

# LIGHTS and SHADOWS

from the  
Dishman Hills

February 2004

## FOREST TALE

It was the best of forest and it was the worse of forest. This is a tale of two forest (sorry Dickens!). Our land holdings on Tower Mountain contain two forests that were harvested in two very different ways, and now that we are getting a chance to survey the land we are seeing the results of two very different approaches to natural resources stewardship. These results are important since Washington State now requires landowners of timber harvest land to restore damage done by the harvest and this responsibility is "inherited" when you buy land that was logged in the past. Our land on the north side of Tower Mountain that we bought in '94 and '01, was selectively cut prior to sale by a contract company. The State land we received on the south side of the Mountain last year was cut in '71 and '91, guided by State timber harvest specifications. We plan to restore both forests according to the State's forest practice standards as required.

Maybe the biggest difference between the two parcels is that the north side land was accessed with roads up drainage with tributary canyons blocked by roadbed. The results was stream channel diversion onto the access roads with lots of erosion of the roadbed. This damage will be difficult to correct. Water bars were not installed and small culverts became blocked or collapsed adding to the erosion problem. Many of the forest roads were not seeded. Stacks of rejected logs and slash were left causing unsightly debris piles and fire hazards. Maybe the most negative aspect of the north side logging was that they took the largest and healthiest trees, leaving the smaller and diseased ones.

The south side land has access roads that are up on the slopes, leaving the drainage intact, resulting in very little erosion. Riparian areas are left undisturbed and intact. All of the secondary roads have been water-barred and seeded. Where roads cross streams large culverts remain unclogged. All slash piles have been burned and scattered, and unlike the north side, trees were cut close to the ground greatly reducing the "stump" effect. Foresters left the largest and healthiest tree to repopulate the forest. It appears an effort was made to leave a diversity of tree species to accommodate the various habitats on the parcel.

The lessons learned by this tale is that there are right ways to harvest lumber and wrong ways. The south side land was logged under State guidance, resulting in a "thinning" of the forest that helped accelerate it to maturity with a healthy ecology that can support native plant and animal species. The disturbance of harvest was minimized, giving ample consideration to the future use of the land. The north side forest was harvested with speed and finance in mind with much less consideration to the future. Its legacy was to include erosion, noxious weed incursion, fire hazard, destruction of scenery, and a forest that was greatly slowed in its journey to maturity. Needless to say, we have quite a bit more work to do on the north side than the south to comply with State restoration standards by 2005. We would like to run tours of the two forests so this tale can be told on site to those interested in forestry. Now there is a national dialog on how to treat our forest resources to reduce wildfire hazards. The tale of how to balance timber harvest with healthy ecology for native plants and animals, and support soil conservation, scenery, and recreational space, is told on Tower Mountain.

*Never a day passes but that I do myself the honor to commune  
With some of nature's varied forms - George Washington Carver*

## STUFF

The Association attended the Sunrise Elementary science fair this month. We shared a table with the Native Plant Society and set up our new display that includes pictures, maps, and various artifacts from the Dishman Hills. It's always a surprise to find out how many kids have had adventurous experience hiking through the Hills.

Spring is just around the corner, and it about the time for the first buttercups to be emerging in some of the sunnier, thus warmer, spots. Remember that when hiking during these wetter months in the Hills it is important to stay on the trails since the vegetation on wet ground is easily damaged this time of year.

We have scheduled our annual Buttercup Hike for Saturday, April 17th. The hike will start at 1pm at Camp Caro on the north side of the Natural Area and we will hike for several hours to enjoy the beautiful spring experience of the Hills in full bloom. Some may want to picnic at Camp Caro at noon before the hike. Besides enjoying the great outdoors, we will be talking about the latest projects in the Hills this year.

## 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 meet every other month on the third Tuesday at Opportunity Elementary School, S. 1109 Wilbur, in the teacher's lounge, 7pm. Our next meeting will be March 16.

The following are our January donors that have consented to be listed: Greg & Lois Baker, Dick Behm, Diane Casey, David Cole, Lyndall Cook, Robert Downing, June Foote, Mary Gardner, Charles Gillingham, Marva Goede, Claire Goudge, Don Griffiths, Dr. & Mrs. Kenneth Gudgel, Gary & Andrea Gunning, Isabel Hawkins, Mike Henneberry, Alice Herman, LeRoy & Shirley Hook, Pat Killien, Esther Lancaster, Harry Merrick, Margaret Milsap, Jack O'Brian, Michael & Jeannette Ormsby, Joy Peterson, Fred & Dorothy Radebaugh, Ruth Roberts, Marjorie Rozell, Lee Smith, John & Barb Swan, Robert & Darlene Turner, Edwin & Betty Weilep, Robert & Sylvia Wilson, Harold Wimpy, Donald Woodke, Larry & Mary Wright, and three anonymous donors. Thank you one and all for making 2004 start so well!

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