



# Washington Association of Conservation Districts

## Five Things to Know for July 5, 2024

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



We hope you all had a fun and safe 4th of July. Here are some [fun facts](#) about the holiday:

- In 1778, George Washington gave his soldiers a double ration of rum to celebrate the July 4 holiday.
- Massachusetts was the first state to make the 4th of July an official state holiday in 1781.
- The first July 4 celebration that took place at the White House was in 1801, hosted by Thomas Jefferson.

- Independence Day became a federal holiday in 1870.
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## Five Things to Know

### 1 – WACD Awards: Nominate Someone!

[WACD is announcing our 2024 Award Guidelines](#). Awards ensure that the best and brightest in our community are recognized for their service and hard work.

Nominations take only a few minutes to write, and there are many categories to recognize the many roles and individuals that are a part of our work. Here are a few of the winners from last year:

- **Joe Kear** (Underwood CD) was awarded the Wayne Reid "Young Tiger" Award after joining their board in May of 2023 and by November had already helped the district secure a \$5.5 million forest stand improvement grant to help respond to fires in Skamania County.
- **Randy Kelly** (Okanogan CD) was honored with the Special Service Award for more than 30 years of conservation service between his time as an Okanogan Associate Supervisor and a NRCS District Conservationist.
- **Pauline Hagen** (Stevens County CD) was recognized as the Associate Supervisor of the Year for her participation at many statewide meetings on behalf of her conservation district and as a major contributor to the WACD Livestock Task Force and Livestock Committee.

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## 2 – CD Board Supervisor Changes

Sixteen supervisors, with a combined 194 years of experience are leaving their local conservation district and handing the reigns to the next generation. All of this year's district supervisor elections and appointments were ratified at the May Commission meeting and the new supervisors are one month into their terms.

Please take a moment to look over whose tenure as [district supervisors have ended](#) and [who is stepping in](#) on their local district board.

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## 3 – PMC User Guide Now Available

The [WACD Plant Material Center](#) has developed a [User Guide](#) to help familiarize Washington State conservation district employees with the Plant Materials Center.

The guide addresses bareroot plants, live stakes, gravel bed plants, and additional services the PMC offers such as brokering and contract growing. The guide also explains ordering, cancellation, storage, and handling of plant material.

This educational tool was developed by the PMC based on a need that was noted in the WACD Plant Materials Task Force survey conducted earlier this year. We hope you find this document helpful! If you have comments or feedback on the User Guide please reach out to Jacquie Gauthier at [pmcssales@gmx.com](mailto:pmcssales@gmx.com).

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## 4 – Legal Services Fund Update

The WACD Board has once again funded the WACD Legal Services Fund beginning July 1st. Last year six conservation districts took advantage of the one hour of free legal services, and four of the six secured additional time at a reduced rate.

This service is accessible to each member CD in good standing, subject to available funds. Please contact any [WACD Executive Office staff](#) to request a consultation with WACD's General Counsel. Staff will share your contact information with counsel who will reach out directly to you.

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## 5 – Annual Meeting: Call for Presentations

WACD staff are beginning preparations for the 2024 WACD Annual Conference, to be held December 2 - 4 at the Northern Quest Casino in Airway Heights near Spokane. This year, we are doing an open call for presentation or session proposals.

If you have a topic or speaker proposal — one that you feel would be a great addition to the conference — please send your ideas with a description to Ryan Baye at [ryan@wacd.org](mailto:ryan@wacd.org) by

August 2nd. Topics could include (but are not limited to):

- District Success Stories
- Unique District Projects/Programs
- Emerging Natural Resource Issues
- District Operations
- Interesting speakers

Nominations don't have to be for your own conservation district, feel free to nominate another district's program or an individual you want to elevate in front of the entire membership. WACD will seek to provide appropriate compensation to key speakers.

