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Washington Association of Conservation Districts

5 Things to Know for March 23, 2023

Dear Thomas,

Breaking news...

The Senate Operating budget came out today and it includes **\$10 million for technical assistance** and **\$40 million for riparian work**. We expect to see something like this in the House budgets next week so this comes as a surprise, albeit a welcome one!

In other news...

In case you missed it, I posted a [special message to members and partners](#) at the beginning of this week. We should know more in a few days about the State Conservation Commission's next steps.

Many thanks to eagle-eyed Josh Giuntoli (SCC) for finding this notation in a fiscal note for [House Bill 1578](#) (which we have added to the [WACD Watch List](#)):

\$693,800 annually for Conservation District Community Response: Pass through to the Washington State Conservation Commission for coordination with Conservation Districts. To increase actions taken by homeowners and landowners on their property to be prepared for the next wildfire.

This exhortation from author James Clear seems apropos at this time:

"Don't rush, but don't wait. Act with urgency, but release yourself from the need to achieve it on a particular timeline. When you think longer term than most, you can think bigger than most. If it takes years, start now."

And this entirely [useful quote](#) whenever you find yourself in a situation where folks disagree:

"It's not me versus you; it's us versus the problem."

Deep enough!

Always yours for conservation,

Tom Salzer, Executive Director

THE FIVE THINGS TO KNOW

1 – NACD Spring Fly-in concludes today

Washington State was well-represented in the "other Washington" this week at [NACD's Spring Fly-in event](#). Representing the Washington Conservation Partnership is:

- Michael Crowder, NACD Past President and Benton CD supervisor
- Doug Rushton, WACD National Director and Thurston CD supervisor
- Ryan Baye, WACD Director of Member and Legislative Services
- Keith Griswold, NRCS Assistant State Conservationist
- Daryl Williams, SCC Chair, Governor appointee with the Tulalip Tribes
- Cherie Kearney, SCC commissioner, Governor appointee with the Columbia Land Trust
- Larry Cochran, SCC commissioner and Palouse CD supervisor

Meetings were held with:

- Representative Marie Gluesenkamp Perez
- Representative Marilyn Strickland
- Representative Susan DelBene
- Representative Kim Schrier
- Representative Derek Kilmer

Meetings were also held with representatives for:

- Representative Adam Smith
- Representative Cathy McMorris Rodgers
- Senator Patty Murray
- Representative Rick Larson

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 – WACD Board work session: what happened?

Almost every WACD board member was present for the work session held on March 20. Even though no decisions were made at the work session, good discussion was had.

- Updates for four South-Central Area conservation districts (Benton/Franklin, North Yakima, and Underwood) were presented to the WACD board.

- WACD Lobbyist Brynn Brady updated the Board on what has been happening in Olympia. The board briefly discussed conservation district election legislation. The Senate released its Capital Budget on Monday and released its Operating Budget today. We expect to see riparian funding in the House budgets that come out on Monday, March 27. (But see the breaking news piece at the top of this newsletter!)
- In light of recent news about bank closures, WACD talked at some length about finances, including discussing the State's Local Government Investment Pool. WACD also talked about the investment mix in place for WACD assets.
- WACD Director of Nursery Operations, Jim Brown, presented a Plant Materials Center update. He also described the many ways that conservation districts receive special treatment that they would not get at commercial nurseries. Examples: priority booking on initial orders, custom bundling of plant orders, custom sorts (meaning asking for a certain size class instead of the more variable conservation grade), supplies for plant sales, outreach, tours of the PMC for districts, and informational PDFs. Also, PMC staff will attempt to find homes for orders that are canceled after the deadline to help districts avoid cancellation fees. Districts get preferred shipping dates because of their plant sales.
- The WACD board also discussed potential other uses of some of the nursery property located in Bow, Washington.
- A carbon market proposal was brought forward by [LandUp](#). That company wishes to work with conservation districts that have landowners who own 2,000 or more acres of forested land.

Documents from the meeting are available in a [Box.com folder](#).

4 – Committees

Sustainable Funding Committee met on Tuesday

Ron Shultz (State Conservation Commission), Stu Trefry (Pierce CD), and Craig Nelson (Okanogan CD) joined [committee members](#) to discuss previous work on this topic.

Livestock Task Force met on Wednesday

The [Livestock Task Force](#) met to discuss news about off-channel watering of livestock and other issues. Those "other issues" turned out to be observations of staff from one state agency driving through watersheds and sending people letters about their potential to pollute.

5 – Miscellaneous

No PMC update today as working the fields took precedence.

Recent Posts on the Hub

- [\\$25 million to help reduce wildfire risks in WA](#)
- [Economic and Revenue Review: March 20, 2023](#)
- [Special Message for Members and Partners](#)

- [Week 10 General Legislative Review](#)
- [Plant Materials Center Update March 16, 2023](#)
- [Pierce CD Seeks Wildfire Program Manager](#)

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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