

IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

Virgil Moore, Director

F13AF00850

Interim Report



MK NATURE CENTER

October 1, 2013 to September 30, 2014

Prepared By:

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September 2014
Boise, Idaho



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Note: This report represents the first year of the second three-year grant cycle of this grant. The report emphasizes FY14 findings.



Sage grouse mount in MKNC display.

**FEDERAL AID IN WILDLIFE RESTORATION
FINAL PERFORMANCE REPORT**

State: Idaho

Grant Number: F13AF00850

Grant Name: Morrison Knudsen Nature Center

Report Period: July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014

Report Due Date: September 28, 2014

Location of work: Ada County, Idaho

NOTE: This is the first interim report of the three-year grant period that includes FY14, FY15, and FY16.

Objectives: Our overall objective for this project is to deliver a clear and concise message to all MK Nature Center (Nature Center) visitors regarding the importance of the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration program and the Pittman-Robertson (PR) Act. We intend to help our visitors learn about the Act, how it works, and why it is important. When visitors leave the MKNC, they should have a basic understanding of how sportsmen contribute to wildlife conservation.

This grant also supports our wildlife outreach initiatives, some of our wildlife habitat maintenance and enhancement tasks, as well as some facility costs. Our ability to attract wildlife to the Nature Center provides our customers with substantial viewing and photographic opportunities. This wildlife allows us to engage the public in a wide spectrum of wildlife and conservation issues. These interactions are critical in advancing the Department's mission. Therefore, facility and habitat maintenance and enhancement tasks supported by this grant are crucial to our success.

This will be accomplished by:

1. Increased interpretive signage
2. Restoration of native landscaping
3. Maintenance of the Theodore Roosevelt Room

If the work in this grant was part of a larger undertaking with other components and funding, present a brief overview of the larger activity and the role of this project.

This project is part of the overall Nature Center program. The Nature Center is a 4.6 acre fish and wildlife habitat with waterfalls, streams, ponds, viewing stations, habitat displays and a visitor's center. Mission of the Nature Center is to inspire love, appreciation, and stewardship of the natural world.

Describe how the objectives were met:

Increase interpretive signage

Again this year during the “fawning season,” we placed interpretive signs throughout the Nature Center to inform our visitors about proper wildlife viewing behavior and mule deer ecology.

Restoration of native landscaping

Habitat maintenance and enhancement on our 4.6 acre site requires a great amount of time and effort. In FY14, volunteers contributed nearly 500 hours of work under this grant.

Much of this work was habitat maintenance and enhancement. Site and facility maintenance is a significant portion of the daily tasks of nature center staff as well.



Native Plant Garden

The Native Plant Garden remains one of our most effective wildlife habitats and outreach tools. This small (7,300 square feet) but highly visited area, provides excellent habitat for a variety of animals, most notably, mule deer. This area demonstrates to visitors the reclamation of an area that had become entirely over-run with cheat grass, a pervasive and destructive invasive plant in the western U.S. The Native Plant Garden also provides the public with a model for creating a water-wise backyard habitat that is conducive to our climate.

In addition to the Native Plant Garden and other natural habitat areas of the center, we also maintain a Habitat Improvement Program (HIP) garden, a Formal Backyard that is a mix of lawn and native plants (National Wildlife Federation-Backyard Wildlife Habitat designation), a Butterfly/Hummingbird garden, a Pollinator garden (new with USFS funding), and a compost pile. We continue to strive to create and maintain a completely native landscape at the Nature Center. Toward that end, we continuously remove exotic species, replacing them with native species.



