

LIGHTS and SHADOWS

from the
Dishman Hills

November 2005

TOWER TOUR

As the cold winds of Autumn blew and rain clouds threatened, members of the Association (Art Zack, Michael Hamilton) were joined for a Tower Mountain tour by County Commissioner Mark Richard along with his daughters, and representatives of the Inland



Land Trust (Chris DeForest), the Spokane Mountaineers (Jeff Lambert, Bill Fix), and the Dream Trail Group (Patty Houff). The tour took us from the top of Tower Mountain down the east ridge to Big Rock and back again, winding our way through the Rocks of Sharon on the ridge. Mark, a captive audience, was bombarded with conversations that ranged from geology to biology to the importance of the Conservation Futures Program, and of conserving Big Rock and the surrounding natural area. All of us have been working hard on the new conservation area on Tower Mountain and on a trail connection between there and the Dishman Hills Natural Area to the north. We wanted those in charge of the destiny of the County to see first-hand what we were doing, and appreciate the value of this beautiful spot. The threat to the area was well demonstrated with a truck parked just below Big Rock. Mark appeared to be impressed by the whole experience and stated that he would support putting a 5 year extension of the Conservation Futures Program on the ballot, as well as a proposal to make the Program permanent.

HOW OLD THE FOREST

Take any group of kids into the Dishman Hills Natural Area and someone will ask how old is the surrounding forest. A recent study by the students of North Central High School has shed some light on this issue. They surveyed the ponderosa pines at Pineroft Natural Area, a patch of forest protected by the State just off Pines Ave., next to the River. Twenty five trees were cored and measured. Ages ranged from 17 to 185 years with an average of 88.2 years. The pine forest in the Dishman Hills is very similar. Our forest is older being in rugged terrain and more remote. A burn study of the Dishman forest in 1999 sampled 16 trees and found their ages ranged from 33 to 202 years with an average of 126.25 years. The North Central study revealed a very interesting aspect of the pine forest. There was no significant relationship between the diameter of the trees at breast height and their age. The diameter of the ponderosa pine is greatly dependent on local conditions, and our dry-land pine forest are much older in many cases that you would expect by looking at the tree size. Mature trees may have been bypassed by logging because of small size leaving us some fairly old stands. The ponderosa can grow very large provided there is ample water. Many of our large "domestic" pines in the city are younger than the small "wild" pine in the forest.

What can be more important than the science of life to any intelligent being who has the good fortune to be alive?

Isaac Asimov

THANKS for GIVING

Donations as of mid November totaled for the year almost \$10.8K, already exceeding the 2004 annual total that amounted to about \$10.4K and the year is far from over. This is allowing us to make some accelerated payments on our land purchase contracts thus saving interest cost and moving closer to the day when we can consider additional conservation projects.

We are very pleased to announce that this month the Association was informed by Foundation Northwest that we are both endowed with an annual distribution from the Stanley and Bernice Fahlgren Fund, and are recipient of a grant from the Patricia M. Houff Fund. The warmest of thanks to those generous heroes that have chosen the Dishman Hills Association as a way to give back to their community a wonderful gift that will last forever and that is available to every citizen. To this end we recommit ourselves to provide the best we can in saving natural space for the community.

Last year's financial numbers have been crunched and they show that we succeeded in spending only 3.8% of income on management and 4.0% on fund raising, the rest going for conservation programs! This efficiency is possible by using volunteers backed by the generous, often unsolicited, support of the community through donation of funds and equipment.

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 January 17. This is our annual meeting where we will elect officers, review the past year, and maybe, set some goals for 2006. We also plan to consider a revised set of bylaws for the corporation at this meeting.

The following are our October donors that have consented to be listed: Steve & Jan Barrett, Earthworks recycling, Judy Heggen-Davis, Frieda Foth, Don Griffiths, Camille Kovarik, Cynthia Langlois, Fred Radebaugh, Diane Rogers, Mary Ruud, Jeanne Wilson, Mary Wright, and one anonymous donor. Thank you for your support.

Please use this form when sending **CONTRIBUTIONS or DUES**
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3415 S. Lincoln Dr.
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