



photos-Darl Black

# Festivals *and* Fishing Around Pymatuning Reservoir

*by Marilyn Black*

In addition to year-round open fishing seasons for all warmwater fish species, Pymatuning Reservoir, on the border of Pennsylvania and Ohio, is the centerpiece for public festivals throughout the year.

The reservoir has the highest water acreage of any inland lake in Pennsylvania, drawing anglers, campers, boaters, hikers, swimmers, birdwatchers, sailboat enthusiasts, kayakers, competition anglers and others who enjoy the 20 horsepower limit on this wide lake. Multiple public and private campgrounds, rental cabins, small motels, and seasonal homes in close vicinity to Pymatuning Reservoir make it convenient for families from near and far.

## Onion Festival (Onion Fest)

The newest free public festival hosted by Pymatuning State Park (PSP), Crawford County, highlights onion fields cultivated in the late 19th and early 20th

centuries on wetlands, which today are beneath and surrounding Pymatuning Reservoir's northern section. In 2024, the Onion Festival is Friday, July 12, from 2:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., and Saturday, July 13, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., at the Linesville Beach. Featuring assorted onion foods, Onion Fest provides exposure to the recreational activities the park offers. Visitors can enjoy pontoon boat rides, kayak rides, paddleboarding, swimming, educational programs by conservation organizations, archery, live music, arts and crafts, and concessions.

## Pymatuning Lake Festival (Lake Fest)

The Pymatuning Area Chamber of Commerce holds its annual Lake Fest in early August, with all free-admission activities based at the Ohio PSP Main Beach and its parking area just off the causeway in Andover, OH. Lisa Hulihan, Crawford County,





Jessica Rohrdanz, Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission Northwest Region Outreach and Education Coordinator, chats with avid angler Dan Wielobob, Crawford County, during the Pymatuning Winter Fun Day.

Non-campers must leave their vehicles at the lot beside the campground entrance and amble among colorful illuminated sites to reach beachside pumpkin-themed activities. Spooktacular features contests for costumes, site decorations, decorated pumpkins and pumpkin derby races, plus trick-or-treating. Each day also has an apple slingshot, a bonfire at the beach, live music, pumpkin decorating and crafts

especially enjoys “the outstanding Saturday night fireworks, combining explosive illuminations with the gorgeous lights on kayaks and other boats bobbing on the lake surface.” This festival also includes food, crafts, children’s activities, vendors and local entertainment.

## Kids Free Fishing Derby

Pymatuning Lake Association conducts its annual Kids Free Fishing Derby in early August. Pre-registered youth ages 2 to 15 years old fish from shore or boat on Pymatuning Reservoir, with the event headquarters and measuring station based at Espyville Boat Launch.

## Pymatuning Fall Spooktacular

According to Sean Benson, Assistant Park Manager at PSP, the annual free public event with the consistently highest attendance within PSP is Pymatuning Fall Spooktacular, averaging 4,000 attendees during two consecutive early autumn weekends. Campers at Jamestown Campground are encouraged to decorate their sites and wear costumes.

for kids, all conducted by campground hosts, volunteers and park employees.

## Pymatuning Winter Fun Day

PSP, the Pymatuning Trail Blazers Snowmobile Club, Relay For Life, scouts and other partners on the second Saturday each February gather at the Jamestown Day Use Area at Shelter #4 and Beach #2 to shake off cabin fever by showcasing cold weather outdoor activities. This free public event usually includes a charity fundraising polar plunge, displays of vintage snowmobiles, maple sugaring, sled dogs, informational stations by resource agencies, chainsaw carving, horse-drawn carriage rides and more.

## A Day at the Hatchery

To observe the process of raising fish, mark your calendar to attend the free open house on a Saturday in early April each year at the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission Linesville State Fish Hatchery. This day-long event includes exhibits, craft activities for youngsters, displays by other conservation agencies and showcases its 10,000-gallon viewing tank. ☐

## Pymatuning Reservoir Events

Event	Date
Great Pymatuning Shoreline Cleanup	May 4, 2024
Gateway Jamestown Fireworks in the Park	June 29, 2024
Onion Festival (Onion Fest)	July 12-13, 2024
Pymatuning Lake Festival (Lake Fest)	August 3-4, 2024
Pymatuning Lake Association Kids Free Fishing Derby	August 3-4, 2024
Pymatuning Fall Spooktacular	September 27-28, 2024
	October 4-5, 2024
Pymatuning Winter Fun Day	February 8, 2025
A Day at the Hatchery	April 12, 2025

Dates are subject to change.