

Kids' Activities at Lakes Festival To Feature Fish Printing

COOPERSTOWN – The Cooperstown Art Association will pick up where artist Tracy Helgeson left off in 2008 as fish printing returns to Lake Front Park this Saturday. Thanks to a grant from Stewart's Holiday Match, kids (and adults) will be able to create original works of art on cloth, paper, and T-shirts using paints and fish, both real and rubber.

According to Acorn Naturalists, an independent educational supply company founded by professional educators over two decades ago, fish printing is a perfect way to combine science (fish diversity, anatomy, ecology), art (create colorful displays), math (measure fins, proportions, count fin rays), reading (combine with fish stories) and writing (write fact or fiction about the fish) while practicing the ageless art of Gyotaku or fish printing. Before cameras, fishermen often recorded large or unusual specimens by making ink block reproductions of their catch. At the Otsego Lakes Festival, participants can develop beautiful, scientifically accurate prints with guidance from the professional artists of CAA.

Organized under the umbrella of Otsego County's Water Quality Coordinating Committee, the Otsego Lakes Festival offers all the components of a festive occasion – music, art, children's activities, good food and camaraderie – while providing valuable educational opportunities about lake protection and regional water quality programs from those who work to protect these resources. Personnel from WQCC member organizations will be on hand both to distribute literature and to discuss water quality issues one-on-one with interested parties.

As part of the Otsego Lakes Festival, at noon the Lake and Valley Garden Club and the Otsego Lake Association will hold a dedication of the Buffer Strip Garden in Lake Front Park. The buffer strip has been a joint effort of the LVGC and OLA. Phase one of the project was initiated by OLA primarily to deal with the run-off from Pioneer Street into Otsego Lake and to provide a demonstration of the effectiveness of the buffer strip concept. After that, efforts were combined with LVGC to expand the project to span the entire frontage of the park, including a handicapped accessible boardwalk, native plantings, horticultural beautification, and plans for education about conservation and protection of lakes and streams.

Another feature of this year's festival will be a workshop on the use of rain gardens to protect water quality. The session, led by Cornell Cooperative Extension Master Gardener Annette MacLeod, will provide an overview of the design, function and planting of rain gardens for homeowners. Al Keck of the Watershed Supervisory Committee will also be on hand with information on the WSC's onsite systems inspection and upgrade program, plus information pamphlets on the care and feeding of such systems. SUNY-Oneonta Biological Field Station interns will lead biology/ecology/water activities about plants, fish, crayfish, bugs and water in the expanded Kids' Tent.

As in past years, the Otsego Lakes Festival will showcase non-profit groups from throughout the region that support water quality initiatives. Exhibits will detail local efforts to improve and safeguard water resources in Otsego County. The festival will also feature lake-related activities and entertainment, including:

- Water Quality/Ecology Barge Tours by SUNY-Oneonta Biological Field Station staff
- 17" x 22" signed and numbered limited edition 2010 Otsego Lakes Festival posters by Richard Duncan (13"x18" versions of the poster available as well)
- Commemorative Otsego Lake poster sales by Natura Productions
- Raffle, 10-piece wardrobe suitable for American Girl and all 18" dolls, by Molly Holtje

- Aquatic life touch tanks and “show and tell”
- Food by the Envirothon Committee and Hartwick American Legion Auxiliary
- Educational exhibits by lake-focused organizations

Confirmed exhibitors and vendors at the Otsego Lakes Festival thus far are: Cooperstown Art Association; Richard Duncan; Lake and Valley Garden Club; Natura Productions; Natural Resources Conservation Service; New York State Department of Environmental Conservation; New York State Federation of Lake Associations; Otsego County Conservation Association; Otsego County Planning Department; Otsego Lake Association; Otsego Land Trust; Safe Kids of Otsego County; SUNY-Oneonta Biological Field Station; Otsego 2000; and Otsego County Water Quality Coordinating Committee.

To date, Lakes Festival donors include: Bruce Hall Home Center, Church & Scott, Cooperstown Art Association, Cooperstown Chamber of Commerce, Richard Duncan, The Farmers' Museum, Tier French, Molly Holtje, Hubbell's Real Estate, Inc., Mrs. Suzanne Kingsley, Lake and Valley Garden Club, Michael and Carol Manno, Richard McCaffery, Mohican Flowers, Natura Productions, New York State Historical Association, Otsego Boating Association, Otsego County Conservation Association, Otsego Lake Association, Otsego Land Trust, Otsego 2000, William H. and George-Ann Ryland, Safe Kids of Otsego County, SUNY-Oneonta Biological Field Station, and Wilber National Bank.

The OCWQCC was established in 1992 as a sub-committee of the Otsego County Soil and Water Conservation District. It is comprised of a diverse group of people representing state and local government agencies, non-profit organizations, academic institutions, and lake associations. These members have technical expertise and knowledge and are committed to working to improve and maintain the quality of water in Otsego County through the reduction of nonpoint source pollution within its boundaries.

For more about the Otsego Lakes Festival, or for further details on sponsorship and volunteer opportunities, contact Darla M. Youngs at (607) 547-4488 or visit the OCCA website, www.occainfo.org.

Photo caption: Photographer Richard Duncan created this year's Otsego Lakes Festival commemorative poster. Signed and numbered limited edition posters will be available at \$100 each, with smaller prints priced at \$20. All proceeds go the Lakes Festival.