



EMPLOYEE

ASSISTANCE NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2025

PROVIDED BY SAINT ALPHONSUS EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

SUNSHINE & SANITY

A GUIDE TO OUTDOOR SUMMER FUN IN BOISE

Spending time outside during Boise's sunny summer months is more than just fun—it's a powerful way to boost your mental health. Nature-based activities reduce stress, ease anxiety, improve mood, and strengthen your connection with nature and the community. Whether you're drawn to rivers and trails, gardens and wildlife, or mountain views and quiet escapes, the Boise area delivers a wide variety of options to unwind, recharge, and reconnect. Here's a guide to some of the best summer outdoor activities in and around Boise, Idaho, to support your well-being.

Float the Boise River

Floating the Boise River is one of the city's most beloved summer traditions. Rent a raft or inner tube and enjoy a leisurely 3-4 hour journey from Barber Park to Ann Morrison Park. The gentle current, tree-lined banks, and occasional wildlife sightings create a calming, almost meditative experience. It's the perfect activity for cooling off and mentally drifting away from stress.

Connect with Nature at Zoo Boise

Zoo Boise offers more than just a chance to see exotic animals—it fosters a sense of wonder and connection with the natural world. Located in Julia Davis Park, the zoo features shaded paths, engaging exhibits, and special summer programs for all ages. Walking through the zoo can be both soothing and stimulating, a great combo for mental clarity.

Hike and Bike the Boise Foothills

With miles of trails accessible from various points around the city, the Boise Foothills are a haven

for hikers, mountain bikers, and trail runners. The fresh air, sweeping views, and natural sounds help reduce mental fatigue and elevate mood. Whether you're out for a quick morning hike or a long afternoon bike ride, the foothills provide a sense of escape and perspective.

Bike the Boise River Greenbelt

The Boise River Greenbelt stretches over 25 miles through parks, nature areas, and downtown, offering a smooth ride or walk along the water. It's ideal for cycling at your own pace, whether you're commuting, exercising, or simply soaking in the scenery. Shady sections and plenty of wildlife viewing make this path especially calming. The rhythmic motion of biking combined with nature's presence is a mental health win.

Explore the Tranquil Trails of the MK Nature Center

Hidden just off the Greenbelt, the MK Nature Center is a peaceful, educational escape into Idaho's ecosystems. Stroll along the shaded paths and peek into underwater viewing windows to see native fish up close. Interpretive signs and gentle landscaping create a quiet, reflective space perfect for grounding yourself. It's an ideal spot to reset when life feels noisy.

Find Your Calm in Boise's Parks

Boise's urban parks are green oases perfect for everything from picnics to meditative walks. Boise's largest city parks—Ann Morrison, Kathryn Albertson, Julia Davis, Esther Simplot, and

(continued on page 2)



Saint Alphonus
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EAP MISSION Saint Alphonus Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a voluntary, confidential counseling service that assists employees and their families with issues that affect their quality of life at home and work.



(continued from page 1)



Marianne Williams—each offer their own unique charm. Ann Morrison offers open fields and river access, while Kathryn Albertson Park is a peaceful wildlife sanctuary with winding pathways. Julia Davis hosts cultural sites like the art museum and rose garden, while Esther Simplot Park features ponds and water recreation. Marianne Williams Park is a smaller, tranquil space ideal for quiet time alone or with a book. Whether you're walking, relaxing by a pond, or throwing a frisbee, there's something mentally rejuvenating about these green spaces.

Relax and Reconnect at the Idaho Botanical Garden

Nestled in the foothills near the Old Penitentiary, the Idaho Botanical Garden is a lush, colorful retreat. Explore themed gardens like the meditation garden, herb garden, and native plant collection. The garden frequently hosts live music and evening events, giving you multiple ways to experience nature. Immersing yourself in floral beauty and fragrance can be deeply calming and joy-boosting.

Hike Camel's Back Park

Camel's Back Park offers a blend of active challenge and beautiful scenery right in the North End. A steep but short trail leads to panoramic views of Boise, while the surrounding foothills offer gentler paths. It's a fantastic way to break a sweat and clear your mind before starting—or ending—your day.

Hike to Table Rock

Table Rock is a local icon offering a moderately difficult hike and breathtaking views from its summit. Sunrise and sunset hikes are especially popular, offering solitude and natural beauty that are hard to beat. The climb offers a sense of accomplishment, while the vistas invite reflection and presence. It's a powerful way to feel grounded and expansive at the same time.

Make a Splash at Lucky Peak State Park

Just minutes from town, Lucky Peak State Park offers a full menu of lakefront summer activities—swimming, kayaking, boating, and relaxing on the beach. Water has a naturally calming effect, and the open space gives you room to breathe deeply and unwind. It's an ideal spot for a solo escape or a weekend picnic with friends.

