



Washington Association of Conservation Districts

Five Things to Know for February 15, 2024

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1 – Latest Legislative News

Tuesday was another legislative cut-off in Olympia, where bills must be approved by the House or the Senate or be left behind for the year. Eight bills were cut from WACD's bill tracker with two directly related to CDs:

- **[HB 1365](#)** Improving Puget Sound water quality
- **[HB 1935](#)** Promoting resource conservation practices that include student education and leadership opportunities in public schools.

Wednesday saw the release from the Revenue Forecast Council of its projections for Washington State's economy and revenue for state budgets. That information was holding back the tidal wave of budget proposals, so the most definitive numbers could be available for the negotiations. As we go to print, WACD expects to see a capital budget proposal on Thursday and a operating budget proposal on Sunday or Monday. No definitive word yet on

WACD's CTA funding request.

WACD's Director of Legislative and Member Services, Ryan Baye, covers more in his [Legislative Updates newsletter](#) ([click here to subscribe](#)). For a "front door" to advocacy topics, [visit our Advocacy 2024 page](#).

2 – NRCS Practice Revisions – Public Comment Period

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is seeking [public comment](#) on proposed revisions to eight national conservation practice standards. Comments are due **March 4, 2024**.

Proposed revisions to the national conservation practice standards include:

- Field Border (Code 386)
- Filter Strip (Code 393)
- Grazing Management (Code 528)
- Hedgerow Planting (Code 422)
- Mulching (Code 484)
- Seasonal Water Management for Wildlife (Code 646)
- Structure for Water Control (Code 587)
- Wetland Restoration (Code 657)

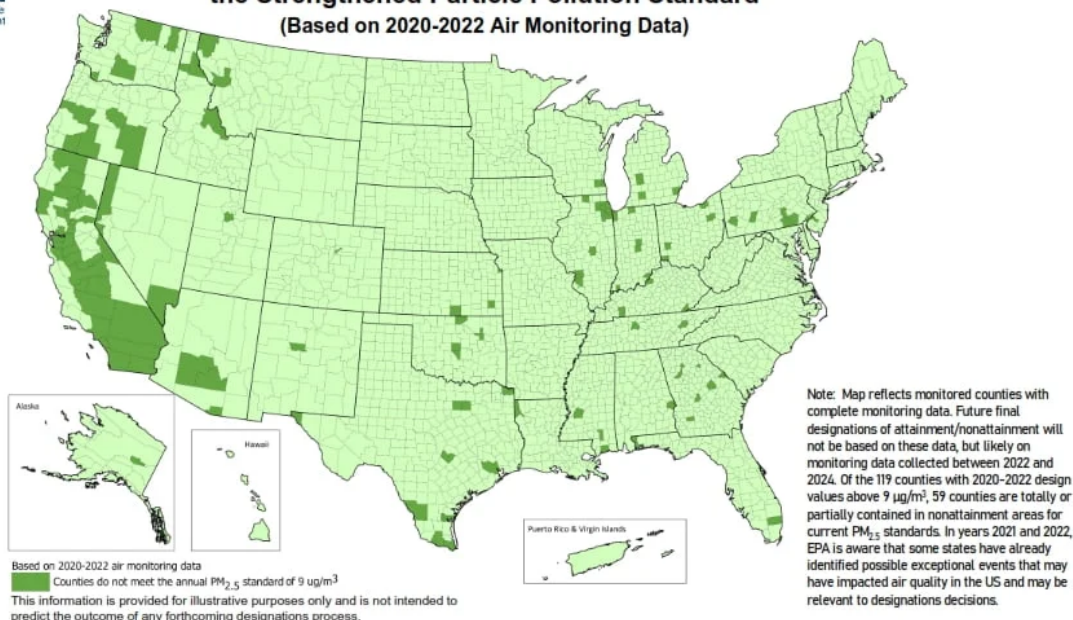
Proposed text can be found on [this NRCS webpage](#). Comments should be submitted via [regulations.gov](#) or via mail by **March 4, 2024**.

