



Conservation CONNECTION

WHIDBEY ISLAND CONSERVATION DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

ISSUE

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Welcome, David Edwards



Our 5th board supervisor was appointed in July to fill an open position

with one year remaining. Welcome David Edwards to the WICD board! David is a retired Air Force pilot who currently flies commercial airlines, and has a background in forestry. He is a member of the Society of American Foresters and has an interest in using remote sensing technologies in forest management, wildland fire, and agriculture applications. We're excited to have you on the board, David!

Visit www.whidbeycd.org/board for additional information about our board.

Better Ground Meets Nearshore Living

As part of the **Better-Ground.org** initiative, WICD partnered with Snohomish

Conservation District and the WA Dept of Ecology to produce a new resource management guidebook targeted to nearshore community residents. **Nearshore Living** explores the many ways water affects and informs our lives here in the Pacific Northwest, and how we affect the water. It's a great introduction to new Puget Sound residents or anyone looking to understand our unique ecosystem. Available to view, download, or share [HERE](#). Printed versions available by request.



Tahlequah was the inspiration for the first Orca Recovery Day in 2018, after she mourned her dead calf for 17 days. She's a new mom again! (above with her new calf) We wish them both health and happiness.

EcoChallenge Oct. 5 - Nov. 5

This year, with the health and safety of our human community in mind, we're going virtual with our orca recovery events. That doesn't mean that we can't make a collective difference for our Southern Resident Orcas! Join our Ecochallenge this October, and take actions that both help Orcas and keep each other safe.

How it works:

Visit orcarecoveryday.ecochallenge.org to sign up. Join our team - **Whidbey Island Conservation District** - or create your own team of family and friends, coworkers, classmates, or volunteers. Choose up to 5 daily actions and 10 one-time actions to take between Oct. 5-Nov. 5. Preview the actions [HERE](#). Report the actions you and your team take, earn points, and win prizes!

Other virtual orca recovery events include:

Orca Forum - Wednesday, Oct. 14, 5 - 7:30 pm.

Hear presentations from local marine scientists who are studying orcas and their habitat.

Orca Trivia Night - Thursday, Oct. 15, 7 pm.

Compete for prizes individually or gather a team and join us for an online trivia evening themed on all things Orca, Salmon, and Marine Habitat.

Community Art Contest - Sound Water

Stewards and Island County Marine Resources Committee are holding an art contest for all ages. The theme is "Orca recovery and the human connection to Orcas." Read the details [HERE](#).

Save the Date! Orca Recovery Day- Saturday, Oct. 17

Orca Recovery Day is a region-wide day of action to improve salmon habitat and water quality for our critically endangered Southern Resident Orca community. In 2019, over 2,300 people participated in 65 work parties across the Pacific Northwest.

What's Going On With the Orcas?

Puget Sound has its own unique community of orcas, the Southern Resident Orcas, and they are some of the most at-risk marine mammals in the world. In summer, the orcas feed mainly on Chinook salmon returning to the Fraser River in British Columbia and Puget Sound. During other seasons of the year their diet expands to include other species like chum salmon which return to rivers all over the Puget Sound. As seasonal salmon populations dwindle, so has the orca population. Where three family pods used to be seen all summer hunting in the Puget Sound, now they travel to other waters in search of food.

Southern Resident Orca recovery depends on the recovery of salmon populations in the Pacific Northwest, which depends on the improvement of the riparian areas in which the salmon travel up and down to spawn.

Orca Recovery Day is your opportunity to take actions to improve salmon habitat and water quality!

By taking action in our own lives and inspiring the people around us, each of us contributes to a world of impact.

Find more details and all the links to participate in our events here at whidbeycd.org/orca.



WICD Joins International Coastal Clean-up Day

On Saturday, September 19, WICD staff and board participated in International Coastal Clean-up Day. Near-shore residents all around the globe went out and picked up trash and debris on the world's beaches. We weren't able to gather as a group for this event, but we were out doing work on multiple Whidbey beaches, together in spirit.

Native Plant Sale Alert!

Our annual bare root native plant pre-sale will begin Nov. 1 and we're getting excited! The plant sale is an opportunity to buy bare root native plants for your garden, greenspace, restoration project, and forest. **Sign up** for our email list to receive exclusive plant sale updates.

Are you looking to find a source for a large quantity (100+) of a single plant species for your large reforestation or restoration project? We may be able to help. Contact us now to check availability - shannon@whidbeycd.org.

