

IMAGES

... then and now

From The Indian Hill Historical Society

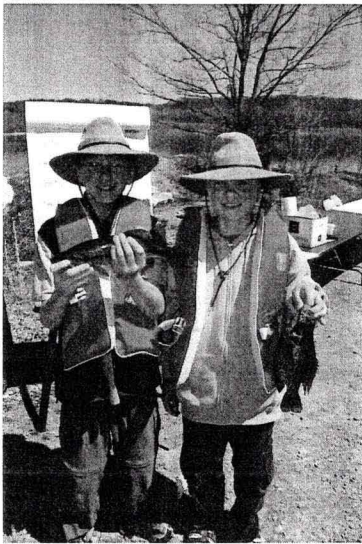


Buckingham Lodge
1861

The First Annual Grand Valley Fishing Tournament

Grand Valley Preserve, a 350 acres site with approximately 150 acres of water was the location for the first annual Grand Valley Bass Fishing Tournament on April 21. The event was publicized on the village webpage and by word of mouth.

Each team of two people paid a \$20 registration fee at the Administration Building. One member of each team had to be an Indian Hill water customer, and a map of the preserve and a set of rules were provided for each team. Fishing was from 8:00 – 12:30, and was allowed from boats only, restricted to small electric trolling engines or hand powered. No live bait was permitted, only artificial lures. All bass had to be caught and released except those between 11" and 13" long. Prizes were awarded to the person catching the largest fish, and the team with the most pounds of bass, with a limit of 8 bass. Fish had to be alive to be weighed, so participants needed either a fishing basket, or cooler with water and some type of aeration system. The rules stated that a coin toss would break any tie.



Park Manager and former Chief of the Rangers, Col. Will McQueen, organized the event and reported that at least 10 boats were practicing the day before the tournament. When Saturday dawned, coffee, juice, and doughnuts were available to all fishermen and women. The spring weather was perfect – a clear sunny day with temperatures of 45 in the early morning, rising to 70 by noon. The Village furnished 3 canoes in case entrants did not have their own boats. Project Manager George Kipp and several Rangers assisted McQueen with the logistics of the event.

Twenty four teams entered the contest. Though there were some canoes, most anglers brought their own small boats. There were about 4 youths, most of whom partnered with their fathers. One adult team of women participated, and about 3 women were on other teams. A member of Village Council entered, and one man drove from Columbus OH to partner with his sister. One confident angler was overheard saying, "I'm in it to win it."

For over four hours, the teams navigated the interconnected lakes, strategically casting into the clear water. They changed lures, drifted into shallows, went to secret hotspots, and used various casts to attract largemouth bass from the honey holes of Grand Valley. Some had more luck/skill than others. Col. McQueen and a Ranger patrolled in the Bass Tracker, checking to make sure all participants were safe, and conforming to the rules.

The winning team of Mike Sparks and Rick Hartig had 8 fish weighing 11 pounds, 14 ounces. Sparks and Bob Watson tied for catching the largest bass, which weighed 4 pounds, 2 ounces. Some teams caught 40 bass, while others got skunked. Interested spectators – friends and spouses – watched the weigh-in and joined participants at the complimentary buffet lunch. McQueen presented the awards, including two Quantum rods and reels, a Ruthven print, and large tackle boxes. Door prizes (hats, tee shirts, and merchant gift certificates) were distributed. All agreed that it had been a superb morning.

According to an old adage, "in fishing there are good days and bad days, but even the bad days are almost always good days". April 21 qualified. When Park Manager McQueen assured everyone of more fishing tournaments, there was energetic applause.

