



Lights and Shadows from the Dishman Hills, January, 1999

IT'S A NEW YEAR

With a new year upon us, it's time for some resolutions, improvements, or maybe just some goals for the next millennium. While after 33 years DHNAA runs about perfectly (ha, ha), there could be a thing or two that could stand improvement.

- 1) Try to improve communication with the general public, outdoor recreationists, and educational groups.
- 2) Fire up a membership drive to sign on some of the younger generation and people who have a interest in preserving our natural heritage but have not heard of us.
- 3) Develop better connections with other people that share similar goals with DHNAA, such as neighbourhood groups, outdoor clubs, and conservation organizations, both local and regional. Encouraging a Spokane area natural resource communication web might be a good start.
- 4) Increase diligence for situations that threaten the Natural Area. Lately quite a number of ecologically threatening situations have popped up, and we need to be more proactive and watchful in order to be effective land managers.
- 5) Improve our ability to tap community resources for funds to save land. Our new Rocks of Sharon Natural Area on Tower Mountain is doing wonderfully but more land is available now, an opportunity that could be realised with new funding sources.
- 6) Design new management techniques that can save the natural setting during urban growth, increased usage, and threatening development. We need to be on the cutting edge of new land management methods for urban natural areas so we can plan for change rather than fight it.

Of course, any list of resolutions tends to be a "wish list" and our organization has limits of manpower and funds, but New Year's resolutions are not required to be totally realistic or we all would have lost those pounds and cleaned out the basement years ago.

BEETLES STILL ON MOVE

The bark beetle infestation is still present on the Hills, demonstrated by the "blotches" of brown on the hillsides caused by dead trees in an otherwise green forest. Conditions for these bugs has been ideal for the last few years starting with Ice Storm 96. Since then nature has dealt out more favours, such as a heavy snow during the winter of 96/97, downing more ice damaged trees and preserving the eatable parts of the downed trees with cold temperatures. When food on the grown ran out, the beetles moved on to susceptible live trees. Last year's hot, dry summer served to stress trees leaving them more susceptible to the bugs. Maybe these bark beetles are another of the effects of El Nino weather changes!

SPECIAL KIDS TAKE TOUR

Early this month the Association provided instruction to a lively group of boys from Ness Elementary School with a field trip in the Hills. Yes, this lovely El Nino weather is perfect for a mid-winter hike. The kids asked lots of good questions. Highlights included counting tree rings on a big stump, and some fly overs by resident ravens, croaking of course. They asked about the "vanilla tree" which confused us until we understood that they were thinking about the remarks of someone who said that the ponderosa pine trunks smelled like vanilla, but none of the group could verify this though they smelled many trees.

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 have our monthly meeting in February at Opportunity Elementary School, South 1109 Wilbur, the third Tuesday of the month at 7 PM. December donations were a phenomenal \$3,202, expenses were \$222.66 for postage and bulletin printing.

Our thanks to you loyal supporters who are listed here: Barbara Bailey, Jim/Marilyn Bertis, Brad/Jane Blegen, Florence Boutwell, Patricia Burkhart, Helen Cook, Elizabeth DeNiro, Walter Fernau, M.D., Mrs. Kenneth Gudgel, Le Roy Hook, Hans Krauss, Patrick Lettermaier, Helen Lininger, Sandra McMillan, John O'Brien, Fred Malstrom, Beula Moon, Joy Peterson, Madeline Phelps, Luella Rowberg, Tom Rogers, Iris Scheel, Spokane Area Retired Educators Foundation, Helen Stowell. Patricia Sweeney, Beth Tietjen, Jeanne Wilson, Mrs. Harold Wimpy, Larry/Mary Wright, and Hershel Zellman.

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