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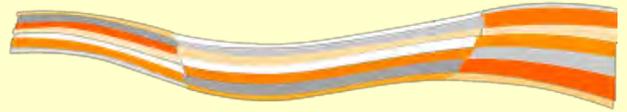
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Photos top to bottom:
Ruby-crowned kinglet
by Brian Lawless.
Western tanager and
hummingbird by
MKNC.



The Nature Center Stream



Spring The Seasonal Newsletter of the Idaho Department of Fish and Game MK Nature Center 2017



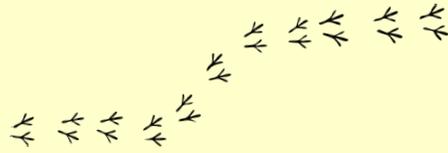
Spring brings with it a host of changes to the natural world. Birds provide one of the most obvious seasonal changes. In early spring, birds like dark-eyed juncos and red-breasted nuthatches return to higher elevations. Year-round residents like the ruby-crowned kinglet, song sparrow and black-capped chickadee begin singing to establish their summer breeding territories.

As April advances toward May, our neotropical migrants begin to return from such far-flung places as Central and South America. Colorful warblers, tanagers and orioles are joined by swallows, flycatchers, vireos and hummingbirds arriving for the summer. Early morning at the nature center and along the Greenbelt becomes an avian orchestral delight as these birds sing with the rising sun. All this singing is very serious business. Males are establishing and maintaining territories and trying to attract a mate. As such, males generally arrive several weeks before their consorts. These birds take advantage of the summer's bounty of insects to feed themselves and their hungry youngsters.

When visiting the nature center this spring, check out the birds to both see and hear the changing of the season.

Nature Center Notes

Vicky Runnoe, Conservation Education Supervisor, IDFG.



Signs of spring are all around the nature center. The geese have laid claim to the nesting box and a large swath of property around it. Garter snake noses can be seen peeping out from their winter hibernaculum on warm afternoons. Buds are bursting and several butterflies have been seen. On a recent walkabout on the path, I was treated to a burst of spring song from a tiny ruby-throated kinglet. This bit of olive-drab fluff belted out his lovely notes from amongst the shrubs. My presence deterred him not a bit as he announced his presence to all kinglets near and far.

Another sign of spring is the sound of excited voices floating across the nature center. Shouts of surprise and discovery echo along the winding paths. Families and school groups bask in the return of sunshine and warming temperatures. Along with our visitors, volunteers are out and about, eagerly tackling many “spring cleaning” projects---weeding flowerbeds, turning the compost, trimming shrubs and many other tasks. We all welcome spring for the renewal it brings to a winter-weary landscape. Make sure to take some time to enjoy spring at the MK Nature Center. You never know who or what you might discover in this season of change.

Blending In

Sara Focht, Wildlife Educator, IDFG MKNC



“The ducks and geese are starting to fight.” This is what I tell students in MKNC programs this time of year, so they are prepared for the hissing and stalking geese and “mean” ducks.

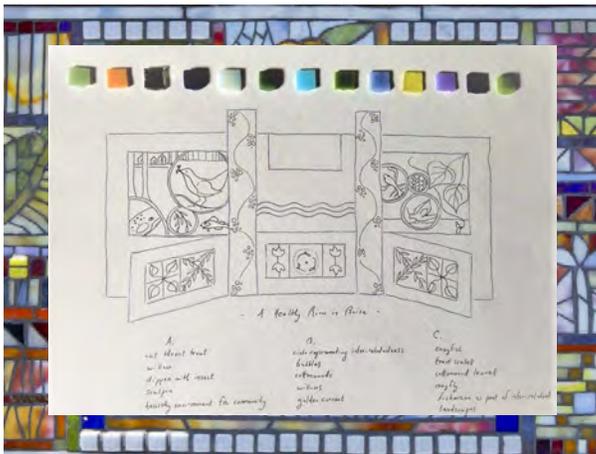
It is fun to see ducks pairing up and the nesting boxes here in the pond get some use. This photo was taken where the large sturgeon pond bridge bends at the elbow. Below is a small island where, throughout the year, interesting things occur. You will notice the beaver chewed trees at the top of the picture, and the pair of ducks near the middle. I liked the way the ducks were arranged, seemingly to show how beautifully camouflaged the female is.

Soon we will have a line of little yellow ducklings swimming across the pond. Photo by Sara Focht

Friends have Big Plans

Joyce Harvey-Morgan, FOMKNC, Board Member

The Friends of the MK Nature Center has been very busy!! 100% of our work is geared toward enhancing the important work of the MK Nature Center—getting kids and families outside to enjoy, appreciate, learn about and protect the natural world.



