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# Washington Association of Conservation Districts

## Five Things to Know for December 31, 2025

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# SAVE THE DATE



## WACD 2026 Annual Conference

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 3 - SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5

Skamania Lodge, Stevenson, WA

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## Five Things To Know

### 1. Governor's Budget Proposed Cuts

Governor Ferguson's proposed, budget introduced on December 23, included a cut to the Conservation Commission.

- \$676,000 for FY27 in reduced operating funds for "agency activities pertaining to technical services to conservation districts".

You can learn more about other natural resource agencies, and our first look at 2026 legislation, by reading our first [Legislative Newsletter](#) in 2026, or attend our new [Legislative Check-In](#) every Monday at Noon for districts to interact face-to-face (virtually speaking). You can read about more ways to participate on the [Advocacy section](#) on the Hub.

**(An earlier edition of this 5T stated the Governor proposed a cut to the Riparian Grant Program. That was an incorrect statement.)**

### 2. 2026 Legislative Day Hotel ~ Reserve Your Room Today!

WACD has secured a block of hotel rooms at the state's per diem, and the Columbia Room in the Capitol building to rest your weary feet. This year, the hotel and breakfast will be held at the [DoubleTree Olympia](#). One perk of staying at the DoubleTree is that you do not have to find parking at the Capitol, and instead ride the Capitol Dash bus. Please make your hotel reservations by **January 24th** to ensure you **secure the state per diem rate by using this link**. If you are staying an extra night for the Ombuds workgroup you can adjust the dates at the top of the page.

*Note ~ with the half day SCC budget development meeting the day before Legislative Day and the Ombuds workgroup meeting the day after, please book your rooms early in case we need to add to the hotel room block.*

### 3. 2026 Legislative Day Information

Each year, WACD organizes a **Legislative Day** in Olympia to help coordinate district engagement with the legislative process. For 2026, our Legislative Day will be **February 10th**. We are asking districts this year to fill out [a short form](#) by **January 9th** so we know how many meals to prepare, which districts want WACD to make their legislative appointments, and which CDs are wanting to showcase their outreach materials for legislators.

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### 4. New WACD Task Forces

There are three new task forces created via resolutions from the Annual Conference: on CREP agency responsibilities, on Shellfish Aquaculture practices, and on agricultural viability. If you or your district are interested in serving on one of these three work groups, please reach out to WACD staff. You can read the full text of each resolution in the [Resolutions section](#) on the Hub

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### 5. Conference Recordings Available

For those who weren't able to attend the WACD Conference or participate online, many of our sessions are now available [online](#) or are accessible through the 2025 Annual Conference webpage.

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](#)

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## Upcoming Events

### 2025/2026

- 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](#)
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## Inside WACD

### Scottish Rambles

Looking back on the year, I find myself reflecting again and again on an October trip to Scotland. Not only was it incredible and well worth all the hassle of international travel, but it was an opportunity to see first-hand a different landscape and ponder my place in our big, big world.

Among the areas visited were the Scottish Highlands, made famous by generations of history and Hollywood (ask me sometime about the number of times the show *Outlander* was



mentioned during our trip). By going in the fall, we were drenched numerous times by the many types of rains of Scotland. But that allowed us to see things both beautiful and tragic.



Above is a photo taken near Glen Coe, a mountain valley in northern Scotland. It is a beautiful landscape, with rivers carved by centuries of rainfall coming off the mountain. Everywhere we went were scenes like this.

What makes it tragic is the lack of trees. Over many millennia, changing weather patterns from the ending of the last Ice Age and the human need for wood removed nearly all of what was the Great Caledonian Forest. What remains is largely non-native, with one UK government report estimating over 40% of the trees in Scotland were American Sitka spruce, planted in the 19th and 20th centuries to give Great Britain a faster growing timber stand.

