



Washington Association of Conservation Districts

5 Things to Know for February 17, 2023

Dear Thomas,

This is a big week for legislation with today, Friday, February 17th, being the "[*last day to read in committee reports \(pass bills out of committee and read them into the record on the floor\) in house of origin, except House fiscal committees and Senate Ways & Means and Transportation committees.*](#)" Tom and Ryan have been pulled in several different directions this week and are doing the best they can to monitor all of the activity. WACD is very fortunate to have the services of lobbyist Brynn Brady who provides consultation and guidance to WACD on a variety of legislative matters throughout the year.

This issue of the Five Things to Know comes to you a day late because Ryan and Tom were both away for part of this week. Thursday continues to be our usual and customary publication day.

FIVE THINGS TO KNOW

1 – Voluntary Riparian Grant Bill Amended and Passed

Of note is the vote today on Substitute House Bill 1720. HB 1720 was amended to add a riparian grant program to be administered by the Salmon Recovery Funding Board. That change did not remove the program from the Conservation Commission. SHB 1720 was voted out of the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee with a unanimous DO PASS recommendation.

The amendment incorporated into the bill essentially divides the riparian grant program between the State Conservation Commission and the Salmon Recovery Funding Board, creating two riparian grant programs. If this holds up throughout the process, conservation districts will be able to demonstrate their incredible ability to put conservation on the ground.

This compromise is a win for our conservation district community. There was a significant risk of districts getting sidelined as this legislation progressed. The desire for a regulatory backstop by some original bill sponsors was viewed by some people in our community as conflicting with

our ethos of voluntary, incentive-based conservation. This created a point of friction that made it seem that districts are unwilling or incapable of moving forward with a new voluntary riparian grant program. We know that if our agricultural partners can compromise, we can go along with those compromises. WACD staff believe that being excluded from this proposal would have damaged the reputation and credibility of conservation districts for years to come, at least in the eyes of some legislators.

There is, perhaps, an oversight in the amended language. The last section requires a task force to report back on the success of the State Conservation Commission riparian grant program but the SRFB riparian grant program does not include this requirement. Hopefully, we will see this addressed if SHB 1720 advances to the Senate for consideration.

2 – CD Elections Study Bill Amended and Passed

At the end of last week, House Bill 1567 on conservation district elections was amended before being adopted by the House State Government and Tribal Relations Committee. SHB 1567 moves next to the House Rules Committee, where bills are held before any vote by the full House.

The amendment added to the study bill extends the deadline for reporting study results back to the appropriate legislative committees:

The Washington state institute for public policy must provide as much information as possible in a preliminary report to the legislature by December 1, 2023. A final report must be completed by June 30, 2024, and submitted in accordance with RCW 43.01.036 to the standing committees of the house of representatives and the senate with jurisdiction over elections and conservation district issues.

3 – Once More: Volunteers Needed for Shared Resources Work Group

We are extending the open call for volunteers who wish to participate in the Shared Resources Work Group. We are looking for volunteers to help as WACD examines how to reduce expenses for individual districts by sharing or pooling funds for key services. If you are interested, please contact Ryan and Tom at oly@wacd.org.

Resolution 2022-08 as adopted at the 2022 WACD annual business meeting calls for WACD to address the need and opportunity for sharing district resources and services, with a report due to WACD membership by June 30th of this year. You can read the full language on the WACD Hub, where all the active resolutions are available [here](#).

4 – NACD Annual Conference Summary

With more than 20 Washingtonians attending, our state was well represented! After serving a very full term as NACD President, Michael Crowder handed over the reins to NACD's first woman to serve as President, Kim LaFleur from Massachusetts. Wade Troutman (Foster Creek CD) and Larry Davis (Whatcom CD) received special recognition. NACD's committee structure was changed with the adoption of the revised bylaws. NACD gave the oath of office to newly elected officers of the Association of Conservation Executive Directors (ACED). ACED is a new

organization to give state association executive directors a voice in NACD. More on the NACD annual meeting is shared below.

5 – Thank You to the 2023 Legislative Day Crew



Many thanks to those who made Legislative Day a success: conservation district supervisors, their staff, and Conservation Commission staff. We also extend our appreciation to Brynn Brady who helped make this a productive investment of time and energy. Many more people were present and engaged than are shown in this snapshot.

Executive Corner

NACD Annual Meeting Report

Washington State was represented by more than 20 conservation community members and significant others at the 77th Annual Meeting of the National Association of Conservation Districts held this week in New Orleans, Louisiana.

By all accounts, this was a great meeting. I'm sure we'll hear some reports from Conservation Commission staff participants that corroborate this. I was pleased to observe that in the population of attendees, it seemed there were more women present, more people of color

present, and more diversity in generations present. At this meeting, it felt to me like whoever spoke was respectfully listened to and heard. While there is always some separating of people based on position in the NACD hierarchy, those in leadership invested extra time and effort to be accessible to all. There was a sense of warmth and acceptance in every meeting or presentation I attended.

