

Reminiscences: I'm nearly 100 years old and missing the good old days ...

Fishing for memories, part 4



by local contributor **Dan Sater of Cle Elum**

One of my favorite fishing spots was Wildcat Lake.

Getting there

There is a trail leading into it from Snoqualmie Pass but going in from the Middle Fork was faster. I had to drive up the Middle Fork past Camp Brown and Dingford Creek.

Another mile or so, I would park the truck along side of

the road and change my shoes so that I could wade across the river and change back into my boots to start hiking.

There was an old trail on that side of the river that ran from Camp-15 to Goldmyer Hot Springs. I started back down that trail until I hit an old trail that had never been brushed out since it was built, going straight up Wildcat Creek.

Occasionally I would run into an old growth Douglas Fir tree that had blown across the trail and had to figure out how to maneuver over it. Once the timber played out into a rockslide, you had to try and maneuver up through this slide until you neared the top of this ridge. Then, you had to go up through a chimney to get to the top.

Once there, the ridge flattened and you could begin to see the lower Wildcat Lake to your left. You soon found the trail coming in from the Pass and followed it up to Upper Wildcat Lake.

Setting up camp

There was a fairly level spot on the lower end of the lake where we made camp. We could fish the right side of the lake from a rockslide but the other side was a straight up and down granite slab.

Whistling Marmots were chattering up a

storm. Laying out a tarp on the ground we placed our sleeping bags on it and after building a fire, we cooked our supper and hit the hay.

You wouldn't believe it!

The next morning as I was fixing breakfast, Frank was fishing. He hooked a fish and gave his pole a jerk which made his fish fly off the hook and land in my frying pan. **WISHED THAT HE HAD GUTTED IT FIRST.**

Going lake to lake

We fished there that morning and around noon, we headed on up the ridge toward Lake Caroline. It seemed that there were bigger fish in that lake and they were harder to catch.

From there, we dropped down to a small pot-hole lake where we could cast to the middle of the lake. We could always catch us enough fish to eat at that spot.

One year when we stopped there we found over 100 fish heads in one spot there. It looked like someone had stopped there with a helicopter and made a killing.

From that small lake, we dropped down a ways further to Derrick Lake.

At every lake the fishing was great. Going to a place where several lakes were close by always seemed to help. If the fish were not biting at one lake, maybe they would at another.

One year I made an awful mistake. I took my oldest daughter up there by myself. She was not a teenager yet and if anything had happened to me, she would never have been able to find her way back out by herself. Thank God that everything worked out OK.

Frank so loved going to that lake that he continued on for many more years but he went in from the summit. He went in with a lot of his family and, if I am not mistaken, I believe that he wanted his ashes spread in there. I don't believe that you could find a more beautiful spot anywhere.

My main regret is that I am no longer able to do those things anymore