

# LIGHTS AND SHADOWS FROM

# THE DISHMAN HILLS

January 1979

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS TURN DOWN "THE MEADOWS" DEVELOPMENT BY DISHMAN HILLS

SOME THINGS ARE GOOD ABOUT WINTER

If you think of winter only as bone-chilling cold and chill factors, drive-ways to shovel, icy roads to survive and fuel bills to pay, try looking around a bit more. Aside from snow sports, many other pleasures belong to winter alone. The snow sparkles and across it comes a troop of quail, if you have put out cracked grain and have planted bushes for them to hide under. Then there are the little birds, the juncoes with their black heads, house finches with streaked and rosy breasts, perhaps a pert song sparrow and always some house sparrows. If you have a mountain ash tree, the Bohemian waxwings, and perhaps a few of the smaller cedar waxwings, will gobble the berries eagerly. You might even have a robin. In the evening a shy little mouse may creep out for its share.

Visit the nearby hills after a new snowfall and there on the clean white pages are the neatly written signatures and the stories of last night's adventures of many a wild creature. Here are the pairs of little tracks with marks of a long tail between--white-footed mice. A cottontail rabbit's distinctive prints, big hind feet ahead of the little fore paws, lead into the rock crevice that is the little fellow's home. Then the neat, narrow tracks, in nearly a straight line, distinguish a coyote looking diligently for his next meal. Seldom does one find evidence of success--winter must be a hungry time for a coyote.

(Continued on page 2)

\$5000 GIFT OFFER MET--AND EXCEEDED

Donations to the land fund since April will have exceeded the anonymous offer to match up to \$5000 total gifts received by the end of 1978. The past year has been

SEWAGE, DRAINAGE, ACCESS ROADS ARE REASONS

Spokane County Board of Commissioners announced its decision Dec. 13 to deny approval of "The Meadows" development sponsored by Peter Rayner south of 18th Ave. at the end of Park Road. Commissioner Ray Christensen gave as reasons for denial the questions of adequate sewage disposal, drainage, access roads and the sponsor's changing his request from that for a planned unit development to the usual type of subdivision, between the rejection by the planning commission and the commissioners' hearing.

No mention was made of adverse effects on the wildlife and open space, of air and noise pollution or of spot zoning, placing a high density development in an area of low density housing. However it is encouraging that the commission recognized the danger to the aquifer that supplies the valley's and city's water.

Our thinks to the 1000 or more of you who signed the petitions against the development and who attended the hearing. We have people power, which is the way democracy should work. Yet we cannot afford to be complacent. The apparent lack of concern for the area itself as a valuable open space indicates that the only sure way to protect the area and the adjacent hills will be to buy the land and add it to that already protected. To that end we dedicate ourselves and urge that you continue to support the land purchase fund as much as you can.

OFFICER, BOARD ELECTIONS SET FOR JAN. 24

Our annual meeting for election of officers and directors for the coming year will be Wednesday, Jan. 24 at 7 p.m. at Kiwanis Camp Caro, S. 625 Sargent Road,

Dishman. Plans for the coming year will

The California Quail, though not a native here, does quite well in suburban areas where housing is not too crowded and trees, particularly conifers, and dense bushes provide shelter and hiding places. The birds will scratch through shallow snow for food but deeper snows give them a hard time. Here is where they need help in the form of cracked grain or bird seed put out for them in less snowy spots. They also need gravel so they can grind their food. Their worst enemies are cats and dogs, especially during nesting and brood-raising.



DISHMAN HILLS NATURAL AREA ASSN., INC.  
E. 10820 Maxwell Ave., Spokane, WA 99206  
Phone (509) 926-7949

A non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of some of the natural environment of the Spokane area for people to enjoy and learn from.

Helen E. Lininger, president  
Thomas H. Rogers, vice-pres. & editor  
Bernice Ammons, secretary  
David E. Lentas, treasurer

Directors (in addition to officers)  
Doris Allgood Warren A. Hall  
Omar E. Carroll Leroy Hook  
Bernice Hahn William F. Marchand  
Margaret Haggin Ambrose Priestley

Monthly meetings are at Kiwanis Camp Caro, S. 625 Sargent Road, Dishman. Board meeting is at 7 p.m. and general meeting is at 8 p.m. the fourth Wednesday. You are cordially invited to attend both.

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\$5000 GIFT (continued from page 1)

Income from recyclables also helped substantially--many people are saving their newspaper, brown bags, junk mail, returnable bottles and aluminum cans, foil and trays for the land fund.

Dave Lentas, our treasurer, will have the 1978 financial statement ready for our January meeting. A condensed version of it will be printed in the March bulletin.

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BOTTLE BILL GOES TO LEGISLATURE

Initiative 61, the "bottle bill", received more than enough signatures for it to be presented to the legislature, which

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WINTER GOOD THINGS (cont. from page 1)

Daytime denizens leave their marks too. Here is an oblong depression, where a ruffed grouse landed in the soft snow and from it a line of evenly spaced xes as the hardy bird stalked cautiously away. Perhaps he is now watching you from a conifer branch overhead. Then here are the leaping tracks of a red squirrel as he makes a quick passage from one tree to the next, and there on a big rock are the remains of a fir cone that supplied his breakfast.

Mid-winter can also show you a tiny black insect walking across the snow, if it's not too much below freezing--most insects cannot move at such temperatures. Wingless, it nevertheless is a member of the scorpion-fly family, but looks more like a little spider. The little creatures can even be found mating on the snow.

Overhead is activity also, as roving flocks of red crossbills look for Douglas fir cones to pry open. Then there are little mixed groups of chickadees and nuthatches searching the pines for dormant insects. Empty pine seed wings may be drifting down from treetop activities of flickers, house finches and juncos, which this year are exploiting this food source. And from afar comes the guttural croaks of a pair of ravens.

If you are especially lucky you may hear the commotion of little birds scolding; a sleepy great horned owl, blinking slowly, turning his head occasionally and perhaps wishing his small neighbors would leave him alone. After all, if one is to be up all night catching mice he really needs forty winks.

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the ballot and in the third case it will