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Photos available upon request

## Emerson Students Enhance the Earth on Arbor Day

### Local youth in conservation program provides meaningful experiences in nature

On the morning of April 24, Arbor Day, a busload of Emerson High School students tumbled out into the damp woods of Skagit Land Trust's Cumberland Creek Conservation Area some three miles east of Day Creek on the South Skagit Highway. As their day unfolded, they would visit and work at several stations organized by natural resource teacher Bev Mowrer. Helping her were colleagues from Emerson, EarthCorps volunteers, a Leadership Skagit 2015 team that helped Emerson gain a natural resource toolshed and supplies, Olympia archeologist Melanie Diedrich, and Skagit Land Trust staff and volunteers including Cumberland Creek Land Steward Jim Johnson.

Rotating from station to station in small groups led by one of their fellow students, the students learned about careers in natural resource conservation; crafted nature-themed Mother's Day gifts; helped removed invasive Himalayan blackberries; and participated in an archeological dig to learn about the human and natural history of this conservation area.

Before leaving, all gathered in a large circle under clearing skies to share and reflect upon the day's experiences. What emerged was uniformly good humored and positive. Clearly it had been both a full and memorable day. Skagit Land Trust and Emerson High School plan to continue this fruitful partnership to engage local youth in impactful conservation leadership.

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**About Emerson High School:** Since 1976, Emerson High School has provided a secondary education program that is an alternative to conventional public high school. The basic structure and organization of Emerson is similar to any regular school setting. The "alternative" title refers to the method of delivery of services. Because class sizes are smaller, the students enjoy a higher level of interaction with teachers and peers. The school places an emphasis on multi-modal, experientially based instruction, and off campus learning opportunities are utilized to support both academic classroom instruction and to develop personal life competencies. Students participate in a wide array of community events and provide volunteer service to the community.

**About Skagit Land Trust:** Skagit Land Trust was founded in 1992 by three visionary founders and 31 charter members to conserve wildlife habitat, agricultural and forest lands, scenic open space, wetlands, and shorelines of Skagit County, Washington. Today, the amount of land and habitat protected by the Trust has grown to over 6,700 acres including more than 30 miles of shoreline. Visit [skagitlandtrust.org](http://skagitlandtrust.org) for more information.





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