Soar into Nature at the World Center for Birds of Prey

This conservation center offers close-up experiences with eagles, falcons, and hawks, set in a peaceful desert landscape. Walking the trails and watching flight demonstrations connects you with something ancient and awe-inspiring. Educational exhibits encourage thoughtful reflection on our place in the natural world. It's both grounding and uplifting.

PERFECT APPETIZER FOR WHEN
YOU DON'T HAVE A LOT OF TIME

SHRIMP TACO BITES
WITH CILANTRO CREAM SAUCE



INGREDIENTS

- 20 shrimp (small, uncooked, peeled and deveined)
- 1 tbsp taco seasoning
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 20 Tortilla "scoops"
- 1 cup cabbage finely chopped
- cilantro cream sauce
- 1 avocado pitted and diced
- cilantro (to taste)
- Sriracha (optional, to taste)

CILANTRO CREAM SAUCE

- 1 cup sour cream
- ½ bunch cilantro finely chopped
- ½ lime juiced
- salt to taste
- pepper to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Place shrimp and taco seasoning in a Ziploc bag and shake until shrimp is coated with seasoning.
2. Heat oil in a large pan over medium heat. Place shrimp in pan and cook for about 2 minutes on each side or until pink and cooked through.
3. Remove shrimp and place on a plate. Cover with foil to keep warm.

4. Place tortilla scoops out on a tray and place a little bit of cabbage in each scoop.
5. Spoon about 1 tsp of the cilantro cream sauce into each scoop over the cabbage.
6. Place shrimp and a couple dices of avocado into each scoop.
7. Drizzle a little Sriracha (optional) over shrimp and garnish with cilantro.
8. Serve immediately.

FOR THE CILANTRO CREAM SAUCE:

1. Combine sour cream, cilantro, lime juice, salt and pepper in a small mixing bowl.
2. Stir well to combine, cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate until ready to serve.

PREP
10 m

COOK
5 m

SERVINGS
20

Recipe from EverythingAirfryer.com | <https://www.favfamilyrecipes.com/shrimp-taco-bites-with-cilantro-cream-sauce/>



THE HEALING BENEFITS OF NATURE

Nature is an important need for many and is vital in keeping us emotionally, psychologically, and physically healthy.

There has been extensive research completed on the healing aspects of being in nature. Year after year, research continues to consistently find that even a few moments in the outdoors can have significant impacts on our mental health, leading to healthier, happier, fuller, and more productive lives.

Nature has a very wide definition. It can mean green spaces like parks, woodlands, or forests. It can also mean blue spaces like rivers, wetlands, beaches, or canals. It can also mean the trees on our urban streets, our private gardens, and even our indoor plants and window boxes. For those who find it a struggle to “get out in nature” due to challenges or barriers they may be facing with a medical or mental health condition, it’s imperative that we create space for nature in our indoor environment. By allowing the sun to shine in the windows, fresh air to flow through our homes,

and perhaps a having plant or two that does not require much attention, we can reap the benefits that nature has to offer.

Being in nature has also been shown to boost cognitive functioning by rejuvenating and restoring the mind. In addition to being scenic and beautiful, the sight of a bubbling stream, a serene meadow, or remote mountains, even a documentary on nature, can also reduce stress, lower blood pressure, and improve mood and self-esteem. Numerous studies have shown that a reduction in stress and anxiety leads to improved productivity, self-discipline and increased engagement. Simply put, green, natural environments can stimulate curiosity and engagement.

In order to take care of something, someone, or even oneself, one must feel a connection. Harvard Men’s Health Watch of Harvard Health Publishing found that being in, and connecting with, the outdoors has been found to reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety, while also creating more moments of contentment, awe, and even joy.

We are very fortunate to live in a state that has so much to offer. Challenge yourself to engage with nature each day in a way that is meaningful for you. It can be as simple as sitting outside, opening a window, taking a nap in a hammock, going for a walk in a park or around the neighborhood, going camping, taking a hike in the foothills, or planning a grand adventure. Nature is all around us, we simply must hit pause in the rush of everyday life to appreciate the benefits of it.



Rent a Paddleboard at Quinn’s Pond

Quinn’s Pond is a favorite spot for paddleboarding, floating, and relaxed sunbathing. Paddleboarding is great for balance, core strength, and mindfulness in motion. Rentals are available on-site, making it easy to try even if you’re a beginner. It’s a serene way to enjoy the water and disconnect from daily stress.

Refresh Your Mind and Body at Bogus Basin

Just 45 minutes from Boise, Bogus Basin transforms into a summer playground with scenic chair lift rides, mountain biking, hiking, and weekend yoga classes. The fresh mountain air and alpine meadows provide a total mental refresh. Bonus: live music on the weekends keeps the mountain energy high.

