

2023

VOL II

# CROSSROADS

BY CANYON COUNTY PARKS, CULTURAL &  
NATURAL RESOURCES

*Girl With Bunny*—Our take on  
the popular “Wes Anderson  
Style” going around social  
media.











*Above, Left: The atlatl range at Celebration Park isn't just for local fourth graders—these high schoolers came all the way from France! They came with their Boise High School exchange partners as part of their one month in the United States student exchange.*

*Below, Left: Who's been walking in mud and tracking it inside the Visitor Center again?! These tracks were probably left by killdeer.*

*Right: As part of our ongoing efforts to make the park more accessible and easier to navigate for visitors, new signs are going up to show where things are. Alex and Shawn put these up in late winter. Keep an eye out for more!*



*Below: Family and friends enjoy a day on the river with some guests from Idaho Public Television.*

*Next page, top left: Lewis & Clark Middle School student Taylor Starry plants some sagebrush to earn volunteer hours for school. Her uncle, Dylan Starry, also taught her a little about ecology and a lot about trash pickup.*

*Next page, top right: Dylan and Eric dismantle the museum kiosk to make room for construction. See page 13 for details.*

*Next page, below: College of Western Idaho professor Nikki Gorrell gives a tour to her archaeology students on the petroglyph trail at Celebration Park.*



*Above and below photos courtesy of Tim Tower.*















*Previous page, top: A Ford Model A during Archaeology Month.*

*Previous page, bottom-left: Roy Cordingly took this beautiful picture of Guffey Bridge.*

*Previous page, bottom-right: An American flag at the top of Guffey Butte.*

*Left: Interpretive Specialists learn new programs at Lake Lowell Park.*

*Below: Interpretive Specialist Larry Haney waves goodbye to the school bus from the Atlatl Deck.*





# CROSSROADS

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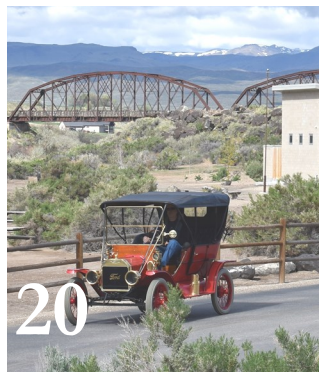
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EDUCATION | ARCHAEOLOGY | HISTORY

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*Every year in June, there's one day where you don't need a fishing license to fish in Idaho!*

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# From the Director

By Nicki Schwend



Over the decades, Celebration Park has had so many wonderful individuals employed as Interpretive Specialists. These people enjoy learning, sharing their knowledge with others, working with kids and visitors, and cultivating enthusiasm related to Archaeology and all the other awesome things related to Celebration Park. They are eager to get people excited about everything connected to humans through deep-time, and the awesomeness of the place they are visiting.

Every now and then, you have a team of Interpretive Specialists that forms a unique bond and working relationship that feeds off its own enthusiasm and creates bonds beyond work. They are collectively so eagerly immersed in their love of the job that it bleeds over into their personal life. They come in early or stay late to take hikes together and explore the area. They ask for supplemental

educational reading materials. They want to spend time making new 'artifacts' for our educational lessons. They want to experiment with primitive technologies to better understand the artifacts and processes that we discuss with visitors. They show up on their days off because they don't want to miss a special event, a speaker, or a presentation. These are the times that I wish I could freeze the entire team and keep them and their love of what they do forever... Yet, we all know that's not possible. Instead, my full time-staff and myself have learned to appreciate these 'jackpot' staffing teams and relish every day of working with a team like this. ■

*Above: Director Schwend takes Canyon County Commissioners on a tour of Celebration Park.*

*Below: Interpretive Specialist Robyn Foust holds students' attention during a Native American Lifeways presentation.*





## CANYON COUNTY PARKS, CULTURAL & NATURAL RESOURCES

# DEPARTMENT UPDATE: ON THE GROUND

### Sign Project

Visitor experience is always one of our top priorities at the Parks Department and helping visitors find their way is an important way we can make that experience better. While we offer tours and Visitor Center hours every day from 10 to 2, a lot of park visitors arrive outside those hours. To help, Outdoor Recreation Planner Alex Eells, in collaboration with department leadership and Maintenance Coordinator Shawn Gray, has worked tirelessly to install more signage to help visitors find trails, where to park, how to pay fees, and more.

### Dock & Buoy Updates

Another of Alex Eells' projects was working through the early spring with Canyon County Facilities and Marine Patrol to prepare docks, signs, and marine buoys for the upcoming season. This meant taking inventory, reapplying decals to buoys, replacing old and creating new signs, and replacing aging and broken panels on docks all around Lake Lowell. Working in the wind and sleet, Alex, with the help of Maintenance Coordinator Shawn Gray and Visitor Services Specialist Dylan Starry, got everything ready for opening day of boating season – April 15<sup>th</sup>.



### Petroglyph Hunt

There's a lot of lore in the west. Tales of ghost trains and lost miners are just a couple of the stories Interpretive Specialists could tell you about. One of those stories has been a lost petroglyph somewhere along the Snake River that depicted what was always told to us as a curlew – a type of bird with a long beak that feeds in mud around waters. Interpretive Specialist Brendan Blowers-de Leon took it upon himself to find it, and eventually he did! He took this great photo this spring.



CANYON COUNTY PARKS,  
CULTURAL & NATURAL  
RESOURCES

# DEPARTMENT UPDATE: IN THE OFFICE

## First Aid Certification

Parks staff strive to be the best-trained as possible. This year, all 17 Interpretive Specialists certified in basic first aid, CPR, epinephrine auto-injector, and AED (defibrillator). A special thank you is due to Canyon County Paramedics Deputy Chief Casey Walker and his staff for the instruction. This will go a long way in being prepared for any situation while working so far from help. Staff will be able to help visitors, students, and themselves in emergencies, providing invaluable service to the County and its citizens and visitors.

