



Washington Association of Conservation Districts

Five Things to Know for October 2, 2025

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



Evergreen huckleberry plugs wait to be packed into pre-orders for Whatcom CDs 2024 Plant Sale. Photo by: Emily Hirsch, Whatcom Conservation District.

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Five Things To Know

1. WACD's Annual Conference & Business Meeting ~ Register Today!

Hotel Registration

WACD is excited to be hosting our **2025 Annual Conference and Business Meeting** at the Northern Quest Resort and Casino this year from **Monday, December 1st to Wednesday, December 3rd**. We've secured a group rate at the state per diem amount of \$126 for conference attendees.

To secure the discounted rate, you will have to call the Northern Quest Casino Reservation Department at 1-877-871-6772 and reference either the *"Washington Association Conservation Conference"* group rate or mention the **Group Discount ID 30560**. You can only utilize the discount over the phone, it will not be possible to make hotel reservations with the group discount online. **Our group rate at the Northern Quest runs until Friday, October 31st.**

Conference Registration

Registration for the Annual Conference on Monday and Tuesday and for the Business Meeting on Wednesday, whether you're planning to participate online or in-person, can all be done on one form – [just click here](#).

WACD is offering a single price for conference registration and meals at \$550 per person. The cost to attend virtually will be \$150/per person. If your district sends 3 or more supervisors to attend in person, your entire district can attend virtually for only \$75.00.

As in years past, we are discounting registration for new supervisors and new district staff to encourage their attendance and meet the statewide community. The first 15 to register as first-time conference attendees pay 50% of the regular registration price. There will be a dedicated new supervisor and manager training session on Monday morning with a leadership consultant for new managers / executive directors and supervisors elected or appointed in 2023, 2024, or 2025. **Regular registration ends November 21st.**

For more information visit the Conference Page on the HUB [here](#).

2. Area Meetings – Details on the HUB

Area meeting details and registration information is now available for all of the meetings on the HUB: <https://wadistricts.us/annual/2025meetings/2025-area-association-meetings/>

- **Wednesday, October 15** – Northwest Area meeting – [Register by October 7th](#)
- **Thursday, October 16** – Southwest Area meeting – [Register by October 1st](#)
- **Wednesday, October 22** – Northeast Area meeting – [Register by October 15th](#)
- **Thursday, October 23** – North Central Area Meeting – [Register by October 10th](#)
- **Tuesday, October 28** – South Central Area Meeting – [Register by October 15th](#)
- **Wednesday, October 29** – Southeast Area meeting – [Register by October 3rd](#)

3. Webinar Roundup ~ Upcoming Webinars of Interest

- Oct. 2, 12:00-12:30 PM PT – NACD Conservation Coffee (Webinar): [New Fiscal Year Check-In with NACD President Gary Blair](#)
- Oct. 14, 10:00-11:00 AM PT - [NRCS Introduction to EWP Program and Sponsor Responsibilities](#)
- Nov. 13, 12:00-12:30 PM PT – NACD Conservation Coffee (Webinar): [Take Advantage of your NACD Membership](#)
- Dec. 18, 12:00-12:30 PM PT – NACD Conservation Coffee (Webinar): [Leadership Tips and Tricks with the NACD Presidents Association](#)

4. After the Flames Conference & Workshop

The **After the Flames Conference and Workshop** is returning in 2026 as a dynamic, solutions-focused gathering designed to support wildfire-impacted communities and the professionals who serve them. This pivotal event will be held **April 6-9, 2026**, at the scenic Suncadia Resort in Cle Elum, Washington.

This is a nationally recognized conference and workshop focused exclusively on post-wildfire recovery. Hosted by Coalitions & Collaboratives (COCO), the event fosters cross-sector collaboration among agencies, researchers, nonprofits, and community leaders to promote actionable solutions and meaningful partnerships.

