

Kids Meet Rain & Wind, but Catch Fish at annual EAFG Teach-Me-To Fish Outing

June 4, 2011; 123 Kids; 296 in Attendance; 25 Volunteers; Education & Outdoor Experience Shared



Rose Barus and Susan Gould registered 123 eager kids and their parents from areas as far away as Arcade and Batavia. Each youth was provided with official Mardi-Gras “fish bead” necklace to identify registration status

and with a packet of “fishing stuff” that included Bassmaster youth magazine, NYS Conservationist Fishing flyer, Erie County Fishing Hotspot map and a flyer for the EAFG Sportfest in August.

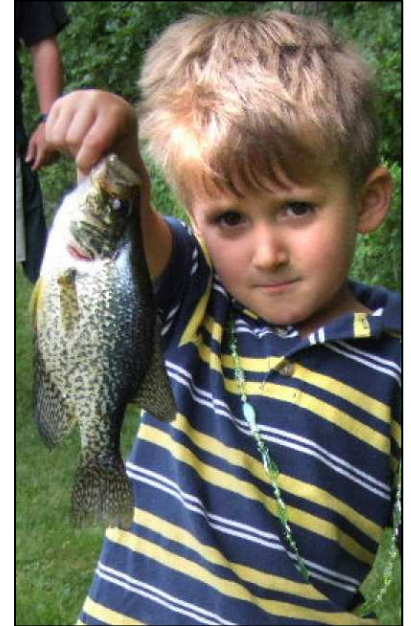
The weather gods sent unwanted thunder and lightning to the area at 11:15 a.m., causing the pond fishing portion of the event to close early for safety. Everyone headed for shelter and the value of a true “outdoor experience” began prior to lunch! What fun! Most folks got soaked and were still laughing about it all!



Prior to fishing, the kids visited each of four learning stations where they discovered fishing knots, casting, plastic bait rigging and where-to-go fishing in Erie County.

Bob Carlson, Russ Johnson and Norby Antonik demonstrated one-on-one outdoor fun as kids learned to tie a strong, easy-to-tie, Palomar knot.

Next stop was at the Skeet Shooting shelter with Joe Fischer and Spencer Schofield, both visiting from the Erie County Fish Advisory Board, where parents were taught over 50 places they can take their families to fish right here in Erie County. Kids were presented with their own free copy of the



Lake Erie Fishing Hotspots Map.

At the casting station, Ted Malota and John Borngaber demonstrated step-by-step skill-forming lessons to help kids learn how to cast toward hula-hoop targets. The kids developed skill quickly. Malota reported, “the kids really “get good” in such quick fashion!”

At the Plastic Bait learning station, Mark Mann and John Bonanno showed kids the magic of how-to rig a plastic worm, a plastic jig tail and how to fish with an artificial bait. No mess, no fuss! Kids got to keep their new plastic lure and some used these to fish the pond.

At the Bait & Tackle Station, fishing experts provided advice and free nightcrawlers or live minnow bait with lessons on how to rig the baits. Over 1,000 worms were donated by Weekley’s Bait Shop in Hamburg, New York.



Bait in hand, all the skill development stations completed, Don Kochersberger and a team of volunteers provided pre-rigged rods/reels that enabled the



kids to fish with their own individual fishing line.

At the "Lunker Pool", the official weighmasters said, "the kids really caught a lot of fish today!" Some kids caught 15, others were still trying for



number 1, but the lunker pool aerator was bubbling all morning. All the fish were released back to the pond after the contest.

The "Lunker Pool" is a 6-foot swimming pool filled with pond water, complete with a powerful, battery-operated aerator, allowing kids to watch assorted fish from the pond swim around as they compete to catch one of their own. The newest



addition to the pond was cold water trout, with brook, rainbow and brown trout released about a week before.

Nine-year old Collin Voss caught a 13-1/2" rainbow, the biggest fish of the derby, but

trout were not included in the big fish category due to the sensitive nature of handling the species. Trout die quickly when handled, so anglers were asked to simply catch and release all trout. Everyone understood the concern.

Dan Wilson maintained the first aid station EMT watch, offering sunscreen, band-aids and advice. Wilson was prepared with CPR equipment and Emergency Rescue if needed for any reason.

Over the course of the fishing day, Erik Maeder and team of EAFG volunteers provided on-site fishing lessons as families fished the pond.

Nadine Fulle, Dave Zell Jr., John Borngaber and others donned their plastic food gloves to provide healthy food line service under the direction of Elaine Winters. Complete with the Sahlens backyard barbecue tent and grill, healthy watermelon, salads and, of course, a few sweet treat cookies were there for good measure. Everyone loves Sahlens hot dogs!



Thanks were noted to Pure Fishing, Mepps Lures, Walmart, Tim Horton's Coffee, Weekley's Bait and all the East Aurora Fish/Game and Erie County Fish Advisory Board volunteers who donated the biggest prize of all, their time, to help our youth learn more about how to have fun in the outdoors through fishing. Special thanks to Jack Maeder for his professional photography skills!

Thanks TEAM!
Dave Barus 2011 Chairman