



Washington Association of Conservation Districts

Five Things to Know for February 22, 2024

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1 – Legislative Update

The floodgates are open and budgets are flowing around Olympia. Both House and Senate versions of the supplemental operating, capital, and transportation budgets are out and now working their way through the legislative process. \$3.5 million in Conservation Technical Assistance (WACD's primary financial priority) for FY 2025 is included in the House operating budget and we are in contact with Senate budget writers. Once budgets are at the point of reconciliation, WACD will know which version is more preferential for districts and we'll be able to advise our membership accordingly.

Policy bills are active while attention is diverted to the budgets. Of interest to our membership, SB 5921 (Commission tribal representation) was not voted on by the House Ag & Natural Resources committee this week and is "dead" for the remainder of the 2024 session. No reason was given as to why. At the same committee hearing, there was an hour of spirited testimony regarding a bill to eliminate the WDFW Commissioners and instead create a single state agency director similar to the Director of Agriculture position. [That testimony](#) may be of interest to many readers.

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 – Special Commission Meeting ~ February 28th

Next Wednesday, the Conservation Commission will hold a special meeting starting at 1 PM in Lacey to consider adopting their proposed Riparian Grant Program Guidelines. This was an action item postponed from their January regular meeting.

You can register to attend (either in-person or online) on [their special meeting notice](#). In-person attendees are asked to register by Monday the 26th due to space limitations.

3 – WACD Board Meeting ~ February 26th

WACD's Board of Directors will hold a regular meeting by Zoom on Monday, February 26th, with in-person attendance available at WACD's Olympia office. The draft agenda is available [here](#). Meeting documents are being posted to a Box.com folder at <https://wacd1.box.com/s/tmr7tzhr7unlc0txid7mylokfu8pbfh>.

4 – Washington Conservation Society Meeting & Update

The Washington Conservation Society will host its next board meeting on February 23rd at 9 am. You can join via [Zoom](#). For more information on the WCS visit our website: www.waconservationsociety.org.

The Society recently launched a CD History Preservation Project. This initiative is being led by Lee Hemmer, Larry Davis and Heather Wendt. The groups first task will be to verify the formation date of each CD, and subsequent merger dates and name changes. Look for an email from the group to CD Managers and Chairs. Let's work together to capture our history!

5 – Regional Envirothon Competitions ~ Coming Soon!

Envirothon is the largest outdoor environmental science competition in the United States and Canada for high school students. Students compete in teams of five to demonstrate their knowledge in Soils, Forestry, Aquatics, Wildlife, and a current issue topic. This year's issue topic is Renewable Energy for a Sustainable Future.

There are four regional Envirothon competitions occurring in March & April with the winners moving on to the State Competition hosted by Walla Walla CD on May 16th & 17th at Camp Wooten in Walla Walla. Winners at the state competition move on to Nationals which will be held in New York, July 28th - August 3rd. For more information visit the Envirothon website: <https://waenvirothon.org/current-competition/>. For some Envirothon inspiration click on the video below or follow this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MTHesK3v4FU>.



Upcoming Events

2024

- **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)

Other Resources

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

Executive Corner

NACD Annual Meeting Reflection

I love to visit San Diego, and I know this probably colors my perception of the NACD Annual Meeting held there. The NACD meeting was a great event with content for district board members and district employees.



As you read about the NACD meeting, please think about what you might have found interesting. I've heard district people say that the NACD meeting has nothing for them. That might have been true years ago but it's not that way now. Whether you are a state leader, district board member, or district employee, there is a ton of valuable information provided during the meeting. Just as importantly, you are able to create and build on relationships with leaders and do-ers from all across the country. More than ever before, the NACD annual meeting is meaningful for anyone in our conservation community.

On Saturday, February 10, the National Conservation District Employees Association held a four-hour training session for CD staff.

On Sunday, February 11, meet-and-greets with soil health champions, urban grantees, and NACD grantees helped district people get ideas and build relationships.

Sunday's Pacific Region meeting (photo above) was very well attended with more than 50 people in the room. This is a far cry from a handful of years ago when only four or five people showed up. It was great to see so many people from Washington State, to renew relationships with peers in other states, and to get to know so many folks who came from the other side of the Pacific Ocean to attend.

Afterwards, a first timers session was held to help people know how to get the most out of their time at the NACD meeting.

