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# Washington Association of Conservation Districts

## 5 Things to Know for December 16, 2021

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### Dear weblinx,

The quarterly District Manager's meeting held this month started with great introductions: name, affiliation, and **what you are looking forward to in 2022**. Washington State has such a great cadre of new and experienced district leaders that 2022 promises to be a fantastic year for conservation districts. It is very exciting to see the level of expertise and the excitement that this key group of people brings to our statewide conservation community!

### 1. Executive Director candidate feedback due by noon Friday, 12/17

The Washington State Conservation Commission would like your feedback on the three finalists for the WSCC Executive Director position. From Lori Gonzalez:

*We'd like to hear from you. Please fill out the Executive Director Feedback Form at this link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DRGYFQ2> by noon on Friday, December 17. There is space to provide feedback for all candidates on one form. All submissions will be treated confidentially and can be submitted anonymously. If you have questions regarding the form, please contact Lori Gonzalez via email at: [lgonzalez@scc.wa.gov](mailto:lgonzalez@scc.wa.gov).*

### 2. Governor announces salmon recovery proposals for 2022

This week, Governor Inslee announced his [salmon recovery proposals for 2022](#). You may have also seen an [article in the Capital Press](#) that identified a mandatory-width buffer approach in the Governor's proposals:

*Washington Gov. Jay Inslee will ask lawmakers to impose mandatory setbacks along waterways to protect salmon, a proposal that could eliminate farmland and stifle rural development. Inslee said Tuesday his plan was the result of two years of talks between his office and tribes...The governor's office has not released the text of the bill. According to a policy brief, the setbacks would be statewide and would be based on the height of trees along banks.*

But...we have not yet seen a detailed bill so we don't know the actual details. We'll have accurate information when it becomes available. In the meantime, our advice is to stay calm and seek to become better informed. It's safe to say: more to come!

### 3. SAVE THE DATE for WACD Legislative Week

We are planning on the **last full week of January** (January 24 through 28) for virtual legislative visits. We believe this time period will be the most effective in conveying key messages from conservation districts to legislators. If you desire WACD's assistance in scheduling remote appointments with your legislators, please contact Ryan Baye at [rbaye@wadistricts.org](mailto:rbaye@wadistricts.org) as soon as possible.

#### 4. Last call for your WACD annual conference feedback

WACD will draw two survey submissions on January 3rd for \$25 gift cards. We'll use your survey feedback to help us improve your experience next year. The survey is anonymous so participating in the gift card drawing is a voluntary opt-in at the end of the survey form. Find the survey at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2021WACDconference>.

Session recordings are available on the annual conference page under the Sessions tab: <https://hub.wadistricts.org/annual/2021meetings/conference/#sessions> ([contact us](#) for the Zoom recording password).

#### 5. NACD annual conference early registration extended

The early bird registration deadline for NACD's 76th Annual Meeting in Orlando, Fla., **has been extended**. If you have not registered already, you can still save \$50 by [registering online](#) through **next Wednesday, Dec. 22**.

NACD's annual meeting will be held at the Hilton Orlando Lake Buena Vista at Disney Springs Resort from **Feb. 12-16, 2022**. Hosted in partnership with the **Association of Florida Conservation Districts**, this year's meeting will focus on the theme, "**Conservation Defined for All**."

Conference registration includes entry into the Conservation Expo, NACD General and Concurrent Sessions, Monday's Leadership Lunch and Live Auction, and NACD Training Sessions and Workshops.

Once you register, don't forget to book your hotel room! The group rate is \$222/night plus tax. To reserve your room, click [here](#), or call 407-827-4000 and identify yourself as a registration with the National Association of Conservation Districts or "NACD." The deadline to reserve rooms is quickly approaching, with a deadline of **Friday, Jan. 21, 2022**.

Check out NACD's [Annual Meeting webpage](#), where you can find all the details on breakout session descriptions, speaker bios, and much more.

### From your Executive Director

#### WACD office schedules

The WACD Plant Materials Center in Bow will be closed on December 24th in observation of Christmas and back in the fields on Monday, December 27th.

The WACD Executive Office in Olympia will be closed the last two weeks of December as our Olympia staff use some accrued vacation time. However, if you have urgent issues, both Ryan and Tom will be checking emails at least every couple of days. The easiest way to reach one or both of us is to email [oly@wacd.org](mailto:oly@wacd.org).

