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The Nature Center Stream

SPRING

The Seasonal Newsletter of the MK Nature Center

2015

Come Party Like an Animal!

MK Nature Center 25th Anniversary Festival
And Native Plant Sale

Saturday, April 25

MK Nature Center
600 S. Walnut Street, Boise



Help us celebrate and raise money for the MKNC!
Native Plant Sale 10-1

*Activities and Games 10-4

Payette Beer Garden 12-3:30

Music by The *Hokum Hi-Flyers* 2-4

Food by *Burgerlicious* 12-3:30

*Live Bird Demonstrations 11, 12, 1 and 2pm

*Activity ticket price: \$1 each. Discount savings on multiple ticket purchases.
Food and beverages sold separately.

Morrison Knudsen Nature Center
25th Anniversary Fundraising Event



Thank you to our
generous donors
and sponsors:



MK Nature Center - Your Face-to-Fish Connection

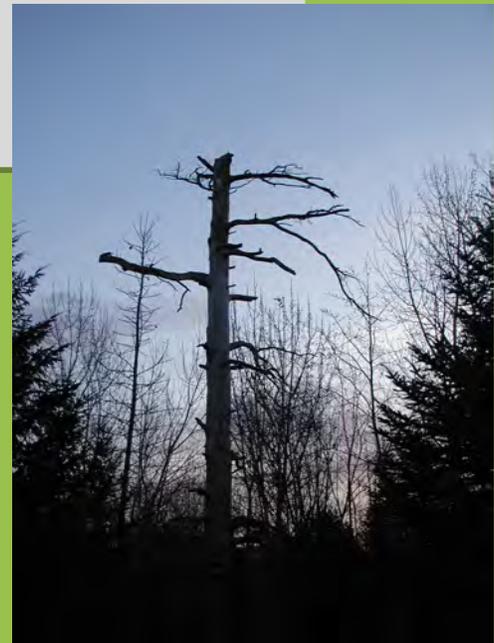


Dave's Two Cents

Dave Cannamela, Superintendent, MKNC

The Death and Life of a Tree

About 16 years ago during my interview for this job, Al VanVooren asked me this question: "So Dave, what are you going to do when the Nature Center snag falls over?" I'm not sure I had an adequate answer. But I have one now. Our old snag, one of the nature center icons, and a prominent feature in our logo, finally gave up the ghost a few months ago. It was so, so sad, even to those of us who treasure and respect the natural order of things and natural processes. That snag was a daily perch for what was then our resident heron (who, by the way, flew into the wires several years ago and is now a taxidermy in the visitor center). But in recent years the old snag started to sag, and the pine trees around it grew to obscure it from view. It lost its prominence but not its importance, because the insects and woodpeckers were still getting good mileage out of it. We propped it up, but that wasn't right or effective; it was supposed to come down and it did...and will soon be soil. Fortunately, we have friends. Our friends at Idaho Tree Preservation agreed to *create* a new snag out of a big old black locust tree. Yes, its an exotic species, but it has the makings of a great snag and is in a great location; across the pond in full view. How do you make a snag? You kill a tree! Work began on Monday, March 30 to clear away some surrounding trees and shape the locust into a respectable snag. We are looking forward to pointing out the ecological and aesthetic value of standing dead trees to our visitors while standing on the bridge above the sturgeon. So, it only took me 16 years to answer the question- the snag needed time to grow into its role.



Pictured above: Idaho Tree Preservation Employees Marc Otto, Russell Desclos, and Kevin Chapton. Looks like they are having fun making us a new snag. Pictured right: In 1991, a live Ponderosa Pine tree was cut and brought in to be "the snag." This was the only tree that stuck up out of the landscape at the time and was so iconic it became part of our logo. Pictured far right: The same snag at sunset! Now this snag is down.

