

Winter Edition
December 10, 2004



Special points of interest:

- Winter Tips
- Hunting Dogs
- Gift Ideas
- A Special Thanksgiving



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Canyon News

Winter Fishing Forecast **By Rod Griffin**

There are only a few things in life that are certain, one of them is that time stands still for no man. It seems like just yesterday that we were starting our busy season, and here we are at the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. In another few weeks 2004 will be history. We always look forward to the winter season because we have a little more time to pursue two of our greatest passions: fishing the Yakima River, and hunting the wily Chukar, Quail, and other upland birds. Most afternoons, Steve and I have to make one of our toughest decisions; whether, we are fishing or hunting today.

With the colder temperatures come more solitude and more opportunity to see an abundance of wildlife. Big Horn Sheep,

Deer, Bald Eagles, and an occa-



sional Elk frequent the canyon hillsides at this time of year. Average flows are less than 1,000 cfs, causing fish to pod in the deeper slots and runs. Wade fishing and water conditions will remain favorable until Spring runoff begins. The lower water temperatures, normally in the 30's, make nymph and streamer fishing the most productive methods for catching trout. However, this doesn't mean that we entirely give up on the dry fly fishing

* See our website for downloadable river map

game. On days where the temperature warms into the 40's, and there are a fair number of them, we can have some pretty good midge activity. Flat water stretches, such as Frustration Flats*, can be a good place to see rise rings, and test your skill with tiny (#22 & 24) midge imitations. Can you guess how this section got its name?

One of our favorite tactics at this time of year is swinging smaller more subtle steamer patterns using a 5wt or 6 wt rod and sink tip line such as a Teeny T-130 or TT-175. We do this in the slower, deeper runs where fish may be holding. Start on the top and work your way down through the run; casting across and down allowing a downstream belly to develop in your line. Be sure and

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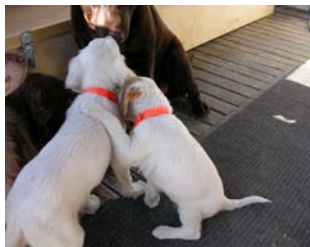
Reduced Winter Rates

From November 15th through the end of February, you have an opportunity to utilize our same great services at reduced prices. The reason we go to this pricing schedule is because the fishing window is shorter due to water temperature and day length. This is certainly no indication of the quality of your experience, as you see fewer people, lots of wildlife, and can experience some very productive fishing. Until March 1, our pricing is as follows:

Clackacraft Drift Boat rental: \$119.00 includes put in, pick up, and vehicle shuttle

Guided Fly Fishing Trips: \$295.00 includes 5+ hours of guided fly fishing from a drift boat, all flies and supplies, lunch, snacks, soft drinks, and any needed gear (rods, reels, waders, etc...). We typically start our day trips at 10:30 am and fish until 4:00 pm. The most productive fishing is between 11:00 am and

3:00 pm. Techniques we utilize include swinging streamers on a sink tip, indicator nymphing, and dry fly fishing with Midge patterns.



“The beauty of this landscape . . . can only truly be appreciated by being there in person”



Doggy Daycare

By Steve Joyce

The newest members of our staff, Yakima Canyon Sadie and Yakima Canyon Sallie, joined us last Spring at the ripe old ages of 11 weeks and 9 weeks. Since that time, we have interrupted these English Setters busy play schedules twice a day for “work time.” Work time means putting them on a long lead and walking them through the campground and along the river banks in search of the numerous coveys of resident Quail. Whoa, Come, and Heel are commands likely to be heard amongst the intermittent whistle blows that signal a change in di-

Some mornings they’d Whoa and hold; other mornings, they’d act like the high octane puppy food they eat had affected their hearing. We started hunting on a regular basis around the beginning of November. We kept them on the long leads to start and eventually got to the point where we felt reasonably comfortable in turning them loose and not having to worry about them disappearing. The official Chocolate Lab, Fidget, has been with us on each hunt. She has tried to teach the pups the ropes - reading ter-

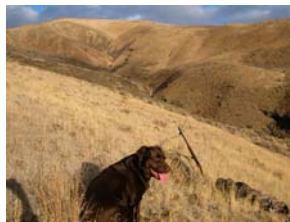
unlike fishing in that you learn something on days that you find them and also on days that you don’t! The beauty of this landscape as you crest a hill and see the rich brown, deep rugged breaks of the Columbia River contrasted against a cloudless blue sky can only truly be appreciated by being there in person.

Yesterday was one of those days. We closed the shop at 1:00 pm and went for an afternoon hike. We worked our way up one draw, bumping a couple coveys of

recreation.

