

LIGHTS and SHADOWS

from the
Dishman Hills

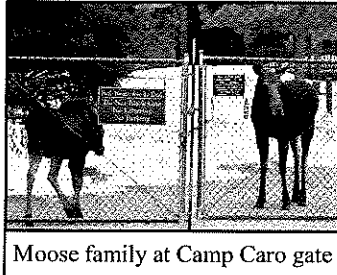
February 2009

MOOSE TALES

We are on the tail end of winter and the four legged residents of the Natural Area are often seen foraging for food on the forest edge. The following account was written by Joyce, a resident near Camp Caro and our "de facto" gate keeper for the Camp. Her story is a reminder that all of us who use the Natural Area have a responsibility to protect both the beautiful natural space that we enjoy and the wild animals that depend on the habitat.

On July 10, 2008, many forest animals were burned out of their homes and habitat. Today they are having a very harsh winter that's driving them down to places like Camp Caro to get food. The moose and her baby who live in the area, as well as all the deer have to be alert for irresponsible dog owners that allow their dogs to run and chase them. My husband and I witnessed a dog chase a deer into the fence on the north border of the Natural Area and the deer was bound up for a short while. The same deer we suspect that is the one now with a broken front leg. We confronted the dog owner and took his plate number and turned it over to County's Park Ranger and the Humane Society. We observed a potentially more serious situation several days later when mama moose and her baby were grazing at Camp Caro when a car full of dogs

pulled up to the closed gate. A woman rolled down her car window to allow her dogs to bark wildly at the moose and appeared to consider the scene very entertaining. Mama moose did not, and in haste jumped the play-area fence at the parking lot and slid on the ice to get to her baby that this woman and her dogs were tormenting.



Moose family at Camp Caro gate

Please, if you see people with dogs not leashed make it your business and tell them that there is a leash law in Spokane County and the area parks and natural areas. Camp Caro is closed till spring due to a lack of man power, so if you use the Hills use Park and 8th Ave, or the Siesta Court trailheads. Having the Camp Caro entrance closed will help keep the wildlife a lot safer during this harsh winter.

The moose family that Joyce describes has a fascinating history of motion. The female moose has a ear tag number 110. According to Washington Fish and Wildlife, this moose was tagged in 2006 near the Sunset highway on the west side of Spokane, and then relocated to Mica Peak, a number of miles to the east of the Natural Area. The very same female moose with daughter was spotted at Camp Caro on February 12 and photographed for the local paper at the Eagle Ridge golf course off highway 195, west of the city, on February 14! For those of you that live between all these moose destinations, do not be surprised if you find a pair of moose eyes staring at you through the darkness.

The closed gate for the Camp Caro parking lot has not entirely cured the dog problem in the area. A number of people have been observed climbing the fences here to take their dogs into the Natural Area.

If there is a just God, how humanity would writhe in its attempt to justify its treatment of animals— Isaac Asimov

PROGRAM CONTINUES

Spokane County Parks and Recreation talked to a group of us about upcoming plans for their continuing Conservation Future Program. This program has been ongoing for a number of years and has been very successful in adding many valuable natural spaces to our community. They would like to open up the program for new nominations by this summer. Prior to that they will assess the current candidate list and remove those that are no longer suitable. A new feature will be a organized "A" list that will line up candidates as to purchase priority. The YMCA building purchase was a hot topic, and several people questioned whether the program should burden itself with this high-priced acquisition.

BUTTERCUP TIME

The annual buttercup hike has been scheduled for Saturday, April 4, 1 pm, starting at Camp Caro. If the parking lot is still closed, we will start from a different trailhead. Check the March newsletter for updated details, or call Michael Hamilton, 747-8147, prior to the hike for an update. We trust that the snow will have melted by then, but some of us remember last year's hike that featured beautiful scenes of bright yellow buttercups contrasted by the brilliant white of fresh fallen snow! Spring is coming.

ASSOCIATION 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 questions. Our board meets every other month and March 25, Wednesday, is the next meeting, 7pm, at the Moran Prairie Spokane County Library, 6004 South Regal St. Members and the public are always welcomed to drop by to see what is going on with the Association.

The following are our January donors that have consented to be listed: Greg & Lois Baker, Nancy Cashion, Vivian & Thomas Caufield, Robert Downing, Earthworks Recycling, Victoria Egesdal, Jean Flechel, Margaret Fletcher, Art Fried, Gary Gunning, Michael & Claudia Hamilton. The Hobnailers, Janyce Keeling, Killackey Family, Pat Killien, Glen Kivett, Kerry Masters, Brian & Molly Miller, Matt Miller, Bill Nienhuis, Dave Noble, Ken Swedberg, Stephanie Schrimshire, Donald Walter, Robert & Sylvia Wilson, and two anonymous donors. Thank you for your generous support.

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