

TIMES HERALD-RECORD SUNDAY

SUNDAY, JULY 20, 2008 | RECORDONLINE.COM | CATSKILLS EDITION | \$1.75

July 20, 2008



Swinging Bridge Reservoir employee Peter Ehrenbers of Liberty releases bass that were caught and weighed during a fishing contest held Saturday. The reservoir, which had been drained for repairs and was nearly empty two years ago, is now back to full capacity. PAGE 58

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DOMINICK FIORILLE

Swinging Bridge bass are golden

Winning team pulls in \$6,000

BY NATHAN MAYBERG
Times Herald-Record

SWINGING BRIDGE – Two years ago, there were hardly more than a few drops of water at the Swinging Bridge Reservoir. The Mirant Corporation had drained it after finding a sinkhole in the dam.

There was just enough water to keep the fish alive, but it wasn't conducive to their health. There were only a few spawning areas, and the smaller fish were vulnerable to larger predators.

Last year, Mirant was bought out by Alliance Energy, which finished the repairs to the dam and restored the water at the lake to its full capacity.

On Saturday, the company

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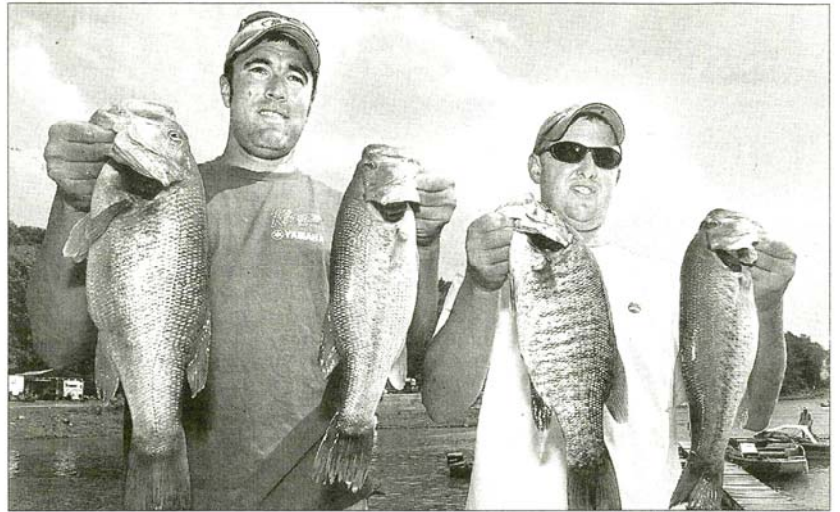
A **BASS FISHING** photo gallery from Saturday's tournament is now posted at recordonline.com.

offered a \$6,000 top prize to the boating team that caught the largest five-bass stringer.

The team of Brian Bylotas and Kevin Park of Olyphant and Waymart, Pa., respectively, turned in their top five fish for a net weight of 13.6 pounds to win the grand prize. Their largest catch was a 3.8-pound largemouth bass. They caught 15 bass total, but only their top five counted in this catch-and-release contest.

"I'm going to buy more fishing equipment," said Bylotas.

Craig Cherry, of Glen Spey, and his team turned in a combined catch of 11.55 pounds for



Times Herald-Record/DOMINICK FIORILLE

Brian Bylotas, left, and Kevin Park show off a catch worth \$6,000 at the Alliance Energy Charity Open.

a \$3,000 prize. "I fish here all the time," he said. "It's come back. The fish are OK still. We did miss it a lot."

Perhaps nobody was happier

than Bill Croissant, owner of the Swinging Bridge Marina. "We had a hardship for three years," he said.

Now they are hopeful that the

contest will bring more attention to the beautiful lake. After the first fishing contest in seven years, they're discussing an ice-fishing contest this winter.