

Fishing Opportunities for Families and Children

by Deborah Weisberg

Mike Acord and his brother George grew up fishing in Lancaster County and credit Saturdays on the stream with the life they lead today.

Mike fishes club circuits. George is a professional tournament angler who competes on the Bass Anglers Sportsman Society (B.A.S.S.) and Forrest L. Wood (FLW) tours. Together, with their father and fishing mentor George Sr., they own Susquehanna Tackle Company in Columbia.

“If it wasn’t for our dad, we would have been jocks more, because kids in our neighborhood were baseball and football stars,” said Mike. “We played sports, too, but come weekends, we’d drop our bats and balls and go fishing.”

Mike taught his three daughters to fish. He and his brother also work with junior bass clubs and scouting groups and make a special effort to engage families that visit their store.

“Some parents will come in, and you can see that they don’t have a clue about how to teach their kids to fish,” said Mike. “We drop everything to help them out. It’s important to involve kids in fishing, and it’s fun. It creates memories. Being out in nature, teaches many life lessons.”

The Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission (PFBC) imparts that same message through a variety of activities that cater to families, no matter what their level of fishing skill.

Programs include basic fishing with bait or lures, ice fishing, fly fishing and fly fishing just for women and girls. Many programs are held in partnership with state, county and local parks and organizations such as Trout Unlimited where some members have completed the PFBC’s Fishing Skills Instructor Course.

These programs are free and include all tackle and hands-on teaching from knot tying to taking a fish off a hook as well as lessons about conservation. Kids under the age of 16 aren’t required to be licensed in Pennsylvania, and the adult licensing requirement is waived for these programs.

“Everyone gets plenty of attention, so they won’t become frustrated,” said Amidea Daniel, PFBC Northcentral Regional Education Specialist. “Nothing builds interest like



photo-Deborah Weisberg

success. You see it when kids catch a fish. They’re jumping up and down, and the parents are taking photographs.”


“Smaller-scale events like Family Fly Fishing also generate excitement,” said Daniel. “In most cases, we get ages 8 and up, but we’ve also had 3- and 4- year-olds who were fantastic at basic roll casting, and the parents are right there with them as they reel in panfish.”

“We teach them about insects and flies, by turning over stones and explaining what’s in the water,” said Daniel. “When you show them, they understand. And, when we get into casting, they absolutely love getting their line into the water.”

“Reinforcement is the key to sustaining a family’s interest,” said Daniel, noting that PFBC provides plenty of opportunity for folks to practice their skills before investing in tackle or a fishing license.

“A lot of our programs lead up to Fish-for-Free days,” said Daniel of the annual PFBC tradition that lets everyone fish without a license. Slated for Memorial Day, May 26, and Independence Day, July 4, the expectation is that fledgling anglers will make wetting a line part of their camping or picnic adventure. All other fishing regulations still apply.

Thanks to PFBC’s Fishing Tackle Loaner Program, people can borrow rods, reels and other basic equipment at 75 different sites—typically at state parks—around the Commonwealth.

For more on PFBC programs, visit www.fishandboat.com. 

Best Family Fishing Waters



These best family fishing waters are part of “Pennsylvania’s Best Fishing Waters” program. For more information and the complete list of waters, visit www.PaBestFishing.com.



