**STRAITS AREA SPORTSMEN’S CLUB**

 P.O. Box 764

St. Ignace, Michigan 49781

2019 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 the current year, 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 2018 Hunter Safety Education Course a success. We will again certify another class of young sports people in Spring 2019.

**Tracks Magazine**

As in 2018, this year we will again sponsor 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)**

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

In 2018 over 105 kids registered, with over 194 people in attendance. Throughout the day we awarded over 116 prizes to the kids who participated in the event. This year the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Jordan River Fish Hatchery will again contribute 1,000 brook trout for the event. This generous donation will add much enjoyment and lots of smiles to the kids who catch the brook trout. Last year the kids caught over 150 brook trout during the course of the event. Congratulations and thank you to our 22 volunteers, the Forest Service, the State of Michigan DNR, Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, and the U.P. Chapter of Ruffed Grouse Society for their combined efforts to make this event a success. We would especially like to thank all the donors whose contributions made this event possible.

The 2019 KFD will be our 23nd annual event. The event will again be held on the free fishing weekend to take place on Saturday, June 8th. All club members are invited and encouraged to participate in the 2018 KFD. We need and appreciate YOUR help!

**Deer Range Improvement Program (DRIP)**

The SASC was notified by the Michigan DNR last month that our application for a $15,000 DRIP grant has been approved. This year we have partnered with the U.S. Forest Service and the Ruffed Grouse Society to help us with this endeavor. We plan to utilize a custom mechanical masticator to brush approximately 30 acres of small openings on Forest Service land in a deer wintering complex. The process will remove encroaching woody vegetation so natural grasses and forbs can thrive. Plans also include planting multiple 8 to 10 foot tall red oak trees. Habitat is the key to winter deer survival. This extremely important grant provides funding for deer habitat on non-state lands. Only 20% of the winter deer yards in the U.P. are on state lands. This is the fifth successful grant application that we have secured for our area.

**Big Buck Contest**

There were 82 entries in the SASC contest in 2018 and 21 deer were registered. This year a surprising thing happened! We actually had a tie for first place when two bucks measured exactly the same. Our two first place winners were Bruce Bigger and Greg Peterson. We combined the first and second place prize money and divided it evenly. The third place prize went to Dave Thompson.

**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 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.

**Deer Spotlight Surveys**

During the month of October the SASC does deer spotlight surveys for the DNR to provide insight for the coming firearm deer season. The 2019 survey will be the eighth year that the SASC has participated in the survey.

**Brevort Lake**

The Straits Area Sportsmen’s Club has a partnership with the DNR to raise walleye fingerlings for Brevort Lake. Since spring of 2013 we have stocked over 152,000 walleye fingerlings into Brevort Lake. Last fall we stocked an additional 3,000 larger 6”-9” walleyes into Brevort Lake. This year we will again be working with the DNR to stock walleye fingerlings into Brevort Lake. Additionally, we plan to stock larger 6”-9” walleyes again in the fall and are currently working on the best way to accomplish this, either by purchasing them, or by raising them ourselves.

Cooperative Lakes Monitoring Program is a DEQ managed program which monitors Michigan lakes. Club member Art Bombry’s hard work to monitor Brevort Lake confirms that there are no contaminants in the lake and that it is biologically healthy.

**Wolves**

As most of you know, a federal judge has relisted the wolf as an endangered species for the fourth time in ten years. The bad news is that on August 1, 2017, the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Washington D.C. upheld the lower court’s ruling to keep the wolves on the endangered list, even though they are well beyond their targeted recovery numbers. On a personal note all of the resource dollars used to pay all the court costs take away from the real reasons these departments exist—WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT! In the 50 years of wildlife management nowhere in this country has an animal been hunted enough to be put back on the endangered list.

I am sure many of you have heard lately that The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will soon be de-listing the wolf. While this is great news, it will most likely be short-lived. The animal rights groups have millions of dollars in their coffers and will eventually find a sympathetic Federal Judge to again relist the wolf as endangered.

To achieve a permanent solution, we are working with Congressman Jack Bergman, 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!

**Cormorant Harassment**

This year the SASC, in cooperation with the U.S.D.A., Wildlife Services and the DNR, will again only be allowed to harass cormorants on Brevort Lake. NO shooting will take place on Brevort Lake. In May 25, 2016 a U.S. District Court vacated our Public Resource Depredation Order for

double-crested cormorants until the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) prepares an adequate Environmental Assessment, which was completed in November of 2017. But in this new assessment the USFWS claims that there is not enough scientific evidence on the effects that cormorants have on free swimming fish (if you can believe that). Therefore, the new Depredation Order addresses only the concerns that cormorants have on the envirorment. As you might know, this is alarming to us as we have been working very hard to build up the fisheries in our area. Cormorants will wipe out fish populations very quickly if allowed to remain unchecked. One study estimate states that in the early 2000’s cormorants were consuming 13,900 size 1 walleyes annually on Brevort Lake. We have been working with Representative Jack Bergman of the Washington D.C. office, Senator Debbie Stabenow Traverse City office, SCI, UPSA and the MUCC to find a solution to the problem.

We will still need volunteers to harass cormorants this year. 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 that 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 which eventually leads to death. As there is no cure, prevention is the only tool we have to attempt to control and isolate this disease. The SASC will be working 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.

**The Hiawatha National Forest**

The SASC is taking part on the Trails Working Group that is being coordinated by The U. S. Forest Service. Our goal is to set up a connecting trail system in The Hiawatha National Forest that actually goes from city to city, or to a given destination. The Forest Service is planning to have a new ATV trail system in place the end of 2019.

**Fishing Hunting and Trapping**

Hunters, Fisherman and Trappers (FHT) are the lead conservationist in North America that help to protect us from animal rights group activists that bombard us with pictures of starving and mistreated animals to increase their financing in order to support their attorneys. As a FHT organization we support scientific Management of our fisheries and wildlife. The SASC will continue to educate and inform the public about our fisheries and wildlife.

**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 |
| Hiawatha National Forest Trails Workgroup | Three Shores CISMA |
| Michigan Conservation Coalition | U.P. CWD Task Force |
| Michigan United Conservation Club | U.P. Fisheries Advisory Committee |
| National Rifle Association | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service |
| NRA-ILA | Upper Peninsula Sportsmen’s Alliance |
| RAC Forest Service |  |

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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). 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