

Insider  
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Cedar Falls Edition  
By Kim Burger

Congratulations to the Cedar Valley Walleye Club for their recent recognition for outstanding volunteer service to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and the state of Iowa. Milo and Harriet Gadow and Bob and Zella Piper attended a special awards ceremony in November to accept the honor on behalf of the club.

The Cedar Valley Walleye Club was originally the dream of Pat Wagner and Dr. Ken Budke back in 2003. Since that time the organization has grown to over 80 members led by Walter Earnst who serves at its current president. Maintaining good fishable waters in the area has been the focus of the group. They have worked closely with the DNR over the years and have raised the funding necessary to release over 5,000 walleye in Brinker, Big Woods and Dike Lakes. These walleye range between 4" and 10" in length and the fish released in Big Woods and Brinker Lakes carry a freeze brand indicating the year they were stocked. The club raises funds for its activities through memberships and a Canadian fishing trip they raffle each year.

One such activity is the annual Family Fishing Day at Prairie Lakes Park. The club partners with Gary Siegwarth from the Elkader Trout Hatchery to provide a day of good old fashioned family fun. This year's event takes place this Saturday, January 19<sup>th</sup> from 10am to 2pm. 1,800 catchable rainbow trout will be released into the lake and parents are encouraged to bring the children out for some fresh air and a little ice fishing. Another family fishing day is planned for late March or early April for anglers who prefer open water fishing when the weather is warmer, although anglers can fish anytime because the trout never all get caught!

The purpose of these events is to introduce area anglers to trout fishing and fishing in general. It is also a good way for local residents to take advantage of outdoor recreation opportunities that are close to home. The fishing events at North Prairie Lake are just the tip of the iceberg for discovering the diverse fishing opportunities available throughout Iowa. Organizers hope these events work as a stepping-stone for family fishing day participants to then discover and take advantage of other fishing opportunities.

For those interested in pursuing trout additional fishing, Iowa has tremendous 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 with catchable-size trout 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](http://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. These will be available at the family fishing day event. 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).

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 the trout fishing event, 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!

Milo Gadow, a real worker bee for the Cedar Valley Walleye Club oversees the family fishing event and works hard to gather prizes for every child who attends. He is grateful for assistance from Hank's Bait Shop, Jim's Bait Shop, the Cedar Falls Scheel's All Sports Store, Universal Industries, Hawkeye Corrugated Box, and the Cedar Falls Tourism and Visitors Bureau.

The Visitor Center is located just up the hill from the lake and will open during the event. Participants are welcome to stop in for a quick warm up over a hot cup of cocoa. So come out and do some fishing this Saturday and watch for the Cedar Valley Walleye Club's exhibit at the upcoming Boat Show in the UNI-Dome January 25-27th and learn more about the club. You may even want to fill in a membership form or purchase a raffle ticket to help them with their cause.