You can browse NACD annual meeting photos by starting at [NACD's general Flickr account](#) or by diving directly into an [album of annual meeting photos](#).

NACD President Michael Crowder shifted into the Past President role as [Kim LaFleur from Massachusetts became NACD President](#). (You can find information about NACD officers on the [NACDnet website](#). I'm sure NACD staff will update officer information in the very near future.) I have been very pleased with the work Michael has done to strengthen and improve NACD. He called on WACD members and staff several times to help with particular tasks and our people were always pleased to provide that assistance. Michael also has been and continues to be a superb representative for Washington State.

While Michael was leading the way on several initiatives, Kim was simultaneously working very effectively on numerous significant issues. I was honored to work directly with Kim on the [NACD DEI Task Force](#). The induction of the first woman to become NACD President is, to me, highly significant. More than half of all farm producers in the United States are women, so to have this perspective finally reflected in the highest position in our national organization seems appropriate and meaningful. Kim is a first-generation farmer so she brings special insight to NACD into the challenges facing new farmers. I am confident that NACD has a great leader for the next two years in President LaFleur.

A major highlight for Washington State was the special recognition of two of our people. Wade Troutman (Foster Creek CD) and Larry Davis (Whatcom CD) were both recognized. Wade received the Olin Sims Conservation Leadership Award:

*The **Olin Sims Conservation Leadership Award** was established in partnership between NACD and NRCS and is presented to an individual, district, or organization that has gone above and beyond to promote private lands conservation. Sims, a rancher from McFadden, WY, was a longstanding leader in NACD who dedicated his life to volunteer service and conservation. The award serves as a testament to the memory and legacy of Sims.*

*The **Olin Sims Award** was presented to **Wade Troutman** of Bridgeport, WA. Troutman is a prominent conservation leader in the state of Washington. He has served on his local conservation district board, and in various positions with the Washington Association of Conservation Districts and NACD. Troutman actively manages his farm to protect sage grouse habitat. More than 30% of the land he farms is left in its natural condition, which provides cover and food for the sage groups grouse and countless other species. He has, and continues to be, an inspiration and mentor to innumerable leaders at the local, state, and national levels.*

Larry Davis received the President's Award from outgoing president Crowder:

*The **President's Award**, given yearly by NACD's President to an individual or organization that has been especially dedicated to advancing conservation during the president's term, was given to **Larry Davis** of Washington.*

The standing structure of committees and resource policy groups was changed by the NACD Board of Directors this week. The reason for changing the overall structure was to streamline the system and make it easier to understand workflow and reporting. As I learn more I'll report back to WACD members on this topic. Also, whenever a new NACD president is inducted into office, that person may choose to change who sits on these groups. With a change in structure and in the office of the president, we can expect to see quite a bit of change over the coming weeks.

In the past several years, NACD has been providing grants directly to conservation districts. Pacific Region conservation districts have been big beneficiaries of these programs. For every dues dollar sent to NACD from Pacific Region districts in fiscal years 2020, 2021, and 2022, NACD invested over \$42 in grant funding in Pacific Region districts.

The Pacific Region includes Alaska, American Samoa, California, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, Oregon, Palau, and Washington. Some highlights for the Pacific Region in 2020, 2021, and 2022 include:

- 163 dues-paying districts
- 17 Soil Health Champions recognized
- 117 TA grant contracts issued, benefiting at least 114 districts
- 31 Urban and Community grant contracts, benefiting more than 30 districts
- +75 mentions of Pacific Region districts in NACD publications

In short, conservation districts get a whole lot of value for the dues they provide to NACD.

I am happy to be a Friend of NACD ([Silver level](#)) and I encourage you to consider donating to the [Friends program](#). Your dollars are used to help conservation districts grow and succeed. You can also honor someone you know who has contributed to advancing the field of conservation by completing a [memorial or honorarium membership form](#). Becoming a paid Friend or nominating someone for recognition are two ways you can give back to the conservation district community.

Part of the reason I attended the NACD meeting was to represent the Pacific Region in a new group, the Association of Conservation Executive Directors (ACED). Among the several meetings ACED held, I was captured by NACD photographers in two such meetings:

- <https://www.flickr.com/photos/nacd/52685770536/in/album-72177720305947207/>
- <https://www.flickr.com/photos/nacd/52685257302/in/album-72177720305947207/>
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Washington State people were present everywhere during the NACD annual meeting. Many thanks to all who attended for the strong representation of Washington conservation, and

similarly, many thanks to all who authorized the expenditures necessary to send so many of our people to this event!

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

- [Week 5 General Legislative Review](#)
- [WACD Testimony on HB 1567 on Conservation District Elections](#)
- [WACD Testimony on HB 1720 on Riparian Areas](#)
- [Week 4 General Legislative Review](#)
- [Legislators Don't Have Fangs](#)
- [Plant Materials Center update: February 2, 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.

We appreciate our great 2022-2023 sponsors

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