



# Washington Association of Conservation Districts

## Five Things to Know for April 17, 2025

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WASHINGTON NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY | APRIL 2025 NATIVE PLANT APPRECIATION MONTH



EXPLORING BIODIVERSITY: EXERCISES IN COMMUNITY SCIENCE



April is Native Plant Appreciation Month! To find events in your area visit:

<https://www.wnps.org/wnps-annual-events/npam>

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## Five Things To Know

### 1. Together for Conservation: Statewide Leadership Forum RSVP

SCC and WACD are co-hosting this meeting to bring together conservation districts to discuss issues facing Washington state.

The meeting will cover the following topics:

- A conversation on shared leadership and working together
- Legislative updates and planning for 2026
- Communication strategies on water quality
- WACD Sustainable Funding Committee update

📍 **Location:** Enchantments Ballroom, [Icicle Village, Leavenworth](#)

📅 **Date:** June 12, 2025 from 8 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. ([Add to calendar!](#))

👏 **What:** A statewide forum with SCC, WACD and conservation districts.

🚗 **Travel:** SCC is also excited to offer up to \$1,000 in reimbursement per district to attend in person. Supervisors and staff are encouraged to attend.

Please register for the event below, even if you plan on attending virtually. Registration closes on **May 29, 2025**.

[Register Here](#)

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## 2. Area Director Opportunities

WACD is seeking supervisors in the [Northeast, Southeast and South Central Areas](#) who are interested in serving on the WACD Board of Directors. The WACD Board oversees the actions of your state association, the activities of its staff, and the operations of the WACD Plant Materials Center. The WACD Board meets once a month through Zoom, from 6 – 8:30 PM on the 3rd Monday of each month.

If you have questions or would like to put your name forward for consideration, please contact Ryan Baye at [rbye@wadistricts.org](mailto:rbye@wadistricts.org).

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## 3. Conservation District Office Space Survey

Perhaps you never think about the National Association of Conservation Districts, but NACD is thinking of conservation districts. This is a challenging time for them, and for all of us. NACD, NASCA, and NCDEA leaders welcomed the new NRCS Chief Aubrey Bettencourt in Washington, DC on April 9th, providing briefings on how the Conservation Partnership works and on locally led conservation. Check that out in [NACD's Facebook post](#) on this topic.

NACD is asking members to help us understand conservation districts' office footprint and the potential impacts of NRCS lease terminations. With 3,000 members across 50+states and territories, NACD does not have specific data on how many districts are collocated with USDA. The survey goals are to:

- Understand conservation districts' overall office footprint (e.g., how many are collocated with USDA, how many have standalone offices?)
- Anticipate potential impacts to conservation districts, nationwide.
- There have been few, if any, official lease terminations at USDA FPAC. However, as USDA continues to assess its federal footprint and staffing changes, this survey can also be utilized for members to inform NACD of official closures or lease terminations.

NACD continues to track these, and many other, developments to best represent the needs of NACD members.

[NACD Survey](#)

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## 4. Waters of the United States Listening Sessions

The EPA and the Department of the Army intend to engage stakeholders on certain key topics related to the implementation of the definition of “waters of the United States” in light of the Supreme Court's 2023 decision in Sackett v. EPA.

The agencies are committed to learning from the past regulatory approaches—the pre-2015 regulations and guidance, the 2015 Clean Water Rule, the 2020 Navigable Waters Protection Rule, the 2023 Rule, and the Amended 2023 Rule—while engaging with stakeholders before

taking further administrative action to provide any additional clarification to agency staff, co-regulators, and the public on specific aspects of the definition of “waters of the United States.”

There are several listening sessions planned:

- [Listening Session for States](#): April 29, 2025, from 9:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. ET (Virtual and at EPA Headquarters in Washington, D.C.)
- [Listening Session for Tribes](#): April 30, 2025, from 1:00 - 3:30 p.m. ET (Virtual)
- [Listening Session for Industry and Agricultural Stakeholders](#): May 1, 2025, from 9:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. ET (Virtual and at EPA Headquarters in Washington, D.C.)
- [Listening Session for Environmental and Conservation Stakeholders](#): May 1, 2025, from 1:00 - 3:30 p.m. ET (Virtual and at EPA Headquarters in Washington, D.C.)
- Listening Sessions for the Public and Local Governments: To be Announced

Reach out to [Nick Peak](#), Agriculture Advisor EPA Region 10, if you have questions about this process.

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## 5. Western Water Resilience Workshop Series

The Western Water Resilience Workshop Series: Empowering Ag Advisors to Partner with Small-Scale Growers continues this spring with two dynamic, farmer-informed virtual sessions. These live, interactive workshops are tailored for agricultural service providers across Washington, Oregon, and California.

