

Dave Graybill

The Fishin' Magician

Nickel Ads
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Our winter weather remains cool and dry throughout the region, and many anglers are taking advantage of clear roads to get out on the water. There are a couple of particularly attractive winter-time fisheries that boaters are enjoying in unusually warm and clear conditions. I have made trips to Lake Roosevelt and Rufus Woods to take advantage of these great winter days.

It has been confirmed that the Colville Tribe released a new batch of triploids from their net pen on Rufus Woods. There were 780 fish weighing an average of 5 pounds released into Rufus Woods, and that accounts for the great fishing above Chief Joseph Dam. Anglers are trolling along the can line here and catching mostly tagged trout, with a phone number for Colville Tribal Fisheries. Anglers are encouraged to call the number of the tag and report their catch. I would be sure to thank them for the addition of fish to the reservoir when you call in.

I went back a second time to Rufus Woods, and once again was able to get some very nice triploids. I had on board Denny Rudeck of Moses Lake and Greg Kramer from Leavenworth. We went straight to the can line above the dam, where several boats were trolling near the barrier. Most people were trolling standard gear, but Gil Biles was there with a friend trolling with fly rods, and getting some great fish. Fly fishing can be a very effective way to get Rufus Woods triploids, and I started out with a large Woolly Bugger with a Wiggle Fin Action Disc on one of my rods, but had no takers.

When I had two size 1.5 Apex lures on the downriggers my luck changed. I had a purple color on one rigger and an orange of the same size on the other. The best depth

was 12 feet on the downrigger, and both Denny and Greg landed nice fish on either the purple or the orange Apex. The action slowed down in mid day, so I added a whole Dilly worm, which is a smaller nightcrawler, folded onto the lead hook and added a generous dab of Graybill's Guide formula Kokanee scent.

This improved the action, and if I hadn't demonstrated my long-line release, we would have finished much earlier. However, we headed for the ramp with a cooler full of triploids ranging in size from a pound and a half to 5 pounds. In the last hour or two the wind completely stopped, and we could see fish rising on the surface. I would drive the boat to these rises and sometimes would hook a nice fish. I am still looking for the kokanee that I had heard were being taken on Rufus Woods near the can line. The kokanee here and on Lake Roosevelt have eluded me, but I will keep trying to find them and figure out the technique and tackle that will get them. If you would like to get some big triploid rainbow on Rufus Woods I would get there right away. Although 780 is a lot of fish, success is high and they will become scarcer as anglers catch them.

Ice fishing continues to be popular on some of the waters in our region. I must remind anglers that our winter temperatures are just maintaining ice on our lakes, and not really making thicker layers. Anglers should always check the ice before venturing out on its surface. Remember, at least four inches of clear ice needed for ice fishing. I have had reports of people going through the ice on Fish Lake and there had been water on the surface of both Fish Lake and Lind Coulee earlier this winter. Of the two lakes, I have had better reports on perch catches at Lind Coulee. Perch are still being caught at Fish Lake, but in better numbers at Lind



Coulee. A lake that has plenty of ice is Patterson, near Sun Mountain Lodge in Winthrop. There is 12 inches of ice on the lake and it is producing mixed catches of perch, rainbow and kokanee.

The Methow is producing some steelhead, but the action is much slower than earlier this season. There are drifts that are ice free and anglers may be able to touch a fish or two in these areas. Most experienced anglers will find the fishing in mid February and March much better, as the days are warmer and longer and the fish tend to be more active as we approach spring.

I have good news for fans of the Quincy Trout Derby. If all goes well the plan is to double the amount of prize money by doubling the number of tagged fish available. This is done by adding tagged fish to Quincy Lake this year, in addition to the ones released into Burke. I will have the final details on the annual derby that takes place this year on March 1st, and will keep you informed.

I want to remind members of the Wenatchee Sportsmen's Association that the annual banquet and auction is coming up on Saturday, February 8th, and they had better get their tickets. They can be found at Hooked on Toys and High Mountain Hunting Supply in Wenatchee.

I just spent a day at the big sports show in Puyallup. I was able to see many people from our region there and others that I don't see very often, other than at the shows in our area. I was able to visit with the folks at Fetha Styx rods to learn more about the rods they have provided to me and I will be sharing through my Product Review Page of my web site. I saw Ed Iman and got an update on Fish Camp for this fall. Anton Jones of Darrell Dads Family Guide Service was there and Keith Jensen who now has Big Wally's Guide Service. I spent some time with Jim Teeny and we are making plans to fish another Oregon lake that has huge rainbow. Dick Sagara, who represents Aquaz waders, showed me their new model that will be available in a couple of months, that features a zippered front and—get this—pockets for hand warmers! I will let you know when they are out and where to find them. The next sport show coming up in our region is the one in Yakima and it will be held on February 14th through the 16th. Don't forget to mark your calendars for the Wenatchee Show which will be on February 21st to the 23rd.

If I had my druthers, I would be going to Rufus Woods. I want to get my share of the big triploids while they last!

Reach Dave at:
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