Great content was on the schedule on Monday. Breakout sessions included presentations on:

- sentinel landscapes
- urban green infrastructure
- pay for performance
- aquaculture
- nontraditional community outreach
- climate-adapted native plant materials
- agroforestry
- healthy soils
- carbon sequestration
- conservation in Pacific Island communities
- soil health calculator
- conservation districts addressing climate resilience
- unconventional partnering

Tuesday was just as meaty as Monday, where breakouts included:

- engaging youth in conservation
- national baseline data for climate smart agriculture
- converging ag drainage with water quality
- tribal district approaches to food security
- securing outreach expertise
- advancing producer engagement in ecosystem services markets
- innovative partnership-based approaches to conservation drainage
- connecting communities
- pesticide education
- linking soil health to profitability
- a partnership between an ag retailer and local government
- equitable pathways to market for climate smart producers
- stewardship of the Western Monarch
- integrating ag into regional climate action plans
- building partnership between national programs and local implementation

Wednesday featured conservation symposiums on NCPP, regenerative agriculture, and pathways to market for climate smart producers.

NACD committees met, the NACD board met, and affiliated groups like the NCF (National Conservation Foundation), NCDEA (National Conservation District Employees Association), and ACED (Association of Conservation Executive Directors) also met. NCPP (National Conservation Planning Partnership) met following the annual meeting.

The Conservation Showcase had many vendors well known to districts and the NACD Marketplace was represented.



AGENDA

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10 MONDAY, FEBRUARY 12

9:00 AM - 6:00 PM - Registration	Seascope Foyer	3:30 PM - 4:30 PM - Sentinel Landscapes - Networking with Federal Partners	Coral 5
8:00 AM - 5:00 PM - Interdenominational Room	Osprey	4:00 PM - 4:25 PM - Breakout Sessions	
8:00 AM - 12:00 PM - NACD Executive Board Meeting	Pelican	Where Good Things Grow - Healthy Soils at Home	Coral 1
8:00 AM - 10:00 PM - NCEA Board Meeting	Pacific Jewel A	Carbon Sequestration and Soil Health	Coral 2
10:00 AM - 5:00 PM - NCF-Environon Operating Committee	Coral 4	Water Quality of Life	Coral 3
10:00 AM - 12:00 PM - New Board Member Orientation	Silver Pearl 1	Conservation Delivery in Pacific Island Communities	Coral 4
1:00 PM - 4:30 PM - NACD Board of Directors Meeting	Silver Pearl 1	4:35 PM - 5:00 PM - Breakout Sessions	
1:00 PM - 5:00 PM - NCEA District Employees Training	Coral 2	Predictive Soil Health Calculator: An Overview	Coral 1
1:00 PM - 5:00 PM - Next Generation Leadership Institute	Pelican	Minnesota's Resilience on SWCDs to Address Climate Resilience	Coral 2
2:00 PM - 7:00 PM - Conservation Showcase Set Up	Silver Pearl 2/3	Unconventional Partnering - The Voluntary Stewardship Program, CD's and Counties	Coral 3
4:30 PM - 6:00 PM - Resolutions Committee Meeting	Sandpiper CD	6:00 PM - 9:00 PM - NCF Live Auction	Pacific Jewel Ballroom
6:00 PM - 9:00 PM - USS Midway Event**	Navy Pier - 910 N Harbor Dr		

Hosted by CARCD. Sponsored by Warner Ranch.
Shuttle bus service will run from 5:00 - 6:00 PM and 8:00 - 8:45 PM.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11

