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ISSUE
-2026-**

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Join us at the Sheriff's Training Center starting on Saturday, April 25 at 9am for a fun and informative session. Whether you're new to boating or looking to refresh your knowledge, this course is perfect for all skill levels. Learn about boating safety, navigation rules, and more from our experienced instructors. Don't miss out on this opportunity to enhance your boating skills and knowledge. We can't wait to see you there!

The course will be taught on the following Saturdays in 2026:

- ✿ April 25
- ✿ June 13
- ✿ July 11
- ✿ May 16
- ✿ June 27
- ✿ August 8

at the Sheriff's Training Center, 13022 W. SR 902, Spokane 99224

Recreational boaters in Washington are required by law to complete a boating safety course and carry a WA State Boater Education Card if you operate a vessel with a 15hp or greater motor, were born after Jan. 1, 1955, are 12 years of age or older.

PRE-REGISTRATION IS RECOMMENDED:

www.EventBrite.com/e/washington-boater-education-course-tickets-1981799172674



Campfire Safety



Sitting under the stars by a crackling fire has its appeal. It's where stories are told, sing-a-longs happen, and meals are cooked over an open flame. Campfires bring family and friends together. But campfire mishaps can cause injuries. With a few safety tips, you can prevent these accidents.

SAFETY AROUND THE FIRE

- Before setting up a campfire, be sure it is permitted. Check with your local fire department.
- If campfires are permitted, they need to be at least 25 feet away from any structure and anything that can burn.
- Clear away dry leaves and sticks, overhanging low branches and shrubs.
- Avoid burning on windy, dry days. It is easier for open burning to spread out of control when it is windy and dry.
- Watch children while the fire is burning. Never let children or pets play or stand too close to the fire.
- Attend to the campfire at all times. A campfire left alone for only a few minutes can grow into a damaging fire.
- Keep a campfire small which is easier to control.
- Never use gasoline or other flammable or combustible liquids.
- Always have a hose, bucket of water, or shovel and dirt or sand nearby to put out the fire. Make sure to put it completely out before leaving the site.
- If your clothes catch fire, stop, drop, and roll. Stop, drop to the ground and cover your face with your hands. Roll over and over or back and forth until the fire is out.
- Treat a burn right away. Cool the burn with cool water for 3 to 5 minutes. Cover with a clean, dry cloth. Get medical help if needed.



ROASTING WITH CARE

If roasting marshmallows, help young children. Never shake a roasting marshmallow. It can turn into a flying, flaming ball. A heated metal scewer can cause burns.

FACT

⚠ Campfire accidents send thousands of people to emergency rooms with burn injuries every year.



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It sure has been nice to have clear and sunny days throughout the region for many days. There is even more daylight with the change to daylight savings time. It's a great time of year, with springtime changing the hills to green and soon the balsam root plants will decorate them with bright yellow flowers. Fishing opportunities continue to expand as water temperatures warm.

I am always interested in how the fishing is on Moses Lake, and I had a chance to check out the action at the I-90 Bridge last week. I arrived late in the day, so I am sure I missed the usual crowds on the rip rap banks and on the bridge itself. There were still some anglers fishing along the shore, and even some just arriving when I was leaving. I was able to visit with one angler who was getting some good sized perch from the bridge. He was nice enough to pick one out of his bucket to show me. He said the perch fishing is holding up really well, and there are some very nice crappie being caught near the bridge, too. I remember that there were swarms of crappie here last year, but you had to sort through them to get some keepers. Maybe there are a lot more crappie keeper size this season, which is at least 9 inches. I will remind folks that the limit is ten on Moses Lake. While I was on the bridge a bass boat headed for the launch. Could the bass bite be early this year? I hope so! This week's photo is of an angler with a perch he caught from the bridge.

