



SHERWOOD PARK
FISH & GAME ASSOCIATION

RANGE OF THOUGHTS WINTER 2020



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President's report

Good day everyone. I hope 2019 was good to you and that 2020 will be even better. We have moved into a new year with several new Board members, some new activities planned based on priorities identified in last fall's Member Engagement Survey, and some new and not-so-new ideas to increase membership participation.

In 2019, we continued the weekly rimfire silhouette shoots and started the monthly Outlaw Precision Rimfire Series (ORPS) and held two Mapleseed events. (I must say "hats off" to the ladies that humbled some of the other gender at these.) There were several archery events through the summer and a Family Fun Day at the end of August. Our Communications Director started the News for the Week email, revamped our *Newsletter*, and started *The Ketchamoot Discourse* discussion group on Facebook. Our 1st Vice President oversaw the redesign of the Member Portal and re-launch of the SPFGA website, installation of the new camera system, and the automatic entry gate which is set to become active this month. In addition to this long list, we also had our traditional Sunday afternoon and Wednesday trap shoots, two black powder shoots, our annual work party, maintenance on the Big Bore range 100 m berm, and the usual facility maintenance activities. All in all, a very productive year and I must say hats off to all the Board and club members that made it happen.

There was a large turnout for the elections again this past December, which was great to see. To the Board members who concluded their Board service the December AGM elections, I thank you for all your hard work and hope you will assist the new incumbents in their endeavors. To our new Board members, I look forward to working with you in the coming year.

To start 2020 off, we held Range Safety Officer (RSO) training courses on January 5 and February 9. We plan on more of these through the year.

Trophy scoring was held on January 26 at the Old Log Cabin. It is always nice to see the trophies members have attained during the past year and hear some of their stories.

The SPFGA hosted this year's provincial Alberta Fish and Game Association (AFGA) conference at the Clarion Hotel on February 20 through 22.

Our **Awards Banquet** this year is on Saturday, April 18 at the Millwoods Golf Course clubhouse. Here, we celebrate



our hunting and fishing successes from 2019, show off some of our photos, have a great meal and do some fundraising. This year there is a rifle, a bow, a fishing trip, a number of bucket draws, silent auctions and door prizes. We even have a special draw for the ladies. As a special, there will be some pictures of last year's fishing trip, so please be sure to mark it on your calendar and we look forward to seeing you there.

I am looking forward to the coming year and working with the Board and members to maintain and improve the great facility we have. Make sure you follow **Bullet Points**, our newly renamed news and events emails for upcoming items of note. One to put on your calendar is the work party on June 6. It takes a lot of time and effort to maintain and improve this facility. Many hands make the work a lot lighter and it gets done much faster.

I look forward to seeing you out at the facility. Until then, I suggest stay warm and be safe in all that you do.

Al Keeler

SPFGA Board

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president@spfga.ca
Al Keeler

Past President

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Matthew Meier

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2020 Awards Banquet



The **SPFGA's annual Awards Banquet** will be held on **April 18, 2020** at the **Millwoods Golf Course clubhouse, 4540 50 Street, Edmonton.**

Tickets:

Adults: \$40

Children (2-10 years): \$20

Child under 2: No charge



2020 calendar of events

	Board meetings 2nd Tuesday of the month, @7:00 p.m. Chamber of Commerce Building 100 Ordze Avenue	General meetings 4th Thursday of the month, @7:30 p.m. Old Log Cabin 50 Spruce Avenue	Special events
February	February 11	February 29* <i>Clubhouse at the Ketchamoot Creek facility at 1:00 p.m.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feb. 20–22 AFGA Convention • Feb. 22 & 23 Intro To Winter Camping
March	March 10	March 26	
April	April 14	April 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apr. 4 ORPS • Apr. 18 Archery Work Party • Apr. 18 Awards Banquet • Apr. 19 Mapleseed Event
May	May 12	May 28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May 2 ORPS • May 2 Youth Archery Shoot • May 2 Trap Shoots start Wed & Sun • May 10 Mother's Day Shoot • May 16 Les Berry Shoot • May 23 3D Archery Shoot
June	June 9		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jun. 6 Annual Work Party • Jun. 7 OPRS • Jun. 14 Youth Archery Shoot • Jun. 21 Mapleseed Event
July	July 14		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jul. 4 ORPS • Jul. 5 Elk Calling Seminar • Jul. 6 Rimfire Silhouette starts, Mon nights • Jul. 11 Archery 5-Card Poker Shoot • Jul. 11 Rimfire Raceguns • Jul. 12 Canadian Rimfire Precision • Jul. 18/19 Black Powder Shoot
August	August 11		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aug. 1 ORPS • Aug. 9 Mapleseed Event • Aug. 22 3D Hunt-style Archery Shoot • Aug. 30 Trap shoots end • Aug. 31 Rimfire Silhouette ends
September	September 8	September 10 Hunter's Night	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sept. 5 ORPS • Sept. 5/6 Black Powder • Sept. 13 Family Fun Event
October	October 13	October 29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oct. 3 OPRS • Oct. 17 Mapleseed Event
November	November 10		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nov. 7 ORPS
December		December 3 Annual General Meeting	

