



THE FIRING LINE

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE RIVER FALLS SPORTSMEN'S CLUB

MARCH, 2025

THIS ISSUE:

New members listed

Carcass roll-off proves more popular

James Vogt lauded at Court of Honor

2025

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT

John Pietenpol
715-781-0799

VICE-PRESIDENT

Parker Heise
715-781-7708

SECRETARY

Brad Cran

TREASURER

Ben Gaus

RANGE MASTER

Ed Gibb

CHIEF INSTRUCTOR

Kevin Larson
715-495-5114

CLUB MANAGER

Eric Swenson
715-760-0499

DIRECTORS

Dan Herum
Rachel Vogt
Nate Schultz

Clean-Up Day is May 10th

A conflict with long-scheduled Project Appleseed weekend prompted directors to push the Club's annual Spring clean-up out to Saturday, May 10th.

Volunteers are encouraged to turn out between 8 am and noon. Bring gloves, a rake, or any other tools needed if you have passion for a specific outdoor chore.

Membership supports dues hike, effective 2026

Sportsmen's Club members approved a board recommendation on Jan. 4th to increase club fees in 2026. Price for individual memberships will rise to \$90 (with four volunteer hours) or \$180 without. Family memberships will be \$135 or \$270 without volunteer hours. Junior memberships will increase from \$25 to \$30.

Directors began taking steps to address a potential deficit last fall when treasurer Ben Gaus reminded board members that annual membership dues are supposed to cover basic annual operating costs and club upkeep. Since the national pandemic in 2021, most basic operating expenses for the club have increased to the point where the current membership dues are barely covering them and may fall short going forward, he said.

Club bylaws require a majority vote by the membership for any dues increase, which cannot take effect until the following year.

Members were advised of the pending vote via a separate postcard mailing ahead of the Jan. 4th meeting. The initiative passed by a 72 "yes", 20 "no" margin.

In other business, John Pietenpol was re-elected president, Ben Gaus as treasurer, Kevin Larson as Chief Instructor, and Rachel Vogt as director by a 67-13 margin over candidate Nick Larsen.

During his President's Report to members, Pietenpol noted the passing of some members, thanking Margaret Wilson for a recent contribution made on behalf of her late husband, Ron Wilson.

Pietenpol noted several work projects completed, including new overflow parking and a road onto the new property, extension of electrical service to the acquired shed, new moveable archery stands, and the addition of new scoring stands and a flagpole installation created by Eagle Scout candidates Keirka Kretzmann and James Vogt, respective-

ly.

In the areas of community outreach, Pietenpol noted that the Club helped sponsor an event for disabled hunters in Elmwood, initiated placement of a deer carcass disposal container in River Falls for a third year, and provided facilities for River Falls Police Department

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President's Award

Nick Larson of River Falls was the recipient of the River Falls Sportsmen's Club "President's Award" for 2024. President John Pietenpol made the announcement during the Jan. 4th annual meeting. Larson was lauded for his active role in co-chairing the fundraising banquets for the past three years, and for his active role in designing the new club logo that graces t-shirts, hoodies, jackets, and hats produced recently to bolster the club's brand. Photo contributed.



AT LEAST 92 Sportsmen's Club members stayed beyond the renewals and complimentary snacks to participate in voting at the annual meeting. Photo courtesy of Nate Schultz.

Please welcome these new RFSC members!

Michael Zahn, Hammond; Josh Johnson and Alexis Benavides, Inver Grove Heights **(Dec.)**

Patrick and Isaiah O'Brien, River Falls **(Jan.)**

Nicole Freeberg and Lon Coffey, Roberts; Andrew Dyb, Hammond; and Fred Trautmiller, River Falls. **(Feb.)**

Upcoming Club events

- Tuesday, March 25th. Summer Trap League Captain's meeting, 7–8 pm. Leaders will be asked for input on trade-offs between continuing widespread awarding of team plaques versus raising fees for team participation.
- River Falls High School Shooting Sports begins the week of March 6th, with students utilizing facilities from 4–9 pm Fridays and 9 am–3 pm Saturdays, through June 27th. An event with Clear Lake is set for 9 am to 7 pm, on Saturday, April 19th. June 28th is Shooting Sports Fun Day from 9–3, for students and parents.
- 2025 Summer trap hours 5–9 pm, Tuesdays and Wednesdays, and Sundays from 11–3 pm. Two practice weeks, April 15th and April 22nd. First official week of league starts April 29th, 2025.
- St. Croix Central High School Trap Team begins its Sunday afternoon–Thursday evening league on March 9th & 13th, continuing into June.
- Regular board meetings begin at 7 pm, the second Monday of each month.

Newsletter

Comments, tips, criticisms, contributions, obits, and club – related questions are welcomed. Write, text or call Steve Dzubay at #715-821-7537 or stevendzubay@gmail.com. Special thanks to Deb & Rich Cernohous for their proof-reading assistance.

RF carcass pickup yield has grown yearly

BALDWIN -- River Falls Sportsmen's Club three-year effort to help to encourage proper disposal of deer carcasses appears to be gaining momentum.

