

## Volunteers Plant Trees Along Hood Canal to Help Lure Back Fish

**• A volunteer effort to increase vegetation along Hood Canal's shorelines aims to improve the habitat for wildlife.**

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Jefferson County

After years as a fisherman, Port Townsend resident Jean Erreca figures he has a lot of bad karma to work out.

"I'm making up for the salmon I killed in the past," Erreca said Thursday as he dug a hole for a sapling near the Shine Estuary.

A member of the North Olympic Salmon Coalition, Erreca joined others along Hood Canal to plant trees in the wetlands and woods owned by J.P. Durga, a company that makes organic body care products.

"It'll improve the habitat as far as providing cover and habitat for fish species," Erreca said. "I'll probably have made up my quota today. We're not going to mention the trout."

Volunteers planted 50 western red cedar trees and 50 sitka spruce trees as part of the Marine Riparian Initiative, an effort by the Hood Canal Coordinating Council to re-vegetate the shorelines along Hood Canal.

The HCCC's Richard Brocksmith said shoreline planting is a good tool to help troubled bodies of water.

"The more protection we can provide to these little pockets of estuary, it's going to help everything in general," he said.

The HCCC works with landowners in Mason and Jefferson counties and on the Hood Canal side of Kitsap County who want their waterfront property reviewed and repaired to promote fish and wildlife. Though most of its 50 projects have taken place outside of the county, it has planted trees on property in Seabeck near Stavis Bay.

The project along the 100-acre salt marsh at J.P. Durga was the group's first commercial property to undergo planting. The HCCC usually draws interest from people who attend its community restoration workshops, which emphasize the importance of shorelines to the health of waterways.

"We have one site in Kitsap already so we would like to find even more ways to talk to people in Kitsap about trees along the shoreline," Brocksmith said.

Brocksmith said shoreline planting would help with the Sound's oxygen problem. Planting vegetation along the shore near areas with low oxygen levels will help slow down stormwater runoff that pollutes the Sound and create a habitat for bugs and the small fish that eat them — as well as the salmon that eat small fish, Brocksmith said.

But planting trees alone will not solve the problem of low oxygen levels that kill off fish in Hood Canal and Puget

Sound.

"These trees are kind of more site-specific things," Brocksmith said.

The HCCC investigates each proposed site to determine the best way to improve it.

Jeff Adams, a marine water quality expert from Washington Sea Grant, is in charge of projects along the Kitsap side of Puget Sound. To contact Adams about shoreline planting, call him at (360) 337-4619.



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