

The Nature Center Stream



SUMMER The Seasonal Newsletter of the Idaho Department of Fish and Game MK Nature Center **2016**



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The Only Constant is Change -Heraclitus

Much like the natural world, things here at the Nature Center are in a constant state of flux. Though you can depend on great wildlife viewing and friendly faces, what you see and who you see changes daily. In this issue of the Nature Center Stream, we will share many changes happening at the Nature Center this summer. You might not know this, but the MK Nature Center only has two full time employees. All the other people you see when you visit are part time, BSU work study students, interns, volunteers, or community service participants. So many people come and go, offering a variety of skills and talents. We appreciate each and every person who joins our team for days or years. We say goodbye to our supervisor, Dave Cannamela (see page 2) and our volunteer coordinator, Jessica Gordon. We welcome our great summer staff (page 7) and BSU interns. More changes are to come!



Pictured left to right back row: Scott Sliney, Celia Moreno, Ray Heady, Arleen Schaeffer, Cheryl Minckler, David Cannamela. Front row: Sue Dudley, Susan Ziebarth, Sara Focht, Jessica Gordon with Hagen Cardenas.



MK Nature Center - Your Face-to-Fish Connection



Dave's Last Two Cents

On the occasion of my retirement I want to leave you with a quote from David Orr, who said it best: "...nature centers are among the jewels of American Culture, uncelebrated, greatly loved, and well-positioned now to do heroic things in a quiet unassuming way." As corny as it sounds, the MK Nature center is magical. People enjoy and connect with nature here in every manner imaginable. This nature Center, like every other one, has the power to move people to a love, appreciation and greater understanding of our natural world. It is my hope that this connection will somehow stir our visitors to be responsible stewards of natural places everywhere.

Nature centers have at least two key benefits. First is the ability to serve everyone. All of us have a stake in healthy ecosystems, which is ultimately reflected in our own health. Second is the ability to connect the ecological dots. We help our visitors understand the interdependency of everything from the fungi, bacteria, and other small critters we see in our compost programs, to the native plants that benefit from the composting process, to the animals that depend on those plants, and to the animals that depend on the animals that depend on plants. The nature center was created, in part, to give attention to "non-game" species because they are ecologically and socially important. I am proud to say that the MKNC has done a spectacular job striking a balance between "game" and "non-game" initiatives and efforts. After all, these are terms invented by humans for our own purposes. Blurring the lines between these critters helps us to understand that every component of our environment is important and that we need to be stewards for them all.



Pictured here on his last day of work, Dave Cannamela smiles as big and as brightly as he did every day. Dave worked for the Idaho Department of Fish and Game for 28 years! Just under half that time, he spent as a Fisheries Biologist. He spent his last 15 years as the Nature Center Superintendent. "Gregarious Enthusiasm" would describe his teaching style, as well as how he greeted visitors and volunteers. We already miss him.

Summer Experience

Bethany Reinstein, BSU IDoTeach Summer Intern

If you were given a paintbrush and were told to paint exactly what you'd like your life to look like, what would you paint? For me, I would paint my adult life as being a teacher. Getting into Boise State, I set my eyes on the S.T.E.M. Education Program, IDoTeach to help reach that goal. One reason that IDoTeach attracted me to their program is that the focus is on hands-on, inquiry learning. Instead of being taught how to teach, I have been given opportunities to go out into the local schools to get experience. Through IDoTeach, since the first semester, I have been given the chance to teach at Garfield Elementary and Les Bois Junior High School. Another benefit to this S.T.E.M. Program are the internship opportunities that are readily available. Ergo, during the summer of 2015, I participated in an internship with the Boise Urban Garden School, also known as BUGS. This summer, I have the privilege of interning with the MK Nature Center.

Although my collegiate focus is mathematics, I have had an interest in adding an endorsement in biology into my studies as well. For me, having the chance to spend my summer at the MK Nature Center learning and teaching, I hope to finalize the decision of whether or not to add biology to my studies.

