



MK Nature Center

STREAM

In this issue >>>

The Seasonal Newsletter of the Morrison Knudsen Nature Center

Fall 2024

- Evening Lectures 2
- Change is in the Air 3
- Donors Past and Present 4
- Bird Seed Sale 5
- Art and Nature 6
- Community Volunteer Workdays 7
- Volunteers at Work 8
- Wildlife Trunks 9
- Boise 6h Graders 9
- Donors and Volunteers 10

Sockeye at MKNC

On September 20th five Upper Columbia River sockeye salmon arrived at the MK Nature Center. These fish were delivered from the Eagle Fish Hatchery Complex, and they have quite a story to tell! Unlike Idaho’s Snake River sockeye salmon that are endangered, these sockeye are not endangered and strayed in their return migration from the ocean, missing their northerly turn at Kennewick, Washington, finding themselves at Lower Granite Dam. There, they were collected by Idaho Fish and Game along with Snake River sockeye, transported to Eagle, separated from the Snake River fish, and brought to the nature center.

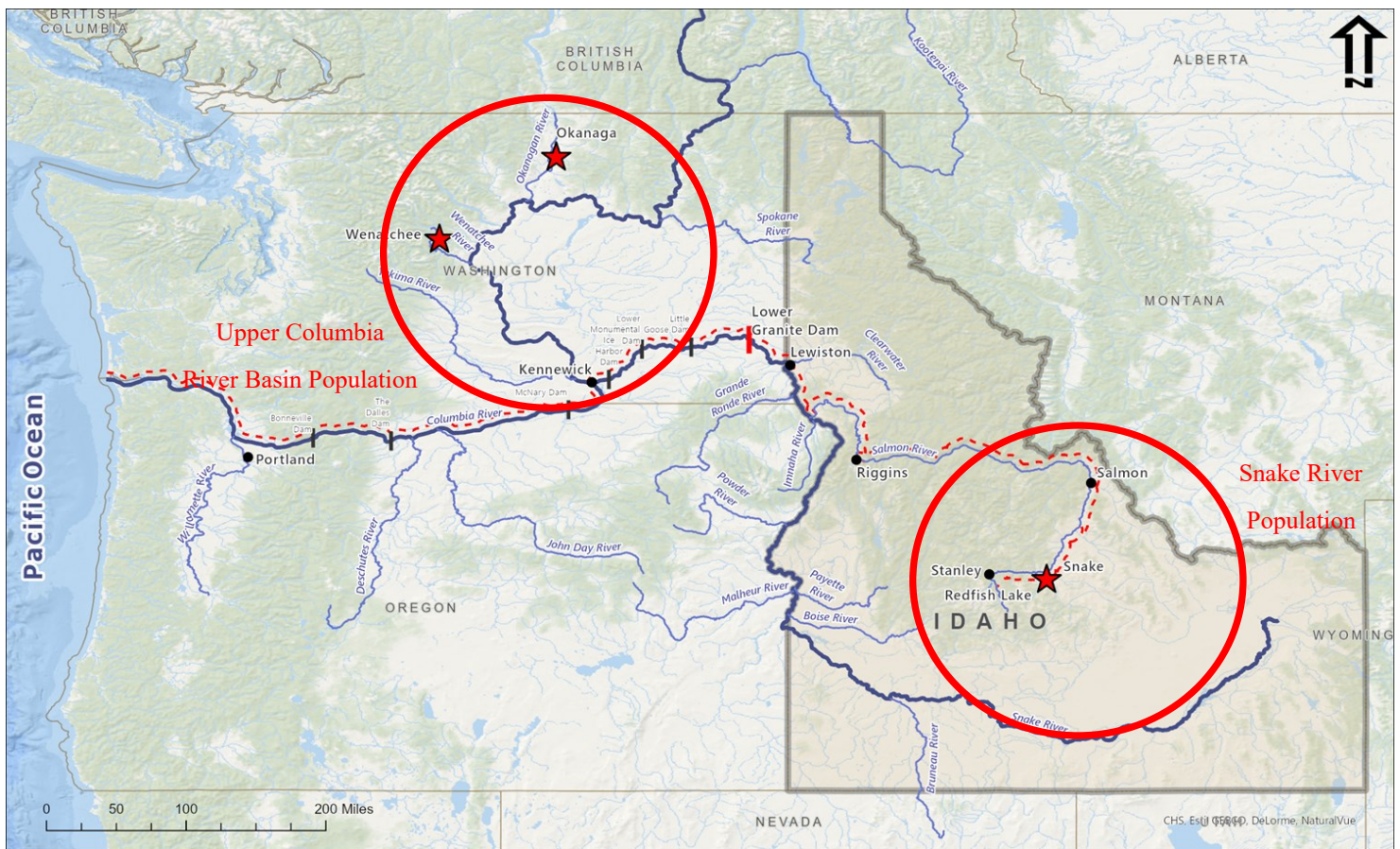
The Upper Columbia River population and the Snake River population look identical but are genetically distinct. Fisheries managers would not want to spawn the two populations together for fear of creating a less robust group of offspring. Remember, Snake River sockeye salmon migrate back over 900 miles and 6,500 feet in elevation to spawn at Redfish Lake...they are truly incredible!

