



MK Nature Center

STREAM

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Happy 125th Anniversary!

Victoria Runnoe, Conservation Education Supervisor, IDFG

The Idaho Dept. of Fish and Game is celebrating its 125th anniversary in 2024. On May 9, 1899, the agency was established by the state legislature. Over the intervening years, Fish and Game has worked tirelessly to meet its mission to preserve, protect, perpetuate and manage Idaho’s wildlife both now and into the future.

Beginning in 1938, public education became a part of the agency’s work. The opening of the nature center in 1990 marked a significant step in providing high quality, wildlife-focused educational opportunities for the public. Today, the nature center continues to be a proud part of the agency’s work, helping the public learn about and appreciate the state’s wildlife resources and the work of the agency in managing those resources for all of us.

Photos by IDFG



Nature Notes

Vicky Runnoe, Conservation Education Supervisor, IDFG

The spring forward into daylight savings time is the official signal that our busy field trip season is fast approaching. Natural signs of the changing season have also become evident--bird song, buds on trees and shrubs, and bees from the observation hive making forays outside on warm days.

Another sure sign of spring is the return of an AmeriCorps member to the nature center. We have been fortunate to host a member for the past eight years. The Friends of MK Nature Center, via generous donors, provides fiscal sponsorship for our member. We appreciate their continued support of this important opportunity. Through their term of service, members work as part of the education team, helping us expand our programming to school groups and the public. By the time they are done in August, members have gained knowledge and skills they can apply to future employment opportunities.

AmeriCorps is not the only partner the nature center has worked with to provide on-the-job opportunities for current and post-graduate students. Over the years, we have hosted interns from several programs including GK-12 and IDoTeach, both sponsored by Boise State University. In addition, many of our part-time staff go on to careers in natural resources and education. From state parks to municipal facilities to schools to non-profit organizations, the nature center has played a role in training future employees and teachers. It is not without a wee bit of pride that we reflect upon the people who have been part of our efforts over the years. Providing formative experiences in environmental education and natural resources shines a light on another valuable role the nature center plays in our community.

Our new AmeriCorps member just started her term. We are excited to have her here and look forward to seeing where her nature center experience takes her in the future.



STUMPED

Vicky Runnoe, Conservation Education Supervisor, IDFG

The stepping stumps and hollow log are an early project sponsored by the Friends of MK Nature Center (FOMKNC). They have been wildly popular since being installed. This fall, staff noticed that thousands of excited, jumping feet had taken their toll on the stumps. Master Naturalist and FOMKNC Board member Howard Sheppa began to look for replacement stumps. On a serendipitous whim, Howard contacted Idaho Tree Preservation just to see if they might be willing to sell some large rounds from trees they remove as part of their work. The answer was no, they wouldn't sell the rounds, instead they would donate them! Adding to that generosity, Idaho Tree Preservation staff delivered the wood rounds, free of charge.

The large, heavy new stumps were moved to their location and securely installed in late winter, thanks to the hard work of Howard and fellow Master Naturalists Todd Finato and Kevin Wilson. We are happy for more excited feet to enjoy jumping across the new stumps. Many thanks to Idaho Tree Preservation for their generosity!



Stepping stumps ready to be placed. Thanks for your donation, Idaho Tree Preservation!! Photos by Howard Sheppa.

Volunteers Kevin Wilson and Howard Sheppa replace the rotten stumps with the new ones. Photo by Sara Focht.

AmeriCorps 24

Sara Focht, Wildlife Educator, MKNC



MK Nature Center welcomes Abie Diaz as our 2024 AmeriCorps Member. Abie joins the education team and will be teaching programs, guiding tours, creating educational displays, staffing outreach booths, and more. Abie is a Conservation Biology student and has special interest in regenerative agriculture methods, indigenous land management, plant taxonomy and the medicinal uses of plants. Abie is an Idaho Master Naturalist and serves as a plot lead for the Boise River ReWild Project.



