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The Good and the Despicable

It's good news, bad news for fly anglers in central Washington. First, the despicably bad: a band of midnight poachers with gill nets ravaged a critical spawning area in Lake Lenore, Washington's premier Lahontan cutthroat lake. In just one set the poachers killed 242 prized cutts with a total weight of more than 500 pounds. The

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife says, "We're not sure how many nights' or weeks' worth of fish they've taken." Four poachers were arrested. All four men pleaded guilty to unlawful recreational fishing and fishing with a net, a gross misdemeanor, and each was sentenced to 20 days in jail, 40 days of home monitoring, and a \$4,100 fine. Lenore is an über-popular, highly regulated fishery: barbless hooks, no bait, a one-fish limit—and definitely no gillnetting.

The good: Chelan County has its first fly-fishing-only lake. After years of public closure, Upper Wheeler Reservoir has reopened as the state's 16th fly-only water. Credit the Wenatchee Valley Fly Fishers. The 36-acre rainbow lake is 11 miles south of Wenatchee.

Returning to the Dammed River

Accessible for the first time in more than 40 years, the fertile spawning waters of central Oregon's upper Deschutes River and its key tributaries are proving to be hot destinations for spawn-run chinook, kokanee, and summer steelhead. And those spawners are spawning—more than half a million anadromous smolts have hatched in the previously inaccessible section and migrated downstream, around the Pelton-Round Butte hydro complex, and on to the Pacific. For more than four decades, ocean-run salmon and steelhead were blocked from this impounded section of the prized Deschutes. The solution was a unique 273-foot underwater tower and fish collector engineered to provide upriver passage to the Metolius, Crooked, and upper Deschutes Rivers. The success is prompting National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration fisheries managers to reintroduce hatchery summer steelhead and reestablish self-sustaining populations, providing more steelhead for downriver fly fishers.



PHOTO COURTESY BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Henrys Fork Rainbow Binge

It's an outstanding year to drop a fly in the popular Box Canyon section of Idaho's Henrys Fork River. Electroshocking surveys by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) have turned up nearly double the normal number of rainbows per river mile. In a normal year, IDFG tallies about 3,000 trout per mile; this year the number was 6,200. High winter water flows, restored habitat, improved irrigation systems, and fish-passage improvements get credit.

Orvis Guide of the Year

Troy, Montana, trout guide and outfitter Tim Linehan of Linehan Outfitting Company, www.fishmontana.com, has earned the prestigious title of 2013 Orvis Endorsed Guide



PHOTO COURTESY OF TIM LINEHAN

of the Year. Orvis spokesperson Christie Kozak says Linehan is a guide who combines humor, passion, skill, and patience, and who creates successful outings and indelible memories for his clients. Tim and his wife, Joanne, have operated the trout fishing and big game outfitting company since 1992, specializing in fly fishing the Kootenai, Clarks Fork, Bitterroot, and Missouri Rivers, as well as other western Montana waters.

Lyons Creek and Reservoir, CA

By Don Vachini

Located in the Sierra Nevada foothills about 70 miles west of Yosemite, and named for the writers Mark Twain and Bret Harte, the town of Twain Harte was the destination for our annual extended-family vacation. The town isn't a noted fly-fishing destination. However, knowing that my group would be visiting for a week, Sandy Gordon, the marketing manager of the Tuolumne County Visitors Bureau (www.yosemitgoldcountry.com), dutifully shared a local secret. "There's a little-known stream running right through town that you might want to check out. The Department of Fish and Game [DFG] regularly plants it with trout, and the county provides access," she confided. "It's a real wild card."

Known locally as "the canal" or "ditch," Lyons Creek was built as a water supply for miners during the gold rush days. Fed by icy releases from deep in the bowels of Lyons Reservoir, this channeled, 10- to 15-foot-wide, 3- to 4-foot-deep flume is still delivering water to townfolk. Shaded by oaks and pines as it courses along a 5-mile hiking/biking trail, the distinctive waterway harbors both stocked and native rainbows.

Watching a pair of adult anglers ride herd over a trio of wide-eyed 5- to 7-year-olds working over schooled planters, my 11-year-old grandson and novice fly angler, Domenic, and I undertook a different agenda. Because Gordon had hinted that the section of stream begin-

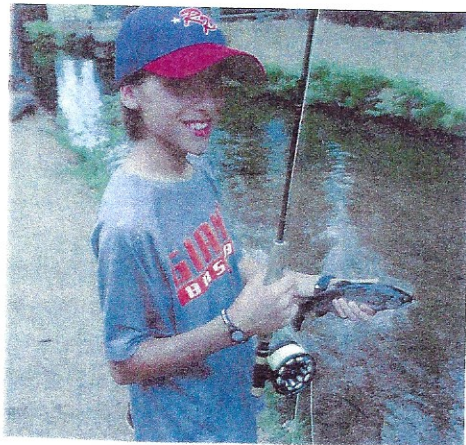


PHOTO BY DON VACHINI

ning 100 yards above the parking area receives very little pressure, we instinctively headed there.

Beyond 0.5 mile upstream, both the trout and the setting take on a wilder appearance. Over the course of three days, Domenic progressed along his learning curve on the peacefully gurgling current with its challenging waters and trout lies. While he improved his deliveries, placing dry flies up tight against overhanging grass, it was a beadhead Bird's Nest dropper that was often ambushed as it swirled deep along undercut levees.