Flowers, Food, Friends, and Fun

Sara Focht, Wildlife Educator, MKNC



The winter volunteer potluck was held on February 4th this year. We had beautiful flower arrangements created and donated by Heidi Marotz. They not only brightened the room, they served as popular door prizes. And speaking of door prizes, we know our volunteers are not in it for the cash or prizes, but thanks to volunteer Wayne Larsen (pictured bottom right), we had a lot of fun gifts to give away. Wayne drives around the valley *nearly every day*, approaching businesses for donations to the Nature Center. He has proven what we already knew....people love the Nature Center and are happy to support us by

giving us much needed supplies and thank you gifts for our volunteers!



Nature Center volunteers help us with all aspects of our work. Some teach, some garden, others clean and prepare materials for programs. Some build and others staff the front desk. Just about anything that gets done around here gets done with the help of volunteers!



Top right: Sue Nass, Mary Dudley and Jessica Gordon. Middle right: Parkside teacher Sheri Shaw won a basket. Right: Wayne Larson and his wife Theresa.

The following people volunteered their time to the MK Nature Center between December 1 and March 31, 2015. MK Nature Center receives an average of nearly 500 volunteer hours monthly. Thank you!!

Brent Bramlet
Peter Cannamela
Lonne Carlson
Dylan Cole
Mady Cook
Seth Davis
Josh Forberg
Bob Foss
Kori Frahm
Marlene Fritz
Ray Heady

Tanner Hurst
Wayne Larsen
Mack Leith
Heidi Marotz
Cheryl Minkler
Ryan Monaghan
Abby Moone
Bronwyn Meyers
Rick Nielson
Kerry Overton
Curtis Peterson

Jerry Pugh
Emily Rigg
Arleen Schaeffer
Mauricio Shoup-Lopez
Jacob Stewart
Nels Taylor
Jessica Templeton
Marta Watson's Bishop Kelly class
Tyson Weatherford
Tristan Welsh
Susan Wildwood

MK Nature Center - Your Face-to-Fish Connection

We Give, You Give, Idaho Gives!

Jillian Moroney, MK Nature Center Volunteer Coordinator

Please mark your calendars for **Thursday, May 7, 2015!** This will be the third year that the MK Nature Center is participating in Idaho Gives, the one-day online charitable giving campaign that benefits Idaho nonprofit organizations. Donations to the MKNC are welcomed year around, but donating on this one day makes us eligible to have our donations multiplied and win matching awards through Idaho Gives. **You can schedule a donation ahead of time to be applied on the giving day. Here is a link directly to our donation page: <http://tinyurl.com/MKNatureCenter>**



Your donation enables the MK Nature Center to continue to:

- Provide year round opportunities for people to enjoy wildlife,
- Feed those darn big trout, and sturgeon,
- Train and manage volunteers who help maximize our impact,
- Propagate gardens of native plants,
- Teach science, ecology, stewardship, and conservation,
- Create new visitor center displays,
- Buy art and craft supplies for programs.

We connect people to nature, people to people, and at MKNC we aim to inspire people to learn, conserve, and grow. When you donate to the MK Nature Center, you are giving back to nature *and* people. The impact of your donations extends beyond the boundaries of the Nature Center into the community through our volunteer programs, court ordered community service projects, partnerships with vocational programs, and synergistic relationships with other agencies and organizations. The people who learn skills here can apply them in other venues, the children we educate will eventually use their knowledge in decision making situations, and the friendships made will turn into support systems that last a lifetime. The money you give goes toward habitat enhancement and conservation, development and delivery of educational programs and events, and aesthetic improvements to the center.

With the \$4,600 you donated last year during Idaho Gives, you helped fund some of the kids' favorite programs including Class in the Creek, Scat and Tracks, and Beaver Chew. You also helped keep our birds, Hoots and Fiona, happy and healthy. Even our Streamwalk and indoor facilities benefited from your generous contributions.

You can help by donating on **May 7th**. Thanks to the Idaho Nonprofit Center the donation process is very easy. Simply go to www.idahogives.org, search for the MK Nature Center (located through the Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation) and follow the instructions on how to make a donation.



The MKNC is committed to going above and beyond, and it is *only with your donations* and support that we are able to do so.

MK Nature Center - Your Face-to-Fish Connection

We Asked-You Answered!

