



# Washington Association of Conservation Districts

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## Five Things to Know for December 14, 2023

Apologies folks!

WACD is having difficulties with our website today and our "draft" newsletter was published instead of the real McCoy.

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1. **Annual Conference Survey**
  2. **Bare Root Harvest in Under Way at the PMC**
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## 1 – Annual Conference Survey

### *We want and need your feedback*

To help us make improvements and ensure the WACD annual conference remains relevant and useful to you, we ask that you complete a survey about this year's conference. The **2023 WACD Annual Conference Survey** is available at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/N8LB6BQ>. We'll keep it open until the end of the month. Please take a few moments to give WACD the gift of your feedback.

## 2 – Bare Root Harvest is Under Way at the PMC

Bare root harvest started on December 1st with the full harvest crew. That includes 22 seasonal employees, 6 of whom are working in the fields with the lifter and 16 in the packing shed sorting, grading, counting, and packaging. There is one additional seasonal employee, Jon, who works diligently building orders and preparing shipping. Crew Leader Maria supervises the packing shed crew and Farm Operations Supervisor Oscar oversees the lifting crew.

Nineteen seasonal employees worked here last year and longer; some have been with us for several years. Having that many returnees makes it easy to get harvest started. The crew has already harvested a total of 351,788 plants so far this season with an average of 30,478 plants harvested per day.

Our sales volume this year is composed of 289 orders which is a slight increase from the same date last year when it was 280 orders. There is still a wide variety of species available so if anyone needs bare root conservation seedlings and live stakes check out the current availability at [www.wacdpmc.org](http://www.wacdpmc.org). The list is getting shorter so it is advisable to secure your plant materials sooner rather than later.

[You can view the full PMC update on the WACD Hub](#)



### 3 – Final Resolutions Are Now Available

WACD has processed all of the changes to resolutions that occurred during the WACD annual business meeting last week. Download "Resolutions adopted - 2023" from the WACD Resolutions page at <https://wadistricts.us/wacd/resolutions/> or hit this link to download the file directly: <https://wadistricts.us/download/resolutions-adopted-2023/?tmstv=1701900116>

### 4 – Legislatives Update

The Governor released his proposed supplemental budget yesterday and Conservation Commission staff quickly [published](#) how their budget would be affected for FY25 if the

proposal was adopted. WACD's message right now is to remember the legislature holds the purse strings, our lobbyist is exploring if the Governor's proposal has any traction with legislators. And if you don't avidly watch TVW, you likely missed a [Commission presentation](#) last week on the riparian grant program to the House Ag & Natural Resources Committee.

As part of WACD's preparation for the 2024 legislative session, we are working to securing a hotel with a group discount for folks planning to attend WACD Legislative Day on Thursday, January 25th. WACD is also offering legislative scheduling assistance to districts that would prefer not to make their own arrangements, please contact [ryan@wacd.org](mailto:ryan@wacd.org) by Jan 5th.

## 5 – WACD Awards

Announced at the WACD Conference, we can share the recipients of WACD awards now that all awardees have been notified. Thank you for your nominations and congratulations to this year's winners.

- **Wayne Reid "Young Tiger" Award** - Joe Kear (Underwood CD)
- **Special Service Award** - Randy Kelly (Okanogan CD)
- **Associate Supervisor of the Year** - Pauline Hagen (Stevens County CD)
- **Vim Wright "Building Bridges" Award** - Rep. Mike Chapman
- **Eugene Schloz Outstanding Supervisor Award** - Albert Roberts (in memorial)
- **President's Award** - Roylene Comes at Night (NRCS) & Dave Fenn (Lewis CD)
- **Conservation District of the Year** - Cascadia CD

## Bonus items!

### *Holiday Letter to Members and Partners*

On Monday, December 11, WACD Executive Director Tom Salzer emailed a holiday letter to all conservation district supervisors and managers/executives in Washington State. Not all of those emails went through so [the letter is also available on the Hub](#) and at the bottom of that post is a [downloadable copy of the letter](#).