## Museum Project

With the addition of the new mezzanine in the Canyon Crossroads Museum, it meant we had to make a lot of space available for construction over the winter and spring. We held many classes in the shop or the decks outside, but it meant we also had to disassemble the huge kiosk in the museum. We are happy to announce, however, that the mezzanine is now complete and will house the Dr. Mark Plew Library – a collection of archaeological books, maps, and documents spanning a career studying the Snake River Plain and beyond. See page 13 for more details.

## CATCH Program Training

Programs Manager Eric Savadow is always on the lookout for new training opportunities for Interpretive Specialists and staff, from first aid to history lessons. This spring, he arranged a training with Betsy Bowling of the CATCH Program. This program aims to find housing for those in need by conducting outreach in an attempt to connect people with the programs and services they need to attain housing. Thank you to Betsy and her staff for providing this training and for their hard work in our community!







## CANYON COUNTY PARKS, CULTURAL & NATURAL RESOURCES

# DEPARTMENT UPDATE: EVERYTHING ELSE

### New Staff Training

Our staff numbers are way up this year, which has been a great help with our education programs and with park upkeep. The field trip season officially starts in mid-March, so every spring marks the start of annual staff training. Programs Manager Eric Savadow led new and returning staff through training in place-based and environmental education, tours, and interpretation. Lake Lowell training also included discussions in archaeology with Director Nicki Schwend. We love our Interpretive Specialists!

### Birds of Prey Education

One of the modules of Winter Desert Ecology is a collaborative effort with Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Morley Nelson Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area. These experts bring live education birds to the park and conduct a lesson on raptors and birds of prey. BLM Outdoor Recreation Planner Jared Fluckiger often brings owls, falcons, and hawks, and Monte Tish brings his golden eagle, Slim (who once belonged to Morley Nelson himself!) Thanks to these guys and the birds they bring to Celebration Park!



### The White Family

These wonderful people are Shay White and his parents, Janie and Rick. They've been longtime friends to us at Celebration Park, and they help us keep the waters safe by educating us on the river and its many dangers. Shay has been boating the Snake River since he was a child and knows it better than anyone. The Whites have taken Park staff on field trips upriver and even helped emergency services rescue boats stuck, broken down, or wrecked. They recently accompanied some staff on a trip exploring the canyon, and we just want to say thanks for their dedication to service and their kindness.

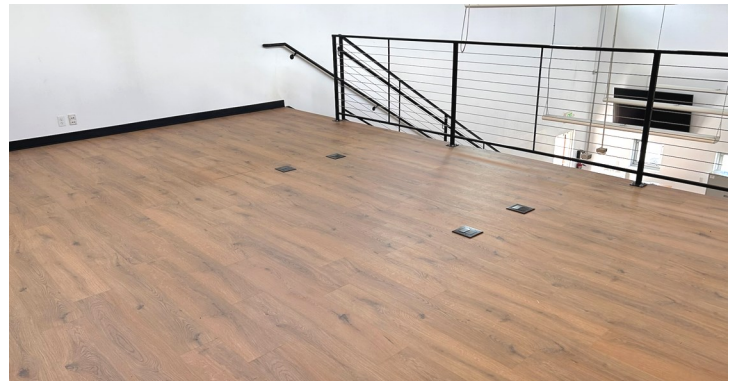


# Maybe She's Born With It Maybe It's Mezzanine

Another long-awaited project is finally completed: the new mezzanine in the Canyon Crossroads Museum. The addition of the loft will allow for the storage of the Dr. Mark Plew Library – a collection of books, documents, maps, and notes from a long, distinguished archaeology career. Dr. Plew, professor emeritus at Boise State University, taught anthropology and archaeology for over 25 years, and still contributes to and maintains a presence in the department, having helped teach and lead the archaeological field school that took place at Celebration Park this spring. As he neared retirement, he generously donated his career's work to the Parks department.

*The Dr. Mark Plew Collection will include books, documents, periodicals, and other data amassed over a career in archaeology in the Snake River Plain and beyond.*

The addition of the mezzanine also means increased storage and backup workspaces for staff. While it took some time to find a contractor willing to make the drive out to Celebration Park, John Fitzgerald of Veritas Maintenance submitted a bid and once approved, had the whole thing installed in a matter of weeks.



*Above, right: The view of the empty, finished mezzanine from upstairs.*

*Middle, right: Facing the new mezzanine from below.*

*Below, right: Dr. Plew in his office.*



# Spotlight on Interpretive Specialists

This year, we're very fortunate and happy to be able to have a full staff of 17 Interpretive Specialists working at the Parks Department. Some are relatively new while others have been here for years. They come from all kinds of different backgrounds and their stories all vary.



Tate enjoys having the opportunity to spark interest in the County's parks and cultural resources. He's been passionate about the recreation Idaho provides, especially in Canyon County. He's been visiting Celebration Park since he was ten years old, and it's a special place because of the many great memories of visiting in that time. From fishing and hiking at Celebration Park to swimming and boating at Lake Lowell, the County has offered him a huge number of treasured experiences. He wants to be able to share his passion for these places with other people.

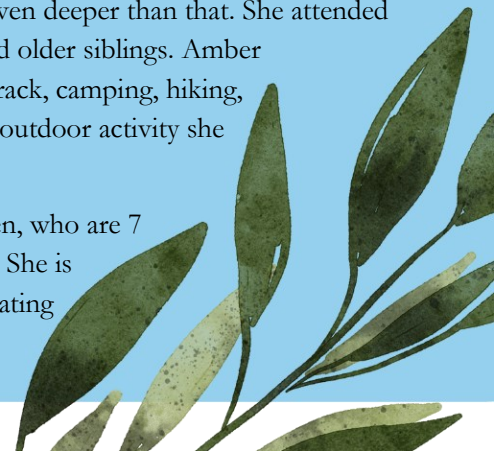
Paul was born and raised in Nampa, Idaho. He spent countless hours hunting and shooting in the Snake River Canyon (now Celebration Park). He retired after working 27 years as a conductor for Union Pacific Railroad. After his retirement, he restored both of his summer homes in Silver City, Idaho.

