



LIGHTS AND SHADOWS

FROM THE DISHMAN HILLS

MAY 1990

HILLS ARE LIVELY WITH COLOR

The recent rains have brought a rich green and a variety of colorful flowers to Dishman Hills. Balsamroots ("wild sunflowers") are still conspicuous, though beginning to fade a bit. Rivaling them is the wild pink phlox, brightening many a forest opening. Piled high with its snowy clusters of spicily fragrant flowers is buckbrush, which supplies browse for hungry deer in winter. Biscuitroot flaunts its lacy clusters of bright yellow flowers. Blue camas, that staple former food of Native Americans, seems more common than usual, appearing in more moist spots. A few wild hyacinths, of a paler blue, have appeared. Pale yellow Indian paintbrushes are appearing, as are a few flowers of mule's ear, the flowers resembling those of balsamroot--the large, long leaves giving the plant its name.

Red-breasted nuthatches, so common this winter, seem to be decreasing. The red crossbills, regular this winter, seem to have departed. A number of summer birds have arrived. Evening grosbeaks, noisy in the pines, are migrating through. Vireos and warblers have arrived, as will as a pair of diminutive calliope hummingbirds, the smallest bird of North America. Chipping sparrows and black-headed grosbeaks have returned. One of the ponds has a handsome pair of mallards, followed by three tiny ducklings. If we have a fairly wet spring and summer, they may be able to fledge before the pond dries up. We wish them success! Red squirrels should have had a good winter, judging from the plentiful pine cone crop.

Some twenty hikers, children with their "Big Brothers and Sisters" from the Spokane area, delighted in a trip into the Hills May 12. It was real fun to accompany them as their nature interpreter. We hope they will return before too long.

Our income for April totalled \$839.21 (154.21 from recycling). Our thanks to the following who have contributed and given permission to be listed here: Dean H. Banta, Joan Barbour, Jon Barstad, Kathryn Bernard, Robin M. Bishop, Pat Brown, Tom Buerke, Joe Collins, James F. Conaty, Susan E. Dickinson, Verna Dolphin, Reece Ennesh, Richard D. Everett, Helen Ferguson, John Gardner, D. Gilbrech-McGown, Robert A. Gilchrist, Emmett Gumm, Dorothy Hartung, Eris A. Heggem, Ivy/Ken Hendrix, Blanche Holsten, Helen Lininger, John Lorang, James R. Loudermilk, Jack/Alice Malone, Lynda Mather, Elizabeth O'Brein, Ruth P. Ownbey, Madeline A. Phelps, Frank/June Potter, Julius F. Presta, Ambrose Priestley, Ruby Rector, Tom Rogers, Bill Royall, Dennis L. Sanders, Blanche Sarver, Larry Thieman, Jane M. Thrasher, Jane Van Meter, Lona West, Leona Widner, Shirley E. Wihlborg, Jeanne H. Wilson, Sylvia K. Wilson and Paul Winkelman. If we've missed you, please let us know at 926-7949. Thanks!

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

Our monthly meetings starting in May will be at the new lodge at Camp Caro, S. 625 Sargent Road, Dishman, at 7:30 p.m. the third Monday of each month. You are cordially invited. For additional information call 926-7949.

PEOPLE CONCERNED ABOUT ENVIRONMENT

Washington State's Department of Ecology presented its proposals for "Environment 2010" for public comment Monday evening, May 14 at the county Public Health building. Some 100 people attended, more than the D.O.E. people had expected. Breaking into four groups, they engaged in lively discussion about environmental problems facing the Spokane area and the state in general. The group I was in was made up of concerned citizens from several walks of life: environmentalists (aren't we all in some sense?), farmers, a state legislator and a representative of Kaiser Aluminum.

Air pollution was high on the agenda. The group admitted that the private auto is the chief offender. More stringent standards for emissions, requiring higher gas mileage, a higher gas tax, and greater use of mass transit were suggested. It was pointed out that local government supposedly wants more use of public transit, yet continually pushes for more and wider highways and another freeway, which would make it easier for people to drive their cars instead.

The impending shortage of water and how to cope with waste water from the sewage plant and the fertilizer- and pesticide-containing runoff was brought up, as well as how to conserve water. One person defended the use of large amounts of water for lawns, saying that lawns contribute much oxygen to the air. Countering this was the statement that trees, shrubs and other plants, often requiring little or no water, for example in the Dishman Hills Natural Area, give off more oxygen than lawns. Does anyone have hard facts about this?

Our consumptive life style was brought up: the United States, with 6 percent of the world's population, consumes 40 percent of its resources, including energy!

The solid waste problem, including that of largely unrecycled plastic, was touched upon. Generally agreed upon was the need for greater communication, both among state agencies and among people from different sectors of the public, and better education to inform the public--people themselves must take on responsibility for environmental protection. --TR

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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!