



# The Nature Center Stream



**Spring** The Seasonal Newsletter of the Idaho Department of Fish and Game MK Nature Center **2019**



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## Signs of Spring



*MK Nature Center - Your Face-to-Fish Connection*

# Nature Center Notes

Vicky Runnoe, Conservation Education Supervisor, IDFG



A sudden breath of warm air; the swirl of a sturgeon; a hint of green; and the song of a house finch all announce that spring has arrived at the nature center. Another sign is the sudden uptick in visitors as people head outside to enjoy the sunshine and watch the world awaken from its winter slumbers. After the winter quiet, the sound of excited voices carries across the nature center grounds as visitors spot a sturgeon, a mule deer, a great blue heron or a mink. Gaggles of students follow their guides, exploring, observing and learning as they enjoy the outdoor classroom that is the nature center.

Other, less typical signs of change can be seen and heard. A whiff of fresh paint wafting through the building announces the presence of an artist at work on a new display. The sounds of construction out on the grounds are another hint of new opportunities for exploration and learning. For now, we leave you, our visitors, wondering what new things you will get to enjoy and learn from. They will be revealed as summer approaches. But until then, please come by, take a stroll around the grounds and enjoy the riot of spring changes. We look forward to seeing you!

## 2019 Master Naturalists



*The MK Nature Center along with program partners (City of Boise and Idaho Botanical Gardens) welcome our 2019 members of the Sagebrush-steppe Chapter of the Idaho Master Naturalist Program. These 26 people will be spending a lot of time learning and volunteering at the Nature Center this year. We are so excited to have them as part of our team! Photo by Sara Focht.*

