



# The Nature Center Stream



S P R I N G

The Seasonal Newsletter of the MK Nature Center

2 0 1 3



On May 2nd, Idahoans from across the state will come together to help support local nonprofit organizations. This is your chance to give to your favorite Idaho nonprofit groups. Of course, we hope you give to the MK Nature Center! Your donations will go a long way in helping us with the operations, improvements, and sustainability of the MK Nature Center. The added benefit of giving to us on this designated day is that your donations have the potential to be multiplied many times thanks to generous contest prizes and matching awards that will be given throughout the campaign. This is much like NPR's one day fund drive!

You can help not only by donating, but by helping others learn about the opportunity to donate. Recruit a friend or family member to make a contribution to the MK Nature Center. Tell them why you love the place, why you go there, or why you are happy it is part of your community!

Remember: On May 2nd, go to [www.IdahoGives.org](http://www.IdahoGives.org) and search for the MK Nature Center (located through the Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation's donation page) and follow the instructions on how to make a donation. Busy or worried that you'll forget? You can even schedule a donation ahead of time to be applied on that day (like today!). Thanks ahead of time for your support!



## RANGEN, INC. SUPPORTERS FROM DAY 1

*Dave Cannamela, MK Nature Center Superintendent*

For the last 23 years people have been coming to the Nature Center to look at, admire, and ogle our resident fish—and for 23 years Rangen Inc. has been helping us feed those fish (with some help from mother nature). Our best guess is that down through the years Rangen has donated about four tons of fish food—that's a lot of smiles on the faces of fish viewers, many of whom are anglers who dream of catching fish like the ones on the other side of the glass. The water is the heart and soul of the Nature Center and the fish viewing opportunities here are what make us unique and special. It takes an unfathomable amount of work and support to run this place. Rangen has quietly supported us since our inception. It's about time we gave them the recognition and thanks they deserve. We are sincerely grateful to Rangen for their selfless, consistent, and substantial role in helping us create and sustain "the fish park." Next time you eyeball a gorgeous fish through the looking glass—thank Rangen.

## MK NATURE CENTER SET TO UNVEIL NEW MURAL

On May 2, 2013, the MK Nature Center will unveil a mural created by local artist, Marcus Pierce. Although Marcus' work shelter has kept the viewing windows and the art work covered for several months now, the wait will be worth it. The finished project more than meets our original objective to enhance the educational and aesthetic features of the Nature Center with a beautiful piece of art. The mural, which adorns (and hides) the concrete superstructure at the largest and most popular fish viewing windows, compliments the view of the underwater world and the surrounding environment. In addition to enhancing our teaching capabilities and the experience of our visitors, the mural will also serve as public art. And because the mural is located on the outside Streamwalk, it will be available for public viewing every day of the year. The artwork broadens the scope of the Idaho environment that can be seen and enjoyed at the MK Nature Center and creates a more complete picture of Idaho's natural resources and ecological systems.

Notably, this project was made possible through the generous donations of several individuals, along with a grant secured by the Nature Center from the Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

The event on May 2nd will begin at 5:00pm with a social hour, followed by recognition of the donors and artist, and finally the unveiling at 6:00 pm. Guests will be invited to linger, mingle, and enjoy the entire Nature Center. The event is free and open to the public.



# VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

One of the best facets of working at MKNC is all the great people you get to interact with on a daily basis. It could be one of my amazing co-workers, or perhaps just a brief interaction with a visitor out on the path. Often, I get to interact with our many volunteers. I have enjoyed working with and getting to know Samim Mohammad Aziz.



*Samim does all kinds of jobs at the Nature Center. Here, he holds one of nearly 100 plaster molds he cast this spring to revitalize our Tracks Trunk.*

As a junior at Boise High School, Samim came to us for volunteer work as a requirement for his Community and Leadership Responsibility Class. Students in this class find an organization for which they want to volunteer and then come weekly to volunteer. Samim says he chose the Nature Center because, “I love nature, fresh air, water, and animals. It is awesome that there is a piece [of] nature close to downtown. You can always go [to MK] to look at the nature and it will release stress and you can relax.” We could not be more pleased that Samim found us!