Sara Focht, Wildlife Educator, MKNC

At the beginning of March, I scrolled forward on the calendar, as I often do, to see what programs were coming up. I do this so I can get a head start on material preparation for each program. I noticed I had three owl programs, so I checked the supply of owl pellets and much to my surprise, they had disintegrated! I needed over 100 pellets quickly! I shot an email to IDFG employees and Steve Liebenthal (Communications Bureau) wrote up a quick press release. Quite a few Idaho newspapers picked up the unique story of MK Nature Center running low on owl barf, and what you do you know? Within days, I was getting several boxes a day! Pellets came from Idaho Fish and Game employees, but also citizens from Middleton, Coeur'd Alene, Grangeville, Burley, Boise, Twin Falls and Salmon!

In total, we have received over \$1,300 pellets from donors...and they are still coming! The pellets, if purchased from a biological supply company, are about \$4.00/pellet, a price that is prohibitive to us. *That* is expensive vomit. Purchased pellets are typically from captive raptors, so the bones inside are primarily from white mice...kind of mundane. The donated wild pellets are so much more interesting! They are full of treasures like bird beaks, rabbit feet, and squirrel skulls (ouch), as well as rat femurs, vole spines, and mouse vertebrae.



A bird skull is a PRIZE find in pellet dissection. Most bones are from rodents, and are cool, but everyone envies the kid who finds a bird beak or rabbit foot!



Two of the many pellets that were sent in by employees and volunteers. Imagine the excitement and disgust these will soon bring a child.



Pellet donor Stephanie Van Diest has a dead tree right outside her window inhabited by a barn owl. She sent us 80 pellets! Dead trees (snags) are important for some species of owls for nesting. Owls don't make their own holes, rather, they utilize woodpecker holes or rotten cavities in dead or dying trees. Other owl species use stick nests made by eagles or hawks. In total, 14 species of owls live at least part of their lives in Idaho. Photos by Stephanie Van Diest.



Owl Pellet Donors-thank you!

Larry Amen
Carla Beck
Willie Bokma
Dallas Burkhalter
Preston Edwards
Fred Erland
Kori Frahm

K. Hazelbaker
Ken Jeske
The Koehn Family
(JoNee, Kylan, Layton, Marilee)
Barbara Mecham
Frank Michaelson
Delinda Nordquist

Diana Porter
Darla Regehr
Ken and Sally Stephens
Stephanie Van Diest
Dr. Todd Wells
Andrea Wilkey

Nature Center Events

April 13th evening lecture at the MK Nature Center-Ecofeminism

6:30 pm. There has long been an association between women and nature, based largely on biology and traditional cultural roles. Ecofeminists have challenged, built upon, and complicated this traditional association in several ways. Rochelle Johnson (professor of English and Environmental Studies at The College of Idaho) will discuss the history informing ecofeminism, its early forms, and some of its most recent debates—all in hopes of helping us consider the ways in which gender may inform our understandings of the human place in the natural world. Free—all are welcome. Call Sara at 287-2906 for more information.

April 17th National Week of the Young Child at Ann Morrison Park

Noon to 3 pm. This family-friendly event provides child care programs and home-based providers with a unique opportunity to find educational resources in the community. The MK Nature Center, Boise Fire Department, Boise Police Department, Boise Parks and Recreation, Safe Routes to School - Bike Safety and other programs will be there with activities for kids. National Week of the Young Child is an opportunity to focus on the needs of Idaho's young children and their families, and to recognize the early childhood programs and services that meet those needs.

April 25th MK Nature Center 25th Anniversary CELEBRATION (see front cover)

Festivities are from 10 am to 4 pm! Come to MK Nature Center for cake, music, fun activities, live bird presentations, native plants and food! Support the Nature Center for the next 25 years!

April 24-25 Idaho Native Plant Society NATIVE PLANT SALE at MK Nature Center

A wide variety of native plants available for sale along with expert advice! The Pahove Chapter of the Idaho Native Plant Society hosts this sale. Members only can purchase plants Friday April 24th from 5 pm to 7 pm (memberships can be purchased at the cash register). Saturday, shop from 10 am to 1 pm.

