



# LIGHTS AND SHADOWS FROM THE DISHMAN HILLS

AUGUST 1988

## HILLS DRY BUT STILL INTERESTING

August in the Dishman Hills continues very dry--no surprise to any of us for we have had no measurable precipitation for six weeks. Grasses and even bushes are very dry in many places. Fortunately we have had no fires in the Hills this year.

Most of the birds are silent and secretive. Roving flocks of red crossbills are sounding their sharp "kip kip" calls, however, and the "yank yank" of red-breasted nuthatches can be heard in many a place. Chickadees are active and cheerful and an occasional flicker flashes its bright orange wing linings. A few robins are about and the cooing of a mourning dove is occasionally heard. Nighthawks have raised their broods and are feeding over the valley below. Red squirrels, as always, question your intrusion.

A few flowers persist on moist spots. At East Pond, devoid of water as are the other ponds, the white umbels of water parsnip are going to seed, though mints still sport their lavender flowers. Indian paintbrush lingers in Cottonwood Hollow and a few asters and goldenrod are appearing, though apparently hampered by the drought. The best flower delight is a few skyblue gentians in a moist spot by the trail.

Lack of flowers makes some insects harder to find. A few butterflies are about: tiny skippers, a few brown wood nymphs and a few second brood ochre ringlets. The pine whites that wove patterns through the pines during recent weeks are all but gone, presumably having laid their eggs before ending their brief adult lives. A visit earlier this week found only three, but a dome weaver's web was almost completely covered with their detached wings. The delicate little dome weavers are common now, as are the funnel weavers, which spread out their platform-like webs from sheltered places on the ground.

Sure to attract attention are the band-winged grasshoppers, some of which make crackling noises as they fly. Common but silent are the drab lesser migratory locusts. None of these appear to inflict any serious damage to vegetation. In a natural ecosystem such as in the Dishman Hills the checks and balances generally keep any one species from becoming overabundant.

Antlion larvae have made several dozen of their pits, used for trapping insects, by the ponderosa pine nature trail sign above Camp Caro. Look for them when you visit.

This seems to be a good year for yellowjackets, apparently favored by the dry weather. In the Hills they are busy hunting their prey of small insects in low vegetation. They also scavenge for protein: dead animals and your food on picnic plates.

A few people get stung every summer and those who are allergic may suffer severely or even die. (cont. in column 2)

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

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Board members (in addition to officers): Doris Allgood, Gary Brewster, Omar Carroll, Margaret Haggin, Francis Potter, June Potter, and Ray Staley.

## DONATIONS INCREASE IN JULY

July income to the Dishman Hills project increased over June, to \$977.60. Expenses for the month were \$40 for administrative expense, \$83.28 for bulletin printing and \$80.08 for bulletin postage.

Our thanks to the following who have donated cash, recyclables and/or services during July and have given permission to be listed here: Linda L. Armacost, Ansel B. Barton, Kathryn Bernard, Stuart Blackwell, Vera Carpenter, Margaret Clay, Jackie Davenport, Dee Davis, Naomi E. Edge, Carl V. Erickson, John Gardner, Elton Grant, Russ/Evelyn Harmon, Eris A. Heggem, Victoria M. Helgeson, Blanche Holsten, Mary Holz, Lynn M. John, Norman Kinney, John C. Lorang, Jack/Alice Malone, Joanne M. Miller, Aroa Ohme, Medora Parmentier, Joy Peterson, Ambrose Priestley, Bonnie Randles, Dan Rogers, Tom Rogers, Tom Rogers Jr., Dennis L. Sanders, George/Shirley Schneider, Larry Thieman, Dwight J. Vance, Jane van Meter and Jeanne H. Wilson.

cont. from column 1

Probably the best advice is to let them get a bite of food and not fight them for if you squeeze them, they will let you have it, the same as when you disturb their nests. (Not all yellowjackets have paper nests in trees; some make nests in the ground, so don't step near them. They are going to defend their homes, the same as you or I.)

The visit earlier this week revealed a handsome golden digger wasp diligently searching the ground, perhaps for a spot to dig a nest burrow or to capture spiders with which to provision her nest. The insect highlight of the trip was a thread-waisted hunting wasp plugging with dirt clods the entrance to her nest burrow, which had been supplied with paralyzed caterpillars.

We will resume our monthly meetings the third Monday of September at 7:30 p.m. at Camp Caro. You are cordially invited.

Please use this form when sending contributions  
(Contributions are income tax deductible)

Account No. **09310**

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Land purchase fund

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\$ \_\_\_\_\_ To cover bulletin expense (\$2)

\_\_\_\_\_ Check here if you do NOT want your name listed as a donor.

Please make checks payable to Dishman Hills Natural Area Association and mail to the Treasurer, P.O. Box 14141, Spokane, WA 99214-0141. Many thanks!