



LIGHTS AND SHADOWS
From the
DISHMAN HILLS

NOVEMBER 1995

THANKS TO NOVEMBER CONTRIBUTORS

Our thanks to those who contributed to the Dishman Hills-Tower Mountain project in October and have given permission to be listed here: Marjorie Benander, Brad W. Plegen, Wilford A. Dolphin, Myrtle A. Erickson, John R. Gorman, Don Griffiths, Marie L. Kinney, Gail L. Lambert, Janice G. Mahoney, Francis H./June Potter, Richard Schmidt, Hazel L. Smith, Lois Smith, Helen Stowell, Mary Anne Sullivan, University High, Jeanne H. Wilson, Niel/Patricia Wright and Art Zack/Nan Smith. If we missed listing you here, please let us know by calling 926-7949. Again thanks!

A FRIEND OF THE ENVIRONMENT PASSES

A loss to all of us is the passing of our friend Morrie Haggin, dedicated worker in behalf of environmental protection, supporter of the Dishman Hills project and many another cause. We are most thankful for his life and will surely miss him.

SLIDE SHOW PROGRAM SHOWN

In November we showed our Dishman Hills-Tower Mountain slide show to most appreciative members of Spokane Lilac Society and Spokane Floral Society. We are always happy to present our program and to lead hikes into the Hills. Just let us know a few weeks ahead. Call us at 926-7949.

A NATURAL YARD ATTRACTS WILDLIFE

If you have a "shaggy" yard with trees, shrubs, flowers and even a few weeds, it will pay off for you in a dividend of bird life and even of butterflies and other little creatures. And a number of native plants are attractive and don't require any watering or other care: ponderosa pines, Douglas firs, mock oranges, serviceberries, golden currant, Oregon grape, mountain spray and others. These plantings will also save you money and time, for you'll have less lawn to fertilize, water, and mow. Composting your clippings and leaves will help the soil and save the expense of disposing of them in some other way.

ORGANIZATION PURPOSE STATEMENT

We are a nonprofit organization dedicated to saving some of the natural areas of the Spokane area for people to enjoy and learn from.

President: Michael Hamilton; Vice-president: Tom Rogers; Secretary: Helen Linger; Treasurer: David Lentz; Board members (in addition to officers): Omar Carroli, Francis & June Potter and Ray Staley. All serve without pay and we have no paid employees. We strive to keep expenses at a minimum.

Monthly meetings are held Opportunity Elementary, South 1109 Wilbur on the third Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. **You are cordially invited.**

HILLS ENJOYABLE IN AUTUMN

Late November's springlike weather set the stage for a pleasant hike in the Dishman Hills. Buttercup leaves were awaiting Spring--they might not have to wait that long for they have been known to flower in December. Emerald green mosses on cliffs vied with Oregon grape and alum root leaves for springlike color and a few golden serviceberry leaves were reluctant to let go. Lichens on the rocks had taken on fresh hues varying from gray to chartreuse. Polypody ferns continue to peer out from the crevices of Caro Cliff but bracken fern has turned tan. Snowberries shone like little lights. Sprites among the grasses was the array of fungi, creamy white, tan, reddish brown and dusky, ranging in size from saucer-sized to no bigger than peas. These little plants were busy returning to the soil mats of fallen leaves, fertilizing it for next year's growth.

An occasional red squirrel -- they aren't red at all but brown -- watched warily from the pines or perches on boulders, ready to scamper away. A raven croaked overhead and a little flock of pygmy nuthatches searched the pines for food, along with a red-breasted nutch -- breast also not red but orange-brown and some finches and crossbills. On East Pond two handsome mallard drakes and one hen circled leisurely, all in full breeding plumage, ready for next year. Water levels were low but better than in some years, when the ponds are virtually dry.

The Department of Natural Resources with the cooperation of Spokane County Parks is erecting pole fences at entrances to keep out vehicles and horses and placing water bars to divert runoff from trails. DNR has also erected new entrance signs. Trails are nearly litter free but need some more work to restore them after erosion during the heavy rains.

Some vandalism still is occurring. Destruction of a trailside bench has occurred and someone has disfigured with paint rocks and trees along the trails. Nearly all of the little maple trees, labeled "Historic Trees" have died, not being adapted to the dry soil there, though those who planted them had the best of intentions. On the bright side, the soil disturbed during the construction of the new lodge is being recolonized naturally by pine seedlings and other native plants, though weeds, the bane of disturbed soil, are competing. Deer tracks were evident there but the ground squirrels and marmots have long since gone into hibernation.

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