When I was out checking on the activity on the March 1st opening of several lakes in the region, I made it all the way up to the Coulee City Marina. The reason was that with the very unusual weather we've experienced in the region there could be people already looking for walleye on Banks Lake. Sure enough, there were several trucks and trailers parked here, and I saw one boat as it was just leaving the marina. You may recall that I posted the Walleye Fishing Prospects graphs from the netting surveys conducted by the Department of Fish and Wildlife on Banks Lake and Potholes Reservoir last fall. The results of this survey on Banks has some interesting aspects to it. Although

the overall abundance of walleye in Banks is down just slightly from the survey done in 2022, the abundance of certain sizes of walleye was up. The number of walleye in the 16 to 20 inch class made up almost 40 percent of the population of walleye and there will be more walleye of 20 to 24 inches (which most anglers release) that are in the previous survey as well.

I was curious about how the kokanee derby came off on Lake Chelan. Many think this one is done too early in the season, but the fishing is usually good for kokanee this time of year. According to what I have been told,



Quincy Wildlife Area doesn't offer fishing in early March. It's an irrigation fed water and the level is way down this time of year. Evergreen Reservoir is a terrific spiny ray lake, with a variety of species that attract anglers when it fills. I got word that the irrigation canals will start filling on March 18th and soon after, when the boat launches are usable it will get busy. Not as busy as some of the larger reservoirs in the region, but anglers in the know will be on Evergreen looking for the walleye, largemouth and smallmouth bass, perch, crappie and even tiger muskie. I have been fishing Evergreen for many years and have had many memorable days on the small reservoir. My wife and I had a terrific day of fishing for largemouth bass and have spent countless days catching smallmouth. Probably the most memorable was the time I hooked a tiger muskie and Eileen was able to net it. We were thrilled when we released it and still marvel at the experience even now. I will be keeping tabs on Evergreen and will let you know when the water is high enough to launch a boat.

It has been confirmed that the planned special release of 1,500 trout into Burke and Quincy lakes for the March 1st opener didn't take place, due to a mechanical issue with the truck. According to the folks at the Region 2 office in Ephrata the plant should happen this week. As I mentioned in my earlier report, anglers were disappointed at Burke and Quincy and much happier at Martha and Caliche. I also checked the lakes further up the valley. I saw a few trucks parked at the public access at the upper end of Lake Lenore and also at the very top end of the lake. I wasn't able to talk to anyone there and continued up the highway to Dry Falls Lake. I stopped at the overlook and took a shot of the fly fishers that were paddling around on the calm water. This should have been a productive day for those who made the bouncy drive into the lake which is accessed above the State Park across from Park Lake. I also watched a boat take off from the Coulee City Marina on Banks, where there were several trucks and trailers in the lot. I'd bet they were looking for pre-spawn walleye.

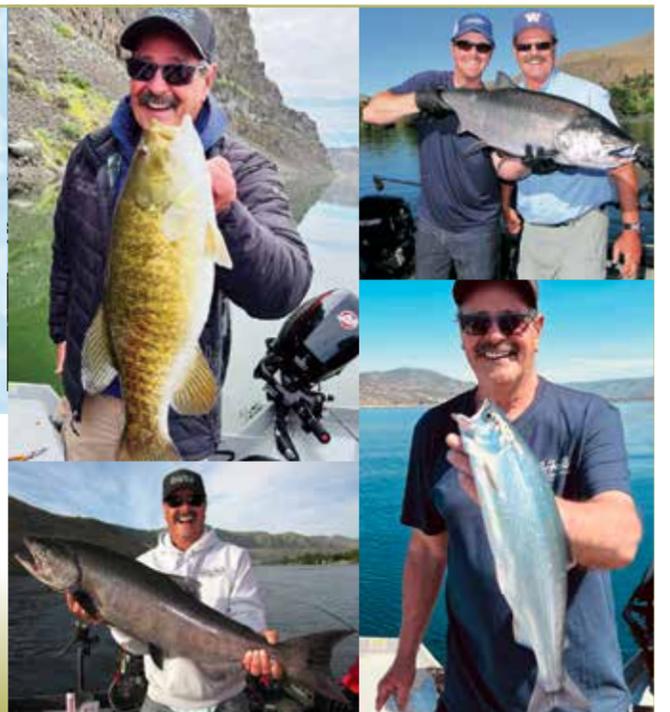
the fishing was very good for the derby, and everyone had a great time. Fishing starts at 6 in the morning and by 8 some of the boats were done, having taken their limit for the day. They only allow 50 boats in the derby each year. Word is that most of the fish were taken at around 50 feet. It turns out that two Leavenworth anglers took first place in this year's derby. The 20 fish that they turned in weighed a total of 8 pounds. Obviously, the kokanee aren't very big on Chelan this year, but the action is great. I wanted boaters to know that I got a message from Nate Stull, of Stully's Guide Service, saying that there is a lot of debris in the water on Chelan right now. So, better take it slow when you are driving up and down the lake looking for fish.

