



LIGHTS AND SHADOWS FROM THE DISHMAN HILLS

January, 1983

140 ACRES MAY BE ADDED TO NATURAL AREA

Spokane County Parks and Recreation Department is writing a proposal to the Board of County Commissioners for buying a 140 acre addition to Dishman Hills Natural Area. Although the county received no bids on the Balfour Park land, it did sell some unneeded land at Bear Lake. According to Sam Angove, parks superintendent, proceeds from that sale, coupled with our association's land fund, should come close to providing enough for the purchase. Lying adjacent to the south edge of the original 80 acres which we purchased with help from the Nature Conservancy, this parcel of wild land has been the object of our and the park department's intentions for some ten years. Hopefully a deal can be reached at last.

WINTER FINDS INSECTS AND BIRDS IN HILLS

Winter may seem like a strange time to look for insects and other little invertebrates but such observing gives clues to their life histories. While most kinds pass the winter as eggs or pupae, some hibernate in the adult stage, quickly becoming active in warmer weather. On the snow may be several kinds of insects that have fallen or been blown from trees and bushes. These include predatory "true" bugs, Lacewing Flies, small beetles, moth larvae and several kinds of tiny gnats and flies. Most of these stranded creatures will be restored to activity by the warmth of the hand or a temperature rise to above freezing but a few have succumbed. Ants and a large predatory bug seem to be in this latter category. On the other hand there are the "snow bugs", diminutive, skinny-legged insects that look more like spiders than insects but possess only six legs. Long-faced, wingless creatures, they are members of the Scorpion fly family. On days when the temperature is near thawing or above, they may be found walking on the snow, jumping long distances when touched or merely curling up and "playing dead." Sometimes they are even found mating. Lichens and mosses might be their food.

Small spiders of several kinds often appear, as may small millipedes with their dozens of pairs of legs. One might think that birds would feed upon these helpless little creatures on the snow but there seems to be little evidence of this.

Several kinds of small birds remain the year around, using trees and shrubs for food-hunting and shelter. Chickadees, nuthatches, Golden-crowned Kinglets and occasional Brown Creepers often move in mixed flocks. Each species seems to have its own niche to search, thus avoiding serious competition for food. Chickadees seek insects among the foliage of the conifers and the bare branches of deciduous trees and shrubs. Nuthatches examine the foliage, branches and trunks of the conifers and may also extract seeds from pine cones. Red-breasted Nuthatches are not choosy about the kind of conifer but Pygmy and White-breasted Nuthatches nearly always forage on Ponderosa Pines. The latter species generally confines its activities to the trunks of the larger trees. Golden-crowned Kinglets prefer Douglas Firs. Fluttering in midair, they search the undersides of the branches. Brown Creepers stay strictly with the conifer trunks, starting at the bottom in their search for insects and spiders.

In good cone years Red Crossbills, Pine Siskins and Evening Grosbeaks may be present, traveling in small flocks and feeding on conifer seeds. Siskins are also partial to seed of birches and alders. Woodpeckers are scarce in young forests, which lack dead trees, but may appear in older forests and are particularly common in recent burns. The Hairy Woodpecker digs for beetle larvae in the bark and wood of dead or dying conifers but the smaller, similar Downy Woodpecker works on willows, cottonwoods and aspens.

(The above article is excerpted from material being prepared for a booklet describing the year round activities of the more common plants and animals of the Dishman Hills and nearby areas.)

ECOLOGY DAY CAMP IN DISHMAN HILLS

Spokane Audubon Society is considering conducting an Ecology Day Camp in the Spokane vicinity this summer. Tentative plans are for a week of Monday-through-Friday sessions with optional field trips Saturday and/or Sunday. Enrollment would be open to anyone 18 (possibly 16) years or older. The program probably would be centered at Camp Caro in the Dishman Hills. Field trips would be conducted into Dishman Hills Natural Area and probably also to outlying areas such as Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge, Little Spokane, River Park, Liberty Lake Park, Deep Creek Canyon and Mt. Spokane State Park. It is expected that college credit can be arranged.

Subject areas which could be included in the program are: aquatic life, birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, conservation, ecological relationships, fungi, lichens, mosses, geology and soils, insects and other invertebrates, nature photography, techniques for teaching ecology and environmental education, trees, shrubs, flowers, ferns, urban ecology and weather.

To help in planning, the Society needs input from interested people as to how many are interested in attending and what part of the summer would be most suitable. Please phone or write as soon as possible to Tom Rogers, 926-7949, E. 10820 Maxwell, Spokane, WA 99206.

ASSOCIATION TO ELECT OFFICERS, DIRECTORS

Our annual meeting, at which officers and directors are to be elected, will take place Wednesday, January 26 at 7:30 p.m. at Camp Caro. We hope you can come. We will also be discussing the imminent land purchase and the proposed ecology camp.

RECYCLING PRICES ARE UP!

Specialty Insulation, E. 2626 Trent, is paying \$70 a ton (3.5 cents a pound) for newspaper. If you wish the money from your paper to go to our land fund, just tell them to credit it to Dishman Hills Association. We also have an account at Spokane Recycling, E. 3407 Main. They are paying 1 cent a pound for glass bottles, 20 cents a pound for aluminum cans, \$35 a ton for white ledger and \$30 for colored.

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. Lentz, Treasurer, E. 10922 23rd Spokane, WA. 99206. Many Thanks! To reduce expense, no receipt or acknowledgement will be sent unless requested.