



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, April, 2002

SPRING FEVER

At last, Spring has sprung and the flowers are blooming in the Hills. The Buttercup Hike was a great success with 35 eager hikers joining in a trek to Eagle Peak with many stops along the way to chat about the landscape. Surprisingly, the majority were first time visitors to the DH, and had the pleasure of discovering a new place to commute with nature in their own backyard. After several hours of weaving our way across many path junctions some of the hikers were very appreciative of having a trip leader with a good map. The weather was beautiful and the trails were full of people enjoying a stroll outdoors after a long, cold winter.

We have started the season's conservation projects by removing several trees that fell across trails last winter. Trees that were killed by Ice Storm and the following bark beetle infestation are now coming down after several years of weathering. When the wind is up watch out for falling timber. The forest floor that for many years was mostly clear of rotting wood is now covered, creating new habitat for a variety of animals and plants. The nap weed patch behind Camp Caro looked pretty beaten back by last year's spraying.

Another sign of Spring is the opening of the cabin facility at Camp Caro. The lodge is open from April 15 to October 15, and can be reserved through Spokane Parks (ask for Marlene). Rental rates this year are \$50 for youth non profit, \$100 for adult non profit, and \$150 for everyone else. The rates are per day, 8am to 8pm. Marlene says that lots of dates are open.

DREAM TRAIL

A project is afoot that should catch the attention of any outdoor enthusiast who appreciates our local topography. What if there was a trail that started on the Spokane valley floor and ascended over 1,500 feet vertically, passing through numerous environmental zones, traversing striking geologic terrain, while providing spectacular vistas and culminating on a lofty ridge overlooking the Inland Empire in all its glory? Is this a dream? The Spokane Mountaineer Conservation Committee and the Dishman Hills Association have started working on this dream trail project; a trail to connect the Dishman Hills Natural Area and the Rocks of Sharon high on a ridge over three miles to the south. The land between the two natural areas is still undeveloped, consisting of forest, meadows, rocky cliffs, and old burn areas. The challenge will be to plan the route, assemble all the land ownership information, and start the long process of finding purchase opportunities coupled with the resources needed. A dream you say! Maybe; but we start with our "eyes on the prize" and with an optimism based on the tremendous value such a trail would have to the Spokane Community. A trip of a thousand miles starts with the first step.

DOG GONE IT

Just when you think it's safe to go back in the woods, here comes something new attacking the environment. Lately, there have been several encounters with dog owners using the Natural Area for a hunting paddock for their dogs. The latest experience with this canine falconry involved a dog fitted with a beeping device so the owner could retrieve his rampaging pet faster. Dogs are allowed in the Natural Area only on a leash; this is to protect the small mammals. Spokane County, responding to the demand for dog walking areas, is planning a green area specifically for pet walking.

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. Rather than monthly meetings we will meet every other month with the next one the third Tuesday of May at Opportunity Elementary School, in the teacher's lounge, S. 1109 Wilbur, 7pm.

The following are our March donors: Joyce Alonso, Marjorie Benander, Carolyn Boatsman, Phyllis A. Burwell, David Donnally, Robert Downing, Elaine Harris, Addie Haynes, Eris Heggem, Merry & Bill Herron, Beverly Hinton, Leroy & Shirley Hook, Jayce Keeling, Camille Kovarik, Arla Lewis, Jacqueline Mallereau, Gerald A. Manfred, Marilyn Miller, C. R. Orcutt, Madeline Phelps, Gary Plowman, Linda J. Siverts, Spokane Area Retired Educators, and Jeanne Wilson

*Most cherished in this mundane world is a place without traffic;
truly in the midst of the city there can be mountain and forest.*

Wen Zhengming (1470-1559)

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