

The Nature Center Stream



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



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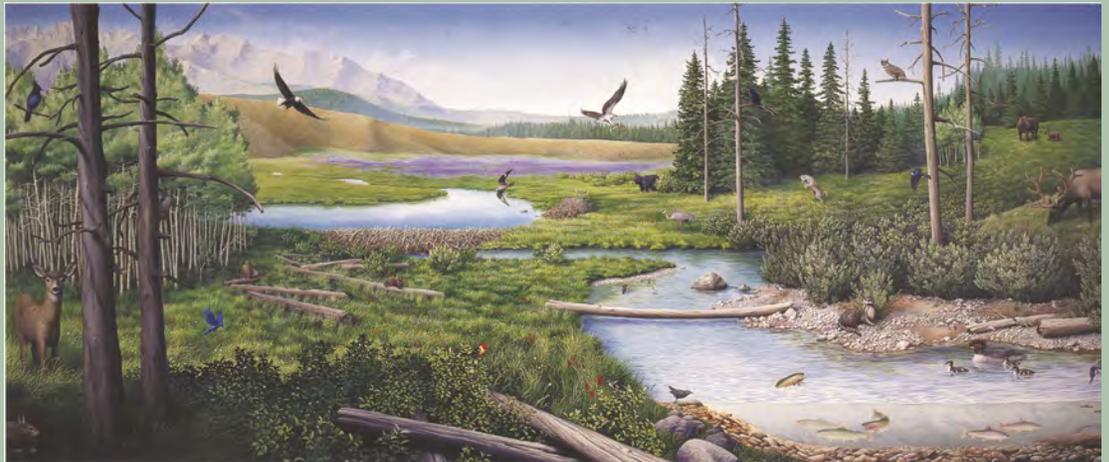
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Oh Deer! *Sara Focht, Wildlife Educator, IDFG.*

What did Mrs. Claus say to Santa when she looked out the window? “ Looks like RAIN, DEAR!” And this is a great time of year to look out the window and see deer at the Nature Center! Every December brings a wave of deer programs at the Nature Center. Kids get to compare and contrast moose, deer, elk, and caribou. Caribou seem to be the animal most kids don’t know much about, until you tell them that it is practically a reindeer, then they are the experts! We look at caribou fur, feet, and antlers, up close. We talk about food, drink, shelter and clothing that can be made from caribou bodies and who, besides humans, will hunt them. We find deer tracks, scat and sometimes even some live deer resting under a nature center tree.

*Endangered Southern
Selkirk Mountains
Woodland Caribou still
live in north Idaho in
very small numbers. No
hunting of caribou is
allowed in Idaho.*



Students take a break from their worm experiments to view the herd of deer right outside the auditorium window. Later, kids were able to see the deer outside when they toured the Nature Center.

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Nature Center Notes

Vicky Runnoe, Conservation Education Supervisor, IDFG.



I am an avid reader and winter gives me more time to curl up with a good book. Currently, I am revisiting a favorite by author Richard Nelson, [The Island Within](#). The book is an exploration of place, specifically the islands off the southern coast of Alaska. Nelson argues that we all need a sense of place for solace, rejuvenation, contemplation and to indulge our sense of wonder.

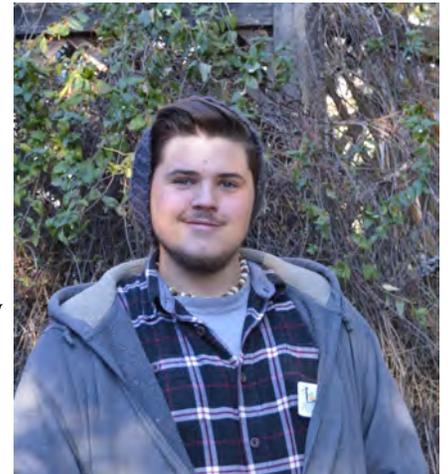
These places can be large or small, far away or close to home. And in today's increasingly urbanized society they play an ever more important role, connecting people with the natural world. I would like to think that the MK Nature Center provides this sense of place for our visitors. Right in their own backyard, this little slice of wild Idaho provides quiet and the chance to wonder at the lives of all the myriad creatures that call it home. It nourishes our sense of wonder, provides the unexpected and can be a place of calm away from the bustle of our daily lives. While the nature center is not large and lacks the romance of wilderness, it is nevertheless special in its own right, giving us all a chance to connect with our own sense of place.

