

Spring 2016 Newsletter – Rainbow Sportsmen's Club

Happy 2016 to all! It has been quite a while since the club put out a newsletter, and rather than incurring the time & expense of mailing and/or emailing out individual copies we will be publishing them to our website where both members and the general public can view them.

2015 was a busy year for the club and ushered in numerous changes, some completed and some still in the works.

Closing of the North Handgun/Rimfire/Blackpowder Range (next to the Archery Range): Due to a high number of people carelessly shooting at ground-based targets at this range – along with targets placed on top of the earthen berm/backstop, a large volume of ricochet and stray rounds were causing serious safety issues. Stray rounds had hit the clubhouse and were heard buzzing across the upper trap range (narrowly missing members in several instances), hitting trees along the public road to the west of the club and, inevitably, flying across the road itself. If you don't understand what a serious issue this is, and what the potential catastrophic results could have been, then you have no business handling firearms. The club provides shoulder-height target stands and builds tall earthen berms directly behind them for a reason – whether shooting from a bench or standing it offers the optimal trajectory for bullets to impact safely into the berms. Yes, we all enjoy shooting stuff on or near the ground (like tin cans, balls, spinners, etc.) but a high percentage of shots at such targets result in a ricochet – whether you hear it or not. We prefer that members do not shoot at targets or objects below waist height, however, if you decide that you absolutely must shoot at a ground target, or even one that is below waist height, place the target directly at the base of the berm (and away from the club's target stands to prevent damage to them) and shoot straight at it from the firing line. You may also place targets like clay pigeons directly on the berms themselves, but NOT ABOVE the midpoint of the berm. This will help ensure that errant shots or ricochets safely impact the berm where they belong.

Expansion of the South Handgun/Rimfire Range: To help offset the closing of the north range, we started an expansion of the southern handgun & rimfire range (same side as the manual trap throwers). Next to the original 50-yard range, we've added a shorter 25-yard range and new berm. Both are in the process of being built up and work will continue on them after the spring thaw. We installed a couple of concrete pads for the benches at the new 25yd range and will add more to this range as time permits.

Installation of Security Cameras: Because of numerous instances of unsafe range behavior, improper range use, unauthorized access by non-members and outright vandalism to club buildings, equipment and fixtures, we have installed multiple security cameras around the property. Some of these cameras you will see in the open, but others you will not. Footage from them will help us monitor activity around the club property & hopefully help to prosecute any future trespassers and vandals.

Changes to Membership Application Requirements: To help add another layer of security and member identification to the club, we are adding a section to our membership application for vehicle identification information. Anyone submitting a membership application must now provide the make, model, color and license plate number for their primary vehicle(s) in order for your application to be approved. These would

be the vehicles that you would typically drive to the club and/or on a daily basis. This will help us monitor traffic into the club and better identify the members that use our facilities.

Improvements to Upper Trap Range: The wooden retaining wall and stairs at the Trap League range have been in a sorry state for some time. These rotting items will be removed and replaced with poured reinforced concrete. At the same time a new railing for the stairs and around the top of the wall will be built.

Maintenance Shed Improvements: Last year we added a wide apron in front of this building to make servicing and repairing our maintenance equipment easier. It's nice to be able to change the oil and blades on our mowers now without lying in the dirt and mud! An addition to this building is also pending that will provide shelter from the elements and security for our truck, tractor and other grounds maintenance equipment.

Archery Range Improvements: Another pending improvement is the replacement of the aging archery bales and shelters at 20, 30 and 40 yards – the 40-yard target is completely gone. These are old targets, but doesn't help that some inconsiderate morons have fired handguns, rifles and shotguns into these bales over the years, which sped up their destruction.

Increase in Membership Dues: Well, based on what you've been reading, this change was inevitable. Our membership has been growing steadily and last year we had over 400 members on our roster. That means more wear and tear on range facilities, more maintenance and more improvements to accommodate the increased use. Sure, more members do bring in more dues money, but it doesn't begin to cover the repairs and improvements that need to be done to keep our range & facilities viable. As of November 2015 dues have gone up modestly to \$60/year or \$170/3-years. That's still a tremendous bargain compared to other range options out there. Remember, this is your club. Treating the facilities with care and respect helps keeps our maintenance costs down which helps minimize dues increases. A little common sense and courtesy goes a long way!

Just to reiterate, this is a private club. You pay membership dues for exclusive access, so keep your gate code private and do not give it out to any non-members. Also, our facilities may be in a rural area, but they are not isolated. Our club is closely surrounded by residential homes, farmsteads and other private & public lands so everyone must keep that in mind. As a member, you are responsible for your actions and the actions of your guests. You use the facilities "on your honor" and at your own risk – there are no club range safety officers on site. So, if you see anyone else shooting unsafely, vandalizing property, etc. - but you don't feel comfortable confronting them directly or asking for their proof of membership, call one of the club officers (phone numbers posted at front gate) with the person's name – if you know it, and/or their physical description(s), vehicle info, license plate#, etc. and the officer will respond. There seems to be ever-growing numbers of groups and individuals that would love to shut down clubs like ours and, emboldened by the support of anti-gun media and opportunistic lawyers, will take any opportunity or excuse to strip us of the ability to enjoy our hunting and shooting sports heritage along with our rights to personal protection ... DON'T give it to them! Shoot safely, be smart and use common sense! We all want our club to be around for our kids, their kids and all future generations to use and enjoy!

