



Washington Association of Conservation Districts

Five Things to Know for April 3, 2025

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



Thank you to members of WACD, SCC and Districts who attended the NACD Spring Fly-In last week representing Washington State on the Hill in DC.

In This Issue

Five Things to Know

1. Capital Budget Update
2. Rates and Charges Bill Update
3. Updated District Directory is Now Available
4. WADE Conference Information
5. Volunteer Programs Make a Difference
6. Bonus Item - NACD Stewardship Week - Home is Where the Habitat is

Upcoming Events

Executive Corner

Latest Posts on the Hub

Thank you to Sponsors

Five Things To Know

1. Capital Budget Update

On Monday, March 31, the House and Senate released their proposed Capital Budgets. Those budgets can be found [here](#). Both the House and Senate versions mostly retained, or slightly increased, Capital funding levels for the State Conservation Commission's programs. It is still early in the process. Budgets will need to be approved by the Governor who, so far, has been very critical of proposed tax increases necessary to fund House and Senate budget proposals. You can learn more about that [here](#).

One surprise in the Senate Capital budget was a whopping 25 million dollar increase in Riparian Grant Program funding, bringing their total proposed allocation to 50 million dollars. We believe this could be an inadvertent error that legislators may correct as budget negotiations move forward.

Across agencies, we have seen proposed increases in riparian grant funding levels and an across the board lack of investment in forest health and wildfire resiliency. The House and Senate will now negotiate a compromised version of their budgets.

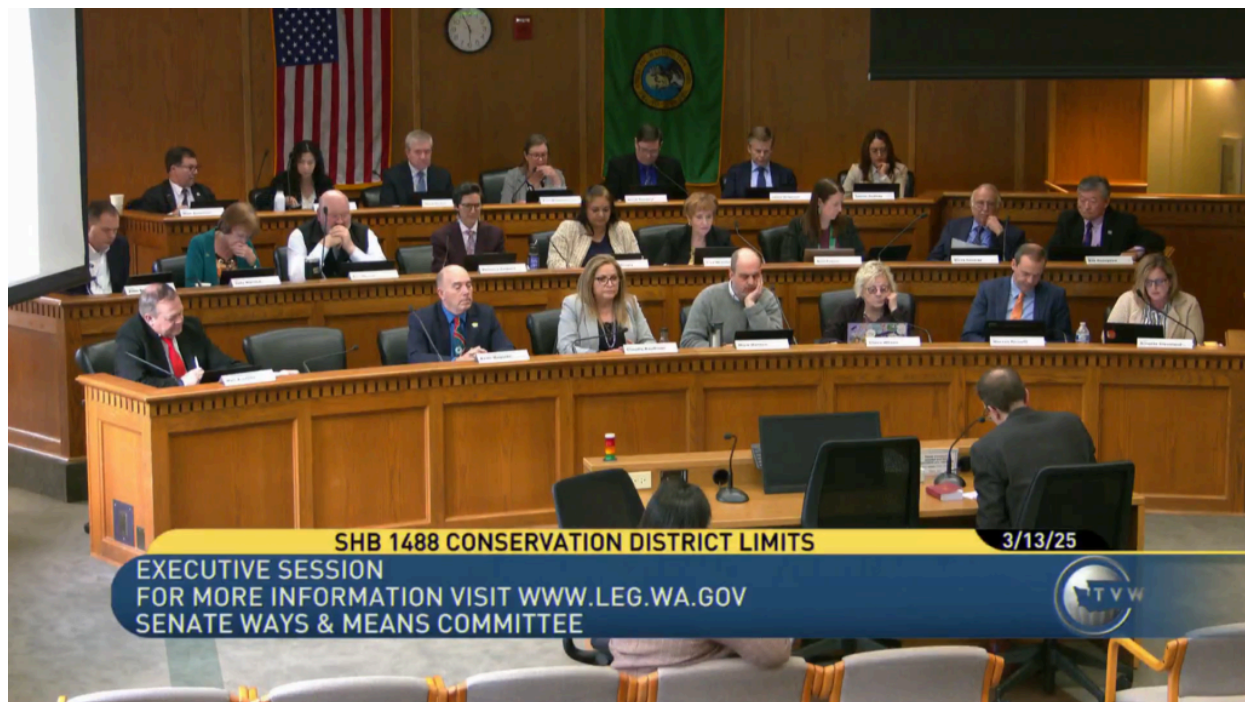
WACD has already started developing language for districts to use around reconciling the difference in the Senate and House Operating budgets. We will send that out shortly. We are also beginning to develop a campaign to seek reinstatement of forest health funding in the supplemental budget as we do not expect to see major increases in that funding category this session.

