

Nitro Express

Official Newsletter of Watauga Gun Club

September, 2006

I want to thank everyone for all of the support you gave my family and me upon the death of my brother Walter. For any of you that do not know, he died in a car accident on Wednesday August 30, 2006. As you will see, he is mentioned in this newsletter. I had that part written before his death. He got mentioned a whole lot whenever I talked about anything. He loved to hunt and shoot and was as strong of a pro-gun advocate as ever lived. I wish I could have got him to join the club, but he never would. He said he could not be a part of a club because he would end up working on it too much and he did not have time. Those of you that know him can attest this is true because he gave a full commitment to whatever he did. You are probably going to keep on hearing about him because we worked and played together almost everyday for over 50 years. I wish I was half the man he was.

Wayne Green

Minutes from last meeting:

See the website (www.wataugagunclub.com) or contact the club secretary (Robert Niemi).

Range Officers Notes & Notables:

Club Match

Hunter rifle, from the bench rest shed. 100 yards, 24 caliber or larger. Scopes at or below 6X. Sandbags or Bi-Pod. None of them 60# windage adjustable sled things! Five shots, five targets. Come and have fun.

Congratulations to Lloyd Poole on the varmint match last month. Just a couple of wiggles and he would have had a perfect score. Todd Walker, Bryan Wood, Wayne Green are your top winners. Todd, Bryan, and Wayne all shot the same gun. I guess the gun got used to it. Remember that next year, reserve your turn early.

IDPA Report

This coming Saturday will be the last regular monthly match before the State Championship. Preparations are coming along nicely. There just over 150 registered shooters. Our sponsor ship list is very impressive. We will be setting up for the match the week of October 2nd through the 8th. Some shooting areas will be open on the 2nd and 3rd. Any members needing to get their work hours in let me know.

Around The Club

We want to thank the membership for their diligent care of the grounds this summer. Thank you for helping to keep the grounds picked up. There is a large pile of tree tops by the foot bridge and a number of logs. If anyone has access to a chipper, that would be a good way to dispose of the limbs. The logs need to be cut for fire wood and stacked by the end of the club house.

Thanks to Fred Stahl for getting the fence line around the back of the property up in shape.

Things to do:

A leak in the ceiling of the club house needs fixing.
Cut fire wood.
Patch the hole in the ceiling in the kitchen.
Any thing you see that needs doing.
Shoot lots of cartridges and make lots of noise!!

Wanted: A set of reloading dies for .223 and a case trimmer. Gary at 963-6307.

Upcoming Events

- Club Match (hunter Rifle) September 14th.
- IDPA match September 16th.
- NRA HIGHPOWER match September 23rd.
- ATA Match September 30th, October 1st.

From Reid Perry

There is a proposal to change the hunting laws in North Carolina to allow hunting on Sunday. If you want to comment on this proposal you can email your opinion to http://www.ncwildlife.org/sunday_hunt/Sunday_hunt/htm You were supposed to have your comments in by August 31, but they might read them anyway. Reid wrote about his experiences on Sunday fishing in his support of Sunday hunting.

I vote for Sunday hunting. I remember when I was about 9-10 years old (1952) and my Grandfather had a problem with me fishing in HIS pond on a Sunday. We'd get back from church and after lunch, I'd say I wanted to go fishing. He'd himm and haw around and finally relent. We'd go down to the chicken lot where my Grandmother would dump the slop bucket for the chickens to eat. One shovel full of dirt would net you ½ a pea can full of big fat worms. Gads, there were more worms than dirt. He and I would sit under that big old tree and fish the afternoon away. You couldn't keep the big Fat Bluegills off those worms. They were the size of my Grandfather's hand and black under the gills. Thanks for the memories. Reid.

Someone please explain to me how shooting/ racing/ whatever Wathsis on a video game can compare to Reid's experience or those you probably remember.