7:00 AM - 8:00 PM - Registration	Seascope Foyer
7:00 AM - 8:00 AM - Inspirational Session	Osprey
8:30 AM - 5:00 PM - Next Generation Leadership Institute	Pelican
9:00 AM - 5:00 PM - Interdenominational Room	Osprey
9:00 AM - 11:30 AM - Meet and Greets	
Soil Health Champions	Coral 3
Urban Drainages	Coral 2
NACD Grantees - TA, Perimeter Fencing, & others	Coral 1
9:00 AM - 12:00 PM - NARCDC Board Meeting	Sandpiper AB
9:00 AM - 12:00 PM - NCF-Environon Operating Committee	Coral 4
10:00 AM - 11:30 AM - Committee Meetings	
District and Partner Relations	Driftwood
Legislative	Coral 5
Natural Resources	Shorebreak
1:00 PM - 3:00 PM - Region Meetings	
Northeast	Seaglass
Southeast	Coral 3
North Central	Coral 4
South Central	Sandpiper CD
Northern Plains	Coral 1
Southwest	Coral 2
Pacific	Coral 5
3:00 PM - 5:00 PM - NACD Board of Directors Meeting	Silver Pearl 1
3:00 PM - 5:00 PM - NACD Business Meeting	Driftwood
3:30 PM - 5:00 PM - First Timers Session	Shorebreak
Sponsored by Agri Drain	
4:00 PM - 6:00 PM - Conservation Showcase	Silver Pearl 2/3
5:00 PM - 8:00 PM - Showcase Reception	Silver Pearl 2/3
Sponsored by Farm Credit Council	
5:30 PM - 7:00 PM - NCU Cohort Social*	Tidepool 5
Hosted by the NACD Presidents Association	
5:30 PM - 7:00 PM - NCEA District Employees Reception	Coral 5
Hosted by the NCEA. All district employees welcome!	

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 12

7:00 AM - 8:00 PM - Registration	Seascope Foyer
7:00 AM - 8:00 AM - Showcase and Coffee	Silver Pearl 2/3
Sponsored by Prince George's SCD	
8:00 AM - 10:30 AM - Opening General Session	Pacific Jewel Ballroom
10:30 AM - 11:45 AM - NACD Auxiliary Business Meeting	Coral 1
10:30 AM - 12:00 PM - Conservation Showcase	Silver Pearl 2/3
12:00 PM - 2:00 PM - Leadership Luncheon	Pacific Jewel Ballroom
2:00 PM - 5:00 PM - NCEA Board Meeting	Sandpiper AB
2:15 PM - 5:00 PM - NCF Board of Trustees Meeting	Driftwood 2
10:30 AM - 12:00 PM - Breakout Sessions	Silver Pearl 2/3
2:30 PM - 3:30 PM - Breakout Sessions	
Camp Ripley Sentinel Landscapes	Coral 1
Encouraging Urban Green Infrastructure Practices for Climate Resiliency	Coral 2
Vermont's Journey Towards Pay for Performance	Coral 3
Leveraging Agriculture for Restoration	Coral 4
2:30 PM - 3:30 PM - EPA Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Programs	Coral 5
2:45 PM - 5:30 PM - NACD Resolutions Hearings	Shorebreak
3:05 PM - 3:30 PM - Breakout Sessions	Seaglass
Community Outreach through Nontraditional Agriculture Farmer to Farmer Coffee Talks	Coral 1
Climate Adapted Native Plant Materials Project	Coral 2
Wetland Connections Maximizes Watershed Restoration Project	Coral 3
Scaling Agroforestry in U.S. Agriculture	Coral 4

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 13

7:00 AM - 8:00 PM - Registration	Seascope Foyer
7:00 AM - 8:30 AM - President's Association Breakfast**	Shorebreak
Hosted by the NACD Presidents Association	
7:30 AM - 8:30 AM - Showcase and Coffee	Silver Pearl 2/3
Sponsored by Noble Research Institute	
8:45 AM - 10:30 AM - General Session	Pacific Jewel Ballroom
11:00 AM - 11:30 AM - Conservation Showcase	Silver Pearl 2/3
11:30 AM - 1:00 PM - Film Screening & Lunch	Pacific Jewel Ballroom
1:30 PM - 3:30 PM - NACD Board Meeting	Silver Pearl 1
1:30 PM - 2:10 PM - Breakout Sessions	
Engaging the Next Generation - Youth in Conservation	Coral 1
QGIS: New National Baseline Data for Climate-Smart Ag	Coral 2
Converging Ag Drainage with Water Quality	Coral 3
Tribal Conservation District Approaches to Food Security & Production	Coral 4
1:30 PM - 3:00 PM - Sentinel Landscapes Meet & Greet	Coral 5
2:00 PM - 4:30 PM - NCF Board of Trustees Meeting	Driftwood 2
2:00 PM - 5:00 PM - NCEA Board Meeting	Sandpiper AB
2:15 PM - 3:00 PM - Breakout Sessions	
Securing Outreach Expertise for Your Conservation District	Coral 1
Advancing Producer Engagement and MMRV in Ecosystem Services Markets	Coral 2
Innovative Partnership-Based Project Approaches to Increase & Accelerate Adoption of Conservation Drainage	Coral 3
Connecting Communities Relationship Building to Diversity Participation	Coral 4
3:00 PM - 4:30 PM - U.S. Department of Defense Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (EP) Office Hours	Coral 5
3:30 PM - 4:15 PM - Breakout Sessions	
Dirty Water Bugs Use: Pesticide Education for Urban Communities	Coral 1
Cultivating Resiliency: Linking Soil Health to Profitability	Coral 2
Bridging the Gap: A Partnership Between an Ag Retailer and Local Government	Coral 4
3:30 PM - 5:00 PM - Breakout Session	
Forum for the Future: Enabling Equitable Pathways to Market for Climate Smart Producers by Leveraging Local Conservation Districts	Coral 3
4:15 PM - 5:00 PM - Breakout Sessions	
Stewardship of the Western Monarch Through Community Action	Coral 1
Integrating Agriculture into Regional Climate Action Plans	Coral 2
Maximum Partnerships: Building Partnership Between National Programs and Local Implementation	Coral 4
6:00 PM - 7:00 PM - Banquet Happy Hour	Pacific Jewel Foyer
7:00 PM - 9:00 PM - Appreciation Banquet	Pacific Jewel Ballroom