Under the 2026 theme **“Collective Recovery from the Ground Up,”** the conference invites participants to explore and share innovative approaches, policies, and practical strategies that enhance wildfire planning and accelerate effective post-fire recovery. Attendees will engage in in-depth workshops, hear from top experts, and build critical partnerships aimed at restoring landscapes and fostering long-term community resilience.

[Read more](#)

5. USDA's Farm to School Grant Program

The program objective for the FY 2026 **Farm to School Grant Program** is to improve access to local foods in eligible Child Nutrition Program (CNP) sites through comprehensive farm to CNP programming that includes local sourcing and agricultural education efforts. Examples of

project activities that could be supported by FY 2026 Farm to School grants and support the required objective include, but are not limited to:

- Launching a pilot program that creates opportunities for eligible entities to create farm to CNP initiatives;
- Ready producers to participate in the CNP food marketplace by providing training on procurement regulations, Good Agricultural Practices, and other food safety-related topics;
- Solving distribution bottlenecks that limit the feasibility of sourcing more locally or regionally produced items by working closely with intermediaries (e.g., distributors, food hubs);
- Integrating agricultural education with career and technical preparation programs to encourage the next generation of agricultural producers;
- Expanding experiential learning opportunities at CNP sites, such as creating school gardens, developing school-based farmers markets, providing support to agriculture/food clubs, and/or increasing exposure to local farms and on-farm activities;
- Adopting agricultural education curricula that encourage the sharing of Indigenous traditional knowledge between generations, such as native plant varieties and planting practices.

Link to Additional Information: [Farm to School Grant Program Website](#)

Grantor Contact Information: If you have difficulty accessing the full announcement electronically, please contact: [Anna J Arrowsmith](#), Grants Officer

6. WSDA Releases Dirt Data Reports

What Is Dirt Data Reports?

Dirt Data Reports is a web-based tool that makes it easy for anyone to upload their soil sampling data, enter project-specific information, and generate customized, research-based soil health reports to make farmers' soil health data accessible and actionable. Whether you're part of a state soil health initiative, an extension program, or a conservation district, this tool can help you:

- Save time with automated reporting,
- Generate reports in two formats: an interactive HTML file and a printable Word document,
- Generate reports in English and Spanish,
- Provide high-quality soil health outreach and extension,
- Communicate complex data in an accessible way, and
- Empower participants to better understand and manage their soils.

WSDA believes that understanding soil health shouldn't require a soil science degree. With Dirt Data Reports, we're closing the gap between complex data and practical decision-making – one report at a time.

Ready to generate your own reports? Head over to <https://wsda.shinyapps.io/dirt-data-reports/> to get started. Your feedback is welcome as the team works on updates and new features. Describe your experience through this [form](#).

7. Invitation to Participate in National Soil Health Project

The project proposed below comes from Matt Yost, an Extension specialist at Utah State University. He asks that conservation districts share this announcement and invitation to participate in a national soil health project with Washington farmers and ranchers. He also asks that this not be posted to social media because "...the free soil health test part invites scammers who take up all the spots for farmers." WACD thanks Dr. Dani Gelardi for sharing this information!

A new public-private partnership for improving how soil health can help with management decisions is being conducted in the United States. The project is called **"Probing Our Country's Soil Health"**. We are looking for farmers and ranchers to participate.

Participating landowners will receive:

- Compensation for your time (~ 1 hour) for helping
- A personalized soil health report of your fields. The value of this lab work (at no cost to you) is about a thousand dollars per field.
- A copy of a book called "Probing Our Country's Soil Health". This will be a hard-copy photo book illustrating soil health across the country and the outcomes to this project.

To learn more about this project, click on [Probing Our Country's Soil Health](#) to see a short video.

If interested in participating, you will need to:

- [Sign up](#) for a one-hour Zoom Meeting where a facilitator will lead you through a management survey for 2 or 3 fields.
- Grant access to fields for hand-probe soil sampling 2 or 3 sampling sites from each field. Normally this will happen 3-6 months after the survey; you will be notified beforehand.

