



LIGHTS AND SHADOWS FROM THE DISHMAN HILLS

February, 1983

NEW LIFE IS SPRINGING UP IN THE HILLS

At the time when most forest creatures are trying merely to get through the winter, great horned owls are nesting, often starting incubation in January or February, and red crossbills, reputed to nest at any time of the year, may be starting new families. Both these birds can do so because they have fairly good assurance of a food supply for their young, unlike the situation for most small birds, which depend upon insects and upon seeds picked up from the ground.

The warming sun of late winter starts streamlets flowing and releases snow melt that greens up mossy cliffs and hangs them with icicles overnight. As sunny south and west slopes become bare of snow, buttercups appear, followed soon by the green spears and pink stars of grass widows. By ponds and streams aspens, alders and birches dangle their catkins and pussywillows show silver.

Among the earliest insects to become active in the foothills are the hibernator butterflies. Milbert's tortoiseshell may appear as early as mid-February and the mourning cloak and satyr angling commonly fly on warm March days. Several kinds of small moths are already on the wing. Lady beetles are becoming active in large clusters on the ground.

Quail and a few pheasants move back to the brushy forest edge. Juncoes and a few flickers and song sparrows gradually invade the foothills from the valleys. Robins follow, joined by varied thrushes, which will take part in a vertical migration to higher mountain forests for nesting. Fox sparrows and towhees, early migrants, are returning to drier, brushy places. Red-tailed hawks circle and scream over the edge, searching for nest trees. Many kinds of small birds must delay their return until insect numbers increase, which happens gradually as new plant growth provides them with food.

ECOLOGY DAYCAMP PLANS FIRING UP

Spokane's ecology daycamp is scheduled for August 1-5 at St George's School on the Little Spokane River. The program will supply many helps for teachers and other leaders, with alternative choices for those who prefer exploring in greater depth the natural history of the Spokane area. Registration fee will be \$20.00. Full details will be available in a flyer in early April.

ASSOCIATION'S ASSETS INCREASING SLOWLY

Our association's income for 1982 came to about \$6400, most of which was interest on funds accumulated over a number of years, or about \$4700. The other \$1700 came from contributions, including \$574 from recycling paper, aluminum, bottles and glass. Contributions were the lowest in many years, primarily, we believe, because we put out only one newsletter because of problems in arranging for new labels and the switchover to the new printing process. The current recession no doubt was partly responsible also.

Expenses for the year were \$972, leaving a net income of \$5453. Our total assets as of December 31 were \$57,974. We expect that this and more will be needed to accomplish the purchase of the 140 acres adjacent to the present Dishman Hills preserve. Your continuing donations will be most appreciated.

All officers and board members were reelected at our January 26 meeting at Camp Caro: Helen Lininger, president; Tom Rogers, vice-president; Dan Knierim, Secretary, and Dave Lentes, treasurer. Board members are: Doris Allgood, Bernice Ammons, Roger Burwell, Omar Carroll, Margaret Haggin, Bernice Hahn, Ann and Don Kachinsky, Bill McMillan and Amby Priestley. Officers are also board members.

NATURAL AREA GROWS THROUGH THE YEARS

A recent news article in the Spokesman-Review and editorial in the Spokane Daily Chronicle gave Dishman Hills Natural Area excellent publicity, for which we are grateful. For the benefit of any of you not familiar with the project from the beginning, we submit the following.

A small group of us met in 1965 and resolved to save the Hills. We asked the county commissioners and park department to take steps to acquire land in the Hills and were told to first buy a parcel of the land to prove we were serious. In 1966 we incorporated as a nonprofit organization and contacted The Nature Conservancy, which used its revolving land purchase fund to buy 80 acres. Our organization then raised over \$22,000 by donations from the public and returned the purchase price to TNC's land fund. At present TNC holds the title to the 80 acre preserve.

Spokane County then became actively involved. The next acquisition was in 1969 when Ina H. Johnston gave \$30,000, which the county used to obtain state and federal matching funds and bought 124 acres more. Subsequent donations, including a substantial anonymous one and \$7500 from our organization, were used by the county to bring the total to about 300 acres. Since 1971 we have been working closely with the county park department to obtain the 140 acres now under consideration. Our organization now has about \$58,000, thanks to many generous donors. We expect this amount will buy about 50 acres. How to obtain the money for the other 90 acres is the problem. More matching funds might become available--this is by no means certain. County Park Superintendent Sam Angove reports steady progress toward acquiring the land and is hopeful that it can be achieved this year. He indicated that several thousand dollars more of donations probably will be needed, so please continue to contribute to our land fund. Incidentally, all gifts to it are fully income tax deductible.

Donors to the Dishman Hills project include Spokane Valley Kiwanis and Rotary Clubs, numerous Spokane area garden clubs and businesses, the national board and Inland Empire chapter of The Nature Conservancy, Spokane Audubon Society, the Hobnailers and many hundreds of individuals. KZUN held a radio auction, selling many articles donated by the public. In 1970 Spokane Valley Chamber of Commerce presented us with a plaque in recognition of our efforts to save Dishman Hills.

We are a non-profit organization dedicated to saving some of the natural environment of the Spokane area for people to enjoy and learn from. Our monthly meetings are at Kiwanis Camp Caro, S. 625 Sargent Road at 7:30 p.m. the fourth Wednesday. You are cordially invited to attend. For further information and for slide programs and guide service into the Dishman Hills call us at 926-7949.

Please use this form when sending contributions to save the Dishman Hills and the Tower Mountain corridor. Your dues and/or gifts are income tax deductible.

\$ ___ Annual dues (\$5) New? ___ Renewal? ___

\$ ___ Land purchase fund

\$ ___ In remembrance of _____

\$ ___ Bulletin expense fund (\$1 or more)

Please make checks payable to Dishman Hills Natural Area Association and mail to David E. Lentes, Treasurer, E. 10922 23rd Spokane, WA. 99206. Many Thanks! To reduce expense, no receipt or acknowledgement will be sent unless requested.

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