



Washington Association of Conservation Districts

Five Things to Know for January 4, 2024



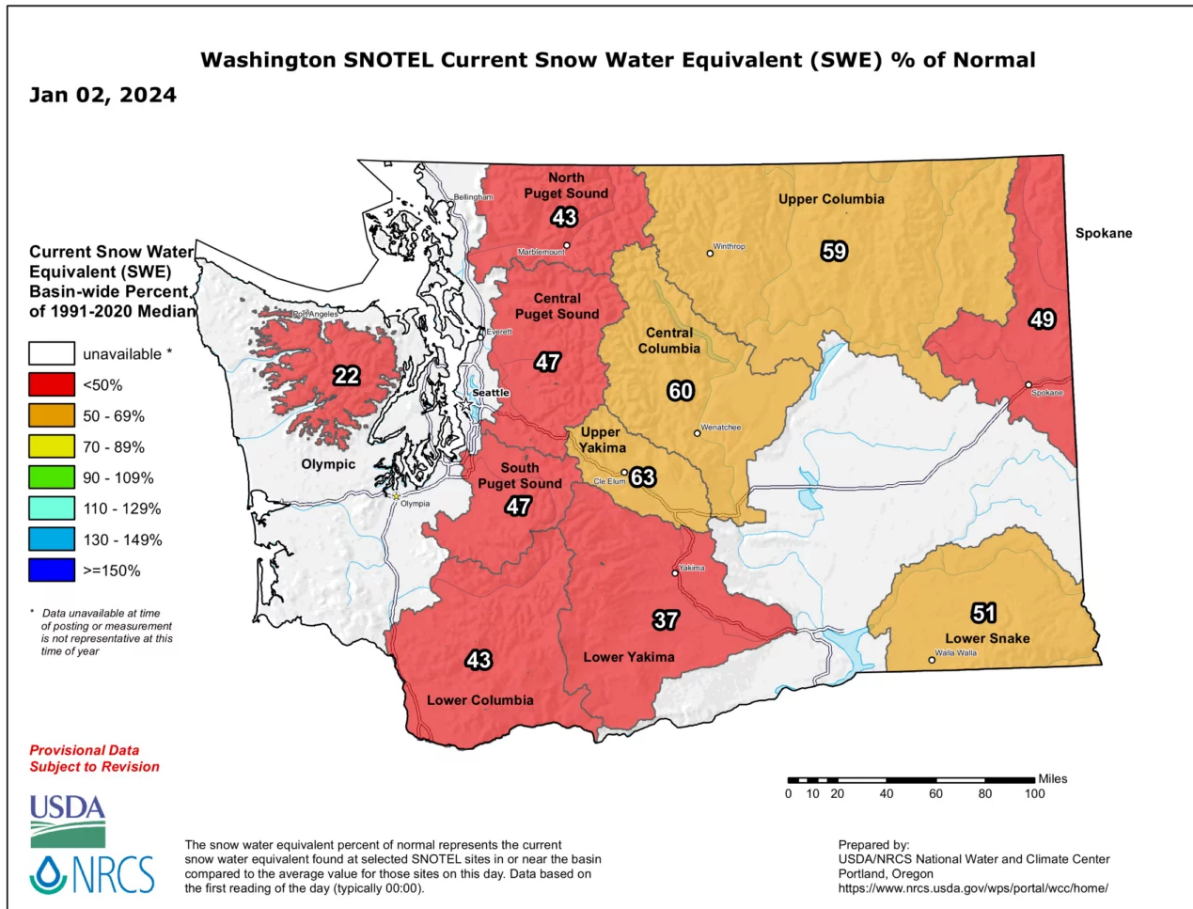
Mazama Winter, by Becky Drenner, Okanogan Conservation District. This was sourced from the Conservation Commission's [Marketing Toolkit](#) resource. Highly recommended!

This is the kind of snow we wish we had in the Olympics and Cascades! Unfortunately, the [January 2, 2024 SNOTEL report](#) reveals grim numbers in all areas.