A dam on the South Fork Stanislaus River impounds 3-mile-long Lyons Reservoir at 4,266 feet in elevation. Because this 170-acre impoundment encircled by timber is a source of drinking water, no contact of any kind with the water is allowed, and the lake is relegated to day use only (gates are locked in the evening).

Catchables are regularly infused by the DFG, and there is plenty of room for them to roam and grow out of the reach of anglers. Holdovers can approach 5 pounds on occasion, although the majority top out between 13 to 15 inches, around 2 pounds.

With limited casting space, most productive locales center on the Stanislaus entry and the deep structure along the dam. While conehead Woolly Bugger and Matuka streamers, stripped erratically with sinking line, will seduce larger residents, deploying a fast-sinking, tungsten beadhead nymph from the dam's metal carwalk often accounts for more fish.

To reach Lyons Creek from Sonora, follow State Route 108 for 11 miles to Twain Harte. Turn west on Twain Harte Drive and drive 1.7 miles to Joaquin Gully Road, then turn north and drive 1 mile to Middle Camp Road. Turn right and drive 0.1 mile. Turn left onto South Fork Road and drive 0.4 mile to the fishing access site located on the left. The reservoir is farther east on SR 108. Turn left onto Lyons Lake Road and follow the dirt road to the reservoir. A walking trail follows its perimeter,

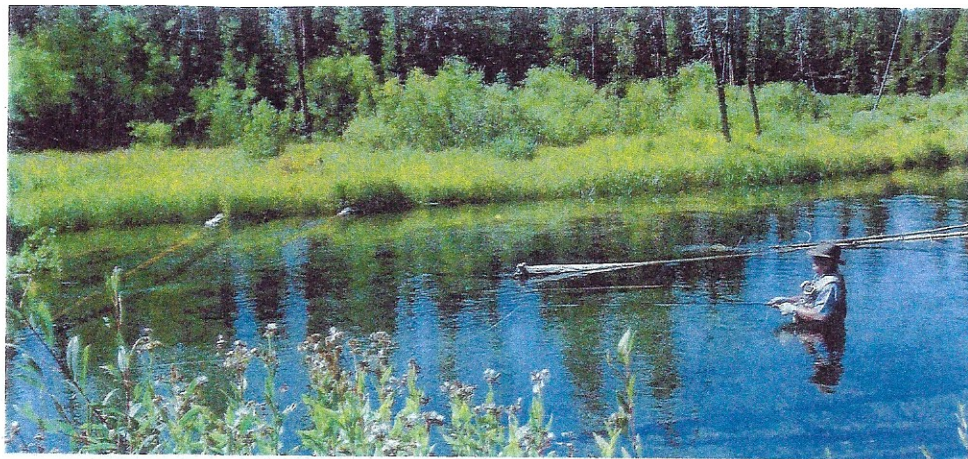


PHOTO BY DAN ANTHON, WWW.DANANTHON.COM

Fall River, OR By Jeff Perin

One of Oregon's best spring creeks is located about a half-hour drive south of Bend, between Sunriver and La Pine. The Fall River is a 10-mile ribbon of mostly glassy water interrupted occasionally by chutes and one large series of falls. In these waters, anglers enjoy a mixture of wild and stocked rainbow trout, wild brown trout, and even psychedelically colored brook trout, all of which become eager to take flies when autumn arrives.

The Fall River is restricted to fly fishing and offers anglers a substantial challenge. When fish are feeding at the surface, 6X and 7X tippets are essential. Transitional patterns, such as emergers and cripples, are often best, though many Fall River regulars successfully rely on attractors such as the Go to Hell Variant and the Lady Di. Interestingly, both of these flies have a hot pink spot that must drive the fish wild.

The Fall River is known for consistent year-round hatches. Blue-Winged Olives and midges hatch nearly year-round, and Pale Morning Duns arrive in the spring and last well into fall. Green Drakes (summer) and Mahogany Duns (late summer and fall) round out the mayflies typically seen here. Several species of caddisflies hatch from early spring through fall, but the real standout seems to be a size 16 or 18 grayish-olive caddisfly that persists throughout the summer and early fall. The ubiquitous Yellow Sally prevails through the summer. Besides hatches, the river's dense riparian vegetation, backed by stands of lodgepole pines, provides excellent habitat for ants, beetles, yellow jackets, and grasshoppers.

Nymphing, while good, offers special challenges because state regulations specify that anglers on fly-fishing-only water cannot use additional weight on their lines or leaders. Given that the average nymph used here is a size 16, the challenge of getting the fly deep enough is obvious. The problem can be conquered two ways: first, tungsten beadheads get deep, even if they're quite small. Second, a long, light tippet also helps reach the fish. Most nymphing here is sight-fishing, so I've had great success with long leaders. I use a bright orange lead-eyed egg, without a strike indicator, and add a Rainbow Warrior or Tungsten Micro Mayfly about 18 inches below the egg pattern, which remains visible, acting as an underwater indicator.

Dan Anthon, a local guide from Sisters and a Fall River regular, prefers streamers when searching for bigger fish around logjams and undercut banks. A few streamer fanatics use custom-cut, high-density sinking tips, matching the length and density of the tip to specific spots.

Only a few stretches of private property interrupt fishing on the Fall River, which flows mainly through U.S. Forest Service land. Numerous access points are found off South Century Drive—Forest Service Road 42. The river between the spring/headwaters and the falls off Forest Service Road 4360 is open year-round. The section from the falls to the confluence with the Deschutes closes on October 1 and reopens on the last Saturday in May.