



Five-Year Plan (July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2027)

Whidbey Island Conservation District

For more information, contact: Executive Director Heather McCoy, (360) 678-4708, heather@whidbeycd.org

The Whidbey Island Conservation District (WICD) was organized on June 21, 1967 as a political subdivision of Washington State, operating under the authorities, powers, and structure contained in RCW 89.08. The District serves Whidbey Island and is governed by a five-member Board of Supervisors composed of three elected positions and two positions appointed by the Washington State Conservation Commission (WSCC).

Mission

To promote natural resource stewardship and resilient ecosystems for present and future generations.

Vision

A valued community partner and resource for a sustainable Whidbey Island through practical, science-based solutions to challenges to clean air, water, and healthy soils.

Values

Trustworthiness: We earn public confidence through integrity, accountability, transparency, prudence, and extraordinary service. We value the trust of our community and take great responsibility in our use of public funds.

Strong, Equitable Partnerships: We show respect for all people. The success of our mission depends on collaborating with community members and listening to the ideas, needs and perspectives of others. Our community conserves natural resources most effectively when all stakeholders are engaged and welcomed.

Science-based Solutions: We value and promote best management practices based on sound conservation science and planning principles. We offer practical, on-the-ground solutions designed to meet each landowner's specific goals and needs, engaging them on their terms.

Voluntary Stewardship: We foster voluntary commitments to conservation. We are not a regulatory body and do not enforce compliance. We maintain objectivity and respect the privacy of all landowners.

Responsiveness: We provide technical and educational assistance to the public and respond to requests in a timely and courteous manner. If we cannot provide direct assistance, we strive to connect landowners with other resources to meet their needs.

The Conservation Planning Process

For all of our planning work, WICD uses the USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service's [Nine Step Conservation Planning Process](#), which takes a holistic ecosystem, or watershed, approach to managing natural resources. We focus on the natural systems and processes that sustain natural resources, such as soil, water, air, plant, and animals, while considering social, cultural, and economic perspectives.

Key Decision Makers

The landowners, land managers, and residents of Whidbey Island are key decision makers because their land management choices affect the condition of natural resources on a daily basis. The WICD Board of Supervisors is a key decision maker in how the District's resources are allocated. WICD is committed to working with our diverse group of partners and supporting organizations to help carry out the mission and goals of the District. Our service area, Whidbey Island, is within Island County, which is located in Congressional District 2 and WA Legislative District 10. Island County is governed by a three-member Board of County Commissioners.

Purpose of this Five-Year Plan

This long-range plan has been created to guide WICD in our priorities, activities, and initiatives for the next five years. The process of developing this new plan enabled us the collective opportunity to reflect on our organizational values, to document the perspectives of a diverse range of our stakeholders, and to craft our findings into a road map to guide us through our 2027 fiscal year. The following three institutional goals represent our strategic direction for the next five years. These goals are supported by specific objectives and bulleted tasks. With the strategic priorities outlined below, we will build on our past successes and rise to meet the community needs articulated to us through the planning process. Our long-range plan will direct our annual work plans for the next five years; these annual work plans will implement priority actions and track articulated metrics each year to together address the long-range plan's goals.

Five-Year Plan Goals, Objectives & Tasks

GOAL 1: Improve Sustainable Natural Resource Management Practices on and around Whidbey Island

Objective 1: Provide conservation planning and other technical assistance to empower clients to adopt positive conservation actions in the natural resource areas of soil, water, air, plants, and animals

- Empower landowners and managers to follow conservation planning techniques to more efficiently implement best management practices
- Develop a priority resource concern rubric that we apply across programmatic and fundraising activities
- Define a core program suite for technical assistance delivery to message externally and make internal priority decisions, including intake, feedback, and evaluation measures
- Organize and digitize client records into an accessible database for better, more comprehensive planning services

Objective 2: Identify financial assistance opportunities and guide landowners and managers in implementation of best natural resource and land-use management practices

- Educate and advocate for landowners in navigating financial assistance programs
- Build and provide a clearinghouse of financial assistance and management practice resources
- Develop a culturally responsive assistance model through evaluation and monitoring of implementation practices and collecting client feedback

Objective 3: Act as a key educational resource for on-the-ground natural resource and land-use management practices

- Empower land managers through service orientations, educational workshops, and other outreach tools
- Inventory and evaluate existing education and outreach tools and channels to improve operational synergy and institutional retention
- Create a community engagement strategy and evaluation model for new educational program development led by public need
- Develop curriculum for a coached conservation planning program
- Pilot then launch the coached conservation planning curriculum

GOAL 2: Strategically Develop and Engage in Strong, Mission-Aligned Partnerships

Objective 1: Improve our service delivery and reach by integrating and leveraging our partnerships