One of the popular lakes in the



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Blackberry Smoked Salmon

Chef Sam Lungren - Wild Foods with MeatEater



It was part collision of available foods, part childhood "science project." I was probably around 12 years old, with a pile of pink salmon on my hands, a backyard full of ripe blackberries, and a Little Chief smoker. I'd made my standard-issue brine, but on a whim decided to smooch in a pound of juicy, dark purple berries that happened to be sitting nearby on the kitchen counter.

I was surprised by the results to say the least. After brining all night and smoking for a few hours, the normally pallid humpy flesh had turned a deep purple-bronze, almost mahogany hue. The berries added a subtle fruity sweetness to the salmon that made it difficult to stop eating.

Recently I was lucky enough to catch a healthy, 8-pound Chinook in the Snake River along the Washington-Idaho border. On my way home the next day, poking around for steelhead in the Clearwater River, I happened into a veritable orchard of blackberries along the bank. Back at the MeatEater office, the recipe turned out just as tasty as it had decades earlier.

Ingredients

- 5 lbs. salmon or trout fillets
- 3 cups blackberries or other sweet berries (huckleberries are a NW favorite)
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1 cup salt
- 3 cups water (or enough to cover fish)

1. Fillet your fish, leaving the skin on, and cut into strips if desired. Wash any residual slime off the skin.
2. In a large bowl, dump in the berries and smooch them up with the backside of a ladle. Whisk together the water, salt, and brown sugar. Immerse the fish in the brine, cover with plastic wrap, and store in the fridge overnight.
3. Set your smoker to low. As it heats up, remove the fish from the brine and set out in open air on a plate or sheet. Let the pieces dry until they become tacky—a slight stickiness that indicates excess moisture has left the flesh.
4. Once the fish is tacky and the smoker rolling, load it up and close the lid. Check back again in three hours. For the perfect cocktail smoked salmon texture, pull off the smoker as soon as the flesh starts to flake easily, but is still moist inside. For a harder, more preserved smoke for trail and boat snacks, give it another hour or two. Serve on your favorite cracker.

NOXIOUS WEEDS

What is a Noxious Weed? They are non-native plants that have been introduced to Spokane County through human actions. Because of their aggressive growth and lack of natural enemies, these species can be destructive, competitive, and difficult to control.



MUSK THISTLE

MUSK THISTLE

(*CARDUUS NUTANS*)

This biennial with a rosette grows 4ft in diameter and mature plants can reach 7ft tall. Waxy leaves are dark green with sharp spines. Upper stems are bare and lower stems are spiny and winged. Pink to purple flowers droop at maturity. Taprooted; reproduces by seed. One plant can produce 1000 seeds that remain viable for 10 years. Digging can be successful. Cut the root several inches below the soil. Grazing is not an effective control. Spray in the rosette stage.