May the blessings and joys of the holidays surround you and yours during this holiday season.

Welcome Curtis-Lake

Sara Focht, Wildlife Educator, IDFG.

We welcome Curtis-Lake Cloudt to the Nature Center staff. Curtis joined us in October as a part time employee whose main job is to help maintain the grounds and buildings, no easy task considering the age and wildness of the place. Curtis-Lake helps Susan keep the water running, the fish alive, the path walkable, and the walls from caving in. Curtis has an extremely friendly demeanor and is a positive, smiling addition to our team. So far, the parts of the job he likes most are being able to work outside all day, and being challenged to find creative solutions to maintenance problems.



Curtis-Lake grew up in Boise and though still quite young, has had several jobs in the Boise area including restaurant work, customer service, and labor. When not at work, Curtis-Lake enjoys outdoor activities and learning. He is passionate about contributing to conserve natural resources and practicing environmentally friendly behavior. His interest in the environment and nature is what motivated him to apply for this job. He felt this would be good experience, learning about nature.

If you see Curtis out on the path or inside the nature center, don't hesitate to ask him questions; he already knows a lot about Idaho's plants and animals, and is happy to share his knowledge with you!

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The First Butterflies of Spring

Sara Focht, Wildlife Educator, IDFG.

One of the sure signs of spring is the first flutter of the Mourning Cloak butterfly. This Idaho native is seen first because of its unique overwintering technique. Unlike most butterflies, the mourning cloak overwinters as an adult! Tucked neatly inside tree bark grooves, the adult rests in a state of “hibernation” through the winter. Last year, my first sighting of a Mourning Cloak was on March 22nd by the Boise River!



Notice the beautiful dorsal side of the wings is much different than the dull ventral side. Right photo: by bradsmith on Flickr CC BY-NC2.0. Left photo by wanderingnome on flickr CC BY-NC 2.0

The Mourning Cloak is a member of the Nymphalidae family. A few other members of this family overwinter as adults as well, including Milbert’s Tortoiseshell, Commas (Satyr, Hoary, and Green), the California Tortoiseshell, and the West Coast Lady. However, most members of this huge family do not overwinter as adults.

As it turns out, butterflies vary widely in how they manage winter temperatures. Most butterflies in Idaho overwinter as caterpillars or pupas. Some even winter in their chrysalis. And then there is the famous Monarch, that migrates south for winter.

Because Mourning Cloaks come out in spring and are already adults, they can mate early. They lay eggs that hatch in June or July. After they emerge from their chrysalis, they feed briefly, then estivate (a type of summer hibernation) until fall. When the days cool, they emerge to eat and store energy for their winter hibernation. Their total life cycle is 11-12 months, a very long time for a butterfly! Look for them this March and again in the fall, but don’t expect to see too many in the heat of the summer.

Dates to Remember

January 9 Lecture: Geographical Information Systems (GIS), applications for conservation. Presented by Pam Bond from IDFG. MK Nature Center 6:30-8 pm.

February 8 MKNC Volunteer and Supporter Potluck. MK Nature Center 6 pm. RSVP to sue.dudley@idfg.idaho.gov.

March 13 Lecture: Beaver biology and ecology. Presented by Dirk Anderson, M.S. Natural Resources and current AmeriCorps Member. MK Nature Center 6:30-8 pm.

