

**Impacts of Project F.I.S.H.  
(Friends Involved in Sportfishing Heritage):**

**Michigan's Statewide Aquatic Resources  
Education Program as a  
Partnership among  
MSU Extension,  
MDNR,  
and Many Others**



**PROGRESS AND IMPACT REPORT**

**OCTOBER 17, 2005**

**Project F.I.S.H.:**  
**Michigan's Aquatic Resources Education Program as a  
Partnership among MSU Extension, 4-H Youth Development, MDNR, and Many Others**

**Project F.I.S.H. Executive Summary and "Fast Facts"**

- ⇒ 579 volunteers trained from 1998-2005
- ⇒ Trained Project F.I.S.H. participants represent 63 counties, with 24 counties having trained MSU Extension-related staff/volunteers.
- ⇒ 70,000 + youth involved in learning programs, as assessed in follow-up evaluations conducted 3 months post-workshop training
- ⇒ 115 county 4-H and MSUE staff/leaders/volunteers involved to date
- ⇒ More than \$500,000 in funding received during 1998-2005 to support Project F.I.S.H.
- ⇒ In-kind contributions of equipment and materials from various donors from 1998-2005 are valued at more than \$300,000
- ⇒ 40+ State and National partners offering reduced pricing to leaders involved in Project F.I.S.H.
- ⇒ Project F.I.S.H. has distributed 4200 fishing rods to educational partners and trainees to use in programs.
- ⇒ Project F.I.S.H. supplied all of the fishing equipment used in the Fishing in the Parks and Urban Fishing Programs coordinated by the MDNR starting in 2004.
- ⇒ Many state programs are taken advantage of by F.I.S.H. volunteers. 40% of the DNR Free Fishing Tackle Program awardees were F.I.S.H. Programs. Majority of the KATCH Grant Recipients have been affiliated with or recruited by Project FISH.
- ⇒ Project FISH model for sportfishing education has been extended:
  - by invitation to Missouri, to conduct Missouri 4-H Sportfishing Training
  - to Ohio Girls Scouts program, which has subsequently partnered with 4-H. Wants us to work with their program in the spring 2004.
  - to St. Cloud State University to be used in their college of experiential learning.
  - to Arizona, which has developed Project Fishizona through Pima County 4H.
  - to Utah, Project FISH mentor moved there and is continuing the program
  - to 10 different states (including: AZ, OH, AR, MO, CA, FL, ID, MN, VA, WI).
  - to other state 4-H programs through participation in the National Conference of State 4-H Sportfishing Coordinators, Reno NV 2002
  - National contact for the Hooked On Fishing Not On Drugs Program.
  - Asked to be a model for the National Physical Education Initiative Grants Program and have taught this curriculum in National PE Workshops held in Alabama and Louisiana, in 2004-2005 and to be in Michigan in 2006.
  - Invited to serve as instructional leader at the National Hooked on Fishing – Not on Drugs Facilitators' Workshop in Utah in 2005.
  - in articles in Fishing Tackle Retailer Magazine for it's model program partnering youth fishing programs with the FishAmerica Foundation/KATCH Grant habitat program.

- ⇒ Manufacturer Shakespeare and retailer Gander Mountain Stores credit Project FISH with re-orienting the industry away from one-shot, short-term programs toward a holistic approach to youth development with long-term contact of youth with their adult mentors. Shakespeare uses Project F.I.S.H. as its featured case study for fishing education through volunteer and youth-oriented programs. Shakespeare now recommends product used by Project FISH to other education programs nationwide.
- ⇒ Michigan staff have provided the instruction regarding youth development and developmentally-appropriate teaching of aquatic ecology and fishing at the National 4-H Sportfishing Workshop since its inception in 1996. Since its inception 26 trainers from Michigan have participated in the national training.
- ⇒ Project F.I.S.H. is now officially recognized as the “Hooked on Fishing – Not on Drugs” Program and Michigan 4H Sportfishing Program state coordinating entity by the Future Fisherman Foundation, the education arm of the American Sportfishing Association.
- ⇒ Project F.I.S.H. successfully attracted two large grants from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for its KATCH (Kids Are True Conservation Heroes) small grants to youth to conduct local conservation improvement and service projects. \$17,543 was disbursed to the local level from monies received from NFWF and additional donors. These grant monies were matched at the community level by more than \$83,639 in direct local contributions of goods, supplies and contributed services by local volunteers. 498 youth were involved in authentic, community-based conservation work, putting in 11,362 hours of their time in conservation service. 234 adults contributed 8,814 hours of conservation mentorship. In 2005, \$51, 528 of direct local contributions came from 14 grants totaling \$14,895 distributed. 569 youth logged 4421 hours on these local conservation projects.
- ⇒ Project F.I.S.H. has provided instructional support for two annual intergenerational Elderhostel programs since 1998, reaching learners who seek to introduce their grandchildren to the sport of fishing. Nearly 500 grandparents/grandchildren have participated in these programs.
- ⇒ The Project F.I.S.H. web site ([www.projectfish.org](http://www.projectfish.org)) averages approximately 1,200 hits per day from persons seeking information and access to the Project F.I.S.H. network of opportunities. Just in the month of September, 2005, this website received visits from 928 unique visitors, resulting in a total of 24,652 hits. For February through September 2005, there were 3,159 unique visitors, and a total of 100,154 hits.

## **History of Project FISH**

### Mid-1990s

Project F.I.S.H. is a direct result of and directly connected with the National 4-H Sportfishing Program, which started in 1994 with Michigan representation on the national planning committee. Because there was no state Aquatic Resource Education Program sponsored by MDNR (as was the case with most other Great Lakes states), Project F.I.S.H. was needed to fill a niche for fisheries resource programming.

### 1996

Michigan 4-H programs participated with a full team of 10 4-H agents, 4-H volunteers, campus staff, and MDNR representatives at the first National 4-H Sportfishing workshop in NY. As part of their workshop experience, participants were asked to develop a program plan for implementing this national program at state and local levels. The team attending this workshop carefully considered youth developmental needs, the learning opportunities that exist related to fishing, fisheries and aquatic resources, and the potential array of diverse partners to be involved with implementation of the 4-H sportfishing program in Michigan. This team decided to call the Michigan program "Project F.I.S.H.: Friends Involved in Sportfishing Heritage." Although the team consisted of 4-H agents, volunteers and the chair of the statewide 4-H NREE Programming Committee, the group deliberately chose to name the program Project F.I.S.H., (without "4-H") so that partners would be attracted to this diverse and new network to work with 4-H, MSU Extension and MDNR. In addition, since there was still no state Aquatic Resource Education Program, it was deemed by this planning group that Project FISH could fill this void if conceived as broadly involving diverse partners.

### 1997

Michigan's team hosted the second National 4-H Sportfishing Workshop at Kettunen Center. We sent an additional 7 participants to this workshop for training. These participants included 4-H alumni, volunteers, teachers, and partner organizations such as MDNR. The state Project F.I.S.H. team (consisting of those trained at both National 4-H workshops) asked to become its own State 4-H Programming Committee. The request was denied. Instead, the Project F.I.S.H. team was told its two chairpersons (trained as "coordinators" at the National Workshop) could join the NREE Committee and serve as a subcommittee.

