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Conservation CONNECTION

WHIDBEY ISLAND CONSERVATION DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

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Visit our website at *www.whidbeycd.org*

Time to Develop 2015 Work Plan and Budget

WICD is currently developing our plan of work and budget for FY2015 (July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015). On April 8, a draft will be available on our website for public review and comment. We value your input as part of this process! Comment period will end April 24th and the budget and work plan will be considered by the WICD Board of Supervisors at their May 22nd Board meeting.

Annual Open House and Awards Event – April 8, 2014

We invite you to join us on April 8, 4:00 – 5:30pm for our annual Open House to be held at the Coupeville Library. The draft FY15 WICD budget and work plan overview will be presented. The District will be recognizing outstanding cooperators, volunteers and partners. Please come out and meet the District staff, board, and your neighbors.

Whidbey Farm Forum 2014

"All Things Farming on Whidbey"

The Whidbey Farm Forum on Monday, March 31, 6:30 – 8:30, promises to be a fun, information-packed evening where current activities related to agriculture on Whidbey Island will be shared. Farmers and agricultural partners are all invited to attend. One of the highlights will be a presentation by the Northwest Agriculture Business Center on the Mobile Poultry Processing Unit that is currently being built and will include Whidbey Island in the area it serves (see article below). The Whidbey Farm Forum will be held at the Fritz Cornell Nordic Hall in Coupeville. ***RSVP*** appreciated, or click ***here*** for more info.

Mobile Poultry Processing Unit (MPPU) Coming to Serve Whidbey Island

Exciting NEWS!!! NABC is currently having a state-of-the-art Mobile Poultry Processing Unit (MPPU) built to serve commercial scale producers in Whatcom, Skagit, and Snohomish Counties as well as larger scale producers in King, Island, and San Juan Co. The MPPU will be fully staffed with experienced operators emphasizing food safety and efficiencies to provide each producer with the highest quality product at a reasonable cost. The Unit will be equipped with the best available equipment to achieve a humane kill using a stun knife, effective scald and pluck, followed by evisceration in shackles (to avoid cross contamination), an organically approved anti-microbial dip (lactic acid), and air-chilled for top quality and the safest end product. In addition, the MPPU will be offering custom cutting of product, vacuum packing, and professional, custom labels for each producer (with farm logo & name).

Upcoming poultry workshops are available for both current producers considering scaling up their production and those investigating entrance into this sector of the poultry industry. Presenters will discuss how to safely, profitably, and legally raise meat birds. The dates are: March17 (WSU Snohomish County Extension) and March 24 (WSU Whatcom County Extension). Follow these links for more ***info*** or ***registration***.

Thank You for Another Successful Native Plant Sale!

Twelve weeks of online pre-order sales cummulated at the end of February with the distribution of over 8,500 native plants (mostly bare-root) to nearly 200 customers! And, why are we so happy about that? Planting natives sets the stage for good resource management: less watering equals less depletion of soil fertility, which minimizes the potential for invasive weeds to take hold and spread and the subsequent use of fertilizers and herbicides to manage these consequences. So, thank you for planting those natives. And a special thank you to the 36 volunteers who helped us count, bundle, pack, and distribute the pre-orders. You rock!

Incumbent Supervisor Automatically Re-elected

By reason of being the only person filing for the position by the filing deadline (January 7, 2014), the February 4 election was cancelled and incumbent Wendi Hilborn was automatically re-elected to serve a 3-year term as WICD Supervisor. No poll site, absentee balloting or mail balloting was performed pursuant to WAC 135-110-370. An additional position appointed by the WA State Conservation Commission is still open, and applications will be accepted until March 31. Downloadable application available ***here***, or for further information, please contact the District at 360-678-4708.

Whidbey Farm Map

The opportunity is now to get your listing in the Whidbey Farm Map and Guide for 2014. You may also wish to advertise as a sponsor on the map. The Whidbey Island Farm Map & Guide, "Whidbey's Country Farms," is produced annually featuring a map of the island and promoting farming-related Island County events, activities, and places. Deadline March 19. For more information, click ***here***.

Forest Stewardship News

A variety of forestry education offerings throughout the year, including workshops, field tours, field days, and short courses are available through WSU Extension Forestry Program. An online version of the Forest Stewardship Coached Planning course begins April 23.This is a great learning opportunity for folks whose schedules do not allow them to attend the face-to-face Coached Planning Classes. In this class, you will learn how to assess your trees, avoid insect and disease problems, attract wildlife, and take practical steps to keep your forest on track to provide enjoyment and even income for years to come. You will develop your own Forest Stewardship Plan, which brings state recognition as a Stewardship Forest and eligibility for cost-share assistance, and may also qualify you for significant property tax reductions.

There is also an upcoming Shitake Mushroom workshop taking place at the Greenbank Farm on April 12. For details on this and all the latest news and events for the WSU Extension Forestry Program, click ***here***.

Calendar at a Glance - A quick look at upcoming events with links to more details

March 15, Saturday; 8:00am: ***Women in Ag Conference***, Pacific Rim Institute, Coupeville

March 19: Whidbey Farm Map deadline (article above) contact Sera Hartman ***sera@agbizcenter.org***

March 25, Tuesday; 10:30 - Noon: Greenbank Farm, Walking Classroom with Rob Hallbauer of WICD – ***Soils and Plants of Greenbank Farm***. For more info, call 678-7700.

March 31, Monday; 6:30 - 8:30pm: ***Whidbey Farm Forum***, Fritz Cornell Nordic Hall, Coupeville

April 8, Tuesday; 4:00 – 5:30pm: WICD Open House, Awards and Budget/Work Plan presentation, Coupeville Library

April 12, Saturday: 9:00am & 2:00pm: ***Shitake Mushroom Workshop***, Greenbank Farm

April 15, Tuesday; 8:00 - 10:00am: ***Rain Garden Maintenance Training*** for Landscapers, Contractors & Gardeners; free light breakfast and coffee; Coupeville Rec Hall

- Why homeowner's install Rain Gardens • How they are designed and constructed
- Why maintaining Rain Gardens is important for stormwater management
- How to get help on design and maintenance help from the Whidbey Island Conservation District

April 15, Tuesday;12:00pm: On-Farm Food Safety and Conservation via Webinar. To sign up, go to this ***link***.

April 22, Tuesday, 11:00am -2:00pm: Meat Producers workshop with ***Jan Busboom, Ph.D.*** Puget Sound Energy meeting room, Freeland

Dr. Busboom will be talking about 1) the effects of various feeding/management systems on quality, nutrients and palatability of meats and poultry and 2) Identifying post-harvest practices that combined with acceptable pre-harvest practices result in consistently acceptable flavor and tenderness of beef, pork, lamb, goat and poultry meat. More details on this event coming soon.

Updated information may be available on the WICD *Calendar page.*