



Lights and Shadows from the Dishman Hills, June, 1997

HUTTON KIDS EXPLORE HILLLS

Some 60 eager first and second graders from the Hutton School in the Spokane Valley toured the Dishman Hills, looking at the plants, birds, and little water creatures. Leading the hikes were teachers Sue Harnetiaux and Mary Stuckart; Emily Celto of Spokane County; Mary Cather, very knowledgeable about insects and Audubon Society members Jan Reynolds and Tom Rogers. The weather was perfect, neither too warm or too cold in spite of an earlier threat of rain.

Jan's group saw a Calliope Hummingbird, the U.S.'s smallest bird, and a normally elusive Catbird. Also observed were a Western Wood Pewee, a Western Flycatcher, Black-capped and Mountain Chickadees, a Yellow Warbler, a Chipping Sparrow, a Warbling Vireo, a Western Tanager, a Raven, a Red-tailed Hawk, and Violet-green Swallows.

The ponds yielded Salamander larvae, leeches, snails, and water fleas. Seed shrimp were abundant. Water insects included Whirligig Beetles, Back-swimmers, and midge larvae.

Spring flowers are gone, but early summer ones are brightening trailsides. To mention a few, there were Mock Orange, Honeysuckle, Camas, Phlox, Stonecrop, Sticky, Geranium, Biscuitroot, Mountain Balm, and Cinquefoil.

The event was a reminder that environmental education is a very important goal for our organization. We feel that the key to the preservation of our natural areas is for the younger generations to learn their value by experiencing the wonder of nature first hand.

ORGANIZATION NEWS

We are a non-profit organization dedicated to saving natural areas in the Spokane region for public enjoyment and education. Call Michael Hamilton at 747-8147 with any questions about the Association. Our monthly meetings for the summer are at Camp Caro, four blocks south of Sprague on Sargent Rd., the third Tuesday at 7 PM, **You are cordially invited.**

Donations came to nearly \$445 in May, a decided drop from April. We thank the following May donors who have given permission to be listed here: Kathryn Henderson, Helen Lininger, Gloria Krebs, Carol Miller, Marilyn Miller, Larry Moon, Gale Mueller, Sandy Hills Garden Club, Lois Smith, Norma Trefry, Mary Wilhelm, Shirley Wihborg, and Jeanne Wilson.

We will be publishing a more complete financial statement only every quarter. Our expenses have decreased since we are doing our own printing and bookkeeping.


WHITWORTH STUDY OF DH

A study was completed last winter by a Whitworth Conservation Biology student titled "Local Struggle for Diversity in the Dishman Hills". The report discusses the challenges of managing a natural environment while being surrounded by urban growth. Dishman Hills is characterized as a habitat island that faces major threats to its biodiversity due to lack of natural fires, exotic plant and animal incursion, and habitat fragmentation.

The lack of natural fires fails to provide the right environment for plants that require periodic, low intensity fires. Exotic plants and animals are being introduced by humans in the form of cats, dogs, non native plants and noxious weeds, and exotic birds.

The natural environment is also being fragmented by the proliferation of trails, roads and construction in the DH area. This will effect the natural migration of animals and increase the "edge effect", placing development adjacent to the natural areas.

The report questions whether or not it is possible to maintain the DH as a natural area with all of these threats to the habitat. The answer to this question is a complex one, and it will be a challenge to find a management solution that will preserve the natural area as well as possible under conditions that are out of our control. We have work to do! You may request a copy of this report from the address below for the cost of reproduction and postage, about \$2.00.

 We are going to have a weed pulling party at the Dishman Hills sometime in late June while conditions are still good. If you are interested in helping call Tom Rogers now, 926-7949.

Please use this form when sending **CONTRIBUTIONS or DUES**
All contributions are tax deductible

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E. 10820 Maxwell
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