To learn more about endangered Snake River sockeye salmon, visit the [Sockeye Salmon](#) webpage.

A special thanks to our colleagues at the Eagle Hatchery and Fisheries Bureau for making this sockeye fish viewing experience possible!

Photo by Sara Focht, IDFG





The sockeye salmon delivered to the MK Nature Center were from the Upper Columbia River Basin population and were collected at Lower Granite Dam by IDFG. Map provided by IDFG.

Mark Your Calendars

The MK Nature Center will be hosting evening lectures for adults once again this fall. All lectures start at 6:30 pm in the MK Nature Center auditorium. These events are free and open to the public with no registration required. Check our website for updates or changes or call (208) 334-2225 for more information.



October 16-Sturgeon-White sturgeon are famous for being the largest freshwater fish in North America. Idaho is home to several populations of these amazing creatures in the Snake and Kootenai rivers. Martin Koenig – Sportfishing Program Coordinator – will dive into the history of sturgeon fishing in Idaho and current conservation efforts happening to manage these ancient giants. 6:30 pm.



November 19 –Forest Carnivores-Wolverine, fisher, and Canada lynx, Oh my! IDFG Wildlife Biologist Cory Mosby will walk us through the ecology of three charismatic forest carnivores found in our state. 6:30 pm.



December 11 –Woodpeckers-Jon Dudley from the US Forest Service, will share research monitoring the effectiveness of forest restoration treatments for white-headed woodpeckers. Can forest thinning and prescribed burning support white-headed populations? 6:30 pm.

Change is in the Air

Sara Focht, Conservation Education Supervisor

As the long, hot, smoky summer, shifts into shorter, cooler, and more colorful days of fall, it is time to reflect on other changes at the nature center.

Idaho Fish and Game staff and friends celebrated Conservation Education Supervisor, Vicky Runnoe on September 16th, as she heads into retirement (see photos below). As our team is about to change, I look back on my 19 years at Idaho Fish and Game and realized *I am the newcomer!* Our important part-time staff members come and go over the years, but the core five staff members are long-time IDFG employees, dedicating an impressive combined 128 years of service to the agency!

As the new Conservation Education Supervisor at the nature center, I am excited to help this amazing place and stellar staff through changes that are part of our future!

Like the seasons, there are some changes in our future that we can predict and plan for. Also like nature, we will be resilient in the face of wild and random variables! This issue of the newsletter (and every issue, for that matter) shows the diversity of people who come together to make this place tick. Volunteers, IDFG employees, businesses, recreation groups, interns, artists, students, donors, and scientists create strength in the diversity of skills and personalities they bring. I am excited to see what the future will bring.



Above: The nature center core staff members and their ages-we wish! The numbers represent the number of years worked at IDFG. Clockwise starting in upper left: Lori Wilson, Sue Dudley, Sara Focht, Susan Ziebarth and Vicky Runnoe in the middle.



A snapshot in time of the MKNC staff in August of 2024. Photo by Sue Dudley, IDFG.

Left to right: Look who came to Vicky's retirement party! Her supervisor, Adam Park and Harrison Ford! It was a packed house-standing room only for the party to honor Vicky. The Gray Beards presented Vicky with an honorary membership into their group. Photos by Sue Dudley.



Donations and Donors Past and Present

Susan Ziebarth, Nature Center Habitat and Maintenance



A Gift from Idaho Power, Power of Community

Along with providing a great group of hard working volunteers (pictured right) on May 23 of this year, Russ Weedon, contacted us with a gift donation from Idaho Power of \$500. We got a ton of much needed grounds maintenance and spring clean-up, and a donation this fall to boot! Thank you Idaho Power!