May 7th Idaho Gives-Give to your favorite Idaho non-profits

See page 4 for details on how to donate to the MK Nature Center. <http://tinyurl.com/MKNatureCenter>

May 9th International Migratory Bird Day at World Center for Birds of Prey

10 am to 5 pm. The Peregrine Fund's World Center for Birds of Prey will be hosting an exciting, interactive day dedicated to migratory birds. The theme of this year's celebration is 'Restore Habitat, Restore Birds'. There will be guided bird/nature walks, migration games and activities, face painting, food trucks, and fun for the whole family. Partners include the Intermountain Bird Observatory (IBO), the Golden Eagle Audubon Society (GEAS), and the MK Nature Center. Kids will be half price! Call Tate Mason at 362-8259 for more information.

May 17th International Museum Day at the Old Penitentiary

Noon to 4 pm. The Boise Museum Association hosts the annual International Museum Day. The MK Nature Center will be there along with the Basque Museum, the Old Pen, the Idaho Botanical Garden, the Idaho Museum of Mining and Geology, the Boise Watershed, the Boise Art Museum, and the World Center for Birds of Prey. This is family-friendly event! Wow, visit all those museums at one time! For more information call Sara at 287-2906.

Let's Learn About Mink

Sara Focht, Wildlife Educator, MKNC

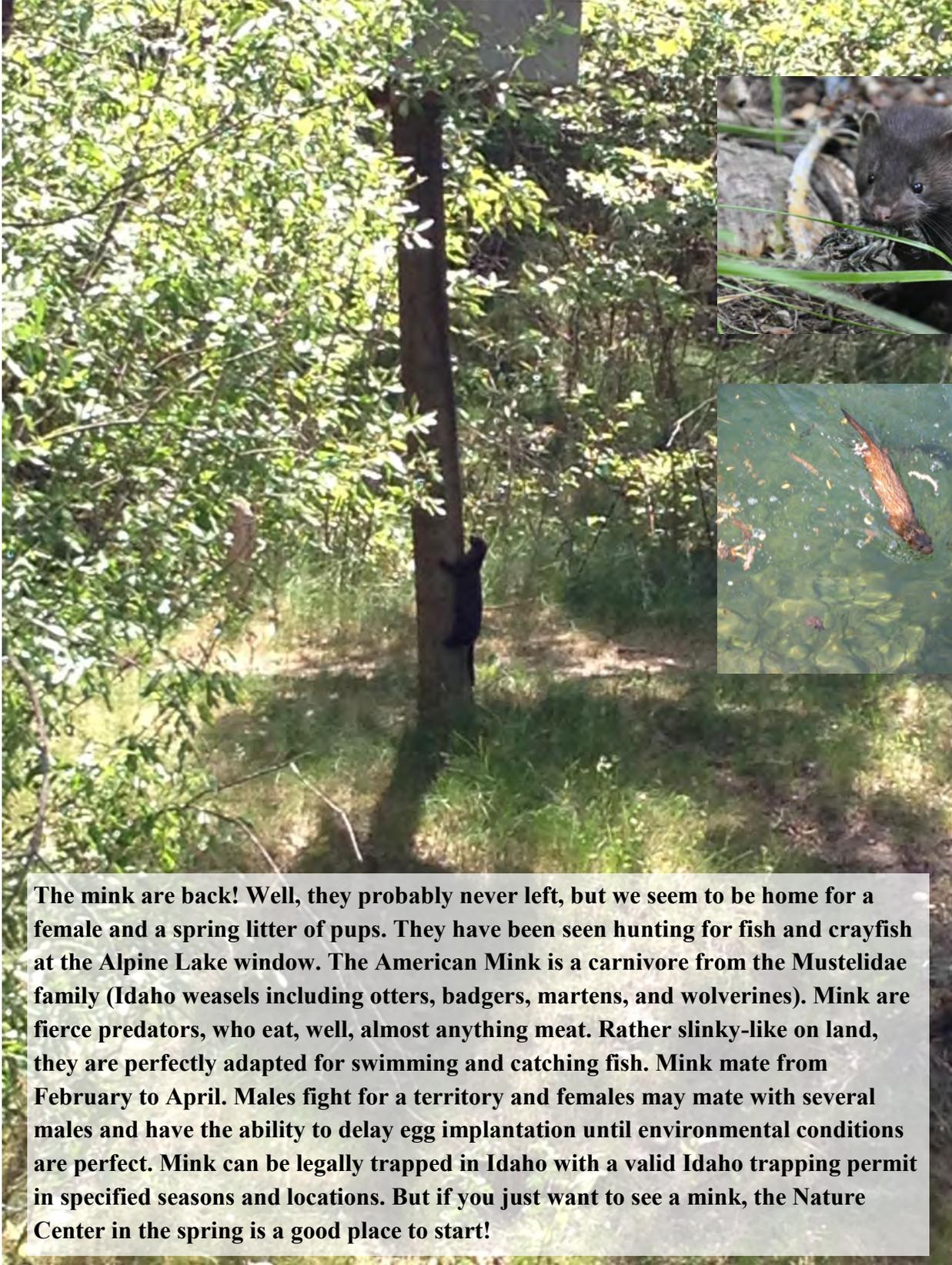


Photo below by
Hoots Gibson



Photo left by
Christen Sappas

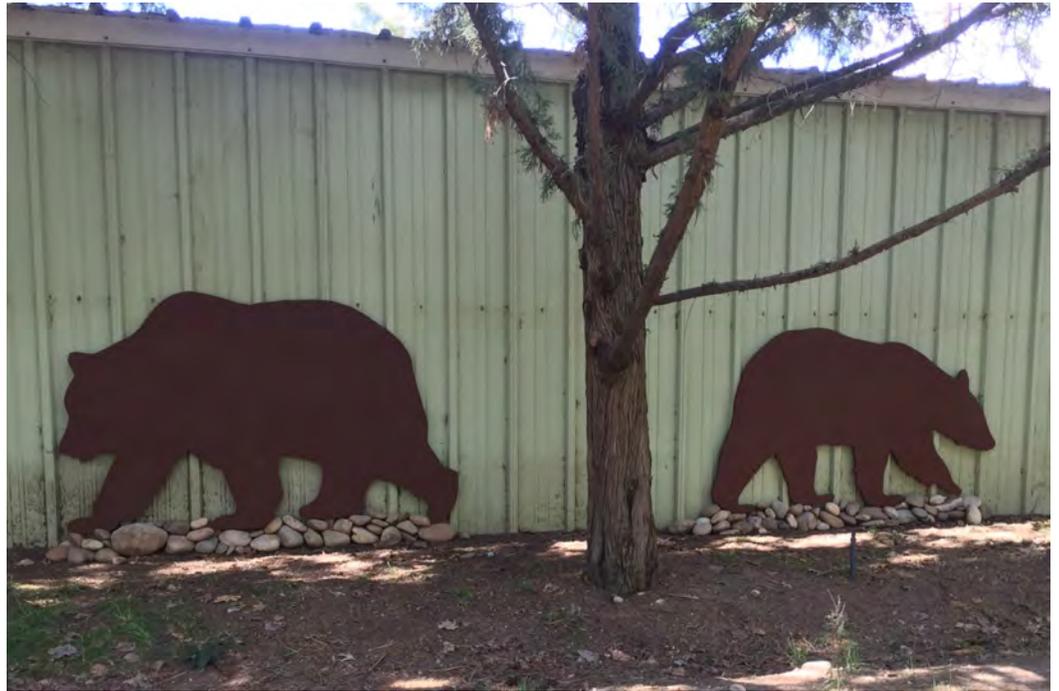
The mink are back! Well, they probably never left, but we seem to be home for a female and a spring litter of pups. They have been seen hunting for fish and crayfish at the Alpine Lake window. The American Mink is a carnivore from the Mustelidae family (Idaho weasels including otters, badgers, martens, and wolverines). Mink are fierce predators, who eat, well, almost anything meat. Rather slinky-like on land, they are perfectly adapted for swimming and catching fish. Mink mate from February to April. Males fight for a territory and females may mate with several males and have the ability to delay egg implantation until environmental conditions are perfect. Mink can be legally trapped in Idaho with a valid Idaho trapping permit in specified seasons and locations. But if you just want to see a mink, the Nature Center in the spring is a good place to start!