### *Envirothon auction was a success!*

The Envirothon auction held at the WACD Annual Conference raised \$7,885 to help send the winning state team to the national competition. [New York is hosting the national competition](#), starting at the end of July 2024. Learn more about Envirothon competition on the [Washington State Envirothon website](#).

## Upcoming Events

### 2024

- **January 8:** [Washington State Legislature short session begins](#)
- **January 15:** [WACD Regular Board Meeting](#)

- **January 18:** [State Conservation Commission meeting – Lacey, WA](#)
  - **January 25:** [WACD Legislative Day](#)
  - **February 10-14:** [NACD 78th annual meeting – San Diego, California](#)
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## Executive Corner

### 'Tis the season to be thankful.

We are just eleven elven days from Christmas. Whether you celebrate this season or not, the bustle of activity between Thanksgiving and New Years is inescapable. It touches all of us in some way. Deadlines, traffic, shopping, colored lights showing in the usual places and sometimes in the oddest of places. It is sensory overload.

At this time of year, I become more reflective. My life has been full of adventures and I'm sure there are more to come. Some of those adventures proved to be what I think of as "marker moments" in my life. These are the events that when you think back on your life, your life turned on a particular moment. While you may remember the date, you primarily remember it by the event, and by how your life was before and after it.

For example, my on-again, off-again girlfriend finally agreed to marry me and we made that union official on August 27, 1977. I remember the date, but what I remember more clearly was how I felt that day and how my life changed overnight, becoming more complicated and ever so much richer.

There are so many marker moments for me... Falling on a nearly vertical climbing pitch, getting lost on a solo hike near White Pass, night hiking in the Olympics, getting so sick I passed out face-down in the toilet (thank you, Janis, for getting me to the emergency room). Three totaled motorcycles. A helicopter crash. Getting stuck underground when the mine boss set off a blast, thinking everyone was out. My personal list goes on and on.

Our community has had some marker moments, too. I recall the time a Governor drew a red line through the State Conservation Commission's budget. At the time, that seemed like an unthinkable thing to do. Part of the backstory here is that the Commission had focused so much energy in telling the conservation district story that it forgot to tell decision makers of the valuable role the Commission filled. That was indeed a very painful moment, not just for the Commission but for our entire community. The value of WACD was made clear to me as leadership rallied support from conservation district supervisors and staff from across the state. Our community descended on Olympia like locusts and by sheer persistence, caused the Commission's budget to be reinstated in the budget. This event was a turning point for voluntary conservation in Washington State.

More recently, the loss of Albert Roberts (Okanogan CD) and Ron Shultz (State Conservation Commission) were marker moments. Most of us don't remember the day each person walked on, but we remember the time before and how it felt afterwards.

The only decent bit from my first two attempts at this column is this: "I was fortunate to have known each of them for many years. Ron and I worked alongside each other through much of my 13 years with the Conservation Commission. While many, many people in our conservation community believe in the voluntary conservation ethos, Albert and Ron were dedicated to it. It would be hard to find two individuals more supportive of local conservation than Albert and Ron. I still pause to hear their voices, and the silence that returns makes me feel their absence even more profoundly." As I type this today, I feel them echoing in my heart and mind.

Marker moments give us opportunities to gaze into the mirror and consider how our lives are going. They also help us re-affirm what is most important to us. For me, voluntary conservation is one of those core values that has become a central point in my life. Our shared conservation ethos is something that vibrates inside me with warmth and -- yes, I'll say it -- with love. Making the conscious choice to make a career out of conservation was a marker moment for me. I came into this work accidentally but stay with it by choice.

This surprises me when I think about it. Our community is composed of an incredible array of personalities. We are not easy on each other. While conservation districts are incredibly proficient in helping people choose better ways of managing the resources they shepherd, we don't always exercise those skills with each other. In so many ways, we are more like a very large family. We speak a little more directly and harshly with each other. We feel broken promises as betrayal. We get wound up over things that are often pretty small in the big scheme of life. We take liberties with each other that we wouldn't take with strangers.

