



Conservation CONNECTION

WHIDBEY ISLAND CONSERVATION DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

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WICD is NW District of the Year!

WICD was recently selected as Washington State Conservation Commission's (WSCC) 2016 Northwest Region District of the Year!

Of the 12 districts in the region, WICD was recognized for its leadership role in a collaborative effort with the Natural Resource Conservation Service and San Juan Island Conservation District to complete an extensive drought research project. Also noted was District Manager Karen Bishop's role as President of the Washington Association of District Employees, as well as Board Supervisor Sarah Richards' input to the WSCC Communications and Partnership Building Committee.



Photo courtesy of Shana Kay
Accepting the award l-r, WICD Supervisors Sarah Richards, Ed Adams, Tom Fournier, District Manager Karen Bishop



Douglas Spirea is readily identified by its spiky pink flower clusters in summer and stalks of brown seed clusters that persist through winter.

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Visit our website at www.whidbeycd.org

WICD Annual Native Bareroot Plant Pre-Sale Begins! **Easy online ordering . . . and our popular plant packages return!**

This year our **storefront** has 28 species of natives and a collection of 8 **plant packages**! Our plant packages offer a group of plants pre-selected to address a specific landscape goal or condition. We have packages for bluff stabilization, pollination, wet and dry sites, attracting birds, and more. The **Plant Sale Storefront** has expanded descriptions and pictures of all the plants offered. We're also offering plant **protector tubes**. It's time to **shop!**

Native plants improve water quality, reduce soil and wind erosion, clean the air, reduce energy costs, help protect homes from wildfire, attract and support local wildlife, and beautify property.

In addition, plant sale revenues contribute to our programs — including free farm and forest planning and best practice assistance, engineering services,

storm water management, cost share and tax incentive program guidance, and educational workshops on a variety of local resource conservation topics.

How do I order my bareroot plants?

Ordering your plants and purchasing by credit card is easy at our website: www.whidbeycd.org.

Phone orders can be taken by calling 360-678-4708, or by walk-in at our office at 1 NE 4th St., Coupeville. Order now for pick up Saturday, February 25 at **Camp Casey conference Center (Auditorium A)** in Coupeville. Perfect for early spring planting.

Order early and receive a discount!

Now through December 4th, all plant orders over \$75 are eligible for a 10% discount. Use code EARLY10 at checkout and save!

Help guide WICD's future work: Take our 3-question survey until December 7 to share your ideas!

WICD began its six month long-range planning process earlier this month, which will span until April 2017.

Led by two experienced Washington State Conservation Commission staff with input from the public, partners, staff, and board supervisors, long-range planning helps conservation districts identify broad goals and outcomes, and focuses on a vision for future work. On November 9 and 10, three community meetings were held at the Coupeville, Oak Harbor, and Freeland Libraries.

Interested in sharing your ideas? Help guide WICD's future work by taking this 3-question, 3-minute survey at www.surveymonkey.com/r/WICDlongrangeplan. You can also call us at (888) 678-4922, submit your comments via WICD's **contact form**, or email us at wicd@whidbeycd.org. We look forward to hearing from you.



Photo courtesy of Kelsi Franzen
Natural Resource Planner Matt Zupich shares information about Whidbey Island's natural resources to the audience at the November 10th Freeland Library community meeting.

WICD welcomes new staff this fall



Photo courtesy of Sandy Welsh

Kelsi Franzen and Matt Zupich are WICD's new staff hired this fall.

This fall, WICD is joined by two new staff members, a Natural Resource Planner and a Marketing, Education and Outreach Coordinator, who collectively bring 18 years of experience to the District's team. To learn more about new staff members Matt Zupich and Kelsi Franzen, check out their bios on our WICD website [Staff Page](#).

"Weeds of Winter" Bulletin coming soon



Photo courtesy of WSU King County

Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*) is a Class C Noxious Weed in Island County.

In an effort to provide information to landowners about controlling noxious, non-native plants that are highly destructive, competitive, and difficult to control, WICD partners with the Island County Noxious Weed Control Board to feature a monthly Weed Bulletin. The Weed Bulletin is returning this winter with a feature focused on "Weeds of Winter." Interested in past issues of the Weed Bulletin, or would like to sign up for future issues? Visit the [Weed Bulletin page](#) at WICD's website for more information.

Firewise: WICD, CWIFR, and WA DNR team together to offer Firewise Pilot Program in central Whidbey

On Whidbey Island, we are entering the wettest part of the year. Perhaps it seems an unlikely time to talk about wildfire, often reserved for the summer dry season or its effects in eastern Washington. But, as WICD District Manager Karen Bishop found out last fall when working with landowners affected by the 2015 fires in areas serviced by Okanogan Conservation District, there is no better time than the present to increase homeowner awareness and preparedness to wildfire risk, even on Whidbey Island. This year, WICD received a Washington State Conservation Commission grant to promote the [Firewise Communities/USA Program](#), in partnership with Central Whidbey Island Fire and Rescue District (CWIFR) and Washington Department of Natural Resources (WA DNR). Outreach to communities on the westerly side of central Whidbey will mark the start of this pilot program beginning this fall. Stay tuned!



Photo courtesy of WSOC

Wildfire in Eastern Washington, but . . . Wildfire on Whidbey – Are we ready?

AgWeatherNet: Current and historic weather data is a click away



Photo courtesy of AgWeatherNet

Two weather stations exist on Whidbey as part of WSU AgWeatherNet, located on private property. This is the Coupeville weather station.

WSU Extension's AgWeatherNet is a service to farmers and gardeners alike. You can download the free Mobile phone app or visit <http://www.weather.wsu.edu/>. WSU AgWeatherNet provides access to current and historical weather data from Washington State University's automated weather station network, along with a range of models, decision aids, alerts, and advisories. With just the click of a button, you have access to two weather stations in Langley and Coupeville. Raw data for air temperature, wind speed, solar radiation, dew point, precipitation accumulation, leaf wetness, 8" soil temperature, and relative humidity is accessible every 15 minutes. Dr. Gary

Grove, WSU AgWeatherNet's Director, welcomes questions or comments about the AgWeatherNet's use on Whidbey Island, and how to make it more readily accessible to residents. He can be reached at grove@wsu.edu.

WICD works with partners to promote Whidbey as an authentic culinary destination in 2017

WICD is currently working with farmers, farm product users, and support organizations to implement a collaborative marketing effort that will promote Whidbey Island as an authentic culinary destination to off-island tourists and local residents in 2017, as well as to revitalize the Whidbey Island Grown Brand. A Whidbey Farm-to-Table Forum is set as the kick-off event this January, and a print and virtual marketing piece will be designed, along with encouragement of farmers to host on-farm events as part of this effort in 2017. The Island County Lodging Tax Advisory Committee 2% Tourism Grant Program awarded a \$3,500 grant to WICD to support these efforts. Current partners include an expanding list of area farmers, farm product users, staff from Northwest Agriculture Business Center, Goosefoot, Slow Food Whidbey Island, WSU Extension Island County, Whidbey & Camano Island Tourism, and South Whidbey Tilth. More partners are expected and welcome to join.

