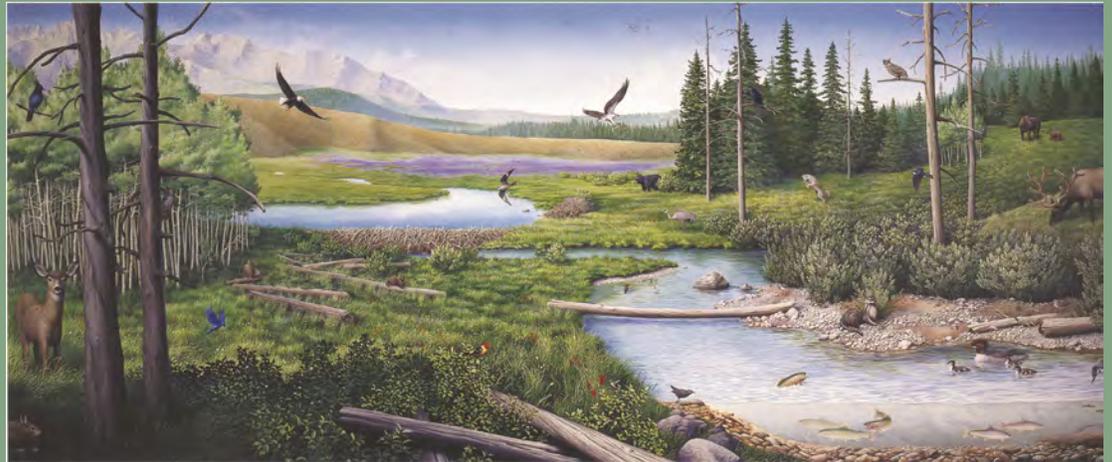


The Nature Center Stream



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



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A Winter Sense of Wonder
From the MK Nature Center staff



MK Nature Center - Your Face-to-Fish Connection

Nature Center Notes

Vicky Runnoe, Conservation Education Supervisor, IDFG



As 2018 winds down, I find myself reflecting on the one project that represents everything that makes the MK Nature Center such a special place---the signage project. Yes, the signs are beautiful, engaging and informative. And they add unexpected splashes of color to a winter-drab landscape while also complimenting the riot of spring and summer flowers. But what makes this project so meaningful to me are the many people who worked together to make the new sign project possible. It truly was a collaborative effort between staff, volunteers, contractors, members of Friends of MK Nature Center, and the many generous donors who contributed to this project.

Such collaboration is reflective of the special place the nature center holds in the hearts of our community. It is truly wonderful to see our visitors interacting with the new signs. On the day after its installation, I came upon a gaggle of small children excitedly climbing up on the sturgeon bench. Two parents gathered the kids together to see if, sitting side-by-side, they all measured up to a sturgeon. Photos were taken and as the group wandered away, I overheard one of the parents say, "this is awesome, what a great new addition!" I smiled and walked back across the bridge.

We look forward to seeing you in the New Year!



Clockwise starting with above: Mink tracks, mule deer tracks, squirrel tracks, raccoon tracks, and a fight on the bridge! Photos by Sara Focht.

Wildlife Weekend Public Programs



MK Nature Center



**WEEKEND
PUBLIC
PROGRAMS
2019**

Winter/Spring Programs:

SUNDAY, JANUARY 13th-Bears of Idaho Come learn about black bears and grizzly bears in Idaho. How are they alike and how are they different? Find out how they live, what they eat, and how to be safe when in bear country. 1-4 pm. Free (donations encouraged).

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 3rd-Do you LOVE wildlife? Make Wildlife Valentines for your whole class! 1-4 pm. \$5 for a set of 30 valentines. You make the wildlife-themed cards....we provide all the materials, workspace, patterns, examples and snacks. Limit 50 kids. Register at sara.focht@idfg.idaho.gov.

SUNDAY, MARCH 10th-Beaver Chew Beavers are our largest rodent. They have some neat features that help them survive. Come learn about beavers and build a beaver dam of your own! 1-4 pm. Free (donations encouraged).

SUNDAY, APRIL 14th-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-Worm's World Worms are so weird...cool....gross! Learn about the secret lives of worms...how they live and why we absolutely need them! 1-4 pm. Free (donations encouraged).

Life Under the Snow!

