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Washington Association of Conservation Districts

5 Things to Know for January 13, 2022

Legislative Alert

[In today's Legislative Alert](#), we touch on these bills:

- House Bill 1856 - Adding counties to the voluntary stewardship program
- House Bill 1838 - Protecting, restoring, and maintaining habitat for salmon recovery
- House Bill 1910 - Concerning conservation district elections

We also provide updates on:

- House Bill 1631 - Supporting Washington's food production system by providing technical assistance in support of improved voluntary environmental stewardship
- House Bill 1652 - Concerning conservation district elections

Coming up:

- 1/18/22 - Committee vote on House Bill 1631
 - 1/19/22 - Public hearing on House Bill 1838
-

Dear weblinx,

The 2022 legislative session convened on Monday, January 10. Even before that, the pace of work for your WACD Executive Office staff was accelerating. This week we signed in in support of two bills and coordinated testimony for HB 1652 on conservation district elections. We also worked with partners and our lobbyist, worked on legislative alerts and information, and assembled materials for next Monday's Board of Directors meeting. It's a busy time!

Please remember that anything can happen during legislative session. While WACD and our partners are going to be carefully monitoring legislation and talking about what we support or don't support, the most important element is you. Legislators tend to give great weight to people they know from their district. If you have not yet made yourself known to your elected officials, it's not too late. As the Nike commercials used to say: just do it!

1. Legislative watch list launched along with alerts and mailing list

Watch list – Have you wanted a summary of the bills that WACD is watching on behalf of conservation districts and what WACD's position is on each bill? To meet this need, we launched a legislative watch list last week. Think of it as the hot list of key bills to be aware of.

During legislative session, the watch list will be linked in the main menu bar for the WACD Hub. The direct link is: <https://hub.wadistricts.org/wacd/advocacy/watch-list-2022/>

Legislative alerts – We also began posting legislative alerts last week to help members remain aware of the most urgent issues and needs regarding specific bills. The most recent alerts are shown near the top of the [Hub home page](#).

Legislative updates by email – For those who want to receive legislative information by email, we've also opened a subscription form for legislative updates. We recognize that not everyone wants to receive legislative information, so we'll be focusing more content in an emailed legislative update for those who wish to receive it. Ryan Baye is handling this for our members and partners. Subscribe at <https://hub.wadistricts.org/resources/newsletters/legislative/>.

2. Legislative Briefing and Legislative Week

WACD will hold a legislative briefing on Friday, January 14 for interested members and partners. Please contact Ryan Baye (rbaye@wadistricts.org) if you need the Zoom connection information.

This year, Legislative Week (translation: coordinated virtual visits with legislators) will be held from January 24 through 28. This week was selected because it comes before the cutoff date for policy bills. We believe this time period will be the most effective in conveying key messages from conservation districts to legislators. Please contact Ryan Baye at rbaye@wadistricts.org for more information.

3. WACD and WSCC meetings next week

The WACD Board of Directors meets at 6:00 pm on Monday, January 17, 2022. This will be an entirely online (virtual) meeting. The draft agenda is available on the [Board Meetings page](#).

The Washington State Conservation Commission meets at 8:30 am on Thursday, January 20, 2022. The meeting will be conducted virtually. Find the draft agenda and meeting materials on the [Commission Meetings page](#).

4. Plant Materials Center update

The WACD Plant Materials Center has survived freezes, snow, and drenching rain. Harvest of dormant stakes and conifer seedlings is occurring now. The update this week also features positive information about revenues as compared to this time a year ago. WACD is thankful to have this asset that is being operated well by our people.

5. After 32+ years Duane Bartels retires from the Pomeroy CD

We extend our appreciation to Duane Bartels for more than 32 years of service to conservation and community. If you've been in our statewide community for a few years or more, you've encountered Duane. He did not want a big deal to be made of this but we could not let this go without recognizing his contributions and time in service.

This past year or so has been a time of transition for many conservation districts as supervisors and employees have transitioned out of service. We extend our congratulations and appreciation to all who have served and send out a warm welcome to all who have joined our community.

From your Executive Director

A simpler, less divisive approach to DEI?

With the massive amount of work currently on WACD's plate, we don't have much time to write a long treatise about how we'll move forward on diversity, equity, and inclusion. Instead, in this space, I am sharing an approach to help us move forward in a way that respects your local conservation district and community.

This year, I would like to avoid using the abbreviation "DEI." It seems like whenever that abbreviation is used, it triggers polarized views and passionate exchanges on this topic. Civility has suffered as a result and many members have shared their pain at how divisive this topic was in 2021. A more pragmatic approach that seems less inflammatory is to simply consider how each of us could reach more people in the communities we serve.

On the most practical level, sharing what a conservation district is with more people means broader support and engagement from community members. This goes along with the simple definition of underserved that I heard Supervisor Albert Roberts express: *underserved means people we haven't served yet!*

This reminds me of something I heard a conservation district supervisor say a few decades ago to his board, and it went something like this: *"If we keep working only with the same people we have already worked with, we are doomed because they are retiring, selling out, and passing on. Pretty soon we won't have anyone left to work with!"* This statement signals that reaching new people may also be a key to the continued growth and prosperity of conservation districts.

What does inclusion look like in your community? It could mean attending some meetings of groups you never talk to. It could mean translating an important document for community members whose first language is not English. It could mean inviting new folks to your workshops, field tours, or board meetings. It could mean having coffee with some folks you often see but haven't gotten to know. Whatever it is, it is your choice. Nobody knows your local community like you do. That is part of the basis for locally-led conservation, a value that WACD subscribes to as part of [WACD's ten guiding principles](#).

Along the way, you may discover new ideas, make new friendships, and create even better conservation outcomes.

Weekly thoughts

Thinking about inclusion seems a bit easier to grasp. It's less hypothetical because it's something I can do, and it doesn't take much extra effort to reach a little farther for ideas and participation. I leave you today with just one quotation about reaching new people:

"Inclusion is not a matter of political correctness. It is the key to growth." – Jesse Jackson

Yours in conservation,

Tom Salzer, Executive Director
exec@wadistricts.org
(360) 999-5151 X101

Recent Posts on the Hub

- [WACD's testimony on HB 1838](#)
- [Plant Materials Center update: January 20, 2021](#)

- [WACD 2022 Legislative Session Policy Priorities](#)
- [Inslee's proposal mandating stream buffers seen as shift to regulations | capitalpress.com](#)
- [Week 1 General Legislative Review](#)
- [Statement by Secretary Vilsack on Martin Luther King Jr. Day | USDA](#)
- [Job Opening for Wildfire Community Resiliency Lead/Planner - Okanogan CD](#)
- [WACD to implement DEI recommendations](#)
- [USDA Announces Additional Farm Service Agency and Rural Development State Directors | USDA](#)
- [Washington lawmakers file Inslee's mandatory buffer bill | capitalpress.com](#)

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/>.

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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1219 11th Ave SE, Olympia, WA 98501
(360) 999-5151

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