



# FY2021 (7/1/20 – 6/30/21) Annual Work Plan Whidbey Island Conservation District (WICD)

**For More Information Contact:**

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## **Mission of the Whidbey Island Conservation District**

The mission of the Whidbey Island Conservation District is to assist the management of natural resources on and around Whidbey Island for present and future generations, inspiring voluntary conservation practices.

**This Annual Plan is divided into two sections – “Natural Resource Priorities” and “District Operations Priorities.”**

## **Part I Natural Resource Priorities** (in order of priority based on public feedback and WICD Board-approved 2017-2022 Work Plan)

- Water quality and quantity
- Soil health, preservation, and retention
- Economic and environmental sustainability of Whidbey Island land uses (i.e. farm, forest, residential)
- Shoreline resources and marine life habitat
- Human willingness to invest in conservation
- Land use
- Wildlife habitat, rural and urban
- Energy (i.e. conservation, alternative generation resources)
- Air quality

**Priority Geographic Areas:** All of Whidbey Island.

## **Natural Resource Program Goals and Actions:**

1. In cooperation with Island County’s surface water quality and ground water monitoring programs, assist landowners and land managers to meet their water quality and quantity goals.
2. Provide conservation technical assistance and conservation planning upon request.
3. Identify conservation cost-share opportunities, assist with practice implementation, and follow-up on operation & maintenance.
4. Follow-up on practice implementation and operation & maintenance.
5. Provide technical assistance to partners coordinating complex projects impacting natural resources.
6. Participate in planning processes with partners to achieve economic and environmental sustainability of Whidbey Island land uses.
7. Collaborate with partners on marketing and policy strategies to preserve the viability of working lands.
8. Promote natural resource conservation through a diverse communications strategy.
9. Provide adult and youth natural resource education.

**Measurable Objectives: Improve water quality in two priority watersheds; achieve conservation planning, technical assistance, cost share, and outreach & education goals.**

**Existing & Potential Funding Source(s) (in no particular order):** *Island County (IC) Rates and Charges, WA State Conservation Commission (WSCC), WA Association of Conservation Districts (WACD), Ntl. Assoc. of Conservation Districts (NACD), Washington Conservation Society (WCS), Puget Sound Conservation Districts (PSCD), Island Local Integrating Organization (ILIO), Island County government, WA Dept. of Ecology (ECY), Puget Sound Partnership (PSP), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), United States Dept. of Agriculture (USDA), Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and other USDA agencies, National Park Service (NPS) the Whidbey Camano Land Trust (WCLT), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Towns and Cities, Tribes, Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO).*

## **Natural Resource Program Goals and Actions for FY21**

- 1. In cooperation with Island County's surface water quality and ground water monitoring programs, assist landowners and land managers to meet their water quality and quantity goals.**
  - a. Utilize current, local water quality data to focus and prioritize technical assistance efforts.
  - b. Maintain WICD's non-regulatory technical assistance role to assist landowners.
  - c. Develop a system to evaluate WICD services through an online/print survey tool, administered by staff.
- 2. Provide conservation technical assistance and conservation planning upon request.**
  - a. Improve TA priority ranking system and develop strategy for helping cooperators with low priority ranking.
  - b. Assist at least 25 clients with agricultural-related inquiries:
    - a. Provide at least 10 site visits and BMP recommendations using NRCS planning process.
    - b. Complete at least 5 farm plans, including NRCS RMS and CNMP plans as needed.
  - c. Assist at least 25 clients with forest stewardship-related inquiries:
    - a. Provide at least 10 site visits and BMP/forest management recommendations, including forest plan implementation and compliance with designated forest tax program.
    - b. Complete at least 5 forest management plans.
  - d. Assist at least 45 clients with residential conservation-related inquiries including, but not limited to, wildfire preparedness (Firewise), water resource management, backyard habitat conservation, bluff & shoreline management, native plant conservation
    - a. Provide at least 20 site visits and offer BMP recommendations
    - b. Provide at least 10 Firewise Home Assessments and offer BMP recommendations using the National Fire Protection Association's process.
  - e. Hold a Native Plant Sale, integrating TA and outreach events with sale of plants.
- 3. Identify conservation cost share opportunities, assist with practice implementation, and follow-up on operation & maintenance.**
  - a. Assist at least 4 landowners per biennium to develop, engineer, and implement cost share projects using WSCC cost share funding.
  - b. Provide outreach to local landowners and residents informing them of NRCS, ECY, and other USDA cost share funding programs, including environmental, energy, and value-added product development opportunities.
  - c. Explore adjustments to WICD's cost-share policies to include a more diverse set of land uses and resource concerns.
  - d. Develop a strategy to follow-up on cost-share project operation & maintenance
- 4. Follow-up on conservation practice implementation and operation & maintenance.**
  - a. Develop a strategy to collect conservation implementation data on non-cost-share practices
  - b. Refine client cooperator databases using available technology with a goal to increase data management efficiency, informing & collaborating with PSCD & other WSCC databases.
  - c. Assemble, review, and report conservation practice data annually
  - d. Utilize GIS to visually map areas of WICD action.
- 5. Provide technical assistance to partners coordinating complex projects impacting natural resources.**
  - a. Work with local jurisdictions and NGOs as technical advisors for priority projects.
  - b. Projects in progress include:
    1. Maxwellton Creek Alliance (seeking project funding)
    2. Lone Lake Algae Management Plan (implementation assistance if funding is available)
    3. Penn Cove Watershed NTA (funding expires 9/20)
    4. North Whidbey NTA (submitted, not yet funded).

