

LIGHTS and SHADOWS

from the
Dishman Hills

October, 2003

SCHOOL'S IN

On a sunny fall day during the week a visit to the Dishman Hills found the natural area crawling with school children. The Camp Caro parking lot was choked with big, yellow school buses dropping off students and turning around to leave. Upon inquiry of what school could field this mass of kids for a day in the woods, it was found that there were actually three separate groups from three schools. Teachers and parents had their hands full keeping their groups separate. The scene was a reminder of the value of urban natural areas for education in our community's schools. Spokane area students need accessible, quality natural habitat to experience the complexity, the beauty, and the value of healthy ecosystems as part of the neighbourhood. In the last ten years the availability of space for field trips has declined. Many camps north of Spokane, such as Camp Spalding; that were often visited by students in the past are now unavailable. Tight budgets also are discouraging schools to commit the resources for long bus trips to distant areas.

While demand goes up supply goes down. The future hope to save the natural wonders of our planet is to have conservation be embraced by all as a way of life rather than just a cause for a few active, but small groups. There is no better way to start than to treat school kids to a day in the woods. The Dishman Hills Association remains committed to encourage educational uses of the lands we own and manage.

TREES HELP

Urban forest such as at the Dishman Hills are taking on a new responsibility to save the planet. Washington State is taking part in an innovative effort to reduce greenhouse gasses in our atmosphere by using trees to fix carbon. This project is part of the Global Climate Change Initiative that is being funded by the U.S. Department of Energy. Much of our fuel burning releases carbon dioxide, and these gases are warming up the Earth's climates by trapping solar heat. The average household in Spokane emits almost 25 tons of carbon dioxide every year through heating, travel, and electricity use! Trees remove carbon from the air as part of their natural respiration and store the carbon in their wood. Washington's Department of Natural Resources has a grant to explore the possibility of entering the carbon sequestration market where forest owners could sell "carbon credits" to offset emissions from those who emit greenhouse gases. Economic incentives like this may be part of a bigger solution to tackle a serious global pollution problem. The State is also interested in researching the details of how to manage forest to maximise this carbon fixing feature. It really is a win, win situation where someone like our Association can work on forest health, combat global warming, and make a little money. So, maybe in the far future our lovely green covered hills in the Spokane Valley will be known as the Dishman Hills Natural area and Carbon Sink, and we may be selling credits to the waste-to-energy facility.

Lose your primary entanglement with the angonizing beauties of the natural world and you need tremendous lashings of power and money to make up for it. The soul, hungry for belonging, will eat up the trees, sky and ocean.

-- David Whyte

AUTUMN

The following article is from the Lights and Shadows in the fall of 1976, the Nation's bicentennial. Tom Rogers was writing the bulletin. The Association had made its first land purchase and the County had joined in with 220 acres more. We were at full steam, but we were about to meet up with our first big challenge dealing with development competing with the local environment, the Meadows subdivision, a 130 house proposed development on Park road.

"Autumn is in full swing, though at times it seems more like summer. To see some fall flowers in the Hills go up the trail from Camp Caro and turn left at the first fork by the big cliff. At Cottonwood Hollow you will find blue gentians and the white flower clusters of yampa, the roots of which were eaten by the Indians.

Most of the summer birds have migrated but chickadees, nuthatches and juncos are still around. Red crossbills may be passing over and evening grosbeaks have arrived from the mountains. If you are lucky you may glimpse a Townsends's Solitaire. You might hear a rock wren or get a scolding from a pine squirrel or see a late chipmunk or marmot. The white-crowned sparrows are now migrating through the Dishman Hills and residential areas that are not too tidy and so provide grass and weed seeds. Most of the autumn birds are young ones, with brown and gray head stripes. The birds nest in Canada and Alaska between the tundra and the taiga. A few may winter in Spokane but more often winter further south. In the spring they move north again, in late April or early May. They sing occasionally in the fall but their usual voice now is a loud "pink".

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 meeting the third Tuesday of the month, Nov. 17, at Opportunity Elementary School, in the teacher's lounge, S. 1109 Wilbur, 7pm.

The following are our September donors that have consented to be listed: Joseph Collins, Robert Downing, Frieda Froth, Jim & Gloria Fox, Lois Hatch, Eris Heggem, David & Rebecca Knapp, Don & Gloria Nicol, and Pioneer School. Thank you very much.

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 address) 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