



Idaho Naturalist news

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Dead Salmon	2
Native Plant Gardens	3
Pronghorn Pathways	4
Mammal Tracking	5
Idaho Bird Observatory	6
Wildlife Wars	7
Loving your Timesheet	8
Woods Creek Fen Tour	9
Camas NWR	10
Sacajawea's Bitterroot	11

The Idaho Naturalist News is a quarterly newsletter of the Idaho Master Naturalist Program.

Edited by Linda Kahn and Sara Focht

For questions & comments contact Sara Focht at Sara.Focht@idfg.idaho.gov.

Send contributions to Linda Kahn at hcms214@yahoo.com.



Idaho Master Naturalist Leaders Meet in Idaho Falls

Sara Focht, IMNP State Coordinator, IDFG

On October 8th and 9th, leaders from nearly all of the Idaho Master Naturalist chapters around the state convened in Idaho Falls for the first annual leadership meeting. We had a day and a half of great presentations, conversations, and the sharing of ideas.

Despite all the chapters being formed under the state Idaho Master Naturalist Program, each chapter has developed unique qualities and features. We found strength in our differences and were inspired by one another's insights. Chapter leaders work hard to maintain their chapters. I am impressed with the dedication and organization these employees and volunteers display. Thanks to all the Master Naturalist Chapter Leaders!



Standing from left to right: Barb North (Portneuf), Deborah Harrison (Upper Snake), James Henriksen (Upper Snake), Angela Stormberg (Upper Snake), Roger Piscitella (Upper Snake), Kari Archibald (BYU), Chad Walker (TVCC), Wendy Brockish (Upper Snake), Terri Bergmeier (Portneuf), Mary Van Fleet (Henry's Fork), Gretchen Vanek (Portneuf), Kim Shirley (Portneuf), Lisa Huttinger (Wood River Valley). Kneeling from left to right: Kyle Babbitt (Upper Snake and Henry's Fork), Sara Focht (state program), Elizabeth Dickey (Sagebrush-steppe).

Dead Salmon Bring Life!

Ron Lopez, Idaho Master Naturalist, Sagebrush-steppe Chapter

Below: boxes of dead steelhead await being hauled to headwater streams for dumping.



Above: Tom and Patty McGrath, Sagebrush-steppe Master Naturalists, lead Krista Muller (IDFG) to dump fish.

The most challenging and interesting volunteer activity I participated in this summer was the Stream Nutrient Enhancement Project. The purpose of the study was to recreate the effects of the salmon and steelhead runs prior to the placement of the dams on rivers. Before the dams, the fish migrated up many mountain streams to spawn. After spawning they died. Their bodies provided a source of nutrients in the water and the surrounding land. Since the dams have been in place, the runs have dwindled and no fish are returning to the headwaters of the Boise River.. For this reason, few ocean nutrients are provided to sustain life along these streams.

Volunteers hauled boxes of dead steelhead several hundred yards up some of these streams, dropping them off at different sites along the way. Some of these boxes weighed between 40 to 50 lbs, with thawing, dripping fluid from rotting fish and had a bit of an unpleasant smell. We also used different types of salmon carcass pellets made from the fish to test their effects and checking the results against the actual dead fish. This was very strenuous.

We met at 6:30 am, a few miles up the road to Idaho City. The first day, I rode with Krista Muller from Idaho Department of Fish and Game, a young energetic biologist. Even though I will be 70 in November, I felt I was in good shape but quickly found out I have limitations. When Krista found out how old I was she became very protective as if I were her grandfather. I shouldn't have mentioned my age to her. Most of the people involved in this project are graduate students from several universities. They were a great bunch of people to be around, most in their mid 20s, strong, energetic and enthusiastic.

The next day I rode with Gregg Servheen. He is a great organizer and always up-beat. I rode alone with him in his truck and got to know him and found him to be a very dedicated individual. He has great organizational and people skills. Both days were in excess of 10 hours and at the end of the second day my thighs hurt and I was stiff and tired but it was a great feeling to have been a small part of that group of people. It was well worth the efforts involved.

Stream Nutrient Enhancement Project partners listed on next page.