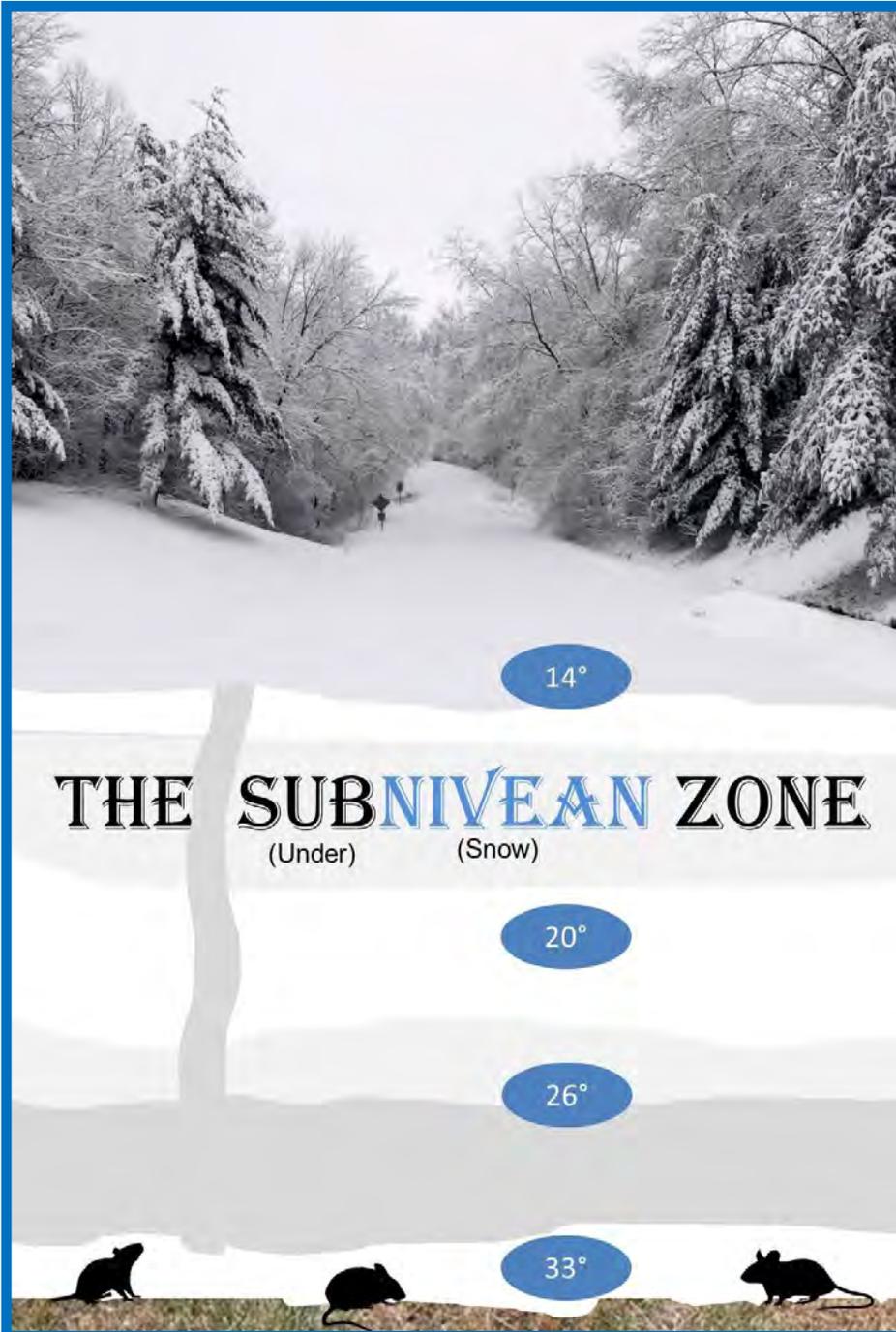
Sara Focht, Wildlife Educator, IDFG MKNC

Most of us think of animals hibernating or migrating away during the winter, but many animals tolerate cold temperatures and have adaptations to do so. One interesting survival technique for small rodents is to occupy the warm (ok, that is a stretch) area just above the surface of the ground, but below the insulating snow layer. This area is called the subnivean (sub=under, nivean=snow) zone. Small mammals take advantage of the degrading snowflakes and sublimation of snow, which happens at the ground level, to tunnel around and look for food on the surface of the ground. This may seem like a super safe wintery place to be, but there are

dangers! Many predators have learned to hunt the subnivean environment. Foxes can dive down deep for rodents, using their excellent hearing to “home in” on undersnow sounds. Owl talons can plunge through many feet of snow to catch prey that they never see until captured. Weasels have a great tactic...just tunnel down through the snow and munch on mice!

Other dangers of living in the subnivean zone include flooding during the spring thaw or roof collapse!

Next time you are skiing or snowshoeing on some thick snow, remember the life that goes on beneath your feet!



Pocket gopher eskers found in the spring and summer are evidence of animals tunneling at ground level and under ground level during the winter!
Photo by Sara Focht.



Spring Lecture Series at MK Nature Center



January 24th: Paleontology in Idaho: A brief synopsis of the scientific field of paleontology followed by some paleontological features and facts from Idaho. Presented by Joe Gandolfi.