March 14 Lecture and skills workshop: Idaho Native Plant Society hosts two presentations. Bee City USA by Judy Snow. And, Idaho reptiles and amphibians by Dr. Charles Peterson. Focus will be on using the iNaturalist website and app for citizen scientists to inventory Idaho’s plants and animals.

April 10 Lecture: Bears of Idaho. Presented by John Beechum. MK Nature Center 6:30-8 pm.

These events are free and open to the public and are designed for adults. Check MK Nature Center website for changes or call (208) 334-2225 to confirm program times and topics.

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Helping Hands

Sara Focht, Wildlife Educator, IDFG.

One of my favorite aspects about working at the Nature Center is the fast pace, busy, somewhat exciting nature of each day. There are a few weeks straddling November and December where my workload slows just a little and I have time, if I have the foresight, to get ready for the wave of business to begin again. During this same time, I get a little lonely too, so this year I welcomed the help of nine women, most of whom are Master Naturalists, to come help me get ready for our busy spring programming season. We ate some holiday snacks and talked, but we mostly cut!



Clockwise starting in the lower left corner: Diana Parker, Marylee Hale, Carolyn Larson, Leslie Nichols, Brian Lawless, Amber Nichols, Mickey Keiser, Alice Crockett, Barbara McGillivray, Tracey McDonnell.

I often incorporate a craft or hands-on activity into my lessons here at the Nature Center. Young children love to work with their hands and some of them only learn when they do! I try and plan my crafts to enforce a concept or vocabulary word students learned in the program. For example, the turkey craft goes with our popular turkey program. It might just look like a pretty magnet (yes, there is a magnet on the back), but when we put the craft together, we talk about the tail fan, fancy feathers, snood, and caruncles. While crafting, we also practice turkey sounds, and not just gobble gobble. gobble..., but purrs and yelps, and putts.

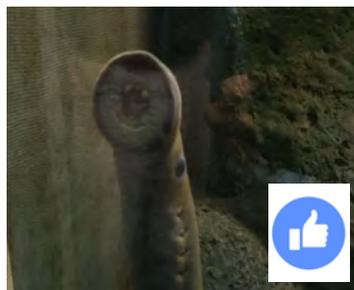
Do You “LIKE” Us?

If you have not already, check us out on Facebook. Find out what is happening at the Nature Center as it happens! You may visit the Nature Center and not see much wildlife on a particular day or time, but on Facebook you see it all! From great egrets to mink catching crayfish and trout spawning, we post pictures of all our exciting visitors!

Here are some Facebook comments from visitors:

“One of the little gems of Boise where you can experience nature and fish ecosystems. Kids and adults alike are fascinated by the wildlife, plants and of course the featured attraction, living dinosaurs. Have a great time.”

“Such a great place to visit! It is a great place to learn what fish and game does for Idaho! I love this place and will return.”



MK Nature Center - Your Face-to-Fish Connection

Friends Update

Joyce Harvey-Morgan, FOMKNC Board Member.

The Friends of MK Nature Center (FOMKNC) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, established to support and enhance the programs, staff, and facilities of the Idaho Department of Fish & Game MK Nature Center.

In our first year, we funded an AmeriCorps member to supplement the Nature Center staff for the 2016-2017 year. Brian Lawless will assist the educational staff, providing weekday programming for school groups and expanding programming on weekends and evenings. In addition, we have funded the creation of a mosaic to be made by Anna Webb, depicting plant and animal elements of a riparian zone, on the "riffle wall" along the stream walk. We have been awarded a grant by the Boise City Department of Arts & History to help support this project.

In our second year, we are beginning the planning phase for our next major project, an overhaul of all the signage—directional, informational, and educational—at the Nature Center.

AND we are working to expand our membership base. The support of our members is crucial to our success. It really does make a big difference! As we hear so frequently, "Everyone loves the Nature Center!" Please show your love by joining the Friends of MK Nature Center for 2017. Membership categories begin at only \$10. You can join by sending a check to FOMKNC, P.O. Box 604, Boise, ID 83701.



