

# STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE FOREST LAKE SPORTSMEN'S CLUB

Adopted April 7, 2008

## **Our History**

The Forest Lake Sportsmen's Club traces its roots back to a 1916 photo appearing in a Forest Lake newspaper article describing how Forest Lake Sportsmen's Club members helped the DNR to stock fish in Forest Lake that summer.

The Forest Lake Sportsmen's Club was founded by local shooters who desired a safe, private and user-friendly place to shoot firearms with their families. A small parcel of land was acquired and a trap & rifle range was carved out. The club was incorporated in 1937 but during the war years of the early 40's, the club curtailed its activities, directing their focus on winning the war. When peace was won, its members could once again enjoy their sport on their own land. A clubhouse fire seemed to doom the club but in the latter 40's, & early 50's, a rebirth of the club found membership shares being sold for \$100 dollars each, to current members and new, to bring new life to the club and help pay for the growing costs of new improvements to the grounds including a clubhouse. Five trap fields were eventually built where the six fields are located today including two skeet fields. A 300 yard rifle range was also incorporated into the area, superimposed on the trap & skeet fields, making it difficult to enjoy both shooting venues at the same time. It was found in the 50's that a larger clubhouse was needed and a construction add-on, more than doubled the size of the clubhouse. The modification can be seen today, in the two different levels of roofs on the existing building.

In the late 50's, early 60's, more land was purchased west of the clubhouse, where the tall pines grow today. These were planted by club members and the Boy Scouts.

In 1993 a trail was cut through the woods on the east side of the property to start a walk through archery range. 3-D league archery shoots were started as a result of the increased interest in archery and to help finance the club. Also in 1993 a new rifle range was planned and constructed, in a safer, more convenient location, becoming active a year or so later. Located at the northwest corner of the club's property, we could now safely allow rifle, pistol, and shot-gun and archery activities to run at the same time without interfering with one another.

On August 19, 1995, the White Bear Rod and Gun Club merged with the Forest Lake Sportsmen's Club, bringing in 40 members and creating a more solid membership base and new resources.

Forty acres of new land was purchased east of the club in the latter 1990's, making our total area just over 100 acres. The 40 acres acquired has become the home of FLSC's archery venue. By clearing the land around the clubhouse of older archery targets, FLSC paved the way for the new wave of interest in sporting clays shooting, allowing us to

build two separate sporting clays courses through the woods, along the perimeter of the present location of trap and skeet. Safety concerns made it necessary to install a 6 foot chain-link fence around the entire property through a partnership with the Minnesota DNR.

### **Our Mission**

The Forest Lake Sportsmen's Club is a member-owned shooting sports center dedicated to providing its members and the shooting community with a safe, attractive, and well-managed environment to enjoy their shooting interests, and to promoting good sportsmanship, conservation and the advancement and preservation of the shooting sports.

### **Our Values**

#### *One Club:*

Our strength and vitality lie in being one organization working together across our shooting interests to achieve our mission. We value the collective and collaborative efforts that are so essential to our success.

- Work across all of our operations to implement and support the right strategies, at the right places, always with the greater good of our mission in mind
- Celebrate individual, team, and project success of all who are part of the Forest Lake Sportsmen's Club

#### *Member Services:*

We will meet the highest professional and safety standards in all of our organizational endeavors and in doing so hold ourselves accountable to our mission and members.

- Provide priority access to club facilities for members pursuing their shooting interests
- Provide a welcoming, professionally-managed, and attractive environment
- Offer quality, affordable facilities for archery, pistol, shotgun, and rifle shooting
- Sponsor club activities that further a spirit of goodwill among our members and among the sporting public generally

#### *Education, Training, and Public Service:*

We will provide education and training for youth and the shooting public, and offer opportunities for the public to enjoy our facilities.

- Make our facilities available for firearms safety training classes
- Sponsor shooting leagues for individual and team participation

- Open our ranges to the public for sight-in opportunities prior to fall hunting seasons
- Hold and operate shooting tournaments when financially viable
- Offer shooting clinics
- Share our facilities with the police and special interest groups
- Cooperate with the DNR and other state agencies

### **Our Vision**

Our vision is to be a respected organization with first-rate facilities, and to establish the club more firmly as one of the best shooting organizations and facilities in the state and region. We will accomplish this by:

- Managing our facilities and events in a professional, exemplary manner
- Providing a welcoming environment for our members and for the shooting public
- Hosting registered shooting tournaments (archery, sporting clays, trap, and skeet)
- Administering club business efficiently, cost-effectively, and with accountability to our shareholders
- Achieving and maintaining financial stability

### **Our Operating Environment – An Assessment**

*Internal Assessment – Factors inside our club that we can largely control:*

#### **Strengths**

- We have a full membership roster with a waiting list.
- We have a large potential membership workforce and many shareholders with access to heavy or specialized equipment who are willing to help.
- Our facilities are well-developed and attractive to outside groups and organizations.
- Our location is convenient to the metro area.
- We are a total shooting sports center.
- Our rates are very affordable, both to our shareholders and the public.
- There is additional capacity on all shooting ranges.
- The club is friendly, sensitive to neighbors, and supportive of the community and special interest groups.

