



The Nature Center Stream



W I N T E R

The Seasonal Newsletter of the MK Nature Center

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Winter Wednesdays; A LUNCH AND LEARN SERIES PRESENTED AT THE MK NATURE CENTER



January 11-Tracking Wildlife in the Winter

January 25- Raptors of the Boise River

February 8- Care and Feeding of Backyard Birds

February 22- Winter Survival of Deer and Elk

March 7 - Creating a Garden Plan with Native Plants

Join our favorite experts with a brand new lunch and learn series

All Winter Wednesdays are from 11:00am—12:30pm at the MK Nature Center. Gourmet soup and salad lunches from Open Table Catering.

Cost is \$16.50 per session, per person.

Register and purchase tickets at www.brownpapertickets.com

Limited to 20 participants

For more information, please call 208-334-2225

MK Nature Center-Your Face-to-Fish Connection



WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW ABOUT MKNC

Dave Cannamela, MK Nature Center Superintendent

Everyone knows “we do education.” You know about our educational programs and events, but what you may not know is that the Nature Center hosts many community service volunteers. These folks might be students who must complete community service as part of their school curriculum. They might also be adults, who got into a bit of trouble with the law, and were court ordered to do community service. These latter types are from all walks of life...we all make mistakes! Most of them come to the “job” with unique and valuable talents and skills such as carpentry skills, manual labor skills, electrician skills, and office skills. Susan Ziebarth (MKNC) works with each person to find the right kind of work for them. The benefit of these people to us is clear, but this year, we were enlightened to learn that some of them are really quite benefitted by us! One guy in particular invited the MKNC staff to his rehabilitation program graduation. At that event, he spoke of how his experience at MKNC was positive and how he was treated with respect. He lauded the work we do and suggested that everyone visit MKNC. The work to organize and supervise these volunteers is worth the effort for us...and we hope we continue to be beneficial to them and the community.

GOODBYE FRIEND



Houdini, one of MK Nature Center's American Kestrels, died on October 30th, 2011 of natural causes. Houdini spent 8 years in the outdoor aviary at MK Nature Center and was nearly 11 years old when he died. Houdini helped us teach thousands of people about the amazing adaptations raptors have. Visitors could see up close the curved beak, sharp talons and wing shape that make falcons such good hunters. Houdini also helped us show visitors how male and female birds are often colored differently and the reasons for that! Thank you, Houdini!

AFRICAN CHILDREN'S CHOIR VISITS MK

On Tuesday, October 25th, we were honored to host the African Children's Choir for an educational program. Though they came early in the morning, they were bright-eyed and eager to learn about Idaho's wild-life. After their tour, they serenaded us in the lobby with a lovely hymn that filled the room and our hearts. We enjoyed these talented international visitors!

Learn more about the African Children's Choir at <http://africanchildrenschoir.com>



PARKSIDE SCHOOL AND MK- A PERFECT PARTNERSHIP!

Patty Rowan, the founder and director of Parkside School, plans ahead. Twice a year, she comes to the Nature Center with her calendar and schedules all the programs for the upcoming 6 months. Parkside students come to MK Nature Center 1-2 times a month all year long. They are our most regular group and we absolutely love getting to know the kids personally.

Because the kids come so often, they have participated in all of our regular programs. This has given us an opportunity to create NEW programs just for them. We often use these new programs for other groups, so thanks to Parkside School, we are always improving our program repertoire.

Here are just a few programs Parkside kids have come to experience in 2011:

Beavers, Bears, Birds, Snakes, Owls, Butterflies, Properties of Water, Spiders, Mushrooms, Falcons, Animals Getting Ready for Winter, and Conifer Trees.

<http://parksideschoolboise.com>



Adelaide St. Michell braves the cold with a smile while at MK Nature Center in December. The December program was about conifer trees and the amazing cones they all produce. Students were interested to learn that cones produce seeds, just like flowers!

HOW CAN WE STAY IN TOUCH?

We love to let you know what is happening here at the Nature Center. From random wildlife encounters, to something really interesting that happens seasonally (like snakes coming out of hibernation), we need to keep you informed.

The Nature Center is a dynamic, organic place filled with ongoing projects, donations, school kids, visitors, and critters. Please LIKE our facebook page, sign up to receive our newsletter online, or better yet, come down for a visit.



VOLUNTEER POTLUCK PARTY

Wednesday, February 8, 2012

MK NATURE CENTER

LIVE MUSIC!

FOOD FAMILY

FRIENDS

FUN

RSVP to Cass.meissner@idfg.idhaho.gov

All MKNC volunteers and supporters invited!

THE NATURE CENTER GOES LOCAL

In keeping with responsible environmental behavior, the **MK Nature Center Gift Shop** now carries over **30** items that are either locally produced or made in the USA. These items range from books and toys to socks, jewelry, and more.

Our latest Idaho Artisan is **Loretta Pompeii Flick with Pompeii Designs**. With a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree Loretta has come a long way in her creations. She uses natural stone and shell with intricate designs in the jewelry she creates for the MK Nature Center.



MK Nature Center-Your Face-to-Fish Connection

VOLUNTEERS AT THE NATURE CENTER; MAKING A DIFFERENCE.

Thankfully many volunteers rolled up their sleeves this year to help us at the Nature Center. From events to routine chores, and everything in between our volunteers donated over 3,400 hours in 2011. Volunteer hours are like CASH to us! We use volunteer hours to match Federal grant money. We are required to generate and equivalent of \$65,000 in match to secure our grant and volunteer hours comprise the bulk of our match. From the entry level positions to customer service to advanced carpentry, they are all very valuable and allow us to keep the doors open and the stream flowing.