Henry's Fork Chapter Creates Native Plant Gardens At Harriman State Park

Bren Dismuk, Idaho Master Naturalist, Henry's Fork Chapter

Harriman State Park has always been a favorite of locals and of the Henry's Fork Chapter of the Idaho Master Naturalist Program. And this year is no exception: one of this year's many volunteer opportunities for the Henry's Fork Chapter (HFC) has been to create a native plants garden on the east side of the visitors center. I designed this project because I am an avid gardener and it has been a long-time dream of Jodi Vincent, Assistant Park Manager. We began planning last winter and it will take several seasons to accomplish our vision.

Work began on the garden in the spring after approval from park management on the design, budget, and definition of what a native plant garden in the park should look like. After some extensive research and a couple of design patterns, an agreement on the plan was reached.

Phase I on the garden began in June 2010 after the soil dried out a bit. Scraping off plant material, tilling, tilling, and more tilling, then raking rocks finally left a plot almost ready to plant. Some top soil and compost helped bring the soil to something a little more palatable for many plants and seeds. Of course, the Idaho Master Naturalists showed up for the more difficult work. Some of these fine folks included Cathy and Jeff Dufault, Nancy Williams, Gin Russell, C.D. and Myra Weaver, Phyllis King, Nancy Olson, Karen Davidson, Beth Fleming, Nancy Willard and others. And, one afternoon Gary Gross and family dropped in to assist.

This phase will be the section next to the visitor center and will be a wildflower garden. The plan is to have each individual plant labeled with both the common and scientific names. All plants will be native to Island Park, Idaho.

Future phases include many different grasses and shrubs and the already-growing trees in the garden area. One of the exciting features of the garden is a handicapped and stroller accessible footbridge to be installed over the dry creek from the parking lot. And later, as budgets allow there will be footpaths leading to picnic areas around the visitor center and near the parking lot areas. What a fantastic place to have a meal or break after a day of hiking, biking, horseback riding or fishing. Yes! Relax in the shade!

We are all so excited about the future prospects of the educational benefits and of increasing the aesthetics around the visitor center of Harriman State Park. This park is one of the many treasures we have in our backyard in Island Park and we want to give back to it as it gives to us.

Continued from previous page. [Stream Nutrient Enhancement Project Partners](#)

Idaho Department of Fish and Game
Idaho Power Company
Bonneville Power Administration

Michigan Tech University
University of Idaho
Idaho State University

Pronghorn Pathways

Andrew McKean, Idaho Master Naturalist, Wood River Valley Chapter-Sage School

You wouldn't find your normal teenager waking up at 6 o'clock on a Saturday, much less driving multiple hours to do community service. But that's exactly what I did on the 25th of September (National Public Lands Day) to snip the bottom section from a barbed wire fence at Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve. Other than the free cinnamon rolls, we had a greater reason for giving our weekend over to what seems like a silly task.

When American Pronghorns (mistakenly called antelope, which don't live in North America) migrate, they come across fences. Whereas deer and elk can easily jump over the fence, a pronghorn feels the need to climb under them instead. You would think that the fastest land animal in North America, with a top speed of 57 mph, would be able to jump a barbed wire fence. But to be able to run at such a high pace, the pronghorn needs long distance vision, making close up obstacles (e.g. fences) a menacing opponent. As these speed demons make their migrations through southern Idaho they run into fences such as those at the Craters of the Moon. Our mission was simple, to remove the bottom wire to provide as smooth a migration as possible.



Students from the Sage School (Wood River Valley Master Naturalists) pose next to the barbed wire fence they modified to help migrating American Pronghorn. Photo by Lennie Ramacher.

Once we arrived at the visitor center at Craters of the Moon, we were given a short briefing, some of the cinnamon rolls mentioned earlier, and we were off. After a short drive on a dirt road we were at our destination, a fence that bordered the park, which also climbed up a sizable hill. With our large group for National Public Lands Day, the clipping took little time. Two groups split, one to hike half way up and work down, the other to work up and meet in the middle. Once we enjoyed a short lunch break and took some photos, it was time to finish the second half of the hill. Now that the system had been practiced, the second round took less time than the first, and our job was done.