# What Do All These Photos Have in Common?

*Sara Focht, Wildlife Educator, MKNC*

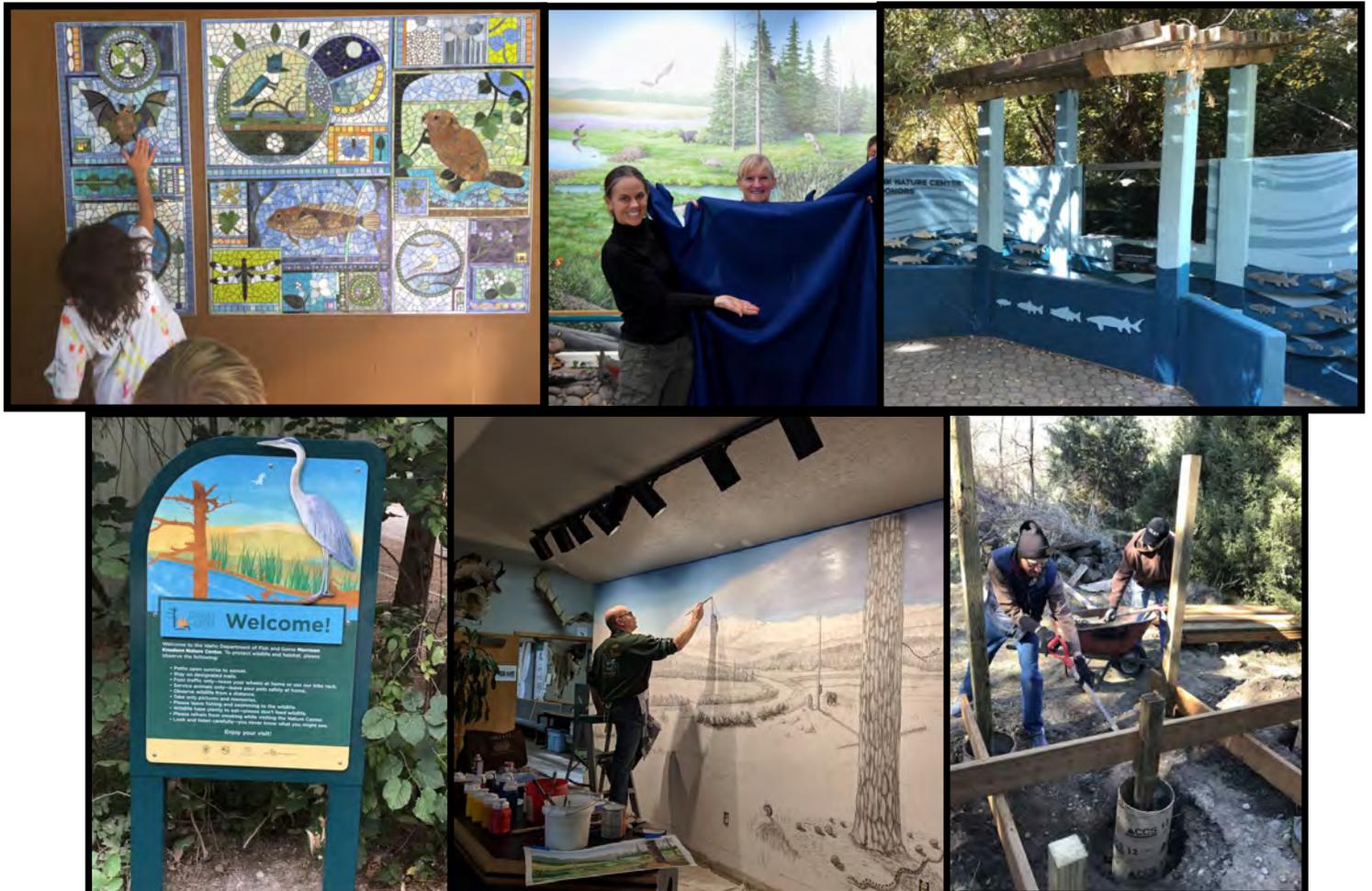


A beautiful mosaic, new table cloths, a donor recognition wall, 26 professional interpretive trails signs, a pollinator display, and new construction. What might all of these things have in common? All were funded by the Friends of MK Nature Center!

On May 2nd, the Friends of MK Nature Center (FOMKNC) and many other Idaho non-profit organizations will be fundraising with the annual IDAHO GIVES event. If you like the projects the FOMKNC is currently working on, and you want to support more projects like these at the Nature Center, consider donating to this group on May 2nd through the Idaho Gives website <https://www.idahogives.org/organizations/friends-of-mk-nature-center>.

100% of the money raised by FOMKNC goes to projects on the ground at the MK Nature Center.

*Photos by MKNC*



# Wildlife Weekend Nature Activities



Spring/Summer Programs:

**SUNDAY, APRIL 14th-Wildlife Weekend Nature Activities-EGGS!** Spring is here! Come learn about all kinds of eggs. Bird eggs, insect eggs, fish eggs and candy eggs! Hunt for different animal eggs at the Nature Center while learning how they are the same and how they are different from each other. 1-4 pm. Free (donations encouraged).

**SATURDAY, APRIL 27th-Wildlife Celebration and Native Plant Sale** Something for the whole family. Enjoy over 15 booths and activities between 10 am and 4 pm. \$3.00/person admission.

**SUNDAY, MAY 19th- International Museum Day at MK Nature Center** From 12 noon-4 pm enjoy the Nature Center grounds and visit over 10 booths and activity stations. This event is sponsored by the Boise Museum Association. See page 6 for full advertisement. FREE.

**SUNDAY, JUNE 16th- Wildlife Weekend Nature Activities-Scat and Tracks!** Come discover the signs that animals leave behind at MK Nature Center. Make a plaster track and learn about animals through finding their clues. 1 pm-4 pm. FREE and open to the public.

**SUNDAY, JULY 21st-Wildlife Weekend Nature Activities-Crayfish!** Crayfish are important underwater crustaceans! From 1 pm –4 pm, visit stations and booths that will help you learn about crayfish, where to find them, how to catch them and how not to get pinched! FREE and open to the public. Donations encouraged.

**SUNDAY, AUGUST 18th-Wildlife Weekend Nature Activities-Class in the Creek!** From 1 pm –4pm, you will learn about all the creatures that live in the Boise River by collecting them yourself. Boots and nets provided! This experience is designed for kids ages 4th grade and up, but other activities will be available for younger visitors. FREE.

