



# The Nature Center Stream

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



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## New AmeriCorps Member on Board



Photo by Bridgett Ball.

Austin Reich will be joining the MK Nature Center team from October 1, 2019-August 30th, 2020. As a recent graduate from Northwest Nazarene University (NNU), Austin wants to share his passion for nature and education with the community as he prepares for graduate school next fall.

Austin comes to the Nature Center with experience both with teaching and managing volunteers. At NNU, Austin was a Research Assistant, Head Animal Caretaker, and an Animal Outreach Educator. He also was a Zoo Teen at the Zoo Boise and later became the Zoo Boise's Teen Volunteer Coordinator.

The MK Nature Center's AmeriCorps Member is sponsored and paid for by Friends of MK Nature Center and is provided through Palouse Clearwater Environmental Institute. We appreciate the financial support from our Friends Group, the program support from PCEI and the hard work and dedication from our participating members. Welcome Austin!



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

# Nature Center Notes

Vicky Runnoe, Conservation Education Supervisor, IDFG



As many of us have discovered, it is often the small things that make the greatest impact. Here at the nature center, small things often yield amazing results. So it was this summer with our education booths.

These booths are small, simple, informal opportunities for visitors to learn. Set up in the nature center courtyard and staffed by Idaho Master Naturalist volunteers, the booths covered a wide variety of topics. Each booth offered hands-on elements to encourage engagement and provoke questions. Topics included Idaho's wild dogs and cats; horns and antlers; Idaho's mustelids; sagebrush ecosystems; Idaho's anadromous fishes; scat and tracks and more. Using a variety of props including pelts, skulls, mounts, plaster casts, bottled scat (seriously!), bouquets of sagebrush, popcorn fish "eggs," and much more, the tables were attractive and intriguing to visitors. Some folks would stop by for a quick look while others lingered to learn as much as they could. Rotating topics provided our return visitors with new opportunities each visit. Between June 1 and mid-August, 63 booths attracted 6,000 visitors!



I particularly enjoyed observing the interactions between volunteers and visitors. Each volunteer brought their own unique techniques to engaging visitors. They deftly juggled questions from children and adults, encouraging unsure visitors to touch props, sniff samples or guess what items might be. And they did

it all with a welcoming smile even when temperatures began to warm. Equally rewarding was seeing how much our volunteers enjoyed learning new things. They found great satisfaction in sharing their new knowledge with nature center visitors. Small things indeed yield large impacts!

*Photos from top to bottom: Idaho Master Naturalist, Kevin Laughlin shows visitors pelts and skulls. Idaho Master Naturalist Sue Moeller staffs a booth about animals who live in the sagebrush-steppe habitat. Idaho Master Naturalist Jenny Kuykendoll shows pelts and pictures of Idaho's weasels. Photos by Tess Wolfenson.*



# First Day of Issue Ceremony

*Vicky Runnoe, Conservation Education Supervisor, IDFG*

On Tuesday, July 9<sup>th</sup> the nature center had the honor of hosting the official dedication and national release of the United States Postal Service's Forever Frogs stamps---a First Day of Issue Ceremony. It began in January with an out-of-the-blue email inquiry from a postal official in Washington D.C. He explained the event, finishing with the query "Do you think MK Nature Center would be an appropriate venue?" "YES!!!" was our enthusiastic reply and after official approval from our agency, the Idaho Dept. of Fish and Game, we were off running or maybe hopping . . .

Nature center staff members learned a lot about philately and philatelists (ie. stamp collecting and stamp collectors) over the intervening months. We discovered that collectors travel great distances to attend these ceremonies and purchase newly released stamps, First Day Covers and other associated memorabilia. We also found out that being chosen as a ceremony location is quite an honor. We were thrilled and excited to show off our facility on the national postal stage.

The ceremony program speakers highlighted frogs, their vital ecological role and the importance they serve as gateway animals, introducing children to the wonders of the natural world. The 223 guests also learned about how stamp topics are selected and a bit about the history of stamps. Several chorus frogs were also in attendance and although they did not say much, received a lot of attention from some of the younger attendees and the media.

Overall, it was an exciting experience! The nature center staff enjoyed working closely with Postal Service colleagues in Washington, D.C. as well as locally. These folks provided important guidance and assistance in helping us make sure that frogs and their postal images were dedicated with a splash.

