



Washington Association of Conservation Districts

Five Things to Know for March 28, 2024

<https://wadistricts.org> ◦ <https://wadistricts.us> ◦ <https://wacdpmc.org>



This week conservation district supervisors, staff, and partners met in Yakima to provide input on the SCC's strategic budget planning process among other topics.

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Five Things to Know

1 — WACD Spring Legislative Workshop Registration Information

WACD's Spring Legislative Workshop for Conservation District Supervisors, Managers and Partners will take place May 29th and May 30th at the Hal Homes Community Center - 209 N. Ruby St., Ellensburg, WA 98926.

- May 29th 10:00 AM — 4:00 PM
- May 30th 8:30 AM — 12:00 PM

The meeting will be offered in person and remotely via Zoom.

Meeting Topics:

- Prepare for the 24/25 Legislative Session & Discuss WACD Priorities
- Provide input on the work of the Sustainable Funding Committee
- Hear Updates from other WACD Committees
- Review the Status of Active Resolutions
- Rates and Charges Resolution Discussion
- District Elections Discussion

If you plan on attending either in person or remotely please [REGISTER HERE](#).

Hotel Information: A block of rooms at the government rate have been reserved at the following hotels under the **Group Name: WACD:**

- [Best Western Plus](#), 211 Umptanum Rd, Ellensburg, WA 98926 - (509) 925-4244
- [Hampton Inn](#), 2705 Triple L Loop, Ellensburg, WA 98926 - (509) 933-1600

Questions? Contact: Heather Wendt, 509-873-2669, hwendt@wadistricts.org

2 — WSU Local Food Systems HUB ~ Food-Waste Prevention

Presentation

In 2020 the WSU Food Systems Program created a networking and resource sharing space called the HUB. On **April 17th** the WSU HUB will be presenting on food-waste prevention. Reducing food waste is an important component of a sustainable food system. WSU Assistant Professor Diane Smith has been working to increase food access in the face of climate change, and has developed programming in food waste reduction. She recently led her second Food Waste Prevention Week campaign.

Sign up for the meeting [here](#) and watch previous calls on their YouTube channel [here](#).

3 — Applications for USDA Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production Grants Due April 9

WASHINGTON, March 19, 2024 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is accepting applications for grants to support urban agriculture and innovative production. Applications for USDA's Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production grants are due April 9, 2024, via [grants.gov](https://www.usda.gov/grants).

"This grant program has proven very popular and impactful in recent years, and we look forward to partnering with more communities nationwide to strengthen local food systems and increase access to healthy foods," said Terry Cosby, Chief of USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), which leads USDA's Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production (OUAIP). *"These projects will add to the important work communities are doing to build food security in underserved areas."*

Since 2020, UAIP grants have invested more than \$46.8 million in 186 projects across the country, and they're part of USDA's broad support for urban and innovative producers. UAIP grants are available to a wide range of individuals and entities, including local and Tribal governments, nonprofits, and schools. OUAIP provides grants for two types of projects: Planning Projects and Implementation Projects.

Learn more at: <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/news/applications-for-usda-urban-agriculture-and-innovative-production-grants-due-april-9>

4 — NACD's Conservation Coffee Virtual Learning Opportunity

Join NACD and our District and Partner Relations Committee for the next Conservation Coffee, a virtual learning and networking opportunity for districts and their partners!

On **April 11 at 3:00 p.m. ET** via Zoom, learn from Aimee Figgatt, NACD's Stewardship and Education Coordinator, about NACD's Stewardship Week (April 28-May 5) and the variety of

free resources available to districts to support their programming. Aimee will also share information on other educational resources available through NACD.

[Registration](#) for the session is free and open to anyone with an interest in joining! If you're unable to attend live, the session will be recorded and shared later. Check out the previous coffees, as well as a variety of other recorded learning and networking sessions, on NACD's YouTube [here](#).

