

Welcoming Dave Graybill To The Nickel Ads Classifieds

The Fishin' Magician

I had a busy week. My sidekick Eric Granstrom and I decided to take a trip up river and fish for steelhead from shore. Day two we traveled to Brandts Landing on Rufus Woods Reservoir and tried our luck for triploid rainbow. We finished our trip with a visit to the new Colville Tribal Hatchery and learned what this state of the art facility will mean to the future of salmon fishing in our region.

We started our steelhead fishing adventure in Chelan Falls, where the hatchery outlet flows into the Columbia. I was glad I suggested we put on our waders as the water was higher than I had ever seen it here. Instead of casting from dry ground at the stream mouth, we were up to our knees in water. We made some casts here but I wanted to get down to the bridge, where I had been catching steelhead on every trip. I was certain we were going to get at least one fish from the point just above the bridge. Well, the point I planned on us standing on was under water, and once again we were up to our knees. Granstrom not only didn't get a fish here, he tore his waders on the bramble tangled path I led him on to get there. We scrambled up the hill to the road, trudged back to the truck and headed for Wells Dam.

Once again, I had pretty good luck on my last trip to Wells and figured I could put Granstrom into a fish, even fishing from the shore along the bar below the launch. Not that day. We fished our way up and down the bar. He got one hit and I missed a fish and that was it. Jeff Stroup, who was checking fish, told us that it had been extremely slow at Wells. I talked to him



later and the one boat that had come in after we left did have one hatchery fish. That was four guys fishing all day from the boat. I am not giving up on Wells, though. I have had some great days here in January.

The following day we made our way up to Brandts Landing on Rufus Woods. Brandts Landing is 7.9 miles from the turn off at the bridge below Chief Joseph Dam, and is a federal park. Here you will find pads for RVs, fire pits and restrooms. When we arrived we saw several of these areas busy with anglers around a warming fire, but found one open at the top end of the park. We packed our gear down to the beach and rigged our spinning rods with slip sinker set ups, and baited with marshmallows and shrimp on one rod and a mallow and crawler on the other. The shrimp rig won the race for the first hit, and I reeled in a bright, 4-pound

triploid. A while later Granstrom hauled in a beautiful rainbow of over 20 inches. We called it a day when it started snowing hard, but stopped on the way out and visited with an angler from Arlington. He and a friend had spent the weekend here and caught several triploids to 5 pounds.

On Monday we got a guided tour of the new Colville Confederated Tribe hatchery at Bridgeport. Funded by the Bonneville Power Administration and other agencies, such as the Grant County PUD, the 50 million dollar facility will be in operation by spring of 2013. The hatchery is the fourth promised in an accord with the tribes. The other three are in Leavenworth, Entiat and Winthrop. Pat Phillips, hatchery manager, said that they will be producing for release over one million spring salmon and over two million summer-run salmon. The result will be thousands more salmon returning to the upper Columbia River, and the first-ever run of spring salmon to the Okanogan River. Anglers can expect to see salmon returning to the region by 2015, with the first significant numbers of fish coming back in 2017. The Colville Tribe will be distributing fish from the hatchery among its members, and sport anglers will be able to take these additional fish. This replaces the loss of salmon as an important food and cultural aspect of tribal life. The economic benefits resulting from improved sport fishing will also be significant to the communities in the vicinity of the hatchery and all along the Columbia River. (Eric Granstrom video recorded our visit and the show about the new hatchery will be available on my web site

sometime soon. I have a much expanded story about this hatchery and my prospects for the best fishing ahead of this winter in my new E-Letter that will be out in early January. If you want to get the E-Letter, which is free, just go to FishingMagician.com and click on the E-Letter button to subscribe.)

The heavy snow that has fallen throughout the region will make things tough for anglers that have made fishing plans. Many of the ramps will be snow or ice covered and slick. It is always a good idea in winter to have a bag of sand in the back of your rig. A trip to the shores of Rufus Woods would be in order. There are picnic tables and fire boxes at intervals along the shore at the park just above the dam. I spoke to one of the tribal fish checkers when I was at Brandts Landing. She said the fishing on Rufus had picked up, and that the best areas were at Brandts Landing at the "burn pile" which is near the second park, just past the boat launch.

I hope you all had a great Christmas. I am really looking forward to the new year. I have a lot of great fishing adventures planned. Happy New Year to you all!

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