



Conservation CONNECTION

WHIDBEY ISLAND CONSERVATION DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

ISSUE

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2020

WICD Election Results:

Gary Ketcheson Joins Our Board Starting in May

On February 4th, the district held our annual board supervisor election. We had four amazing candidates running for an open elected position. An enthusiastic turnout of voters elected Gary Ketcheson as the new board supervisor for a 3-year term. Retired from a 32-year career with land management agencies, Gary holds degrees in Resource Conservation and Forest



Hydrology, and is currently an active WSU Master Gardener. Gary's win still needs to

be confirmed by the Washington State Conservation Commission during their annual meeting in May, at which time Gary can join the board. Congrats to Gary, and thank you to everyone in the Whidbey community who participated!

Appointed Position

In addition to the elected Board position, there is one appointed position expiring on May 1, 2020 as well. **The deadline to apply is March 31, 2020.** Complete information on how to file as an appointed candidate is available to review and download at: www.scc.wa.gov/elections/



WICD staff Kelsi Mottet (left) and Gwendolyn Hannam (right) recently completed the NRCS Conservation Planning Course - preparing them to provide farm & livestock assistance which meets NRCS standards.

WICD Staff Expands Its Expertise and Capability

WICD Natural Resource Planners Kelsi Mottet and Gwendolyn Hannam participated in an in-depth "Introduction to Conservation Planning Course" this past fall provided in partnership between the Washington State Conservation Commission's Center for Technical Development and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. As part of the course, over 30 planners representing local, state, federal, and non-profit entities throughout Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Utah came together for a week-long course in Pullman to learn about the NRCS nation-wide conservation planning process. Planners were then required to go back to their respective regions and identify real-time clients they would work with on a farm conservation plan to NRCS standards.

After multiple months of work and review, Gwendolyn and Kelsi received notice from the NRCS that their farm



Weeds of Spring 2020: The Bio Control Issue!

Did you know weed management can include using living organisms?

Our Spring Weed Bulletin features specific insects that can be released to a targeted weed-infested area, allowing the agent to attack the weeds. Click [HERE](#) to learn more.

Our seasonally-themed bulletins are a partnership between WICD and Island County's Department of Natural Resources. They highlight the most important noxious weeds for landowners to look out for that season. To view the current bulletin or view an archive of local weed resources, visit whidbeycd.org/weed-bulletin. View the complete list of Island County's Noxious Weeds for 2020 at <https://bit.ly/2UH1u4q>.

plans met the standards, thus successfully completing the course! They join existing WICD Farm Planner Erin Borden in delivering assistance to farmers, small acreage landowners, livestock owners, and anyone interested in establishing conservation practices on their property. **Our services are free, and remember – we don't regulate or report. We are here to support YOU!**

Learn more about the "Benefits of a Farm Plan" and "How to Be a Conservation Partner" by clicking each of the images at right.



Your Health is Important To Us!



Whidbey Island Conservation District is monitoring the evolving coronavirus (COVID-19) situation and taking the recommended precautions to keep everyone healthy. We will keep our event pages up-to-date with cancellation or rescheduling information. If you are scheduled for a site visit

or classroom lessons, we'll contact you directly if there's a change in the original schedule, or feel free to call us to reschedule.

Our staff is working from home and is available over email and phone for technical assistance and resources, so please continue to contact us with your conservation questions.

Thank you for working with WICD. Stay healthy and safe out there!



Support Local Ag - Now More Than Ever

Small businesses on the island are hit hard by the mandatory closures due to COVID19. Our local farmers, producers, and restaurants are looking at new ways to bring their fresh and value-added products to customers. **Whidbey Island Grown** and **Northwest Ag Business Center** are organizing local producers to bring fresh, locally made food safely to customers. The products will be aggregated at drop sites around the island, packaged for customer orders, and delivered to pick-up locations where customers can pick up their orders according to safe social distancing practices. If you have products you'd like to offer through the Whidbey island Grown fresh sheet, contact foodhub@whidbeyislandgrown.org or click [HERE](#) to read how you can engage with the cooperative.

Nature is Still Open For Business

Are you and your family feeling stuck inside? Our friends at Thurston Conservation District have put together some outdoor activities to encourage everyone to get some fresh air and learn a little about your local watershed in the process. How about a Bird and Plant Safari or Garden Design Project? Click [HERE](#) to learn more.



www.whidbeycd.org

Plant Sale Recap

The District held its annual Bare Root Native Plant Sale and pre-order pickup on Feb. 29 at Greenbank Farm. The online pre-sale from Nov - Jan was our best yet - orders were up 22% over last year!

