



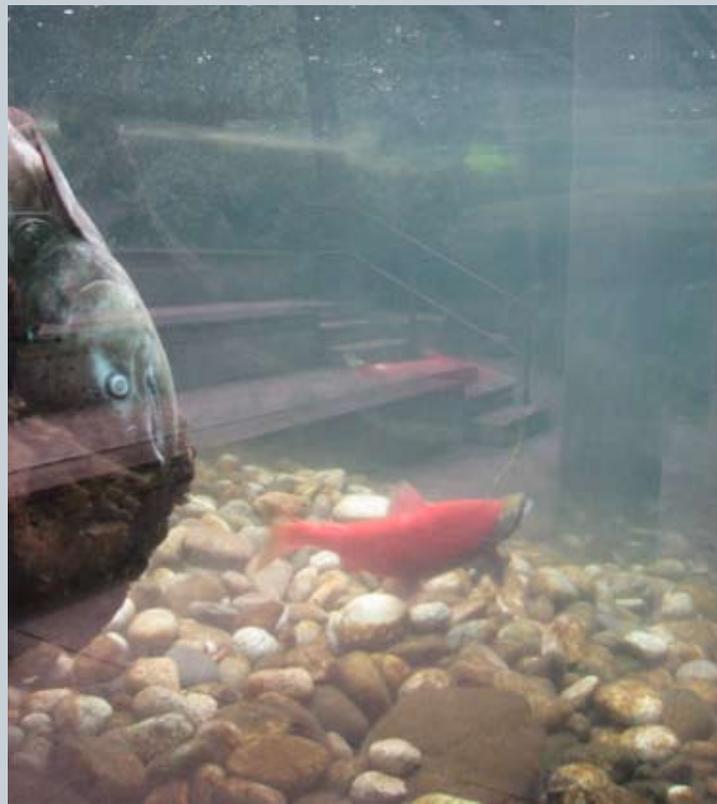
The Nature Center Stream



F A L L

The Seasonal Newsletter of the MK Nature Center

2 0 1 2



Early September could be the best time to visit at MKNC. Just after Salmon and Steelhead Days, the Kokanee (red fish) linger and the Chinook (left side of photo) die after they spawn. Fish death brings in the mink and heron and the crayfish are out in droves! The aspen and cottonwood leaves start to turn yellow. If you didn't make it here this fall, be sure to get here next September.





VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Dave Cannamela, MK Nature Center Superintendent

It is really fairly hard to explain. Things *happen* at the Nature Center. People come and go, opportunities ebb and flow, and the energy rises and falls. I suppose it is a lot like nature that way!

We have a lot of volunteers, but sometimes we find one that just “clicks”! Shawn Fluewelling is one of those people. Shawn has been volunteering at the Nature Center since 2010. He is a quiet guy, but gets things done! He does all kinds of grounds maintenance, but he has also been an integral part of fixing our wetlands bridge, installing our new interpretive signs (see page 7), fixing pavers along the path, and repairing benches. His skill set is broad and he is very independent, making it that much easier to be productive around here!

Shawn loves fish and fishing. He is a snow boarder from southern California who moved to Boise with his wife in 2006. His personal interests are as broad as his work here at the Nature Center. He enjoys race cars and races at Firebird Racetrack. He repairs computers and ventures into the world of video games. He has a full time job too, so he squeezes his volunteer work into his busy life, somehow.

He says he likes the Nature Center because it is “a great opportunity to be outside and meet people.” He also appreciates the fact that it is free! He is amazed at how much is crammed into such a small place (and I don’t think he was talking about my office).

We really enjoy having Shawn around and are thankful for all he has given us!

MK Nature Center-Your Face-to-Fish Connection



Shawn and his dog Sigfried. Shawn adopted this beautiful dog from the Meridian Animal Shelter.

SUMMER VOLUNTEERS

Sara Focht, MK Nature Center Education Coordinator



The 2012 summer was especially busy at MKNC. Fortunately, we had a lot of great help. We appreciate all our volunteers, but I am not sure “appreciate” says enough about how we feel about these three gals. Reilly Newhouse (upper left photo) is a graduate student at BSU. She was an Elementary Education major and now is studying Literacy with an endorsement to be a Reading Specialist as a graduate student. Needless to say, she is a natural in front of a class. Reilly helped with education programs all summer. One student who came to visit MK with his daycare recognized “Ms. Newhouse.” She had been a student teacher in his classroom.

