



# Conservation CONNECTION

WHIDBEY ISLAND CONSERVATION DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

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## When It Comes to Conservation Resources, We Have You Covered

WICD's connection to the island community runs deep - 50 years and counting, in fact. With a modest staff of six - 2 full-time and 4 part-time - our WICD team loves to work with land-owners on farm planning, forest planning, water resource management, backyard & habitat conservation, bluff & shoreline resources, local agriculture outreach, beginning and transitioning farmer outreach, soils, noxious weeds, native plants, and more - and sometimes all in the course of one day! Not only do we provide one-on-one technical assistance and educational programming throughout the year, we've also compiled some of the top resources into bite-sized "Conservation Resource

Packets" which are available at our office, or can be downloaded from the WICD website. Curious to know more about our programs?

Visit [whidbeycd.org](http://whidbeycd.org) or download WICD's updated Guide to District Services brochure at [www.bit.ly/2J0yhOp](http://www.bit.ly/2J0yhOp).



Sierra Country Club's Firewise Committee led an informative and action-packed Firewise Day that removed 1,380 lbs. of brush and fuels from community property.

## WICD Plan of Work & Budget Approved

After a public comment period May 5 - 21, the WICD board of supervisors approved the fiscal year 2019 Annual Plan of Work and Budget at their May board meeting, Wednesday, May 23. The approved plan of work and budget are available for download on the WICD homepage, or you can view the approved plan directly at [www.bit.ly/2J5aD2Y](http://www.bit.ly/2J5aD2Y).



## Sierra Country Club is first nationally-recognized Whidbey Island Firewise Community



WICD is proud to recognize the efforts of the Sierra Country Club for its wildfire preparedness and education. Under the leadership of the Sierra Country Club Firewise Committee and HOA Board Members, this community has completed a Community-Wide Wildfire Assessment, held over five Firewise-focused educational events, utilized numerous methods for distributing Firewise information, incorporated a "reflective house number sign" program to promote ease in access to emergency response at night, and 25 + community members have taken advantage of the Whidbey Island Firewise's free 30-minute Firewise Home Assessment consultation to learn what they can do to be better prepared for wildfire on their property.

Recently, on Saturday, May 5 - during the national Wildfire Community Preparedness Day - over 30 Sierra community members contributed an estimated 60 hours of volunteer time during their annual Sierra Community Clean-Up event. During this time, community members learned about tree and brush pruning techniques from staff at Whidbey Island Conservation District and the WA Dept. of Natural Resources (WA DNR), and removed 1,380 lbs. of potentially ignitable fuels from trees and shrubs on

the community property. As of May 29, the National Fire Protection Association recognized Sierra Country Club as Whidbey's first nationally-recognized Firewise Community. Way to set the standard, Sierra Country Club!

Are you interested in using Firewise practices on your property or in your community? Whidbey Island Firewise is a service available free to all Whidbey Island neighborhoods and property owners, offered by the Whidbey Island Conservation District in partnership with WA State Conservation Commission,

WA DNR, North Whidbey Fire and Rescue, Central Whidbey Island Fire & Rescue, and South Whidbey Fire/EMS. Visit [www.whidbeycd.org/firewise/](http://www.whidbeycd.org/firewise/) to learn more and give Kelsi Mottet, (888) 678-4922, to request an assessment on your property or a presentation at your next community meeting.



Did you know? WICD offers free **Firewise Home Assessments** in conjunction with local fire department's interior home safety surveys.

Visit our Homepage at: [www.whidbeycd.org](http://www.whidbeycd.org)

## WICD Staff Highlight Meet Matt Zupich

Staff Here At the District  
Are Local, Just Like You!



Matt installs a staff gage to measure tide elevations at Greenbank Beach, early May 2018.

### • Where are you from and how long have you been on Whidbey?

I'm originally from Western Pennsylvania. After leaving home I lived in North Carolina, Ohio, Minnesota, Idaho, Oregon, and Eastern WA. I moved to Whidbey with my wife, Kelly, in 2007. We enjoy living in Coupeville with our two dogs and two goats!

### • What aspects of working in the resource conservation field inspire you most?

My primary inspiration for working in this field comes from a lifelong love of the outdoors and deep appreciation for nature. Most of my youth was spent outside climbing trees, playing with bugs, sticks, and rocks, or fishing and hunting with my Dad. So, at work, I'm encouraged by people and practices that utilize natural processes and functions as an asset rather than a problem. I'm also highly motivated by people working cooperatively to address natural resource issues and build long-term partnerships.

