

Family Fishing Day at Tifft Nature Preserve 2009

It's All About the Kids!

June 13, 2009; 136 kids registered. 18 volunteers. 4-Learning Station format.

From the great hotdogs to the fine fish-catching, city of Buffalo kids had a day full of outdoor fun!



Kids lined the registration lane positioned from the main entrance at the Tifft Nature Preserve service center all the way to the entrance road from 9:30 AM to 10:30 AM. The 2009 Family Fishing Event at Tifft recorded the highest attendance on record for this location with 136 kids, plus parents or guardians.

There were 305 people present for the fish and learn event at Lake Kristy! Rose Barus, Donna Kayes, Spencer Schofield and Joe Fischer were busy at the registration table!

Pete Quagliana and Don Nikischer of the New York Walleye Association were busy at the bait station and



aerated "Lunker Pool". The kids brought in 53 fish for measure through the 2-hour event. Butch White sorted worms from Weeklies Bait in Hamburg for distribution,

fathead minnows from Big Catch Bait and Tackle were also used for bait.

The kids caught quite a few fish! Post-spawn yellow perch and pre-spawn largemouth bass and rock bass



waited in protective ambush of their spawning beds near summer-emerging weeds near shore.

The biggest fish caught by the kids was a 13-3/4" largemouth bass landed by young master angler, Dakota Casper, a 14-year old

youngster coached by WNY Jr. Bassmaster angler, Ian Cashdollar.

Working a classic plastic worm bait donated by Bass Pro Shops from their main office in Springfield, Missouri, Dakota explained to the crowd during the "big fish" award ceremony, "I just cast the worm out and the fish was there in the weeds!"

He smiled to the crowd and picked up his prize, a deluxe Okuma open-face spinning rod and reel rig.

he smallest fish contest was more the talk of many young anglers along the shore. "I'm fishing for the littlest fish, said many kids. Gabby Colpetzer

and Genie Sculpin tied each other with a 2-3/4" goby each. Gabby came up to claim her prize and said, "Oh thank you! Thank you!" Then selected one of the Daiwa spincast rigs that included a tackle box and assortment of lures. One youth reported losing a bass over 25 inches in length. He said, "my mom tied the hook on



and when we reeled in the line, the hook was gone!" Ooops.
 The kids caught sunfish, rock bass, largemouth bass, perch, pumpkinseed, gobies and



bluegills.
 Some 112 rods/reels were awarded to kids that completed the 4-Learning Station course. The format of the 4 Learning Station program format was a great way for kids to participate while developing hands-on skills that allowed them to be eligible for the rod/reel drawings: - The 4 Stations included:

- 1) Knot-Tying, kids learned to tie a Palomar Knot
- 2) WNY Jr. Bassmasters, kids learned to rig a plastic worm and jig tail on a hook
- 3) NYS-DEC, 2-pop-up tent learning station. Mike Wilkinson and Mike Todd demonstrated fish and aquatic life



- 4) Casting Station, last stop where kids learned right way to push the button/hold it in and then cast.

The WNY Jr. Bassmasters with Kathy Cashdollar, NYSDEC Biologists Mike Todd and Mike Wilkinson from Buffalo DEC, ECO Chuck Wilson, the Sahlen's hot dog chef's from Hawkeye Bowmen, all received applause and thanks.



Additional thanks went to Pure Fishing and Northern King Lures for their prize donations, Will Elliott of the Buffalo news, the Erie County Federation of Sportsmen and Erie County Fish Advisory Board volunteer folks who gave up their Saturday to help kids learn more about how to have fun in the outdoors through fishing.

Parents and guardians asked for an address where they might send a thank you letter. It seemed, everyone really enjoyed the day! Special official thanks to ECFAB for rod/reel donations and to Crows Nest for their \$500 cash donation to help offset costs.

Over 100 pictures were taken by Joe McAdams, see: <http://www.eriectyfsc.org/2009events.html>.

Thanks TEAM!

Dave Barus 2009 Federation coordinator.

Mike Todd 2009 NYSDEC coordinator.