He enjoys the outdoors and continues to stay active running and weight lifting. Teaching at Celebration Park is another step in a long and productive life.



Amber was born and raised in Idaho. But her roots go even deeper than that. She attended Pierce Park Elementary in Boise, as did her father and older siblings. Amber spent her summers racing horses at Les Bois Racetrack, camping, hiking, swimming, finding hot springs, or whatever other outdoor activity she could find.

Now Amber lives in Caldwell with her two children, who are 7 and 9, and works another job as a mortgage lender. She is proud to be an Idahoan and is passionate about educating others about Idaho's history!







JC grew up in Idaho and Utah and spent every summer camping and hiking. She knew she wanted to be an archaeologist when she was 13. Having recently graduated from Brigham Young University with a BS in Anthropology, JC is passionate about archaeology and loves sharing that with others. Recently, she has been researching rock art, archaeo-acoustics, and archaeo-astronomy. Her favorite part of working at Celebration Park is helping with the field trips, because she loves being outside and helping students interact with the history, geology, and ecology of Idaho. JC spends her free time reading, crafting, and pursuing her goal of becoming a cat lady.

Mallory was born and raised in Southern Idaho in an outdoor-loving home. She moved to Utah after high school to attend Brigham Young University. She graduated with a BS in Wildlife and Wildlands Conservation with an emphasis in Entomology. She also enjoyed doing research work on mule deer, black bears, and pronghorns while obtaining her degree.

Mallory can be found around Celebration Park scouting for aquatic insects in the Snake River or watching for native pollinators on our flowering plants. In her spare time, she enjoys hiking and backpacking with her husky, Junebug. She also can be found in the kitchen baking fun new recipes with Junebug as her taste tester.



Jessica has been fascinated with stories and storytelling since she was small, often listening to the wild tales from her grandparents from when they were growing up in the Melba Valley. Eventually this led her to Moscow, ID and a BS in Anthropology, with a minor in creative writing from the University of Idaho.

Now she spends what free time she has exploring the surrounding area with her dog Orion, or her second love, learning about ancient traditions and trades and learning how to do them with what materials are available. This includes everything from ceramics to weaving.

Josh was born and raised in the Boise foothills where he ran wild in his youth and fell in love with the Idaho landscape. He later attended Boise State University where he obtained a BA in Philosophy and English Literature. While at university, he explored his interests in archaeology and anthropology, and attended and instructed archaeological methods field school at Celebration Park. His interests include living sustainably, playing music, woodworking, throwing pottery, gardening, and being a dad.







Lily grew up on the outskirts of Parma, Idaho. As a child, she developed a love for all things outdoors. She could often be found covered in dirt with flowers in her hair and a toad in hand. Today, not much has changed. Lily can still be found toting around all forms of critters and wildflowers. Lily's passion for the outdoors led her to gain a BS in Wildlife Biology & Ecology and a minor in Literature from Northwest Nazarene University. It also led her to pursue herpetological research in Costa Rica and Panama.

For as long as she can remember, Lily has been visiting Celebration Park with her family on their yearly Mother's Day trip. Her previous knowledge of the park and her love of the outdoors is what led her to becoming an Interpretive Specialist. Lily loves being able to work at the park because she gets to be outdoors rather than behind a desk, chase lizards in the summer, and help teach kids and visitors about all the wonderful ecology and history of the park.

Brendan grew up camping around Idaho with his family, before life took him around the world to live in Haiti and Costa Rica. After returning from managing a biological field station in the cloud forests of Costa Rica, he now works as an Interpretive Specialist at Celebration Park near the Owyhees. He loves to support and facilitate people's outdoor exploration of Idaho's cultural history and its wilderness lands, through teaching at Celebration Park and as a volunteer crew leader for wilderness trail maintenance at Idaho Trails Association. He and his wife, Emely, love camping, backpacking, and exploring new hiking trails, bringing along their mini-schnauzer, Powderfoot, whenever possible.

Brendan holds a BA in Mass Communications from Northwest Nazarene University and an MA in Applied Anthropology from the University of North Texas. Recently he's been enthralled with ecological writers such as John Muir and Robin Wall Kimmerer, and also enjoys scuba diving, petroglyphs, IT work, breakdancing, and international travel.



Let me tell you about Larry! He enjoys ghost towns, historic artifacts, and stories of old. Correction! He likes stories... period! But of all of the stories he enjoys hearing and retelling, his favorites are those about people and adventures past. He is even old enough to have lived some stories of his own! He believes history isn't irrelevant. It's alive in the things around us and in the decisions people make. History isn't destiny, but it is in our very DNA. When Larry isn't outdoors exploring the desert or giving tours at Celebration Park, he enjoys "down time" with his friends and family. Or perhaps, he can be found engrossed, making very strange woodworking projects.

He's traveled to 46 states and lived in four. Additionally, he holds a BA in History from Cal Poly, Pomona. But, his most valued experience is in being a husband and a father. Such is a timeless thing, eternally warming his heart.





Jenna comes from a family of teachers who also enjoy the outdoors as a way of life. She grew up in the deserts, forests, and lakes of central and southern Idaho, learning about many of the natural features that are also found in Celebration Park, like petroglyphs, geology, and botany. Her undergraduate degree is in Biology from the College of Idaho, and her graduate work culminated in a Masters of Science in Environmental Education from Southern Oregon University. She taught a wide variety of science courses at high schools in Garden Valley and Nampa. Working at Celebration Park represents a nice balance between all of her interests, not only teaching about the interrelationship between humans and nature, but getting to live it as well. Jenna drinks an inordinate amount of tea, and has an unusually large and fluffy cat named Sasha who has mostly learned how to go on walks, just not necessarily in a straight line. Hunting morels and picking huckleberries are her favorite yearly traditions.