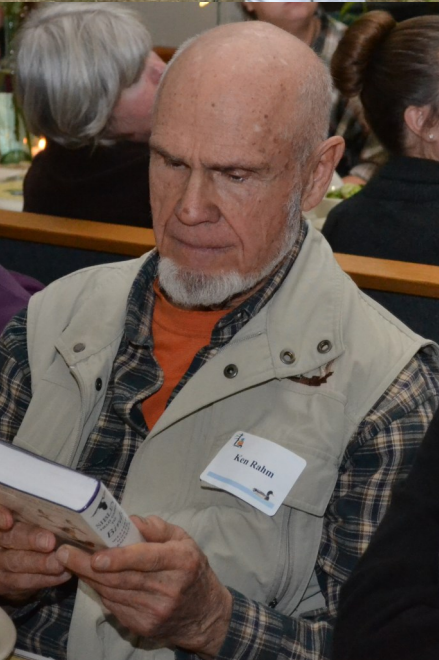


Left: Russ and Sue Dudley.
Above: The Power of Community volunteers.



A surprise donation from Idaho Mountain Recreation Club!

Years ago a social recreation group was formed by some outdoor enthusiasts, including some Fish and Game employees. They met for presentations once a month for several years in the nature center auditorium until the group dissolved about 6 years ago. IMR purchased the current ceiling projector we are still using to this day. Their Treasurer, Elaine Walker (pictured left), was tasked with closing the club's bank account and contacted the nature center about donating the remaining funds to us. Thanks to IMRC for the donation of two thousand dollars!

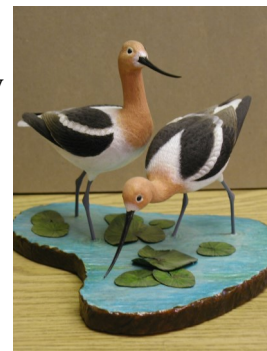


Ken Rahm Remembered

Long-time nature center donor and supporter passed away this year. Ken came to us sometime around 2004, shortly after his wife Lia died. She was a talented and prolific wood carver and Ken donated her carvings to the nature center (pictured right).

Ken was a gentle, kind, caring soul. He was in awe of the magic and beauty of Mother Nature. He also loved the MK Nature Center and valued the mission. He valued the staff and understood that whatever job people were doing, no matter how unglamorous, it was all mission-driven.

Ken's love of the nature center was certainly reflected in his generosity to us: his gifts were varied, and numerous. The gift of his wife's, Lia's, incredible wood carvings will be an everlasting reminder of his love and generosity and will bring pleasure to many for years to come.





BIRD SEED SALE

FUNDRAISER
Supporting the
MK Nature Center

December 6th & 7th
9 am to 5 pm

PREMIUM BIRD SEED

Several seed varieties to choose from!
Large selection of nature themed holiday gift items,
birding guides, children's books, toys, jewelry, and more.

Activities for the whole family!
Saturday December 7th:
Live Bird Presentations at 11:30am, 12:30pm, & 1:30pm.
Kid's Craft 11am to 2pm.



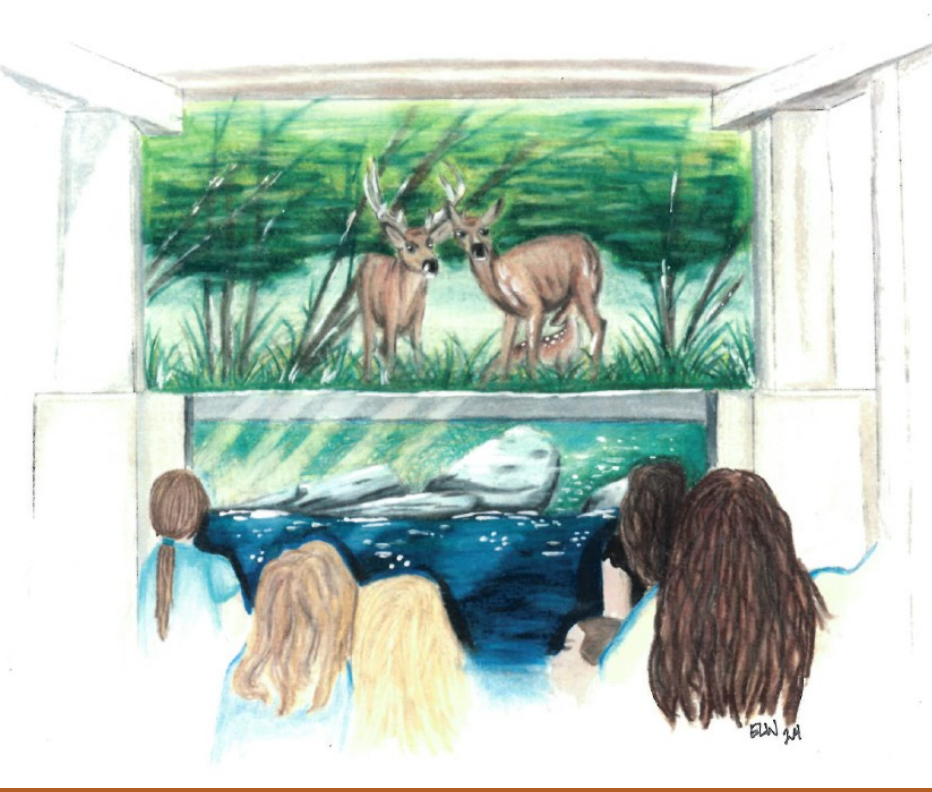
600 S. Walnut Street, Boise Idaho 83712 208-287-2900 sue.dudley@idfg.idaho.gov

