

The Fishin' Magician

Welcoming
Dave Graybill
 To The
Nickel Ads
Classifieds

Once again, steelhead fishing is in the news. This time it is the announcement that the season has closed, prior to the hoped March 31 extension. Anglers had put their gear away last Sunday evening. It was great to get a few more days, though. Now on to spring fishing!

My fishing buddy Rollie Schmitten and I had a great trip last week. We traveled north on the Columbia River, practically to the Canadian Border to Northport. This small town, about 30 miles north of Kettle Falls is right on the Columbia, where it still runs wild and free. I wanted to go since I heard of the great trout fishing in the early spring.

At the Pasco Sports Show I met Art Grobben. He and his wife Nina own and operate Lazy Daze Retreats (lazy-daze-retreats.com), and Art arranged two days of fishing with a couple of local guides. Rollie and I were going to try for rainbow and walleye, too. The Grobbens hosted us in their main lodge which was way beyond my expectations and beats anything I have ever experienced. We were greeted each morning by a flock of wild turkeys off the patio and the comforts, décor, and views at the lodge were amazing.

On the first morning Brian Day, of Day Fishing, met us at the Lazy Days Retreats dock. We ran up the river to a nice bay that was within sight of the border, that he called the Boundary. We rigged up with spinning rods and jigs, tipped with crawlers and went to work. It was snowing at the time and the hole only produced one burbot so we moved on



to a huge bay that is known as Deadman's. This eddy is just off the main flow of the Columbia and offers some smooth water for jigging. We landed a few walleye missed a bunch of hits and released two small sturgeon.

We dropped Art Grobben off at the lodge and ran further down stream to and through a cut Day called The Dalles. This is the narrowest part of the Columbia I have ever seen. Rock bluffs pinch the river into a gap that is only a couple of hundred yards wide. When the spring runoff hits, this spot rages with current. Standing waves and huge whirlpools prevent boats from attempting to navigate the river. It also prevents the passage of walleye, so incredible numbers are caught here then.

Day ran us well below the narrow cut and into a deep bay. We were fishing our jigs as

deep as 80 feet and there were walleye around. We all got our baits picked a few times and ended up with seven small walleye in the live well when the wind made it difficult to keep our 1/2 ounce jigs on the bottom. This was my first introduction to the very upper Columbia and it was spectacular. In addition to the very impressive, big water we fished and ran through, we also saw lots of deer and eagles. Brian Day has been on this part of the river for years, and really knows his stuff. It was a real pleasure being out on the water with him.

The next morning we were met by Justin Hotchkiss, of Far North Charters. His specialty was fishing for the big trout that inhabited this stretch of the Columbia. Trout fishing in this area is good year-round, but the best chance of getting a really big rainbow, up to 10 pounds, is best in March. He also gets some large cutthroat then, too.

Hotchkiss motored down stream a ways and set the boat's nose up river, and used a bow-mount electric to control our drift and keep us near the seams that he wanted us to cast to. To the end of our leaders he attached large, brown bullet head streamers. The current lines off points or bars in eight to ten feet of water was what Hotchkiss liked. This is where the big rainbow would be staging for the spawn. He had already spotted some reds.

On our second drift Schmitten hooked a good fish. It turned out to be a bright rainbow of about 3 pounds! This was what we were looking

for and we were anxious for more. Rollie hooked another fish that really put a bend in his rod and when he got it up next to the boat we were surprised to see that it was a whitefish—a large one. Not long after I hooked a fish which was another whitefish, only bigger!

We landed one more whitefish in this part of the river and then headed across to a very large bar on the opposite bank. This was a perfect drift for these big rainbow, and they were there. I was switching between a Stone Fly and the streamer and was now using a 22-foot, 300-grain sink tip. This was really getting down and I hooked two fish and Schmitten three on this bar. Nothing to the net though. We tried one more great looking spot, but the wind began to blow a good 30 mph plus and we headed in.

I can't say enough about our experience in Northport. We met some great people and saw some impressive water. You can contact Brian Day via e-mail at bdayn@aol.com, and Justin Hotchkiss by logging onto farnorthcharters.com.

Next week I am going to head down to the Basin and check on the lakes that opened on April 1st. I'll let you know where to go for the best early season trout fishing at the many lakes in the Columbia Wildlife Refuge!

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

Fishin' Magician!
 Dave Graybill
 E-newsletter

Free E-Letter

Featured Stories, Forecasts & More.
 Just Log on to FishingMagician.com & Click on the E-Letter Button.

CDP CUSTOM DIESEL PERFORMANCE
 CUMMINS - DURAMAX - POWERSTROKE
Better Fuel Economy! Full Service Repair!
 BRAKES • BALL JOINTS
 EXHAUST • A/C SERVICE
COMPLETE LIGHT TRUCK SERVICE!
 221 Park St. • Next to 7-11 • Behind Car Wash • **663-6308**

We Have Moved!

For Huntin, Hikin, or Fishin
 Radical 453
Danner
 With Gortex 1 Year Waterproof Guarantee
 Buy 5 Pairs of Socks Get 1 FREE!

NEAL'S
 FAMILY SHOES & REPAIR
 662-8472
 811. S. Wenatchee Ave
 Open : Sat. 8-4 • Tues.-Fri 8-6

Where Do You Want To Go?
 5th Wheels • Motorhomes
 Travel Trailers
 Reservations are Filling Up Fast So
BOOK NOW
 For The Best Availability!

EVINRUDE
 REPOWER WITH EVINRUDE!
 Get an Early Start!
 15-300 HP

Lyle's Boats & Motors Inc.
 (509) 663-5191 • (800) 750-2318
 5970 Sunburst Lane Cashmere

Freedom RV Rentals .net
 509-665-6490 WENATCHEE, WA