For More Information on how to Control your Noxious Weeds, Contact:

Spokane County Noxious Weed Control Board

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How to Brine Wild Game

Danielle Prewett - MeatEater

Ingredients for a Classic Brine

- 1 cup kosher salt
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 gallon of water
- 2 tbsp. peppercorns
- 4-6 bay leaves
- 4-6 sprigs of fresh herbs

Ingredients for Garlic & Herb Salt

- 1/2 cup kosher salt
- 2 tbsp of mixed fresh herbs such as rosemary, thyme, parsley, or sage
- 2 cloves of garlic, minced
- 1/2 lemon, zested
- 1 tbsp. fresh cracked pepper

The most common complaint I hear about wild game is that it's tough and dry; a symptom often the result of overcooking. The best way to counterbalance this issue is to start brining your meat. Salt can dramatically enhance juiciness, and in my opinion, is the most essential ingredient in your pantry.

Juices squeeze out of meat as it cooks. The higher the heat, the more you lose. Since wild game is usually very lean, it's detrimental to overcook because there's no fat to make up for the excessive moisture loss. The easiest way to avoid this undesirable situation is to utilize the power of salt.

Salt can react with meat in two very different ways. If you apply a large amount for an extended period, it will draw all the moisture out. We refer to this process as curing, and it aids in preservation. A brine is salt dissolved in water with various herbs and spices in which you submerge meat or inject into meat. It has the opposite effect and increases the amount of moisture in the muscle tissue.

The salt in a brine denatures and relaxes protein structures. This allows the muscle tissue to absorb water from the wet brine. In other words, it helps meat hold more water, which counterbalances moisture loss when heated. I like to think of it as insurance for overcooking. In addition, it tenderizes meat and enhances the natural flavors.

There are two types of brines, wet and dry. A classic, wet brine is the one you are probably most familiar with from preparing Thanksgiving turkeys.

A dry brine is a mixture of salt and other spices without the liquids. In layman's terms, it's a dry rub applied to meat.

While technically a dry brine and a cure are the same



thing, the main difference is the purpose. Unlike curing, a dry brine uses only enough salt to lightly cover the meat, not encrust it, for one to three days without having to rinse. The primary goal is to infuse foods with moisture and flavor.

Both types of brines are beneficial. A wet brine is perfect for cooking skinless birds or hefty cuts of meat before smoking. A common solution is 3 to 6% salt. My go-to ratio is a quarter of a cup of kosher salt for every four cups of water. You can include sugar to counterbalance the salt and add peppercorns, garlic, or herbs for flavor.

Remember that the longer you brine, the saltier the meat will be. Small birds or game may only need 8 to 12 hours, while turkeys or whole hams benefit from 24 to 48 hours in the refrigerator. Always rinse the meat with cold water before cooking to remove excess salt.

When it comes to cooking plucked birds, it's easier to achieve crispy skin if you go with a dry brine. The added water from a wet brine pumps liquid into the skin, which can make it rubbery if not thoroughly dried out before cooking. The dry-brine method is also my trick for making the perfect backstrap steak.

Below are two recipes; one is a classic wet brine to use for almost any type of wild game that you plan to braise, roast, or smoke. It is perfect for skinless birds, geese, rabbits, squirrels, bone-in hams, or shoulders from deer or hogs.

The garlic and herb salt is a homemade rub that I frequently use for plucked gamebirds. It's excellent on pheasant, chukar, quail, and partridge. In fact, I use this rub to season my turkey every Thanksgiving instead of a traditional wet brine. It's also a smart way to season potatoes and mushrooms.

