



# Lights and Shadows from the Dishman Hills, September, 1997

## FIRE, FIRE IN THE HILLS !

As you may know by now we had a fire in the Dishman Hills on August 9th. The fire burned about four acres before it was promptly put out by the Department of Natural Resources, and Fire Districts 1 and 8. Seven brush engines, one aircraft, and over 50 people battled the flames to bring it under control before any significant damage or loss of property could occur. It took a little over an hour from the time the fire was reported to when it was contained. While the cause of the fire is unknown, it seems likely that it was human caused since no lightning storms had occurred shortly before. We extend our most sincere gratitude to those who acted swiftly, professionally, and bravely to protect the Natural Area. Special care was taken to insure a minimum of damage to the Natural Area caused by the fire equipment, and restoration of fire lines and access paths is complete.

We will watch the recovery of the fire area with great interest. The fire killed about 1/2 acre of pines, mostly small to medium in size. Several Douglas Fir and larger pines also were destroyed. The ground was blackened with no small plants left, except, amazingly, a few serviceberry bushes, which retained dead yellow-brown leaves. Though the ground fire was very hot, shrubs are expected to sprout from the roots. Grasses are already sprouting in the ash encouraged by some of the wet weather we have received in September. Meanwhile, the fire-killed pines will attract beetles, the larva of which will bore holes in them, hastening their return to the soil. This year's bumper crop of bark beetles has already been observed attacking some burned trees. The area around the burn is replete with healthy trees, bushes, flowering plants, and grasses that will replenish the burned acres. Weeds like Dalmatian toadflax and goatweed might invade the burn area, though without foot trails nearby to bring in the weeds, seems unlikely.

## ORGANIZATION NEWS

We are a non-profit organization dedicated to saving natural areas in the Spokane region for public enjoyment and education. Call Michael Hamilton at 747-8147 for any questions. We have our monthly meetings at Opportunity Elementary School, South 1109 Wilbur, the third Tuesday at 7 PM, **You are cordially invited.**

We thank the following July/August donors who have given permission to be listed here: James Ady, Barbera Baily, David Brown, Esther Browning, Isabel Hawkens, Adeline Haynes, Alfred/Carla Joyal, Loring Jones, Dorothy Knechtel, Jean Koch, Janice Mahoney, Marilyn Miller, Wilfred Moss, Stephen Peterson, Willene Priestley, Katherine Randall, Kent Richardson, Ruth Roberts, Tom Rogers, Ron Schmidt, Stephanie Schrimshire, Lois Smith, Jeanne Wilson, and Paul Winkleman.

## NATURE CONSERVANCY VISITS

On August 23rd, and on September 13 about a forty members of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) were given tours of the Dishman Hills by Michael Hamilton of the DHNAA and Guy Gifford of the DNR. These groups of TNC supporters were interested not only in seeing the Hills, but in learning about the management issues involved in running the Natural Area. They got a first hand look on enforcement of the rules when we ran into three mountain bikers on the trail. They were introduced to the new nature trail that will be built behind Camp Caro, and were lectured about the geology of the region. We also discussed the problems with pine bark beetles and mistletoe. The recent fire site was toured with a discussion of the pros and cons of fire in Dishman Hills Natural Area. The party got a good view of the surrounding landscape from Eagle peak and learned about the new nature area we are starting at Tower Mountain. The last stop of the tour was the East/West ponds which are still half filled with water. These members of TNC came from all over the state, we had people from Seattle, the Tri Cities and Spokane. They were impressed by the beauty of the place and the hard work that has gone into the protection of the area.

## TAX VOTE POSTPONED

The vote on the Conservation Futures tax has been postponed till the November election. There will be an article on the tremendous value of this tax for the Spokane community in next month's newsletter. This is very important, so please take note.

Please use this form when sending **CONTRIBUTIONS or DUES**  
All contributions are tax deductible

SEND CONTRIBUTIONS TO: DHNAA  
E. 10820 Maxwell  
Spokane, WA 99206

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Please put your account no. \_\_\_\_\_ on your check

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ MEMORIAL FOR \_\_\_\_\_  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_ LAND PURCHASE FUND  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_ ANNUAL DUES due in January (\$10 regular, \$5 student  
or living lightly, \$2 to cover bulletin expenses)

New ?  Renewal ?  Don't list me as donor

Please tell us if this newsletter is unwanted or if there is an address mistake