

150 local youths attend annual Venango County Youth Field Day

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More than 100 local youths turned out at the Oil City Izaak Walton League grounds Saturday for a day of shooting, canoeing, archery and more at the annual Venango County Youth Field Day.

The event has been held annually for more than a decade and its focus is to expose area children to outdoor activities.

"We are trying to teach kids about the outdoors. If we can get one kid hooked on fishing, hunting or archery, that's one kid off of the streets, not getting in trouble or sitting around," said Bill Lynam, an organizer of the event.

Lynam has been helping with the event for 12 years.

One-hundred-fifty kids ages eight to 18 registered for the all-free day of activities.

Lynam said donations from various organizations such as the Elks, the Kiwanis, Eagles, Lions, sportsman's clubs and other service organizations help make the field day possible, and have been supporting the event for years.

The history

In 1992, a group of about ten



Attendees of Field Day listen to a presentation on furs and trapping from Pennsylvania Trappers Association member Jim Stoops of Polk.

people got together in Franklin with a mission of providing some summer activities for our youth, Lynam said.

At that time, a field day was held in Lawrence county, and according to Lynam "was a success," so the group set out to emulate the event.

The first field days were held at

the 4-H fairgrounds outside Franklin, but the site proved to be too limiting in size.

It was then that the Izaak Walton Club offered the use of its grounds, free of charge, including heat, electricity, costs of maintenance and cleaning up after the event.

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Every child attending received a t-shirt. During the provided lunch, 45 pizzas fed the group.

"Year after year we get the same volunteers coming back, helping with the event," Lynam said.

This year

Close to 50 volunteers were on site helping with the event Saturday.

"Just the fun run alone takes a lot of volunteers; they throw darts, spears and toma-

hawks and each one of those stations need supervision," Lynam said.

There are 10 different events and the participants rotated to a new activity every 35 minutes.

During the day, kids participated in a fun run and obstacle course with Pennsylvania Game Commission, archery with the Rainbow Bowman of Franklin, Turkey hunting presentations by The National Turkey Federation, fly tying with members of Trout Unlimited from Franklin, .22 caliber rifle shooting with the Izaak Walton Rifle Team, fishing and canoeing with the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat

Commission, fur taking and trapping presentations with members of Pennsylvania Trappers Association and PGC, shotgun shooting with the Oil City Skeet Club and muzzleloader shooting with volunteers including members of the sheriff's department.

A first aid station was also on-site, set up by Community Ambulance.

The event is usually held the third Saturday in June.

"This is an event that is geared toward the whole county," Lynam said.

Similar events are upcoming, for Forest and W. County.