The mission of the AmeriCorps Program is to “improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering.”

Abie comes to the nature center through the Palouse Clearwater Environmental Institute's AmeriCorps Program along with a cohort of members serving all across Idaho. Each year, our AmeriCorps member is funded by Friends of MK Nature Center, our 501(c)(3) nonprofit partner.

We are so looking forward to working with Abie. As always, our AmeriCorps member gains valuable work experience at the nature center. This experience serves as a stepping stone in their career, and we reap the benefits of learning from them in their areas of interest and passion. Photo provided by Abie Diaz.



Celebrating Pollinators

PROVIDING FOOD, HABITAT & WONDER



at the

MK Nature Center

600 S. Walnut, Boise

Saturday, June 15th

10AM-3PM

\$5/person (ages 3 & up)



Family Friendly Event

Observation Hive Tours

Exploring Bee Keeping with the

Treasure Valley Bee Keepers Club

Pollinator Themed Education Booths

Activities and Crafts

Questions? Contact Sue Dudley:

sue.dudley@idfg.idaho.gov

208-287-2900



Idaho Gives

FOMKNC Board



Idaho Gives is coming up April 29th –May 2nd. This week of giving is your chance to support the nonprofits in Idaho that you believe in and want to be a part 501(c)(3) partner. All of the money raised is donated to MK Nature Center for projects, supplies and to enhance the visitor experience.

Mark Your Calendar - Idaho Gives April 29 – May 2, 2024



Projects we plan to fund and want to continue to fund.

1. We have begun initial planning on the creation of a new outdoor learning space at the MK Nature Center. The goal is to create an area where groups can gather and learn about all what the nature center has to offer through programs, classes, and hands-on experiences.
2. Fund a 2025 AmeriCorps member to enhance and expand educational programming for the growing minds visiting this hidden gem in the Gem State!

We hope that you will participate in the 2024 Idaho Gives. Our Friends non-profit has been able to accomplish BIG projects with your past contributions, enhancing outdoor learning opportunities at MK Nature Center.

Volunteer Spotlight

The nature center is lucky to have a volunteer like Susan Floriana-Riley. She has been doing beautiful artwork on our welcome sign for the past two years. She draws amazing pictures of animals and plants you can find here on the nature center grounds. Thank you Susan; we have really enjoyed these signs.



2024 Idaho Native Plant Sale

Saturday, April 27 10am-1pm

At MK Nature Center

Susan Ziebarth, Habitat Maintenance Coordinator, MKNC, IDFG



The Pahove chapter of the Idaho Native Plant Society will host their annual Native Plant Sale at MK Nature Center on Saturday, April 27th from 10 am –1 pm.

Talk with experts about which native plants might work best in your yard to attract pollinators and other local wildlife.

[Watch the INPS website for details and plant lists.](#) A detailed availability list will be available close to April 22nd.

Cash, checks, and debit/credit is accepted, but cash and checks is preferred.

Idaho Fish and Game Botanist, Lynn Kinter wheels a load of native plants for the annual plant sale. Photo by Susan Ziebarth.



Images of Spring



Canada goose laying an egg!
Photo by Vicky Runnoe.



Oregon grape starting to bloom.
Photo by Sara Focht.



Comma.
Photo by Erica Wilson.



Left: Prunus sp. In full bloom.
Right: Western Larch needles budding.
Photos by Sara Focht



Dates to Remember

April 11th-Evening Lecture Series-PRONGHORN. Idaho Fish and Game Wildlife Biologist, Jake Powell will be visiting from the Magic Valley Region to talk about pronghorn in Idaho. This lecture starts at 6:30 pm, at the nature center and is free and open to the public.



April 13th-Earth Day Celebration at Kristin Armstrong Municipal Park. Join MK Nature Center and a plethora of organizations who will be at the park to celebrate Earth Day. The City of Boise is the host and all ages are welcome to learn about how to live more sustainably.