Alex Rheault (smiling in the upper right photo) is an Environmental Science major at University of Idaho. Her parents live here in Boise. Lucky us, she decided to come live with her parents for the summer. She volunteered nearly every day in June and August. It did not take Alex long to get the hang of it and she was off teaching classes by herself!

Amanda Wunder came to us from Carroll College in Helena, Montana. She is an Environmental Studies major with an emphasis in Biology. She volunteered at MKNC for her required summer internship.



Amanda was put in charge of our involvement in the Idaho Food Bank’s Summer Lunch in the Park Program. This is our second summer participating in the program. MK Nature Center offers an after lunch activity for kids after they receive and eat their free lunch! Amanda planned the activities, recruited and scheduled volunteers and ran each activity!

In my four years at MKNC, it never ceases to amaze me how many talented and motivated people want to help us out. They come from all walks of life with a variety of skills.

Volunteers allow us to accomplish much, much more than our budget allows. The community benefits tremendously from their time and generosity. These three women really helped me with education programs and made a lot of kids happy this summer.

ONE-EYED FIONA

Fiona came to the MKNC with her pin feathers sticking up on her head. Because of this, we knew she had been born this spring, but that was about all we knew of this female American Kestrel. The big mystery was how she lost her eye. Nobody knows, but the vet said she thought she could see a remnant of an eye deep in the socket.

Fiona flies beautifully, but hunting might be tough with only one eye. She now resides at the MKNC in the aviary with Hoots (Digger-have still not finalized his name) the burrowing owl. She loves to steal his food, but besides that, they get along well. She is easy to handle (unlike Hoots), prefers Susan over most others, and is a great attraction! We are happy to have another American Kestrel! Welcome Fiona!



GK-12



We are fortunate, once again, to host two BSU graduate students from the GK-12 Program. This year brings us Michelle Laskowski and Elyse Begnoche. Michelle (left) is a student in the Biological Sciences Program. Her Master's Thesis work is on the Malaria Virus in bird blood! Undoubtedly, Michelle will bring us closer to other parasites this year and help us teach visitors about ecological relationships between organisms. You can see here, though, that she is not afraid to cross over to other topics, as she holds elk antlers to her head to entertain a visiting group.

Elyse is in the Department of Geosciences (Hydrological Sciences Program). Her research is about measuring water in a watershed that is not running off into streams (that would be too easy). But instead, all that water that gets soaked up and travels through the soil in a watershed. Wow, we look forward to more lessons about water and the properties of water from Elyse. Below, Elyse staffed the MK Nature Center booth at the Girl Scout Green-Fest in August.



ART DONATED TO NATURE CENTER

This 22 x 31 inch painting of a bugling elk was donated to MKNC by Ken and Becky Brawley. They recently moved to the area and were downsizing with their new home. Without enough wall space, they generously gave the beautifully framed piece to MKNC, where it will soon be hung for everyone to enjoy.

I am no art critic...but I know what I like when I see it. This painting is truly amazing. The detail is incredible and the way Carl Brender illuminated the sagebrush, depicting the late afternoon sun, is fascinating. The elk's breath is a small vapor, just giving you the shivering feeling of a fall evening. I can almost hear that elk bugling. The piece is titled, "Indian Summer-Bugling Elk." Thanks to Ken and Becky Brawley for this lovely donation!



BUGLING ELK-A UNIQUE AND SEASONAL SOUND

It is the time of year for elk to begin bugling. The male elk bugle to attract a female and defend a harem of females. The bugle is a crescendoing scale of notes up to a high pitched squeal, followed by a series of high pitched barky things....is a true sound of summer fading.

You cannot hear elk bugling at the Nature Center, but you can hear them calling in meadows up in the Boise and Payette National Forest near dusk. Bring your blanket and your flashlight with you, as you will want to stay until after dark. The bugling can go on for hours. Males will often spar with their antlers and the fights can be heard through the night air as faint "clicking" sounds (or loud clicking sounds if you are close).

