

# “Sunny Day Kids” Hooked on Buffalo River Fishing Fun

## Fishing & Learning Excitement at Bison City Rod & Gun Club, Buffalo, NY

May 28, 2017; 141 Kids, 322 Total Attendance; 21 Volunteers; 8-Learning Stations

By Forrest Fisher

The forecast for rain and fog was swept aside when bright, sunny skies with a gentle 75 degree breeze surprised families with kids from Buffalo and Western New York as they came to fish



bass pro, Scott Gauld, who took time to share “easy tips” for everyone in the program. He explained that catching a fish with a rod and reel (bait or artificial lure) is not only possible, it is fun and it’s

and learn at Bison City Rod & Gun Club for the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Jimmy Griffin Memorial Teach-Me-To-Fish event.

Once a polluted waterway that would burn from the heat of a lighted match, today the Buffalo River waterfront is clean, alive, and hopping with fish, kayaks, canoes and kids with fishing poles! The Buffalo-Niagara Riverkeeper Group is a big part of the clean-up progress.

The kids and their families all learned a bit more about the adventure of the outdoors through the fun of fishing, many for the very first time!

While the river was running a bit muddy from recent rains, the steady flow of riverfront kayakers, sailboats, canoes and power boats showed proof that water color is not a deterrent. Kids fishing from the Bison City fishing pier were busy. Even single adults without kids came to discover the fun and adventure of “how-to-fish”. More and more people want to know.

Lynda Kollar, Rose Barus and Linda Cooley energized a positive first-moment connection



with folks at the registration station. Kids and parents learned “How-To-Fish” and what to do from Western New York

not hard. Gauld provided that special seal of “sure-fun is right around the corner” that only a professional angler might be able to share with onlookers. People went away looking for the fishing pier!

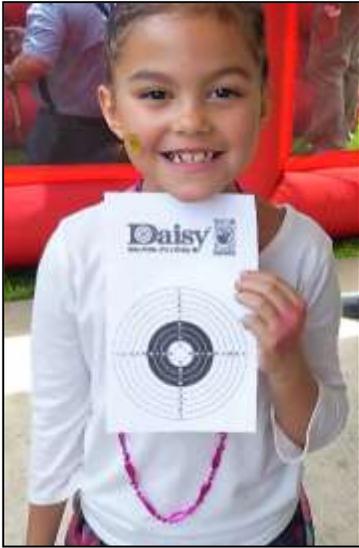
Marine Unit 2 with Erie County Sheriff Tim Dusza and his team provided tours of their vessel, explaining water-safety and allowing kids to blow the horn and turn on the flashing lights. Big smiles there!



Russ Johnson and Bob Carlson, members of the East Aurora Fish & Game Club, who have perfected the system for educating kids and parents on how to tie a Palomar Knot and Clinch Knot, taught everyone how to tie on a hook in only a few seconds.

Rigging a weedless plastic bait, a plastic worm or jig tail, was made easy with a hands-on demonstration by junior Bassmasters Alex Gauld and Collin Voss, as they provided each youth with a souvenir plastic creature bait

sample to fish with or take home. The girls



seemed to pick the pink squiggly tail crayfish!

Environmental Conservation Officer, Jeff Jondel and Joe Mills provided hands-on firearm safety training and shared the laws of responsibility for parents and kids so they could experience the Cabela's BB-Gun Range, an inflated

and fully enclosed, safe, "bounce house" style event. The NRA safety-instructors provided easy 1, 2, 3 steps for responsible use of a firearm, using a BB-gun. Kids and parents took turns checking their aim using Daisy Red Ryder BB-Guns, shooting at suspended souvenir paper targets. Happy kids took their targets home with ear-to-ear smiles as souvenirs.

Lifetime youth educator and certified New York State Archery champion, Paul Stoos, worked with Earl Farrel, Sr., to provide first-time how-to lessons for kids at the Cabela's Archery Booth using air-suspended targets.

Captain Jerry May and walleye master, Ted Malota, took taught kids how to cast a spincast fishing rod with hookless casting baits. The kids were sailing their lines a very long way toward hula-hoop targets in just minutes. Ted shared, "Wow, some of these kids are really good with so little practice!" Fun for all!

Fishing from "George's Landing," the Bison City Fish Pier, was a fun and exciting adventure for

many kids. Several landed their first-ever fish. Fishing educator, Dave Solowski, provided eager kids with bait, pre-rigged rods, reels, bobbers, hooks, split-shot and plenty of nightcrawler bait supplied by Weekley's Worms.

Special thanks to Donna Kayes for providing "pre-fish confidence" while outfitting each youth with a life-preserver before entering the pier area. While several first-fish catches were recorded, fun was had by all. The fish were placed in the aerated Lunker Pool and released by the kids after the event. Kids that did not catch a fish enjoyed seeing the fish that others caught.

At the newest learning station OUTDOOR



AWARENESS, Lyme Awareness Educator, Sheri Voss, provided hands-on lessons for families with advice on how to stay

informed, prepared and proactive whenever they head outdoors, with special focus on deer ticks and the Lyme disease outbreak.

As families completed the learning station tours, a 70-page slide show indoors allowed for their continued education with Sahlen's grill-cooked hot dogs, Perry's Ice Cream, Paula's Donuts, Gwen Jozwiak's hand-made "fish cupcakes" and other munchies. During the random raffle, 76 happy youths won a free rod/reel combo. Everyone else, adults too, took home fishing maps, tackle, and special prizes from the "Bison City Tackle Treasure Chest."

Everyone, kids and adults, were BIG WINNERS!

*This special youth outreach event was sponsored and coordinated by the Bison City Rod & Gun Club with special thanks to Ted and Doraine Malota, Cabela's, Erie County Federation of Sportsmen, WNY Safari Club, Sahlen's Meat Packing, the Norby Antonik Foundation, Weekley's Bait, Paula's Donuts and 18 dedicated volunteers who donated their time to help our youth and their families learn more about the outdoors through the fun of fishing! Thanks TEAM!*

*Dave & Rose Barus, 2017 Program Chairpersons*



Kelsey Voss MC