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Washington Association of Conservation Districts

The 5 Things for March 18, 2021

Dear weblinx,

It has been another eventful week for your state association of conservation districts.

Today is the **67th day of the 105-day legislative session**. We are more than halfway through. The March revenue forecast has been published so budget writers finally have the figures they need to work on final budgets. Revenue projections look stronger than expected (see [State revenues projected to have returned to pre-pandemic levels - Washington State Wire](#)). To paraphrase a colloquial phrase, this is where things get real. That point is especially important because so many bills included a null-and-void clause which negates the intent of the bills if they aren't funded.

Meanwhile, the **WACD Legislative Week** has been underway. Dozens of supportive conversations were held with legislators. Simultaneously, we are preparing for the **NACD virtual advocacy week** that is coming up quickly.

On the federal level, President Biden signed the [\\$1.9-trillion COVID-19 Relief bill](#). The impact of that on Washington State is both known and unknown. We know that Washington State will receive some relief funds. We don't yet know how those funds will be allocated. Ryan's [Legislative Flavor](#) post touches on this.

While harvest season at the **WACD Plant Materials Center** has come to a close, conservation district plant sales are going strong. Please do reach out to [our PMC people](#) if you have additional needs.

This week, the **WACD Board of Directors held a work session** and the **Washington State Conservation Commission held a regular meeting**. At the Commission meeting held today, we heard about a couple of **conservation district elections** that will need to be done over (assuming that the appropriate Superior Court so orders). We did expect some hiccups as we moved to every conservation district holding an election simply because our districts have not had to run an election every year. Some of our members may be out of practice with running district elections.

You may have heard of the [National Conservation Planning Partnership](#), also known as the NCPP. We participated in a meeting last week of key folks in Washington State. One conclusion was that to maintain progress on improving the capacity and effectiveness of conservation planning, we should have a **Washington Conservation Planning Partnership** (WCPP). That effort is just getting off the ground so stay tuned for more information.

The **Joint Committee on Elections** – a WACD and WSCC cooperative effort – will hold its first meeting next week. WSCC folks will be using GovDelivery to keep you informed and WACD will

capture pertinent information on a [special web page for that committee](#).

WACD continues to interview **DEI facilitators** who may be able to help us meet the charge in Resolution 2020-05 and Resolution 2020-06 to form a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee. We have another interview coming up on Monday.

If you are interested in a range of ideas of interest to conservation districts, we posted plenty of new, interesting links in **WACD's Reading List** at <https://raindrop.io/collection/15979489>.

Next week there is a workshop on "Environmental Justice: Race, Poverty, and the Environment." A few weeks later are a couple of additional workshops. Find them listed in the Events calendar on the Hub home page: <https://hub.wadistricts.org>

Over the past few weeks, I've been reflecting heavily on the amount of labeling of others that I keep hearing. Labels get in the way of seeing individuals for who they really are and the value that they bring. I reflect on this a bit more in my **Executive Corner** column titled [What does success look like?](#)

Always yours for conservation,

Tom Salzer, Executive Director
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5 Things to Know

1. Legislative Flavor

Ryan reprises the high points of the past week in his [Legislative Flavor for March 18](#). Here's a teaser to prompt you to click and read: *The long-anticipated March revenue forecast that we have mentioned ad nauseam over the last month was not the only major budget news received that will impact Olympia's budget negotiations.*

2. Legislative Week concludes

Legislative Week is coming to an end for WACD. We want to thank the conservation districts who spoke with their legislators either during the last seven days (or at any point during this legislative session). Those conversations will help remind the elected officials in Olympia of the importance of your work and what conservation districts are able to accomplish with state funding.

WACD will continue to work behind the scenes and through our lobbyist until the draft legislative budgets are announced in the next few weeks. The rumor is that the draft budgets will be delayed in their release as the federal relief package throw a wrench into budget calculations. Whenever that point comes, we will share those proposals and their impact on districts, as well as any opportunities for additional advocacy from districts that we can identify.

In the meantime, we will leave up the recording of our WACD Legislative Lunch from Monday the 8th ([recorded for those who could not attend](#)) where the Commission outlined their budget packages and WACD provided analysis of this very unusual legislative session. Our legislative materials are also still available for district use ([click here to view](#)).

Thank you again for volunteering your time and energy advocating for conservation districts.

2. Two items about USDA

We received a request from NACD for feedback on how conservation districts experienced USDA administrative functions. Find that at [Feedback sought by NACD about FPAC](#).

We also learned that LincPass update procedures are available and that some people have been having some trouble. There is more on that in [New LincPass process for those with access to USDA computers and applications](#).

4. Climate-smart agriculture

This week, we heard that the preferred phrase in federal-level conversations about soil health, carbon, and climate is becoming "climate-smart farming" or "climate-smart agriculture." Try weaving that phrase in when you chat with your Congressional folks. Learn more about this idea in [USDA Requests Information on USDA's Climate-Smart Agriculture and Forestry Strategy](#).

Additional USDA resources about climate-smart agriculture we found online:

- [Helping Farmers Help the Land Through Climate Smart Farming](#)
- [Defining Climate-Smart Agriculture](#) (PDF)

5. Plant Materials Center update

You know it's spring when you see [load restrictions in eastern Washington](#) in the news! The WACD Plant Materials Center is experiencing spring, too. Energy is shifting from harvest to clean up and prep. Find their report in [Plant Materials Center update: March 18, 2021](#).

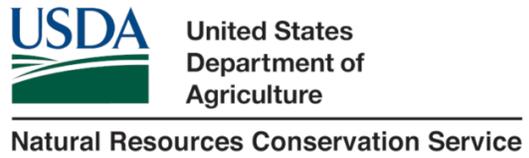
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- [Friends of NACD](#) – Your contributions provide funding for technical assistance grants to conservation districts.
- [Washington Conservation Society](#) – WCS is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization so your contributions are tax-deductible. If you make purchases through Amazon Smile, a portion of your purchases goes to WCS in support of their programs and initiatives.

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