Streams of communication

Roland Coppens, Communications Director

Last December, through an informal contest we asked for your ideas for names for the email communications streams we keep you updated with. From your suggestions, we chose the following:



Bullet Points: essentially our previous News for the Week refreshed with a new name, this is the main vehicle to supply you with club-related news and events every 1-2 weeks.

Bullet points was chosen, as it simultaneously suggests an itemized list—essentially what these emails are—while offering a nod to hunting and sport shooting.



Range of Thoughts: this is our quarterly newsletter (you're reading it right now). We particularly liked this name, as it simultaneously suggests at the mix of topics from the breadth of interest of our membership while giving acknowledgment to our wonderful range, which has been recognized by a number of parties over this past year as being quite exceptional.



Safe and Sound: These are system messages and include both safety and facility-related information as well as non-emergency items such as membership renewal notices and notices of general meetings where you are asked to vote (i.e. elections, budget approvals, bylaws updates, fee changes, etc).

To round all of this out, each of the above will be archived on the website so you'll be able to refer back to past issues to search for content and information.

New automatic entry gate

Matthew Meier, 1st Vice President

We have been hard at work since early 2019 on improvements to the camera and access control systems at our Ketchamoot Creek property. If you've been out over the last few months, you'll probably have noticed these underway.

You've likely also noticed that we're in the process of upgrades to the property's entrance gate.

Our iconic entrance gate was constructed in the early 1980s by Frank Lee, our current Conservation Director and club life member. It began life with a simple combination lock, the combination being changed each year. Over the years it has seen several modifications as various security systems were added to the property. In the 2000's the first set of cameras was added, followed a few years later by updated cameras and an electronic latch & card access system.



While this has served us well, the familiar entry process is a bit cumbersome: arrive at the gate, get out of your vehicle to scan your card at the card reader, open the gate, get back in your vehicle, drive through, get out of your vehicle, close the gate, sign the logbook at the kiosk, then enter the property. Repeat in reverse on exit. Mud following the rains in warm months & snow and ice during cold months added to the fun of this process. As the club has grown, traffic at the gate where all of this goes on has increased.

While we were working out the installation details of the new camera system this past summer, we realized that the timing offered some efficiency opportunities which opened the door to the installation of an automatic gate system. The Board elected to take advantage of those opportunities and, toward the end of 2019, began the steps toward these upgrades of our entrance gate.

The sliding gate system and new pedestal-mounted card readers have been installed at the entrance and exit sides. We are planning on making the new gate system active on **February 29**. At this time, the sign-in logbook at the kiosk will also be retired, with the new electronic entrance system taking over task of the property usage logs that our range certifications require.

When the new system becomes active, you will simply drive up to the card reader on the driver's side of your vehicle, scan your card and drive through after the gate has opened.



A short list of things to keep in mind with these changes:

1. The details of your existing gate access card have been transferred to the new system, so you won't have to wait for a different card to be sent.
2. You will be scanning through the driver's window, meaning that you will be on the opposite (left) side as you drive through the gate. Please take care with traffic approaching the gate as you do so.
3. All members with gate access cards must scan their card on entry (scanning one right after the other is fine, the system will accept this).
4. If you are behind another vehicle entering the property, do not simply drive through. Stop at the pedestal and scan the access cards for the occupants in your vehicle.
5. Please ensure that any vehicles behind you do not tailgate through with you. We are all responsible for the access security of the property.
6. Please ensure that the gate is closing behind you before leaving the gate area.

We will be keeping the existing manual gate (the big green cross-bar). We will swing it out of the way and keep it as a backup should the automatic gate ever be out of service. Should that happen, we will send instructions to you regarding access details.

We sincerely hope you enjoy this improvement to the access to our property. If you have any questions or concerns, please let us know at memberservices@spfga.ca.

Join us on Saturday, February 29!

We've invited a member of the **Alberta Trappers Association (ATA)** to come to our Ketchamoot Creek property to give a talk about Alberta's furbearers and the conservation cycle.

