



Conservation CONNECTION

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WHIDBEY ISLAND CONSERVATION DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

Weeds of Winter 2018 Now Available



WICD and Island County's Department of Natural resources are

partnering to provide a quarterly, seasonally-themed Weed Bulletin. The current bulletin, "*Weeds of Winter*," is a locally-tailored resource for acquainting land-owners on Whidbey with noxious weeds to be aware of and remove during this season. To view the bulletin, sign up to receive future Weed Bulletins, or view an archive of local weed resources, visit www.whidbeycd.org/publications.html. To learn more about other noxious weeds in our area, check out Island County's Noxious Weed List for 2017 at www.bit.ly/2o6XSy0.

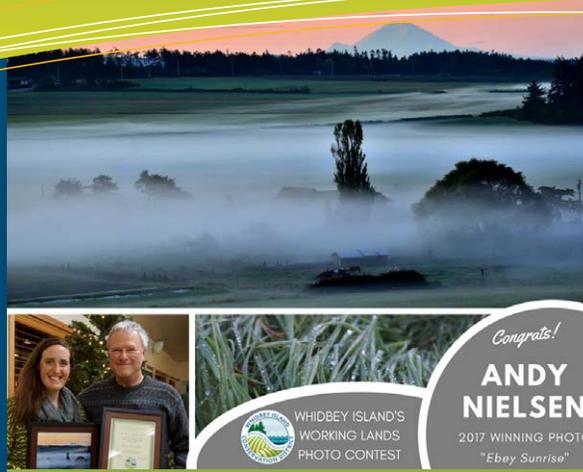


Photo Contest Winner

We are pleased to announce Andy Nielsen as the 2017 Working Lands Photo Contest winner with his photo, "Ebey Sunrise." Look for Andy's photo in our revised website homepage banner! Many thanks to all the great submissions, and to those who promoted the contest among friends and colleagues - and a special shout out to "The Oystercatcher" restaurant for their generous contribution toward the grand prize of a \$300 gift certificate. Congratulations, Andy!

Annual Native Bareroot Plant Pre-Sale Ends Soon There's still time to order, and we've added new selection categories.

Pre-sale ordering for our Native Plants ends midnight on Wednesday, January 31st! In response to requests, we've created new category pages on our **storefront** for site-specific goals like **drought tolerant**, **erosion control**, **hedgerow**, **forest edge**, **pollinators**, and **fire-resistant** species - note: fire-resistant doesn't mean fireproof. Water your plants well.

Several of our favorite bare-root species have just been discounted - \$10.25 for a bundle of five plants. (regularly \$11.25). This includes: **Mock Orange**, **Red Flowering Currant**, **Tall Oregon Grape**, and **Nootka Rose**. Our potted **Sand Strawberry** has been discounted to \$3 (regularly \$3.50). And we've restocked **Thimbleberry** and **Oceanspray** which

had been sold out. View the complete **storefront** at our website, and pre-order/purchase plants online! Phone orders can be taken by calling 360-678-4708 or by walk-in at our office, 1 NE 4th St., Coupeville. **Order now for pick up Saturday, February 24, 9am-1:30pm at Camp Casey, Coupeville.**

Also on February 24, additional rare native prairie species will be offered for sale by the Pacific Rim Institute. Plus WSU Extension's Waste Wise Program will be featuring a Plastic Garden Pot Exchange. Click on the image at right for more details.



WICD Recognizes Partners in Awards Ceremony

As part of WICD's 50th Anniversary Open House event on December 1st, Conservation District staff and board were honored to recognize specific partners who were selected as having played key roles in inspiring and implementing conservation practices throughout Whidbey Island that year. Congratulations to this year's recipients:

- **David Bauermeister**, NW Agriculture Business Center
- **Roy Zipp**, Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve
- **Michael Bakker**, Local Forest Landowner
- **Ed Hartin**, Central Whidbey Island Fire & Rescue District
- **David Way**, Washington Department of Natural Resources
- **Janet Hall**, Washington State Parks
- **Susie Richards**, Service Education Adventure
- **Bill Massey**, View Haven Angus
- **John & Miriam Burk**, Lazy Gate Farm
- **Ken Drecksel**, Whidbey Island Conservation District

