

Dave Graybill

The Fishin' Magician

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We are definitely getting serious steelhead weather now. Not only cooler but wet. I decided to visit some of the better steelhead water on the upper Columbia River, so anglers can have a good idea of what to expect as they plan their next adventure. The good news is that I found anglers with fish everywhere I went.

Last Thursday I drove up to Wells Dam to try my luck casting a bobber and jig on the bar below the dam. This stretch is open only down to the power line that crosses the river about where it takes a bend. I was wearing waders as I was testing a pair of Dry Max socks from Grays Harbor Unders, who makes very effective base layers of clothing for outdoorsmen. I was also wearing a pair of their tights and long sleeve shirt. I have a leak in one of my wader booties and wanted to see if the Dry Max socks would keep me comfortable. As I stepped into the water I felt the chill of the water entering the leak, but after the initial sensation of cold, my foot kept warm. I couldn't tell the difference between my leaky boot and the dry boot. These socks saved the day for me. You can learn more about Grays Harbor Unders by visiting my web site at FishingMagician.com and going to the How To page. Anyway, back to fishing.

I set my depth at six feet and went to work. My bobber went down after a few casts, and I hooked something. I thought it might have been a pike minnow, but it turned out to be a small steelhead smolt, clipped adipose and all. I worked my way up the bar and as I got toward the top I got a serious bite and hooked a bigger fish. I worked



it to the shore and it took a short run and jumped. It was a steelhead alright. I managed to get it to shore, saw that it was a wild fish of about 8 pounds and just slipped the jig from its jaw. I fished for a little while longer, but wanted to fish at Pateros, so I just fished for an hour here. On my way out I stopped to visit with two anglers that were fishing from the rip rap above the dam. One of them had released a big wild fish, but other than that they hadn't hooked anything. The angler I was talking to was shaking his head, as he has been having good luck catching steelhead here.

I jumped in the rig and headed for Pateros. I had talked to Jeanette Palmer earlier in the week and she said she had fun watching someone land a nice steelhead from the dock while having lunch at the Rivers Restaurant. I packed my stuff down to the walking path and started casting near the bridge. I heard something splash and saw that

there was a steelhead on a stringer on the dock near me. One of the two anglers fishing from this dock lost a fish when it jumped. While I was fishing a boat rolled in from fishing at the Rocks. There were three anglers on board and they had a stringer off the side of the boat that had two nice steelhead on it. I saw a boat running up from the Rocks at noon and noticed that it was Shane Magnuson's. I ran up to the rig and headed to the launch to see how he was doing. He had two clients on the boat and they had their limits. According to Shane in the last three days he has taken 19 steelhead here in Pateros and 16 were hatchery keepers. That's a great ratio of hatchery to wild. Anglers who like fresh steelhead dinners are loving it.

Magnuson mentioned that he saw Jim Passage at the Rivers Restaurant and he was headed up the Methow to fish with guide Jeff Brazda. I sent Passage a text, asking him how he did. He reported that he and Dennis Broughton had a great day. They hooked a total of seven steelhead and two were keepers. Passage also mentioned that in one hole he hooked the same 12-pound wild steelhead twice! First time that had ever happened. Fishing on the Methow has definitely improved with the wet weather.

Overall, the steelhead fishing in the Pateros area is going great. I want to remind everyone about the Pateros Celebrates Steelhead event that is scheduled for Thursday, November 19th at the Central Building in Pateros. This event will have some big names in steelhead fishing providing a

free seminar on steelhead fishing that evening, and there is a great optional dinner prior the seminars. Featured speakers that night will be Jeff Brazda on fly fishing the Methow, Rick Graybill on bobber and jig fishing on the main stem Columbia and Shane Magnuson on techniques for fishing the smaller rivers. For more information on the dinner and room reservations call Jeanette Palmer at Howard's on the River at 509-923-2200.

My fishing buddy Mike McKee called to tell me he was part of an outing with the Wenatchee Fishermen's Forum going to Buffalo Lake and wanted to know what to take along for tackle. I told him to stop by Bob Feil Boats and Motors and pick up some blades and spinners made by Kokabow. He reported that all four of the people along limited and the Kokabow gear outfished everything they tried. They got several rainbow of 20 inches. They got kokanee, too, but they were ready to spawn and were released. Buffalo closed at the end of October, but he suggested anglers use this gear on the lakes that are open year-round in the region.

Well, my personal survey of steelhead fishing on the upper Columbia indicated that there are fish to be had. Best at Pateros and on the Methow. My wife loves to catch steelhead so we'll be planning a trip to try Bridgeport very soon!

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

Steelhead Fishing Seminar

Thursday November 19th

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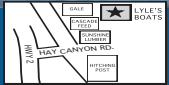
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