I attended this talk last year and was amazed how interactive, informative, and entertaining it was. So excellent in fact that we've invited the ATA to come and offer this same talk to you!

Starting at **1:00 p.m.** at the clubhouse on our property (**50302 Rge Rd 203**), **Jeff Bakker** of the ATA will give us an interesting way to think about conservation against the backdrop of a discussion about Alberta's furbearers, complete with examples of different furs. Following this, we will go out onto the beaver pond behind the clubhouse and have an opportunity to learn about beaver biology.

The beaver biology talk was fascinating and informative as well—an interactive presentation about the important interactions beaver have with the environment, how beavers store their food for the winter, what's going on under the ice around a beaver lodge, and feeling around under the ice to experience what the beaver's front door and front yard are like.

All of this is suitable for the whole family—including kids of kindergarten age on up! Please come on out for this fun and informative day!



As we'll be outside for the second portion on the beaver pond, dressing for the conditions is advisable. Also, as the clubhouse has been winterized, we will be using the outhouses for our bathroom facilities.

This will be our February General meeting, so there will be a very brief discussion about an update to the club's Mission Statement before the presentation begins. The proposed update is something that flowed from the Member Engagement Survey we sent out last fall. We promise to keep this part short though—while this is small bit of club business we'd like to involve you in, we'd like the focus to be on this excellent presentation.

Member disciplinary findings

When situations where the need for correction of member behaviour is identified, per item 2.5 of the bylaws the matter is referred to the Member Discipline Committee (MDC) for review. The primary objective of the MDC is member education rather than punitive action. All efforts are to be made to find productive ways to engage with members when issues arise and to achieve mutually beneficial solutions.

The purpose of this section is transparency and accountability, reporting back to the membership in a meaningful summary that respects member confidentiality.

Since being formed in the Spring of 2019, the MDC has investigated 27 separate incidents. In descending order of precedence, these matters have dealt with:

- Use of the range when closed or outside shooting hours
- Use of centerfire firearms on the Rimfire range
- Safety curtain violations
- Issues related to unsupervised children

The investigations into these incidents have resulted in:

- 11 suspensions of various lengths (generally 1-6 months depending on severity of the incident) combined with a repeat of the orientation for reinstatement;
- 4 written warnings; and
- 12 incidents being dismissed as unfounded or for lack of verifiable evidence. (Sometimes complaints are based on what people think they have observed but the evidence does support this, and the member asserts they did not do what they were accused of. The MDC is inclined to give members the benefit of the doubt when there is no evidence to the contrary. In approximately half of these incidents the committee was unable to make clear determinations due to the limitations of the old camera system. These situations are expected to be fewer in number now that our new camera system is online.)



Learn to ice fish

Reproduced with permission from the Alberta Conservation Association.

Original work: <http://bit.ly/ACAlceFishing>

Looking for a great reason to get outside and have some fun in the winter? Ice fishing is a great activity for families and people of all ages. Whether you just feel like a casual adventure at a local lake, a luxury trip with tents, heaters, satellite TV, or hiking into a remote lake with a hand auger, there is an ice fishing adventure for all levels of skill and dedication.

Step 1: Get a WIN Card

This couldn't be easier. All you need to do is go to AlbertaReIm.com, click on "Create Account" (top right of the page), and fill out the form.

What is a WIN card?

A Wildlife Identification Number (WIN) is used by hunters and anglers in Alberta to purchase hunting and fishing licenses. The card is valid for five years and is used at the point-of-sale to confirm your eligibility for a license. Read the [WIN card F.A.Q](#) for more information.

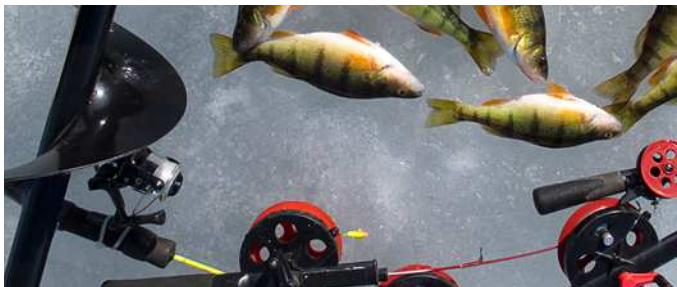
Step 2: Purchase a fishing licence

Another easy one! Go to AlbertaReIm.com and purchase a fishing licence. You can now legally fish in Alberta! If you are younger than 16 or older than 64, you don't need a licence to fish.

Make sure to familiarize yourself with the [Alberta Fishing Regulations](#). Before heading out, check the regulations for the specific waterbody you plan to fish at.