If you need help getting started with a plan for native plant landscaping or restoration, check out our website www.whidbeycd.org/native-plants. We have planting lists for everything from pollinator gardens to rain gardens to marine shore-front landscapes.

WICD Video Series Reaches Out to You



Our mission at the conservation district is to assist in the management of Whidbey's natural resources and inspire voluntary conservation practices in landowners, but what does that look like in practice? What types of activities do we promote, and how?

In our new video series, **What Do Conservation Districts Do?**, our staff will share with you how we operate and show you some conservation practices we emphasize in our work. Our goal is to connect with all of you in this time of social distancing, and provide another opportunity to learn how we, as a community, can keep Whidbey Island and Puget Sound healthy for years to come. You can view the videos on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), our new [Youtube channel](#), and on our [website](#).

Bring on the Pollinators!

In partnership with the Endangered Species Coalition, WICD is working with South Whidbey School District, Calyx School, and Coupeville School District to plant pollinator gardens with students. The pollinator gardens will include native plants and wildflowers that will bloom from spring-fall, providing full season forage as well as nesting habitat for bees, butterflies, and other pollinators.

Providing wildflower-rich habitat is one of the most significant actions you can take to support pollinators, and fall is the best time to plant your garden! Native plants will be watered by rain all winter, which allows them to establish deep roots and means less care and watering from the gardener. Many wildflower seeds need a period of cold winter weather in order to germinate.

Our website has plant lists, planning guides, school lesson curriculums, and a list of local businesses that sell native plants and seed mixes. WICD staff is also available to help you get started with your project, so please reach out for support! www.whidbeycd.org/pollinator-pledge

Firewise Program Congratulates the Pondilla Estates Community

The recent smoke provided a reminder that wildfires are a serious threat to our habitat and health. Western Washington has a unique wildfire history and ecology worth learning about and preparing for. Many of your fellow Whidbey landowners are doing just that! The Pondilla Estates community -

located in the North Whidbey Fire & Rescue District (NWFR) in north Coupeville - was recently recognized by the



(From left to right) Pondilla Estates residents and Firewise leads Lisa Peters, Teri Jo Summer Reiger, and Melanie Beckstrom display their community's official Firewise USA™ signs, having just achieved national recognition.

Protection Association as Is-

land County's third national **Firewise USA™ site**.

Since March of last year, residents in Pondilla Estates have proactively engaged their community through outreach and education on wildfire preparedness, including hosting a socially distanced **Community Wildfire Preparedness Day** this past June. Through pruning, limbing, and tree thinning, they reduced 84 cubic yards of potentially wildfire prone "ladder fuels." Community leads Melanie Beckstrom, Teri Jo Summer Reiger, Dale Reiger, and Lisa Peters teamed together with their neighbors and with WICD, NWFR, WA DNR's Wildfire Division, and Washington State Parks as part of the **Whidbey Island Firewise Program**. Congratulations!

How can you be more wildfire prepared, **Whidbey-style**? Wildfire ignition and behavior are based on fuels, weather, and topography. Think in terms of the **"Home Ignition Zone,"** a great visual concept coined by **Jack Cohen**, Research Physical Scientist of the U.S. Forest Service. The Home Ignition Zone outlines "3 Zones of Defense" you can prioritize for wildfire preparedness actions.

Start with these six tips – and request a free, educational **Firewise Home Assessment** today!

- 1. Remove** – Remove leaf & needle debris from your rooflines, gutters, decks, porches, patios, and fences.
- 2. Screen & Seal** – Make sure home entry points are screened, reducing embers from entering. Use 1/16th inch metal mesh for crawlspaces, attic & soffit vents, and windows.
- 3. Trim** – Prune back any vegetation within 5 feet of your home, so it won't touch your structure or the ground directly.
- 4. Store Away** – Keep brooms, cushions, potted plants, and other decorations indoors during high fire danger.
- 5. Select** – Select drought-tolerant and **fire-resistant plants** – those which contain less oils, resins, and waxes.
- 6. Maintain** – Keep your grass mowed at 3" to maintain vigor but keep height managed. Consider use of non-combustible mulch, like beach rock, or gravel, for use of fuel breaks or landscaped "islands."



NOW HIRING! Forest Stewardship Program Coordinator

Work as an Area Forester in one of three Forest Stewardship Program Coordination Areas to build the new Regional Forest Stewardship Program and associated service delivery system.

More info about the position and application [HERE](#).

Firewise® Home Ignition Zone

