

# Students to Release Classroom Raised Salmon in Paw Paw

**Date:** April 22, 2013

## **Contacts:**

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**What:** 6th Grade Students will Release their Classroom Raised Chinook Salmon

**When:** Friday April 26, 2013 between 9:30 a.m. to 10:15 a.m.

**Where:** Paw Paw, Michigan in the Paw Paw River below the Maple Lake Dam. (The dam is at the north end of Maple Lake, Power Plant Road). On the river side is a canoe/kayak launch site at which the Salmon will be released.)



180 students in Mrs. Jane Larson's six 6th-grade science classes have been carefully raising Chinook salmon from 217 eggs since November 2012. The students cared for the salmon in a 51-degree 75-gallon tank since the eggs were first introduced. Each student will take turns with each releasing a 3 to 3.5 inch Chinook salmon into the Paw Paw River just below the Maple Lake Dam. The Students will begin releasing the salmon at about 9:30 a.m. on Friday April 26, 2013. The release should be completed by 10:15 a.m.

Following the release, students will rotate through educational stations across the street at a Paw Paw Village park area (N. Kalamazoo Street/M-40 and Power Plant Road)., The students will be divided into groups where they will learn 1) Maple Lake Restoration efforts, 2) Hydro-dam workings; 3) Enviro-scape modeling of pollution; and, 4) Fishing tips.

In the Fall of 2012 Mrs. Larson's students went to the Wolf Lake Fish Hatchery to learn about the process of harvesting eggs, raising and caring for the eggs & young salmon; and "stoking" releasing them in Michigan Waters. The students were so excited they wanted to get involved with the 'Salmon in the Classroom' program. <Larson attended an all day training at the Hatchery. With the donation of a chiller unit from the South Haven Steelheaders Association (to keep the water at 51 degrees) and a donation of the 75-gallon tank from the Paul and Amy Nielsen family (no relation to Paw Paw Manager Larry Nielsen), the students were ready for their batch of eggs. All 217 eggs (hand counted by Mrs. Larson) came from Chinook Salmon off the Little Manistee River.

From Mrs. Larson: "Once they have absorbed their yolk sac, we feed them small food fine grain in the form of pellets. We have gone through six different size food pellets and are now at pellets 2.5 millimeters in size. The food pellets consist of ground up fish and chicken feathers for protein.

"The weekly and sometimes daily water changes were the most laborious part of caring for the salmon. We siphoned out water into small buckets then dragged the buckets one at a time to dump in a drain about 30 foot away then fill the tank back up with fresh water from the hose stretched from the green house attached to our room across the classroom to the tank. But, the students really enjoyed the effort."

Twin Salmon: The students were excited by twin salmon that were co-joined at the belly. Watching them grow and learn to swim was fascinating; one on top right-side up and one upside-down. Students were saddened when these weak fish did not survive.

For the release, Mrs. Larson will have the fish transported to the release site the fish will then be fished out of 5 gallon buckets into individual cups or containers for each student to release one of their classroom salmon into the Paw Paw River. There are about 180 sixth graders that will each get to release of salmon pending no casualties. The canoe launch area is quite small so the students will be escorted down by class hour they have Mrs. Larson with 5-8 students being at the water's edge for the release. Other students will wait in the "staging" area at the top of the steps to the canoe launch for their turn.