



LIGHTS AND SHADOWS FROM THE DISHMAN HILLS

MARCH 1992

THANKS TO FEBRUARY DONORS

Donations to the Dishman Hills project amounted to \$454.97 during February, \$57.97 of this was for recyclables. Expenses were \$111.15 for bulletin printing and mailing, \$75.00 for our annual bulk mailing permit and \$40.00 for administrative expense. Our thanks to those named below who have given permission to be listed as donors:

Lila M. Ackerman, Gretchen Brown, Fern E. Dahlstrom, R. W. Downing, Harriet R. Evans, Mrs. Kenneth Grudgel, Janet Hannick, Margaret I. Hoover, Maxine F. Leszczykowski, Barbara W. Lockwood, Janice M. Mahoney, Ernest F. Pike, Tom Rogers, Marjorie Rozell, Kenneth C. Swedberg, Joan M. Talbot, Laurence Thiemann and Ed Tietjen.

WILDFLOWER IDENTIFICATION class will again be given by Washington Native Plant Society. Geared towards beginners but a good review for those with some experience. Dates are Tuesday evenings, April 14, through May 19, 7:00 - 9:00 P.M. at Shadle Park High School. Register through Community College Extended Learning Program. For more information, call Nicolin J. Gray at (509) 467-8895.

Our annual Buttercup Hike into the Dishman Hills is scheduled for Sunday, March 29 at 1:30 p.m. starting at Camp Caro, South 625 Sargent Road. Come dressed for the weather--rain or shine. We will hike for as long or short a distance as you want. Come for a great time among the spring flowers!

We continue to be frustrated by the lack of a comprehensive plan for the protection of Dishman Hills Natural Area. The Department of Natural Resources, which has designated the area as a Natural Resource Conservation Area, has not called for a meeting of the management advisory committee for over a year. The Department has indicated that the prime consideration is "the protection of the resource". We still believe that this is best done by allowing foot traffic only, but no concensus has yet to be arrived at. Meanwhile we are planning to put up signs around our own land to protect it better. It appears that the "absentee owners" of the land, the DNR, The Nature Conservancy and Spokane County expect our organization to provide virtually all of the protection, yet we are getting little or no support from them. We hope this will soon change.

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: Lawrence Thiemann Secretary: Helen Lininger
Vice-President: Tom Rogers Treasurer: David Lenten
Board Members (in addition to officers): Doris Allgood,
Omar Carroll, Margaret Haggin, Michael Hamilton, Francis
Potter, June Potter and Ray Staley.

Our monthly meetings continuing until Spring will be at Opportunity Elementary School, 1109 South Wilbur the third Monday at 7 P.M. You are cordially invited.

SPRING IS ON THE WAY!

Glistening buttercups are dotting the Dishman Hills now, and the pink of grass widows is appearing. Less noticeable are the two inch high flower clusters of "pepper and salt", named for their tiny blossoms dotted with purple stamens. Other plants are greening up, promising more flowers in time for our annual buttercup hike in late March.

Birds are still scarce in the Hills but juncoes are starting to forsake bird feeders in city and valley yards and a few robins are looking for nesting territories. Chickadees and nuthatches seem scarce. Towhees haven't been sighted yet but should be arriving soon. Of course there is always a raven flying over, hoping to spot something edible.

A welcome sight are the mourning cloak butterflies, basking in the warm weather after their winter hibernation. If you aren't familiar with them, they are rather large chocolate brown insects with wings bordered with yellow and a row of sky blue dots just inside the borders. A marvelous sight! They will be seeking willows and quaking aspens on which to lay their eggs in tight bands around twigs. A few spiders are already active: the filmy web of a dome weaver was seen recently, though the owner apparently wasn't home. Maybe the victim of a hungry bird? Several kinds of flies are active, including a bee fly, which parasitizes grasshoppers.

Things are pointing to an early spring--perhaps we already have it. This may mean a hot, dry summer. Then we will need to be doubly careful with fire. It would seem that keeping power wires away from the Dishman Hills and similar areas would be good insurance against what happened in last October's "fire storm." Yet housing development in these areas still seems to be receiving government permission, even though adequate water for fire protection does not appear to be available. The only recommendation so far seems to be to cut down the trees close to houses built in the woods. (It seems that we are supposed to be planting trees on Arbor Day, not cutting them down!)

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