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Upcoming Events

2024

- **January 8:** [Washington State Legislature session begins](#)
- **January 18:** [State Conservation Commission meeting – Lacey, WA](#)
- **January 22:** [WACD Board of Directors Meeting](#)
- **January 25:** [WACD Legislative Day](#)
- **February 10-14:** [NACD 78th annual meeting – San Diego, California](#)

1 – Legislative Day Details!

We have secured the Holiday Inn Express & Suites in Lacey/Olympia with a group discount for folks planning to attend WACD Legislative Day on Thursday, January 25th. To reserve your room please [follow this link](#). The link will take you to the hotel website, where, at the top of the page, click "book now" and enter the dates (January 24th - January 25th), click "search" and the next page will display the room rates and types. If you need to book a reservation outside of the dates, you can call the hotel directly (1-360-491-7985) to make or modify your booking.

WACD will be hosting a legislative breakfast and briefing on the morning of the 25th, from 7 - 8:30 AM at the Holiday Inn Express. Staff is also preparing legislative materials for districts for potential use on Leg Day.

2 – WACD Websites Have Changed

WACD has three websites: the [main, public-facing site](#), the [WACD Hub](#), and the [WACD PMC site](#). Our main site and the Hub have both moved to new hosting services.

Our main site is now hosted by [Streamline](#)

We are excited to share with you that the main site at <https://wadistricts.org> looks different than it did last year! While we have much the same content as before, the look and feel of the site is different. We moved our main site to Streamline for better reliability and to help make our content more accessible to website visitors who may have auditory, visual, or motor challenges.

The Hub has also moved to a new host

Over the Christmast-to-New Year break, WACD staff moved the Hub to a different hosting service. This was done to improve reliability and speed. Also, running the two websites on different hosts gives us more resiliency in the event one hosting service experiences a problem.

The Hub is now available at <https://wadistricts.us>. If you happen to hit the old URL, you should be redirected to the new Hub location. You'll know it's the new Hub if the page has more blues and greens in the color scheme.

As we get into the new year, you can expect to see seldom-used features of the Hub disappear as we work to make the content more focused and improve the responsiveness of the website. The Hub has leaned toward an "everything but the kitchen sink" approach, making it slow and cumbersome to use. We will continue to refine this service in 2024.

3 – Funding Opportunities Newsletter

On Tuesday, WACD sent out a list of potential new funding opportunities for our member districts. Heather Wendt found three available funding entities with areas of interest that overlap with district services. You can find that newsletter [here](#) and the sign-up sheet to

receive future updates on the [WACD website](#).

4 – Legislative Services

It is January and next week the Legislature convenes. WACD is gearing up its legislative services for the 2024 session. The two most apparent products will be a WACD bill tracker accessible on our website and a weekly legislative newsletter. The legislative newsletter every Monday will provide more detail than the weekly Five Things to Know newsletter, with information we know will be pertinent to our members: new bills introduced, opportunities to testify in committees, and weekly highlight by our lobbyist on legislative action outside WACD's purview. You can subscribe to that newsletter [here](#).

On top of the Association's advocacy for our members, WACD can also provide more specific services to conservation districts. This may take many different forms depending on your individual needs. WACD can assist with scheduling legislative appointments, completing funding request forms, writing draft legislation, and assisting with other needs your district has when it comes to promoting voluntary conservation in Olympia.

5 – District Video Tour

In the spirit of trying something different in the new year, we thought we could highlight district videos for the benefit of our membership. These were created by districts themselves or in partnership regarding a district project, and are worth sharing with our membership to celebrate some of their successes.

Because they were the first to respond to Ryan's email back in November, this week we want to highlight the Little Wind River Habitat Restoration Project by the Underwood Conservation District. Their video has received 60,000 views on YouTube! Click on the image to watch the video and learn more about the project.