- 5. Stormwater Outreach and Technical Assistance Network NTA . (funded 5/20 thru 5/22)
- c. Consider other projects as needs arise.

**6. Participate in planning processes with partners to achieve economic and environmental sustainability of Whidbey Island land uses.**

- a. Bring respected, science-based recommendations to governing bodies when decisions are made affecting resource land regulations.
  - 1. Assist local jurisdictions as a technical advisor on conservation related topics
- b. Continue staff training to understand local, state, and federal regulations to assist landowners.
- c. Represent landowner perspective as a member of local groups, prioritizing projects for funding opportunities including but not limited to: ILIO, Salmon Recovery Technical and Citizen Committee (SRTCC), PSCD, NRCS Local Work Group, Island County Marine Resources Committee, etc.
- d. Participate in state and national policy development efforts when needed through PSCD, WACD, WSCC, NACD, and others.

**7. Collaborate with partners on outreach and policy strategies to preserve the viability of working lands.**

- a. Facilitate the development of diverse partnerships to collaborate and share resources to strengthen Whidbey Island's agriculture system.
  - 1. Coordinate monthly Whidbey Island Growers Association (WIGA) meetings providing educational opportunities for farmers.
  - 2. Provide assistance to Whidbey Island Grown Cooperative, including outreach support.
- b. Partner with WSU Forest Stewardship Program, WA Department of Natural Resources (WADNR), and willing, local fire and rescue districts to provide resources for forest and timberland management, as well as wildfire preparedness.
- e. Assist landowners to connect with conservation easement and beneficial tax programs including, but not limited to, Designated Forest Land, Public Benefits Rating System, and Current Use Agriculture. Provide staff training for conservation easement and tax programs.

**8. Promote natural resource conservation.**

- a. Utilize a broad range of communication tools to promote a holistic understanding of production and ecosystem processes.
- b. Explore pathways to promote WICD services to local municipalities and county government.
- c. Explore pathways to engage Naval Air Station (NAS) Whidbey Island military families, active duty military, and veterans.
- d. Work with PSCDs to implement Better Ground marketing strategy.

**9. Provide adult and youth education.**

- a. Develop adult educational program strategy, which can be employed in current and future fiscal years of the District, based on demand, time-frame, and topic areas.
  - 1. Provide at least 6 presentations at partner events, including providing a booth presence where possible.
  - 2. Provide at least 6 technical workshops, including ongoing participation as local resource conservation experts for Sound Water Stewards and WSU Master Gardener training programs.
  - 3. Provide meeting facilitation as needed for grant funded projects, and other projects as prioritized by WICD board.
  - 4. Provide outreach and education assistance to partner organizations as requested.
  - 5. Attend partner meetings on a regular basis to stay consistently connected to programs and resources that may benefit the public
  - 6. Seek out new educational partnership opportunities
- b. Youth education
  - 1. Identify locally tailored and targeted messaging and programming for youth education in conjunction with partner organizations and volunteers.
  - 2. Maintain and/or update youth programming relative to current state and federal learning standards