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## Upcoming Events

### 2024

- **July 17-18:** [WSCC Commission Tour and Meeting in Vancouver \(hosted by Clark CD\)](#)
  - **August 13:** [WACD Plant Materials Center Open House](#)
  - **September 16:** [WACD Board of Directors meeting](#)
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## Executive Corner

Dear Association Members and Partners:

Today is the day after Independence Day 2024, and that means WACD has entered a new fiscal year with a new work plan and a new budget. Thank you for working with us to make the past year a remarkable one for WACD, conservation districts, and partners.

### FY 2023-2024

I want to point out some of the highest of the high points we recently communicated to all conservation district supervisors and managers. During the 2023-2024 fiscal year, your state association of conservation districts continued to provide more services and support for conservation districts. Consider these examples:

- More than 1.6 million native plants were harvested for restoration and conservation projects.
- During the 2023 legislative session, WACD was instrumental in securing over \$55 million for new conservation programs, bringing the State Conservation Commission's budget up to \$97 million in operating funds for the biennium. This was sweetened in the 2024 session as we helped secure another \$3.5 million in Conservation Technical Assistance funding. That brought an additional \$75,000 in CTA to every conservation district in

Washington. If we look at only the \$75,000 to your district, that's pretty good return on the investment of your district's WACD dues!

- WACD implemented a legal services fund that is working well for conservation districts. Six of Washington's 45 conservation districts used that service in FY 23-24. That account is funded again so critical legal help will be available when needed.
- WACD'S 10 active committees have been working to address topics important to conservation districts. Committees are made up of district supervisors, managers, and staff from across the state, ensuring that member views are brought directly into WACD operations.
- Throughout the year, WACD maintained a regular flow of information to members and partners. Our three newsletters (Weekly Updates, Legislative Updates, and Grant Opportunities) reach 379 inboxes.

## **What about FY 2024-2025?**

We have some great things in motion for FY 2024-2025!

- As noted above, the legal services fund will continue. Having access to experienced legal counsel is a critical building block for conservation districts.
- In the next week or so, WACD will be announcing a contract for information technology support for conservation districts. (I've signed the contract but we need to meet one more time with the vendor to make sure we are on the same page.) This is a service WACD has not provided before. By the way, WACD continues to provide free email accounts to more than 80 people in our community.
- WACD is working with Enduris to create a help desk for human resources needs. Identifying and addressing needs for legal services, IT support, and HR support came from the Shared Resources Work Group with support from the WACD Board of Directors.
- WACD continues to build and support strong, healthy partnerships with key entities, including the State Conservation Commission, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Washington Association of District Employees, and the Washington Conservation Society.

While WACD built new services and promoted more partnerships, we also fought for choices that benefit conservation districts. Advocacy and representation, both with the Legislature and with agencies, is how this work occurs. Along the way, WACD did not stop progressing on the topics members identified as most important to them. We did not stop hearing your concerns.

## **WACD is a service entity**

I'm very pleased that WACD is continuing to move toward a service-oriented business model. This requires investment of time, money, and energy. WACD is providing more resources for conservation districts than ever before, and we can only do that with your continued support.

All of this and more is in the annual dues letter we recently sent to conservation supervisors and managers. We publish the dues letter each year for everyone to see. Find the 2024 letter at <https://wadistricts.us/wacd/documents/#dues>.

Once again, thank you for a great FY 2023-2024. We toast you, we support you, and we look forward to another great year of serving you!

## Thank you, veterans!



Thank you to all veterans and to the families that supported their military service. Independence Day is when I reflect on family and friends who served so that we could enjoy so many rights and privileges in the United States. It's easy to discount or dismiss those who worked on our behalf, but the reality is it takes a toll on the person and everyone in their support group. Please know you are appreciated!

### 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](mailto:oly@wacd.org). Emails sent to that address reach the entire Executive Office team!

Always yours for conservation,



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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## Latest Posts on the Hub

- [2024 WACD Award Nominations now Open](#)

- [Welcome to 15 new conservation district supervisors](#)
- [Celebrating our Outgoing 2024 Supervisors](#)
- [Ecology offers \\$1.7 million in drought planning and preparedness grants](#)
- [Whitman CD Conservation Technician Crew Lead](#)
- [Equity and Board Succession Plan Required for NACD TA Grantees](#)

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