MK Nature Center - Your Face-to-Fish Connection

Bears at the Nature Center

Sara Focht, Wildlife Educator, MKNC

Black bears and Grizzly bears: can you identify them? Color and size are poor features to tell the difference between Idaho's two bear species. The shape of the body and face are better indicators as well as their range and habitat.



There are just some animals you are never going to see when you visit the Nature Center! Yet people who visit here are interested in wildlife that can be found throughout Idaho, not just in a small urban habitat area. So, we put our volunteer Rick Nielsen to work because we heard a rumor he was pretty handy with tools. Turned out to be true! Rick projected photos of animals onto the screen in the auditorium and traced them onto paper. Then, he transferred them to wood, cut them out, puttied, sanded, and painted. These lovely silhouettes line the parking garage just outside the visitor center door to the northeast. The grizzly bear and black bear are finished and the moose and elk are on the way! Just today, I stopped by the bears with my tour group and we talked about the bears of Idaho! They loved them! Thank you Rick for your artistic talents and project management!

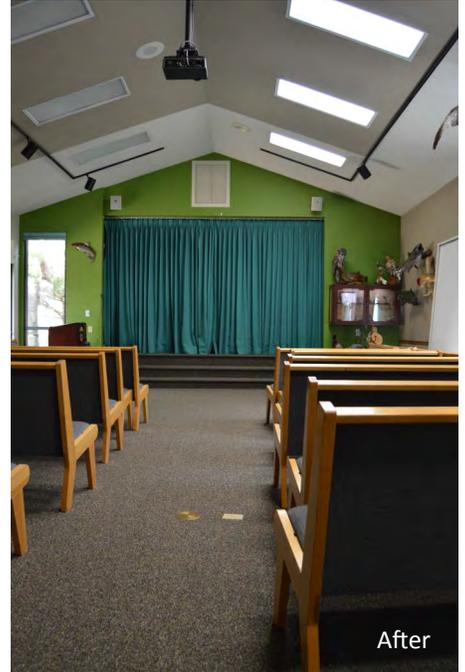
Grizzly bear left,
black bear, right

MK Nature Center - Your Face-to-Fish Connection

Carpet

Twenty five years old, blue, ripped, snagged, trampled and full of dirt! The old carpet had to go! Thanks to a grant from the Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the Nature Center got a serious facelift in March. Susan Ziebarth and Scott Sliney (MKNC) did most of the preparation work. We ripped out the carpet ourselves and the crew from OEC came in and pretty much finished in one day.

Before



After



During



During

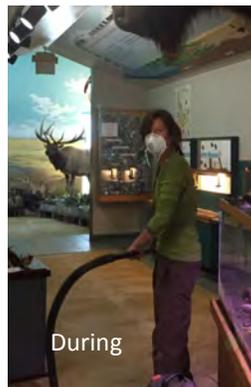


After



During

The friendly and fast crew from Fetty's Custom Floor Coverings. Carpet from OEC.



During



After

Left middle: Rebecca Fritz, MKNC, preps the subfloor for carpet installation. Left: Susan Ziebarth did the majority of the carpet prep work and put the pieces and details back together after installation.

Fiona's Field Trip

Dusty Perkins, Associate Professor of Biology at College of Western Idaho



Above: College of Western Idaho Biology Club and Faculty Advisor, Dusty Perkins (holding Fiona) pose with their Kestrel Boxes prepared at their event. Photo by Dusty Perkins.