We made the slow walk down, collected a mile and a half of barbed wire, conversed and enjoyed the wonderful weather in southern Idaho, and stopped to take pictures of various insects and landscapes. When we got to the bottom we filled the back of a pick-up truck with our 'prize catch.' After our final group photo and our good byes we left to return to our homes.

A truck full of barbed wire was the prize of the day. Thanks to the Sage School students, National Public Lands Day, and Craters of the Moon Monument and Preserve. Photo by Lennie Ramacher.

Mammal Tracking Research

Mary VanFleet, Idaho Master Naturalist, Henry's Fork Chapter

The Henry's Fork Chapter in Island Park is one of two chapters (the other is the Upper Snake Chapter) that will be involved in a unique large mammal tracking research study conducted by Nicholas Sharp of the Wildlife Conservation Society, and Ph.D. students at University of Montana. The study is sponsored by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game and the Idaho Department of Transportation. The project focuses on the study of moose and elk migration corridors and their movement across Hwy 20 in the Island Park area as they migrate in spring and fall to their respective seasonal feeding grounds. The objective of the study is to reduce animal-vehicle collisions. A portion of the study will be to conduct track surveys



Grizzly bear tracks are common in the Island Park area. Photo by Mary VanFleet.

along Hwy 20 to determine specifically where moose and elk are crossing the highway.

The Master Naturalists who have volunteered for this study will be trained by a professional tracker to identify moose and elk tracks. The Naturalists will be monitoring stretches of Hwy 20 during the fall and spring migrations for evidence of the animals crossing the highway, and then documenting the tracks with GPS coordinates. Determining whether the animal approached the highway, walked along it, turned back from the highway, or crossed it will be recorded. The data from the IMN observations will be used to supplement the main portion of the study, which will involve collaring migrating moose and elk, and plotting their movements. The data will also be used by the Idaho Department of Transportation to determine how to reduce and prevent collisions between wildlife and vehicles.

Naturalists sign up for a year-long volunteer effort that will involve over ten hours of specific training, both classroom and in the field, in identifying and distinguishing moose, elk and deer tracks. The Naturalists will be monitoring Hwy 20 sections between Macks Inn and the Ashton Hill area for the fall 2010 migration, the spring 2011 migration, and also the fall 2011 migration. Naturalists that are unable to participate in the tracking study, but are interested in learning more about animal tracks, have an opportunity to sign up for an additional day of tracking instruction by a professional tracker. This class of advanced training will teach naturalists the basics of tracking techniques, data collection, and field identification of a wider variety of animal tracks and sign. The Henry's Fork Chapter is excited about this opportunity to participate in a research study and learn more about large mammal tracking.



Professional tracker David Moskowitz shows trainees how elk rub and scrape the bark of twigs to gain nutrients. Photo by Mary VanFleet.



A Visit to the Idaho Bird Observatory

Ken Coleman, Idaho Master Naturalist, Stagebrush-steppe Chapter



On an early mid-September morning, Gene Hinnrichs and I drove the “Magic Carpet Highway” to the Idaho Bird Observatory on top of Lucky Peak east of Boise. When we arrived, we discovered a home schooling group and many others already there for the morning activities! *Word has definitely spread about the fascinating work being done here.*

There are actually three projects going on presently: Song birds, Hawks and Owls. During our visit, songbirds were collected off the mist nets, banded, and logged in with all sorts of measurements recorded. We were then able to assist in releasing them so they could continue their migration south for the winter. Well worth the trip up the rough road. Take your time, be patient, and allow at least half a day for this great experience.

Visit the Idaho Bird Observatory website at:

<http://www.boisestate.edu/biology/ibo>



Upper right: Jesus Gomez Esteban and Dr. Jay Carlisle of Idaho Bird Observatory band birds captured in mist nets. Lower left: Idaho Bird Observatory staff looks at wing feathers of a western tanager to age the bird. Lower right: Master Naturalist Ken Coleman gets ready to release a Wilson's warbler.

