



FY2020 (7/1/19 – 6/30/20) Annual Work Plan Whidbey Island Conservation District (WICD)

For More Information Contact:

Matt Zupich, District Manager

matt@whidbeycd.org 360-678-4708

www.whidbeycd.org

Mission of the Whidbey Island Conservation District

The mission of the Whidbey Island Conservation District is to assist the management of natural resources on and around Whidbey Island for present and future generations, inspiring voluntary conservation practices.

This Annual Plan is divided into two sections – “Natural Resource Priorities” and “District Operations Priorities.”

Part I Natural Resource Priorities (in order of priority based on public feedback and WICD Board-approved 2016-2021 Work Plan)

- Water quality and quantity
- Soil health, preservation, and retention
- Economic and environmental sustainability of Whidbey Island land uses
- Shoreline resources and marine life habitat
- Human willingness to invest in conservation
- Land use
- Wildlife habitat, rural and urban
- Energy (i.e. conservation, alternative generation resources)
- Air quality

Priority Geographic Areas: All of Whidbey Island.

Natural Resource Program Goals and Actions:

1. In cooperation with Island County’s surface water quality and ground water monitoring programs, assist landowners and land managers to meet their water quality and quantity goals.
2. Provide conservation technical assistance and conservation planning upon request.
3. Identify conservation cost-share opportunities and assist with practice implementation.
4. Follow-up on practice implementation and operation & maintenance.
5. Provide technical assistance to partners coordinating complex projects impacting natural resources.
6. Participate in planning processes with partners to achieve economic and environmental sustainability of Whidbey Island land uses.
7. Collaborate with partners on marketing and policy strategies to preserve the viability of working lands.
8. Promote natural resource conservation.
9. Provide adult and youth natural resource education.

Measurable Objectives: Improve water quality in two priority watersheds; achieve conservation planning, technical assistance, cost share, and outreach & education goals.

Existing & Potential Funding Source(s) (in no particular order): *Island County (IC) Assessment/Rates and Charges, WA State Conservation Commission (WSCC), WA Association of Conservation Districts (WACD), Ntl. Assoc. of Conservation Districts (NACD), Washington Conservation Society (WCS), Puget Sound Conservation Districts (PSCD), Island Local Integrating Organization (ILIO), Island County government, WA Dept. of Ecology (ECY), Puget Sound Partnership (PSP), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), United States Dept. of Agriculture (USDA), Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and other USDA agencies, National Park Service (NPS) the Whidbey Camano Land Trust (WCLT), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Towns and Cities, Tribes, Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO).*

Natural Resource Program Goals and Actions for FY20

- 1. In cooperation with Island County's surface water quality and ground water monitoring programs, assist landowners and land managers to meet their water quality and quantity goals.**
 - a. Utilize current, local water quality data to focus and prioritize technical assistance efforts.
 - b. Maintain WICD's non-regulatory technical assistance role to assist landowners.
 - c. Develop a system to evaluate WICD services through an online/print survey tool, administered by staff.
- 2. Provide conservation technical assistance and conservation planning upon request.**
 - a. Improve TA priority ranking system and develop strategy for helping cooperators with low priority ranking.
 - b. Assist at least 25 clients with agricultural-related inquiries:
 - a. Provide at least 10 site visits and BMP recommendations using NRCS planning process.
 - b. Complete at least 5 farm plans, including NRCS RMS and CNMP plans as needed.
 - c. Assist at least 25 clients with forest stewardship-related inquiries:
 - a. Provide at least 10 site visits and BMP/forest management recommendations, including forest plan implementation and compliance with designated forest tax program.
 - b. Complete at least 10 forest management plans.
 - d. Assist at least 25 clients with Firewise-related inquiries
 - a. Provide at least 10 Firewise Home Assessments and offer BMP recommendations using the National Fire Protection Association's process.
 - e. Assist at least 30 clients with residential conservation-related inquiries including, but not limited to, water resource management, backyard habitat conservation, bluff & shoreline management, native plant conservation
 - a. Provide at least 10 site visits and offer BMP recommendations
 - f. Hold a Native Plant Sale, integrating TA and outreach events with sale of plants.
- 3. Identify conservation cost share opportunities and assist with practice implementation.**
 - a. Assist at least 4 landowners to develop, engineer, and implement cost share projects, ranked in priority by the WICD board, using WSCC cost share funding.
 - b. Provide outreach to land and home owners informing them of NRCS, ECY, and other USDA cost share funding programs, including environmental, energy, and value-added product development opportunities.
- 4. Follow-up on conservation practice implementation and operation & maintenance.**
 - a. Develop a strategy to collect conservation implementation data on non-cost-share practices
 - b. Refine client cooperator databases using available technology with a goal to increase data management efficiency, informing & collaborating with PSCD & other WSCC databases.
 - c. Assemble, review, and report conservation practice data annually
 - d. Utilize GIS to visually map areas of WICD action.
- 5. Provide technical assistance to partners coordinating complex projects impacting natural resources.**
 - a. Work with local jurisdictions and NGOs as technical advisors for priority projects.
 - b. Projects in progress include:
 1. Greenbank Marsh Restoration
 2. Maxwellton Creek Alliance
 3. Lone Lake Algae Management Plan
 4. Penn Cove Watershed Near Term Action (NTA)
 5. North Whidbey NTA (submitted, not yet funded).
 6. Stormwater Outreach and Technical Assistance Network NTA (submitted, not yet funded).
 - c. Develop a 1- to 2-page report about the Ebey's Landing project.
 - d. Consider other projects as needs arise.

