



Washington Association of Conservation Districts

5 Things to Know for October 13, 2022

2022 marks WACD's 80th anniversary, a remarkable achievement by our entire conservation community

Conservation



Is Everyone's Business

Dear Thomas,

1 – Plant Material Center news

The regular PMC update usually falls in fifth place in the Five Things list but today we want to put it in first place!

Work on the Missouri Gravel Bed project is very interesting and you can read a bit more about it in [today's PMC update](#). This project, headed by Assistant Nursery Manager John Knox, is also presented in **Promising News for Autumn Bare Root Planting** ([click here for the PDF document](#)). Register to hear John Knox (PMC) speak to this on October 20 (registration is free): [Extending the Bareroot Planting Window Tickets, Thu, Oct 20, 2022 at 11:00 AM | Eventbrite](#)

Along with the regular hard work of operating a native plant nursery, the WACD PMC staff are continually seeking to improve production and survival of plants. The Missouri Gravel Bed project could be a game changer for some riparian restoration projects in the coming years!

2 – Area Association meetings have started

This week, the Northwest Area Association of Conservation Districts met virtually and the Southwest Area Association of Conservation Districts met in person with a virtual option. Several resolutions were passed by voters at these annual meetings. Clean copies of resolutions from all area meetings will be posted to the [Resolutions tab](#) on the Hub [area association annual meeting page](#).

Resolutions so far (and these are from Tom's memory so are subject to correction!):

- **Pierce CD:** dropping population criteria and removing per parcel maximum annual rate under RCW 89.08.400(3)(a). *Passed.*
- **Skagit CD:** reform conservation easement processes and funding. *Passed.*
- **Whidbey Island CD:** moving the HABs Work Group recommendations forward. *Passed.*
- **Clark CD:** increase shared conservation district resources. *Passed.*
- **Thurston CD:** dropping population criteria and removing per parcel maximum annual rate under RCW 89.08.400(3)(a). *Passed.*

Resolutions from areas that passed move on to the appropriate WACD committee for review and a recommendation of DO PASS or DO NOT PASS. The resolutions go to the floor of the WACD annual business meeting on November 30 for discussion and decision by voters from conservation districts in good standing. Districts that have paid their annual WACD dues before the start of the November 30 business meeting are considered to be in good standing and their supervisors can present resolutions, vote, and be elected to the WACD Board of Directors.

Next week, WACD will participate in three area association meetings in Waterville, Davenport, and Clarkston, and the week after, we'll be at the last meeting in White Salmon. Dates and times are detailed at <https://hub.wadistricts.org/annual/2022meetings/areas/#dates>.

3 – WACD Annual Conference update

You can now make hotel reservations for the WACD annual conference at the Coast Wenatchee Center Hotel. Rooms are available at the government per diem rate (as low as \$98/night) for Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday nights (November 28, 29, and 30). We are still working with

the hotel on a room block for Sunday, November 27 at per diem. Up-to-date information will be posted to the [Hub page for the 2022 annual conference](#).

Branded items have been ordered for conference attendees. We approved the final artwork yesterday and confirmed sending the items to production.

We are nearing a decision point on whether to run the virtual side of the conference as we have before or to use a completely different event management platform. The choice is less controlled by cost and more about providing the best possible experience for our in-person and virtual attendees.

Monday, November 28th:

- We'll have a special session in the morning for new supervisors. New supervisors will be eligible for free registration for the annual conference.
- After lunch, we are planning a session on inclusion that will include stories from conservation districts. Several folks have agreed to share their experiences. After that, we'll have time for people to identify their concerns about incorporating inclusion into their district programs and services. Those concerns will be captured for future discussion and action.
- Attendees will be able to visit vendor tables and talk about conservation projects at district poster sessions.
- Before dinner, we'll have a President's Reception, followed by dinner.

Tuesday, November 29th:

- Tuesday morning dawns with a focus on the future, i.e., the Farm Bill. We think we have a great personage lined up to join our Farm Bill team of presenters so stay tuned as this develops.
- After lunch, the Washington State Conservation Commission has an afternoon of program topics to share.
- We'll have a banquet dinner that night and it appears the Envirothon auction will be happening then, too.
- Somewhere in the schedule we'll slip in a session on the 2023 Legislature, including how to best work with your legislators and predictions of some key topics for the 2023 session.

Wednesday, November 30th: Wednesday will be the annual business meeting where we hear about the work of WACD and where voters discuss and decide on resolutions.

4 – We're Nearing Last Call for Wildlife Award Nominations

WACD's Wildlife Farmer and Wildlife Steward Awards are nearing the October 28th deadline for nominations. WACD will also recognize large and small-scale co-operators. Please consider writing a nomination for one of the new awards or [one of the other eight awards](#) WACD hopes to grant this year.

- Wildlife Steward Award - [Nomination Form Available Here](#)
- Large Farmer Award - [Nomination Form Available Here](#)

- Small Farmer Award - [Nomination Form Available Here](#)

5 – Work Group on Harmful Algal Blooms Submits Report

Harmful algal blooms (HABs), caused by the proliferation of cyanobacteria, can cause human and wildlife illness and even death. In 2021, the Washington Association of Conservation Districts adopted a resolution to establish a workgroup to assess the status of HABs in the state, the adequacy of current funding for monitoring HABs, the adequacy of funding for programs to address HABs statewide, and to recommend actions that conservation districts could take to reduce the frequency and duration of HABs in Washington.