- Create criteria and protocols for evaluating existing and potential partnerships
- Track partner relationships as part of the new comprehensive database
- Develop a template Memorandum of Understanding for partnership agreements

Objective 2: Participate in partner committees addressing high priority natural resource concerns for broader collective impact

- Create criteria and protocols for evaluating existing and potential committee participation and set framework for District capacity
- Participate in prioritized committees based on qualifying criteria and staff capacity

- Lead and convene collective impact efforts aligned with priority rubric, leveraging District relationships

Objective 3: Collaborate on joint projects to address specific natural resource concerns on and around Whidbey Island

- Focus new project development and funding on projects aligned with determined criteria and protocols, that leverage prioritized partnerships
- Conduct environmental assessment and gap analysis of partner agency activities and skills to better define the District’s niche and identify need for future WICD programs

GOAL 3: Continue to Strengthen and Build Organizational Sustainability

Objective 1: Secure a strong financial foundation through targeted efforts to increase revenue opportunities

- Build a grant pipeline database and project management infrastructure
- Research feasibility of improved plant sale revenue generation, as well as new revenue streams
- Build an organizational branding and messaging strategy to improve public understanding of WICD services
- Create an action plan for a development program focused on individual and planned giving

Objective 2: Build Board capacity and expertise to ensure strong leadership and oversight, as well as cultivate donor relationships and potential organizational and agency partnerships

- Build a robust Board leadership program to include recruitment, onboarding, training, self-evaluation, and continuing education components
- Build Associate Supervisor program recruitment and engagement strategy to increase board diversity and inclusion
- Foster relationships between Board members and community leaders, partners, and stakeholders
- Improve election and appointment outreach capacity

Objective 3: Ensure staff, Board, and volunteers feel valued and are appropriately supported, nurtured, and compensated for their efforts

- Develop an institutional framework to define work culture and establish core competencies
- Strengthen personnel policies including updating WICD’s operations manual, formalizing job descriptions, developing onboarding procedures, and regularly reviewing compensation levels
- Integrate customized annual professional development plans and performance review process
- Build institutional knowledge and succession planning
- Increase staff capacity through hiring and training (e.g. development, planning, education)
- Broaden staff and volunteer recruitment strategies to help diversify candidates to reflect our island-wide community

Staffing Needs

To better meet the growing needs of our community, WICD plans to expand our staff team over the next five years. This will be done primarily through hiring additional planners, as well as a Development Manager to focus on grants and explore new fundraising/revenue opportunities.

Current Staff	FTE	Future Staffing Needs	FTE
Executive Director	1	Executive Director	1
Finance & Operations Manager	0.8	Finance & Operations Manager	1
Senior Natural Resource Planner	1	Senior Natural Resource Planner	2
Natural Resource Planner	1	Natural Resource Planner	2
Community Engagement Manager	0.8	Community Engagement Manager	1
		Development Manager	1
Total Current (as of April 2022)	4.6	Total by End of 2027	8

Criteria for Selecting Goals and Priorities

- Community Input
 - Documented research, reports, local knowledge, and data that identify specific conservation needs (see Natural Resource Data sources list below)
 - Long-term impacts and benefits
 - Funding availability and District capacity
 - Global, national, and local trends (e.g. climate issues, water quality and quantity issues)
 - Local ordinances
 - Opportunities to collaborate and leverage resources to achieve greater collective impact
-

Natural Resource Data & References

WICD relies on information, data, and the best available science from sources such as those listed below (direct links are underlined):

- [Natural Resources Conservation Service \(NRCS\) - Field Office Technical Guide \(FOTG\)](#)
- [USDA Web Soil Survey](#)
- [WSU AgWeathernet](#)
- [Island County Water Resources Management Plan including CARA \(Critical Aquifer Recharge Area\)](#)
- [Economic Development Council population information](#)
- [USDA Agricultural Census](#)
- [Farm Service Agency data](#)
- [Center for Sustaining Agriculture and Natural Resources](#)
- [Climate Impact Group](#)
- [Dept of Natural Resources \(WDNR\) stream typing maps](#)
- [Island County zoning & code](#)
- [Washington Administrative Code](#)
- [Island County Assessor parcel data](#)
- [Island County GIS](#)
- [Regional GIS data](#)
- [MRC – Sound IQ](#)
- [Puget Sound Partnership data resources and action agenda](#)
- [WA State Dept. of Archaeology and Historic Preservation \(DAHP\)](#)
- [Washington State Conservation Commission \(WSCC\)](#)
- [Dept. of Ecology \(ECY\)](#)
- [WA State Dept. of Health Shellfish Information](#)
- [Island County Data](#)
- [Priority Habitats and Species \(PHS\) - WDFW](#)
- [DNR Natural Heritage Species](#)
- Local and Regional surveys and data sets created by ourselves and partner entities
- Tribal information