- c. Employ a variety of online & printed educational tools to promote conservation resources to diverse audiences.
  1. Design targeted strategies and routes for most efficient use of online platforms.
    - i. Continue to refine website platform for ease of public and internal use.
    - ii. Develop social media (Facebook & Instagram) post strategy & implementation.
    - iii. Explore use of video as a communication tool for online platforms.
    - iv. Organize, consolidate, update, and maintain contractor resources list.
    - v. Deliver quarterly Weed Bulletin.
    - vi. Deliver quarterly WICD Conservation Connection newsletter.
    - vii. Continue coordination of monthly Make a Difference Column in Whidbey Weekly.
    - viii. Integrate Better Ground, as well as WSCC Communications Toolkit when appropriate.
  2. Design targeted strategies and routines for most efficient use of print platforms.
    - i. Develop one-page “fact sheets” on WICD programs & services, prioritization process, timelines and procedures.
- d. Maintain and improve outreach program tracking system.

## **Part II District Operations Priorities**

(in order of priority based on public feedback and WICD Board-approved 2017-2022 Work Plan)

- Satisfied and informed customers
- Stable funding and fiscal accountability
- Satisfied, well-trained employees
- Engaged and well-trained board
- A ready and willing corps of volunteers
- Complete and current policy manual, procedures and processes
- Maintain positive relationships with other conservation districts, the Conservation Commission, and other government and NGO partners
- Marketing who and what we are
- Maintain visible, suitable, and accessible office space

### **District Operations Program Goals and Actions:**

1. Provide accurate and complete information in a simple and understandable format.
2. Bring a high level of transparency, professionalism, and responsiveness to WICD partners and the public.
3. Plan for and maintain consistent funding to ensure staffing levels that will support natural resource and operational goals.
4. Achieve highest level of accountability, both in district operations and financial audits, to ensure the proper, effective, and efficient use of public funds.
5. Provide employee and board development opportunities and cross training.
6. Provide employees and board members the opportunity to participate in state, regional, and national conservation organizations.
7. Provide adequate staffing to accomplish work plan and offer competitive compensation/benefit packages.
8. Ensure employee satisfaction for team cohesiveness, improved workflow, and increased productivity.
9. Annually review WICD policies, procedures, and related processes; update as needed.
10. Maintain and/or foster relationships and agreements with all partners through effective communication & execution of services.
11. Provide consistent volunteer opportunities that support District operations

**Measureable Program Objectives:** District funding adequate to address landowner demand; satisfied tax payers and landowners; low staff turnover; informed and engaged Board of Supervisors; clean audits.

**Existing & Potential Funding Source(s) (in no particular order):** *WA State Conservation Commission (WSCC), Island County(IC) Rates and Charges, United States Dept. of Agriculture (USDA), Office of Farmland Preservation (OFP), NGOs such as Northwest Agriculture Business Center (NABC), Goosefoot Foundation, Russel Family Foundation, Tribes, Cities & Towns, Island County government, WA State Department of*

*Agriculture (WSDA), Port Districts, IC Economic Development Council (EDC), the Trust Board of Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve, Chambers of Commerce, private donors and sponsors.*

