**STRAITS AREA SPORTSMEN'S CLUB**

 P.O. Box 764

St. Ignace, Michigan 49781

 2023 Newsletter

Fellow Club Members and Interested Parties,

Our club is involved in a multitude of activities intended to provide enjoyable and memorable outdoor experiences. To review some of the activities of the Sportsmen's Club during the past year and things to come in this current year. The following are considered most significant as they have significantly and positively impacted this area. Now that things are returning to a regular schedule, we look forward to an event-filled and successful year.

**Tracks Magazine**

We will continue our yearly sponsorship of the MUCC "Tracks" Magazine Program. The program provides the magazine to fifth graders in Rudyard, St. Ignace, and Moran Township school districts.

**Kids Fishing Day (KFD)**

We are excited to resume our Kid's Fishing Day! This program has been among the most rewarding for those club members participating in this event. This year the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will provide 1,000 rainbow trout for our event for the kids to catch. An additional fish tank with larger 15-16" Rainbow Trout will also be on-site for the kids.

The 2023 KFD will be our 24th annual event on the Free Fishing Weekend on June 10, 2023, at the Castle Rock Ponds. All club members are invited and encouraged to participate in the 2023 KFD. We need your appreciate your help!

**Deer Range Improvement Program (DRIP)**

The Michigan DNR has again notified us that our 2023 DRIP habitat grant has been approved. This three-part project aims to improve the suitability of the St. Martin winter deer complexes in Mackinac County by hand brushing of non-commercial aspen cutting (14 ac +27 ac match) and alder strip-cutting (8 ac match) in the St. Ignace Ranger District, Hiawatha National Forest. Non-commercial aspen cutting would regenerate aspen in areas where access is too wet for commercial harvest. In addition, this project would improve habitat conditions for deer and ruffed grouse. Alder strip-cutting would create six ½ acer openings and strips for alder regeneration for deer browse and American woodcock dancing habitat. All areas are within deer wintering complexes and are accessible to the public for hunting.

Our partners in this grant are again The U.S. Forest Service, Ruffed Grouse Society, and the Michigan DNR, which will be adding to the value of this grant. The Forest Service with $26,400.00, Ruffed Grouse with $3,998.00, SASC $5,990.00, and the Michigan DNR $10,000.00 DRIP Grant. Bringing the total value of this wildlife grant to $46,388.00

With our partners, this will be our sixth successful wildlife habitat project in the East Hiawatha National Forest. When completed, this will bring our wildlife habitat total dollar amount to $247,845.00 of completed wildlife habitat work over the past eight years.

**Big Buck Contest**

There were 74 entries in the SASC contest in 2022, with ten deer registered. Our first-place winner was Tom Colegrove, our second-place winner was Joe Prout, and our third-place winner was Ernie Bigger. Congratulations to our winners, and thank you to all who entered.

**Deer Camp Surveys**

The Sportsmen's Club sponsored a prize for the DNRs Deer Camp Survey in the November firearm deer season. The deer camp survey monitors deer sightings, harvest, and hunter opinions during the 16-day firearm season. In addition, it provides hunters and DNR staff with feedback on the status of the deer herd and hunting satisfaction soon after the season ends. Beginning in the early 1990s, deer camps have been casually recruited into the survey by word-of-mouth, visiting camps, using club membership lists, or sign-ups at banquets.

**Brevort Lake**

After carefully accessing our goals with the DNR, we have decided only to stock the larger 6" -9" fall walleyes every other year. Spring Walleyes have a catch rate of about 1%. Fall walleyes have a catch rate of around 65% more cost but much better results. Therefore, 2023 will be an off year, and we will not be stocking until the fall of 2024. The amount we stock will depend on the funding we have available at that time. We currently anticipate stocking 3000-4000 fall walleyes in 2023. If you would like to donate to our Brevort Lake Walleye Fund, you can mail a check to Straits Area Sportsmen's Club, P.O. Box 764, St. Ignace, Mi. 49781, or on the Straits Area Sportsmen's Club webpage thru Pay-Pal or a major credit card. Please indicate "Walleye Fund" on your check or PayPal receipt.

Historic Stocking Information of Brevort Lake Spring walleye stocking 2013 – 2019 186,404 1¾ inch walleyes. Fall stocking 2018 - 2022 11,103 6" -9" walleyes. Cost to date 2013 – 2022 $32,002.00

**Grey Wolves**

Grey Wolves Have been placed back on the Federal Endangered Species list for the sixth time by a federal judge in California. This makes no sense at all. With over 6000 gray wolves in the lower 48 states and over 77,000 gray wolves in North America, the gray wolf has long passed the recovery goals of both the Federal Government and State Governments. In addition, the Grey Wolf has been devastating our U.P. deer herd to a point where deer numbers are significantly lower in many areas of the U.P. Last year total U.P. registered deer harvest was 23,787, an all-time low, and a far cry from 20 years ago where we use to harvest 60- 95,000 deer per-season.

