



# Washington Association of Conservation Districts

**To:** WACD Members  
**From:** Tom Salzer, Executive Director  
**Date:** June 22, 2021  
**Subject:** WACD dues and you

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Dear Members:

Thank you for supporting your member-directed statewide association of conservation districts!

Following are some highlights of what WACD accomplished in FY 2020-2021 with your support:

- Our contract lobbyist helped to support and advance key items of importance to our member districts and our partners.
- Maintaining CTA (conservation technical assistance) support for districts in the Washington State Conservation Commission's budget was our #1 priority. The Legislature passed a budget that contained \$2 million in new CTA funding. That funding becomes part of the Commission's base budget in the next budget cycle.
- While the House budget and the Senate budget were different when it came to conservation funding, in most cases the final budget included the higher amount.
- Legislatively, we tracked all pertinent bills and engaged in policy conversations when necessary.
- Final performance of the WACD Plant Materials Center for FY 2020-2021 won't be available for a few months, but we know that we exceeded our sales target and that expenses were within the limits in the adopted budget. It was a very good year.
- Financial performance of WACD was mixed. The Plant Materials Center continued to perform very well. On the Executive Office side, COVID-19 impacted expected revenue from the WACD annual conference.
- Extraordinary gains were made in invested funds and it gives me great pleasure to let you know that WACD is asking for less in dues support for FY 2021-2022 year because of those gains.
- To provide more transparency and information to members, in June 2020 we began sharing weekly reports called the *5 Things to Know*. In February 2020, we launched the *WACD Hub* to provide even more resources to members and partners.

## More about dues

Dues from member conservation districts do not cover the full cost of operating WACD. Functionally, WACD operates as two divisions: the Plant Materials Center in Bow and the Executive Office in Olympia. In simplest terms, the PMC works to generate revenue to support all of WACD, while the Executive Office delivers services to members and provides representation on important issues.

On the Executive Office side of our house, WACD depends on dues, grants, annual conference registrations, and sponsorships. Each of these fund sources is important, but the generated funds are still not enough to cover our full operating costs. For several years WACD has also used \$75,000 in operating profit from the Plant Materials Center to supplement the Executive Office operation.

## 2021-2022 Dues

As per WACD Bylaws, dues are assessed equally to all member-districts in the amount of \$3,888.89 per district. The Board of Directors, based off the success of the Plant Materials Center and a windfall in our investments, is directing \$18,000 of that amount to reduce each district's amount by \$400. On June 21<sup>st</sup> the WACD Board of Directors adopted the fiscal year 2021-2022 budget that includes a one-time credit of \$400 per conservation district, effectively reducing dues for each member-district to \$3,488.89.

## Not a normal year!

COVID-19 threw all of us a curve ball in 2020 and this continues in 2021. A virtual WACD Annual Conference in 2020 showcased not only the possibilities of virtual events, but also their limitations. WACD board members and staff heard from many districts in the months after the conference about how 2021's event should be conducted based on how the 2020 event went. Our plan for the WACD 2021 Annual Conference is to hold virtual sessions for content delivery, followed by an in-person Business Meeting. We'll have more details for you soon.

## This year

This year we are taking on some big challenges, including:

- Conservation district elections
- Pursuing sustainable district funding
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Onboarding new leaders into our community

The Joint Committee on Elections (JCE) is working on crafting recommendations that could improve conservation district elections. Those recommendations should be ready in time for Area Association meetings this fall.

The Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (CDEI) has been appointed and we have hired a consultant to help us get the committee's work well launched.

This year, we are using a "welcome wagon" approach to help bring new board supervisors and district managers into our conservation community. Please join us in this by reaching out to new folks and letting them know that our entire community welcomes them and wants them to succeed! If you have time, invite them out for coffee (real or virtual) and get to know them, and let them get to know you.

### **Plant purchases benefit your conservation district**

When you patronize the WACD Plant Materials Center, you get high-quality conservation-grade native plants and you help support WACD's work on your behalf. We advocate for the state and federal funding you need. We lobby for the legislation you want. We protect the voluntary, non-regulatory, locally-led way of delivering conservation. Please help us to help you by utilizing our great Plant Materials Center for your next plant sale.

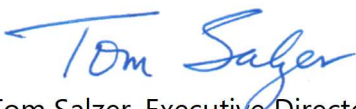
### **Thank you**

Thank you to all our members for your effective engagement with legislators. You may think that your advocacy only affects your conservation district, but it also supports our entire conservation delivery system. We greatly appreciate that while you are working on gaining support for your initiatives, you are also supporting the statewide initiatives as adopted by members through your resolutions. Our lobbyist is very effective, but nothing can replace the real magic provided by you when you build relationships with your legislators and make them partners in your commitment to conservation. Job well done!

Also, please thank our sponsors whose help was critical in delivering last year's annual conference. Find our sponsors on the Hub website. Please keep your eyes and ears open for potential sponsors for the 2021 WACD Annual Conference. We could use their help.

On behalf of the entire WACD Board of Directors, it is my pleasure to share WACD's appreciation of our member districts. We look forward to an even better year ahead. As always, we welcome your ideas. WACD hears you, and we are here for you.

Always yours for conservation,



Tom Salzer, Executive Director

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