#### **Weaknesses**

- We do not have a coherent business plan or model to achieve financial stability.
- We do not have an approved operating budget.
- We do not have a shareholder orientation program or process, making it especially hard for new members to fully integrate with the club.
- Though many members are heavily involved, many of our large number of shareholders show little involvement or participation.
- At times there is division among shooting groups.

- We lack a professional all-club manager.
- We have not provided clear, singular, board-approved direction to the club manager.
- There has been indiscriminate spending for projects without board approval.
- There has been misuse and abuse of scheduling dues work-off labor for events.
- Some events have been very well done, but others exhibit poor planning and organization and lack of ownership by project leaders.
- We do not have regular housekeeping on our ranges.
- We do not protect the club's history and affairs with adequate control and storage of archival materials.
- There are times where there is a lack of diplomacy and a positive and friendly attitude.
- We have had a lack of confidentiality on private business matters.
- Significant strides have been made, but we do not have a defined, coherent program for advertising and promotion.

*External Assessment – Factors outside our club that we can influence but may not control:*

#### Opportunities

- The club is an undiscovered gem, with a large land holding in the metro area. This provides opportunities to attract increased business. We can participate and advertise in national, regional and local associations like the NRA, POMA, shooting and archery sports groups and the chamber of commerce. We can enhance recruitment and marketing of our shotgun, archery and handgun leagues. We can consider opening our rifle range to the public on a regular basis. We can expand youth offerings and other learning/lesson opportunities.
- The merger of Wyoming Township and the City of Wyoming offers an opportunity to work with the new municipality to zone the club property “allowed use.”
- The new state law allowing and protecting shooting ranges is good, but there is the opportunity to work with legislators to strengthen this law and we need to accomplish this.

#### Threats

- Continued development of land adjacent to club property can bring increased concerns about noise, safety, and environmental issues. The farm to our North is zoned residential.
- An Interstate 35/Highway 8 development and reconstruction project in the future may impact the club.
- We currently experience considerable dust from the gravel road along our property. Possible reconstruction of this road would impact club operations.

## **Our Goals – Three Initiatives to Sustain and Build the Forest Lake Sportsmen’s Club**

The concerns described above shaped a list of the most significant strategic issues facing the club. The goals listed below are our chosen responses to these issues. These three initiatives outline our principal effort for the next three years.

Each goal has corresponding action steps that are necessary elements to achieve that goal. Carrying out some action steps will depend on our ability to attract additional support and assistance from club members for our overall plan.

### *Goal 1: Achieve and maintain financial stability*

#### Action steps:

- a. Each year, develop an operating budget for club business showing expected revenue, operating expenses, debt payments, and capital development outlays. This budget should be reviewed and approved by both boards.
- b. Develop a business plan for each of the club’s major sporting activities (archery, sight-in days, shotgun sports, and pistol leagues) and sponsored events with a view to maximizing revenue while minimizing expenses. Eliminate activities for which the “subsidy” is more than the club can afford.
- c. Carefully evaluate and adopt a combination of cost controls, dues structure, dues work-off policies, assessments, and user fees/pricing that eliminate the club’s structural financial deficit (annual expenses exceed annual income).
- d. Establish clear rules and authorization procedures to insure appropriate use of our club’s dues work-off provisions.
- e. Investigate our inventory procedures, and if found wanting, establish clear processes for inventory control. Closely monitor our inventory against sales.
- f. Resolve which expenses should be the responsibility of which board – FLSC, Inc. or FLSC Operations.

### *Goal 2: Provide exemplary club management*

#### Action steps:

- a. Recruit, support, and retain a qualified, experienced all-club manager with good public relations and salesmanship skills.
- b. Establish clear, singular, board-approved direction to the club manager with a clear chain of command and communication. Insist that no other directions to the manager are appropriate or valid. Member concerns about club management should be referred to the board.
- c. Develop a training and orientation program for all employees that emphasizes our values and the understanding that all operations must be customer-friendly.

### *Goal 3: Increase camaraderie and participation among our members*

Action steps:

- a. Develop a shareholder orientation document.
- b. Establish a new member orientation program, including an annual welcome function hosted by the boards with a club tour.