Step 3: Equipment

Before you do any fishing, you are obviously going to need some equipment. If you are just starting, you can get away with just a jigging rod and some small spoons or bait and hooks. Bring some type of metal rod to break open previously drilled holes and be sure to have something to sit on. However we do strongly recommend a hand auger for drilling holes.



Here is a more thorough list of basic equipment:

Ice auger, something to sit on, skimmer (a scoop to remove ice and slush from the hole), jigging rod with 2-8 lb line (depending on the target fish), hooks, leaders (metal wire attached to the lure so the fish can't bite off the line [needed for pike]), ice fishing tent, pliers (for removing hooks), food, wind-proof clothes and a big old plastic toboggan for hauling your gear across the ice.

An ice fishing tent and a heater can make the experience much better on cold days but is not required for success.

Step 4: Find a place to fish

Many of our aerated lakes can be fished at during the winter. [Check out our aerated lakes page to find a lake near you.](#)

Take a look at the fishing regulations to find a lake that has what you are looking for in an ice fishing adventure. For example, Wabamun Lake has lots of big fish with frequent catch rates, but is catch and release only. Pigeon Lake and Lac Ste. Anne have decent whitefish populations and you can keep up to 10 whitefish. (Check the regulations before going out.)

Step 5: Ice safety!

We can't stress about ice safety enough. Do some research online about ice thickness and weight and remember that even if the ice is thick enough, ice thickness can vary throughout the waterbody—perhaps there is a current from a stream that enters the waterbody, or gas bubbling up from the lake bed, both of which you can't see but can drastically reduce ice thickness in a small area.

Although falling through the ice is a relatively rare event, having an ice rescue kit is never a bad idea.





Step 6: Set-up & technique

Ice augers are typically pretty straightforward to use, but be careful as new ones can be very sharp. Although there are probably better spots to fish on every lake, there doesn't seem to be much consistency when it comes to depth.

Every species of fish is different and are attracted to different lures and bait. Whitefish respond to wireworms (fake worms made from coloured wire), and small brass spoons. Pike and walleye will go for bait like worms or minnows, or larger spoons and lures. Most ice fishermen will tell you that bait is the best course of action. Ask around or research online the best way to get bites from your target fish.

The basic ice fishing technique is called jigging. Jigging is where you let the lure drop to the bottom, and then quickly pull the lure off the bottom and let it naturally sink back down, this is often when you will get a bite. You can

also let the bait sink to the bottom, reel the line about two feet, then just let it sit there and let the bait do its job.

Don't over-jig the line, gentle jigging is usually best. You should always be able to feel the weight of your lure, so if there is any extra weight (a fish bite), you can tell immediately. A 1-4 lb test line is usually best for smaller fish like whitefish, so you can feel anything on the other end of the line much easier.

Step 7: Fish handling

If you are just on the ice for a fun day of catch and release, please remember to handle fish with care. For example, the layer of slime on the fish is an important barrier that prevents infections, too much handling can remove the slime and increase the fish's chance of getting an infection. Please review [My Wild Alberta's webpage](#) on proper fish handling techniques.



2020 SPFGA photo contest



Prizes for best photos are awarded annually to members at the Awards Banquet in the Scenic and Wildlife categories.

Judging will be done by the staff from the Sherwood Park Mall location of McBain Camera. The winner in each category will receive two tickets to the Awards Night banquet, a \$30 gift card, and their name on the photo contest trophy.

Submissions accepted until **March 21**. Up to two photos can be submitted in each category. Prints (maximum 8"x10") or USB drives with JPEG image files can be dropped off at **McBain Camera in Sherwood Park Mall**. JPEG image files can be shared from cloud drives (Dropbox, Google Drive, OneDrive, etc.) to McBain Camera staff: sales.sp@mcbaincamera.com. Prints and USB drives will be returned in person at the Awards Night banquet.

Members are encouraged to enter their Scenic and Wildlife for this contest.

For additional questions, contact communications@spfga.ca

Petition e-2341 closes with 174,000+ signatures

E-petition e-2341 closed on February 15 with 174,810 signatures, making Canadian history as the most signed Ourcommons.ca e-petition ever.

