



# Washington Association of Conservation Districts

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## Five Things to Know for February 8, 2024

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## 1 – Legislative Cut-Off

For those who follow WACD's Legislative Updates' newsletter, you've already seen our report on the two major legislative cut-offs this past week. For those who are not subscribers, here's are status updates on major bills WACD knows our membership is interested in.

### Bills Still Alive

- **[SB 5972](#)** Concerning the use of neonicotinoid pesticides.
- **[HB 2446](#)** Investing in reforestation efforts following landscape-scale forest disturbances.

- [SB 5667](#) Concerning eligibility, enrollment, and compensation of small forestland owners volunteering for participation in the forestry riparian easement program.
- [HB 2293](#) Studying the effects of avian predation of salmon.

### Bills Left Behind

- [SB 5846](#) Concerning beaver ecosystem management.
- [HB 1971](#) Concerning a rangeland fire protection association pilot project.
- [HB 2286](#) Creating a capital grant program to support recovery of salmon and steelhead stocks.

WACD's Director of Legislative and Member Services, Ryan Baye, covers more in his [Legislative Updates newsletter](#) ([click here to subscribe](#)). For a "front door" to advocacy topics, [visit our Advocacy 2024 page](#).

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## 2 - District Wait List Survey

In January, WACD staff reached out to District Managers and Executive Directors with a request for information regarding district wait lists for various services (farm plans, cost share, etc.) as we prepare for legislative budget conversations around CTA to accelerate in next week or two. Our goal is to be better armed with the districts' current level of need and this is one way we can measure that.

So far, sixteen districts have responded and from a good cross-section of our membership. We now know that there are at least 400 outstanding requests for farm and forest plans at those sixteen districts. But we are still hoping for more district information, so we're making another call for responses. The link to the survey is <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/cdwaitlist>.

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## 3 - Conservation Plant Spotlight - Douglas Fir

Our fabulous [Plant Material Center](#) (PMC) has lots of Douglas Fir, *Pseudotsuga menziesii*, looking for their forever homes! Did you know that [Douglas fir](#) is not a fir at all? It is actually a member of the pine family! It is one of the largest trees in the world and one of the most important timber species in the United States. The genus name, *Pseudotsuga*, is derived from two Greek words, pseudo, meaning false, and tsuga, meaning hemlock which references to the fact that it is often confused with hemlock trees. The epithet, *menziesii*, is in honor of Archibald Menzies, a botanist from Scotland. The common name Douglas is named for botanist David Douglas.

*According to the [USDA Plant Database](#) the seed of Douglas fir is an important food for chickadees, red crossbill, finches (house and purple), evening grosbeak, Douglas squirrel, Townsend chipmunk, deer, meadow mice, shrews, and many other birds and mammals. The needles are an important source of food of blue and spruce grouses. Mountain beaver, deer, elk, and rabbits eat foliage and twigs within their reach.*

Douglas Fir also has a rich cultural history in our area having been utilized by the Columbia Plateau tribes to treat rheumatism, warts and chest colds. To learn more about this important

conservation species visit the PMC website: [wacdpmc.org](http://wacdpmc.org).



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## 4 - Plant Materials Center Update

Jim Brown, WACD's Director of Nursery Operations, penned an update today about the Plant Materials Center. Plants sales are down somewhat compared to last year but we are ahead on harvest. The crews have been working extra hard during some very challenging weather conditions. And if you recall the cold snap last fall, it appears to have damaged some plants. [Read more about this situation in Jim's report.](#)

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## 5 - Save the Date ~ WACD Legislative Workshop

Save the date — **May 29th & 30th** — for a Legislative Workshop hosted by WACD at the Hal Homes Center in Ellensburg. The upcoming workshop will provide Conservation Districts with an opportunity to provide input on the work of the Sustainable Funding Committee, review existing resolutions, and strategize for the upcoming legislative session. For those who are unable to attend in person, a remote option will also be available. Stay tuned ~ more information to follow!

