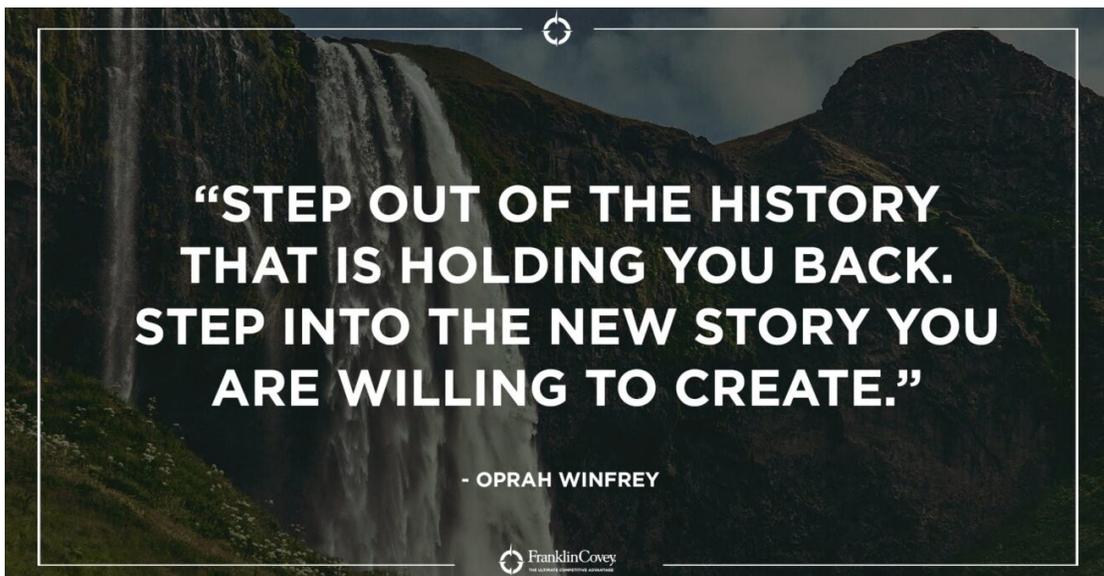
Please keep WACD in the loop when you share an issue with your representatives and senators.

We recently learned of a situation in a conservation district where the district is engaging with a state senator. Our lobbyist and your WACD Executive Office staff have conversations with our elected officials frequently. It never works out well when we are surprised to hear of a district issue from a representative or senator. It erodes our credibility and makes your district look like it is working in isolation. We can best help your cause if you keep us informed!

5. Coming up

A few notable events/meetings are just around the corner!

- January 11: [Legislative session begins](#)
 - January 18 meeting: [WACD Board of Directors work session](#)
 - January 21 meeting: [WSCC regular meeting](#)
 - January 21 webinar: [Contagious Culture, Contagious YOU](#). Sponsored by NCDEA. Use "National Conservation District Employees Association" as your organization when registering. *"Your success and influence as a professional depends upon your ability to relate to others, to create impact with your clients and team, and in being an inspiring authentic human to be with. It's the quality of your presence that ultimately determines your ability to succeed -- your presence is your impact, and for good or bad, you are contagious."*
 - February 1-10 meeting: [NACD 75th Annual Meeting](#)
 - February 8 meeting: [SoilCon: Washington Soil Health Week](#)
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What is phishing and what to do

Despite it being the middle of winter, “phishing” is on the rise. These are emails appearing to be from people or organizations you know and trust. They can even send text messages claiming to be from someone you trust who’s “borrowing a phone”.

These emails trick your email system into showing false information, that an email from x7k73as@gmail.com is from a trusted individual like “Ryan Baye.” They will ask for personal information, or ask you to purchase gift cards, or to open a file attached to the email. They create a sense of urgency so you don’t think about the peculiarities of the request, or they encourage you not to contact the supposed sender because it is time sensitive.

It should go without saying that you should NOT provide that information or purchase gift cards or open the file! It should, but many of us have fallen for these requests, and the senders are getting more clever in how they personalize the message to make it seem real.

Fortunately, these scammers cannot hide their real email. When something doesn’t look right, you should always immediately check what email account is actually sending you this message. When in doubt, trust your instincts. [See an example of what to look for here.](#)

Executive Corner

Dear weblinx,

(Please note that I wrote this before the events of yesterday, January 6, 2021. And my first thought was: given the context of what we just witnessed, this is no longer appropriate. But after sleeping on it overnight, I think it is more appropriate than ever so here it is, as written early in the week!)

Let's start 2021 with a little love.

If you love food and fiber production, you love conservation districts. If you love clean water, healthy soil, great habitat, and abundant fish and wildlife, you love conservation districts. If you just love to get out of the city and drive through open country nearby, you love conservation districts. If you love local, you love conservation districts.