2. Rates & Charges Bill Update

On March 26, the Washington State Senate approved an amended version of [SHB 1488](#). The amendment places a \$25-per-parcel cap on rates-and-charges fees. A mechanism to adjust the cap in response to inflation was also added. The adjustment is intended to help rates-and-charges fees keep pace with inflation, i.e., to help communities enjoy a continuous level of service from the conservation district that serves them.

Since the bill language differs in the House and Senate versions, the bill will next go to a House-Senate conference where final language will be negotiated. Once there is concurrence on the final language, the bill will be sent to the Governor for final approval.

WACD would like to thank all of the Districts who assisted with garnering support for the bill and the legislators who sponsored and voted for it. WACD's lobbyist Brynn Brady did a phenomenal job of shepherding the bill through the legislative process. **Thank you!**



3. Updated District Directory is Now Available

WACD maintains a directory of conservation districts and partners to facilitate interactions with and within our conservation community. We also make available to members several region-specific contact lists of board chairs and managers. Conservation Districts and partners can [contact us](#) for a link to the latest version.

4. WADE Conference Information!

WADE Registrations:

[How to Register](#)

The registration deadline is **May 1, 2025**. After that, no new registrations will be accepted. You don't have to pay right away, but you must be signed up by then to attend. Do you have new

employees at your district? Please forward this email their way! [Registration](#).

Cost: Registration for the training is \$800/(\$900 after April 1st) per person. That fee includes registration, 2 nights lodging (June 9 & 10) at Sleeping Lady, and all meals beginning at dinner on June 9th through lunch on June 11th. Additional cost information is on the registration form.

There won't be a live virtual option this year, but some sessions may be recorded and shared later at the track coordinators' discretion. Slide decks and other materials will also be available when provided by speakers.

WADE Employee of the Year:

Help Recognize Your Staff!

The WADE board is now accepting nominations for the WADE Employee of the Year award. All past and current CD employees, WACD, and WSCC employees are eligible for nominations, and anyone can nominate a person for this award. A person may submit more than one nomination. Please visit the [WADE website](#) for additional information and guidelines.

If you wish to make a nomination, please fill out the [nomination form](#).

The deadline for nominations 4pm on **Friday, May 9, 2025**.

If you need any assistance or have any questions, please contact [Zorah Oppenheimer](#).

5. Volunteer Programs Make a Difference

Many conservation district use volunteers to implement local conservation and education projects. Volunteers truly make a difference in the work we do! WACD has partnered with NRCS to assist districts in signing up their volunteers as **Earth Team Volunteers**. Since 1985, Earth Team Volunteers have helped directly with conservation work across the nation. Learn how your CD Volunteers can become Earth Team Volunteers [here](#).

6. NACD Stewardship Week ~ Home is Where the Habitat is

Held from **April 27 – May 4**, this year's Stewardship Week theme, "Home is Where the Habitat is," focuses on protecting and restoring native and managed habitats.

Need supplies to help your district or local school celebrate? Printed education materials are available to order [on NACD's marketplace](#)! Order soon to make sure they arrive in time, or [download the materials](#) for free and take them to your favorite local print shop.

The resources - including lesson plans, activity sheets, student journals, and outreach kits - are all designed to help districts engage schools and communities in conservation learning. Please reach out to [NACD](#) with any questions.



Upcoming Events

2025

- **April 21:** [WACD Board of Directors Meeting](#)
- **May 1st:** [State Technical Advisory Committee Meeting](#)
- **May 13-15:** [SCC Meeting & Tour](#)
- **May 19:** [WACD Board of Directors Meeting](#)
- **June 9 - 11:** [WADE Conference](#)
- **June 12:** SCC/WACD All Districts Meeting
- **June 16:** [WACD Board Meeting, Bow, WA](#)

Executive Corner

Appreciating everyone in, and in contact with, our community

Sometimes it's worth putting the closing paragraphs up front so they are more likely to be seen:

Appreciating all of the people who make it possible for communities to be well served by conservation districts is important and meaningful. You are appreciated! Please take a moment to share your appreciation with some of the people who make it possible for us to support the local delivery of conservation programs and services.

