



# The Nature Center Stream



SPRING

The Seasonal Newsletter of the MK Nature Center

2014



## IDAHO GIVES-MAY 1

Mark your calendars for Thursday, May 1, 2014!

This will be the second year of Idaho Gives – the one-day online charitable giving campaign to benefit the nonprofits you care about in your community. Your donation to the MK Nature Center will help fund educational programming, site enhancement, and the sustainability of our mission: “to inspire love, appreciation, and stewardship of our natural world.” We appreciate your generous support throughout the year but **on this one day**, the potential exists to have donations multiplied many times over through generous contest prizes and matching awards.

You can help by donating on May 1st, and spreading the word about this opportunity. Share with them why you love this place, why you come here to visit, and why you think we are important in the community.

On May 1, 2014 go to [www.idahogives.org](http://www.idahogives.org) and search for the MK Nature Center (located through the Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation) and follow the instructions on how to make a donation. Here is the link directly to our donation page: [tinyurl.com/MKNC2014](http://tinyurl.com/MKNC2014).

Busy that day or worried you might forget? You can even schedule your donation ahead of time to be applied on the giving day (and today seems like a good day to do that!).

Thank you for all of your continued support and thank you to the Idaho Nonprofit Center for again bringing this opportunity to the many nonprofits doing amazing things in communities across the state!



*MK Nature Center-Your Face-to-Fish Connection*





# WELCOME FRIENDS

Dave Cannamela, Nature Center Superintendent

I'd like to invite you to join the Friends of the Morrison Knudsen Nature Center. We've identified eight membership levels, from the \$10 Mayfly to the \$10,000 White Sturgeon. These are annual memberships that follow the calendar year; we will send you a friendly renewal notice each November. Every membership above the Mayfly level includes some modest rewards: a 15% discount at the gift shop, our newsletter, invites to MKNC events, and more. We also plan to have two "members only" days each year to give our Friends exclusive treatment at their Nature Center. Our new and improved membership envelope will be available soon. We will also issue membership cards which can be housed at the MKNC or carried by the member- it's your call.

The primary intent of the friends group is, of course, to raise money for the MKNC by offering our supporters a convenient way to support their Nature Center. In large part, the formation of the Friends Group is just a formality; this process will allow us to organize, recognize, and expand the support network that already exists. The supplemental income we receive from our supporters is substantial and it helps us across the board. For example, over the past 15 years, we've been able to increase the quantity and quality of the MKNC habitat, wildlife viewing opportunities, events, programs, and displays, and customer service because of you. Looking ahead, public support will be increasingly important as we face impending budget challenges.



# NEW SALAMANDER JOINS STUMPY



Stumpy the salamander has been a main attraction at the visitor center since 2007. Now Stumpy has a buddy! The Renner/Sanders family donated their pet tiger salamander to the MK Nature Center. They had him for three years after finding him in a crawl space. Introducing, SAMMY! He is huge, more brightly colored than Stumpy and we think they are both male, (but I guess we will find out). Pictured holding Sammy is Elizabeth Renner. To her right is Maxx Sanders, Schyler Renner and in front is Alysha Sanders.

UNPLUG



BE OUTSIDE! BE ACTIVE!  
PLAY!

# UNPLUG and Be Outside

## EARTHFEST

Activities at MK Nature Center

April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2014 10:00 am – 2:00 pm

**FREE**



### FUN BOOTHS AND ACTIVITIES

10am - 2pm

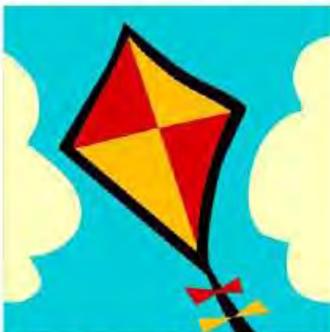
8 outside booths with educational art, games, and activities for kids of all ages.