### 1998

Michigan's team hosted its first and second state-level training workshops with about 35 participants, total. In addition, we sent another 5 participants to the third National 4-H Sportfishing Workshop in Texas. We were invited by the newly formed Great Lakes Fishery Trust to develop a "flagship" proposal for its first grants award cycle; the proposal focused on developing a major statewide youth fisheries education initiative, and the Project F.I.S.H. team was awarded this grant. We were able to hire Project F.I.S.H. Education Program Coordinator, Mark Stephens, who began work in fall of 1998.

### 1999-2000

Program design and development began. One requirement of the GLFT grant was to establish a statewide steering committee to include not only the programmers (predominantly 4-H and MSU and MSUE staff), but also other representatives from the GLFT fisheries community (MDNR, MUCC, NWF, and tribal fisheries organizations). This steering committee began its work. Curriculum design occurred through adapting the National 4-H Sportfishing Curriculum into a format and layout consistent with the steering committee's vision of what was needed in Michigan.

A place-based, and community-based workshop design model was developed, in partnership with local hosting organizations, which included MSUE County offices, conservation clubs, and other organizations. The main focus of the workshop design model continues to be first meeting with diverse LOCAL partners to chart the needs and venues for fisheries and aquatic education

that networks existing and potential community capacity (sportsmen's clubs, universities/colleges, resource management agencies, private sector, civic non-profits). Once Project F.I.S.H. coordinates among these entities, then the partners offer the Project F.I.S.H. workshop sessions, involving and highlighting the educational support resources of all.

Due to the nature of GLFT funding as the support base, workshops were concentrated in the Lake Michigan watershed area (west Michigan). The first workshops that attracted local level 4-H participation were in Kalamazoo and Kent Counties. Kalamazoo County 4-H volunteer Dave Dyer worked to broaden our early 4-H partnerships with retail stores, Trout Unlimited, and other agencies and organizations.

### 2001-2002

A second round of GLFT funding provided support for sustenance of Project F.I.S.H.. In addition, program funding support was received from: Hal and Jean Glassen Memorial Foundation, Gander Mountain Stores, donors to the Aquatic Resources Endowment Fund of the MSU Fisheries and Wildlife Dept., and a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant to the Michigan 4-H Foundation.

A new element of the program (funded particularly by the Glassen Foundation and NFWF) was small grants to local youth groups for aquatic resources stewardship/action projects. Several youth groups participated in this first round of KATCH grants (Kids are True Conservation Heroes) administered through Michigan 4-H. This funding was open to 4-H groups, school groups, other youth groups, Scouts, and many others, not just to Project F.I.S.H. youth. Several 4-H groups were successful in receiving KATCH grants.

The Project F.I.S.H. program expanded and we have been analyzing evaluation data from volunteer workshops conducted since program inception. In addition, by this time, the Project F.I.S.H. website ([www.projectfish.org](http://www.projectfish.org)) had become a mainstay in sustaining program activity for those trained at the volunteer workshops. Volunteers can access the website, and can order (and pay online) receiving educational discounts on teaching supplies. Our Program Coordinator, Mark Stephens, who negotiates with equipment manufacturers, facilitates these services and educational materials suppliers for an educational volume discount on such items as fishing rods, tackle making supplies, aquatic ecology teaching supplies, and other materials. Fees passed on to participants average about 40-50% below retail prices charged at most stores, and yet the fees collected still cover shipping charges and labor for handling.

### 2002-2003

The program now delivers an average of 10 workshops per year, throughout the state. Two successful statewide Kettunen Center workshops had occurred by this date, and workshops in other locations were hosted by a variety of organizations, including 4-H Extension offices. Revenues generated through workshop fees and equipment orders as well as the endowment funds in FW now cover 25% of the annual salary and operating costs for the program. Additional funding for this program year and into the next year was been obtained from: Michigan Department of Education, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, and the GLFT.

By this time, the reputation of Project F.I.S.H. coordinating staff gained the program two new opportunities. In the fall of 2002, the Project F.I.S.H. coordinator and several key volunteers were invited by Missouri Extension to provide the technical expertise to train their state 4-H sportfishing volunteers at its first-ever statewide workshop. In addition, the Great Lakes Fishery Trust looked to MSU Fisheries & Wildlife to conduct the Great Lakes Region wide networking conference for fisheries and aquatic stewardship education.

### 2004-2005

The Project F.I.S.H. program continues to gain popularity with the counties and promotion of the program is becoming easier as it becomes successful in other counties. The annual statewide

Kettunen Center workshop attracts enough participants to fill each year, as counties what a vehicle to get their volunteers trained. Some Counties for example have only a couple of interested volunteers and send them to the state training and others like Washtenaw, Oakland and Saginaw have offered to host a workshop in their community. In 2005, 9 of the 14 KATCH (Kids Are True Conservation Heroes) Grants were awarded to Project F.I.S.H. volunteers or their affiliates. KATCH is not focused solely on aquatics, so Project F.I.S.H. clubs also do other activities aside from their Fishing/Aquatic Emphasis to work in their communities.

In 2005, the high quality reputation of the Project F.I.S.H. program was recognized again, as its state coordinator served as an instructor at two national workshops for the National Physical Education Initiative Grants Program (of the Future Fisherman Foundation), in Alabama and in Louisiana.

Because of the central role of Project F.I.S.H. as a program that coordinates fisheries and aquatic education partners, staff was again selected to facilitate and host an important networking conference, the Southeastern Michigan Mentoring and Social Support Summit for Fishing, Boating and Aquatic Stewardship, during Nov. and Dec. 2004 (sponsored by the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation).

## **Additional Project FISH Success Stories**

### **Macomb County**

Volunteer Henry Bowman learned about Project F.I.S.H. in 1998 when Project F.I.S.H. partnered with the DNR to fish out the Pocket Park at the Michigan State Fairgrounds through a program called "Catch A Meal". Henry contacted Project F.I.S.H. to bring his at-risk kids from the Children's Home of Detroit to the Catch A Meal Program. Acting as the Recreation director for the home, Henry partnered with Project F.I.S.H. to train his staff on two separate occasions to create a year round fishing program at the Children's Home. Henry has moved on to be the Recreation Director for the City of Warren and has trained his staff and hosted a very successful Project F.I.S.H. workshop. Each Wednesday from April through October, Henry and his crew bring 20 students per week to the Detroit Pocket Park to take part in fishing programs offered by Gary Williams in the spring and summer and the Catch a Meal Program in the fall. Henry served as a steering committee member for the Southeastern Michigan Mentoring and Social Support Summit for Fishing, Boating and Aquatic Stewardship held in 2004.

