

# New Kids on the Fishing Block at Ellicott Creek Park

## 76 Kids Learn About the Fun of Fishing!

- All Kids Awarded Rod/Reel Prizes -

June 14, 2014; 178 Total Attendance, 14 volunteers; 6-Learning Stations

Overcast skies and strong winds brought heavy record rain to this Western New York area the day before this first time event at Ellicott Creek County Park in Tonawanda, New York.

Despite the record nasty weather and resulting high flood waters to the waterways, the kids, parents, grandparents and single adults came ready to discover the fun and adventure of "how-to-fish".

Western New York bass pro, Scott Gauld, recommended that the group conduct their actual fishing activities in the "overflow pond" that results when high water occurs at the convergence of Ellicott Creek and Tonawanda Creek. Ellicott Creek borders the south shore of the park, with Tonawanda Creek forming the north edge of the park.



Worms in Blasdell, New York.



Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts attended in uniform, working toward their fishing merit badge.

The overflow pond water was off-color, stained brown, but with visibility of about 12 inches, kids and parent guides caught over 75 fish, including an 18-inch largemouth bass, with sunfish and rock bass comprising most of the prize catches.

DEC fish biologists Shawn Story and Mike Todd provided mounted samples of local fish species and pond life critters, complete with an explanation to help everyone understand the biological circle of life for



these critical creatures of our waterways. The story included phytoplankton, photoplankton, zoo-plankton, bugs and other water column bio-life that provide food for small fish, the small fish provide forage for the larger fish.

There were live crayfish samples and other pond life, including various nymphs, to help folks learn the lingo of these important underwater life forms.

Two 80-year old gentlemen anglers, Russ Johnson and Bob Carlson - members of

the East Aurora Fish & Game Club, have perfected the system of educating kids and parents on how to tie the Palomar Knot.

Given a choice of plastic bait forms, including grubs, worms, crayfish and other types of plastics, girls choose brighter color baits, the guys preferred the darker colored artificial molded creature baits. After they completed their simple 5-minute learning station, teacher mentor, Collin Voss – junior master angler, provided the kids with a souvenir plastic bait sample to fish with later.

Lifetime youth outdoor license program founder, Charter Captain Joe Jemiolo, provided details and opportunity for kids to enter a free raffle for a NYS lifetime fishing or hunting license, through the Erie County Federation of Sportsmen.

With instruction, kids used a spincast rod and casting plug to learn the art of casting a line.

After a few minutes of instruction, the kids were sailing their hookless casting baits a very long way toward hula-hoop targets.

Was fun for everyone!

Kids learned where to fish in Erie County with Joe Fischer and Spencer Schofield, learned how to fish and rig with expert angler and story teller, Paul Stoos.



At the end of the session, folks new to fishing asked lots of questions about the small things they wanted to know more about - a sure sign they plan to return to the friendly waterways of Western New York with their

new rods and reels.

Every youth who attended the event was provided with a free rod/reel combo, where-to-fish maps and tackle to take home.

High, muddy water or not, the kids and parents were all winners!



***This special youth event was coordinated by the NYSDEC and Erie County Federation of Sportsmen with extra special thanks and support from the [WNY Safari Club](#), Sahlen's Meat Packing, the Future Fisherman Foundation of America, the Norby Antonik family, Pure Fishing, Weekley's Bait, Bass Pro Shops, and 14 volunteers who donated their time to help our youth and their families learn more about fun of the outdoors through fishing!***

***Thanks TEAM!***

*Dave Barus 2014 Federation coordinator  
Mike Todd 2014 NYSDEC coordinator*