



# Lights and Shadows from the Dishman Hills, April, 2000

## FLOWERS ABOUND

The Buttercup Hike this year was a little wet, very colourful, and contained several surprises. We took a route along the northern side of the Natural Area, so we could tour some of the land that will be affected by the new Sprague Couplet, a beautiful land track that includes rocky terrain, virgin forest, and two fantastic topographic features, Split Rock and Cave canyons. These two canyons greatly impressed those on the hike, and we were reminded of their pending destruction (see following article) by the very messy logging of old growth trees ongoing in Cave Canyon. There were still Buttercups and Grass Widows aplenty, but already the Balsamroot, Glacier lilies, and Shooting Stars are decorating the ground. We also saw Biscuit-root, Phlox, Sea Spray, and, of all things rare, Bitterroot! Of course, there was an abundance of flowering Serviceberry bushes. At one point we were confronted by a rather large Marmota Flaviventris (Yellow-bellied Marmot) that was extremely curious of our approach. The West pond was filled to overflowing, and was spilling out the low end creating a lively creek that babbled down the trail to 8th Ave. If you approach the ponds quietly this time if year, you will be greeted by a chorus of frogs.

## CHANGE IN THE WIND

Matters are coming to a head on the fate of the north side of the Natural Area as the county plans to start construction of the Sprague Couplet. All the land for the right-of-way has been purchased and contracts are being bid for the construction phase this summer. They plan to "cut the ribbon" on the new roadway October first. A number of issues are being monitored by the DH Association:

Let' start with the good news. About 18 acres of land to the north of Camp Caro was given to the County. This land contains three toxic waste dumps in old refilled pits which must be reclaimed before the road can be built, and very soon you might notice that the large depression to the west of Sargent Rd. will be filling up with dump cap material. The area will be sloped to the north and covered with vegetation. Sometime in the future this area could provide additional parking for Camp Caro. About 10 acres of this parcel, the parts that are rocky, are slated to be transferred to County Parks to become part of the Natural Area. If County Parks will not accept the land, the Association is prepared to step forward.

As for some other matters, one is not going so well. The road plan and the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) calls for "landscape buffers" and additional green space to be provided between the roadway and the Natural Area where the alignment dips to the south near our boundary. The County has obtained this land as part of right-of-way purchases, but has moved to resell it to reclaim money spent on the project. Several meetings with the County have failed to

convince them of the importance of keeping this promise. On the contrary, County officials have indicated that to get top dollar, this land will probably go to developers that will be allowed to bring high-density building right up to the northern NRCA boundary, accessed through the new roadway. This will mean the destruction of a beautiful tract of urban wilderness and several exceptional features such as Split Rock Canyon. It also means a real double-cross by the County that provided many verbal and written assurances that the Natural Area would be provided additional lands to ameliorate the environmental degradation of having development near its boundary. The people building this road are putting the Natural Area on the bottom of the priority list, and are only considering dollars rather than the overall good of our community. Well, the last chapter of this story is yet to be written, and we will continue to fight for the Dishman Hills during this time of change.

## ORGANIZATION NEWS

We are a non-profit organization dedicated to saving nature areas in the Spokane region for public enjoyment and education. Call Michael Hamilton, 747-8147, if you have any questions. We have a monthly meeting the 3rd Tuesday at Opportunity Elementary School, S. 1109 Wilbur, at 7 PM.

The following are our March donors that have consented to be listed: Signe Currier, Janet Foulon, Kenneth Grudgel, Donald Hagan, Lloyd Hannink, Elaine Harris, Dianne Huggar, Loring Jones, Mary Jo Kester, Don Kram, Mary Lentz, Helen Lininger, John Lorang, Hanna Lovik, Marilyn Miller, Gloria Nicol, Francis potter, Neil Prescott, Edward Reynolds, Sheri Robinson, Jane Rogers, Otto Schumacher, Linda Siverts, Lois Smith, Helen Stowell, Beth Tietjen, Norma Trefrey, Whitworth Belles, and Janet Wilson. Many thanks for your generous support.

Please use this form when sending **CONTRIBUTIONS** or **DUES**

All contributions are tax deductible

SEND CONTRIBUTIONS TO: DHNAA

3415 S. Lincoln Dr.  
Spokane, WA 99203

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Please put your account no. \_\_\_\_\_ on your check

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ MEMORIAL FOR \_\_\_\_\_  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_ LAND PURCHASE FUND  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_ ANNUAL DUES due in January (\$10 regular, \$5 student  
or living lightly, \$2 to cover bulletin expenses)

New ?  Renewal ?  Don't list me as donor

Please tell us if this newsletter is unwanted or if there is an address mistake