



# Washington Association of Conservation Districts

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## 5 Things to Know for February 24, 2023

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Dear Thomas,

More legislative changes this week as pressure mounted to get bills out of fiscal committees by...today. Read on for the rest of the story!

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### FIVE THINGS TO KNOW

#### 1 – Voluntary Riparian Grant Bill Stalls

HB 1720 appears to be dead for this session. The [House Ag & Natural Resources Committee](#) adopted the bill unanimously out of committee last week, after adding a second proposed grant program within RCO with the same language as proposed for the Commission's grant program. WACD felt the second program would be duplicative and confusing, and submitted [written testimony](#) to that effect. It received a fairly positive hearing in the House Capital Budget Committee on Monday the 20th but was passed over when scheduled for a vote on Wednesday.

However, there is still some hope. The partnership between tribal entities and agricultural groups, as well as the [bipartisan approach](#) taken by the committee members, created a powerful group of supporters. We expect the interest around increased salmon recovery funding to continue throughout the remainder of the legislative session and WACD will work to see additional funds dedicated to voluntary conservation approaches in the final budget.

#### 2 – "Gillnetted" is the New Legislative Term

In the final meeting of the [Senate Ag & Water Committee](#) last week before the Policy Cut-off, fourteen bills were scheduled for a vote but only two bills were actually passed. Many bills that sponsors hoped would continue in the legislative process died, including two WACD were supporting: [SB 5484](#) and [SB 5551](#). The chair of that committee expected to see his bill pass that banned gillnets for nontribal fishing, and when that did not happen, all the other bills got caught up "in the gillnet". Everyone has heard the proverb about what happens when a door

closes, a window opens, but it is still a heavy blow to some good legislation.

### 3 – Understanding Legislative Terms

For those who don't have a copy of the Washington State Legislative Manual (like Ryan) but would still like to understand the process, here is a [brief explanation](#) of the words you'll hear in the next days of the legislative session if you're watching TVW:

- **Rules Committee** - All proposed legislation goes through this committee and only comes out when it's wanted for a vote. Think of it like a dam, with a lot of bills coming in and a few coming out at a regular pace.
- **Rules Pull** - When the Rules Committee meets, each member is allowed to select a set number of bills that move to the Floor Calendar. Those bills "pulled from Rules" are eligible for a vote.
- **Floor Calendar** - A floor calendar is the term for the document prepared each day of session with all the bills eligible to be voted on that day by either the House or the Senate.
- **Second Reading** - When either body is debating a particular bill and voting on amendments.
- **Third Reading** - The term designating when the final vote on a bill is being taken. In the House with its electronic voting system, it may take 30 seconds to conduct the Third Reading. The Senate still operates on an oral roll call voting process, where Third Reading may last for ten minutes or more.

### 4 – PMC Update

After a three-week hiatus, the Plant Materials Center update is back. When one is setting records for plants sold, harvested, and shipped, one's work life gets very busy. We're glad to get an update from Jim Brown, Director of Nursery Operations at WACD's PMC. So far, the PMC folks are dodging some of the "gotcha's" that could be occurring this time of year. We are keeping our fingers and toes crossed for luck as the season continues! Read more at <https://hub.wadistricts.org/2023/02/pmc-feb-24-2023/>

### 5 – WACD Board Meeting on Monday

The WACD Board of Directors will hold a regular business meeting on Monday, February 27 at 6:00 pm. You can find documents (including the draft agenda that contains Zoom connection info) in a Box.com folder at <https://wacd1.box.com/s/iva5zixkwjp2csby52ns9autjrqpjyxx>

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## Executive Corner

### Whiplash

This week we have a sense of whiplash as bills move along fairly rapidly and then suddenly die, or maybe they didn't completely die, or maybe they are moving out of view through a different

mechanism.

What was it Miracle Max said in The Princess Bride? *"There's a big difference between mostly dead and all dead. Mostly dead is slightly alive."* That may describe where we are with Substitute House Bill 1720 on riparian buffers. By all accounts, it is dead. But there are rumors that there may be money allocated in a proviso so that riparian buffer work can continue, and there seems to be some interest in bringing this topic back in the 2024 legislative session.

## Training

Another thought this week has to do with conservation district staff training. As funding and staff for the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service increase over the coming few years, we are going to need more conservation district folks to become NRCS-recognized planners. I have a feeling NRCS is going to be hard-pressed to get their new people trained quickly so that could make it even more difficult for districts to position staff to be good helpmates to NRCS and producers.

I know that NRCS State Conservationist Roylene Comes at Night is thinking about this, too. We are incredibly fortunate to have her as a strong, effective partner. Now is the time to be planning for conservation district staff training so that our community is well-positioned to move conservation work forward.

WACD Executive Office staff remain available for your feedback and questions. Please reach out to us at [oly@wacd.org](mailto:oly@wacd.org) and we will get back to you as quickly as we can.

Always yours for conservation,

Tom Salzer, Executive Director

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**More photos from the 2023 NACD Conference**



Associate Supervisor Larry Davis (Whatcom Conservation District) being honored with the NACD President's Award by outgoing President Michael Crowder (Benton Conservation District Supervisor).



USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Chief Terry Cosby and National Association of Conservation Districts outgoing President Michael Crowder present the Olin Sims Conservation Leadership Award to Wade Troutman (Foster Creek Conservation District Supervisor).

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## Recent Posts on the Hub

- [Plant Materials Center update: February 24, 2023](#)
- [Habitat Restoration Project Manager Job Announcement](#)
- [State Conservation Commission meeting](#)
- [Legislature: sine die](#)
- [Legislature: floor cutoff, opposite house](#)
- [Legislature: fiscal committee cutoff, opposite house](#)

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.

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