



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, June, 2001

PLANT HIKE GREAT

On Saturday, June 2, Art Zack led a group of hikers from the DHNAA and the Washington Native Plant Society to our new Rocks of Sharon Nature Area on Tower Mountain. The group started at the end of Holman Road, hiked up Iller Creek, climbed to the ridge, and circled Big Rock. The weather was cool but the rain held off as we explored the botany of this new public area, much of which Spokane County recently acquired with its Conservation Futures Program funds. While the vegetation is not rare, its location is surprising, with much of what is found in the riparian corridor being common farther east in the Rocky Mountains at higher elevations. Species such as western hemlock, alder, rocky mountain maple, thimbleberry, ladyfern, baneberry, trail-plant, cow parsnip, western meadowrue, and pioneer violet were seen, along with the rarer yew, huckleberry, menziesia, queen cup beadlily, and even a western redcedar. The reason for this uncommon habitat is the north-south orientation of this north-facing drainage. In addition to the cooler, wetter conditions found with north aspects, prevailing winds here tend to be from the west, so that when fires occur, such as happened in 1991, they jump over the moister drainage rather than run the length of it. As a final reward, after enjoying the aforementioned species and many others, the group enjoyed a wonderful view of the Palouse from Big Rock Ridge.

STEWARDS AHoy

For those hiking in the Hills this summer, there is something new that you might encounter on the trail. They will look like ordinary hikers but will be topped by a blue Department of Natural Resources hat, accompanied by a backpack stuffed with information, and, hopefully, will extend a cheerful inquiry about the status of your forest adventure. This summer there are three land stewards that will be patrolling the Natural Area, mainly on weekends and in the evenings. This patrol is part of a land stewardship program run by The Nature Conservancy's (TNC) statewide program to better protect choice ecological areas. In eastern Washington there are three other areas besides Dishman Hills: Pincroft Natural Preserve Area, Spring Creek Canyon, and Little Pend Orielle Wildlife Refuge.

In the Spring the stewards for eastern Washington were trained in the basics at a two day work shop at Camp Caro. Topic covered included introductions to WA's Natural Heritage and Nature Area programs, the Nature Conservancy, and the noxious weed problem. We hope that by adding the human element to natural area management we can do a better job in public education and safety, rule enforcement, and have a faster response to a number of "watchdog" responsibilities. These stewards are all volunteers so give them a smile, a bit of conversation, and some input.

SOME PHILOSOPHY!

The hearing for rezoning of land on the NW side of the Natural Area has preceded with a decision by the County to allow the rezonation of low density residential land to commercial. This is despite all the information that we supplied the County as to the promises made during the construction of Appleway Blvd. not to do this. Back in 95 the new road was proclaimed by the County to be compatible with the Natural Area since they would control development. Part of this promise was to provide a buffer zone between the road and the Natural Area by land acquisition, complying with growth management goals, and holding the line on upzoning of land to uses that would put more pressure on the ecology. To date, the County has failed to do any of this. The message is loud and clear, that the good of the community, the region, and the environment must take a back seat to the rights of an individual to maximize their profits. Some planning philosophy!, We will appeal!

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 third Tuesday of the month but during the summer month there will be no meetings.

The following are our May donors that have consented to be listed: James & Patricia Conaty, Margaret Galbraith, Joyce Kelley, Helen Lininger, John & Marilyn Miller, Joy Peterson, Jane Rogers, Beth & Ed Tietjen, and Barney & Jeanne Wilson

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