



Washington Association of Conservation Districts

Annual Work Plan, Fiscal Year 2023 (7/1/22 – 6/30/23)

For More Information Contact: Tom Salzer, Executive Director, tsalzer@wadistricts.org

Annual Plan Format Changes: There are several changes you will see in this Fiscal Year 2023 Annual Work Plan and Budget. These changes were made to improve the overall work and budget management for the Association, to strengthen the connection between the annual plan and the actual work of the staff, and to help staff and board prioritize work throughout the year. Changes include:

- Combining Work Plan and Budget into one document so that there is a clearer connection between WACD's services and their associated revenue and expenses.
- Changing Work Plan from calendar year to state fiscal year (July 1-June 30). This aligns with WACD's budget year, with the fiscal year used by state agencies and most member Districts.
- Restructuring the plan to align with the actual Budget areas and activities and duties of staff and of the organization. This resulted in regrouping WACD's annual work plan into five program areas that better align with current WACD work activities.
- Inclusion of both Executive Operations with Plant Material Center budget areas in this plan. WACD manages these two budget areas as separate business activities.
- Executive Operations focus- This plan update focuses on improving the work plan elements of the Executive Operations to better serve the staff and Board. Changes in this area include breaking out goals and measures into discrete activity areas. This helps better communicate the level of work and the specific activities required to accomplish the executive operation budgeted work throughout the year.
- PMC budgeted activities are referenced to show the full work of WACD. This effort did not focus on the PMC activities, as they have existing annual work guidance in place. In future years, this work will be built out and integrated in overall WACD annual planning work.

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Who are we?

The Washington Association of Conservation Districts (WACD) is a 501c6 nonprofit trade organization, created in 1942 to improve business conditions for member conservation districts.

WACD supports conservation districts in their work with government, partner organizations, businesses, private landowners and working lands managers to implement best management practices, to utilize innovative equipment and materials, to provide technical assistance, and to develop expertise to address resource issues.

WACD, through the work of its leadership, professional staff, and its members, provides support to conservation districts in the areas of technical capacity development, leadership training, government relations, strategic planning, governance, conservation funding, legislation and information sharing. WACD's initiatives allow conservation districts to use their collective strengths to accomplish what cannot be done individually.

Mission: Washington Association of Conservation Districts serves as the collective voice of conservation districts to help them achieve their purposes.

Vision: WACD aspires to fully support conservation districts in their implementation of locally developed conservation programs.

WACD Guiding Principles:

1. We exist to advocate for, and support, member conservation districts.
2. We serve people with dignity and respect, acting with integrity and operating with transparency and accountability to all.
3. We continually seek to become more capable in serving members, including maintaining financial strength, enhancing board capacity, and improving staff capacity.
4. We value and recognize our people for excellence in performance, including teamwork, innovation, timely completion of tasks, and support of others.
5. Our responses to conservation issues are founded on proven methodologies and science.
6. We form and support strategic partnerships to maximize our effectiveness and to reduce duplication of effort.
7. We seek to conserve natural resources in the way we operate our organization.
8. We believe in, and uphold, the practice of locally-led, voluntary, incentive based conservation.
9. Private lands – and those who steward them – provide unique and valuable conservation of renewable natural resources to be used today and by future generations.
10. Because natural resources cross jurisdictional boundaries and ownerships, all lands – and the people and entities that manage them – are important in conserving renewable natural resources.

A- PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

I- Executive Operations:

1 – Advocacy and Legislative Engagement

This is a core member service area. WACD advocates for the interests of Washington State’s 45 local conservation districts. We testify before the Washington State Legislature, submit letters and comments on proposed rules and legislation, and regularly meet with lawmakers and agencies to advance beneficial policy related to voluntary conservation.

WACD’s team also engages our membership each spring with a Legislative Day to help connect conservation districts with state legislators. The event serves as an opportunity for conservation districts to advocate for policies that benefit them directly and educate decision-makers on the ins and outs of district work.

<p>Advocacy and Legislative Engagement:</p> <p>Activity 1: <u>In-Session Engagement</u>- Coordinate member CD in-session engagement to support WACD priority conservation policy and funding outcomes.</p> <p>Measure: Members engaged in CD leg days. Regular and emergency communication with members, partners, and board ensure engagement on key issues, as they arise. Communications meet the needs of stakeholders.</p>
<p>Activity 2: <u>Out of Session Engagement</u>-Support members in building strong relationships with their local legislators, a key foundation to proactive engagement.</p> <p>Measure 1: Aid districts each year in establishing and strengthening legislator relationships on 1 to 2 priority initiatives. Support growth of relationships with legislators. WACD will co-host at least 1 District tour with a local CD and will explore possibility of sponsoring an annual legislator’s tour day for CDs for FY24.</p> <p>Measure 2: Work to identify and secure funding opportunities for community engagement and education staff for conservation district in support of WACD DEI Committee Report Recommendations.</p> <p>Measure 3: Encourage membership to develop an elections resolution for 2022 that learns from challenges of 2022 legislative session.</p>

The below timeline shows when advocacy and legislative activities are most active in a typical year.

