



# Whidbey Island Conservation District

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Legislative District: 10 Congressional District: 2

## Other Accomplishments



The goals of a three-generation sheep dairy include “nurturing the land, our family, and our livestock.”



Before: The dairy leveraged a Tilth grant with WICD’s cost-share program to implement best management practices (BMPs) focused on protecting nearby water and shellfish resources.



After: Cost-shared BMPs include installing a livestock waste storage facility and heavy use area protection.

### 2019 FEATURE ACCOMPLISHMENT

## Partnerships Support Local Farm Businesses and Farmland

### Resource Challenge

Farmland conversion is an increasing problem on Whidbey Island. Agricultural lands are removed from Current Use at an average annual rate of 3 percent with a total of 20 percent removed since 2010. These lands are at risk of being converted and developed. While Whidbey Island Conservation District’s (WICD) programs and incentives help farmers maintain operations and steward natural resources, a larger network of partners is necessary for farms to ensure their long-term viability and capacity to withstand the pressures of development.

### Project Summary and Results

WICD partnered with local farmers, businesses, and organizations to launch the “Whidbey Island Grown” brand and form the Whidbey Island Growers Association (WIGA) as a collective marketing, sharing, and leveraging cooperative for local agricultural based products. Whidbey Island Grown products are now found in local stores and WIGA membership is on the rise. WICD also partnered on a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) funded project to connect new and military veteran farmers with resources, mentors, and available farmland at risk of conversion. These efforts are expected to improve farming opportunities and reduce farmland conversion.

### Key Partners

Island County Assessment; National Institute of Food and Agriculture/USDA; Washington State Conservation Commission; Organic Farm School; Washington State University Extension; Northwest Agricultural Business Center



Whidbey Island Growers Association members tour a local farm and receive valuable information related to running a successful farm business.



WICD helped launch the “Whidbey Island Grown” brand to market locally produced food and agricultural products.

## Priorities for 2020...

- ▶ Carry out a grant-funded project to promote and support BMP implementation in the Penn Cove watershed.
- ▶ Coordinate development of an Algae Management Plan as an initial step toward minimizing toxic algae blooms in Lone Lake.
- ▶ Continue supporting a local homeowners’ association to explore options for addressing a derelict tide gate through estuarine habitat restoration.