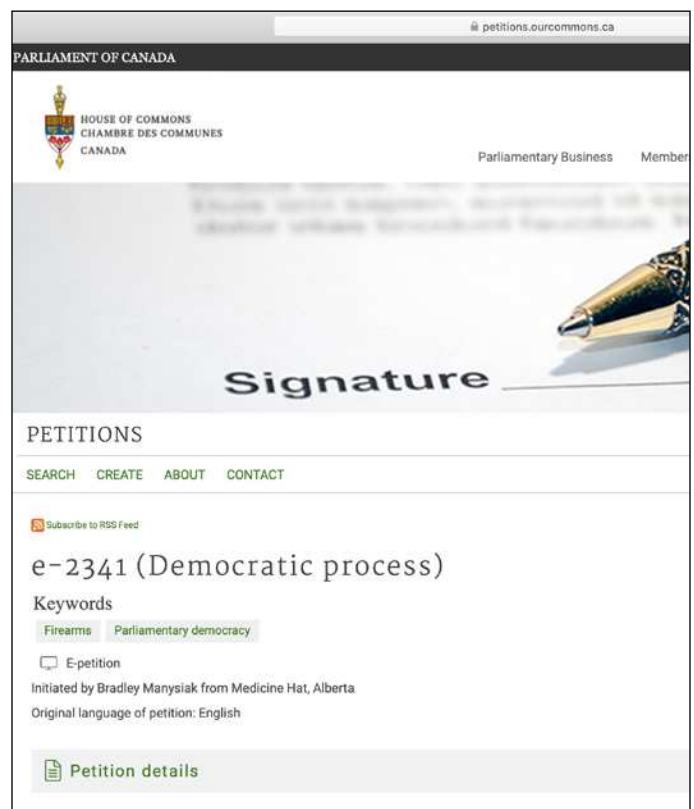
Such a strong response understandable - the Liberal Party, after Bill C-71 received Royal Assent last June, expressed its intent to ban "military-style assault rifles" through an Order in Council.

The use of an Order in Council for such a purpose is gross overreach of executive authorities and a side-step of Canada's democratic processes on an important question such as this.

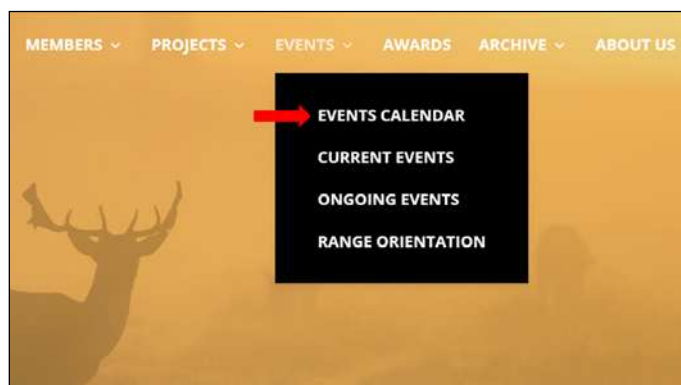
Initiated by Bradley Manysiak of Medicine Hat and sponsored by MP Glen Motz, Petition e-2341 called upon the Government of Canada to follow our democratic processes and put any new firearms laws, bans, buyback programs or changes to licencing before the House to be debated.

E-2341 arose at a critical time for Canada's gun owners, hunters, and sport shooters, being just a short time away from our ability to own and use certain firearms changing forever.

Canada's conservation communities, fish and game clubs, and gun owners can all take a moment of pride for having stood together and making their voices heard like this.



Our new website calendar: Worth checking out!



Roland Coppens, Communications Director

One of the easily overlooked upgrades made during our refresh of the website in the fall was to the events calendar. What's there now is considerably more feature-rich than anything we've had before & well-worth looking at.

One of the big benefits is the ability to export an event (or the month in its entirety) into the electronic calendar you use. Multiple formats (Google, Apple, Outlook, etc.) are supported with this.

Events have full details, including the venue, address and Google maps.

The calendar is fully searchable, which will come in handy because we've got so much planned for 2020 already and more coming!

As well, in the footer at the bottom of every page on the website a brief summary of upcoming events appears. Click on something there that interests you to take you to that calendar entry.

Events for February 2020

EVENTS IN: 2020-02 SEARCH: Keyword FIND EVENTS VIEW AS: Month

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
26 Scout Group Trophy Scoring	27	28	29	30 General Meeting, SPFGA	21 Tofield Snowmobile Junior Forest Wardens - Club House	1 Tofield Snowmobile Junior Forest Wardens - Club House
2 Tofield Snowmobile Junior Forest Wardens - Club House	3	4	5	6	7 Club house area all day 201 ENDEAVOUR CLUB	8 Club house area all day 201 ENDEAVOUR CLUB
9 Club house area all day 201 ENDEAVOUR CLUB 50m Range - Range Safety Officer Course Garage: In-person Orientations	10	11 Board Meeting	12	13 EPS Tactical Overflow Range	14	15
16	17	18	19	20 AFGA Convention	21 AFGA Convention	22 AFGA Convention Winter Camping Course
23 Winter Camping Course	24	25	26	27	28	29 General Meeting

