

My Williamson River Experience

By Beth Jappay

In early August I had an unexpected 4 day weekend. Usually for me that would mean heading to Hosmer to one of their first come first served campgrounds, but those are gone this year. So I decided to try the Williamson river, knowing that the huge Klamath Lake rainbows migrate up it in July when the lake gets too warm.

I like to hire guides the first time I go to a new place, and for this trip I hired Dylan from [Woody's Guide Service](#) for a half day. I drove my RV to Chiloquin, and spent the night at the Kla-Mo-Ya casino parking lot, where they are welcome.



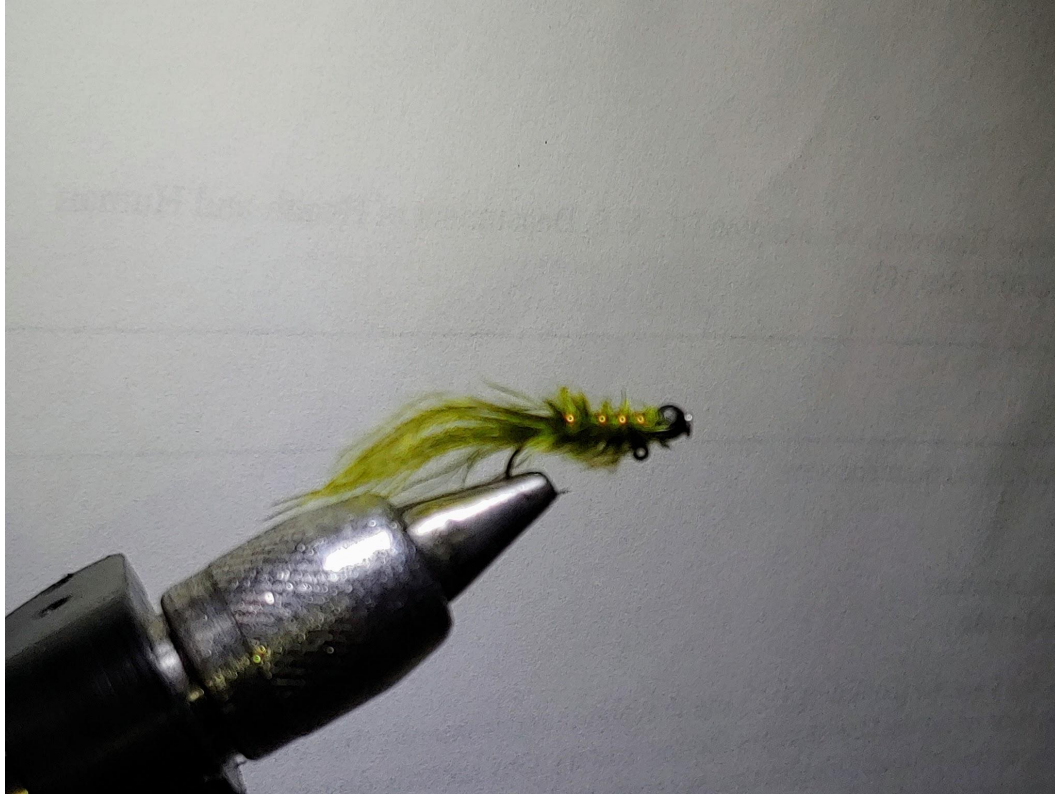
Dylan picked me up there at 6am. We launched from the public launch, just downstream from Carmen's cabin. A short row upstream and we were fishing the famous Blue Hole, just below the confluence of the Williamson river and Sprague river. It is a volcanic formation, looking to be up to 20 feet deep in places.

The fish don't tend to migrate further upstream and congregate there, since the Sprague is the colder of the two rivers.

These fish, fresh out of the lake, respond better to lake flies, and Dylan initially had me stripping damselfly nymph patterns on an intermediate line across the deepest stretch. We didn't have any initial bites, so we sent midges under an indicator downstream through an obstacle course of boulders and downed trees, and there I picked up 3 rainbows, one of 20 inch, 22 inch, and a 25 inch.

We then slipped downstream, fishing the White hole (named for the house next to it, once white and now gray), and further downstream the Brown hole, named for Carmen's brown house. We didn't pick up any further fish, and called it a (half) day. Dylan gave me recommendations for the next couple of days, which I will write about next month.

I went back on my own the following weekend, launching my pontoon at the same public launch. I had a vigorous upstream row, managing to get to the White Hole by the power of my oars, but the next riffle was too fast for me. I ended up walking over the rocks and logs to the side of the riffle to the Blue Hole, dragging my pontoon behind me. I spent most of the day in the Blue hole, trying various techniques. I found the fish easily spooked, and had multiple bites and a few hookups with a balanced damsel under an indicator in the obstacle course,



and swinging big ugly boobies under a type 5 sink in the deep stretch.



When it started getting late, I gradually slipped back down to the launch, swinging a wet fly and a prince nymph as I went. I hooked an enormous rainbow, probably 30 inches, a couple of dozen feet above Carmen's dock. He jumped a few times, and headed downstream. Despite having a 6 weight rod, I was unable to stop him and he broke me off well into my backing.

So I arrived back at the launch having not landed a fish, but well satisfied. Amusingly, a guy at the take-out recognized me from the Flycaster's June East Lake trip.

Anyone interested in the Williamson River should consider renting Carmen's house on the famous Brown hole. She donated a weekend to the club auction last year, and her house can be seen on AirBNB under the name [Rustic River Lodge](#). The best months are July, August, and Sept.

Next month: Enormous rainbows at Rocky Point.