April 26th and 27th-Native Plant Sale-The Pahove Chapter of the Idaho Native Plant Society will hold its annual native plant sale Friday for members and Saturday for the public. This is your chance to buy native plants for your yard and get expert advice from chapter members! See page 6.



May 2nd-Evening Lecture Series-IDAHO FISH AND GAME's K9 UNIT. Senior Conservation Officer, Craig Mickelson will be here with his dog Blue to tell and show us how the K9 unit is deployed to help solve wildlife crime in Idaho. This lecture and demonstration starts at 6:30 pm and is free and open to the public at MK Nature Center.



May 19th-International Museum Day at the Idaho Botanical Garden. Join MK Nature Center and 13 other local "museums" to celebrate International Museum Day. MK Nature Center is a member of Boise Museum Association! Admission to the Idaho Botanical Garden for the event is free from 12 pm– 4 pm.

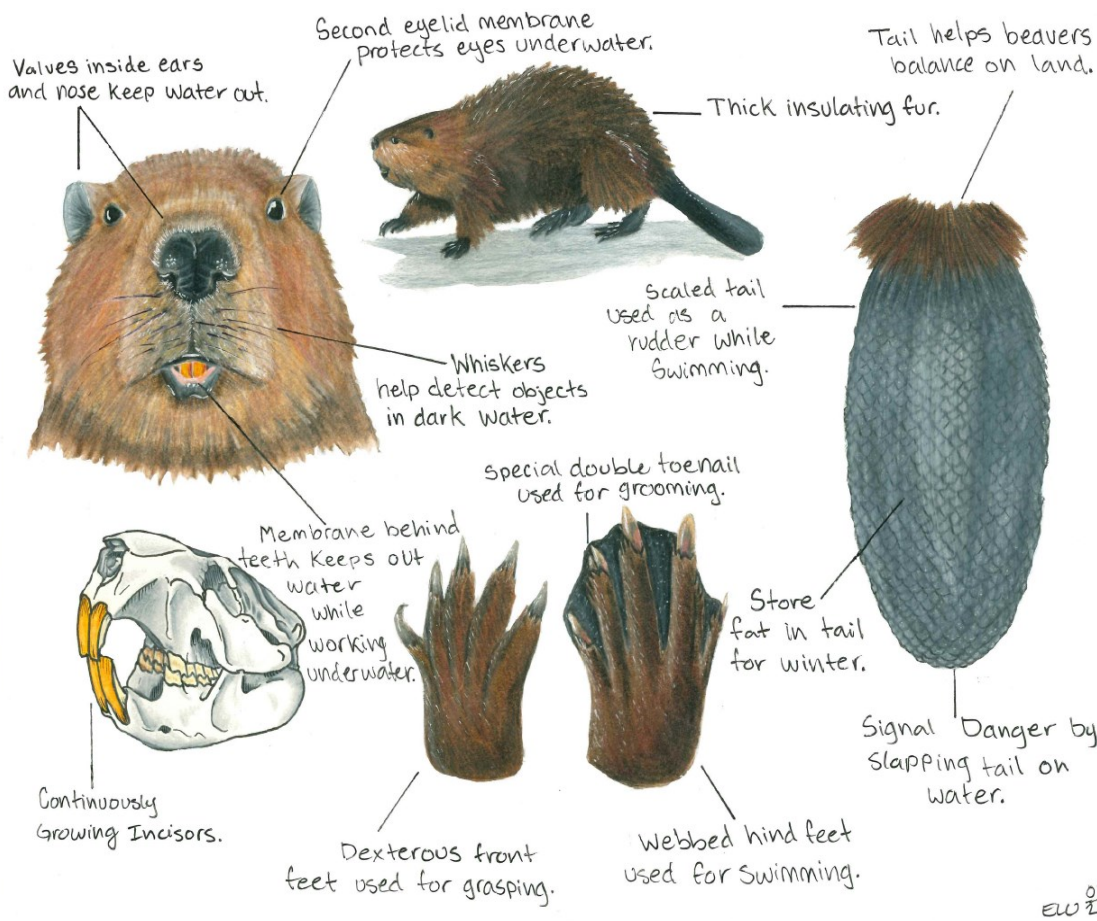


June 15th -Pollinator Event at MKNC. From 10am-3pm, the nature center will host a family-friendly event all about the importance of pollinators. See page 4.