### NATIVE PLANT SALE

10am – 1pm

Buy native plants for your yard!  
Experts available to help you choose!



### KITE MAKING WORKSHOP

10am-11:45am and 12pm-1:45pm

Sign up at  
[snowschoo@bogusbasin.org](mailto:snowschoo@bogusbasin.org)  
Limited 30 in each session

(600 S. Walnut Street Boise, Idaho 208 334 2225)



# NEW GK-12 FELLOW JOINS N.C. CREW

Amanda Laib is a Masters of Science Geology student at Boise State University, working as a research assistant in the Isotope Geology Lab where she separates minerals from rock samples for geochemical and geochronological analysis. Her research is focused on the geochemistry and geochronology of volcanic rocks in the stratigraphy of the John Day Fossil Beds National Monument. The GK-12 Fellowship at MK Nature Center, has been a highlight of her graduate student experience so far. Her favorite part about helping teach at the Nature Center is the curiosity and excitement of the children. She is amazed at every lesson by how much the kids already know about the natural world. "It is so gratifying to be involved in broadening and deepening their knowledge, and hopefully to inspire some future scientists," says Amanda. We are overjoyed to have her join our team!



## DO YOU SHOP AT FRED MEYER?

You can now continue to support the MK Nature Center while doing your regular shopping! The Fred Meyer Community Rewards program will provide a quarterly donation to our organization when you register for the program. To register, go to [www.fredmeyer.com/communityrewards](http://www.fredmeyer.com/communityrewards) and use the NPO number 89563.

How it works-

At the end of each quarter (3/31, 6/30, 9/30, and 12/31) Fred Meyer will make a donation to the MK Nature Center based on the accumulated spending of all the customers who linked to us through the website and the NPO number.

This will not affect the Rewards Points, Rebates, or Fuel Points already in place. This is a separate program and some purchases are not eligible, i.e. prescriptions, lottery tickets, fuel, tobacco, stamps, etc.

Our thanks to Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation for serving as our non-profit sponsor.

For further information feel free to contact Jessica Gordon at [jessica.gordon@idfg.idaho.gov](mailto:jessica.gordon@idfg.idaho.gov) or 208-297-2901 or your local Fred Meyer Customer Service location.

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# UP ON THE ROOFTOP



It's done and it's beautiful. A far cry from the curled, cedar shakes, gaping holes, and blue tarps. The new roof truly represents a combined effort. Grants from The Boise Legacy Constructors Foundation and the Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation provided the financial means. IDFG engineering and administrative personnel played their parts, and Edgar Sanchez and his crew from E&H Quality Construction LLC made quick work of the job. Even with rain delays, it only took them a couple of weeks to tear off the old and put on the new. The crew was extremely diligent, polite, and friendly. As busy as they were, we managed to find time to socialize and become friends.



*Photos from top to bottom:  
E & H Quality Construction LLC crew happy to be finished with the job. Pictured left to right, Juan Aleman, Omar Cendejas, Wil Aleman, Jose Sanchez and Edgar Sanchez. Crew members not pictured, Hector Garcia and Pete Peterson.*

*Cedar shakes originally placed on the building in 1991 when the visitor center and grounds were built.*

*A work in progress.*

*The new shingles are lovely, safer, and blend in nicely.*

# A NATURE CENTER FISH JUMPS INTO A WALL: DAM!

(NATURE CENTER BEAVERS ARE SPRUCING UP THE STREAMWALK)

*Rebecca “Becky Jo Catfish” Fritz, MK Nature Center Staff*

Morning rounds at the Nature Center include: starting the coffee pot, unlocking gates, thawing mice for the owls, and now...cleaning up after a beaver! This winter, a very busy beaver (*Castor canadensis*) has been back and forth between the Boise River and Nature Center. While I can't say the same thing for MK's cottonwood and aspen trees...the Nature Center crew is very excited!

