



Washington Association of Conservation Districts

Five Things to Know for September 7, 2023

1 – CREP Contracts

As many in our conservation district community already know, a complicated situation involving Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) contracts has emerged. Originally centered on some CREP contracts previously enrolled on streams that were not on the map of approved streams, other problems with CREP contracts have surfaced.

Published information sources:

- Yesterday, the Lynden Tribune published [All streamside conservation contracts in review](#).
- The Capital Press published [Washington farmers losing payments for providing fish habitat](#) on August 25, 2023.
- About 26 minutes into [The Farming Show 9/2/23 podcast](#), the host speaks with farmer Steve Groen about CREP.
- CREP was apparently also brought up in [The Farming Show 8/26/23 podcast](#) episode.

The WACD Board of Directors will discuss CREP contracts at their September 18 board meeting. WACD staff anticipate that the Conservation Commission will also discuss this at their September 21 meeting.

This evolving situation remains very fluid and your Association is in close contact with FSA and other agencies on this matter.

2 – Area Association Meetings

Dates have been set for all six area association meetings so set aside some time for your area meeting:

- Wednesday, **October 4** – NW Area Association meeting hosted by the [Clallam CD](#)
- Monday, **October 16** – SW Area Association meeting hosted by the [Pacific CD](#)
- Wednesday, **October 18** – NE Area Association meeting hosted by the [Pend Oreille CD](#)
- Thursday, **October 19** – NC Area Association meeting hosted by the [Adams CD](#)
- Tuesday, **October 24** – SC Area Association meeting hosted by the [Benton CD](#)
- Thursday, **October 26** – SE Area Association meeting hosted by the [Whitman CD](#)

WACD is maintaining a doorway to this information on the Hub at <https://hub.wadistricts.org/annual/2023meetings/areas/>

3 – WACD Annual Meeting

We have updated the [2023 Meetings page](#) with information about [Area Association meetings](#) and the [WACD Annual Meeting](#). We will be updating the Area meetings and WACD Annual meeting information regularly over the next several weeks. Make [2023 Meetings](#) your go-to stop for information on these meetings.

WACD is pleased to welcome [new and repeat sponsors](#) of the 2023 annual conference. More sponsors will be posted to the conference page shortly.

4 – WCS Accepting Applications

The [Washington Conservation Society](#) (WCS) is currently accepting applications for their Environmental Education Mini-Grants. Applications are due November 1st. Applicants must be a WCS member to be eligible to apply. Visit the [WCS website](#) for more information and to complete the on-line grant application. If you have questions please email Heather at waconservationsociety@gmail.com.

5 – Award Nominations Open

Each year, WACD seeks to recognize the best and brightest in our community. We are looking for nominations in eleven different categories, ranging from Associate Supervisors to local co-operators. Applications should take no more than a few minutes of your time. The [2023 nomination forms](#) are now available on the WACD HUB. Additionally, NACD is seeking applications for their [Hugh Hammond Bennett Award](#) for Conservation Excellence to honor one conservation planner and one producer from across the country.

Bonus: Update on Commission Executive Director Recruitment

Because finding the next Executive Director for the Conservation Commission is important to so many of our Association members, we provide a summarized update on how this is going.

- A preliminary screening of candidates is done. The first screening period ends on September 10. We expect a refined pool of candidates will be shared with the selection committee next week.
- We believe there will be three interview sessions around the end of the month that will include internal stakeholders (Commission staff), external stakeholders (including conservation districts), and the selection committee.
- The selection committee is likely to meet during the first week of October to discuss a recommendation to make to the full Conservation Commission board. The most likely scenario is a special meeting of the Commission in October to make a decision on the committee's recommendation. However, it is possible the Commission will choose to wait until their regular meeting on November 30 in Wenatchee to make this decision.

It's important to remember that the Commission may find that no candidates meet their needs and the recruitment is reopened. Also, the position was advertised as open until filled so it's possible that additional candidates will appear late in the process.

We hear that Kirk Robinson's tenure as SCC Interim Executive Director will conclude at the end of September. WACD is thankful for his leadership and appreciates his willingness to serve in the interim role during this crucial time.

A District Perspective



Thank you to Ferry CD's Supervisors and staff for letting Ryan Baye (WACD Director of Legislative and Member Services) attend the August board meeting and the tour of Curlew Lake aquatic projects. Attending a district board meeting on the water was a first for Ryan!

Upcoming Events

2023

- **September 18:** [WACD Board of Directors meeting](#) – online
- **September 20-21:** [State Conservation Commission tour and meeting – Clarkston, WA](#)
- **October 4:** [NW Area Association meeting](#), hosted by Clallam CD
- **October 16:** SW Area Association meeting, hosted by Pacific CD
- **October 18:** [NE Area Association meeting](#), hosted by Pend Oreille CD
- **October 19:** [NC Area Association meeting](#), hosted by Adams CD
- **October 24:** SC Area Association meeting, hosted by Benton CD
- **October 26:** [SE Area Association meeting](#), hosted by Whitman CD
- **November 27-29:** [WACD Annual Conference and Business Meeting](#) — Wenatchee, WA
- **November 30:** [State Conservation Commission meeting – Wenatchee, WA](#)

2024

- **February 10-14:** [NACD 78th annual meeting – San Diego, California](#)
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Executive Corner

It's been a while since I wrote an Executive Corner column. I feel a little rusty as I start this piece.

