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Fruitport Conservation Club news

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(Fruitportcc.com)

By Greg Weaver

Wow, what a winter we've had! Finally, this last week, the snow is gone and the water has soaked into the ground, leaving the range nice and green. It's time to get out the golf clubs and sunscreen and start enjoying the spring weather.

The winter trap league wrapped up its schedule on April 18. Chad Fett took "Top Gun" honors this time around with a total score of 389 out of 400. The first place team included Norm Beebe, Mike Erffmeyer and Mike Vandenbosch. Second place went to Jerry Bensingler, Kevin Fairfield and Brad Osmer. Congratulations to all the winners.

The summer trap league is scheduled to start on June 6 and run for 16 weeks through September 19. The cost is \$4.50 per round, and the public is invited to come out and get involved in this shotgun shooting sport. Shotguns are not provided, however, 12-gauge ammo is available for purchase at the club.

FCC holds a "Hunters .22" shoot every third Sunday of the month. Unlike the 100-yard egg shoot of the past, we are focusing on improving your shooting skills with your .22 rifle. We only shoot at 50 feet, and a basic .22 with iron sights or scoped and 50 rounds of ammo is all that is needed. The new shoot includes five stages with 10 rounds fired at each stage. The stages include sandbag rest, sitting and standing with or without some type of support. We are finding that each person's skills are improving each month as they learn breath control, how to aim, and when to squeeze the trigger. The .22 shoot starts at 9 a.m. with rifle sight-in. The five stages start at 10 a.m. We're encouraging the whole family to come out and spend some quality time together. The cost for the shoot is \$5.00 for members and non-members alike.

The Fruitport Conservation Club, in conjunction with the Amateur Trap Association (ATA), is holding ATA registered shoots in 2013. There will be two different events offered. On Saturday, May 11, the ATA will shoot 100 single, 100 handicap, and 50 pair doubles. Starting time will be 10 a.m. and the shoot runs until 4 p.m. There will be a "Big 50" shoot on May 28, June 25, and September 24. The "Big 50" will be at 5 p.m. Food and drinks will be available. For additional information, contact Jeff Russell at (616) 638-0579.

The FCC pistol shooters are starting another spring season with their shoot that is similar to a trap league format. The challenge is to hit a spinner target five times with each successive spinner being set at a different range. The NRA Pistol Qualification or the NRA Conventional Bullseye Pistol Qualification courses are still available for those just starting to improve their handgun shooting skills. The pistol shooters hold their events every Wednesday evening from 4 to 9 p.m.

The annual spring work bee is scheduled for Saturday, May 18. There are several building projects planned, such as adding new tire and sand berm at 50 feet in front of the rifle range for shooters who would like to shoot their pistols from the rifle range area. Those of you who have helped build the other tire berms know how much fun it is to pack tires with sand. But as Mom always said, "Many hands make light work." If you have old tires lying around the yard, consider bringing them out to the club and we'll make use of them. Along with that, general cleaning of the range area, cleaning and organization of the new pole barn, possibly building a pavilion roof over the area between the rifle and pistol ranges, some painting and building target stands at 100 yards are also on the "to do" list if we can get enough members to come help out.

NRA certified instructors Mike and Joe Lucht hold a one-day Concealed Pistol License (CPL) class from time to time. The next class is scheduled for Sunday, May 19. For additional information or to

sign up, please call Mike at (231) 286-2757. If you can't make this one, watch the FCC website for future classes to be posted.

Now for the BIG news! A group of Fruitport Conservation Club members are currently working on building a 3D archery course on the club grounds. It will be a first for Western Michigan. The course will consist of 15 to 18 targets set in a woodsy setting. The targets will include all types of wild game that an archer may encounter such as deer, bear, hogs and turkeys. Other exotic animals will be included, but you will have to get the bow and arrows out of the closet and come out and see for yourself. The 3D archery range is scheduled to be up and running in late May. Watch the FCC website for further information to be posted.

Put a sticky note on your calendar of events that are to be held in September. On Saturday, September 7, the Sportsmen for Youth organization will once again be holding their outdoor event for the youth of Western Michigan. Last year's event brought out over two thousand kids who had the opportunity to sample all forms of outdoor activities. This year's event is looking to be even bigger and better. Many members of the Fruitport Conservation Club are on hand to run three shooting stands so the kids can have the opportunity to shoot .410 shotguns, .22 rifles and pistols. If you have that day free, please contact one of the FCC board members and let them know that you can help out. Then, on Saturday, September 14, the club will be holding their second annual fundraiser banquet. Last year's banquet was a huge success and the year's looks to be even better. Please plan on attending because you may just win a new .22 rifle on the 14th that you can take to the woods for the small game opener on the 15th.

The FCC board of directors has approved a new membership form, which includes Range Safety Rules. All members will have to read and agree to abide by the safety rules by signing as such. The change in membership forms was driven by unfortunate events that have occurred at several local ranges in the West Michigan area. The new forms are available at the club or on the FCC website. Remember, "Safety First" when using any of the shooting ranges on the club grounds. Use the safety lights provided when going downrange to set, check, or retrieve targets; and please keep all targets set low and directly in front of the sand berms so we keep all of the bullets on the club property. Last, if you bring targets to shoot at, please take them with you when you go, or place your trash in one of the garbage cans. Also, all spent brass, such as .22 shells, are to be swept up and placed in the trash when you are through using the range. Don't leave your mess for the next guy to clean up. We all should do a better job of keeping the club grounds neat and orderly.

The combination lock on the gate is scheduled to be changed on June 6. If you are a member, you should receive an informational letter detailing upcoming club events and the new lock combination. If you miss it, stop by the club any Tuesday through Thursday evening and someone should be on hand to assist you.

A yearly membership at the Fruitport Conservation Club, 5373 Sternberg Road, is only \$45.00 (\$67.50 for a year and a half after July 1). A membership allows usage of the ranges from 9 a.m. to dusk seven days a week unless another event is taking place. For more information about the club and current events can be obtained at the club website, fruitportcc.com.

If you haven't been out to the club in awhile, stop by and say hello. We'd be glad to see you! The membership of the Fruitport Conservation Club wishes everyone a safe summer. •