Now for the FUN stuff!

Throughout the year we host numerous events, some are exclusive to club members and others are open to the public as a way to raise additional funds, attract new members, allow current members to get more involved in the club and exhibit a fun & positive presence in the greater community. Here's a quick overview of what's going on for 2016:

Meetings & Election Results: Club meetings are held on-site at our clubhouse the first Monday of every month at 7:30PM. If that day happens to be a holiday, the meeting will be the following day. Officer election results for 2016 are: President – Tim Ellis, Vice President – Lyle Webb, Treasurer – Gene Giese, Secretary – shared role (Tim/Gene), Board of Directors – Kurt Holmgren, Jay Webb, Keith Parris.

Ice Fishing Derby & Raffle: February 14th at Brooks Lake in Cokato, MN from 2pm – 4pm. Raffle tickets are \$1.00 each and are available on-site or in advance from members. In addition to tons of door prizes throughout the tournament, the top three cash raffle prizes are: 1st - \$400, 2nd - \$300, 3rd - \$200 (need not be present to win). There are also cash fish prizes in two divisions (Junior – age 15 and under, Senior – age 16 and over) for both first and heaviest Northern, Walleye, Crappie, Sunfish and Rough Fish.

Military League: Starts May 4th and runs Wednesday evenings through September. This is a rather informal league that incorporates a variety of static and moving shooting scenarios with both rifles & handguns. Limited to military surplus or modern military-styled rifles/carbines. For more info call Tim at 320-980-0460.

Trap League: Starts May 5th and runs Thursday evenings through September. For details, cost and to join or form a team, call Joe at 320-286-6394.

Spring Shoot & Pancake Breakfast: Held on May 22nd. Open to both members and the general public. Pancake breakfast from 7AM – 10:30AM (all you can eat pancakes!), Trap Meat Shoot starts at 11AM (use your shotgun & ammo). The .22 Shooting Gallery (use our ammo and vintage gallery guns) and any other events start at 10AM.

Black Powder, Cannon & Mortar Shoot: Held August 27-28th. A big weekend of various black powder rifle & pistol events culminating with a live cannon & mortar shoot on Sunday (late morning). Spectators welcome (free entry). Pancake breakfast available in our clubhouse Sunday morning. Lunch wagon on site both days. Free on-site camping along the Crow River (primitive facilities). Need not be a club member to watch or participate. For Participant and Spectator info call Tim at 320-980-0460.

Fall Shoot & Pancake Breakfast: Held on September 11th. Open to both members and the general public. Pancake breakfast from 7AM – 10:30AM (all you can eat pancakes!), Trap Meat Shoot starts at 11AM (use your shotgun & ammo). The .22 Shooting Gallery (use our ammo and vintage gallery guns), Running Deer Shoot (bring your own deer-legal caliber gun & ammo) and any other events start at 10AM.

All-Around Shoot: Members only event and “bragging rights” contest held the last Sunday in September. Be prepared to “shoot it all” with your own gear – archery, trap, handgun, offhand rifle & running deer (any MN legal deer caliber). For more info call Tim at 320-980-0460.

Work Projects: Many other clubs require a work commitment as part of their membership obligation ... we do not. That's not to say that there isn't work to do around the club (you did read the previous parts of this newsletter, right?) - there are always tons of major and minor maintenance, repair and improvement projects going on and it usually falls upon the same small group of members to get them done. These are usually also the same members that work at our various events throughout the year. Now we don't mind at all doing all of those things, but we have lives outside the club too and we gladly welcome help from any other members that want to "give back" to the club and pitch in. To find out about workdays, events and other opportunities to help throughout the year call Tim at 320-980-0460.

Brief History of the Rainbow Sportsmen's Club

According to our articles of incorporation, the Rainbow Sportsmen's Club was founded in 1949 in Cokato MN by seven local men for "... social, moral, educational and scientific purposes, to provide comfort, education, and recreation for all classes and to encourage and foster good sportsmanship ... to assist in the conservation of wild life, game and fish and natural resources." There have been a lot of changes in our country and communities in those 67 years, some good, some not so much. But the founding principles of our club have held true and are more important today than ever.

We sometimes get asked, "So what's up with the name? Why did the club founders choose the word 'rainbow' when they named the club?" Sadly, the specific reason was not documented, but the meaning is as deep and old as mankind itself. Throughout human history, rainbows have been used as symbols of creation, peace, love, hope and freedom by numerous religions, cultures and groups. Those are all noble concepts and, based on the club's purposes stated above, the reason the name was chosen undoubtedly lies somewhere amongst the definition of them all.

So regardless of our individual backgrounds, all of us can find a place among people who share common core beliefs, values and interests - an extended "community", if you will. A community that, at a minimum, understands and honors the founding principles outlined in the Constitution of the United States, values individual freedom and liberty, cherishes our long hunting and shooting sports heritage, and seeks to promote the sustainable conservation of wildlife, lands and waters for all future generations to enjoy.