Brenda: Why do I work at Celebration Park? Let me count the ways. Is it the beautiful canyon? The mysterious petroglyphs? The romance of the historic railroad bridge for the Dewey mines? The excitement of hunting mammoths? The gracefulness of a flock of herons flying above? The intricacies of the orb spider's web? The daring of the marmots? The scurrying of the lizards? The fish laughing at me as they splash when my back is turned toward the river? All these are wonderful but what makes my day is the excitement the kids have when they get off the bus and experience the sagebrush steppe desert, the massive boulders, and the thrill of being on the bridge. I love learning from my fellow workers and the visitors I see at the park. The beauty of Creation constantly grabs my attention. I've lived in Idaho since 1985. I loved taking my kids on field trips as they were growing up and Celebration Park was a favorite. I have 8 grown children and am expecting the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> grandchildren this year. I enjoy hiking, gardening, reading, photography, and learning about this amazing world.



Robyn grew up in California, enjoying the outdoors and an active lifestyle, along with reading and musical theater. She moved to Idaho, then attended Boise State University, earning a Business Degree. Robyn raised 2 children and was able to enjoy her passion for dogs, training and showing her dogs in several dog sports. Looking for a life/career change from Computer Support and Training, she started and ran a dog grooming business with her husband, until she could pursue her next great adventure.

Now at Celebration Park, where she has worked since 2021, she is excited to have more opportunities to work in the outdoors, learn about Idaho history, natural resources and continue using her training skills to teach students and visitors about Celebration Park and the history it preserves.

Robyn loves dogs, camping and exploring Idaho. She is planning on attending CWI in the fall, seeking an AA degree in Geography/GIS, along with courses of interest in Geology, Art, and Spanish.





Colton was the 4th child out of 8 born to an avid outdoorsman who raised him to appreciate the outdoors and all it has to offer. Having been raised in Melba he spent much of his childhood in and around Celebration Park, including a field trip there when he was a child; to him it was odd going on a field trip to his backyard. He always enjoyed teaching people about what he was passionate about, which, coupled with his own interests, drew him to work at Celebration Park in order to encourage others to share his passion with the great outdoors. Plus, who wouldn't want to work in their own backyard? He spends much of his time in the Owyhees these days, and his hobbies include learning & playing instruments, hiking, shooting, reading, and historical reenactment.



Charlie grew up in Northern Michigan, where he spent many a day hiking in the woods and swimming in Great Lake Michigan. Now a resident of Idaho for the past three years, he spends much of his time wandering around Boise and its trails with his family and his cat, Freya. When he's not out and about, Charlie enjoys watching movies with his roommates, and playing video games with his younger siblings.

Charlie is currently attending Boise State University as an undergrad, where he majors in history. As he hopes to someday be a professor, Celebration Park and its educational programs provide him with the perfect opportunities to learn what makes a good educator! He also has strong interests in prehistory and biological anthropology, which he is happy to discuss with anyone given the chance!

Lora grew up along the Oregon Coast and Willamette Valley, running wild and free with her brother and neighborhood friends. This led to a deep interest in outdoor education and nature. She started working outdoors as a camp counselor and eventually came to work as an Interpretive Park Ranger at Lake Mead. While working for the Park Service, she met Dennis, her husband of 20 years. From there, they moved to Wyoming. Four boys later, they relocated to Spokane, WA, then Carson City, NV, and finally landed in Kuna, in 2019. Lora spent time in the public schools teaching outdoor science at her sons' schools. Currently, when not working at Celebration Park, she works part-time as a teacher at Kuna High School teaching a new Outdoor Natural Science Class she created to help more teens connect to nature.



Merri has traveled the world as a backpacker, sound engineer, journalist, and horse enthusiast, but she always finds herself back in the West, particularly Owyhee County. When she's not giving tours at Celebration Park, you'll probably find her exploring the Owyhees on foot or riding her horse, Hillbillie Willie. Years of working on a Forest Service wilderness trail crew, and conducting wildlife and archaeology surveys in the Sierra Nevadas and other great landscapes gave her a vast appreciation for outdoors and nature. She's held spotted owls, she's seen eight cougars so far, and she hopes to one day mark a wolverine off her bucket list. She's a writer and photographer, and has written several books, including [Tales From the West: Four Seasons in the Owyhee Country](#).



# Leaving a Long-Lasting Legacy

Volunteers are always welcomed and appreciated at the parks! Sometimes it looks like building something new or planting seeds, weeding invasive plant species, or even working on the Story Trail. But we don't just accept volunteers—we're also volunteers ourselves! Eric is a well-known and much-appreciated educator at the Boise Watershed and Dylan is very involved in the Deer Flat Chapter of Idaho Master Naturalists. Many of our Interpretive Specialists spend extra time in the parks, too, lending a hand and their expertise in animal and plant identification, anthropology, and gardening to various projects around the department. We're happy to help out when we can, but we're most grateful for the hard work and dedication that our volunteers donate to our lands and projects.







# Archaeology Month 2023

The Idaho State Historic Preservation Office has been hosting Idaho Archaeology and Historic Preservation Month every May for over 30 years. This year, Celebration Park saw a number of fun and interesting events over the course of two weekends: May 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> and May 20<sup>th</sup>.

The first weekend included a stop at the park by the Idaho Model T Club. This year, over 25 cars – some 100 years old – arrived at the park on a beautiful Saturday morning. The backdrop of the Historic Guffey Railroad Bridge made for a great sight as the caravan of old coupes, sedans, and pickups made their way down the winding road into the park.

