



*MK Nature Center*

# STREAM

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Morrison Knudsen Nature Center SPRING 2020

*In this issue >>>*

Idaho Gives 2

Big Changes 3

Signs of Spring 5

Bull Frogs 6

STEM Events 7

Potluck Photos 8

MKNC 9

Supporters

## License Desk Moves to MKNC

Sara Focht,  
Wildlife Educator, MKNC

The Idaho Department of Fish and Game License Sales Desk has officially moved into MK Nature Center lobby for the duration of the Headquarters construction project.

MK Nature Center staff welcomes our colleagues and license buyers! The public can purchase hunting and fishing licenses and tags at the regular front desk business hours of 8am-5pm Monday-Friday.

During the COVID-19 outbreak office closures, license buyers can purchase licenses online at <https://idfg.huntfishidaho.net/login>. Items not available online can be purchased by appointment at (208) 334-3700 or any regional office number.

Pictured left to right: Customer Service Representatives Ashlyn Olmstead, Sophia Dann, Michaela Grossklaus and Assistant Chief of Enforcement Matt O'Connell.



# Nature Notes

Vicky Runnoe, Conservation Education Supervisor

Slowly but surely, the nature center is awakening from its winter slumber. Flowers are being seen on trees and shrubs. Tiny green leaves are beginning their seasonal unfurling. Song sparrows send forth their cheerful bouncy notes from alongside the stream. And the geese are boisterously reclaiming the pond as their own.

Unfortunately, this spring is arriving under the invisible cloud of an unwelcome intruder into our community, COVID 19. Out of an abundance of caution, our visitor's center is closed and our programs cancelled for the time being. However, we want to remind you, our visitors, of the importance and value of relaxing outdoors during times of uncertainty and worry. Many studies have revealed the stress-reducing, mood lifting, and immune system-enhancing values of spending time in the outdoors. Not only is sunshine sure to lift your spirits, exercise and a good dose of vitamin D is good for your overall health. Watching a new season unfold, as it has for eons, is a comfort. Welcoming old friends as favorite flowers bloom and bird songs fill winter-empty spaces is soothing. The out-of-doors also allows you to easily practice your social distancing so you can enjoy a walk, hike or run in our community's many wonderful open spaces.

## Idaho GIVES-2020

Diana Parker, Board Member, FOMKNC

### Friends of MKNC

I hope each of you has been able to enjoy the outdoors while social distancing this spring. Nature can be healing—emotionally, spiritually and physically.

Your generosity continues to enhance the outdoor experience at the MK Nature Center. Two more nature playscapes will be installed at the Nature Center this spring (stepping stumps and hollow logs).

Did you know that MKNC staff change out the outdoor education displays 6 to 8 times each year to ensure that the information is timely and relevant to you? Did you know that the Friends are funding a replacement outdoor kiosk to begin construction this year?

The Friends are participating in ID Gives on May 7<sup>th</sup>. Your generosity will help us fund:

- new and updated seasonal education displays for the new outdoor kiosk
- an AmeriCorps member to deliver nature education programs at the MKNC.

Thank you in advance for your donation! We've been able to accomplish BIG projects with your past contributions. Stay well!

<https://www.idahogives.org/organizations/friends-of-mk-nature-center>

Top photo: The old kiosk has served us well for 30 years. The new kiosk will have more storage and space for educational messaging. Bottom photo: The stepping stumps and playscape log have arrived and await installation!



# Big Changes Ahead



Above: These photos show the remodel progression from left to right. Photos are all taken facing north, but at slightly different angles of the lobby. Photos by MKNC staff. Below: a graphic rendering of the new IDFG Headquarters Building (graphic provided by Glancey Rockwell & Associates).

Sweeping changes are heading our way at MK Nature Center. In May, the IDFG Headquarters building will be demolished and construction of the much needed new building will begin! This means a new look and feel out front of the Nature Center and even inside the grounds. Most of the parking lot will be unavailable, the front gardens and long green metal shed will all be leveled for the new design. The transition may be messy, but in the end, it will be lovely.

On the following page, there is a parking map available, as parking out front will be very limited. In addition, a rendering of the new building is provided below.



View from Park Blvd. (Looking Northeast)

# Construction Update and Parking

In preparation for the IDFG Headquarters building demolition and construction, this area map is provided to help visitors better access the MK Nature Center grounds and Visitor Center. Please note that as of approximately May 5th, parking in front of the Nature Center will be very limited. Ample parking is available at Kristin Armstrong Municipal Park. Visitors are asked to refrain from parking at St. Luke's or BSU (both across Walnut Street).



# Images of SPRING



Sights and sounds of spring abound at MK Nature Center. Each day brings a new sign that life is waking up! Geese are fighting and nesting, the sturgeon have returned from the deep, and flowers are blooming! Stop in and enjoy the season changing.

