



# Washington Association of Conservation Districts

## 5 Things to Know for March 3, 2022

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Dear Thomas,

### 1. New Commission ED started this week

Chris Pettit, the new Executive Director of the State Conservation Commission, officially started work on Tuesday. He has already been making the rounds with key partners to establish good working relationships with them.

The Conservation Commission may be a small agency but it has a complex workflow and many activities underway. As we all know, it takes time to come up to speed in a new job. Chris's life is full of change right now so please extend your patience and grace to him as he finds his footing in our conservation community.

### 2. Legislative bills are done...or are they?

As we enter the final days of the 2022 legislative session in Olympia, we want you to know what will happen between now and the scheduled adjournment date of March 10th. While these dance steps are pretty well known to those who dance this dance often, there is still a possibility of something new happening that keeps observers closely watching proceedings. Learn more in [Between Now and the End of Session](#).

### 3. WACD's budget reconciliation priorities

This week, WACD sent letters to the budget writers for the House and Senate. The letters contained the same points we published in [WACD 2022 Budget Reconciliation Priorities](#):

WACD views the following components as critical to addressing our state's natural resource concerns:

- \$15 million for Riparian Restoration Projects (Senate version) with the language from the House's proposed Riparian Habitat Incentives to allow for expanding riparian restoration options to include a true commodity buffer program, an adapted commodity buffer program, and a small landowner program.
- \$2.7 million for District Project Engineering Services (Senate version) so conservation districts have the project engineering services necessary to enable permit and design work for conservation projects.
- \$6 million (House version) for the Voluntary Stewardship Program to increase the success rate of identifying and protecting critical areas without sacrificing local agriculture.

WACD also hopes to see additional funding for conservation districts and the State Conservation Commission in the Sustainable Farms and Fields Grant Program (\$2 million), the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (\$4 million), and in the form of financial assistance for project monitoring (\$2 million) to track the effectiveness and provide

accountability of these on-the-ground projects.

#### 4. HAB Task Force members still sought

WACD continues to seek additional members for the Harmful Algae Bloom Task Force. This work is being led by the good folks at the Whidbey Island CD with assistance by WACD staff. Please [contact Ryan or Tom](#) if you have questions or wish to participate.

#### 5. Plant Materials Center

No report this week from the WACD PMC because seasonal field crew members have been leaving for other jobs. With fewer people to get the work done, staff are very busy. Fortunately, the PMC did not experience any flooding from the recent heavy rains, but the rainfall did leave the fields very wet!

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### Remember the Leaving a Legacy Program!

The Washington Conservation Society annually publishes [Leaving a Legacy](#), a memorial and celebratory book of conservationists who have made or are making a notable impact on the natural resources in Washington State. Inductees include past and present Supervisors, district volunteers, and agency partners. The book includes photos and biographical information. The book is published electronically each fall.

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### Recent Posts on the Hub

- [Between Now and the End of Session](#)
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- [Plant Materials Center update: February 24, 2022](#)
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See the full list of Recent Posts at <https://hub.wadistricts.org/posts/>. Review the articles WACD staff are reading at <https://hub.wadistricts.org/resources/wacd-reading-list/>. Conservation districts mentioned in news media are [shared on Flipboard](#).

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### From your Executive Director

I am reflecting this week on how WACD's successes might look like failures to some folks. We sought the passage of HB 1652 on conservation district elections — a bill that enjoyed wide

support — only to see it die in committee.

We fought against mandated riparian buffers and in the process, we were able to introduce the idea that voluntary conservation had never been fully funded by the State of Washington. We are seeing this play out now with some budget additions for voluntary conservation, a very unusual outcome (fingers still crossed!) in a supplemental budget year.

It might seem that WACD's workload related to the current legislative session should be winding down about now but that is not the case. Over the weekend, we saw a surprise striker filed that would have injected riparian buffers into HB 1117, the bill about net ecological gain. Fortunately, the striker did not survive the process, but for a little while, we were scrambling to rally our partners. What happened? HB 1117 died.

We also sent thank you letters to the House and Senate budget writers to reinforce WACD's priorities. The Conservation Commission also communicated with budget writers and their priorities align well with WACD's.

Perhaps it suffices to say that while we entered this legislative season with hopes and expectations, few of the balls pitched at us were quite what we expected. Through good partnerships, a very capable lobbyist, and flexibility we were able to field those balls effectively. We stayed true to our core principles while working to support conservation district success.

## Weekly quotations

Meeting new people — SCC ED Chris Pettit! — is on my mind this week.

***"Everyone you will ever meet will know something you don't."*** – Bill Nye

***"Be genuinely interested in everyone you meet, and everyone you meet will be genuinely interested in you."*** – Rasheed Ogunlaru

Yours in conservation,

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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.

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## 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



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