**District Operations Goals and Actions for FY21**

- 1. Provide accurate and complete information in a simple and understandable format.**
  - a. Keep Board of Supervisors, taxpayers and the general public informed through open public meetings and inclusive planning processes. Utilize the local newspapers, social media, e-mail, and WICD website as primary communication tools, ensuring that diverse audiences are being reached
- 2. Bring a high level of transparency, professionalism, and responsiveness to WICD partners and the public.**
  - a. Provide information through formal and informal processes.
  - b. Continue to improve upon and refine a single-source database system to improve efficacy of communication.
  - c. Improve tracking system, in collaboration with WSCC and PSCD, to ensure timely responsiveness to the public.
  - d. Explore the use of a survey tool for client feedback.
- 3. Plan for and maintain consistent funding to ensure staffing levels that will support natural resource and operational goals.**
  - a. Secure state funding for WSCC grants, cost share, and projects with WSCC, PSCD, and WACD.
  - b. Explore and/or pursue funding for local and regional Near Term Action (NTA) projects and other relevant funding opportunities.
- 4. Achieve highest level of accountability, both in district operations and financial audits, to ensure the proper, effective, and efficient use of public funds.**
  - a. Comply with all state/federal audit requirements, as well as requirements of funding entities, while keeping financial systems efficient and transparent to taxpayers.
  - b. Prepare for onsite State Auditors Office (SAO) regularly-scheduled audit which occurs every 3 years (next 2022).
- 5. Provide employee and board development opportunities and cross-training.**
  - a. Provide training for staff and board utilizing current staff, WA Association of District Employees (WADE) training conference, the Center for Technical Development (CTD), NRCS, WSCC, Enduris, WA State Labor & Industry, SAO, and other entities.
  - b. Continue to cross-train specific District Manager (DM) duties and financial staff responsibilities where needed.
  - c. Provide training for staff specifically in public records and open public meetings statutes, group facilitation, grant writing, and project management (including budget management).
- 6. Provide employees and board members the opportunity to participate in state, regional, and national conservation organizations.**
  - a. Participate in PSCD, WADE, WSCC, WACD, NACD, and NRCS activities.
  - b. Seek out new conservation partner opportunities.
- 7. Ensure employee satisfaction for team cohesiveness, improved workflow, and increased productivity.**
  - a. Improve employee review process to incorporate job satisfaction and wellness criteria
  - b. Consider alternative work schedules and ad-hoc remote work arrangements
  - c. Encourage teambuilding and wellness activities including an annual staff and board retreat
  - d. Conduct routine staff meetings to include personal wellbeing check-ins
  - e. Increase staff awareness of funding sources, balances, and targets

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| <p><b>8. Annually review WICD policies, procedures, and related processes; update as needed.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Ensure that board-approved policies are up-to-date, organized, and accessible to the WICD board, staff, and the general public (upon request).</li></ul> |
| <p><b>9. Maintain and/or foster relationships and agreements with all partners through effective communication &amp; execution of services.</b></p>  |
| <p><b>10. Provide consistent volunteer opportunities that support District operations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Train and support volunteers for the WICD annual plant sale, Orca Recovery Day, and other events as needed</li></ul>  |

**Budget information – following page**

# FY21 ANNUAL BUDGET – 5/27/20

	Yearly
<b>INCOME</b>	
Assessment	\$ 180,277
Dept Ecology - Stormwater	\$ 38,400
WSCC Basic Allocation	\$ 12,500
WSCC IM	\$ 83,100
WSCC Cost Share to L/O (pass through)	\$ 93,225
WSCC Cost Share TA	\$ 15,000
WSCC LT	\$ 25,000
PSCD Shoreline NTA	\$ 43,000
Better Ground	\$ 1,000
Penn Cove NTA	\$ 4,400
Whidbey Island Grown	\$ 3,000
Plant Sale	\$ 29,000
<b>TOTAL Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 527,902</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>	Yearly
Salary expenses incl IRA, WC, LI, FICA	\$ 281,700
Plant Sale wages	\$ 9,300
WICD paid Medical/Dental	\$ 46,725
Supplies (office and operating)	\$ 3,800
Phone/Postage/ Communications	\$ 3,600
Admin Travel, Mileage, & Lodging	\$ 1,700
Field Travel, Mileage	\$ 3,360
Election	\$ 500
Rent	\$ 23,888
Insurance (Enduris)	\$ 7,260
Utilities	\$ 2,525
Maint/ Repairs incl Sharp, WTS & NSIC, CRM, fire ext.	\$ 6,080
Conference, Dues, Training	\$ 7,920
Landowner Cost Share (pass through)	\$ 93,225
Better Ground expenses	\$ 1,000
Shoreline NTA Project expenses	\$ 500
Stormwater Project expenses	\$ 5,000
General Project expenses + Advertising	\$ 3,500
Plant Sale expenses	\$ 18,570
Capital Expenses	\$ 5,000
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$ 525,153</b>
Revenue less Expenses (to Reserve)	<b>\$ 2,749</b>