

GET OUT AND ENJOY

The weather now is perfect for outdoor recreation and the Dishman Hills natural Area is loaded with hiking opportunities. But our Natural Area is also part of a much larger family of wonderful (free!) places to hit the trail. Spokane County has been busy, steadily building a collection of conservation areas (C.A.s) that surround and are within our fair City. This is the Conservation Futures Program, and these scattered lands await discovery by all who want to commute with nature, get some excellent exercise, or just get away from the hussel-bussel of everyday life.

So, just ring up County Parks on the internet, query Conservation Futures, make a choice of which area to visit and head out. Their web site has good maps and directions for each of the Conservation Areas. Currently there are 24 C.A.s, 10 in the City and 14 outside the City. More are being added every year as the County finds suitable candidates.



View from the McKenzie C.A.

The city/valley views are breathtaking from the Palisades Addition C.A. on the west side of the City. Here one walks along a high erosional bench formed on the softer interbeds rocks that are between two immense lava flows. If lake views are your cup of tea try the McKenzie C.A. above Newman Lake, or if the smell of cedar is what you seek visit the Cedar Grove C.A. behind Liberty Lake. Want to watch small birds, grab the binoculars and head for the Slavin C.A. where ponds on an open scabland prairie beckon many species. If larger birds are the target, strap on the serious hiking boots and hike up Tower Mountain in the Iller Creek C.A. to watch the raptors ride updrafts along the Big Rock ridge. These C.A.s come in all sizes from the 1,000 plus acres at Antoine Peak C.A. to the 2.5 acre Downriver C.A. where one can have a picnic next to the Spokane River. Some are close to city center such as Drumheller Springs C.A. on N. Ash St., and others, such as the McLellan C.A. which is on the northern edge of the County up by the Big Bend in the Spokane River, are distant.

*Most cherished in this mundane world is a place without traffic;
truly in the midst of a city there can be mountains and forest.*

Wen Zhengming (1470-1559)

While all of the C.A.s are unique, they all have something in common, fabulous and interesting natural settings for you to visit and enjoy. Maybe as important is what these areas don't have. They don't have acres of pavement, herds of cars and people, thickets of store fronts and signs, or pools of pollution and noise. These C.A.s are the signature of where we live, the Inland Pacific Northwest. They are places for all to relax, realign, realize what a great place we have to live.

HARD CHOICES

The Association recently received a questionnaire from a local university requesting us to take part in an inventory of biofuel source areas in the Pacific Northwest region. They had just received a grant to determine the available biomass of the regions forest as a future energy source when fossil fuels fail to supply society's needs. The move to use forest thinning and wood waste for energy sources has already begun under the name of efficiency, fire prevention, and forest health. But to use our forest to replace fossil fuels are a much bigger deal! All of this is a chilling reminder of what the future may hold for us if we have not developed and installed other renewable energy sources sooner than later. Our tremendous thirst for portable energy for cars, as well as wood for cheap heat, could result in the stripping of NW forest very rapidly if and when other energy sources dry up or are disrupted. Our natural places will be needing serious protection when and if that day comes. We politely declined to be part of this survey. We do own the future, but we will have hard choices to make when the going gets tough.

ASSOCIATION NEWS

We are a non-profit 501(c)(3) 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 month on the third Tuesday. Our next meeting is September 20th, 7 pm. We meet at the Moran Prairie Spokane County Library, 6004 South Regal St. Visitors are always welcomed.

The following are our July donors that have consented to be listed: Lauretta Byrd, Nancy Cashion, Joseph Collins, Linda Crowe, Lois Hansen, James Harless, Eris Heggem, Kathryn Henderson, Gloria Krebs, Cynthia Langlois, Robert Larned, Marilyn McCall, M.K.Montgomery, Beverley Scheunemann, Rose Schultz, lee Smith, Mary Weathers, Hershel Zellman, and one anonymous donor. Thank you all for this midsummer support.

YES, I want to help protect our natural areas in the Spokane Region

Enclosed is my tax-deductable donation of :

\$ 15* \$ 25 \$ 50 \$ 100 Other _____ * annual dues, due by June 30

Gift is a Memorial for: _____

Name: _____ Acc. No. (see address) _____ Please don't list me as a donor

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I would like to receive my Lights & Shadows online My email address is: _____