Artist Anna Webb has several pieces around Boise to enjoy. These panels titled "Day" and "Night" are at the Bloch Cancer Pavilion at Julie Davis Park and were created in 2014. Photo by Darin Oswald.



Scott Sliney

Sara Focht, Wildlife Educator, IDFG.

Scott Sliney joined the MKNC team back in 2010. Just recently, he left us to pursue full time employment with the City of Boise as an Enterprise Systems Business Analyst. While at the Nature Center, Scott did some of everything. He performed various maintenance tasks, ran the gift shop, taught programs, landscaped, fed animals, cleaned fish viewing windows and much, much more! Since Scott lives relatively close to the Nature Center, he often came down in pinches and emergencies!

We first met Scott when he came to the Nature Center with his family one afternoon in 2008. While videoing his son in front of the Alpine Lake window, a chinook salmon jumped out of the window and onto the pavement! Scott picked it up and threw it back over the wall into the water. All caught on video, Scott was nice enough to share the video with us and it was history from there. We appreciate Scott's dedication, talents, calm and consistent demeanor, and friendship over the years. We will miss him, but we know he is thriving in his new job.



Above: The Nature Center family grows and changes over time, as all families do. Full and part time employees, volunteers, former employees and supporters gathered for a lunch to celebrate Scott (pictured far right), Melissa (wearing red and black) and Rikka (in the gold scarf) in November. Right: MKNC employee Calvin Woodland poses with Hobbes Runnoe, making the famous duo, Calvin and Hobbes.

Bird Seed Sale 2017

Sue Dudley, IDFG.



Thank you to everyone who came out to support our annual bird seed sale; it was another successful year! Special thanks to our event sponsors, Wild Birds Unlimited and our wonderful volunteers who help us put on this event.



Idaho Master Naturalists Ron Lopez and Cindy Clark volunteered at the event. Ron Andrew, Volunteers not pictured include Marylee Hale, Daria Paxton, Nick Monteiro,



Idaho Master Naturalists Ariel Varland and Erika Buchanan volunteered to help customers carry seed to their cars.



Larry Ridenhour from the BLM gave live raptor presentations.



Boyd Steel from Wild Birds Unlimited helped promote bird feeding by talking with customers about bird feeding equipment. Thanks to Boyd and Julie for supporting the Bird Seed Sale.



Erick Cheshire is a senior at Timberline High School and has been helping us out this semester. Erick comes to the Nature Center every afternoon as part of the Boise School District's Community-based Education Training Program. Erick washes the viewing windows, rakes leaves, shovels snow, and feeds the fish. We appreciate all his hard work and dedication. We hope to have him back next semester.

Thank You For Supporting MKNC

The following people volunteered their time to the MK Nature Center between September 1-December 31, 2016.
MK Nature Center receives an average of nearly 500 volunteer hours monthly. Thank you!!