Book Review of *Wildlife Wars* by Terry Grosz

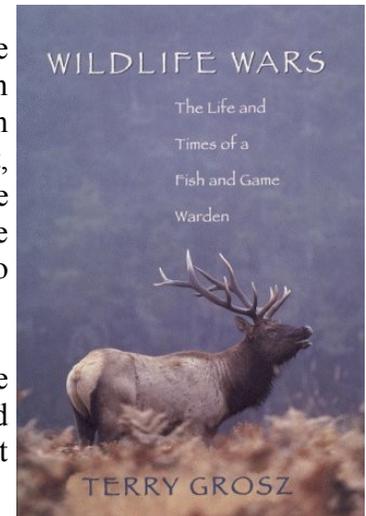
Elaine Walker, Idaho Master Naturalist, Sagebrush-steppe Chapter

Author Terry Grosz is a retired wildlife biologist who worked as a game warden for the California Department of Fish and Game and for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for over 30 years. *Wildlife Wars* is the first in a series of four books detailing his swashbuckling experiences as a game warden. In addition, Mr. Grosz has written four other books of stories from his long career.

The stories in this one book alone could represent an entire career. Chapter one details an undercover sting to nab sturgeon snaggers along the Klamath River. With no other game warden in sight, he brought in nine poachers singlehandedly. In fact, most of his work was done solo. Time after time, he approached hunters—most of whom had loaded guns at the ready—to cite them for various unlawful practices. It's no wonder a game warden is one of the most dangerous jobs!

Each chapter is a stand-alone story of outwitting wildlife lawbreakers. From deep in pine forests, to juniper forests and even on the coastal seas, Mr. Grosz has stories of the ones that didn't get away.

As Master Naturalists, we help conserve and restore natural resources through our volunteer work. We may never see the side of wildlife conservation that Mr. Grosz describes in his book. If your hometown library doesn't have a copy of the book, ask your librarian about getting this worthwhile read through interlibrary loan.



Five Ways to Love Your Timesheet

Sara Focht, Idaho Master Naturalist Program, IDFG

As an Idaho Master Naturalist you do many important and meaningful tasks to complete your volunteer work. You band ducks and teach children about butterflies. You capture songbirds, fix fences, clean up trash, and guide wildflower walks. You help with administrative tasks of your chapter and drive great distances for training and volunteering. One thing most of you do that is very important, but may seem meaningless and boring is recording your volunteer time on the Idaho Master Naturalist Time Sheet. Now, I know this is not an exciting task. It is not fun, it may not be pleasant, however, it is VERY important!

Would you go out and perform a bird survey for your local biologist and not turn in the data sheet? Of course you would not. Your timesheet data are as important to me as the number of Bald Eagles you spot on the river for your local biologist. Your data are important for a number of reasons. Let me list the ways!

1. Your timesheet data is the **ONLY** way I can report back to my supervisors (the folks that fund the Idaho Master Naturalist Program). Without your volunteer hours at the end of each calendar year, I cannot accurately report all the good work that you are doing all across the state.
2. Your volunteer time can and **WILL** be used to calculate match money for grants. Some grants require the organization receiving the grant to “match” the money that is granted. The dollar value of volunteer labor can be used for that match. This means, your time can leverage more money for conservation!
3. When you log your volunteer time, one field you record is your travel time to and from the volunteer activity. **YOU** can deduct this accumulated travel mileage on your tax form if you itemize.
4. You may receive volunteer time for filling out your volunteer timesheet! Yes! Ask your chapter leader if and how much volunteer time you can earn by filling out your timesheet consistently (the maximum is 2 hours/year).



5. Logging time will help your chapter leaders verify when you are certified. You have worked hard! So get recognized for finishing the program requirements by logging your time. If you volunteer above and beyond the requirements (and many of you do). Keep recording your time!

If you every have questions or concerns about logging your time, contact your chapter leader or me directly at sara.focht@idfg.idaho.gov.

So add your timesheet to the list of important volunteer tasks that you all do as Idaho Master Naturalists. Thanks in advance for recording all your 2010 time by January 1, 2011!



Woods Creek Fen Tour-What is a Fen?