Family Fishing Festival at Gifford Pinchot State Park, York County

photo-Carl Richardson

Lakes

Waterway	Fish Species
Blue Marsh Lake, Berks County	Crappies
Cross Creek Lake, Washington County	Largemouth Bass
Duck Harbor Pond, Wayne County	Bluegills and Pumpkinseeds
Foster Joseph Sayers Lake, Centre County	Channel Catfish
Lake Arthur, Butler County	Bullhead Catfish
Lake Chillisquaque, Montour County	Largemouth Bass
Lake Erie/Presque Isle Bay, Erie County	Yellow Perch
Lake Irena, Luzerne County	Yellow Perch
Lake Marburg, York County	Yellow Perch
Lake Somerset, Somerset County	Largemouth Bass
Lily Lake, Luzerne County	Bluegills and Pumpkinseeds
Marsh Creek Lake, Chester County	Largemouth Bass
Nockamixon Lake, Bucks County	Largemouth Bass
Pinchot Lake, York County	Largemouth Bass
Promised Land Lake, Pike County	Yellow Perch
Pymatuning Reservoir, Crawford County	Crappies
Rose Valley Lake, Lycoming County	Yellow Perch
Shenango River Lake, Mercer County	Crappies
Shohola Marsh Reservoir, Pike County	Bluegills and Pumpkinseeds
Wilmore Dam, Cambria County	Crappies

Wild Trout Waters

Big Spring Creek, Cumberland County
Lackawanna River, Lackawanna County
Penns Creek, Centre, Mifflin and Union counties
Saucon Creek, Northampton County
Spring Creek, Centre County
Toms Creek, Pike County

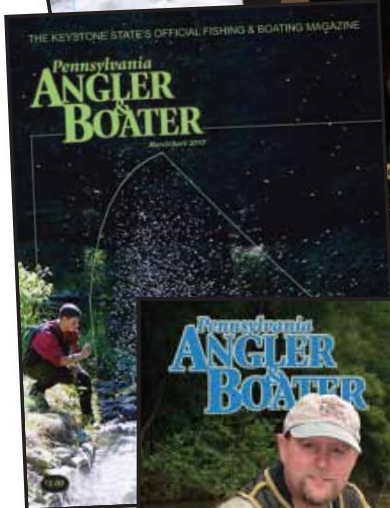
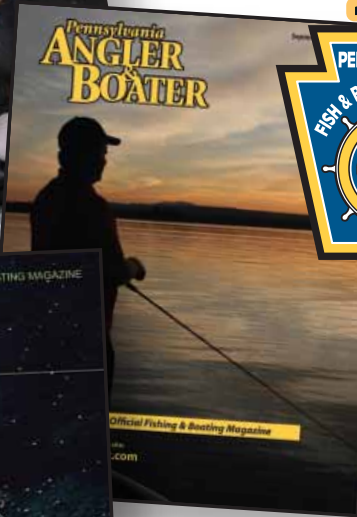
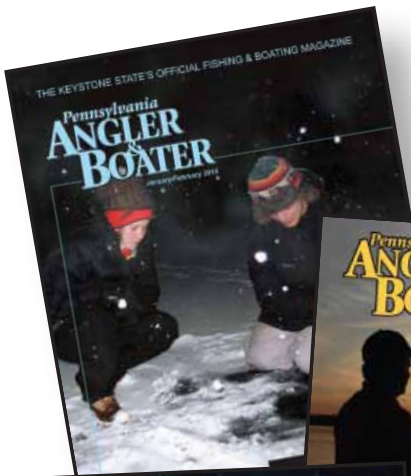
Stocked Trout Waters

Bradys Run Lake, Beaver County	Locust Lake, Schuylkill County
Canoe Creek Lake, Blair County	Neshannock Creek, Mercer and Lawrence counties
Clark Creek, Dauphin County	Oil Creek, Crawford and Venango counties
Conocoheague Creek, Adams and Franklin counties	Pine Creek, Lycoming, Potter and Tioga counties
Donegal Lake, Westmoreland County	Poe Lake, Centre County
Fishing Creek (Upstream from Benton), Columbia County	Upper Woods Pond, Wayne County
Harveys Creek, Luzerne County	West Branch Brandywine Creek, Chester County
Kettle Creek, Clinton and Potter counties	Wissahickon Creek, Philadelphia County
Lackawanna Lake, Lackawanna County	Yellow Breeches Creek, Cumberland and York counties
Lackawaxen River, Pike and Wayne counties	
Laurel Hill Creek, Somerset County	
Little Lehigh Creek, Lehigh County	



Family Fishing Program event at PNC Park, Allegheny County

photo-Jeff Decker



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