*Stamps labeled clockwise starting in upper left: squirrel frog, northern leopard frog, Pacific chorus frog, American green tree frog. Photo provided by USPS.*



*Ceremony speakers listed left to right: Ed Schriever-Director, IDFG; Elaine Clegg-President Pro Tempore, Boise City Council; Tom Samra-Vice President Facilities, USPS; John Cossell-Biology Department Chair, Northwest Nazarene University; Victoria Runnoe-Conservation Education Supervisor, IDFG; Michael Mirides-District Manager, USPS; Abby Hambright-national anthem singer.*





## FALL Lecture Series at MK Nature Center-2019



**Tuesday October 1st** :Why is it *THAT* color? Dr. Terry Panhorst will share with us how mineral color in rocks is the *most* noticeable and *least* reliable characteristic for mineral identification. See examples of minerals and their color variations.

**Monday, October 21st**: Bird expert, Terry Rich will cover types of feeders and seeds, the value of water in winter, and other features that make a backyard attractive to birds. We'll also talk about how to identify the most common birds coming to feeders in the Boise area. Finally, we'll look at Project FeederWatch, one of the easiest bird data collection programs out there.

**Wednesday, November 6th**: Jan Shirley from Wiggly Composters will be here to help you learn about how and why to compost with Red Wigglers. Find out how to set up a worm compost pile, how to take care of it and why it is important! It is time to turn your food and paper waste into a valuable resource!

**Monday, December 9th**: Lance Davison will tell us about the Treasure Valley Canopy Network and show us how regional public-private partnerships are building collaborations that are having a lasting impact on the health and vitality of our urban forests and people. He will share information about the mission, current programs, and discuss how you can engage and support sustainable growth and improved environmental and human health throughout the Treasure Valley.

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

Google MK Nature Center to check website for details and/or program changes

## Farewell Tess

*Sara Focht, Wildlife Educator, IDFG*

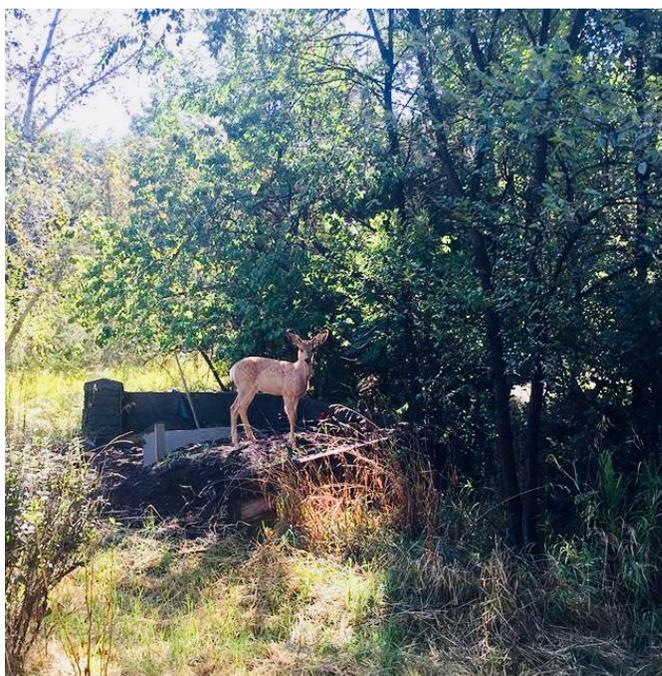


*Tess Wolfenson, pictured here with her favorite co-worker, Wilson.*

Our AmeriCorps Program runs from October 1- August 31st, leaving a void in September. As I reflect back on September and as I prepare to train a new AmeriCorps Member, I am so thankful for Tess Wolfenson and her two years of service to MKNC through AmeriCorps. Tess came to us in 2017 and gave her heart and soul to the Nature Center. Her energy, positive attitude, long hours, and most importantly...good humor invigorated me to strive do my best every day.

AmeriCorps members donate 1700 hours per year to meet the minimum qualifications to finish the program. They receive a small monthly stipend and a \$4,500 education award at the end of their service. Being an AmeriCorps member is a big commitment, one that requires sacrifice and dedication. Tess worked alongside Nature Center staff every day with energy and professionalism. We wish Tess the best in her bright future!

