

LIGHTS and SHADOWS

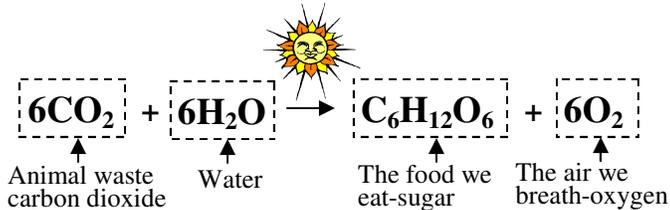
from the
Dishman Hills

November 2012

IT'S A MIRACLE

In this season of Thanksgiving, there is something going on in the Natural Area that should be better understood and appreciated. It's the bases for most of the life on our Planet, and one of the true miracles of the many we find in Nature. Photosynthesis is the process that plants and their chlorophyll component takes sunlight, water, and minerals from rock and makes most everything you enjoyed at your Holiday dinners.

Below is the formula for life (it would make a great tattoo):



This process has been around awhile. Travel back 3.5 billion years, and you might notice that some bacteria are figuring out how to use the abundant CO₂ and hydrogen to make something useful. Stick around for a billion years to pass and you will find that these workhorses have filled the planets oceans and have pumped enough oxygen (their waste) into the air to make a lungful quite pleasant. Now there is something to be thankful for.

Your Christmas tree, while severed from its moorings, is still at work freshening your living room air. The bright green color is the reflection of the only wavelength of light it finds unuseful. The total energy captured globally by photosynthesis is 130 terawatts, about 6 times the energy consumption of Humans, and converts 115K million tons of carbon into biomass. One acre of corn on a bright summer day makes enough oxygen for 802 people; Thanks again. This is a process that we have not been able to mimic with synthetic methods. Even if we could, nothing seems to be able to beat the job a heap of slimy algae can do to produce the basics for life.

The chemical path from solar radiation to a T-bone steak is long and complicated. Leaf or needle pigments harvest the suns energy and pass it on to the chlorophyll that will do the alchemy of using this solar power to split water, H₂O, into oxygen and hydrogen. The oxygen is exhaled, and the inhaled CO₂ is combined with the hydrogen to form sugars, the food that lets the plant grow. Starving Native Americans knew that the sap transporting layers of trees just inside the bark, were a source of food in a pinch.

A tree never hits an automobile except in self defense—Proverb

Some animals have harnessed photosynthesis by incorporating chloroplasts into their structure as a symbiotic arrangement. Imagine if humans took that choice as a food source. Meals would consist of stripping bare and sun-bathing our green bodies for an hour. We certainly would have a different social structure with that arrangement. So, the next time you are strolling through the woods, take a deep breath and turn to the nearest tree and say thank you!

FULL RETREAT

The Conservancy Board had a full days retreat this month to reassemble ourselves for the future. We drafted updated mission and vision statements, as well as a list of our core values. The real goal for the day was to assemble a strategic plan for the next few years. To this end we retained a professional land trust consultant, Donna Erickson from Missoula, to lead us in an organized effort to put our future goals down on paper. Results of this well-spent-day will be showing up on our web page. Notable was the agreement that the Conservancy is still in the natural land acquisition phase, and probably will be for several more decades. After that we will have to change to a stewardship organization.

Other items worked on included the structure of our committees system since we realize that we need to emphasis individual work groups to tackle all the challenges of 2013 and beyond. A major topic was how to handle expansion of the organization which may include a larger board, increased membership, bigger projects, and the possibility of having some staff, or maybe even an office. The bottom line is that we have a lots of stuff going on and invite all interested to join us in the task at hand. The General Membership meeting in January is coming up, an excellent time to see where YOU can fit in!

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 747-8147, if you have questions. Our board meets every month on the third Tuesday. Our next meeting will be on December 17th, 7 PM. We meet at the Moran Prairie Spokane County Library, 6004 South Regal St. Visitors are always welcomed.

The following are our October donors: Susan Burian, Nancy Cashon, Peter Dix, Mary Eberle, Virginia Foote, Roger Fruci, Craig Hart, Megan Hornby, Jane Cunningham, Cynthia Langlois, Peggy McTigue, Linda Moulder, Lois Packer, Bill Peterson, Steve Peterson, Fred Radebaugh, Mary Lou Safranek, Rose Schultz, David Shannon, Jon Stevenson, John Sullivan, Kathleen Thompson, Frank Tracy, Unitarian Universalist, Bernadine Van Theil, Kathleen Weinand, Hershel Zellman, and 1 anonymous donor, Thanks, Thanks, Thanks!

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

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