



Lights and Shadows from the Dishman Hills, June, 1998

SUMMER TIME IS HERE

The Dishman Hills are very much into the summer scene. Picnickers are filling up Camp Caro and hikers wander through the Hills enjoying the season. With some extra rain in the last month, vegetation is lush and the ponds have water aplenty. Luckily, it appears that the bark beetle infestation may be on the wane since the little critters don't have all the extra food they had last year because of Ice Storm 97, but you will see some standing trees all brown and dying from the beetles. The burn area from last year is revegetating fast and it's getting hard to detect except for the scorched trees and a few dead bushes. The ponds are crawling with tadpoles, whirly gigs, diving beetles, backswimmers, giant water bug nymphs, water scorpions, and caddis flies larvae. A quiet hiker is serenaded by a chorus of frogs. Also of note is the impressive population of dragon flies around the ponds.

In accompaniment to the bountiful plant, insect, and amphibian sightings, a large variety of birds were spotted or heard in a brief walk through the woods around mid afternoon. Included in the extensive sighting list were pigmy nuthatch, warbling vireo, pine siskin, yellow warbler, song sparrow, house finch, cedar waxwing, red crossbill, robin, cordilleran flycatcher, calliope hummingbird, chipping sparrow, northern flicker, Oregon junco, western wood pewee, American gold finch, black-capped chickadee, and the usual mallards on the East Pond.

ORGANIZATION NEWS

We are a non-profit organization dedicated to saving natural areas in the Spokane region for public enjoyment and education. Call Michael Hamilton at 747-8147 with any questions. We will not have a July meeting since it's summer time.

Donations to our Dishman Hills Land Fund and operating expenses amounted to \$1481.20 in May. Many donations were as memorials for Gertie Hanson, who, with her husband Wes, protected their land by putting it into the Inland Northwest Land Trust.

Our thanks to you who who donated and have given permission to be listed here: Mabel and Shirley Asher, Marjorie Benander, Debbie Berreth, Joy Best, Lloyd Brooten, Nancy Cashon, James Edge, Janis Engwer, Catherine Gerger, Robert Gilchrist, Nicolin Gray, Don Griffiths, Dr. Kenneth Gudgel, Wes Hanson (anonymous memorials for Gertie), Jerome Harrington, Sharon Huston, Inland Empire Gardeners, Gloria Krebs, Karen Larimore, Helen Lininger, Nadine Lavonne, Janis Meckel, Marilyn Miller, Francis/June Potter, Willene Priestley, Eileen Ray, Tom Rogers, Carol Schreiber, Brenda Sims, Linda Siverts, Shirley Skinner, Elaine Snively, Spokane Recycling Products (for anonymous donors), Kenneth Swedberg, Jody Wende, Jeanne Wilson and Barb Wunische.

LICHENS ARE LIKABLE

The Hills have an abundance of trees and rock outcrops that make lots of good habitat for lichens. A lichen (pronounced "liken") is really two plants in one: a fungus with green algae inside. The fungus provides a place for the algae to live; the algae manufactures food for the fungus. This relationship is symbiotic or mutualistic, not parasitic since both the host and the guest benefit from the arrangement. These plants have no stems, true leaves, or roots.

Most lichens have no common names, so we present them by form groups and their scientific names. On twigs and shrubs are tiny orange ones, *Xanthia polycarpa*. On twigs of Douglas firs are two kinds of "foliose" (leaf-like) species that are grey above and black below, named *Hypogymnia*, meaning "naked below". On rocks are "crustose" (crust-like) kinds, clinging tightly; they are named *Parmelia*. Common on ponderosa pine is the "fruticose kind (stem-like), yellowish-green and branching, called *Evernia mesomorpha*.

Lichens may be seen at any time of the year. They grow very slowly and are generally long lived. Some of the oldest lichens can be found in the Arctic and are claimed to be 4,000 years old. On the many rocks in the Hills the lichens are the first step in establishing plant colonies by accumulating soil beneath them on the otherwise bare surface. They are susceptible to damage when an off-the-trail hiker treads over lichen-encrusted rocks. So be careful not to wander off the trails tempted by an attractive rock path.

There is more work to be done on the lichens in the Natural Area in order to complete a comprehensive inventory of all the species present.

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