March 13th: Federal Lands 101: Protecting Resources: Dennis McLane will teach us about the constitutional foundation and historical evolution of the agencies that provide protection to our federal lands and resources. How did Federal land come to be and should we change it?

March 26th: A Thriving Future for Boise...and the World: with Bas Hargrove (Senior Policy Advisor with The Nature Conservancy). TNC is working here in Idaho and around the World. Find out what they are doing and how to help.

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

May 20th: Natural history of the White Sturgeon: 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. All lectures are 6:30-8 pm.

MK Nature Center 600 S. Walnut Street, Boise, ID 86712 (208) 334-2225



Left to right: Earthworms mating in the springtime, photo by Sara Focht. Jeremy Emmerson teaches a Bears of Idaho class, photo by MKNC. A child enjoying the Boise Foothills, photo by Christian Nafzger. Cooper's hawk, photo by MKNC.

2018 Bird Seed Sale

We have the best community of supporters! Thanks everyone for coming out to buy your seed here at the Nature Center. Huge thanks also go to Boyd & Julie Steele owners of Wild Birds Unlimited who donate the seed at cost, so we can raise money for the Nature Center. Making this event even more fun, is working with such wonderful volunteers who help make things run smoothly.



Free Parking Rakes in the Donations



A big thank you goes to Susie Carlson (pictured left) for organizing the donation collection at the Nature Center's parking lot for the Boise State Football home games. Thank you to all the volunteers: Willow Hahn, Al Strassle, Kristin Gnojewski, Jael & Cody Parker (pictured above) for helping Susie! Parking at the Nature Center is always free, but BSU fans were generous with their donations.

Species Spotlight - The Common Poorwill

Phalaenoptilus nuttallii Tess Wolfenson, AmeriCorps Member, MK Nature Center

The Common Poorwill is a funny little bird and is the smallest in the Nightjar family. I was delighted to learn that THE John James Audubon named this little fella. The most interesting fact about the Common Poorwill is that it is the only known bird to hibernate! They lower their body temperature, heartbeat and breathing for days or weeks at a time and enter a state of torpor. Torpor allows them to go long periods of time without eating since their prey (night-flying insects) are not as active in the colder months. Perhaps this is not true hibernation as a snake or frog might do, but it is the closest thing to hibernation in the bird realm!

They nest in a shady, shallow scrape on the ground at the base of a hill. Their clutch size is two and their young are semi-precocial meaning they are hatched in a semi-advanced state and can feed themselves almost immediately. They often imitate snakes hissing if the nest is disturbed or they feel threatened. Their diet consists of nocturnal insects such as moths and beetles and they regurgitate a pellet like birds of prey! The poorwill name comes from the droning *poor-will* sound they make dusk until dawn in the springtime.

Another fun fact is that during the Lewis and Clark Expedition in 1804, Meriwether Lewis observed a hibernating Common Poorwill in North Dakota. However, the Hopi Tribe were likely the first to recognize their torpor state since they called them *hölchko* meaning "The Sleeping One." You are more likely to hear rather than see a nocturnal Common Poorwill during the summer in Southern Idaho!



The Common Poorwill. Photo by Dominic Sherony on Flickr (CC BY-SA2.0)

Donors and Volunteers

The following people volunteered their time to the MK Nature Center between
October 1-December 31, 2018

Pam Bly
KayLynn Broadhead
Susie Carlson
Patrice Davies
Seth Davis
Brent Davy
Margit Donhowe
Maria Donovan
Jeremy Emerson
Bob Everhart
Joseph Gandolfi
Kristin Gnojewski
Katarzyna Grabrec
Janna Gray

Willow Hahn
Marylee Hale
Julie Hall
Gary Hundt
Linda Jarsky
Carolyn Larson
Wayne Larson
Cindy Marlow
Jackie Murphy
Teri Muse
Bronwyn Myers
Tom Neale
Karing Nial
Damon Noller

Cody Parker
Jael Prin
Barb Recla
Emily Rigg
Susan Riley
Arlene Schaeffer
Klaudia Schaller
Howard Sheppa
Crikky Simon
Julie Steele
Al Straessle
Roger Wallace
Kevin Wilson
Pete Zimowsky

The following people and businesses donated money or materials to the MK Nature Center between
October 1 and December 31, 2018 (this list does not include donations to Friends of MK Nature Center)

A–Mark Foundation
Emily Wagner
Hilda Packard
Jeannie Steele
Sharon & Russ Keifer
Wild Birds Unlimited

Friends of MK Nature Center purchased a full set of beautiful new table cloths. Our last set lasted forever and were starting to look worn. We appreciate this donation so much as we use these ftable cloths for special events, volunteer appreciation dinners and more!