Welcome Heather!

It gives me great pleasure to welcome Heather Wendt to WACD. As Director of Development and Engagement, Heather will have a tremendous impact on WACD's continued work to improve representation and service. We are in the process of splitting up work between Heather, Ryan, and Tom. The sense of teamwork is very good and we are making great strides on numerous fronts. I know the math doesn't really work this way, but adding a third person to the Executive Office staff feels like we actually doubled our capacity!

CREP

Well. The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program is suddenly problematic on many fronts. CREP has been a tremendous tool for riparian restoration. Now we learn that some contracts may not be completely valid. Producers are feeling this in their pocketbooks and it has affected their trust in our conservation delivery system. That just won't do.

A fortunate outcome for WACD is an improved relationship with [FSA State Executive Director Jon Wyss](#). I am very pleased with Jon's desire to do what he can to protect agricultural producers, even while he works to uphold the viability of the CREP program.

Wildfire

Changing wildfire behavior concerns me. We have grown used to thinking that wildfires behave in certain ways but more recent experiences show they can behave differently than we expect. What's the next step for districts working with individual landowners? Perhaps it is working with entire communities of landowners to create larger protected zones so that wildfire can't gain a foothold inside a neighborhood or community. This approach would be similar to the evolution we've seen in effective riparian restoration. The best practice used to be addressing scattered occurrences along streams but that has changed to addressing whole reaches of streams.

Reading

One immediate impact of bringing Heather aboard was it allowed Ryan and me to take much-needed, long-delayed vacations. One nice thing about a long vacation is it resets one's way of thinking. During the day-to-day scrum of work, it's easy to get caught up in fighting the fires (organizational, programmatic, and relationship) that pop up seemingly daily. A vacation resets that rhythm, allowing one to step back and think more holistically about what we are doing. During travel breaks, I read some interesting pieces that you might find interesting:

- [Let Go of Linear Thinking: Embrace the Past-Future-Present Mindset](#)
- [Stuck in Past or Future-Oriented Thinking?](#)
- [Past, Present or Future? How Your Time Orientation Affects Your Health](#)
- [What's Your Time Perspective?](#)
- [WHAT IS BEING PRESENT IN THE MOMENT \(AND IS IT EVEN REALISTIC?\)](#)
- [What if everything turns out OK? The power of imagining a better future](#)

Those articles are all about changing the way one thinks.

Being a somewhat visual thinker, I am always attracted to something that says matrix or chart! Put them both into one title -- i.e., "Matrix Map" -- and I'll always click that link.

- [The Expanded Matrix Map: Leveraging Your Triple Bottom Line for Fundraising](#)
- [The Matrix Map Approach Part One: How to Create the Matrix Map](#)
- [Matrix Map Part Two: The Strategic Imperatives](#)

And then this article reinforced for me the value of local thought leaders who step out ahead of their neighbors and, by implementing new conservation practices, model that behavior for others:

- [We're more likely to break conservation rules when we see others doing it, scientists say](#)

An analysis of the effectiveness of conservation spending left me not really knowing what to think but knowing the article made me uncomfortable! Hat tip to Ashley Smithers (Clark CD) for sharing this one with me.

- [Return\(s\) on investment: Restoration spending in the Columbia River Basin and increased abundance of salmon and steelhead](#)

For those who like longer reads, I also picked up a couple of new books:

- [The 48 Laws of Power](#). This book is a bit scary in the way the author details some of the behaviors we see in organizations. I bought it to try to better understand such behaviors. WACD staff see a vast range in the way people think and act. Maybe this book will help us respond better to the people we serve.
- [The Agony and the Ecstasy: A Biographical Novel of Michelangelo](#). This one is a purely personal read. I first read this in junior high school and became entranced with the world the author was able to create through his writing. Over the years, my hardback edition was lost, and for several years I've been keeping an eye open for a copy. I ran across the book in a small bookstore recently and immediately pulled it from the shelf.

It's good to be back from vacation. We are seeing a lot of activity in our conservation community and most of it looks like progress. It's good to be home.

Always yours for conservation,
Tom Salzer

Recent Posts on the Hub

- [Derelict Structure Program Lead, Environmental Planner 3](#)
- [Agricultural Community Program Manager](#)
- [Fighting fire with Firewise: Columbia River Gorge towns push for more wildfire safety practices \(Underwood CD\)](#)
- [Lewis Conservation District Joins Farm Bureau Tour of Agriculture](#)
- [Northeast Area Meeting](#)
- [Southeast Area Meeting](#)

See the full list of Recent Posts at <https://hub.wadistricts.org/posts/>. We capture many articles of interest to segments of our community in the [WACD Reading List](#).

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>



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