



DISHMAN HILLS NATURAL AREA ASSOCIATION
3415 S. LINCOLN DRIVE, SPOKANE, WA 99203, 509 747-8147

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LIGHTS AND SHADOWS from the Dishman Hills, August, 2001

BUTTERFLIES ARE NEAT

What beast carry such fanciful names such as Phoebus' Parnassian, Alexander Sulfur, The Early Elfin, and the Dreamy Dusty Wing? They are all part of 59 species of butterflies that have been identified in the Dishman Hills/Rocks of Sharon natural areas. Butterflies are part of the worlds second largest insect order Lepidoptera, which is Greek for "scale wing" referring to the fine scales that overlap like shingles on the wings.

These short lived creatures can be found throughout the summer floating in the wind in open meadows where resides the plants on which they feed. Butterflies are out only during daylight with the moths taking over during the night. The high diversity of butterflies in the Hills matches the high floral diversity found in the many microenvironments around wet/dry areas in the lower Hills (see L and S, 4/01, *The Vernal Pool*), and in the different elevations of the steep terrain at Tower Mountain. Each species feeds on particular plants and their emergence from a chrysalis will match the blooming of their favorite host plant. Butterflies eat only liquids, mainly nectar and their mouths are tubes that are up to 1 1/2 times body length.

Each scale on the wing is a single color with patterns made up of thousands of scales. While we think butterfly wings are colorful, many are relatively drab on the underside, giving them protective camouflage when they are not flying and their wing are folded.

Butterfly lifes are short by human standards. The insect will mature in just a few weeks, and their only job is to disperse and to reproduce. Males generally outnumber females to assure all females will be fertilized. Females will lay hundreds of eggs on food plants with about a 5% survival rate. Their biggest role in the food chain is during their larval or nutritive stage when the caterpillars with their voracious appetites convert tons of plant matter into succulent (to birds!) maggot flesh. It is estimated that arthropods, a group that includes all insect, consumes 20% of the earth's vegetation each year!

Overall, a healthy population of butterflies demonstrates a healthy ecology. But remember that their habitat is a natural area where insect collecting for other than scientific study is not allowed. So, just enjoy the serene and ephemeral beauty of these colorful insects as they slowly sail pass.

THIS IS A TEST

The Association's appeal against commercial rezonation of land on the north side of the Natural Area is still pending, waiting for a date to be scheduled by the County Commissioners for a public hearing. The County has been very busy finishing up the new Comprehensive Growth Plan, which will guide local development during the 21st century. This appeal will be a test of the new plan to see whether the County will support the document or allow individual landowners to

slowly undermine it through exemptions. This issue involves land on the new Appleway Blvd., that is in a medium residential zone. When the new road was built on the north side of the Natural Area we agreed it was necessary for regional transportation but did not want "Sprague type" development to follow. They agreed, promising not to allow commercial rezoning. Well, in June the County approved a B-3 regional commercial rezone south of Appleway just NW of the Hills most ecological sensitive area. They just couldn't envision a major roadway without commercialization. So we appealed. Stay tuned for the hearing date. Meanwhile, if you want to support or comment on this you can submit thoughts to: Spokane County Commissioners

For more detail see L
and S, 6/01, *Some
Philosophy!*

Appeal File No. ZE-1-01
Spokane County Courthouse
1116 W. Broadway Ave.
Spokane, WA 99260-0100

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 September meeting the third Tuesday of the month at Opportunity Elementary School, in the teacher's lounge, S. 1109 Wilbur, 7pm.

The following are our July donors that have consented to be listed: Vivian & Thomas Caulfield, Beverly Hinton, Alfred & Carla Joyal, Jeff Lambert, Helen Lininger, Linda & Stephen Martin, Melvin & Gloria McCuddin, Leo Middendorf, John & Marilyn Miller, Spokane Mountaineers, Ambrose & Anna Priestley, Jane Rogers, Eugene & Iris Scheel, Philip & Marcia Spohn, Helen Stowell, Maty Taylor, Barney & Jeanne Wilson, and Hershel Zellman. Thank you one and all!

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