

**TRAIL PLANNING**

The Dishman Hills Natural Area is known for its extensive trail system, and many have had the experience of getting a bit confused (or lost!). They wonder which way is which after too many trail junctions. Well, we are currently reconsidering our trail plan to see what can be improved. This was initiated by DNR (Department of Natural Resources) announcing that they are prepared to spend \$60K to do a comprehensive update of our trail signs for the Natural Area. This amount should cover a new set of signs with a few interpretive installations thrown in for environmental education. The "ball is now back in our court", and we want to present to DNR an improved trail plan. No one is sure where all the trails came from. One would assume that years of human use created the paths we see today and there are only a few trail segments that were actually designed and built. Here are some of our trail considerations:

- 1) No trail should terminate at a private property boundary.
- 2) There should be trail loops where possible to circulate hikers through and within the Natural Area. Exceptions would be trails to important ecological sites or viewpoints.
- 3) Eliminate redundant trails that are shortcuts, duplicates, or Dead-ends.
- 4) Limit trails in areas of sensitive ecology.

We must remember that our goal here is to first protect the natural and native ecology. Secondly, we want to provide public access to experience what we are conserving. We do not want to design a recreational or sports area which would slowly consume the very thing that draws people here in the first place, a fine piece of northwest forest in our backyard. The Conservancy has felt for some time now that supporting trails that lead onto private property is not right. We realize that a hiker trekking down a trail might pay little attention to where the path goes from public to private. Part of this project will be to design and build new trail segments that complete loops in the existing trail system, so hikers will not face the dilemma of having to stop and turn around at a private property boundary. Another important goal will be to decommission trail segments with a program of trail and environmental restoration. Sounds like a lot of work? It is, but we can break it down into several smaller campaigns of work to get the job done. Sometime in the next year you will find new signs, new trails, and restored trail paths. Please respect trail closer signs, so the forest can heal itself and the paths can disappear, naturally.

**HAPPY HIKING**

At last, the parking lot for the Big Rock trailhead on the southern side of the Iller Creek Conservation Area. is complete (or very nearly ). The county says it will wait to hydro-seed the cuts into the hillside until the rains return in the fall, so the grasses can stabilize the slopes in the spring. The lot has been about a year in the making, with several delays for rain and snow which is bad for construction. The location is at the top of Stevens Creek road off the Palouse Highway. Head north on Stevens Crk Rd., and drive slowly so as not to create much dust. Next you will pass Jason Hill Ln on the right near where Stevens Creek road use to end. Next go into the forest on our new road segment, and take a left into the lot.



Giant Parking Lot

You will be impressed with the size. It is designed for bus/trailer turn-around space. Plans are for an information kiosk with a map of the area. One of the most frequently asked question is "Do I need a parking pass to park in this lot?" The answer is no you do not.

After parking, head back to the road, turn north, and follow the dirt road/track uphill. You will pass a log-ditch barrier that was donated by a local resident to control motor vehicles. Keep heading up the road a ways (it's a right-of-way) to trailhead. From there a fine foot trail built by the Washington Trail Association takes you up, up to the Big Rock Ridge. Happy Hiking!

**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 will be on September 18th, 7 PM. We meet at the Moran Prairie Spokane County Library, 6004 South Regal St. Visitors are always welcomed.

The following are our July donors that have consented to be listed: Jill Beth, Carol Bryan, Ruth Cahalan, Nancy Cashion, Joseph Collins, James Harless, Karol Kaye, Jean Koch, Cynthia Langlois, Linda Martin, William Peterson, Marilyn Stedman, Norma Trefry, Elenora Wildermuth, and one anonymous donor. Thanks for your support in the doldrums of summer.

*Nature recycles everthing  
Waste is food in Nature* - David Brower 1993

***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: \_\_\_\_\_

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