



Washington Association of Conservation Districts

Five Things to Know for June 6, 2024

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



Did you know **June 17th - 23rd** is **National Pollinator Week**. To celebrate on June 20th NRCS is hosting a Conservation Outcomes Webinar on the value of pollinator practices applied through voluntary conservation programs. This webinar will share findings from a study conducted by Virginia Tech in collaboration with USDA's Conservation Effects Assessment Project.

For more information and to register visit: <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/events/usda-conservation-efforts-support-pollinators-agricultural-production-nationwide>.

Photo Above: Hunt's Bumble Bee (*Bombus huntii*) on Western Prairie Clover (*Dalea ornata*).
Photo Credit: Donna Lucas

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Five Things to Know

1 — Status of WACD Resolutions ~ There's an App for That!

One project that has been on WACD's plate for quite some time: going through the list of resolutions that are still active. Resolutions adopted within the past five years are considered to be alive, constituting our policy direction from the membership.

There are 81 active resolutions, covering a wide range of topics. Some are focused internally on WACD governance and operations. Some are focused externally on agencies and partners. Some touch on Farm Bill programs. It's quite a varied lot.

To help members and partners remain aware of activity on any of the still alive resolutions, WACD staff put together an online tracker. Find it at: <https://resolutions5.glide.page/dl/d0a5f4>

If you open that link on a mobile device, you should be prompted to install it as an app. This means you can have all 81 resolutions in your pocket wherever you go.

What does this look like? [Resolution 2023-26 Conservation District and WA Dept. Ecology Alignment of Roles and Responsibilities](#) shows the details available in the tracker. Similar details are available for most resolutions.

2 – Sustainable Funding Committee Spring Workshop Survey

In case you missed the WACD Spring Legislative Workshop you can still participate in the Sustainable Funding Committee's Survey. If you already took the survey and would like to update or change your answers please feel free to complete the survey again! To access the survey visit: <https://www.menti.com/al1siyfmo7tg>.

You can view the matrix of funding options [here](#).

If you have questions or comments please contact: Heather Wendt, hwendt@wadistricts.org.

3 – Summer Nursery Tour ~ Register Now

Have you ever wanted to tour a premier bare root native plant nursery? Well, now is your chance. WACD's Plant Materials Center will be hosting a tour on Tuesday, August 13th from 9:30 am until noon.

Come learn about the history of the Plant Materials Center, plant production, services provided to Conservation Districts and enjoy a field walk to see the extensive variety of plants, pollinators and other wildlife.

[Register](#) by July 31st and enjoy lunch on us!

Questions? Please contact Jacquie @ 360-757-1094 or pmcsales@gmx.com

4 – Washington State Envirothon Competition Results

The 2024 Washington State Envirothon (WSE) was held on May 16th and 17th, 2024 at Camp Wooten State Park in Walla Walla, and the results are in:

First Place: Tesla STEM High School, Redmond

Second Place: Walla Walla High School

Third Place: CASEE High School, Brush Prairie

Tesla STEM High School will represent Washington State at the NCF-Envirothon Competition at Hobart and William Smith Colleges in Geneva, New York on July 28 - August 3, 2024. The WSE Committee will provide team registration (\$2,300) and a transportation stipend (\$750 per student/advisor) to Tesla STEM HS to make the trip.

The WA State Envirothon Committee would like to thank:

- Huge thanks to Alison and the Walla Walla County CD team for hosting!

- Special thanks to all of those who helped coordinate and facilitate this year’s competition! This competition cannot happen without each of you sharing time, energy, and expertise. Thanks for providing any supplies and materials from your office.
- Thanks to our partners at NRCS for their generous sponsorship, as well as having staff onsite to share their expertise and knowledge. Please pass this on to any staff that may have been missed. Thank you!
- Thanks to WA Association of Conservation Districts, the WA Conservation Society, and the WA State Conservation Commission for their sponsorship and continued support for Envirothon. We cannot do this without them!

Congratulations and great work everyone! For more information on the Washington State Envirothon visit <https://waenvirothon.org/>.



5 – Conservation District Rates & Charges Discussion

One takeaway from the Spring Legislative Workshop is the formation of a working group of member-districts to prepare for the 2025 legislative session on the topic of conferring more local control over rates and charges authority. The membership has adopted resolutions at previous Annual Business meetings in support of this goal, but it will take a group of interested individuals to help prepare the way over the summer and fall.

If your conservation district is interested in participating in the working group, please contact Legislative Director [Ryan Baye](#).

