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# Washington Association of Conservation Districts

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## 5 Things to Know for March 2, 2023

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**Dear Thomas,**

Another legislative cutoff has passed and the next one is March 8 which is the "last day to consider (pass) bills in house of origin" according to the [cutoff calendar](#). What this means is if your favorite bill has not yet reached the Rules Committee, it is unlikely to meet the March 8 cutoff.

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## FIVE THINGS TO KNOW

### 1 – Legislative Update

After the first two legislative cut-offs, WACD's list of bills we're actively tracking shrunk from 64 to 28. [WACD's Legislative Watch List](#) now focuses on which bills are being voted on by the House or Senate, bills will have to be approved by their "house of origin" by next Wednesday to continue through the legislative process. The bills that didn't make it through the Policy Cut-Off or the Fiscal Cut-off still hang around, but it is much more unlikely those proposals will make it into law. Here are some of those bills WACD was closely following (for one reason or another) that did not make it over the most recent hurdle:

- [HB 1698](#) – Providing flexibility for the department of fish and wildlife to collaborate with local governments to manage gray wolves.
- [HB 1740](#) – Concerning eligibility, enrollment, and compensation of small forestland owners volunteering for participation in the forestry riparian easement program.
- [SB 5651](#) – Concerning equity and environmental justice in the growth management act.
- [SB 5688](#) – Providing carbon sequestration and ecosystem services in the management of public lands.

### 2 – NACD Farm Bill Priorities

The 2023 Farm Bill Priorities for the National Association of Conservation Districts are now available, with eleven [Farm Bill Principles](#) and five [issue papers](#) issued earlier this week in advance of the [NACD Fly-In](#) later this month where conservation leaders gather in our nation's capital. This is the year the Farm Bill must be re-authorized, with federal programs like CRP,

RCPP, CREP, and CSP important sources of funding for our member districts.

### 3 – WACD Fly-In Priorities

WACD, along with Conservation Commission and NRCS, will be participating in the Fly-In this year. As we prepare, we want to ensure we're effectively representing our membership when meeting with congressional offices. If there is any issue that needs to be brought to the attention of your federal representatives, or if there is a message to pass along, please contact your WACD Executive Office staff at [oly@wacd.org](mailto:oly@wacd.org). Here are some items we're preparing for D.C.:

- Foster Creek CD's desire to keep sage grouse habitat intact through a waiver for the State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) Initiative.
- Columbia Basin CD seeking federal funding for the Odessa Groundwater Replacement project.
- WACD's 2022 [resolution on good-faith](#) negotiations regarding FSA contracts originating with Whitman CD.
- WACD's 2018 resolution on reviewing soil rental rates originating with Asotin County CD.

### 4 – PMC Update

Harvest is nearly done, with just a few weeks left. Meanwhile, shipping continues. The WACD Plant Materials Center remains on pace for record sales in 2023. So far, more than 1,250,000 plants have been shipped! Information on a podcast titled ***Growing the Next Generation of Trees with Jim Brown*** is included in [this week's PMC update](#).

### 5 – WACD Board Meeting Summary

WACD's Board of Directors met this past Monday night. In addition to learning more about the activities of Clark, Grays Harbor, Lewis, and Thurston CDs, the board took a number of actions including authorizing the exploration of a proposal to relocate Skagit CD's office to the Plant Material Center. You can read the full [list of actions taken](#) or [previous board meeting minutes](#) on our public-facing website.

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## Executive Corner

### Conservation Districts are the Strong Foundation for Success

After the whirlwind called the NACD Annual Meeting, followed by rapid-fire legislative actions and a WACD Board meeting, I find myself trying to catch my breath. The Legislature doesn't take much time off when they are in session, and that means Ryan and I don't, either. With just two of us, we're working at a pace that isn't sustainable over the long term. Fortunately, the Legislature eventually adjourns!

Nevertheless, we are both finding time to attend conservation district meetings. This week, Ryan made the journey to the [Jefferson County CD](#) in Port Hadlock. I attended the [Clark CD](#) meeting in Vancouver. These visits are very important. While district visits give us opportunities to share information in person, the real value is the grounding we receive in what is most

important: the conservation delivery system and the people who make it work.

I visualize the conservation delivery system as a pyramid with conservation districts forming the foundation for everything else at higher levels of the pyramid. Our system succeeds because of the great people in individual conservation districts that provide a robust foundation.

It strikes me as somewhat odd that we refer to people higher on the pyramid as leaders when the real leaders are the people who govern and staff conservation districts. Time and time again, our cadre of conservationists deliver the work that needs to get done, and they do it with grace, skill, and compassion. We do have great leaders in the conservation district movement and they are the people *in* conservation districts.

In my reversed view, the people we usually call leaders are really followers of the direction and drive provided by districts. I describe it this way because I want every conservation district supervisor and employee to understand that what they do is important. We wouldn't need a conservation commission or a state association if we didn't have conservation districts. Those of us not with a conservation district exist to serve conservation districts in some way.

I hope you remember this the next time you have questions or need help. Often, when I talk with people in our conservation district community, the theme I hear is people in leadership are just too busy or too important to want to help solve a conservation district's problem. Please remember that without conservation district problems, opportunities, and capabilities, we would not need people in leadership.

They are there because of you.

They are there for you.

You are important.

## Contact WACD

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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## 2023 NACD Conference: Awards



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: March 2, 2023](#)
- [WACD Annual Conference](#)
- [Week 7 General Legislative Review](#)
- [Palouse CD Seeks Conservation Planner](#)
- [NACD Releases 2023 Farm Bill Recommendations](#)
- [Plant Materials Center update: February 24, 2023](#)

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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