

Fort Frances Sportsmen's Club

Annual Report 2009

**2010 Annual General Meeting will be held at the
Volunteer Bureau (old CN Station) on January 26 at 7 p.m.
Guest Speakers Jack Headman and the MNR
www.ffsportsmensclub.com**

The Fort Frances Sportsmen's Club held its Annual Meeting on January 21, 2009. Guest speakers were Don Jones, who outlined the regulations required for gun ranges, and Darryl McLeod who gave an update of sturgeon studies on the Namakan River. (This last report is on file.)

At the meeting, conservation awards were handed out.

- The **Bud Cyr Conservation Trophy** went to Ross Donaldson and Allan Empey, mentors to the Get Outdoors Club. They have been working with these youth for many years. (Ross for 9 years, and Allan for 10).
- Sara Empey was awarded the **Dino D'Agostini Conservation Trophy** for youth. As president of the junior club, she was a great leader and worked on extra projects.

Directors for the senior club were nominated at the end of the meeting.

Board of Directors

At the first meeting of the Board of Directors in February, elections took place:

President: Brad Houghton
Vice-President: Henry Miller
Secretary: Jeremy McGuire
Treasurer: Ben Wiersema
Membership: Henry Miller
Big Game: Jeff Johnston
Fish: Jeff Johnston, Richard Boileau
Ranges, Handgun: Willie Anderson
Property: Willie Anderson, Bill Nickel, Brad Houghton
Archery: Ben Wiersema, Blair Beadow
Skeet: Tony Manuge, Len Noonan, Jeremy McGuire
Publicity: Henry Miller, John Homer
Get Outdoors Club: Henry Miller
Conservation Education in Schools: Henry Miller
Alternates: Bill James, Richard Boileau

Special Committees

Bass Derby: Leo Korosec

Website: John Homer

Seeding: Jeff Johnston, Ben Wiersema

OFAH Lottery Tickets: Henry Miller

Property

Improvements have been made to the junior clubhouse, which is also used by the skeet club. The outside sports a new exterior and a deck, while inside walls have been insulated. The deck was dedicated to the memory of Dave Brockie.

An MNR Stewardship Council meeting was held on the property in the summer. This council and the /Stewardship Rangers planted 300 spruce and Jackpine trees in the west field.

Changes were made to the ranges this summer. New signs were posted around the property. Shooting benches were moved so that those shooting at the 50-yard and 100-yard targets would also hit the 200-yard berm (a safety backup).

Signs were also posted at the rifle and pistol ranges. Rifles are not allowed at the pistol range and pistols are not to be used on the rifle range. Ranges were inspected and approved by Don Jones.

Membership

When renewing your membership, be aware that if you join the OFAH directly, you are not a member of the Fort Frances Sportsmen's Club and thus, you do not have the privilege of using our facilities. When you renew with our club, you automatically become a member of the OFAH. Returning your membership form right after receiving it ensures that your membership does not expire. For updates on up and coming activities please be sure to give your email address on your membership form. All emails are confidential and only used for club emails.

Thanks to all who have made donations to the club.

Club Activities and Projects

The archery club held a 3-D shoot on August 23. Although a few archers practise several times a week most of the year, others seldom use the range until close to hunting season. 3-D contests like this provide an opportunity for an early practice before the hunting season. For those who hunt, it is important to be accurate.

Skeet has become very popular this year with shooting taking place twice a week.

Skeet Section Summary

(submitted by Tony Manuge)

With the cool wet and windy summer, the numbers in attendance were down a bit from 2008. We did see the competition heat up somewhat with Len Noonan, Jeremy McGuire and Tony Manuge all performing well. This being my second season shooting trap, I was very happy to run 50 straight twice this season.

We had a good turn out for Family Day and did get a few people coming back for our regular Tuesday night shoot. Len Noonan and Henry Miller had the juniors out for an introduction to skeet in August.

We had a reporter from the Fort Frances Times out a couple of times and they profiled Jill Gustafson in an article, along with a write up of Len's victory at the year-end shoot off.

A few of us did a road trip up to Kenora for sporting clays and we may try to do something here in 2010 to try to get the numbers back up and draw on the younger shooter. At the very least, Len and I will try to take a few more of our regulars on the road to see what is happening at other clubs for shotgun sports. All in all, we hope to spruce up the program and have more fun in 2010.

Shooting Sports Day

In the summer the club organized a Shooting Sports Day where the public was invited to participate. Instruction was given in skeet, archery and rifle shooting. Participants then had time to practise. This was not a competition. Prizes were awarded by drawing names. Thanks to all who organized this event.

Seeding

The preliminary paper work and ordering of the seed was done by Ben Wiersema in early spring. Most of the actual seeding was done by Jeff Johnston along 84 kilometres of logging roads. Richard Boileau also helped out.

Hares

The hare fecal pellet count was done again this year by Jeff, Henry and MNR biologist Melissa Mosley. Four stations, consisting of 4 sub plots, had been set up along the Turtle River and Heron Roads by Jeff and the MNR four years ago. The results are sent to the MNR in the Northern region to determine hare populations.

Cougars

Reports of cougars in the area are becoming more frequent. For several years now, motion cameras have been placed near the areas where the cougars were reported to have been seen. Last summer a camera was

set up north of Stratton by Jeff and MNR technician Tony Elders. They were monitored by a resident near the site. So far, no pictures of the cougars have been taken.