Special Equipment Needed:

Pot, whisk, large non-reactive container

Preparation:

1. Combine all of the ingredients in a large pot. Bring to a boil and stir to dissolve the salt. Remove from heat and let the mixture cool. You can add a little ice to speed up the process.
2. Once completely cool, (DO NOT add while warm) pour the brine over the meat in a large, non-reactive bowl. Cover and transfer to the refrigerator for 8 to 48 hours depending on weight of meat.
3. Before cooking, rinse the meat with cool water.
4. Garlic and Herb Salt
5. Mince the herbs and garlic as finely as you can. Add to a bowl with the kosher salt, cracked pepper, and lemon zest. Mix well and spread the salt across a sheet tray in a thin layer. Allow to dry out overnight and store in an airtight container. For faster drying time you can place inside a dehydrator on the lowest setting.
6. This recipe makes roughly half a cup. When ready to use, season gamebirds over and under the skin with only as much salt as needed to lightly cover. You don't want to make it so salty that it needs rinsing. Let the seasoned meat rest in the refrigerator for 24 to 48 hours uncovered. Pat the skin very dry before cooking.



GET OUT & EXPLORE!

Here are a few ideas for outdoor fun. All are public & family friendly. It's always a smart idea to research the area you plan to explore beforehand - be aware of any closures or scheduled maintenance.

HIKING TRAILS

Liberty Lake Loop Trail 8.4 Miles Round Trip Liberty Lake, WA	Farragut State Park 4000 acre state park Athol, ID
Bowl & Pitcher 2.1 miles of trail Spokane, WA	Tubbs Hill 120 acre natural area Coeur d'Alene, ID
Mica Peak 45 miles of trail Spokane, WA	Mickinnick Trail 7 mile round trip Sandpoint, ID
Minnehaha 27 miles of trail Spokane, WA	Granite Falls 1.5 Mile Loop Trail Priest Lake, ID
Palouse Falls 94 acre park LaCrosse, WA	Pulaski Tunnel Trail 4 mi round trip trail Wallace, ID
Q'emiln Park 78.5 Acre park Post Falls, ID	Badger Mountain Trail 3.2 miles round trip Richland, WA

BIKE PATHS

Camp Sekani Biking Spokane, WA	Lake CDA Scenic Byway Coeur d'Alene, ID
Ben Burr Trail Liberty Lake, WA	Silver Mountain Bike Park Kellogg, ID
Saltese Uplands Conservation Spokane Valley, WA	Schweitzer Mountain Selkirk/ Sandpoint, ID
Riverside State Park Nine Mile Falls, WA	Latah Trail Moscow, ID
Centiannual Trail Washington to Idaho	Lewiston Levee Parkway Lewiston, ID
Route of the Hiawatha Mullan, ID	The Lakes Trail Richland, WA

FISHING SPOTS *Must have a License!*

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Banks Lake Central Washington	Hauser Lake Idaho Panhandle
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Spokane Rifle Club 6411 N Aubrey L White Pkwy, Spokane, WA	Rattlesnake Mountain Shooting Facility 93315 N Wa-225 Benton City, WA
Farragut Public Shooting Range 33644 N Shooters Rd Athol ID	Hole in the Wall Range 7509 w Deschutes Ave Kennewick, WA

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The Health Benefits of Being in Nature



Nature has a lot to offer, and the benefits of spending more time outdoors may be even more significant than people recognize.

Nature enthusiasts are known to say that spending time in the great outdoors has a positive effect on their mental and physical well-being. Such an outlook is more than mere speculation, as it turns out spending time in nature provides a host of health benefits that might surprise even the most devoted outdoors enthusiasts.

Nature and Cognitive Health

A 2010 study published in the American Journal of Alzheimer's Disease & Other Dementias found that engaged persons with dementia in horticultural therapy-based (HT-based) programming solicited higher rates of participation than traditional activities (TA) programming. In addition, a separate 2013 study in the journal Dementia found that exposure to a therapeutic garden had a positive impact on quality of life for people with dementia. And it's not just dementia patients who can experience the cognitive benefits of time spent in nature, as the Hagley Museum and Library reports that numerous studies have found exposure to nature improves cognitive function.