Evan Tibbott Idaho Master Naturalist, Upper Snake Chapter

On Saturday, September 18th, about 40 people gathered for a tour of the Woods Creek Fen, near Driggs, in the Teton Valley. The 60-acre section that the group toured has been set aside with educational signs and a parking area along the Bates Road, two miles west of town. Part of a larger, 4,000 acre fen, this area is a unique example of the diversity found in the eastern Idaho region and the Teton Valley itself. Its preservation is largely due to the generosity of former Teton Valley resident, Fred Mugler and the joint efforts of the Nature Conservancy, the Teton Regional Land Trust, private landowners, and citizens.

What is a FEN, you may be asking. As explained by the descriptive markers, a fen differs from a bog in that it is underlain by a peaty soil rich in nutrients that results in a greater diversity of plant life than a bog. We examined some of this flora during our tour. The fen also differs from a bog in being maintained primarily by ground water; whereas a bog depends mainly on rainwater. Some of the plants we saw were: hoary, geyer and bebb willow, gentian, Nebraska sedge, bog birch, Kentucky and blue-eyed grass, cinquefoil, kinnikinnick, paintbrush, alpine meadowrue, northern bedstraw and Jones primrose. The day was mild and clear.



Author Evan Tibbott pictured on far right. Photo by Emily Morrison, Teton Regional Land Trust.



Left: Upper Snake IMNs Evan Tibbott, Gloria Hahn and Mary Dolan with Cub Scouts).

Below: Left to right Glen DeVoe, Gloria Hahn, Mary Dolan, Marlene Riplinger, Therese Lloyd, Alice Crockett, Diane Yonk. Photo by Evan Tibbott.



Camas National Wildlife Refuge

Evan Tibbott Idaho Master Naturalist, Upper Snake Chapter

In early October, Mary Dolven, Gloria Hahn, and I teamed up to provide Cub Scouts a tour of the Camas National Wildlife Refuge. We had 13 boys and their leaders. The group was given an overview of the Camas National Wildlife Refuge and its importance to migrating waterfowl and many species of song-birds. This refuge is a vital link along the Pacific Flyway, providing a place where migrating birds can find nesting sites, shelter, food, and water as they travel during fall and spring migrations. It is one of four national wildlife refuges within the eastern Idaho region. The others are Grays Lake NWR, southeast of Idaho Falls; Bear Lake NWR, in the extreme SE corner of the state; and Minidoka NWR, west of American Falls. These areas are, in turn, complemented by the two state wildlife management areas (WMA's) in our immediate region—Market Lake and Mud Lake.

During the tour, flights of sandhill cranes were conspicuous over the refuge. Other species sighted were Canada geese, American coots, a few western grebes, gadwalls and, probably blue-winged teals. The boys seemed to really enjoy this tour and kept a checklist of various natural features seen along the way.

Camas National Wildlife Refuge was developed from an area that was originally a mosaic of marshes and wetlands. In the late 1800s, the area became part a large livestock ranch operation. Later, the land was divided into smaller units and crops were cultivated for livestock feed. The refuge itself was created in 1937 and now encompasses 10,578 acres at an average elevation of 4,800 feet. Camas Creek, which originally flowed nearly all year to provide water, is now dry during these months due to a series of droughts and irrigation. Water for the refuge now comes from nine artesian wells, mainly from the Egin Bench area, and is distributed throughout the refuge by miles of canals, dikes and other water-control structures.



In Search of Sacajawea's Bitterroot

Sue Birnbaum, Idaho Master Naturalist, Sagebrush-steppe Chapter

Mid-September, on a beautiful late summer day, I went on a nature hike to Mores Mountain near Bogus Basin Mountain Recreation Area with a group of fellow Master Naturalists from the Sagebrush-Steppe Chapter. There was a surprising amount of color on the trail—luminous red berries of the mountain ash, purple asters, red paintbrush, and a pale pink false Solomon's seal. Douglas firs towered over us with their bright green wolf lichen. The trail was steep at times, but our leader, Edna Rey-Vizgirdas, Forest Botanist for the Boise National Forest, encouraged us onward, while relating her extensive knowledge of the plants and trees. Ask Edna about the dwarf mistletoe, and she will explain to you how it has led to the "witches' broom" shape of the Douglas fir branches.



Mountain ash berries and red leaves are one of Idaho's most brilliant fall plants.