Photos by Austin Reich, AmeriCorps Member, MKNC



*Welcome*

## 2020 Sagebrush-steppe Chapter Idaho Master Naturalists!

# Nobody Likes a Bully

Austin Reich, AmeriCorps Member, MKNC

Nobody likes a bully, someone who puts down others and prevents them from reaching their full potential. Someone who picks on the little guy, the underdog, or the one who's down and out. Many herpetologists feel the same way, specifically about bullies or *Lithobates catesbeianus*, the American Bullfrog. Originally from East of the Mississippi where they had natural checks and balances keeping them in line, these East Coast natives have found their way to much of the Western United States as well as Central and South America. Here in Idaho they are now the biggest frog in the pond, literally. The attributes that allow them to survive in their native habitats make them bullies here in Idaho. A full grown female Bullfrog can lay up to 20,000 eggs in one clutch, which is important in their native habitat as they are food for so many other animals. This is significantly more than the two other Ranidae frogs in Idaho with the Columbia Spotted frog laying up to 1,300 eggs, and the Northern Leopard frog laying up to 6,500 eggs. Bullfrogs have another adaptation that turns them into bullies, Bullfrogs often consume aquatic animals as part of their diet, including tadpoles and other frogs, even their own! Lastly, American Bullfrogs are better able to withstand the effects of *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis*, or Bd, a deadly fungal disease that has been affecting amphibian populations worldwide. This means they can be a vector for the fungus, without suffering from the results, infecting native populations of amphibians.

This perfect storm of aggressive carnivores, explosive breeders, and disease vectors makes them bullies to our native frogs and toads. Just like with people, the best way to stop bullying is to stand up to it. Not unlike people, the best way to stand up to these bullies is to get rid of them. With a valid fishing license everyone can help lessen the impact of bullfrogs on native habitats as well as practice your French kitchen skills! *Bon appétit!*



# Spring STEM

Austin Reich,  
AmeriCorps Member, MKNC

During the last couple of months there have been numerous requests for the Nature Center to send out staff or volunteers to teach outside of the Nature Center. Typically these come in the form of STEM nights and other similar outreach events. Often times we have to say no due to the large amount of in-house programs we do. However just in the last three months we were able to attend seven STEM events to bring the joy of the outdoors to kids who don't normally have the chance. Just in those few visits, with the help of some amazing volunteers, we were able to teach over 600 people about Idaho wildlife!



## Chronolog Station

Rest your cell phone in the provided cradle and snap a photo of the Sturgeon Pond. Follow the directions on the sign to send your photo to Chronolog. There, your photo will join everyone else's, creating a time-lapse view of the seasons changing at MK Nature Center. Check out the series of photos so far! <https://www.chronolog.io/site/MKN101>



### MKN-101

Help document Morrison Knudsen Nature Center by uploading to chronolog, a photo monitoring tool powered by people like you

1



Turn phone horizontal and seat in bracket

2



Take a photo of the landscape

3

Email to [upload@chronolog.io](mailto:upload@chronolog.io) with the subject line **MKN-101**



Terms and conditions apply. Learn more at [chronolog.io/terms](https://www.chronolog.io/terms)



# Volunteer Potluck

Sue Dudley, Volunteer Coordinator and Gift Shop Manager, MKNC

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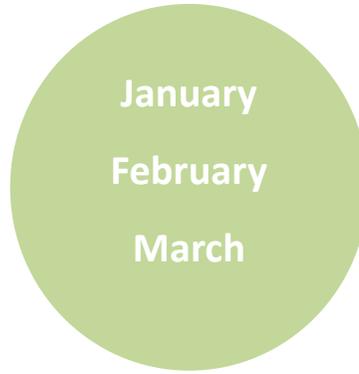
Nothing better than having our wonderful volunteers over for dinner! Thanks everyone for making it a really fun night.



# Volunteers Donors

Steven Berg  
Gwenyth Bigelow  
Pam Bly  
Marianne Bowman  
Alan Crockett  
Alice Crockett  
Tom Curren  
Seth Davis  
Brent Davy  
Becky Gillette  
Elizabeth Grosse  
Kristin Haustveit  
Randy Langseth  
Jon Mathews  
Terri Muse

Bronwyn Myers  
Karing Nial  
Lori Ode  
Lyla Olson  
Barb Perry  
Barb Recla  
Arleen Schaeffer  
Howard Sheppa  
Christine Simon  
Julie Steele  
Sandra Sweet  
Bonnie Urresti  
Roger Wallace  
Tess Wolfenson



All 4 One Charity  
A-Mark Foundation  
David and Sheree Donlon  
Edwina and John Allen  
Hilda Packard  
Leesa Hobbs  
Scott Prestel  
Robin Fox  
Wild Birds Unlimited

## Wood Duck Home Improvement

Vicky Runnoe, Conservation Education Supervisor, IDFG

What do you do with a stack of wood duck boxes that you no longer have the space to store? Put them up, of course! However, with staff busily engaged in other, more urgent projects, this was a low priority. Into the breach stepped some of our intrepid volunteers!

Howard Sheppa, Alan and Alice Crockett, and Brent Davy answered an emailed call to help. These hard-working volunteers first removed all of our old dilapidated boxes and took a good look at where some new boxes could be placed. With some modifications to turn round entrance holes into oval ones, the boxes were ready. But wait! These volunteers did not simply reinstall but also made improvements to help prevent the boxes from being invaded by non-native invasive rodents (aka squirrels). Poles that support the boxes are now fitted with a metal sleeve that will help protect nesting wood ducks from potential predators.

Keep an eye on these new boxes this spring. You might be rewarded by a glimpse of a wood duck or an equally welcome western screech owl. Many thanks to Howard, Alan, Alice, and Brent!!

