



LIGHTS AND SHADOWS FROM THE DISHMAN HILLS

March 1985

RECYCLING CONTINUES GOOD

We don't yet have the total on our recycling income for last year but we suspect it will be good. Your bulletin editor set himself a goal of \$400 but, due to the help of you who saved newspaper, nonslick paper, cardboard, aluminum cans and foil and glass, \$496 were added to the land fund, about enough to buy a half acre. Most prices for recyclables are holding up well. Aluminum is down somewhat but is still paying well. If you have recyclables, please don't throw them into the garbage but call us at 926-7949. Or we have an account at Spokane Recycling, E. 3407 Main, if you wish to drop them off yourself. Please leave your name so we will know to whom to give credit. Thanks!

We understand that the county commissioners are considering an ordinance that would require all "garbage" to be collected at a central point, for fuel for the proposed "garbage to energy" plant. Whether this would mean the end of paper recycling here is not clear. We are investigating this.

Our annual Buttercup Hike into Dishman Hills will be Sunday March 24 at 2 p.m. at Camp Caro, S. 625 Sargent Road. Bring the family. Coffee, cocoa and cookies will be served.

Negotiations are continuing with the owners of the 140 acres just south of The Nature Conservancy's preserve. We hope we can report some definite progress in our next issue. It has been a long, slow process but we're still hanging in there.

We presented slide shows on Dishman Hills, flowers, butterflies and mushrooms to Spokane Floral Association, Spokane Mushroom Club and residents of Holman Gardens Retirement Home during February and March. And to set the record straight, the showing to South Walnut Garden Club was in January, not November.

Signs of Spring (continued from column 2)

Last year's dead, dry flower stalks remind me that another summer is on the way. Here stand the conspicuous brown pinedrops with beadlike seed capsules. All along are the split-open pods of glacier lilies and tan stalks of Indian paint brush, yarrow, cinquefoil, alumroot and hawkweed.

The ponds are still thick with ice, except for some melting along their edges. Pussywillows are starting to peep out by West Pond. On the west slope--land we hope some day to add to the protected natural area--a few buttercup buds and green spears of grass widow leaves are appearing. The area burned a few years ago is mostly fallen pines, but one stub has a woodpecker nest hole near the top.

At Lost Pond on Nature Conservancy land, patches of brown on the ice are signs of melting, but a dead leaf skittering across, chased by a northeast breeze, is forecasting a coming weather front with snow or rain, as do the gathering clouds. Through the pines comes the cheery, whistled song of a chickadee, always an optimist. Spring, although late this year, will surely come, this tiny voice reminds us.

SIGNS OF SPRING IN THE HILLS

March 2 and a clean blue sky arches over the Hills. A good day to get inspiration for the main article for Lights and Shadows. Although snow is still a foot deep in many places, Goldback Spring is running and filamentous green algae are flourishing in the little pools below it. The trails are icy but show ample signs of winter use by people. Coyotes too had been by, as shown by their scat, some of which consisted mostly of apples or sedge leaves, not very digestible for them but at least stomach-filling. This long, cold winter likely was a hungry one for them, as white-footed mice and cottontail rabbits apparently were at a low point of their population cycle this winter.

Birds were decidedly scarce in the Hills also, with a very few chickadees and nuthatches, rarely a raven, a magpie or a red crossbill. Surprisingly there were more sightings of brown creepers, searching the tree trunks for insects. Today two juncoes are an unexpected find. These little ground-feeders winter in the valleys, often at feeders, since snow covers their natural food, and gradually move back into the foothills and mountains as the ground becomes bare again.

About the only green things today are the pines and firs, Oregon grape leaves and mossy cliffs, the latter hung with glistening icicles or emerald from snowmelt. Lichens, those tiny plants part fungus, part algae, are conspicuous as usual on tree trunks and branches and on bare twigs of shrubs. Some are greenish-gray and others bright chartreuse. On cliff faces others are black, gray or olive. On occasional bare ground are diminutive gray-green cups of Cladonias--alas, most lichens have no common names, for few people have ever bothered to give them any.

(Continued in column 1)

We are a nonprofit organization dedicated to saving some of the natural areas of the Spokane area for people to enjoy and learn from.

Our March meeting will be at the Agricultural Building, N. 222 Havana at 7:30 pm. the fourth Wednesday. Starting in April we will be back at Camp Caro.

Please use this form when sending contributions to save the Dishman Hills and the Tower Mountain corridor. Your dues and/or gifts are income tax deductible.

\$ ___ Annual dues (\$10) New? ___ Renewal? ___

\$ ___ Land purchase fund

\$ ___ In remembrance of _____

\$ ___ Bulletin expense fund (\$1 or more)

\$ ___ Student (\$5) and/or Living Lightly

_____ Your account number above your address.

Please make checks payable to Dishman Hills Natural Area Association and mail to David E. Lentz, Treasurer, P.O. BOX 141561, Spokane, Wa. 99214. Many Thanks! To reduce expense, no receipt or acknowledgement will be sent unless requested.