

Welcoming Dave Graybill To The Nickel Ads Classifieds

The Fishin' Magician

There has been early morning frost in most areas of the region now, but there are still some nice sunny days. That's one of the things I like about the area. Even through the fall and winter we have plenty of sunny days to enjoy our fishing. It may be hard to believe, but lower water temperatures will actually improve the action for steelhead.

It was a chilly day on the upper Columbia when Pat Armstrong, from Town Ford and I hit the water, again near Bridgeport. We saw an interesting sight on our way up river to one of my favorite spots.

I thought I was seeing a large piece of driftwood coming down the river, but as we got closer we saw that it was a coyote! We followed it from a distance as it made its way across the river. I took a couple of photos and got back to the business of fishing.

We didn't have to wait long to see Armstrong's bobber go down. He brought a nice triploid to the boat right away. The triploids kept us very busy all day long, and Armstrong got one that must have weighed 10 pounds. We talked to another boat that was fishing this stretch of river and they had also taken a whole bunch of triploids. They had also hooked three steelhead, and had one keeper in the box. We only hooked one steelhead on this trip, and it turned out to be a small hen that was a hatchery fish.

Somehow I have managed to get at least one keeper steelie on each of my trips to Bridgeport so far this year. I have hooked as many as five in a day, with

two being hatchery fish on one occasion. This isn't bad for this time of year. It is early in the season for the fishing this far up the Columbia to really get cooking.

If you've noticed the fish counts, there are almost 21,000 steelhead over Priest Rapids Dam, and there are a few more coming over every day. We won't see 26,000 like we did last year, but there is no doubt that there is an abundance of fish available this season. The last couple of trips I have taken some small fish, of 4 or 5 pounds. There are still enough bigger fish in the river, like the one my wife got a couple of weeks ago, to make this very interesting.

If there is anything that I have been reminded of as I get into the swing of steelhead fishing this season, it is the

advantage of using long rods, and the necessity of fluorocarbon leaders. The 10-foot nine-inch rods my wife and I are using really make tossing bobbbers easy, and mending our lines a breeze. I have been using 10-pound fluorocarbon and 1/4-ounce Maxi Jigs on the upper Columbia, but when I fish the Grande Ronde, I will scale down to 1/8th ounce jigs and 8-pound test fluorocarbon. I will do the same when I fish the Methow and Wenatchee rivers, too, when the water is low and clear. I can still get away with the heavier stuff when the water is high and dirty.

I am really looking forward to my first trip to the Grande Ronde. I have been trying to get down there for years. My buddy Brian Nielson, BJ's Guide Service, told me that this year we were just going to pick a date and go. My wife Eileen and I will be on the river with Brian on Halloween Day, rain or shine.

It's about a five hour drive from Leavenworth, and we plan on leaving early enough to see the sights and get some good photos on the way there. Eileen has never been through this country, and I'd like to show her Palouse Falls, for example. The canyon land that the Grande Ronde flows through is quite scenic, too, and I expect that we'll get a really good Fishing TV Show out of this trip. You'll be able to "go along with us" next month. So be sure to check out the schedule on the Fishing TV Page at the beginning of next month. There are some good shows, including one on fishing the upper Columbia for steelhead coming up this month.

I couldn't have a better person to take us on our first trip on the Grande Ronde. Nielson has been guiding on the river for over 30 years. To say he knows the river and how to catch steelhead on it is an understatement. If you want to see what the Grande Ronde looks like and the fish that are taken from the stream, log onto www.bjguide.com. He has a great web site with lots of photos of past and present trips that you can view.

We plan on getting on the water at first light and spend about six hours drifting down river. He likes to pull plugs on the Grande Ronde, and he told me if I want to bring a rod along it should be loaded with line no heavier than eight-pound test. I'm going to throw a bobber rod in the boat and give this a try on the float, too. Be sure to pick up a copy of the Nickel next week. I will relate all the details about the trip, and you'll be able to see some photos on FishingMagician.com.

I've had a great time fishing for steelhead this early season, and I want to thank the folks at Bob Feil Boats and motors for that. The Jetcraft 1925 Discovery has been a great boat for steelheading on the Columbia.

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



Free E-Letter

Featured Stories, Forecasts & More.

Just Log on to FishingMagician.com & Click on the E-Letter Button.

CDP CUSTOM
DIESEL
PERFORMANCE

CUMMINS - DURAMAX - POWERSTROKE

**Better Fuel Economy!
Full Service Repair!**

**BRAKES • BALL JOINTS
EXHAUST • A/C SERVICE**

COMPLETE LIGHT TRUCK SERVICE!

223 Park St. • Next to 7-11 • Behind Car Wash • **663-6308**

For Huntin', Hikin', or Fishin'

Radical 453



Danner

With Gortex 1 Year
Waterproof Guarantee

Buy 5 Pairs of Socks
Get 1 FREE!

NEAL'S
FAMILY SHOES & REPAIR

662-8472
811. S. Wenatchee Ave
Open : Sat. 8-4 • Tues.-Fri 8-6

To Advertise Here

Contact:

Bill Hansen



at the

Nickel Ads
Classifieds

662-1405

For More Information