

LIGHTS and SHADOWS

from the Dishman Hills

March 2003

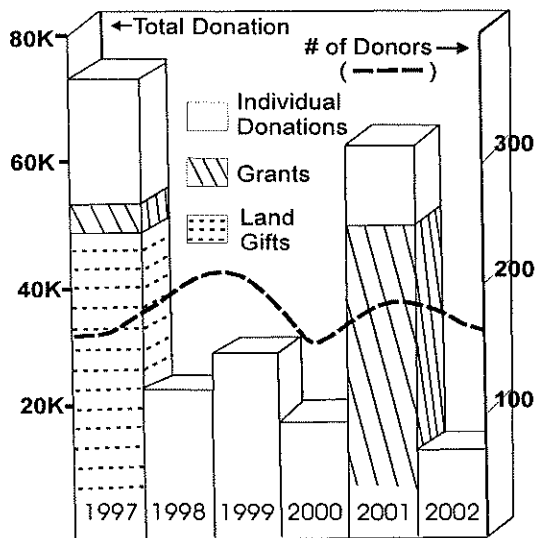
LAND TRANSFER

Here is the latest episode of the State's offer to transfer 250 acres of prime forest land on Tower Mt. to Spokane County for free. First the County refused to accept the land. A strange decision considering that the County was mandated by the voters last fall to seek and acquire natural spaces for community resources. They plan to spend tax money for the Conservation Futures Program to buy natural areas, but take a pass on beautiful, free forest acreage next to the new Rocks of Sharon Nature Area for which both the Association and County have already spend 1.5 million dollars in public resources. This was a decision we were not comfortable with, so the Association stepped up to the plate and offered to accept the transferred parcel from the County if they acquired it. This would relieve them of all obligation for stewardship, their main concern. The County determined that the reassignment of this land to the Association complied with all the legal aspects of the transfer program, and agreed to the transfer. The State had previously agreed to this arrangement, but now has decided that they may not want to proceed with the transfer after all, considering the reassignment to the Association. Will the State change its mind again? Will the County stick with its decision? Will this forest be saved?

THE BOOKS

As we close the books on last year's financial activity, we thought it might be informative to give a snapshot of the Association's finances over the last six years. Since we venture to save more natural land through purchase, long range planning is very important to best balance income and expense obligations. Our recent land purchase on Tower Mt. has us working hard to cover the cost.

While donor numbers and individual donations seem relatively constant, special resources such as land gifts and grants come sporadically, and we are hard pressed to depend on them showing up at the right time and amount. The bottom line is that we have faith our community will support land conservation in the future. The steady amount of individual donations is a symbol of public commitment that has been extremely important in attracting and winning grants from organizations that wish to acknowledge and partner with this community commitment. So, please help us keep the ball rolling; any donation large or small will make a difference.



BUTTERCUP TIME

The seasons are changing, and all the signs of Spring are around us. The buttercups have been up for several weeks and the grass widows and glacier lilies have sprung up to compete for the few pollinating insects that have emerged. Soon showy white flowers of ninebark bushes, bright yellows of cinquefoil and the pale lavender of wild onions will add to the spectacular flower parade in the Hills. It comforting to reaffirm that with the world in such tempest that nature still progresses on despite all.

Spring is also time for our annual **Buttercup hike** which is scheduled for April 6, Sunday. We will meet at 1pm at Camp Caro on the north side of the Natural Area off Sargent Road. The camp has picnic tables so if you are inclined show up early for a picnic. The hike will run for about two hours and cover about three miles, all on trails of course. Shake off that winter attitude and head for the hills! Call Michael Hamilton at 747-8147 with any questions.

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 meet every other month on the third Tuesday at Opportunity Elementary School, S. 1109 Wilbur, in the teacher's lounge, 7pm. Our next meeting will be May 19.

The following are our February donors that have consented to be listed: Margaret Becker, Marge Benander, Robin Bishop, Myrna Cliff, Jeff & Brenda Danner, Dr. & Mrs. Fernau, Celeste Frost, Marva Goede, Scott Grimmett, Tim & Susan Henderson, Harry & Inge Hendron, Hobnailers, Pat Killien, Sunni Mace, Marilyn Miller, Roy Mills, Bill Nienhuis, Jack O'Brien, Stephen Peterson, Marilyn Stedman, Mr. & Mrs. Sylvester, Jill Thomas-Pestrin, Shirley Wihlborg, Jeanne Wilson, and four anonymous donors.

We abuse the land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us...When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect.

— Aldo Leopold

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All contributions are tax deductible

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