### **Van Buren County**

Bruce Pennington of Hartford Public Schools attended a Project F.I.S.H. workshop held in partnership with the DNR Mattawan Fish Hatchery in 1999 and created an 8 week component for fishing and aquatic resources for his middle school environmental education class. Prior to the workshop, the class hired a perch party boat once a year to go fishing, at a cost of \$800.00. After attending the workshop, Bruce partnered with the SW Michigan Steelhead and Salmon Fishermen's Association, which he met at the workshop, and this organization now offers free salmon and trout charters for the school and provides use of equipment and facilities. Since that time, Bruce continues to utilize Project F.I.S.H. resources and promoted the program to Marc Hettig at the Hartford High School who incorporates advanced programs like fly tying, rod building and taxidermy for kids who have taken part in middle school programming. He has even has a young lady in his class develop a new knot for tying off rod wrapping and has this knot named after her by one of the leading line companies. Marc has also successfully applied for a KATCH grant with his class.

### **Wastenaw/Livingston County**

Susan Bloom is an educator for the Ypsilanti Public Schools. She learned of Project F.I.S.H. in 1999 while attending the Outdoorama Sport and Travel Show in Novi. Project F.I.S.H. partnered with the MDNR, Michigan Sea Grant, Michigan United Conservation Clubs, the Ingham County Drain Commissioner, Gander Mountain Stores, and the Michigan Fly Fishing Club to host the Wet and Wild World of Fish. Sue was very excited about working with this program and attended a weekend training where she cleaned her first fish. She has since been trained as an instructor in the National 4H Sportfishing program, traveled to Missouri with the Michigan Team to help kick start their state 4-H Fishing Program, and attended the 2005 facilitators' workshop of Hooked On Fishing, Not On Drugs (HOFNOD) in Park City Utah. Sue has been a state instructor at many Project F.I.S.H. workshops and Intergenerational Elderhostels and utilizes the curriculum in her high school classroom. She has incorporated everything from Salmon in the Classroom, to fishing tackle loaner programs run by the kids to fish decoy carving. Sue is the ultimate Project F.I.S.H. success story.

### **The Clinton River Watershed Council**

Brett Levin was hired as the Education Director for the Clinton River Watershed Council in 2001 and attended a Project F.I.S.H. workshop to make some connections and learn some new activities and resources in MI. Fishing was his passion and he used it to connect with sportsmen's groups and the general public to bring recognition to the Clinton River. The focus of the river's recreational opportunities became a high priority for the CRWC education program, and many groups/individuals attended river clean ups and education programs. Heather Van Den Berg took over for Brett in 2002 as the education director. Heather "got her feet wet" as student employee for Project F.I.S.H. during her entire undergraduate years at MSU. She realized the importance of partnerships in the community and continued the focus on aquatic

resources of the Clinton River for recreation. Her leadership has helped the CRWC's education program to be a model for other watershed groups in the state. Sportsmen who work for businesses, corporations, and local government along the watershed, partner with Heather, and the CRWC, to keep that river healthy. Heather has hosted and taught at a number of Project F.I.S.H. workshops.

### **Ingham County**

Project F.I.S.H. had been trying to work with local Lansing schools for a number of years with not much luck until Pete Bosheff attended a Project FISH workshop in 2003. Pete truly believed that this type of partnership programming would be good for the Lansing school district and had the connections to get "us" in. Since being trained, Pete has smoothed the way to the right people, and since his wife is a past city council member and the assistant principal for a large Lansing Middle School, this made making connections a bit easier. Partnered with the opportunity to get a grant from the Lansing Mayor's Youth Drug Free Task Force, Pete worked with Project F.I.S.H. to bring Hooked On Fishing Not On Drugs (HOFNOD) to his wife's Middle School. This program was recognized as an extreme success and is being considered by the Lansing School District Curriculum committee. The participants trained in this workshop have already used the materials and resources to offer training to the students and a fishing club has been developed. Pete has taken the leadership role in working with the District and Lansing City Council, and has recently been trained as a facilitator for HOFNOD for Michigan

### **Ionia County**

Ron Martin is the director for Lakewood Schools Community Assets program which provides in and out of school time programming for the Lakewood School District. Ron was trained through the Ionia School District's professional development days (which featured Project FISH in 2003), and has since used Project F.I.S.H. resources for after school programs. Ron recently successfully applied for the National Physical Education (PE) Initiative offered by the Future Fisherman Foundation and will get fishing into the PE program for all of Lakewood schools in 2005/2006. Carol Ritcheske from Freedom Acres School also received a PE grant and will incorporate Project F.I.S.H. into her classroom in the 2005/06 school year. The Ionia school district has 12 teachers that have been trained in Project F.I.S.H. and have developed a district wide curriculum program for environmental education based on fishing and aquatic resource education.

### **Manistee County**

Jim Kolbe of Teen Outdoor Adventures attended the very first Project F.I.S.H. workshop offered by MSU in 1997, even before there was a Project F.I.S.H. coordinator. Jim offers at-risk teen boys the opportunity to "get wild" through his program. From hunting elk in Montana, hunting bears in Canada, to canoeing the Minnesota Boundary Waters and pan fishing local lakes, Jim provides experiential learning opportunities. He says the kids are OK with the hunting but, by far, they would rather go fishing, because everyone does it together. Jim has partnered with many local Michigan resources to get kids out on boats, in waders on local streams and on their property to do native habitat work.

### **Saginaw County**

Tony and Lawrence Watson attended the first Project F.I.S.H. workshop in 1997 and liked the idea but didn't get involved right away. They promoted the program and always wanted to incorporate it into their community programs. Tony still is trying to do this while working for 4-H, but Lawrence has attended a second Project F.I.S.H. workshop to get reacquainted with the program and then hosted a program for his Saginaw Public School. Lawrence is the Director of the Growth and Afro Centric Program (GAP), an anti-truancy program for Saginaw Public Schools and started a student mentor program in the summer of 2005 with the staff he had trained earlier. He created a student workbook utilizing all four components of Project F.I.S.H. and got kids involved that were "under-served" by the community. The kids had to complete the activities on their own, with their mentor and their group throughout the summer and then had to do a presentation to the Saginaw Public Schools Board of Education. After completing this, the

kids then had the chance to receive prizes, go on charter fishing trips and participate other fun events. This is truly a community partnership program with support from contact made through Project F.I.S.H..

### **Salvation Army**

Through personal contacts with Chris Temple of Gander Mountain Stores, Christina Gallop was informed about Project F.I.S.H. and worked closely with Chris and Dale Johnson the coordinator of Echo Grove Camps to host a Project F.I.S.H. training workshop for the staff of the camp and the staff of the Warren Corps Recreation Center. Work is now being done to bring fishing and outdoor mentor based opportunities to Salvation Army communities across the state and hopefully the nation.

### **St. Clair County**

Cindy Babisz is the program director of Downriver Recreation in Algonac. She has a passion for fishing but didn't know how to incorporate it into her programming. She attended a workshop in 2003 and has since partnered in hosting a workshop for her staff, fishing derbies and classes offered through Downriver Recreation. She has worked with the local watershed group after attending the Southeastern Michigan Mentoring and Social Support Summit for Fishing, Boating and Aquatic Stewardship; together with these newly formed contacts, she set up activities for their first "River Day." She is working very hard to offer more programs focused on fishing and aquatic stewardship for youth and adults through partnerships and is very close to opening a youth-operated bait and tackle shop in the city of Algonac.