# Images of Fall



*Photos clockwise starting in upper left. Kokanee salmon can be viewed most years at the Nature Center in the first two weeks of September. Colorful leaves aplenty. Caddisflies are abundant in the Boise River. Flowers to seeds. Deer visit the NC regularly. Fungus pops up in the fall. Paper wasp nests become inactive and fall to the ground. Students bird along Boise River. Photos by MKNC staff.*



Adriana Larkin-Growing up in Kalispell, Montana I enjoyed everything outdoors, from hiking, fishing and swimming in the summer months, to skiing, snow shoeing and ice skating in the winter months. I stayed in Kalispell and attended Flathead Valley Community College where I earned an Associate of Science Degree. After college I briefly moved to Texas, where I worked at a garden center and gained a greater appreciation for everything green. However, missing the four seasons and hiking I decided to move closer to home. I am currently working at the MK Nature Center, where I get to enjoy talking to other people who share a love for the outdoors. I hope to one day have a career in environmental science.

*Adriana (above) and Madie (right) are part time employees at MK Nature Center and do a little of everything inside the building and on the grounds.*



My name is Madie and I'm a junior at Boise State University majoring in biology and minoring in chemistry. After BSU, I'd like to attend graduate school or do research related to plants or animals. I have a beagle named Sam and a leopard gecko named Eco. I'm super artistic and love being outdoors!

*Maddy (below) and Harriet (bottom) were summer interns at the Nature Center during the summer of 2019. Photos by Sue Dudley.*



My name is Maddy Bigelow, and I'm going to be a senior at Borah High School. I've always loved being in the outdoors, so when I found out I could work at the MK Nature Center I was really excited! I plan to major in Wildlife Resources at University of Idaho, so I knew that working at the MK Nature Center would help get me started on my path to becoming a Conservation Officer. I love working at the MK Nature Center because it feels like a second family to me and I'm always learning new things from people around me. Everyone is so understanding and willing to help out if I make a mistake or have a question. I'm excited to come back next summer after I graduate to learn more about wildlife and what else it has to offer.



My name is Harriet Parkinson and I'll be a senior at Boise High this fall and I have loved having the opportunity to be outside volunteering with the MK Nature Center this summer! After I finish high school, I plan on going to college to study Mechanical Engineering with a focus on battling global climate change through innovation. I've recently become very passionate about preserving the beautiful natural landscapes found locally here in Boise, as well as around the world. I wanted to volunteer at the MK Nature Center this summer because I know it has a significant role in teaching people young and old to find wonder in the outdoors. People gain an appreciation for the outdoors when they come to the Nature Center which then cultivates a desire to preserve those natural landscapes.

# Ecology Heroes

*Sue Dudley, Volunteer Coordinator and Gift Shop Manager*

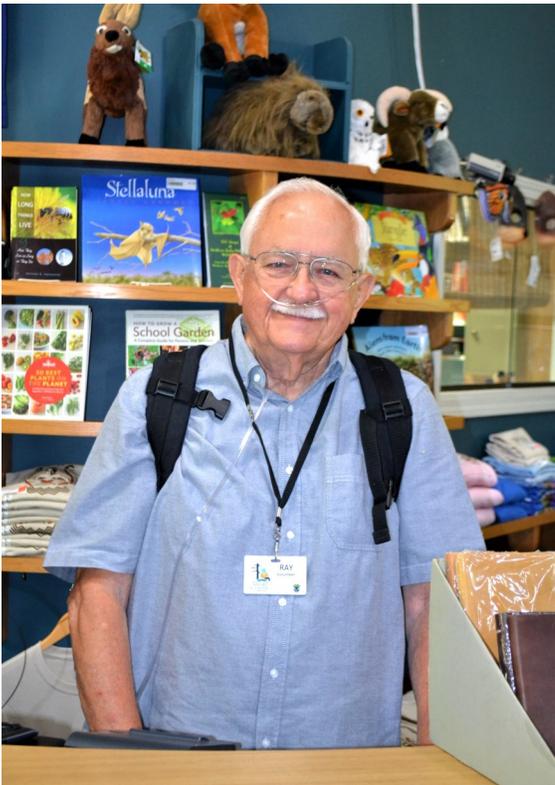
I have spent many years with these awesome people, teaching at the Ecology station at the Salmon and Steelhead Days Event. Every year when I ask, they agree to help without batting an eye. I really couldn't have run the station without them! I wanted to say a huge THANK YOU, to Chris Harrington, Evan Brown, Lori Adams, Tony Lamansky, Adare Evans, and Tim Copeland!! (Adare & Tim not pictured).