There is a lot to love about conservation districts. Consider that with more than 7.6 million people in

Washington State, each district serves, on average, more than 169,000 people. Of course, this average is influenced by the population differences across our great state, including our most populated county (King at 4,195,502 people) and our least populated county (Garfield at 2,230 people).

Also consider that Washington State has 35,600 farm operations on 14,600,000 acres of land. On average, each conservation district has 791 farms operating on 324,444 acres.

These numbers don't include forest land, so let's talk about that. Washington State has a total of 22,174,177 acres of forest land, and 6,510,000 acres are classed as non-industrial private forest. Think about the more than 14 million acres of farm land and the more than 6 million acres of non-industrial private forest.

Our 45 conservation districts are constantly assisting people that work more than 20 million acres of land. Considering that there are 45.672 million acres of land in all of Washington State, it is clear that leading and working for a conservation district is incredibly important.

Are you feeling the love yet?

What do conservation districts do on those millions of acres? They work to address:

- Water quality
- Soil quality
- Air quality
- Habitat for native species
- Invasive species
- Working lands and open area loss
- Interface area changes such as conversion to small acreage operations and homes in forests
- Energy use

Local conservation districts present the best form of local government where people choose to work with their conservation district. Local folks help to shape programs and services and to implement conservation practices. Our conservation districts are not regulatory. Conservation districts call their customers "cooperators" because that's how they work with people and partners: cooperatively, collaboratively, creatively, and compassionately.

That is exactly the kind of local government I want and it is already here in the form of locally-led conservation districts.

Yes, there is a lot to love about our conservation districts. Just like the people they serve, they are persistent and practical in their efforts to address natural resource concerns. They are just like the people they serve because they are governed and staffed by people connected to local land and water issues. Conservation districts understand local issues because they are an integral part of communities all across the State of Washington.

I deeply appreciate the role of conservation districts and the tremendous people who govern, staff, and assist them. I'm feeling the love and I hope you are, too!

I'll close by quoting a conservation district board chair who recently closed their regular meeting with these wonderful words: *"Let's work together and honor each other!"*

Best always,

Tom Salzer, Executive Director
exec@wadistricts.org



As we begin to work on updating our five-year summary of adopted resolutions and the status of each, we begin with an updated list of all such resolutions.

We will work on updating the status of each during January. Download the five-year summary in PDF format from the [Resolutions page](#). Once we finish updating the status of each resolution, we'll post that information to the Members page under the Resolutions tab.

We need you on Slack!

Slack stands for *Searchable Log of All Communication and Knowledge*. The Slack account exists to promote conservation community success in Washington State by facilitating communication and the exchange of information. [Contact Tom for an invitation](#). We would love to see you there!



More from the WACD Plant Materials Center

COVID-19 Update – All of the staff and crew at the PMC are currently healthy and nobody is in quarantine because of a positive COVID test, including household members. This is very good news since there was concern of being affected by a projected holiday surge in the virus.

All due precautions are continuing and will remain in effect until advised to do otherwise. That could be a while given the pace of the roll out of the vaccines. Most or all of the folks at the PMC are probably in the phase 4 group so it is going to be a while. Hopefully we can continue to remain healthy until then. The rate of new infections in Skagit County has eased a bit in recent days to less than 20 per day.

December Financials – The financial reports ending December 31, 2020 have just been completed. The PMC is on track in most categories. Revenue is similar to where it was this time last year, as are total expenses. Some expenses are a little higher such as seasonal labor; it is \$14,000 more than last year which is a 12% increase, and can be attributed to the 12% increase in minimum wage last January. Staff wages are also up 9.5% due to COLA's and merit increases.

Sales – There is not a new sales report this week to review but new sales continue to come in and they should be similar to this time last year, which was a record setting year. There should be an updated sales report next week. One thing it will probably show is that the number of orders has increased but that the average size for each order is less. More smaller orders are welcome since the price per plant increases with smaller quantities. The problem is there are only so many orders that can be filled per day and an increase in the number of orders could result in longer wait times for the order to be ready. We will do what is needed to contain those times.

Life Goes On – Every year is different around here, particularly with plant growth. Seemingly insignificant variations in the weather can cause significant changes. The weather in December was wet, blustery and chilly. We received 3.71" of rain in the month and the average temperature was 42° F, but there were not any freezing temps. The low for the month was 37°. And that has caused some of the plants that typically leaf out early to begin bud swell (see photos). The bud swell we are seeing is not alarming at this time. Cooler weather lays ahead which will cause bud swell to slow down. It is something to monitor however in case things start leafing out and then it gets really cold. If it looks

like that may happen then we will start processing more to get them in the cooler and out of harm's way.



Indian Plum



Red Elderberry

More from the WACD Executive Office

Envirothon raised \$\$\$ – A big thank you to all of the folks who participated in the Envirothon auction. Envirothon raised \$1,890 this year through their online auction!