Take a Scenic Drive to Idaho City

Just an hour’s scenic drive from Boise, Idaho City offers history, charm, and a slower pace of life. Near the town are hot springs where you can soak in natural mineral water while gazing at the trees. The drive itself—through forests and along rivers—is calming and beautiful. It’s an easy, rejuvenating day trip when you need a real reset.

Let Nature Work Its Magic

Boise’s summer offers endless opportunities to recharge outdoors—physically, mentally, and emotionally. Whether you’re hiking a ridge, floating a river, or simply lounging in a shady park, these experiences can restore your sense of calm and connection. Sunshine, fresh air, and movement are powerful tools for resilience—use them often.

EAP COUNSELORS

SAINT ALPHONSUS EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



**Jared Belsher – Supervisor
MA, LCPC, NCC**

Jared is a licensed clinical professional counselor (LCPC) and national certified counselor (NCC) who has worked in outpatient mental health clinics and in private

practice since 2007. He received a bachelor’s Degree in Political Science and a master’s Degree in Community Counseling from Northern Arizona University. His approach to counseling is strength-based, which means that rather than dwelling on

things that are wrong, he focuses on the strength individuals have, and how they can use those strengths to overcome their obstacles. He uses a person-centered approach and additional counseling techniques such as cognitive-behavioral

therapy (CBT) to help clients discover healthier ways to cope and think about a problem.

(continued on page 4)

LIVING WITH UNCERTAINTY

Living with uncertainty can be challenging. Most of us, myself included, prefer to be 'in the know.' Not knowing often leads to a sense of anxiety, loss of control, and fear. Despite how uncomfortable not knowing may be, it affects a significant part of our lives. There is so much that we cannot plan for or control in this life, which frankly is hard. So how can we more peacefully live alongside 'not knowing'?

- Before reacting, or assuming, stop. Take a breath and slow down.
- Assess the situation for what you do know and what is under your control and what isn't.
- Act where you can and want to. If in doubt, ask a trusted person to think through the situation with you.
- Notice change. Elements of a situation often shift with time, potentially offering new

information and opportunities to reassess when, where, how, and if, to act.

- Determine what does and does not 'belong' to you and then delegate appropriately. Frequently, people assume responsibility for things that are not theirs to address.
- When appropriate, find allies and community who share your concern, point of view, or are impacted by the situation.
- Release yourself from the burden of guilt if you cannot change the circumstances.
- Learn to 'sit with' not knowing. Meditative practices, conversations with trusted people, and connecting with something larger than yourself can help us manage the anxiety that comes with not knowing.



- Use your voice to express your position, keeping in mind your safety and the safety of others.
- Reconnect with hope. People can do this in many ways: Reading, listening to podcasts, prayer, remembering past difficult times that you or others have made it through, seeing what is good in the world, and talking with others.
- Lastly, utilize your EAP benefit! We would be so happy to visit with you as you navigate the many unknowns that life often presents us with.

EAP COUNSELORS

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Jenny Lee Doty, MSW, LCSW

Jenny Lee has been practicing as a Licensed Clinical Social Worker for nearly a decade. She has worked in the mental health field for more than 20 years in a variety of treatment settings including but not limited to schools, day treatment centers, hospitals, and local community agencies. Jenny Lee has provided treatment to children, pre-teens and teens, and adults in individual, group, and family settings.

Jenny Lee is skilled in working with complex family units, emotional and behavioral issues, trauma, depression, mood disorders, anxiety, co-occurring diagnosis, psychotic disorders, self-harm, suicidal ideation, gangs, and those involved with foster care and Child Protective Services. Jenny Lee practices from a strength-based approach to treatment, while using a combination of interventions tailored to meet each individual's needs.



Melissa Young, MSW, LCSW

Melissa has been a Mental Health Professional for 30+ years having the opportunity to serve in a variety of mental health settings, with diverse client populations, working in various roles. As a Clinical Social Worker she has had the opportunity to work with survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence; as an Outpatient Psychotherapist within a Community Mental Health Center; a Peace Corps Volunteer in Asuncion, Paraguay; Hospice Social Worker; and currently working as a Counselor at the Saint Alphonsus Employee Assistance Program and Safe Connections LLC. She employs an eclectic approach to her work with clients, believing that a trusting and supportive relationship is key to any therapeutic success. In addition to her professional life, she is a mother of three sons and is a proud dog, cat, chicken and horse owner.

Saint Alphonsus Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Regular Appointment Hours:

9:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m., Monday-Friday
(special appointment hours by request)

Phone: (208) 367-3300

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