*Clockwise starting in upper left: Sue Dudley, Chris Harrington and Evan Brown get ready to teach at the Ecology Station. Evan Brown gets kids excited about spawning salmon. Chris Harrington explains how returning salmon provide nutrients to Idaho's plants and animals. Lori Adams waits for kids to arrive...always with her signature smile. Chris Harrington, Tony Lamansky, and Evan Brown still smiling after teaching 2,000 kids. Photos by Sue Dudley.*

# In Remembrance of Ray Heady

*Sue Dudley, Volunteer Coordinator and Gift Shop Manager, MKNC*



This past July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2019 we lost a dear friend to the MK Nature Center, Ray Heady.

Ray started volunteering at the nature center in the fall of 2012, helping with Idaho Salmon and Steelhead Days, International Migratory Bird Day, and Bird Seed Sale events. However, my wonderful friendship with Ray truly began fall 2014 when he asked to volunteer in our gift shop.

Ray was great to work with; he was always ready to help do whatever needed to be done. He was always so kind, asking after the well being of each staff member as well as my own. Ray was always willing to go out of his way for another person. Everyone here called him friend and looked forward to when he showed up to cover his shift in the gift shop.

As I got to know Ray, I was in awe of all the things he had accomplished in his life; his hobbies alone were impressive. He was an avid birder, photographer, Master Naturalist, Advanced Master Gardener, gun collector, knife maker, and wood carver.

This latter hobby, is one of my fondest memories of Ray, watching him work on his latest carving project at the front desk, when it was slow in the store. For several years Ray would make hand carved walking sticks and give them to me for our volunteer potlucks. We would draw a name out of a hat and one lucky volunteer would become the owner of a Ray Heady original walking stick. He also blessed myself and other staff members with beautiful handmade treasures as well.

When you walk around the nature center you will see Ray's little touches everywhere. He made all the wooden directional signs on the grounds, the sign in the pollinator garden and the delightful wooden mouse eating cheese in our log cabin. All these touches added up to 6 years of volunteering and logging in a massive 1,775 hours, he poured his heart into the nature center

I am heartbroken over Ray's passing. He became so much more than just a friend to me; I felt like he became one of my own family members. It was an honor knowing him, and I will miss him very much.

In the end, volunteers like Ray are what make the MK Nature Center such a wonderful place to be, like one big family!





The 2019 class of the Sagebrush-steppe Chapter.

# 2020 Idaho Master Naturalist Class

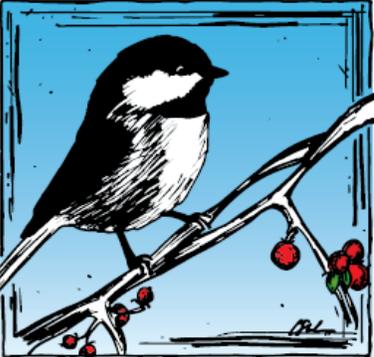
Are you interested in the Sagebrush-steppe Chapter of the Idaho Master Naturalist Program? If you are, information and registration can be found at this link. <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1lvxn314S06BT4zkR74QQNj8L18IaII95>. Registration forms and payments will be accepted at the Idaho Botanical Garden no earlier than November 1, 2019. Classes begin February 25th, 2020.

The Sagebrush-steppe Chapter is sponsored by the MK Nature Center, the Idaho Botanical Garden, and the Golden Eagle Audubon Society Chapter. Chapter members attend 40 hours of classes covering different nature-related topics and donate 40 hours of volunteer service prior to December 31, 2020 to become certified or “finish” the program.

If you enjoy learning about nature and want to give back to conservation in Boise...and you enjoy meeting like-minded people, this chapter may be for you!

Contact Sara Focht at [sara.focht@idfg.idaho.gov](mailto:sara.focht@idfg.idaho.gov) for more information or to ask questions.

**Stock up on winter bird seed & Find that special gift**



at the MK Nature Center's  
**HOLIDAY  
BIRD SEED SALE**  
December 6th & 7th  
9 AM to 5PM  
600 S. Walnut St.  
Boise, Idaho 83712  
**Premium Bird Seed**

Several seed varieties to choose from.  
Large selection of holiday gift items  
children books, toys, jewelry, and more!

