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## 5 Things to Know for January 20, 2022

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### Legislative Alert

[In today's Legislative Alert](#), we touch on House Bill 1838, House Bill 1910, and Senate Bill 5882.

**House Bill 1838** (Protecting, restoring, and maintaining habitat for salmon recovery) had a public hearing on January 19. So many people signed up to testify that the hearing was extended to tomorrow, January 21. If you still want to weigh in on HB 1838, there is still time to do so. Browse to <https://app.leg.wa.gov/csi/House> and select "HB 1838 Salmon habitat" to submit your comments. However, WACD believes it will be more effective for our members to reach out directly to members of the House Rural Development, Agriculture, & Natural Resources Committee. Find the committee members at <https://leg.wa.gov/House/Committees/RDAN/Pages/MembersStaff.aspx>

**House Bill 1910** (Concerning conservation district elections) has been scheduled for a public hearing on January 27. WACD opposes HB 1910 for several reasons. We encourage you to visit today's legislative alert for more information.

**Senate Bill 5882** (Clarifying the existence of riparian stock watering rights) is scheduled for a public hearing on January 27. SB 5882 attempts to clarify the confusion around livestock riparian water rights.

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### Dear weblinx,

As we near the end of week #2 of the 2022 Legislature, there has been plenty of action on legislation significant to conservation districts. This week WACD testified on House Bill 1838 (Protecting, restoring, and maintaining habitat for salmon recovery). Many of our partners testified against HB 1838 and several tribes and agencies (and some non-governmental organizations) testified for it. WACD testified as OTHER so that we could express our strong desire that voluntary conservation programs be fully funded by the State of Washington. [Read more about our HB 1838 testimony...](#)

### 1. Legislative information

**Watch List** – WACD's [Legislative Watch List](#) is updated regularly to include the dates of public hearings and committee votes on legislation important to conservation districts. The Watch List is easily found by clicking on the Legislative Watch List item in the Hub main menu bar.

**Legislative updates by email** – This will be our last week of providing detailed legislative information in this Five Things newsletter. While legislative matters won't disappear from the Five Things, they will be greatly abbreviated. To receive the most detailed information, we encourage you to [subscribe to WACD's Legislative Updates newsletter](#). This newsletter will be

curated by Ryan Baye, WACD's Director of Legislative and Member Services.

**How to participate** – We have [collected information to help you participate](#) in the legislative process. Please remember that there is no substitute for the relationships you build and nurture with legislators and their staff. Most of the time, hearing directly from you is going to be powerful input for your local elected officials.

## 2. WACD's 2022 Legislative Priorities

WACD's [2022 legislative priorities](#) are now available for members and partners. These priorities are based on adopted WACD resolutions and were reviewed by the WACD's Board of Directors at their January meeting. Please [contact Ryan Baye](#) if you need talking points on any of WACD's legislative priorities.

## 3. Legislative Week

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](mailto:rbaye@wadistricts.org) for more information.

If you are planning to meet with legislators, handouts are an great example of when a picture can be worth a thousand words. The Commission has several legislative handouts on their website to support their supplemental budget requests and the proposed district election changes, available at <https://www.scc.wa.gov/cd/overview>.

## 4. WACD Board of Directors changes

We welcome Annie Byerley (Walla Walla County CD) as the newest Southeast Area Director. She joins Mary Collins (Palouse CD) to represent the eight districts in that area.

Marshall Stowe (Wahkiakum CD) recently resigned as Southwest Area Director. Marshall's departure creates a vacancy in the Southwest Area. This will be filled by the Southwest Area Executive Committee, as described by the Southwest Area Association's Articles and Bylaws. [All six areas' governing documents are available on the Hub.](#)

## 5. Plant Materials Center update

Records continue to be broken at the WACD Plant Materials Center. The PMC has sold more than the budgeted target and momentum continues for an incredible year. Another key hurdle is about to be met as the PMC hits the one million mark in plants shipped this season. [Read more in the January 20 PMC update.](#)

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## From your Executive Director

### Taking the long view on challenging legislation

House Bill 1838 was the focus for us early this week. Emotions on this legislation have been running high, with some people strongly in favor of this legislation and others strongly opposed. WACD visited with several agricultural industry partners to learn their positions before we chose to testify as OTHER.