Thus far this summer, I have been able to lead field trips and teach students about the different animals that have found their home at our center on our Streamwalk tour. For example, there have been up to four deer that have been lounging in the shade, owls perched in the trees and mallards swimming in the waters. Also, the bull frogs have not disappointed—they are usually lounging on the fallen branches when we walk across the bridges. Other programs that have been exciting to be a part of have been the Beaver Chew, where students can learn about beavers and build their own dams; Class in the Creek, where students look for river wildlife; and Nature Art, where students visit different stations throughout the center and create art projects.

I have enjoyed helping Girl Scouts get their badge, watch chinook salmon find a spawning spot at the Nature Center, and teaching kids every day. The program that I most like to teach is Adaptation Artistry where kids learn about animal adaptations and then create an animal of their own. Other opportunities that I have had while spending my summer here involve creating informational brochures for students to take home and helping design educational booths for the guests.

During the summer, I get to absorb teaching and learning through the MK Nature Center. This type of educational experience is not something that can be gained by sitting in a lecture hall at school. Instead, I get to spend my days helping teach youth by being outside in nature. Even if I was given a paint brush, instructed to paint what I wanted, I don't think that I would have painted something as cool as this.



Top photo: Jordin Person, our summer BSU IDoTeach intern. Above: Bethany Reinstein helps kids explore the compost pile at MK Nature Center.

MK Nature Center - Your Face-to-Fish Connection

International Museum Day 2016

The Idaho Fish and Game MK Nature Center has been a longtime member of the Boise Museum Association. This association brings Boise’s museums together to share ideas, print a promotional brochure (pictured below), and hold an annual event. This year’s International Museum Day was held at the Old Idaho Penitentiary. MK Nature Center had a plethora of volunteers helping visitors match pictures of wildlife to their scat or track-a very popular game! We also had coat hanger bow and arrows for kids to shoot at targets, but not before they got their “hunting license” and rules for shooting.

A special thanks to Idaho Master Naturalists Kay Lynn Broadhead, Gail Kirkpatrick, Diana Parker, Bronwyn Myers, and Bob Everhart who staffed our booth and helped visitors learn about Idaho’s wildlife.



*Above: Master Naturalist Kay Lynn Broadhead staffs the popular scat and tracks matching game table.
Left: Master Naturalist Diana Parker shows participants furs and antlers from Idaho’s animals.
Below: Neva and Lyla Olson practice bow hunting at the MK Nature Center booth at International Museum Day.*



- Boise Museum Association Members:
- Idaho Black History Museum
 - MK Nature Center
 - Zoo Boise
 - Idaho Botanical Gardens
 - Boise Art Museum
 - Idaho Historical Museum
 - Old Idaho Penitentiary
 - World Center for Birds of Prey
 - Basque Museum and Cultural Center
 - Idaho Military Museum
 - Museum of Mining and Geology
 - Anne Frank Human Rights Memorial
 - Boise Watershed

MK Nature Center - Your Face-to-Fish Connection

Pay it Forward

A huge box of crayons arrived at the Nature Center on April 16th. They were the jumbo crayons we supply at the wildlife track rubbing tables. Nobody remembered ordering them. There was a card attached and not only did it explain the package, but it touched our hearts. It turns out, a very generous family sends gifts to commemorate their son's short life each year on his birthday. The child passed away from S.I.D.S. when he was four months old. The family enjoys the Nature Center and performed a "random act of kindness" to our benefit. It was a reminder how much a small generous act can impact the world.



Friends of MKNC Fundraising

Joyce Harvey-Morgan, FOMKNC Board Member



The Friends of MK Nature Center has had an exciting and productive first year of operation. Our mission is to support and enhance the work of the MK Nature Center, one of our wonderful community treasures.

