



AKSARBEN AQUARIUM 21502 W HWY 31 GRETNA, NE 68028

Fish Tales

Spring 2014



Spring 2014 Volunteer Opportunities

We have three Outdoor Discovery Programs in April and May. These events offer 4th – 6th grade classrooms a wide range of outdoor activities. Aquatic education activities include: fishing, fly-fishing, bow-fishing, and fish printmaking, as well learning about fish of Nebraska with live fish displays and exploring lake food webs with macroinvertebrate collections. In addition to the Outdoor Discovery Programs, we have fishing events scheduled with many schools in Southeast Nebraska, and we have our inaugural Trout in the Classroom Field Days scheduled for this spring at the Aksarben Aquarium!

Please get in touch with Lindsey or Larry for more information and to sign up to help!

April 15 & 16: Platte River State Park

NGPC Outdoor Discovery Program

April 29 & 30: Trails West YMCA Camp, Scottsbluff

NGPC Outdoor Discovery Program

May 1: Aksarben Aquarium, Gretna

Trout in the Classroom Field Day -
Upchurch Elementary

May 8-10: Fort Kearny State Rec Area

NGPC Outdoor Discovery Program

May 13: Aksarben Aquarium, Gretna

Trout in the Classroom Field Day -
Walt Disney Elementary

May 1: Aksarben Aquarium, Gretna

Trout in the Classroom Field Day -
Upchurch Elementary

May 15: Holmes Lake, Lincoln

Fishing with Prescott Elementary

May 16: Two Rivers, Waterloo

Fishing For All with Millard Public School
Special Needs classes

May 17: Free Fishing Day ***

Alexandria
Fort Robinson
Fremont Lakes
Louisville SRA
Mahoney
Platte River SP
Ponca State Park
Two Rivers
Victoria Springs

May 20: Pfizer Pond, Lincoln

Fishing with Lakeview Elementary

May 22: Bowling Lake, Lincoln

Fishing with Arnold Elementary

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Do you need help with an event?
Contact Lindsey to put you in touch
with other Youth Fishing Instructors
OR join the YFI Facebook group to
contact each other directly!
See details on Page 2.

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

***Special fishing events are typically scheduled at these parks. Please contact the Parks directly for more information and to volunteer to help at these events.

Fresh Faces in Aquatic Education at NGPC

Matt Gruntorad



One of our new staff members may be a familiar face to many of you! Matt Gruntorad returns to the NGPC Aquatic Education team after spending a few years in Lubbock, TX studying sound production in fish. Matt will be coordinating this year's Family Fishing events and managing use of the Fishing Activities Trailers.

Matt worked with Larry in 2010 to coordinate some of the original Family Fishing nights. Prior to that, he assisted Lindsey with her graduate research. We are very happy to have him back!

In addition to fishing, Matt enjoys riding motorcycles and antique tractors around Nebraska and playing online role-playing games like World of Warcraft. His favorite fish is the tadpole madtom. When you see Matt, be sure to congratulate him on completing his Master's Thesis titled "Gizzard Shad *Dorosoma cepedianum* Acoustic Response to Environmental Stressors" and on his upcoming marriage to his fiancée Laura in July.

REMINDER: Use your ID number when you fill out activity report forms this season. You can find your ID on the address label for this mailing or printed on the back or your name tag. Name tags will be mailed in April to instructors who were active in 2012 or 2013.

Natalie Luben



Natalie Luben may also be a familiar face to many Lincoln and Ogallala area anglers. Prior to joining the Aquatic Education team, Natalie worked with the Nebraska Fish and Wildlife Cooperative Research Unit. During her years with the Coop, she conducted angler surveys on the Salt Valley Reservoirs around Lincoln, and most recently at Lakes McConaughy and Ogallala. She has a strong background in Natural Resources education, and has worked for the Department of Environmental Quality and the Middle Niobrara Natural Resource District.

Natalie is an outdoors enthusiast. In addition to fishing, she also enjoys hiking, boating, canoeing, and archery. She also has a green thumb and makes a hobby of cultivating orchids!

Elvis Chizinski



Chris and I wrapped up 2013 by welcoming our son Elvis Elan into the world. Elvis was born under a full moon on December 16th, at 11:05 PM and weighed in at 6 lbs 13 oz. He has grown like crazy from day one, and is now about twice that size! He's very good at kicking, making big smiles and blowing spit bubbles. We are madly in love with him.

