

Dave Graybill

The Fishin' Magician

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The Methow River is now closed until further notice. Jeff Brazda said this wasn't disappointing as the river was going to go into freezing mode anyway. The main stem Columbia is now closed from 3/4 of a mile downstream of Wells Dam to the Highway 173 Bridge in Brewster to allow any Methow River bound fish to get there.

Now open to steelhead fishing is the main stem Columbia River from Rock Island Dam to the powerlines crossing the Columbia at Daroga State Park. Anglers can now fish the lower Wenatchee and Entiat rivers until further notice. Tributaries that continue to be open to steelhead fishing include the Okanogan River, the Similkameen River and the Columbia River from the Highway 173 Bridge in Brewster to Chief Joseph Dam. For details long onto: <https://fortress.wa.gov/dfw/erules/efishrules/erule.jsp?id=1724>.

I have to say it was a very welcome sight to see anglers fishing near Entiat and above Rocky Reach Dam on my way home from Pateros. It won't be too long before the Wenatchee River settles into fishing shape and steelhead anglers know there are going to lots of eager fish waiting to do battle in this stream.

I've been thinking about Rocky Ford Creek, near Ephrata. This stream has provided me with some terrific fishing days in the winter. When the steelhead rivers were frozen or it was just too darn cold to fish with a bobber and jig I would grab my fly fishing gear and head for the Ford. Well, I am going to plan a trip there no matter what the conditions are on the other streams. I talked to Darc Knobel at the Desert Fly Angler in Ephrata and he said that he can't remember the when the fishing has been better on the Ford than it

came within netting distance we saw it was a hatchery fish and got it into the boat. This wasn't a very big fish but it fought like crazy. We went back to work and this time Schmitten hooked up. His fish was another terrific fighter. It jumped three times! Schmitten said he couldn't remember ever hooking a steelhead that jumped three times and it was another hatchery fish. We decided to rest this hole and gave the Blow Hole a chance. When we got there the current had died to nothing and a slight upriver breeze made fishing a chore. We ran back up to the hot hole and Schmitten hooked and lost another steelhead. Since the current was shut off, we chose to call it a day. We were done by noon with two nice hatchery steelhead in the cooler.

Earlier in the day Schmitten had told me that there was a big announcement out on steelhead fishing in the region. The Methow River was closing and the Wenatchee and Entiat were opening. This was really great news. Here are the details:

is right now. They have planted the creek and not just with smaller rainbow. Sure there are some smaller fish in the mix, but he said anglers are catching an amazing number of rainbow from 4 to 6 pounds, and even a few to 8 to 10 pounds. Fish are being found from one end of the mile-long creek to the other. Anglers are using the usual patterns to get their fish. Everything from Scuds under an indicator to egg patters to mini Leeches and streamers are all working at one time or another. I will be headed there as soon as I can and I'll let you know how I do.

One of the fisheries that many people just don't think about this time of year is the winter trout fishing on Banks Lake and Lake Roosevelt. Both of these big waters offer excellent trout fishing in the winter and Banks particularly produces some big ones. Anglers trolling near Steamboat and further up on Banks are showing off rainbow in the 4-pound class. While typically not as large overall, but definitely more numerous are the rainbow on Lake Roosevelt. The fish are caught in the top 10 to 15 feet of water and are caught on crank baits, like Rapalas and other plugs. Shore fishing on Lake Roosevelt hasn't taken off yet, but will be very good in the next month. I have had great luck fishing bait from the shore near the swimming area at Spring Canyon in the winter.

There are some great options for anglers here in the region. I hope you all enjoy a great Thanksgiving and get a chance to get out and do some fishing with friends and family over the Holiday weekend.

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