If that sounds uncomfortable, well, it certainly can be! And yet, I am thankful to be a part of this community. Over time, I've found that even when the ship rocks, our people are eventually able to come together, extend grace to each other, and find our center again. I am deeply thankful for the forgiveness our community members give each other, time and time again. That resiliency is one of our greatest strengths.

Our conservation family has influence. We create positive change. We build better communities. We do these things without losing sight of neighbors and neighborhoods, creatures and communities, and (dare I say it) people and politicians.

Yes, I'm thankful for our politicians, too. You may be surprised when I say they are really just like us. Some are loud and crave the spotlight. Most, I think, are a little quieter and more interested in supporting and improving the lives of their constituents. However, they must blow their own horns to raise money to get re-elected, so that is just part of the process. A few work almost behind-the-scenes, influencing outcomes but rarely being spotted in the wild.

I am very thankful for the quiet ones. I see the same thing in conservation districts where we see a small number of people frequently stand up and speak out. The vast majority of our people seem to just quietly get on with delivering conservation to their community the best way they know how. I celebrate our persistent, proficient conservation district governors and professionals. Without them, we wouldn't have the country's best conservation delivery system. We need people stepping out in front, but

the people on the other side of this are foundation stones for our conservation house.

On a more personal level, I am also thankful for the people who have filled the seat I currently occupy. Over the past few weeks, I've been conversing with Don Stuart, one of WACD's finest executive directors. It's safe to say that without Don's leadership, I would not have made this career choice. He was a huge influence for me. At the time, I was working for the State Conservation Commission so I saw a lot of Don. I came to appreciate his intelligence, his passion, and his different sense of humor. Today, he is a published author several times over (you can find some of his books on Amazon) and living among the trees on Vashon Island. He remains aware of our conservation district world and appreciates the great work being done across Washington State.

Following Don was Pat MacGregor and Kitty Russell. Then along came John Larson, Dave Vogel, Bob Schroeter, Patricia Hickey, and then me. I stand on the work done with and for our community by these folks. You may have liked them...or not. Nevertheless, each influenced the operational environment of WACD and our member districts, so what we have today is attributable in part to their work. I am deeply thankful for each of them.

They had marker moments during their tenures as WACD Executive Director. Each of us has such moments. What a tremendous blessing it is to be part of a huge tapestry of people who disagree on so much but continue to coalesce around the idea that voluntary, local conservation is crucial to conserving our precious natural resources, and around the ideal that conservation districts are the best mechanism to achieve this.

I hope you'll take some time to reflect on the marker moments in your life and how they have changed you. There is something about our community that attracts and keeps you with us. It might be interpersonal, it might be aspirational, it might be tradition. Whatever it is, it is important. I hope you can be thankful for it, just as I am thankful for you.

Always yours for conservation,

Tom Salzer, Executive Director

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## Latest Posts on the Hub

- [PMC Update for December 14, 2023](#)
- [Lower Columbia Fish Enhancement Group Executive Director Position](#)
- [Holiday Letter to Members and Partners](#)
- [Palouse CD Seeks Conservation Planner](#)
- [Conservation district hosting annual plant sale | Peninsula Daily News](#)
- [Buy a beer, plant a tree: local program sees first plantings | The Daily World](#)

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

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## Latest on the [Reading List](#)

- [Gray and Oregon Road fires were among the most destructive in Washington history | The Spokesman-Review](#)
  - [How researchers, farmers and brewers want to safeguard beer against climate change | AP News](#)
  - [USDA plant hardiness zone map update gardeners climate warming : NPR](#)
  - [Climate change is hastening the demise of Pacific Northwest forests - Columbia Insight](#)
  - [Farm bill, funding updates | WAWG](#)
  - [Addressing the Elephant in the Room | Psychology Today](#)
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