

# Family Fishing Day at Tifft Nature Preserve 2010 It's All About 192 Kids!

June 12, 2010; 192 kids registered. 23 volunteers. 6-Learning Station format!

Bobbers and plastic worm baits soared through the air with the greatest of ease as Buffalo area youth enjoyed a day of fishing and outdoor learning fun at Lake Kristy, Tifft Nature Preserve.

From 9:15 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., kids of all ages lined up at the Registration Station, three-



deep, at the main entrance to the Tifft Service Center. The 2010 Family Fishing Event at Tifft recorded the highest ever attendance for this location with 191 kids, plus parents or guardians. Rose Barus, Edna Davis and DEC Administrator, Evie Derry, were very busy at the Registration Station!

There was a total estimated attendance,



including parents, of 365 people for the fish and learn event at Lake Kristy! At the Live Bait Station, Tom Fischer and Don Davis distributed 3 boxes of 500 worms each to youngsters, all donated by Weekley's Bait in Hamburg. The fish were biting!



The kids caught lots of fish! Yellow perch, bluegills, sunfish, rock bass and largemouth bass dominated the activity as the fish were measure by New York Walleye Association members, Pete Quagliana and Don Nikischer. Over 50 fish were measured through the 2-1/2 hour event and all fish were released alive back to Lake Kristy.

The "biggest fish" caught by the kids was an 11-3/4" largemouth bass landed by Celia Hinckley who selected one of the Daiwa spincast rigs that included a tackle box and assortment of lures.



The "smallest fish" caught was a 3-1/4" Goby by Alysea Beneck. The "oddest fish" was determined to be an 8-1/2" shad caught by James O'Donnell and "most fish" caught winner was Conner Van Valkinburg with 5 fish.



Some 17 kids caught their first fish ever! Other kids caught many multiple species that included sunfish, rock bass, largemouth

bass, perch, pumpkinseed, gobies and bluegills.

Some 86 rods/reels were awarded by random raffle to kids that successfully completed the expanded 6-Learning Station program.

Parents agreed that the program was a great way for kids to develop necessary hands-on fishing skills. Learning Stations included:



- 1) Knot-Tying, kids learned to tie a Palomar Knot with Norby Antonik, Russ Johnson and Bob Carlson.
- 2) Plastic Baits, kids learned to rig a plastic worm and jig tail on a hook with Ron Smith and Joe Jemiolo
- 3) NYS-DEC, 2-pop-up tent learning station on fish and fauna with DEC biologist Mike Wilkinson, Mike Todd and DEC intern, Matt Bowker. Bowker addressed the kids later and spoke about the importance of scouting and nature.
- 4) Casting Station, kids learned the right way to cast with father and son team Rob J. Bruen and Rob T. Bruen.
- 5) Where-To-Fish, the ECFAB hotspot fishing map was detailed by Spencer Schofield and Joe Fischer in a classroom



format with focus on where to fish in Erie County from shore.

- 6) How-To-Fish, with expert angler and story teller, Paul Stoos. Kids learned how to adjust their bobber stops, choose hooks and fishing tricks.

Environmental Conservation Officer's Scott Marshall and Mark Mazurkiewicz who took time to meet parents and kids, the Sahlen's hot dog chef's from Hawkeye Bowmen, Ray Gwarek, Tom Chirico, Tony Wenzka and



Gabby Cronin, Rod/Reel station attendants Bob Wagner and Earl Ludwig (both over 80 yrs old), all received applause and thanks.

Additional thanks go to sponsors Berkley-Pure Fishing, Northern King Lures and Mustad Hooks for their prize donations, Will Elliott of the Buffalo News, the Erie County Federation of Sportsmen and the Erie County Fish Advisory Board volunteers who gave up their Saturday to help kids learn more about how to have fun in the outdoors through fishing.

Special official thanks to Lauren Makeyenko, Tiff Experience Manager, who furnished an emergency 50-cup coffee



percolator pot to save the morning, Nathan Pyzikiewicz from AmeriCorps, ECFAB and ECFS for rod/reel donations, and thanks to Crows Nest for their cash donation to help offset costs.

**Thanks TEAM!**

*Dave Barus 2010 Federation coordinator.*

*Mike Todd 2010 NYSDEC coordinator.*