

From: Ian STEWART [iandalestew@shaw.ca]

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Cranbrook Trip May 10-17, 2016-05-24

I got a bit of a bonus two weeks ago in the form of an extra fishing trip that I had not expected. I had switched my spring excursion with older brother and fishing partner, Wayne, from the Cranbrook trip we have done together for the last seven years to a Chilcotin trip in June. My better half decided that I needed to rescue my ailing brother from the boredom of not being able to get out on the water without assistance while his collar bone healed.

I climbed on the Dash 8 at 730 Tuesday morning with high hopes for a repeat of some of the great fishing we had last few years on Cranbrook area lakes. As usual, the great gods of fishing showed me that what happens a year later (or even a day later) is not always the same as what happened in the past!

We started on Premier, where the fish were noticeably absent from the marl shoals and seemed to have taken to the depths at a much earlier time. We don't particularly like trolling deep sink lines to catch fish or using deep chironomid techniques so we spent a day and half patrolling the shoals and managed to shake loose a few fish. The only real excitement happened for a 1-hour period when we discovered a school of large brookies on one shoal and were able to entice them to bite by retrieving a "Blob" rapidly near them. They responded a half a dozen times with arm jarring strikes but in every case after a short, hard fought battle managed to throw the hook.

We tried Quartz the next day in the wind and rain and didn't touch a fish. A few fish were showing on the surface but seemed to be jumping for the hell of it because we couldn't find anything that they would take (tried all previous year's successful flies plus a few more to no avail.) After a morning's fruitless efforts, we headed back to Premier Lake campground, packed up the trailer and headed over to Alsace (Moose) Lake in White Swan Park. There, the fishing was much better than we had encountered so far with fair numbers of fish up to 20 inches. Unfortunately, after a few days, the wind conditions became intolerable and we decided to head over to Larchwood and finish off the trip.

We had fair fishing for our last two days, chasing trout around on the shoals and getting large fish to take our offering of various leeches fished on floating lines or intermediate sink tips. As usual, when fishing with leeches, we had more LDR's than successful nettings, but did manage to bring a dozen or so fish in the 17 to 20 inch range to the net. The wind was present but wasn't as much of an issue because of Larchwood's more protected waters.

We are thinking that we probably have to hit Premier and Quartz earlier in the season, if the warm springs are going to become a regular occurrence instead of a rarity.

I headed home with aching shoulder and arm muscles (I had the job of rowing because Wayne has a couple of weeks to go before he can stress his collar bone with that activity . . . or so he told me!) but happy that we managed to find a few fish to stave off the late spring blues.



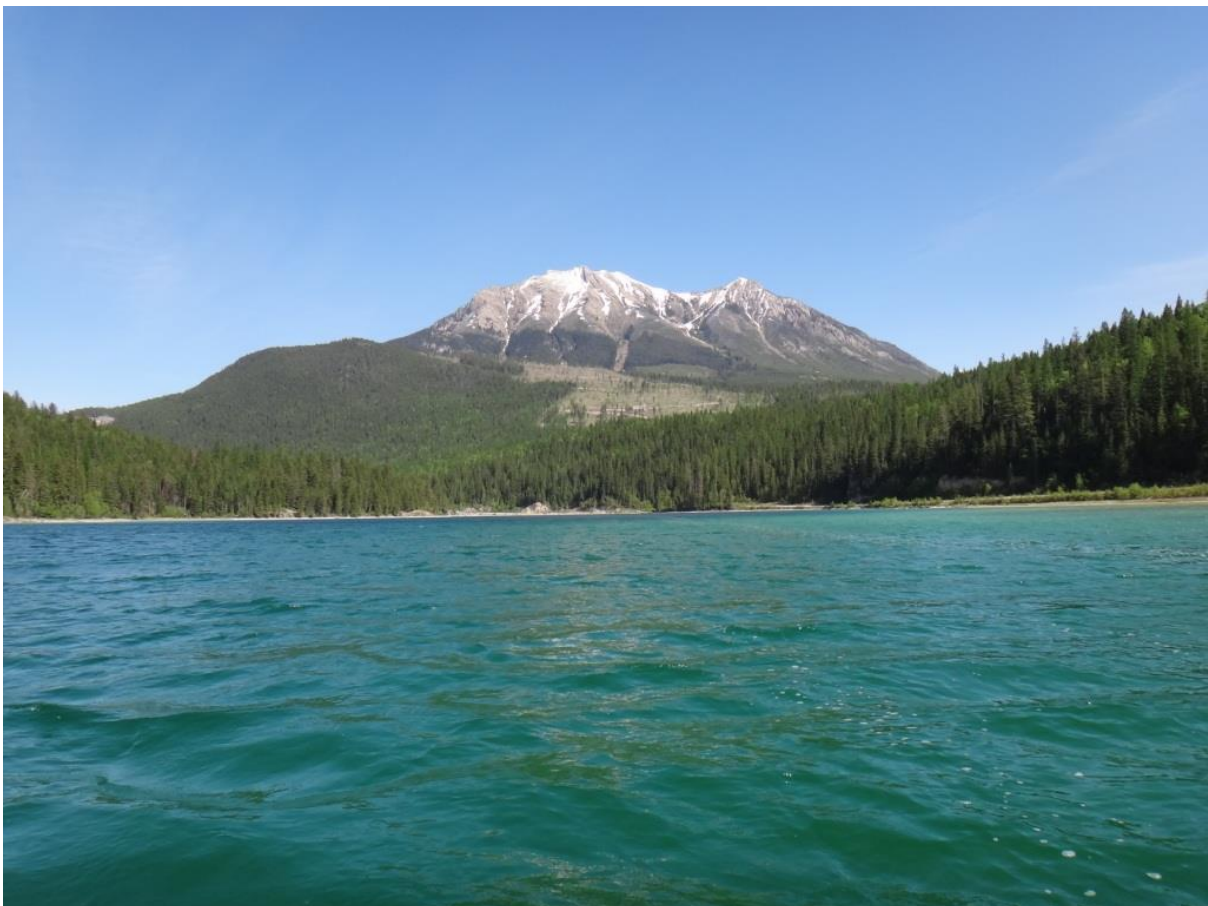
1 Premier Lake spawners at launch ramp



2 Premier Lake penstamens



3 Alsace Lake pennask bring shy about a photo op



4 Alsace Lake with the wind at gale force



5 Larchwood lagoon 18 inch trout on leech pattern



6 Larchwood trout caught in 3 ft of water.