MK Nature Center staff: Thank you for giving us the opportunity to have Fiona [American Kestrel] at our event. Fiona did awesome and melted the hearts of our audience. We had over 75 participants, successfully constructed 25 Kestrel boxes, and gave three 20-30 minute programs about Kestrels, Kestrel biology and conservation efforts by the American Kestrel Partnership.



Members of the Biology Club construct American Kestrel nesting boxes. Photo by Eric Obendorf.



Associate Professor Dusty Perkins holds Fiona and gives a talk about the biology of Idaho's smallest falcon. Photos by Eric Obendorf.

Skull Donation

Sara Focht, Wildlife Educator, MKNC



Alana, Kyler, Gabe, and Ayden Burrows brought me this skull to identify (held by Alana). Turns out it is a yellow-bellied marmot skull. One of the advantages of working here is you get all this cool dead stuff! Marmots are members of the rodent family (like mice, rats, beavers). Marmots, like other rodents, are very important members of their ecosystems.

They provide food for eagles, cougars, otters, and other animals. They also help aerate the soil (ground-dwelling rodents) and move seeds, two functions essential for plant growth. More specifically, marmots are a type of squirrel.

Idaho is the home to many squirrel species including native tree squirrels (the red squirrel), flying squirrels, chipmunks, many types of ground squirrels, marmots, and non-native eastern fox squirrels (found in a neighborhood near you).



MK Nature Center 25th Anniversary Photo Contest

In honor of our 25th anniversary, the MK Nature Center is hosting a photo contest! Photos will be displayed on our Facebook page as well as at different celebratory events throughout the year. We are looking for photos that celebrate the beauty and unique character of the MK Nature Center. You are invited to participate by sharing pictures you have taken at the MK Nature Center that fit into one of the following categories:

Abstract/Artistic

Education

Fish and Aquatics

Landscape

People Enjoying Nature

Wildlife (nonbird)

Birds

Macro/Insect/Arachnid

Plants

HOW AND WHEN TO ENTER:

We will be accepting photo entries starting *January 2015* until *August 1st*. All photos must be submitted in digital format through email to sara.focht@idfg.idaho.gov. In your email you should include your name, age (if younger than 18), a photo title or description, and the category in which you wish the photo to be entered. If you are submitting multiple entries, a picture description and category must be entered for each photograph.

CONTEST RULES:

All entries must be:

Digital

Taken at MKNC

Taken by an amateur photographer

Accompanied by permission for MKNC to use the photo for publicity

Must not have been entered into previous MKNC contests



Photos left to right from previous photo contests: Mule deer fawn by Jim Judd, wood duck by Lada Stransky, kids as owls by Robert Allen.

MK Nature Center - Your Face-to-Fish Connection

NatureCorps

Jillian Moroney, Volunteer Coordinator, MKNC

When I moved to Boise in August of 2014 I was looking for ways to invest in the community, be outside, and meet new people; so I started volunteering and eventually working at the MKNC. After being in Boise for about eight months something has become clear to me: the MKNC is a Boise institution and everyone has a story to share about the time they have spent here. After 25 years of inspiring love and appreciation for natural resources along the Boise greenbelt, there are a lot of stories to share!

In an effort capture 25 years of MK Nature Center stories we are starting the NatureCorps project. Modeled after StoryCorps, a large oral history project whose pieces can often be heard on NPR, NatureCorps is a series of interviews with people of all ages and backgrounds who have one thing in common: a love of the MK Nature Center. Stay tuned for information about public recording sessions, or contact us to set up an interview. Interviews can be as casual or as structured as you are comfortable with, but to help you get started we have come up with a few prompts:

- How do you feel when you visit the MKNC?
- What is your best memory of the MKNC?
- What is something you learned at the MKNC?
- If you had a friend who had never been to the MKNC, how would you describe it to them?
- What do you like about the MKNC?
- What would you like to say to the MKNC on its 25th Anniversary?

These stories will be used to create an oral history about the MKNC, for anniversary materials, and to create media pieces which inspire, entertain, and inform people about the MKNC. Do you have a story to share? We would love to hear it...everyone's story matters!

