



Washington Association of Conservation Districts

5 Things to Know for January 12, 2023



Photo by J. Dorner

Dear Thomas,

Managing our expectations

WACD's membership includes all 45 conservation districts formed under the authorities in RCW 89.08 in the State of Washington. It is a tremendous responsibility to support and represent all 45 districts. But with so many people involved, there will always be situations

where individuals or groups have different points of view.

Resolutions come to mind when I think about expectations. To some, resolutions adopted by WACD's members are the marching orders that WACD's Board of Directors and staff *must* follow with no deviation or adjustment. A different point of view is that resolutions essentially form a wish list. In either case, WACD's job is to do the best we can to meet those needs and desires. That requires us to be flexible, responding quickly to rapidly changing conditions. Especially in the legislative process, things change much faster than we can accommodate with one annual meeting of members for expressing priorities to WACD.

Complicating this is the lack of a ways-and-means checkpoint in the process. We don't generally stop to evaluate whether we have the time, talent, or money to do everything that members want. One reason for this is there is precious little time for a 19-member board to find a time to meet over the holidays and before the Legislature convenes. I can promise you that WACD will continue to do the best we can to meet the needs and desires of conservation districts.

Resolutions and legislation

This year, we have some new conservation district resolutions to add to our five-year list of resolutions. It's a lot to stay on top of.

There often seems to be an expectation that the newest resolutions are the most important or most urgent ones for WACD to address. But here's a harsh truth that can be difficult to stomach: in the legislative process, rarely does anyone get exactly what they ask for. Successful legislation involves compromise. Without compromise, it is extremely unlikely that any piece of legislation can advance.

The 2023 Legislature convened on Monday of this week. Almost immediately, [House Bill 1215](#) was filed. HB 1215 describes the Governor's proposed approach to riparian buffers. We are evaluating the bill language and will be closely following its progress through the legislative process.

We are fairly certain there will be at least one proposal about conservation district elections. As I write this, there are some quiet conversations taking place that could shape our next steps on this subject. We are engaged.

A significant resolution concerns eliminating caps and population criteria on rates-and-charges systems for conservation districts. Unfortunately, there has not been enough work with a crucial partner, the [Association of County Officials](#), to know if its members will support such legislation. There are also other partners that need time to understand the issue and the proposed solution. There is no draft bill language to propose to legislators. Getting from the starting line on this topic to the finish line in one session is an almost impossible ask. To advance the rates-and-charges resolution, we need to build a foundation of support so that when it does officially go before legislators for action, we make it easy for them to support the proposed legislation. WACD has started working to build such a foundation so that we can attempt to move this forward in the 2024 legislative session.

Our opportunity to play even better chess

As WACD works with legislators, we have to look several years ahead at what could happen when decisions that involve conservation districts or the State Conservation Commission are made. As you'll see in the proposed budget this year, we are playing for very big stakes. The potential ripples from final decisions will be significant. Working with legislators is always a bit of a chess game. With such important issues on our plate this year, there is more at stake and we have to play even better chess than usual.

I encourage you to not panic too quickly when a piece of legislation causes concern. Take the long view and think about what that bill might mean several years down the road. Do share your concerns with us. We need your perspective and knowledge; both important and influential. We need to hear from you in order to do the best job of representing you. And remember that rarely do we get everything we want and nothing we don't want. Compromise, within the limits of our value set, is how we move the dial.

This will be a 105-day session, known as a long session. Some big issues are top-of-mind with legislators. Sadly, concern for natural resources is not very high on such lists for many legislators. This is something that you are best positioned to help with. Please make sure that your legislators know how important natural resources are to your entire community. Conserving natural resources for current and future generations benefits all Washingtonians.

Always yours for conservation,

Tom Salzer, Executive Director

Five Things to Know

1 – WACD testified on budget bills this week

WACD staff testified this week on bills relating to the Governor's proposed operating and capital budgets. Tuesday's [testimony on the operating budget is published on the Hub](#), as is [Wednesday's testimony](#). As I write this, I am prepared to testify in two hearings today on the Governor's proposed capital budget.

2 – WACD Legislative Watch List is now available

WACD has published positions on individual bills in the [WACD Legislative Watch List](#). Key actions on individual bills will be tracked and reported via the Watch List. Please note that due to the fast-paced, dynamic nature of legislative processes, WACD's positions on bills may change at any time.

3 – WACD Legislative Day set for February 8

Washington State's Legislature convenes on January 9, 2023. WACD will hold a Legislative Day on February 8 in Olympia to help conservation districts connect with legislators.

We have found one hotel that can accommodate our group but they cannot offer per diem room rates. I expect that we'll make a decision in the next few days on how to proceed.

4 – Commission and WACD meetings in January

The Washington State Conservation Commission will hold a [regular business meeting next week on January 19th](#). Note that the location of the Commission meeting information on the [WSCC home page](#) has changed. It is now found under the "Get Involved" menu choice.

The Washington Association of Conservation Districts Board of Directors will hold a [work session on Monday, January 23rd](#).

5 – WACD PMC featured by GoSkagit

GoSkagit recently published a front-page, above-the-fold story on the WACD Plant Materials Center. You can access it by [starting with our post about this](#).

More things...

- [Sign-up for WACD Legislative updates](#)
- [AgForestry is seeking applicants for Class 45](#)
- Note that the sign-up period for the [2023 NRCS Riparian Buffer Program](#) for producers will close on January 13th.
- Now available on the OFM website: [Riparian Taskforce Final Report: Facilitation Process and Recommendations](#) (PDF)
- WACD's [2023 Legislative priorities](#) (not yet updated with resolutions adopted in 2022)
- [NRCS defines "equity" and "underserved communities"](#)
- There are plenty of interesting links in the [WACD Reading List](#)

Recent Posts on the Hub

- [WACD is OTHER on HB 1166](#)
- [Week 1 General Legislative Review](#)
- [WACD testimony on SB 5200 concerning the capital budget](#)
- [WACD testimony on HB 1147 concerning the capital budget](#)
- [GoSkagit covers PMC: Plant center fills niche in nature restoration work](#)
- [NACD Announces Application Period for Urban and Community Conservation Grants](#)

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.

We appreciate our great 2022-2023 sponsors

Many thanks to our generous sponsors for helping us support Washington State's conservation districts. WACD encourages you to consider patronizing these sponsors in thanks for their important support:: <https://hub.wadistricts.org/annual/2022meetings/conference/#sponsors>



- [USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service](#)
- [Washington State Conservation Commission](#)
- [Arrowleaf Consulting](#)
- [envu](#)
- [Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife](#)
- [The McGregor Company](#)
- [Enduris](#)
- [Pheasants Forever](#)
- [Rainier Seeds](#)
- [JTII](#)
- [BFI Native Seeds](#)
- [Northwest Farm Credit Services](#)
- [Wilbur-Ellis](#)
- [Plants of the Wild](#)

Pass it on!

Please pass this newsletter on to others in our conservation community so they can subscribe and be as informed as you are!

SUBSCRIBE

Visit the Hub to stay informed!

<https://hub.wadistricts.org>

We welcome your [feedback](#)

Subscribe | Unsubscribe | Manage your subscription | Contact WACD support | Send us feedback

1219 11th Ave SE, Olympia, WA 98501

(360) 999-5151

MailPoet