Weighing in at 60 pounds, quick to break apart sticks and play in the mud, beavers have a lot in common with the 2nd graders who come to learn about them. The “Beaver Chew” program at the Nature Center is very popular. Kids (and adults) learn the adaptations which make beavers, oh so cool. Beavers come complete with: an extra set of eyelids (built in swimming goggles), ear flaps (ear plugs), an extra set of lips (no choking on water), and their rudder-like tails.

Similar to humans, beavers are known for making large changes to their surrounding environment. While often considered pests by people, many other species benefit from having beavers move into the neighborhood. Dams create the wetland habitat desired by many nesting pairs of waterfowl, and all of those sticks in the water are great for fish to hide from predators! Ponds are great breeding grounds for insects and thus fish thrive there. Wetlands filter contaminants out of water and even raise the water table. Beavers also create slides to their burrows or lodges. That's right... beavers engineer waterslides.

There is one more trick up my sleeve to get you excited about beavers. Safely tucked away between the pelvis and tail of each mature beaver, are their castor sacs. Castor sacs secrete castoreum, which beavers use to mark their territory. Humans have found a use for castoreum as well. Foods, often vanilla or raspberry flavored foods, may have the phrase ‘natural flavors’ listed in the ingredients. ‘Natural Flavors’ is a sugar-coated way of saying ‘castoreum oil milked from the rear of a beaver.’ There is something to think about!

So, please join us at the Nature Center and let's all give a great, big Tail-Slap in support of Boise's beavers!



*A beaver chew might be one of the few examples where the evidence of an animal is just as exciting as seeing the actual animal.*

*MK Nature Center-Your Face-to-Fish Connection*

# INTERNATIONAL MIGRATORY BIRD DAY MAY 10TH, 2014 10 AM - 4 PM

Join us for this wonderful annual event. The theme for this year's International Migratory Bird Day is "Why Birds Matter – The Benefits of Birds to Humans and Nature." Birds are more than pretty and musical; they provide vital ecological services including insect and rodent control, pollination, seed dispersal, and cleanup and recycling. Please join us to celebrate birds. Enjoy bird banding, presentations featuring live birds, owl pellet dissection, bird games, face painting, feather art and more.

*Native plants will be for sale again this year. Food will be available for purchase during this event.*

Bird Walks: 9:30 am to 11 am

Live Bird Banding: 9 am – 12pm (weather permitting)

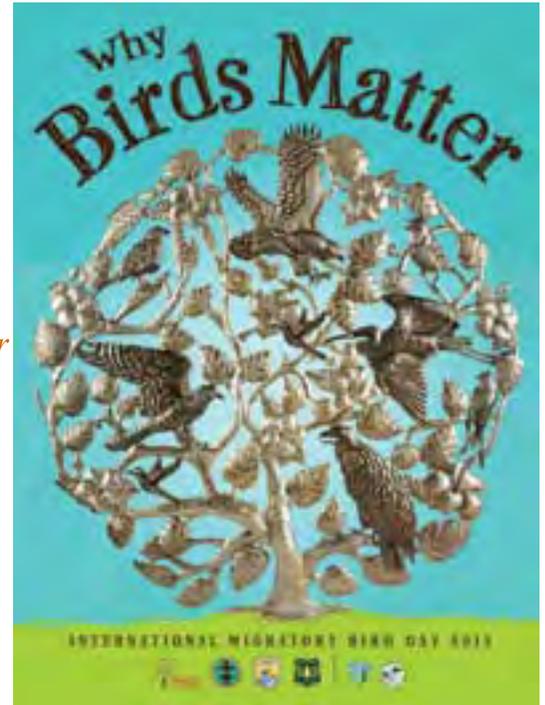
Live bird presentations: 11:00 am/12:00 pm/1:00 pm/2:00 pm.

Games and activity stations: 10 am – 4 pm

Burgerlicious Food Truck: 11 am to 3:30 pm

Cost: \$3.00 (ages 3 years and over)

Tickets are available for purchase the day of the event.