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 14

7:00 AM - 10:00 AM - Registration	Seascope Foyer
8:30 AM - 10:00 AM - NACD Board Meeting	Silver Pearl 1
8:30 AM - 11:30 AM - Conservation Symposiums	
NCFP Conservation Planning Training and Education Listening Session	Coral 1
Putting Farmers at the Center of Regenerative Agriculture Engagement Planning	Coral 2
Forum for the Future: Enabling Equitable Pathways to Market for Climate Smart Producers by Leveraging Local Conservation Districts	Coral 3
9:00 AM - 3:00 PM - CTC Board Meeting*	Shorebreak
10:30 AM - 2:00 PM - NACD Executive Board Meeting	Pelican
12:45 PM - 4:00 PM - Host State Tours**	
Sustainable Agriculture: Compost, Pollinators, and Wine	Coral 1
Urban Agriculture in Southern San Diego County	Coral 2
Collaboration for Forest Health	Coral 3
10:00 PM - 3:00 PM - ACD Executive Board Meeting	Sandpiper CD

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 15

8:00 AM - 4:00 PM - NCFP Meeting + Lunch	Shorebreak / Tidepool 2
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GET THE AGENDA ON YOUR PHONE!



*INVITATION ONLY **SEPARATELY TICKETED





That is not a complete review. Much, much more happened.

For me, most of the value of this meeting is in the relationships I've formed over the years and catching up with those folks. I've been blessed to work with some of NACD's leaders and was able to renew those relationships in San Diego. I caught up with state association executives and brought a few great ideas home to Washington State.

My point is that there is something for anyone from our conservation community at the NACD Annual Meeting. While this was not always the case, the content being provided is useful to all players in local conservation district work.

Being on the NACD DEI Special Committee, I was very pleased to finally meet Dr. Loutrina Staley in person. She provided briefings to the NACD Board and also met with several other groups.

I noticed more people of color at this meeting than I had in earlier years. More importantly, I sensed more camaraderie between people. Barriers seemed to be down and all sorts of people were in one-on-one and small group conversations, listening and sharing. Not only was the amount of interaction superb, but the grace and respect exhibited by attendees stood out.

Next year's NACD Annual Meeting will be held in Salt Lake City. If you've never attended this meeting, I encourage you to try it. I think you'll be surprised how valuable and enjoyable it is.

We like to hear from you

As always, we look forward to your ideas and questions. Please reach out to us at oly@wacd.org. This is a group address for Heather, Ryan, and Tom, so your message will probably get through!

Always yours for conservation,



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Latest Posts on the Hub

- [Conservation Planner Service Contract to support the USDA NRCS in Field and Area Offices throughout Washington State](#)
- [February 19 - 23 General Legislative Review](#)
- [Mississippi's Gary Blair Selected as NACD President-Elect](#)
- [Palouse Conservation District receives grant to assist homeowners in wildfire prevention](#)
- [WACD Testifies on Conservation Technical Assistance Funding](#)
- [February 12 - 16 General Legislative Review](#)

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