

The Fishin' Magician

Welcoming

Dave Graybill

To The
Nickel Ads
Classifieds

Boy it's great to be out fishing in the sunshine. It took until July for summer to arrive here in Central Washington and am I glad it's here. When you make the run from above Chief Joseph Dam to the upper net pens on Rufus Woods, I like to do it with sunshine in my face rather than snow, as I have done in the winter.

I made just such a run on Friday. I met Matt Gutzwiller, his brother Jerry and their nephew Cody Permann at the Triangle Exxon in Brewster that morning. Matt was the winning bidder for a trip with me at the Wenatchee Sportsmen's Association dinner and auction, and I suggested a trip to Rufus Woods. There was some concern about forecasted wind for our day on the reservoir, but I assured them that the weather is always better than predicted on Rufus. Sure enough, when we launched it was flat calm.

After fishing for a while at the lower end of the reservoir, I suggested we take advantage of the calm waters and shoot up to the net pens where I have found better numbers of fish. Everyone liked the idea, so we stowed the gear and I put the throttle down on the Jetcraft.

We passed small groups of boats and bank anglers on the way up. There were a good number of boats at the lower pens, and a huge number of boats and bank anglers at the upper pens. There was even one whole bay filled with pontoon boats. It looked like a fly club had made the trip to Rufus.

We saw boats scattered from one end of the Nespelem Bar to the other. I opted to get out of the main current and troll, rather than dead drift

jigs, as I had the last time. We put the rods out and found the action much better than what we had experienced in the lower reservoir. We were into fish almost immediately. Things got pretty crazy a couple of times. We had two trolling rods out and Matt was sitting in the bow casting a spinner. We had a couple of doubles on and some very exciting battles. When the larger fish decide to head downstream with the current there isn't much else you can do than watch the line sizzle off your reel.

We did get a couple of fish that were just 18 to 20 inches, but most were fat 3- to 5-pounders and one that probably pushed 8 pounds that Cody landed. Get this. He's from Montana and had only caught small trout! We were pretty proud to show him what Washington trout were like, and he was sure impressed.

The forecasted wind did appear about the time we were headed back to Chief Joe, of course. The Jetcraft made the run down a pleasure, even against a stiff upriver breeze. We saw lots of wildlife and even stopped at Lone Pine Island to read the sign: Coulee Dam 36 miles, Chief Joseph Dam 14 miles. It was a terrific day on the water with the



Gutzwiller clan.

On my way home I thought I would drive down and see what the launch looked like at Wells Dam. Wow. You know the old fish ladder there? It's completely under water. There is only about 20 feet of the very long concrete ramp showing out of the water. There were waves breaking along the launch bay like it was the seashore! The signs say the launch is closed until July 22nd, and I'd say it will take at least that long for the water to settle down enough for them to go in and get things fixed up enough to put a boat in here.

Jeff Phippen, the chair of the annual Trout Unlimited Kids Derby stopped by Sunday evening to give me the word on this year's event. It will be held on Saturday, July 23rd this year at the Acclimation Pond on Blackbird Island. As many of you know, the Icicle Valley Chapter of Trout Unlimited teamed up with Chelan PUD and the Department of Fish and Wildlife to make improvements on the Blackbird Island Pond so it serves two purposes now. First it provides a holding

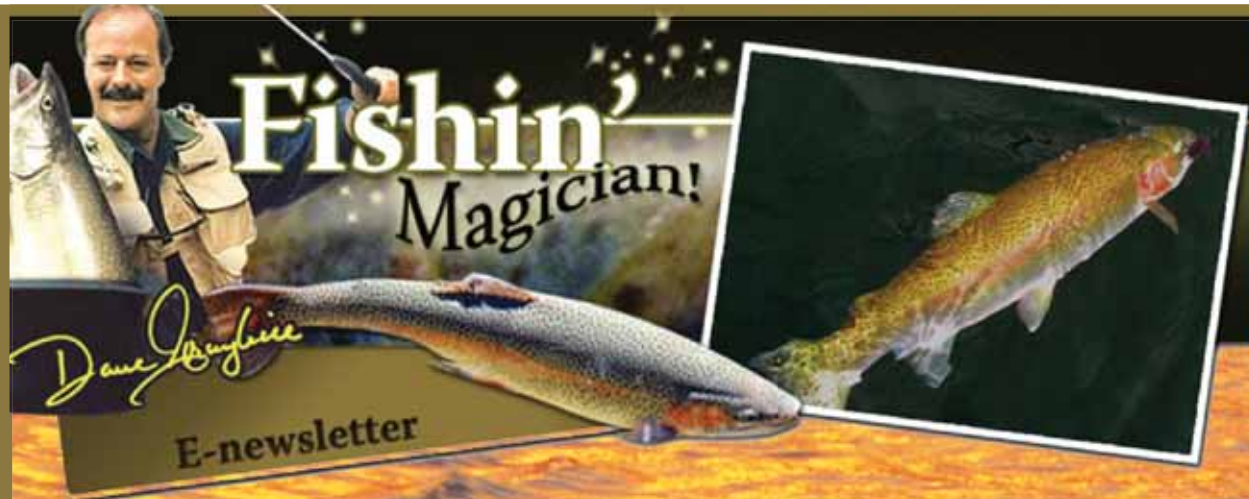
pond where juvenile steelhead acclimate and smolt before heading downstream to the Columbia and the ocean. After the smolts have left, it becomes a fishing pond for juvenile anglers, kids under age 15.

To celebrate the departure of the steelhead smolts and the opening of the juvenile pond to young anglers, TU holds a derby. It is a "bring your own gear" affair, but there will be volunteers on hand to help you with your tackle. There will be some bait available and Pepsi is providing soft drinks. This year kids under the age of 10 are invited to enter a drawing at the event for a chance to win a ten-speed bike, valued at \$350.00! There will be lots of other prizes handed out as well. The event starts at 8 a.m. and ends at noon.

Speaking of derbies, time is running out if you want to get your ticket for the Budweiser-Lowrance King Salmon Derby in Brewster. It's coming up the 5th through the 7th of August, and only 250 tickets will be sold. Just log onto brewstersalmonderby.com, and follow the instructions to get your entry form and all the details about this great salmon derby!

I spent a nearly fishless day on Evergreen Reservoir with my wife on Sunday. She's very impressed with how my attitude held up. I didn't curse and throw stuff around in the boat or yell at her or anything, pretty much. There's always next week!

Reach Dave at: www.FishingMagician.com
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