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Five Things to Know

January 28, 2021: Today is [Data Privacy Day](#)

1. New bills of interest

With the first legislative hurdle less than three weeks away, the legislation introduced this week may be the last large batch of policy bills introduced during this virtual session. Looking at the current collection of legislation relevant to WACD reminds us of a fish tank: a few big fish like [SB 5373](#) (*instituting a tax on greenhouse gas emissions*) and [HB 1395](#) (*concerning equity in farming*) along with several relatively smaller legislative fish like [SB 5342](#) (*concerning irrigation district elections*) and [SB 5372](#) (*creating a hemp processor registration process*).

On a more serious note, WACD will be closely monitoring [HB 1385](#) (*limiting transfers of water rights out of their original water resource inventory area*). Not only does WACD have a resolution on the books addressing this topic, but conservation districts in NE Washington are among those who could be impacted. At this time, neither CDs nor the Commission are included in the bill's language but are among the stakeholders involved.

This week, WACD supported [SB 5220](#) that would *exempt salmon recovery grants from taxation*. We also supported [HB 1168](#) (*concerning long-term forest health and the reduction of wildfire dangers*), a DNR bill where we worked behind the scenes to get conservation districts named in two places.

Download our [Week 3 New Bills of Interest](#) summary. Members can access information on the [Members page](#) under the Legislation tab (password: **password removed**).

2. 5 Things survey results

Thank you to those who responded to our recent survey about WACD's weekly 5 Things newsletter. We are shortening the newsletter but also providing extended content on the website, with links to that content in the newsletter. We'll keep the frequency at weekly. Survey results are posted at <https://wadistricts.org/2021/01/results-of-the-5-things-newsletter-survey> and you can also see the charts at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-8SJXZ7B57/>.

In keeping with the survey results, this week the Plant Materials Center report is moved to a full web post available at <https://wadistricts.org/2021/01/plant-materials-center-update-january-28-2021>. We've consolidated all other PMC and Executive Office items into one small block found below.

3. WACD Legislative Week on the horizon

In years past, conservation districts braved the snow and traffic to come to Olympia for a

Legislative Day. This year, as we adjust to a virtual legislative session, WACD has set February 8-12 as WACD Legislative Week.

If you are interested in assistance from WACD in scheduling your legislative appointments, please contact Ryan Baye at rbaye@wadistricts.org.

4. DEI and Elections committees

Resolutions 2020-05 and 2020-06 call for a committee to be formed about diversity, equity, and inclusion. On Monday, the WACD Board of Directors discussed criteria for filling a DEI group to ensure representation from all area associations and to include people with diverse backgrounds. Stay tuned for an announcement from WACD President Jeanette Dorner as we get this effort off the ground.

In December, the Conservation Commission passed a motion calling for a joint committee appointed by the Commission and by WACD about conservation district elections. This topic was discussed at last Monday's January Conservation Commission meeting. Resolution 2020-10 also addressed this matter. Again, please stay tuned for more information.

5. Coming up

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

- February 1-10 meeting: [NACD 75th Annual Meeting](#)
- February 3, 2:30 to 4:30 Pacific : Pacific Region Meeting at NACD Annual Meeting
- February 8 meeting: [SoilCon: Washington Soil Health Week](#)
- February 8-12: WACD Legislative Week (stay tuned for more information)
- February 15 meeting: WACD Board of Directors regular meeting

Executive Corner

Dear weblinx,

When someone says or does something that is not aligned with your value set, what do you do? [Do you speak up](#) (possibly before thinking about the words that may emerge) and risk escalating the situation? Or [do you say nothing](#) and, through your silence, risk affirming or reinforcing the behavior?

I'm sure that we've all experienced that moment where frustration or outrage bubbles up and threatens to overwhelm your ability to really hear and understand the other person's point of view. I tend to feel emotions much more strongly than most people may realize. An almost daily challenge for me is to make myself pause and reflect instead of reacting emotionally at that moment.

Moving toward a more effective approach to working together means pausing to truly understand what the other party is saying. Others won't hear you until they feel they have been heard, and to hear them, one must stop, set aside the swirling thoughts in your mind, and focus intently and intentionally on what is being expressed. This act of careful listening functions on two levels: the actual words being said, and the content that is not being said with words. Body language, motivations that underly particular points of view, and unstated inherent biases also drive content that exists outside of just the words we use.

Who am I speaking to with these comments? I'm really capturing my own reflections about myself and sharing them because someone may find my own struggles useful. Daily, I remind myself of Stephen R. Covey's [Habit 5: Seek First to Understand, Then to be Understood](#). Whenever I forget this, things don't go the way I expect them to go!

This theme of reacting versus responding touches on several concerns, including:

- Validating the person speaking, even when we don't agree with what they are saying.
- Hearing the person without judging, listening without labeling.
- Showing empathy, being considerate, showing respect.
- Understanding our own inherent biases, being in touch with our own feelings and emotional drivers.
- Seeking positive outcomes for all.