6. Participate in planning processes with partners to achieve economic and environmental sustainability of Whidbey Island land uses.

- a. Bring respected, science-based recommendations to governing bodies when decisions are made affecting resource land regulations.
 - 1. Assist local jurisdictions as a technical advisor on conservation related topics
- b. Continue staff training to understand local, state, and federal regulations to assist landowners.
- c. Represent landowner perspective as a member of local groups, prioritizing projects for funding opportunities including but not limited to: ILIO, Salmon Recovery Technical and Citizen Committee (SRTCC), PSCD, NRCS Local Work Group, Island County Marine Resources Committee, etc.
- d. Participate in state and national policy development efforts when needed through PSCD, WACD, WSCC, NACD, and others.

7. Collaborate with partners on outreach and policy strategies to preserve the viability of working lands.

- a. Facilitate the development of diverse partnerships to collaborate on effective agricultural marketing and experiences to on- and off-island populations.
 - 1. Coordinate monthly Whidbey Island Growers Association (WIGA) meetings providing educational opportunities for farmers.
 - 2. Provide assistance to Whidbey Island Grown (WIG) steering committee, including outreach support.
- b. Partner with WSU Forest Stewardship Program, WA Department of Natural Resources (WADNR), and willing, local fire and rescue districts to provide resources for forest and timberland management, as well as wildfire prevention.
 - 1. Work to secure future cost share for Firewise plan implementation for forestland and home owners.
- c. Assist landowners to connect with conservation easement and beneficial tax programs including, but not limited to, Designated Forest Land, Public Benefits Rating System, and Current Use. Provide staff training for conservation easement and tax programs.

8. Promote natural resource conservation.

- a. Utilize a broad range of communication tools to promote a holistic understanding of production and ecosystem processes.
- b. Develop a plan to promote WICD services to local municipalities and county government.
- c. Develop a plan to engage Naval Air Station (NAS) Whidbey Island military families, active duty military, and veterans.
- d. Work with PSCDs to implement Better Ground marketing strategy.

9. Provide adult and youth education.

- a. Develop adult educational program strategy, which can be employed in current and future fiscal years of the District, based on demand, time-frame, and topic areas.
 - 1. Provide at least 6 presentations at partner events, including providing a booth presence where possible.
 - 2. Provide at least 6 technical workshops, including ongoing participation as local resource conservation experts for Sound Water Stewards and WSU Master Gardener training programs.
 - 3. Provide meeting facilitation as needed for grant funded projects, and other projects as prioritized by WICD board.
 - 4. Provide presentations to community organizations and public on WICD rates and charges proposal (assessment renewal).
 - 5. Provide outreach and education assistance to partner organizations as requested.
 - 6. Attend partner meetings on a regular basis to stay consistently connected to programs and resources that may benefit the public
 - 7. Seek out new educational partnership opportunities.

