



LIGHTS AND SHADOWS FROM THE DISHMAN HILLS

OCTOBER 1993

MORE LETTERS NEEDED

Our grateful thanks to you people (twenty-one in all) who have written the County commissioners requesting that they exclude horses from the county-owned land in the Dishman Hills. (We have banned riding from our land and the Department of Natural Resources expects to do the same.) The gist of these notes is that horses damage trails, introduce weed seeds and are simply incompatible with foot traffic in such a small area.

We do need many more letters from you supporters of the Dishman Hills, protesting horse and bike use there. Are we to let a small but vociferous group thwart the desires of the "silent majority" of over 700 people and organizations which support the concept of a nature preserve and are on our mailing list? You are taxpayers as well as those who want to ride horses in the Hills. So please write a note to the County Commissioners to this effect. Their address: Spokane County Courthouse, West 1116 Broadway, Spokane, WA 99201. We would very much appreciate if you would send us a copy of your note so we can monitor the effort of protecting the Hills. Our address is elsewhere in this bulletin. Thanks!

SEPTEMBER CONTRIBUTORS AND EXPENSES

Total contributions for September totaled \$365.23 (\$45 for memorials and \$66.66 for recyclables). Expenses came to \$40 for administration and \$118.64 for bulletin printing and postage.

Our thanks to the following who contributed cash, recyclables and/or services during September and have given permission to be listed here: June Helen Foote, Frieda Foth, Frank Gropp, Mrs. Kenneth Gudgel, Charline A. Hagen, Adeline Haines, Michael Hamilton, Joyce I. Harper, Dorothy Hartung, Gloria J. Krebs, Hannah K. Lovick, Carl Milton, Dennis L. Sanders, Susan E. Venn and Jeanne H. Wilson. If you should have been listed here but we missed you, let us know at 926-7949. Thanks again!

We are still looking at the possibility of obtaining land that will connect our Dishman Hills Nature Preserve with Tower Mountain to the south. A trail runs through a beautiful grove of big Douglas fir. We want to preserve a wildlife corridor to the mountain, so that deer and coyotes, even elk, can come down.

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

President: Michael Hamilton, Vice President: Tom Rogers, Secretary: Helen Lininger, Treasurer: David Lenten, Board of Directors: Omar Carroll, Michael Hamilton, Francis Potter, June Potter, and Ray Staley

Our meetings are held every third Monday at 7 P.M. at Opportunity Elementary School, South 1109 Wilbur. You are cordially invited to attend.

Please send donations to our box number, shown at top of this bulletin.

HILLS BEAUTIFUL WITH AUTUMN COLORS

In Dishman Hills Natural Area, as elsewhere, Autumn is very much here. The Hills are bright with color: the gold of cottonwoods, willows and aspens, the leaves of the latter quivering in the gentle breeze; serviceberry and hawthorn leaves in Joseph's coat patterns; the varied reds of wild rose, red osier dogwood and meadow sweet. Even the modest little plants, wild strawberry, wild geranium and prairie smoke show a pattern of red and green. Flowers are virtually gone; even goldenrod and wild asters are through for the season. Only those of some of the knapweeds, unwanted foreigners, still persist. Listed as noxious by the government, they thrive on disturbed ground, so spring up along paths and roads.

The "bird vacuum" has arrived. A recent hike into the Hills found only two red-breasted nuthatches, a raven and what may have been a pileated woodpecker was heard. A few red squirrels chattered but chipmunks seemed to have retired for the year. A bright spot was the finding of six male and three female mallards on East Pond, the males resplendent in full plumage after their fall molt. Unusual was a female American wigeon with them. All are no doubt just putting in time after the nesting season, taking advantage of this year's good water levels in the ponds.

It's too cool for most insects, but a few flies did appear, mainly blowflies, their blue-black bodies glistening in the autumn sunlight. Unusual was a tiny hippoboscoid fly, which hitches rides on birds, sipping their blood on the way. (Why they occasionally land on me--that's how I find them--is a mystery. I don't have feathers.)

Not one pine white butterfly was found in the Hills this fall, nor apparently in the Spokane Valley either. I still wonder if there might be a connection between their abundance and that of the nuthatches. Speaking of abundances, the tiny caterpillars which infested the lupines last year were nowhere to be found this year, their enemies, probably parasites, having brought them under control. Nature has a way of taking care of things, if we will give her a chance.

On the down side, mountain bikers are still riding through the natural area, even on our land where we have signs forbidding it. Bikes deepen the grooves in paths, encouraging erosion on steeper ones.--TR.

Please use this form when sending contributions
(Contributions are income tax deductible)

Account No. **09045**

Your Name _____
Please put your account number on your check.

\$ _____ Land purchase fund

\$ _____ Memorial for _____

\$ _____ Annual Dues (\$10) New? ___ Renewal? ___

\$ _____ Student or Living Lightly (\$5)

\$ _____ To cover bulletin expense (\$2)

_____ Check here if you do NOT want your name listed as a donor.