



The Nature Center Stream



S u m m e r

The Seasonal Newsletter of the MK Nature Center

2 0 1 0

MK Nature Center - Your Face-to-Fish Connection

"FACE-TO-FISH" DAYS

Friday 5 PM - 8 PM | Saturday 9 AM - 2 PM

July 9th & 10th

<http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/cms/education/mknc/>



What is your favorite face-to-fish encounter? Come to the nature center and try gyotaku, get in the Boise River, put your nose on the glass, take stream walk.

Learn more and have some fun at this brand new signature anniversary event as we showcase all of your favorite programs.

We are celebrating 20 years of "face-to-fish" experiences at this anniversary special event!

Concessions will be available by Mustard's Grill both Friday and Saturday, during the event times.

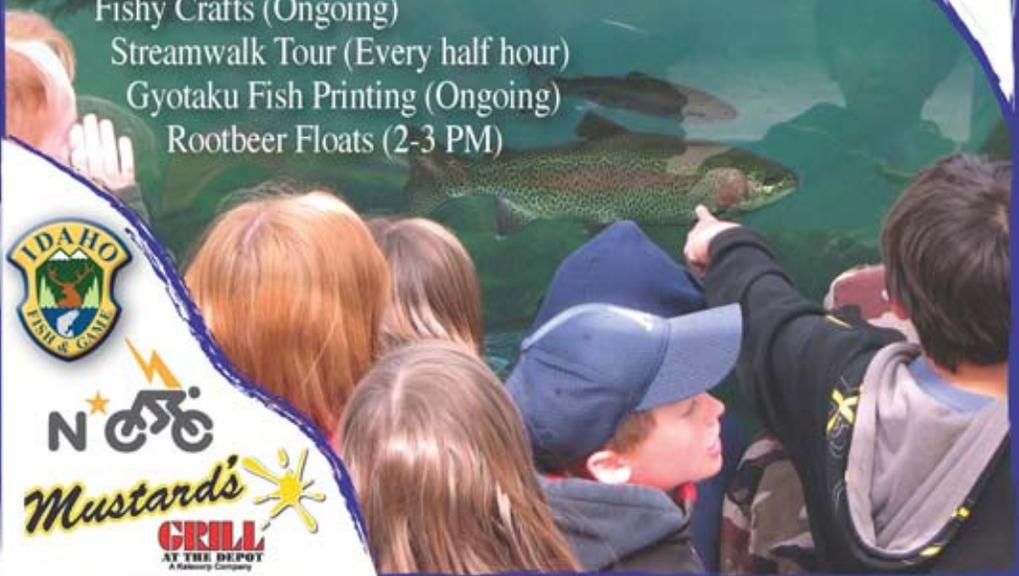


Friday

- Fishy Crafts (Ongoing)
- Rootbeer Floats (4-5 PM)
- Class in the Creek (On the hour)
- Gyotaku Fish Printing (Ongoing)
- Streamwalk Tour (Every half hour)
- Concessions by Mustard's Grill (5-8 PM)

Saturday

- Class in the Creek (On the hour)
- Concessions by Mustard's Grill (11 AM - 2 PM)
- Fishy Crafts (Ongoing)
- Streamwalk Tour (Every half hour)
- Gyotaku Fish Printing (Ongoing)
- Rootbeer Floats (2-3 PM)





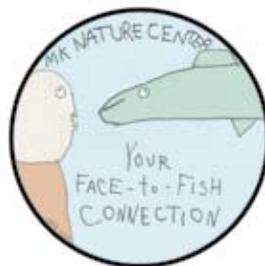
NO NATURE CENTER IS AN ISLAND

Although the Nature Center appears to be an entity unto itself, we are very dependent on our IDFG coworkers for support. The fish at the nature center were (and still are) brought to us by fisheries biologists and hatchery folks. For example, "The Beast", our 7 foot sturgeon, was brought to us by Hagerman State Fish Hatchery employees. The Chinook salmon come from the Rapid River and South Fork Salmon River (McCall) hatchery workers. Fish biologists brought the suckers and chiselmouth. Our support team is much larger than this. There's HR, payroll, accounts payable and all of the other administrative support staff that helps our operation. Graphics people, web weasels, media folks also contribute greatly to the cause. The list goes on and on. The point is, our visitors see us and the work we do, but they don't see the machinery behind the clock's face. However, we know who they are, what they do, and we appreciate them for it.



Stella Bush (Sr. Financial Specialist) and Connie Thelander (Human Resources) are two of the many important people that help behind the scenes at the MK Nature Center.

