

# Business Update



SPRING 2025

## YOUR CHECKOFF AT WORK

### New board members join the WTSC

The Washington Turfgrass Seed Commission has some new faces in leadership. JR Swinger (Lind), Travis Meacham (Moses Lake) and Matt Logan (Mesa) retired from their positions recently. Swinger and Meacham have both served in their positions for multiple years. Swinger no longer grows turfgrass seed, and Meacham is happy to let a new leader step forward. Meacham will retain his position as chair of the Turfgrass Seed Association.

“We really appreciate all the years of service these guys have put in over the years,” said Shane Johnson who serves as the WTSC administrator.

Michael Rainis of Freihe Farms near Moses Lake was elected to replace Meacham, and Jory Iverson of Columbia River Seed in Plymouth was elected to replace Swinger. Iverson served on the board previously, but took a couple of years off, and is now back and ready to serve. Derek Green of Fairfield was elected to serve in District 1’s second position. The board also voted on its leadership team, electing Jeff Tee to retain his position as Chair and Michael Rainis as Treasurer.

### WTSC 2025/2026 annual budget approved

At the February meeting, the Washington Turfgrass Seed Commission passed their new budget. They approved an expense budget of \$196,600, slightly over their expected income. “We continue to try and draw down some of our reserves,” explained Shane Johnson who serves as the Commission’s executive director. “Again, the growers

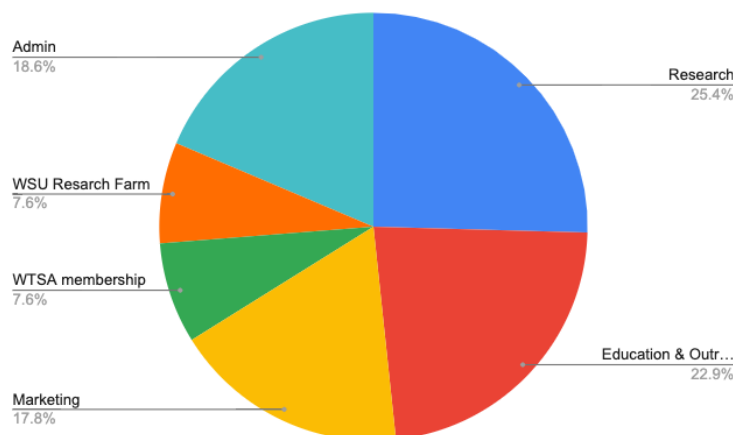
have consistently said that they don’t want to sit on a large sum of reserves. This budget reflects that goal.”

Roughly 25% supports research at WSU and OSU (see additional articles). The WTSC also spends about \$15,000 annually on the WSU Perennial Grass Farm. Roughly 40% of the budget is also spent on Education & Outreach and Marketing. The remaining budget funds organizational memberships, operations and administrative services.

### WTSC marketing effort grows

This year the WTSC marketing and communications team is continuing to increase the footprint of its messaging. This summer, the WTSC will be partnering with WSU Soccer to highlight the benefits of grass over plastic turf. The WSU soccer field is one of the premiere pitches in the Pacific Northwest. The field has been renovated multiple times with Desert Green of Moses Lake supplying the sod in the 2023 renovation. The pitch is one of the best maintained fields in the region.

“I’m excited to celebrate our farmers and their product through one of the best soccer fields in the west,” said Kara Rowe, WTSC’s communications lead. Even though the football field across the street is plastic turf, Rowe says this partnership should lead to some positive outcomes.



WTSC is also targeting Washington-based landscapers. After reaching out to a dozen landscapers, Rowe noticed none knew their grass seed was grown in Washington. “Our own landscapers don’t know that the grass they install or the hydroseed they use comes from local farms,” said Rowe. To better educate industry, the WTSC launched

## SINCE 1984

### Commission Purpose

The growers of turfgrass seed in Washington voted to establish the Washington Turfgrass Seed Commission for the purposes of funding research in the production, processing, or distribution of turfgrass seed-by-products, and establishing and conducting programs to develop markets for turfgrass seed and its byproducts, including straw utilization projects.

In accordance with the marketing order, the Washington Turfgrass Seed Commission collects assessments from growers to pursue its purposes.

#### Your Commission

Jeff Tee (Chairman)  
Position 1, District 1, Director Appointed  
tee2102@aol.com

Derek Green  
Position 2, District 1, Elected  
derek95green@gmail.com

Jory Iverson  
Position 3, District 2, Elected  
jory@columbiariverseed.com

Jared Stevens  
Position 4, District 2, Director Appointed  
jaredmstevens@gmail.com

Michael Rainis (Treasurer)  
Position 5, Director Appointed  
michael@friehefarms.com

Paul Marienau  
Position 6 Handler, Board Appointed  
paul@fusionseed.us

Paula Moore  
Position 7, WSDA Representative  
pmoore@agr.wa.gov

Shane Johnson  
Administrator  
shanej@agmgt.com



WASHINGTON TURFGRASS  
SEED COMMISSION

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waturfgrass.org

an outreach effort specifically targeting Washington landscapers. This effort will continue into 2025.

## Research projects funded

At the February board meeting, the 2025 research projects were reviewed, and funding decisions were made for the year. The commission committed \$50,000 in total funding for 2025.

- Weed Management in Turfgrass for Seed (\$15,000) - Ian Burke, WSU
- Vernalization genes, flowering and Variety Development in Kentucky Bluegrass (\$25,000) - Michael M. Neff, WSU
- Exploring allelopathic potential of Kentucky bluegrass plant extract for annual bluegrass control (\$10,000) - Ruying Wang, OSU

## WTSC Meeting Schedule for 2025

Thursday, June 12 – 9:00am, WSU Grass Seed Research Farm, Pullman, WA

Thursday, September 4 – 11:00am, Moses Lake, WA

Thursday, December 11 – 11:00am – Kennewick, WA

## Legislative fix for “slow pay/no pay” problem passes Senate

Senate Bill 5074 passed the Washington state Senate and is being considered in the House. The bill, sponsored by Sen. Matt Boehnke (R-Kennewick), passed unanimously from the Senate chamber in early March. The bill is a legislative solution for the “slow pay/no pay” situation in the state. WTSA leadership has been working with WSDA and legislative staff to develop language that will solve the problems with delayed payment. The team continues to advocate for a solution for all turfgrass seed farmers.

## WTSA advocates for state turfgrass research funding

Both Sen. Judy Warnick (R-Moses Lake) and Rep. Tom Dent (R-Moses Lake) are again championing funding for the current WSU turfgrass durability research program. Funding for the current research is set to expire in June of 2025. WTSA has been working on the \$846,800 request for this biennium, which would cover years 3 & 4 of the project. This project was not included in WSU’s overall budget request as we had hoped, but it is still supported by the industry and growers.

*The WTSA mission is to advocate on behalf of the Turfgrass Seed Industry in Washington State by education, marketing and political outreach with the goal to grow the Turfgrass Seed industry in Washington State and beyond.*