To share your story or to get involved in the collection of these stories, please contact Jillian Moroney. Jillian.moroney@idfg.idaho.gov or 208 287-2901.



Jillian Moroney on her first day at MK Nature Center as a volunteer.



Tell us your Nature Center story



MK Nature Center - Your Face-to-Fish Connection

Thank You For Supporting What We Do!

These individuals and businesses supported the MK Nature Center between January 1 and March 31, 2015. Donations come in the form of cash or in-kind materials.

Albertsons (Eagle, Parkcenter)	Del Taco	On the Border
Edwina & John Allen	Eric, Carly, & Evan Dirmann	Hilda Packard
Eileen Allison	Don & Sheree Donlon	Payette Brewing Co.
Applebee's Restaurant	Firehouse Subs	Harry Richardson
Tom and Terri Barry	Five Guys	Brad Robertson DDS
Big Bun Drive Inn	Golden Wheel Drive-In	Rosauers Food & Drug Center
Big Judd's	Goody's	Arleen Schaeffer
Big O Tires (Broadway Store)	Honeybaked Ham & Café	Joe & Carol Slaughter
Black Bear Diner	Idaho Camera	Jennifer Smackey
Bob's Bicycles	Idaho Central Credit Union	Smash Burger
Donna Bostard	Jack in the Box	Sockeye Brewing
Steve Bouffard	Java Coffee & Café	Sportsmans Warehouse
Bruneel Tire Factory (Vista Ave)	Johnny Carino's	Staples
Maria Cannata	Kneaders Bakery & Café	Starbucks (Broadway)
Chique Lixo	Phyllis and Mike Kochert	Julie & Boyd Steele
Choice Cuts Meats	Les Schwab (Broadway, Cole, Fairview, Meridian East)	Mary Stieglitz
Cobby's	Lorrie Suess	Subway (Broadway)
Robert and Nancy Coleman	George Meintel	Which Wich Sandwiches
Commercial Tire 99	Menchies Frozen Yogurt	White Porch Design
Concrete Construction Supply	Mike's Stone Supply	Whole Foods
Costco Wholesale	Fred & Cheryl Minckler	Wild Birds Unlimited
Country Club Reel Theater	Bronwyn Myers	Zamzows
Craft Warehouse	Norco (Amity and Eagle)	
Leah Cruz	Olive Garden	
D & B Supply		

Native Plant Sale

April 24-25

(see hours on page 6)

MK Nature Center

600 S. Walnut Street

Boise, Idaho, 83712



MK Nature Center - Your Face-to-Fish Connection



This flowering quince (Chaenomeles speciose) bloomed a couple weeks early this year. This photo was taken March 20th and by the time this newsletter hits the stands, the booms are surely to be finished.

Photo by Sara Focht, MKNC

To Donate to the MK Nature Center, fill out the form below, enclose your check, and mail to
MK Nature Center, PO Box 25, Boise, ID 83707.

F R I E N D S O F T H E M O R R I S O N K N U D S E N N A T U R E C E N T E R

Individual Memberships:	
\$10	Mayfly
\$25	Sagebrush
\$50	Gopher Snake
Family Memberships:	
\$100	Mink
\$250	Mule Deer
\$500	Great Blue Heron
\$1,000	Chinook Salmon
\$10,000	White Sturgeon

Name(s)		
Address		
City	State	Zip
E-mail Address		
Phone Number		

Members receive*:

- “The Stream” E-newsletter
- Invitations to Nature Center events
- Invitations to “Friends Group Days”
- On-site birthday party options
- Free souvenir penny
- **Sagebrush Level and above:**
15% discount at MKNC gift shop

** Fees/restrictions may apply.*



Today's Date: _____

- New Membership (\$ _____)
- Renewal Membership (\$ _____)
- Check here to receive a donation receipt.

Make checks payable to MK Nature Center



fishandgame.idaho.gov/MKNC

Questions? Sue Dudley 208.287.2900 sue.dudley@idfg.idaho.gov or
Dave Cannamela 208.287.2902 david.cannamela@idfg.idaho.gov