### • What is something – anything – you'd like to learn more about?

Personally – how to play guitar; professionally – advanced GIS analysis.

# Water Resource Management Encourages Us to “Think Like a Watershed”

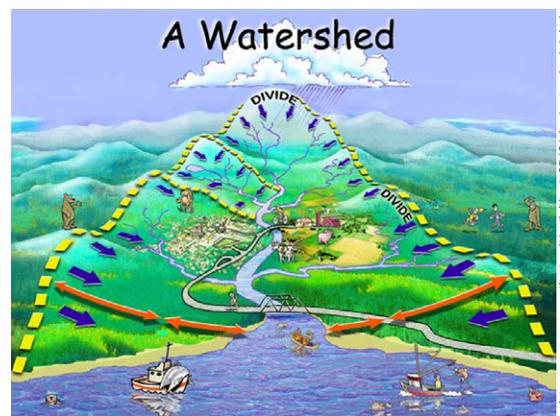
## An Excerpt from WICD's Recent Whidbey Weekly “Make a Difference” Article Will Get You Thinking

Although our minds are heading steadily into summer, here at Whidbey Island Conservation District, we reflect on the lessons of the wet “shoulder seasons” just passed. During these times, staff from WICD have the opportunity to listen and learn from, as well as share ideas with landowners on how to address water's movement on properties using our Water Resource Management technical assistance program. Wet yards and pastureland, flooded crawlspaces, water surfacing in areas one may not think of – sound familiar? WICD's goal in all this is simple – to empower landowners to find solutions which advance their “property hopes and dreams” while addressing and assessing the natural processes at play, so that the long-term conservation of the land contributes to the long-term happiness of the landowner.

As one of our most valuable resources here on Whidbey Island, water's role is more often of benefit than it is of hindrance to us. But when water unexpectedly stands between you and your property aspirations, we agree it can be a hard pill to swallow. However, during those times, it is good to remember that living on an island presents us with unique challenges and thus, unique opportunities to address those challenges – opportunities to learn and grow together in tandem with the land we so value. On Whidbey, let's “think like a watershed.”

What does it mean to “think like a watershed”? Perhaps you've heard a similar term before – to “think like a mountain.” This was a term coined in 1949 by Aldo Leopold, one of the conservation “greats” of his era and author of *A Sandy County Almanac*. In essence, to “think like a watershed” means to cultivate our awareness to the interconnectedness our lives have with the land we own and encourages us to step up and be stewards when challenges arise. This concept, however, wasn't the first of its kind. Nearly a century prior, author John Muir exclaimed, in his 1869 *My First Summer in the Sierras* – “When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe.”

To read the full article and learn more ideas for coming together with your neighbors to address landscape-scale stormwater issues and how WICD can assist in this process, pick up the May 24th edition of the Whidbey Weekly or view online directly at [www.bit.ly/2LJNstJ](http://www.bit.ly/2LJNstJ).



## Messages from Our Conservation Partners

### Support Local Farmers - Looking for a source of fresh, locally grown produce and farm products?

• Tilth Alliance 2018 “Puget Sound Fresh” Farm Guide now available.

[www.pugetsoundfresh.org/](http://www.pugetsoundfresh.org/)

• Check out the Whidbey Island Grown Brand website for local products and partners.

[www.whidbeyislandgrown.com](http://www.whidbeyislandgrown.com)

• Goosefoot's new Farm Stand, Farm Store, CSA, and Market Directory is available for the 2018 season.

[www.bit.ly/2xvbDZF](http://www.bit.ly/2xvbDZF)

### Regional & Local Conservation News

• Island County Planning Commission Rural Lands Regulations discussion continues on Mon., June 11 at 2:00 p.m., Is Co Commissioners Hearing Rm, 1 NE 6th St. Coupeville, WA.

[www.bit.ly/2IJ1RnT](http://www.bit.ly/2IJ1RnT)

• Island County Public Works released A web application landowners can use to report noxious weeds, downed trees, etc. (360) 679-7331

[www.bit.ly/2s7bUwH](http://www.bit.ly/2s7bUwH)

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=ec11r9xSoUc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ec11r9xSoUc)

• Island Transit getting “Greener” as bus fleet switches to biodiesel fuel blend in early May. (360) 678-7771

[www.bit.ly/2LaCsEP](http://www.bit.ly/2LaCsEP)