



# The Nature Center Stream



S u m m e r

The Seasonal Newsletter of the MK Nature Center

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Once a month, the Boise Co-op donates \$1,500 to a local non-profit for their “Shop for Good” program. In May, the MK Nature Center was the beneficiary! The Co-op has been so good to us over the years...donating healthy snacks for our Jr. Naturalist Program, wine and food for our volunteer appreciation parties, and now this.

In addition to the donation, the MK Nature Center crew was invited to spend a few hours at the Co-op on May 16th to meet and greet Co-op customers. This was a great opportunity to share our cause, our information, and our passion for our mission with many members of the community. Thank you Boise Co-op!



*MKNC employee Scott Sliney and volunteer Martha Sliney staffed the information table at the Co-op. Scott was responsible for getting the Shop for Good grant.*





## WHAT REALLY HAPPENS HERE

*Dave Cannamela, MK Nature Center Superintendent*

Throughout the year, what the Nature Center offers to its visitors is nice, but what nature allows us to offer at this time of year is particularly incredible. For instance, there are twin mule deer fawns napping outside of my office window right now. They ate lunch with me yesterday and the day before that, they were right where they are now. Sara and I have been parading kids (and adults) through our office to give them a peek. Over the past month, countless visitors have had the opportunity to see one or more of the five fawns that were born nearby as they make their way through the Nature Center. The native plants have bloomed or are blooming. Dragonflies and ladybugs have hatched – it's always a treat to see ladybugs in all of their life stages. We've been seeing the mink, the fox, and countless ducklings. Today we received one of our annual shipments of adult Chinook salmon from Rapid River. It is prime time for wildlife viewing.

All of these things are unique and wonderful and most of our visitors understand that once they've encountered them. When people get a chance to experience wildlife and nature first hand and up close, their views change. The best teachers in the world, (and some of them work here), can't do what one encounter with a newborn fawn can do. And that's what the Nature Center has to offer; that's what the Nature Center contributes to our society.



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

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

# ALPINE LAKE MURAL UNVEILING



On the evening of May 2nd, the long-awaited Alpine Lake mural was unveiled. Local artist Marcus Pierce worked the long cold winter to complete this project which has been a dream of ours for over 10 years.

Susan Ziebarth gave Marcus everything he needed to get the job done. This includes a heated enclosure and the preliminary preparation of the wall surface.

As the kick-off to the day, Bri Eggers of Channel 6 news broadcasted the weather from the Nature Center. The “grand unveiling” was preceded by a social hour that included a silent auction. It was a fun and successful day made possible by NC staff, volunteers, donors to the mural project, the Idaho Statesman, the Boise Weekly, the City of Boise, IDFG employees, and the Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation.



*Top: Nature Center supporter Janet Conley and Idaho Department of Fish and Game Director, Virgil Moore, enjoy the evening at the Nature Center.*

*Middle: Visitors mill about enjoying the mild weather and the view of the new mural. MKNC's Jessica Gordon smiles as she sees her hard work pay off. Jessica played a key role in planning the event, along with Rebecca Wagner (who took the photos).*

*Bottom: Artist Marcus Pierce says a few words to the crowd before the mural was unveiled.*



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

# MKNC WILDLIFE EDUCATOR RECEIVES AWARD



*In March, 2013 Wildlife Educator, Sara Focht received the Environmental Educator of the Year award from the Idaho Environmental Education Association for 2012. Sara has worked at MKNC since the fall of 2008 as the Education Coordinator. Sara is pictured here (green shirt and tan hat) leading a listening activity with elementary school students by the Boise River.*

## GK-12 FELLOWS FINISH THEIR YEAR

Boise State's GK-12 program (funded by the National Science Foundation) has been partnering with MK Nature Center. This June marks the end of our third year of hosting two graduate students at MKNC. Elyse Begnoche (pictured left) and Michelle Laskowski (right) had a busy year. Together, they taught 165 programs since last July! Michelle is off to Maryland, where she has found a full time job in a malaria lab. Perfect, since she studied malaria in birds for her graduate thesis. Elyse is unsure of her next move, but with graduate school behind her and ample teaching experience under her belt, she will go far. We wish them the best and thank them for their hard work and dedication to MKNC this year. Thousands of kids benefited from their



teaching and scientific experience. It is hard to see them go, but a month from now, we will have two more fellows and the adventure will begin again.



