

## WILTON FISH & GAME ASSOCIATION

On April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1929, the Wilton Fish & Game Association was organized with G. F. Goodspeed as its president. It was disbanded on March 9, 1942 and later re-organized in 1951 with 21 members and Dr. D. Rowell Orr as president. On November 11, 1951 the Wilton Fish & Game joined the Maine Fish & Game Association and became incorporated on August 6<sup>th</sup>, 1953 adopting its constitution on January 11, 1976. The constitution and by-laws were revised and accepted by the membership at a regular meeting in April of 1991. There have been numerous changes to the by-laws as needed, some as recent as 2013.

The Articles of Incorporation state the the purposes are: (a) “to promote the interests of legitimate sport with rod and gun; (b) to enforce the laws for the protection and propagation of inland fish and game within the state.”

On September 10<sup>th</sup>, 1989 the club signed a formal agreement with the North Jay Sportsman's Club to rent its electric trap machine and a regulation trapshooting range was constructed on the grounds. In 1990 the kitchen was renovated, painted, the stove made operational and a sink was put in. An archery range was built and a wheelchair ramp installed at the main entrance to the clubhouse. Upgrading of the outdoor and the indoor ranges continue as needed.

Over the years the organization has conducted two to four free Hunter Safety Courses as well as NRA sanctioned Home Protection Courses and assisted the Boy Scouts in achieving merit badges for shooting. In 1995 a nine station walk-thru sporting clay course using the electric trap machines, a high and low trap house with manual traps, a running rabbit trap (made by members), a rising teal and a few other target presentations was made operational. The course is a formidable challenge to all shotgunners and a great primer for bird hunting season. In 2002, eight members donated money and the club acquired a loan for the remainder, to purchase a ProMatic Ranger 8 trap and installed it in the existing trap house. In the meantime, the North Jay club dissolved and the Wilton Fish & Game acquired permanent possession of the electric trap.

The indoor range is a 6 station 50 footer with retrievable targets. This range is controlled access for obvious reasons and no shooting is allowed while the main floor is occupied. Between 2012 and 2013 the indoor range received extensive rehabilitation including heat, lighting upgrade and a ventilation system.

In 2010 a Youth League of young shooters was established. They are competing with other clubs and beginning in 2011 they were also shooting trap. As of 2013 there are three teams, the first being The Rimfires with 5 youths, followed by The Firing Pins and most recently, The Single Shots. Another milestone in 2010 was the installation of a metal roof being put on the clubhouse. It should be noted that nearly all of the clubs activities and work are accomplished thru volunteer work by members and donations from supporters or members. Our regular meeting is the third Sunday of the month at 6.30 pm and the Annual Meeting is in January.

We purchased 12+ acres of land abutting ours in mid 2011 and as a result of this our annual dues were increased to \$45.00 per year for individuals or a whole family. Within a short time after the purchase, an archery range was built, complete with a 15 foot tree stand, again, a

donation from a member.

In 2012 we conducted our first Open House in conjunction with the annual Wilton Blueberry Festival with our Youth Shooting Teams handling the food sales. During the Open House, we conduct trap shooting, have a 3 gun (rifle, pistol,shotgun) shoot as well as a .22 "Gatling Gun" opportunity. Also in 2012 work began on renovating our kitchen with a complete kitchen that was donated to us. This work is ongoing.

In 2013 we received an NRA grant for a well and it was drilled in July of that year. We anticipate having a complete kitchen and toilet in the not too distant future. Our By-Laws were again updated and approved by members and the Youth Shooters had a float in the Blueberry Festival parade.

For a number of years we have operated a booth at the Farmington Fair in the fall as well as a booth at the Annual Wilton Blueberry Festival in the summer. While our ranges were open to the public, we experienced frequent disregard for safety rules, posted shooting hours and frequent littering as well as some of our buildings being shot. As a consequence, the association reluctantly adopted *members only* criteria in 2009. That same year we adopted 20 rules of conduct for range use and thru 2009, considerable work such as grading, bulldozing, fencing and construction of a two station shooting box (a CONEX shipping box) was installed on the outdoor range. There was a "Cowboy Shoot" in 2009 which was quite successful and we now hold a "Field Day" each September with trap shooting, archery and other shooting events on our ranges. We also conduct ice fishing derbies each February and try to schedule them on the free fishing weekend and thru the summer months we have trap shooting Monday evenings, usually until the end of September.

As mentioned before, our regular meetings are on the third Sunday of each month at 6.30 pm and the Annual Meeting is in January. Our mailing address is P.O. Box 339, Wilton, ME 04294 and our physical location is 256 Rt. 2 West, Wilton, ME 04294.