



LIGHTS AND SHADOWS FROM THE DISHMAN HILLS

MAY 1993

GROUPS ENJOY SPRING HIKES

The family hike sponsored by Spokane Audubon Society into Dishman Hills May 15, found about eighteen enthusiastic people, aged three years to seventy-nine. Mary Porter, biology teacher at John Rogers High, brought eight of her students, both girls and boys (they are currently enhancing Drumheller Park in North Spokane by planting native shrubs to help restore a natural area). In the ponds the students found a pair of mallards, salamander tadpoles, leeches, water tigers and red fairy shrimps (little crustaceans that swim upside down), diving beetles, water striders and a big dragonfly. A yellow warbler sang in the shrubbery and an old brood mourning cloak butterfly, having survived the winter, glided by. Grouse locusts, tiny grasshoppers, apparently rare in the Spokane area, were found. They also pass the winter in hibernation.

Balsamroot flowers brightened the open space and fringecups, wild hyacinths and wild onions added their color.

A public hike into the Hills the afternoon of May 23, was late enough to miss the heavy showers and also showed that summer is already upon us, for most of the spring flowers are through blossoming. Wild pink phlox was abundant, however, and the purple of larkspur added its touch of color, as did prairie smoke and bright yellow ragwort. Balsamroots were fading.

The Spring migration of birds is picking up. (The red-tailed hawk riding the breeze likely had stayed through the winter, however.) A solitary vireo was singing. A few butterflies, including an ochre ringlet and a few little "blues" joined mourning cloaks and an anglewing.

The following Monday we led a hike for six energetic women who represented an informal "newcomers' hike" (though not all were strictly newcomers). It was a pleasant trip for everyone, who agreed the Hills are a beautiful place.

Contributions for April came to \$274.76 and expenses \$256.49 (administrative services \$40, bulletin expense \$118.43 and property tax \$98.06). Interest income was \$41.40. Our thanks to the following who contributed money, recyclables and/or services during April: Omar Carroll, John Gardner, Frank Gropp, Michael Hamilton, Elaine Walker Harris, Bob Nelson, Rich Nelson, Madeline A. Phelps, Elaine Powers, Willene Priestley, Tom Rogers, Mable R. Sackett, Richard/Lonnie Schmidt, Spokane Floral Association, Kenneth C. Swedberg, Florence Thayer, Lawrence Thiemann, Ed Tietjen, Don Wilson, and Jeanne H. Wilson.

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

Our meetings are held every third Monday at 7 P.M. at Opportunity Elementary School, South 1109 Wilbur. During the summer we will be meeting at Camp Caro, 625 South Sargent Road, Dishman. You are cordially invited to attend.

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

NATURAL AREA NEED YOUR HELP

When a public hearing on the management plan for the Dishman Hills comes up, we expect a very strong lobbying effort by people who want the right to ride horses in the Natural Area. We have nothing personal against these persons, whom we have come to know as good, courteous people. In fact some of them in the past helped us to protect the area from the setting of fires by unknown persons. We do feel, however, that horses in the area are incompatible with the purpose for which we started the nature preserve project some twenty-five years ago, namely, careful use to protect the land and its plants and animals. Horses tend to cut up the trails, making them dusty and sometimes inviting erosion. Worse, some of them leave the trails. The inevitable manure brings in weeds, besides being objectionable to people on foot. There is a conflict of use. In such a small area, horses and hikers are not compatible. We believe that horse use should be accommodated elsewhere.

Advocates of horse riding say that since some of the land was acquired by tax money, riding should be permitted. Yet such use is not permitted in county or city parks, with the exception of the riding ring in Valley Mission Park, and the much larger Liberty Lake Park.

To counteract the pressure on the county commissioners of organized groups for riding in the Natural Resource Conservation area, we urge you to contact the commissioners and insist that the area be protected against horse use. We believe that our Dishman Hills Association members far outnumber the advocates of riding in the Hills but that won't do any good unless the commissioners hear from you, so please add your weight to the protection of the preserve by writing a short note to this effect to each commissioner: Pat Mumme, Skip Chilberg and Steve Hasson, Spokane County Commissioners' Office, West 1116 Broadway, Spokane, WA 99201. Please send a copy of your note to us at 10820 E. Maxwell, Spokane, WA 99206-4894. We can win this!

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