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## 6 - BONUS! Ryan Returns

For those who did not send him an email after January 17th , Ryan spent 15 days in Panama and Costa Rica on his international seminar as part of the AgForestry program. Tom and Heather are very happy to have him back. He will be writing about his reflections and experiences for next week's Executive Corner, and you don't want to miss it.



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## Upcoming Events

### 2024

- **February 8:** [SoilCon: Diversified Organic \(Puyallup\)](#)
- **February 10-14:** [NACD 78th annual meeting – San Diego, California](#)
- **February 13:** Legislature – Last day to pass bills in house of origin
- **February 13:** [SoilCon: Irrigated Perennials \(Prosser\)](#)
- **February 15:** [SoilCon: NW Washington Annuals \(Mount Vernon\)](#)
- **February 20:** [SoilCon: Dryland \(Davenport\)](#)
- **February 21:** Legislature – Last day to read in bills from committees in opposite house, except fiscal and transportation bills
- **February 26:** Legislature – Last day to read in bills from fiscal and transportation bills in opposite house
- **February 28:** Washington State Conservation Commission special meeting to consider interim guidelines for the Riparian Grant Program.
- **March 1:** Legislature – Last day to consider (pass) opposite house bills (5 p.m.) (except initiatives and alternatives to initiatives, budgets and matters necessary to implement

budgets, differences between the houses, and matters incident to the interim and closing of the session).

- **March 7:** Legislature – Last day allowed for regular session under state constitution
  - **March 19-21:** [Statewide CREP training](#) by FSA (Spokane)
  - **May 29-30:** WACD's Legislative Workshop (Ellensburg)
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## Resources

Check out these resources:

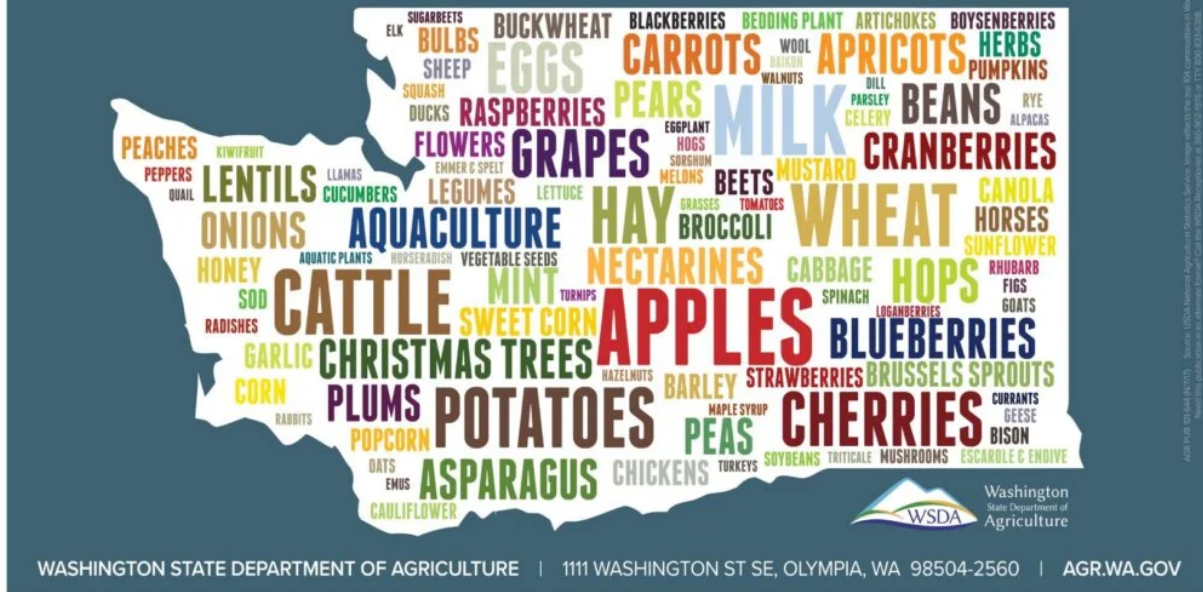
- Correspondence
    - [January 2024 Box.com folder](#)
    - [February 2024 Box.com folder](#)
  - Bookmarks in the [WACD Reading List](#).
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## Executive Corner

### WSDA posters

You might be interested in some of the materials available on the Washington State Department of Agriculture's website at <https://agr.wa.gov/washington-agriculture>. For example, this great infographic of ag commodities produced in Washington is available on the WSDA website along with several other resources.