Correspondence

January correspondence

Find January correspondence in the [January 2024 Box.com folder](#). That folder includes:

- January 2024 Nonpoint Newsletter (Ecology)
- Puget Sound Partnership - Whidbey Study 2022-2023
- NACD eResource

Correspondence available as links

- [Washington State Conservation Commission: Deadline extended to January 17 for comments on Riparian Grant Program](#)
- [Washington State Conservation Commission District Digest](#)
- [Washington State Conservation Commission VSP News](#)
- [Puget Sound Partnership 2024 legislative session kickoff news](#)
- [Thurston Conservation District January 2024 newsletter](#)
- [WACD Funding Opportunities for Conservation Districts, January 2, 2024](#)

Be sure to visit the [WACD Reading List](#) for more interesting content!

Executive Corner

Welcome to 2024

I suppose every newsletter you receive at the start of the new calendar year will say much the same thing: welcome to 2024! We are excited to be starting a new year with you and look forward to working with you to advance voluntary conservation throughout Washington State.

Challenges = opportunities

WACD is facing some challenges. In the words of [John Adams](#), "[Every problem is an opportunity in disguise](#)." As you read the challenges I've listed below, please view them as opportunities for us to do and be better.

- We need to do a better job of managing and reporting our work on resolutions throughout the year. We're working on this.
- As costs rise, we are facing increasing difficulty balancing our desire to increase and improve service to our members and our ability to pay operating costs from current year revenue. Our members face this same condition: the desire and commitment to do more, while costs act like a vise to keep things the way they are. WACD needs to find

some new sources of revenue that come from outside our conservation district community.

- We need to regroup and focus on what is most important. We need to do things right, and we need to make sure we are doing the right things. Doing things right is tactical and operational. Doing the right things is strategic. "[Doing things right is implementing the vision, but before you implement it you must create it. Doing the right things is creating the vision.](#)" In WACD's 82nd year of existence, the conditions we are operating in are changing rapidly. It's time to dig in and re-examine who we are and the value we provide our members. One way to do that is to look at what we are doing, and why we are doing those things.
- In recent years, various internal and external factors have influenced WACD's relationship with members. In 2024, WACD is committed to improving relationships with all members, partners, and sponsors.
- Our resolution system is showing wear-and-tear. It worked well when there was no internet and people had to travel to meet in the same room to debate and decide issues. That is not the world we inhabit today. We need to come together earlier in the year to help formulate policy positions that all members can support and espouse. We can and should do a better job of evaluating the impact of each resolution on WACD resources and engaging in honest conversation about how we can accomplish everything members want from their association. I call this the "ways and means" step: figuring out the possible ways to move a resolution forward, and identifying the resources that work would require. So far, we don't have a ways-and-means process; we simply jump straight from adopting resolutions to calls for prioritizing every resolution.
- One of the deepest puzzles to solve is the lack of people interested in serving in WACD leadership. Serving takes time and energy. The potential impact on WACD's capacity is huge, but the actual impact on the individual's life can also be dramatic. We desperately need more leaders in the pipeline, yet each year it seems as if it becomes harder and harder to find people willing to stand up for local conservation on a statewide level. I've thought about this for years and I continue to crave a solution.

In summary

So that's it, a simple list of what we could do better. In summary:

- Better tracking and reporting of resolution work.
- Find new revenue sources to support WACD's work for and with members and partners.
- Re-evaluate what we are doing: are we doing it right, and are we doing the right things?
- Focus on improving relationships.
- Develop a "ways and means" process step to help us figure out how to move resolutions forward.
- Build a pipeline of leaders eager to step into WACD Officer and Director positions.

This list might be a great New Year's resolution for WACD! We look forward to your ideas and questions, so please don't hesitate to reach out to us at oly@wacd.org.

Always yours for conservation,



Latest Posts on the Hub

- [Riparian Grant Program: Review and Comment on Guidelines](#)
- [Welcome to the WACD Hub 2024](#)
- [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](#)

See the full list of Recent Posts at <https://wadistricts.us/posts/>. The Jobs list is available at <https://wadistricts.us/jobs/>. A wide range of content is available in the [WACD Reading List](#).

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Pass it on!

Please pass this newsletter on to others in our conservation community so they can subscribe and be as informed as you are!

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1219 11th Ave SE, Olympia, WA 98501
(564) 669-7540

