

LUNKER HUNTER SPOONPLUGGERS MEETING MARCH 1, 2007

“SPRING STEELHEAD IN THE GRAND RIVER”



Bob Strek talked about “**Fishing the Grand River Downtown for Spring Steelhead**”. Bob is a knowledgeable and experienced river angler (sometimes referred to as a “**river rat**”) who has caught many fish there. He has used many techniques and **different equipment over the years** from wading to **his present jetboat** which he uses to go over the coffer dams up to 6th Street. He **stressed safety**, as the river can be very treacherous. The **best launch** for this area is downstream **at Johnsons’ Park** off Veterans Memorial Drive. With his jetboat it takes him 17 minutes to **run up to 6th Street Dam**. Every season **before he goes fishing, he scouts and learns the river structure** because **winter ice** and currents **can change the holes**, structures, and shallows of the previous year. He even takes pictures of pilings, big rocks, and cement debris during low water to better **locate dangerous obstructions**. This is very important for safety and locating fish. Water temperature and water depth is critical in locating and catching steelhead. About **2 weeks after the salmon spawn**, the **steelhead begin coming in the river** to eat the eggs. Bob uses 35 pound pyramid anchors to hold the boat in the current. Drag chains could also be used, but be careful to not let the rope touch the bottom or it will fray. For steelhead, he **usually uses spawn or plugs**. **With spawn**, to check the slowest speeds, he will use a **3-way dropper rig or a bobber**. Which one is used depends on the water level, current,

and structure he is fishing. If there is a line or **current break** on the waters' surface, that is an **ideal path to float your bobber**. He ties his spawn bags fresh on the water, using netting and copper wire to secure. The eggs are "hardened" in cold river water.

Plugs are used to check slightly faster speeds and he either trolls or anchors with them. By letting out or bringing in anchor rope, he can move the lures around some while anchored. He uses a **variety of plug styles** depending on the depth and speed needed. If weight is used, he spreads split shot out on the leader so it is not concentrated. **For casting**, Bob uses **long, stiff rods**, from 9-12 feet, and can **get 100 foot casts** using **20 lb. Fireline on a spinning reel**. This is to **cover more water** from one anchoring position **and not spook fish** in the shallow water. He **changes lures a lot**, using different colors, sizes, and actions. Big John rod holders are his favorite, but if he is holding the rod, he is working it constantly. Bob said not to wear "Hunters Orange" clothes on the water as it will spook fish more readily. He tries to **be observant** about his surroundings whenever fishing and notes where other fishermen are fishing, often coming back later when they are gone to check out the area. **A lure retriever can save a lot of lures** (and money!) on the river. Bob even handed out a copy of the 6th Street dam section of the river that has **50 named spots to fish!** Many thanks to Bob Strek for a very informative presentation!

Chase Klinesteker