

PENINSULA DAILY NEWS

Plant-A-Thon sets record as volunteers place 6,500 trees, shrubs

By Peninsula Daily News

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Nicolas Harper and Samantha Trone from Swan School in Port Townsend were among the 140 volunteers planting trees at Tarboo Wildlife Preserve near Quilcene on Feb 4. (Connie Gallant)

QUILCENE — Volunteers are planting thousands of native trees and shrubs along Tarboo Creek and the surrounding wetlands in Quilcene this year, with the next two events this Saturday and a week later.

Event are coordinated by Northwest Watershed Institute (NWI), a Port Townsend nonprofit that works with landowners and partnering organizations to protect and

restore a stream and wildlife corridor from the headwaters of Tarboo Creek to Dabob Bay.

This year, instead of the usual large Plant-A-Thon that involves youth and parents from five local schools, NWI is hosting several smaller events.

Volunteers from three area schools kicked off the first day of the 17th annual Plant-A-Thon on Feb. 4 with 30 people planting about 900 trees and shrubs along Tarboo Creek and the surrounding wetlands.

Student and adult crew leaders attended a short training before the event began. As more volunteers arrived, crew leaders helped lead groups in each planting zone.

Volunteers chose from a variety of potted and bare-root native plants in each zone such as spirea, sword fern, crab apple, salmonberry, osoberry, Douglas fir, Western hemlock, Western redcedar and vine maple.

“Plant-A-Thon school coordinators Kit Pennell (Chimacum PI Program), Emily Gohn (Swan School) and Amber Jones (OCEAN School) have supported the Plant-A-Thon for many years and were instrumental in bringing everyone together for another successful planting project,” said Megan Brookens, education and outreach director for NWI.

“Every year, school groups come together for Plant-A-Thon, and this year, I am excited that more community members are also participating through monthly Dabob Days volunteer projects,” she said.

On Feb. 25, 10 Dabob Days volunteers planted more than 1,000 live plant cuttings through cardboard to suppress invasive reed canary grass. Student leaders from OCEAN School, Emilia Ramsey and Gabriel Hefley, led community volunteers in each planting zone.

Additional restoration planting projects will take place at a Dabob Days event this Saturday and a Plant-A-Thon day on Saturday, March 11, on NWI's Tarboo Wildlife Preserve in partnership with local schools and community members.

Funding for Plant-A-Thon and Dabob Days projects is from Washington State's No Child Left Inside grant program, Jefferson County Conservation District and the Washington State Conservation Commission, the Clif Family Foundation, Dennis Watson Spirit of TEAM Memorial Grant.

Many donations support the program, including a truckload of clean cardboard for mulch from Sheets Unlimited, donations from The Food Coop's annual Satsuma fundraiser and wood for wetland boardwalks from Carls Lumber. Gloves for participants were donated by Henery Hardware. Snacks were donated by The Food Coop and Pane d'Amore.

To volunteer at an upcoming Dabob Days project or Plant-A-Thon project, email megan@nwwatershed.org.

For more information about Northwest Watershed Institute, visit nwwatershed.org.