Our membership numbers continue to increase. And we had a very successful Idaho Gives campaign, raising nearly \$21,000. Matching gifts from the MK Foundation, the Harry W. Morrison Foundation, and the Friends of MK Nature Center Board combined with generous gifts from many, many community members to help us reach and even exceed our goals. And because of the large numbers of donors, we received a bonus award from the Idaho Gives campaign.

We are well on our way to funding an AmeriCorps member (to supplement MK Nature Center staffing on evenings and weekends) and the creation of a beautiful educational mosaic work of art surrounding the riffle window. Watch for its unveiling next spring!

Annual Program Report

Our fiscal year ended June 30th, and we are proud to report our educational programs for last year. In fiscal year 2016, we taught 336 guided programs at MK Nature Center totaling 10,007 participants. We participated in 10 outreach events around the community, serving 3,306 people. We look forward to another great year of teaching, exploring, and celebrating Idaho's wildlife resources with our visitors.



MK Nature Center - Your Face-to-Fish Connection

Snow in June!

Sara Focht, Wildlife Educator, MKNC

The black cottonwood tree is an iconic figure along the Boise River and at MK Nature Center. Not well known for producing valuable wood products, black cottonwood trees are priceless to many wildlife species. Pretty much, if you are an animal that eats plants, you probably eat black cottonwood. All parts are edible. Young shoots are enjoyed by rabbits, buds are eaten by grouse, leaves are chomped on by deer, elk, and moose, and don't forget the thin little cambium layer eaten by beaver.

Black cottonwoods are members of the willow family and like all willows, they love water. They anchor riverbanks with their roots, but are often the tallest tree in the riparian area, creating excellent perching platforms for fish-seeking eagles, osprey, and kingfishers.

Birds build nests on the branches and woodpeckers drill older trees creating cavities to nest in providing a plethora of real estate for animals who cannot make their own holes. Even the branches, that easily break in wind storms, provide sappy cambium exposure sites where fungi thrive.

Butterflies and bats snuggle into the deep bark folds of the male or female tree. That is right. Unlike many trees which produce both male and female flower parts, black cottonwood trees are dioecious. Some trees produce the fluffy stamen laden male flowers that release pollen, whereas others produce the female flower parts that catch the pollen to form the fluff-filled seeds. Everybody knows about the “cotton” floating in the air creating mystical snow-like conditions on 90 degree June days.

Cottonwood leaves turn a vibrant yellow/gold in the fall and often turn brown in fantastic patterns. Once the leaves fall into the water below, they decompose relatively slower than other tree leaves. This gives aquatic insects and other organism a longer time to ingest them, sending the carbon of which they are composed, up the food chain instead of into the atmosphere.

These trees also provide shade over riverbanks, keeping water temperatures cool (and thus more oxygenated) and providing cover for fish and other river dwellers.

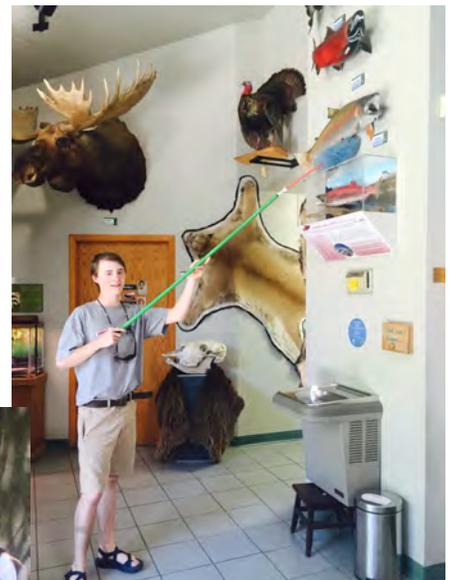
Black cottonwood trees are facing challenges as more river and streamflows are controlled by humans, changing the way they reproduce and propagate. Helping conserve these trees will, in turn, help a multitude of other plants and animals thrive.



Far left: Black cottonwood fluff collects on the path of the nature center, giving the appearance of snow in summer. Photo by Sara Focht. Middle: The female catkin (flower cluster) with seeds. Above: The male catkin (flower cluster) with sticky bud coverings at the top. Photo from USDA Plants Database.

