



# Lights and Shadows from the Dishman Hills, March, 1998

## BUTTERCUP HIKE IS APRIL 18

Our annual buttercup hike into the Dishman Hills is scheduled for Saturday, April 18, starting at Camp Caro, South 625 Sargent Road at 1:30 p.m. We'll hike as far as anyone wants to. Besides buttercups, we expect to see grass widows and the tiny flowers of pepper and salt (parsley family). Towhees should be back, scratching among dead leaves on the ground. Otherwise it will be resident birds such as the red-breasted and pygmy nuthatches, or possibly some white-breasted chickadees, or perhaps a downy woodpecker, a flicker, or a ruffed grouse. The ponds may have attracted a few mallards. If it is a warm day we may find a few butterflies coming out of hibernation like mourning cloaks and angelwings. A few flies will likely be on the wing, for they are active at lower temperatures than most other insects.

Thus far this winter, robins have been very common in the Spokane Valley. Males are starting to sing and claim nesting territories. Wintering waxwings are still lingering. The larger Bohemians will very soon head north. A different population of cedar waxwings will move in during May and nest locally. Of course, we will have an abundance of house sparrows and starlings along with house finches, a few flickers and song sparrows, year around residents. It's time for the violet-green swallows to arrive. These warm days should provide them with plenty of flying insect food. A butterfly and numerous buttercups were spotted just before press time so Spring is here regardless of the calendar. If you maintain a bird feeder, food is scarcer this time of year so keep them fullup.

## 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 for any questions. We have our monthly meetings at Opportunity Elementary School, South 1109 Wilbur, the third Tuesday of the month at 7PM, You are cordially invited.

February contributions for the Dishman Hills Project came to a very good \$1,625.15. Expenses were \$165.14 for printing supplies and bulletin mailing, the rest going to our land purchase. Our thanks to all. The following have given permission to be listed: Stephen Barrett, Cornelia Bratten, Rita Cencich, Joseph Collins, Signe Currier, Myrtle Erickson, June Foote, Mrs. Kenneth Gudgel, Adeline Haynes, Eric Heggen, Igna Hendron, Steve Hoitink, Hobnailers, William Kuhlman, Frank Howard, Maxine Leszczykowski, Margaret Millsap, Gloria/Don Nicol, Bill Nienhuis, Joy Peterson, Tom Rogers, Norma Rosenberger, St. Mary's Garden Club, Spokane Valley Kiwanis, Kristin Stewart, Dorothy Torney, Grace Ward, Jeanne Wilson, Art Zack, and 3 anonymous donors.

## DISHMAN HILLS ONLINE

The Hills are now online thanks to the outstanding work of the 5th and 6th grade kids at Regal Elementary and their teachers Mrs. Mooney, Mr. Severn, and Mrs. Fiorina. The address for the web site is as follows: [http://www.sd81.k12.wa.us/Regal/Dishman Hills/Grant.htm](http://www.sd81.k12.wa.us/Regal/Dishman%20Hills/Grant.htm). The main menu gives you informative and interesting choices. One can visit the natural area by viewing a map and selecting "hot buttons" for in depth site information. There are discussions on the forest, topographic sites such as the Enchanted Ravine, the animal population, ground plants, and special topics like soils and mutant frogs. The dialog is written by kids for kids making this web site a great environmental education tool for the elementary schools. There are also options to view data tables on environmental observations, expert and source information, other similar site connections, and research questions. Several more projects are in the pipeline including a virtual hike in the Hills with information stops as you walk (electronically) along the trail. Check it out!

## CONSERVATION FUTURES

Nominations for the Conservation Futures Program are being accumulated by County Parks and Recreation. The Program will purchase natural lands from a property tax fund over the next three years. Public meetings will be held and public input and support is solicited; contact Parks and Recreation for details. There will be several land parcels nominated that extent the boundaries of the Dishman Hills. We realise that the opportunity to extend into areas of similar topography and ecology is going fast.

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