# Spring Wildlife Celebration

at the  
**MK Nature Center**  
600 S. Walnut, Boise

**Saturday, April 27**  
**10am - 4pm**

**\$3 per person (ages 3 and over)**



## Family Friendly Event

- ❖ Wildlife Themed Education Tables
  - ❖ Live Bird Presentation
  - ❖ Activities and Games
- ❖ Hunting Dog Demonstrations



Questions? Contact Sue Dudley

[sue.dudley@idfg.idaho.gov](mailto:sue.dudley@idfg.idaho.gov)

208-287-2900





# Evening Lecture Series at MK Nature Center



**April 25th: Pacific Northwest Bumblebee Atlas Introduction 5:30 pm-6:15pm** Idaho Fish and Game Wildlife Diversity Biologist, Dr. Joel Sauder will teach you about the project, how to get trained and get involved collecting data about bumble bees.

**April 25th: Raptor Identification: 6:30-8 pm** Do all raptors look like red-tailed hawks to you? Do Cooper's and Sharp-shinned hawks have you stumped? Join Ornithologist Bryce Robinson and learn your raptors.

**May 20th: Natural history of the White Sturgeon: 6:30-8pm** IDFG's Martin Koenig will tell us about the ancient history of sturgeon, their interesting life cycle, and their current conservation status.

Lectures are designed for adults, are free, and open to the public.  
MK Nature Center 600 S. Walnut Street, Boise, ID 86712 (208) 334-2225

## The Grey Beards



The snow has long since melted, but we did have some days of shoveling at the Nature Center. Shoveling the entire path system takes some teamwork, since we don't use a snow blower. On one particularly fluffy morning, volunteer and Idaho Master Naturalist Howard Sheppa (pictured left) showed up with shovel in hand to help us out. We were not surprised to see him, even though we did not prompt volunteers for snow removal help. Howard is here a lot and is a key member of the self proclaimed "Grey Beards." This group is a quartet of hard-



working, energetic, and fun people who are tackling some big projects around the Nature Center. Last fall, they reinforced a couple of bridges and they are currently working on a big project that will be revealed in the next newsletter.

*The Grey Beards from left to right: Roger Wallace, Kevin Wilson, Brent Davy, and Howard Sheppa. Photos by Sara Focht.*



# 2019 Idaho **NATIVE PLANT SALE!**

Sponsored by the Pahove Chapter of the  
Idaho Native Plant Society  
and the Idaho Department of Fish and Game  
MK Nature Center

**Saturday, April 27, 10AM - 1PM**

at the MK Nature Center

**600 S. Walnut, Boise**  
behind the Fish and Game Building

### Conservation in action!

**Native plants help build beautiful outdoor spaces and resilient ecosystems.**

- \*Choose from a wide variety of trees, shrubs, perennial flowers and grasses
- \*Plants adapted to the Treasure Valley's soil and climate
- \*Experts on hand to answer questions
- \*Pollinator and Bird Friendly
- \*Organized by sun, shade and watering requirements

**--- INPS Members Only Sale: Friday, April 26, 5-7PM ---**  
If you are not a member, you may join at the Friday sale.

Watch the INPS website: [www.idahonativeplants.org](http://www.idahonativeplants.org) for availability list to be posted in mid-April

**Questions? Call Susan: 208-867-6188**

Sorry, no debit or credit cards,  
cash and checks only.

nursery license OT0016



INTERNATIONAL

Sunday, May 19<sup>th</sup>  
Noon - 4:00 PM

# MUSEUM DAY



**FREE EVENT! FAMILY FRIENDLY!**

**Sample Boise's museums in one place!**

Live birds, hands-on activities, games, art projects, exhibits, nature activities & **FOOD TRUCKS!**

Sponsored by the  
Boise Museum Association  
**WWW.BOISEMUSEUMS.ORG**

All other participating organizations will have normal admission prices on May 19.