NE and SE Area Directors – There are two vacancies for Area Director positions, in our Northeast Area and Southeast Area. These individuals represent regional interests among WACD's state leadership and help communicate information both to and from their local member-districts. If you are interested in serving, please contact WACD staff, current NE Area Director Jeff Schibel, or SE Area Director Mary Collins.



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!](#)

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.

Our conservation community

- [USDA Seeks Members for Advisory Committee on Urban Agriculture](#) | NRCS
- Jobs: [NRCS seeks to fill four direct hire positions](#) (Soil Conservation Technician, Engineering Technician, Soil Scientist, Forester)
- Job: [Washington Department of Agriculture seeks Soil Health Scientist](#)
- Job: [King CD seeking Senior Director of Stewardship Programs](#)
- Job: [Columbia CD Seeks District Manager](#)
- Job: [Walla Walla County CD seeks Project Manager for Restoration Projects](#)
- Job: [King CD seeks Ag Drainage Coordinator](#) (PDF)
- Job: [Asotin County CD seeks Archaeologist - Cultural Resource Specialist](#)
- Job: [Palouse seeks Grants and Development Manager](#)
- Job: [Jefferson County CD Seeks District Manager](#)
- Job: [Riparian Habitat Stewardship Coordinator, King Conservation District \(Renton, WA\)](#)

Agriculture / Food

- WASHINGTON: [Senator puts Washington meat inspections on table](#) | capitalpress.com
- NATIONAL: [Schrier bill aims to reduce methane emissions in "cow burps"](#) | Washington State Wire
- NATIONAL: [Federal checks salvage otherwise dreadful 2020 for US farms](#) | AP News
- WORLD: [As fertilizers spread worldwide, researchers find herbivores can't keep up with excess grasses](#) | Star Tribune

Budget / Legislature

- [Five things to know about Washington's 2021 legislative session](#) | NW News Network
- [10 steps for a successful \(virtual\) legislative session](#) | AWC
- [2021 Legislative Sessions Expected to be Unprecedented in Several Ways](#) | KOHO 101.1
- [2021 Legislative Session goes almost entirely virtual](#) | WAWG
- [A few notable prefiled bills](#) | Washington State Wire - *One of those bills relates to the Growth Management Act and interestingly, the UW Center for Livable Communities just published a GMA-related document:*
 - [Billig and Salomon legislation would change effective date of growth planning actions under the GMA](#) | Washington State Wire
- [Updating Washington's Growth Policy Framework](#) | Center for Livable Communities
- [Washington House releases remote legislative session plan for 2021](#) | Q13Fox

Climate / Weather

- OREGON: [Forest carbon offsets expand: good for landowners, bad for mills](#) | capitalpress.com

COVID / Pandemic

- [Inslee announces new phased regional approach to reopen Washington amid coronavirus pandemic](#) | Seattle PI
- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Governor's Proclamations and State Guidance](#) | MRSC
- [Vaccine Information](#) | Washington State Department of Health
- [Washington has the third-lowest COVID-19 spread in US](#) | Seattle PI
- [Washington state way behind expectations on COVID-19 vaccinations](#) | OPB

Diversity / Equity / Inclusion

- [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion 101 \(with Richemont's Doug Melville\)](#) | HBR

Fire

- [Despite What The Logging Industry Says, Cutting Down Trees Isn't Stopping Catastrophic Wildfires](#) | Northwest Public Broadcasting

Geology

- [Podcast | How Mount Rainier will tell us when it's going to blow](#) | Crosscut

Health

- [The One Thing That Most Impacts Your Ability to Make a Decision \(According to Science\)](#) | Thrive Global

Invasives

- [Native Species or Invasive? The Distinction Blurs as the World Warms](#) | Yale E360

Management / Leadership / Governance

- [How to be a successful remote employee](#) | Quartz at Work
- [Self-improvement strategies to become a better leader](#) | Fast Company
- [The "Three Times Rule" for Starting Difficult Conversations](#) | Psychology Today
- [Study: Liberals are prone to chronic second guessing, while conservatives tend to go with their gut](#) | PsyPost
- [Productivity Is About Your Systems, Not Your People](#) | HBR
- [Manager and Employee Feedback Examples: How to Give Feedback at Work](#) | The Leapsome Blog
- [New year questions for team leaders](#) | Management Issues

Soil

- February 8 meeting: [SoilCon: Washington Soil Health Week](#)

Technology / Information Technology

- [10 Different Types of Malware Attack and How to Avoid them](#) | Cyber Security News
- [Scam alert: PayPal account 'limited,' phishing text claims](#) | Komando.com
- [FBI Warn Hackers are Using Hijacked Home Security Devices](#) | Cyber Security News

WSU

- [Ever wonder why WSU's famed Cougar Gold is called Cougar Gold?](#) | 24-7 Sports

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