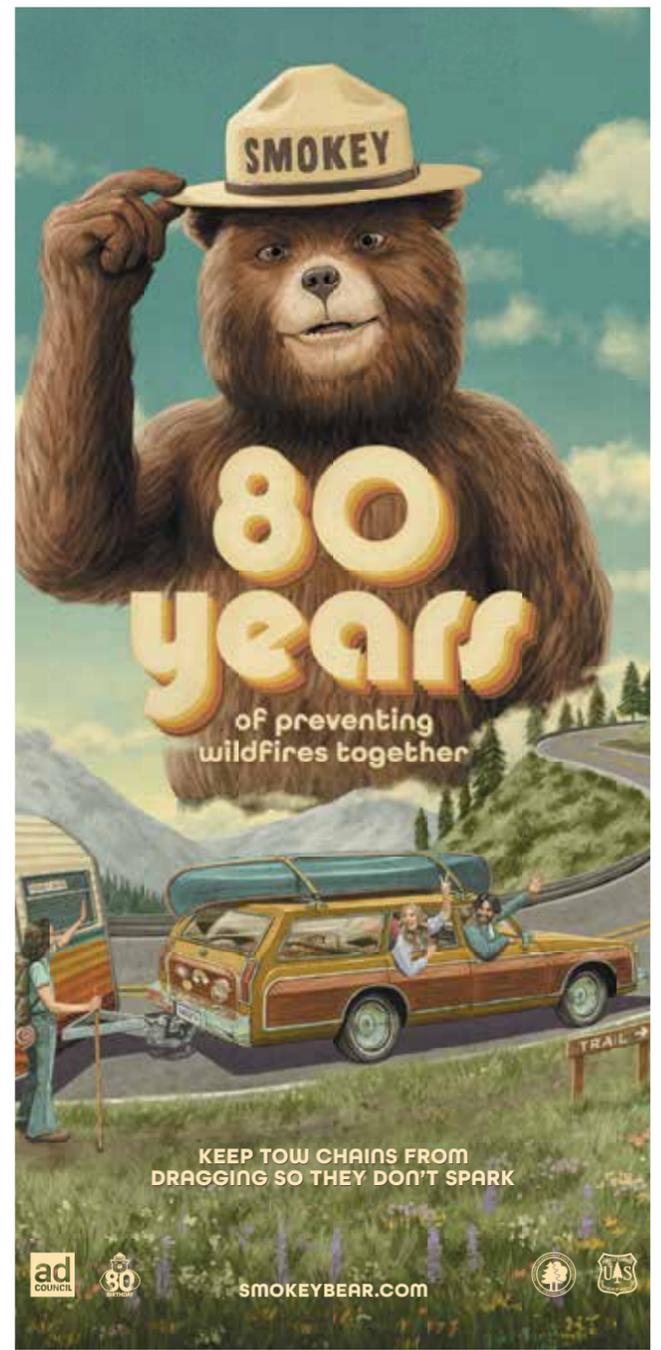
Nature and Vitamin D

The potential health benefits of vitamin D are increasingly drawing the attention of medical

researchers, and for good reason. According to the Harvard Medical School, recent research has suggested that vitamin D may offer added protection against conditions such as osteoporosis, cancer, heart attack, stroke, and depression. Exposure to sunshine can help the body generate vitamin D, thus providing further reason to spend time in nature.

Nature and Overall Well-being

Given the aforementioned health benefits related to spending time in nature, it's easy for even non-scientists to conclude that being outdoors has a profound impact on overall well-being. But non-scientists can rest assured that recent research has confirmed such conclusions. A 2019 study published in the journal Scientific Reports found that individuals who spent at least 120 minutes a week in nature were significantly more likely to report good health and psychological well-being than those who spent less time outdoors. Though the authors of the study cautioned that the exposure-response relationship was under-researched, and therefore likely needed to be studied more extensively, in the meantime individuals, after a consultation with their physicians and confirmation that it's safe to get out more often, can aspire to spend at least 120 minutes in nature each week. The results may speak for themselves.



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