Upcoming Events

2024

- **June 10-12:** [WADE Annual Conference](#)
 - **June 17:** [WACD Board of Directors meeting](#)
 - **August 13:** WACD Plant Materials Center open house ([inquire](#))
-

Executive Corner

Communication is Key

Spring Legislative Workshop

One of the takeaways from WACD's Spring Legislative Workshop is how powerful clear and honest communication can be. We heard important information about sustainable funding options. During the discussion about elections, difficult truths were voiced. What we came away with was a group of people better prepared for whatever happens next on these topics. That would not have been possible without preparation, grace, some humor, and a shared desire to move our community forward. Thank you to all who participated.



Communication has changed in our community

I thought about the workshop during my long drive home. I thought about communication and how much it has changed over the last 30 years. Today, more than ever, WACD (Washington Association of Conservation Districts), WADE (Washington Association of District Employees), WSCC (Washington State Conservation Commission), and NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Service) are communicating across the entire Partnership. There is distinctly less [balkanization](#) of information.

That's good, because when we try to hide information or dole it out sparingly, somebody who needs it gets left out. That does us no good. The downside? We are drowning in information. Every entity has one or more newsletters that enter our inboxes at various times. Some days it feels like a flood. It can get overwhelming. I know, because some days I throw up my hands and take a walk to clear my mind before cracking those emails open!

Our Partnership is a collaborative

I think of the Partnership as a collaborative venture where we don't always agree on details but we generally agree about the most important things. That set of shared beliefs is what allows us to stick together, even when the going gets a bit rocky. We're in a bumpy part of the road right now with FSA and CREP contracts, but even while many in our community are upset, they still see the importance of FSA in supporting conservation programs and agriculture.

We can't have an effective, productive partnership without a lot of communication. Every time I hear about a meeting, I confess that I groan a little bit. My mother once asked me what I do for a living, and after listening to my explanation, she summarized it like this: "Oh, so your job is to go to meetings." It can certainly feel that way. Without those meetings over Zoom, Teams, conference calls, and in-person, we would have a much more difficult time moving ahead together. While I do get tired of meetings, I also recognize how critical they are to our shared purposes.

