

COWLITZ RIVER FLOAT

By Diane Schmitt

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Please email with an RSVP if you are planning on attending.

We hope you can join us for another fall river trip on the Cowlitz River, fishing for steelhead, Coho, and sea run cutthroats. There is a seven-mile drift from Cowlitz (Blue Creek) Trout Hatchery to Mission Bar that takes about 3 to 5 hours depending on how much you stop to fish along the way. Lost Creek Fly Shop, owned by **Mike Sturza**, will provide the shuttle service for a \$15.00 fee per person on Saturday.

We will leave from the Blue Creek boat ramp on Saturday and float to Mission Bar. This is an easy float!!! This stretch of the Cowlitz River allows you to drift with a kick boat, pontoon boat, kayak, or drift boat. Watercraft are optional for this outing since there is good wading water in both directions from the boat ramp.

Expect jet boat traffic for the first third of the drift which is the most fished and reputed to have the most productive waters for steelhead and sea run cutthroats. The middle third of the drift has a few good spots to pull over and prospect for smaller cobble, finding channels and sheltering bank structures. Depressions on the bottom are particularly important in this stretch. People typically pull over and have lunch on an island on the right side of this stretch of the river.

The lower third to Mission Bar ramp has productive waters that are excellent for wading with good bottom cover for the fish. After several hours of floating, the river makes a sharp left turn. You know you've made the turn if you see a house on the left bank that looks like a Cabela's store about a 1/4 mile further downstream. Then another 1/4 mile downstream the ramp will be where the trees end on the right side of the river. There is a brown notice board next to the ramp that can be seen from the water.

Cell phone coverage for AT&T is spotty and is unknown for other carriers.

DIRECTIONS:

Cowlitz Trout Hatchery, 165 Osprey Lane, Toledo, WA 98591
From northbound at the I-5 and I-205 merge, drive north for 55.4 miles
Take the WA-505 exit 63, toward Winlock/Toledo. Go 0.3 miles
Turn right onto WA-505. Follow for 2.4 miles
Turn left onto Jackson Hwy. Go 1.2 miles
Turn right onto Spence Rd. Go 5.5 miles
Turn right after 0.2 at the Cowlitz Trout Hatchery sign (0.9 miles past Classe Rd)
Follow the road around the hatchery to its end, at the boat ramp (upstream end of hatchery)

MEETING PLACE AND TIME:

7:30 AM— we will meet and set up gear at the **Blue Creek Trout Hatchery boat ramp** where shuttle vans will arrive to take us to Mission Bar.

METHODS, TACKLE, & FLIES:

FLY LINES: Floating & sinking tip lines, 5-8 weight (5 weight if you are after sea runs; 7/8 weight for steelhead and coho). A fast action 6 wt. or medium action 7 wt. is a good compromise.

WET FLIES: Black, blue, purple, red, and orange stinger/intruders; bright flies on sunny days and dark flies for cloudy skies; smaller flies if the water is clear (6-14).

DRY FLIES: October caddis and muddlers. Swing fly with sink tip or skate fly on surface with dry flies for steelhead, coho, and sea runs. Nymphing the drop offs has proven to be effective for both fish also. If you are fly fishing for cutthroats, try targeting slower water and back eddies next to fast water.

OTHER ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMMODATIONS:

CAMPING: Cowlitz Trout Hatchery parking lot. Outhouse only...no running water or hookups

ACCOMMODATIONS: Castle Rock, Mossy Rock, Salkum

FLY SHOP: Lost Creek Fly Shop, 360-978-4059, lostcreekflies.com

SHUTTLE: Provided by Mike Sturza at Lost Creek Fly Shop, \$15.00 per person

SOCIAL GATHERING:

Dinner on Saturday night will be a potluck buffet. CSF will provide the main course. Bring your own beverage of choice. Dutch oven treats are encouraged.

A-L provide salads or side dishes

M-Z provide hors d'oeuvres or desserts

WHAT TO BRING:

PFD and whistle for each person in a floating device

Discover Pass for each vehicle

Fishing license

Snacks and drinks for the river trip.