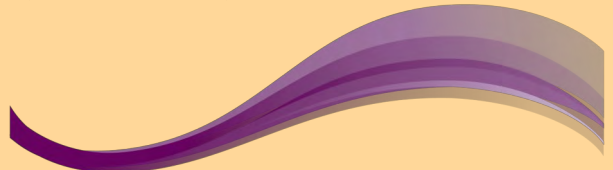




# The Nature Center Stream



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



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## Pollinators Provide!



See page 3 for more details about our new pollinator exhibit with an observation hive!



# Nature Center Notes

Vicky Runnoe, Conservation Education Supervisor, IDFG



On a recent summer day, a family stopped me along the path to say how much they enjoy visiting the nature center. In and of itself, this is nothing unusual, and such comments are always appreciated. But then another group stopped me and yet another and another after that! Were people feeling particularly complimentary that day? Actually, each group commented on “all the new improvements” they were seeing during their visit. For some it was interacting with the new signs for the first time. Others were fascinated with the bees and the pollinator display. Families loved the photo opportunity at the newly re-painted owl cut-outs. Others expressed excitement upon seeing the nest being constructed by volunteers, wondering what it was and when it will be done. It was great to see visitors responding so positively to all these projects. It is clear that these improvements provide yet another means of helping our visitors form connections to the natural world and nurture their sense of wonder. We are excited about all the new additions and are very pleased that they are being so well-received.

We have been fortunate to also get some “nuts-and-bolts” improvements thanks to our agency, the Idaho Dept. of Fish and Game. The auditorium now has a new HVAC unit to provide quiet, efficient heating and cooling for school groups and visitors. We were also able to replace decking and railings on two of our bridges. While neither was a safety hazard, the upgrades were definitely needed.

We greatly appreciate our agency colleagues, our volunteers and the Friends of the MK Nature Center helping to make the nature center such a popular destination for visitors. Their collective efforts are certainly noticed and appreciated by many. If you have not visited recently, please stop by, take a stroll and enjoy.



# Pollinator Exhibit Comes to Life

*Sara Focht, Wildlife Educator, MKNC*



Over the winter and spring, Nature Center staff and visitors have had the pleasure to watch local artist, Rick Friesen, bring the pollinator exhibit to life!

Thanks to Friends of MK Nature Center and the Sagebrush-steppe Chapter of the Idaho Master Naturalist Program, funding was available to create a dynamic, colorful, and powerful display about our native and non-native pollinators in Idaho.

Each day brought a new color or animal to the mural. Just when we thought it could not get any better, Rick would add a flower or feather for detail...making it look more real and more interesting that the day before.

In the mural, Rick beautifully depicts an Idaho landscape with its animals and plants; all of whom depend on pollinators!

The final touch was the observation bee hive complete with queen, workers, cells for honey and eggs! The hive has captivated visitors and been the center of attention and the source of compliments from many.

Come down and see the mural and bees for yourself. If you are not already thankful for pollinators, this will surely help you get there!



# Spring Garden Clean up Day



*The garden crew: Suzann Troje, Blake Harding, Harriet Shaklee, Laurie Hansen, Katie Sheppa, Simon Shockley, and Judy Walsber. Thank you to this crew who helped us get the native plant garden looking lovely for spring.*

# Wildlife Weekend Nature Activities



Spring/Summer Programs:

**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.



## New Owls

Former MKNC employee and current IDFG Customer Service Representative, Michaela Johnson re-painted the popular owl cut-outs! These owls have been a favorite stop along the nature center path since 2009 when they were made by Master Naturalist, Glenn Mouser. The paint was fading and looking rough around the edges. We appreciate Michaela's artistic talents and care in making these owls look new again!

# Baby Sturgeon on Display

Sara Focht, Wildlife Educator, MKNC



In early June, MK Nature Center received four juvenile sturgeon. The large sturgeon in the pond outside are a big attraction, but these little guys are pretty adorable.

If you want to see them, be sure to visit when our building is open (T-F 9 am-5 pm and S-S 11 am-5 pm...closed Mondays). They are located in the lobby in the big fish tanks. They measure about 10-12 inches long and are only a year old.

Young sturgeon look much like their parents, but with sharper noses and more spikey scutes (modified scales). In the tanks, you can get up close and really see their interesting vacuum-like mouths, barbels for feeling the ground and their googly eyes!

Idaho Fish and Game Fisheries Biologist, Martin Koenig gave an evening lecture back in May about White Sturgeon in Idaho. As he was leaving he asked if we might be interested in having some young ones for our display! Absolutely! Martin managed to get us some from a hatchery that raises them and releases them in to the Snake River.