### **Muskegon Public Schools**

Retired Science Curriculum Coordinator Dan Poort is a consultant and along with two teachers and a vice-principal attended a Project F.I.S.H. workshop in 2002 in Kent County. These trainees went back to their county and hosted a workshop for their county, and partnered with a number of local entities from the sportsmen's club, university, Extension and County Conservation District. They took a leadership role in creating a community-based sportfishing and aquatic resource education program. The teachers coordinated fishing outings, river clean ups and public speaking events for the kids and have successfully applied for four KATCH Grants, three in 2002-03 and one in 2004-05. Frank Cox of MSU Extension has been a leader in their community for outdoor recreation programs and has co-taught an intergenerational Elderhostel in his community.

### **Wayne County**

Jeanne Lilienthal is a retired Detroit Police officer that works for the YWCA Camp Cavell during the summers. Jeanne attended a workshop in Macomb County in 2003 and held a F.I.S.H. camp in 2004 at Camp Cavell in Lexington MI. This was a week long camp for kids from Detroit and the suburbs. She also hosted Daddy/Daughter Weekends at camp on three separate occasions. She didn't feel very comfortable teaching many of the things she was trying, so she attended another Project F.I.S.H. Workshop to meet some more individuals and learn some new skills and brush up on the old ones. After this workshop, she offered three separate F.I.S.H. camps at Camp Cavell and has partnered to work with other volunteers at her camp and those who want to replicate what she is doing in their communities.

### **National Corporate Partnership Highlights**

In creating partnership opportunities for the state of Michigan, Project F.I.S.H. has taken the lead on ideas and philosophy for fishing education for the state and nationally. Specifically, Gander Mountain Stores has been extremely supportive of the Project F.I.S.H. program and has piloted some unique fundraising/marketing programs to generate funds back to Project F.I.S.H.

Gander Mountain/F.I.S.H. created a plush puppy that Project F.I.S.H. called "Bobber" and \$5.00 of every sale went to MSU for the program. This program generated \$6,000 in three months and now is being used to support the National Hunter Safety Education Program. Together, we also piloted the "outdoor partners night" where 10% of all the Michigan Gander Mountain sales went to Project F.I.S.H. This was such a success that it is now opened up that 10% would go to any non-profit of the customer's choice. We have worked together to promote a very successful Cast-Aways for Kids Program (a rod and reel exchange program).

Shakespeare Fishing Tackle has modified their corporate giving program to focus on long-term, multiple-touch programming. They have also created fishing reels specifically based on recommendations from Project F.I.S.H. and has informed other state education programs of recommended products by the Project F.I.S.H. Program.

Many partnerships have been created to offer products and resources at reduced costs to Project F.I.S.H. volunteer instructors so that youth involved in these programs are able to benefit from the materials while learning. The following are examples of the partners; Shakespeare Fishing Tackle , The Worth Company, Windsor Nature Discovery, Mason Tackle Company, Northland Tackle Company , Kreinik Fly Division , Wapsi Fly Company , Witchcraft Tape (WTP Products) , Wright & McGill Co., Nasco, Inc, Bass Pro Shops, Inc., Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation, Ironwood Pacific, O.Mustad & Son, Hodgman, inc., Plastilite Corporation, Berkley, Cortland Line Company, Plano, Inc., Component Systems Inc. Water Gremlin, Gudebrod Inc., Wildco, Inc., Hurst Hackle Company, Sevier Inc., Webmariner Internet Communications, FISHHOO.com, BigFishTackle.com, Al's Goldfish Lures, HL Outdoors. Several of these businesses are based in Michigan or the Great Lakes region, thus directly benefiting local and regional economic development.

## **County 4-H Programming Stories: Success in Reaching New Audiences through Project F.I.S.H.**

### **Alcona County**

County agent Les Thomas attended a statewide training during Agriculture and Natural Resources Week in 2004. Since this time he has procured funding and partners to be able to begin a successful Project F.I.S.H. program in his county. In 2005, he offered a F.I.S.H. training in his county and NE Region to train a staff to be able to run a week long summer program based on Project F.I.S.H. activities for Alcona, Montmorency, Otsego and Presque Isle Counties. This camp included 16 Adult Volunteers, 13 Teen Volunteers and 45 Campers.

### **Alpena County**

Tammy Barrett attended a Project F.I.S.H. training workshop at the Alpena Sportsmen's Club coordinated in cooperation with Brandon Schroeder (MI Sea Grant) and Les Thomas (Alcona County 4-H). She will be starting a youth club that focuses on the natural resources and will recruit volunteers and kids through doing activities at events that are related to fishing and aquatic resources.

### **Branch/Hillsdale County**

Volunteer John Underwood was sponsored by 4-H to attend the Project F.I.S.H. Workshop at Kettunen Center in 2003 and an advanced training in 2004. Since that time he has started a 4-H club in his church and community. He has partnered with many organizations to do related outdoor activities each month. His kids successfully applied for a KATCH Grant in 2005 to do habitat work in the Hogs Creek Watershed.

### **Berrien County**

James Weaver has started a 4-H Sportfishing Club in this county and has been slowly recruiting volunteers to work with his kids. He has attended many festivals and has offered assistance to a number of other programs beginning in Kalamazoo and Van Buren Counties.

### **Cheboygan County**

David Huntington of Mackinaw City Schools wanted to attend one of the few Project F.I.S.H. trainings that happened to be cancelled. He was encouraged to contact the 4-H office in his county to see if they would sponsor him to attend the Statewide Kettunen Center training. He did that and the Project F.I.S.H. Coordinator contacted the county as well to encourage them to support David for the training. Since that time David is working with his school and has had many Project F.I.S.H. volunteers (including decoy carving) work with his kids as well. The county office has partnered with David and they have received a KATCH Grant to do some wildlife projects on the school grounds.

### **Genesee County**

After creating a "Model Program," volunteer Shelby Johnson continues to offer programming to the local kids at the Beecher School district. This project is a perfect example of how Project F.I.S.H. can work toward community youth development. Shelby used to coordinate a one day river clean up in Flint MI to get youth active, involved and to have ownership of their natural resources. They spent mornings cleaning and afternoons fishing. The Project F.I.S.H. coordinator was contacted for materials for the clean-up but convinced Shelby to focus on long term contact with the kids. Since that time Shelby has recruited and trained others, adopted local McKinley Park and Thread Lake for the program's "home," participated in additional training with the 4-H program on a national level, and holds "anyone's invited" meetings every Wednesday. His partners include the Flint Parks and Recreation, Genesee County Extension, local churches, friends, parents, and local fisheries and non-profit watershed organizations. Project F.I.S.H. provides Shelby with access to supplies and equipment from national contacts, a network of other Project F.I.S.H. volunteers, and continued training opportunities. When Shelby is asked why he is doing this his answer is "this is not a good neighborhood and there is no respect for the water or the environment; if we didn't do this for the kids, no one would."

