

Grants Available to Improve Sinnemahoning Creek Watershed

The Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission (PFBC) has announced that approximately \$3.6 million is available to develop and implement projects that benefit fishing, boating and aquatic resources in Cameron, Elk, Potter and McKean counties, with primary emphasis on projects within the Sinnemahoning Creek Watershed upstream from the confluence of the First Fork of Sinnemahoning Creek.

Applications must be postmarked no later than Feb. 14, 2009. Grants will be awarded by summer 2009. Projects that will be considered for funding include, for example, acid mine drainage abatement; habitat protection, enhancement and restoration; and the acquisition of properties for public fishing and access.

This funding is available through a 2007 settlement agreement with

Norfolk Southern as restitution for environmental damages from a June 30, 2006, train derailment in rural Norwich Township, McKean County. The accident spilled sodium hydroxide into Big Fill Run, Sinnemahoning-Portage Creek and the Driftwood Branch of the Sinnemahoning Creek. Under the settlement, Norfolk Southern agreed to pay the Commonwealth \$7.35 million as restitution for environmental damages. The PFBC received \$3.675 million of the settlement and must use the funds to develop and implement projects that benefit fishing, boating and aquatic resources in Cameron, Elk, McKean or Potter counties.

For additional information about applying for this grant program, contact the PFBC at 814-359-5124 or download an application from the agency's web site at www.fish.state.pa.us/grants.htm.

Fishin' from the Kitchen

Hearty Smallmouth Bass Stew with Pasta

by Wayne Phillips

A hearty smallmouth bass stew with pasta is the perfect comfort food on a chilly winter night.



photo-Wayne Phillips

Ingredients for four servings:

- ✓ Boneless, skinless smallmouth bass for four, large dice
- ✓ 8 smoked bacon slices, diced
- ✓ 2 medium onions, coarsely diced
- ✓ 2 cloves garlic, finely minced
- ✓ 1 28 ounce tin roma tomatoes
- ✓ 1 cup black olives, preferably Kalamata or Nicoise
- ✓ 1-2 Tbsp. dried basil
- ✓ 12-16 ounces pasta, cooked and drained
- ✓ Salt and black pepper to taste

Serve

Spoon cooked pasta into bowls. Ladle smallmouth stew over top. Serve with a crisp green salad and crusty bread.

Hints

Smoked bacon adds a real woody flavor to the stew. Cutting the fish into larger cubes prevents it from falling apart and becoming mush when it simmers in the stew. One inch cubes work well in this recipe.

Procedure

Saute bacon until it begins to brown. Drain one half the bacon fat from the pan. Add onions and garlic. Saute until softened. Add basil and tomatoes. Gently simmer for 10 minutes. If stew becomes too thick, add pasta water to thin it out. Season diced fish with salt and black pepper. Simmer in stew until fish is opaque, about 5-7 minutes. Cook pasta and drain.

There are many different varieties of olives on the market. Olives with the pit in tend to be more flavorful than those with the pit removed. For this stew, Kalamata, Nicoise or oil cured black olives add terrific flavor. Feel free to use a combination of olives, including green olives, to give the stew a different flavor.

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