For Rod and I, this is our first training project with pointing dogs. At times, we have wondered if we’re doing the correct things to turn these pups into the quality pointing dogs they were bred to be, or if we were going to stifle their instinct and break their desire to find birds. We have gotten advice from several friends and customers along the way including Mike Maynard and John Kowalski, who own and have trained many dogs of their own. One morning when Mike was out

rain to find the easiest path, and likely places to find water and shade, but the pups seem to have ideas of their own. These are big running dogs, and they seem to have an endless supply of energy.



birds near the top and too far ahead of us to do any shooting. We worked a basin on the other side to no avail, and then circled around and started working our way back down another draw. The sun was just beginning to set across the river from us, casting a golden glow on the hill we were coming down. Rod was on one side with both dogs working ahead of him, and I was coming down the other with Fidget. As Rod shifted his gaze from Sallie to Sadie, she suddenly came to an abrupt stop - front leg poised and

here, we were walking the pups and Sadie paused to point at a robin. She snuck forward intending to catch the bird, which of course flew away with both dogs running to the ends of the leads in pursuit. Mike smiled and said, “Well guys, these dogs are just fine. The only thing that can screw them up now is you two!” I don’t know if that made us feel better or worse...

So the training continued through the Summer and into the Fall. The pups were birdy, but discipline seemed to come and go.

The field training has been fun for the dogs, and also for Rod and I. Our goal this season was to give these pups as much exposure to wild birds and hunting as we could. It is unrealistic to think a young pup will be acting on command and holding points inside of 1 hunting season. So on the training end, we have bumped a lot of birds, shot at few, and managed to work off the Thanksgiving turkey we again ate too much of. On the outdoors end, we have seen a lot of new and exciting country. Chukar hunting is not

tail straight. As he picked his way through the loose basalt and down the steep slope, she held the point for three or four minutes and then repositioned slightly and pointed again, a few feet further down. Sadie’s point held and just as Rod was coming into shotgun range, 3 birds got up within 10 feet of her. We didn’t get a shot at that covey, but the smile on Rod’s face as we loaded the dogs up and drove home said it all - it was another great day of “hunting”.

Christmas Gift Ideas (like we needed the prodding)

The Christmas season is just around the corner and it's time to start thinking about what to get those hard to shop for people in our lives. We have a few new products in the shop this season, along with some of our very practical everyday items. We also do gift certificates for any dollar amount or service. The following are some great gift ideas:

- Chain drift boat anchors: \$59.95
- Cataract drift boat oars (complete set): \$425.00
- Wooden handled rubber bag boat nets: \$159.95
- Scented gel fly candles: \$24.95
- TFO Fly Rods: Signature, Professional, TiCr, and X series: \$89.95 - \$249.95
- TFO Rod/ Reel Combinations: \$147.95 - \$197.95
- Okuma fly reels (4 wt. - 8 wt.): \$37.95 - \$81.95
- Gift Certificates: any dollar amount or service including guided trips
- Red's Fly Shop Hats (new styles and colors): \$17.95 - \$22.95
- 10 shuttle punch card: \$225.00
- Polarized Fishing Glasses: \$14.95-\$49.95
- 2004 Brand new Clackcraft Drift Boat (w/ anchor, oars, trailer): \$6495.00



We hear Santa's sleigh has a receiver hitch and 2" ball just ready to deliver your brand new Clackcraft.

Bug for a Bag" results

The "Bug for a Bag" event sponsored by Red's Fly Shop was completed at the end of September, resulting in 118 bags of garbage being picked up and removed from the river corridor. This activity made a noticeable difference, which has been commented on by our staff, as well by numerous customers in the shop. We thank everyone who participated in this event and look forward to sponsoring similar events in the future.



"A little extra effort goes a long way in maintaining a pristine environment"

A Thanksgiving to Remember By Tony Robins

I took the opportunity to load up the family and drive to Montana to visit with Albert Connole, a.k.a. Uncle Bert, over the Thanksgiving break. He's now in his mid-80's, not quite as tall as he once was, but still sporting the same smile and firm handshake. Every time I walk into his house, I'm overwhelmed with the fossils and artifacts he proudly displays. Before dinner, we headed up to the attic to dig through a big box of old reels, and talk of old times.

We traded stories about our early fishing years. He already knew

mine, since he was the one that got me started nearly forty years ago on Georgetown Lake. In those days I used to save up to buy a fly (yes, a fly, and carefully chosen!), and would fish from our rowboat "Maggie", or off Hugo Wara's dock. Just before sundown, trout would start to rise, and there were plenty of them. I remember like yesterday when my back cast hooked the birdhouse on top of his boathouse, and I lost my precious fly. I never was able to get it back. That incident led to a cooperative effort with my brothers to buy a fly tying kit,

beeswax and all. I also used to row Maggie through that same spot, slowly trolling a brown wooly worm, holding a blue fiberglass rod with an automatic reel between my knees. One evening a feisty rainbow took the whole rig overboard before I could grab it. I tied a rake to a rope, and dredged until I came up with my line. I was happy to land my rod at one end, and a nice fish at the other!

