

The Leader

Teens lead tree-planting project in Tarboo Watershed

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On a rare break from winter rain, Port Townsend High School senior Wyatt Steffens led a group of high-schoolers and volunteers in a tree-planting event on Feb. 8 to help restore salmon and wildlife habitat in the Tarboo Watershed in Quilcene.

Steffens organized the planting, recruiting and coordinating a team of 15 volunteers as part of his senior project.

“I recently moved to Port Townsend and I have been enjoying the wildlife here, so I wanted to use my senior project as a way to restore natural land,” Steffens said.



Wyatt Steffens plants one of 100 trees at the Tarboo Wildlife Refuge - Western Red Cedar.

After moving from Florida last year, Steffens joined a new environmental expedition club, led by student Jasmine Heuberger-Yearian and the Northwest Watershed Institute. The group meets monthly to remove invasive plants, clean beaches and care

for the Tarboo Wildlife Preserve. When Steffens proposed his tree-planting project idea to the Northwest Watershed Institute last fall, the club helped promote it.

The planting was co-sponsored by the Northwest Watershed Institute and the Unkitawa Foundation of Seattle.



PTHS students Jasmine Heuberger-Yearian, Anika Avelino and David Smith joined Steffans as crew leaders during the event, leading families from PTHS and Swan School who volunteered to plant trees, continuing the tradition they started in 2005 at the first Northwest Watershed Institute Plant-A-Thon.

The group planted 100 large trees, including Western red cedars, Pacific crabapple and grand fir, at a site that is being restored by the Northwest Watershed Institute, within the 400-acre Tarboo Wildlife Preserve.