



LIGHTS AND SHADOWS

FROM THE DISHMAN HILLS

MARCH 1989

FEBRUARY DONORS LISTED

February donations of money, recyclables and/or services totalled \$650.82, thanks to you faithful supporters of Dishman Hills, listed below: (If you have given us permission to list you but your name is not below, please let us know at 926-7949.) Jim Bertis, Jeanne P. Boyer, Robin M. Bishop, Vera Carpenter, Steven Davenport, Pamela J. Dixon, Verna O. Dolphin, John Gardner, Sue Godfrey, Bart Haggin, Ken Hendricks, Beverly Hinton, Blanche Holsten, LeRoy Hook, Lynn M. John, Lady Bugs Garden Club, Maxine F. Leszczykowski, John Lorang, J.C. McDowell, Florence Miller, Ora Mae Orton, P.E.O. CW Chapter, Joy Peterson, Ambrose Priestley, Ruby Rector, Thomas H. Rogers, Dennis L. Sanders, Blanche Sarver, Mary Sweeting, Joan Talbot, Larry Thieman, James L. Valentine, Dwight J. Vance, Whitworth Belles Garden Club and Jeanne H Wilson.

Our annual Buttercup Hike in the Dishman Hills is scheduled for Sunday, March 19. We'll see you at Camp Caro. S. 625 Sargent Road at 1:30 p.m.

Washington Native Plant Society is again sponsoring a class in wildflower identification through SFCC's Institute for Extended Learning, Tuesday evenings, 7 to 9:30, April 11 - May 16 at North Central High School. The class will teach, with live plants, how to use keys for identification. Teachers will be Drs. Ken Suedberg and Suzanne Schwab of the biology department of E.W.U. and Nicolin Gray, retired botanist from Whitworth College. Please register through SFCC Extended Learning; look for registration forms in the spring Extended Learning Bulletin mailed to you in March. Cost of the class is \$29, to be paid to SFCC. Books needed, "Washington Wildflowers" and "Keys to Plants of the Spokane Area", total cost about \$10, will be on sale the first night. Enrollment is limited to 25. For additional information please call Nicolin Gray, 467-8895.

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

President: Larry Thieman Secretary: Helen Lininger
Vice-President: Tom Rogers Treasurer: David Lenten

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

SOMETHING ABOUT OWLS

Since owls are mostly nocturnal, they are probably the least known of any of our birds. Of the fourteen species known to occur in Washington, all but one have been found in the eastern part of the state. Of these, five appear in the Dishman Hills-Tower Mountain area.

Probably the best known because of its large size and widespread occurrence is the Great Horned Owl. It is a fearless hunter of birds and small mammals and has even been known to kill skunks! Smaller species of owls may also be included in its menu. It lives in a variety of habitats ranging from desert to mountain forest and nests in trees, on cliffs or even on the ground. A nest has been reported in the Tower Mountain area.

Fairly common though rather inconspicuous is the little Western Screech-Owl. It nests in tree cavities, cliff crevices and even in nest boxes. There is strong evidence that it nests in the Dishman Hills. About the same size is the Boreal Owl, which finds to its liking the open subalpine forest, where it hunts the meadows and finds refuge from its enemies in the dense branches of subalpine fir and Engelmann spruce. Probably they are preyed upon by Barred Owls. Formerly thought to be rare, they are proving much less so by recent studies. Even smaller is the Pygmy Owl, about the size of a robin. Frequenting mountain forest in summer, it descends to the lowlands in winter, often entering city suburbs. It often flies in the daytime and is so tame that it can sometimes be picked up by hand. Slightly larger is the Northern Saw-whet Owl, one of which was found dead in the Dishman Hills. Smallest of all is the Ferruginous Owl, a quite rare inhabitant of mountain forests. It is said to feed mostly upon night-flying insects.

Becoming increasingly common in the state is the Barred Owl, about the size of the Great Horned. Usually frequenting mountain forest, it occasionally wanders. One was sighted on Tower Mountain and last fall one perched all day in a tree in a Spokane Valley backyard. The giant of owls in the Northwest is the Great Gray, living in mountain forest. Rather rare, it hunts low over meadow openings, searching for small rodents.

Our thanks to Bart Whelton of Spokane Audubon Society for supplying much of this information.

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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!