



Youth Fishing Instructor, Kurt Kiner, helps a family catch sunfish during the August 15th Family Fishing Night at Holmes Lake in Lincoln.
Photo credit: Thaddeus Fonck

AKSARBEN AQUARIUM 21502 W HWY 31 GRETNA, NE 68028

Fish Tales

Summer / Fall 2013



NEBRASKA
— GAME  PARKS —

HIGHLIGHTS

Greetings, Youth Fishing Instructors!

By Lindsey Chizinski

I'd like to start this newsletter with an apology to anyone who had a birthday in the last few months. Your birthday cards are seriously belated! I got really behind in the office during all of the fishing we did this summer. I haven't tallied up numbers yet, but we sure kept busy with all of the summer school, daycare and family fishing events. Anyway, I wanted you to know that you were not forgotten, and I hope you all had fantastic birthdays!

Another thing that kept me busy this summer was the launch of our Trout in the Classroom program. We have three pilot schools participating during the 2013-2014 school year. Walt Disney Elementary and Upchurch Elementary are in the Millard School system, and Patriot Elementary is in the Papillion-LaVista School system. Additionally, the Osceola Public Schools agriculture program is adopting our curriculum to use in the high school. Teachers attended a training workshop in July and are excited to receive their first batch of trout in January! We hope to expand the program significantly over the next few years.

On July 27th, we hosted our 3rd Annual High School Bass Fishing Tournament at Harlan County Reservoir. It was a cool, rainy day, and the teams brought in some impressive bags. Our winning team, Eric Soe and Payne Ahrens from Gretna, brought in a five fish limit totalling 15 pounds. Eric also took home the prize for biggest fish with his 5 1/2 pound lunker. I'd like to thank Nebraska Fish and Game Association members Harold Fankhauser and Corey Malm as well as Chris Chizinski and T.J. Fontaine from the University of Nebraska, Lincoln and Daryl Bauer, Karie Decker, Jordan Katt, and Cameron Depue (NGPC) for joining us at the boat ramp at 4:30 AM to set up and run the tournament. We had a great day, and are looking forward to next year's tournament already.

In other news, I'm happy to announce that my husband and I are expecting our first child in December! We will be welcoming a son, and are very eager to meet him. He may even be a Christmas baby if he decides to take his time with the arrival. I will be on maternity leave after his arrival until mid- to late-March, but will be back in the swing of things in plenty of time for expos and the spring busy season. During my leave, you can contact Larry or our staff assistant Tori with any questions or concerns. As always, if you have any equipment requests you can contact Sue Josoff at the Aksarben Aquarium (sue.josoff@nebraska.gov, 402-332-3901).

Reminder!!!

Please turn in your Activity Report forms for 2013. We will be compiling our annual reports and awarding participation incentives in November, and we need your **Activity Report Forms** as soon as possible to make sure that everything is accounted for. So, please go through your desks, your trucks, and your tackle boxes and get those forms sent in!

Also, if you have any photos to share from this season's fishing activities, please send them our way! Check out the back page for some of our summer adventures.

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REMEMBER: You can access activity report forms, order forms, and trailer request forms for your events online at <http://fishingnebraska.wordpress.com/volunteers/resources/>

Fishing Activity Trailers

By Larry Pape

In the spring of 2013, we placed our first Fishing Activity Trailer in Scottsbluff, in memory of Youth Fishing Instructor (YFI) Jerry Tallmon. Under the care of Instructors Sharon and Dennis Gregory, the trailer is available for use by NGPC and YFI staff in the Panhandle area. Equipped with 50 rods and reels, tackle, brochures and outdoor activities, it has been used in numerous civic, church, and family fishing events.

In the spring of 2014, we plan to add three more Fishing Activity Trailers across the state. We are currently building one that was made possible by a memorial to Jack Peterson of Bennett, Nebraska. It will be placed in Lincoln for use in the Southeast part of the state according to the Peterson family wishes. We intend to order and build two more trailers this winter, to be located in Kearney and North Platte. Additional locations of Family Activity Trailers will depend on the utilization of these four, expressed interests in other locations, and available funding. These trailers are primarily funded through donations.