# Washington farmers produce over **300** different commodities



## 28 people representing Washington at NACD

I am delighted to report that our community is sending 28 people to represent Washington State at the NACD annual meeting in San Diego. This is a huge turnout and speaks to not only the quality of the NACD event but also to the pride so many of us feel in our community. We have the best conservation delivery system in the country!

### On Membership: Value and Values

I had an issue with an organization I belong to where I did not receive a benefit that was supposed to be included as part of my membership fee. I advocated to receive that benefit and, after a couple of years of going back and forth, I did.

As I reflected on this, I realized that I was treating my membership as a transactional relationship, i.e., in return for my dues, I expected to receive certain services. This was a bit disturbing to me because I believe in the role and goals of that organization, but I was actually treating it as if I was checking out at the grocery store and getting shorted on something. In other words, I joined that organization because I believed in the values it represented, not because of the value of goods and services I might receive.

One of the points made to us by a few conservation district supervisors last year was (and I paraphrase): what have you done for us lately? This is a transactional point of view. In exchange for dollars we expect something real and concrete. Having just experienced this myself, I understand this perspective more than ever. It's not wrong to think this way, but it is rather incomplete.

As I look at how WACD is working to provide evident value to WACD members, some questions arise in my mind. Is WACD's value to members only the services received by members? Or is the value having an advocate in your corner, ready and able to move your issues forward? It's

really both, don't you think?

WACD does provide certain services. We provide email addresses to those in our community who need them. We provide "first hour free" consultation with our General Counsel, and that firm offers discounted rates to conservation districts who engage them for more work. We operate the premier conservation-grade native plant nursery in Washington State. And of course, we continue to provide advocacy through the work of WACD staff and our contracted lobbyist to support conservation district programs and funding. These are transactional items that members are eligible to receive in exchange for their dues.

What we don't talk about very often is how we support the values of our members. What do I mean? I'm talking about supporting local governance, and non-regulatory approaches to natural resource conservation, and working one-on-one over kitchen tables to craft solutions that work for the unique situation of each customer. In partnership with you, we serve as guardians of these values, and as we read various bills and work with many agencies, we remain vigilant for changes that may threaten the values you, and we, hold dear.

In the short term, when we don't get something we expect, it's natural to feel shortchanged. That's how I was feeling when my other group didn't give me what I had paid for. But did I really pay dues to receive that, or did I pay because of the representation I received from that organization? As I reflected on this, I realized that I became a member, and have remained a member for many years, because that organization is a bastion against threats to what I believe in. Similarly, WACD works on the front lines to protect conservation districts from various threats.

I know we'll continue to work toward providing distinct, measurable goods and services to members. I also know we'll continue to advocate for local, cooperative, incentive-based, non-regulatory conservation. If you want to know what your district receives for your membership, just look to the services WACD provides. The value of professional advocacy alone is worth investing in. If you are concerned about protecting the shared values that bind our community together, your dues help us do that on your behalf throughout the year with elected officials, agencies, and partners. We're in your corner.

## **We like to hear from you**

As always, we look forward to your ideas and questions. Please reach out to us at [oly@wacd.org](mailto:oly@wacd.org). This is a group address for Heather, Ryan, and Tom, so your message will probably get through!

Always yours for conservation,



Tom Saper  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



## Latest Posts on the Hub

- [PMC Update for February 8, 2024](#)
- [NRCS Seeks Public Comment on 8 Conservation Practices](#)
- [DNR Urban Forest Inventory Technician Position](#)
- [10 years of USDA Climate Hubs](#)
- [Washington proposes \\$386 million for statewide clean water initiatives, includes Spokane Conservation District](#)
- [January 29 - February 2 General Legislative Review](#)

See the full list of Recent Posts at <https://wadistricts.us/posts/>. The Jobs list is available at <https://wadistricts.us/jobs/>. A wide range of content is available in the [WACD Reading List](#).

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