News

As many of you probably have heard, the U.S. Forest Service is planning on opening up sections of the Pisgah National Forest in the Globe section of Caldwell and Watauga counties to logging. The purpose of these operations is to produce varied aging of trees in the forest to enhance wildlife. Specifically, deer, bear, grouse, and turkey were mentioned. As many of you may remember from the hunter education classes that are required to obtain a hunting license, wildlife need food, water, space, cover, and edge to have a healthy population. Edge is the transference from one type and age of vegetation to another.

I would be the first to admit that in the past the forest service seemed to only care about managing the forest to produce wood products for the timber industry. This was because they used the practice of clear-cutting or taking every tree over a very large area. This produced a single age forest just as no timbering at all would do. Fortunately, this seems to be a thing of the past. The Alternative B plan that was discussed at the meetings held at the Blowing Rock Town Hall seemed to be an exemplary manner in which to promote wildlife and actually increase the amount of land set aside for old growth forests. These old growth areas would however be adjacent to areas of growth of varying ages that would provide the five items mentioned above that wildlife need. This plan requires selective cutting of trees that would leave 25 to 30 percent of the presently standing timber in the areas where timbering is going to be done. At later dates, further timbering would be done in other areas that were not set aside as old growth preserves. This would insure a diversity that is very beneficial. Even the views are going to be improved as the leaf colors in the fall will be more varied than they will if they reflect a predominately single growth, single age forest.

However, most of the people in attendance at the meetings held by the Forest Service appeared to have little regard for wildlife. One lady said we already had too many deer, that there were plenty of turkeys, and that bears were dangerous. I do not believe that she knew what a grouse was so she did not seem too concerned with them. She (and others) seemed upset that only species that could be hunted would be helped. All of you that hunt know that it is impossible to help game animals without helping hundreds of non game animals, such as songbirds, hawks, rodents such as chipmunks, foxes, etc. Indeed, statements were made indicating that the "million dollar views" from private properties needed protecting as they were more valuable than the multi-use function the national forest is supposed to serve.

These people want a no action scenario that would prevent the Pisgah from ever being logged if you could see the logging operation from Blowing Rock or along U.S. Route 221. This means that an old growth, single age forest would result. The only way any diversity in the timber growth could possibly occur would be if there were to be a major forest fire. They have formed a political action committee to lobby for their point of view.

The Friends of Grandfather and Blowing Rock Scenic Views are trying to have legislation introduced by our Senators and Representatives that would classify thirty to forty thousand acres of the Pisgah Forest as a scenic view-shed. All timber harvesting would be banned. Only those fields that currently exist to provide food plots for wildlife would be allowed to remain. No expansion or enhancement of wildlife food plots would be allowed. No roads would be opened to allow access for hunting or to serve as access for disabled people wanting to enjoy the forest, be it hunting, or just getting out in the woods. The entire forest would become a single age entity that would be detrimental to wildlife and any multi-use function. I believe this is the correct interpretation of the proposed ordinance. You can read it yourself at the Watauga County Library. Ask for the Thursday August 24 edition of the Blowing Rocket. The Blowing Rock National Scenic Area Act is on page 15. This Act also allows for hunting or fishing to be banned in sections of this area for (1) public safety; (2) administration; (3) public use and enjoyment. I do not quite know what this means as the hunting and fishing regulations cover public safety and administration and I thought hunting and fishing were public use and enjoyment. I also do not know where these sections are or how large they are.

Please contact your Senators and Representatives and let them know your feelings on this matter. If you think that old growth, untouched view-sheds should be the prime use for thousands of acres of public land, tell them. If you think the forest should be managed for multi-uses such as hunting, fishing, and being able to access public property as well as timber harvesting, tell them. In any case ask them to make sure that in whatever manner use is made of the national forest that it be closely monitored to determine the results of whatever management program that is implemented and to make sure that the plan is properly followed.