Later in the day, we welcomed the Idaho Flintknappers for a day of hands-on exercise making projectile points from obsidian. Bill Todd and Rod Dotson led participants through the steps it takes to take a huge chunk of obsidian and turn it into a projectile point. Daniel Sportiello and Chris Siepert helped out and everyone who tried was



*Above: Old cars from the Idaho Model T Club roll into Celebration Park as the Historic Guffey Railroad Bridge looms in the distance.*

*Right: Mike Tarri leads a cordage-making lesson while Parks Interpretive Specialist Jenna Raino assists.*



able to make a tool, usually a projectile point, but sometimes something else like a scraper. The “knap-in” continued into Sunday.

May 20<sup>th</sup> was an exciting day with lots of interesting programs on the schedule. One of these was a hike to the mining cabins along the Snake River with Bureau of Land Management Archaeologist Cameron Hogin. Interpretive Specialist Mallory DeFord accompanied him and a group of interested participants. They were able to explore several of the ruins of mining cabins along the Halverson Lake Trail, including where local legend William “Doc” Hisom lived for years. There was a hide tanning demonstration with archaeologist Dean Shaw, where

he showed visitors how to process raw animal skin into hide suitable for clothing – a process that actually uses the animal’s brain! Mike Tarri led a demonstration of cordage making from plant fibers, teaching participants a couple of methods and



materials. Later, visitors learned to make pine pitch glue with Chris Siepert and how to weave pine needle baskets with Daniel Sportiello. Archaeologist Carolynne Merrell gave two presentations on rock art sites in Idaho, showing fascinating photos from her studies. Bill Todd led flintknapping lessons for kids (and adults, too!) for most of the day, and many kids were able to form a good start on a projectile point or other stone tool. Park Interpretive Specialists also provided tours of the petroglyphs and opened the atlatl range for any interested visitors. It was a beautiful day with little wind, so we were able to give out quite a few “I hit the mammoth at Celebration Park” stickers!



We were happy to take part in Idaho Archaeology and Historic Preservation Month again this year. The history of this land is an important part of Idaho’s culture and we’re grateful to be able to help preserve a piece of it.

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*Above: Archaeologist Carolynne Merrell and Parks Interpretive Specialist Jessica Clark enjoy the petroglyph trail.*

*Middle: A 1923 Ford Model T with a pickup style body on display during the Melba Fun Run Antique Car Show.*

*Below: A line of antique and vintage cars and trucks show the many ways these vehicles could be customized—sedans, coupes, trucks, even delivery vehicles—Model T and A Fords were customizable in many ways.*





# DON'T GO CHASING WATERWAYS

by Alex Eells, Outdoor Recreation Planner



As the Outdoor Recreation Planner, I have learned a lot this year about our waterways and what it takes to keep yourself and other users safe. Multiple parks we manage or co-manage with other agencies are near major waterways, including Celebration Park, Lake Lowell Park, Wilson Ponds, and Martin Landing – they’re all right on the water. For this reason, one of our department’s main goals is water safety. In summer 2022, we received an Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation (IDPR) Cutthroat Plate Grant to install a new fishing dock at Celebration Park’s East End. Permitting for this took nearly six months, working with numerous agencies – IDPR, Army Corps of Engineers, ID Dept. of Water Resources (IDWR), ID Dept. of Lands (IDL) and US Fish and Wildlife.

As it turns out, installing a dock on the Snake River requires a lot of steps.

Of course, there’s budgeting, grants, and planning. But there are a few other things involved. One of those is a snail study. The Snake River physa snail is a listed species on the Endangered Species list. The US Fish and Wildlife Service requested a site visit to check for this snail. The Boise office sent Fish and

Wildlife Biologist Alyssa Bangs out to wade through the river in search of these snails. She and I picked up rocks and overturned sludge and whenever I found something, she confirmed what it was. I found a bunch of snails – mostly different little ramshorn snails – but no Snake River physa snails! With this result, we received their approval to continue.

I quickly learned that the biggest issue with this project wasn’t the regular application process – it was the **rocks** that put us in a hard place down at Celebration Park. One of the biggest “boulders” we ran into with this project was trying to find a way to anchor the dock system along the river. Normally, docks are anchored by driving pilings into the river bed or anchoring the docks to cables along the bank. Due to massive boulders down at Celebration Park, driving pilings was going to be impossible and IDWR had concerns about cables anchored above the surface of the water. After meeting the contractor down at the park, we came up with a custom design for this dock system. We would anchor the dock and gangway to a massive boulder embedded along the river. IDWR would only approve this if we could justify the integrity of this dock design. So, in February of this year, I helped conduct a data collection along the Snake River at Celebration



*Above: The endangered Snake River physa snail. None were found during the site study at Celebration Park.*

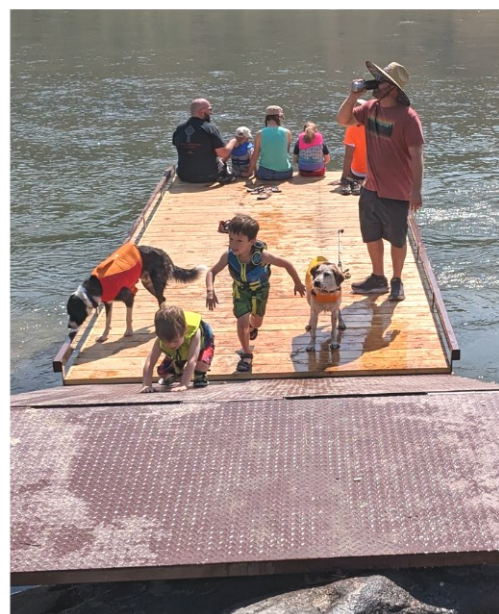


Park with Devin Krasowski, Canyon County Development Services Department (DSD) Engineer, and Sgt. Roberts, Canyon County Marine Patrol Sergeant. Having received my Boater Education card only a couple weeks prior, I developed a greater respect for the Snake River on that cold February day.

