



LIGHTS AND SHADOWS
From the
DISHMAN HILLS

AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 1996

SUMMER DONATIONS A BIG HELP

July and August donations totaled \$2,095.00 with Spokane Audubon Society contributing a big \$1,600.00 from its Bird-A-thon.

Memorials contributed \$190.00 of the total and interest on the land purchase reserve added \$48.92. Expenses were \$130.88 for administration, \$111.07 for bulletin mailing and \$6.75 for office supplies.

Our thanks to you who contributed and have given permission to be listed here: Kelle Antonellis, Karen L. Behm, Margaret V. Bloom, Esther L. Browning/David Bush, June Helen Foote, Corinne Y. Gillingham, Frank H. Gropp, Mrs. Donald Hagan, Doris G. Harshbarger, Isabel Hawkins, Roy/Eris A. Heggem, Mrs. B.H. Jacklin, Elizabeth Jacobsen, Arla F. Lewis, Dorothy M. Knechtel, Helen E. Lininger, Bettie Maron, Sharon Murphy/Roger Fruci, Don/Gloria Nicol, Bill Nienhuis, Madeline A. Phelps, Francis/June Potter, A. Willene Priestley, Spokane Audobon Society, Star Steel (Kermit/Annouchka Anderson), Tom Rogers, Hazel L. Smith, Lois Smith, Mrs. F.L. Terhaar, Florence Thayer, University Elementary School PTA, Glen P. Volyn, M.D., Wanda B./Ronda L. Warren and Jeanne H. Wilson. If you should have been listed here but we missed doing so, please let us know at (509) 926-7949. Again, many thanks!

WATER LEVELS GOOD IN THE HILLS

The wet spring and summer resulted in luxuriant growth but hot, dry weather in between has dried up most flowers and bushes except around ponds and springs. Goldenrod and yampah, that white-flowered carrot relative, are the most common, and Indian paintbrush is still bright in Aspen Hollow.

A mallard hen found East Pond to her liking. Nearby were the only other birds found: A little hawk perched atop a tall pine snag while two pygmy nuthatches flitted nearby, one actually alighting a few feet below the hawk! The only other bird was a towhee calling from nearby shrubs. A big dragonfly coursed over the pond. An occasional red squirrel chattered from the pines.

Paths were rather litter-free, cigarette butts and candy wrappers the main offenders. Tracks showed that a few bikers and horseback riders are still entering in spite of signs posted by the Department of Natural Resources. Thanks to the DNR neat pole fences have been placed across entrances and water bars placed on main trails where erosion has been a threat. Vandalized trail side benches have also been restored.

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 Lininger; Treasurer: David Lentes; Board members (in addition to officers): Francis & June Potter and Ray Staley. All serve without pay and we have no paid employees. We strive to keep expenses at a minimum.

Our monthly meetings are at Opportunity Elementary, South 1109 Wilbur on the third Tuesday at 7 p.m.. You are cordially invited.

NATURE'S DISPOSAL SYSTEM

A biology teacher once asked her class, "What living things are the most important in the scheme of the world's environmental system?" After students volunteer a number of answers, the teacher replied, "The decomposers." This is really only one half the answer, for if there were no green plants, there wouldn't be anything to decompose. Yet if plants and the animals that feed upon them died and never decomposed, the earth would be covered with dead bodies.

We often fight against the decomposers, the molds and bacteria which try to destroy our food, fungi which rot our houses, fence posts, boats and anything else made of wood. Of course we must get rid of these things when they are no longer wanted. We burn them in trash piles or incinerators or landfill them. The decomposers do it slowly, releasing carbon dioxide with little effect upon the content of the air, contrary to burning.

Nature doesn't always get rid of things slowly however. Lightning may cause fires, which we consider undesirable and spend much time, money and effort to put out. But fire is Nature's incinerator, returning material to the soil for reuse. We are beginning to realize that continued fire suppression of forest fires results in a real holocaust when a fire does start. Recall what happened in Yellowstone Park a few years ago. Yet, even then, the whole park didn't burn, but only in patches. Much wildlife actually benefitted, as grasses and flowers, suppressed by forest, furnished the animals with abundant food. Lightning-caused fires can be beneficial in another way, for the electrical discharges manufacture nitrogen compounds that are fertilizer.

We didn't make the rules--nature did. Sometimes it is futile, even undesirable, to try to impose our own rules upon her.

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