



PARKS AND
RECREATION

Adopt the Greenbelt News

A newsletter for participants of the Adopt the Greenbelt program.

Boise Area City Nature Challenge

May, 2021

If you plan to get out along the Greenbelt between April 30th and May 3rd, please consider participating in the [City Nature Challenge](#)! The Challenge is a community science effort aimed at documenting global biodiversity. To participate, download the [iNaturalist app](#), snap a photo of nature, and upload the photo to the app! You never know what you might discover! Click [here](#) to learn more.

FOCUS ON NATIVE PLANTS - Creeping Oregon Grape

Creeping Oregon grape (*Mahonia repens*) is native to the Rocky Mountains and westward areas. It's a low-growing evergreen bush 1 to 3 feet tall with bluish-green, leathery, spiny-toothed leaflets. This time of year you can easily spot the deep yellow flowers in bloom, which by summer will have matured into small clusters of grape-like, dark bluish-purple berries. The berries are edible, though quite sour, and can be made into jellies. Oregon grape is beneficial to the local ecosystem as it provides cover for wildlife, fruit for birds, and nectar for our native bees.



American Beaver

North America's largest rodent, the American Beaver (*Castor canadensis*) can be spotted along the Boise River and slow-flowing brooks and streams. Beavers prefer to alter their environment, by damming streams and other flowing water to create ponds. They eat the bark of deciduous trees such as aspen, willow, birch, and cottonwood. They also feed on various woody shrubs and roots of aquatic plants and are most active from dusk to dawn. Their teeth never stop growing and contain high amounts of iron giving them an orange color. Some of their habits, though destructive, provide habitat for waterfowl, songbirds, and small mammals. Efforts have been made by staff and volunteers to protect Black cottonwood trees from excessive beaver damage through the use of wire wrapping. Please help in the effort to protect this keystone species by letting us know if you spot an area with signs of recent beaver activity.

Nature Enthusiasts Beware - Poison Ivy



As you are outside enjoying the beautiful spring weather, be sure to keep on the lookout for poison ivy. The entire plant (stems, flowers, pollen, and even the smoke of burning plants) is allergenic due to the presence of the oil urushiol, causing severe and continuing skin irritation on contact for most people. You can also be poisoned by secondary contact with tools or clothes that have touched poison ivy. If you don't already know what it looks like, familiarize yourself with it before beginning your outdoor adventures. Western poison-ivy (*Toxicodendron rydbergii*) is a rhizomatous, erect, low shrub that has

no aerial roots, so it does not climb as some of the eastern species do. Plants are sparsely branched and woody only about 2 to 48 inches from the base and it typically only reaches heights of less than 3 feet. The leaves are compound and consist of three bright green, shiny leaflets. Leaf shape and texture can be variable, even on the same plant which may lead to incorrect identification. If in doubt, the saying "leaflets of three, let it be" should be followed. Let us know if you spot a patch of poison ivy growing along your adopted Greenbelt stretch.