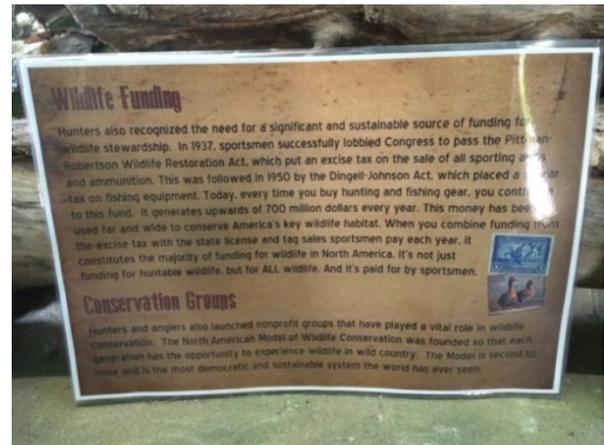
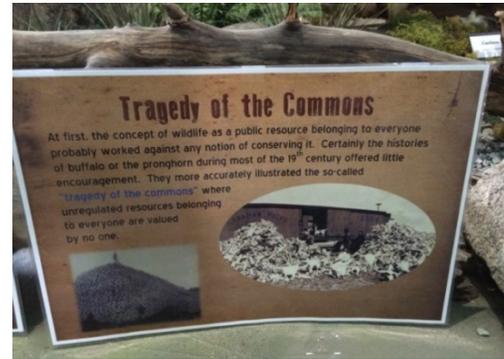
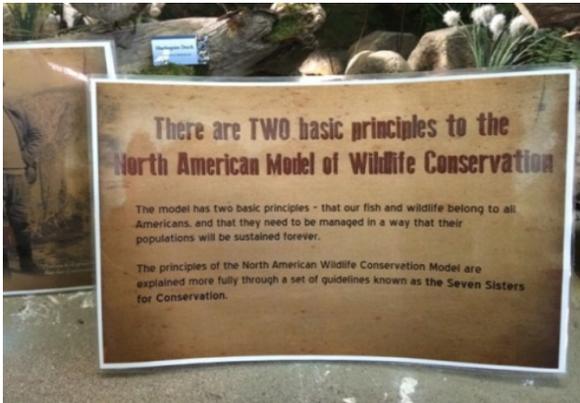
Photo credits- Hoot Gibson.

We are fairly certain that our habitat improvement efforts are working, particularly for mule deer. Over the last 4 years, no fewer than 16 mule deer fawns have been born in or in close proximity to the Nature Center. The does and fawns seem to spend the majority of their time here for at least 2 months, and they are frequently seen throughout the rest of year. They utilize the habitat extensively and their impact on the native plants, especially the flowers is obvious. The presence of these animals creates one of our best educational opportunities. They create many conversations with visitors about wildlife-related topics including hunting, wildlife management, Department funding, native habitat restoration and proper wildlife viewing behavior. Our educational methods are many, but nothing is more effective than having wild animals create teachable moments when they unexpectedly appear.

Although mule deer, especially the fawns, often take center stage, the Nature Center attracts a wide variety of other wildlife, including fox, beaver, mink, several waterfowl species, insects and countless song birds.

Maintenance of the ‘Theodore Roosevelt Room’

We made progress in determining the text for our signage in the Theodore Roosevelt Room and created mock-ups. Final versions will be created in FY15.



We provided 199 programs which fit the criteria of wildlife outreach as defined by the grant. These programs were provided for 5,999 students and 745 parents and teachers.

Discuss differences between work anticipated in grant proposal and grant agreement and that actually carried out with Federal Aid grant funds.

N/A

List any publications or in-house reports resulting from this work.

N/A

Estimated Cost: Final cost will be provided in a separate SF425 submitted at a later date.

In-Kind Match

We accounted for \$16,201.40 worth of match (\$2,868.07 more than the annual match requirement). This match consisted of \$12,310.33 of volunteer value and \$3,891.07 in donations of cash and materials. We generated \$1,837.86 in program income in FY14.

Project Personnel:

David A. Cannamela, Nature Center Superintendent
Susan Ziebarth, Wildlife Technician
Sara Focht, Wildlife Educator
Sue Dudley, Wildlife Educator
Jessica Gordon, Volunteer Coordinator

Additional temporary staff and volunteers including BSU Graduate Fellows (GK12 program), BSU work-study students, and others.

Name, title, phone number, and e-mail address of person compiling this report:

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Approved by:

IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

Handwritten signature of Bradley B. Compton in black ink.

Bradley B. Compton, Assistant Bureau Chief
Bureau of Wildlife

Handwritten signature of Jeff Gould in black ink.

Jeff Gould, Bureau Chief
Bureau of Wildlife

FEDERAL AID IN WILDLIFE RESTORATION

The Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Program consists of funds from a 10% to 11% manufacturer's excise tax collected from the sale of handguns, sporting rifles, shotguns, ammunition, and archery equipment. The Federal Aid program then allots the funds back to states through a formula based on each state's geographic area and the number of paid hunting license holders in the state. The Idaho Department of Fish and Game uses the funds to help restore, conserve, manage, and enhance wild birds and mammals for the public benefit. These funds are also used to educate hunters to develop the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary to be responsible, ethical hunters. Seventy-five percent of the funds for this project are from Federal Aid. The other 25% comes from license-generated funds.

