

Welcoming Dave Graybill To The Nickel Ads Classifieds

The Fishin' Magician

My wife and I hit the road for some fishing fun this week. First we tried the Upper Columbia near Bridgeport for steelhead, and later on we traveled to Banks Lake. We had a great day on both of these different waters, and I am glad that the mild weather continues to greet anglers that are out and about this fall.

It was my wife's birthday wish to fish at Bridgeport. We have had many memorable trips to this stretch of the Columbia, and this was one of the best. There were no fish at the first spot I tried, so I dropped down stream a ways to one of our favorite holes. On my first cast my bobber went down and I soon had a bright, 8-pound wild steelhead next to the boat. After releasing this fish I moved us back up to the top of the hole and in no time at all Eileen's bobber went down and she reeled in a jack salmon that probably weighed 6 pounds. We made a few more drifts through here and my wife hooked three more fish. They were either jack salmon or triploids and we decided to rest this hole and move further down river.

The action didn't stop. We continued to hook fish along one of our favorite drifts. We hooked three more steelhead, and one made a 360-degree cartwheel before throwing the hook. We lost track of the exact count, but must have hooked 20 fish over a five hour period. Soon the jack salmon will disappear, but there will be triploids caught through this stretch all season long. Its okay with me, they just add to the fun of the day.



I was impressed with the size of the fish that we did land or get a good look at before they flew off the hook. I expected to see a lot of 4-pound fish this year, but every fish was much bigger than that. The steelhead count over Priest Rapids Dam has passed 20,000 fish, which surprised those that make the forecasts. We've got a lot of great fishing for steelhead ahead of us this fall and winter.

By the way, we were fishing bobbers and jigs. We are both using the Buzz Ramsey signature Berkley Air rods now, which are 10-feet, nine inches long. My wife loves the way they cast and even though a bit longer than the rods we were using before they are

actually lighter. These rods have more backbone than the previous rods, too, and I am not quite used to it yet. I popped a fish off on the strike, using a 10-pound fluorocarbon leader, so I have to use a softer touch when setting the hook with this rod. We are also both using the Abu Garcia Sorron spinning reels. I have been using mine for the past three seasons and gave one to Eileen this summer with the new rod. She can't believe how smooth the retrieve and drag is on this reel, and she has used a lot of different reels and caught a lot of steelhead over the years. We were also using the Maxi-Jigs that Yakima Bait introduced last year. When we fished below Chief Joseph Dam this summer during the special "keep" season for triploids, we used these jigs without bait and caught 'em like crazy. Steelhead love them, and bright pink or orange worked for us on this trip.

I have been trying to get to Banks Lake this fall. I wanted to see what the lake looked like with the draw down, and see if it's possible to get around on the lake. I have had some good reports on the fishing at Banks, too.

The launch at Coulee Playland in Electric City is great. The concrete pad reaches the water just fine. You should bring along some waterproof boots to climb in the boat, as it is fairly shallow when you put in, but other than that it's just like launching anywhere else. Coulee Playland isn't charging a launch fee this fall either.

I very slowly and very carefully motored the Jetcraft down lake, trying to keep in the channel. There were times when I had just five feet of water under us, but I was going slow enough to swing the bow back and forth and keep us in enough water to keep us headed toward Steamboat Rock. The channel is mostly sand and mud as you approach Jones Bay, but I still kept the throttle on near dead slow. Three or four bass boats blasted by us going full tilt. They obviously had been through here the day before and knew their way around.

When we reached Northrup Bay the water dropped to over 20 feet and we made it to the back side of Steamboat easily. I tied a crank bait on my bait caster and Eileen tried one of her favorite Senkos. I caught a nice largemouth along the shore and then met a bass boat that had been working the shoreline around the corner from me. We hopped around them and made a few more casts, but then ran across to Barker to inspect the flats.

It was much easier on the return trip. I just followed the arrow on my Lowrance and I made it back in half the time. I am anxious to try Banks again this fall. The Scholarship bass tournament was held here last weekend. All 21 boats limited both days.

These are just two of many great places to fish this fall, and it's just getting started! Oh boy, this is going to be fun!

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



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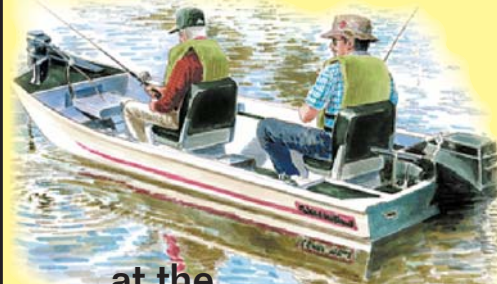


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