

Welcoming Dave Graybill To The Nickel Ads Classifieds

The Fishin' Magician

I finally have some snow in my yard here in Leavenworth, but overall the weather remains mild in our region. It makes it easy for me to make plans to get out on the water. No freezing temperatures or high winds to worry about. The closure of many of the rivers in our region to steelhead fishing hasn't slowed me down. There are enough fish on the upper Columbia to make for some great days.

I mentioned that fishing below Wells Dam saved the day for Rollie Schmitt and I last week. Well, this week we decided to start our day there. We began by drifting bobbies and Maxi-Jigs off the bar below the launch bay. Schmitt got a wild fish on the first drift, and I thought, oh boy, we're in for a busy day. We got nothing on the next pass but I got a wild fish on the third.

I had brought along some back-trolling set ups. I had one with peach-colored Spin-N-Glows and Corkies with orange and peach-yarn, and the other with pink as the theme. Once I got the diver size figured out, we got a nice wild fish using this method. The fish hit the peach-colored rig. We then ran across the river to the big back eddy that had produced fish for us the week before, and were surprised when we didn't even get a bite in this area.

We had planned on fishing from Wells Dam all the way down to Chelan Falls, and had left my truck there on the way up. We had fished a couple of spots below Wells, but wanted to see if we could find some new water. We found water alright, and we fished a few likely looking holes. We saw an angler fishing a point above the boulder field at the bend, and want to go back there some day. The boulder field was a disappointment. We gave it several drifts without any success, and then made the run down to Chelan Falls.



Our money hole below the Beebe Bridge didn't let us down. My bobber took a dive on our first pass through. The current was different on this particular day as the water was very high, and pushed us right through the hole. We only got the one wild fish, and Schmitt is convinced that we spooked the steelhead out of there. We didn't miss many hits on this day, and released a total of four nice wild steelhead. Not a bad day. We plan to give Rufus Woods a try for walleye on our next adventure.

Some of you may be aware of important changes that are being made to the commercial fishing allowed on the lower Columbia River. These were prompted when the Oregon Coastal Conservation Association was able to get a measure on that state's ballot in November to remove gillnets from the river. The result was the creation of a special work group with

representatives from the commissions of Washington and Oregon. The work group – assembled at the request of Oregon Gov. John Kitzhaber – worked since early September on the recommendations, which will now be considered by both states' fish and wildlife commissions. Key provisions of the proposed plan, "Management Strategies for Columbia River Recreational and Commercial Fisheries: 2013 and Beyond," include:

- Prioritizing the recreational fisheries in the main stem Columbia River and commercial fisheries in off-channel areas.
- Transitioning commercial fisheries remaining in the main stem to alternative gear, such as beach and purse seines.
- Phasing out the use of gillnets by non-tribal fishers in the main stem by 2017, while maintaining the economic viability of the commercial fishery during and after the transition.
- Shifting a greater portion of current hatchery salmon releases to off-channel areas, and exploring options for expanding those areas for commercial fisheries.
- Gradually increasing the catch share of salmon for the sport fishery in the main stem over the next four years and by 2017 providing 100 percent of the summer and mainstream spring Chinook harvest to the sport fishery, while increasing spring Chinook opportunity for the commercial fishery in the off-channel areas.
- Requiring sport anglers fishing for salmon and steelhead in the main stem Columbia River and its tributaries to use barbless hooks beginning 2013.

At long last a serious plan to remove gillnets from much of the main stem Columbia River is actually moving forward.

I also wanted to mention that the deadline for public comment on the proposed changes in the fishing regulations for the coming season has been extended to January 29th. Of concern to many anglers is the removal of all bag limits and size restrictions on bass and walleye on the Columbia River from McNary to Chief Joseph Dam, among other waters. To see these proposed changes and others you can view them by going to: http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regulations/rule_proposals/comments/recommend.php

I have been getting some reports of improved fishing for both triploid rainbow and walleye on Rufus Woods Reservoir. I hope to get up there myself a couple of times in the next week or so. Much of the action is taking place at the upper end of the reservoir, near the net pens.

I have a great new line up of Fishing and Cooking TV shows posted on my web site. If you didn't know, all of these shows can be watched "on demand" or anytime you want simply by clicking on the show title. There is a good one on fishing on Rufus Woods in the winter with Stuart Hurd.

I am going to plan a bunch of fishing trips the next couple of weeks. I want to take advantage of the mild weather to get as much time on the water as I can!

Reach Dave at:
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