January March

EXPORT EVENTS

February 2020 Sunrise Ski Area, Alberta

Today: 8/1/19° Tomorrow: 21/1/19° Wednesday: 20/1/19° Search Calendar (This computer only)

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
26	27	28	29	30	31	Feb 1
3 Tofield Snowmobile Junior Forest Wardens - Club House	4	5	6 Tofield Snowmobile Junior Forest Wardens - Club House	7	8	9 Tofield Snowmobile Junior Forest Wardens - Club House
10	11	12	13	14 Find out where our other day's happenings	15	16 Club house area all day 201 ENDEAVOUR CLUB
17 Find out where our other day's happenings	18	19	20	21	22	23 AFGA Convention
24	25	26	27	28	29	30 Winter Camping Course

All Events

General Meeting

February 29 @ 10:00 am - 2:00 pm

Winter Camping Course Garage: In-person Orientations

Description: February General meeting of the SPFGA

Location: Ketchum Creek Facility
50302 Rge Rd 203

SPFGA members are invited to all General meetings. If you have a specific item you would like added to a particular General meeting agenda, per item 3.2 of the bylaws you must provide a written request to the president@spfga.ca or secretary@spfga.ca a minimum of 24 hours before the Board meeting immediately preceding that General meeting.

MIDDLE CALENDAR ICAL EXPORT

Details

Date: February 29
Time: 10:00 am - 2:00 pm

Organizer

SPFGA

Venue

Ketchum Creek Facility
Google Map
Website: www.spfga.ca

53°19'35.3"N 112°51'27.3"W
View larger map



Investments in Alberta’s fish hatcheries


On January 27, Jason Nixon, Alberta Minister of Environment and Parks announced ongoing upgrades and expansion of fish hatcheries:

- \$26 million is budgeted for the replacement of the Raven Creek Brood Trout Station, located near Caroline, with a modern, state of the art facility.
- \$12.6 million worth of upgrades to Sam Livingston Fish Hatchery, located in Calgary, are substantially complete.
- \$4 million in improvements are underway for Allison Creek Brood Trout Station, located in Crowsnest Pass.

Darryl Smith, AFGA Provincial Fish Chair, characterized this announcement, along with the open houses and online consultations related to increasing angling opportunity in the province, as “appearing to mark a turning point in the direction of fisheries management in Alberta.” Fisheries managers are considering the use of a variety of tools to deal with species at risk and fisheries that support the majority of Alberta’s sportfishing opportunities.

Mr. Smith recognizes that there is still more work to do however, citing issues impacting aquatic habitat and recognizing their ongoing challenges.

Minister Nixon’s press release regarding January 27’s announcement can be found [here](#).



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Jan 27, 2020

Media inquiries

Funding for Alberta’s fish hatcheries

The province is supporting Alberta’s fish hatchery facilities to ensure sustainable recreational fishing opportunities and a healthy aquatic environment.

On this page:

[Quick facts](#) [Related information](#) [Media inquiries](#)

Do you know where you are?

You head out one weekend to the Ketchamoot Creek property for some family fun. You arrive and, after enjoying the amenities, you go to the clubhouse lawn for a picnic lunch. Your spouse takes a bite of her sandwich and suddenly grabs her chest and collapses. In a panic, you call 911 and are connected with EMS dispatch. The first thing the dispatcher asks is the address where you are located...and you have no idea.

My name is Mark Lowry. I am the SPFGA Handgun Director and I would like to tell you about steps the Board has made to change the incident above into one with the potential for a better outcome.

This year, we are undertaking a project to ensure members are able to deal injuries and accidents at the SPFGA Ketchamoot Creek property. We are establishing an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) which will outline the steps to take for minor and major incidents on the property, including the location of first aid kits, the legal land description and municipal address of the property. This EAP will be located in each first aid kit.

The project is much more than that though. We are in the process of purchasing and installing an automated external defibrillator (AED) on the property which will be available 24/7, improving our first aid kits to include up-to-date supplies with hemorrhage control kits,

and offering the training necessary to use them. We are also implementing a reporting system to better track incidents and the use of these supplies.

So, how will all of this positively change the outcome of the scenario above? You will know where each first aid kit is located and be aware that each one contains a copy of the EAP. You will have access to an AED and, after having provided the municipal address and legal land description, will receive instructions from the dispatcher regarding CPR and the use of the AED. After a short while, your spouse opens her eyes and begins breathing on her own. EMS arrives and transports your wife to hospital, where she makes a full recovery.