#### Plant Materials Center update

Our amazing year at the WACD Plant Materials Center continues. Current sales are 32% ahead of this time last year. So far this season, 432,000 plants have been harvested. [Read more...](#)

#### Reflection #1

Your WACD Executive Office staff have been gearing up for the 2022 Legislature that convenes on Monday, January 10th. This will be another challenging session and not only because of how

the Legislature will operate under COVID-19 protocols. This time, we expect to see at least one bill on conservation district elections plus legislation about mandatory riparian buffer widths.

The conservation district elections legislation will be tracked closely by Washington State Conservation Commission staff and by WACD. By working together through the Joint Committee on Elections in calendar year 2021, WSCC and WACD can effectively present a united face and leverage the good work of the Committee.

Regarding mandatory riparian buffer widths, WACD will probably be focusing on the effectiveness of voluntary implementation. There seems to be an undercurrent in some agencies that voluntary conservation doesn't really work. I have a feeling that we'll see this come up as more regulatory approaches are proposed. We're already seeing an increase in Administrative Orders issued by the Department of Ecology in some areas. A few districts report that Ecology staff are acting as if the Livestock Riparian Water Policy has already been changed. These are just a few indicators of what may be an increasing focus on regulation as a way to protect water, habitats, and species.

What I'm leading up to is this: we will be facing some unique opportunities to educate legislators (new and experienced) on the value of our voluntary, incentive-based conservation delivery system. This is a significant moment that may well affect the future of conservation districts and how they are able to deliver services to constituents. WACD will be asking for your help as some issues crystallize during the 2022 legislative session.

## Reflection #2

WACD voting members approved a change in WACD bylaws that I am particularly pleased about. Which one? The one that says that all 45 conservation districts are members of WACD. You may have thought this was already the case but prior to the November 30th annual business meeting, we had only two classifications: conservation districts that had paid their annual dues were WACD members, and those that were not paid up were not members.

One of the most important things that WACD does for conservation districts is to represent you with agencies and with legislators. We retain a professional lobbyist to help us in this work. It is important that we are able to say that we represent all of the 45 conservation districts formed under RCW 89.08 and now we can. The work we do in seeking more district funding and on legislation affects all conservation districts, not just the ones who paid their dues.

This means that if your conservation district has a tough year and can't pay dues, WACD will still represent you. We'll still report to you. You'll still be an important part of our family of members. Of course, we do need your support (including dues) but no matter what, we'll be there for you. It feels very good to finally be able to say that!

## Weekly thoughts

As we begin to think about working with partners and legislators on key issues, I hope you enjoy these two quotations!

***"When we begin to see our differences as opportunities rather than threats, then we can work together."*** – Bidemi Mark-Mordi

***"Don't alienate the legislature on Day 1."*** – Andrew Cuomo

Yours in conservation,

Tom Salzer, Executive Director  
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## Recent Posts on the Hub

- [Plant Materials Center update: December 16, 2021](#)
- [West Sound Habitat Restoration Project Manager | Mid Sound Fisheries Enhancement Group](#)
- [Inlee to push for mandatory riparian buffers | capitalpress.com](#)
- [Bright Future Fund microgrants to farmers | AFT](#)
- [New Snowpack and Precipitation Normals Now Available | USDA](#)
- [Fridays on the Farm: Restoring Habitat in the Pacific Northwest | Farmers.gov](#)
- [DNR Opens Applications for Largest Urban and Community Forestry Grant Funding Cycle in Agency History](#)
- [Feedback Isn't Enough to Help Your Employees Grow | HBR](#)
- [Plant Materials Center update: December 9, 2021](#)
- [2021 resolutions now available in summary form](#)

See the full list of Recent Posts at <https://hub.wadistricts.org/posts/>. Also see the articles WACD staff are reading at <https://hub.wadistricts.org/resources/wacd-reading-list/>.

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## Partners are important!

Find our list of partners at <https://hub.wadistricts.org/wacd/partners-sponsors/partners/>.

- [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.

## We appreciate our great sponsors

Many thanks to our generous sponsors for helping us support Washington State's conservation districts. We will be updating our sponsor list in December! Until then, find sponsors on the Conference page: <https://hub.wadistricts.org/annual/2021meetings/conference/#sponsors>



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