3 – EPA's Air Quality Ruling on PM2.5

EPA has announced the Administrator's final decision to revise the annual primary PM2.5 NAAQS from **12** µg/m³ to **9** µg/m³. What is PM2.5 you might ask? PM2.5 is fine particle pollution, also known as fine particulate matter or soot. PM2.5 comes from smoke from fires and emissions (releases) from power plants, industrial facilities, and cars and trucks. EPA is providing new tools to help air agencies evaluate and exclude data associated with exceptional events related to smoke from wildfires. More information on the new ruling can be found [here](#).



Most Counties with Monitors Already Meet the Strengthened Particle Pollution Standard (Based on 2020-2022 Air Monitoring Data)



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4 – Carbon Market Resources

If you're looking to expand your knowledge on Carbon Markets, there are now several new resources available across various industry sectors. Whether you simply want to gain a better understanding of all the carbon-related terminology, or you're looking to delve more deeply into specific industry, these resources may be of interest to you.

[Introduction to Forest Carbon, Offsets and Markets](#)

This OSU publication will introduce readers to forest carbon, carbon offsets, projects and markets. It is intended to orient forest owners, land managers, natural resource professionals and others to forest carbon and carbon market terminology and processes, as well as resources for assistance and getting started.

[Top 10 Things You Wanted to Know About Agricultural Carbon Markets](#)

The American Farmland Trust's policy and science experts created this guidebook to help farmers, agricultural advisors, and conservation professionals navigate agricultural carbon markets.

[Carbon and Cow\\$ Podcast](#)

WSU's Center for Sustaining Agriculture and Natural Resources podcast series explores emerging opportunities in carbon markets and where the dairy and livestock industry can play a role.

[Soil Health & Carbon Strategies](#)

Fresh from being presented at the NACD annual meeting in San Diego this week is the Oregon Association of Conservation Districts' workbook: [Carbon Sequestration and Soil Health Guidebook](#).

5 – Friends of NACD District Grants Program Awardees

Congratulations to **Ferry** and **Mason** Conservation Districts for being among this year's recipients of the Friends of NACD District Grants Program. The Friends of NACD District Grants Program supports locally led conservation and advances climate resilience, education and youth development, and food security. Now in its fifth round of funding, the program is funded through donations individuals and organizations make to NACD. This year, eight conservation districts will receive \$2,500 to implement community-based projects.

“NACD is excited to support innovative projects spearheaded by conservation districts across the country,” **said District & Partner Relations Committee Chairman Franklin Williams.** “These locally led projects will help educate and connect communities through conservation. Thank you to the generous Friends of NACD who make this program possible.”

For more information on this program visit <https://www.nacdnet.org/friends/friends-of-nacd-district-grants-program/>

6 – NACD adopts Washington Resolutions

WACD National Director Doug Rushton reported from San Diego that the national association adopted all five of Washington's resolutions. He will have a full report once he returns to Washington, but we wanted to share the news. These are now apart of NACD's active resolutions:

- Interest-Free conservation agriculture equipment loan program (Palouse)
- Carbon Conservation Stewardship Program (Palouse)
- Communication about Fuel Breaks in CRP (Walla Walla)
- Cancelling FSA contracts (Whitman)
- CREP Contract Communications and Payment Inconsistencies (Columbia)

Upcoming Events

2024

- **February 15:** [SoilCon: NW Washington Annuals \(Mount Vernon\)](#)
- **February 20:** [SoilCon: Dryland \(Davenport\)](#)

- **February 21:** Legislature – Last day to read in bills from committees in opposite house, except fiscal and transportation bills
- **February 26:** Legislature – Last day to read in bills from fiscal and transportation bills in opposite house
- **February 28:** [Washington State Conservation Commission special meeting](#) to consider interim guidelines for the Riparian Grant Program.
- **March 1:** Legislature – Last day to consider (pass) opposite house bills (5 p.m.) (except initiatives and alternatives to initiatives, budgets and matters necessary to implement budgets, differences between the houses, and matters incident to the interim and closing of the session).
- **March 7:** Legislature – Last day allowed for regular session under state constitution
- **March 19-21:** [Statewide CREP training](#) by FSA (Spokane)
- **May 29-30:** WACD's Legislative Workshop (Ellensburg)

Resources

Check out these resources:

- Correspondence
 - [January 2024 Box.com folder](#)
 - [February 2024 Box.com folder](#)
 - Bookmarks in the [WACD Reading List](#).
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Executive Corner

The Impact of AgForestry

Tom asked me to fill-in for him this week while he attends the NACD Annual Conference in San Diego and to write about the impact of AgForestry, which only makes sense. I've been back "in country" for two weeks and am still processing the experience of spending fifteen days in Panama and Costa Rica. That reflecting will continue for the foreseeable future, especially as I distribute coffee, chocolate, and other souvenirs to friends and family.