Save the date!

Bird seed sale fundraiser is coming December 6th & 7th 2024.

This year there will be some changes, we will have a new seed vendor, but the varieties of seed types will be similar, more information will be coming out about this at a later date.

I would like to give a HUGE THANK YOU to Nancy Jasper, with IDFG, who redesigned our bird seed flyers, posters and banners. They look awesome!



Art and Nature

Artwork and information by
Erica Wilson, volunteer, IDFG

Common Name: Mule Deer

Scientific Name: *Odocoileus hemionus*

In Idaho: Native to Idaho, found year-round.

Reproduction:

The breeding season (rut) generally occurs in November or December. The rut is synchronized with the doe's annual estrous cycle, meaning the period of time when she can become pregnant. Bucks spar during the rut, competing for receptive does. After being bred, does begin a seven month gestation period and fawns are born in late spring and summer, coinciding with an abundance of nutritious food for lactation. Females give birth to usually one or two fawns, with twins being more common among does in prime breeding age whose nutritional needs are met.

Interesting Facts:

Mule deer get their name from their big, mule-like ears. Their large ears are about three-fourths the length of the head. Subtle differences in mule deer occur depending on where they live. There have been as many as 11 subspecies of mule deer described.

Mule deer are herbivores with a four chambered stomach similar to cattle, elk, and other ruminants. They digest food by regurgitating partially digested plants, re-chewing, and resting to allow for bacterial breakdown of plant material.

Migration is the seasonal movement between habitats. For mule deer this is typically the biannual movements between high elevation summer range and lower elevation winter range. Not every mule deer is migratory; some remain on their range year-round.

The longest documented mule deer migration is over 240 miles from winter range in the Red Desert of Wyoming to summer range near Island Park, Idaho.

Mule deer have no upper front teeth, only a hard palate

Community Volunteer Work Days

Susan Ziebarth, Nature Center Habitat and Maintenance

Redwing Shoes, National Volunteer Work Week, April 17

Bruce Vargas-Munoz was the sole Boise area volunteer on April 17. He cleared old wood and debris from around the creek and pond, then assisted in the rescue of a young squirrel trapped in beaver wire right outside of the nature center fence. The squirrel revived after some rest.



Brookfield Properties-Boise Towne Square, July 17

Thank you to Brian Bretz, Jack Yejekwe, Nia Eng and nature center employees, Bethany Tenant (pictured left) and Susan Ziebarth (not pictured). The crew rebuilt the fences near the bird viewing window and cleared piles of brush and limbs from the perimeter of the butterfly garden.

Meridian FFA, September 7

Three extremely hard working Future Farmers of America (FFA) members Addison Davis, Courtney Simon and Ryan Stevens-Vaughn (pictured right) were accompanied by their mentor Amber Bucknell for a volunteer day of giving. With the help of nature center employees Susan and Gage, the big tree and shrubs were finally planted in the humungous pots that delineate the Fish and Game driveway from the nature center entrance path. The plants endured a hot summer in a very hot, concrete environment and seemingly survived. Fingers crossed for a healthy future for the plants and the FAA volunteers.