These links expand on these thoughts for those who wish to explore reacting vs. responding:

- <https://kgdiversity.com/a-blueprint-for-transforming-reactions-vs-responses/>
- <https://www.nami.org/Blogs/NAMI-Blog/December-2018/Please-Don-t-React-Respond>
- <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/focus-forgiveness/201609/react-vs-respond>
- <https://www.management-issues.com/connected/7257/reacting-vs-responding/>
- <https://zenhabits.net/respond/>

What I've written so far is from the perspective of one human who wants to do a better job responding. What if you're the [person who feels disrespected](#), devalued, unheard, and you are in an emotional frame of mind? The same ideas apply: pause, listen to the other person instead of to the drumbeat in your mind, try to understand what is truly being said, and then pause again to think so that you can respond thoughtfully instead of reacting emotionally. You may not realize that the other person didn't mean what you think you heard. Finding common ground requires that the people involved be able to hear and understand each other.

Let me close by saying that I know how hard it can be to pause, take a deep breath, count to ten, etc. When someone pushes your buttons, [reacting emotionally is part of our DNA](#). People push my buttons every day, sometimes on purpose, sometimes unintentionally. My daily challenge is thinking through a response instead of reacting in the heat of that moment. I try to keep my eyes on the horizon and remember some of the important long-term outcomes for our Association: stronger relationships, a better understanding of each other, more engagement, and more effective pathways forward.

Here's the last link in this missive. If you read no other link, try this one. It provides a succinct set of steps to help you respond thoughtfully instead of reacting emotionally:

- <https://www.inc.com/justin-bariso/7-simple-strategies-that-will-help-you-manage-your-emotions.html>

Slowing down and pausing after someone speaks would be an effective habit to cultivate throughout our community. Giving them time to complete their thought and giving yourself time to think about what you heard will undoubtedly result in better communication. That's a habit I am trying to grow in my own behaviors.

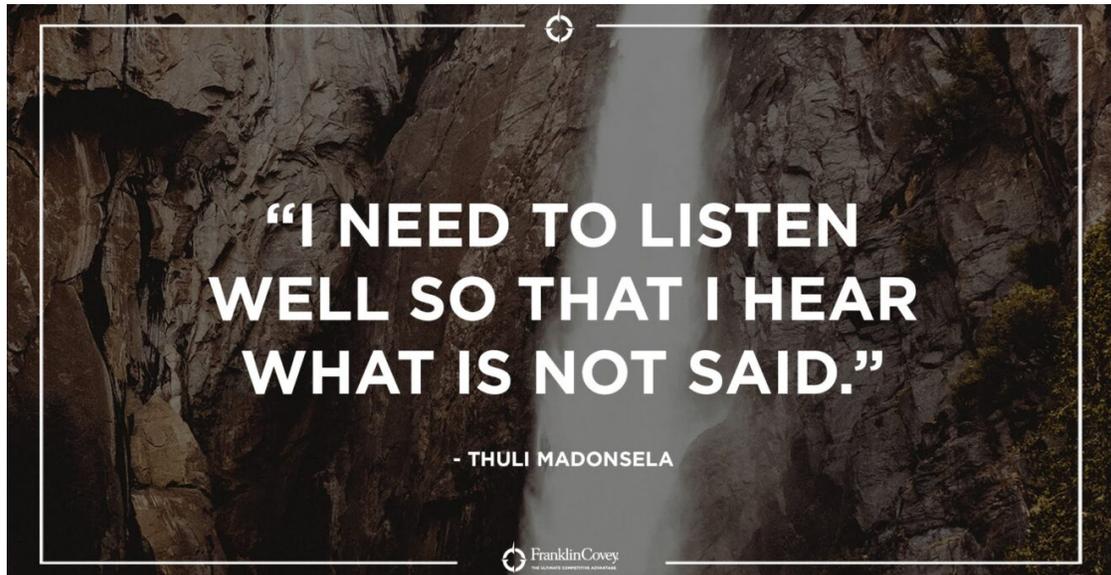
As always, I appreciate your thoughts, so do feel free to respond!

Thank you,

Tom Salzer, Executive Director

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More from WACD

- WACD Executive Office staff will be busy February 1-10 with the NACD annual meeting, but we remain available to our members for questions and assistance.
- Read the weekly [Plant Materials Center report for January 28, 2021](#).
- View the [current WACD Reading List](#).
- If you aren't yet a Friend of NACD, considering learning more and contributing to that worthy program at <https://www.nacdnet.org/get-involved/friends-of-nacd/>. Your support helps to provide [grants to conservation districts](#).
- Speaking of NACD, don't forget to visit their National Conservation Foundation [online auction](#). WACD contributed four items (#62, #63, #64, and #65):
 - [Deluxe Frasier River Salmon Gift Pack](#)
 - [Willapa Valley Lavender Farm Love Spa Box](#)
 - [Hand Warmer Mug](#)
 - [Bunnies By The Bay - Camp Cricket set](#)

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