

Panning For Gold



On February 20th, 2011, Local Fisherman from Anne Arundel County, Maryland flocked to a local neighborhood park to try their hand at finding gold in the Magothy River. Most people in Anne Arundel County had no idea there were such treasures right in their back yard but a few in-the-know fisherman, they found the Gold in a big way and some silver mixed in to boot.

Beachwood Park is a long time park that has lost its way, but still carries much potential for those that have not forgotten. Beachwood Park is located on the Magothy River to the east of Lake Waterford. Beachwood Park is a historic site once owned and operated as a beach resort and amusement facility from 1948 to the early 1960's. The park is known as a great spot for fishing. Parking is on Beachwood Drive along the wooden guardrail. There are several natural walking trails within the park.



Local Fisherman have long been escorted to this shore by their fathers and friends but when the numbers of perch in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries were evaluated many years ago it was determined a ban on Yellow perch had to be imposed to protect the Yellow perch from possible extinction in our rivers. When the ban was imposed, Beachwood park was soon forgotten, but with the help of numerous foundations, volunteers and the hard work and dedication by our own DNR (Department of Natural Resources) the Yellow perch populations seems to be on the rebound and the park is once again a gathering place for both fish and fishermen. We still don't have the numbers of old, but their numbers and habitats are still under great research, and if everyone understands the process of monitoring these habitats and respects the size regulations, the Creel Limits and restrictions one day we may see the fishery as we once did.

Maryland DNR Fisheries Service Hatcheries and Finfish Restoration program conducted a pilot project for restoration of Severn River and South River yellow perch during the spring of 2001. This included the development of reliable production and marking techniques to produce fish for

stocking and to assess the impacts of stocking efforts. Techniques included induced spawning of adult yellow perch using hormonal stimulation, oxytetracycline (OTC) marking trials to determine optimal doses for effective marking, the culture of several ages/sizes of perch for stocking and development of methods to uniquely mark fish stocked at different sizes.

In order to enhance and evaluate river ecosystems the DNR initiated a five-year stocking program starting in 2002. Pre-spawned adults were collected from fyke nets set in targeted tributaries. Adults were transported to [Manning State Hatchery](#) and induced to spawn in tanks. Perch were marked and stocked as larvae and juveniles in the Severn River and South River. Approximately 600,000 larvae and 400,000 juveniles were released into these tributaries.

After stocking, a monitoring program was conducted in both watersheds to capture yellow perch. Sampling was conducted over the range of occurrence for juveniles beginning immediately following each stocking event. Approximately 450 yellow perch that were captured in the survey are being analyzed to determine if they are of hatchery or natural origin. Preliminary results indicate that the hatchery fish had good survival to juvenile size. The contribution of wild perch and those stocked as larvae and juveniles will be used to determine parameters, such as survival and abundance, using mark-recapture models. After stocking has occurred for two years, analysis of adults for hatchery marks can also be conducted in order to assess the contribution of hatchery efforts to the spawning stock. These sampling efforts will be useful to assess the population status in these rivers and integrate information into data collected concerning the watershed ecosystem health. The success of restoration efforts can also be evaluated.

With the continuing research at hand, the DNR determined that the numbers have been showing promise and they provided the legislative branch with the encouraging research data so they lifted the ban on Yellow perch in a few keys areas of the state which included the Beachwood Park Fishery. There are still closures throughout Maryland, including Anne Arundel County, so before you head out to your fishing location make sure the area you're looking to fish is not on the closure list, such as parts of Severn Run.

Though the new regulations effective in January, 2009, opened up the previously closed Magothy and Severn Rivers, there are still sections closed within each watershed. In the Magothy, from the base of Lake Waterford downstream for 3300 feet, a person cannot fish for any kind of fish in February, March and April. During February, March and April a person may not fish in the Severn or Severn Run from the Route 3 Bridge downstream for 2400 feet.

It was nice seeing all the fishermen lined up on the beach, not quite elbow to elbow, as a matter of fact there seemed to be enough room for all the 50 or so fishermen I saw and spoke to along the shore. Everyone seemed to be happy with their spots, spread out and catching fish from one end to the next. Everyone seemed to have smiles on their faces and I saw friendships being made on the spot, aside from the one boater that blew through the fishing area with his skiff, within feet of 20 bobbers or so...Not Cool!

But luckily, feelings weren't hurt too badly and people got back to fishing pretty quickly, and were back on the fish once the water quieted down again.

I remember going to Beachwood Park as a kid and it was a nice stroll back to memory lane. I had a great time talking to all the local fisherman and families. We had father and son teams shoulder to shoulder, just like old times and it was nice to see the camaraderie between each of the fisherman. I was surprised to see only one kid under 11-12 years old out there panning for gold, but maybe if we start pulling them away from their Nintendo Games, Ipods, or whatever the new thing is, maybe we'll see them start enjoying life as we did as kids and this was a great day fishing many kids were missing out on.



One of the Father-Son-Teams enjoying the gold rush was brothers Jeremy & Jeff Holbrook, and their father Larry shown above



Bill Houghton of Pasadena had quite a few nice Yellow perch as well.

Up the river a little farther towards the channel of the Magothy, they seemed to be getting a little more white perch mixed in as well with the yellows. These were nice fish with some near citation size. Earl Bloomer and Steve Bias, friends from Glen Burnie.



This was their second day of fishing for them at the park. They said yesterday the bite was red hot, catching a limit of Yellow perch pretty quickly, with some slab white perch too. Steve had a white perch yesterday just under the 13 inch citation size at 12 3/4 inches.



Mark Spangler of

Millersville, MD also had a bucket of fish. Mark said he had been coming to Beachwood Park on and off for the last couple of weeks waiting for the big migration to start and now he hit it perfect. Mark said he has been fishing the park for over 10 years.

As I was leaving the park I had the fortune of meeting two Natural Resource Police of Maryland whom were actively checking licenses, creel limits and sizes. I was proud to say I did not see one violation infraction and the fisherman were proud to show off what Maryland's hard work has produced. I saw handshakes, smiles, and "thank you(s)" instead of seeing citations exchanging hands between fishermen and "The Man", and that's always a good thing. I was happy to see such a positive dialog between the authorities and the public, and remember these guys are there for us and the wildlife.

Well Folk... Maybe spring has sprung, I sure hope so, but if the weather holds and you're getting some cabin fever the bite is on and I don't know how long it's going to last.

Thanks to all the fisherman out there I spoke to and Thank you to the DNR for being there, keeping all as it should be.

Thanks for Sharing

"Hunting and Fishing Maryland.com"

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