Photos by Susan Ziebarth, IDFG



Volunteers at Work

National Public Lands Day

Volunteers represented MK nature center at National Public Lands Day at Bogus Basin on September 28th. Over 100 event participants visited the booth with information about mammals, public land owned by Idaho Fish and Game, wildlife trivia, and the Nature Center! Thank you to Jon Mathews, Claire Veseth, and Katie Sewell!



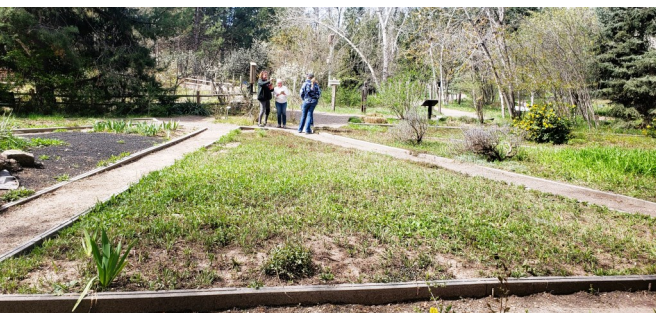
Latino Conservation Week

[Latino Conservation Week](#) kick-off was held at MK Nature Center on September 14th! The event included a proclamation reading by the City of Boise, booths and activities from community organizations, dancing by Ballet Folklorico Mexico Lindo Idaho (left). MK Nature Center volunteers Violette and Jaimi Anghel along with Christine Simon provided a fish casting game (right). Thank you to all our community partners for sponsoring this event.



Sensory Garden

It started with a great idea and came into being because of these hard-working people, Sue Dudley, Susan Ziebarth, Benita Putzier, Jan Egge, and Susan Riley (pictured below). What once was a spoke of mostly weeds and grasses (left) is now a beautiful oasis for children to explore (bottom left). Next time you are visiting the nature center make sure you check out our new sensory garden.



Check out a Wildlife Education Trunk

Lori Wilson, Wildlife Educator, MK Nature Center

Do you need to enhance an event or lesson? Check out a wildlife education trunk? Idaho Fish and Game offers many different wildlife education trunks to check out for free in the Treasure Valley. Trunks can be checked out for a week at a time. Pick up and drop off location is at IDFG Headquarters building at 600 S. Walnut Street in Boise.

Trunks contain lesson plans, games/activities, plenty of books, and natural objects such as horns, antlers, furs and feathers. People check out trunks to share wildlife with classrooms, libraries, senior citizen centers, business events and homeschool groups.

Trunks available include bear, elk, salmon, trout, owls, bats, songbirds, raptor, and more! To check out a trunk, email lori.wilson@idfg.idaho.gov.



Boise Schools 6th Grade Visitors

MK Nature Center partnered with Bogus Basin and the Boise Watershed to host local 6th graders for a week of study about the Boise Watershed. For three days in a row, students travel to places in their watershed to learn about the plants, animals, physical properties and human impacts on the watershed. Hiking at Bogus Basin, catching aquatic insects at the Nature Center, and seeing how water is stored behind Lucky Peak Dam makes for a pretty exciting science week!



DONORS



Marc Von Huene
Idaho Power
Trout Unlimited
Wild Birds Unlimited

Donors listed above do not include Friends of MK Nature Center members and donations.

VOLUNTEERS

July

Violette Anghel
Jaimi Anghel
Pam Bly
Brian Bretz
Amber Bucknell
Addison Davis
Joan Dodd
Kevin Drews
Jan Egge
Nia Eng
Krystell Finato

August

Todd Finato
Mike Frith
Elizabeth Grosse
Marylee Hale
Helen Harrington
Eric Keren
Randy Langseth
Kevin Laughlin
Jon Mathews
Martha McClay
Nanette McGrath

September

Terri Muse
Bronwyn Myers
Benita Putzier
Madeline Rosa
Arelene Schaeffer
Katie Sewell
Howard Sheppa
Christine Simon
Courtney Simon
Ryan Stevens-VanGann
Al Straessle

Bethanne Todd
Bonnie Urresti
Claire Veseth
Madeline Walker
Roger Wallace
Kevin Wilson
Erica Wilson
Judith Wojcicki
Jack Yejekwe



Right: Through the spring and summer Helen Harrington has been coming most Monday mornings sweeping and raking the nature center paths. This helps us keep our paths in great shape. We appreciate you, Helen!

Left: Arleen Schaeffer is a master at organizing and labeling product in such an efficient manner. She can label hundreds of gift shop items in only a few hours! We are grateful for you, Arleen!

Photos by Sue Dudley, IDFG.



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