## BELL RINGING AT THE CAPITAL CITY PUBLIC MARKET

The Capital City Public Market kicks off the season on Saturday, April 19th, 2014. The MK Nature Center will have a table for the opening day but we have the privilege of being the Bell Ringer to begin the market on Saturday, May 3rd, 2014. The bell rings at 9:30 am SHARP. Be sure to visit the Bell Ringer Booth throughout the morning to say hello!



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# BURROWING OWL RESEARCH

*Jamie Wade, GK-12 Fellow, BSU-written December 2013*

As I was driving along Simco Road on my way to Grandview the other day, I couldn't help but scan the landscape for brown-feathered faces, white eyebrows, and bright yellow eyes. This time of year, you won't find many Burrowing Owls out and about in the Snake River Birds of Prey Area. The owls have packed up and left the cold Idaho winter in search of warmer climes to the south. Not a bad idea, considering the recent freezing weather.

With the Burrowing Owls tucked warmly away in their winter vacation homes, you might think that an owl researcher would be able to take a vacation as well. But no matter how much I wish it would, my thesis will not write itself. If you asked me five months ago if I wanted to spend a day in a cool room working at a desk, I would have taken you up on the offer. Digging up owls in 100 degree weather is not exactly a comfy job. However, now that I have spent some time at a desk, I would gladly break out my shovel and head for the country.

Now, you may well ask what I meant by "digging up owls." Although it sounds strange, "digging up owls" is quite literally what I have spent the last two summers doing. I am a Raptor Biology graduate student at Boise State University, and my research is on Burrowing Owls.



*Jamie looks as surprised as her study specimen.*

Burrowing Owl nesting behavior, the owls may reject eggs added to their nests.

I am currently interpreting the results of these experiments and hope to complete my work in the spring. With any luck, and a few more hours in front of the computer, you will be reading about my results in the next MK Nature Center Newsletter! *Jamie is one of MKNC's 2014 GK-12 Fellows from BSU. Burrowing Owls return to Idaho in March.*



*Owlets stare up at Jamie as she pops the top off their artificial burrow.*

My research is focused on studying how Burrowing Owls respond to foreign eggs in their nest. To answer this question, I have added eggs to Burrowing Owl nests and evaluated the owls' responses. In order to add an egg to a Burrowing Owl nest, the nest must be dug up. The Burrowing Owls in my study area nest in artificial burrows, permitting me safe access to eggs and owls without collapsing or compromising the integrity of the burrow.

My research essentially simulates a naturally occurring behavior called conspecific brood parasitism. Conspecific brood parasitism refers to when a female bird lays one or more of her eggs in the nest of another female of the same species. This behavior occurs in over 236 species of birds, but there are no reports of this behavior in owls. Because the costs of raising offspring are great, selection should favor the evolution of behaviors to defend against investing in unrelated offspring.

Thus, if the selective pressure of conspecific brood parasitism has been strong enough to influence



# THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING WHAT WE DO!

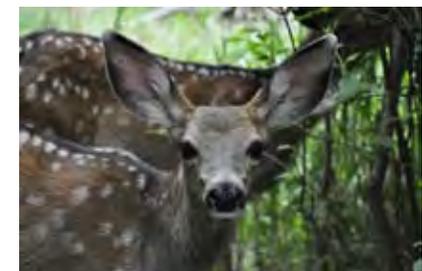
## **FRJENDS GROUP MEMBERS January-March 2014**

Kristine Beoka  
Grace, Scott, & Melissa Carico  
Corrine Christ  
Ann DeBolt & Roger Rosentreter  
Evan, Eric & Carla Dirmann  
Mike & Phyllis Kochert  
Glenn Mouser  
Lenna & Craig Olsen  
Lyla Olson  
Neva Olson  
Jeanet Ross  
Jim Ryan  
Joan Yost

