

Local Walleye Club Promotes Fishing and Philanthropy

By K. S. Brooks

Walleye is delicious, according to Dennis Spaulding of the Lake Roosevelt Walleye Club, and I believe him. If you Google walleye recipes, the list is endless. Luckily, you don't have to sift through all those recipes to find a good one, because Dennis shares one of the club's favorite recipes with us below.

The Lake Roosevelt Walleye Club (LRWC), based in Kettle Falls, isn't just about catching fish, however. The club, which currently has around 70 members, is quite active in supporting other local non-profits. On average, the club donates more than \$5000 per year to local causes, including Casting for Kids, the Kettle Falls Food Bank, and Operation Santa. Money is raised through the club's yearly fundraising efforts. Their main fundraiser is the club's raffle, and this year's prizes include gun safes, hunting rifles, and fishing gear. Like previous years, there is a 1 in 40 chance of winning. Raffle tickets are available at Clark's Sporting Goods, TJ's Tavern in Kettle Falls, the Barstow General Store, and from any club member.

I've done a bit of fishing, so I'm familiar with fishermen being protective of their favorite spots, lures, and techniques. You won't find that kind of secretiveness at the LRWC – part of their mission is to educate and encourage folks to fish for walleye. They are even generous enough to allow the public to attend their meetings which take place on the second Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m. at the Kettle Falls Gun Club. During these meetings, expert anglers share their knowledge and methods to help attendees improve their skills.

Now, you may think that you need a lot of equipment to get started with walleye fishing, but you actually don't. In fact, you don't even need a boat. "You can fish from shore, standing where a creek runs into Lake Roosevelt," Dennis told the Silverado. "The fish will stage in that area to eat what's been washed down from the creek. Great spots are where the Kettle, Spokane, and Colville Rivers feed into Lake Roosevelt." Dennis said that there are other places, but you need to know a little bit more about the fish to understand where and when these types of spots work.

There are actually a number of different ways to fish for walleye. Dennis explained that walleye spend a lot of time just off the bottom of the lake, so using a method called bottom bouncing can be effective. Rapala lures and blade baits are two other popular ways to fish for walleye.

I'm sure you've had days fishing when you've ended up buying dinner because you didn't catch anything. Don't worry, there are plenty of walleye in Lake Roosevelt, so you're bound to catch some. In fact, during the three days of the 2017 Washington State Governor's Cup Walleye Tournament, over 400 fish were caught. And, all but seven of those fish were released back into the lake, so there are still plenty left for you.

The Washington State Governor's Cup Walleye Tournament has been going strong for over twenty years now. Teams from all over the country and Canada come to Kettle Falls to participate each year. The LRWC has been running the tournament since 1997 when they took it over from the Kettle Falls

Chamber of Commerce, which got the idea from the Governor's Cup in Fort Peck, Montana. Some of you may recall that the Lake Roosevelt Walleye Club used to be known as the Kettle Falls Walleye Club, but after a few years, they felt it made sense to encompass the entire lake, since there are members from down in Spokane, as well.

Members of the LRWC enjoy monthly events, in season, in addition to the Tuesday night meetings. They have three "fish outs" at the beginning of the season, starting with fishing at 8 a.m. and ending the day with a barbecue. There is, of course, the Governor's Cup in June, league fishing competition begins in July, a fish fry in August, and in September there is another tournament. Members' families are always welcome at events, because the affordable dues of only \$30 per year cover not only the individual, but the entire family.

What could be better than a great day fishing out on the lake with fun people, and then good food when you get ashore?

Of course, you don't have to keep the fish you catch. In fact, members are encouraged to release the bigger fish because they are considered the breeding stock. There is plenty of food at the barbecues either way.

The Lake Roosevelt Walleye Club cares about all fish, not just walleye, and they are concerned about the conservation of all fishes as well as the health of their environment. One of their present concerns is the population of northern pike in Lake Roosevelt. If you go down to boat ramps along the lake, you'll see signs with pictures of northern pike, along with instructions not to release them if you do catch any. Northern pike are voracious eaters of native trout and salmon fry, and are considered an invasive species.

According to a Spokesman-Review article from 2015, northern pike began showing up in walleye studies north of Kettle Falls back in 2011. Pike suppression began in 2014, and in 2017, the Colville Confederated Tribes offered a ten dollar reward for each pike head left in freezers at either the Kettle Falls Marina or the Noisy Waters (formerly Barney's Junction) gas station. A representative from the CCT is expected to be in attendance at an upcoming LRWC meeting to give an update on the pike bounty.

If you would like to learn more about the Lake Roosevelt Walleye Club, feel free to attend their next meeting on Tuesday, March 16th at 6 p.m at the Kettle Falls Gun Club.

And now that I'm hungry for some delicious fish, here's an easy and rave-worthy recipe from the LRWC.

- Walleye filets
- 2 cups of Krusteaz Bake and Fry Coating Mix (available at Super One)
- 1 cup Parmesan cheese
- 1 cup crumbled Ritz Crackers.

Mix bottom three ingredients thoroughly. Turn the damp filets in the mix until coated, then insert them in 350 degree oil until golden brown.