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Dylan Ingel, left, and his sister, Riley, wait for a bite at an Arkalon Park pond early in September 2012, while their father looks in his tackle box during the annual Arkalon Fishing Derby. Families are invited to attend the annual fishing derby at the Cimmaron National Greasslands north of Elkhart on Saturday, June 1. L&T file photo

- Special to the Leader & Times ELKHART – The 23rd Annual Santa Fe Trail Fishing Derby on the Cimarron National Grassland north of Elkhart will be hosted on Saturday, June 1.

The fishing derby is open, free of charge, to kids ages 0 to 16 and to adults age 55 and older, and is conducted on Kansas Free Fishing Day, so fishing licenses are not required.

In addition, the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism will provide rods and reels for those who want to participate but don't have fishing gear.

The derby will be in the Grassland's Cimarron Recreation Area. One of the ponds has a fishing dock accessible for persons with disabilities so that mobility-impaired anglers will find it easy to participate.

"The Cimarron National Grassland employees are proud to be able to continue the tradition of the Derby, now in its 23rd year," said Jeff Stoney, Acting District Ranger. "We encourage everyone to come out and enjoy their National Grassland."

Registration and fishing will begin at 8 a.m. on Saturday, June 1, weigh-in from 11 a.m. to noon with prizes and awards following and a free hot dog lunch will be served.

Prizes will be awarded for the largest fish by weight in the various age categories and overall

largest.

“It’s impressive how the businesses and individuals of the area continue to show great support of our annual event,” Stoney continued. “With food and prizes for the young and not so young of our area, we look forward to a great turn out for this year’s fishing derby.”

Sponsors for the event are the USDA Forest Service, Rolla Recreation Commission and Elkhart Recreation Commission.

Questions regarding the event can be directed to USDA Forest Service, Cimarron National Grassland, P.O. Box 300, Elkhart, KS 67950, or by phone at 620-697-4621, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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