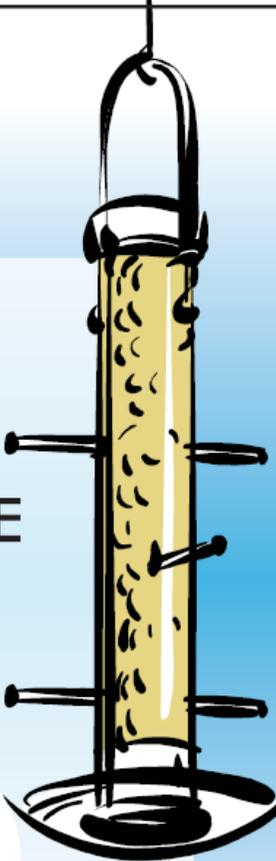
**Activities for the whole family**  
Saturday December 6th  
Live Bird Presentations at  
11:30, 12:30, & 1:30  
Kid's Craft 11 to 2pm

Questions? Call 208-287-2900  
Or email [sue.dudley@idfg.idaho.gov](mailto:sue.dudley@idfg.idaho.gov)

**All Proceeds Support MK Nature Center**



Presented by:  
MORRISON KNUDSEN  
**NATURE  
CENTER**  
BOISE, IDAHO

# Donors and Volunteers

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

**Harmon Travel, Nadene Kranz, Trout Unlimited, Hilda Packard, Wild Birds Unlimited**

The following people volunteered their time to the MK Nature Center between July 1st, September 30th.

Leshanda Allen	Janna Gray	Diane Merryman	Randy Stevens
Joanie Allen	Kelsey Green	Cheryl Minckler	Kayla Stewart
Michele Andrew	Willow Hahn	Sue Moeller	Nicole Stewart
Emilia Arrington	Marylee Hale	Terri Muse	Al Straessle
Cidney Beitia	Amanda Harwood	Bronwyn Myers	Christine Straessle
Jessica Belgrade	Arlene Hayward	Tom Neale	Sandra Sweet
Jon Bender	Alisson Henderson	Karing Nial	Steve Tornga
Tina Bennett	Brian Henderson	Damon Noller	Suzanne Troje
Steve Berg	Kassi Heringer	Anna Nyman	Margaret Tuttle
Madison Bigelow	James Herzog	Carolyn O'Connell	Bonnie Urresti
Dave Blatchley	Cassidy Hill	Stephen Parker	Roger Wallace
Pam Bly	Steven Jennings	Harriet Parkinson	Quentin Watson
Bill Brudenell	Ashley Jones	Alysha Phillips	Russ Weedon
Ingrid Brudenell	Forrest Kelly	Scott Plumley	Lydia Wildman
Enrique Camarena	Kendall Kester	Nick Porter	Whitney Wilmes
Kimberly Chmura	Russ Kiefer	Allen Powell	Kevin Wilson
Taylor Coleman	Sherry Kistner	Barbara Price	Ben Winkler
Bill Copeland	Mick Klein	Barbara Price	Judy Wojcicki
Danielle Corson	Sandra Kurka	Benita Putzier	Tess Wolfenson
June Creson	Jenny Kuykendoll	Charley Rains	Lowell Wood
Patrice Davies	Sadie Larsen	Mary Reid	
Seth Davis	Carolyn Larson	Amanda Richael	
April Davis	Kevin Laughlin	Emily Rigg	
Brent Davy	Travis Long	Cherly Roberts	
Gabe Derrick	Ron Lopez	Sara Rogers	
Louis DeWitt	Jessica Lucas	Andie Root	
Nancy DeWitt	Gloria Luciano	Alma Sabanovic	
Kevin Drews	Cindy Marlow	Arleen Schaeffer	
Bob Everhart	Katelynn Martin	Klaudia Schaller	
Eric Fereday	Susan Martin	Harriet Shaklee	
Lauri Foss	Nathaniel McBride	Sam Sharr	
Sterling Foster	Barbara McGillivary	Joshua Shelvock	
Colleen Gee	Nanette McGrath	Howard Sheppa	
Charly Goettsche	Kirstyn McKay	Katie Sheppa	
Heinrik Goettsche	Robert McNaught	Aubrey Smith	
Adam Graham	Damaris Melick	Bobbie Smith	
	Jared Mercer	Julie Steele	



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