



Washington Association of Conservation Districts

Five Things to Know for January 25, 2024

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Legislative Day Edition



Photo by Dana Coggon from the 2023 Legislative Day event. This year we saw more than 30 people engaged in working with their legislators on conservation district matters. We'll have a summary report available next week.

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1 – Legislative Day

Legislative Day is today! Participants met at the Holiday Inn Express in Lacey, Washington at 7:00 am for breakfast together. They heard from WACD about WACD priorities and had a great discussion with Conservation Commission staff.



Each person attending Legislative Day received a lapel pin as shown above. Note that the pin does not indicate whether the wearer is with the State Conservation Commission, a conservation district, NRCS, or WACD. We wanted something that suggests solidarity among the Conservation Partnership in Washington State and a relatively plain lapel pin featuring the Conservation "C" seemed like just the ticket.

If these pins are a hit, we'll get more of them made. There are some design changes needed for the next iteration (Puget Sound is a bit narrow, don't you think?) but this is a good start. The pins are a bit larger than normal and are easily seen, as shown below.



2 – Legislation moving

From [WACD's Bill Tracker](#), here are some bills we're tracking this week:

- **SSB 5667** – [Concerning eligibility, enrollment, and compensation of small forestland owners volunteering for participation in the forestry riparian easement program.](#)
- **HB 1574** – [Supporting Washington agriculture by capturing methane and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.](#)
- **SB 6143** – [Concerning local salmon habitat recovery planning in critical areas.](#)
- **SB 6278** – [Promoting organic agriculture.](#)
- **SB 6281** – [Investing in reforestation efforts following landscape-scale forest disturbances.](#)

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

3 – Local Working Groups

[NRCS has a web page](#) that details ten local working group meetings happening in February, March, and April:

- **Big Bend Local Working Group:** Feb. 13, 2024 from 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.
 - **North Central Local Working Group:** Feb. 21, 2024 from 4 to 7 p.m.
 - **Northeast Local Working Group:** April 4, 2024 at 12:30 p.m.
 - **Northwest Local Working Group:** March 4, 2024; April 1, 2024; and May 6, 2024 (*optional*)
 - **Palouse Local Working Group:** April 2, 2024
 - **Puget Sound Working Group:** Feb. 21, 2024 (*Specific time to be determined*)
 - **Snake River Local Working Group:** Feb. 14, 2024 from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
 - **South Central Local Working Group:** March 12, 2024 9 a.m. to noon
 - **Southwest Local Working Group:** Feb. 22, 2024, from 10 a.m. to noon
 - **West Palouse Working Group:** Feb. 21, 9 a.m. to noon
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4 – NACD Urban and Community Grants

Since 2016, NACD has partnered with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) on a very successful Urban and Community Conservation (UAC) grant initiative, awarding over 7.75 million dollars to 182 different projects.

In fiscal year 2023, NACD will again award funds through the UAC program. Districts may apply for two different kinds of funding:

- Up to \$10,000 for a UAC planning grant, to begin early-stage program development.
- Or, up to \$60,000 for a UAC implementation grant.

Both grants are meant to develop conservation district capacity so grant budgets should focus primarily on staff time. Conservation districts may view the complete request for proposals (RFP) on the [UAC webpage](#). The [online application portal](#) is now open, with a deadline of 11:59 p.m. Pacific time on April 1, 2024.

5 – District Video: Tagging, Releasing, and Tracking 500 Juvenile Salmon



EVERY SPRING, JUVENILE SALMON BEGIN THEIR BIG JOURNEY SWIMMING FROM THE RIVER TO THE OCEAN.

Researchers from Pacific Northwest National Laboratory partnered with the Benton Conservation District to put on a virtual Salmon Summit event in May 2021. The research team tagged and released 500 juvenile salmon, which were raised at the Aquatic Research Laboratory. The video details the process of tracking the salmon on their journey to the ocean as well as the role of researchers in studying fish passage/hydropower.

View it at <https://youtu.be/PXK-potJHys?si=osrYqv0gPflyf0ON>

6 – BONUS: Updated District Directory available

While Executive Office staff were busy in Olympia for Legislative Day, WACD's Financial Accounting and Human Resources Administrator, Lori McLaughlin, updated the District Directory! We've uploaded it to the Hub website. Please contact us at oly@wacd.org to get the URL. We hide the URL to help keep bad actors from getting easy access to your contact information.