Bert's first outing was with my Uncle Ray. He rigged his little brother up with a willow branch, a length of line, and a fly. He



FROM THE BANKS OF THE YAKIMA RIVER

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Thanksgiving, cont'd.

landed his first fish that day.

Uncle Bert generously shared his passion, taking us to creeks around Butte, like Divide Creek, Rock Creek, and Flint Creek, and occasionally the Jefferson or Big Hole Rivers.

Hopper fishing was the most memorable to me. He recalls his best day ever was on the Madison, but his best half-hour ever was on the Big Hole. He landed a four-pound brown trout, shortly followed by a five-pound rainbow. He recalls fishing bucktail flies for these. Browns were called

“lochs” or “Loch Lavens”, loch being “lake” in Scottish. Some of the western rivers were transplanted with these, others from Germany, thus “German Browns”.

Catch and release is a fairly new concept, maybe the late 50's for my uncle. In the early days, the catch would feed you, your family, and some grateful neighbors. If you went fishing, it was expected that you brought dinner home.

The early gear consisted of a cane rod, simple reel, and a uniform fly line. There were no tapered or weight forward lines. A dime would buy a leader with loops for an end fly, usually a heavier “squirrel”, and a separate loop for a dropper, usually a Potts “Sandy Mite” or “Lady Mite”.

My uncle and his friends weren't fly fishers by choice; it's just what they had. In fact, when spinning gear showed up, they gave that a whirl. Uncle Bert told me of the story when Red, my father, got to try Sam Papich's brand new spinning outfit on the river. Sam was going over and over the technique, “now Red hold this, but watch that, be sure to let go with your finger at just the right time....”. Then my dad wound up,

and proceeded to throw the entire rig into the river. Disgusted, he disrobed, waded in, and got it back with no chance for a second try.

The old steelhead rigs were impressive—a heavy natural bamboo rod, and a Winona reel. This was just before the war, about 1940. The war changed everything, even his fishing buddies. His best friend was my father's brother, Eddy, “Egg,” as Bert called him. Everyone in Butte had a nickname. Uncle Eddy was a naval aviator that never returned home from WWII. Uncle Bert still grieves that loss. I'm sure Eddy would have been happy that Bert fished enough for the both of them!

We laughed about some of the innovations over the years. I remember a metal fly rod we had. It had an action like a big car antenna, and the ferules would knock around when casting. Now we're back, in some ways, to where it all started. Yet even with today's breathable waders, graphite rods, light reels, and weight-forward floating lines, who wouldn't trade all that for a shot at those 1940 Big Hole fish with a cane rod, stiff line, and leaky hip boots?

Let's all give thanks this holiday season—for all our blessings and especially to those who passed along their passion for our sport.

Fall Fishing Forecast—cont'd

keep a tight line throughout the swing so you can feel the tug and set the hook. Also, don't pick up the line too soon. Make sure that you let it swing all the way through to the tail-out. Often times the fish will follow the streamer and pick it up on the end of the swing, or on the strip at the end of the swing – we call this position the “hang down”.

If we are not swinging streamers, we are probably fishing a standard nymph rig with two bugs under an indicator, in the slots and seam lines where fish are likely to be holding. Good nymph patterns to fish during the winter months include Skwala Stoneflies, Baetis, and Midge nymph imitations. Copper Johns and Brassies in various colors, especially red, can be very productive. They also lend themselves to the occasional Whitefish, and let me tell you, they too can be fun to catch.

February is the transition month that typically marks the change from Winter to Spring. We continue fishing Midge pat-

terns, which get more consistent as the weather and water temperatures begin to



warm. This change in water temperature also triggers a large migration of Skwala Stonefly nymphs, which become the focal point for large pre-spawn Rainbows. We have seen some of the best nymph fishing of the year during the month of February. A size 10 double beaded Skwala nymph with a Red Copper John behind it is a deadly combination. Towards the end of the month, our thoughts and hopes will be turning towards dry fly fishing with Skwala Stoneflies



sizes 8 through 12. The past two seasons, we have caught our first fish on Skwala dry flies from mid to late February. The fish have come through a long winter, and the Skwala hatch offers them the first opportunity to gorge themselves and restore their energy supplies.

All in all, winter on the Yakima is a favorite of ours. We will be open daily throughout the winter, the coffee pot is always on, and we invite you to stop in and see us. We here at Red's hope that you and your family have a blessed Holiday Season and Happy New Year!