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

# THANK YOU FOR GIVING, IDAHO!



May 2nd was a historic day throughout Idaho. The day granted nonprofits the opportunity to highlight their causes, and for donors to show their support; and did they ever! Supporters generously donated \$5,800 to the MK Nature Center. The MK Nature Center would not be able to continue site enhancements, such as the recently unveiled mural by Marcus Pierce, or strive to continually improve the grounds and the nature experience, without grants and donations. Thank you for all your support. Thanks also to the Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation, our non-profit partner, who made the online donations possible.

## BOISE BANDITS VISIT MK NATURE CENTER



*From left to right: Boise Bandit Brian Williams, MK Nature Center teachers Sara Focht, Elyse Begnoche, Rebecca Fritz and Boise Bandit A.J. Springer.*

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

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# WILD DOGS ONLY, PLEASE!

Almost everyone who works at MKNC has a dog. Dave has his shiny black Chelsea. Rebecca has her running partner, Walt. There is Sue with her guard dog, Copper, and Sara with her recently lost love, Tom. It is safe to say we are dog lovers here. However, the Nature Center grounds are not the place for dogs. Yes, we get it....you love your dog and want them to be with you....to enjoy nature and smell the smells of the wild. You will have to find a dog-friendly Foothills trail for that. Dogs are not allowed at the Nature Center, even on a leash (except working dogs, of course).

The Nature Center was created 22 years ago for wildlife habitat and wildlife viewing. Some dogs (probably yours) are calm and collected and would have no effect on the natural processes and visitor experiences. But “other people’s dogs” can be annoying and chase wildlife, poop at random, and crash through the ponds for a duck neck.

So, leave your dogs at home (please don’t bring them and leave them in the car). Come enjoy nature without your canine friend just for a short time. You might get lucky and see our visiting wild dogs!



*Red foxes frequent the Nature Center for food. They help themselves to the plethora of squirrels available. We welcome our wild dog visitors.*



## PEACE CORPS BOUND

Alex Rheault was a volunteer last summer. This summer we were happy to hire her as summer seasonal staff. Now graduated from the University of Idaho with an Environmental Science degree, she is shipping herself off to Nicaragua for two years of Peace Corps service.

Alex does it all here. She works the front desk, weeds, teaches, cleans, organizes and provides great customer service to our visitors. We are excited to see her in two years and hear about all of her adventures! Thanks Alex and we wish you the best of luck!

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

# TAYLOR STANSBURY

If you come to the Nature Center this summer, you are likely to see Taylor Stansbury. She will be the one with sandals, shorts, a t-shirt, hair in a ponytail, work gloves on and probably sweat running down her face. She might be scrubbing the insides of the fish-viewing windows or pulling weeds, or maybe even walking around with George the gopher snake wrapped around her arm.

Taylor is a Junior at University of Idaho. She is a psychology major with a Spanish minor. She started working here when she was 16...the summer before her Senior year in high school. She has been back every summer, spring break, Thanksgiving break, and Christmas break.



It is nice to have someone who is willing and able to jump in during some of our busiest times of the year. Taylor also staffs the gift shop, sweeps the path, feeds the captive animals and scrubs the aviary carpet (it's not a glamorous job). She has great rapport with customers and this summer she will be leading tours!

## THE BIG TWO FIVE

Please stay tuned. The MKNC is launching a *fun* fundraising initiative in anticipation of our 25th anniversary, in 2015. Look for opportunities to donate in amounts that reflect the “big two five”- 25 cents, \$2.50, \$25, \$250 \$2,500 and so on! We are striving for financial stability and opportunities to enhance all phases of Nature Center operations and facilities and we have 2.5 years to do it.



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

# DUNK DAVE AND OTHER UPCOMING EVENTS

July 18th

**VOLUNTEER and SUPPORTER SOCIAL 2:30-6:30**

The weather will be warm, so it will be a good day to enjoy some ice cream and visit with fellow wonderful Nature Center volunteers and supporters. The best part, our beloved site superintendent, Dave Cannamela, will make an appearance in the Dunk Tank along with Bri Eggers and the Channel 6 news crew! Several other staff and willing participants will take a turn as well but I am sure Dave will make quite the “splash” as the target! The Dunk Tank will be available throughout the event and will be a \$1 donation per ball, maximum 3 balls per turn, but no limit on how many turns you may take!! For further information please contact Jessica Gordon at 208-287-2901 or at [jessica.gordon@idfg.idaho.gov](mailto:jessica.gordon@idfg.idaho.gov) .