- b. Youth education
 - 1. Identify locally tailored and targeted messaging and programming for youth education in conjunction with partner organizations and volunteers.
 - 2. Maintain and/or update youth programming relative to current state and federal learning standards
- c. Employ a variety of online & printed educational tools to promote conservation resources to diverse audiences.
 - 1. Design targeted strategies and routes for most efficient use of online platforms.
 - i. Continue to refine website platform for ease of public and internal use.
 - ii. Develop social media (Facebook) post strategy & implementation.
 - iii. Explore use of video as a communication tool for online platforms.
 - iv. Organize, consolidate, update, and maintain contractor resources list.
 - v. Deliver quarterly Weed Bulletin.
 - vi. Deliver bimonthly WICD Conservation Connection newsletter.
 - vii. Continue coordination of monthly Make a Difference Column, incorporating new writers from staff of partner organizations.
 - viii. Integrate Better Ground, as well as WSCC Communications Toolkit when appropriate.
 - 2. Design targeted strategies and routines for most efficient use of print platforms.
 - i. Develop one-page “fact sheets” on WICD programs & services, prioritization process, timelines and procedures.
 - ii. Continue to refine use of resource packets for initial client reference
- d. Maintain and improve outreach program tracking system. Integrate outreach tracking with technical assistance tracking system through development of a new or adaptation of an existing database.

Part II District Operations Priorities (in order of priority based on public feedback and WICD Board-approved 2016-2021 Work Plan)

- Satisfied and informed customers
- Stable funding and fiscal accountability
- Satisfied, well-trained employees
- Engaged and well-trained board
- A ready and willing corps of volunteers
- Complete and current policy manual, procedures and processes
- Maintain positive relationships with other conservation districts, the Conservation Commission, and other government and NGO partners
- Marketing who and what we are
- Maintain visible, suitable, and accessible office space

District Operations Program Goals and Actions:

1. Provide accurate and complete information in a simple and understandable format.
2. Bring a high level of transparency and responsiveness to WICD partners and the public.
3. Maintain consistent funding to ensure staffing levels that will support natural resource and operational goals.
4. Achieve highest level of accountability, both in district operations and financial audits, to ensure the proper, effective, and efficient use of public funds.
5. Provide employee and board development opportunities and cross training.
6. Provide employees and board members the opportunity to participate in state, regional, and national conservation organizations.
7. Provide adequate staffing to accomplish work plan and offer competitive compensation/benefit packages.
8. Ensure employee satisfaction for team cohesiveness, improved workflow, and increased productivity.
9. Annually review WICD policies, procedures, and related processes; update as needed.

- 10. Maintain and/or foster relationships and agreements with all partners through effective communication & execution of services.
- 11. Provide consistent volunteer opportunities that support District operations

Measurable Program Objectives: District funding adequate to address landowner demand; satisfied tax payers and landowners; low staff turnover; informed and engaged Board of Supervisors; clean audits.

Existing & Potential Funding Source(s) (in no particular order): *WA State Conservation Commission (WSCC), Island County(IC) Assessment/Rates and Charges, United States Dept. of Agriculture (USDA), Office of Farmland Preservation (OFP), NGOs such as Northwest Agriculture Business Center (NABC), Goosefoot Foundation, Russel Family Foundation, Tribes, Cities & Towns, Island County government, WA State Department of Agriculture (WSDA), Port Districts, IC Economic Development Council (EDC), the Trust Board of Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve, Chambers of Commerce, private donors and sponsors.*