Invasive Species

The club is sponsoring a sign warning the public about invasive species. This sign will be placed 2.2 km east of Windy Point. The cost is \$150 for the first year and \$130 for each of the next 3 years. The OFAH is spearheading this initiative and sponsoring the erection of the sign.

Lottery

We sold 100 OFAH Lottery tickets in 2009 with \$600 profits going to junior education. This year's sales are going well. Richard Boileau, who is in charge, ordered the books earlier than we have ever done. The profits will go to the Rainy Lake Fisheries Charity Trust. Jeff is chair of this important organization.

Bass Derby

At the Fort Frances Canadian Bass Championships in July, Leo Korosec organized fish care. Many of our members worked hard to keep the fish alive and returned them to Rainy Lake.

Elk

More elk are being collared. Recently a trap was put out near the Cameron Lake site. Four elk were caught—one bull previously collared, one immature bull, one previously collared cow, and one calf.

Mike Solomon and Murray English, chairs of the Northwestern Ontario Elk Restoration Coalition, have co-authored a book which traces the history of the local elk herd. There is a black and white version, along with a coloured version. These are on sale to those who were involved with the relocation. The price is \$40 (colour) and \$10 (black and white).

Moose Management Review

The MNR began a review of moose management and the present moose tag allocation system. Phase I of the review was held in Dryden in 2008. This review covered several aspects but the suggestion that a new system for moose tag allocations drew the most interest. Eight members of the FFSC attended.

In February of 2009, Phase II took place in several centres including Fort Frances. This meeting, open to the public, was advertised by the local club and moderated by OFAH member Jack Hedman and assisted by Bruce Hamilton. Attendees were invited to comment on the options presented or to make other suggestions.

In the fall, results of hunters' suggestions from the Phase II meeting were shared with the OFAH Big Game Advisory Committee. There was no clear indication of preferences. Many seemed content with the present system. They did agree that the transfer of tags should be made harder.

Other News

Jack Hedman has served his term as president of the OFAH. As past president, he continues to sit on the board of the OFAH.

Bruce Hamilton has served as chair of the OFAH Zone A for several years. Zone A meetings are held three times a year. The fall meeting was held in Fort Frances. The next one is in Atikokan on January 23, 2010.

Jeff Johnston was awarded the Larry Nault Memorial Plaque for outstanding conservation efforts in the Zone.

Conservation Education in the Schools

During January and February, we worked with 124 pupils in several classes at Robert Moore and JW Walker showing them how to build bird houses from parts we had cut out before hand. Instructions were given on where to place the boxes and how to monitor them. The kids learned the habits and habitats of the three species which could occupy these bird boxes: bluebirds, tree swallows and wrens. In total, 79 bird houses were built.

Three classes learned to snowshoe and hiked north of town near the ski trails. Another class snowshoed on Sportsmen's Club property. Topics from their course of studies were taught on these trips.

Two classes planted 1200 trees in June. Several parents of pupils in the classes helped out as well as Vic Alberts, Henry Miller, and the teachers.

Jeff Johnston, chair of the MNR stewardship council, organized a cleanup of landings at Cuttle Lake, Big Sawbill, and Crowrock. Although this was a Stewardship Council initiative and financed by the MNR, Fort Frances Sportsmen's Club members Jeff, Vic, Henry and Jody Bonner-Vickers (teacher) supervised and worked with the pupils.

The Henry Miller Conservation Plaque, an award given by the Sportsmen's Club to a class or school who has done the most for conservation, was presented to J.W. Walker school by Catherine McGuire.

In September a Grade 3 class from Robert Moore School hiked into the bush in Crozier. We taught the kids how humus soil is formed and showed some relationships between plants and animals.

No other contacts were made with the schools for the remainder of the year because of the flu epidemic.

Get Outdoors Club

There are fewer members this year and the youth are older than other years. Some have been in the club for many years, two for 7 years.

Members have been involved in several conservation projects such as collecting pop cans for recycling and looking after birdhouse lines, and recording the results, construction a beaver baffler, and collecting garbage. They set up an information booth at Badiuk's display at the Trade show and sold OFAH lottery tickets.

Outdoor activities included ice fishing, hunting, cross country skiing, hiking and canoe practice. They made a nature trail near Lake Wasaw. During these activities they gained more knowledge about our natural environment.

Executive of the Get Outdoors Club 2009

President: Sara Empey

Vice-president: Julianna Donaldson

Secretary: Nick Donaldson

Treasurer: Robert Empey

Thanks to our volunteer mentors Henry Miller, Allan Empey, Ross Donaldson, Linda Empey, Joe Bodnar, Trevor Mills and Denise Donaldson.

Birdhouse Project (to help Eastern bluebirds)

There are 38 bird house lines consisting of 437 boxes. The summer of 2009 proved to be too cold for these birds as only 188 bluebirds were fledged. There were 71 dead nestlings and 73 unhatched eggs.

Grants

CFWIP grants from the MNR helped finance the hare and cougar projects, and youth conservation.

Special Thanks

**Thank you for making the annual report possible*

Jody Bonner-Vickers for typing the report

Gillon's Insurance for copying

Get Out Doors members Sara, Robert, Jason Empey stuffing envelopes and stapling

John Homer Emailing

Henry Miller Composing

We hope to see you all at the annual meeting.