**STRAITS AREA SPORTSMEN’S CLUB**

 P.O. Box 764

St. Ignace, Michigan 49781

 2020 Newsletter

Fellow Club Members and Interested Parties,

The year 2020 has been a very different year and the COVID-19 pandemic is dictating what we do and when we do it. Many of our events had to be canceled or scaled back, due to mandatory and/or reasonable health requirements. To update everyone, the following are some of the activities of the Straits Area Sportsmen’s Club of the past year. Included are anticipated events to take place in the current year.

**Hunter Safety Education Course 2020**

On hold at this time, we will post updates on our Facebook page and Website.

**Tracks Magazine**

On hold at this time

**Kids Fishing Day**

***This event, which was scheduled to take place on June 13, 2020, sadly has been canceled.***

**Deer Range Improvement Program (DRIP)**

The Sportsmen’s Club completed our 2019 Deer Range Improvement Grant and it was a great success. We effectively partnered with the U.S. Forest Service and the Ruffed Grouse Society in this endeavor. We employed a custom mechanical masticator to brush approximately 30 acres of small openings on Forest Service land in a deer wintering complex. The process removed encroaching woody vegetation so that natural grasses and forbs can thrive. We also planted multiple eight to ten-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 located on state lands. This is the fifth successful grant application that we have secured for our area.

**Forest Service Wildlife Habitat Grant “Great Lakes Restoration Initiative” (GLRI)**

 We will again be partnering with the Forest Service and the Ruffed Grouse Society this time to implement a $60,000.00 GLRI grant in the Hiawatha National Forest. This will be done over a period of five years. Similar to the 2019 DRIP grant, we will mow openings, plant fruiting shrubs and additionally including 100 acres of noncommercial aspen cutting and 15 acres of alder regeneration cuts with creation of brush piles for woodcock and snowshoe hare.

**Big Buck Contest**

There were 80 entries in the SASC contest in 2019, with 18 deer registered. Our first place winner was Louie Grondin. This year again a surprising thing happened! We had a tie for second place when two bucks measured the same. We combined the second and third place prize money and divided it evenly to the second-place winners, Adam St. Andrew and Cody King.

**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 1990s, 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 ninth 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 the spring of 2013, we have stocked over 198,000 walleye fingerlings into Brevort Lake. Last fall we stocked an additional 3,000 larger 6-9” walleyes into Brevort Lake. This is the second successive year we have stocked the larger 6-9” walleyes, which brings the total to 6,000. Incidentally, 2020 is a non-stocking year for the SASC.

During last fall’s stocking of those larger 6-9” walleyes, we clipped the lower-left pectoral fin to more easily identify them when caught. If you do catch a walleye with the lower pectoral fin missing could you please measure the total length of the fish and message us on our Facebook page or email us at sasc764@gmail.com This will help in our assessment of our stocking effort.

**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 75 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 actively working with Congressman Jack Bergman, Safari Club International, The Upper Peninsula Sportsmen’s Alliance, and the Michigan United Conservation Clubs to pass into law through the United States Congress a bill that will remove the gray wolf as an endangered species PERMANENTLY! As of this writing, there are two bills in the U.S. Congress one in the U.S. Senate introduced by Senator Mike Lee of Utah called “The American Wild Game and Livestock Protection Act” And the other is in the U.S. House of Representatives and it is being sponsored by Rep. Collin Peterson of Minnesota and Rep. Rob Bishop of Utah and it also is being called “The American Wild Game and Livestock Protection Act”. Both of these bills mirror each other just about word for word and they seem to have good by partisan support, so hopefully, they can get this done.

**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. On 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 environment. 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 2000s cormorants were consuming 13,900 sizes 1 walleye 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.

**Fishing Hunting and Trapping**

Fishers, 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. 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, a Website <https://straitsareasportsmensclub.net/home>, and an 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. Our Instagram page has pictures and comments about past and recenttt SASC activities.

**Straits Area Sportsmen’s Club Surveys**

The SASC has been conducting several surveys in the last year to understand the viewpoint of our members and followers. This will help our club members who are on several State, Upper Peninsula, MUCC, 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 |
| 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 a membership only), or $45.00 (which includes the “Michigan Out-Of-Doors” magazine). 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 to 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