

LIGHTS and SHADOWS

from the
Dishman Hills

May 2003

SUCCESS!

The State trust transfer land on Tower Mountain, the Big Rock parcel, will be moved to the Dishman Hills Association some time in late summer or early Fall (hip, hip, hurrah!). A meeting with the County Commissioners, the State Land Commissioner Doug Sutherland, and the Association was fully successful in addressing all the problems that were holding up the transfer. This "ground breaking" move to use a community-based conservation group as a recipient for State trust lands instead of local government required special effort from all the parties involved. Other conservation groups both local and statewide have express support and delight in seeing a new conservation tool emerge.

During the joint meeting, details were presented as to why the State put the Big Rock parcel in the transfer program in the first place, and why they have been so supportive in seeing this beautiful piece of forest added to the new nature area on Tower Mountain. Evidently, back in the mid-nineties when the joint management (State-County-Assoc.) document was being assembled for the Dishman Hills NRCA, the public expressed concern that certain activities such as horse riding and mountain biking would be excluded to protect the sensitive environment there. The State commented that they would support a larger nature area on Tower Mountain that could include such activities; they made good on their promise Will wonders never cease!

The land transfer will represent the largest single addition to the Association's holdings both in size and value. Needless to say, we are delighted with how this has all worked out. But the real winners are the people of our community who can benefit from saving another piece of our natural setting that makes Spokane such a special place to live.

BALSAMROOT

There is a native plant in the Dishman Hills and the Spokane area that provides a striking display this time of year on sunny hillsides and meadows. Its numerous, bright yellow, daisy-like flowers wave in the wind, catching one's attention. It's the Arrowleaf Balsamroot or Mountain Sunflower. This plant, a member of the sunflower family, blooms until things warm and dry up in the summer. The Arrowleaf has large arrow-shaped leaves that appear grayish due to a thick covering of fine white hairs. The large yellow flowerheads, usually many per plant, are borne on individual stems and have from eight to 25 rays. A thick taproot that gives the plant half its name, has a viscous sap that has the smell and flavor of turpentine or balsam.

This plant was a grocery store for the native Americans. The young shoots, before they emerged from the ground in the early spring, were sought by many and eaten raw. The flower budstalks were also a favorite springtime food both raw and cooked. The large



Balsamorhiza Sagittata

Never does Nature say one thing and wisdom another
— Pliny the Elder

taproots were dug, peeled, and then pit-cooked overnight. The root's carbohydrates were then converted to sugar and then could be eaten immediately for a "sort of dessert", or stored for later eating or for trade. The flowers seeds were harvested, dried, then toasted on hot rocks. The seeds were eaten whole or beaten into a meal that could make a porridge or was mixed with other delicious items such as deer grease or Douglas fir sugar. All parts of the plant were used as medicines in the form of infusions for colds, whooping cough or stomach pains, or poultices for burns. Some tribes even smoked the leaves as a tobacco substitute.

So get out on the trail and enjoy the Arrowleaf Balsamroot, for soon the entire plant will dry up when the rainless, hot summer descends on the Northwest.

SCOUT PROJECT

Eagle Scout Troop 420 is starting a special project to build a Dishman Hills Natural Area sign on Appleway. For many years, people have commented that the approach to Camp Caro and the northern access to the Natural Area is hard to find. In addition they want to do some landscaping on the corner of Sargent and Appleway where the sign will be. The contact for this project is Forest Duba at 921-9862, if you would like to add some resources or ideas to this project

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 next month on the third Tuesday at Camp Caro on the north side of the natural area off Sargent Road, 7pm. Our next meeting will be June 17.

The following are our April donors that have consented to be listed: Robert & Mary Burroughs, Rita Cencich, Jim Conaty, Michael Edwards, Claire Goudge, Don Griffiths, Kenneth Gudgel, Elaine Harris, Eris Heggem, Hobnailers, Moritz & Dora Kundig, Kerry Masters, Prudence Miller, Marilyn Miller, David Noble, Ormsby family, Richard Randall, Norma Rosenberger, Lois Smith, Ernestine Staley, Ruth Stickney, Mary Sweeting, Joan Talbot, Beth & Ed Tietjen, Norma Trefry, Rita Waldref, Hershel Zellman, and two anonymous donors. Thank you.

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 (see on address)

\$ _____ 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