Knowing where you are and how to get help are the keys to a positive outcome when incidents occur.

When you call 911 at the property, tell them:

Municipal address
50302 Rge Rd 203, Beaver County

Legal land description
SE 21 50 20 W4

It is our hope to have these things in place by this summer and begun offering first aid training courses to the membership.



Our Emptying Skies

Roland Coppins, Songbirds Director

A study published in the journal **Science** in October 2019 titled **Decline of the North American avifauna (Science Oct 2019: 366(6461), p. 120-4)** demonstrated the staggering decline of bird populations from North America skies and is the most exhaustive attempt to date to understand the problem.

The study demonstrates **2.9 billion** fewer birds now than 1970, a steady 29% decline across 529 species, even species with traditional abundance. David Yarnold, President and CEO of the National Audubon Society has described the findings as “a full-blown crisis.”

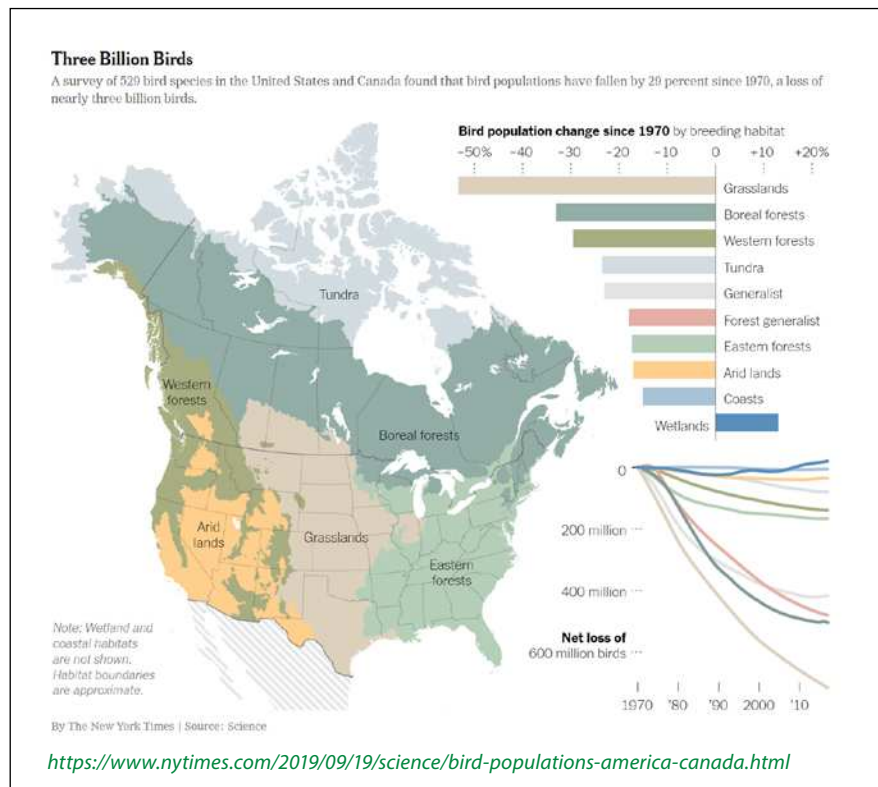
In any ecosystem, common bird species serve as keystones, spreading seeds, controlling insect species, and pollinating flowering plants. While perhaps not the headliners that the California Condor or Sandhill Cranes might be, declines in common species like blue jays, starlings, blackbirds, or warblers have tremendous ripple effects across the entire ecosystem all the same.

Certainly, habitat loss is an important factor of these declines—every bit of grassland that’s plowed, forest that’s cleared, or wetland that’s drained has a negative effect on the birds that depend on that area—but another important factor is the effect of pesticide use. A study published in September 2019, also in the journal **Science**, titled **A neonicotinoid insecticide**

reduces fueling and delays migration in songbirds (Science Sep 2019: 365(6458), p. 1177-80) demonstrates that a group of pesticides called neonicotinoids, widely used in agriculture, flea control on pets, protecting trees from boring insects, and insect eradication from homes, can slow weight gain in songbirds and delay their migratory departure.

In Canada, three neonicotinoids are currently approved for agricultural use: thiamethoxam, clothianidin, and imidacloprid. These compounds belong to a group of substances called nicotinic acetylcholine receptor agonists and they disrupt the communications between the nerves and muscles in insects, leading to paralysis and death. They are highly water soluble and are persistent in the environment.