### **Gladwin County**

Gladwin County has started a very successful Project F.I.S.H. club because of the work of Jan Wendland, Terri Hicks, Glenda Bair and Bev Przystas. 18 youth from this county, mostly teens, have enjoyed going on fishing outings, doing community service and receiving a KATCH Grant and FishAmerica Fund Grant to build lunger Structures along the Cedar River. This program is expanding to teens working with younger students and becoming mentors to their own county and other counties. They have called on other Project FISH volunteers to help them get started.

### **Ionia County**

4-H leader Marie Smith is a die-hard Project F.I.S.H. volunteer and has attended multiple Project F.I.S.H. workshops to get training to work with Portland/Ionia Public Schools and her after-school programs through 4-H. Many partnerships have been created in Ionia County including work with the schools, public library, sportsman clubs and local businesses.

### **Iosco County**

In partnership with Michigan Sea Grant, Brandon Schroeder, a new Project F.I.S.H. Club was formed to do fisheries related activities including a KATCH Grant for stream and park clean-up and working at festivals to promote conservation. This group is just getting started in 2005, but has big plans and many partners already lined up to help them accomplish their plans.

### **Iron County**

County 4-H Agent Kristina Carleson contacted Project F.I.S.H. to get materials for a few guys who want to do fishing programs with kids. The coordinator encouraged Kristina to sponsor the volunteers to attend the Statewide Project F.I.S.H. training at the Kettunen Center. The three were happy to spend a weekend learning activities and resources to work with kids in their county. They started a Project F.I.S.H. club and purchased start up materials after the training, and they are now working with kids in that county.

### **Kalamazoo County**

Volunteer Dave Dyer works with his own 4-H club, and he started a teen club and encouraged JP Lawrence to get trained in 2001 at Kettunen Center. JP now is a junior at MSU and works closely with students and 4-H in natural resource education. Dave worked very closely with the DNR Wolf Lake Fish Hatchery and local schools.

### **Kent County**

Kent County partners who collaborated to host their workshops in 1999 and 2000 included: Pat Dignum (MSUE 4-H), Tammy DeBaar (Wege Wittenbach Environmental Education Center of Lowell Area Schools and Trout Unlimited), and Gander Mountain Stores. Training occurred at all sites. The first-ever Trout Unlimited Youth Chapter was started as a result of this collaborative. Several adults enrolled as new 4-H volunteers with the county. Dignum has used the program with at-risk youth in downtown Grand Rapids, with the City's fishing in the parks program, with Campfire programs, as well as other audiences through her county 4-H programs. In 2003-2004, two new Project F.I.S.H. clubs were formed in this county. Pat has received a KATCH Grant to do a community wildflower garden on an abandoned lot in Grand Rapids. This \$1,500 KATCH grant then, in turn, was used to leverage the additional support needed to create an \$80,000.00 habitat improvement project. Several of the originally trained school teachers are continuing their programming and taking advantage of the 4-H program to work cooperatively on projects. Pat Dignum has moved to Montcalm County in 2004-05, and hopes to get things going there. She has been on an African Safari with people she met at the Project F.I.S.H. Training in 2003.

### **Mackinaw County**

A newly formed Project F.I.S.H. club led by Tracie Abram in partnership with the Sue Pann, of Curtis Schools, spent all summer doing fishing and aquatic related activities. Tracie decided to offer training in Curtis MI to get more volunteers, so they can expand their programming to the

kids. Sue Pann attended a Summer F.I.S.H. Camp offered by Camp Cavell, a YWCA from Detroit. Sue met Jeanne Lillianthal at a Project F.I.S.H. workshop and attended the camp to learn more and get new ideas for the Mackinaw County Club in Curtis.

### **Macomb County**

The Huron Pointe Sportsmen's Association holds an annual event called Heritage Days each fall. Project F.I.S.H. volunteers have been attending and doing activities for the group. When the club contacted the Project F.I.S.H. coordinator, he encouraged the club to do more long-term contact with the kids after the event so they trained 5-6 volunteers at a F.I.S.H. Workshop in Macomb County. Since that time Matt Roberts has been involved in putting on events for the youth of their club and local communities. He has contacted Project F.I.S.H. for support of volunteers and equipment and he has attended conferences and additional training to get "hooked up" with additional partners. He has collaborated with other Project F.I.S.H. affiliated groups to get more exposure to the out of doors to the youth of his club. They recently successfully applied for a KATCH Grant for a river project in Macomb County. This club has another volunteer, Kevin Archambault, who attended a National 4-H Sportfishing Training in Alabama in 2004 and now sits on a number of 4-H Committees locally and statewide.

### **Midland County**

Dave Thomas sponsored 9 volunteers to attend a Kettunen Center training in 2003 to work with fishing and aquatic resources in his county. They utilize the materials and resources at camps and club meetings of the MYOP Club, a club for promoting outdoor sports. Dave co-taught a full workshop called "From The Lake to the Pan, and Everything in Between" at Exploration Days in 2005. Dave has also received a KATCH Grant to work with his REACT team. Dave has also used Project F.I.S.H. materials for a week long Fishing and Outdoor Camp.

### **Muskegon County**

One of the best examples of the community-based and partnership orientations of Project F.I.S.H. is in Muskegon County. A few Muskegon County teachers and administrators had attended the Kent County workshop, and wished to bring the program to their own county. They approached Mark Stephens and Frank Cox (Muskegon County MSUE), who together hosted a local planning meeting to decide how to modify and adapt the training workshop and program for Muskegon County. Partners involved in this planning included 4-H (of course), the Muskegon County Conservation Club, Muskegon Public Schools, Gander Mountain, and staff with the Lake Michigan education programs of Grand Valley State University. This group planned the content of the workshop, and its timing, locations, and publicity. The workshop model the partners finally implemented took place over 4 weeknights (spread out over 4 weeks), and it rotated to the Conservation Club, the Intermediate School District, P.J. Hoffmaster State Park, GVSU's facilities (Innis Water Research Center). As a direct result of the Project F.I.S.H. collaborative workshop hosted by Muskegon County 4-H, Frank Cox has worked with the Soil Conservation District to partner with the schools to foster the KATCH grants carried out by numerous youth groups in the county.

### **Oakland County**

In Oakland County, the main host for two workshops was the local parks systems. In the first workshop in 2000 at Independence Oaks County Park, there were 32 participants. Participants from this first workshop assisted Sue Stapleton in her county 4-H environmental programs and with her programs in Pontiac. Sue Stapleton took the lead among county partners and in conjunction with southern Genesee County to offer the second workshop, in 2001, at Springfield Oaks 4-H Center. There were 29 participants at this second, 4-H sponsored workshop. From the beginning, 4-H staff member Sue Stapleton has been actively supportive of and a leader in Project F.I.S.H. Sue speaks directly about the benefits of Project F.I.S.H. educational learning experiences in meeting the needs of youth with emotional developmental difficulties.

