

Spring Edition  
April, 2005

### Special points of interest:

- Spring Forecast
- River Clean-up
- Spawning Trout
- New Drift Boat Service



### Inside this issue:

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| Spring River Clean-up | 2 |
| Spring Spawning       | 3 |
| A Day in Paradise     | 3 |



# Canyon News

## Spring Fishing Forecast

By Rod Griffin

Here it is, late March in the canyon, and Skwala Stoneflies and Blue Winged Olives (BWO's) seem to be the words we hear and say in the shop every day. Spring is the time of year that everyone who spends any amount of time fishing the Yakima waits for. The Skwala Stonefly is the first "Big Bug" activity of the year, generally starting in late February and running into mid April.

It's always exciting to see a nice rainbow taking a Skwala offering on top after several months of mostly subsurface techniques. This is also the time of year that we see some good BWO activity, and this year is no exception in both cases. Even though we have experienced some unusually low water flows (850 to 950 cfs.) so far this season, the Skwala and BWO fishing has been very, very good.

A typical fishing day currently consists of: nymphing under an indicator during the morning hours, casting a BWO combinations to feeding fish from about 12:00 to 2:00 pm, and tossing a size 8 through 12 Skwala dry into likely looking seam lines and structure along the banks the rest of the day.

Good nymphing patterns have been: size 10 Double Beaded Skwala or Kaufmann's Stone for the bigger bug; and size 18 or 20 WD-40, size 16 Red Copper John, size 16 Silver Lightening Bug, size 18 or 20 Brassie, or size



16 through 20 Pheasant Tail for the dropper.

Oh yeah, let's not forget the March Browns. Late March and April are normally the best months for this hatch, and it is normally the most consistent on the section of river between Irene and Big Horn. March Brown showings tend to be short-lived but provide fast and furious action. As I write this, we are still looking forward to the opportunities that this insect will provide in the weeks to come.

The end of April marks the start of one of the most prolific hatches on the Yakima. It is "CADDIS" time, and it begins with the Grannoms (a true size 12). Caddis nymphs, in green and tan, are very active at this time and should not be neglected

in your fly selection when the fish are not taking Caddis on the surface. The first two weeks of the Caddis hatch can be some of the most productive fishing of the year. Joining the Caddis in May will be Pale Morning Dunns (PMD), Big Yellow Mays, and even the occasional Salmon Fly. Overcast, drizzly days can be exceptional with PMD's and Big Yellow Mays in the morning and Caddis in the afternoons.

Water conditions in May can be somewhat erratic, with runoff and spring rains having an impact on river flows. We do not expect this to be the case this year. The number "1" ranked question we have heard this year is "What do you think is going to happen with the river flows and fishing this

*continued on page 4*



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



New '04 Boat for Sale



A candid picture caught our fleet of five brand new '05 ClackaCraft drift boats being deposited on our front lawn last month. Call us to reserve one for rental

## 2005 River Clean-up

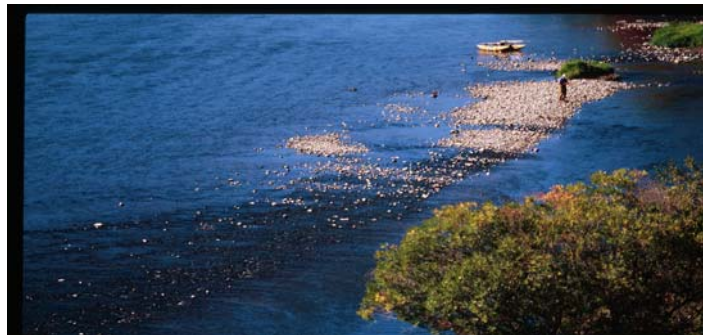
By The Staff at Red's

Red's Fly Shop is proud to announce the 2005 Canyon Clean Up event has been set for Sunday, April 17. Registration will take place over coffee and donuts between 8:00 and 10:00 am at the shop. Floaters and wade fishermen alike are encouraged to participate in this effort.

Those with boats will choose a designated section to float and pick up trash on the water. Wade fishermen will be assigned a section of highway to walk and collect trash along the roadway. With the unseasonably low water

levels we are experiencing this season, much of the trash that collects in the "hard to reach" places is exposed and accessible. We anticipate a great turnout and a positive impact to the natural

setting. To register for this event, simply show up anytime during the registration hours and pick up an assigned "beat".



## New Boats—and New Services

Red's Fly Shop is now a Clackacraft Drift Boat Outlet. In addition to our new (each year) rental fleet, we have brand new, fully equipped Clackacraft drift boats in stock and ready for same day purchase and use. All sales transactions are processed through Clackacraft, allowing for factory direct pricing. Buying a boat from our lot allows you to bypass the 8-10 week lead time and save money on freight! Give us a call or send us an email if you have any questions. We are proud to join the Clackacraft family of dealers.

