



Five Things to Know for December 11, 2025

Conference Recap Edition

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This photo—taken at the WACD Conference—captures an incredible depth of knowledge, heart, and passion for conservation. Together, this group represents a remarkable **258 collective years** of service and dedication. From left to right - Lee Hemmer (Foster Creek CD), John McLean (Foster Creek CD), Wade Troutman (Foster Creek CD), Dave Stadelman (Columbia Basin CD), John Preston (Columbia Basin CD), Dan Roseburg (Columbia Basin CD).

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Five Things To Know

1. WACD Conference Recap ~ New Officers, Approved Resolutions & Awards

New Officers

Congratulations and welcome to the newest WACD Officers. Look for an introduction from each officer in future newsletters.

- **Secretary** - Elizabeth Bella (Underwood CD)
- **Treasurer** - Cyndi Schaeffer (Snohomish CD)
- **National Director** - Heather Smith (Grays Harbor CD)

Resolutions

The twelve resolutions adopted by the membership at the 2025 Annual Business Meeting are now included in the [Resolution Tracker](#) on the WACD Website.

WACD Awards

Each year WACD tries to honor extraordinary individuals in our community in the many ways people contribute to conservation. Here are the 2025 award winners:

- **Conservation District of the Year** - Kittitas County CD
- **Eugene Scholz Outstanding Supervisor Award** - Jed Holmes (Skagit CD)
- **Associate Supervisor of the Year** - Teri Jo Summer-Reiger (Whidbey Island CD)
- **Wayne Reid "Young Tiger" Award** - Heather Smith (Grays Harbor CD)
- **Professional Service Award** - Ryan Gelwicks (Skagit CD)
- **Special Service Award** - Alan Chapman (Whatcom CD)
- **Vim Wright "Building Bridges" Award** - Sarah Moorehead (Thurston CD)
- **Wildlife Steward of the Year** - Riverbend Ranch (Tenino, WA)
- **President's Award** - Doug Rushton (Thurston CD)
- **President's Award** - Jim Brown (WACD PMC)

2. WACD Conference Survey ~ Participate Today!

As we reflect on the conference, we are already thinking about how we can improve next year's event. WACD asks for your participation in a quick **survey** so we can improve on the experience for **2026 at Skamania Lodge, December 3rd - 5th**. The survey is designed to be anonymous. WACD staff are also available if you want a longer discussion.

[Survey](#)

3. Envirothon Auction Results

A message from Jodi Prout, Envirothon Chair, "I just wanted to share a big, heartfelt thank you for making this year's Envirothon auction such a success. We raised an incredible \$9,229 this year! 🎉 That's a huge testament to your hard work, community connections, and commitment to supporting students.

Our highest selling item was Mike Nordin's one-week stay at his house in Norway, which went for an incredible \$2,000 (travel not included). The live auction brought in \$5,205, with big ticket items like the Tacoma Rainiers tickets and Diane Baye's beautiful quilt both going for \$300. The silent auction raised \$2,609, with the Seattle Seahawks items coming in at the highest, followed by the Osprey backpacks. We also brought in \$1,250 through Raise the Paddle and \$330 from the 50/50 raffle. We usually pull the 50/50 on Wednesday morning but we opted for the evening instead so it was less than what we usually bring in.

While Craig was sorely missed as our auctioneer, Mark Peterson, local celebrity and auctioneer extraordinaire, did a great job energizing the crowd. He has just flown in from Atlanta the day before, then hung lights at the children's hospital in the frosty cold that day. His energy, enthusiasm, and farmer-rich storytelling really lit up the room and kept the crowd engaged. He was gifted a note, Cougar Gold Cheese and a limited edition whiskey from Dry Fly Distilling in Spokane."

4. Election Results for the West Region Commission

Representative

Bill Blake has been elected as the new Western Washington representative on the State Conservation Commission.

Bill previously served as the Executive Director of the Skagit Conservation District from 2017 - 2023 and as WADE President from 2020 - 2022. Bill brings experience in Agriculture, Forestry, Stormwater, Ecosystem Recovery and Management. His professional experience began in 1984 as a Weyerhaeuser employee performing water quality testing and analysis. Bill also previously worked as a Farm Planner at Snohomish CD. He later worked for a fisheries enhancement group, the Stillaguamish Tribe, and ended up spending seventeen years at City of Arlington. While at Arlington he moved from Natural Resource Manager writing ESA plans, to Permit Center Manager, Assistant Director Community Development and Stormwater Manager.

5. Conference Partner Offers CD Engagement Opportunities

Recycling of Agricultural Plastics

One of the Natural Resource sessions at the WACD Annual Conference featured a presentation by Mya Keyzers with ECY's Recycling and Market Development Center on the recycling of agricultural plastics. Mya's presentation slides and links to additional resources can be found [here](#).

Mya is also looking to connect to Washington State CDs who might be interested in collaborating on this topic. She has outlined engagement opportunities below:

- I am looking for connections to anyone interested in considering what kind of information we should focus on collecting to better understand the amount and type of ag waste generated, where/how it is disposed, and explore solutions that could be a good fit in WA.
- If anyone is interested in piloting a collection event like what is happening in Skagit County, let's connect, I am happy to help.
- Looking for Conservation Districts that want to be the owners of balers and binders to facilitate farmers in collecting and organizing material for recycling. This hub and spoke or co-op style of equipment sharing.

