



Conservation CONNECTION

WHIDBEY ISLAND CONSERVATION DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

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WICD Report of Accomplishments

WICD addresses many local natural resource issues with expertise in conservation planning, technical assistance, and engineering for farms and forest lands, and stormwater management in urban and rural areas. Projects are funded in a variety of ways, including partnerships with other organizations and cost shares with landowners. WICD also delivers education to landowners through events and workshops. Read our highlights for 2015 in our *Annual Report of Accomplishments*.



Evergreen Huckleberry (Vaccinium ovatum) in bloom. Grows 2'-3' in sun, up to 12' in shade. Prefers moist, well-drained soil.

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WICD Annual Native Bareroot Plant Pre-Sale Begins! Easy online ordering . . . and our popular plant packages return!

This year we have 29 species of natives and a collection of 8 plant packages. Our plant packages offer a group of plants pre-selected to address a specific landscape goal or condition — like bluff stabilization, attracting birds, attracting pollinators, or a wet, dry, sunny, or shady location. By purchasing plants in a package, you'll also save money! The **Plant Sale Storefront** has expanded descriptions and pictures of all the plants offered. It's time to shop!

Native plants improve water quality, reduce soil and wind erosion, clean the air, reduce energy costs, help protect homes from wildfire, attract and support local wildlife, and beautify property.

In addition, plant sale revenues contribute to our programs — including free farm and forest planning

and best practice assistance, engineering services, storm water management, cost share and tax incentive program guidance, and educational workshops on a variety of local resource conservation topics.

How do I order my bareroot plants?

Ordering your plants and purchasing by credit card is easy at our website: www.whidbeycd.org. Phone orders can be taken by calling 360-678-4708, or by walk-in at our office at 1 NE 4th St., Coupeville. Order now for pick up Saturday, February 27 at **Fort Casey (barrack F)** in Coupeville.

Order early and receive a discount!

From October 29 through November all plant orders over \$75 are eligible for a 10% discount. Use code EARLY10 at checkout and save!

WICD Forestry Program

The current Forest Stewardship Coached Planning course co-hosted by WSU Extension and WICD will be the last one held on Whidbey for the foreseeable future. WSU Forestry is converting to more **on-line courses** and modules that are available on-demand. The online version of the WSU Forest Coached Planning course will continue to be an important part of the WICD forestry program. Check for other Forestry workshops and events in the coming year at the **WICD online calendar**.

Beyond workshops and classes, WICD has a long tradition of providing one-on-one, free, non-regulatory assistance to landowners who want help

in managing their forests. We help owners to assess their forest stands, identify their goals, prepare forest management plans, and in some cases to qualify for property tax reductions through the Current Use tax program. WICD staff can also help owners who may qualify for cost-share assistance with various forest management practices, such as thinning, replanting, and brush control, through the NRCS EQIP program. Don't hesitate to **contact WICD** if you have questions or would like more information about how we can assist your forest management practices.



Mud Management Workshop

Do you and your critters want to be mud-free this winter?

- Tuesday, Nov 10, 5:30 - 7:30 pm, Trinity Lutheran Church Chapel Bldg, Freeland
- Thursday, Nov 12, 5:30 - 7:30 pm, Heller Rd Fire Station meeting room, Oak Harbor

Join WICD at either one of two workshops to learn how you can keep the mud at bay in areas like paddocks, gateways, pathways, around barns and other shelters.

We will discuss different types of footings and materials, such as geotextiles and grids, that keep your footing free of mud. [RSVP here](#), or contact Sarah at 360-678-4708 or sarah@whidbeycd.org for more information.



Okanogan Conservation District staff assess post-fire landscapes after the recent devastating wildfires.

Future of the Whidbey Island Farm Tour

As of September 2015, the Farm Tour Committee, in concert with the Whidbey Island Conservation District, has hosted 10 increasingly successful annual farm tours. Through the years, the tour has successfully raised awareness about our local farms and their farming practices, including the implementation of many best management practices that protect our natural resources. Additionally, the tour has assisted our farms with marketing and promoting the benefits of locally grown food, fiber, and other products, thereby improving the economic sustainability of the Whidbey farms.

During this time, our local

agricultural community has been evolving, with more small farms coming on line each year. And, of course, Whidbey has farms of all different sizes with different levels of commercial interests and production. Relative to participating on the Farm Tour, some farms are naturally set up for large events, while others are more suited to a smaller crowd.

In response to the diversity of farm characteristics within the local agricultural community and the dynamic and exciting changes that

are taking place, the Farm Tour Committee has concluded that now is a great time to take a hiatus from the current format of the tour and initiate discussions among farmers to identify the best ways to move forward. The Committee will keep you informed as the future of the

Farm Tour takes shape and anticipates an exciting new version to come. Stay tuned!



Upcoming Events - Please visit the WICD website [Calendar page](#) for a list of upcoming events.

Helping Our Neighbors: Okanogan Fire Needs

Recently, our WICD District Manager, Karen Bishop, spent a week in Okanogan assisting the Okanogan Conservation District (OCD) in the overwhelming task of assessing the resource impacts to local landowners from the devastating fires in August. The need for qualified resource specialists will continue for months, and WICD will likely lend staff again to help with the crushing amount of work to be done. Here are some suggestions from OCD Manager Craig T. Nelson of things you can do to help:

“Support organizations need cash donations to meet individual needs for families directly impacted by the fire. There are two organizations I highly recommend and both are local and 501 c(3). Okanogan County Community Action Council provides

vouchers for hotels, fuel and food, and replaces lost and damaged items from clothing to tires. You can donate via a [Paypal link](#) on their website, or mail a check to OCCAC, PO Box 1067, Okanogan, WA 98840

The other group is the Community Foundation of North Central Washington. They are the primary fiscal sponsor for the Okanogan County Long Term Recovery Group and will funnel dollars to local disaster case managers and social workers to help people with their highest needs. They have a [donation button](#) on their website, or you can mail a check to CFNCW, 9 S. Wenatchee Ave, Wenatchee, WA 98801

Ranchers and farmers will need support for fencing and water troughs in the coming months and years, but

right now they need forage for their animals. Between the fires last year and this year, our county has lost a lot of grazing and pasture lands. Sadly, there are no more available pastures and range areas for these livestock, so many producers are now feeding livestock months earlier than usual and will continue far longer than usual next year or face the decision to decrease herd size or ship cows far away.

If you know someone who can donate hay, they can call Shauna at (509) 760-5825 to arrange a pick up or delivery, and they will get it distributed equitably. Or you can donate to their [Youcaring.com donation page](#).

On behalf of a tired but very proud county, I thank you and your friends and family for what help you can provide.”