

March 2009

Orcas Middle School student Tika Zbornick recently assisted the Land Bank with a restoration planting at the Judd Cove Preserve as part of a science assignment. Teacher Laura Tidwell assigned students to do a project that would have community benefit and integrate principles of the scientific method. At Judd Cove, the Land Bank's restoration efforts to date have included removal of a large dock and associated pilings and other infrastructure that served as an industrial log dump and log-boom holding operation for over 50 years. As part of the clean-up and restoration, 40 yards of fill were removed to help re-establish the natural shoreline's shape and function.

Tika observed the 15 x 40 foot area along the bank to determine how wave action and upland drainage may make the newly exposed area vulnerable to erosion. To help stabilize the soils, create wildlife habitat, and soften the visual impact of the work area, Tika planted 45 native trees and shrubs – a mix of ocean spray, snowberry, Douglas fir, salal, Oregon grape, red-flowering current and cedar. A generous mulching and setting up a fence to help prevent deer browse on the young plants completed this phase of the project.

Tika's involvement in this effort extended to include her parents, brother and a friend, turning a big job into a fun experience. As time goes by, these plants not only stabilize the shoreline and filter runoff, but grow to provide important forage and protection for wildlife. They will add to the beauty and health of a very special part of the Orcas coastline, and be a lasting reminder of one student's efforts to care for the environment of her island home.

