

# LIGHTS and SHADOWS

from the  
Dishman Hills

December 2004

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Dear friends, neighbors, and supporters:

We had a great year. It started with work on the land east of Tower Mountain that was donated to us by the State in late '03. We moved fast to file the paperwork to register the land as a nature preserve with the Department of Revenue and we posted the boundaries with signage. By spring, we had our first tour onto the parcel with the Native Plant Society. We were also active on Tower Mtn. in our joint project with Spokane County, the new Rocks of Sharon Nature Area. The Association successfully nominated the 80 acre Carroll parcel for purchase by the County's Conservation Futures Program. This land provides great public access to the Nature Area from Holman Road and is a compliment both to County and Association land holdings on the mountain. The County purchase of the nomination late this year, was the culmination of several years of negotiation by the Association with the land owner.

Throughout the year the we worked with a new conservation/recreation group that formed to promote a trail connection between the Dishman Hills and the Tower Mountain natural areas. This work group, called the Dream Trail group, is spearheaded by the Spokane Mountaineers and includes members of many of the active conservation/recreation organizations in the area. We worked with route planning, land owner relations, purchase opportunities, and the search for the resources for land acquisition or easements. The group presents a tremendous opportunity to open lines of communication between government, land owners, and conservation people. As part of election year activities we had a walk-talk event for county commissioner candidates on Tower Mountain to exchange views. We will be active with the Dream Trail group in '05 and into the future. This project, as with many conservation projects, may take many years.

In October the Association purchased 20 acres of undeveloped land south of the Dishman Hills Natural Area. We had to move fast to obtain this parcel since development is starting in the area and open space here will soon be unavailable. As with all land deals, a successful purchase is backed with quite a bit of work. We have opened negotiations with the developers working in this area and are currently exploring opportunities to accommodate residential cluster development with our conservation goals. This will be our first task of the new year.

The natural area had a good year; no wildfires, no big storms and no infestations. We worked with the scouts to complete several conservation projects including improvement of the trail to the ponds and a new entrance sign. The Association continued to run a number of educational tours throughout the year and maintain fund raising activities. We succeeded in our goal this year was to modernize our Bylaws and continue our campaign to streamline Association operations.

Our January meeting will be on the 17th at Opportunity Elementary school, S.1109 Wilbur, at 7pm in the teachers lounge. It will be our annual election of officers so if you plan to join up better show up.

*...but speak to the Earth, and it shall teach thee — Job 12*

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