Elvis is already fascinated with fish, just like his mom and dad. One of his favorite pastimes is to sit in front of our aquarium and watch the guppies swim.

Thanks to everyone who sent us congratulations and good wishes! I plan to have him out at Family Fishing nights this season, helping to pass out worms.

Fishing Courses at Southeast Community College

The Fishing Fundamentals courses at Southeast Community College are underway. Here's what a participant has to say about the course:

"My family is participating in the Weeping Water class with Jerry Smith and we LOVE it! It is so much more information than we thought it would be! My kids now think of fishing with excitement instead of remembering the not-so-good experiences in the past. Information/knowledge makes a person that much more confident and able to enjoy an activity! [Jerry] shows a true love for the sport and for passing on information. He is a fabulous teacher because of that."

Contact Lindsey Chizinski if you are interested in teaching opportunities.



Discover Ice Fishing at Mahoney SP

By Tori Mullins

On January 11th, the ice on CenturyLink Lake at E.T. Mahoney State Park held almost 200 people during the Discover Ice Fishing Clinic, which was a HUGE success, thanks to all of our wonderful volunteers who chose to slather on the sunblock and brave the sunshine and 45 degree weather! I suspect that Larry spent the night previous executing his famous "Perfect Ice Fishing Weather Dance". I'll leave you to your imagination but I've been told that if you ask politely, he will to perform it for a select audience. A few participants thought that the dance worked a bit too well once they noticed the fractures running through the ice, but with a little cajoling and the promise of hot chocolate, the cracks were all but forgotten. I, however, was far less concerned with the cracks than I was concerned with stepping into an abandoned hole. Between staff and volunteers, there were about 30 people assisting approximately 177 participants... that makes for a lot of holes in the ice! Although the Discover Ice Fishing Clinic was not nearly the size of the annual Brainerd Jaycees Ice Fishing Extravaganza in Minnesota (touted to be the world's largest ice fishing event), it sure felt like it!

Our volunteers brought a wealth of experience to the ice, making for an exceptional experience for everyone

involved. I bet the sunshine and 45 degree weather didn't hurt either.

Smiles and kind words were plentiful throughout the event as well as in the weeks following, as my email inbox was flooded with nothing but applause from participants. As much as we would love to take the credit here at NGPC, it's largely owed to you. So many of the NGPC events would not be possible without you and all that you do, and for that we are extremely grateful!

The following Thank You from participant Randy Neu sums it up:

"I want to thank you so much for that clinic on Saturday. It was beautiful day! What a great turnout. I learned a lot from the volunteers...met some great fellow fisherpersons...It was neat and refreshing to see folks catch their first fish! ... I went out the next day to Halleck park in Papillion and caught 3 trout!! So I am very pleased! Thank you! Please you and your staff keep it up! You are appreciated!"

Rod and Reel Maintenance

By Tori Mullins

This past winter, the Youth Fishing Program had 28 volunteers help with the colossal task of stripping, cleaning, greasing, and reassembling about 250 fishing rods and reels. The recurring theme of both days was reminiscent of the mummies of ancient Egypt. I encountered lots of mummified worms hanging tight until next season.

After the abuse of a summer spent in the clammy little hands of children gripping too tightly and casting with vigor, the reels often gave way to a mess of fishing line that could have been mistaken for an oriole's nest. Upon further inspection and the lack of evidence of fledglings, I was convinced that it was actually just the work of incredibly excited, novice anglers.

Generally, the children (and sometimes adults) that we are making contact with are first time anglers, making it enormously important that our equipment is well maintained and functioning well! We all know that there are fewer things more frustrating than equipment malfunctioning, especially when you are beginning to learn a new skill. These maintenance days are critical to the success of the Family Fishing and Youth Fishing Programs.

I will admit that I forgot to reattach the reel cover more than once, but I guess that is what happens when you are in good company! While the maintenance days were not my first event since coming on with NGPC, it was the first time that I was able to speak with you all without having to dodge hooks, but I have to say I'll take dodging hooks over "New Jersey" jokes any day ☺.