LOGO DEVELOPED BY VOLUNTEER



Sara Focht, Education Coordinator, MKNC

Mack Leith has been volunteering at MK Nature Center for nearly 8 years. The 25 year old reptile and amphibian lover comes twice a week to MK to feed critters, work out on the path, clean windows, take out the recycling, and feed the fish.

Mack offered up his artistic talent one day when I was describing a sticker I wanted to make, but could not draw. The result was the charming image you see on the left.

As Face-to-Fish Days planning began, we found ourselves in an exciting situation of already having the perfect logo!

Mack is an active member of the Idaho Herpetological Society. He enjoys drinking soda pop, listening to records, and loves motorcycles. He raises reptiles and amphibians at home.

Mack's knowledge, enthusiasm, and great sense of humor add a lot to the Nature Center and we thank him for the terrific logo and all he does for us!

MK Nature Center - Your Face-to-Fish Connection



EDUCATION PROGRAM UPDATE

Sara Focht, Education Coordinator, MK Nature Center



At the Nature Center, our fiscal year comes to a close on June 30th. That is a time to look back over the year and be proud of what we have accomplished.

This year was no exception! The MK Nature Center staff gave 293 programs to just over 11,000 people! Additionally, nearly 3000 visitors came to the Nature Center on an unguided group visit. These numbers do not include the thousands of people who come on their own.

The year ahead brings many challenges to the MK Nature Center. Shrinking budgets and staffing reductions at the Nature Center in addition to public school field trip money cuts

will all have an effect on how we are able to serve the community with high quality conservation education. With that said, we are ready to face the challenges that are before us!

A RARE VISITOR DROPS BY THE NATURE CENTER

Brenda Beckley, Aquatic Education Coordinator, IDFG

I was going about my daily work routine when I received a telephone message from Susan Ziebarth at MK Nature Center, "Brenda, we have this huge bat flying around the Nature Center over the pond!" I dashed over to MK as fast as I could. I immediately spotted Susan on the bridge peering up at a bat in the cottonwood tree that was growing near the beaver dam. It was a rarely seen hoary bat.



It wasn't surprising the bat had chosen a cottonwood tree in which to roost. The dark brown fur tipped with white blended in well with the white bark. Its body almost looked like a dried leaf from a distance. Hoary bats roost during the day in this way and feed on moths at night. Hoary bats are insect eaters, like all of Idaho's bats. In a single night these creatures can fly about 24 miles. The hoary bat is Idaho's largest bat with a wingspan of 15-16 inches. They travel even greater distances in late summer when they migrate to warmer climates.

This day had a lot of meaning for me not only to see this bat, but because I helped build the beaver dam and plant the cottonwood trees at MK as an intern in 1994. Imagine our city if we all planted native plants in our backyards and avoided insecticides and fertilizers as much as we could. How would our city change? This little spec of land keeps giving to our community because the native habitat is clean and available. I stayed observing the bat over the next couple days until people wondered if I was crazy... then, headed back to work.

Hoary Bat. Photo by MKNC.

JUNE'S MAIN ATTRACTION

Dave Cannamela, MK Nature Center Superintendent

The noise level at the MKNC increased dramatically in June. Some of that was a result of the normal increase in traffic we see when the weather improves, but much of it, especially the screams and shouts, were a direct result of people seeing our 7-foot, 200 pound white sturgeon: I call him "The Beast". Remember The Sandlot? "The Beast" was introduced to our pond on November 18, 2009 and seems to be loving it. We now have three of these dinosaurs, the odd sizes, 3, 5, and 7 footers. Sturgeon have been on Planet Earth for about 400 million years. Their skeletons are made of cartilage, not bone. And yes they do resemble sharks- *Not Catfish!*

May through September is prime sturgeon viewing time as these fish become active and are frequently seen from the west end of the long bridge. During the winter, they seem to hunker down, out of sight, in the deepest darkest part of the pond.

White sturgeon are endangered in Idaho. Studies on the Kootenai River have revealed that alterations in stream flows and spawning habitat caused by dams have contributed to their decline. Spring flows, which are now hindered by dams, do not provide the necessary velocity for scouring processes that historically provided clean gravel as the spawning substrate. The Kootenai Tribe of Idaho, with the support of Idaho Department of Fish and Game, is sponsoring a river restoration project aimed at recreating sturgeon-friendly spawning conditions.



Sturgeon photo by Gene Halberstadt