

# Teach-Me-To-Fish Clinic at Tifft Nature Preserve 2011

## 265 Brave the Rain & Clouds to Learn Fishing!

June 11, 2011; 114 kids registered; 13 volunteers; 5-Learning Station format!

The overcast clouds coupled with the sound of train cars (thunder) in the distance did not deter parents and kids as Buffalo area youth prepared for a day of fishing fun and outdoor learning at Lake Kristy, Tifft Nature Preserve.

Kids and parents lined up three-deep at the registration station located at the main entrance to Tifft Nature Preserve Service Center. Rose Barus and DEC Administrator, Evie Derry, brought giggles, smiles and good news of the happy fishing fun just ahead for kids and parents.

The event enjoyed a total attendance, including parents, of 265 people for the fish and learn event. At the Live Bait Station, Tom Fischer and Norby Antonik distributed over 1,000 worms to youngsters, all donated by Weekley's Bait in Hamburg, New York.

Pete Quagliana and Region 9 Environmental Conservation Officer, Darci Dougherty, added easy congratulations and confidence for kids as they measured, identified, recorded and placed

fish into the aerated Lunker Pool (swim tank). The Lunker Pool was hopping with fish! The kids caught yellow perch, bluegills, sunfish, rock bass and largemouth bass using worms, plastic jigs and artificial flies. Over 50 fish were measured through the



event, including 23 kids who caught their first fish ever! All fish were released alive back to Lake Kristy by kids that had not caught a fish.

The "biggest fish" was an 11-1/2" largemouth bass, the "smallest fish" caught was a 3-3/4" sunfish and both entries were judged to be an instant winner for a brand new rod/reel rig.

Some 95 Shakespeare and Mitchell rods/reels were awarded by random raffle to kids that successfully completed the expanded 5-Learning Station program.

Parents complimented volunteers at and agreed that the program was a great way for kids to develop necessary hands-on fishing skills and have fun at the

same time.

Learning Stations included:

- 1) Knot-Tying, kids learned to tie a Palomar Knot with Russ Johnson and Bob Carlson.
- 2) Plastic Baits, kids learned to rig a plastic worm and jig tail on a hook with Will Elliott and Joe Jemiolo.
- 3) NYS-DEC, 2-pop-up tent "Fish & Fauna" learning station with DEC biologist Mike Wilkinson, biologist Mike Todd and



fishing education intern, Josh Berry, where real fish and pond life were provided for one-on-one discussion.

- 4) Casting Station, kids learned the right way to cast with Bob Bruen and his casting crew.
- 5) How-To-Fish, a new station with expert angler and story teller, Paul Stoos, who with Ron Smith, taught kids how to adjust their bobber stops, choose hooks and use



fishing essentials to be successful.

Parents and kids all enjoyed over 50 pounds of Sahlen's backyard barbecue hot dogs with chef's Tom Chirco and Ray Gwarek from Hawkeye



Bowmen.

Special thanks to sponsors at Sahlen's, Pure Fishing, Musky Joe Lures, Will Elliott (Buffalo News), Erie County Federation of Sportsmen, Weekley's Wholesale Bait, the Future Fishermen Foundation of America, to moms & dads, and most of all, to so many volunteers who gave up their Saturday to help kids learn more about how to have fun in the outdoors through fishing.

The event was not funded by Erie County this year, so extreme special thanks to the Erie County Federation of Sportsmen and to Crow's Nest Fishing Club for their financial aid to absorb all costs.

**Thanks TEAM!**

*Dave Barus 2010 Federation coordinator.*

*Mike Todd 2010 NYSDEC coordinator.*

