

Insider
For March 24, 2010
By Kim Burger

The Cedar Valley Walleye Club, Iowa Department of Natural Resources and Cedar Falls Parks Department will host the 7th Annual Open Water Family Fishing Day on Saturday, April 10th, from 10:30am until 2pm at North Prairie Lake in Cedar Falls. The Iowa DNR will stock the lake with 1,500 catchable-size trout and a number of Walleye Club members will be on hand to provide assistance. Family fishing days are designed to bring awareness to the sport of fishing and the events are very popular with nearly 115 children and parents attending last winter's ice fishing day. Club members and sponsors gathered up enough prizes for nearly everyone to take one home.

Organizers hope these events work to encourage participants to discover other fishing opportunities. Iowa has tremendous trout fishing resources in the northeast part of the state. There are more than 50 different trout streams to choose from, with most located in remote scenic valleys. Many of these streams support naturally reproducing populations of trout and most are also stocked from April through the end of October, which makes catching fish fairly easy for the beginning angler. The best part is that the same fishing license and trout stamp purchased to fish at the family fishing day on North Prairie Lake can be used throughout the year on any of the beautiful streams throughout northeast Iowa. For those who have never been to a trout stream, it is a scenic treat they will never forget. More information can be obtained by going to the DNR website at www.iowadnr.com.

The most important reference guide for anyone interested in pursuing trout fishing further is the Iowa Trout Fishing Guide. This guide is a fold out map showing directions on how to get to all of the trout streams and provides useful information about the trout program. Trout guides can also be obtained from any of the trout hatcheries in Manchester (563-927-3276), Elkader (563-245-2446), or Decorah (563-382-8324). The Cedar Falls Visitor Center also has a supply.

Adult anglers need to have a fishing license and trout fee, which is good for the entire year. Kids under the age of 16 do not need a fishing license or trout fee, but the trout they catch must be part of a licensed adults 5-fish daily limit. Another option is for kids under 16 to purchase their own trout license, which allows them to keep their own 5-fish daily limit.

In addition to trout, other species such as bluegills, bass, and catfish can be caught on nearly any of the area lakes in Cedar Falls and Waterloo. Some specific lakes include Casey Lake in Hickory Hills Park, which has other attractions for kids such as animals and a nature center; South Prairie Lake just to the south of North Prairie Lake; George Wyth Lake in George Wyth State Park; and Meyer Lake in Waterloo. All of these lakes have bathroom facilities as well as good access for families and kids.

Another tremendous fishing resource in Cedar Falls is the Cedar River. If you just want to have fun catching a fish and don't care what species, you can throw in a line baited with a night crawler and pretty much be guaranteed to catch unique fish species nearly anywhere on the river. In recent years, the DNR and Cedar Valley Walleye Club has enhanced walleye populations to the point that walleye fishing on the Cedar has become extremely rewarding - and there's nothing more tasty than a meal of fresh walleye fillets!

The Cedar Valley Walleye Club, currently led by president Doug Bonwell, is around 75 members strong. They meet every first Monday of the month at 7pm at the Cedar Falls Amvets and always welcome the participation of new members. Other upcoming events on the club's calendar include a fishing school on Tuesday, May 25th and Iowa Free Fishing Day on Saturday, June 5th, both at George Wyth Lake. The club will also be sponsoring a girl for Hickory Hills' Outdoor Journey for Girls on July 15th. If you'd like additional information about the Cedar Valley Walleye Club or any of these events, contact Milo Gadow at 266-8993.