



**DISHMAN HILLS NATURAL AREA ASSOCIATION**  
 3415 S. LINCOLN DRIVE. SPOKANE, WA 99203. 509 747-8147

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# LIGHTS AND SHADOWS from the Dishman Hills, July, 2001

## HIDING IN THE WOODS

What do Robin Hood, moonshiners, and the wicked witch in Hansel and Gretel all have in common? They are part of the many generations of people that have been off to the woods to do things better unseen. At the Dishman Hills we have a history of clandestine activities including a hobo village from the great depression, a whiskey still from prohibition days, and many "hideouts" where generations of kids have wiled away the day dreaming of pirates and high adventure. This summer we are once again experiencing this phenomena, but three activities are particularly disturbing because they involve the irresponsible use of fire.

The discovery of our first back-woods methamphetamine lab early this summer reminded us of the proximity of urban culture. This was a small box-lab drug users are taking to the woods to cook batches of drugs in privacy. It involves the use of a camp stove and several toxic and inflammable chemicals. It's a dangerous activity done by less than responsible people, and it has us somewhat concerned.

In July there was a very small forest fire near the East Pond on the northwest side of the Natural Area. On investigation it was found that the fire was started by fireworks. With fireworks outlawed in Washington, some people are headed to the woods to launch their pyrotechnics out of sight from the authorities. Needless to say, a dry woods is about the worst place on earth to do this, so we are assuming these people are young kids that really don't know better.

The latest activity is being done by an older set. On the east side of the Natural Area we are getting complaints from neighbors about weekend camp fire/drinking parties up in the Hills. We believe that most of the forest fires in the last ten years were caused by camp fires that were left to smolder. It's probably too much to expect that people breaking the rules by starting fires and drinking in the woods would be responsible enough to put out their camp fire.

On one hand, our "hiding in the woods" set sort of comes with the territory of managing an urban forest. But on the other hand, dealing with fire the stakes are very high. All of you that use the Dishman Hills should be eyes and ears to detect dangerous activities. While we don't suggest that anyone stop observed dangerous activities, please report any to us or to the Spokane County Parks and Recreation.

## SHARON STORY TOLD

A recent article in the Spokesman Review (7/22/01) by Rich Landers showcased our new Rocks of Sharon Nature Area on Tower Mountain as part of the Conservation Futures Program story. Landers gives a good account of the program which is striving to protect the County's few remaining wild areas. This program has been a great success in providing land purchase funds from a small property tax

increase. The funds which are used to obtain urban forest and nature areas, have had a compounding effect since they have been, in many cases, matched by public partnerships such as our joint efforts with the County at the Rocks of Sharon. The newspaper article covered some important issues. The Conservation Futures Program will sunset after this year and we will have to support it in an election in the Fall. The article also points out that the land parcel that includes Big Rock, a prominent landmark on Tower Mountain, has not yet been obtained, and it probably won't be in the near future since the land owner is not interested in selling. Landers also mentioned our dream of connecting the Dishman Hills Natural Area on the northern end of the Dishman ridge and the Rocks of Sharon on the southern end of the same ridge with a trail. This trail would run for about five miles, climb almost 2000 feet vertical, and take the hiker through a wonderful variety of biological and geological zones.

## 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. We have a monthly meeting the third Tuesday of the month but during the summer month there will be no meetings.

The following are our June donors that have consented to be listed: Vivian & Thomas Caufield, Beverly Hinton, Alfred & Carla Joyal, Helen Lininger, Melvin & Gloria McCudden, Leo Middendorf, John & Marilyn Miller, Ambrose & Anna Priestley, Jane Rogers, Eugene & Insk Scheel, Philip & Marcia Spohn, Mary Taylor, Barney & Jeanne Wilson, and one anonymous donor.

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