

## **Two Association of NW Steelheaders Chapters unite to provide three days of kids fishing fun at the Willamette Sportsman Show in Albany**

By Ron Pockrus

With McLaughlin Chapter providing the fish tank, aeration equipment, and prior operating experience advice, and 23 members of the Mid-Valley Chapter providing angler support we successfully brought smiles to hundreds of young boys and girls.

450 hungry rainbow trout provided by Blue Den Ranch hatchery of Scio provided very good fishing indeed. As evidenced in these photos, we had three eight-hour days of non-stop fishing and fun.





The show sponsor was thrilled that the kid's fishing pond was one of the most popular events at the show, as evidenced by the continuous long line of anxious, high energy, future anglers waiting to fish. This effect continued throughout all three days of the show (estimate +350 kids total).



Twenty-five of the fish were tagged and each time one was caught, the lucky angler received a new Diawa rod and spinning reel (donated by Team Diawa). How is that for planting the seed to make more future anglers? Surprisingly, only eight tagged fish were caught in three days, and thus, only eight prizes were awarded!





The 1500-gallon fish tank delivery was arranged through Kyle Smith and delivered by Robert Burk and Doug Loose (McLaughlin Chapter members) who provided aid to set it up properly . Their assistance and knowledge of using this equipment added greatly to Mid-Valley Chapter's ability to succeed.



In addition to our McLaughlin Chapter partners, this event was also successful in large part to the coordinated efforts of several other volunteers.

Trout Unlimited also provided support manning the fish tank, keeping bait on the hooks, hooks in the water, and bagging fish. The Trout Unlimited team was also important to our success, and we thank them tremendously.

Yes, we exceeded expectations and objectives providing the opportunity for children—many as first time anglers—to catch fish. The thrill of fishing and the excitement of catching a fish provided smiles to children and parents alike, and ultimately that is what good memories are made of. With a little help from mom and dad, the seeds now planted in these youngsters will continue to grow throughout their lifetime.

**All said and done, we give thanks and recognition to the following persons for helping to bring this wonderful event to successful fruition:**

**Bob Lewis and Gary Putman, Willamette Sportsman's Show coordinators for:**

- Scheduling the fish pond loan from the ANWS McLaughlin Chapter
- Providing the trout from Blue Den Ranch hatchery
- Providing new rods and reels from Team Diawa
- Providing great, continuous moral support throughout the show

**Kyle Smith, Robert Burk, and Doug Loose, from the McLaughlin Chapter for:**

- Delivering the fish tank and all relevant equipment, and helping us set it up
- Providing advice on processes of operation
- And being generous partners that made the event possible

**Troy Rintz and Terry Turner from Trout Unlimited for:**

- Giving their time to help set-up and man the fish tank throughout the event
- Being great partners and support throughout the weekend

**Lewis and Karen Hans (biologists) for:**

- Sharing expertise in keeping the trout healthy and biting (by providing advice on tank additives and checking water samples)

- Providing support, helping the children catch fish, while at the same time teaching basic fishing, courtesy practices, and calming down the children

**Randy and Travis Wilson for:**

- Finding the equipment necessary to drain the fish tanks at the completion of the event

**Albany Rental for:**

- Providing the sump pumps needed to drain water from the tank after the event

**Mid-Valley Chapter Members**

**George Larson, Acting President for:**

- Coordinating volunteer efforts to present this event
- Providing support and assistance wherever needed throughout the event

**All participating Chapter volunteers-a big thanks for:**

- Setting up and tearing down the fish tank
- Cleaning and repairing the tank liner after the event
- Manning our booth, selling ANWS raffle tickets, signing up new members
- Sharing the history of the ANWS and handing out our most recent magazines
- Full-time manning the fish tank for three consecutive days!

**“THIS WAS A GREAT EVENT RESULTING FROM THE EFFORTS OF ALL INVOLVED”**