## ***Other Donors (cash or in-kind donations)***

### ***January-March 2014***

Edwina & John Allen  
Kevin & MaryPat Barr  
Boise Coop  
Dallas Burkhalter  
Golden Eagle Audubon Society  
Maria & Gene Halberstadt  
Kay Hummel & Jeff Fereday  
Shelby Jorgensen  
Steve Liebenthal  
Hilda Packard  
Parkside School  
Payette Brewing Co.  
Donald L. Peters  
Scott & Susan Prestel  
Sierra Trading Post  
Starbucks-(Broadway Store)  
Whole Foods (Boise)  
Ryan & Danielle Woodburn



## **ADDITIONAL THANK YOU'S**

These folks deserve endless thanks for their longstanding and over-the-top support. Their financial support is significant and provides the practical means for getting things done; beyond that, they also express their belief in our mission, which helps keep our spirits up.

Edwina and John Allen  
Lenna and Craig Olsen  
Ted Trueblood Chapter of Trout Unlimited  
Golden Eagle Audubon Chapter of the Audubon Society  
Watchable Wildlife Program (IDFG)

*Mink and deer photo  
courtesy Hoo T. Gibson.  
All other photos courtesy  
MKNC.*

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# VOLUNTEER AND SUPPORTER PARTY

Wednesday, February 5th, 2014 was a very snowy winter evening. It was also the date of our Annual Volunteer and Supporter Appreciation Event. We truly enjoy the opportunity to gather with our friends and say “thank you.” Last year was a catered event so we had a potluck this year. Wow, what a spread we had! We shared food, drink, stories, and laughter (often thanks to our grateful host Dave Cannamela).

Thank you to those who braved the icy roads and attended our celebration, but mostly thank you to all of you for your contributions to the cause.

Thank you Boise Co-op Wine Shop, Payette Brewing, and Whole Foods for working with us to provide for our supporters.



*Photos clockwise starting in upper left: Beth and Tate Mason provide delightful entertainment for the volunteer party.*

*Jessica really knows how to spruce up the place with some curtains and flowers.*

*Volunteer Bob Foss enters with a huge crockpot of food.*

*Bob Austin, Hilda Packard, and Terry Austin, longtime supporters of the Nature Center made it out on the blustery evening.*



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# BISHOP KELLY WORKDAY

Thank you Marta Watson and your wonderful Bishop Kelly Economics students for helping out at the MK Nature Center again this year! Before putting them to work, a tour was in order! Dave spoke to the group about the significance of the MK Nature Center in front of the Alpine Lake mural (pictured below).

Each year, the students, teachers, and administrators of Bishop Kelly participate in a Service Learning Day. For the past 4 years, Marta Watson, Economics teacher and

MK Nature Center supporter, has brought her first period class to help us with projects. The compost pile and the Hummingbird and Butterfly Garden were on the list again this year. Thank you to all this year's hard working students!!



*Pictured above: Dave Cannamela, the MK Nature Center Superintendent, coaches with the summer Bishop Kelly baseball team. He was having a good time with one of his players!*

## JR. NATURALIST PROGRAM- A SPRING BREAK ADVENTURE



*Left: Participant Nick Vice shows off his dirty hands after making a replica beaver dam. Right: Minu Ho (pink), Kena Geary (hooded), Robin Reeder (glasses), Lukas Rollenhagen (black sweatshirt), and Andrew Fritz (blue) enjoy their nature exploration.*



*Below: Areebah Hargan journals at her personal nature spot.*



*For the third year, the Jr. Naturalist Program has take place at the MK Nature Center during spring break. A special thank you to Idaho Master Naturalist Joyce Harvey-Morgan for her dedication to this program.*

*Left: Joyce leads students for a hike in the foothills.*

*Thank you J. Naturalist staff! Joyce Harvey-Morgan, Sandy Sweet, Rebecca "Becky Jo Catfish" Fritz, Jamie Wade, Amanda Laib, Sara Focht, and Christen Sapnas.*

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# MK NATURE CENTER SPRING 2014 EVENTS

 = Events held at the MK Nature Center.