The fun began on a crisp 27-degree February morning down at the Celebration Park shop. Roberts unloaded the patrol boat in the Snake River and then Krasowski and I boarded and then waited for about 15 minutes while the boat refused to start. It turns out, boat engines don't like 27-degree mornings any more than we do! We finally motored to the East End project site. This section of the Snake River is located on the north side of Sign Island, which is about ½ mile long. It is very shallow (1-3 ft. deep) with a main channel that is about 4-8 ft. deep. Due to the shallow depth and the extensive weeds, the jet on the boat got clogged multiple times. I became the official grate stomper in order to free the weeds from the jet intake. It was difficult work – Roberts expertly maneuvered the boat into position while Krasowski took readings. But the river doesn't stop moving, even if we ask it nicely, and with only a couple feet of water where we needed to get data, the boat drifted and ran aground. Now all three of us had to get out and rock the boat free. My feet got stuck in the muck and I wished I had brought my waders. My legs, from mid-thigh down, were numb the rest of the day. I now understand what it means to be chilled to the bone! After a long winter day of collecting data along the Snake River, we had enough information to develop our justification for this dock project.

Installation day for our Non-Motorized Dock couldn't have come at a better time of year than May—one of our busiest times of the year, with recreationists ready for boating, camping, horseback riding, hiking, fishing, and swimming. Bill's Machine Shop (who fabricated the dock) came down to Celebration Park May 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> to install the dock system. The first day was spent installing the anchor platform onto a giant boulder, to which we would connect the gangway and dock. The next day, the crew drove down a 26-ton boom truck to crane the dock into place. After several failed attempts Joe, the owner of the shop, recommended bring down a larger crane to install the dock. Joe stated, "I would rather be safe than sorry." Joe made a great call and we appreciate working with contractors that are willing to wait a few more hours to get the right equipment then be in a hurry and risk causing extensive damage. After a couple hours, a 45-ton crane showed up and we all breathed a little better while the dock system was installed with the right crane equipment for the job. Within minutes of the dock system being connected to the platform, the public was ready to recreate and enjoy this stretch of the Snake River.

I would like to thank everyone involved with the grant process. I learned a lot about the grant and permitting process and received a lot of help along the way. Thank you Canyon County Marine Patrol, Canyon County Development Services, Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, Idaho Department of Water Resources, Idaho Department of Lands, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Bill's Machine Shop. ■







# Monte & Slim

We are very fortunate to have such a great working relationship with our local partner agencies. One of those is the Bureau of Land Management's Morley Nelson Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area (NCA for short). During the winter months, we offer field trips in Winter Desert Ecology, covering topics of winter adaptations and birds of prey. We can talk about the raptors that can be seen in the NCA, but those talks don't hold the attention of students in the same way that our friends Monte Tish and BLM Outdoor Recreation Planner Jared Fluckiger and their education birds can.

Monte and Jared graciously agree to bring their birds out to Celebration Park whenever we ask and we are so grateful to them. Some of those raptors include these pictured: Little Hawk—a Swainson's hawk, Merlin—a great horned Owl, and the queen of them all, Slim—a golden eagle.

Slim was originally Morley Nelson's bird. A rescue, she was never able to be released into the wild, so she stayed with Morley and later Monte. Eyes open wide when Slim opens her massive wings to a span of over six feet!

We'd like to give a big thanks to Jared and Monte and their birds for coming out this winter and early spring to help us in our quest to keep Canyon County a destination for local school field trips.



*Above, right: Monte Tish looks closely at Little Hawk the Swainson's hawk.*

*Middle, right: Monte and Merlin the great horned owl.*

*Below, right: Monte, Slim, and Jared present during Winter Desert Ecology.*



# SOUTHWEST IDAHO

# RESOURCE CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT

## UPDATE

The Southwest Idaho Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) Council has stood for years as an organization committed to furthering conservation throughout the region. From wildfire fuel reduction efforts to building community centers, the RC&D has been a part of the efforts to improve the landscape of Southwest Idaho for decades.

This season, they're all about continuing wildfire fuel reduction efforts in Wildland-Urban Interface areas – zones of transition between wilderness and land developed by human activity. One of these is the Warm Springs Mesa homeowner's association (HOA). With leadership from the HOA and the RC&D, these efforts reduce the risk to homes and property from wildfires.

Another fun project in the works is the Waterfowlers of Idaho's Conservation Day. This event will be the 7<sup>th</sup> annual event, and will be held August 19<sup>th</sup>, 2023 and is supported by the Canyon County Soil and Water Conservation District. This event is held at the Idaho Department of Fish and Game's Southwest office

in Nampa and provides education about waterfowl hunting and conservation, as well as lunch for the kids. Fish and Game and the RC&D are committed to helping create and educate the future of hunting and fishing conservation through the kids that take part each year.

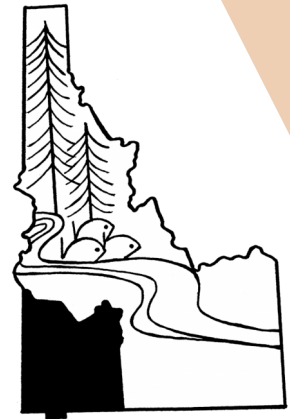
*The Southwest Idaho RC&D Council is recognized as a leader in cooperation between the public and private sector in natural resources management, conservation, and human resource development in rural and urban areas.*

We are proud to be a part of the Southwest Idaho RC&D and stay at the forefront of conservation in our area. Involvement in the RC&D means the department can apply for grants ourselves, receive administrative help with projects, and have a voice in the conservation decisions that affect where we work and recreate. ■



# Free Fishing Day

June 10th, 2023



By Bill Moore, Grants Coordinator

Free Fishing Day in Idaho was established by the legislature as the first Saturday after the first full week of June each year. On this day, no licenses are required, but all other legal requirements must be met. This new anglers can try fishing without first buying a license, and maybe even more importantly, take their families outdoors for an inexpensive outing. The Southwest Idaho Resource Conservation and Development Council (RC&D) partnered with the Idaho Department Fish and Game (IDFG) to host a free fishing clinic. To reduce the costs even more, we provided all the equipment needed, including rods and reels, line, bait, and hooks. Plenty of volunteers graciously agreed to help provide guidance for entire families to go fishing for a day. We also donated some equipment to individuals to keep who did not have any, meaning these new anglers can fish again another day.