Current inventory : Brand new 2004 16' Low Profile model with pedestal seats. This boat has a white hull with a Forest Green stripe and Black top. The price for 2005's has gone up to \$7,195.00, but this boat is available with an upgraded heavy duty Ziemann trailer at a price of \$6,495.00.

### Drift Boat Storage:

There's no need to drag the boat and trailer back and forth over the pass in the Sunday evening rush, or leave it at your cousin's friend's

grandma's house in Kittitas. Red's Fly Shop offers monthly drift boat storage at our riverside launch location. We have a limited number of spaces available and do tend to fill up during the peak summer months, so call early to secure a spot. Rates are as follows:

\$40.00 per month for monthly storage. \$80.00 discount for annual payment.

### **New!**

### Drift Boat Service and Repair:

Our experience over the years has allowed us the opportunity to work with drift boats both on the water and off the water. Boat and trailer problems tend to come up at the worst possible times, and scheduling preventative maintenance in the big city can be an expensive hassle. Red's Fly Shop is proud to offer a convenient on-site Service & Repair facility. Whether you need to get your wheel bearings re-packed, fix a tail light on your trailer, or install a double pulley chain anchor system, all you need to do is schedule an appointment and leave your

boat with us until your next fishing trip. We are also expanding our fly shop to include a comprehensive supply of parts and accessories for hard boats and inflatables.

### Services available include:

- Repack wheel bearings on trailer
- Wire and replace trailer lights
- Replace winches, straps, and latches
- Repair gel coat along chines on fiberglass boats
- Pressure clean boat interiors

Call for rates and availability. Some services require us looking at the boat/ trailer prior to giving you a repair estimate.

## Spring Spawning

The time of year has arrived once again for the Yakima River Rainbows to begin their annual spawning rituals. While some migration occurs into tributaries such as Umtanum Creek and the Teanaway, much of the spawning activity in this system takes place right in the main stem of the Yakima itself.

A spawning bed, or “redd” is formed when a female (hen) uses her tail to clear a depression in the gravel river bed and deposit her eggs. Once she drops the eggs, the chosen male (buck), who is alongside at this time immediately fertilizes them.

The hen then covers the eggs with gravel to protect them until they hatch. Eggs hatch approximately 4-7 weeks after they have been fertilized. The “alevins”, as they

are called at this time, remain in the gravel for another 3-4 weeks before they emerge as fry.

While hens drop eggs in only one location each year, it is possible for bucks to fertilize more than one redd in a season. Shallow, oxygenated riffles with gravel bottoms are prime spawning habitat. Redds are easily identified by the lighter colored, freshly turned gravel that covers the eggs.

The adult trout are on the redd only during the time of construction, which can last up to a week. Although trout tend to be very territorial during this time, there may be more than one pair spawning close together in some of the prime habitat locations.

As always, and especially with the low water conditions we are

experiencing this season, keep an eye out and do not disturb these areas. Redds are very delicate, and walking through or dropping/dragging an anchor on them is devastating.

It’s also important to mention that targeting spawning fish is stressful for the fish, and unethical for the angler. If you are fortunate enough to see a spawning pair of Rainbows, observe and enjoy the activity, but try not to spook them. Trout, and particularly the females, expend a tremendous amount of energy during the spawn. The better the condition they are in when they finish spawning, the sooner they will return to their pods and pose a challenge for the us “match the hatch” anglers to cast to.

## Just another day in Paradise A peak around the corner

By Steve Joyce

It was a bright, sunny day that could have easily been mistaken for just another day in paradise. However, driving up the canyon through the Beavertail, it quickly became apparent that this was not another ordinary day in the Yakima Canyon.

Something was different – hovering in the leeward side of every bush there were bugs – not just any bugs – CADDIS! Wait a minute, what was that? Was that a nose I saw under that bush? There it is again! It is a nose – and there’s another one!

So it began, the 2002 Caddis Season on the Yakima River. Unfortunately, I was on my way into town this fine day for an appointment that would take the rest of the afternoon. My caddis fishing would have to wait until tomorrow.

Friday, April 27, 2002

By the time I got the boats out, the shuttles run, and the sheets washed, it was about 1:00 PM. All I’d thought about for the last 24 hours was those noses I’d seen the previous day. I called my friend, Johnny, to see what his schedule looked like. He had a commitment at 3:30, but he’d be able to fish for a couple of hours – Great! I had a boat in the water at our upper launch when he arrived. It was to be a short float today – Upper Red’s to Lower Red’s – about 3/8 of a mile. As we shoved off and cranked over to the far side, we were a little concerned by the lack of feeding fish we were seeing. After what we’d witnessed the day before, we were anticipating one of the better days of the year. Today’s weather was a bit different – cloudy and a couple of degrees cooler – would it be a

bust? Our first two casts after we dropped the anchor on a nice seam answered that question for us. Two casts, two fish – not bad.