Summer Staff to the Rescue

Summer is a busy time at the Nature Center! Locals with out-of-town guests, daycares, camps, church groups, kids enjoying their summer break, all flock to the Nature Center to see the deer, fish, and maybe lunch in the park next door. Weeds grow, garbage is dropped, and fingerprints appear on the fish viewing widows faster than you can say CHINOOK SALMON! Volunteers and summer interns play a huge role in the nature center's daily operations. We recognize and thank all our new summer volunteers!



Photos clockwise starting in upper right corner: Katie Hebdon, Kyle Larson, Ben McFarland, Grace Gould, Jordin Person, Ali McClintic, Rikka McCarthy. Middle photo: Bethany Reinstein.

Thank You For Supporting What We Do!

These individuals and businesses supported the MK Nature Center between April 1 and June 30th, 2016 in the form of cash, in-kind materials*, or FOMKNC membership.

Bruce B. Ackerman
 Edwina S. Allen
 Ryder Anderson
 Jax Anderson
 Jeff Anderson
 JoAnne Anderson
 Barbara Ballance
 Mary Pat Barr
 Jill M. Baum
 Michael Bixby
 Bert Bowler
 Klaus Brown
 Dallas Burkhalter*
 David R. Butzier
 Susan Chew
 Janet Conley
 Summer D. Crea
 Brian C. Cronin
 Patrice Davies
 Seth T. Davis
 Nancy DeWitt
 Louis W. DeWitt
 Donna Dillon*
 David & Mary Dudley
 Lisa Eller
 Ralph E. Esbensen
 Joseph Evans
 Michael T. Farley
 Catherine Fischer
 Sara B. Focht
 Mary Anne Foley
 Robert & Laura Foss
 Renee H. Frazier
 Rebecca Fritz
 Annalyn Gerard
 Genevieve Gerke
 Leroy G. Godlove
 Rhonda Goldston
 Jessica Gordon
 Willow Hahn
 Maria Halberstadt
 Nola Harrigan
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Stephen Hawks
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 Jake Heusinkveld
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 Kaci Jensen
 Shelby Jorgensen
 Scott Ki
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 Keith Kiler
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 Mary Grunewald McGown
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 Rebecca Morgan
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 Sue Norton
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 Sierra Page
 John & Julia Page
 Claire Page
 Dean Park
 Diana Parker
 Amy Parrish
 Richard T. Plov
 Brinkley Pound
 Richard & Carrie Prange*
 Anthony J. Rheault

Steven & Kelly Richards
 Ron Rollston
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 Christine Simon
 Martha Sliney
 Jennifer Smackey
 Mary Ivory Smith
 Aubrey Smith
 Dorothy A. Snowball
 Boyd & Julie Steele
 Daniel C. Stickney
 James Strong
 Tom Stuart
 Lorrie Suess
 Richard Swain
 Robin Takasugi
 Amber Thompson
 Robert A. Tinstman
 Kum Cha Toronjo
 Ray & Kum C. Toronjo
 Jack & Joan Trueblood
 Elizabeth Urban
 Susanne L. Vader
 Patrick J. Vaughan
 Katherine Vaughan
 Thomas & Jeanette Von Alten
 Rebecca Wagner
 Laurel D. Wagner
 Russ Weedon
 Wild Birds Unlimited *
 Carrie Wiss
 Jane E. Godfrey Wold
 Thomas J. Woodall
 Kathleen Yochum*
 Joan Yost*
 Ellen Zaleta

Birds HEART Boise Event

The Nature Center has the best volunteers, they braved cold, windy and rainy weather during our event to help families learn about migrating birds. Thank you, we couldn't have done it without YOU!



