

BIG ROCK UPDATE

Those of us in the Association that have been working on the Big Rock land exchange over the last few years were quite relieved to see the deal closed. We had a small celebration, hosted by Mountain Gear, in the field beneath the Big Rock. The real reward is seeing this fine piece of real estate conserved and saved for the public to enjoy.

Before the ink was dry on the closing documents, we were discussing how best to manage the new acquisition. A Big Rock committee has been formed to work with the various issues involving our new property. On top of the list is establishing suitable parking on the south side of the property off Stevens Creek Road. We don't want to make our neighbors upset about blocked roads caused by additional traffic, and we are working on a grant to build some parking space. Please do not park up at the end of Stevens Creek road until improvements are made so we can get off on the right foot with the locals. We are also concerned about blocking the motorized vehicles that have been using the slopes for climbs up to the ridge. They have caused a lot of damage and need to be stopped sooner rather than later.



ENOUGH STUFF



What we have nowadays filling up the Natural Area is not people, but stuff. There seems to be an ever increasing amount without a matching place to use them. Many of us have probably seen the obvious stuff issues that surround us; such more camping trailers without more campgrounds and more boats without more lakes. It all became a lot clearer the other day when an approaching hiking party was announced by the click-click of their super light trekking sticks on trail. The group appeared to be in fine spirits, but half of the total mass of the group seemed to be stuff. There were high-tech, light weight hiking shoes, a selection of wide brim, collapsible gortex hats, camelback water dispensers, dangling GPS and digital camera units, cell phones (one rang on passing, or was it an I-Pod playing a catchy tune?), bedrolls, and who knows what else! Things were attached to these walking sporting goods stores by webbing, cargo pants, and packs (both back and fanny). I imagined that their pockets were full of power bars, energy drinks, and maybe a few satellite uplink units. Thinking that they be taking the long route to Everest, I asked what was up with all the equipment and was informed they were simply taking their "expedition gear" out for a run, as if their stuff was requiring of them some usage and they were simply complying. This stuff probably cost as much as a good used car and really didn't add one cents more pleasure of the experience of hiking in the Dishman Hills.

All kidding aside, the Dishman Hills is getting full of too much stuff. This stuff, with people attached, shows up as paintball wars, geocaching, pack animal training, orienteering, illegal camping, mountain biking and hunting, dog (are they stuff?) walking, and who knows what else! Approaching the equipment-people the response is usually very similar - "I've spent a lot of money on all this equipment and I need to use it

somewhere." Well, that's not what the Natural Area is all about, supporting the sporting goods industry. Supporting the natural ecosystem is what we are about, and you don't need all this stuff to experience the wonders and inspirations of Nature. Besides being a distraction to yourself and others, all this stuff has the potential of destroying the very reason we all come to the Natural Area. Come one, come all to visit, but try to leave most of the stuff home. Enjoy Nature one on one. However, do bring the basics for a safe and enjoyable visit. A while back we had a request of the opposite extreme, for a nude hiking event in the Natural Area, we had to decline.

ASSOCIATION 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 questions. Our board meets every other month on the third Tuesday. We are on our summer break and the next meeting will not be until September 15th. We will meet at the lodge at Camp Caro on the northern side of the Natural Area off Appleway at the end of Sargent Rd.. Members and the public are always welcomed to drop by to see what is going on with the Association.

The following are our June donors that have consented to be listed: Chris Baldini, Mary Benham, Brad Blegen, Carol Bryan, Nancy Cashion, Rita Cencich, David Cole, Joe Collins, Gail Duba, John Douglas, Celesta Frost, Lisa & Joe Giegel, Scott Grimmert, Larry Grossman, Charmaine Gural, Henry & Charline Hagen, James & Sheila Harless, Donna Havrilla et al (memorial for Iris Scheel), Eric Heggem, Kathryn Henderson, The Hobnailers (memorial for Grace Reynolds), Dianne Huggar, Chris Kopczynski, Beatrice Lackaff, Jeff Lambert, Esther Lancaster, Jim & Marilyn McCall, Sandy Mansfield, Della Meyer, Marlene Montgomery, Bill Nienhuis, Bob Ordner, Marion Pillsbury, Fred & Dorothy Radebaugh, Ed & Jan Reynolds, Norma Rosenberger, Beverly Scheunemann, Rose Schultz, Linda Siverts, Ann & Terry Smith, Nan Smith, Florence Sylvester, John Terris (memorial for Grace Reynolds), Jill Thomas-Pestrin, Pat Thompson, Larry & Janice Thorson, Beth & Ed Tietjen, Mary & Larry Weathers, Mike & Jody Wende, Elnora Wildermuth, Bill & Edie Wilson, Jeanne Wilson, Karl & Kris Wolback, Art Zack, and one anonymous donor. Thanks to all for being a part of the good we are doing for our community.

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One cannot fix one's eyes on the commonest natural production without finding food for a rambling fancy.
- Jane Austen (1775-1817)