### **April 24 - Rainwater Harvesting in Action - 10 am - 11:30 am PT on Zoom**

Hear directly from farmers Michelle Week (Good Rain Farm) and Nate Johnson (Sunbow Produce) as they share their experiences designing and using rainwater harvesting systems to build resilience. This session will spotlight practical strategies and lessons learned from growers adapting to increasingly unpredictable water access.

[Register for the 04/24 workshop here](#)

### **May 8 - Western Water Rights 101 for Ag Advisors - 10 am - Noon PT on Zoom**

With Amanda Cronin from (AMP Insights), we'll break down water rights fundamentals across WA, OR, and CA for western ag advisors. You'll gain practical tools to support growers with questions like:

- Do I have a water right—and how can I find out?
- What can I legally use water for, and how much?
- What if I don't have a water right?
- Is it realistic to apply for a new water right?

While you won't be a water rights expert in two hours, you will walk away with practical tools and region-specific insights to help your growers navigate tough questions.

[Register for the 05/08 workshop here](#)

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## 6. New Tool for Nutrient Management Planners Available

Conservation planners use site-specific nitrogen and phosphorus planning thresholds for leaching and runoff within the Conservation Assessment Ranking Tool (CART) to help producers protect water quality. Those same planning thresholds are now publicly available in the new Geographic Information System (GIS) Site Risk for Water Quality (SRWQ) tool available on the Dynamic Soils (DS) Hub.

[Access the Tool Here](#)

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## 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:** Together for Conservation: Statewide Leadership Forum
- **June 16:** [WACD Board Meeting, Bow, WA](#)

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## Executive Corner

### How can we function better as a collaborative team?

I used to have a sticky note on the wall by my work phone that asked three questions:

- Is it urgent?
- Is it important?
- Who else needs to know?

The first two metrics are used in various decision-making systems to help prioritize workload. For example, if it is urgent but not important, then it really doesn't need to be done. If the matter is important but not urgent, it can be planned and scheduled. If it is both urgent and important, then other things get moved aside to deal with. And if it is neither urgent nor important, it can be ignored.

It's the "who else needs to know" question that I've often found we tend to forget. We get caught up in urgent, important things, and being a community of "do-ers," we jump on those

things to get them done. Along the way, we sometimes forget to let others know what is going on.

As I thought about this, I recognized that I've been sensing an emerging trend for several years, a trend I find quite troubling. Boiled down to its essence, it looks like one of two things, or a combination of them: groups in our community aren't trusting each other, or people are just too busy to actually communicate well with other groups. Either way (or both), this works against growing conservation district capability and effectiveness.

I bring this up because your WACD staff just became aware of information developed by conservation districts that would have helped us advocate more effectively for our community. It may be that someone said yes, I'll share it with WACD and then didn't do it because of the overwhelming nature of district work. It may be that the group simply assumed the information would be shared by someone, somehow. It may be that folks didn't recognize that WACD could have used that information on their behalf. Whatever the reason, the failure to communicate vital information is a symptom that says all is not well.

And we need to be well. We need to work well together, where we means everyone in our community, including conservation district staff and managers, district supervisors, State Conservation Commission staff, the SCC board, NRCS staff, WACD staff and board, and anyone else you can think of (ECY, DNR, WDFW, USFW, and more) who partners with, or helps fund, conservation districts.

Until our larger community of conservation districts and those that partner with them can express what is most important to them and what is most urgent to get done first, I don't think we can make much headway. When we identify the ways groups intersect, we are also identifying opportunities to work together to achieve those important objectives.

Please look at the groups you work with and ask: are they operating as independent islands of thought and resources, or are they talking with other islands to make sure all needs are met.

If it's urgent, look at whether it is also important. If it is also important, that issue becomes a top priority. But also try to build the question "who else needs to know" into your workflow. The more we ask this question, the more peers and partners we'll identify who can help us succeed.

Over time, I did add a fourth item to my short-list (urgent, important, who needs to know): if not me, then who? In other words, if I'm not going to do it, who will? Have I clearly communicated that expectation to the other person or group? Who is responsible for taking action or moving the item forward?

Perhaps we could expand this last item a bit in terms of conservation opportunities we see in all the many corners of our beautiful state: if not us, then who?

I know each of us has our own way of prioritizing work. I like the four-question approach:

1. Is it urgent?
2. Is it important?
3. Who else needs to know?

4. If not us, then who?

## 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](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

- [Foster Creek Conservation District enhances watershed health in Douglas County](#)
- [Strong Partnerships Help the Newport Community Garden Flourish](#)
- [Elementary students to explore agriculture at Kittitas Valley Event Center](#)
- [Week 13 Legislative Update](#)
- [Spokane Conservation District's annual tree sale draws crowds as spring arrives](#)
- [New conservation district program offers sprinkler system analysis](#)

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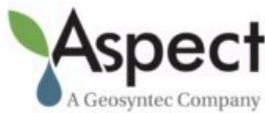
Reading List

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