



Conservation CONNECTION

WHIDBEY ISLAND CONSERVATION DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

ISSUE

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2017

Weeds of Spring 2017 Now Available



New staff at both WICD and WSU Extension Island County have partnered to launch a new

quarterly Weed Bulletin system. Beginning with the "Weeds of Spring 2017," several weed species will be highlighted each issue that are important for homeowners to know about that season. Later in 2017, "Weeds of Summer," "Weeds of Fall," and "Weeds of Winter" will be distributed quarterly. To sign up to receive the next Weed Bulletin, or view an archive of local weed resources, visit www.whidbeycd.org/weed-bulletins.html.



WASTE STORAGE & APPLICATION TOUR

Saturday, April 8; 10am - 3pm *SPACE LIMITED TO 20 PARTICIPANTS!*

Do you own livestock? Are you curious about waste storage and its potential benefits to your land?

Join Bruce Gordon, WICD's Farm Planner, on this interactive, day-long tour. Beginning at 10 a.m. with a brief introductory workshop at the Old Bayview Schoolhouse 2nd floor classroom, we'll visit three Whidbey Island waste storage facilities installed with cost share assistance from WICD – one medium-sized facility in south Whidbey, one small-sized facility in central Whidbey, & one large-

sized facility in north Whidbey – to see first-hand how you can prevent nutrient loss, protect water quality, and improve agricultural production on your land.

This event is free, but does require an RSVP. First-come, first-serve. Out of respect to the private landowners who are welcoming us to their homes, we'll be capping attendance at the first 20 individuals who RSVP at: www.whidbeycd.org/rsvp.html



Whidbey Island's Collaborative Agricultural Marketing Effort Continues to Grow



The new year was welcomed by an event held on January 30 that drew over 130 people representing Whidbey Island's farmers, restaurants, caterers, lodging establishments, and support organizations. The Whidbey Farm-to-Table Forum, held at the Coupeville Rec Hall, was designed to energize the island community and discuss how businesses could work together to collaboratively promote Whidbey

Island as a world-class agricultural destination. Featuring a keynote from Cristie Kisler, Owner of Finn River Farm & Cidery and a member of the Olympic Culinary Loop, followed by a panel of farmers and restaurants led by Vincent Nattress, owner of the Orchard Kitchen, the event gathered support and input from the community on this effort, and the input is being used to create strategies moving forward. Currently, a 17-member Steering Committee is helping to begin the development of agreements and marketing tools for this relaunch. These efforts have been led by members of the Whidbey Island Growers Association, a group of Whidbey farmers who have been meeting monthly since October 2015 in a "potluck group" to respond to changes

in the local agricultural community and economy, with an emphasis on the continued growth of local agriculture on Whidbey. These members are also helping to provide input in the development of print and digital marketing tools, including an interactive website and teaser rack card for the Washington State Ferries. These tools are, in part, funded with a \$3,500 grant from the Island County Lodging Tax Advisory Committee's 2% Tourism Grant Program, and a \$2,500 sponsorship from the Port of South Whidbey. Efforts to secure additional funding are currently underway to hire a full-time staff person to oversee and coordinate the collaborative marketing initiatives. Stay tuned for more updates as they become available.

Pesticide Applicator Licensing

To become a Licensed Pesticide Applicator in WA State, you may order English or Spanish study materials directly from WSU [here](#). For more information, visit the WSDA site [here](#).

From NRCS:

• EQIP Program Sign-up Deadline – April 21

EQIP is a technical and financial assistance program designed to help farmers, private forestland owners, tribes and other private landowners/managers improve irrigation efficiency; manage nutrient run-off and/or animal waste; improve the health of native plant communities; and reduce soil loss. View the EQIP fact sheet [here](#).

• Critical Wetlands Project Proposals Due April 24

Funded through the Wetland Reserve Enhancement Partnership (WREP), conservation partners are encouraged to submit proposals to protect, restore and enhance critical wetlands on agricultural lands through voluntary easements. More details [here](#).

To apply or ask questions about either program, please contact Soil Conservationist Gabby Fajardo, 360-488-4848.

50 Years of Conservation Leadership

2017 marks WICD's 50th anniversary! To celebrate and honor the occasion, a special Open House event is planned for early Summer. Stayed tuned for evolving details!

Whidbey's Local Food Bounty Begins

Spring is here . . . and that means the Farmers Markets are starting up, local farmers are seeking members for their Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs, and roadside farm stands will start to be stocked again. Last year, WICD developed two brochures – one for highlighting the Farmers Markets on Whidbey, and CSA Farms of Whidbey. These two brochures are now updated with 2017 dates and information and can be found at <http://www.whidbeycd.org/local-agriculture.html>

or click on the images to the right. Goosefoot's Roadside Farm Stands, Farm Stores, and Farmers Market Directory is being updated for 2017, but you can grab a copy of last year's publication at <http://www.goosefoot.org/pdf/farmstands.pdf>



Our Native Plant Sale Volunteers Rock!

Thank you, to our 2017 team. We couldn't do it without you.

- gratefully, WICD staff

Thank you to all who made this year's Annual Native Plant Sale our most successful ever, especially to the 42 amazing plant sale volunteers! Over 10,500 native plants (mostly bare-root) were distributed to nearly 300 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 need for fertilizers and herbicides!

Are You Wildfire Aware? You're Invited to the 2017 Whidbey Island Firewise Day, Sat., May 20 10am-2pm



Spring has just arrived, but that means summer is just around the corner. Are you wildfire aware and ready? Firewise is a fantastic program to help you prepare . . . and it's right here on Whidbey Island. Check out the **NEW Whidbey Island Firewise webpage** – www.whidbeycd.org/firewise/ - chock full of great tips for preparing properties and homes from wildfire.

With May as Wildfire Awareness Month for many western states, WICD and its partners, Central Whidbey Island Fire & Rescue District, Washington Department of Natural Resources, and the Washington State Conservation Commission, along with participation from staff of the National Fire Protection Agency and Whidbey Camano Land Trust, will be featuring the first-ever *Whidbey Island Firewise Day* on **Sat., May 20 from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. at Race Road Fire Station, 1164 Race Rd., Coupeville, WA**. The 2017 Whidbey Island Firewise Day will offer free educational workshops, demonstrations, and resources for homeowners and their families from local and regional fire experts on a variety of topics, including:

- Understanding the science behind wildfire
- What is Whidbey Island's wildfire risk and how does it impact me as a homeowner
- Forest health and management – how to reduce your risk
- The Firewise Program and its benefits and resources
- Tree thinning demonstrations with local fire fighters
- . . . and more!

Since 2002, Firewise has been a nationally-recognized outreach and education program that empowers residents to work collaboratively and take proactive steps to protect their homes from wildfire. The program can be tailored to meet the needs of each community in which it is present. Of the over 1,200 recognized Firewise communities today, Washington state took the lead in new communities joining in 2016. The program was brought to Whidbey Island when natural resource leaders realized the importance of supporting landowners with mitigation suggestions to reduce their wildfire risk. To download our general Firewise information flyer, [click here](#).

