

LIGHTS and SHADOWS

from the
Dishman Hills

July 2006

BUG HEROES

Ladies and gentleman a round of applause please for the bug heroes of the hour, *Cyphocleonus achates* and *Larinus minutus*. Many of you will know them by their familiar names, the voracious knapweed root boring weevil and the lesser knapweed flower weevil, the lesser of the two weevils (sorry). Several years ago the Dept. of Natural Resources turned these two guys loose on the weed patches behind the lodge at Camp Caro and at several other places in the Natural Area. The bugs were supplied by the U.S. Dept of Agriculture.

The results is in this summer and it was a success with patches of knapweed, a noxious invasive plant, completely wiped out. We are giving credit to the bugs since other changes such as global warming

Adult



Knapweed root weevil

and over development in the area were unlikely to have effected these tenacious, and unwanted plants.

Allow us to "roast" these insect celebrities as a sort of a tribute to work well done, without wages we might add. Both hail from the Balkans and the eastern Mediterranean and have only been here in the Northwest for a short time. The root weevil attacks the knapweed from the bottom and the flower weevil from the top. Do they meet in the middle somewhere?

The root weevil's young start the onslaught. Larva, buried in a cozy winter subsurface hide-a-way hatch with an apatite and immediately mine into the knapweed roots. Older larva continue consuming the roots and newly emerged adults chew holes in the root mass and dig their way to the surface and feed on plant leaves. In the late summer the females lay up to 50 to 70 eggs. When they hatch the little guys mine their way back into the root system for another cozy winter stay while mom and dad freeze to death above..

The flower weevil larva dine on the knapweed seeds as soon as they hatch. Nothing like a strong attack on the reproductive organs to hit a species where it hurts! Hatching adults begin feeding on the leaves and flowers, and presumably meet up with their cousins coming up from the cellar at this time. Adults lay their eggs in the fall and dig into the ground to winter out.

The combination of these two bugs is the one-two punch for the knapweed and the plants have by the scores fled the Natural Area for better territory. Using natural controls for the war against unwanted noxious weeds is a partial answer to how to save the native plant population. All we can say is that we are glad the bugs are on our side. Three cheers for these emigrants doing a job that American species just can't do.

Omnia quae secundam Naturam fiunt sunt habenda in bonis
[The works of Nature must all be accounted good.]

Marcus Tullius Cicero, Roman Orator/Statesman (106 B.C.-43B.C.)

NEW IDEAS

A new conservation movement is emerging throughout the West that is also effecting Spokane. It's Civic Tourism. This the blending of the work of natural space advocates, the cultural community and the traditional tourist/recreation industry. It encourages communities to invite tourist by creating a sense of place that evolves around unique culture, heritage, and natural setting, instead of allowing tourist to demolish those values. This concept challenges the tourism and recreation industries to use their resources to save and improve the community rather that just use and market it.

Spokane Chamber of Commerce has already taken a step with their new slogan "near natural, near perfect." Several of the recreational equipment stores around town have been very active in helping maintain the natural areas their customer use. Our new system of Conservation Areas, our trails, and beautiful river all fit in very nicely. The plan is use your resources to make the community a fantastic place to visit rather that on marketing and unplanned growth and they will come. Public involvement is essential and civic tourism requires funding and cooperation among all the players in a community.

We hope that the Dishman Hills Natural Area will allows be a part of the community's ability to draw tourist. To that end we have initiate a WEB site, are now offering advertised educational tours twice a year, and have been featured in regional magazines such as Sunset.

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 are taking our summer break and meet next will be on the third Tuesday of the month, September 19th, at 7pm, at Opportunity Elementary School, S. 1109 Wilbur.

The following are our June donors that have consented to be listed: Laura Byrd, Patty Houff, Eris Heggem, Don Griffiths, Glen Kivett, Ester Lancaster, Ruth Stickney, Patricia Sweeney, Richard Taylor, Larry & Janice Thorson, Walt & Norma Trefry, Baretta Velategui, Tom & Mary Water, Jeanne Wilson, and one anonymous donor. Thank you all and have a good summer.

Please use this form when sending **CONTRIBUTIONS** or **DUES**
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