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# LIGHTS AND SHADOWS FROM THE DISHMAN HILLS

September 1984

## PEOPLE WORKING WITH NATURE AT HOLDEN

The mine shafts and the mill at Holden Village are succumbing to the ravages of the weather, which includes deep winter snows. The mill is a collapsing framework of steel, hundreds of tons of it, and the shaft openings are caving in. Surprisingly, a deer was resting under the wooden cribbing at the entrance to one shaft.

The village is largely energy-self sufficient. Electricity is supplied by a generator turned by the rushing water of a tributary creek and a picturesque old-fashioned waterwheel which puts out three kilowatts. Solar energy is used to help heat water, and waste heat from the kitchen is also used for water heating. Food wastes are composted and used to fertilize flower gardens and a rhubarb patch.

The huge mounds of mine waste, fine compact material the color of Bryce Canyon, support practically no life, as they are extremely acid from sulfur compounds and the cyanide used in recovering gold. The Bureau of Land Management is searching for plants that will grow on them; Jerusalem artichokes are proving promising. The village management is studying the possibility of making alcohol from them to run the buses which connect the village with the boat landing on the lake. There are no autos at the village since there is no road access to it.

All in all, Holden Village is an inspiring place promoting harmony among people and between people and their environment.

Spokane Valley Women's Club recently invited us to show slides of Dishman Hills at Grinaldi Senior Center in Opportunity. The club has been behind our project for many years and recently, discontinuing its garden department, sent the balance of its garden fund, a sizeable amount, to our land fund for Dishman Hills. Again, many thanks, ladies!

Negotiations are still going on for an agreement to buy an additional 140 acres in the Dishman Hills. We have made the owners another offer and are awaiting their reply.

Dishman Hills (Cont. from column 2)

This species lingers later than its similar-looking relatives, Swainson's thrush and the veery, sometimes even showing up on the Christmas count. All three are excellent songsters. Completing the picture a magpie, flashing black and white, flapped leisurely overhead against the canopy of wispy cirrus clouds and a clean blue sky.

A disturbing note was the vandalizing of a hikers' bench along the main trail. It and a similar one were built this summer by Tim Cejka of Scout Troop 485 as an Eagle Scout project. We need more young people like Tim and hope the vandals will find something more constructive to do. -T.R.

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.

## DISHMAN HILLS WANDERINGS

As I entered the Dishman Hills on a recent September morning I was greeted by chickadees, a junco, a nuthatch and two Audubon's warblers, all busily searching for insects among the pines. Along the trail blue gentians flowered and mints by Goldback spring scented the air.

Along the trail to Camp Caro vegetation has successfully healed the old, eroded trail, which a CETA crew of young people some years ago replaced with the present one. On either side leaves were coloring, alum root, ninebark and mountain spray sporting shades of red, but brilliant wild rose fruits stole the show. Pink Indian paint brushes still lingered and wild asters added touches of lavender and gold. In drier, rockier places, grasses and other small plants were bleached and dry, their usual response to our arid summers, with a normal July-August rainfall of less than an inch.

As the day warmed, insects began to move about. The most conspicuous were band-winged locusts, their black and yellow wings making jerky crackling sounds. A few red-winged grasshoppers flew up from open, grassy spots, producing a loud, steady crackle. It is possible to identify some kinds of grasshoppers by sound alone. An occasional dragonfly patrolled the area, seeking winged insect prey. Strong fliers, they often are found miles from the ponds where they spent their early lives. Today one of the big blue ones, ordinarily very wary, lit on my shirt!

East Pond still held a little water, in which many back-swimmers stroked about with two oarlike legs or surfaced for air, and a lone whirligig beetle, a glistening black, slid along the surface. Lacy white water parsnip flowers were abundant and here and there was the rich pink of aquatic false buckwheat. This is the pond where a rare plant is found, its only known locality in eastern Washington. Hopefully the ponds will some day become part of Dishman Hills Natural Area.

A few birds had gathered around the ponds. A solitary vireo sang and sought insects in the trees and a small hawk was startled by my approach. Juncos fed among the cattails--an unusual place for them--and a towhee hopped about in the bushes. A California quail called "Kah-koo-kah!" The ponds are vital to these birds, though many smaller birds seem to get along well without drinking water. West Pond's water level was surprisingly high considering that we had almost no rain for over a month. Along its edge was a shy hermit thrush, migrating from its mountain summer home.  
(Continued in Column 1)

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 (\$10) New? \_\_\_ Renewal? \_\_\_

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\$ \_\_\_ In remembrance of \_\_\_\_\_

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

\$ \_\_\_ Student (\$5) and/or Living Lightly

\_\_\_\_\_ Your account number above your address.

Please make checks payable to Dishman Hills Natural Area Association and mail to David E. Lentes, Treasurer, P.O. Box 141561, Spokane, Wa. 99214. Many Thanks! To reduce expense, no receipt or acknowledgement will be sent unless requested.