Advocacy and Legislative Engagement

Activity	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
In-Session							■	■	■	■		
Out of Session	■	■	■									■

2 – Other Member Services

The Washington Association of Conservation Districts provides other services to members and partners, including: association business meetings coordination and support; interactive communications and engagement activities, education and trainings, and coordination of WACD-sponsored committee work.

Other Member Services:

Activity 1: Association business meetings coordination and support - Facilitate statewide coordinated impact through formal resolution process and associated network building of business mtg cycle. Activities include supporting area association’s annual meetings and coordination of annual WACD meeting.

Measure 1: Area meetings are held annually (Six area meetings) with WACD support, as needed.

Measure 2: WACD annual conference and business meetings are coordinated and held. The meetings include association business and offer leadership, training, and networking opportunities for conservation district board members.

The below timeline shows when planning for these area and association meetings occurs:

Activity	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Area Meetings												
Annual Conference/ Business Meeting												

Activity 2: Interactive communication and engagement- WACD maintains a variety of tools to strengthen member engagement and public engagement, including website, blog, e-mail/ newsletters, member visits/ meetings, press releases, interviews with media, and other communications.

Measure: Members and partners understand and value WACD's work. Members see that their input is valued and heard in WACD’s work.

Activity 3: WACD Committee Work- The WACD President oversees both permanent and special committees that provide guidance, oversight, and direction to the Board and the organization. The permanent committees are: Executive, Officer Recruitment, Finance, Legislative, Bylaws and District Policies, Natural Resources, and Tribal Relations.

Measure: Committees have clear direction, provide useful direction for board business, and members see service as adding a valuable contribution to WACD’s work. Work with each committee to map out a reporting calendar to keep membership informed on committee progress through the year.

Activity 4: Support and training- This is work involves providing key member support and professional training to strengthen conservation district effectiveness across the state. This work includes Board directed priorities, along with opportunistic activities, such as involvement in Building Better support for District managers.

Measure 1: Compile and make available to interested conservation districts, a list of resources and best practices for equity, community engagement, and outreach with underrepresented communities. This work will include

developing a central repository of resources, tools, and best practices. WACD will seek support in this work from the State Office of Equity. (WACD DEI Committee Report, Year 1 Recommendations)

Measure 2: Feedback from participants indicates the value of support and trainings provided.

3– Partnerships

In addition to direct member services, WACD focuses on building and strengthening partnerships to support and leverage WACD’s ability to serve as the voice of Washington State’s 45 conservation districts and to increase the collective impact of member conservation districts.

WACD works closely with traditional conservation partners, including the Washington State Conservation Commission, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Washington Association of District Employees, the National Association of Conservation Districts, and others to maintain and strengthen our collective impact in addressing shared conservation goals.

WACD also works to build and strengthen partnerships with other entities in support of member conservation district goals and priorities, including tribal relations, work with state and federal agencies, and other non-governmental organizations.

Partnerships:

Activity 1: Traditional Conservation Partnerships- Maintain and strengthen traditional conservation partnerships, including w WSCC, NRCS, WADE, NACD, and others to increase the collective impact of member conservation districts.

Measure: ID and work on at least one partnership initiative annually that focuses collective efforts to increase WACD’s impact on shared goals. In FY23, our partnership focus will be on the Farm Bill.

Activity 2: Expanded Partnerships- Build and strengthen partnerships with other entities in support of member conservation district goals and priorities, including Tribal relations, and work with state and federal agencies, and non-government organizations.

Measure: Staff will develop goals for this in FY23.

4– Administration

WACD’s administrative activities are focused on sound and sustainable business and management practices, so WACD’s member services can sustain and strengthen their impact on the mission.

Administration:

Activity 1: Board Governance - Support Board operations and development, focus on board roles and responsibilities.

Measure 1: Board members are clear on their duties and appreciate their contribution and impact; board operates in sound governance practices; Board meetings are effective and focus themes including strategy, policy, oversight, and delegation.