To enroll as a landowner participant, click on this booking page link to schedule an appointment: <https://calendly.com/probing-our-countrys-soil-health/shape-survey>

Please share this invitation with any farmers, ranchers, organizations (conservation boards, crop advisors, conservation planners, etc.) that might be interested. Please do not share this on any social media that might attract scammers that waste time slots.

If you have questions, please reach out to:

Dr. Matt Yost

Professor & Agroclimate Specialist

matt.yost@usu.edu

435-797-4210

Upcoming Events

2025

- October 15: [Northwest Area meeting](#)
- October 16: [Southwest Area meeting](#)
- October 20: [WACD Board Meeting](#)
- October 22: [Northeast Area meeting](#)
- October 23: [North Central Area Meeting](#)

- October 28: [South Central Area Meeting](#)
- October 29: [Southeast Area meeting](#)

Inside WACD

A Building Dedication and Celebration to Remember!

I was honored to attend the Columbia Basin Conservation District's (CBCD) building dedication and celebration on September 19th. Their beautifully remodeled building in Moses Lake stands as a testament to visionary leadership and community commitment. The project was first initiated by CBCD's former manager, the late Marie Lotz, and was brought to fruition through the hard work of current manager Kristina Ribellia, her dedicated staff, and a supportive board.

The celebration also carried deep meaning, as the conference room was formally dedicated to Marie. Her husband, children, grandchildren, and many friends joined in honoring her lasting legacy.

In addition to celebrating their new home, the event recognized another conservation champion: WACD's North Central Area Director & CBCD supervisor, John Preston, who was honored for 50 years of service as a CD supervisor. The community also extended heartfelt thanks to John's wife, Helen, for her steadfast support throughout his decades of service.

Thank you to Columbia Basin CD for sharing this milestone with us.

Heather L. Wenott



So the federal government shut down...

I've been through this before. Suddenly, federal partners who you may, or may not, share a facility with are coming to work but not getting paid. These are the times that test us. These are the times that make us dig deeper to examine our own reasons for devoting our lives to conservation.

This is not a comfortable time. It's not comfortable for our federal partners, nor is it comfortable for our conservation district members. However, in the midst of your discomfort, there are opportunities to strengthen the Conservation Partnership. Caring and supporting each other now will pay dividends when we eventually emerge from this dark tunnel into the bright light of a normal day.

This is the time to remember what we have in common with our federal partners: caring for people, caring for land and water, and caring about the communities we live, work, and play in. This is the time to be supportive where and when we can.

In Washington State, most conservation districts are no longer co-located with a USDA agency. In other states, where conservation district people rub elbows with federal partners every day, it's easier to see the emotional toll a federal shutdown has on partners. It's a little harder for us to see that in Washington because by distancing ourselves, we've created a buffer. This is the time to reach across that divide, express your support, and strengthen relationships.

But how? It could be a phone call or a coffee visit. How about a potluck or a pizza party? A card signed by everyone at the district may be meaningful. For our federal partners, just knowing that someone else cares may make a world of difference. These things cost little to do but can be very impactful.

Considering that federal employees aren't going to be paid during the shutdown (at least, that's how it appears), if you have a potluck or party, you might want to send leftovers home with partners.

Please take some time to share that you care. It makes a difference, now and in the future.

We'd like to hear from you

People make Washington's conservation delivery system work. Whether it is people you work with, people you serve, or the statewide community of conservation districts, success is built on working with people. Success is built on 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

- [Program to bring in nearly 4,000 trees to Everett by 2028](#)
- [In Our View: Efforts to expand tree canopy beneficial to all](#)
- [Snohomish CD Community Conservation Crew Member](#)
- [Sunset clause added to \\$5 fee - Conservation district to report funding metrics](#)
- [Crews remove Water Stargrass from the Yakima River to save Salmon and bring balance to the ecosystem](#)

- [WSDA's STAR Market and Incentives Specialist Position](#)

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Washington Department of
Fish and Wildlife



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