Samim came to Boise in February 2010. Before that, he lived in the Ukraine for two years, in Russia for eight years, and in Afghanistan for six years! As you might imagine, he is worldly beyond his years and he speaks five languages.

Besides volunteering at MK Nature Center and going to school at BHS, Samim attends the Dennis Technical Education Center. There, he works on cars and trucks. He uses the mechanical and electrical knowledge he gains at the DTEC to fuel his hobbies of making electronic costumes and custom backpacks with speakers!

Just when you think a guy could not be any busier, Samim also loves basketball and frequents the YMCA for a game.

Samim is a driven student, volunteer, athlete, and community member. It is no surprise we are delighted with his courteous personality and commitment to helping us. We appreciate his time and his friendship and we have no doubt he will fulfill his dreams of being a Heavy Duty Technician

Samim plans to win a Heavy Duty Diesel Skills USA Competition and get a scholarship for the College of Western Idaho. He wants to attend 4 years there and work for Thermo King, Western States Cat, or Commins.

## THE STRENGTH OF STEELE



Julie and Boyd Steele moved to Idaho from Salt Lake City in 1984 to create a different lifestyle for themselves and their children. Julie was an RN who, at the time, was serving as a hospice director. The changing health care environment and the stressful nature of her job convinced Julie that she needed a better way. One of Julie's favorite things to do after work was to sit in her garden, relax, and watch the birds. Julie learned about birds from her mother who always enjoyed watching and feeding them. Wanting to do something that she really enjoyed and had knowledge of, Julie decided to open a birding store. A franchise opportunity seemed like the best fit. She went with Wild Birds Unlimited because they demonstrated the standard of ethics Julie looked for in a business and because they were familiar with and supportive of western birds and their environment.

Julie and Boyd opened their Wild Birds Unlimited store in September of 2006. Through the Bird by Bird Program, they immediately became great partners with several local organizations including the Golden Eagle Audubon Society, Watchable Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, Bureau of Land Management, and Idaho Department of Fish and Game. They also lend their support to groups focused on nature and birds such as MK Nature Center, Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge and Pathways to Nature. Julie also does presentations for garden clubs to encourage them to use native plants in their landscapes.

Julie and Boyd have been Nature Center supporters and friends since 2006. They have sponsored events and singlehandedly made our annual Bird Seed Sale possible. In addition, they make feeding the birds at MKNC possible by providing seed to us at an affordable price.

In the six years that their Wild Birds Unlimited store has been open, Julie and Boyd have given donations of cash and products valued at \$30,000 back to our community. Now that is what I call strong community partners!



# WINTER VOLUNTEER DINNER BRINGS IN THE CROWD



On the evening of February 6th, 2013, the Nature Center teemed with volunteers and supporters! The volunteer and supporters dinner was a success. It was so fun to see everyone together enjoying a fabulous dinner catered by Life's Kitchen. Thanks to all who came, but more importantly, thanks to all who help the Nature Center in one form or another! Thanks to Boise Co-op, Bueno Cheapo Vino, and Zeppole for donating food and drink to help us honor our volunteers and supporters.



*Top: Bob Foss and his wife Laura joined us! Bob started volunteering about a year ago...he is a jack of all trades! Middle Left: The room was set up for 85 guests. It looked beautiful thanks to Jessica Gordon! Middle Right: Cheryl and Fred Minckler, long-time volunteers and friends....smiling as usual. Bottom Left: Rebecca "Catfish" Fritz and Kerry Overton enjoy a pre-dinner chat. Bottom Right: The house was packed!*

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# VOLUNTEER LEADS JR. NATURALIST PROGRAM



Idaho Master Naturalist Joyce Harvey-Morgan (left) led the second annual Jr. Naturalist Program at MK Nature Center over spring break. With the help of fellow Master Naturalist Sandy Sweet, MKNC employees Sara Focht and Rebecca Fritz, and BSU graduate student Michell Laskowski along with 19 amazing 4th, 5th and 6th graders, the week went off without a hitch! The program is a week-long daycamp to connect kids to nature.