Pictured clockwise starting in upper left corner: Susie Carlson and Bronwyn Myers staffing the welcome table. Bert Bowler and Deniz Aygen teach people how to prevent birds from striking windows. Rikka McCarthy and Corrine Christ. Ally Turner and Leith Edgar from the USFWS. Arleen Schaeffer, Jessica Gordon and daughter Hagan Cardenas. Diane Parker and John Hanna. Vicky Runnoe, R.L. Rowland, Alex Rheault. Julie Steele, Linda Jarsky. Ann Brueck, Mary Reid, and Nancy DeWitt.



Silas and Ellie Byrne enjoy their bag and bar at Birds HEART Boise Event. Thanks to Whole Foods' Brit Talbert and KIND's Amy Sorensen for donating these items to give to our event participants.



Our event poster was inspired by the artwork of Reagan Alexander, a 3rd grader from Mullan Trail Elementary School in Post Falls, Idaho.

What Does the Fox Say?

Sara Focht, Wildlife Educator, IDFG MK Nature Center

A few years ago, we introduced a new program about the wild canine species that call Idaho their home. Recently, we have had several requests for “Wild Dogs of Idaho” and we are having a great time teaching kids about wolves, coyotes, and foxes. Kids love listening to the various sounds these animals make and then trying to make the sound themselves. It turns out that sounding like a wolf and coyote is pretty easy, but imitating a fox is not. Most kids actually don’t know what the fox says and after listening to it, still cannot really replicate the sound. Red fox adults can produce up to 12 different sounds variously described as barks, wows, warbles, clucks, huffs, whines, shrieks, rattles, coughs, and whimpers.

Program participants learn how these canines are similar to each other but also how vastly different they live their lives. The kids get to pass around the pelts of these animals, usually deciding the fox is the softest. Getting to hold skulls of these dogs, shows them how the canine teeth are similar in all the dogs, but size and shape distinguish them from each other.

Though we don’t see any wild canines on our tour at the Nature Center, we see plenty of places a wild dog could hide, small mammals that could be food for wolves, coyotes, or foxes, and even berries and insects that

might be enjoyed by the smaller dog species.



Kids become dogs during a smelling game, where they have to use their canine sense of smell to find a partner or a picture that matches the smell in their container. When all is said and done, these kids know a lot more about the wild dogs with whom they share Idaho’s habitats.



Pictured far left: A coyote near the Old Idaho Penitentiary, just a few miles from MK Nature Center, photo by Christina Watson. Middle photo: a red fox just outside the Nature Center back door, photo by Susan Ziebarth. Right Photo: Fox hunting squirrels on the IDFG parking garage, photo by IDFG.

MK Nature Center - Your Face-to-Fox Connection

Whoots Has Some New Friends and a New Perspective

Susan Ziebarth, Wildlife Educator, MKNC

Whoots (aka Digger), our little burrowing owl with a BIG attitude has been extra annoyed by us and hard to handle lately. Apparently we aren't spending enough quality time with him.

One evening, after hours, through the courtyard gate, Tara Lowery and her friend Jon struck up a conversation with me about native plants. Since native plants are my kryptonite, I gave in, unlocked the gate and let them in. As we chatted I learned that she worked with burrowing owls and other raptors and critters at Zoo Boise, including "Blewie" our aged owl, former friend and roommate to Whoots. Blewie was a transfer from Zoo Boise and he was Whoots's roomie for about two years. That evening, Tara generously volunteered to "hang out" with Whoots and see if she could figure out what's making him so grumpy.

This turned out to be one of the best things that has happened to Whoots in a long time. After sitting with him, talking to him, getting closer to him and observing him, Tara made some simple but wise recommendations to enrich his habitat. Since he cannot fly, she thought he might enjoy access to higher perches, giving him new areas to explore and a different vantage point. That week, with the carpentry skills of volunteer Mary Reid (pictured below) we installed the "stairway to heaven". He took to the steps almost immediately and spends most of his time on them rather than on the ground. Tara also installed a larger dust bath. Within seconds of the dirt being poured into it, he jumped in, rooted around for insects and took a long awaited dust bath. Fiona (kestrel) has been enjoying the dust bath from time to time, too. Nature Center employee Calvin Woodland installed a tunnel at the top of the stairway. He uses it to get to his highest perch and away from us, after yelling what we can only guess are little owl expletives.