MK Nature Center-Your Face-to-Fish Connection

ANNUAL BIRD SEED SALE RAISES MONEY FOR MKNC

Saturday, December 1, 2012 – 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The MK Nature Center will host its 6th annual bird seed sale with proceeds from this event to benefit educational programs at the Nature Center. Once again this year the Nature Center will be partnering with Wild Birds Unlimited to bring you quality bird seed in assorted types of locally-preferred seed which will be available in small to large bags. The MK Nature Center Gift shop will have many nature-themed holiday items for purchase as well.

Holiday Nature Crafts for the kids from 10am-3pm.

In keeping with the Idaho Department of Agriculture's efforts to stop the spread of noxious weeds, this year's sale features safe, noxious weed-free seed. For more information please contact Sue Dudley at sue.dudley@idfg.idaho.gov, 208-287-2900.



NEW INTERPRETIVE SIGNS AT MKNC



Finally, another project that has been “on the books” for several years is nearing completion. A collaborative effort between Nature Center staff and local artist Mark Baltes has resulted in the replacement of several of our fading nature center signs. These new ceramic signs preserve the original artwork created of Helen Mayne and allowed us to update the text. The new, very creative stands are better fit for the nature center environment, and add to our “art collection”.

NUTHATCH CORRECTION

In the last newsletter issue, we featured the Red-breasted Nuthatch. Well, we tried to feature it, but on accident, we posted a photo of a White-breasted nuthatch! So here is an opportunity to talk about the difference between the two species.

There are actually four species of nuthatches in North America. The white-breasted, red-breasted, brown-headed and pygmy.

White-breasted nuthatches (pictured on the right) are found in central and north Idaho year round. The all-white belly is topped with grey-blue back feathers.

Red-breasted nuthatches (pictured on the left) are also found in central and north Idaho year round, but they can be seen them in southern Idaho during the winter. They have a little black cap and a white face with a black stripe through the eye. They have a grey back and a distinctive reddish/rusty belly.

Pygmy nuthatches (pictured in the middle) can be found all year in central and northern Idaho. They are mostly gray on top and white on the belly with the color line changing right at the eye level.

The brown-headed (not pictured) nuthatch can be found in the southeastern U.S. but never in Idaho.

All the nuthatches are small birds that scale trees looking for insects. They all have a flattened body shape and habit of going head-first down tree trunks. This allows them to find insects that woodpeckers miss as they hitch *up* trees. Nuthatches also spend a lot of time gleaning upside-down on the undersides of limbs, pine cones, etc. . . While most nuthatches are solitary, the pygmy is very social, moving around in family groups. They sometimes roost communally in cavities during the winter.



LOCAL COMPANY HELPS MKNC

Thank you EnerNOC for choosing the Nature Center for your community outreach work day event! In September, enthusiastic employees of the Boise EnerNOC team had a great morning volunteering at the MK Nature Center. There were 26 folks working on several projects. Some volunteers cleaned and organized the plethora of rubber boots used for our popular “Class in the Creek” program. Others re-wrapped wire on select trees to prevent beaver damage while their counterparts relocated and rebuilt the faux beaver lodge in the beaver pond. Of course, there were some weeding projects including removing watercress from the creek feeding the beaver pond and weeding in the new Forest Garden area that is being developed as an outdoor classroom. A part of the group expanded beyond the Nature Center boundaries and picked up litter along the Boise River Greenbelt.

EnerNOC which stands for Energy Network Operations Center is changing the way the world uses energy. Their goal is to make energy management as integral as accounting to the operation of every organization. They help commercial, institutional, and industrial organizations use energy more intelligently, pay less for it, and generate cash flow that benefits the bottom line through their complete suite of technology-enabled energy management solutions.

EnerNOC has won numerous awards for its technology, customer service, and industry leadership. They serve customers worldwide and are continuing to grow and expand. EnerNOC attracts bright, enthusiastic people who are dedicated to helping achieve a cleaner, safer, and more cost-effective energy future.

