



Washington Association of Conservation Districts

Five Things to Know for March 6, 2025

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"Today is your opportunity to build the tomorrow you want." - Ken Poirot

Photo Courtesy of the SCC's Flickr Account - Community Garden Helper by Elsa Bowen,
Lincoln County CD

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Five Things To Know

1. WACD Budget Priorities

With Governor Ferguson's announcement last week regarding additional cuts to the Conservation Commission, WACD has modified its current operating budget priorities to reflect the new proposal. We expect the WACD Board to provide additional guidance at their meeting on Monday, March 17th, but for the moment the biennium's budget goals are:

1. Seek an increase or at the very least maintain Conservation Technical Assistance funding levels.
2. Maintain Forest Health & Community Wildfire Resiliency funding levels.
3. Preservation of the Conservation Commission's Science Hub.

If you have questions, or comments, about these priorities please reach out to us. As always, if there are additional ways WACD can be of service to our membership during session, all you have to do is pick up the phone or write to Tom, Heather, or Ryan at oly@wacd.org.

2. Rates & Charges Bill Update

We are happy to announce that [House Bill 1488](#) passed the House. It will move over to the Senate, where it will repeat the committee process in that chamber in a couple weeks.

Thank you to everyone who spoke to their legislators about the bill. Your support and testimony made a real difference in moving this legislation forward!

3. Updates from NACD on Recent Executive Actions

The National Association of Conservation Districts has compiled survey results from CDs across the country on the impacts of recent executive actions. This information may be helpful to you in your own advocacy and public outreach work as you support conservation districts and our partners. The report will be updated as additional survey responses are collected.

Click the link below to download the report in PDF format:

[Report: Sustaining our Locally Led Conservation Delivery System: Urgent Action Needed to Address Funding Freezes, Bridge Staffing Gaps, and Preserve Partnerships – February 28, 2025](#)

More information on NACD's advocacy work and the upcoming Spring Fly-In can be found [here](#).

4. Prescribed Burn – Technical Service Provider Workshop!

NRCS WA will be hosting an online event on **March 21, 2025** from **9 am – 11 am**.

A Prescribed Burning Design and Implementation Activity (DIA-160) is a site-specific plan that helps a participant with implementing their conservation plans by providing site-specific instructions, requirements, plans, or specifications on the land. NRCS Technical Service Providers (TSPs) prepare these plans using inputs such as:

- Location of the burn unit
- Specifically required weather conditions
- Resource management objectives
- Smoke management plan
- Identification of burning methods
- Firing sequence
- Pre-burn preparation and post burn evaluation and management
- Contingency plan and identification of safety zones

You can register for this free webinar [here](#)!

5. Washington Soil Health Initiative Webinar Series: Making Soils Data Actionable

Virtual webinar series on **Tuesdays, March 11th, 18th, and 25th**, from **12-1pm PST**

Register for FREE at bit.ly/MSDA2025

Making Soils Data Actionable

Washington Soil Health Initiative Webinar Series

More soil tests and data are available to farmers than ever. While this can be empowering, it can also be confusing. New information on soil chemistry, biology, and physics can sometimes be difficult to translate into action.

In this webinar series, we highlight projects across Washington that are using soil data to inform real, on-farm management decisions.

If you've been hit with soil data overload, this is the series for you.

Soil physical properties: Compaction

March 11th, 12-1 pm PST

Haly Neely (*Assistant Professor, Washington State University*)
Natalie Sturm (*Graduate Student, Washington State University*)

In this webinar, Haly and Natalie will share their research on soil compaction and the management strategies to reduce it – including how farmers can use similar approaches on their own operations. These WSU researchers will also explain how identifying and managing soil compaction can benefit farmers and crop consultants around Washington state.

Precision agriculture technology and data

March 18th, 12-1 pm PST

Steve Mantle (*Founder, Innov8 Ag*)
Linda Neunzig (*Agriculture Coordinator, Snohomish County*)
Nate Krause (*Operations Manager, Swans Trail Farms*)

Join us for a case study on how public-private partnerships can be leveraged to democratize soils data and precision agricultural technology. In this talk, you'll hear from a Washington company, county, and grower, on how working together can lower the barriers to entry for environmental and economic decision-making in agriculture. Learn about new data-informed technology, and the local efforts to bring it to a farm near you.

Soil chemistry meets biology: Nitrogen credits

March 25th, 12-1 pm PST

Rich Koenig (*Professor, Washington State University*)
Savannah Crnick (*Resource Planner, South Yakima Conservation District*)

Ever wonder where those nitrogen (N) credits come from and how to use them? Rich will describe the origins, importance, and practical use of N credits in a fertilizer budgeting process. From irrigated to dryland systems, credits are the "money in the soil bank". You'll also learn how South Yakima Conservation District implements this knowledge, by using deep soil sampling to support growers in managing their crops, nutrients, and irrigation water.

Farmers,
agricultural
advisors,
extension staff,
and decision
makers are
welcome



Register for
FREE at
bit.ly/MSDA2025

Anyone attending this program who requires auxiliary aids or services, please contact Dani Gelardi at 360-791-3903 or dani.gelardi@agr.wa.gov.



AGR2-2502-005

6. Special – WACD Going to Washington

Washington State's Conservation Partnership will be participating in the 2025 NACD Fly-In on March 25 and 26. It will be part of National Ag Week, when commodity groups and agricultural associations all travel to our nation's capital (we've run into the Washington Tree Fruit Association and the Washington Wheat Growers in the halls of Congress or in the

Congressional cafeteria).

We will be bringing the state association's message to Congressional offices, especially the impact of recent federal actions on districts and our partners, but if there is something you'd like WACD to raise with your local Representative please reach out to Ryan Baye at ryan@wacd.org.

