



Washington Association of Conservation Districts

5 Things to Know for March 16, 2023

Dear Thomas,

BREAKING NEWS

On Thursday, March 16, the Washington State Conservation Commission board voted to end its relationship with Chris Pettit. This was a very difficult decision for Commissioners as evidenced by the Commission board extending an Executive Session twice.

Even with Chris's departure, there remains a perceived lack of trust between some conservation districts and the Commission. Lack of trust is usually not a one-way street. The Conservation Commission and conservation districts need to work on improving this relationship. WACD is here to help where and when needed.

The hard work of everyone with the Conservation Commission and in the conservation district community must continue without interruption. The current legislative session is still in full swing and we need to keep our eyes on the opportunities and challenges still in play. The amount of money being considered for on-the-ground conservation projects is meaningful and can help our community really move the dial. Please do not let today's action interrupt the progress and momentum currently underway, regardless of your thoughts on the Commission's decision.

Looking ahead, what will the Conservation Commission do? We know the Commission will attempt to quickly get an interim Executive Director in place. To fill this gap for the short term, Ron Shultz has agreed to serve on a temporary basis.

President Mumford and I ask that you give all the Commissioners some grace as they work to take next steps. We can attest that the action taken by Commissioners was extremely difficult for every one of them. We also know they had the best interests in mind for our entire community as they reached this decision.

WACD President Mike Mumford
WACD Executive Director Tom Salzer

THE FIVE THINGS TO KNOW

1 – What is the status of riparian restoration funding?

Since last week's issue of the Five Things to Know newsletter, we've been hearing that riparian funding will be in the Legislature's budget, with some amount to be split between the State Conservation Commission and the Salmon Recovery Funding Board. We don't know the amount. We don't know the restrictions that might be placed on those funds. Those details will emerge as conversations continue. WACD continues to track progress on this issue.

2 – Riparian funding request letter

WACD asks conservation districts to reach out to their legislators to explain the need for meaningful riparian restoration funding and to request their support. WACD's template for that letter is at <https://hub.wadistricts.org/2023/03/riparian-buffer-letter-suggested-language/>. Please consider this a starting point for modifying the language to fit your needs and voice.

WACD would appreciate being copied on your letters or you can [send us copies](#) of what you sent to legislators. This will allow us our lobbyist and WACD to better coordinate this work.

3 – SCC Meeting: March 16

The Washington State Conservation Commission met in Everett on Thursday, March 16. The opening paragraphs of this issue of the Five Things describe the unusual action taken by the Commission.

4 – WACD Board Work Session: March 20

A work session will be held by the WACD Board of Directors on Monday, March 20 starting at 6 PM via Zoom. We have invited South Central Area conservation districts to visit with the WACD Board at the March 20 meeting. Over the next several days, we will be adding additional information to the [online folder](#) for this meeting.

5 – PMC Update

Harvest has wrapped up but shipping continues! All crews did a tremendous job this year with record volumes. Up next: field cleanup. By the way, April is Native Plant Appreciation Month. [Read more in today's update.](#)

Executive Corner

We bring people together

Over the past 80 years or so, our conservation community has brought people together to find solutions to problems that often seem perplexing and overwhelming in their complexity.

That work continues today and will continue tomorrow. Bringing people together is what our people do, and they do it well.

Conservation districts are well known for being the go-to place where different interests can be voiced. Districts find ways forward in ways that marry local needs with community desires.

The State Conservation Commission fills the same role in the diverse suite of state, federal, tribal, and non-governmental entities working in our conservation universe. Among state agencies, the Commission is the only place where the focused interests of diverse interests can be heard and where collaborative solutions can be created.

This ability to bring people together to find solutions is one of the great values provided by our conservation community. When legislators ask what your entity does, don't forget to share with them that your people solve problems.

Contact WACD

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

Always yours for conservation,

Tom Salzer, Executive Director

Recent Posts on the Hub

- [Plant Materials Center Update March 16, 2023](#)
- [Pierce CD Seeks Wildfire Program Manager](#)
- [Riparian Buffer Letter: Suggested Language](#)
- [Week 9 General Legislative Review](#)
- [Plant Materials Center Update March 9, 2023](#)
- [Week 8 General Legislative Review](#)

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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