*Above: White sturgeon juveniles transported from Hagerman Fish Hatchery to MK Nature Center await their new home. Right: Martin Koenig scoops them up and puts them in MKNC lobby tanks. Below: Settling into their new environment. These babies can be easily viewed during visitor center hours.*



White sturgeon used to travel from Idaho to the ocean and back several times in their 100 year + life span. With the construction of the dams along their migration route, they can no longer make that journey and are land locked in Idaho. Despite that barrier, there are two populations of sturgeon in the Snake River that do spawn naturally. With the help of hatcheries and biologists, Idaho Fish and Game and Idaho Power are keeping White Sturgeon going.



# Spring Wildlife Event 2019

*This Nature Center event is only possible because of these wonderful volunteers who donate their time and talents to help us offer this wonderful educational experience for the public.*



# Scat and Tracks

*Sara Focht, Wildlife Educator, MKNC*

Scat and Tracks is one of our most popular programs at the MK Nature Center. During this program, students learn about the different animal clues that can be searched for and found anywhere outside! The big exciting clues are piles of scat or the rare animal footprint. But students learn to slow down and look more closely at their surroundings. Small chew marks in leaves, a floating feather, woodpecker holes are more subtle signs of animal life. By the end of the program, we are finding tiny spider webs, water ripples made by fish and the occasional crayfish claw!

Inspired by our program, we designed a weekend public program about SCAT, TRACKS, and other animal signs. June 13th was the day and over 100 visitors enjoyed the scat and track matching game, a scavenger hunt and a taste of raccoon scat cookies (seriously gross looking, but wonderfully delicious).

We hope you visit the MK Nature Center this summer to look for animals and their clues. Or better yet, just take a look in your own backyard, or nearby park and see what you can find.

*Left: Raccoon Scat Cookies-authentic! Below: Volunteer Lyla Olson staffs the cookie and lemonade table. Several people would not try them but everyone who did....loved them!*



## Raccoon Scat: A Tasty Outdoor Snack!

3 Tbs butter  
 1 12 oz bag marshmallows  
 1 12 oz bag semi-sweet chocolate morsels  
 10 oz of raisins or craisins (berries)  
 2 cups crispy rice cereal (insects and crayfish parts)



1. Melt butter over low heat in a large saucepan
2. Add marshmallows and allow to melt, stirring often. Once marshmallows are mostly melted, add chocolate morsels and stir until everything is melted.
3. Add raisins, craisins and cereal to mixture, stir (Amounts are approximate and may need to be adjusted until you get the right consistency.
4. Use a spoon to scoop out cookies onto waxed paper or cookie sheet
5. Form to look like raccoon scat
6. Allow to cool



# BSU Intern Summers at MKNC

My name is Rosio Ojeda. I am currently a Boise State student majoring in Environmental Studies and minoring in Sustainability; and hopefully able to graduate in next year in the spring. I am a first generation college student, making it very important to me to continue my education and having the chance to be an



Intern here at the Nature Center for the summer of 2019. When I am not at school or at the nature center; I like taking small trips whenever I get the chance or going on hikes or simply just going for a run. But mostly I really love spending time with my friends or visiting family.

Growing up, my family would go fishing once in a while; but in reality I did not know much about the outdoors. Being at the Nature Center I have learned a lot about the outdoors I wish I could have known when I was younger. As I started to grow older, I found my passion which is to care for our natural environment and its species. I believe that being at the nature center has brought more insight on what I am planning to do in the future. Education is the first step to securing our natural environments. After graduating, I plan on working with companies that focus on fixing issues with air and water pollution, as well as habitat loss.

## New Bridges!

*Vicky Runnoe, Conservation Education Supervisor, IDFG*

Twenty-nine years of hundreds of thousands of feet along with a smattering of deer hooves, raccoon feet and scampering squirrels takes its toll on a footbridge. Such was the case for two of the nature center bridges. While the foundation structure of both was in excellent shape, the stringers, decking and railings were in need of replacement. Thanks to funding provided by Idaho Dept. of Fish and Game, Mark Brice and his crew with Bricon, Inc. came in to save the day, ah repair the bridges. Over a two week period in June they worked to strip the bridges down to their foundations, install new stringers, lay new decking and install new railings. The Bricon crew enjoyed working at the nature center and we enjoyed having them here on the property. Now, we have two beautiful new bridges that will hold up for many more years of feet of all kinds!