Upcoming Events

2024

- **January 25:** [WACD Legislative Day](#)

- **January 31:** Legislature – Last day to pass bills out of committee in the house of origin
- **February 5:** Legislature – Last day to pass bills out of House fiscal and Senate fiscal/transportation committees
- **February 5:** [Sustainable Farms and Fields: Funding Q&A Webinar](#)
- **February 8:** [SoilCon: Diversified Organic \(Puyallup\)](#)
- **February 10-14:** [NACD 78th annual meeting – San Diego, California](#)
- **February 13:** Legislature – Last day to pass bills in house of origin
- **February 13:** [SoilCon: Irrigated Perennials \(Prosser\)](#)
- **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
- **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)

Resources

Check out these resources:

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

Legislative Day: Join Us Next Year

I'm not sure how an entire year has passed since the 2023 Legislative Day event. It seems like yesterday, yet suddenly here we are again. Since I'll be at the Capitol much of Thursday, I'm writing this note earlier in the week. I'll edit it, if necessary, before publishing the **Five Things to Know** newsletter later on Thursday.

We never get enough people at Legislative Day, but somehow, it is always enough. Participants reach some of our most influential legislators. Legislators recognize the special effort people made to be able to have in-person meetings with them at the Capitol. This investment makes a difference, not just for the districts who come to Olympia for this event, for everyone in the conservation community.

Some conservation districts prefer to reach out to their legislators and not participate in Legislative Day. There is nothing wrong with this approach. What is most important is creating and nurturing positive relationships with elected officials. Next year, in recognition that your work affects all districts, you might wish to send at least one representative to Legislative Day. When a team shows up in the Capitol, it can be very impactful.

Plant sales and cognitive dissonance

Plant sales at the WACD Plant Materials Center continue to be below the record-setting levels we saw at this time last year. It could be that last year we experienced a bump from pent-up demand caused by COVID interrupting restoration work.

Where I am experiencing cognitive dissonance is in trying to understand the assertions that the PMC can't supply enough plants to districts while our sales numbers belie this assertion.

Cognitive dissonance is the discomfort a person feels when their behavior does not align with their values or beliefs. Cognitive dissonance is a psychological phenomenon that occurs when a person holds two contradictory beliefs at the same time. Source: [Medical News Today](#)

If your district can't get the plants you need from the PMC, we need details. In some cases, I'm aware that a district believes we don't have the plants but in fact we do. In your situation, it may just be that we actually do have the plants you need but without hearing from you, we can't know that. Also, giving us plant species and volume helps us plan for future years. I know it may come as a surprise but we can't read minds. Please do reach out and tell us what you need, and thus give us a chance to help you succeed. Contact our PMC Sales Manager, Jacquie Gauthier, at pmcsales@gmx.com or [360.757.1094](tel:360.757.1094), with your plant needs. Plenty of stems are still available.

Sponsors

A quick reminder to think of WACD's sponsors throughout the year as you look for solutions to your conservation and operational needs. These companies do not need to sponsor WACD's work but they do because they believe in what conservation districts do. Please give them a chance to help you!

Leadership

It's been a while since I've shared anything motivational. I encourage leaders at all levels to review the five Essential Leadership Reads on Psychology Today:

- [Are You a Natural Leader?](#)
- [The Transformative Impact of Sponsorship](#)
- [5 Leadership Lessons We Learned From the Movies...All Wrong](#)

- [Humble Leadership Should Not Be an Oxymoron](#)
- [When Leaders Fail in Character](#)

There is some powerful learning embedded in those five articles. They are worthy of your time.

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

- [King Conservation District Board of Supervisors election opens January 23](#)
- [Stevens County Conservation District Forestry and Livestock Event 2024](#)
- [Bill proposes tax incentive for farmers](#)
- [Conservation districts annual meetings planned](#)
- [January 15 - 19 General Legislative Review](#)
- [Jan 8 - 12 General Legislative Review](#)

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](#).

Thank you to the 2023 WACD Annual Meeting Sponsors



Washington Department of
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Edward Jones
MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING



Tapteal Native Plants

WACD encourages you to consider patronizing sponsors in appreciation of their important support: <https://wadistricts.us/annual/2023meetings/conference/#sponsors>

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