We made the drive up to the Shafer Butte picnic area/Mores Mountain trailhead so that we could get nature walk leader training as well as an education in our local mountain botany. Edna, along with help from volunteers, leads these hikes for the public offered by the Forest Service throughout the spring, summer and fall.

This opportunity might not have occurred were it not for Martha McClay's mission to find the rare

Sacajawea's bitterroot on Mores Mountain earlier this year. Martha, a Sagebrush-steppe Master Naturalist from this year's class, had attended some of Edna's nature hikes to learn where Sacajawea's bitterroot was usually found. In her quest, Martha realized the potential for Master Naturalists to help in leading the hikes. Together, Martha and Edna organized the leader training. Martha's mission was successful in two ways: she did eventually find Sacajawea's bitterroot while hiking with a retired botanist, and she helped create new volunteer opportunities for Master Naturalists.



Sacajawea's Bitterroot. Photo by Barbara Ertter.

As we made the final climb to the top of Mores Mountain, the forest opened up to a large granite outcrop. It was there, Edna told us, among the well-drained soils and weathering granite gravel, that Sacajawea's bitterroot grows. This plant is found only in central Idaho, with most plants growing in the Boise National Forest. It is a very small plant with white flowers that blooms in late June/early July. This ground-hugging plant is dormant most of the year, and all signs of it disappear after flowering.

A relative of Sacajawea's Bitterroot, the common Bitterroot, made famous by Meriwether Lewis' Expedition, blooms with pink petals, and can be seen in a more extensive area of the western United States. The plant is so beautiful—it's not surprising it is Montana's state flower.



Edna Rey-Vizgirdas (left) and Martha McClay (right).

Fulfill Your Volunteer Hours at Boise's Beautiful Idaho Botanical Garden!

Elizabeth Dickey, Sagebrush-steppe Chapter Leader, Idaho Botanical Garden

Calling Sagebrush-Steppe Master Naturalists!

If you are looking for unique ways to fulfill your volunteer hours, there are myriad interesting ways to do this at Boise's Idaho Botanical Garden. Elizabeth Dickey, Education Specialist, has listed some ideas below that might cover your area of interest or expertise. Several needs may depend on time of year. You may reach Elizabeth at 208.343.8649.

1. Assist in the Native Foothills Garden (clean-up, weed control, planting, sign-making). Bitterbrush and other planting in the foothills on undeveloped portions of IBG lease lands. This occurs primarily in the spring. This would include along the Wilderness Trail and adjacent to the Foothills Native Plant Garden.
2. Assist with planting, weeding, clean-up, and general maintenance in the L & C Native Plant Garden. You could adopt a certain zone and just work there, or the entire area. Planting is usually in the spring (April-June) or fall (Sept-Oct).
3. Help maintain any other portions of the Garden of interest (ie. Water Conservation Landscape, drought tolerant landscapes around greenhouses, Herb Garden , or wherever!)
4. Help determine native water lily availability. We would like to purchase several more for the L&C Wetland.
5. Plant species sign making. Learn the computer software and help print and place signs by plants throughout the garden. We **badly** need identification signs to enhance our educational outreach opportunities for visitors. They like to know what plants we have.
6. Check and update our current bird list, or work on an animal list for IBG, which should include the herps (snake, lizards, frogs, salamanders). We are getting many more lizards in L&C as time goes on.
7. Brochure assistance. We need a tree brochure/leaflet, an updated one for the Heirloom Rose Garden, one for the Western Waterwise Garden, and other areas.
8. Maintain our many bird houses scattered throughout the garden (clean them out as needed at the right time of year, determine which are viable, need replacing, etc.). You could also assist with finding other types of boxes we should have. A box for kestrels? Box for bats?
9. This may be difficult and beyond the ability of most, but develop a list of common insect pollinators we have, or what plants are best to attract them, or a list of what we have here, or something along those lines. Maybe too much expertise for this, but some buggly person could love this.



The Idaho Botanical Garden is a living museum dedicated to furthering science education within the scenic setting of its outdoor classroom and into the community.

Photo Gallery



Master Naturalist Jessica Daley of the Sagebrush-steppe Chapter, helps spawn steelhead at Ahsaka and Powell Station.

