



Lights and Shadows from the Dishman Hills, June, 1999

GREEN SPACE - AN EDITORIAL

The value of urban green space is becoming more apparent as Spokane expands into the surrounding countryside. The trend of the times is to move out to where there is some breathing room and build the American dream house with some acreage, nothing wrong with that, but there goes some space. Meanwhile urban planners work to accommodate expansion with urban connectors, freeways, arterials, and schools, and there goes some more space. Then businesses, churches, and convenience stores move in to support the growth, besides land is cheaper out on the urban edge.

One day we wake up to find that one of the reasons we love our community is gone, and everyone is upset and starts pointing fingers. Its what we call urban sprawl, and it is happening all over the US, and its happening at the Dishman Hills, Latah Valley, Browns/Tower Mtn area, Indian Trail, and the Little Spokane River areas. Spokane is not in the advanced stages of urban sprawl, there is a lot of opportunity, not to stop growth, but to do it right. The task of preserving green space and natural areas should be the responsibility of local government and the citizens of the communities that have so much to gain. Directing growth is a long term commitment, a tough job, that must be addressed by planners, and government leaders.

At the Dishman Hills we deal with growth issues all the time, and one of our goals is to increase community awareness of the value of saving our natural spaces. We are constantly trying to counter the bad effects of growth. In the last year we have deal with two roadways, three dumps, one toxic waste site, one expanding trailer park, one proposed water tank, a neighbourhood request to remove nearby trees (falling hazards), and several property trespass problems. All of these issues involved someone viewing the Natural Area as simply undeveloped open space that was there to accommodate growth. We certainly learned our lesson when County road planners pushed the new Sprague couplet into our northern boundary, probably to avoid displacing a few business along First Ave., and to save some money.

We have learned that green space must be actively protected. Spokane is rapidly passing the stage where natural spaces will "just be there" without active preservation. So what is the right answer? There are many answers. Overall we must elevate the priority of preserving and managing our natural areas. The cost of ten miles of roadway could save hundreds of acres of forest, streams, and recreational land. The Conservation Futures program is a step in the right direction. We must all work to change our governments view that the natural scene must take backseat to urban expansion. It should be a part of it, an important part. Maybe some of you readers out there have some ideas how to take Natural Spokane into the next millenium. Please write them down and send them to the address on the right and we can start a forum on finding the right answers.

ESA STILL ON THE WAY

The Ecological Society (ESA) convention is still on tract for the first week in August. Look for details in July Light and Shadows. On August 6 the public will be invited to stop by Camp Caro to view a ESA field lab display during their rapid environmental assessment of the Natural Area. There will be a public workshop August 7 at N.222 Havana on the issues of preserving a healthy ecology in the face of urban expansion. Check out their webpage at esa.sdsc.edu for details.

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 with any questions. Another reminder that we will have our summer meetings only on call.

The following who have given permission to be listed here contributed in May to our land fund and expense account for a total of \$1570!: Margaret Bloom, Stanley Fahlgren, Wilbert/Gladys Fritz, L.K./Tudy Hatch, Adeline Haynes, Camille Kovarik, Helen Lininger, Carol/George Miller, Marilyn/John Miller, Francis/June Potter, Edward/Jan Reynolds, Tom Rogers, Norma Rosenberger, Helen Stowell, Kenneth Swedberg and Jeanne Wilson. **Our thanks to all you donors!**

May expenses were \$519.80 for taxes on land donated but which does not qualify as tax exempt--we have it on the market--and \$81.83 for bulletin postage. We have made the June 6 quarterly payment of about \$5000 on the Tower Mountain- Rocks of Sharon parcel we are buying. The same amount is needed for the September 6 payment plus money for bulletin postage. Please keep your gifts coming. **Again, many thanks!**

Please use this form when sending **CONTRIBUTIONS or DUES**

All contributions are tax deductible

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