WSU Forest Stewardship Coached Planning Classes on Whidbey

WSU Extension is offering a comprehensive forestry class for Whidbey Island property owners starting on March 6, 2018 at the Pacific Rim Institute south of Coupeville. Whether you have just a few acres of woods or a large forest tract, this 8-week class will equip you to prevent forest health problems and contribute to the beauty of Whidbey Island. As part of the class you'll prepare a personalized forest stewardship plan, which may enable qualifying landowners to apply for conservation cost-share grants and property tax reductions. To learn additional details and registration info, visit <http://forestry.wsu.edu/nps/events/cpwhidbey/> or contact Kelsey Ketcheson, Program Coordinator, at (206) 263-1128 or kelsey.ketcheson@wsu.edu.

"EQIP" Funding Application Cutoff

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program ("EQIP") is a voluntary program that provides financial and technical assistance to eligible agricultural producers to plan and implement conservation practices. Although applications are accepted year-round, the next cutoff date is March 16, 2018 for consideration for funding in fiscal year 2018. To learn more about EQIP opportunities, visit www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/wa/programs/financial/eqip/, or call the local USDA NRCS staff at (360) 428-7684.

Farm Conservation Planning WICD's Core Technical Assistance is Available to Whidbey's Landowners

Did you know that Whidbey Island Conservation District offers farm conservation planning assistance to Whidbey residents? Whether you're a newly arrived homesteader looking to explore livestock or crop options on your acreage, an established small or large farm operator, a backyard horse owner, or just curious to know more, we're here to help you. Contact us at (888) 678-4922 and ask to speak with one of our farm conservation planners. Read below for three helpful tips on learning about our farm planning services.

• **Our Farm Planning Services:** The "farm conservation plan" is a document developed in partnership between you – the farmer, rural property owner, or land manager – and your Conservation District staff. A farm plan's aim is to meet your goals while protecting water quality and natural resources. Farm size, soils type, slope of the land, proximity to water bodies, type of livestock or crops, and finances

available are some of the things considered in a farm plan.



Diagram courtesy of King Conservation District



Our farm conservation planners have a wide range of skills and expertise to share with you.

• **What goes into a farm plan design?** Farm planning starts with a site visit where a Conservation District farm planner listens to your farm goals and objectives, then walks the property with you to identify management challenges and natural resource concerns. The farm planner then recommends possible actions, such as rotational grazing, cover cropping, using manure as a fertilizer, targeted weed management, stream buffer planting, fencing, building a compost facility or establishing a heavy use paddock for livestock. You review the recommendations with the help of the planner and make the decisions for your farm plan.

• **The Farm plan is complete – now what?** The final farm plan is a voluntary commitment. Once you make your decisions, a tentative implementation schedule is set and the plan is documented. Revisions of the plan can be made as the goals and needs of the farm change. In some cases, a farm plan can open the door to benefits such as financial assistance for projects or eligibility for farm conservation tax reduction. Or it may assist farmers in meeting requirements of Island County land management codes, including the Critical Areas Ordinance.

Take a Tour of WICD's Website & Resource Packets

Each year, WICD staff assists hundreds of landowners throughout Whidbey Island with their natural resource questions. Over the years, staff has come to identify a handful of some extremely useful print and digital resources from a variety of sources, which stand out in their approachability and applicability to common natural resource questions we encounter.

In addition to providing these as printed handouts in our office and during site visits, our staff has worked to bundle these "top resources" into digital packets that you can easily access via our website.

While browsing the web, we encourage you to visit our [Farm Planning](#), [Firewise](#), [Forest Planning](#), [Backyard Conservation & Education](#), and

Water Resource Management

service pages to view and download these packets, which cover topics including:

- Intro to soils resources
- Native plant care & ideas
- Noxious weeds resources
- Farm & rural property stewardship resources
- Horse-related resources
- Firewise resources
- Forest stewardship resources

Farm Resource Highlight

Rural Property Owners Resource Packet

Our staff's top picked resources for rural property conservation - a great introduction to farm planning and other agricultural topics! Download your packet here

