The 2019 Isabella Lake Fishing Derby kicks off April 13-15, 2019, in the Kern River Valley. This event, now in its 30th year, started off small as a Kern River Valley Chamber of Commerce-sponsored event designed to create something new and fun that came after the local Whiskey Flat Days celebration up in Kernville and before the major holidays, designed to help the local economy and for everyone who loves the outdoors to participate in and enjoy.

From these humble small-town beginnings, the Isabella Lake Fishing Derby has grown into one of the largest public entry freshwater fishing tournaments in the state. The history of the derby is varied and interesting and has changed along with the economy and angling regulations and conditions. From the lake being full during great water years to low during drought years, from a few hundred entrants every year to thousands, and from a few prizes to many ways to win. What started with Chamber Sponsorship has turned into both local vendor and big company sponsorships like Berkley and Budweiser participating in the festivities.

The tournament has evolved and matured and above all has consistently kept one thing in mind for entrants: Have fun and catch lots of fish! This event is all about fun and family and the Kern River Valley Chamber and all the derby sponsors have pulled out all the stops for the 30th year. The Chamber, in partnership with Red’s Marina, the DFW and the USFS, raises approximately 10,000 pounds of trout from early November to right before the tournament. These fish are grown in the lake and are acclimated to water conditions and fed three times a day. And as they get larger, often-times fish must be released early due to the pens becoming overcrowded.

The icing on the cake: each year the Chamber brings in 5,000 pounds of Nebraska Tail walkers. These are trophy trout known for their fighting abilities and table quality and average between five and 18 pounds! Plus, DFW stocks right before the Derby. Due to the great snowpack the lake is filling up to its full capacity of 361,000 acre-feet this year.

There are 10 different ways to win this year and...
over $26,000 in total prizes! Raf-
fle items include a brand-new Sun-
dolphin Boss 12 SS Fishing Kayak,
a Honda Generator and cash. The
Bobber Bowl, Lake Trout
Lotto, kids giveaways, on and on all
kinds of ways to win. There are
three different prize slots this year.
Men’s and women’s divisions have
top prizes of $1,000 and $500 and
children’s is $500 and $400. As an
added bonus, winners who pur-
chase Fishing Derby T-shirts and
hoodies get their winnings doubled
for the first slots in each division.
How do you win? Simple: catch
the longest trout!