Upcoming Events

2025

- **March 17:** [WACD Board of Directors Meeting](#)
 - **March 19 - 20:** [SCC Meeting, Grays Harbor](#)
 - **March 26:** [NACD Spring Fly-In](#)
 - **April 21:** [WACD Board of Directors Meeting](#)
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Executive Corner

These are unprecedented times

These are unprecedented times and changes are still coming. Does this leave you feeling unsettled, even concerned? You are not alone. In our conservation community, almost everyone I talk with is worried about how these changes may affect the ability of their district to provide programs and services, and how their farmers and ranchers may be impacted.

We are a small community. Within each district, people know each other. Board and staff members know each other on a first-name basis. You know your partners and producers. When someone loses their job, it's not abstract: it's real, it's personal, and it hits home.

Those of us working in a wider, statewide context feel this, too. We know you and some of your people. What happens to you is not abstract to us. You are real and you matter.

I don't want to come across as Chicken Little, crying that the sky is falling. Sometimes it feels like that, and recently, it has felt like that a little more often. That is unsettling. If you are experiencing feelings of despair or feeling like there is no hope, please find someone trusted to talk with.

I think our pathway through the massive changes we are experiencing is to focus on what we do, how it benefits others, and to tenaciously hold onto hope. Hope is what gives farmers and ranchers the ability to weather difficult times because they know they'll have a chance to do better next season. Hope is what forest owners have, even as they watch forests burn in extreme events. Hope is what our conservation community has, because we spend our time

trying to make the future better for current and future generations.

Along with hope, we coalesce around some foundational core values:

- Conservation should be voluntary, not regulated.
- Incentives to help people change how they use natural resources is a more lasting way of creating needed changes.
- Understanding the desires of landowners and resource users is critical in the collaborative process of finding long-lasting solutions.
- Solutions tailor-made for particular conditions work best.

This is a time to be talking to your congressional and state legislative delegations, frequently. It doesn't matter which party they associate with. What matters is they hear from you and from your community members how changes at the federal and state levels are affecting farmers, ranchers, forestland owners, and the resources they steward. If you have community outreach or education programs, your elected decision makers need to hear about people in those groups, too.

If possible, attach a name or picture to your communications. A name and a face make it personal. It becomes more real. Without these identifiers, it's just dry lists and statistics.

Our conservation community practitioners are very effective at meeting new people, describing the conservation work they do, and persuading people to try something different. These are the very skills you can use effectively when communicating with your electeds. Treat them like a neighbor who needs to know what you are describing. Why? Because they do.



Best wishes to Bob Amrine

On February 26, 2025, Ryan Baye and I attended the Lewis County Conservation District board of supervisors meeting in Chehalis, Washington. The event that called the two of us there was

the last district board meeting for manager Bob Amrine as he retired after 30 years of service.

Bob had been on the job for two years when I was hired by the State Conservation Commission to serve the Southwest Washington conservation districts, including the Lewis County CD, as the Commission's field representative (now called regional managers). I worked with Bob and his board quite often during those years.

Going through some adversity together is a bonding experience, and I still feel that connection to every district I had the pleasure of serving during my Commission time. Now I get to serve all 45 districts and the feeling of being connected to everyone is powerful. Indeed, sometimes it feels overwhelming!

Feeling overwhelmed is what struck me as I was asked if I wanted to say anything during the celebration of Bob's retirement. I stood up and looked at Bob. Our eyes met, and we held each other's gaze. I felt 30 years of history -- great accomplishments, difficult challenges, and hours and hours of working together -- well up inside me. Those memories completely filled my mind and I forgot what I wanted to say. I stood there, tongue tied, in the moment with Bob, feeling perhaps a little extra moisture in my eyes, and feeling intensely grateful to have been able to work with Bob and his district for so many years. But I couldn't express any of that verbally. There was just too much in my heart and in my mind.

I'm a little alarmed at this, because part of my job involves extemporizing at any time on almost any conservation-related subject, even if it is only a few sentences. To find myself unable to speak was something I have not experienced in many, many years. This work we do reaches way down inside each of our people. It lives deep within us. All of our people bring their passion and caring to bear in the work they do. This is part of the secret sauce that makes working for, and with, conservation districts such a powerful, fulfilling experience. We don't often recognize that even while the people being served by a conservation district are having these feelings, so are the district's employees and board members.

It's good to pause for a moment and recognize that we do this work because it stirs something in our soul. It addresses a need that we may not be able to verbalize, but it is real, it is powerful, and it is meaningful. Even if you can't express what you are feeling, I hope you can take some time to bask in the gratitude so many people have for you and your work. I hope, too, that you can feel grateful for the opportunity to provide such great service to your community and natural resources.

Thank you, Bob, for reminding me how deeply we are connected, how wonderful our time has been together, and how the legacy of each person's work lives on in their district and with their cooperators.

With that, I hope I have the opportunity to cross paths with Bob many times in the future, and I wish him a great, well-earned retirement.



Best wishes to Nada Wentz

Bob was not the only district employee who retired last week. Nada Wentz departed after 17 years of dedicated service to Cascadia Conservation District, and on her birthday! In the words of the district, "Nada's passion, expertise, kindness, and joy touched so many lives, and she will be greatly missed."

We'd like to hear from you

As always, we'd like to receive your ideas and questions. Please contact 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

- [Clark Conservation District Community Potting Events](#)
- [Week 7 Legislative Update](#)
- [Asotin CD Seeks Resource Specialist](#)
- [NRCS' Prescribed Burning Design for TSPs Webinar](#)
- [Week 6 Legislative Update](#)
- [Week 5 Legislative Update](#)

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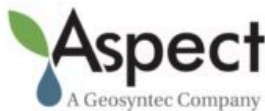
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