### **Presque Isle County**

Holly Wirgau of Rogers City Schools wanted to attend a Project F.I.S.H. training that happened to be cancelled. She was encouraged to contact the 4-H office in her county to see if they would sponsor her to attend the Statewide Kettunen Center training. She did that and the Project F.I.S.H. Coordinator contacted the county agent Ashley Roseberry as well to encourage them to support Holly for the training. Since that time Holly has worked with her school and a few 4-H sponsored events. Ashley has taken a F.I.S.H. training workshop and partnered with Alcona County for a Fish Summer Camp in 2005.

### **Roscommon County**

In 2004, Helen Burgess was trained to use the Project F.I.S.H. materials and started using the materials at events in her county. She has recently been introduced to a couple of F.I.S.H. volunteers that work at the Nokomis Learning Center for Boys, a correctional school for adjudicated youth. They will work together to offer kids going back to their communities, 4-H programs that they can get involved with to stay out of trouble. Helen may provide her kids climbing and high ropes programming that the Nokomis Center offers in return for with help making connections for the kids returning to counties.

### **Saginaw County**

Tony Watson sent a team to attend the first Project F.I.S.H. workshop in 1998. Later, Jan Wendlund participated along with several teen and adult 4-H leaders in the 2001 Kettunen Center workshop. Immediately after their training workshop experience, Saginaw volunteers designed and led a 4-H Project F.I.S.H. camp for youth at Kettunen Center. Saginaw's 4-H Project F.I.S.H. activities have given life to a very large community club involving more than 41 youth and their families, and to a smaller project club. Saginaw County 4-H hosted a Project F.I.S.H. workshop in September 2003 in partnership with Greenpoint Nature Center and area sportsmen's clubs. Since 2004, two other workshops have been held in Saginaw County and the county has taken advantage of Project F.I.S.H. promotions like Castaways for Kids, KATCH, and developed a new program with Saginaw Public Schools through the Truancy office, which has started a sportfishing program throughout the year including out of school time and the summer. Jan Wendland has facilitated trainings at the Eastern Regional 4-H Leader Meet and trained other counties in Project F.I.S.H. activities.

### **Schoolcraft County**

Decoy carver Dick Kahle comes from this county and works with 4-H groups all over the state. He teaches at our statewide Kettunen Center training and then is recruited to visit other programs to continue connecting with youth and leaders. He has taught in Saginaw, Oakland, Mecosta, Newaygo, Presque Isle and Cheboygan counties as well as two sessions on decoy carving during Exploration Days.

### **Washtenaw County**

Eric Fischer will be hosting a workshop during fall 2005 in partnership with Ypsilanti Public School, Colton Bay Outfitters and other local sportsmen's groups. Eric plans to get a good program rolling in his county in 2005/2006.

**Summary of County MSUE Involvement To Date in Project F.I.S.H.**

<u>County Name</u>	<u>4-H Agent/Staff/Volunteer</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Mecosta Kent	Pat Dignum	At-risk, urban youth; Non-traditional 4-H partners
Muskegon	Frank Cox	Multi-partner program designed at county level
Oakland	Sue Stapleton	Works closely with local parks; Pontiac partnership for fishing Derby; and sees impacts in 4-H programs for youth with emotional & developmental difficulties
Saginaw	Jan Wendlund	4-H community and project clubs with both urban and rural youth
Wayne	Gary Williams	Detroit Recreation Centers and MDNR Pocket Park programs 4-H Shooting Sports/GLEP
Roscommon	Helen Burgess	Attended ANR Week training Workshop and uses equipment for county programs
Chippewa	Char Fountain	Attended UP 4-H Leadermete Project FISH training; implements Programs within county
Genesee	Brad Harnick	Coordinates programs with the Beecher School in Flint. Currently working with a newly formed inner-city youth club and it leader.
Clinton	R. Hammond	Works with 4-H Nature Nuts club
Keweenaw	Bertha Rogers	Co-sponsored a workshop and worked Keweenaw Academy for entire summer Education program utilizing F.I.S.H.
Houghton	Carol Kreher/Don Kreher	Works with leaders from the community.
Allegan	Larry Johnson	Volunteers from sportsmen's groups use Project F.I.S.H. at Camp Kidwell to offer fishing programs.
Branch	John Underwood	New 4-H leader focused on Natural resources through fishing.
Wexford	Larry Solce	Attended Project F.I.S.H. Training at Kettunen Center and uses activities for Envirothon training

Macomb	Tina Fleming	Strong 4-H Sportfishing and Shooting Sports Club. Got started when F.I.S.H. Volunteers were asked to a kids' event at the Huron Point Sportsman's Club called Heritage Days. Tina is now encouraging male leaders to take F.I.S.H. training. Husband is F.I.S.H. Vol.
Berrien	Jim Weaver	Started a new program in 2004.
St. Clair	Gilda Schott	Working with Down River Recreation, Cindy Babisz (F.I.S.H. trained in Macomb County) in Algonac, began a 4-H Sportfishing Club the summer of 2004.
Kalamazoo	Vol. D. Dyer	Works with own 4-H club started by teen trained in 2001 at Kettunen Center. Works very closely with the DNR Wolf Lake Hatchery and local schools.
Ionia	Glenda Kilpatrick (before She moved)	Strong program in partnership with the Orleans Township Library and Extension
Washtenaw	Eric Fischer	Will be hosting a workshop fall 2005.
Midland	Dave Thomas	Sponsored 9 volunteers to attend the 2003 F.I.S.H. training at Kettunen Center. Is incorporated this material into his camp program summer 04 and MY-OP program in the fall.
Newaygo	Vol. Susan Lance	Attended F.I.S.H. 2003 at Kettunen Center and two years of F.I.S.H. Classes at Exploration Days. Started new club spring 2004.

NOTE: Many more than these counties have had volunteers trained to work with local 4-H programs. This summary represents only those most active county-based 4-H related programs.

## A Project F.I.S.H. Story

Jan Wendland  
4-H Program Associate  
Saginaw County, Michigan  
October 2005

To tell this story you need to know a little about me. In 1999 I was asked to go to a Project F.I.S.H. (Friends Involved with Sportfishing Heritage) workshop with six people from Saginaw County. I was not the least bit interested in fishing. I didn't like being near the lakes or streams to go fishing or swimming. I just like sitting quietly or walking alongside the water and enjoying the view. I think this was because I didn't know about what was below the surface and had never thought about it.

At this workshop I was impressed with the information. The sessions were put together so well that I became interested in the project. There were easy-to-follow lesson plans put together by Mark Stephens from MSU Fisheries and Wildlife. I also realized that this was a great way to teach youth about the environment and to have another project for 4-Hers.

In the past I didn't like the smell or the taste of most fish, but while at this conference, I even rolled up my sleeves to help prepare the fish. I learned different ways to prepare fish to make them tastier, learned about the nutritional benefits and also the area of fish that contains the contaminants. And I saw there is a need to involve youth in fishing to teach them about the environment. It was a great workshop!