Several hundred youth and their families were able to take advantage of Free Fishing Day 2023 at Kleiner Ponds in Meridian. Idaho Fish and Game hosted free fishing and Learn-to-Fish events throughout Idaho at 20 locations, though it was free to fish any public waters throughout





Idaho. In the leadup to the day, IDFG stocked about 500,000 catchable rainbow trout throughout Idaho waters. This meant that kids and adults alike could catch their first fish.

This event, hosted by the partnership of Southwest Idaho RC&D and the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, provided all the equipment needed for a day of fishing, thanks to the Fish and Game fishing rod loaner program. Fish and Game supplied all the tackle and bait also along with plenty of volunteers to help those needing some instruction on how to rig, bait and cast a line. The RC&D also assisted those needing help learning the techniques of baiting and casting. In addition to providing this assistance, the RC&D was able to provide a large number of fishing related prizes to the young people participating in the event. We were able to give away dozens of fishing rods, tackle boxes, stringers, bait boxes, hook holders, and many other items.

The day couldn't have been more comfortable. It was cloudy with a light breeze and temperatures were in the 70s. Topping it off, a large majority of the participants caught fish. For many, it was their first fish ever! It makes your day when you see a young person turn into a young angler. We hope to help families create lasting memories and help foster future outdoor enthusiasts. I asked one youngster with his first fish if he was going to come back. He emphatically stated, "YOU BET I WILL!"

Many hours went into planning this event and seeking donations from many local and national businesses. I want to thank Rich Williams for all his efforts along these lines and being there on the day to assist anyone needing help. Now that the event has passed, Williams and I are planning on having an after-event meeting with Idaho Fish and Game personnel to discuss what we can do for next year to make it even better.



*Everyone had fun, except this mallard drake.*



*Opposite, above-, middle-, below-right: Kids and adults alike benefit from being able to fish for free every June in Idaho. Pictured are several kids' first ever fish!*



# BIKE CAMPING

WITH BIKE WALK NAMPA



People were “camping” at Celebration Park thousands of years before it was ever a park. While staying overnight might look a little different than it did to the people of this area 10,000 years ago, it’s still a great way to spend time in our own backyard and connect to this special place.

One such way is through bicycle camping. Bike Walk Nampa organizes an annual bicycle camping trip to Celebration Park in mid-spring. This year was their 9<sup>th</sup> annual ride on April 15<sup>th</sup>. Starting at the corner of

Greenhurst Rd. and 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Nampa, riders head south through Melba and on to Celebration Park. LaRita Schandorff helped organize the ride this year and the ride was led by Fred Ellis. Participants rode the back roads away from heavy traffic. “It’s a wonderful 22-mile spring ride to get your legs and gear ready for summer.

Celebration park is a fun destination for a rural bicycle ride any time of the year – nice campsites with fire pits and restrooms and even some RV sites for family members who would want to meet you out there and



spend the night!” she said.

April can be a difficult month to be outside in Idaho – it could be hot or snowy – or both! “This time of year, there is usually a headwind going out and tail wind coming back. In spite of the headwind, the route is a gradual downhill grade into the Snake River Canyon but it is a climb to get out. It all works out to make a lovely ride past farms with spring green fields, new lambs and calves, and the chatter with good friends as you pedal along.” said Schandorff.

Bike Walk Nampa started in 2007 for the purpose of advocating for better bicycling and pedestrian access in Nampa. As a result of these efforts a Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee was formed and the first Master Plan was created and approved in 2011. The plan was updated in 2019 and continues to guide city transportation planners in making improvements. Bicycling access is an important part of the Canyon County Parks Master Plan, approved in 2022 by the Board of County Commissioners. Canyon County Parks’ Outdoor Recreation Planner Alex Eells said, “We

wanted our Master Plan to accommodate as many different user types as possible, and we will strive to bring them all into the fold as we develop more and more projects over the next decade.”

Bike Walk Nampa can be found on their Facebook page under the same name – Bike Walk Nampa, which has details on their schedule as well as information about their Nampa Bike Project, which refurbishes donated bicycles for persons in the community, advertises group rides, hosts bike rodeos, and teaches safety. ■



Check them out on  
Facebook at  
[www.facebook.com/  
bikewalknampa](https://www.facebook.com/bikewalknampa)



*Opposite, above: LaRita Schandorff provided these photos of their trip to Celebration Park. Participants enjoyed riding from Nampa all the way to the Snake River.*





# BUS *Scholarships*

## SPRING WINNERS ANNOUNCED



### *10 Schools*

57 schools requested to be considered for the bus scholarships and a lottery system picked 10 at random. Each school received \$150 to help fund transportation to and from Canyon County Parks field trips.



### *Wide Reach*

Winners included six schools in Canyon County, but also schools in Ada County, Idaho City and New Meadows, allowing students from all across southern Idaho to experience Canyon County Parks programs.



### *Generous Donors*

These awards were made possible by generous grants and donations by individuals and groups committed to ensuring that the educational opportunities we provide are accessible to the greatest possible number of teachers, schools, and students in our region.



