



## SMSC WINTER NEWSLETTER

### Let's start off with a look back on 2020 (and 2019)

Although the global pandemic impacted everyone's lives in ways we couldn't have imagined at the outset, SMSC has been able to stay open as usual. This is because, as one wise gentleman put it, "We are a park that allows you to shoot." We were able to provide our services more or less as usual. However, we were not able to continue our practice of having large, in-person orientation classes. This posed a problem for us, people needed activities like a day at the range more than ever with their options for experiences outside the home being so limited. Our solution was to move our training and new member process online. Potential new members view a training video, take a proficiency test to ensure they retained the essential information and are able to ask questions via email or our forum. This allows us to continue to accept new members and they can go through the process where they are and whenever it is convenient for them. We still have the option for one-on-one orientations for those who are not able to utilize the online experience. The result has been a very positive experience. We have maintained a level of membership to keep our club viable and the feedback from the people using the new process has been positive. If you know someone who is interested in rifle, shotgun, pistol, revolver shooting or archery, please direct them to our website, there is no obligation or cost to go through the training exercise.

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# New Home

In 2019 the state of the range manager's home was such that it was time to replace it. The mobile home had far outlived its life expectancy and replacement was long overdue. The board investigated the options to build a traditional home, cabin or purchase a new mobile home. The latter option was the choice that made the most sense from a practical and financial sense. With a lot of work from our range manager himself and our members, the new home was installed and amenities



added. The new home has a separate entrance for the office so that the range manager is able to get some separation of public and private spaces. This fall with the help of our volunteers, we trimmed the trees around the trailer so that the roof will not be shaded all day long. This will prevent the sort of moisture damage that occurred with the older trailer.

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# Range Improvements

In 2019 we improved the drainage around the east shed to prevent water from seeping into the shed.



Last year the same area was landscaped to prevent further erosion in the area



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The pistol berm was covered with a layer of mulch to better absorb bullets



In the fall of 2020, we were able to get an excellent price on fill. We received 52 truckloads of fill and used it to build the height of our berm. The berm is now twice the height that it was. While we haven't measured it yet, it should be close the height recommended by the NRA for a berm. We hope to get as good a deal this spring and build it a bit higher.

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The archery range also got a number of improvements in 2020. The trails were groomed, some of the unused ones where removed. The large targets near the 'tree stand' were replaced with new targets. While I don't 'arch?' whatever the verb is for what archers do...I did enjoy several nice walks in the woods on the paths last summer.

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# 2020 All Members Meeting Postponed

The 2020 All Members meeting had to be postponed due to the pandemic restrictions. We did put out requests for nominations for the board of directors and we had only 4 nominations, exactly enough to fill the open positions. While they haven't yet been voted on by the membership, we have

appointed the following to fill the empty positions: Dale Meyer and Anthony Deveau are returning to the board and we have welcomed Jidong Zhang and JaMario Ayers to the board. We want to thank Marta Toth and Ron Ruehmann for their service and all of the hard work they did for SMSC.

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# What's ahead for the spring?

## Annual meeting and cleanup day

We have scheduled our annual clean up day for May 15 from 8 AM until done. We are going to hold our 2020 all members meeting that day too. We will take a break from clean up activities to hold a meeting at 11 AM. All members are invited to attend the meeting. If the weather is nice, we will be able to hold it outside so that we can all keep a social distance. Even if you aren't aiding with the cleanup, please come to the meeting to meet the board, voice your concerns, bring your ideas, etc.

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## Membership

We have taken several steps in the last couple of years to help retain our membership. In addition to the email notifications that you all receive; we attempt to reach any members whose emails bounce or are blocked with a phone call. We send post card reminders to any members who are between 60 and 90 days past due.

As in past years we are setting March as our 'Amnesty' month where lapsed members can rejoin without the normal \$10 re-joining fee. Spread the word around to anyone you might know that is interested in rejoining.

Our membership levels as of Jan. 2021 are 1025 annual members and 272 life members which is on par for our normal levels of membership which historically fluctuate between 1100 and 1300 members.

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## Ammo shortage

As you are most likely aware there is an ammunition shortage and it is mainly due to the large number of new shooters who have recently purchased guns. Most factories are running around the clock already. With no guarantee that demand will stay as high as the current level, manufacturers of new ammunition are not likely to invest the capital in new facilities and equipment to expand their current capacity, at least for now. This has even affected us reloaders as the bulk of all primers, powders and bullets go to the new ammunition manufacturers. That isn't to say that ammunition cannot be found. I'm an auction junkie and most of the area online auctions I have seen recently have included quite a bit of new and reloaded ammunition. My guess is that people who have been collecting (I won't say hoarding) it are looking to cash in on the high demand. Sites like <https://minnesota.hibid.com/>, <https://tmracompany.bidwrangler.com/>, <https://riverlandauctions.hibid.com/> have all featured quite a bit of ammunition in their recent auctions. It isn't going cheap, no bargains to be found, but it is available so I thought I'd spread the word.