

## SPORTS

AS  
GOOD  
AS IT GETS

Visitors to Alaska's pristine Goodnews Bay find unspoiled wilderness, avid anglers and bountiful fishing

**GOODNEWS BAY, Alaska** — Nearly 100 years ago, this tiny village 15 miles inland from the Bering Sea got its name because of the favorable fortunes of home-steader Clyde Huffman. In 1903, flush with furs, gold and joy that his wife had given birth to a son, Huffman walked more than 100 miles east to Dillingham, gave a weather report and named the land of his bounty.

That name is still appropriate—particularly if you ask anglers visiting the nearby Goodnews River Lodge.

Bob Stearns, Miami resident and contributing editor to *Field & Stream* magazine, has fished annually at the lodge, located 450 miles west of Anchorage, since the early 1980s.

"I've been all over Alaska, but this is my favorite," Stearns said. "The Goodnews is an incredibly rich river with all five species of salmon, plus char, grayling and rainbow trout."

Herald photographer Tim Chapman and I got to see exactly what Stearns was talking about on a recent weeklong visit.

Lodge owner Mike Gorton greeted us at the village's tiny airstrip with, "Welcome to Goodnews, where we are enjoying the best king salmon run in years! Fish are being caught up to

**GOOD FISHING:**

Above, Miami Resident Bob Stearns fights a 50-pound king salmon along a remote stretch of Goodnews River, 450 miles west of Anchorage, Alaska. At left, Stearns braces his catch while Goodnews River Lodge owner Mike Gorton removes the bright pink fly from its mouth.

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PHOTOS BY  
TIM CHAPMAN/  
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# OUTDOORS THURSDAY



TIM CHAPMAN/HERALD STAFF

**WHAT A CATCH:** Goodnews River Lodge owner Mike Gorton, left, and Miami resident Bob Stearns unhook a fly from the mouth of a 50-pound king salmon.

## Goodnews River riches

40 pounds!”

Having repeatedly been the victim of the “you-shoulda-been-here-yesterday” syndrome, I was skeptical of Gorton’s enthusiastic claim. That skepticism lasted only until the next morning, when he, Stearns, and I caught and released six kings (also called Chinook salmon) in the 30- to 40-pound range – all on 9-weight fly rods! Other lodge guests using magnum Wiggle Worts – large, vibrating plugs with single hooks – caught up to three times that number.

Nearly everyone complained of sore arms during dinner, and there were still five fishing days to go.

If you’re a novice fly fisher who rarely gets to feel the pull of a really big fish, the Goodnews River will be particularly kind to you. You rarely have to make long casts, and sometimes you don’t have to cast at all.

The most effective technique we found for catching the kings was to use a sinking fly line with a large pink or chartreuse pattern drifted down to near the bottom along a