The trailers are specifically designed for Youth Fishing Instructors to make your programs easier to function. All of the gear will be ready-to-go and won't need any assembly! We hope that these trailers will replace the need to send and return equipment to Gretna via UPS. The trailers will be available **only** to NGPC and YFI staff, but can be used for any type of fishing event that you want to be involved with. They are small enough (4'x8') to be pulled by any mid-sized to larger vehicle with a Class A Hitch. Reservations for use will be on a first-come, first-serve basis. The Instructor using the trailer will be responsible for picking-up, returning the trailer to its base site, and having it ready to go for the next person.

For more information contact Larry or Lindsey, or visit:

<http://fishingnebraska.wordpress.com/family-fishing-activity-trailers/>



Goodbye Tyler, Hello Tori!

Many of you had the opportunity to work with our technician Tyler Kapple over the last two years. I'm sure you will be as sad as we were to hear he is going away! Tyler has been called to active military duty with the Army National Guard and will be leaving us to serve in El Paso, Texas for a year. He will be part of a medical unit that works with soldiers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan.

Tyler joined the Fisheries Education program in 2011 and was in charge of coordinating our Family Fishing events across the state. He will be missed for his positive attitude, strong work ethic and ability to adjust to any situation. We look forward to his return.

Coinciding with Tyler's departure, we were fortunate to be able to hire a new staff assistant, Victoria (Tori) Mullins. Tori will be taking over Tyler's

responsibilities with Family Fishing nights and will be filling in for Lindsey as the Youth Fishing Instructor contact and the Trout in the Classroom Coordinator while she is on maternity leave.

Originally from New Jersey, Tori made her way to Nebraska in 2012 by way of a Degree in Art and Education from Green Mountain College in Vermont. She has an extensive outdoor education background, and has worked with programs at Canyonlands National Park in Utah and Lava Beds National Monument in California. Tori enjoys road trips, sleeping in a tent, longboarding and visiting museums. Hopefully you will have an opportunity to meet Tori soon at an Outdoor Expo or Family Fishing Night. Please welcome her and show her the best of Nebraska hospitality!



The Jerry Tallmon Fishing Activity Trailer in Scottsbluff serves as the prototype for 3 additional trailers to be added to the fleet in 2014.

Youth Fishing Instructor Mentors

By Larry Pape and Lindsey Chizinski

The Youth Fishing Instructor (YFI) Program at NGPC has been around for over twenty-five years. During that time, NGPC Fisheries staff has conducted YFI certification trainings for many hundreds of participants across the state. With increasing requests for trainings in the past several years, we are implementing a new program where we will be training experienced Instructors to become Youth Fishing Instructor Mentors. Mentors will be equipped to conduct YFI Certifications, promote the YFI Program and work with new YFI recruits.

Why is this important? We constantly get inquiries and requests from across the state from persons wanting to participate in the YFI program. It is vitally important to get these interested people certified and active as soon as possible. Our staff hosts several certifications annually, but we are not always able to offer the workshops near the diverse areas where the requests come from.

What are the advantages? *Experienced YFI members bring in a lot of knowledge.* In most cases, experienced YFI members have been around longer than either of us! A majority of what we present at a certification course covers how to teach kids to fish and the equipment available through the Youth Fishing Program. You know this information as well as we do. *Many of the contacts we get are referrals from experienced YFI members.* In this case, it is advantageous to have the experienced YFI Mentor certify the person they know. Regionally located YFI Mentors will also allow for us to certify new instructors in a more timely manner. In either case, the recruit has the benefit of the contact with a local, experienced YFI that they can use as a mentor and resource.

How will this program work? *We will train you to teach the topics that must be*

covered in a YFI certification class. We will supply you with a teaching kit including: an instructor's binder with the program script, electronic and paper versions of the presentation and forms. When you conduct certification trainings, we will send participant packets and demonstration equipment for the number of participants you expect, and will process the new instructor information and submit applicants to a background check. We will also help you promote your training, find a location to hold the certification class, and encourage local NGPC Fisheries and YFI staff to assist you.

When can we get started? We will develop the materials this winter, and our first class of Youth Fishing Instructor Mentors will be trained in March at the 2014 Conservation Educators Conference. Between now and then, please give us your ideas, comments and opinions.