After a year of monthly meetings, the workgroup and an associated technical advisory committee recently completed a report with recommendations. Find the report in this post: [HABs Work Group Produces Report and Recommendations](#)

Washington Conservation Society

Environmental Education Mini-grants

A key goal of the Washington Conservation Society (WCS) is to support educational opportunities for youth by sponsoring environmental/conservation education programs in Washington State. To that end, the WCS will set aside an annual contribution, the amount to be determined by the WCS Board of Directors, which will be utilized to provide grants to members to assist in funding environmental/conservation education programs for youth as the first priority for funding. [Applications are accepted until November 1st.](#)

Leaving a Legacy Program

Each year, WCS publishes Leaving a Legacy, a memorial and celebratory book of conservationists who have made 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. More information about the program and a digital copy of [the book can be found on the WCS website.](#)

If you are aware of a past conservation district supervisor or employee who has passed, please reach out to the WCS folks so that they can seek information for the Leaving a Legacy book.

Become a Member

The goals of the WCS are to support conservation activities, natural resource education programs, and to recognize and honor individuals who exemplify the ethic and practice of sound conservation principles. Your membership directly supports WCS's Environmental Education Mini-grant Program. [Become a member today.](#)

Recent Posts on the Hub

- [Plant Materials Center update: October 13, 2022](#)
- [Conservation Specialist \(Term\) Announcement – October 2022](#)
- [HABs Work Group Produces Report and Recommendations](#)

- [Oregon health advisory warns of toxic contaminants in lamprey | OPB](#)
- [Snohomish CD seeks an Engineer](#)
- [Plant Materials Center update: October 6, 2022](#)
- [WACD PMC seeking Farm Operations Supervisor](#)
- [Okanogan Land Trust Seeks a Conservation Associate](#)
- [We Are in Period of Transformation](#)
- [Plant Materials Center update: September 22, 2022](#)

See the full list of Recent Posts at <https://hub.wadistricts.org/posts/>. Many news articles that mention Washington State conservation districts are [shared on Flipboard](#). In the [WACD Reading List](#) we capture many articles of interest to segments of our community.

From your Executive Director

It's a given that every conservation district is unique. It's also a given that the composition of local populations is changing. To echo what I once heard a Grays Harbor CD supervisor say: *if we keep working with the same people, eventually we won't have any customers left!*

The supervisor went on to explain this by saying that in his view, their traditional customer base was retiring, selling or dividing the farm, or just plain moving away. If that kept up, he posited, they would run out of their usual clients.

That observation was made more than 20 years ago and it holds true today. Business conditions for farmers and ranchers are always changing, and part of that is due to the changing demographics of their customers. Today, the makeup of local communities is different than it was a few decades ago. In some places, it's probably not very different, but in others, communities have changed rather dramatically.

I think this goes a long way toward understanding why some conservation districts are "all in" when it comes to reaching people they haven't worked with yet, and why some conservation districts seem just the opposite. Where we see dramatic changes, we see districts adjusting to fit their local conditions.

The majority of Washington State's conservation district voters adopted diversity, equity, and inclusion resolutions in 2020 and again in 2021. Your state association operates based on the decisions reached by the majority. Where do those ideas come from? From local conservation districts who bring forward resolutions at area association meetings.

Generally speaking, a resolution has to run through a gauntlet of decision points to reach the statewide floor at the WACD annual business meeting. First, it has to get the support of the local conservation district board. Then it has to be voted forward by the area association. Only then does a resolution that has been seen by many make it in front of the Association's voters.

Here's a surprising point: the results of this process are not always equitable. Equity means getting what you need to succeed and thrive. Says the [United Way of the National Capital Area](#):

Equity...means meeting communities where they are and allocating resources and opportunities as needed to create equal outcomes for all community members.

Thus, when we act only on what the majority supports, that work may not support the needs of other members of our conservation community. There is a sad irony in that observation.

Given the nature of this topic, there are often very strong feelings involved. This is true at both extremes of the spectrum of beliefs surrounding diversity, equity, and inclusion. This presents a conundrum for WACD. We hear some folks say, essentially, that no matter what WACD does, it won't be enough. We hear other folks say that anything WACD does on this topic is too much.

What can we do? We can follow the direction of the majority, but hopefully with some sensitivity to the wide range of feelings present in our community. This is why [WACD's policy](#) is not directive toward conservation districts. We are developing [resources for conservation districts](#) and those resources are yours to use, or to not use, as you see fit. WACD does want to equip conservation districts to succeed, and since we do not see a cessation of interest in diversity, equity, and inclusion, it makes sense to provide resources to those who want to make use of such resources.

We welcome your helpful ideas on how we can provide resources that are useful and necessary. WACD does this work year in and year out in a dynamic environment that reflects the changes experienced in all of our member conservation districts. If there was no change, this would be pretty simple work...but that is rarely the case. Our work on your behalf is extraordinarily difficult.

Despite the difficult nature of representing 45 unique conservation districts, it is clear that we are all stronger and more effective on your behalf when we can come together in support of important ideas and needs. While those ideas or needs sometimes don't exactly fit your situation, in the long run, maintaining the strength of your collective voice is an important factor in the success of the conservation delivery system in Washington State.

...As I re-read what I wrote, I realize I missed a key point, and that point is the need for compromise on statewide issues. Essentially, we are each occasionally faced with something that we don't fully support. In that situation, an important question to ask yourself is: can I live with it? If the answer is yes, then be neutral or supportive as you feel comfortable, and thus help the issue move forward for the whole Association. If the answer is that you just can't live with it, then speak up and make sure your concerns are heard. Such is the nature of working together at the statewide level, always reflecting the needs of your local community in the dialogues that ensue when we come together! What better time to do this than at area association meetings and at the WACD annual conference and business meeting?

Always yours in conservation,

Tom Salzer, Executive Director
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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: <https://hub.wadistricts.org/annual/2021meetings/conference/#sponsors>



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