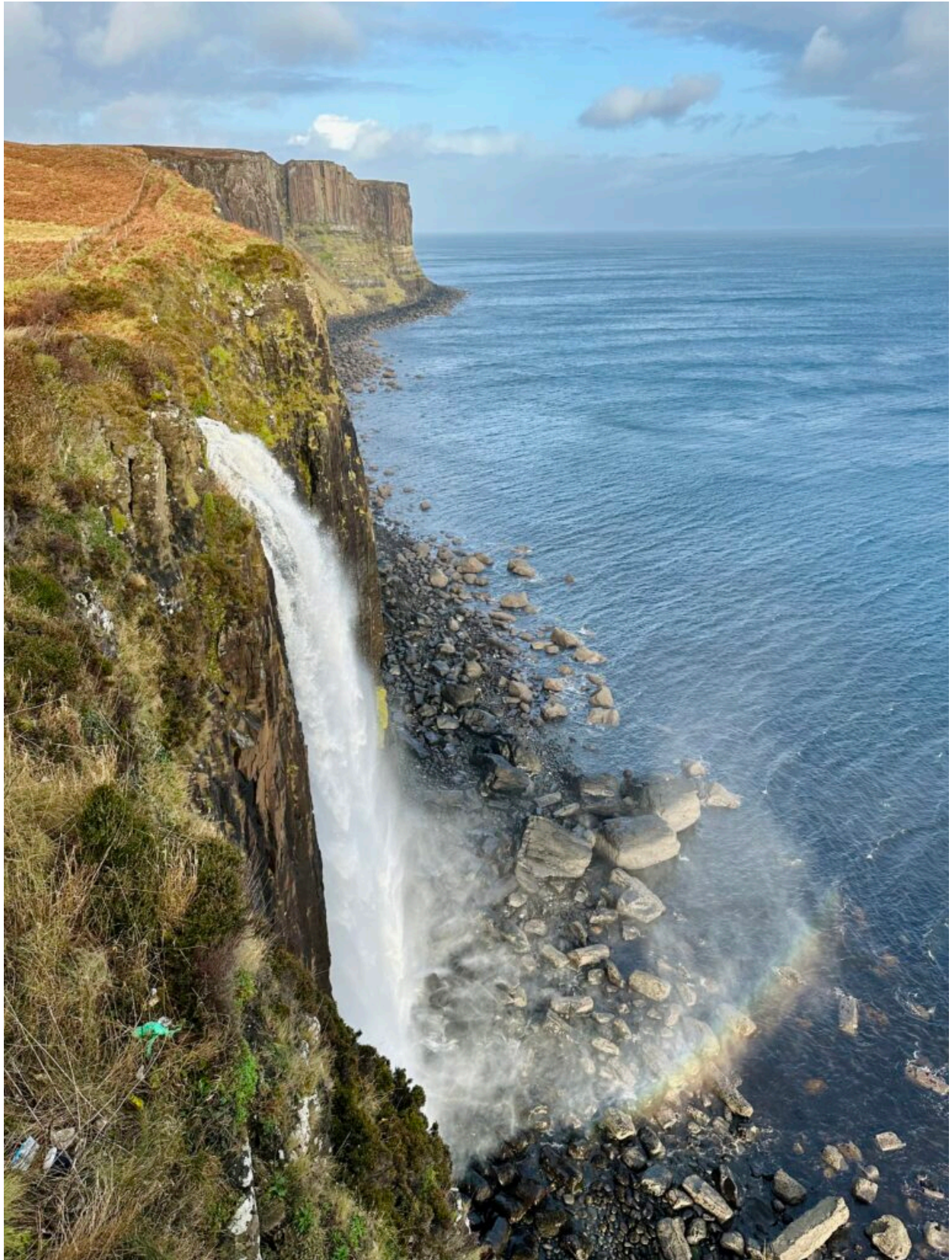
From here at home, look at the overcrowding forests. Native American tribes used prescribed burning for eons, then the US Forest Service spent over 100 years stopping every fire as soon as possible. Now Washingtonians live in an era of catastrophic mega fires, with forestlands turned into desolate landscapes and great plumes of smoke drifting thousands of miles.

That's why conserving our natural resources is so important to me, doing work today that might only be felt by future generations. By recommending best management practices, and constantly scrutinizing the science and evidence-based trials, it allows for any mistakes we make to be fixable by those who come after us. Some of you have been around long enough to see that in your careers, like when planting reed canary grass used to be recommended by the Soil Conservation Service.

Humanity has a great capacity for change, both in how we live and in how we impact our world. But those changes have consequences, which we live with today and our children will live with tomorrow.

Ryan Baye  
WACD Legislative & Membership Services





## 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](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

- [USDA offers aid to flood-damaged Washington farms, ranches](#)
- [New NRCS Regenerative Pilot Program](#)
- [A couple in northeast Washington spent 30 years restoring a neglected tree farm. Last month, they donated it for research](#)
- [Washington Flood Resources: Support for Farmers](#)
- [Snohomish CD Development and Communications Director Position](#)
- [Payroll and HR Specialist Position Snohomish CD](#)

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