



Conservation CONNECTION

WHIDBEY ISLAND CONSERVATION DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

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Sarah Richards Re-elected



WICD Board incumbent Sarah Richards was re-elected in February to serve another term as a Whidbey Island Conservation District Supervisor. Besides her duties as Vice-Chair of the WICD Board, Sarah is also busy serving at the state level as Western WA Area Director for the WA Association of Conservation Districts. Thank you, Sarah, for your involvement!

A board of five Supervisors, three elected and two appointed, direct the programs and policies of WICD - each serving a 3-year term without compensation. Elections are held annually between January and March. A WICD appointed position is also up for renewal. Applications must be submitted by March 31. For submission and eligibility info, visit www.scc.wa.gov/elections/.



Like much of the waters surrounding Whidbey Island, Penn Cove is directly effected by the activities happening within the watershed that drains here.



Weeds of Spring 2018 Now Available

These seasonally-themed bulletins are a partnership between WICD and Island County's Department of Natural Resources. 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. View the complete list of Island County's Noxious Weeds for 2018 at <http://bit.ly/2I18V19>.

Landowner Assistance For Maxwellton & 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 Maxwellton, 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 Maxwellton 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.



WICD volunteers and staff had fun helping the throngs of shoppers and customers picking up their pre-orders on Open Sale Day at Camp Casey!



Thank You for Another Successful Native Plant Sale!

Twelve weeks of online pre-order sales culminated 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!**

Visit our Homepage at: www.whidbeycd.org

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.

Our forest conservation planners provide free, non-regulatory and no obligation technical forest planning services.



Through one-on-one mentoring, we work with you to develop a forest management plan that:

- Contributes to a deepened understanding of your forest conditions;
- Provides you with recommendations on future management needs & opportunities;
- Develops a timeline - or guide - for which forest management activities are scheduled;
- Provides you with additional reference materials, resources, and contacts that will help you carry out in accomplishing your goals and objectives.

In addition to their direct expertise, conservation district staff can also provide guidance on a number of cost-share programs and tax benefit programs for which forest landowners may qualify. We are your advocates! Whidbey Island Conservation District is locally based, and its services are available for free to Whidbey residents on a voluntary, non-regulatory basis. To learn more, visit www.whidbeycd.org/forest-planning.html, or contact us at (888) 678-4922.

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.

