

Dave Graybill

The Fishin' Magician

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What a week of wild weather! I was glad I wasn't planning to be on the water much. I am sure it cancelled a lot of plans for anglers. The rivers are now settling down and clearing, and there are some terrific opportunities for anglers as we move further into the month of September.

We had our final meeting prior to the Wenatchee River Salmon Festival, which is Saturday, September 21st, and it is going to be jam-packed with activities for families. There will be a carnival atmosphere at the National Fish Hatchery in Leavenworth on that day. Salmon Fest used to take place over two days on the weekend, after over 2,000 3rd graders had visited the grounds at the hatchery. This year everything is compressed into Saturday, so families should be aware and make plans to spend the whole day here. This is the best free event for families in the region, perhaps the state, and if you haven't ever attended, make plans to be at the 23rd annual event. I could fill this column by describing the activities that kids can enjoy at Salmon Fest, but the best way to find out about all that will be happening is to go to the Salmon Fest web site at salmonfest.org. You will be amazed. The gates will open at 10 a.m. on Saturday, the 21st and close at 5 p.m. When you see how much there is to see you'll want to be there when the gates open.

On Friday, my wife Eileen and I took my friend Jennifer Heneghen and her Mom Nancy up to Roses Lake, to catch whatever we could. I have promised to take Jennifer fishing for years, and both she and her Mom love to fish for anything that bites. I was hoping to find some big perch at Roses, but they proved

to be elusive. What we did find were lots of pumpkinseeds that were constantly stealing our bait, but also some good pockets of crappie. I rigged Jennifer and her Mom up with bobbers and jigs and let them cast away. They had a blast hooking and releasing these pumpkinseeds.

When we hit a crappie we would turn around and go back to the spot and try to get as many as we could. We lost some crappie and released a few of them and kept ten to fillet at the end of the day. I was disappointed that we didn't find some schools of perch, because I know they are in Roses, but I am glad to see that there are now crappie available here. Probably the biggest surprise of the day was that we had calm and warm weather most of the day, and didn't get the thunder storms that were predicted for last Friday. Roses Lake can also provide very good trout fishing in the fall season, and some very good largemouth bass action as well.

On Saturday I was invited by Nathan Smeltzer to spend a few hours at the Chelan County Fair, and to drop by the Jr. Sportsmen Expo. I have to hand it to the Fair organizers to dedicate one of their buildings to youth and the outdoors. The highlight of the Jr. Sportsmen's area is the fishing pond, which is assembled, stocked and maintained by Andy Reeves. This takes a lot of work, but Andy does it with a smile. Trout fishing wasn't the only attraction. There was a hunting video game, and the Wenatchi River Traditional Archers had a trailer for kids to try their hand at shooting a bow and arrow. The Great Elk Tour Antler Display was a huge hit, and offered pellet gun target



shooting. Other agencies and businesses that helped or provided a display included the Wenatchee Sportsmen's Association, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Ducks Unlimited, High Mountain Hunting Supply, Bravarian Boondockers, the Okanogan Wildlife League, Cascadia Conservation District, and the Noxious Weed Board. There was a raffle and for just two dollars kids could enter with a chance to win a four-hour fishing trip on Lake Chelan with Lake Chelan Adventures, a sturgeon trip with Nick Yednake, a four-hour fishing trip on Lake Chelan with Biggar Fishing Adventures and a muzzleloader hunt, including lodging and meals with Hidden Ranch Outfitters.

It was great to see the participation with the Jr. Sportsmen's Expo, and all the kids that were enjoying it. There is room for more, though, and I would encourage anyone with an outdoor related business or

agency that wants to reach youth to contact the folks at the Fair and arrange to be part of it next year.

The Wenatchee River was high and running mud most of last weekend, but when it settles down there is even more water to fish for Chinook salmon. The upper boundary of the Wenatchee River has been extended. It was opened from Dryden Dam up to the Highway 2 Bridge at Leavenworth on September 1st. Added to this stretch is the river from the Highway 2 Bridge upstream to the Icicle River Road Bridge. The numbers of summer Chinook returning to the Wenatchee are well in excess of spawning escapement needs, and they are not ESA listed stocks. Anglers are able to retain four adipose fin clipped summer run Chinook.

Only two of which may be adults. This fishery is made possible by funding through the Salmon and Steelhead Endorsement. It is very important that all steelhead that are hooked incidentally be immediately released without removing them from water. Intentional fishing for steelhead could result in the curtailment or closure of steelhead fishing on the Wenatchee River.

Have you seen the fall salmon numbers? My, oh my, are they coming in big numbers. I am already getting good reports of catches of bright fish being taken at Vernita. Man, I can't wait to get out there after these brutes. This fall will be awesome!

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

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235 N. Mission St.
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