Feeling good about your work? Good! But this is not the time to let up from the work of reaching out to your elected officials. We continue to need support on SHB 1488, the rates and charges bill. We continue to need your voices advocating for strong, continued support for all conservation programs. If we stop pressing forward now, we may lose key support on legislation or funding. Please do reach out to your legislators now to let them know you appreciate their work and to thank them for their continuing support of local conservation.

With those takeaways out of the way, here are the Executive Corner thoughts for this issue!

Most folks have little idea how much work goes on behind the scenes during Legislative session. The most obvious group of people — legislators — are up early and staying late to work on needs brought forward by the communities they serve. Weekends? That's work time. Holidays? More work time. It is an exhausting grind for legislators and the legislative assistants who support them. Most legislators aren't based in or near Olympia so they are holed up in housing situations that are not always very restful. When you next talk with your legislators, please thank them for their hard work. They don't hear thank you enough.

WACD is grateful to the many conservation districts that have created and nurtured relationships with their elected officials. It makes a huge difference! You may think that your casual conversation with a legislator is of little importance, but in reality, they remember and appreciate you. You are a connection to home and a trusted voice they can count on. Often, we go into a legislator's office and start to explain what conservation districts are, only to be interrupted with a smile and a comment like: *I know my conservation district very well and it does great work*. Legislators knowing and appreciating their local conservation district has value beyond any price.

Building these relationships takes work. It is often easier for a rural district to do so as it may only have a couple of representatives and a senator to keep in touch with. In rural districts, you may see your elected official working in the yard or at the grocery store. It's a neighbor-to-neighbor kind of relationship that can be very powerful.

However, imagine what some of our more populated districts have to deal with! In heavily populated conservation districts, it can be a heavy lift to stay in touch with all of their elected officials. Is it worth it? Without a doubt, yes! We see it each year as we make the rounds. We hear it from Conservation Commission staff and from WACD's lobbyist. The more legislators who know they have a local conservation district, who have heard what it does, and who understand the value districts provide in their communities, the better not only for your district but for all districts. The more who can also connect a district's work with a face and a name from home are often the most powerful allies for local conservation.

Of course, let's not forget our Conservation Commission board members and staff, as well as WACD board members. Each person brings connections and perspectives that expand the

reach of the conservation district movement. It really does take a village.

We don't always agree on everything, nor do we need to. What makes our system work is we are willing to debate the pros and cons of an idea and then follow the majority decision reached by conservation district members...even when we don't completely agree with the decision. There is great strength created by arguing for your preferred position and accepting the choices made by the majority. When WACD is able to communicate to legislators that we are speaking for all 45 conservation districts across the State of Washington, that is meaningful. It carries some weight. Thank you for participating in discussion and decision making, and thank you for supporting the decisions reached by WACD members.

Appreciating all of the people who make it possible for communities to be well served by conservation districts is important and meaningful. You are appreciated! Please take a moment to share your appreciation with some of the people who make it possible for us to support the local delivery of conservation programs and services.

Feeling good about your work? Good! But this is not the time to let up from the work of reaching out to your elected officials. We continue to need support on SHB 1488, the rates and charges bill. We continue to need your voices advocating for strong, continued support for all conservation programs. If we stop pressing forward now, we may lose key support on legislation or funding. Please do reach out to your legislators now to let them know you appreciate their work and to thank them for their continuing support of local conservation.

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

- [Snohomish Conservation District and Verdant Health Commission to Launch Harvest at Home, a Free Community Gardening Program](#)
- [Rural Water Supply Coordinator Position](#)
- [Conservation Talk Series: "Watershed Stewardship: Pullman's Stormwater and Riparian Resources"](#)
- [Week 11 Legislative Update](#)

- [DNR Conservation Easement Cruiser Position](#)
- [King CD Green Cities Coordinator](#)

Recent Posts

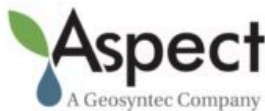
Jobs

Reading List

2024 Annual Conference Sponsors!

Sponsors

Thank you to the 2024 WACD Annual Meeting Sponsors



Pass it on!

Please pass this newsletter on to others in our conservation community so they can subscribe and be as informed as you are!

SUBSCRIBE

More information is available on the WACD Hub!

Visit the WACD Hub

We welcome your [feedback](#)

Subscribe | Unsubscribe | Manage your subscription | Contact WACD
1219 11th Ave SE, Olympia, WA 98501
(564) 669-7540