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LIGHTS AND SHADOWS FROM THE DISHMAN HILLS

FEBRUARY 1995

TOWER MTN SURVIVES CHANGES

The Tower Mountain area has endured a number of events during this century. Fire has swept over it several times, possibly as early as 1910 and supposedly some fifty years ago. Burned areas have recovered, those on the drier slopes more slowly. Selective logging occurred in 1977-78 and again in 1993-94. These operations left logging slash piled in and by the creek, and resulted in deep erosion channels in the logging roads and silting up of the lower reaches of the creek. Erosion has been largely controlled by the more recent loggers and logging slash was piled along the creek instead of in it. Nevertheless most of the area is in quite good condition.

Logging in 1977-78 in the area seemed to have no effect on the numbers of the diminutive winter wrens. Before 1979 as many as six winter wrens were counted on single trips but in that year their numbers began a decline. The winter and spring of 1980 revealed none. Mt. St. Helens exploded May 18 and none were noted until November 24 when one appeared. Was it the eruption or were the birds declining for some other reason? At any rate, there was only one record in 1981, that also in November. From 1982 through 1984 two or three were found per day but on only a few trips. From then on no more than one appeared, and in many years, through 1994, none at all. A mystery for a detective!

The 1991 fire storm, which reached only the lower part of the mountain, appears to have had little effect upon bird life--the fire left pockets of trees and bushes unburned.

Warblers have shown a definite decrease during the last few years. This appears not to be related to any local events but nationwide the suspicion is that the decline of these birds is due to the logging of the rain forests of Central American and northern South America, where these birds winter.

Small flycatchers began to decline in 1982 and by 1990 no more than one per day could be found and only on one or two dates. This may also be due to the clearing of forest in Central America.

Year-round bird residents appear not to have been appreciably affected by happenings on the mountain. Chickadees and nuthatches are common on nearly every visit. Likewise raven and woodpecker numbers seen normal. The elk herd on the mountain is thriving as are white-tailed deer, coyotes and snowshoe rabbits. During last summer's drought the elk took advantage of the trickle of water in the little stream on the land we are buying.

JANUARY DONATIONS SUPER

Donations to our Dishman Hills-Tower Mountain project came to an excellent \$8,709.96. Most of this came in the form of a memorial gift of \$6,900. Recycling brought \$69.96 and interest on the land fund, \$48.66. We cannot rely upon getting another memorial gift of this size so smaller donations will continue to be the backbone of our effort to pay for the 170 acres on Tower Mountain (Rock of Sharon area). However, this big memorial gift has enabled us again to pay off faster what we owe on the land, thus saving interest. We are not obligated to make another quarterly payment until December 1, though we will continue to pay ahead if donations make this possible. Expenses were: office expense, \$48; bulletin printing and mailing, \$137.64; bulk mailing fee, \$75; box rent \$40, and miscellaneous, \$17.50.

Many thanks to you loyal supporters who contributed money, recyclables and/or services during January and have given permission to be listed here: James C. Banta, Beverly E. Brown, Joseph/Stephanie Collins, Robert L./Myrna L. Decker, Verna Dolphin, Robert W./Mary M. Downing, Carol L. Ellis, Stanley A./Bernice F. Fahlgren, William C. Fix, John R./Mary H. Gardner, John R. Gorman, Donald/Inga Griffiths, Michael Hamilton, Lloyd/Janet Hannink, LeRoy E./Shirley F. Hook, Johnston-Fix Foundation, Inland Northwest Land Trust, Dr. F.L./Dorothy M. Knechtel, Karl Krogue, Helen E. Lininger, Dale Lively, William F./Sandra G. McMillan, Mr./Mrs. Roy Mills, Margaret/Edward Millsap, Rich Nelson, John B. III/Sandra G. O'Brien, Francis H./June G. Potter, Avis E./H. Dean Ray, Tom/Jane Rogers, S. Schrimshire, Lee M. Smith, St. Maries Garden Club, S.M. Talbot, Larry W./Janice A. Thorson, Barry W./Jeanne H. Wilson, Harry E./Clodall M. Wilson, and Arthur C. Zack/Nanette Smith. Again, thanks! (If we should have listed you here but missed you, please let us know at 926-7949.)

A.D. (Sam) Angove is retiring from his position as superintendent of Spokane County Parks and Recreation Department. We owe him a debt of gratitude for the tremendous amount of work he has done in securing land in Dishman Hills Natural Area as well as establishing many parks in the county. We will surely miss him and wish him well for the future.

ORGANIZATION PURPOSE

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

OFFICERS / DIRECTORS

President: Michael Hamilton; Vice-President: Tom Rogers; Secretary: Helen Lininger; Treasurer: David Lentes; Board Members (in addition to officers): Omar Carroll, Francis & June Potter and Ray Staley. Officers and board members serve without pay and we have no paid employees.

MEETING DATE / PLACE

Our meetings will be held at Opportunity Elementary School, S. 1109 Wilbur each third Tuesday at 7 p.m. during the school year. You are cordially invited.