Last year’s fund raising efforts resulted in a) the support of an AmeriCorps member, Brian Lawless, who is helping to expand the educational impact of the Nature Center and b) the creation of a mosaic around the riffle wall along the stream walk, the latter with additional support from the Boise City Department of Arts and History. This mosaic—depicting various species in a riparian zone—is being created by local artist Anna Webb and will be unveiled on July 12. From early peeks at the work in progress, it is clear that this will be an amazing visual and educational addition to the Nature Center environment.

This year’s fund raising efforts focus on a comprehensive re-signing of the Nature Center. You may have noticed that many of the current signs are weather-worn, damaged, hard to read, and/or just not very appealing. Our goal is to create a unified look and feel that engages the visitor (whether part of a school tour or part of a family visit) visually, intellectually and emotionally. We could certainly use your help! Please consider making a contribution on May 4 through Idaho Gives, our statewide giving day—just look online for Idahogives.org and search for Friends of MK Nature Center. We’d love for you to become a *Friend* of the Nature Center!



Some signs at the nature center have been damaged and are replaced with waterproof paper signs that only last a few months as shown in the far left photo. The water cycle sign pictured second from the left is a durable sign, but the title has completely faded. The pheasant sign’s protective plastic is cracked. And some signs are just laminated paper, as shown in the far right picture. Photos by Sara Focht.

MK Nature Center - Your Face-to-Fish Connection

New Idaho Master Naturalists

Sara Focht, Wildlife Educator, IDFG.

The MK Nature Center partners with the Idaho Botanical Garden and the City of Boise to sponsor the Sagebrush-steppe Chapter of the Idaho Master Naturalist Program. Pictured here is our 9th class of the program. We look forward to working with these fine folks and welcoming them into our ever-growing chapter of conservation stewards.



Lectures and Events

April 10: Urban Lions. Idaho Fish and Game Conservation Educator, Evin Oneale will present information on mountain lions in urban settings. 6:30-8 pm at MK Nature Center. Free and open to the public. Call Brian at (208) 334-2225 for more information.

April 11: Fire and invasive species in the Boise Foothills. Bert Bowler presents his personal experience with landscaping and restoring land with native plants, and living close to the Table Rock Fire. 7 pm at MK Nature Center. Free and open to the public. Call Susan at (208) 334-2225 for more information.

April 29: Spring Wildlife Celebration Event (see poster on following page). Booths and educational activities for families at MK Nature Center to celebrate Idaho's Wildlife resources. \$3/person from 10 am –4 pm. Call Sue at (208) 334-2225 for more information.

April 29: Native Plant Sale Open to Public (see article on page 8). Shop for native plants from 10 am –1 pm.

May 13: International Migratory Bird Day at the Peregrine Fund. MKNC will have a booth along with several other natural resource organizations. Come celebrate birds at this family friendly event. 11 am-4 pm at the World Center for Birds of Prey. Call Tate at (208) 362-8687 for more information and admission price.

May 21: International Museum Day Boise Museums congregate at one location to let you sample what they have to offer. Join MKNC and other local museums from 12 pm—4 pm at the *Idaho Botanical Gardens*. Free admission to the IBG, and the Old Penitentiary that day. Family friendly. Food trucks. Call Sara at (208) 287-2906 for more information.

MK Nature Center - Your Face-to-Fish Connection

SPRING WILDLIFE CELEBRATION

at the
MK Nature Center

600 S. Walnut, Boise

Saturday, April 29
10am - 4pm



\$3 per person (ages 3 and over)



Family Friendly Event ***

- ☀ Live Bird Presentations
- ☀ Wildlife Themed Education Tables
- ☀ Activities and Games

Burgerlicious Food Truck ☀ NOON-3:30pm



Questions? Contact Sue Dudley
sue.dudley@idfg.idaho.gov
208-287-2900



World of Waterfowl

Brian Lawless, AmeriCorps Member, MKNC



Next time you visit the Nature Center, make sure to look *across* the pond as well as *into* it. You will be treated to a wide world of wandering waterfowl! This fall and winter, we were treated to visits from wood ducks, mallards, common mergansers, hooded mergansers (pictured), ring-necked ducks, and Canada geese. Not only do we have these feathered friends in our pond, but if you walk a few steps to the river, you will see other species of waterfowl that prefer rivers to ponds. If you like to view or photograph

water birds, the Center offers a unique opportunity and viewing angles that are difficult to find other places. Make sure to stop by often in the spring as these migrating birds use the ponds for a rest stop on their way back north through the Pacific Flyway. A weekly visit will lead to sightings of special birds that only visit for a short time every year.



Photos by Brian Lawless.

Everything and the Kitchen Sink

Sara Focht, Wildlife Educator, IDFG MKNC



MKNC volunteer and Idaho Master Naturalist, Ron Andrew, graciously donated his time and expertise to replace our small one-basin sink with a bigger, two-basin sink. The “kitchen” at the nature center, as you can see in the picture, also serves as two people’s office, the copy room, and the ladder storage closet! Since there is so much going on in that little room, every improvement helps!