Art and Nature

Artwork and information by
Erica Wilson, MKNC



Common Name: American Beaver
Scientific Name: *Castor Canadensis*

Reproduction:

Mating is monogamous.
Breeding begins JAN-MAR. Gestation or pregnancy is roughly about four months.
Births typically occur APR-JUN. Average litter size is three-four offspring. Babies are called kits.
Female beavers have one litter a year, and kits are weaned by about six weeks old.

Life Cycle:

Young beavers will usually stay within a family group till they are about two years old. Can stay longer in healthy environments.
Compared to other rodents, beavers become sexually mature later. Females mature at about 2-3 years old and males mature at about 1-2 years old.
Beavers live about 10-12 years in the wild and as long as 19 in captivity. They continue to grow their whole lives and can reach sizes of three-four feet long.

Anatomy Facts:

Largest rodent in North America.
Beavers' incisors (big front teeth) grow continuously throughout its life and are worn down and sharpened by daily use.
Have a membrane behind their teeth that allows them to carry sticks in their mouth without swallowing water.
Smaller front feet are dexterous and adapted for walking, grasping, and digging on land.
Larger hind feet are webbed and nearly hairless for swimming. They also have a special grooming toenail on the hind feet that is used like a comb to remove burs, parasites, and to keep fur clean.
Eyes have a second membrane called a nictitating membrane that protects their eyes while working underwater and swimming.
Have inner ear valves and valves in their nose that close to keep water out while underwater or swimming.
on water.

Diet: Beavers eat leaves, inner bark, and twigs as well as some grasses and aquatic plants.

Misc facts:

Teeth are reinforced with iron which gives them an orange appearance.
Can stay underwater for up to 15 minutes due to large lung capacity.
Can swim up to six miles per hour.
Tail shape varies between beaver families from short and stubby to long and narrow.
Build lodges that can only be accessed from underwater entrances.

Celebrating our Volunteers and Supporters

On February 7th, the Nature Center celebrated our amazing volunteers and supporters with an evening of food, friends, and fun! IDFG Communications Bureau Chief, Adam Park (standing left in photo below) and Deputy Director, Amber Worthington (sitting to Adam's left) attended to show their support and thank the dedicated people who make the MK Nature Center tick.



Debbie Wiggins and Alice Crockett

Sara Focht and Jon Mathews

Jan Egge and Sue Dudley

Sara Focht and Eric Keren



Lori Wilson and Steve Getlein



Eric Keren, Adam Park and Amber Worthington



Sue Dudley and Debbie Wiggins



DONORS



**Edwina & John Allen
Wayne Melquist
Hilda Packard
Susan & Scott Prestel
Wild Birds Unlimited**

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

VOLUNTEERS

Pam Bly

Bill Brudenell

Ingrid Brudenell

Patrice Davies

Kevin Drew

Todd Finato

Susan Floriana-Riley

Bob Foss

Steve Getlein

Trevor Greenfield

Tara Jennings

Eric Keren

Carolyn King

Terri Muse

Bronwyn Myers

Josh Olson

Arleen Schaeffer

Howard Sheppa



Our ace product labeler is back in action, helping Sue get out the latest spring product! Thanks Arleen, you are the best. Photo by Sue Dudley.

Claire Veseth

Roger Wallace

Kevin Wilson

January

February

March



Fifteen Bishop Kelly High School students and their teacher, Marta Watson, spent part of their day at MK Nature Center on March 27th. They focused their work on our butterfly garden, getting it ready for spring. Thank you to the Bishop Kelly students who did a great job helping us! Photo by Sue Dudley.

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