

# Dave Graybill

## The Fishin' Magician

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We've had one of the best fall and early weather patterns that I can remember. Here in Leavenworth I finally just got a couple of inches of snow, which came down more like rice. Well, that's all behind us now. I see nothing but snow and cold temperatures ahead of us in the coming week. When it isn't raining or snowing its going to blow hard, too. This kind of weather is going to keep all but the hardest of anglers off the water. Better have full canvas and a good heater on your boat if you want to get anyone to come along for a trip to Banks Lake, Rufus Woods or Lake Roosevelt.

Fishing has been pretty good on these three big impoundments. At Banks Lake big rainbow are caught in the spring and fall, and this year the fall fishing has been particularly good. The favored method so far has been casting crankbaits to the shoreline. Rainbow of 6 and 7 pounds have been pouncing on them. Some dandy smallmouth have been grabbing these lures, too. Another way to get the big rainbow is to troll Woolly Bugger style flies. Anglers put them way back behind the boat with a small dodger in front of them. Fishing bait from shore can work, too, of course, and many big rainbow are caught off the breakwater at the Coulee City Marina and off the docks or shore near Coulee Playland.

This is the time of year for the trout fishing to really turn on at Lake Roosevelt, too. Anglers launch at Spring Canyon, and they don't have to run far to find fish. There can be big bunches of them right off the shore in front of the park. When I was here a couple of years ago with Shane Magnuson and a boat load of anglers the wind was blowing at least 20 mph and it was freezing cold. We still caught rainbow up to 20 inches like crazy and even got a few nice

kokanee. We were trolling small hoochies behind dodgers on some of the rods and on the others we were using my "secret weapon". It was a size 7 Rapala in the "purpledesscent" color. Lou at Coulee Playland told me about this lure and it turned out to be as hot as he said it would be. I have also used this at Rufus Woods for triploids and they liked it down there, too.

Speaking of Rufus Woods, I talked to Tom Nelson and Rod Endsley, hosts on Seattle's ESPN Outdoorline radio show last Saturday morning. We talked about how popular Rufus Woods is in the winter over here and some of the methods that anglers use to catch the triploids that it is famous for. I mentioned trolling squidder style lures or a Kokanee Pro behind a dodger, and also how effective Woolly Buggers can be for the big trout on Rufus. One thing I forgot to mention was the use of Wiggle Fin Action Discs. This was an oversight on my part, as I have been using these for years. These look like an exaggerated golf tee with a short stem, with a hole through the center. You slide these on your line (with the stem down) so they are right on the nose of a lure, like a Rapala or a fly. They really make the lure or fly dance and this action is something that big trout can't resist. I would strongly recommend that you give them a try. I have included a photo of one of these with the column this week, taken with a quarter in the frame so you can see what size to purchase. They come in larger sizes and some colors, but I use the clear on Rufus.

Anglers have been wondering when the Methow River would close to fishing. Success had been very high in the early season, leading to speculation that the river would close early. It seems that Mother Nature has stepped in. I got a call from one of my fishing buddies that had a trip

booked on the Methow, and it was cancelled. It has gotten very cold up the valley and there is just too much ice for fishing. That could change if we get some warmer weather, but looking at the forecast for at least next week, it is just going to get colder. Until conditions change on the Methow anglers will be out of business. The Department of Fish and Wildlife is also looking at the numbers of fish taken so far this season on the Methow. Success was very high earlier this season, and they may close the river, we may be very close to the allowed mortality factor on wild fish for the season. I will keep you posted on what they determine after they have crunched the numbers.

It's December and I still don't have enough snow to sneeze at here in Leavenworth. It is getting very cold, though, and I have to plan my fishing trips with freezing temperatures in mind. Bobber and jig fishing can be tough with line stuck to the guides in my rod. That doesn't mean I don't fish for steelhead. I just spend more time pulling plugs.

This is also the time of year that I fire up the smoker. I have a good supply of salmon caught this summer and early fall. My wife got me a great smoker a few years ago, at Hooked on Toys, that automatically feeds the chips, so I can watch football while the smoker is cooking away. Most of what I produce is then made into a spread with cream cheese. What I do is crumble a couple of chunks of smoked salmon into a bowl, sprinkle in a generous amount of dill and then add cream cheese. I put the cream cheese in the microwave for three minutes to make it mix easily. I hand it out to family, friends and clients. It is very popular at Holiday parties and family gatherings—if they share. I have found out that



many people horde it and eat it all themselves! I finally got a good load done over Thanksgiving weekend. I wanted to send some home with my daughter after her visit.

Lake Roosevelt is on my list for a trip very soon! I hope for big rainbow and maybe some kokanee.

Reach Dave at:  
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