I now understand why everyone who knows about AgForestry's curriculum asks, "Where are you going on your international trip?" It is such a transformative event to spend two weeks in close quarters with twenty-three other people embedded in a world far removed from any previous life experience. I am grateful that I was a part of such an excursion and am blessed WACD allowed me to leave Olympia for two weeks in the middle of the legislative session.



If nothing else, I will never take for granted again the value of certainty and predictability. In the first three days of our trip, our class had two unplanned overnight trips, including an 18-hour bus ride from Panama City to San Jose, Costa Rica when the planned 90-minute flight was canceled. While the remaining trip wasn't quite as eventful in that manner, we stayed in a different town almost every day. Never in my life have I traveled at such a pace and it hit me on Day 3 that I never knew exactly where we were going, what we would be doing, or where I would be sleeping while on the trip.

I don't think I truly appreciated having that expectedness, like knowing the details of my day, until they were taken away. Having no self-agency was a serious adjustment and as a class we had a conversation on Day 4 about better incorporating feedback and ensuring every individual knew how to give input and ask questions. Or, in another manner of speaking, how decisions were made on behalf of the group and by whom. It was fascinating seeing a little group body being formed and how we chose to organize it. What made our trip run more smoothly would sound pretty typical for a good association: getting buy-in from the group, power sharing roles, identified decision-makers, and dedicated check-ins about how everyone felt.



All the types of cocoa grown at CATIE
(*Centro Agronómico Tropical de Investigación y Enseñanza*)
as part of their genetic seed bank.

The other big takeaway was the reinforcement of the adage "if you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." With over twenty people traveling as one collective, there were times when individuals didn't want to match the group's pace. It was frustrating for everyone at different times, whether for those who wanted to operate at a faster speed or wanted to linger somewhere. It was a constantly changing dynamic, with active but unspoken negotiations between various clusters of people who wanted to move more quickly or more slowly whenever we had to operate as a group.

Twenty-four people can be a clunky group. I know there were times I was out of sync with the group and had to adjust. We were all used to working at our own pace and suddenly had to be thinking about everyone else's timing, preferences, and habits. It called for a lot of patience and grace, as well as scheduling of bathroom stops. But it was important to stick together, both to ensure we all got to experience the same opportunities and to ensure no one got lost in a foreign country.



This is not all, or even most, of my reflections from my Costa Rica trip. And despite these stories, it was an absolute joy. Amidst the crazy schedule changes, unimaginable scenery, and foreign culture, somehow it all worked out for the best. We soaked up as much information as possible about agricultural production in Costa Rica, occasionally played eco-tourist while learning about their environmental frameworks, and departed with an understanding of another country's natural resource issues.

There will probably be more stories from the last sixteen months that I share, and I expect I will be positively schmaltsy in April when our class graduates. But for me, the goal of AgForestry was never about how it could change me. Instead, I wanted to develop new tools and better prepare myself in my commitment to help my organization of the last seven years achieve its goals. So this is not the beginning of the end of a journey, but rather the end of the beginning.

- *Ryan Baye*

Latest Posts on the Hub

- [Chelan County's Cascadia named Conservation District of 2023](#)
- [Clackamas SWCD is Hiring a WeedWise Technician \(Seasonal\)](#)

- [Lewis CD is Seeking a Field Crew Member](#)
- [Urban Forestry Outreach Specialist, Natural Resource Specialist 4 Position](#)
- [February 5 - 9 General Legislative Review](#)
- [DNR Watershed and Stewardship Biologist, Fish & Wildlife Biologist 3 Position](#)

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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