

# "Early" Fishing Lines

## Family & Crew updates

**Gary & Val**— for the first time in 35 years we didn't guide in Alaska! What a change that was for both of us. We went to Alaska a few times to get the boats put together (and taken apart), fun fish and fill the freezer as much as possible. We also spent time getting the golf course in better shape and enjoyed the local fisheries from winter through the fall. We'll get used to it but it's different making the change!

**David**— Worked for ODOT until he was recruited by his former job to go back to oil field work. It was a tough decision but the money was hard to beat and they made the offer irresistible. Plus he really enjoyed the engineering work he was doing when he was laid off (couple years ago). He's been to training in Houston, spent time in North Dakota and is currently back on the slope in Alaska where he feels right at home. He'll be commuting from Oregon for now.

**Morgan**—After graduation in December she did a stint in the local mill until we persuaded her to help us at the golf course. She picked up the bulk of the duties and responsibilities during our winter steelhead season and continued on to the event filled summer. She also turned into a short order cook and makes a mean omelet as well as the best potato salad. Currently in law school at University of Oregon she's focused on environmental/natural resource/ water resource law.

**Tyson, Bri, Asher, Parker & Paige**— As the transition to full time Oregon guiding took some adjustment a few years ago the boat is full most days now and Tyson has gained much popularity. We still help each other (he calls us sometimes too!) and enjoy being part of the fishing family. Bri continues to create art, sell a variety of goods at local markets and raise their 3 children.

**Madison**—Had house watching duties for us in Alaska but broke out on her own for another company and was impressive with her filleting skills. She transferred to University of Alaska and continues her studies for the medical field.

**May you all find time during this holiday season to enjoy friends and family.**

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**Oregon**—You may have noticed the change of focus—in fact, with only one fishing focus now we'll reduce to a one page newsletter it looks like.

Our winter steelhead season was a bit on the strange side last winter. ODFW predicted a smaller than average run and coupled with some ill-timed weather it made for a difficult season—both water wise and fish. While we spent almost as much time on the water as in previous years the season was very challenging. Low water coupled with too much water and fewer fish caused some crowded conditions when everything timed right.



December is a great time to escape the crowds and get on the water around the holidays as the beginning run shows up. At the end of 2017, fish were around but not in great numbers. Plus we were dealing with the aftermath of the Chetco Bar Fire. While it was very dramatic on the drive to the upper put-in's on the Chetco, for the most part the river corridor was largely unscarred. Going down the river it was easy to forget 191K acres burned the summer before. Fires also have a way of bringing out new sites—plants that weren't showing before seem more vibrant. Salvage logging activity in the upper Chetco also added an element of excitement each morning. We were happy to only drive one way with the logging and gravel truck traffic but those guys were great too—trying to time their runs after the majority of the boats had made their way to the put-ins.



Gary & Danielle on the Rogue Bay (Sept)

We had a great time helping with the ODFW broodstock collection program. Not only did we release some steelhead to spawn naturally but several people helped the hatchery program by donating to the "boxes". This in-stream holding box is great fun to stop

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and drop a fish in—especially when the fish makes it into the box. There's certainly a story there ...

Spring salmon fishing on the Rogue was another challenge last year. Tyson held up the majority of this action for us. It's convenient for him as he's right there in Gold Beach with an ear to the current conditions and spots. There were fish around but action was hard to time and easy to miss without diligence.



The bright spot through the year really was the incredible fall salmon run on the Rogue. Frustrated with the springer fishing a few local guides gave the bay a try and success was found early in the summer. Word traveled and by August the bay was full—boats and fish. There were some incredible days and some tough days but everyone was having fun. No super big fish but some nice 20-25 pound fish with jacks and silvers thrown in there late in the season. The run continued into early October with some upriver action helping out. Half-pounder action on the Rogue was late—usually a September fishery it went to October this year. The only problem we encountered was from the Klondike Fire that filled the canyon with smoke making it difficult breathing conditions for some folks.

Fall salmon on the Chetco was a different story with no water well into November. By the time water arrived the fish were pretty well ready to spawn. Right on their heels we started seeing those early December steelies I talked about earlier! And here we are .... Headed into January.

We lost some great friends this past year—colleagues in the guiding industry—Craig Sutton and Dan Stumpff. There were a few others but both these great guys we'd known and worked with for many years. We are thankful for their knowledge and expertise they freely shared as well as their friendship. Rest in Peace!