Here's what happened after the workshop in the spring of 1999. I thought it is fun to fish. I decided to buy a boat so I could take kids fishing. Knowing nothing about what I was buying, I bought an antique boat. It needed a lot of tender loving care. The TLC turned into a business for my son-in-law, who has started Envision Boat Works and someday hopes to make a living repairing boats.

With community leader Joan Kuhne and the other five participants of the workshop working together, we started Project F.I.S.H. This new Saginaw County 4-H project was started with approximately 48 youth. The group was so large we elected to have two separate units. Each had approximately 8 sessions covering topics such as:

- **Can casting** -- an inexpensive fishing equipment to learn casting techniques.
- **Fish ethics** -- Youth learn dilemmas in fishing and how regulations control the fish population or fish community. Youth examine their personal values, beliefs, and attitudes regarding responsible, ethical behavior while fishing. Also youth learn about the laws and how they control the population.
- **Tackle crafting** shows how to make your own tackle; you can make these less expensive than you can buy them. Also shows how to tie knots.
- **Fly tying** shows how to do the fly tying and what equipment is needed.
- **Pour a pond** is part of the aquatic ecology. Youth learn about the watershed, adaptations of fish to their environments, learn the life cycles of organisms and how organisms are adapted to survive in their environment. They can identify specific organisms as part of a food web to become a more knowledgeable angler. They use simple equipment and a dichotomous key to identify if the fishing spot is healthy.
- **Fish Identification** helps youth to identify what fish can be caught and in what streams, rivers and lakes you would have the best possible chance of catching these fish.

We are able to acquire low cost equipment through the Project F.I.S.H. program. Mark has acquired some grant funding that helps us. He also has put us in contact with other funders in our area. This helps us keep

costs down and makes it affordable for the youth. At the end of the session, a group of youth made an exhibit for Achievement Day and the County Fair. They received a blue ribbon at the fair.

In 2001 we also formed a partnership with Gander Mountain to do Ice Fishing sessions to insure the kids know safety procedures for ice fishing. They showed the youth all the different equipment necessary to be safe on the ice and what to look for “safety wise” while ice fishing. What a great session.

I have worked with Mark Stephens at Michigan State University Fisheries and Wildlife to increase our team of volunteer leaders in Project F.I.S.H. Training was offered in the county instead of traveling 200 miles away from home for training. This makes the training convenient and affordable. We held two sessions a week for a four-week period. We trained 12 adults. We didn't have a lot of activity from this training for several years but then two adult volunteers started a school club in a Saginaw County school. One volunteer also wrote a workbook for youth to use like a journal.

I also led a couple of workshops at the East Central Leadermete and at Winterfest to encourage other 4-H staff across the state to start the project in other counties. I made a display and explained how to start a 4-H F.I.S.H. project. Bev Przystas of Gladwin County asked me to give a presentation at a school enrichment day to 150 youth, which I did for 3 years in a row. I made it a lot of fun and also included some fish-related math problems by playing a game showing the youth how food, water, and shelter affect the fish population. It's played in rounds representing years. We send information back to school with the teachers so they can help the kids create graphs and also demonstrate the different skills kids learn in Project F.I.S.H.

After a couple of years of working with me, and taking the Project F.I.S.H. training, a volunteer Terri Hicks, gained confidence to start a club in Gladwin County. This program is now going strong and they are going fishing, spending time outdoors and learning about the environment. We now have a large active program in Gladwin County.



After the youth learn about fishing, they want to go fishing or they lose interest. We planned a charter fishing trip and about 20 youngsters climbed aboard and had a great time. We learned about the fishing industry.

This picture was taken at Fish Camp. The youth are learning to carve and paint lures.

For another fishing experience, we started a Family Fish Camp, which is held over Memorial Day weekend. For the past 3 years we've offered fishing, tackle crafting, fly tying, “pour a pond” and crafts. This is held at Camp Neyati, a family camp with cabins, located on Crooked

Lake, 49 miles northwest of Midland. Each year we want to increase the activities so lure making was offered this past year. The kids learned about the history of fishing and lure carving and how to carve their own lures. We received several donations from Beaver's, Frankenmuth Conservation Club, William's Gunsights & Outfitters, Huron Fish Company, Bay Port Fish Company, Sebewaing Gobblers, Jay's, Gander Mountain, Scientific Anglers, Covenant Health Care so we could offer crafts and fishing supplies This worked well and added another dimension to our 4-H program. Next year we are going to include archery with shooting sports as well as fishing.

With Mark's help, the club teamed up with Gander Mountain's “Cast away for Kids Program.” Fishermen could trade in their old fishing equipment and they would receive a discount on new fishing equipment. They then gave the old and broken poles to our club. With the expertise of two 4-H volunteers, Bob Dunton and Scott Smock, we helped the youth repair the fishing poles. It was fun to watch the kids fix a broken fishing rod and reel; when it worked they were amazed and happy. The club's rod and reel supply was increased, so

if kids and parents don't have equipment they still can go fishing. We will also lend these to other 4-H members who like to go fishing.

In addition to Project F.I.S.H. project, I am always looking for other environmental activities. A Kids Are True Conservation Heroes (KATCH) Grant was available and Joan Kuhne and I encouraged the kids to write the grant to acquire funds to build a canoe launch along the Cass River in Frankenmuth and stop the bank from eroding. We were also included in another research grant for building a nature trail along this same area. We received both of the grants totaling \$7500. With this grant we are including community partners to help with the labor and financial support.



We did a *sit spot* at the site of the canoe launch. A *sit spot* is where you have the youth sit and use their senses (sight, smell, hearing, touching) to tell about what's in the area. They can draw a picture or write something descriptive about the area. The kids did a wonderful job of drawing and writing. I will leave you with this poem written at the *sit spot* by an eleven-year-old girl while sitting at the "y" of a tree.

### A TRIP TO THE WOODS

As I walk along,  
Not making one step wrong,  
I travel to my kingdom,  
No one will challenge me,  
As I walk to my throne,  
The base of the tree,  
I see the cautious squirrel,  
The mole climbing from his furrow,  
I will return soon someday,  
But for now I will stay.

Without the training, support and encouragement of Mark Stephens, Extension Specialist Shari Dann, the MSU Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, Andrea Grix, Youth Coordinator at Kettenun Center, and Michigan 4-H Foundation Grants, none of this would be possible.

Hi Mark,

I just wanted to take a few minutes to tell you about our two fishing camps this summer at Camp Cavell.

Our first week (UP NORTH FISHING TRIP) is designed for kids that have family fishing experience or have been through one of our fishing camps. Twelve kids signed up (10 boys, 2 girls) ages 9-15 years (most of the kids were 12-15). We also had two international counselors from South Africa and two American lifeguards (plus me of course, the 56 year old Gramma!)

