



The Nature Center Stream



W i n t e r

The Seasonal Newsletter of the MK Nature Center

2 0 1 0

20

Years!

MK Nature Center invites you to celebrate its 20th Anniversary this year, 2010!

Throughout the year we will be looking back to 1990, when the Nature Center first opened its doors as the Boise River Observatory.

We will also be looking to the future! In July, we will be hosting a special anniversary event, "Face -to-Fish Days", that will invite the public to enjoy all we have to offer.



These two photos were taken 17 years apart, but in the exact same location. Note the large rock on the right near the water's edge in both photos.



In September, the path will be transformed into a dining room with natural ambiance, during our first annual Fundraising Dinner at the Nature Center.

We hope you can come celebrate 20 years of habitat, wildlife, education, and native fishes!

For details on our 2010 events call 334-2225 or check our website.

MK Nature Center-Your Face-to-Fish Connection

Dave's Two Cents



MK NATURE CENTER GOES GLOBAL

I don't know how they found us, but I'm glad they did! Tracy Day, the Contract Program Liaison for BSU's Intensive English Program called us one day to ask for a program: we've not been the same since. Her international students are so interested and interesting that our "job" immediately rose to a new level. Students from Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Iran, Peru, Ecuador, Japan, Korea, Mexico, China, Switzerland, Uzbekistan. Heck, can you see me trying to communicate the woes of salmon or the intricacies of a crayfish to such a crowd. Its tough enough for me with people who were raised with the same native tongue. But Tracy's students are just so attentive, inquisitive, polite, and determined to understand things, that it's an absolute riot and a joy. Tracy is just wonderful - always upbeat, supportive and eager to learn and do more. Truly a highlight of the year. We look forward to future encounters of the global kind.

OH MY COD, THERE'S A NEW STURGEON IN TOWN!

BY DAVE CANNAMELA, MKNC SUPERINTENDENT

On December 3rd, Dave Danner, one of our local taxidermists brought us *Lota lota* (a.k.a. burbot, eelpout, ling, and lawyer). It's a beautiful fish and a beautiful taxidermy job (see photo below left). *Lota lota* (what great scientific name!) is the only freshwater cod fish in the world; worldwide, there are about 60 species in the cod fish family. The burbot is circumpolar in distribution; meaning, mostly above the 40th parallel in North America (mostly Canada) and Eurasia, but it is native to the Kootenai River, Idaho. Adult burbot average about two feet in length. They are nocturnal predators that will eat just about any form of meat, insects, and other aquatic invertebrates and a wide variety of fishes. Burbot spawn in mid-winter, often under the ice, in what has been described as a "writhing ball" of 10-12 individuals.

On another note, with the help of our co-workers at the Hagerman State Fish Hatchery, a 7 foot, 15 year old, 200 pound sturgeon was released into the pond on November 18th (see photo below right). Susan "dances with sturgeon" got in the water with the big guy to ensure a safe release: that was fun to watch. The beast, as I like to call him, seems to have taken to his new digs in a big way.

The poor guy must find the nature center pond spacious after spending his entire life in a raceway; he'd grown too big to even turn around in that place.



WE'LL GET BY WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM OUR FRIENDS

In our last newsletter, we announced the formation of our Friends of the MK Nature Center group. We'd like to thank those of you who took advantage of the opportunity to be our first Friends. We were especially delighted to receive a check from Biomark Inc., a local company that specializes in the electronic marking of fish and wildlife for research and conservation; many of us are familiar with the "microchip" technology because it's used to mark our cats, dogs, horses, etc.

The Friend's Group gives supporters an official way to contribute to our mission of providing habitat and education to the public. In times where budgets are getting smaller, and the demand for conservation education is growing, we need friends!

Friends Group donations are tax deductible!

INTERESTED IN JOINING FRIENDS OF MK NATURE CENTER?

Help us continue to provide wildlife habitat, fish viewing, education programs and much more!

Send membership donation to MK Nature Center
PO Box 25
Boise, ID 83707

Membership Categories

- _ \$500 Great Blue Heron
- _ \$250 Mule Deer
- _ \$100 Mink
- _ \$50 Trout
- _ \$25 Sagebrush
- _ \$10 Mayfly
- _ other amount

Photos from top to bottom

Male Wood Duck. Photo by Lada Stransky

Bird tracks in snow. Photo by MKNC staff

Thank you Donors

Elaine Johnson
James Ryan
Biomark Inc. (President Dean Park)
Arlene and Robert Morris
Caoimhin and MaryPat Barr
Pat Mills
Ken Rahm
Willow Hahn
Winston Mitchell
Jerry and Janet Conley
Susan Kayler-Daley
Mick and Josephine Chase
Anneliese and Michael Olson
Hilda Packard
Judy Watterlin



E

EVENTS - JANUARY-MARCH, 2010

January 16th

Wildlife In Winter

This is a public program for all ages. Learn how animals survive in the winter. There will be a presentation, a guided walk around the Nature Center, and a craft for the kids. The program starts at 2:00 pm and is free. Donations accepted.