Listening is a critical skill

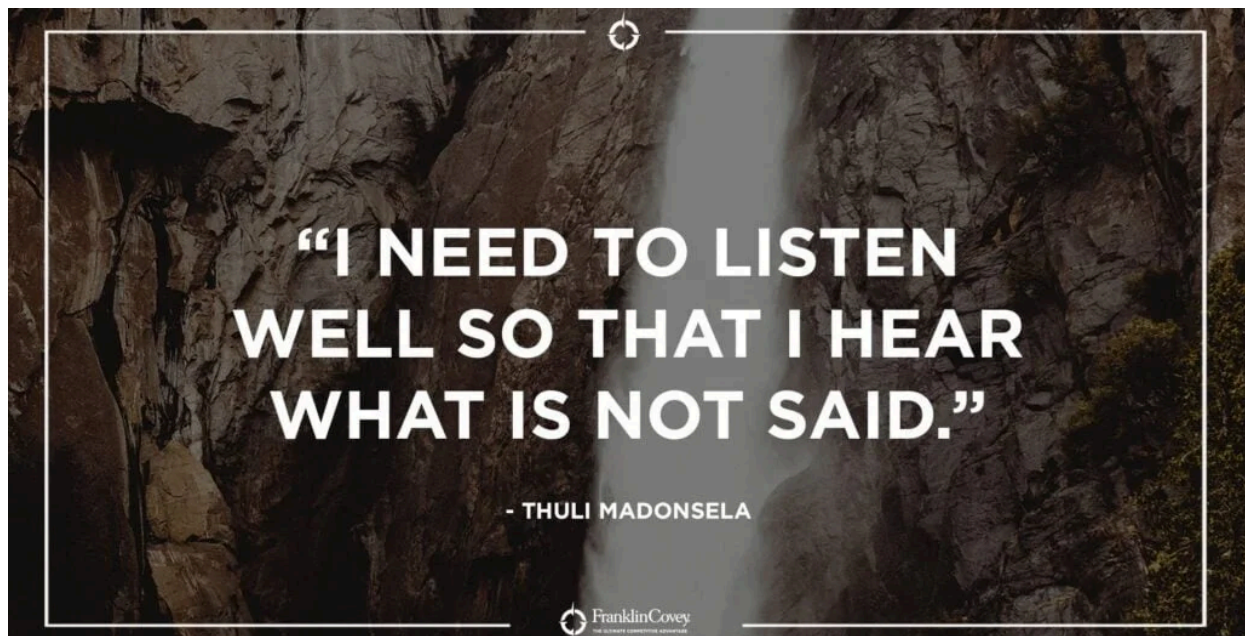
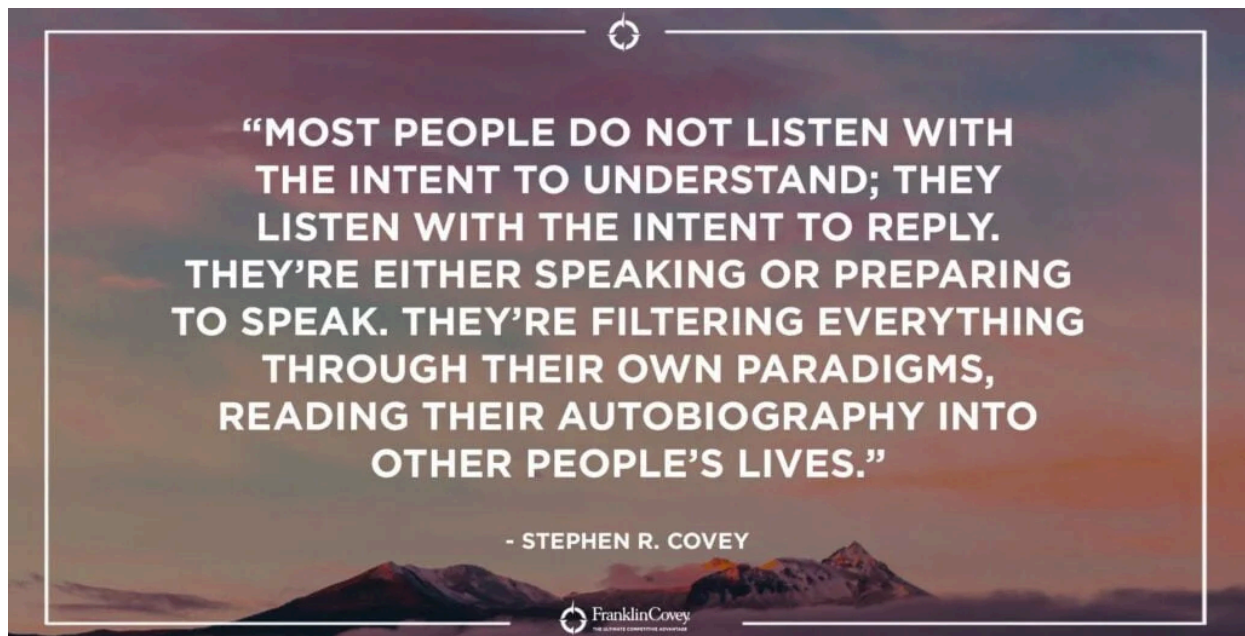
If I could share one critical behavior that helps in every meeting, what might that be? Is it preparation? Is it having your talking points all lined up? No. It is the ability to hit the pause button and hear what others are saying. When we focus on what we want to say, that tends to block the ability to actively listen to others. There is a deeper level of listening that I try to focus on when meetings are particularly difficult and that is trying to hear what people are *not* saying. It can be hard to hear what someone is verbalizing, but as they are talking, they are also filtering out things they don't want to say. What they *aren't* saying can be just as important as what they *are* saying.

I encourage you to try this in a meeting where you're not the focal point. That gives you some space to try to listen on two levels. The first level is at the surface: what people are actually saying in words and presentation slides. The second level is really an internal dialogue with yourself as you ask: why did they focus on that aspect and not mention the other factors I'm aware of? In my notes, I actually capture some of these conversations with myself. I use angled

brackets to show myself that the note inside those brackets wasn't said during the meeting — it was something I was wondering about internally. I find this very helpful when I later go back to my notes as it gives me a deeper understanding of what was being said, what was not being said, and what I was thinking at the time. *< And when I see those notes to myself later, I recognize I was fully present and actively listening in that meeting! >*

The WADE conference is a great place to practice this skill

Next week, many in our community will gather in Leavenworth for WADE's annual conference. This event is always great. It is also a wonderful opportunity to try improving your skill at listening. I hope you will. I'll close this with two "Covey cards" from my collection that are on point with this Executive Corner message.



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

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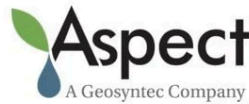
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