

I got a bite. I caught another fish! That fish looks big, you better go weigh it and see if it is the big fish in your age category. Those were some of the sounds you heard throughout the morning at the 18th Annual Kids' Ice Fishing Derby held Saturday, January 31st at Hyde Creek Pond. The kids' ice fishing derby was a great success, in large part due to great weather and hungry fish that kept the attention of both parents and kids' throughout the morning. There were 168 registered kids, 60 girls and 108 boys, ranging in age from 1 to 16 years old. More than 40 adults, including moms, dads, grandparents, neighbors and friends, accompanied the young anglers who came from places throughout Lemhi County and as far away as Challis and Boise.

The young anglers and the adults seemed to be in good spirits in spite of temperatures below freezing. All the kids really seemed to be enjoying their ice-fishing adventure. When taking a break from fishing, popular gathering areas included the hot chocolate station, the warming fire, the porta potty and the sledding hill.

The pond was stocked prior to Saturday with approximately 300 rainbow trout from the Mackay Fish Hatchery. The overall biggest fish of the day was caught by Laci Bennett age 2. She won the 5 and under age bracket a fish weighing in at 0.92 pounds. Other big fish winners included: Age 6-8 – Will Nemgar at 0.83 lbs, Age 9-11 – Blade Barney at 0.76 lbs and Age 11-12 – Brady Strohmeier at 0.66 lbs. All four big fish winners were awarded a fishing rod and reel combo with a tackle pack donated by the Salmon Region - Idaho Department of Fish and Game.

Along with additional prize donations from the Salmon-Challis National Forest, Idaho Fish and Game, Salmon Field Office – Bureau of Land Management, National Marine Fisheries Service, the US Fish and Wildlife Service and Sharon Ackerman – Ack's Auction and Trading Post no child went home empty handed. Prizes, totaling over \$2,000 in value, were awarded to registered youths present at the end of the derby by means of a drawing.

In addition to the prizes awarded at the end of the derby there were 10 tagged fish swimming around in the pond waiting for lucky anglers to catch them. Those tagged fish were worth a \$50 savings bond, if caught during the derby, sponsored by very generous local merchants, businesses and private citizens. They included Dan & Nance Garcia, Hometown Realty, KMC Computers, Knights of Columbus, Lemhi Title & Abstract, Mountain West Real Estate, Page Oeding Real Estate, Robert & Phyllis Rose, Robie Real Estate, Town and Country Real Estate. To everyone's surprise out of over 100 fish caught during the ice fishing derby not one had a tag.

Another popular and very much appreciated donation was the porta potty donated by Lemhi Septic Service. Also, everyone very much appreciated the parking areas created by the great snow plowing efforts of the Lemhi County Road and Bridge crew.

Please look for the advertisement in this issue of the Recorder Herald thanking the merchants who supported this event. And when you get the chance, let them know how much you appreciate their continued generosity.

This year's Ice Fishing Derby was sponsored by the Salmon-Challis National Forest, Salmon Region – Idaho Department of Fish & Game, Salmon and Challis Field Offices – Bureau of Land

Management, US Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, and Upper Salmon Basin Watershed Program-Lemhi Soil and Water Conservation District.

We look forward to seeing you at the summer Kids' Fish Fair and Fishing Derby in June, during Idaho's free fishing day. The success of these fishing derbies depends upon local sponsors, local merchants/businesses, and especially the adults who make the time to take the kids fishing. So Kids, be sure to thank the adults who took you fishing and the local sponsors and businesses that support this annual ice fishing derby.