January 21st

Idaho Native Plant Society Monthly Meeting (6:30 pm)

The Idaho Native Plant Society (Pahove Chapter) hosts monthly meetings/presentations at the MK Nature Center. In January: Gardening with Native Plants (Shrubs and Trees). Botanist Ann Debolt will be explaining the "how-to's" of native plant landscape gardening in the Treasure Valley. She will describe the best plants to use, where to use them in your yard and what benefits they provide. This talk should take some of the mystery out of planting with Idaho natives. Ann is the Natural Communities Specialist at the Idaho Botanical Garden and a charter member of the Idaho Native Plant Society. She was instrumental in developing the spectacular Lewis and Clark Garden at IBG.

January 28th

Volunteer Appreciation Potluck (6:30 pm- 8:30 pm)

Have you volunteered at MKNC in 2009? If so, you are invited to the annual Volunteer Appreciation Potluck. Good friends, Good food, for good people. Please RSVP to Cass at the email to the left.

February 20th

Winter Waterfowl

Join the MK Nature Center for an afternoon of learning all about winter waterfowl. A short educational session followed by an outside walk and walk up activity for the kids. A fun family afternoon starting at 2:00 pm at the MK Nature Center.

February 27th

Idaho Authors Book Signing and Sale

The MK Nature Center will be hosting a winter book sale and signing to benefit our education programs. Top Idaho authors will have books available for sale, as well as participate in some sample readings. Join us for an afternoon of refreshments and readings from books of outdoor, travel and wildlife interest. 1:00pm-4:00 pm.



March 20th

Water-wise Garden Planning

Are you doing some winter landscape planning? Come to the MK Nature center for an educational session covering the principles of xeriscaping. Water wise gardening creates gardens of color, texture, wildlife habitat, and water conservation. A walk up garden collage craft will be available for the kids.

For more information on all these events, call MK Nature Center 334-2225 or email Cass Meissner at cass.meissner@idfg.idaho.gov



MASTER NATURALIST PROGRAM OFFERED IN 2010

MK Nature Center, the Foothills Learning Center and the Idaho Botanical Garden will be partnering once again this year to offer another round of the Idaho Master Naturalist Program.

The Idaho Master Naturalist Program's mission is to develop a corps of well-informed volunteers to actively work toward stewardship of Idaho's natural environment.

The Sagebrush-Steppe Chapter of the Idaho Master Naturalist Program is currently seeking participants. This program is composed of 40 hours of training and 40 hours of volunteer service for certification.

Training sessions will be held January-April on most Tuesdays from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm. The cost of the program is \$60. Volunteer service can be performed anytime throughout the year. Participants learn about Idaho's birds, mammals, geology, ecology, plants, and wetlands.

If you are interested in joining the IMNP in Boise, please contact Sara Focht at (208) 287-2906 or sara.focht@idfg.idaho.gov. If you would like to receive a quarterly copy of the IMNP newsletter or get your name on a contact list for future trainings, contact Sara.



Lance Hebdon (left), Tricia Hebdon (not pictured), Katie Hebdon (center) and Timmy Hebdon (right) braved the cold morning to represent MK Nature Center in Boise's Holiday Parade on November 20th.

2009 PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS!



Great Blue Heron by Bob Fairey
First Place BIRD category

Mule Deer by Winston Mitchell
First Place in the WILDLIFE (nonbird) category

Fish Viewing by Pam Sommer
First Place in the PEOPLE ENJOYING WILDLIFE
category

Swallowtail by Luana McCauley
Third Place in the INSECT category

Floating Leaf by Maria Halsberg
Third Place in the PLANT category



To see all winning photos, visit <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/CMS/education/mknc> and click on EVENTS.

2010 PHOTO CONTEST DETAILS

The 2010 Photo contest is now open. Entries must be:

Digital.

Taken at MK Nature Center.

Taken by an amateur photographer.

Sent to Sara.focht@idfg.idaho.gov by December 1, 2010.

Accompanied with permission for us to use the photo.

One photo per category per person please. The 2010 categories are:

Abstract/Artistic

Aquatics

Arachnids and insects

Birds

Education

Fall/Autumn

Fish

Macro/close up

People Enjoying Nature

Plants

Spring

Summer

Wildlife (nonbird)

Winter



*Crayfish by Maria Halberstadt (above).
Rainbow Trout by Cyndi Coulter (left).*

4 WAYS TO SUPPORT IDAHO'S WILDLIFE IN 2010



#1

Buy a hunting license. That is right, people who hunt in Idaho are the only people contributing to the conservation of game animals such as elk, deer and mountain lion. Idaho Department of Fish and Game works to sustain game animals for Idahoans now and for future generations to enjoy.

#2

Buy a fishing license. Anglers in Idaho pay for all fish stocking, habitat restoration, fisheries research, and some educational programs.

#3

Buy an Idaho Wildlife License Plate! Make your car look good AND support Idaho's nongame animals. Did you know that over 89% of all Idaho's Wildlife cannot be hunted, fished, or trapped and these same animals receive NO funds from the sale of hunting and fishing licenses? Choose from the bluebird, elk, or trout plate.

#4

Do your taxes right! None of your Idaho tax money goes to fish and wildlife conservation! So, do it right, and make a donation to the Nongame Wildlife Conservation Fund on line 37 of your Idaho State Tax Form. ANY amount is appreciated!

MK Nature Center receives small portions of money raised in all these four categories.