If you would like to volunteer for a future coffee to share projects, success stories, provide a mini training opportunity, etc., please reach out to [Dr. Ariel Rivers](#), NACD's Director of Membership Engagement.

5 — Review Requested ~ WACD Annual Plan Draft

At this week's WACD Work Session the board reviewed the FY 25 Annual Work Plan Draft. We invite members of the conservation community to review and provide feedback on the draft. Comments should be submitted by **May 10th** to Heather Wendt at heather@wacd.org.

A copy of the plan draft can be found here:

<https://wacd1.box.com/s/gwj5xe1xut7gvfduk4jr0oqi34i7fn2e>

6 - District Wait List Survey

Back in January and February, WACD requested for information from our member-districts regarding current wait lists for various services (farm plans, cost share for projects, etc.) with the goal of using that information to better educate decision-makers. During the all-districts meeting in Yakima this week, a request was made to share that survey request one last time before publishing the results.

Sixteen districts responded at the time and from a good cross-section of our membership. We now know that there are at least 400 outstanding requests for farm and forest plans at those sixteen districts. We are happy to receive more district information, so we're making this final call for responses. The link to the survey is <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/cdwaitlist>.

Upcoming Events

2024

- **April 15:** [WACD Board of Directors meeting](#)
- **May 14-16:** [WSCC Planning and Regular meeting](#)
- **May 20:** [WACD Board of Directors meeting](#)
- **May 29-30:** WACD's Legislative Workshop (Ellensburg)

- **June 17:** [WACD Board of Directors meeting](#)
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Executive Corner

Thank goodness for spring

I've been in the conservation business long enough to see some patterns. One of those patterns is seasonal in character, and it looks like this: every winter, people go a little stir crazy, until the weather changes and they can get outside! Officially, the first day of spring was March 19th, but I don't really count it as spring until I see the weather change.

This was a pattern I saw repeated over and over when I was a Regional Manager. People would get more growly and reactionary as the winter progressed, and then as soon as some sunshine and nice weather appeared, it was almost as if those high-friction moments disappeared as if they had never happened.

And so I am particularly grateful to see more of our community now getting out in the field, whether it's to prepare a farm field or to implement a conservation project. Thank you for extending some grace to the people around you who may have experienced winter as a time of stress and friction. For most of us, winter is behind us and we can look forward to this time of renewal we call spring and the summer growing season.

Happy birthday, Hugh Hammond Bennett

And speaking of spring, there is another springtime moment to trumpet. We talk about our community being a statewide family. One definition of family is "all the descendants of a common ancestor." Well, that's us. Our common conservation family ancestor is Hugh Hammond Bennett (April 15, 1881 – July 7, 1960).

Bennett was the leader who brought national attention to the conditions we now call the Dust Bowl. Without Bennett, we would not have the Natural Resources Conservation Service and conservation districts. His leadership gave birth to locally governed conservation districts. The roots of that system live on today. Every one of the +3,000 conservation districts in the United States spring from Bennett's visionary work.

Here are a few references if you'd like to read a little more about Hugh Hammond Bennett:

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hugh_Hammond_Bennett
- <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/about/history/brief-history-nrcs/hugh-hammond-bennett-biography>
- <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/about/history/brief-history-nrcs/hugh-hammond-bennett-quotes>

When you think of our conservation district community as an extended family, don't forget those who came before us and did the heavy lifting to create the system we enjoy today.

We'd like to hear from you

As always, we look forward to your ideas and questions. Please reach out to us at oly@wacd.org. Emails sent to that address reach the entire Executive Office team!

Always yours for conservation,



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Latest Posts on the Hub

- [WACD Spring Legislative Workshop](#)
- [Everett Film Fest a chance to see unique flicks](#)
- [Get It Growing: April in the vegetable garden | Sequim Gazette](#)
- [Open house on Lower Chehalis River Resilience Study set for March 28](#)
- [County Conservation District offers sustainable landscaping courses](#)
- [SYCD is Hiring a Resource Conservation Technician](#)

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