Dane Adams	Micah Davison	Caiyun Johns	Nick Monteiro	Bo Ruesink
Libby Adams	Nancy Dewitt	Kyle Johnson	Clay Moore	James Ryan
Reed Adams	Margit Donhowe	Eric Johnson	Luz Moreno	Beecher Ryan
Margaret Anderson	David Donlon	Zach Johnson	Carol Morgan	Johnna Sandow
KC Anderson	Sheree Donlon	Amy Johnson	Jim Morrow	Sarah Fesenmyer
Ron Andrew	Sandra Duran	Ray Jones	Bronwyn Myers	Arleen Schaeffer
Renata Bauer	Leslie Eldridge	Jamie Juker	Justin Nielsen	Barbara Schmidt
Steven Berg	Rod Engle	Kirsten Strough	Anna Nyman	Doug Shaw
Matt Bergstrom	Catherine Foster	Thomas Knuteon	Rochelle Ochoa	Martha Sliney
Gracie Bingham	Renee Frazier	Reilly Ladrach	Bergin Parks	Liam Sliney
Carlos Bittencourt	Amy Goodrich	Amanda Laib	Suzanne Patick	Chris Starr
Joe Bowen	Kayla Griffin	Aurele Lamontagne	Diane Patton	Julie Steele
Mari Briggs	Chuck Guilford	Kyle Larsen	Daria Paxton	Mike Stefancic
Ann Brueck	Willow Hahn	Carolyn Larson	Julia Pinnix	Teresa Stein
Erika Buchanan	Marylee Hale	Victoria Larson	Jennifer Pridmore	Sandra Sweet
Joe Bumgarner	Annette Hanson	Kevin Laughlin	Charley Rains	Jayson Thompson
Greg Burak	Callianne Harris	John Leclair	Jo Ramois	Allyson Turner
Libby Burtner	Kevin Harrold	Mack Leith	Anna Ray	Margaret Tuttle
Cindy Busche	Kerri Hart	Edgar Leith	Barbara Recla	Ariel Varland
Roman Campanella	Raymond Heady	Marjie Lodwick	Mary Reid	Steve Wake
Dave Cannamela	Damien Heard	Renee Lombardo	Chris Reighn	Rachel Walcott
Garret Carcas	Renee Heeren	Ron Lopez	Celia Renner	Russ Weedon
Ethan Carcas	Jeff Heindel	Frtiz Marlene	Jerek Richardson	Olivia Weick
Ronni Cardenas	Katherine Hernandez	Rikka McCarthy	Ryan Richmond	Julie Weymouth
Susie Carlson	Kelly Hibbs	Luana McCauley	Larry Ridenhour	Susan Wildwood
Celia Renner	Shelley Hodges	Ali McClintic	Mary Ried	Richard Wilkison
Cindy Clark	Charlie Hodges	Barbara McGillivray	Emily Rigg	Judy Wojcicki
Stephanie Clark	James Hodges	Megan McKay	Mark Robertson	Kathrine Woodworth
Lance Clarke	Matt How	Bryson McRay	Bailey Rogers	Allan Wylie
Doug Cornwall	Ron Hughes	Cass Meissner	Cathy Rogers	Brian Zimmerman
Valerie Court	Melissa Jannusch	Michelle Meyers	Andie Root	
Mike Culleas	Jeff McLaughlin	Marianne Meyers	Jeanette Ross	
Patrice Davies	Jennifer Caywood	Cheryl Minckler	Annette Ross	
Seth Davis	Chris Jensen	Casey Mitchell	Eric Rothwell	

The following people donated to the MK Nature Center or (FOMKNC) between October 1-December 31, 2016.
Donations come in the form of money, goods, services, or other in-kind donations.

Edwina & John Allen	Amanda Gailbreath	Harry Richardson
Julie A. Artis	Charles Gay	Rocky Canyon Sail Toads
Barbara Balance	Bob & Anne Hay	Victoria Runnoe
Kris Barrash	Kristine Horrace	Jim Ryan
Stephen Bouffard	Sally Hughes	Tony Sandor
Burt Bowler	Sharon & Russ Keifer	Jennifer Smackey
Steve & Darla Christiansen	Belinda Knochel	Boyd & Julie Steele
Alan & Alice Crockett	Sandra Kurka	Alex Takasugi
Louis Dewitt	Dennis Manalo	Ray & Kum Toronjo
Margit Donhowe	Michele Meyers	Trout Unlimited
Robert Ellis	Arlene & Robert Morris	Leland B. True
Deborah Erwin & Chris Dresden	Caroline Morris & David Monsees	Lewis Ulrey
Ron & Vikki Evans	Rick & Penny Nielsen	Susie Vader
Sara Focht	Hilda Pakcard	Mary Whitside
Milette Fujine	Jude & Jim Reppel	Tour & Alberta Woodall