*Photo by Sara Focht, IDFG*



# BSU's IDoTEACH INTERNSHIP

*Emma Charlier, IDoTeach Intern 2019*



My name is Emma Charlier, but my friends call me “Charlie”. I was a volunteer at the Nature Center in 2013, and that is when I first met one of the IDoTeach Interns who was stationed here. I am honored to say that I am taking a turn as this summer’s MK Nature Center BSU IDoTeach Intern. I grew up helping my father with a traveling science show known around the valley as Dr. Picklestein. Coming here and being able to help with more science programs, such as the Stream Walk tour, has been such a treat.



Currently, I am an Elementary Education Major with an emphasis in math. When not studying for school or hanging out at the Nature Center, I can be found bow fishing for invasive common carp, baking Gooley Butter Cake, or slowly reading my way through *Les Misérables* by Victor Hugo.

## Cock-a-doodle-Do!

*Emma Charlier, IDoTeach Intern 2019*

The end of the school year brings us many faces to the nature center, schools going on field trips to celebrate their year. One of the new faces at the nature center was rather unexpected and left most people giggling and chatting about his presence. A rooster took residence for about a month at the Nature Center. He became a conversation piece during the Streamwalk program and was dependably around. Sometimes he would join a group of kids as they explored. Nicknamed “Ralph,” this guy found plenty to eat, but surprisingly did not get eaten by a predator. Due to roosters not being allowed in Boise City limits, he has since been relocated to a rooster sanctuary in Nampa.



# Donors and Volunteers

The following people and businesses donated money or materials to the MK Nature Center between April 1 and June 30th (this list does not include donations to Friends of MK Nature Center).

**Anser Charter School   Veronika Kreps   Hugh & Cynthia McNair  
Barbara Mecham   Hilda Packard  
Wild Birds Unlimited**

The following people volunteered their time to the MK Nature Center between April 1 and June 30th, 2019

Michele Andrew  
Emilia Arrington  
Kris Barrash  
Kay Beall  
Steve Berg  
Madison Bigelow  
Terry Blackwell  
Pam Bly  
Steve Bouffard  
Loreli Bouffard  
Don Brigham  
Connie Capubianco  
Gretel Care  
Heidi Carlisle  
Susie Carlson

Nadine Chaffee  
Corrine Christ  
Cindy Clark  
Bil Clark  
Beth Corbin  
Cyndi Coulter  
June Creson  
Larry Crist  
Tim Curns  
Patrice Davies  
Seth Davis  
Brent Davy  
Margit Donhowe  
Debbie Erwin  
Peggy Faith

Helen Faith  
Mike Fritz  
Amanda Gailbreath  
Joe Gandolfi  
Kailey Graham  
Janna Gray  
LouAnne Gwartney  
Willow Hahn  
Marylee Hale  
Gypsy Hall  
John Hanna  
Laurie Hansen  
Blake Harding  
Arlene Hayward  
Katie Hebdon  
Vicki Henderson  
Jody Hull  
Gary Hundt  
Jim Jameson  
Linda Jarsky  
Bridget Lake-Meyers  
Sadie Larsen  
Wayne Larsen  
Kevin Laughlin  
Eric Lecht  
Howard Little  
Ron Lopez  
Debi Mahler  
Kevin Malloy  
Nancy Malloy  
Mike Mancuso  
Kathy Martin  
Kathy McCoy  
Matt McCoy  
Marylee McGown  
Nanette McGrath  
Rhonda Merryman  
McCall Mescher  
Makenna Meyers  
Joanne Michaels  
Cheryl Minckler  
Sue Moeller  
Dave Monsees  
Nancy Moore

Caroline Morris  
Daniel Murphy  
Terri Muse  
Bronwyn Myers  
Tom Neale  
Conor O'Brien  
Carolyn O'Connell  
Lori Ode  
Carter Pardue  
Diana Parker  
Harriet Parkinson  
Benita Putzler  
Barb Recla  
Emily Rigg  
Susan Riley  
Doug Rose  
Bob Rudkin  
Lori Ruman  
Arleen Schaeffer  
Kirsten Severud  
Harriet Shaklee  
Howard Sheppa  
Katie Sheppa  
Simon Shockey  
Aubrey Smith  
Justin Smith  
Lorna Snowden  
Julie Steele  
Al Straessle  
Sandy Sweet  
Terry Thomas  
Steve Tornga  
Kayla Towles  
Suzanne Troje  
Bonnie Urresti  
Herbert Vester  
Roger Wallace  
Jane Wallace  
Judy Walsberg  
Kevin Wilson  
Judy Wojcicki



*A tea party in the Hunting Cabin. Photo by Victoria Runnoe, IDFG.*