

Welcoming **Dave Graybill** To The **Nickel Ads** *Classifieds* The Fishin' Magician

The early trout opener in the Quincy Wildlife Area and the lakes near George was a great one. Anglers got limit numbers of rainbow at most all of the lakes. Over 400 anglers participated in the Quincy Tourism Association's Tagged Trout Derby at Burke Lake, and it was a huge success.

I stopped my Martha Lake on March 1st, the opening day of the early trout season and found the banks of this narrow and shallow lake lined with anglers. Martha Lake is consistently good every year, which is a surprise to me. The lake isn't much to look at and is so shallow I would think it would be a good candidate for winter kill. However, year after year it provides anglers with excellent fishing. This year the rainbow were 12 to 13 inches long and there were many carryovers taken. Some of these fish were over 20 inches, and I heard of one that weighed 6 pounds! Typically, this lake is hit very hard the first few weeks of the season and then the catch rate falls off. Then anglers shift their attention to other lakes in the area.

On Saturday, March 3rd all the angling attention was on Burke Lake. This was the site of the 2nd Annual Tagged Trout Derby conducted by the Quincy Valley Tourism Association. Over 400 folks signed up this year, and the lake was packed with boats, in spite of a very stiff wind. The banks were also lined with people of all ages, with the hope of landing a trout wearing one of the tags that could be worth some big money. Last year one tagged trout was caught, but it wasn't one with a cash award.



This year was different, at about 9 a.m. Calvin Yamamoto, of Quincy, was anchored fishing with his father, when he got a nice rainbow of 15 inches, weighing just over a pound. Yamamoto noticed that the fish had a pink tag near its dorsal fin, and decided to head in and find out what he had. What he had was the tagged trout worth \$2,000.00! He and his father had fished in the derby last year and had such a great time they decided to do it again. They are sure glad they went to the effort to put their boat in the water and tough it out in the high winds. It paid off big time.

At one o'clock all those who had entered the derby lined up at the weigh station and had their catches tabulated. There were prizes for biggest fish in both adult and youth categories, as well as cash prizes for the best total weight. Adrian Renteria won in the adult

division for a trout weighing 5.65 pounds, and the youth big fish prize was claimed by Austin Morris for a fish that tipped the scales at 2.65 pounds.

The fishing was very good at Burke Lake, although conditions were tough. The wind was blowing a steady 20 miles an hour, often gusting even higher. There were lots of limit catches turned in anyway, and plenty of big rainbow taken. The Quincy Valley Tourism Association put over 120 rainbow in Burke of 15 to 18 inches, and an additional 30 fish weighing from 5 to 7 pounds. Kent Bacon, one of the organizers of the event assured me that there will be another derby the first weekend of March next year. It's something that everyone is looking forward to.

There was a big crowd of anglers on Quincy Lake on Saturday, too, and although fish were being caught the action wasn't as good as Burke. I saw some vehicles parked at the Dusty Lake trailhead, but didn't get to talk to anyone that had fished it. The lake was clear of ice, but I am sure the water was very cold.

I also took a drive to check on the fishing at Martha and Caliche lakes. It was busy at Martha and the fishing was good. While I was there I got a chance to visit with Chris Earhart, a WDFW endorsement officer. He confirmed that the fishing at Martha Lake had been excellent this year, and mentioned that

when it slows down people move to Burke and Quincy where the fishing holds up much longer in the season, and even offers good fishing in the fall. He also mentioned a couple of lakes that I have never tried in the Quincy Wildlife Area. One was Dot and the other Cup. Both of these lakes require a short hike so are not visited with the same frequency as those anglers can drive right up to. He said they are definitely worth the walk. There aren't limit numbers of trout waiting for folks at these lakes, but the trout are of exceptional size. Rainbow over 20 inches are no surprise in these two lakes.

I also took the time to drive down to Caliche Lake, which is about five miles west of the town of George. There was a good crowd of people at this lake, and I soon found out why. They were catching some dandy fish here. All the trout I saw were a solid 12 inches and some slightly larger. The lake had been rehabbed in the fall of last year, and when they planted it they put larger than normal catchable size rainbow in Caliche. There is a small, very rough launch at Caliche and there were a couple of boats on it, but there is lots of good shore access here.

Well, it's official. Trout season is has begun here in Central Washington, and from what I saw we're off to a great start! See you on the water soon.

Reach Dave at: www.FishingMagician.com or Fishboy@nwi.net

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