

MDC Offers Winter Trout Fishing In St. Joseph

Partnerships are providing St. Joseph area residents two places to fish for rainbow trout this winter. The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) stocked rainbow trout on Nov. 1 in the Krug Park Lagoon and in Everyday Pond on the Missouri Western State University campus.

This is the first year for winter trout fishing at Krug Park Lagoon, thanks to participation in MDC's Community Assistance Program by the St. Joseph Parks, Recreation, and Civic Facilities Department. Historic Krug Park opened to the public in 1902 and the three-acre lagoon had seen many uses since. But the lake was shallow, contained only rough fish, and had been closed to the public for fishing since the 1960s, said Eric Dennis, MDC fisheries management biologist.

A renovation and deepening of the lagoon provided an opportunity to restore fishing in the park. Dennis worked with city officials on a plan. MDC started stocking bass, bluegill, channel catfish, and crappie in the pond from late in 2016 into early 2017. The lagoon reopened for catch-and-release fishing, and MDC conducted several Discover Nature — Fishing classes there this summer to teach families how to fish.

"Every time we'd drive by there would be somebody out there fishing," Dennis said.

Now, rainbow trout offer a close-to-home option for catching a cold-water fish that anglers normally have to drive to southern Missouri to pursue. Trout are not native to Missouri but were introduced to cold water, spring-fed streams. However in winter, the cool water of northern ponds and small lakes can support trout.

"We see people out there fishing all the time," Dennis said. "There's a pretty big contingent of fly rod anglers in St. Joseph."

MDC stocked 1,200 pan-sized trout in Krug Park Lagoon, plus seven lunker trout. The fish were raised at MDC's Bennett Spring Fish Hatchery. The lunkers are brood stock no longer needed at the hatchery.

Everyday Pond received 800 trout and four lunkers. The pond is on James McCarthy Drive between Faraon Street and MDC's Northwest Regional Office in St. Joseph. That stocking is a partnership between MDC and the university.

Anglers with a valid Missouri fishing permit can fish for the trout at both sites on a catch-and-release basis until Feb. 1. After, Feb. 1, anglers with valid fishing permits and a trout permit may keep up to four trout. Only artificial lures may be used, live or scented baits are not allowed. All Missouri residents over age 15 and under 65 must have a valid fishing permit, and all non-residents over age 15 must have a fishing permit.

For information about winter trout fishing in St. Joseph, call 816-271-3100.

For more information on Missouri's outdoors and MDC programs, visit <http://mdc.mo.gov>.