U.S. Representative Tom Tiffany from Wisconsin, along with 22 members of Congress, including Michigan's Representatives Jack Bergman and John Moolenaar, have reintroduced legislation to delist the gray wolf through Congress. "Trust the Science Act" follows the scientific recommendations of wildlife experts that show the grey wolf completely recovered and not even close to endangered. But, unfortunately, what anti-hunting groups have done is made a total mockery of the Endangered species act.

**Cormorant Harassment**

This year the SASC will again only be allowed to harass cormorants on Brevort Lake. NO shooting will take place on Brevort Lake. We are getting very frustrated at the slow pace of our cormorant control efforts. The DNR has told us that one nest of cormorant, one breeding pair, and their resulting fledglings for one breeding season will consume 670 pounds of fish biomass. There are over 20,000 breedings pairs of cormorants in Michigan; that number does not include single birds migrating through birds. But you can quickly see this is a major problem for our fisheries.

We will still need volunteers to harass cormorants this year, which is legal to do on Brevort Lake. We have worked hard to bring back our fisheries! Let's work together to prevent the cormorants from having a smorgasbord on our fish. Anyone can sign up to help; any time you can spare will make a difference!

**Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD)**

The SASC will be working full throttle to inform as many people as possible about this horrible disease. CWD affects the central nervous systems in deer, elk, moose, and caribou. CWD attacks the brain in infected animals, eventually leading to their death. As there is no cure, prevention is the only tool we have to attempt to control and isolate this disease. The SASC will work with the DNR and all of our partners to inform hunters and the general public about preventative ways to prevent CWD from escalating in our state. As of this writing, only one deer has tested positive for CWD in the U.P.

**Fishing, Hunting, and Trapping**

Fishermen, women, hunters, and trappers are the lead conservationist in North America. We are a fishing, hunting, and trapping organization; we support the scientific management of our fisheries and wildlife. Hunters and fishermen have funded the vast majority of our wildlife and fisheries management system in Michigan, which has proved to be very successful. Since the North American model of wildlife conservation was implemented, no hunted species since its founding has been even close to being endangered. In fact, the opposite has happened, and numerous species have flourished and expanded their range through hunter effort and support. The SASC will continue to educate and inform the public about our fisheries and wildlife to protect us from animal rights activists that bombard us with pictures of starving and mistreated animals to increase their financing to support their attorneys.

**Straits Area Sportsmen's Club Website**

The SASC now has a Facebook page and a new Facebook page, *"U.P. Wolves Only."* where we are counting wolves per U.P. county; over time, it will prove to be very interesting. Our website address is <https://straitsareasportsmensclub.net/home>, and our Instagram page straits\_area\_sportsmens\_club. Be sure to check them out to keep up to date on club activities such as Kid's Fishing Day, DRIP Grant Projects, Great Lakes Restoration, In-Lake Shoreline Restoration, Cormorant Harassment Program, Brevort Lake fish stocking & surveys, Wolves, and CWD plus much more. Additionally, our Instagram page has pictures and comments about past and recent SASC activities.

**Straits Area Sportsmen's Club Surveys**

The SASC has conducted several surveys over the past few years to understand the viewpoint of our members and followers. This will help our club members on several State, Upper Peninsula, MUCC Boards, and Local Committees. The results of these surveys can be found on our website <https://straitsareasportsmensclub.net/home> under the Education tab.

**SASC Representation in the Following Organizations and Committees**

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| Deer Management Meetings DNR | Ruffed Grouse Society |
| DNR Citizen Advisory Council | Safari Club International |
| DNR Coalition Meetings | Safari Club International Northwood's Chapter |
| Deer Workgroup 2023 | Three Shores CISMA |
| Michigan Conservation Coalition | U.P. CWD Task Force |
| Michigan United Conservation Club; Board of Directors, and Conservation Policy Board | U.P. Fisheries Advisory Committee |
| National Rifle Association | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service |
| NRA-ILA | Upper Peninsula Sportsmen's Alliance |
| Hiawatha Resource Advisory Council U.S. Forest Service |  |

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As you can see, the Straits Area Sportsmen's Club is involved in and supports many activities. As a member of the club, you will help continue our support of all hunting, fishing, and trapping in our area. Please be sure to send your annual dues of $25.00 (for a membership only) or $45.00 (which includes the "Michigan Out-Of-Doors" magazine). You can mail your membership dues to the address below or visit our website, where you can pay using a major credit card or Paypal.

Also, as a Straits Area Sportsmen's Club member, you receive a membership in the Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) and the Upper Peninsula Sportsmen's Alliance (UPSA). If you would like more information about the SASC, visit our Facebook page, Straits Area Sportsmen's Club, or email us at sasc764@gmail.com

Our mailing address: Straits Area Sportsmen's Club

 P.O. Box 764

 St. Ignace, MI 49781

Sincerely,

Gary V. Gorniak

Gary V. Gorniak, President

Straits Area Sportsmen's Club