As we move to some planning for 2012; won't you consider volunteering? Perhaps you are already a volunteer and want to try something new. Here are some opportunities for this next year, outside of daily maintenance, weeds, critter care and customer service.

Event planning and marketing: Do you like to think and work outside the box? Do you have skills in theater, performing arts, set design, applied arts with a passion for environmental education? Do you love promotion, marketing, and coordination? If so, we would love to have you join us as we work on our education outreach events for 2012.

Sponsorships: We are seeking volunteers who would like to work at gathering sponsorships for us. This could include advertising coops for our events, material and cash donations, and sponsorship acknowledgement.

Artistic minded carpenter and painter: The nature center has a need for some large wood painted fish, that folks can put their faces in and snap fun photos of each other. These will be used for upcoming events this spring and on display for visitors to use.

Interested in volunteering? Contact Cass Meissner at 208-287-2901, or at cass.meissner@idfg.idaho.gov



Above: Rebecca Fritz cleans up after a hard day at Gyotaku. Right: Master Naturalist, Kevin Laughlin helps youth volunteers prep tables. Upper Right: Sandy Sweet hangs feather prints at Bird Day.

Thank you
MKNC
Volunteers!



MK Nature Center-Your Face-to-Fish Connection

A NEW YEAR'S WISH LIST

A new projector for the auditorium room. As you know, our auditorium has become a fairly popular meeting place. Audubon, Trout Unlimited, the Idaho Photographic Workshop, the Idaho Mountain Recreation Club, and the Idaho Native Plant Society, hold regular meetings here. In addition, many other groups meet here or otherwise use the room occasionally. The rental fees are much appreciated and necessary. Our projector has reached the end of its lifespan so we are in need of new one to meet the needs of our customers. The cost of a new projector is about \$1000. We have already received a \$500 donation from the Idaho Mountain Recreation Club, so another \$500 will get us there. Thanks for your help!

Internships. The Nature Center has been providing internships to the extent possible for students and other volunteers for the past several years. Typically we fund a College of Western Idaho Horticulture student (formerly the BSU program) to help with landscaping projects. With budgets getting a bit tighter, our ability to provide these "scholarships" is uncertain. These internships have proven to be very valuable to us, so it would be a shame not to be able to fund them. A typical internship is \$600 per student per year.

Critter Care. As you know, the Nature Center is a great place to go nose-to-nose with Stumpy the tiger salamander, Digger our burrowing owl, Txitx our kestrel, and the countless songbirds we attract to the bird viewing area. These are special opportunities, but they're not free. We spend in the neighborhood of \$2,000 per year to feed these guys. Your donations would really help!



Stumpy likes to eat worms, which we find at the Nature Center; and crickets with vitamins. Both the crickets and vitamins must be purchased! The auditorium is a great meeting space if the projector is bright enough-a new projector is in order. Help us out and donate today!

LOST AND FOUND



Killian, David, and MKNC employee Sue Dudley show off George shortly after his re-capture.

On July 31, 2011, George the gopher snake escaped when an MKNC staff member was cleaning his enclosure. He slithered under the new display (apparently, he thought he was out in the desert). We put out food, water and a heat pad to try to attract him back out in the open, but with no success. Months went by and some of us waived in hopes that he would return. On October 18th, 2011 nearly three months later, visitors Killian and David were in the wildlife gallery admiring the display when they spotted GEORGE just 5 feet from where he had disappeared. Welcome Home George! Well, I guess he never left.

FIFTH ANNUAL BIRD SEED SALE A SUCCESS WITH A TWIST



A month before our 5th annual Bird Seed Sale in 2011, Boise High School Junior, Katrina Inch approached us with an idea. She wanted to offer a childrens' activity at the sale to help kids make natural bird feeders and help them learn about the birds that might be attracted to them.

Katrina has volunteered for us before and we knew she was sharp as a tack and a hard worker.

What we did not know was just how ambitious, responsible, and thorough she is. Katrina planned the activities, solicited and received supply donations, took care of the advertising, recruited and trained volunteers, and staffed and supervised the whole event. Sixty-five kids came that day to make bagel birdfeeders, peanut butter pine cones and cereal/cranberry garland.

The annual Bird Seed Sale is our winter fundraiser and has always been "successful." But this year, thanks to Katrina, we had a much better event. Her inspiration and enthusiasm has prompted us to re-design the event in the future. Look for more great changes in 2012!

Above: Katrina Inch gets ready for an interview with Channel 2 at the Birdseed Sale. Left: Boise High Student and Bird Seed Sale volunteer, Hailey Chambers shows off a bagel bird feeder as she waits for kids to arrive.



A NEW GARDEN FOR 2012

BEFORE



College of Western Idaho Horticulture Student Dian Roberson took on the remodeling of our community garden as her senior project. When she started in September, the lot was a jumble of wildflowers, volunteer trees, and old bark chips. She designed and managed the project and set her fellow students to work!

We would like to thank Dian, CWI Intern Joe Purcell, the students of the CWI Horticulture Hardscape Lab Class and their instructor John Dodson.

With the guidance of Edna Vizgirdis (BNF), we have applied for a "More Kids in the Woods" grant that will help us to continue building this garden as another educational tool to add to our arsenal. Watch for photos of the progression in future newsletters.

DURING



Above: College of Western Idaho student "breaks trail" for the new path. Lower right: pavers were created by College of Western Idaho Hardscapes class. The pavers are decorated with plant designs.

AFTER