District Operations Goals and Actions for FY20
<p>1. Provide accurate and complete information in a simple and understandable format.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Keep Board of Supervisors, taxpayers and the general public informed through open public meetings and inclusive planning processes. Utilize the local newspapers, social media, e-mail, and WICD website as primary communication tools. b. Utilize all tools available to communicate district information to WICD's diverse audience.
<p>2. Bring a high level of transparency and responsiveness to WICD partners and the public.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Provide information through formal and informal processes. b. Create a single-source database system to improve efficacy of communication. c. Improve tracking system, in collaboration with WSCC and PSCD, to insure timely responsiveness to the public. d. Implement efficient survey tool for client feedback.
<p>3. Maintain consistent funding to ensure staffing levels that will support natural resource and operational goals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. In collaboration with Snohomish Conservation District, renew Island County assessment (rates and charges) for Island County landowners. b. Secure state funding for WSCC grants, cost share, and projects with WSCC, PSCD, and WACD. c. Secure funding for special projects. d. Secure funding for local and regional Near Term Action (NTA) projects.
<p>4. Achieve highest level of accountability, both in district operations and financial audits, to ensure the proper, effective, and efficient use of public funds.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Comply with all state/federal audit requirements, as well as requirements of funding entities, while keeping financial systems efficient and transparent to taxpayers. b. Prepare for 2019 onsite State Auditors Office (SAO) regularly-scheduled audit.
<p>5. Provide employee and board development opportunities and cross-training.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Provide training for staff and board utilizing current staff, WA Association of District Employees (WADE) training conference, the Center for Technical Development (CTD), NRCS, WSCC, Enduris, WA State Labor & Industry, SAO, and other entities. b. Continue to cross-train specific District Manager (DM) duties and financial staff responsibilities where needed. c. Provide training for staff specifically in meeting and landowner group facilitation, and project management (including budget management).
<p>6. Provide employees and board members the opportunity to participate in state, regional, and national conservation organizations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Participate in PSCD, WADE, WSCC, WACD, NACD, and NRCS activities.

- b. Seek out new conservation partner opportunities.

7. Ensure employee satisfaction for team cohesiveness, improved workflow, and increased productivity.

- a. Review the following items for possible inclusion in WICD Policies and Procedures manual:
 - i. Improve employee review process to incorporate job satisfaction and wellness criteria
 - ii. Consider alternative work schedules and ad-hoc remote work arrangements
 - iii. Encourage teambuilding and wellness activities
 - iv. Establish routine staff meetings to include personal wellbeing check-ins

8. Annually review WICD policies, procedures, and related processes; update as needed.

- a. Ensure that board-approved policies are up-to-date, organized, and accessible to the WICD board, staff, and the general public (upon request).

9. Maintain and/or foster relationships and agreements with all partners through effective communication & execution of services.

- a. Develop a survey tool to assess partner relationships and agreements

10. Provide consistent volunteer opportunities that support District operations

- a. Train and support volunteers for the WICD annual plant sale and other events as needed

Budget information – following page

FY20 ANNUAL BUDGET – 5/22/19

	Yearly
INCOME	
Assessment	\$ 180,340
RCO.Greenbank Marsh	\$ 8,496
WSCC Basic Allocation	\$ 12,500
WSCC IM	\$ 77,500
WSCC Cost Share to L/O (pass through)	\$ 45,000
WSCC Cost Share TA	\$ 11,250
WSCC LT	\$ 20,000
Beginning Farmer & Rancher	\$ 2,691
Better Ground	\$ 23,500
Penn Cove NTA	\$ 86,222
Lone Lake	\$ 38,221
Plant Sale	\$ 27,300
PSCD Orca Day	\$ 4,500
TOTAL Revenue	\$ 537,520
EXPENSES	Yearly
Salary expenses incl IRA, WC, LI, FICA	\$ 301,650
Plant Sale wages	\$ 11,300
WICD paid Medical/Dental	\$ 46,254
Supplies (office and operating)	\$ 6,000
Phone/Postage/ Communications	\$ 3,420
Admin Travel, Mileage, & Lodging	\$ 3,960
Field Travel, Mileage	\$ 3,000
Election / SAO Audit	\$ 500
Rent	\$ 23,196
Insurance (Enduris)	\$ 6,400
Utilities	\$ 2,770
Maint/ Repairs incl Sharp, WTS & NSIC, CRM, fire ext.	\$ 8,285
Conference, Dues, Training	\$ 9,435
Landowner Cost Share (pass through)	\$ 45,000
Better Ground expenses	\$ 3,500
Penn Cove Project expenses	\$ 800
Lone Lake Project expenses	\$ 32,551
General Project expenses + Advertising	\$ 4,400
Plant Sale expenses	\$ 16,000
Rates & Charges Report	\$ 7,500
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 535,921
Revenue less Expenses (to Reserve)	\$ 1,599