

Welcoming **Dave Graybill** To The **Nickel Ads** **The Fishin' Magician**

I just can't help it. I love this time of year. Others may complain about the heat, but with the heat of summer comes some of the hottest fishing of the year. Things are coming together right now to make the balance of August and early September an outstanding time to be out on the water.

I am thinking of the rivers in our area primarily, but some of the warm water fishing has been extended by the cool spring and early summer. I mentioned earlier that the walleye fishing on Banks Lake is the best people have seen in years, and it hasn't shown any signs of slowing down. I have also received some reports from Lake Roosevelt that indicate that this would be the year to give this fishery a try, not only for walleye and smallmouth bass, but trout and kokanee.

What I am particularly excited about is the fishing available on our rivers. The summer-run salmon fishing has developed late this season. That's good news for me, as I haven't had a chance to do much fishing on the upper Columbia. We'll see if the early prediction of over 88,000 fish over Priest Rapids this year comes true. I know for sure that 48,000 have already passed the dam. They are all headed upstream, and with just 23,000 over Wells Dam so far, that means another 25,000 summer-run salmon headed our direction.

It won't be long until the salmon will be stacked so thick off the mouth of the Okanogan and below Wells Dam that even I will be able to get a couple of big, dumb kings to take my bait.

The thermal barrier is solidly in place on the Okanogan now. The Okanogan River is has really heated up, and that will keep the kings from entering it and they will really start to stack up in the Brewster Pool. Good times, very good times are ahead for salmon fishers.

One of my favorite things to do this time of year is fish the small streams in our region. It took a while, but they have all dropped into excellent fishing shape. The fly fishing opportunity on many of our small streams is one of the shortest seasons we have here in Central Washington. It can often be a matter of weeks rather than months that the streams are fishable before cool fall weather shuts down the action. If you want to test your skills casting a fly or a spinner on these waters, better get at it.

I have been able to make some casts with my fly rod on the Icicle and it is producing little trout like a factory. If you have ever wanted to try fly fishing, this is the place to do it. It doesn't take an expert to cast to the trout on this small stream. It is an excellent place to learn. Placing a fly, getting it to drift properly and learning which flies the trout prefer are all skills that will translate to bigger, more difficult to fish waters.

You don't have to fly fish these streams. Most all of them are open to single, barbless hook fishing, too. John Kruse joined me for an afternoon on the Icicle once, and he kept pace with me casting a small spinner on an ultra-light rod. Be sure to check the regulations for

each stream you want to try. The Entiat River has dropped to 250 cubic feet per second (cfs) and that is ideal for this stream. You must travel above Entiat Falls before you can fish the Entiat. There is plenty of trout-filled water on the Entiat and anglers can catch an interesting mix. Rainbow, cutthroat, brook trout and even red-band rainbow can be caught on the Entiat. Myrtle Lake, which is an easy three-mile hike from Cottonwood (end of the road), is loaded with brook trout and well worth the walk. Most of the trout on the Entiat are smallish, but I have heard of some larger cutthroat being taken.

Where big trout can be caught is on the Methow. The river has dropped to 650 cfs near Winthrop and under 1,000 cfs near Pateros. This is an excellent time to float the Methow. Every year rainbow over 20 inches are taken on the Methow, and there are some monster cutts in the stream. All of our rivers are scenic, but the Methow is a stunner. There is a lot of fishing friendly bends and riffles on this river. It can surprise you, too, not only the size of the trout but their willingness to hit a fly. I once caught a 14-inch cutthroat at the put-in, just making a practice cast with the rod I was going to use!

A river that gets very little pressure and is a real favorite of my wife Eileen and I is the Kettle River. I have been watching the stream flow on this one with great interest. It has now dropped to below 300 cfs near Ferry, and that means it is time to give it a try. The Kettle is



larger than the Icicle and Entiat, and is wider and slower flowing. There are rainbow, cutthroat, and brown trout on the Kettle, and the browns can get quite large. I hope to make a trip or two on this one before it gets too cold.

Well, there's plenty to do on the streams here in Central Washington, and I am getting my fly gear organized so I can hit it hard!

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