



FRESHWATER CAST · FRIDAY CAST · OREGON

Billy Chinook: Sunny Warming Canyon Weekend & Clear-Water Smallmouth

Lake Billy Chinook · Fri Oct 2 – Sun Oct 4, 2026 · bank / kayak / boat · times **PT**

Highs ~79° Fri → ~86° Sat → ~88° Sun (NWS PQR north band)

KRDM ~30.07 inHg (Fri ~4 AM PT)

Pool 1942.42 ft · Deschutes Madras ~3620 cfs (USGS)

Soft recreational · no named Billy Chinook trail event

Three-arm canyon water opens early October under a warming dry high — pack a shell for the low-50° dawn, fish the first Cove Palisades cliff slides before the sun climbs, and let crawfish and leftover baitfish tell you which Deschutes, Crooked, and Metolius rock still hold honest Billy Chinook smallmouth.

● WEEKEND OUTLOOK

NWS Portland (PQR) north-band corridor forecast (PQR 121,64), pulled early Friday morning, keeps the Culver / Billy Chinook corridor under a quiet dry high with cool nights and warming days into the upper 70s–upper 80s. **Friday** opens sunny with a high near **79°F** after an overnight low near **53°F**, west-southwest wind 0–6 mph, and almost no rain in the forecast; Friday night settles near **51°F**. **Saturday** climbs to near **86°F** / overnight low near **54°F**, sunny, light north breeze 0–3 mph. **Sunday** peaks near **88°F** / overnight low near **56°F**, sunny, southwest wind 0–5 mph. No active NWS watches or warnings for the corridor at the early-Friday pull. Nearby METAR **KRDM ~30.07 inHg** around 4 AM PT Friday — a settled high over clear canyon water.

For smallmouth: lean the low-light cliff slides, Cove Palisades rock, and arm-mouth transitions hard while nights stay in the low-to-mid 50s, then expect a morning-shallow / midday-slide pattern as highs climb into the mid-80s under sunny skies. Clear water favors finesse early; any light breeze helps a windward rip along canyon walls after late morning. Soft recreational pressure — **no named Billy Chinook trail event** Fri–Sun on the Oregon master schedule.

FRIDAY OCT 2

~79°F

Low ~53° overnight / ~51° night · ~1% storms · WSW 0–6 mph

Sunny

Sunrise **7:03 AM** · Sunset **6:46 PM** PT

Best bite: first light—9:30 AM PT on Cove Palisades / Crooked River Day Use rock; midday deeper arm-mouth slides

SATURDAY OCT 3

~86°F

Low ~54° · ~0% storms · N 0–3 mph

Sunny

Sunrise **7:04 AM** · Sunset **6:45 PM** PT

Best bite: dawn on Deschutes or Metolius arm rock; midday lee cliffs once park traffic builds

SUNDAY OCT 4

~88°F

Low ~56° · ~0% storms · SW 0–5 mph

Sunny

Sunrise **7:05 AM** · Sunset **6:43 PM** PT

Best bite: first light—mid-morning on lee canyon walls; midday windward rip along rock if any breeze stacks bait

BITE TIE-IN

Cool nights + warming sunny days = morning smallmouth on cliff slides, points, and arm-mouth rock, then a midday slide to deeper stone as highs climb into the mid-80s. Keep a crawl-colored tube or drop-shot ready — that is still Billy Chinook's honest early-October menu in clear water.

● DAM & CURRENT / GENERATOR SCHEDULE CHEAT SHEET

Lake Billy Chinook is the PGE Round Butte / Pelton–Round Butte project reservoir at the Deschutes, Crooked, and Metolius confluence near Culver. Normal summer pool sits near **1,945 ft**. There is **no public hour-by-hour hydropower unit board** for anglers — treat generation as a soft current note below the dam, not a clock you can bank on from shore. Live numbers below are USGS instantaneous values from the early-Friday pull; pool and releases can change.