Mark Worth, a wildlife technician with the WDNR's Baldwin office, said roll-offs sited near the River Falls Wastewater Treatment facility were well utilized.

"The dumpster got quite a bit of use, it has been emptied and replaced twice, so close to three whole dumpsters worth of carcasses were kept off the landscape and disposed of properly!", Worth wrote on Feb. 3.

"I wanted to take the time to say thank you again for all of your help with this process and for sponsoring a dumpster with us again for the 2024 season! I look forward to hopefully working with (RFSC) again on this process this coming fall," said Worth.

A container near Plummer Concrete, outside Ellsworth, was also emptied twice. A Dumpster at the Baldwin office was emptied three times. A 12-yard container in Deer Park was filled four times.

"Overall, our Adopt-a-Dumpster



MARK WORTH and fellow WDNR employees set-up the first roll-off on S. Apollo St. in early November.

program collected close to 14 (containers) worth of deer carcasses across the archery and gun deer seasons, in Pierce and St. Croix counties. Definitely a feat that deserves a pat on the back!

"It wouldn't be possible without the help of conservation groups and people like yourself, so thank you very much again!" said Worth.

RFSC contributes \$500 to underwrite costs for the first container. The City of River Falls assists by providing a location, keeping the area plowed, and helping to promote the effort through its e-mailed newsletter.

Scholarship apps due soon

Graduating seniors are urged to consider penning an application for the RFSC scholarship.

Applications are available in the clubhouse and with this newsletter

The deadline for submission is March 31, 2025.

Complete instructions are included on the application itself.

Annual meeting . . . continued from Page 1

Shooting Sports and St. Croix Central trap teams. He also called attention to collegiate accomplishments by Andrew Aderman, and Oliver Cran's success at the state and national shooting competition levels.

Pietenpol extended appreciation to Rachel Vogt for leading efforts to develop a new club logo and create a new line of clothing and hats with the indicia. He also thanked Banquet Committee members and volunteers for efforts in 2024, and Steve Dzubay, for assembling the quarterly newsletter.

Turnout for the 2025 annual meeting was about as strong



PRESIDENT JOHN Pietenpol and Secretary Brand Cran. Nate Schultz photo.

as ever -- based on a "plate-count" for the hors d'oeuvres/finger foods provided by Moose volunteers, treasurer Ben Gaus reported at the January meeting.

About \$16,000 was taken in for membership renewals, key fees, and clothing sales. About \$2,700 was taken in for the day's gun raffles, from which the club profited about \$200 after expenses.

Cost for the venue, food and beverages was \$1,600, Gaus noted, advising that a Moose representative told him at this point they have no one committed to provide food next year, but that may change. Alternatively, the Sportsmen's Club could hire an outside caterer.

The meeting lasted about one hour and 15 minutes.

Eric Swenson succeeds Allen Gallistel as club manager

At the annual meeting in January, Allen Gallistel accepted a nomination to return for another year in the manager's role but then proceeded to endorse the candidacy of Eric Swenson for the job.

Swenson was subsequently elected by a vote of 67 to 15.

An active member for seven years, Swenson lives with wife Michelle at 135 CTH W. The couple has a son who lives in Virginia, and two daughters who reside in the area.

He was a lifelong dairy farmer until selling his herd a few years ago. Since then, he's been a regular at trap leagues and club workdays -- usually operating a tractor & loader or other heavy equipment he's driven over from the farm.

He's the son of the late Eugene Swenson, and grandson of the late

George Swenson.

Eric said he never made time to shoot while working, but since slowing down, enjoys trap -- "clay games and five-stand" -- but his real passion is side-by-side shotguns.

Swenson doesn't have any particular strategy as he begins the new unpaid/volunteer position, but he wants to make everyone feel welcome and "get more involved."



Eric Swenson

Members can reach Swenson directly at #715-760-0499, or e-mail eswenson69@gmail.com

Gallistel couldn't recall exactly how long he held the manager's post but estimated it was about six years this time around.

Gallistel moved to River Falls in 1997 from the Medford area to attend UW-River Falls, but didn't join the club until about 1999 to pursue a passion for trap shooting. After he earned a degree in chemistry in 2001, he remained in RF and gun club visits became more frequent.

He recalls he was first elected to the board in about 2004. Following two years as a director he was elected president and served in that role until about 2010.

The job description includes ordering food and bar inventory, responding to e-mail inquiries and overseeing trap leagues along with the Range Master.

Gallistel worked with member Greg Leier for a number of years, organizing the club's fundraising food



Allen Gallistel

kiosk at the annual River Falls Days celebration. The booth was discontinued three years ago when festival organizers began to require that vendors open

on Thursday evening, then later, provide services Thursday evening through noon Sunday.

"I'm OK taking a break for a few years, then I'll probably come back and run for something again," Gallistel said in January.

Gallistel works as a chemical lab director with the Minnesota Department of Transportation. He also serves as president of the River Falls County-Liners snowmobile club



Jeff and Rachel Vogt celebrate with son James, after the Feb. 22 event at the Roberts Park Building.

