

What the Soroptimist Club did on Earth Day....

By Ian Byington on May 8, 2010



Giving the Garry Oaks a chance on Earth Day....

Barbara Sharp from the Soroptimists sent over this cool report:

CUTTING TREES TO SAVE OUR ISLAND'S GARRY OAKS

Who would have thought you could spend Earth Day cutting down trees? Supervised by Doug McCutchen of the San Juan County Land Bank, Soroptimists did just that. On Saturday, April 17th, volunteers helped restore a significant Garry Oak habitat on Cady Mountain. By cutting down immature Douglas Firs and cutting the limbs on mature firs to allow enough light to penetrate the forest floor, the volunteers were able to give young oaks a chance to take root.

The work party of 14 spent the day trimming and hauling the limbs to selected burn pile sites. In the adjacent meadow, they also worked pulling invasive weeds and grasses from the bases of oak seedlings and repairing their protective wire cages and permeable matting. For their efforts, volunteers were rewarded with surprise gift bags of house-made cookies from Harrison House Suites and Tucker House Inn, a \$20 gift certificate from Coho restaurant, and Cady Mountain's stunning south-side island views.

Following the tradition of naming significant trees, McCutchen christened one mature oak “Sorooptimoak,” in honor of the dedicated Soroptimist crew.

Garry Oaks once thrived across the island, but decades of converting land to agricultural, residential and industrial development has fragmented the habitats, creating the need for ongoing work to restore and expand the ecosystem of these once-prolific trees. Garry Oak ecosystems support 75 to 80 species of animals and birds who are threatened by a dwindling habitat. If anyone would like to participate in a work party, contact Doug McCutchen at 378-4402.

For more information on Garry Oak ecosystems, go to <http://www.goert.ca>.

For more information on Soroptimists, visit <http://www.sifri.org>.