SOURCE	LIVE PULL (FRI OCT 2 EARLY PT)	WHAT IT MEANS THIS WEEKEND
Pool elevation USGS 14087520 Lake Billy Chinook near Culver	1942.42 ft ~3:30–4:15 AM PT Oct 2 Summer full ~1945 ft	Within a few feet of typical summer full — ramps and canyon walls still fish a full-pool feel. Confirm Cove Palisades / PGE recreation hours before you trailer if wind or park gates change the morning plan.
Outflow context USGS 14092500 Deschutes River near Madras	~3,620 cfs ~3:30–4:15 AM PT Oct 2	Solid early-October Deschutes discharge below the project — soft current context for the lower canyon, not a unit-by-unit board inside the pool. Soft outflow → bite only.
Metolius inflow context Metolius River gage ~1,210 cfs	~1,210 cfs · early Fri PT Oct 2	Metolius arm stays the clearer, cooler sister — classic finesse smallmouth water when the main confluence stains or wakes up.

Failover before launch: USGS 14087520 / 14092500 · Cove Palisades State Park / PGE recreation notices. Dam restricted zones and tribal Metolius rules stay off-limits / special-regs. Soft pool → bite — near-full pool still concentrates fish on cliff slides and arm-mouth rock.

COVE PALISADES · CROOKED ARM

Cove Palisades State Park and Crooked River Day Use / marina rock fish a classic early-fall Billy Chinook pattern: crawfish on stone early, then smallmouth sliding deeper along walls as the sun climbs.

DESCHUTES · METOLIUS ARMS

Deschutes arm and Metolius arm points favor clear-water finesse when the main bowl wakes up. Calm dawn pockets favor a compact tube; any light breeze favors a windward rip along canyon walls after mid-morning. Honor bull trout C&R / tribal Metolius rules.

● HOW TO FISH IT — BANK / KAYAK / BOAT

BANK

Shared: Cool Friday dawns and hot Saturday–Sunday afternoons reward a shell early and water later; PFDs on wet canyon rock; dam restricted zones and special Metolius regs stay honored. Start on **Cove Palisades State Park** day-use shoreline and **Crooked River Day Use** walking rock before picnic traffic, then rotate to **Lower Deschutes Day Use** where stone still reaches the bank. Dawn under the sunny high favors a compact tube or Ned along visible slides; once the sun climbs Saturday–Sunday, slow down with a drop-shot or light football jig along deeper walls near the park day-use lanes.

KAYAK

Launch **Cove Palisades** or **Crooked River Day Use** when you want short paddles into cliff pockets boats rush past, then ferry toward quieter **Metolius arm** cuts for clear-water finesse. On calmer dawn pockets Friday–Sunday, work lee canyon walls with a $\frac{3}{8}$ -oz swim jig or tube where bait marks, then slide a small crank parallel to Deschutes arm stone once the sun hits rock. Pack a dry bag — canyon evenings cool after sundown PT — and give bigger boats the main confluence lanes after late morning once weekend recreational traffic stacks up.

BOAT

Cove Palisades / Crooked River marina ramps put you closest to classic fall Billy Chinook transitions: cliff slides, arm-mouth rock, and Metolius clear water where crawfish pull smallmouth. Idle the first hour on a tube or waking bait along stone edges, then slide to deeper walls and 10–25 ft rock with a Ned or drop-shot as the sun climbs. Confirm USGS pool if trailer depth looked skinny last trip — 1942 ft still fishes near full, but arm backs change feel week to week. Weekend recreational traffic builds by late morning even without a trail blast-off.