If any of these topics or opportunities are of interest to you, please reach out to Mya directly: Mya Keyzers, mya.keyzers@ecy.wa.gov.

6. NRCS Invites Comments on Draft Practice Standards

NRCS is conducting internal reviews for **11 Conservation Practices** and is inviting partner comments on the draft documents. This is a review of a draft document prior to posting practices on the Federal Register. The intent is to help streamline changes and gather potential comments. All comments received may not be incorporated into the practice standard. The Federal Register is still the official response for the public.

Partners are encouraged to review all Conservation Practice Standards on the Federal Register as they are posted. NRCS WA welcomes any partner comments on these 11 draft practices. All comments are to be sent to Lynelle Knehans, State Conservation Engineer (Lynelle.knehans@usda.gov) and Bobby Evans, State Resource Conservationist (Robert.d.evans@usda.gov) by **December 19, 2025**.

Practices For Review and Comments:

205 - On-Farm Monitoring for Evaluating Air Quality Resource Concerns
309 - Agrichemical Handling Facility
311 - Alley Cropping
330 - Contour Farming
336 - Soil Carbon Amendment
372 - Combustion System Improvement
373 - Dust Control on Unpaved Roads and Surfaces
374 - Energy Efficient Agricultural Operation
642 - Water Well
670 - Energy Efficient Lighting System
672 - Energy Efficient Building Envelope

You can find copies of the practice standards [here](#).

7. Resource for Areas Currently Affected by Flooding

With areas of our State currently experiencing devastating flooding, NRCS has asked us to remind districts about the **Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWPP)**.

The EWP Program is a recovery effort aimed at relieving imminent hazards to life and property caused by floods, fires, windstorms, and other natural disasters. All projects must have a project sponsor. NRCS may bear up to 75 percent of the eligible construction cost of emergency measures (90 percent within limited-resource areas as identified by the U.S. Census data). The remaining costs must come from local sources and can be in the form of cash or in-kind services.

Type of Work Authorized

EWP is designed for installation of recovery measures to safeguard life and property as a result of a natural disaster. Threats that the EWP Program addresses are termed watershed impairments. These include, but are not limited to:

- debris-clogged waterways,
- unstable streambanks,
- severe erosion jeopardizing public infrastructure

- wind-borne debris removal, and
- damaged upland sites stripped of protective vegetation by fire or drought.

For more information please see the EWPP Fact Sheet [here](#) or contact Nick Vira, NRCS Partnership Liaison, nick.vira@usda.gov.

Upcoming Events

2025/2026

- December 12: [Funding Opportunities Newsletter Published](#)
- January 15: [State Conservation Commission Meeting](#)
- January 26: [WACD Board of Directors Meeting](#)
- February 10: WACD Legislative Day
- February 19: [State Technical Advisory Committee Meeting](#)
- February 23: [WACD Board of Directors Meeting](#)

Inside WACD

A Look Behind, A Look Ahead

To say the last couple of months have been a whirlwind is an understatement. Looking back over the past six months, WACD has adopted a Strategic Plan and a long-term vision that will guide us through 2030. We launched our second legislative campaign and are preparing to roll out a new resource toolkit for districts to use throughout the upcoming session. Recognizing the need to streamline and prioritize our efforts, we are also standing up a new Ways and Means Committee that will begin meeting in January.

WACD is more engaged with partners than ever—participating on WSCC working groups to listen, collaborate, and support efforts that create state-level efficiencies benefiting conservation districts. Our committees worked hard this year, and their efforts sparked thoughtful, respectful dialogue at the Annual Meeting. Speaking of the Annual Meeting and Conference, you'll find photos of our time together below. A heartfelt thank you to everyone who attended, sponsored, and participated.

So where do we go from here? We have several priority areas ahead: the proposed election bill, continuing to investigate sustainable funding for CDs, strengthening communications with our partners, collaborating on strategies that increase efficiencies and lessen burdens on districts, and creating avenues for WACD to be more nimble in responding to emerging issues—all while honoring the fact that we represent all 45 conservation districts across Washington. These efforts, and many more, will shape our work through the end of our fiscal year on June 30.

So, what does WACD do for you? I've highlighted a few examples above. But I also want to ask: **What do you do to support your Association?** We need you. We need you to show up, to vote, to attend meetings, and to consider serving as Area Directors and Committee Members. Your voice matters. *We* are the **45 conservation districts of Washington State**, and every supervisor, staff member, and volunteer contributes to who we are and what we can accomplish—together. Thank you for a wonderful 2025, and I am excited for what we accomplish together in 2026.

Wishing you all have a safe and happy Holiday Season.

With gratitude,





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,

Tom Zaker
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Latest Posts on the Hub

- [PMC Hot Sheet - 20% off Alaska Yellow Cedar! Don't wait - offer ends December 12th 2025!](#)
- [Protecting the PNW's waters; Making learning about salmon and science fun](#)
- [Join Soil Health Breakfast with Palouse Conservation District in Colfax](#)
- [Palouse Conservation District to Host Virtual Talk on Noxious Weeds](#)
- [New web page connects Thurston County landowners to forestry services](#)
- [Native Planting Project Launches to Restore Wetlands North of Moses Lake](#)

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