## SATURDAY, APRIL 19TH

**9:30AM - 1:30PM MKNC AT THE CAPITAL CITY PUBLIC MARKET:** Free/open to the public. Downtown Boise on 8th St, Idaho St., and the Grove Plaza. [capitalcitypublicmarket.com](http://capitalcitypublicmarket.com)

**4PM - 10 PM MKNC @ IDAHO GREEN FEST 2014:** Join us and other organizations, vendors, and presenters to celebrate sustainability in our community! Free/open to the public. Downtown Boise on Banknock between Capital Blvd. and 9th St. and 8th St. between Jefferson & Idaho. [idahogreenfest.org](http://idahogreenfest.org)



## TUESDAY, APRIL 22ND (EARTH DAY)

**4PM - 6PM MKNC @ HAWTHORNE ELEMENTARY GARDEN CELEBRATION:** Join us and others to celebrate Earth Day and the school garden. Free and open to the public. Location: 2401 W Targee St. in Boise.



## THURSDAY, APRIL 24TH

**6PM - 8PM IDEA OF NATURE LECTURE SERIES: GETTING TO THE ROOTS OF THE MATTER: TREES IN THE 19TH CENTURY (SUSAN OLIVER LECTURER) @ BSU:** Lecture at 6pm in the Simplot ballroom of the Student Union Building at BSU. Lecture is free and open to the public. Free reception with appetizers to follow (RSVP required for reception). [scholarworks.boisestate.edu/ideaofnature](http://scholarworks.boisestate.edu/ideaofnature)



## SATURDAY, APRIL 26TH

**10AM - 1PM PAHOVE CHAPTER IDAHO NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY NATIVE PLANT SALE (PUBLIC SALE):** Shop for native plant species and get advice on native plant gardening. Membership purchase available at the sale. Contact Susan Ziebarth (208.867-6188) with questions. [idahonativeplants.org](http://idahonativeplants.org)

**10AM - 2PM EARTHFEEST:** Activities, games, crafts, and a kite making workshop (register for workshop at [snowschoo@bogusbasin.org](mailto:snowschoo@bogusbasin.org)). All activities free and open to the public. [unplugandbeoutside.com](http://unplugandbeoutside.com)



## THURSDAY, MAY 1ST

**ALL DAY IDAHO GIVES 2014:** Support your favorite Idaho non-profits for this one day online giving campaign. Find the MK Nature Center as a project on the Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation's page. [idahogives.razoo.com](http://idahogives.razoo.com)

**MK NATURE CENTER COMMUNITY DAY:** MK Nature Center staff will be on the Cycle Pub all around the downtown Boise area.

**Join us at 4PM at the Nature Center for a FREE GUIDED STREAMWALK.**



## SATURDAY, MAY 3RD

**9:30AM - 1:30PM CAPITAL CITY PUBLIC MARKET BELLRINGER:** MKNC will be ringing the bell to begin the market at 9:30am. Stop by our market booth afterwards. [capitalcitypublicmarket.com](http://capitalcitypublicmarket.com)



## SATURDAY, MAY 10TH

**10AM - 4PM INTERNATIONAL MIGRATORY BIRD DAY:** Family friendly activities, crafts, and live bird presentations. \$3 for tickets (free for ages 3 and under) at the event. The MK Nature Center will be closed to free admission during the event. Contact Sue Dudley at 208.287-2900 or [sue.dudley@idfg.idaho.gov](mailto:sue.dudley@idfg.idaho.gov) with questions. [birdday.org](http://birdday.org)



## SUNDAY, MAY 18TH

**12PM - 4PM INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM DAY:** Activities with local museums. Free and open to the public.

For more information about any of the events contact Jessica Gordon at [jessica.gordon@idfg.idaho.gov](mailto:jessica.gordon@idfg.idaho.gov) or 208.287.2901

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