This was a calculated risk because I'm fairly sure that the initial response for many of us in our community was to loudly oppose the regulatory character of this bill. HB 1838 is legislation

requested by the Governor and supported by many tribes that work with conservation districts. From our members, we heard many points of view. Given the disparity in how folks were feeling about the legislation, we chose to take a different tack: we filed as OTHER to be able to express our concerns with the lack of support for voluntary conservation and to suggest that a better solution than new regulations would be to fully fund voluntary programs.

A detectable undercurrent in the bill is not stated explicitly but is clearly implied: *voluntary conservation has failed so we need to regulate people into doing the right thing*. This is a flawed argument. The State of Washington has never funded voluntary habitat restoration activities to the levels needed. The example I provided in my testimony was that over the last three biennia, the State Conservation Commission has requested \$20 million for the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program but the State has only funded about \$10 million. Since federal dollars match the State's funds at a three-to-one match, the \$10 million that was requested but not funded means we lost out on about \$30 million dollars in habitat restoration funding.

We know voluntary, incentive-based conservation works...when it is sufficiently funded. Over and over, the State has failed to do this, and now this legislation suggests that voluntary conservation has failed. Voluntary conservation works but it must have the resources needed to succeed!

Positioning WACD as OTHER on HB 1838 let us stand out from the crowd. We were able to express the need to support voluntary conservation without a government mandate. This theme was echoed by several others during testimony. Our approach gives our many, diverse partners the chance to speak to the successes that could be achieved if voluntary conservation efforts were fully funded. Had we signed in as OPPOSED, we would have lost that opportunity to present a more viable alternative.

Bottom line: we remain committed to the voluntary, incentive-based conservation delivery system that lives in the hearts of our entire conservation district community.

Our position was informed by WACD's guiding principles, specifically, principles 8, 9, and 10:

- *We believe in, and uphold, the practice of locally-led, voluntary, incentive-based conservation.*
- *Private lands – and those who steward them – provide unique and valuable conservation of renewable natural resources to be used today and by future generations.*
- *Because natural resources cross jurisdictional boundaries and ownerships, all lands – and the people and entities that manage them – are important in conserving renewable natural resources.*

Where this goes from here, nobody yet knows. What we do know is that conservation district programs need more financial support. If there is a strong enough desire to provide more salmon habitat by restoring riparian zones, then we have an opening to push for the level of support for voluntary conservation that we have never before received.

That's a goal worth getting behind.

## Weekly quotation

This week I'm thinking about how to turn our need for increased conservation district funding into something real. These two thoughtful quotations focus on action!

***"If you talk about it, it's a dream, if you envision it, it's possible, but if you schedule it, it's real."*** – Anthony Robbins

***"It is easy to talk about what we are going to do, but it doesn't mean anything until we take action and make it happen."*** – Catherine Pulsifer

Yours in conservation,

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## Recent Posts on the Hub

- [First Legislative Cut-Off Next Week](#)
- [WACD's testimony on HB 1910](#)
- [Plant Materials Center update: January 27, 2021](#)
- [DNR HCP Reporting and Research Coordinator, NR Specialist 3](#)
- [Natural Resource Planner - Whidbey Island CD](#)
- [WACD opposition to HB 1910](#)
- [Summary of WACD positions on 2022 legislation](#)
- [How to Be a Great Supervisor: Insights Learned from 20 Years of Managing\\_| Blue Avocado](#)
- [Week 2 General Legislative Review](#)
- [Legislative Alert: January 20, 2022](#)

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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