● LURE BOX

TOP

Walking bait in slick dawn cliff pockets

Compact buzzbait on shaded rock edges

Small popper when bait is sipping

MID

$\frac{3}{8}$ oz swim jig (green pumpkin / craw)

Tube parallel to canyon walls and points

Small crank / squarebill along rock transitions

Spinnerbait if any breeze stacks a rip

BOTTOM

Ned or light football jig on stone

Drop-shot on deeper clear-water walls

Hair jig when fish get picky midday

Wacky stickbait when fish suspend off cliffs

Stain / clear match: Natural craw and translucent profiles on clearer Metolius / main-canyon rock; slightly darker if Deschutes arm wakes or stains. Tie colors to crawfish and leftover baitfish first.

● BASS LIFE STAGE

Early-fall transition on Lake Billy Chinook. Cooler nights in the low-to-mid 50s and a warming sunny high should pull smallmouth onto cliff slides, points, and arm-mouth rock while keeping them honest in clear water. Fish are not locked on a winter deep stack yet — treat this as a morning-shallow, midday-slide pattern as highs climb into the mid-80s. Skip the spawn talk; that chapter is closed.

What's on the menu: Dated hatch reports for this exact window are thin. Most-likely forage this weekend is **crawfish** on canyon rock and points, with leftover juvenile baitfish wherever birds tip a school, and kokanee leftovers in deeper open water. Start on craw-colored tubes and Neds; keep a baitfish-profile swim jig ready when schools mark midday.

● ALSO HOT / ALSO IN SEASON

KOKANEE

Kokanee still matter for mixed bags in deeper open-water lanes — soft language only; confirm seasons and creel on the live ODFW page before you keep fish.

BULL TROUT · METOLIUS RULES

Bull trout are catch-and-release / tribal Metolius special-regs water — know the live rule before you fish that arm. Same access rules as bass for legal bank and ramp water only.

CROWD / HEAVY TRAFFIC

No named Oregon club / trail event pulled for **Fri Oct 2 – Sun Oct 4** on Billy Chinook. Expect normal weekend recreational and park traffic at Cove Palisades — earlier launch still beats the picnic crowd. Weekend trail traffic elsewhere stays on Siltcoos / Lower Columbia / John Day Pool / Prineville club — not here.

LOOKING AHEAD

NWS trend stays dry and warm into early next week with highs pushing the mid-to-upper 80s — classic early-October canyon mornings if nights stay cool. Heavy Traffic this weekend stays on other OR waters — **none named Billy Chinook** at the early-Friday pull. Next Cast: Monday window.

● PURE-GAS.ORG E0 · THIS WATER

Ethanol-free stations near the Culver / Madras corridor (no pump prices).

- **Lk Chinook Village Store** — 8241 SW Jordan Rd, Culver, OR (~5 mi) · ethanol-free UNBRANDED 92 on Pure-Gas.org — verify grade
- **Leathers Shell** — 603 1st Ave, Culver, OR (~9 mi) · ethanol-free SHELL 92 on Pure-Gas.org — verify grade
- **Truax Towne Pump** — 1236 US Hwy 97, Madras, OR (~12 mi) · ethanol-free TOWN PUMP 92 on Pure-Gas.org — verify grade
- **Pacific Pride CFN** — 1720 NW Hess Ln, Madras, OR (~12 mi) · ethanol-free PACIFIC PRIDE 91 on Pure-Gas.org — verify grade

Stations from Pure-Gas.org OR list (saved for this water). Listings move — verify literal E0 / ethanol-free grade at the pump. No pump prices published in this Cast.

Sources: NWS Portland (PQR) north-band corridor forecast grid PQR 121,64 · METAR KRDM · USGS 14087520 pool, 14092500 Deschutes near Madras, Metolius inflow context · Cove Palisades State Park / PGE recreation · orbass.com Oregon master schedule · Pure-Gas.org ethanol-free station directory · ODFW Central Zone recreation report (live regs). Schedules change — confirm pool, ramps, and the forecast before launch.

Freshwater Cast · Friday Cast · Lake Billy Chinook · Fri Oct 2 – Sun Oct 4, 2026 · drafted Fri Oct 2, 2026 ~7:00 AM PT