Jr. Naturalists on the left from top to bottom: Clay Moore holding his journal. Payton DeVand raking at MKNC for his volunteer work. Graham Elder, Heidi Groves, Mimi Fahnstrom, and Lily Taylor on their foothills hike. Graham Elder, Payton DeVand, Tanishq Khurana, and Jacob Lund hauling debris for their volunteer work. Lily Taylor planting seeds. Above: the whole gang. Below: Lucy and Laurel Coleman posing by their neighborhood trash collection.



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

# UPCOMING EVENTS

For detailed information on any of these events, google MK Nature Center and click on our calendar

April 26th and 27th                      IDAHO NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY'S NATIVE PLANT SALE  
Members only 6 pm - 8 pm (Friday)                      Public sale 10 am - 1 pm Saturday

Native Idaho plants for your yard! Come get advice from local experts on what native plants you can grow in your yard. Reap the benefits of native plants by saving water and attracting native wildlife! You can join the Idaho Native Plant Society on the night of April 26th if you want to shop the members only sale!

April 27th                                      EARTHFEST  
Open to the public                                      10 am - 2 pm                                      FREE

Walk the greenbelt with a wildlife guide. Watch a wildlife movie. Participate in family-friendly activities for the whole family in our new garden. This event is associated with UNPLUGGED WEEK. Find more activities at <http://unplugandbeoutside.com>.

May 2nd    MK NATURE CENTER'S MURAL UNVEILING  
Open to the public                                      5 pm    FREE

The mural has been covered all winter. See the curtain drop and enjoy an evening at MK Nature Center celebrating spring and our newest artwork by Marcus Pierce.

May 2nd    IDAHO GIVES  
See front cover of newsletter

When you come to the Nature Center, you never have to pay an admission fee. Here is your chance to support us in educating the public about Idaho's natural world.

May 11th    INTERNATIONAL MIGRATORY BIRD DAY CELEBRATION  
Open to the public                                      10 am to 4 pm  
\$3.00 suggested donation for ages 3 and up

An event for the whole family. Come to the Nature Center to learn about our beautiful migratory birds. Face painting, games, hands on activities, guided walks, bird banding, and local experts.

May 19th    INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM DAY  
Open to the public                                      12 noon to 5 pm                                      FREE

In Pioneer Park (next to the Idaho State Historical Museum) MK Nature Center will be displaying their talents along with other Boise-based museums. Come enjoy activities from the Discovery Center, the Idaho Aquarium, the Boise Art Museum, the World Center for Birds of Prey, the Basque Museum, and MORE!

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UNPLUG

BE OUTSIDE! BE ACTIVE!  
PLAY!

Join us for nature walks, movies &  
more!

## MK Nature Center's "EARTH FEST"

Saturday April 27, 2013 - 10am to 2pm

A celebration for the entire family during *Unplug & Be Outside Week!*

**FREE!** All ages welcome!

### EVENT SCHEDULE:

*\*Kid friendly activities & crafts will be conducted throughout the day at our new garden site "POLLEN-Nation"!*

*\*Delicious local Muesli Bars & Granola will be available to benefit Boise's refugee community -- thanks to "Create Common Good"!*

**10am – GREENBELT WALK** - join a local nature expert for a 1-mile walk along the Boise River!

**11am – GREEN FIRE: Aldo Leopold & a Land Ethic for Our Time!** An Emmy-award winning film

**12 and 1pm -- Guided STREAMWALK TOURS** – Discover the amazing animals & plants at MKNC! Check out our new native plant garden – a partnership with the Boise National Forest!

**12:30pm – DIRT! The MOVIE!** (with Jamie Lee Curtis) We're connected to the health of our soil!

**10am - 2pm – NATIVE PLANT SALE** - water thrifty native plants benefit wildlife & pollinators!

Did you know that kids today spend up to 50 hours a week dialed into video games, computers & mobile devices? We can improve the physical, mental, and emotional health of our kids by getting them off the couch! From April 20-27, you are invited to "Unplug" by participating in free or low-cost activities offered in your community.

**For more information and a full schedule of activities, visit: [www.unplugandbeoutside.com](http://www.unplugandbeoutside.com)**



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