

CATEGORY: FISHING, HUNTING AND WILDLIFE VIEWING

ACTIVITY — YOUTH FISHING EVENT

Description —

Many chapters host fun, hands-on events to introduce novices or youth to the art of angling. Angling, or fishing, is the most popular outdoor recreational activity in America today.

Benefits —

Youth fishing events are excellent opportunities for the public to learn about your chapter's conservation activities. These events attract outdoor-oriented people who may become members; provide a forum to teach citizens about ethical fishing techniques; and introduce children to the joy of outdoor recreation. The League's conservation message is also passed on by educating participants about pollution in area waterways and the effects that it can have on the activity and their communities.

Key Steps —

- Organize and host a weekend event (or weekday if affiliated with a school group) to take children fishing. Select your location, which could be on chapter grounds, or at a local park or waterway.
- Inventory your loaner gear and decide what food and refreshments you will provide.
- Consider having giveaway items such as tee shirts or fishing-related gear.
- Recruit experienced member anglers to share their love of fishing with participants. Be sure to have sufficient volunteers to work one-on-one with the participants for at least part of the time.
- Decide on the conservation message that you incorporate into the day's event. Use the water body to educate participants about your local watershed and their role in keeping it healthy.
- Teach participants proper and ethical fishing techniques, adding in the message of keeping their gear clean to reduce the introduction of invasive species.
- Be sure participants secure any required fishing licenses from the state.
- Be prepared for rainy weather by having access to nearby shelter or by providing rain gear. You can also give participants a suggested gear list for the day.
- Have first aid kits on hand, and depending on the location, consider lifejackets for safety.

Who Can Help —

Volunteers: Youth fishing events will vary in size. A small chapter can accommodate 12 participants, while larger chapters may accommodate 100 participants. Depending on the number of participants, you may need as few as two volunteers per session or as many as 20.

Partners/Sponsors: National Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation, local (town, city, township, county) governments, school groups, sporting goods stores, bait and tackle shops, other chapters, and state fish and wildlife agencies.

Technical and Other Support: Local (town, city, township, county) governments, state fish and wildlife agencies, U.S. Forest Service, and area parks and recreation departments.

Dollars and Cents —

Expenses: Smaller events may cost \$100 to \$500 (for snacks, night crawlers, and giveaways); larger events could reach \$1,000 or more for canoe rentals, night crawlers, equipment rental, giveaways, and food and beverages for volunteers.

Revenue: To offset expenses, consider requesting business contributions of cash or in-kind services, such as items for door prizes or grants. Or, consider charging a small registration fee.

Getting the Word Out —

Send a pre-event news release to local media outlets, and a post-event release with photos of area youth fishing. Advertise through your chapter newsletter and Web site. Post stories and pictures at area outdoor recreation stores that sponsored the event. Provide guests with information about the League's mission, your chapter's accomplishments, and membership. Take advantage of those non-members attending by promoting the League and recruiting them as new members.

Chapters With YOUTH FISHING EVENT Activities —

Central New York, NY
Wayne County, OH
Martin L. Davey, OH

Fullerton, CA
Dwight Lydell, MI
Mahaska County, IA

Jefferson County, WV
Travelle, WY
Alexandria, VA

Note: For the most current specific chapter contacts, refer the *IWLA National Directory* or IWLA Web site (www.iwla.org).