



Lights and Shadows from the Dishman Hills, June, 2000

ENCHANTMENT

There is a quiet place just south of Camp Caro in the Dishman Hills along the main trail to the "ponds" called the Enchanted Ravine. The name for the ravine came from the imagination of young hikers that attended the Kiwanis summer camp back in the "old days". Tom Rogers, biological guide for the camp, invited the kids to name this canyon. One can imagine an energetic group of youths out to adventure, entering the cool, green, and quiet, vertical-walled canyon conjuring up such a name. Today, the ravine, along the new PineCliff Interpretative trail, still imparts a sense of wonder, discovery, and solitude, that can easily be described as enchantment: try it!

This topographic feature is thought to be a surface expression of an old, near-vertical crack or fault in the Earth's crust. The broken rock erodes much faster than the surrounding bedrock, thus forming the slot-like canyon. The SE-NW alignment of the ravine places it in a group of SE-NW fault-controlled valleys in the Hills (Deep Ravine), and in the Spokane Area (Hangman Crk), and could have been caused by a distant relative of the tectonic forces that now propel the famous, SE-NW trending, San Andreas Fault in California (no kidding).

The trees in the ravine are dominated by Douglas fir, in contrast to the surrounding Ponderosa pine forest. These fir trees are very adaptable, since they can grow without lots of light and in dry or wet areas, unlike the pine that prefers sunny areas. In the ravine, the shady, moist bottom give the firs an advantage, and as they grow creating more shade, the pines have a hard time competing.

The Dishman Hills are full of "enchanted" places where the wonders of nature can speak to those willing to slow down, look around, and absorb the details of our natural world. Many feel that this enchantment is the essence of what the Dishman Hills Natural Area is all about; try it!

THANKS, BUT NO TANKS

The County Commissioners, led by John Roskelley, are supporting the acquisition of the rocky land between the new Sprague Couplet and the Natural Area as an environmental buffer to counter the effects of the new roadway. This story will unfold as the summer progresses, and we are very pleased with the County's willingness to work with us here. Elsewhere things are not so bright.

The County land behind Park Place Development on the NE side of the Natural Area may be offered to Spokane Water Utilities for the construction of a water tank with access road on the high, rocky ground. We were under the impression that this land was part of the Natural Area, and have had several written and verbal assurances that it was ever since the land swap with the Park Place Development in 1995. We have now been told that the County never completed all the paperwork for the land transfers to the DH, and thus County Public

Works can use it for development. Needless to say, the Association is appalled with the disregard Public Works has shown for the Natural Area, and for past agreements. Park Place Retirement Community, in 1995, justified the environmental impact, zone reclassification, and land swap with the County for its new expansion, by ceding 4 acres of their rocky land on the east side of the development to the Natural Area for 4 acres of County flat land needed for their expansion. Subsequently, County Parks and Recreation, the State, and the Association all thought the land transferred and even included it on maps of the Natural Area. Additionally, these "land locked", rocky acres have an access easement through private land to the north, and the County has suggested to the Water District that they use the "undeveloped open space" to the south for their access road, which would destroy 12 additional acres of Dishman Hills land, rather than disturb private land using the legal easement. We can not help but wonder what causes such thinking, and whether there is not some animosity in Public Works for the Dishman Hills related to our involvement in past, and ongoing projects.

ORGANIZATION NEWS

We are a non-profit organization dedicated to saving nature areas in the Spokane region for public enjoyment and education. Call Michael Hamilton, 747-8147, if you have any questions. For the summer months we meet only for special reasons and will resume monthly meetings in the Fall.

The following are our May donors that have consented to be listed: John Cobb, Howard Dolphin, Larry Hatch, Adeline Haynes, Alfred & Carla Joyal, Helen Lininger, Kerry Masters, Leo Middendorf, Marilyn & John Miller, Francis & June Potter, Norma Rosenberger, John & June Warner, and Barney & Jeanne Wilson. Many thanks for your generous support.

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

All contributions are tax deductible

SEND CONTRIBUTIONS TO: DHNAA

3415 S. Lincoln Dr.

Spokane, WA 99203

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