We camped at Kneff Lake, a 30 acre DNR trout stocked lake, east of Grayling. Before we left Camp each kid was issued a day pack for gear, wading boots, and spin casting rod and reel, choose several flies from we had available, and made a fishing lanyard equipped hemostat, clippers, and small fly box. They were also the small tackle boxes with gear. During our time up the kids donned wading boots and flyrods for streamside sessions, kayaked on the AuSable River, frequently from shore or from canoes at Kneff lake,



Cavell,  
fly rod  
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north,  
fished

floated by means of inner tubes, life jackets, or snorkle gear down another stretch of the AuSable, and swam frequently in the lake. Because we hit some very hot, humid days the fishing wasn't great until our traditional last night visit to the Hatchery in Grayling. After some practice time in the hatchery pond catching bluegill and bass, each flyfisher caught their own trout using their own fly (Gramma foots the bill for the trout at 50 cents an inch). The filleted fish were taken back to the campsite where all the campers cooked their own trout, baked potato and sweet corn over the fire. It was a feast fit for a king or queen .. and thoroughly enjoyed by all. The kids RAVE about this trip!!! I also make a CD for each kid of all the photos I take on the trip (that gets mailed to them later).

Our second fishing week at camp was called REEL FISHING and is designed for beginners and Intermediates. I can tell you that this week was a HUGE success! Ten kids were signed up (eight boys, 2 girls) aged 8-15 years. After the introductions, each kid was issued equipment much as described above (a day pack for gear, hat, fly rod and spin casting rod and reel, choose several flies from those we had available. They were given the small tackle boxes with gear. Because my friend Jerry (a 79 year fisherman from Ohio who ties flies all winter for us) had driven up to help us for the day, we altered the normal progression of our classes to take advantage of his experience. Jerry started us off by teaching the kids how to make spinners and powder paint jig heads and each added several to their tackle box.

One of the main parts of this REEL FISHING week is that I try very hard to take the kids fishing somewhere every day (where they stand a good chance of catching fish). We spent part of the afternoon rigging our rods and making our fishing lanyards equipped with hemostat, clippers, and small fly box. I also had them decorate (fabric paint) a fishing hat because I couldn't afford shirts this year. Our first trip was to Hazel's Pond where the kids spent 2 early evening hours very excitedly catching bluegill and bass. It was a good ending to a first day.

On Tuesday, we drove out to Long Lake (a bird sanctuary) near Lapeer? The humidity was UNBEARABLE while we packed and loaded up gear and equipment. At 10 AM, sweat was dripping off my face and hair. When I had scouted this lake out in May I had gone crazy seeing how many fish were visable breaking the water. The DNR had told us to expect lots of carp, pike, bass, bluegill, etc. I was REALLY excited to have found this new spot for our day trip and had high hopes for kids successful fishing .

When we got to the lake we virtually had the whole place to ourselves? no other fishermen anywhere. It was 95 degrees? Needless to say the kids caught almost no fish? Just us too hot (all the fish would be very deep

and NOTHING was biting). I can tell you that many of those kids kept at it for many hours. Deciding to enjoy the time anyway, we all swam, kayaked and picnicked? Ended up staying most of the day? Arriving back at Camp Cavell around 7:30 PM.

Wednesday AM I decided to do a whole day of nature stuff and observation etc? I started by asking the kids to empty the small pond by the lodge (as a service project that would benefit the whole camp). They all pitched in to form a bucket brigade taking out the green water, safely removed the turtles, scrubbed out the excessive algae, and started the whole thing over from scratch. They loved the project, even collected buckets of lake rocks from the beach for the lower layer in the pond. After the water, plants, turtles etc were back in, they did lots of "collecting" and observation stuff.



The first challenge was bug collecting to fill 22 small vials I have with various terrestrial bugs. This was incredible and they brought back everything from a cicada to inch worms. We are making these into displays for our nature center. Needless to say all the activity caused a huge commotion with everyone else in camp wanting to see everything the fishing kids caught.

After collecting terrestrials, I sent the kids to the creek for frogs, salamanders, striders, water bugs, minnows etc which we added to the small pond after checking them out. Our creek

bottom is clay so we don't get the diversity of aquatic bugs that some places get.

Boy, did these kids get complements for all of their efforts (our small pond is USUALLY pristine and a great learning environment but this year it had terrible problems). Although we are located on Lake Huron and have 2 creeks running through the property, this small 8 foot pond was created to allow all the handicapped kids and adults who visit us a place to observe and enjoy. The fishing kids loved doing all the various projects I gave them and really honed their observation skills.

Later Wednesday evening, I took them to another local pond (Violet's Pond) down the road from camp and they caught many small bass but again it was still very hot. Five minutes before we were to leave I was helping a kid with their spinning rod (he used a fly but put the weight too close), I moved the weight, cast it out and wouldn't you know it, I caught a 16+ inch Bass. The kids went nuts with excitement, came running from everywhere to help me. The bass acted like he was going to go belly up so we took him back to Camp Cavell and put him in our little pond by the lodge. He revived and the kids named him King Tut? We released him to a bigger pond the last day off camp (truth be told, the kids were going to eat him at "their camp out" if things went south!!!).

Thursday, I taught the kids Knots all morning (clinch, improved clinch, end knot, arbor, Albright (my favorite), and surgeons). They had a total ball? Time just flew by. I let them keep their knot kits and kids kept coming up showing me their progress long after. We also spent time going over "how to rig a fly rod from reel to hook" and a spin casting rod using all these knots.

Thursday night they did a tent camp out with their counselor (I visited but enjoyed the break) and Friday AM I did fly tying with half of them while the other half made bird feeders in woodshop (then the groups switched).

They loved the fly tying but we only accomplish 2-3 kinds of flies with each group because it takes so long..? Same problem with spinners too? Everyone wished we could do more. I think I need to do a fly tying and spinner - making weekend sometime!!!

Friday they did a casting practice game (kind of like a miniature golf challenge) following a trail to the location where they could fish for suckers in our small hidden creek pond at camp (a natural 50' pool formed where the creek meets the culvert running under the main road) ? The week sped by so fast?.

The biggest problem is that we run out of time! The kids had a total ball and I took a ton of photos....not many big fish caught this year but lots of happy kids!



I am so grateful to you and the PROJECT FISH program.....the training I have had with you has totally made the difference.....I try very hard to get in most of the components....plus adding in flyfishing of course. I have adapted some parts depending on weather and interests of the group. Redoing our 8 foot pond was a spontaneous decision on my part but it really fit the bill for this particular group of fishing kids. Sometimes I debate with myself if I should do even more classroom, but I really think the "hands on" fishing is vitally important for the kids that attract to our Fishing Camps...many don't have any parental involvement but these kids are hooked. So many tell me it has been the best week of their life!

If you happen to come across anyone who would donate a size 13 used pair of wading boots, I have a 20 year old handicapped boy (functions at about age 12) who came along on the Up North trip. He caught his first fish, had a total ball, and wants to come again next year. I have a collection of most sizes but we desperately need larger sizes of boots (size 13 for this particular kid!!!).

I must tell you that one of my greatest thrills has been in assisting Sue Pann (via email, suggestions, addresses etc) get her 4H program going up at her school in the UP. She actually came to Camp Cavell to see how I have set things up and I was able to pass along extras much as you have done for me. Thanks again Mark....the kids truly appreciate everything you do.

Your friend,  
Jeanne