

Welcoming Dave Graybill To The Nickel Ads Classifieds

The Fishin' Magician

Just like the weather, fishing is heating up here in Central Washington. Good to excellent fishing is being had by anglers that are trying for kings on the Columbia and our smaller streams have dropped enough to allow for fly fishing. Triploid fishing continues to be fabulous, particularly on the stretch of the Columbia below Chief Joseph Dam.

I just couldn't wait any longer. I just had to grab my fly rod and give the Icicle, above Eight Mile Campground a try. There are a couple of spots up there I like to fish that are near my home in Leavenworth, and the river has just been too high so far this season. I figured that even though the river was still a bit high and probably cold if I didn't get out now the fishing would be over before I had a chance to try it.

The first stretch was disappointing. I made a few casts into water that usually is full of little rainbow with no results using my trusty Parachute Adams. While waiting for my temperature gauge to give me a reading, I tied on a Stimulator. Even though my gauge didn't quite register 50 degrees the Stimulator produced results. Giving up on this patch of water I decided to try one of my favorite pools further downstream. The pool was a good idea. On my first cast a fat rainbow grabbed my fly and began running and jumping all over the pool. These little rainbow act like steelhead! I caught a few more rainbow through this stretch, then packed up for a road trip to another stream.

Last year I only fished the Entiat once, and it was during a rain storm. Driving up to



the Spruce Grove Campground I found the water high and cold but full of willing trout. The same Stimulator that worked on the Icicle appealed to the Entiat fish, too. Cutthroat, rainbow and brook trout all hit it. The fishing on the Entiat was even better than the Icicle. The water was so high that it is necessary to walk around some areas to get down stream, which is a chore. My shins and legs were scraped and bloody from pushing through the brush, but it was worth it.

Fishing the small streams in our region is coming on very late this year. It is a favorite thing for me. When the weather is steaming hot in the valley, the temperatures on the Icicle and Entiat are moderate. The late afternoon and evening

fishing is really good, if you don't mind catching small trout. The numbers of fish that will come up and swat your fly is astounding. The fish are beautiful and the scenery on these streams is something else. You will almost always have whatever stretch of water you chose to yourself, if you avoid the campgrounds.

I use a very light 3-weight rod and although I carry a fly box full of patterns I use just a few consistently. If you want a good selection for use on these small streams, pick up a few Parachute Adams, some Elk Hair Caddis and some Stimulators. The trout are small, but they will eagerly hit size 12 and 14 flies. A good nymph pattern these streams is a bead head Prince Nymph, and the Hare's Ear is a good back up. My wife's favorite is a Renegade.

Some of the streams that could be on your list to try would be the Icicle, Entiat, San Poil, near Republic, and the Kettle River in the same area. The White River, near Lake Wenatchee is a good one for small cutthroat.

Good news for salmon anglers on the Columbia River is that things have really changed for the better off the mouth of the Okanogan River at Brewster. The recent salmon derby here signaled the arrival of very good numbers of kings to this

area, and fishing has been even better this past week. The Okanogan River has heated up to the point that the "thermal barrier" is in place now and holding kings in the Brewster Pool. Sockeye numbers have dwindled to the point of not worth the effort, but this year the triploid rainbow have replaced them as an alternative when king fishing gets slow after the early-morning bite. Anglers trolling here, especially those fishing herring, are catching very large numbers of triploids.

The scheduled drop in the water level at Banks Lake is a mixed blessing for spiny ray anglers. The water is dropping at a rate of about a 1/2 a foot a day and some of the launches are already out of service. The good news is that the launch at Coulee Playland in Electric City will be available to boaters even when the draw down is complete. There is an old pad off the end of the current launch here, and the folks at Coulee Playland will gravel a path to the old pad to make launching possible. Also good news is that as the water drops the fishing for walleye and bass gets better and better as the fish are increasingly concentrated in shrinking Banks Lake.

There is so much good fishing available for such a wide range of species that it's going to be tough to decide where to go this week. I am planning a trip to the Brewster Pool soon and with luck I'll bag a king or two and some triploids for sure. Next a trip to Banks Lake is way overdue. The action up there right now is going to be great!

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