

LIGHTS and SHADOWS

from the
Dishman Hills

June 2006

THE SPRINGS OF SPRING

This spring was a wet one and in the Dishman Hills the ponds filled up and in a number of places water mysteriously flows from the ground. Goldback, Hidden, and Midway springs are all active this time of year, but all except Goldback will be drying up as we go into the long, dry season of summer. Why are there springs here, and how do they work? These hydrologic features are a combination of ground water tables of different elevations and a plumbing system of fractures and faults in the underlying bedrock for the descending water to flow.

The topography of the Dishman Hills is a result of massive glacial outburst floods that hit this area a number of times up to about 11,000 years ago. The flood scouring resulted in a number of water-catching features including potholes and depressions at a variety of elevations. Some of these depressions have a clay seal on the bottom and these areas form ponds with no outlet. Others areas have underlying granite and gneiss bedrock that is fractured, thus providing conduits for rainwater to drain down to a lower groundwater level where they travel sideways till they reach the surface and, presto, you have a spring.

Spring water is often cooler (warmer in winter) than surface drainage. The temperature of spring water runs close to the average temperature of the vicinity for the last hundred years, but this depends how long and how deep the water reside in the bedrock. Plants and animals around springs form a special community that fits the special micro environment. One old timer described the area around Goldback springs, the largest in the Natural Area, as a "green cathedral" of vegetation that arched over the spring outlet. In the last several years we have been working on restoring this area with some cedar fencing and a footbridge, so please tread softly there.

WHO WE ARE

The Dishman Hills Association gets several surveys ever year that are used to study a variety of environmental issues. The following is a recent study of environmental organization personnel by the Univ. of WA that ask "how do we perceive our relationship to the environment." The results of the survey was sent back to us and provided an interesting view of ourselves (readers included) as people interested in nature conservation. While the report was loaded with graphs, mathematical analyst and techspeak here is the overview simplified.

We are somewhat concerned with global over population but are split as to whether humans have the right to modify the environment to suit our needs. The younger respondents were more inclined to support human dominion over nature while the older rejected it. This was highlighted as a significant indicator as to the future direction of conservation movements as the younger take over. There was an overall moderate skepticism about human ingenuity to keep the earth livable both now and in the future. There was a very strong feeling that global environmental problems are real, serious, and we are on the verge of a major ecological catastrophe. Respondents strongly feel that plants and animals have a right to exist and split somewhat the belief that nature is very delicate and easily upset. As you might expect, there was a very strong support for environmental protection including areas for "no access" by humans and removal of invasive plant species. There was a generally agreement that humans do not purposely abuse their environment.

The survey report analyses of the data indicates we are not very much different from the general public in our responses. We are more sensitive about stewardship responsibilities, have more of a world view, and worry more about the earth's ability to deal with human activities. There is, however, a general acceptance human needs for resources and space. Do you fit this data or are you an anomaly?

UPDATES

The response for our Big Rock fund has been very impressive and we would like to shout as loud as possible through print, **THANK YOU!!!** We are still working on the sales agreement. A document that's up to 25 pages. We are taking our time to make sure everything is done right. Land exchanges can be very complicated and the details of the access issues are slowing things down a bit.

On the Joy Peterson story we must report that Joy had to give up her adventure for a several reasons. She got up to northern Alaska, and found after 60 miles that a combination of very bad weather, muddy roads, and an inability to keep up with he younger members of the tour forced her to retreat back to Spokane where she is dealing with family medical problems and regretting not be able to help the Big Rock fundraising. But don't fret Joy, your fantastic enthusiasm to help an important cause is the real story here. Donors for Joy's trip will be receiving a letter with details.

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 May donors that have consented to be listed: Joan Collins, Bob Damon (Mem. For Helen Lininger), Earthworks Recycling, Jane Foote, Donald & Pauline Hagan, Jerry Harrington, Jean Koch, Hans & Katie Krauss, Jan Strobeck, Kerry Masters, Karen Nelson (Mem. For Maynard Nelsen), Mr. & Mrs. Carrol Orcutt, Joy Peterson (Mem. For Mary Sjostrom), Madeline Phelps, Norma Rosenberger, Helen Stowell, Joan Talbot, Steve & Ellen Victor, Jeanne Wilson, Hershel Zellman, and one anonymous donor. Thank you all for your spectacular support!

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