

## **Muddling Along May 24**

### **A Panther Surprise**

When I looked on the Timberwest website, I was disappointed to note that the access was closed for the end of the hunting season. Andrew and I had planned to go in on the Sunday of the Victoria Day Weekend. We decided to go up anyway and check at the gate and fish Second Lake if there was no way we could get into Panther without the key.

We arrived bright and early (730AM) at the gate and waited for the gate person to show up. 5 minutes later a truck pulled up beside us and a pleasant fellow (it turned out he was a logger who operated a feller-buncher in the Lakes region) asked us where we were going and we said we'd like to get into Panther Lake. His sister-in-law was in another truck pulling a tin boat and suggested "Let them slip in with us—we're going to that region anyway!". We went through the gate with them and met them at the Second Lake gate where the process was repeated. What a generous fellow! He even let us take off ahead and agreed to meet us at the last gate at 330PM so we could get back out without a key!

We arrived at Panther and were into our first fish by 830. It was a glorious day on one of the Island's most prolific lakes with a steady stream of beautiful, hard fighting Panther rainbows coming to the net over the next 7 hours. The biggest fish were only 14 inches but nobody told them that they were small, judging by the long runs and acrobatics that every fish engaged in! The early fish were taking on slow fished nymphs and leeches on sinking lines, but started taking surface flies within a couple of hours. In later hours, I fished dry flies exclusively and had the joy of watching fish after fish take small dry flies at first (Grizzly Adams) when they were concentrating on emerging chironomids then switched to a larger Tom Thumb when a small damsel hatch started around noon.

It was with some reluctance that we pulled out at 3 o'clock and headed down to meet our benefactor at the gate and thank him for enabling us to rescue our fishing plans for the day.



Ready to head out on the lake--no one else at the launch



Prime panther rainbow--one of several dozen reasons we like this lake so much!