**BOOTHS AND ACTIVITIES BY:**

- Idaho Fish and Game MK Nature Center
- Basque Museum & Cultural Center
- Idaho Botanical Garden
- Boise Art Museum
- Idaho Museum of Mining & Geology
- Old Idaho Penitentiary
- Boise WaterShed Education Center
- Idaho Black History Museum
- World Center for Birds of Prey
- Idaho State Museum
- Zoo Boise
- Orma J. Smith Museum of Natural History

# Volunteer Appreciation Party

*Sara Focht, Wildlife Educator, MKNC*

On the evening of February 6th, the MK Nature Center was transformed from a loud, bustling building of visitors to an elegant array of food, decorations, and friends. The annual Volunteer Potluck brings the Nature Center supporters together so we can celebrate all the time, energy, and money they provide. Everyone in the room is there because they love the Nature Center and they act on that love in some way or another.

For staff members, we see volunteers and supporters nearly every day, but to have some of our biggest fans in the room at one time is a bit overwhelming. We truly appreciate their time and friendship!



*The silverware is polished (literally) and the tables were set. MKNC's Sue Dudley has a missed calling as professional event planner and decorator. She goes to the far reaches of detail to make this night special for the volunteers. The place looked gorgeous.*



*Boyd Steele posed proudly with his raffle item made by Ray Heady. Both dedicated volunteers, they now share another commonality-an appreciation for this carved hiking pole.*



*Two long-time volunteers Sheryl Minckler (left) and Arlene Schaeffer (right) stand ready to get food with new volunteers Julie Hall and Pete Zimowsky.*



*Tables of friendly faces!*



*Sara Focht (middle) and Tess Wolfenson (right) award volunteer Jacky Murphy (left) the "Award of Time." Jackie was a regular volunteer last year and is ALWAYS on time.*



*Left: IDFG Director Ed Schriever addressed the crowd with kind words about the Nature Center and praises for all those who pitch in to make the place special. All photos by Sue Dudley.*

# Donors and Volunteers

The following people volunteered their time to the MK Nature Center between  
January 1-March 31, 2019

Pam Bly	Kristin Gnojewski	Nanette McGrath	Lorna Snowden
Curtis-Lake Cloudt	Janna Gray	Terri Muse	Sandy Sweet
June Creson	Marylee Hale	Bronwyn Myers	Steve Tornga
Patrice Davies	Erica Kaszczyszyn	Tom Neale	Bonnie Urresti
Seth Davis	Sandy Kurka	Jael Prin	Roger Wallace
Brent Davy	Wayne Larsen	Jude Reppell	Jane Wallace
Kevin Drew	Carolyn Larson	Arleen Schaeffer	Kevin Wilson
Gerald Flerchinger	Barbara McGillivray	Howard Sheppa	

The following people and businesses donated money or materials to the MK Nature Center between  
January 1-March 31, 2019 (this list does not include donations to Friends of MK Nature Center).

**David & Sheree Lee Donlon**  
**Patricia McDaniel**  
**Hilda Packard**  
**Kay Phillips**

**Scott & Susan Prestel**  
**Aubrey & Bobbie Smith**  
**Parkside Schools Inc.**  
**Wild Birds Unlimited**

## Benefits of a Government Shutdown?

*Sara Focht, Wildlife Educator, MKNC*



“Making lemonade from lemons.” “Finding a silver lining.” These are ways of saying that you can make the best of a bad situation. We did just that during the Federal Government shutdown in January! The shutdown meant that several AmeriCorps members who serve for federal agencies could not work. Instead of waiting it out, they asked if they could come work at the Nature Center. I took that as a sign that it was time to create the long-anticipated parachuting beaver display we had on deck, but could not find the time to complete.

Saskia Van Adrichem, Annalee Cameron, and Nicole Hutcherson (all standing and all AmeriCorps members at Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge joined Tess Wolfenson (kneeling) and Sara Focht (not pictured) in creating the parachuting beaver display.

Beavers were parachuted to backcountry areas by Idaho Fish and Game in Idaho in the 1950s to relocate the animals away from the developing McCall area. A video explaining the project went viral in 2015 <https://idfg.idaho.gov/press/parachuting-beavers-go-global>.