Measure 2: Board will review active resolutions, adopt a prioritize list, and authorize resources.

Activity 2: Planning and Financial Management- WACD follows sound business and financial management practices, including that align with WACD strategies and increase transparency and trust.

Measure: Work with the Board to develop an annual work plan and budget and report progress, as directed. Begin exploring more systematic way of tracking and reporting progress for FY24. Manage work and budget according to planned strategies and goals, and work with the Board to address challenges, as they emerge.

Activity 3: Policies, Agreements, Contracts - Ensure WACD complies with written commitments and upholds Principles in WACD business

Activity 4: Human Resources - Staff are clear about their role, responsibilities, and annual goals, understand WACD employee policies, and see opportunities for learning and growth.

Measure: Updated job descriptions for all staff in FY23.

II- Plant Material Center:

The WACD Plant Materials Center, established in 1993, is operated by the Washington Association of Conservation Districts through a long-term lease with the Skagit Conservation District. WACD is a 501(c)(6) non-profit organization. The mission of the WACD Plant Materials Center is to grow high quality conservation plants and provide customer service for the benefit of Natural Resources throughout the state of Washington, and beyond. Our 60-acre conservation-grade bareroot nursery, located in Skagit County, WA, produces more than 80 species of quality 1 and 2-year-old conservation grade seedlings and cuttings--over 1.5 million plants annually. Our plants are propagated from source-identified, wild-collected seeds and are utilized for conservation projects throughout the northwest.

For this fiscal year 2023 annual plan, Plant Material Center activities are budgeted for and referenced, but the individual activities and goals have not been fully fleshed out. This is because the PMC has separate existing annual work guidance in place, and for FY23 the focus was on improving the planning work around the executive activities. We look forward to fully incorporating PMC activities and goals in the FY24 annual plan.

B- ANNUAL WORK PLAN – IMPACT ON STRATEGIC GOALS

In 2020, WACD developed the current strategic plan as a high-level framework to serve as a foundation for more detailed work plans. The plan included one section that included Mission, Vision, and Principles (MVPs) and a second that identified strategic goals to help inform annual work plan development. The below table is a graphical depiction of the relative impact of FY23 Annual Plan program activities on the 2020 Strategic Plan Goals.

Alignment with WACD Strategic Plan Goals

GOAL 1: Provide advocacy and support for member conservation districts, seeking continual improvement.

GOAL 2: Act with fairness, integrity, and transparency, being accountable to members and partners.

GOAL 3: Maintain and strengthen the capacity and effectiveness of WACD.

GOAL 4: Form and support strategic partnerships to maximize effectiveness and reduce duplication of effort.

Impact

	Strong
	Moderate

Impact on Strategic Plan Goals

FY23 Program	Activity	Goal 1	Goal 2	Goal 3	Goal 4
Advocacy/ Legislative	Legislative Session				
	CD Engagement w Legislators (out of session)				
Member Services	Communications and Engagement				
	Association Business Meetings				
	Training and Support				
	Committee Work				
Partnerships	Maintain/ strengthen Conservation Partnerships				
	Build and strengthen other partnerships in support of member CD goals and priorities				
Administration	Board Governance				
	Planning and Financial Management				
	Human Resources				
	Policies; Agreements; Contracts				
Plant Material Center	Farm Management				
	Sales				

C- FY23 ANNUAL BUDGET

PLACEHOLDER- WACD's Budget will be in June draft

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APPENDIX 1- Officers and Area Directors

Officers

Mike Mumford	President	Pend Oreille Conservation District
Amy McKay	Vice President	Whitman Conservation District
Barbara Bailey	Secretary	Underwood Conservation District
Dave Fenn	Treasurer	Lewis Conservation District
Doug Rushton	National Director	Thurston Conservation District
Jeanette Dorner	Past President	Pierce Conservation District

Area Directors

Alan Chapman	Northwest Director	Whatcom Conservation District
Chris Porter	Northwest Director	King Conservation District
Lisa Zaborac	Southwest Director	Grays Harbor Conservation District
David Iyall	Southwest Director	Thurston Conservation District
John McLean	North Central Director	Foster Creek Conservation District
John Preston	North Central Director	Grant County Conservation District
Jack Clark	South Central Director	Benton Conservation District
vacant	South Central Director	
Jeff Schibel	Northeast Director	Lincoln County Conservation District
Jonathan Birnbaum	Northeast Director	Stevens County Conservation District
Mary Collins	Southeast Director	Palouse Conservation District
vacant	Southeast Director	
Cindy Pierce	WADE President	Snohomish Conservation District