



Washington Association of Conservation Districts

Five Things to Know for May 1, 2025

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



An Interactive Timeline: 90 Years of Helping People Help the Land

Learn more about the history of NRCS [here](#).

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Five Things To Know

1. Rates and Charges Bill Update

[House Bill 1488](#) is still waiting to be signed by the Governor. There were 431 bills adopted by the legislature this session, so there is a bit of a backlog. We hope the bill will be signed sooner than later.

You can access the Governor's Bill Action Schedule [here](#).

2. State Conservation Commission Budget Update

The 2025 Washington State legislative session is over. The House and the Senate adjourned on time, with the usual last minute scrambling. Governor Ferguson has 20 days to review the budgets, with a deadline of May 20.

You can read more about the 2025-27 Biennial Budget Appropriations for the operating and capital budgets and access the detailed breakdown document on the SCC's website [here](#).

3. 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.

4. 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](#)

5. STAR Web Tool Training Event

STAR is a free conservation assessment and planning tool that can be used to inform agricultural production decisions. Producers can receive a field level STAR rating, develop a customized Conservation Innovation Plan, and connect with technical and financial resources.

There will be a STAR Web Tool Training on **May 15th** from 1 pm - 4 pm at the Washington Dept. of Ag Offices in Yakima. You can pre-register for the training at:

<https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/3d4f6a821b714492ae683fd1aae89f80>



STAR WEB TOOL TRAINING

Helping Conservation Agriculture Make Cents

STAR is a free conservation assessment and planning tool that can be used to inform agricultural production decisions.

This easy-to-use tool was developed by Washington researchers, extension specialists, and conservation district professionals with input from farmers and agronomists to ensure that practices and impacts are locally relevant and science based. Receive a field level STAR rating, develop a customized Conservation Innovation Plan, and connect with technical and financial resources.



PRE-REGISTER:

<https://arcg.is/1XDj1a0>



WHEN:

May 15, 2025, 1 pm – 4 pm

WHERE:

Washington State Dept. of Agriculture Offices
Conference Room 238
21 N 1st Ave #236
Yakima, WA 98902

AGENDA:

- History and development of Washington STAR
- How to use the online STAR web tool to:
 - Get a 1 to 5 STAR rating for each field
 - Connect with locally relevant sources of funding and technical resources
 - Develop a customized Conservation Innovation Plan (CIP)
- Details on the free STAR soil sampling program (available to the first 100 STAR enrollees)



SPEAKERS:

Lauren Quackenbush, WSDA STAR Coordinator, lauren.quackenbush@agr.wa.gov

The Washington STAR program is supported with funding from Washington's Climate Commitment Act (CCA). The CCA supports Washington's climate action efforts by putting cap-and-invest dollars to work reducing climate pollution, creating jobs, and improving public health. Information about the CCA is available at www.climate.wa.gov.

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6. Conservation District Event Spotlight!

Crab Creek Summit - June 3rd & 4th, 2025 - Past, Present, & Future

Join us for the Crab Creek Summit, a two-day forum on June 3rd and 4th dedicated to the stewardship of the Crab Creek watershed. Hosted by the Columbia Basin Conservation District, this gathering will provide a venue for critical conversations about the history, stewardship,

water quality, and wildlife habitat along the waterways of the Crab Creek watershed.

The first day, held at the Wanapum Heritage Center, will feature presentations from local stakeholders covering a wide range of topics, as well as booths and demonstrations, and a lunch provided by the Wanapum Heritage Center. The second day is a field trip highlighting some of the amazing work being done in the Lower Crab Creek.

Please RSVP for this FREE event and specify your interest in attending either a single day or both days at www.columbiabasincd.org/ripple-effect.



Upcoming Events

2025

- **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](#)

Executive Corner

Even in the face of difficult budgets, we're winning

What a roller coaster of a year. Things that come to mind include:

- First biennial budget session for the Conservation Commission's Executive Director, and multiple changes at the Commission.
- A new Governor who did not include natural resource issues or agriculture in his priorities.
- A whole herd of new legislators and changes in positions for election officials and agency directors.
- Legislation supported by the Association that is now sitting on the Governor's desk.
- A state budget that is still unresolved and still problematic for many. Despite this, funding for voluntary conservation programs looks like it is in pretty good shape, with the notable exceptions of professional engineering and forest health.

With those bullet points for context, I have to say that this session could have been much worse for conservation. If you are one of the districts that was counting on engineering money or forest/wildfire funding, my comment is likely to sound a bit out of touch. I do understand that there are pain points, and for some, they are much more painful. For the state as a whole, though, our community is exposed to a little less pain than many other groups are feeling.

WACD sensed some of this coming, which is why [our advocacy](#) focused on a campaign-style approach to help educate and inform legislators and agencies. Adding Heather Wendt in 2023 to our Executive Office team gave us the additional capacity we needed to take some ideas from concept to implementation. Ryan Baye and Heather made a powerful team during this legislative session, and our conservation family is better for it. Conservation districts increased their overall engagement with legislators. That's a win.

As a community, we have advanced our capabilities to advocate effectively. Yes, there is still more to do, but this year, we worked well together to advance conservation district interests.

I'm reminded of a saying I heard long ago: we reap the rewards of someone else's misfortune. What this means to me is we can benefit by learning from the difficulties others have had. We've seen groups not do a good job of advocating for their needs. We've seen entities hire advocates who didn't do a good job for them. We've seen groups not help their members engage with elected officials. Learning from those experiences has helped us do a much better job this session. While I don't wish misfortune on anyone, if we can learn from those situations, we become more capable and effective.

My last comment is about a book I'm reading now. [Range: Why Generalists Triumph in a Specialized World](#), by David Epstein, is very interesting to me, considering that he wrote about how many of the most successful people have had a variety of jobs, experiences, and failures. They have wide-ranging backgrounds. I have the hardcover book, but the Audible book is even better because it presents Epstein's thoughts in a measured way, forcing me to hear everything

in the book.

I've been thinking about our community in the context of the concepts in Range. I think we are well-positioned to leap forward in growth. Our conservation district boards are becoming filled with people with rich life experiences. Our conservation district executives are bringing a wide range of interests and knowledge to the conservation district movement. Even our customers are becoming more varied. All of these are ingredients for a more potent dish than we've baked before. I want to leave you with the reassurance that even if budgets are challenging this year, our community is strong and vibrant and growing. That's a win we can feel good about and build upon.

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

- [FY 25-27 State Budget Takeaways](#)
- [Week 15 Legislative Update](#)
- [Week 14 Legislative Update](#)
- [HB 1488 on rates and charges moves to the Governor](#)
- [Columbia Conservation District asks to move into former county building](#)
- [Camp Sagebrush Fosters Unique, Enriching Experiences](#)

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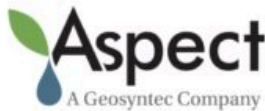
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