



STRAITS AREA SPORTSMEN'S CLUB

P.O. Box 764 St. Ignace, Michigan 49781

2026 NEWSLETTER

Fellow Club Members and Interested Parties,

Our club actively participates in various activities to provide enjoyable and memorable outdoor experiences. Below is a summary of the Straits Area Sportsmen's Club (SASC) activities over the past year and plans for the current year. These efforts have significantly and positively impacted our area, and we look forward to another eventful and successful year.

SASC Banquet: The Straits Area Sportsmen's Club will hold its third banquet on May 2, 2026 at the Little Bear Arena in St. Ignace, Michigan. Doors open at 4:30 PM, with dinner served at 6:30 PM. Dinner tickets are \$65.00 per person, with only 144 tickets available. Audie's Restaurant from Mackinaw City will cater the event.

Various games, raffles, silent and live auctions, and prizes will include 15 or more guns, Rapid River Knives, and hunting or fishing packages and a mystery blind prize worth over \$750.00. Dinner tickets go on sale on April 1, 2026 for members April 8th for non members. For ticket information, contact Fred Strich at 906-430-0857 or fstrich@earthlink.net.

Louie's Kids Fishing Day (KFD): Mark your June 13, 2026 calendar! This annual event, celebrating its 27th year, will occur at Castle Rock Ponds during the Free Fishing Weekend. A tank of 12-14" rainbow trout will be provided for the kids to catch with an additional stocking of rainbow trout in the Castle Rock Ponds. All club members are invited and encouraged to participate. We appreciate your support!

Deer Habitat Improvement Partnership Initiative (DHIPI): We have just been informed that our 2026 DHIPI grant application was approved by the DNR in collaboration with the U.S. Forest Service. Our goal is to enhance deer forage opportunities in the St. Martin wintering deer complex. Over the past eight years with our partners, we have enhanced and create hundreds of acres of wildlife habitat in the East Hiawatha National Forest. This will bring our wildlife habitat total dollar amount to \$326,014.00 of completed wildlife habitat work over the past years.

Big Buck Contest: The 2025 contest had 72 entries, with 22 deer registered. Winners were:

1. Brian Olson (First Place)
2. Ken Belonga (Second Place)
3. Al Colegrove (Third Place)

The fifteen top hunters who registered a deer received prize. Congratulations to all participants!

Deer Camp Surveys: SASC sponsors a prize for the DNR's Deer Camp Survey during firearm deer season. This survey over the past thirty years monitors deer sightings, harvest data, and hunter opinions, providing critical information on the U.P. deer herd's status. This year's prize winner was Mike Peters.

Brevort Lake Walleye Stocking: After carefully assessing our goals with the DNR, we will continue stocking larger 6-9" fall walleyes instead of spring walleyes due to their higher survival rate. Spring

walleyes have a catch rate of about 1%, fall walleyes have a catch rate of around 65% more cost but much better results. In October of 2025 we stocked 5,326 6-8" walleyes in Brevort Lake, 2026 will be an off year and no stocking will take place. This walleye stocking effort is very costly at \$3.50 a fish the total cost of last year's stocking was \$18,614.00. Donations to our Walleye Fund can be made via mail (P.O. Box 764, St. Ignace, MI 49781) or online through PayPal. All donations are tax-deductible!

SASC Historic Walleye Stocking Data

- Spring stocking (2013-2019): 186,404 (1¾-inch walleyes)
- Fall stocking (2018-2025): 20,005 (6-9" walleyes)
- Total cost (2013-2025): \$60,116.00

Grey Wolves: Grey wolves have been relisted on the Federal Endangered Species List despite surpassing recovery goals for over twenty-five years. The U.P. deer population has suffered significantly due to unchecked wolf predation. In 2025 only 20,100 deer were registered in the U.P.- far below the 50,000-60,000 from past seasons. We anticipate the wolf will be removed from the ESL this year, returning management authority to The State of Michigan.

U.P. Wolves Only Facebook Page: SASC launched a Facebook page to educate the public on wolf activity in the U.P. With over 3,974 recent wolf pictures and 3,000 followers, this platform provides valuable insights into wolf populations and their impact on local wildlife.

Cormorant Harassment Program: Again, this year SASC is permitted only to harass cormorants on Brevort Lake—no shooting is allowed. Cormorants severely threaten fish populations, consuming nearly 10 million pounds of fish annually in Michigan. Volunteers are needed to assist in harassment efforts to protect our fisheries. We have worked hard to bring back our fisheries! Let's work together to prevent the cormorants from having a smorgasbord on our fish. The DNR and Wildlife Services will be on Brevort lake this spring shooting cormorants so hopefully that will keep the birds moving off the lake.

Fishing, Hunting, and Trapping Advocacy: Fishermen, 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, fisherman and trappers have funded the vast majority of our wildlife and fisheries management in Michigan, which has proved to be successful. Since the North American model of wildlife conservation was implemented no hunted species has been even close to be endangered since its founding. In fact, just 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 who bombard us with pictures of starving and mistreated animals to increase their financing to support their attorneys.

SASC Online Presence: Join the over 2,000 followers on our Facebook page 'Straits Area Sportsmen's Club', Instagram (@straits_area_sportsmens_club), and our website: <https://straitsareasportsmensclub.net/home> Our platforms provide updates on activities such as Louie's Kid's Fishing Day, DRIP Grants, Great Lakes Restoration, Cormorant Harassment, Walleye Stocking, and more.

East U.P. DNR Citizen Advisory Council (EUPCAC): Three members of the Straits Area Sportsmen's Club are on the EUPCAC giving us direct contact to the DNR about issues that concern our members.

Straits Area Sportsmen's Club Surveys

The SASC has conducted several surveys over the past few years to understand the viewpoints 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

- DNR UPDAT U.P. Deer Advisory Team
- Ruffed Grouse Society
- DNR Citizen Advisory Council
- Safari Club International
- DNR Coalition Meetings
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- Deer Workgroups
- Three Shores CISMA
- Michigan Conservation Coalition
- Upper Peninsula Sportsmen's Alliance
- Michigan United Conservation Club; President, Board of Directors, and Conservation Policy Board members
- U.P. Fisheries Advisory Committee
- Michigan Legislative Sportsmen's Caucus
- National Rifle Association
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Sharp-tail Grouse Association

As you can see, the Straits Area Sportsmen's Club is involved in and supports many activities. As a club member, you will help continue our support of all hunting, fishing, and trapping. Please send your annual dues of \$35.00 or \$40.00 if you use PayPal before May 1, 2026. 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 e-mail us at sasc764@gmail.com

Thank you for your continued support and involvement in the Straits Area Sportsmen's Club!

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