

Huntin' For Fun

Kids dabble with fishing

Anyone who says kids are soft nowadays was not at the Kids Fishing Clinic on April 16 at Sandy Knoll Park in the town of Trenton. The pond there is part of the urban waters fishing program in southeast Wisconsin.

The weather that day was just warm enough to keep the pond at Sandy Knoll ice free. It was drizzling and windy. Even ducks sought shelter from the elements. But that didn't stop more than 100 kids and their adult mentors from fishing for rainbow trout.

The event was sponsored by Kiwanis Early Risers of West Bend, Southeast Trout Unlimited, West Bend Parks and Recreation, the Wisconsin DNR and Klotz's Piggly Wiggly.

West Bend's Michael Sarg from Kiwanis Early Risers started the Washington County fishing clinic for kids four years ago along with the past president of Southeast Trout Unlimited.

"We were friends and we started talking about doing something special for the kids in the community," Sarg recalled. "We knew that the DNR put the program on every year in parks in Milwaukee and Waukesha but none in Washington County. The DNR was happy to have a program in Washington County, but it is the volunteers to do it that was difficult to find."

The Kiwanis Early Risers stepped up and got the program organized. The first year a snowstorm greeted the anglers, but 110 kids braved the storm to fish. Last year was a warm, sunny day and 350 young anglers participated.

"The goal is just to get kids interested in the outdoors," Sarg said. "They do have to come with an adult or older sibling. We provide rods and reels (for those who don't have equipment). We provide bait."

Klotz's Piggly Wiggly donated hot dogs and buns for lunch. Cabela's donated the rods and reels. West Bend Parks and Recreation donated the use of the indoor facilities. The Kiwanis and Trout Unlimited supplied the manpower. The only thing that did not cooperate was the fish.

A cold rain the night before put a damper on the bite and only a handful of the planted rainbow trout were caught that day. That did not stop the kids and mentors from having a good time.

West Bend's Tom Boesch brought his grandson Riley Tanzi, also from West Bend, to try his luck fishing.

"I have been wanting to take Riley fishing for a long time," Boesch said. "When I read this in the (Daily News) that this was going on, I thought I've got to take Riley there. It's just a great time with he and I being together."

Six-year old Riley did not catch a fish, but he had fun despite the cold weather. I asked him what he said when grandpa Boesch asked him if he wanted to go fishing.

"I want to go," he replied. "I remember the time when me and him went fishing a long time ago and he caught a slobbering fish."

The DNR also planted trout in Ridge Run Park, Homestead Hollow Park, Regner Park and Hartford Millpond as part of the urban waters program.

Washington County warden Bob Lee is very enthusiastic about the urban waters program.

"It is geared toward young people to introduce them to fishing," Lee said. "At the Hartford pond, I see a bunch of kids fishing daily. It's a great opportunity for them to get outside and enjoy a fishing experience. A lot of the kids practice catch and release. I have gotten to know them by name and they know me."

The urban waters have special regulations that are posted in the 2011 fishing regulations. Adults can fish these waters after April 29, but discretion should be used because the program is designed for young people.



Larry Polenske/For the Daily News Six-year-old Riley Tanzi of West Bend fishes for trout at the Kids Fishing Clinic on April 16 at Sandy Knoll Park. The pond at Sandy Knoll is part of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' urban waters fishing program.



POLENSKE

Publication: West Bend Daily News;

Date: Apr 27, 2011;

Section: Sports;

Page Number: B3