

Dave Graybill

The Fishin' Magician

Nickel Ads

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Wow. What a weekend. I was busy, that's for sure. I spent Saturday doing a "ride along" with Sergeant Dan Klump WDFW enforcement officer, in the Wenatchee Heights. Between Saturday and Sunday I checked on a dozen different lakes over three counties and the Colville Indian Reservation. I logged 399 miles on Sunday alone. The highlight was the awards ceremony for the Banks Lake Triple Fish Challenge, where the younger anglers showed the adults how it's done!

Sergeant Klump is a second generation enforcement officer. His father Larry was an officer that served here in the Chelan County area for many years. As soon as Dan heard that I had been appointed to the Washington State Fish and Wildlife Commission he called me and invited me to go on a ride along. I figured why not go on the first day of the new trout season, and we did. We started at Beehive Reservoir and found a pretty fair number of anglers, considering that it was a very chilly morning and the same day as the youth parade and the start of the Apple Blossom Festival. We talked to 50 different anglers as we made our way around the lake. Klump asked to see licenses and their catches and they all were very polite and cooperative. As an example of how enforcement operates now, Klump contacted an angler who did not have his license. He said he had bought one but left his wallet at home. In the old days, that would have meant a ticket. Nowadays, though, Klump took his personal information and told him to go ahead and continue fishing and have a good day, and if everything checked out he was fine. Later on, when we got back to his truck, Klump logged the information into his system on the computer, and sure enough, the young man had bought his license two days ago. Of the many contacts we made at the three lakes that we visited there are two things that



stood out as being serious violations. Number one was the number of small boats that we inspected that didn't have the right number of lifejackets aboard or none at all. Remember, there must be a life jacket in the boat for everyone that is riding in it, and those 12 years old and under must be wearing the life jacket. Also, there is still some misunderstanding about catch and release. If you are using bait every fish you release counts toward your limit. In other words, if you are using bait and you release five fish you are done. If you use a lure or fly with a barbless hook you can catch and release all day long. I want to thank Sergeant Klump for taking me along and having the chance to see things from his perspective. During this day we contacted over 80 different people, and he wrote a total of zero citations. Enforcement serves an important role as the face of the Department of Fish and Wildlife and education is a huge part of it. I know he wasn't acting any differently than he would have if I had not been there. I have seen the

report logs of other officers and the number of citations written for the number of contacts made is very low. You typically have to have multiple violations to earn a citation.

My wife, Eileen, and I visited several lakes on Sunday and I will provide some details on how the fishing was at some of the better lakes, but I want to share what we saw at the Banks Lake Triple Fish Challenge, hosted by Coulee Playland Resort. The event is conducted by the Grand Coulee Dam Chamber with Peggy and Lou Nevismal in charge. There are many sponsors that contributed to the Challenge and volunteers like Dave and Betty Hendergart from the Central Washington Bass Club.

This year there were a dozen boats and nearly 30 participants in the derby. Everyone caught fish, but only one angler hit the "trifecta" and caught a walleye, smallmouth bass and a rainbow trout each day for the two days of the derby. It was young Aiden Voth (whose photo is at the top of the column this week) and he walked away with a huge pile of rods and reels, tackle boxes, hats and other prizes. He did everything he needed to do to win the Achilles inflatable boat with motor—except be old enough to accept a prize of this value. Those under the age of 18 aren't allowed to accept prize or cash valued at more than \$500.00. Everyone there, including the adult winners were thrilled with the performance of the young anglers at this year's derby, and they all are planning on being there next year for another shot at the boat and motor. Full details of all the winners for the Triple Fish Challenge will be available on the Coulee Dam Chamber of Commerce web site, which can be found at www.groundcouleedam.org.

In past two days I have visited Beehive Reservoir,

Black Lake, Lilly Lake, Upper Wheeler Reservoir, Alta Lake, Leader Lake, Conconully Lake, Conconully Reservoir, Rebecca Lake, Buffalo Lake, Banks Lake and Blue Lake. The only lake where we didn't find anyone fishing was at Upper Wheeler, which is a fly fishing only, catch and release lake, and there were two anglers on their way in. Buffalo Lake had just one boat on it, but the fishing had been very, very good. Mike Hall, who runs the resort on Buffalo, showed me a photo of a rainbow that weighed 11.9 pounds. Most of the trout were averaging 2 pounds at Buffalo. All the other lakes had plenty of anglers on them and the fishing was great. We saw lots and lots of limits being taken by anglers fishing from shore or from boats. Here are some of the most outstanding lakes for the opening day in Eastern Washington: Spokane County, Williams Lake, 6.2 fish per angler, up to 21.5 inches; Stevens County, Waitts Lake, 6 fish per angler, up to 22 inches; Okanogan County, Conconully Lake, 7.9 fish per angler, no size indicated; Ferry County, Lake Ellen, 5.6 fish per angler, to 21 inches; Pend Oreille County, Diamond Lake, 4.2 fish per angler to 18 inches. Reports indicated that the weather was cold and windy on Saturday, and fishing at most lakes was very good in spite of the conditions.

Seeing all the great fishing going on everywhere I went this past week really has me pumped to get out. I have a trip planned to Potholes for some walleye fishing and sure hope I can get to one of these great trout lakes later in the week. I will let you know where I go and how I do!

Reach Dave at:
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