



# Dave Graybill

## The Fishin' Magician

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Spring-like weather has anglers out in force throughout Eastern Washington. Steelhead anglers are fishing the tributaries, which hold good numbers of fish, walleye anglers are trying their luck on the big reservoirs, and trout anglers are taking advantage of the good weather to fish recently-opened lakes.

By far the biggest crowd of anglers was found at Burke Lake, near Quincy. Over 300 people registered for the 5th Annual Quincy Valley Tourism's Tagged Trout Derby. The lake was dotted with boats from top to bottom and the shore lines were crowded with people casting for trout. Fishing success varied, with some getting easy limits while others struggled. The trout ranged in length from 10 to 18 inches. A very good number of carryover rainbow in the 15- to 16-inch class were being turned into derby headquarters. There were plenty of good catches carefully weighed and measure by the derby volunteers.

To my knowledge, there were two tagged trout turned in. Neither of them was worth the big money, though. One angler, Nells Humphries, was one of the lucky anglers that caught a tagged trout that was worth \$100.00. Last year this same angler caught a tagged trout at the derby and that one turned out to be a big prize winner and he was awarded \$1,000.00! I want to remind anglers to turn in any tagged fish they catch at Burke Lake to the Quincy Chamber of Commerce. If it turns out to be the big money fish, worth \$2,000.00 at derby time, the lucky angler will still receive \$500.00. The deadline to turn in tagged fish is June 1st.

Derby officials told me that although overall registrations were down a bit this year, there was big increase in the



number of youth tickets sold. It is great to see the large number of families with youngsters fishing the derby. One young angler, Nathan Blakney from Wenatchee, turned in a trout that was 21 inches long and weighed 4.4 pounds. I am certain he won the biggest fish in the youth division. I will have more details on the derby winners in my regular reports. Check my web site at FishingMagician.com to find out who won cash and prizes for biggest fish, and heaviest stringer in adult and youth divisions. Congratulations to the Quincy Valley Tourism Association for running another very successful derby.

Since I was in the area, I decided to check out some of the other lakes that opened on March 1st to see how they were fishing last Saturday. Quincy Lake, which is right next door to Burke, was producing at about the same rate as Burke Lake and there were fair numbers of holdover rainbow in the 15- to 16-inch class being landed. The first

lake you see when you enter the Quincy Wildlife Area is Stan Coffin. The lake is full this year and it attracts spiny ray fishers. The main target is largemouth bass, and I want to remind everyone that bass fishing is restricted to catch and release on Stan Coffin. It is also known to produce good numbers of bluegill, perch and some catfish.

Just east of George is a very popular March opening lake, which is Martha. It is one of the most consistent each year, but this year was a huge disappointment. When I stopped by I was shocked to see an angler or two where I am used to seeing big crowds. I was told that this year the opener on Martha was a complete bust. Lots of people and no fish. I will try to find out what is going on there, but it looks like the water was way down, and that may be a reason for the poor fishing.

It was a different story at Caliche Lake, which is west of George. Here the anglers I saw were getting limits of rainbow. I didn't see any boats on the water when I was there and all the fish were being taken from shore, with either bait or lures. Although the trout were abundant they were on the small side. All of them were cookie cutter 10-inches. It didn't matter to the anglers that were there, though, they were happy to fill their stringers.

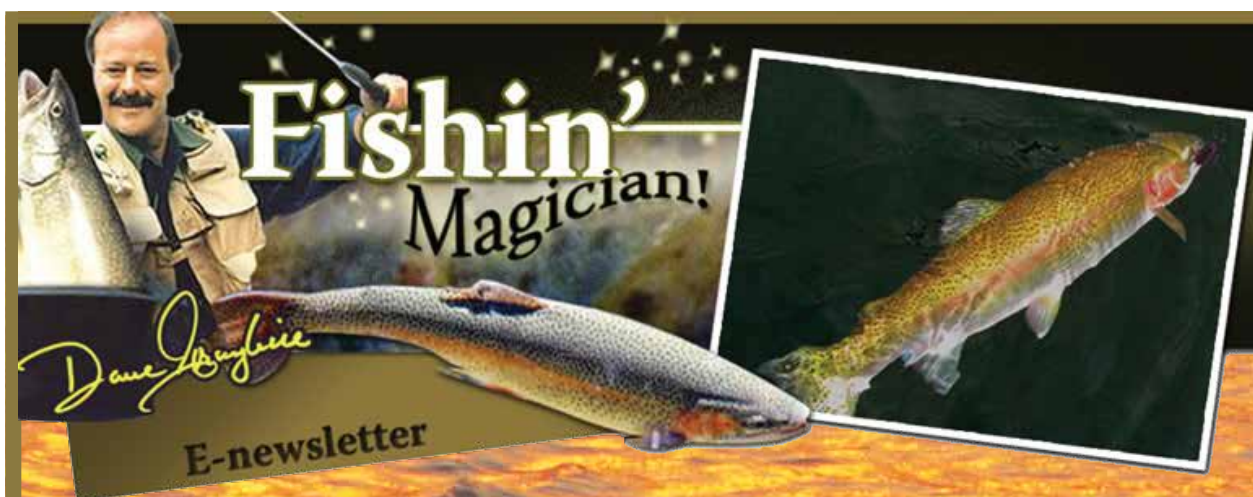
It was still early so I jumped on the freeway and drove to Moses Lake. I had heard the perch fishing was hot near the I-90 Bridge and wanted to check it out. When I arrived I saw a bunch of boats anchored near the bridge and people fishing from the rip rap and the bridge structure. I walked the path and looked at the stringers and buckets and saw some nice perch, but people were all saying that the fishing

was much better last week and there weren't as many of the really big perch being taken. It may have just been the day, you know how fishing goes, but it is still possible to get some nice perch at Moses Lake. I would try fishing early in the day. The bite seemed to have slowed by the time I got there, which was mid day.

What's on my calendar for later this month is the 55th Annual Big Horn Outdoor Adventure Show in Spokane coming up on March 19th to the 22nd. I haven't ever been to this show, but plan on spending a day or two there this year. The next item is the Live Steelhead Broodstock Collection event at the hatchery in Ringold. If you want to fish for steelhead with no limit this is the place to be. Hook and line anglers deliver wild steelhead kept alive to the waiting trucks. This effort helps improve wild fish brood stock numbers for the hatchery. You can learn more about how to help by contacting Paul Hoffarth at 509-545-2284.

One of the things I noticed while hanging around at derby headquarters at Burke Lake is that Evergreen Reservoir is more water in it than usual for this time of year. I am very tempted to try it for walleye and tiger muskie. There is often very good perch fishing in the early season on Evergreen. Maybe I will get down there and find out!

Reach Dave at:  
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