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# LIGHTS AND SHADOWS FROM THE DISHMAN HILLS

January 1985

## LAND USE HEARINGS AGAIN FRUSTRATING

During the fall months we went before Spokane County Planning Commission three times, requesting that the development density allowed by the comprehensive land use plan next to the Dishman Hills be reduced from "urban", which would permit up to seventeen dwelling units per acre (condominiums, high rises). As usual, we lost. At the final hearing, only four of the seven commission members were present. According to the rules, all four (a majority of the entire commission) would have had to vote for our proposal. One outspoken member, who has always opposed us in the past, convinced one other member to vote against our proposal. One member voted to vote against our proposal. One member voted for us. The chairperson does not, of course, vote except in case of a tie.

The above-mentioned member who let the opposition to our proposal said that changing a line on the map would not change anything since zoning alone does that. Upon questioning, he admitted, however, that it would open the door to high density development. In conclusion he remarked that the only way we would be able to protect the land from high density would be to buy it. In other words, if his statement were true, the only way we can ever get a good land use plan in the county is to own all the land, an obviously absurd situation. We could not rebut this argument, since testimony was now closed. Fortunately the member who made the amazing statement is, we understand, no longer on the commission. Hopefully the county commissioners will appoint a more fair-minded and logical person to fill the vacancy.

Many people believe that the Spokane Valley has outgrown county government. Only one county commissioner represents our commissioner district, so we in the Valley can be outvoted by the other two at any time. We understand that the proposal for a home rule charter for Spokane County would not serve valley citizens any better, for we would again be outvoted by the city and the rest of the county. It appears that incorporation of a valley city would bring local government close to home where we could better control it. Petitions are now being circulated to bring the question of incorporation to a vote of the people.

We are still awaiting a reply to our offer to buy the 140 acres in the Dishman Hills south of The Nature Conservancy land.

Members of the South Walnut Garden Club enjoyed a slide show which we presented in November on the birds of the Spokane area. Spokane Realistic Art Association plans to have us show slides of the Dishman Hills Natural Area sometime in the near future.

We also have slide programs available on eastern Washington wildflowers and butterflies, Glacier Peak and Pasayten Wildernesses, Washington; Three Sisters and Eagle Cap Wildernesses, Oregon; the St. Joe-Clearwater area of Idaho (under consideration for wilderness designation), the Mt. St. Helens area after the eruption, and flowers and scenery of the southern Nevada desert. Call us at 926-7949.

Our annual meeting for election of officers and board of directors and other business will be January 23 at 7:30 P.M. in Room D, Agricultural Building, N. 222 Havana. You are cordially invited to attend.

## PEOPLE ENJOYING WINTER HILLS USE

It makes us happy to see that people are making increased use of Dishman Hills Natural Area. Trails are full of boot prints, cross-country ski tracks and even showshoe tracks. It's a beautiful time to be in the hills. Trees and bushes are plumed with snow. Coyote tracks criss-cross the foot or more of clean snow, as do those of red squirrels, white-footed mice seem to be on the increase this winter, their delicate footprints etching the snow ever so lightly. Cottontail rabbits seem to be at a low point, no tracks having been seen this winter. Birds seem scarce also. The only species found thus far on winter censuses for National Audubon Society are magpies, red-breasted and pygmy nuthatches, brown creepers and red crossbills, all in very low numbers. Spokane Audubon Society's Christmas Bird Count found the additional species: flicker and black capped chickadee. Frank and June Potter's feeder on the west slope of the Hills is attracting many house finches and a very rare visitor from the far north, a hoary redpoll.

Increasing use of the Hills brings the possibility of damage to the area. While most of the people have stayed on the trails, a few have left them and bent down bushes. Please keep on the trails. Even the little plants out of sight under the snow may also be harmed by the packing of the snow upon them.

There has been some forbidden use of the Hills by snowmobiles. (All motorized use is prohibited, winter or summer.) A recent visit revealed that a snowmobile had crushed both bushes and small pine trees. And the roar of a gasoline engine is quite out of place in the natural area.

We are a nonprofit organization dedicated to saving some of the natural areas of the Spokane area for people to enjoy and learn from.

Helen E. Lininger, president  
Thomas H. Rogers, vice-president and bulletin editor  
Doris Allgood, secretary  
David E. Lentes, treasurer  
Legal Advisor: Larry Thienan  
Board of Directors (in addition to officers)  
Bernice Ammons, Cary Brewster, Roger Burwell, Omar Carroll, Margaret Haggin, Bernice Hahn, Ann Kachinsky, Don Kachinsky, Ambrose Priestley, and Larry Thienan

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? \_\_\_

\$ \_\_\_ Land purchase fund

\$ \_\_\_ 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.