

CLEAR LAKE PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Agency Article Exchange

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Fish Iowa!

Clear Lake and Fishing are somewhat synonymous. Clear Lake is one of the better lakes known for excellent walleye fishing as well as yellow bass, muskie, catfish and bullheads. Several years ago we decided to offer fishing to the youth of the area as one of our summer programs.

We contacted the local Department of Natural Resources Fisheries Biologist to assist us with the program. The program meets three times with the first day having the Fisheries Biologist speak to the group about fishing in general and types of fish found in Iowa and Clear Lake. Although we do not have a working fish hatchery in Clear Lake, they do have an aquarium with displays of the fish found in Clear Lake so the youth get to tour the aquarium. They then practice their casting skills with plugs on the end of the poles. Obviously this limits the amount of fish hooks in the kids or the supervisors. The youth then spend two days fishing off a jetty on the lake. We recruit a couple of retired men who love to fish to help with the fishing part of the program. The kids are expected to bait their own hooks and remove any fish they catch.

The following information is taken from the Iowa DNR *Fish Iowa!* brochure.

The *Fish Iowa!* program is a teaching module designed for use in physical education and outdoor education settings with middle school through senior high school students. *Fish Iowa!* incorporates physical education, biology, geography, family and consumer sciences, and health into a comprehensive program that focuses on fishing. Angling is a lifetime recreational activity in which almost all individuals may participate regardless of physical or mental disabilities, economic status, or age. It is a comprehensive program that helps students develop motor skills, teaches a lifetime recreational pursuit, and promotes mental health.

Fish Iowa! is sponsored by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources Aquatic Education Program. Seventy-five percent of the monies for Aquatic Education is provided by a grant from the Sport Fish Restoration Fund, which is maintained by a 10 percent excise tax on fishing tackle and related items and taxes on boat motor fuel. State matching funds are paid with fishing license dollars.

Educators receive the instructor's manual and supplemental handouts free of charge through workshops, seminars, or individual mentor sessions. The manual is a basic spincasting module that can be used to instruct beginners of all ages. The module includes five units: 1) Introduction to Fishing; 2) Fish Senses and Characteristics; 3) Basic Spincasting Equipment and Techniques; 4) Baits and Lures; 5) Landing and Caring for the Catch. Each unit is in a lesson plan format. Units may be taught alone or in conjunction with others. So, you can tailor the program to meet your needs.

Fish Iowa! is supplemented by videos, CDs, and DVDs produced for use with the teaching module, posters, informational brochures and student handouts. Over 3,300 free-loan rods and reels are available at some 100 locations around Iowa. Clear Lake Parks and Recreation Department is one of locations that provide the free-loan rods and reels.

For further information on the Fish Iowa! program, contact the Aquatic Education Program at 641.747.2200 or AquaticEd_Info@dnr.iowa.gov