September 4-6th

**IDAHO SALMON AND STEELHEAD DAYS**

The MK Nature Center will host Idaho Salmon and Steelhead Days for the 17th year in a row! The event highlights salmon and steelhead resources in Idaho while striving to connect the classroom lessons of over 2,000 5th graders to the outside world through stations and educational activities. This event would not be successful without the time of our wonderful volunteers! The event takes place September 4th – 6th, from 9am-1pm, with a training the evening of Tuesday, September 3rd. If you would like information about volunteering for the event contact Jessica Gordon at 208-287-2901 or at [jessica.gordon@idfg.idaho.gov](mailto:jessica.gordon@idfg.idaho.gov) . Sign-ups to begin July 19th, 2013.

September 30th

**KEGS4KAUSE AT PAYETTE BREWING**

MK Nature Center will be off site at the Payette Brewing Company. Payette Brewing began their Kegs4Kause program in the fall of 2011 to connect with the community and support local nonprofit organizations. The event takes place on Monday evenings and highlights a different nonprofit each week. On Monday, September 30th, Payette Brewing will donate 50% of their proceeds from beer sales in the tasting room to the MK Nature Center. The tasting room is open from 3-10pm and Burgerlicious will be on-site from 5pm until 8:30 (or as long as people are still hungry!). What a great time to have a burger and a beer, and enjoy the company of your friends, all while supporting the gem in the heart of the city, the MK Nature Center. Help spread the word and we look forward to seeing you there!

## OUR YEAR ENDS AND BEGINS

Our fiscal year ends June 30th and that is a time for reflection. We are proud to report our education numbers to you for Fiscal year 2013.

Total number of guided programs: 286 programs (8694 people)

Number of FREE programs offered to underserved groups: 51 programs (2347 people)

Number of people served through special events: 3672 people

Number of hours teaching: 441 hours

Number of contact hours (teachers with students): 13,442 hours

Free programs for low income and underserved students were made possible through a grant we recieved from the Boise National Forest.

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

## I DO TEACH!

This summer, the MK Nature Center is hosting two IDoTeach interns for 8 weeks. The IDoTeach program, hosted by BSU, serves secondary education math and science students. The program is designed to meet a current need for Idaho science and math teachers. IDoTeach participants attend education classes geared toward teaching Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM). In addition, they are placed in science labs or teaching facilities early in the program to help them get real job experience.



*Above: Christen Sapnas and Christina Townes help visitors make fish prints. Right: Christen Sapnas gets close and personal with the pond.*



## BURROWING OWL ARRIVES FROM ZOO BOISE



On June 25th, the MK Nature Center received a burrowing owl from Zoo Boise. Pictured on the right, the new owl stands close to our resident owl, Whoots. Unlike most owls, burrowing owls are social. We heard the Zoo only had one owl and since we only had one, we offered to either give them ours or take theirs. They agreed to give us theirs! This photo was taken just hours after they were put in the same enclosure. They have been “hanging out” together and getting acquainted. You might notice the right eye of the new burrowing owl has no yellow iris. Three years ago, when the zoo vaccinated the owl for West Nile, his eye turned black. The new owl is much more active than Whoots. He flies around and is exploring his new enclosure. Thanks Zoo Boise!

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# THANK YOU BIRD DAY VOLUNTEERS! WE COULD NOT HAVE DONE IT WITHOUT YOU!



## NATURE CENTER FACTS YOU MAY NOT KNOW

The Morrison Knudsen Nature Center is owned and operated by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game.

We are not funded or endowed by MK Co.

The Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation (IFWF) is a nonprofit entity 501(c)3 that was created in large part to fundraise for the construction of the Nature Center back in 1990.

The MKNC was IFWF's first project. IFWF still serves as the 501(c)3 organization for the Department of Fish and Game.

The Nature Center is currently funded by eight sources, the largest of which is the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Aquatic Education Grants.