

THE FISH FESTIVAL at the FORKS

- Gary Morlock, MWF Vice-President, Angling Committee Chair

The 2009 Fish Festival was once again a great time had by kids of all ages! The kids got to go through the many stations, play different games and try new things, all related to fishing. All the while they are being introduced to a possible new lifestyle to many of them, which not only involves fishing, but many other possible outdoor activities with healthy, educational outcomes. At each station the kids got their passport./activity books stamped and then entered them into a drum for a chance to win many of the day's prizes which were awarded hourly.

Once again the Manitoba Wildlife Federation worked the casting lanes. The kids learn to cast a fishing rod with a tennis ball "hooked up" on the end and cast at the many targets set up, including at times "Freddie the Fish". Quite often many of the kids would try to sneak back in for another turn, which of course they were more than welcome to do when the opportunity arose. We even had one young man, Brandon Pelletier, offer to help work the event after having exhausted five or six turns at the casting lanes himself - and help he did. It was extremely pleasurable and satisfying watching Brandon working with other kids and helping teach them a new skill. Brandon stirred up that old "mission accomplished" feeling in many of us. Thank you Brandon!

I would like to acknowledge our MWF volunteers and take this opportunity to publicly thank them for their time, effort and commitment to the event. This

year, Georgie Daneliuk, MWF V.P. & Program Co-ordination Committee Chair, came out to help all the way from Russell. Along with Georgie a new volunteer, Dennis Elash from Portage la Prairie, came out to help and already volunteered his services for next year. Once again longtime volunteer Bill Petrishen was out to help, and with not much sleep, having been at a late night social function the evening before!

Finally, a special thank you to George Hird of Treherne, for not only coming out to help, but bringing with him four brand new spincast fishing rods, which George personally purchased as a donation for the kids to use. You see, George just thought that these rods might be just a little easier for the kids to learn with.

Without our MWF volunteers and all the help from Water Stewardship staff, Todd Longley of City Cats and the too many others to mention, the Fish Festival could not possibly be the resounding success it once again was.



Top L to R - Everyone got to try their hand at casting; Fish Festival volunteer Bill Petrishen; bottom - So many targets to choose from in the casting lane!



Top L to R Freddie the Fish is hooked!; Volunteer George Hird and Manitoba Water Stewardship staff & Festival Organizer Derek Bueddefeld

Bottom L to R

"Hm-m-m-m Could this be a large-mouth bass?"; Fishing - a great way to enjoy some quality family time.



Volunteer Dennis Elash with one happy little angler!