Horse power!

WICD Celebrates 50 Years of Conservation Leadership

David Montgomery speaks at our celebratory Open House, December 1st

2018 WICD Annual Native Bareroot Plant Pre-Sale Opens Soon!

Mark your calendars for November 1st!

Want to be the first to hear about the Native Plant Sale opening, specials, and deals?

Sign up for the Native Plant Sale email list here.

Landowner Assistance For Maxwelton & Penn Cove - How Whidbey’s Watersheds Influence the Direction of Our Work

The natural boundaries throughout Whidbey Island define the shape of the land and flow of water, creating unique watersheds across the landscape. Some watersheds are closed basins where there is little or no surface flowing out of the watershed. However, watersheds such as Maxwelton, Ebey’s, and Penn Cove are some of Whidbey’s larger watersheds that drain into sensitive water bodies.

WICD plays a unique role working on a voluntary basis with land owners to ensure that the use of their private land is carried out in a way that protects sensitive water bodies downstream. We do this by developing individual relationships with landowners to provide education and technical help on land management practices, often referred to as Best Management Practices or BMP’s.

WICD is a separate entity from Island County with no regulatory authority. The District does, however, use water quality data collected from the County’s monitoring programs to determine the watersheds with water quality impairments. Generally, the County works on compliance with septic systems whereas the Conservation District provides technical support for agriculture, and residential stormwater management. WICD currently has targeted funding from the National Estuary Program to work with landowners in the Maxwelton and Penn Cove watersheds. Please contact WICD if you have property in either of these watersheds and you are interested in help from WICD staff.

Thank You for Another Successful Native Plant Sale!

Twelve weeks of online pre-order sales cumulated at the end of February with the distribution of nearly 10,000 native plants (mostly bare-root) to over 300 customers! Some of the favorite species this year included Western Red Cedar, Snowberry, and Salal. Here at WICD, we consider the planting of natives as one of the key foundations for good resource management. Mature native plants require less watering which equals less depletion of soil fertility. Better soil fertility minimizes the potential for invasive weeds to take hold and spread, thereby reducing the need for fertilizers and herbicides to manage these consequences.

So, thank you for planting those natives! And a special thank you to the 50 volunteers who helped us count, bundle, pack, and distribute the pre-orders. You rock!
Firewise Practices For Spring

Spring has arrived here on Whidbey. With the onslaught of showers and warmer temperatures comes new vegetative growth, which means a lot more fuel for a fire, should it occur. With more homes built in close proximity to forests, and fire suppression resources spread thin across our remote, rural island, it’s important that every homeowner on Whidbey be aware of the risk. Here are several Firewise practices you can incorporate into your spring-cleaning to prepare your Home Ignition Zone for success this summer:

- **Clean** debris build-up like dead leaves, needles, and moss from your roof and gutters.
- **Remove** any dead and dry fuels from under your decks and in crawl spaces around your home’s foundation.
- **Trim** landscaped vegetation “up,” “back,” and “away” from your home structure, especially those near windows.
- **Move** firewood at least 30 feet away from your home. If this isn’t possible, cover the pile with a canvas tarp or bring it inside during the summer months so it won’t be a source of potentially ignitable coarse fuel.
- **Schedule** a free, 30-minute Firewise Assessment at www.whidbeycd.org/firewise-home-assessment.html
- **Request** a Firewise Communities presentation at your next HOA meeting. Contact Kelsi at (888) 678-4922.

WICD Staff Are Here for You and Your Forest

Our Technical Forest Planning Services are Free to Whidbey Residents

With a state whose land area covers 43 million acres, and 22 million of which are forested, it’s no wonder that Washington state is home to over 250,000 small forest landowners. If you are the proud owner of forestland, an important component of forest ownership is the opportunity to become a steward of your land through active management. Forest ecosystems provide many important benefits to both their owners and the greater ecosystem. Carbon storage, water and air purification, nutrient cycling, wildlife habitat, not to mention recreation and goods like timber, fuel, and bioproducts, are just some assets that forests provide. Forest management is on a spectrum. You have a whole host of ways in which you can steward your land. Maybe you’re someone who prefers to “let your trees be,” or perhaps you’d like to manage them for a combination of aesthetics, wildlife habitat, and timber. Depending on your goals, one thing all forest owners should do is get to know their forests. How can you do that? Walk your forestland, walk it often. Observe it throughout the seasons. Note the soils that lie beneath it. Note-taking is your friend. What trees and other vegetation do you see? Dead or downed wood? Past land use patterns? Wildlife? Here at Whidbey Island Conservation District, our planning staff are here to assist you in forest stewardship.

Whidbey Island Conservation District Brings Together Partners for Monthly “Make a Difference”

Have you picked up a copy of the Whidbey Weekly recently? If you have, and you’ve noticed those sun rays extending out over planet earth, you’ve most likely read a recent edition of the “Make a Difference” column. Originally a partnership solely between Whidbey Island Conservation District staff writers and Whidbey Weekly, the column has expanded its “writership” in 2018 to link together natural resource conservation information, expertise, and resources for public benefit from additional organizations including WSU Extension Farms & Food Systems, Waste Wise, and Forestry, Island County Department of Natural Resource’s Noxious Weeds and Shore Friendly Programs, and Whidbey Camano Land Trust. The “Make a Difference” column is regularly featured in either the third or last Thursday edition of Whidbey Weekly each month and columnists from the above organizations are featured. “Make a Difference” has a mission to inspire voluntary conservation actions for those from all walks of life through the lens of “how YOU can make a difference.” Keep your eye out for March’s article coming soon. For access to past articles, visit www.whidbeycd.org/publications.