Vogt awarded Eagle badge at Court of Honor

James Vogt, son of members Rachel and Jeff Vogt and a Boy Scout with Roberts-Hammond Troop 161, recently received his Eagle rank pin and badge at an Eagle Scout Court of Honor in Roberts. James also received a Bronze Palm for earning five merit badges beyond the 21-badge requirement.

Among his accomplishments are national youth leadership training, two Philmont Scout Ranch treks and a Sea Base Adventure.

About 60 people gathered to celebrate the achievement, including Rep. Rob Kreibich (R-New Richmond), who presented a commendation from the State of Wisconsin. James also received congratulatory letters and mementos from Gov. Tony Evers, Sen. Rob Stafsholt (R-New Richmond) and U.S. Rep. Tom Tiffany (R-7th District).

The afternoon program included presentations by at least six Scouting officials, followed by a reception and dinner.

James raised over \$600 to purchase and replace the Club's old 15-foot flagpole with a 25-foot, wind-resistant, lighted pole, plus a new flag and landscaping. Excess funds he raised were donated to the Club's Junior Shooter fund.

He has worked as a trap helper at the club for two years and is also a member of the St. Croix Central Trap team.

A senior at St. Croix Central High School, after graduation, James plans to attend Michigan Technological University at Houghton to pursue an engineering degree.

Board briefs

IN DECEMBER, directors authorized treasure Ben Gaus to purchase up to two truckloads of clay pigeons if he's able to negotiate a fair price. The club could save up to \$9,500.

At that time, there were about 16 pallets on-hand, but we typically need to have about 24 pallets on hand by April 1st. To secure the best pricing, customers must take delivery by June 30th. Projections are based on 145 birds per box; 63 boxes per pallet; 24 pallets per truckload. The tricky part is working around road weight restrictions imposed by the township.

ALLEN GALLISTEL REPORTED in February that award plaques for 2022 and 2023 trap team honorees have been completed by Riverland Laser. Board members are considering various options for future recognition due to escalating prices for plaques. Choices are to reduce the number of plaques awarded or significantly raise prices for team participation to cover higher costs. Board sentiment was to discuss it with team captains at an organizational meeting in late March.

CHIEF INSTRUCTOR KEVIN LARSON who leads the 4-H shooting programs, requested use of a portion of the club's storage shed at the east end of the shelter for permanent storage of targets and other shooting accessories. Directors were supportive and Ed Gibb said he'd work with Larson in defining the space.

DIRECTORS PLEDGED \$500 from the club to support upcoming fundraisers by Pheasants Forever (Schultz abstained, due to his involvement with PF); Ducks Unlimited, and the Whispering Emerald outing for disabled hunters. Those organizations each typically support RFSC's annual fundraiser.

DURING THE JANUARY MEETING, the board and observers brainstormed projects -- short- and long-term -- that would benefit the club. Some are small and can be completed during a club workday, while others might be appropriate and qualify for a grant through organizations like the National Rifle Association, Gun Owners of America, or Wisconsin DNR. Included were: replacing the aging concrete blocks under the gun racks; epoxy coating on the clubhouse floor; removal of leaning trees near the shelter on the 100-yard range; removal of one prominent tree stump and planting of a new tree in memory of Chris Gervais.; extend a connection from the newer, deeper water well on the former Leroy Sylvester property (the current well, drilled in 1961, doesn't infiltrate fast enough to even allow for watering trees and sometimes pumps sand, Dan Herum said. Pietenpol asked Herum to research the costs for trenching, pipe, plumbing and report back.) Ben Gaus asked to purchase a camera or iPad that would be utilized to photograph the counters on trap machines before- and after each use. Regular documentation would create a "check and balance" to monitor clay consumption by trap leagues, school- and college teams.

RIVER FALLS SPORTSMEN'S CLUB

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RIVER FALLS, WI 54022-0336



2025 board seated

Members returned the same directors and seated a new club manager during the Jan. 4th annual meeting. Pictured from front left are: Nate Schultz, Kevin Larson, Rachel Vogt and Ben Gaus. From left rear are: Dan Herum, John Pietenpol, Eric Swenson, Ed Gibb and Brad Cran. Missing was Parker Heise.

RANGE FACILITIES ARE OPEN TO MEMBERS 365 DAYS PER YEAR. WE ONLY REQUIRE THAT YOU OBSERVE POSTED SHOOTING HOURS AS FOLLOWS:

WEEKDAYS FROM: 9 AM TO 8 PM

SATURDAY AND SUNDAY FROM: 9 AM TO 8 PM

THE CLUBHOUSE IS ONLY OPEN DURING TRAP LEAGUE HOURS (JANUARY TO OCTOBER), WHICH ARE AS FOLLOWS:

TUESDAY 5 PM – 9 PM SUMMER, AND FALL TRAP LEAGUE

WEDNESDAY 5 PM – 9 PM SUMMER TRAP LEAGUE

SUNDAY 11 AM – 3 PM WINTER, SUMMER, AND FALL TRAP LEAGUE

WWW.RIVERFALLSPORTSMENSClub.COM/