



Dave Graybill

The Fishin' Magician

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We've had some great weather, and anglers are taking advantage of it. There were some windy days, but I sure hit Potholes Reservoir on the right day to do some walleye fishing earlier this week. I will tell you all about that and remind you of some upcoming events.

I had been eager to get back to Potholes. I had fished last spring, summer and fall and even tried it in February. I got walleye every time I went, and had a hunch that it was going to be another outstanding year on the reservoir. I ran into Shelby Ross, of Ross Outdoor Adventures, at the Bighorn Show in Spokane, and made plans right then and there to go fishing.

We met at the Mar Don dock at 8 a.m. The skies were clearing and there wasn't a breath of a breeze. Once I had my gear aboard we ran across the reservoir to an area that Ross figured we had a good chance of finding some hungry walleye. He knows the reservoir intimately, having fished it professionally for about 15 years, and he put us on fish immediately. We hadn't had our lines out very long when he yelled "fish on", and I reeled in a 23-inch walleye.

He had us set up with whole nightcrawlers on Slow Death Hook rigs with a silver flake Smile blade behind two-ounce bottom bouncers. We were fishing in water that varied from 20 to 35 feet, and spent most of our time below where Crab Creek enters the reservoir. Ross figured we were fishing right in the middle of the spawn, but he still was able to find plenty of willing fish.

We were both running two rods and sometimes we had trouble keeping lines in the water. There were some slow spells but not very many. We landed



only two large perch and didn't have to throw back too many "shorts" either. We pulled the 16th fish in before 1 a.m., and headed for the dock to fillet two limits of walleye. The fish ranged in size from 14 inches to 23 inches, and were all fat and healthy.

It looks like Potholes is going to be the place to find consistent catches of walleye again this year. It was really something last year and who knows it may be even better this season. The water temperature when we were fishing was in the mid 40s and things are happening on Potholes about a month ahead of the typical schedule. If you want to get a fresh walleye meal, Potholes will be the place to find it.

On April 1st a whole bunch of lakes will open to fishing in the Seep Lake Area of the Columbia National Wildlife Refuge. Fishing should be better than usual this year with our early spring. Anglers

should be aware that two popular lakes, Upper and Lower Hampton, will not have fish in them this year, due to a rehab last fall. Anglers should find particularly good fishing at North and South Teal lakes, though. There should be plenty of hungry rainbow in Heart and Canal lakes, and there are some very good options for fans of spiny ray fishing. Hutchinson is always a good bet, and although you don't hear much about the Bob Cat Creek and lakes or the Coyote Creek and lakes, they are loaded with largemouth bass, bluegill and have some crappie, too.

If you are a fan of kokanee fishing you won't want to miss the next free seminar at Town Ford. On Wednesday, April 8th Rick Graybill will be doing a presentation on fishing for kokanee on Lake Chelan. Graybill has prepared a Power Point show that goes into great detail about the tackle, techniques and areas of the lake he fished for kokanee. The seminar will start at 6 p.m. Eric Granstrom, my partner and owner of Gaboon Productions, will be there. I will be traveling to Olympia for my first meeting as a WDFW commissioner. Town Ford is across Costso in East Wenatchee.

Saturday, April 11th is the date of the first annual \$50,000.00 Manson Fishing Derby on Lake Chelan. Fishing for rainbow trout has been getting better and better on Lake Chelan and the Manson Business Association has created a derby to show that off. There will be cash awarded for the biggest trout caught, and the entrant that is drawn will be able to guess the weight of that fish. If they guess the pre-selected fractional weight they will win the \$50,000! Learn all about it at moretomanson.com.

Saturday, April 11th is also the date of the annual CCA Banquet and Auction at the Eagle's Hall in Wenatchee. This is a big fund raiser for the group and also a great way to spend the evening. For information contact Jillian Roth at (509)679-1517.

On April 18th and 19th the 2nd Annual Something Catchy Kokanee Derby will be held on Lake Chelan. There will be big money given away for biggest fish and most boat weight and other categories. There will be a drivers meeting and free seminar the night prior to the derby featuring Gary Morales and Sam Baird to give anglers some tips on catching kokanee. The seminar and mandatory drivers meeting will be at Sportsmen's Warehouse in East Wenatchee and will begin at 6:30 p.m. For more information contact Jason Williams at (509)885-6920. You can get more details by logging onto www.somethingcatchy.org.

Also, mark your calendars for the third annual Banks Lake Triple Fish Challenge coming up on April 25th and 26th. Catch a smallmouth, rainbow and walleye each day of the two-day derby and you will win some great prizes. For all the details on this really fun derby go to www.grandcouleedam.org.

I will be on the road most of the week and then off to Olympia to attend my first meeting with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife commissioners. I should learn a lot and am really looking forward to it.

Reach Dave at:
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 or Fishboy@nwi.net



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