

# LIGHTS and SHADOWS

from the  
Dishman Hills

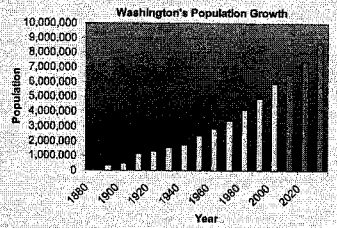
April 2011

## DIVERSITY IS GOOD

The Natural Area is about many things, but right on top of the list it is a refuge for biodiversity. The recognized biodiversity of the Dishman Hills is a major reason why the area has the support of both the community and the State. What is biodiversity? What does it include? Is it threaten? Our State has a Biodiversity Council and they define it as "the full range of life in all its forms. This includes the habitats in which life occurs, the way that species and habitats interact with each other, and the physical environment and the processes necessary for those interactions."

What is at stake here is the survival of our native plant and animal populations. Washington is home (what is currently known) to 3,100 vascular plant species, thousands of mosses, lichens, liverworts, and fungus, 140 mammals, 341 birds, 25 amphibians, 21 reptiles, and 20,000 or so invertebrates. We rank 13<sup>th</sup> out of 50 states for biodiversity, and the Dishman Hills NRCA might be considered the Eastern Washington "capital" of biodiversity. Our location is at the junction of three large ecoregions that cover our side of the State, the Columbia Plateau, Canadian Rocky Mountain, and Okanogan ecoregions. The rugged topography of the Natural Area is an Ice Age artifact that was scoured by gigantic floods that topped the ridge and left many, water retaining depressions that have given additional support to native plant communities.

The importance of the ecosystems that support biodiversity is going up every day. Pressures on them are many but center on habitat loss and degradation, environmental pollution, invasive species, and climate change. Driving all these pressures are the effects of population growth, agriculture, and urban development. Fragmentation of the remaining ecological spaces is a problem that we are also trying to tackle by establishing and saving connection corridors between the Natural Area and the expanding conservation lands to the south on Tower Mountain.. This should keep us very busy for some time since acquisition of lands to do this can be expensive and complicated.



*Man did not weave the web of life—he is merely a strand in it.  
Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself*  
Chief Seattle, 1854

The Columbia Plateau Ecosystem is the most threatened in the state and some of the "protected" species in the Natural Area hail from this ecosystem. To understand the Association's stewardship and mission styles, one must realize that conservation of our biodiversity is of prime importance. We recognize that public access to our natural spaces is critical in defining their value to the community for recreation and education opportunities. But, we must sort out which of these activities, and the amount of them will allow our ecosystems to survive. There are many difficult decisions for us in order to carry out our mission to preserve biodiversity.

## KUDOS

Our Association is embarking on a new project to support the Big Rock and Iller Creek Conservation areas. As previously announced we are buying 10 acres this spring at the end of Stevens Creek Rd for public parking. Spokane County has asked us to do the "heavy lifting" for this project by completing construction of a parking lot on this land and improving a small section of Stevens Creek Rd leading to the lot prior to County acquisition of our Big Rock parcel for Conservation Futures land. A call for assistance was answered by Avista Utilities that has offered to do the design and survey work as a community service project. Aaron Henson, a civil engineer for Avista, is leading these efforts. In addition, a grant for trailhead construction from the Access Fund of Colorado has been awarded to us as recognition of the recreational importance to the area of the conservation lands on Tower Mountain. Support for services, materials, and construction costs have also come forward from Kop Construction Co., Lill Construction Co, and Spokane Rock Products. On top of all this, we are hoping others can help us see this job done and donate the needed resources.

## ASSOCIATION NEWS

We are a non-profit 501(c)(3) 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 month on the third Tuesday. Our next meeting is May 17th, 7 pm. We meet at the Moran Prairie Spokane County Library, 6004 South Regal St. Visitors are always welcomed.

The following are our March donors that have consented to be listed: Nancy Cashon, Joseph Collins, Gary Gunning, Cynthia Langlois, Ken Mondal, Patricia Muncy, Don & Gloria Nicol, Parviz Partovi, Norma Rosenberger, Harold Skinner, Lee Smith, Nanette Smith, The Spokane Mountaineers, William Thrasher, Jeanne Wilson, Art Zack, Hershel Zellman, and one anonymous donor. Thanks tons.

## YES, I want to help protect our natural areas in the Spokane Region

Enclosed is my tax-deductable donation of:

\$ 15\*    \$ 25    \$ 50    \$ 100    Other \_\_\_\_\_

\* annual dues, due by June 30

Gift is a Memorial for: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Acc. No. (see address) \_\_\_\_\_  Please don't list me as a donor

**Please return this form along with your check payable to DHNAA**

I would like to receive my Lights & Shadows online My email address is: \_\_\_\_\_

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