The people that will probably be asked to introduce the bill are:

Senator Richard Burr, telephone 202-224-3154 or 800-685-8916

Senator Elisabeth Dole, telephone 202-224-6342 or 919-856-4630

Congresswoman Virginia Fox, telephone 202-225-2071 or 336-778-0173

Congressman Patrick McHenry, telephone 800-477-2576 or 828-765-2729

And The Last Word Goes To:

Wayne Green

Instead of my usual editorial drivel, I thought I would give you some news about one of our junior shooters. In August, Gary and Sandy Hoyle went to Wisconsin to visit their son Clayton. Their grandson, Mathew Horney, went with them. Many of you know Matt from his participation in Club Matches, the Trap League, and IDPA.

While they were in Wisconsin, Matt decided to attend the Wisconsin State IDPA Match. Matt has recently qualified as a Sharpshooter in the Enhanced Service Division. He decided to shoot this match in the Stock Service Division in which he is a Marksman.

As everyone knows, when you go to somebody else's pea patch, you pick peas by their rules. This match not only differed from the way IDPA matches are conducted locally; there were some interesting interpretations of some of the basic rules contained in the IDPA rule book. That's all right because it was their pea patch.

None of this mattered because Matt showed those Yankee boys (and men) how IDPA is done. He won the Marksman division and would have placed second in the Sharpshooter division. He did so well; he was moved into the Sharpshooter Division. See, no good deed or performance really does go unpunished.

The thing that makes me the most proud of Matt is that he did not shoot some targets that he considered to be placed in a dangerous manner. Some people complained to the IDPA about this stage and it was withdrawn from the match. It takes a lot of courage for a 14 year old to buck the match director at a state match when something goes against his training. Most of the "adults" shot the dangerous targets because they were more concerned with winning than safety or the IDPA rules. This goes to show that age and maturity is not necessarily the same thing.

Matt is a fine young man. He has been shooting IDPA for about six years. As he is a freshman in high school now, he would have been about 8 when he started. He is very competent and mature for his age. I would rather have him behind

me with a loaded gun than 99% of the grown men I know. Watauga Gun Club can have no better representative than Matt at any event anywhere.

I can't stand it. I have to inject some editorial B.S. We all have kids, grandchildren, or know some young people. You seldom, if ever, see any of them at the club. We have got to change this.

The first reason is that it would benefit the kids. When asked the best form of recreation, Thomas Jefferson said that a man should take a gun with him on his walks because shooting helped develop concentration and self-discipline, which were more important than physical prowess. In this day of political correctness, it is difficult to find a way to install a sense of responsibility in young people by any means. The shooting sports are an avenue to do this while the kids are having fun instead of trying to do it by screaming at them. As the saying goes, you usually have better results using a teaspoon of honey than you do with six gallons of vinegar. My daddy used to answer people's questions about my brother and me spending so much time shooting by saying we would get in less trouble out in the woods with a gun than we would with a six pack of beer. If we wanted to keep the guns, we knew better than to get the beer.

The other reason is self-preservation. In case you haven't noticed, we are all getting a little long in the tooth. It would be interesting to know how many club members we have under 40. If we don't get young people more interested in shooting than they are in zapping Whasis on the video game, then we are eventually going to lose our second amendment rights. If you don't care about something, you won't fight for it.

When my brother's stepsons were involved in Scouting, we helped several young men obtain merit badges in shooting and orienteering. Mike Testerman and I did the same thing when his sons were Scouts. Maybe we could start up some kind of program to do this on a regular basis. I think that the agriculture program at Watauga High School has been canceled. This program used to sponsor hunter education classes for young people. Maybe we can take up the slack.

Except for Matt, Tommy Pitts' son Jared, the program Brian Woods has at the high school, and the five or six kids Gary has in the air gun program, we do not have many young shooters. They probably number less than 20 total. Lets all try to do better and bring some young people out to the club. You might have to give up a little personal shooting time, but it is worth it. After all, somebody took the time to get you started. If you know of any young person with any interest at all, please help him or her get involved in shooting.

Nitro Express
PO Box 3284
Boone, NC 28607