



# LIGHTS AND SHADOWS FROM THE DISHMAN HILLS

JANUARY 1993

## NOVEMBER - DECEMBER DONORS

Donations during November came to \$251.28 and in December were \$2,280.72. Expenses were \$166.51 for November and \$115.00 for December (there was no December bulletin). Our thanks to those of you who donated and have given permission to be listed below: Kathryn Bernard, Leonard N. Butters, Mildred F. Erickson, Bernice Fahlgren, Joan G. Fergin, Wilbert Fritz, George W. Girvin, Dr. Kenneth Gudgel, LeRoy E. Hook, Thelma Knowles, Marion E. Krauss, Patrick S. Lettermaier, Barbara W. Lockwood, Bettie Maron, Mary M. Meagher, Dr. Ian Napier, Joy Peterson, Marion L. Pillsbury, Avis E. Ray, Tom Rogers, Julie L. Rosenoff, Luella T. Rowberg, Mabel R. Sackett, Nanette Smith, Spokane Retired Teachers Association, Jan Strobeck, Patricia Sweeney, Lawrence Thiemann, Ed Tietjen, Doreen B. Vance, Jeanne H. Wilson, Sylvia K. Wilson, Mrs. Harold B. Wimby, Mary L. Wright.

Some details of management for the Nature Preserve are still to be worked out. We do not believe that there is need for "controlled burning" to take the place of natural fires to get rid of "excess fuel" on the ground for very little has accumulated. The suggestion has been made that snags be created, by cutting off the tops and limbs of some trees, to encourage cavity nesting birds. We believe that Nature should be allowed to take its course, which will gradually result in snags being produced. Interestingly, red-breasted nuthatches, which excavate nest cavities, are maintaining high numbers without any man-made snags. It is questionable whether snag creation, unless done on a massive scale, would increase woodpeckers, since these birds depend upon a large supply of beetles that bore into dead trees. Woodpeckers thrive after an extensive burn, which we don't believe would be at all desirable or acceptable in the Hills.

Continued effort will be made to eliminate foreign weeds. Hand pulling is much to be preferred, but careful spot application of herbicide might be necessary in some places. Closure of some more recent trails is anticipated, to protect the land. Hand replanting should not be necessary, for keeping the traffic off would be expected to allow natural revegetating. Nature tends to heal itself if given a chance.

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, Vice President: Tom Rogers, Secretary: Helen Lininger, Treasurer: David Lenten  
Board of Directors: Omar Carroll, Michael Hamilton, Francis Potter, June Potter, and Ray Staley

Our February meeting has been shifted to Wednesday, the 17th because of President's Day. It will be at Opportunity Elementary, South 1109 Wilbur at 7:00 PM. You are cordially invited to attend.

Please send donations to our box number, shown at top of this bulletin.

## DEEP SNOW IS NO NEWS!

Just how the deep snows this winter are affecting wildlife in the Dishman Hills we can only speculate. According to reports deer are having a hard time finding food and are being helped by people who live in outlying areas. Free roaming dogs may be harassing them. Birds which find food in the trees likely are not being affected, though the short pine seed crop can be expected to make things difficult for crossbills, nuthatches and red squirrels. Mice should have a secure time under the snow, where they are quite safe from coyotes. Chipmunks are napping in cozy nests under the snow blanket. The Spokane Valley portion of the Audubon Society's Christmas Bird Count came up with a high number of both individuals and species (the highest ever of the latter). We even had an eastern Blue Jay at a feeder.

Prospects are for adequate water in the ponds in the Hills--it has been very low for several years. Spring flowers should be luxuriant, though a late Spring may be the fact.

The advisory committee for the Dishman Hills Natural Resource Conservation Area has been meeting regularly and is in essential agreement concerning the management of the Natural Area. This is in line with the purpose for which our organization started the project, namely to establish a nature preserve to be used for low impact activities. The committee has agreed that the area should be open to foot traffic only, allowing no vehicles or horses and dogs only on leash. Of course, no shooting, fires or camping and no disturbance of plants, animals, rocks or soil. The committee's recommendations still must be approved by the State, and will be open to public comment at a hearing to be projected for late March or early April, though no date has been set. Opportunity will also be provided for written comments.

We are concerned because many people think that the entire area is public property, whereas about half of it belongs to our association and was bought by donations, not government funds. We maintain that the rules governing use should be uniform over the entire area, else protection would be difficult if not impossible. We urge that you attend the public hearing or write in your comments. We will keep you informed as to the date and place of the hearing. Protection of the Hills is at stake!

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