

Canyon Creek Ranch, Oregon

by Glenn Zinkus

What type of experience do fly fishers seek? Some want solitude, others relaxation; for many of us, it's big trout or lots of action. At Canyon Creek Ranch, you need not choose. This private fee fishery near the Painted Hills in central Oregon offers it all: it will be just you, your fly-fishing buddies, and rainbow trout up to 8 or more pounds. Book your trip here (\$125/person/day) through The Fly Fisher's Place in Sisters, (541) 549-3474, www.flyfishersplace.com.

Canyon Creek Ranch offers two lakes: a 14-acre trout lake and a 2-acre bass/panfish lake. The trout lake drops off to a depth of 30 feet and is filled with rainbows. The bass and panfish lake provides another dimension to the angling experience in those magic times after the sun has set and waters like this come alive. Fishing poppers in the evening on the small lake, after you've spent the afternoon on the trout lake, can provide some fantastic action.

Like many high-desert lakes, the trout lake is incredibly fertile, with hatches throughout the year. During the early season, bring lots of leech and Chironomid patterns, along with flashy black/olive Woolly Buggers, Prince Nymphs, and similar patterns. Recent visitors have learned that sculpin patterns and Zonkers seem especially deadly on the largest trout throughout the open season (March 1 through early summer, and again in the fall).

Pay lakes provide a relaxed pace with no competition from other anglers, so you can just focus on large trout. Some of these fish are of dinosauric proportions—I call them "Jurassic trout," owing to their massive girths.

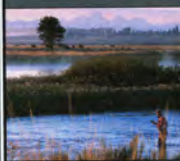
The trout lake is best covered with a pontoon boat, float tube, or even a drift boat. The bottom drops off quickly from the bank, limiting the wade-fishing. The larger trout hold in the deeper sections of the lake in the center, particularly during the daylight hours, but these giants do venture close to shore during the low-light hours. The hour leading up to sunset can be incredible.



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PHOTO BY GLENN ZINKUS

Queets River, WA

By Doug Rose

It's a long way from just about anywhere to the Olympic Peninsula's Queets River. You can buy gas and a bottle of pop at the Queets Village Store. It is located a couple of miles from the Queets River Road, the muddy gravel road that provided vehicle access to 13 miles of river within Olympic National Park for decades. But Amanda Park, population 486, the closest place with a school or fire department, is more than 20 miles from the river. And the nearest communities of any size, Forks to the north and Aberdeen to the south, are, respectively, 45 and 65 miles from the river.

Come prepared for fishing at any depth. To target those large trout during the daylight hours, use a sinking line. A clear intermediate line is the workhorse on most still waters that I fish, and this holds true at Canyon Creek Ranch. Keep a floating line ready for when the hatches tempt trout to the surface.

A comfortable bunkhouse (\$75 per night/1 person, \$25 per additional person, up to a maximum of six), well within earshot of gurgling Bear Creek, beckons after a long day of fishing. The

creek has been the subject of various restoration efforts and looks to have healthy piscatorial habitat. Anglers booking the lake are also welcome to camp on the property. Nearby attractions include the John Day Fossil Beds National Monument, Painted Hills Unit, which you pass through going to and from the property. To reach Canyon Creek Ranch, take U.S. Highway 26 east from Prineville, over the Ochocos toward Mitchell (The Fly Fisher's Place will provide detailed driving directions when you book your trip).

Despite its remote location, the Queets has been a magnet for Northwest anglers since the first road around the Olympic Peninsula was completed in the 1930s. The reason can be explained with one word: steelhead. And although Queets steelhead stocks have experienced ups and down in recent decades (increasing run sizes in the early 1990s, followed by low returns

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