Friends Gather to Celebrate Volunteers

Sara Focht, Wildlife Educator, IDFG MKNC

On February 8th, our winter tradition of celebrating MK Nature Center volunteers continued. With a beautifully decorated building (thanks to Sue Dudley), great food and a roomful of friends, we celebrated the teamwork it takes to operate the nature center. Old friends and some new faces enjoyed the company and fine dining. The nature center staff extends our appreciation to those who could not be with us that night.



Nearly every task performed at the Nature Center, from educational programs and staffing the front desk, to feeding the critters and taking care of the path are partially performed by volunteers and without you...those tasks could not get completed. Thank you!



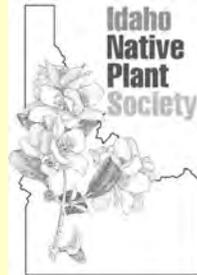
Top: New MKNC Superintendent, Vicky Runnoe, thanks the volunteers and shows them an impressive slide show consisting of photos of their work and accomplishments. Above: Volunteers Joyce Harvey-Morgan and Lauri Foss enjoy the potluck choices. Upper right: an amazing cake by Tara Jennings. Right: MNNC Sue Dudley welcomes FOMKNC Board Member, Amy Parrish.

MK Nature Center - Your Face-to-Fish Connection

Don't Miss the Best Place to Buy Native Plants

Friday April 28th members only sale 5-7 pm
Saturday April 29th open to the public 10-1 pm
Questions? Call Susan 867-6188

Native Plants and friendly help! That is what makes this the best sale in the valley! Don't forget that profits from the sale support the Idaho Native Plant Society which uses their money to educate the public on the economical, cultural, and biological importance of native plants. They also give grants to schools and other organizations who are doing great work that promote native plants. The Nature Center values this partnership to bring you native plants to attract native wildlife to your yard.



Courtesy of the Idaho Statesman, March 17, 2017

<http://www.idahostatesman.com/living/home-garden/article139296263.html>

“I purchased some of the plants at the Idaho Native Plant Society’s annual sale. The group’s sale is great. The plants at the sale are organized by the watering and environmental needs of each so you can match the plants to your site’s needs, and the prices are reasonable. (I’m so dedicated to their sale that I even went this past year on my wedding day before the ceremony!)”

Written by Joe Jaszewski , visual journalist with the Idaho Statesman since 2003.



MK Nature Center - Your Native Plant Connection

Nature Camp, 2017

Sara Focht, Wildlife Educator, IDFG MKNC



The MK Nature Center hosted twenty 4th, 5th, and 6th graders for a day camp during spring break. This was our fifth spring break camp and just like year's past, we had a blast. We had a great group of excited learners who waded in the creek, hiked, made animal masks, completed a volunteer project, wrote in their nature journal, played games, went birding, learned about animal sign and much more. The periodic wet and windy weather did not seem to dampen anyone's enthusiasm for exploring outside. This year's camp was led by AmeriCorps Member, Brian Lawless and Sara Focht. MKNC volunteers made the chaos seem manageable. Thank you to Kevin Wilson, Al Straessle, April Starratt, Hannah Starratt, Micki Keiser, Julie Steele, Marylee Hale, Tom Neale, and Dirk Anderson.

MK Nature Center - Your Face-to-Fish Connection

Thank You For Supporting MKNC

The following people volunteered their time to the MK Nature Center between January 1-March 31 , 2017. MK Nature Center receives an average of nearly 500 volunteer hours monthly. Thank you!!

| | | | | |
|------------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|--------------|
| Jacqueline Alves | Margit Donhowe | Mack Leith | Jena Renfro | Jeremey Webb |
| Ron Andrew | Samuel Fisher | Aaron Mick | Emily Rigg | Ryan Wilson |
| Trace Blackstone | Carson Fitch | Bronwyn Myers | Arleen Schaeffer | Kaiet Ysursa |
| Gage Buss | Julia Gross | Mitchell Peirsol | Ethan Sorenson | |
| Patrice Davies | Raymond Heady | Jordin Pridmore | Payton Tverdy | |
| Seth Davis | Lucas Heilman | Jared Rade | Clare Vaughn | |
| Nancy Dewitt | Covey Hunter | Barbara Recla | Marta Watson | |

The following people donated to the MK Nature Center or (**FOMKNC in bold**) between January 1 and March 31, 2017. Donations come in the form of money, goods, services, or other in-kind donations.

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|------------------------|
| John & Edwina Allen | Bronwyn Myers | Marilyn Shuler |
| John & Judith Focht | Hilda Packard | Sandra Sweet |
| Shelby Jean Jorgensen | Scott and Susan Prestel | Michael Wiegand |
| Amanda Laib | Susan Floriana & Richard Riley | |
| Fred & Cheryl Minckler | Arleen Schaeffer | |

