



**NEW YEARS MESSAGE**

There are many new terms that are a part of our conversations in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century such as carbon trading, relocalization, global warming, peak energy, resource conflicts, and environmental refuges. One word, maybe the most important of them all, is Conservation. Our challenge now is how to do with less, and how to better use what we have, rather than trying just to make more. We are beginning to see that a future of perpetual increases in growth and consumption is not the way to go. The hard times we have now are not punishments for how we structured our society, but rather consequences.

The Dishman Hills Association is, above all else, a conservation organization. Our mission is to save our community's natural ecologies for the future and this mission is getting harder and more complicated all the time. There are many choices for us and each path forward has it's own set of challenges and pitfalls. There are also many choices that our community must make to turn these hard times into a good life for all. The price of inaction and a passive attitude will be high. To commit our community to unlimited development is one choice, but this path will lead us eventually to the suspension of urban planning and environmental protection, loss of clean air and water, and the destruction of the natural spaces. It is said that progress of this sort can be simply rated as how fast we can turn our natural resources into trash.

But there is another path to take, one that can lead to better and healthier life for us. We can redefine growth and progress as the rate we conserve our green spaces (conservation futures program yea!!), on how carefully we control development so that it respects neighborhood and community needs, and how well we protect our natural resources. Conservation supported by wise government, citizen volunteers, community organizations, and involved businesses can be the tool to make us a great place for the 22nd century. Community strength is very important. Together we can control our future, but separately it will be controlled by others. We need to re-energize and organize our conservation efforts. Businesses should support recreational areas, churches can "Care for Creation", neighborhoods can champion their local green spaces, citizens can lobby government to make wise decisions, and clubs and individuals can volunteer. Sure this will cost us some bucks, but respect for, instead of exploitation of, the earth and it's natural systems will surely leave us a happier and healthier people. To double the efficiency of an automobile there are several paths; you can research and retool the engineering of the unit, develop the manufacturing and distribution of the product, and initiate an advertising campaign to sell it; or you can just add a second passenger. Which path makes sense to you?

**BOARD THINKS**

The board brain-stormed on this years goals and some of the responses were: 1) assemble a multi-year plan and develop strategies to accomplish it; 2) educate and outreach to the community by advertising the organization and its goals with a better website and more events; 3) increase membership with events, hikes, and interesting programs; 4) better fund raising by tapping new sources such as local business sponsors; 5) improve or revise the mission statement; 6) finalize the Big Rock land exchange; 7) explore educational opportunities; 8) improve stewardship with an better management plan and better signs. If you think these ideas are not enough to keep us busy during the year, sent us some of your ideas.

**ANNUAL MEET**

Our annual membership meeting was held this month and the board of trustees for the next year will consist of Andrew Ashmore, David Cole, Michael Hamilton, Roger Killackey, Chris Kopczynski, Jeff Lambert, Robert Ordner, Mary Weathers, and Chris Wolbach. We approved an amendment to our by-laws to not use proxy votes in our elections. This will bring us more inline with other non profits and make elections simpler and more fair. A reminder that dues in 2009 will be raised from \$10 to \$15 effective June 15<sup>th</sup> of this year. This reflects the increase of basic cost of postage, newsletter printing and the few incidentals used to support membership. A financial report for 2008 included total income of \$20,536 and expenses of \$13,920. The bulk of the expenses were from professional fees attached to our efforts on the Big Rock land exchange and forest restoration expenses from last summer's wildfire.

Breaking news—Spokane County has closed the Natural Area at Camp Caro until April 14th, and have locked the gate on Sargent Rd. They haven't plowed the parking lot of snow and have had some problems with unleashed dogs attacking deer there.

**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 on the third Tuesday. March 17 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 December donors that have consented to be listed: Steve & Jan Barrett, Jill Beth, Nancy Cashion, Joseph Collins, Janice Cooperstein, Dave Deline, Doris Distad, Jody & Stan Fergin, Fosseen Foundation, Craig Grossman, Wes Hanson, Steve & Karen Heaps, Mary & Bill Herron, Chris Kopczynski, Mary Meagher, Mike & Jeanette Ormsby, Elizabeth Parsons, Bruce & Julie Rosenoff, Jane Schelly, Harold Skinner, Ruth Slichter, Jan Strobeck, Patricia Sweeney, Rob & Darlene Turner, Jeanne Wilson, Mary & Lawrence Wright, Kris & Karl Wolbach, and one anonymous donor. Thank you for closing out the year with strong support.

Please use this form when sending **CONTRIBUTIONS or DUES**

All contributions are tax deductible.

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