



**DISHMAN HILLS NATURAL AREA ASSOCIATION**  
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# LIGHTS AND SHADOWS from the Dishman Hills, May, 2001

## NEW ASSAULT

There's a new assault on the Dishman Hills Natural Area, one that was forecasted, feared, and fought during the last seven years. When the Sprague Couplet (Appleway Blvd.) was built close to the northern side of the Natural Area, we expressed concerns that new access would result in commercial and industrial development adjacent to sensitive natural space. The County, in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Couplet project, agreed that a "landscape buffer" was called for south of Appleway Blvd. between Park and Dishman roads to mitigate this serious concern. One of the ways stated in the EIS to provide this buffer was to require that development proceed under current (1997) zoning and the County's Comprehensive Growth Plan, and would not allow rezoning without consideration of adjacent land uses.

Associated Restaurants has applied for B-3 (commercial) zoning for its residential land south of Appleway Blvd. and north of the Natural Area. The rezoning request has already passed County environmental muster and has completed a public hearing, discussion pending. The environmental checklist for rezoning failed to mention the natural area, the sensitive habitats, and the scenic and recreation uses in the immediate area. The County planner handling the rezoning request claimed that he was unaware of the presence of the Natural Area and of the special ecology in the vicinity. Once again the Dishman Hills Natural Area seems invisible to those who control our community's growth. We feel that the promises in the EIS made by the County should be honored, and that ignorance is not a valid reason for disregarding environmental concerns. By holding firm on land zonation around natural areas, development and natural space can coexist. We shall see if the County is willing to protect natural space or will follow old habits of giving development priority over all.

## PLANT SAFARI

The Buttercup Hike was a great success, with about 20 people taking a brisk hike to Eagle Peak for a beautiful view of the Spokane Valley and the Selkirk Mountain Range to the north. While buttercups were on the wane, the grass widows and glacier lilies were plentiful, and the arrowroot and phlox just starting. A good time was had by all.

There will be a hike up Tower Mountain, to the new Rocks of Sharon Nature Area, on June 2, starting at 10am at the parking area at the end of Holman Rd. To find this spot, head south on Dishman-Mica Rd. to Shafer Rd (light), then right into Ponderosa Development, then right on 44th, left on Woodruff Rd., right on Holman, drive on till it ends as public road. This is a hike for the Native Plant Society, so botany will be the topic of the day. The hike involves a climb of about 1,500 feet vertical, and five miles horizontal, but with all the plant watching, the pace should be slow. Bring lunch and water.

## TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS

For those hiking up to the East/West ponds from Camp Caro, you will notice that a new trail has been cut into the hillside to provide a switchback route where one scrambled up rock and gravel before. We want to restore both the eroded hillside and several trails in the network of trails that leads to the ponds, so, use the new trail please and stay off the old route to allow nature to do a little healing. At the top of the hill above the new switchback, look for the trail to the left, the fastest, most direct route to the ponds. We have moved a large rock off this trail where hikers had to climb a ledge, making passage much easier. There are plans to install a railing on the ledge to insure safety on the bare rock. Soon, several signs will mark the improved Caro-to-ponds route and several redundant trails will be closed.

## 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 with the June meeting at Camp Caro at the Dishman Hills NRCA, 7pm.

The following are our April donors that have consented to be listed: Margaret Bloom, Alan & Velda Carlson, Rita Cencich, the Hobnailers, Mary Gardner, Don & Inga Griffiths, Larry Grossman, Frank & Kathleen Howard, Glen Kivett, Vernon & Gloria Krebs, Helen Lininger, Kerry Masters, Marilyn & John Miller, Barbara Morkill, Jack & Patricia Muncy, Steve Olson, Warren & Ruth Peterson Madeline Phelps, Jan & Ed Reynolds, Jane Rogers, Barney & Jeanne Wilson, Art Zack, and two anonymous donors. Thank you one and all!

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