Many thanks to the 75 dedicated volunteers who helped us set up and pack over 300 orders - and to our community for coming out to support the sale. We'll have 15,000 more native plants on Whidbey Island because of our sale, and that's a big accomplishment benefiting us all and making our island ecosystem stronger.

Don't miss plant sale updates! Sign up [HERE](#) to receive the first notifications of our presale in November. Or visit whidbeycd.org/native-plants.

Forestry Highlight



Forest landowner Tim Keohane prepares to plant conifer seedlings.

WICD's focus on partnering with Whidbey landowners to support good forest stewardship was featured in a recent

"Make A Difference Column" in the Whidbey Weekly newspaper. February's article featured local forest landowners Tim and Paula Keohane, who shared valuable insight into the challenges and opportunities of active stewardship of their woods in central Whidbey. Read up on this story at <https://bit.ly/2QHizu1> and be sure to check out past "Make A Difference Column" articles at whidbeycd.org/make-a-difference-column/.



Pollinator Pal Winners - Take the Pledge!

In partnership with the Xerces Society, the WICD created a Pollinator Pal Pledge, where island residents can pledge to support pollinators in their yards and gardens by planting native plants, creating habitat, and minimizing spraying. All pledges were entered in a drawing, and our three winners (below) received Pollinator Habitat yard signs from the [Xerces Society](#). Do you want to become a Pollinator Pal? Learn how to promote pollinators and take the pledge at whidbeycd.org/pollinator-pledge.



Our Partnerships in Action - The district participates in many events, workshops, and educational opportunities each year. We are your boots on the ground to create Better Ground and we do that by reaching out to you!

- ✓ **Sound Water University** - A great day of learning about all things Puget Sound, held every February at South Whidbey High School. Professionals, including WICD, and community members share information through displays and over 60 classes. <https://soundwaterstewards.org/sw/>
- ✓ **Women in Ag Conference** - WSU Extension's all day workshop that brings local women in farming and ag support together for learning and connecting. WICD facilitated this year's theme of "Healthy Farms," and discussed strategies for everything from stress relief to annual planning. Learn more about Women in Ag [HERE](#).
- ✓ **Conservation in the schools** - Love for nature and conservation starts early, so WICD staff provided an after-school enrichment class about Orcas and Water to Broadview Elementary students. WICD is available to bring conservation education to schools, daycares, girl or boy scout troops, garden clubs, volunteer groups, etc. Contact us if you'd like to develop a class together. (888) 678-4922 or shannon@whidbeycd.org.
- ✓ **Homeowner's Association support** - WICD staff provided support to multiple HOAs on community wildfire preparation, homeowner conservation tips, and native plant landscaping. Would your HOA or neighborhood benefit from our conservation services, regarding landscape planning, water and drainage issues, or wildfire preparedness? Contact us with your projects and questions! shannon@whidbeycd.org

Keep An Eye On These Upcoming Spring Events!

Due to the recent world events regarding the COVID-19 emergency, our upcoming events are subject to cancellation. We will follow CDC and government policies regarding holding public events.



• **65th Annual Stewardship Week: Wed., April 22, 3-5 pm;** the field behind Living Hope Church (105 NW Broadway), - carpool if you can! Join WICD and the Town of Coupeville to plant 50 trees in the town-owned field behind Living Hope Church, starting the process of extending the forest and reducing the field, which will reduce mowing needs and save time and gas. We will also be mulching and fencing the tree saplings to protect them from deer. Advance sign-up appreciated [HERE](#).

• **65th Annual Stewardship Week: April 26 - May 3;** Sponsored by the National Association of Conservation Districts, themed "Where Would We Bee Without Pollinators?" Events include a poster contest for school children and the installation of several pollinator gardens at Whidbey elementary schools. Stewardship Week is a great opportunity to take a stewardship action in your yard, forest, or community. Come up with your own Stewardship Week event and contact WICD for support or visit our website: Whidbeycd.org/backyards-habitat.



• **Wildfire Community Preparedness Day: Sat., May 2;** WICD joins wildfire preparedness work parties in three Firewise Communities on Whidbey. This is a day where communities across the U.S. come together to work on projects that make their homes and neighborhoods safer from wildfire. Interested in hosting a work party in your neighborhood? Contact us or visit our website: Whidbeycd.org/firewise.