## CONTACT US

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# Spring Field Trip Wrap-Up

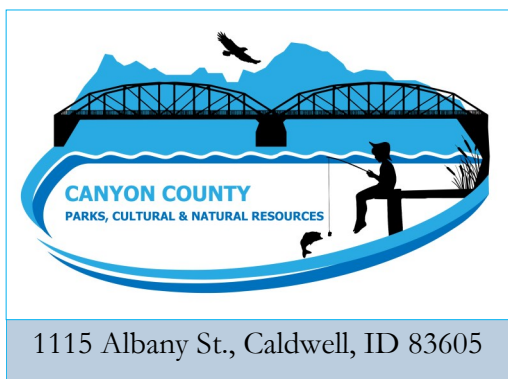
This spring was one of our most successful seasons yet, as we had a full staff of 17 Interpretive Specialists (see page 14 for their stories!). Between March and early June we had over 5,000 students visit Celebration Park and Lake Lowell Park taking part in Stories in Stone (archaeology), Wildland Fire, and the Lake Lowell field trip (ecology). We are grateful to the teachers and administrators for allowing and bringing their students to come to our parks.

|                               |
|-------------------------------|
| <b>SIS = Stories in Stone</b> |
| <b>LL = Lake Lowell</b>       |
| <b>WLF = Wildland Fire</b>    |

| School                      | Program | Date      |
|-----------------------------|---------|-----------|
| Whittier                    | WLF     | 3/10/2023 |
| Central Canyon              | SIS     | 3/17/2023 |
| Greenhurst                  | WLF     | 3/20/2023 |
| Iowa Elementary             | SIS     | 3/21/2023 |
| Park Ridge                  | WLF     | 3/22/2023 |
| New Horizons                | SIS     | 3/23/2023 |
| Silver Trail                | SIS     | 3/24/2023 |
| Meadows Valley              | SIS     | 3/28/2023 |
| Whittier                    | SIS     | 3/29/2023 |
| Garfield                    | SIS     | 3/31/2023 |
| Gem Prep                    | SIS     | 4/3/2023  |
| Chaparral                   | SIS     | 4/4/2023  |
| Sherman Elementary          | LL      | 4/4/2023  |
| Heritage Community Charter  | SIS     | 4/5/2023  |
| Roosevelt                   | LL      | 4/5/2023  |
| Fruitland Elem              | SIS     | 4/6/2023  |
| Vita Ed Homeschool          | LL      | 4/6/2023  |
| Chief Joseph                | SIS     | 4/7/2023  |
| Lake Hazel Elementary       | SIS     | 4/10/2023 |
| Amity                       | SIS     | 4/11/2023 |
| Elevate Academy             | SIS     | 4/12/2023 |
| Homedale Middle School      | SIS     | 4/13/2023 |
| TG Homeschool               | LL      | 4/13/2023 |
| Syringa Homeschool          | SIS     | 4/14/2023 |
| Park Ridge                  | LL      | 4/18/2023 |
| Midvale Elementary          | SIS     | 4/19/2023 |
| Park Ridge                  | LL      | 4/20/2023 |
| Vale                        | SIS     | 4/20/2023 |
| Payette Menonite School     | SIS     | 4/21/2023 |
| East Canyon Elementary      | WLF     | 4/24/2023 |
| Iowa Elementary             | LL      | 4/25/2023 |
| Sacajawea Elementary        | SIS     | 4/25/2023 |
| Endeavor Elementary School  | SIS     | 4/26/2023 |
| Andrus                      | LL      | 4/26/2023 |
| Sherman                     | LL      | 4/27/2023 |
| Van Buren Elementary School | SIS     | 4/27/2023 |
| Riverside Elementary        | SIS     | 4/28/2023 |

| School                       | Program | Date      |
|------------------------------|---------|-----------|
| American Heritage Girls      | SIS     | 4/29/2023 |
| Lakevue                      | WLF     | 5/1/2023  |
| Birch Elementary             | SIS     | 5/2/2023  |
| New Horizon Elementary       | LL      | 5/2/2023  |
| Hawthorne                    | SIS     | 5/3/2023  |
| Tech Trep Academy            | LL      | 5/3/2023  |
| Cole Valley                  | LL      | 5/4/2023  |
| Purple Sage Elementary       | SIS     | 5/4/2023  |
| Centennial High School       | SIS     | 5/5/2023  |
| Lowell Elementary            | SIS     | 5/8/2023  |
| Lincoln Elementary           | LL      | 5/9/2023  |
| Trail Wind Elementary        | SIS     | 5/10/2023 |
| Wilson Elementary            | LL      | 5/10/2023 |
| Carberry                     | LL      | 5/11/2023 |
| Basin Elementary             | SIS     | 5/11/2023 |
| Liberty Elementary           | SIS     | 5/12/2023 |
| Whitney Elementary           | SIS     | 5/15/2023 |
| West Canyon                  | LL      | 5/16/2023 |
| MOSAICS Charter School       | SIS     | 5/16/2023 |
| Cavalry Christian Academy    | LL      | 5/17/2023 |
| Maxine Johnson Elementary    | SIS     | 5/17/2023 |
| Desert Springs Elementary    | SIS     | 5/18/2023 |
| Owyhee Elementary            | LL      | 5/18/2023 |
| Castleford School District   | SIS     | 5/19/2023 |
| Reagan Elementary            | SIS     | 5/22/2023 |
| Nyssa Elementary             | SIS     | 5/23/2023 |
| Heritage Community Charter   | LL      | 5/23/2023 |
| Tech Trep Academy            | SIS     | 5/24/2023 |
| Tech Trep Academy            | LL      | 5/24/2023 |
| Lake Ridge                   | LL      | 5/25/2023 |
| Future Public School         | SIS     | 5/25/2023 |
| Sherman                      | SIS     | 5/26/2023 |
| Silver Trail                 | LL      | 5/30/2023 |
| Nampa Online Virtual Academy | SIS     | 5/30/2023 |
| Tech Trep Academy            | LL      | 5/31/2023 |
| Charlotte Mason Homeschool   | SIS     | 5/31/2023 |
| Union School                 | SIS     | 6/1/2023  |





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