

# Weed wackers help creek, learn ecology

**BY STEVE McCASLAND**  
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**BANDON** — Most kids who enroll in science and biology classes probably expect to bury their noses in books. Not in Bandon.

Trent Hatfield takes his Bandon High School students out in the field. They get their hands dirty learning about stream ecology. Last month, about 30 biology and environmental science students worked for four hours removing invasive plants and planting about a thousand native trees on sections of Gross Creek adjacent to school district property.

"The native trees we planted will provide shade, bank stabilization and, eventually, large woody debris for Gross Creek," Hatfield said.

The school district is partnering on the creek restoration project with Oregon Trout, Bandon Kiwanis and members of the community. The partners' long-term goals for Gross Creek are to enhance habitat in and adjacent to the stream.

Student participant Mark Lane said that, in addition to being fun, the project helped his science grade.

"It was fun because we were outside doing things for our community and our environment," said Mark Lane. "I like to work outside more than I do inside looking at a book."

Oregon Trout's participation included making curriculum materials available and donating money for equipment. Bandon Kiwanis also helped pay for the work, along with several community members who donated time and materials. Others who assisted with the effort included Lisa Hatfield, Jim Proehl, Jen Ells and Josie Schindler.

Classmate David Neel said he participated because he wanted to help the creek.

"I would do it again because I'm a tree hugger just like Mr. Hatfield," he said.

**Students in Trent Hatfield's environmental science class at Bandon High School prepare the earth to plant trees along Gross Creek. Hatfield and his students, along with other teachers and classes, have been working to improve the creek for several years. This portion is located behind Ocean Crest Elementary School.**

