Teenage weed patrol pulls scotch broom

Submitted by the National Forest Service

Kids from the Kulshan Creek Neighborhood Kids program in Mount Vernon and the International District Interim WILD program in Seattle spent the Sunday afternoon, April 28, tackling hordes of scotch broom at Fort Ebey State Park on Whidbey Island.

Scotch broom is a noxious, invasive shrub that forms dense strands, crowds out native vegetation and destroys wildlife habitat.

"Taking out the scotch broom is really tough," said sixteen-year-old Samara Mejia of Mount Vernon in a news release. "You have to get the whole root or the weed will come back."

Mejia said she ripped out 30 bushes, but her biggest challenge were the tiny ones. "It took me 10 minutes and a shovel just to get one out," she said.

Sunday was the second day the kids had been at Ebey's Landing, having arrived the day before for the annual Migratory Bird Festival and camping overnight at Camp Casey for the weed-pulling project organized by the National Parks Service and others.

"I would do this again," said Mejia. "I learned a lot about migratory birds, Fort Casey and invasive weeds. The best part is meeting new people from Seattle and sharing ghost stories."

Photo courtesy National Forest Service

Samara Mejia, 16, with the Kulshan Creek Neighborhood Kids program in Mount Vernon helps remove scotch broom April 28 at Fort Ebey State Park on Whidbey Island.