



Washington Association of Conservation Districts

June 24, 2024

Dear Association Members:

Thank you for working with us to make this past year a remarkable one for WACD and conservation districts. This fiscal year, your state association continued to provide more services and support for conservation districts. Consider these examples:

- More than 1.6 million native plants were harvested for restoration and conservation projects through Washington State and the greater Pacific Northwest.
- During the 2023 legislative session, WACD was instrumental in securing over \$55 million for new conservation programs, bringing the State Conservation Commission's budget up to \$97 million in operating funds for the biennium. This fiscal year, WACD helped secure another \$3.5 million in Conservation Technical Assistance funding that brought an additional \$75,000 in CTA to every conservation district in Washington.
- WACD invested in staff capacity to help support more committee activity, increase WACD's presence at meetings and events, and enable us to improve our policies and procedures.
- WACD secured a bevy of partners who provided additional financial support and representation for the WACD 2023 Annual Conference, helping us build a better conference experience for you. WACD has great sponsors lined up for the 2024 annual conference.
- WACD implemented a legal services fund that is working well for conservation districts. That account is funded again so critical legal help will be available when needed.
- A month ago, WACD held a spring legislative workshop for conservation districts and partners. This productive event will guide WACD's work and reinforces strong working relationships among WACD members and partners.
- In the next week or so, WACD will be announcing a contract for information technology support for conservation districts. This is a service WACD has not provided before. WACD continues to provide free email accounts to more than 80 people in our community.
- WACD is working with partners like Enduris to create a help desk for human resources needs. Identifying and addressing needs for legal services, IT support, and HR support came from the Shared Resources Work Group with support from the WACD Board of Directors.
- WACD continues to build strong, healthy partnerships with key entities, including the State Conservation Commission, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Washington Association of District Employees, and the Washington Conservation Society.
- WACD has 10 active committees that work to address topics important to conservation districts. Committees are made up of district supervisors, managers, and staff from across the state, ensuring that member views are brought directly into WACD operations.

- Throughout the year, WACD maintained a regular flow of information to members and partners. Our three newsletters (Weekly Updates, Legislative Updates, and Grant Opportunities) reach 379 inboxes.

While WACD built new services and promoted more partnerships, we also fought for choices that benefit conservation districts. Advocacy and representation, both with the Legislature and with agencies, is how this work occurs. Along the way, WACD did not stop progressing on the topics members identified as most important to them. We did not stop hearing you.

Operating WACD is a challenge because our revenue stream is relatively flat. As a 501(c)(6) nonprofit entity, WACD is not directly eligible for most grants. WACD survives on four sources of funds: the sale of native plant materials, dues from members, contracts with other parties, and sponsorships.

How can you help WACD do the best work for our conservation district community? Here are six ways to support conservation districts across Washington State:

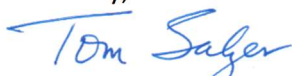
1. Pay WACD dues. Income from dues supports the advocacy and services WACD provides to and for members. When conservation districts don't pay dues, all districts suffer.
2. Patronize the WACD Plant Materials Center. There are few other native plant nurseries in the country that operate for the benefit of members instead of shareholders. It is your native plant nursery so please use it.
3. Participate in the WACD annual conference and business meeting. This is where great relationships are made and where district desires are adopted to direct WACD.
4. Volunteer to serve on committees. All conservation districts benefit when the resident experts in our community give some of their time and knowledge to helping WACD work on issues through the committee process.
5. Write a resolution about a conservation topic that is important to you. The conservation district community needs to hear your needs.
6. Serve as an Area Director or as an Officer of WACD. Few other opportunities present as much opportunity to influence the direction of WACD and the delivery of services to members.

I'm very pleased that WACD is continuing to move toward a service-focused business model. This requires investment of time, money, and energy. WACD is providing more resources for conservation districts than ever before, and we can only do that with your continued support.

Please remit your annual dues so WACD can continue to provide the services you need.

Thank you for your continued support,

Sincerely,



Tom Salzer, Executive Director

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