There was nothing fancy about the fishing on this day. A size 14 Elkhair Caddis with a Peacock body worked just fine. We took turns casting, taking several fish out of each pocket before lifting the anchor and moving down. Those of you who have floated this stretch of water can understand how after fishing for 2 hours, we had still not made it to our takeout. With about 50 yards to go, Johnny looked at his watch and said “Oh shoot, I’m going to be late for my meeting!” I was casting from the back of the boat, so I said “I’ll row us in.” He smiled and said, “I can be a little late. I’m gonna throw a Skwala on and fish this last section.” So Johnny tied on the Skwala and three casts later, a set of jaws that resembled a bear trap stuck up



The Canyon hillsides are in bloom



Bighorn Sheep on the ridge.



Fidget near some new blooms



Sheep moving up the draw.



## FROM THE BANKS OF THE YAKIMA RIVER

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### Day in Paradise, cont'd.

through the foam and clamped down on the big bug. With our yells of "Whoa!" and "Holy Cow!" drowned out in the background, Johnny set the hook, and I rowed across the

river to land the fish in soft water in front of the lower boat launch. The smile on Johnny's face while holding that 23" Rainbow trout best exemplified our feelings at the end of that very special day.

It's no secret why the Elkhair Caddis is the most popular dry fly in the world, and a headliner on the Yakima River. Caddis are found on virtually every river that holds trout. They are often described as a "fair weather" bug, giving their best performances on calm, sunny days. On the Yakima River, and many other Western trout streams, the Caddis show starts around the beginning of May and lasts well into the cool August evenings. If there were a Pina Colada for trout, it could very well be the Caddis. Do you think a big, smart 23" Rainbow would

do something as stupid as eating a Skwala dry fly? No, and we didn't see him in the prime part of the Skwala hatch because he knew better. But you get a couple of Caddis flies into these big boys and they do strange things. The first two weeks of this hatch can be pure pandemonium! The fish do not pay much attention to size, color, or style. They have tasted the fruits of the Caddis, and they need their fix! After the early dizzying effects begin to wear off and the fish regain their wits; then you'll be challenged to trick them with the likes of the X Caddis, Stocking Wings, and Egg Layers - with three different colors and three different sizes for each pattern - all crammed into a one hour window before dark. However, until that happens, plan your fishing schedule accordingly to make sure you have a front row seat for "Just Another Day In Paradise", featuring our star performer, The Caddis. Coming to a trout stream near you in

### New Staff Addition at Red's

Clint Griffin has moved to the canyon from Tri Cities and joined Red's Fly Shop on a full time basis. Some of you may have already met Clint, as he has been manning the shop and guiding for us part-time the past 2 years, while working full time in the vast tree farms of Boise Cascade. Clint, 28, grew up in Prosser and has been fly fishing the Yakima River for many years. When



he's not fishing for trout in the canyon, he enjoys pursuing Steelhead on the Grand Ronde and Klickitat, and chasing ducks in the Columbia Basin with his Yellow Lab, Chase. We're certain that Clint's fly fishing knowledge and experience in combination with his honest, soft spoken manner will make you fast friends. We feel privileged to have Clint as part of our team.

### Spring Fishing Forecast—cont'd

summer with the minimal snow pack and lack of water?"

Over the past two weeks, we have contacted both the Bureau of Reclamation and Department of Ecology to see if we could get any information on water release plans for the river this late spring and summer. The Bureau of Reclamation is not offering any projected information at this time—except that they are conducting a Public Meeting on April 7 in Yakima to present their current plan for allotting water to Junior and Senior Water Rights Holders and subsequent river flows.

Unofficial information has it that the estimated flow will be approximately 700 cfs below the normal summer time flow, which equates to about 3000 cfs. Keep in mind that this is nearly triple current flows, and although reduced, will yield excellent fishing opportunities throughout the lower

canyon stretch.

Spring fishing, often interrupted by high runoff and "blowout" conditions, is expected to be very consistent this year due to the low snowpack and moderate rainfall to date.

As a result, we expect the spring fishing to be excellent, and this Summer should see consistent flows with excellent opportunities to fish against those grassy banks.



As always, call ahead for the most current river and fishing conditions, or check out our website, at

[www.redsflyshop.com](http://www.redsflyshop.com)

The latest weather forecast and real-time conditions are also available at our exclusive, on-site weather station.