Family Fishing Events

By Larry Pape

In 2008, Andrea Faas and I came up with the notion of parking our Urban Fisheries Trailer along the shores of Lincoln and Omaha lakes and inviting families who wanted to learn how to fish, to come join us. The first year we mostly entertained our friend's families, but were encouraged by the number of compliments and request for more.

In 2009, we publicized eleven Family Fishing Nights (FFN) and success was measured by mothers, fathers, grandparents, aunts and uncles - bringing children and wanting to learn how to fish with them. There was no turning back as requests came in for more, and our enthusiasm was huge.

In 2011 and 2012, we counted and surveyed the participants of each year's 30 Family Fishing Events which included 28 Family Fishing Nights, Pawnee Carp-O-Rama and the Kearney EXPO. We found that we attracted over 2000 participants each year. Many of the

participants were moms and/or dads who commented that they had experienced fishing as kids with their parents and grandparents and now wanted help getting started with their children. For the full survey report see; 2011 Family Fishing Survey [pdf], at the following site (<http://fishingnebraska.wordpress.com/volunteers/resources/>).

One of our unfortunate discoveries has been that we reached the limit in how many Family Fishing Events that the Fisheries Education staff can accomplish each summer. For the past two summers I have wracked my brain on how I can expand to so many other wonderful Nebraska communities. My solution came this spring in the form of the Jerry Tallmon Family Fishing Activity Trailer, and the suggestion by Scottsbluff YFIs Sharon and Dennis Gregory that they could hold Family Fishing Events in their area with that trailer.

With the construction of three more Fishing Activity Trailers this winter, my hope is that we can expand Family Fishing Events in the area of those trailers. But this is going to depend upon YFI help.

Our wish is to have Youth Fishing Instructors adopt a community that has a good, local fishing spot, such as Auburn, Ravenna, Alliance, etc., and hold one or two Family Fishing Nights per summer. We will support you with the Fishing Activity Trailer, publicity, materials and local YFI and NGPC staff support.

If you are interested in holding a Family Fishing Night, please fill out the Family Fishing Night [pdf] form available at (<http://fishingnebraska.wordpress.com/volunteers/resources/>).

We have found that our best attendance is Monday through Thursday evenings from 6 to 8 PM (see the FFN form for more suggestions). Family Fishing Nights are our most enjoyable and relaxing events. Parents are there with their children and after getting them fishing, we often just stroll around and visit. Tangles are few, but compliments and smiles are plentiful.



New Instructors learn how to teach casting and knot tying techniques. (Below) Lindsey Chizinski shares tips on how to host successful fishing activities. (Photo credits: Harold Fankhauser)

2014 Conservation Educators Conference

By Lindsey Chizinski

The bi-annual Conservation Educators Conference has been scheduled for Friday, February 28th through Sunday March 2nd 2014 and will take place at Mahoney State Park. The conference recognizes the top contributors to Hunter Education and Aquatic Education at NGPC, and this year's meeting marks the 40th anniversary of Hunter Education in Nebraska! The Youth Fishing Instructors who logged the most hours in 2012 and 2013 will receive invitations to attend the festivities of the weekend. Additionally, Youth Fishing Instructor Mentor Training will take place during the Conference (see Larry's story, this issue). Please contact us soon if you are interested in receiving the training!

12 Instructors Certified in August

The second Youth Fishing Instructor Training workshop of 2013 was held on August 24. Special thanks to Youth Fishing Instructor Alan Roesler and the City of Kearney for hosting the clinic at the Harmon Park Activity Center.

Instructors came from Lincoln, Newman Grove, Columbus, Holdrege, Cozad, Gibbon, Fremont, and Gothenburg!

Please welcome our newest members of the team:

- Sophie Risinger
- Lue Allen
- Erik Johnson
- Mike Bechtel
- Mike Wolff
- Christina Wolff



- Mark James
- Jennifer Frisch
- George Gasper
- Hunter Gasper
- James Reed
- Neil Risinger

What did you do for fun this summer?

What was your favorite YFI activity this year?



Larry Pape shows off a typical daily catch from an August boundary waters canoe trip with Greg Hartel to the Quetico Provincial Park in Ontario, Canada.

(L) Daryl Bauer nets a carp at July's Lake Maloney Carp-O-Rama (photo credit: Harold Fankhauser).

(R) Steve Satra shares his ice fishing knowledge during a clinic at Mahoney State Park in January.