

LIGHTS and SHADOWS

from the
Dishman Hills

April 2013

GRAND EVENT

At the end of last month the Conservancy held an annual banquet to celebrate all the good stuff happening around us. The well-attended event was centered on a tribute to the retirement of Michael Hamilton, the president of the Conservancy for the last 20 years, the welcoming of our new president, Jeff Lambert, and the announcement of a newly awarded grant from the New Priorities Foundation. A good time was had by all. Many thanks for all those that worked to make it possible and to the Inlander weekly for their generous support. For those of you that missed it, be aware that our social events are a lot of fun, and the next one is June 1, details to come.

The following message is from the outgoing president, Michael Hamilton as a brief summation of the experience as seen through his eyes:

It's been a wonderful, challenging, difficult, rewarding, and adventurous twenty years as president of the Dishman Hills Conservancy. At most times, I'd rather have been invisible than pictured as a strong activist flying into the face of urban expansion, and environmental destruction. After all, conservation philosophy suggests one leaves little of themselves behind other than a few footprints. The mission is what was important to me, and to see the fulfillment of our objectives one after another is ample reward. As a team of active members, involved citizens, supporting community, and partnered government we saved 1,721 acres of the landscape for our Natural Heritage!



My journey with the Conservancy started with a spring hike at the beginning of the 1990's. As an outdoor enthusiast, and field geologist for the U.S. Bureau of Mines a little hike in the dense forest of the Dishman Hills seemed worthwhile. Coming from the flatlands of the Midwest, I have always appreciated living in the West, it is a dream come true. I was very impressed not only with all the exposed rocks, cliffs, and ecology, but with the folks on the hike. Tom Rogers, Conservancy founder, was the leader and his sensitivity to the natural aspects of everything around us was very impressive. A discarded aluminum can to Tom was not so much an environmental insult as a receptacle for a fine collection of dead beetles awaiting classification. This was a group I wanted to know. The board

then was staffed with many of the original supporters that started the ball rolling in 1966 and some new involvement was well appreciated. Several "blinks of the eye" later I was on the Board, and then conscripted to be president in 1993. Before the old timers left, they applied their indelible enthusiasm to start the Tower Mountain/Big Rock conservation land purchases, and extracted from me the promise to see this goal realized. To this end I've tried to see it done. The last 20 years was not a singular effort, and I was always surrounded by talented and devoted people, and a supporting and generous community. Actually, the most fun was working with all those that shared the vision of a Near Nature. Near Perfect Spokane. I also found that the best way to explain to people the value of conserving the Dishman Hills is just take them out into the green forest, rocky canyons, and high ridges to take a minute or two to realign their lives, soothed by the sound of wind in the pines, fascinated by the variety of life on the forest floor, and to absorb the wonder of a rapture catching an updraft to soar higher. That really says it all.

SERVICE SUCCESS

Service day and Earth Day events were a success with the Conservancy settling up a booth downtown to participate. Our annual service day attracted over 300 volunteers on a very rainy day to clean up, restore and build trails, as well as to plant trees in the Natural Area. Our new trail system is coming together, more details next month. Thanks to all that made it such a success.

CONSERVANCY 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 May, 21th, 7 pm. We meet at the Moran Prairie County Library, 6004 South Regal St.. Visitors are always welcomed.

The following are our March donors that have consented to be listed: Andrew Ashmore, Brian Aut, Lynn Bahrych, Marcella Bates, Paula Bauer, Carol Bryon, Nancy Cashion, Joseph Collins, Suzy Dix, Gail Duba, Jeff Lambert, Laura Gray, Lindell Haggin, Cynthia Langlois, Nancy Lill, Lee Loudis, Pat Manners, Kerry Masters, Brian Miller, Marilyn Miller, Larry Montgomery, Mark Nelson, Robert Ordner, New Priorites Foundation, Parviz Partovi, Chris Polito, Linda Pool, Rika Ream, Steve Reynolds, Rose Schultz, Gene Slichter, Anne Stuyvesant-Whigham, Robert Swanson, Jane Thrasher, Steve Trefts, Jacqueline Volz, Mary Weathers, Janine Whitacre, Kristine Wolbach, and one anonymous donor. Thank you one and all!!

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

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