

Welcoming Dave Graybill To The Nickel Ads Classifieds

The Fishin' Magician

The weather continues to be hot here in Central W. There is some terrific fishing going on here in our region. The fishing for summer-run Chinook salmon is occupying much of the attention of anglers, or course. The big news though is the announcement that the daily bag limit on sockeye salmon at Lake Wenatchee has been raised to five fish per day!

Fishing for sockeye salmon on the lake has been very good to excellent since the opening. Angler success varies, but it has been as high as 80 percent limits for the boats working the lake. Early estimates of the number of fish that were to reach Lake Wenatchee were for 30,000 fish, but at least 46,000 have passed over Tumwater Dam, and there may be as many as 60,000 in this year's run. The needed escapement is only 23,000 fish and the boost in bag limit was made in an effort to remove as many excess hatchery fish as possible. So far only 7,000 have been taken by sport fishers. Anglers are reminded that this is a selective fishery, with no bait allowed and up to three barbless hooks may be used. The two pole endorsement is not valid for this fishery. Bull trout, steelhead and Chinook must be released immediately and a knotless net must be used. Also, all sockeye that have a floy tag or have one or more holes punch in their tails must be released. This fishery is made possible by funds generated through the Salmon and Steelhead Endorsement Stamp, which is required on Lake Wenatchee.

I have had the opportunity to fish the lake several times with my fishing buddy Rollie Schmitten. He has

netted limit after limit of sockeye for those on his boat. He often doesn't get far from his dock, near the north end of the lake. If the bite here isn't to his satisfaction he will move across and fish below where the White River enters the lake.

This has been a very productive area, particularly later in the morning when the bite lags in other areas of the lake. Most of the sockeye are still in good shape, and are larger than the fish running up the Okanogan. Many fish over 25 inches are landed here.

The method used to take sockeye here isn't much different than what has been used on the Columbia River, off the mouth of the Okanogan River. Most anglers favor a chrome dodger with a prism inset, in a size 0. A common leader length is only 12 to 18 inches, but leaders as short as six to nine inches can often work even better. These short leaders allow the dodger to give a sharp kick to the hooks. I have had very good success with the Macks Lure Cha Cha Sockeye set up, which includes a Smile Blade, pink hoochie or squidder and some beads on two hooks. If you can't find these at your local tackle dealer



they are easy to duplicate as the components are available. To vary the presentation if the bite slows, anglers may want to switch to a white dodger and even fall back to single colored hook that was the standard in years past. Downriggers aren't essential to reaching the depth that most sockeye occupy, but sure make things easier to consistently duplicate the presentation as it changes throughout the day.

The Ponderosa Watershed Committee is holding their 2nd annual Watershed Fair on Saturday, August 25th. This year's fair is much expanded from last year, and it will be both informative and a lot fun! There will be experts from county, state and federal agencies on hand, as well as local organizations that share a common concern about the future health of this important watershed. There will be seminars, information booths, hands on learning experiences, plus a BBQ salmon lunch and a hosted river float. Things that people can learn at the fair include; how habitat restoration is helping to save salmon, what food trout eat, by wading the river, how to live in harmony with the bears that inhabit the forests in our area, and even some essential river floating safety tips. There is something here for those who want to learn more

about all the elements that make this watershed work, right on down to fun that the kids will enjoy. Bring the whole family to this one. The event will be held at the Ponderosa Community Clubhouse from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on the 25th. For more information contact Doug Pendleton at DougPen@nwi.net.

I ran a quick check on river flows throughout the region, and although flows are still high for this time of year, they are all in great shape and dry fly fishing is reaching its peak. The smaller rivers, like the Icicle and Entiat are within a hundred cfs of typical flows. The very popular Yakima River can be fished, despite the fires that have raged in this area. Floating downriver from Ellensburg, in the canyon is excellent and smoke from the fires isn't an issue. If you enjoy fly fishing, I would get out and get at it. The hopper hatches are in full bloom on all of the streams. I expect that fishing will be very good well into September this year. Actually, many streams in our region have dropped so low that fishing is difficult on some of my favorite small streams, but this year they will be better than ever.

I will be giving my fly tackle serious use in the next week. This is the time and I don't want this seasonal opportunity to get away before I get my time on the water. Maybe I'll see you out there!

Reach Dave at:
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