

Olympic Peninsula, Forks, Washington

Travelled to Forks for a fishing trip on the Olympic Peninsula. There are 5 great rivers around Forks, all famous for their steelhead, salmon, and searun cutthroat trout. Took a couple of friends with me and planned on spending 5 days up there. Travelled on Thursday and fished the Hoh that afternoon after getting the camper all situated.

The Hoh was running pretty cloudy because of rains earlier in the week and warm days. It melts the glacier and adds a lot of silt to the river. But we were camped at the Hoh River Resort, right next to the river, so it was convenient and we needed the casting practice anyway.

On Friday we fished the Sol Duc, no hookups. Saw a few fish as we worked up and down the river, some in a group of 8, but none wanted what we had, except a bunch of small trout. Moved to the Dickey and Quilyute, but no hookups there either. Did miss a couple of pretty good strikes. Saw a bunch of river otters working and catching some good size fish, but none for me...

Saturday we were joined by Gordon and decided to start out on the Hoh.



This stuff is not all mine, although my wife thinks I have way too much fishing stuff. It's a combination of all our stuff. Below is Lloyd on the Hoh.



So travelled up the the Upper Hoh, close to the National Park boundary to try our luck. Got a couple of small trout, but no big hits. Couple of guide boats passed, so I guess the Hoh is

fishable even when cloudy. I had broken my rod tip the day before and tried to repair it that evening, but the old tip would not fit well and broke again as I caught a small trout. So we went into Forks to the Yellow Dog Outfitters to get it repaired. While there, he told us about a place some friends of his had caught fish the day before, so we were off for that spot..



We went to the Rearing Ponds, that is on the Boachiel River, with a secondary one on the Calawah River. The mouth of the Calawah is about a mile downstream of the ponds and drains into the Bogachiel. We beat the brush down a fisherman's trail along the Boggie to the river junction.



Fished the Boggie for a little bit, then Godon when downstream, Lloyd stayed on the Boggie and I went upstream on the Calawah. As I moved upstream, I saw a group of about 4-5 fish holding at the top of the ripple. I moved upstream and swung a fly past them. One pulled out of the group and hammered it...It was a really nice wild steelhead and I finally landed and released it. Went right back into the same spot, one cast, got another on. This time it was a wild coho salmon. Great fight, landed and released.

During all this I have been trying to reach my fishing mates via cell, but both of them left their cells in the car. So just kept fishing. I wanted someone to take some photos of the fish, can't take wild fish out of water, so I couldn't get them into a position to take a picture, oh and I wanted them to catch to some too...

Moved up to the top of the run and started working my way back down. Got a really nice one, he came right at me, jumped really high, then headed up the river. Ran almost all my backing off and I panicked and tried to palm the reel to slow

it down, as soon as I did, got too much friction and he broke the 10 lb tippet.

Rerigged and kept moving down that run. Got another wild coho. This is unreal, 3 fish landed and all wild, what's up with that. Ratio should be heavy to hatchery and not a bunch of wild fish... Anyway, kept moving down..

Got another solid fish, she made a couple of solid runs, but my rig was handling it well, so I just let it work. Had learned my lesson with the one I lost. Had my drag set properly and It was a nice hatchery hen, 28 inches, about 8-10 lbs. Got her close and saw it wasn't wild one, so beached her, didn't have a net and don't trust myself to tail one. Once I had her out and killed, took a picture with my phone camera...



The rod is an Angler's Roost Enterprises (ARE) 12 foot 5/6 weight spey rod, Allen 7/8 Alpha reel, and SGS custom shooting head line from Steve Godschall. A great combo, worked well all day. The handle is 16" long, so that is good indication of the fish size.



The above is a little better shot, I think. A nice fish, a great day, haven't caught so many large fish in awhile, not since Alaska in the 70's. Measured at 28 inches, didn't have a scale, but estimate 8-10 pounds. Went home and ordered another ARE, this time a 7/8, 13', 4 piece, line from SGS, ready to go back for some more... First ones on the 5/6 spey rod. I will be back to Forks, soon.

Green Machine (10' 4" 3/4 Switch – 4 Piece)

I built this rod from a Roger Penrose single handed 10' 3/4 weight blank. I extended the length by 4 inches and added a 2 handed grip. The guides are single foot with ceramic inserts from Angler's Roost and the reel seat is from Utmost. The reel seat has a green graphite inlay and the rod is a dark green. I used Evergreen thread with some silver accents.

Grips are custom made and oversize. I like the larger size for 2 handed work, but not sure about when I use it for singlehanded casting. Will just have to use it more and then decide if I want to reduce the grip diameter.



Shown here with a Pflueger 1495 1/2 classic reel. I have also used an Albright Bugati 7/8 large arbor reel with this rod. I tried various lines, including making some custom shooting heads, but finally settled on the Wulf Triangle Taper Ambush 4 weight line. It works beautifully on this rod for both 2 hand casting (spey) and for nymph casting. It is 195 grain line with a 20' front taper, making it really nice for working in the rivers here where you have so little back cast room.

Recently got to give this rod a work out on the Naches River in Washington state. The Naches flows down the eastern slope of Mount Rainier and is fed by many high mountain rivers and spring fed streams. No big ones, but got plenty of smaller cutthroat and rainbow trout. So at least now the "skunk" is off the rod.