Mary building the steps.



Tara inching her way to her new buddy.

After spending lots of quality time with Tara and having new places to explore and new friends, he seems calmer. Hopefully, he's happier. The true test will be the next time we try to take him on a walk or to a school program.



Ready for a quick get-away into the tunnel.

The following people volunteered their time to the MK Nature Center between April 1-June 30th, 2016. MK Nature Center receives an average of nearly 500 volunteer hours monthly. Thank you!!

Michele Andrew
 Bianca Andrew
 Anna Autilio
 Deniz Aygen
 Kris Barrash
 Kay Beall
 Bill Belknap
 Emilio Bengoeche
 Steven Berg
 Bert Bowler
 Kay Lynn Broadhead
 Athena Brown
 Ann Brueck
 Erika Buchanon
 Libby Burtner
 Susie Carlson
 Courtnie Carter
 Corrine Christ
 Bill Clark
 Cindy Clark
 Beth Corbin
 Ray Corbin
 Cyndi Coulter
 Dustin Creek
 Tim Curns
 Patrice Davies
 Seth Davis
 Nancy DeWitt
 Margit Donhowe
 Declann Dunn
 James Dunn
 Derek Duval
 Jessi Ekmark
 Joseph Evans
 Bob Everhart
 Peggy Faith

Helen Faith
 Sean Finn
 Bob Foss
 Renee Frazier
 Amanda Gailbreath
 Salvador Gasch
 Ylva Gasch
 Grace Gould
 Colleen Greenwalt
 John Hanna
 Rilee Harold
 Kevin Harrold
 Raymond Heady
 Katie Hebdon
 Anne Helford
 Dan Herrig
 Ken Hoiland
 Daniel Hope
 Dave Hopkins
 Bill Horton
 Randall Howell
 Jody Hull
 Linda Jarsky
 Aislinn Johns
 Celia Renner
 Gail Kirkpatrick
 Sandy Kurka
 Amanda Laib
 Kyle Larsen
 Kevin Laughlin
 Ron Lopez
 Tara Lowery
 Harold Martin
 Rikka McCarthy
 Martha McClay
 Ali McClintic
 Ben McFarland
 Elizeth Cinto Mejia
 JoAnne Michaels

Jennifer Miller
 Cheryl Minckler
 Abby Moone
 Caroline Morris
 Daniel Murphy
 Bronwyn Myers
 McKenzie Olsen
 Karie Pappani
 Diana Parker
 Clint Penfold
 Barb Recla
 Mary Reid
 Brandon Reinstein
 Celia Renner
 Ashley Rhode
 Terry Rich
 Amanda Richael
 Larry Ridenhour
 Emily Rigg
 RL Rowland
 Lori Ruman
 Abigail Sasso
 Arleen Schaeffer
 Vicky Shroup
 Aubrey Smith
 Lorna Snowden
 Ray Spets
 Julie Steele
 Jake Stone
 Lauren Studley
 Alex Takasugi
 Mike Thompson
 Allison Turner
 Ariel Vanard
 Elaine Walker
 Karen Walsh
 Heidi Ware

Western Screech owls are common at the Nature Center. This year, we were fortunate to have some visible during the day. This owl was perched just below its fledgling and near a huge squirrel's nest, which they may have occupied this spring. This is the same area several visitors saw young great horned owls several weeks prior. The area behind the butterfly garden is a tangled, unkempt area of the Nature Center. It proves to be important cover for many species. Though we try to keep the weeds to a minimum, and do some light watering, we tend to let it "go wild." Of the 4.6 acres here, at least 2 acres are off limits to the public, and are perfect for wildlife. Photo by Sara Focht, MKNC.



MK Nature Center - Your Face-to-Owl Connection