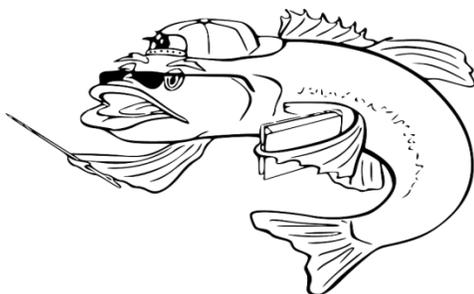
All jokes aside, I saw camaraderie, passion and above all else, dedication within every one of you who took the time to transform what otherwise would have been a tedious task, into a pleasurable afternoon. Without your help, I would have sat in my office and cried all winter.

Fishing Instructor Mentorship Program

The Youth Fishing Program constantly receives inquiries from anglers who want to participate as fishing instructors. Our staff hosts several YFI certification workshops annually, but we are not always able to offer the workshops near the diverse areas where the requests come from. In response to these limitations, we created a mentorship program to train current Youth Fishing Instructors to host certification workshops. After a full day training session, in which participants review a guidebook that outlines the components of a certification workshop, Mentors are equipped to conduct YFI Certifications.

On March 1st, NGPC certified its first YFI Mentors. The following 31 instructors are prepared to host YFI certification workshops. If you are interested in bringing a certification workshop to your community, contact Larry Pape to connect you with a YFI Mentor.

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|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Dave Hoffman | Betty Clayton |
| Mary Ann Niemoth | Linda Ramos |
| John Niemoth | Sheryl Miller |
| Kathy Rowlands | Danny Meade |
| Cliff Huss | Gene Kathol |
| Noel Bennett | Pam Cheever |
| Jan Pogreba | Scott O'Neal |
| Loren Pogreba | Jeane Loos |
| Julie Geiser | Rod Loos |
| Sharon Gregory | Harold Fankhauser |
| Dennis Gregory | Cindy Fankhauser |
| Rob Hadan | Lynn Gray |
| Brenda Goodro | Al Bietz |
| LeRoy Goodro | Diane Bietz |
| Bobby Gosier | Bob Johnston |
| Ray Clayton | |

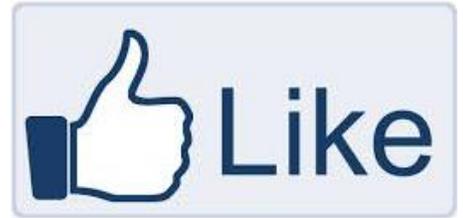


33 Instructors Certified in March

The Aksarben Aquarium in Gretna hosted a successful Youth Fishing Instructor training workshop on Saturday, March 15th. We certified 30 new instructors who were trained to teach casting, knot tying, rigging, fishing ethics and regulations, and fish identification and biology. Additionally, we certified several new instructors at the Conservation Education Conference on March 1. We look forward to working with all of our new instructors in the upcoming season! Thank you for joining the team!

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|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Robert Huerta | Sean Rash |
| Jordan Swenson | Julie Rash |
| Larry Roberts | John Smith |
| Jordan Johnson | Marissa Jensen |
| Nicole Casey | Nicki Pedeliski |
| Michael Coe | Heather McNear |
| James Budde | Shelby Sidel |
| James Padro | Tracy Bellamy |
| Mark Cook, Jr. | Jim Budde |
| Gregory Cook | Eric Einspahr |
| Mat Daniels, Jr. | Mark Grimes |
| Richard Daniels | Megan Grimes |
| Arne Anderson | David Wadzinski |
| Patrick Clary | Miles Bryant |
| Jeffrey Nutzman | Josh Strafelda |
| Steve Glup | Jack Irons |
| Dale Grabowski | |

Family Fishing on Facebook



Family Fishing Nights now have their own Facebook page. Instructors, volunteers, and participants can use this page as a tool to see upcoming events, communicate ideas, give feedback, and even upload photos from an event. For access, copy the following link into your internet browser or search for "Family Fishing Nebraska" in the Facebook search box.

<https://www.facebook.com/familyfishingnebraska>.

Additionally, a group has been created for Youth Fishing Instructors. Join this group to easily communicate with other instructors. Share photos, tips and tricks, or ask for help with an event!

Join the group here: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/FamilyFishingNebraskaVolunteers/> or search Family Fishing Nebraska – Volunteers in the Facebook search box.

Contact Matt Gruntorad if you have questions about our social media pages.

