

Carp Fest Thanks

Thanks to the efforts of dozens of Buckeye Lake area residents and businesses, the first ever Buckeye Lake Carp Fest got off to a great start last weekend. Nearly 275 fishermen from as far away as Cincinnati and Cleveland vied for more than \$3,500 in cash prizes.

Our effort to improve Buckeye Lake's water quality by reducing the carp population would not have been possible without our three major donors. Buckeye Lake for Tomorrow Director Art Lowe and his wife, Ann, sponsored the Team/Family Challenge awards. BLT Director Dave Levacy and his Buckeye Lake Marina sponsored the Big Haul awards. BLASST sponsored the Monster Carp awards.

Several anonymous donors coupled with funds from the BLT treasury and income from the registration fee funded the rest of the cash awards.

BLT directors were particularly generous with their time and donations of supplies and services. They are co-chair Bill Baker with help from his adult children, Bill and Karen Baker; Ron Baker with help from his wife, Sue; Merv Bartholow; Jennifer Finfera; Tom Green; John Hoermle; Ron Koehler; Dave Levacy; Art Lowe; Ed Parrish; Lincoln Scott who induced two colleagues to help out; and Sharon Spahr.

We had critical help far beyond the BLT directors. Buckeye Lake Regional Park Manager Tim Waln and assistant managers Sonya Lindsey and Greg Seymour were very helpful. Both Sonya and Greg also volunteered to help judge our Carp Cook-off. Buckeye Lake Mayor Rick Baker was also a good sport and volunteered to serve as a judge even though he doesn't like seafood. Thanks to Cassandra Austin and her boyfriend for spending a very hot Sunday afternoon helping weigh-in fish. Her colleague, Rob Smith did the same on Saturday.

Ethan Simmons, a fish biologist with ODN's Division of Wildlife, volunteered his expert services both days. He patiently answered dozens and dozens of questions each day about carp and other fish, adding an important educational aspect to the tournament. His knowledge helped offset our relative ignorance. Ethan also volunteered to judge the Carp Cook-off and was genuinely disappointed when no one showed up to cook carp. The

other judges were relieved.

The crew at Z's Village Market in Buckeye Lake was a huge help. They registered more than a hundred fishermen and promoted the tournament to every fishermen coming into their bait and convenience store. Deb Zartman also volunteered as a judge for the Carp Cook-off.

Steve Dornon at Lake's End/Special-T's in Thornville produced our t-shirts in a matter of a couple of days and gave us a high quality shirt and great price to boot. We had a lot of compliments on our shirts and the thanks goes to Steve.

Peggy Wells donated supplies and provided daily go-fer services, delivering ice, forgotten supplies and registration forms from Z's; and helping get the heavy equipment back to the farm. Beacon graphic designer Kendra Edinger produced our forms and flyers, often on very short notice. Kevin Gorham at Pizza Cottage donated some weigh-in buckets.

Thanks to Brown Distributing and Compass Point for donating our banners and signs. You need hosts for them and no one turned us down. Thanks to Buckeye Lake Marina, Buckeye Lake Museum, Fisher's Marina, Lake's End/Special-T's, Millersport Drive-Thru, North Shore Landing, Papa Boo's, Thornville Shell (SR 13 and I-70), Village of Thornville and Z's Village Market.

Thanks to our donors and volunteers, the Buckeye Lake Carp Fest and a reworked Carp Cook-off will return next year. Our tentative date is June 8-10. The weather should be cooler and the carp more cooperative. Some will still be spawning or carrying eggs which should boost our harvest and impact on the population.

We haven't forgotten our fishermen. Thanks for trying us out this year and enduring the sun and heat to help us improve Buckeye Lake's water quality. We hope you had fun and will be back next year.

We're willing to partner with other organizations and events to make this even a bigger weekend. Please send your ideas and suggestions to charlesprince@buckeyelakebeacon.net.

Thanks again everybody! We'll need you again next year.

Charles Prince, Co-chair