**STRAITS AREA SPORTSMEN’S CLUB**

P.O. Box 764

St. Ignace, Michigan 49781

2016 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 of some of the activities of the past year in which your club has participated, the following are considered most significant as they have had a large and positive impact on this area. We look forward to another event-filled and successful year!

**Hunter Safety Education Course**

Thanks to the efforts of Mark Eby, Kevin Monte, Jim Rose, the Mackinac Straits Shooters Association, and member volunteers from our club to make the 2015 Hunter Safety Education Course a success. We will again certify another class of young sports people in Spring 2016.

**Tracks Magazine**

As in 2015, this year we will again sponsor the MUCC Tracks Magazine program to provide the magazine to fifth graders in Rudyard, St. Ignace and Moran Township school districts.

**Kids Fishing Day (KFD)**

This program is one of the most rewarding for those club members who participate in this event.

In 2015 over 125 kids registered, with up to 210 people in attendance throughout the day. This year the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will be adding 1500 brook trout to this event which will add a lot of enjoyment and smiles to the kids that catch the brook trout. Congratulations and thank you to our 34 volunteers, the Hiawatha National Forest Service, the State of Michigan DNR, Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, Cabela’s The Pines Trading Post, and the U.P. Chapter of Ruffed Grouse Society for their combined efforts to make this event a success. In addition, we would like to thank all the donors who made contributions without which this event would not be possible.

The 2016 KFD will be our 20th annual event. The event will again be held on the free fishing weekend and will take place on Saturday, June 11th. All club members are invited and encouraged to participate in the 2015 KFD. We need and appreciate YOUR help.

**Club Annual Picnic**

We had 34 members in attendance for the 2014 Club Annual Picnic. We had good weather, great company and fabulous eats. Be sure and plan to make this year’s event (date to be announced)!

**Big Buck Contest**

There were 90 entries in the Sportsmen’s Club contest in 2014. Due to 2014’s harsh winter, the season’s deer kill was down and hunters registered only 18 deer. Ryan Bird won 1st place, 2nd place went to Boyd Bigger, Sr., and 3rd place was a tie Larry Schlehuber and Venn (Buddy) Alexander.

The Sportsmen’s Club sponsored a prize for the DNRs Deer Camp Survey in December 2014. The deer camp survey is used to monitor deer sightings, deer harvest, and hunter opinions during the 16-day firearm season. 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 1990’s, deer camps have been casually recruited into the survey over the years by word of-mouth, visiting camps, using club membership lists, or sign-ups at banquets.

**Brevort Lake**

The Straits Area Sportsmen’s Club has a five-year partnership with the DNR to raise walleye fingerlings for Brevort Lake. This year we have already begun work on the project with our purchase of yeast and the preparation of the rearing pond. We approximate the release date of the fry in the rearing pond during the week of May 11, with a harvest of fingerlings around the beginning of July. In 2013 we raised 13,000 walleye fingerlings (1½” – 2” in length) and the DNR added another 26,000 for a grand total of 39,000 walleye fingerlings which were stocked in Brevort Lake. Thank you again to all who helped and donated to this project.

The DNR, Forest Service, Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians and the Straits Area Sportsmen’s Club are working diligently to improve the fishing on Brevort Lake. To view the results of last year’s creel survey, go to the search box on the DNR website and type in “Brevort Lake creel survey”.

This year the SASC club will also be working with the Forest Service and the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians to net walleyes. This will enable us to check the population of the spawning walleyes and general health of the fish. As of this writing we have tagged over 1,300 walleyes. Before they are released back into the lake they are counted, measured and tagged. The fish are not harmed in any way.

In the fall of 2015 the SASC will be working with the tribe to do an assessment of all fish in Brevort Lake. We will be targeting all fish – game fish as well as non-game fish. In this survey a small number of fish from all species will be analyzed. There are many benefits to the assessment of these fish. For example, we will be able to survey the composition of the entire fish community including the age structure and growth rates of game and non-game fish, as well as the role of stocking in the adult walleye population.

**Citizens for Professional Wildlife Management**

The SASC is strongly in support of the scientific fish and wildlife law. This is a citizen initiated-law that was passed by both the Michigan House and Senate and became law on April 30, 2015. It just goes to show you what sportsmen’s can do when we ALL work together. The inhumane society spent 3.5 million dollars trying to defeat us but we out smarted them. Passage of this law will prohibit large out-of-state groups from coming into Michigan to attempt to manage our wildlife and fisheries based on THEIR beliefs.

As most of you know, a federal judge has relisted the wolf as an endangered species for the fourth time in ten years. The SASC is working with Congressman Dan Benishek, Safari Club International, The Upper Peninsula Sportsmen’s Alliance and the Michigan United Conservation Club to pass into law through the United States Congress a bill that will remove the gray wolf as an endangered species PERMANENTLY! However, it may take up to two years for this to come to pass.

**DNR Deer Habitat Improvement Grants (also known as DRIP)**

For the past five years club member Al Colegrove has applied for and been awarded four of the last five DRIP fund grants. Last year 2015 we planted large red oak trees (at least 15’ tall) on Forest Service land next to key winter deer yarding areas. These trees are large enough to produce acorns within a few years.

**North American Wetlands Conservation Act Grants**

Partnerships with the Michigan DNR, and area clubs such as Ducks Unlimited, the Sault Area Sportsmen’s Club, Raber Area Sportsmen’s Club, and others is in place to make application for available federal grants to help support wildlife in our area. Notification has been received that this grant has been approved and it will be implemented later this year. Funds will be used to protect and restore habitat for breeding migratory game birds and other wildlife species.

**Wolves**

Wolves continue to be an ongoing problem in our area. Louie Colegrove is working diligently to locate evidence of wolf conflicts in our area and report them to the DNR. If you have a conflict with a wolf (not a sighting) please contact Louie or the DNR. We are presently working with the MUCC and the DNR to extend the wolf hunt area to the eastern U.P.

**Cormorant Harassment**

This year the Sportsmen’s Club, in cooperation with the U.S. Wildlife Services and the DNR, will again be harassing and controlling cormorants on Brevort Lake. Club member Keith Doepker will be in charge of this highly successful program.

**SASC Representation in the Following Organizations**

MUCC Board Meetings

MUCC Convention

MUCC District Meetings

Upper Peninsula Sportsmen’s Alliance

Michigan Sharptail Grouse Association

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Deer Management Meetings DNR

National Rifle Association

NRA-ILA

DNR Citizen Advisory Council

DNR Coalition Meetings

RAC Forest Service

Safari Club International

Michigan Coalition for Responsible Gun Owners

As you can see, the Straits Area Sportsmen’s Club is involved in and supports many activities. You, as a member of the club, will help to continue our support of all hunting, fishing and trapping in our area. Please be sure to send your annual dues of $25.00 (for membership only), or $45.00 (which includes the “Michigan Out-Of-Doors” magazine).

To: 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