Certainly, the SPFGA's traditional efforts at supporting bird populations in the form of birdhouses around the property, constructed through the efforts of my predecessor and long-time Songbird Director, Ron Durstling should continue. To those efforts we should add lobbying for the reduction of use of these neonicotinoids in Canada's agricultural and silvicultural practices. To this end, I authored a proposed AFGA resolution calling for such a reduction. This was approved by the club in the spring, by Zone 5 in the fall, went to this year's AFGA conference as Environmental Resolution 2020-ENV-1.



Special projects update



Gaetan Richard, Special Projects Director

Well, another year has gone by. And, like so many years before, our club had many projects.

All it takes is a trip to the property and you can see the improvements. One of the most visible is the upgrade to the 100 m berm on the Big Bore range. It had begun to slump into the lane to the 200 m targets and a fix was needed.

Planning began in May, getting supplies and contractors ready. Weather permitting, we were looking at a month to complete the project, but the wet summer saw the work drag on. It finally did get completed though and was well worth the wait.

This fall will be the re-certification of our ranges by the Chief Firearms Officer (CFO), who will let us know whether more such improvements will be needed.

The installation of our new security system required more ground disturbance than we had anticipated. As a result, the parking areas will be muddy come spring. We thank you in advance for your patience as we clean up.



Rifle marksmanship programs

Tom Opgenorth, Firearms Director (Rifle)

The past year has seen a lot of activity at SPFGA, and the Winter newsletter seems like an excellent time to for a recap and to discuss ideas for 2020.

In 2019, the following major programs were run:

- Rimfire Metallic Silhouette
- Mapleseed events, run by Project Mapleseed
- Outlaw Precision Rimfire Series (ORPS)

Let's look at each of these in more detail below, and then touch briefly on some ideas for 2020.

Rimfire Metallic Silhouette



Metallic Silhouette is a sport where participants shoot offhand and unsupported at metal targets in the shape of pigs, rams, chickens, and turkeys. The type of firearm being used will dictate the size of the targets and the distance they are shot at. It's a fun and challenging way to get out and practice your offhand shooting.

SPFGA started shooting Rimfire Metallic Silhouette in 2018, largely in response to a survey that went out in the spring of 2018 asking which shooting events members would like to see. Rimfire Metallic Silhouette rated highly, and the low cost of rimfire rifles and ammunition makes it accessible to all.

Rimfire Metallic Silhouette continued again in 2019. Every Monday night in July and August was "silhouette night" on the Big Bore Overflow range, rain or shine. Anybody could show up with their .22lr rifle and participate (.17HMR or .22WinMag, while rimfire, are not permitted). The rains put a damper on the attendance last summer, but a small hardcore group seemed determined to make the best of it and show up to shoot. Personally, I'd like to extend tremendous thanks to Darren McCann and Conroy Kluys for that. Without their help and support there would not have been any Rimfire Metallic Silhouette in 2019.

Looking forward to 2020, it would be great to see this program expand and grow. For those who are more

competitive in nature, there is a provincial Metallic Silhouette league that runs sanctioned events across Alberta. If there is enough interest, perhaps we can expand our current informal Silhouette event to support SPFGA members who want to compete provincially.

If you're interested in seeing us expand into the provincial league, please send an email to rifle@spfga.ca and let us know.

Outlaw Rimfire Precision Series



New for 2019 was the Outlaw Rimfire Precision Series (ORPS) matches. ORPS is a national competition that involves .22lr rimfire rifles and accurate, precise shooting from various improvised positions at distance from 25 m to 100 m. Sometimes the participant is shooting at a 1/4" target at 25 yards from the prone, or shooting at a 5" gong at 100 m from a stepladder.

To add a bit of extra pressure, each stage is timed. There is occasionally a physical component to a stage to elevate the heart rate. Jumping jacks or push-ups aren't unheard of.

The scores from matches across the country are collected and the ORPS organizers maintain a leaderboard. There are different categories based on age: Youth (under 18), Adult, and Senior (over 49). As well, there are two divisions that classify the rifles being used. Production division is (loosely speaking) any .22 rifle with an MSRP of less than \$500. Any optics must also have an MSRP of less than \$500.00. Open division is any rifle that has modifications to the trigger or stock, or has an MSRP of greater than \$500.00 or has an optic with an MSRP more than \$500.00.

ORPS events were held monthly on a Saturday, starting at 8 a.m. and usually finishing by 1 p.m. or so. The overall tone is a casual, relaxed morning spent shooting, but every now

and then a bit of competition creeps in for those that want bragging rights. Registration is required and there is a limit on the number of participants for each match.

Mapleseed Events



Project Mapleseed is a non-profit organization whose mission is to teach marksmanship fundamentals in a safe and structured environment to shooters of all ages and abilities. This is done in a day long Mapleseed event. The instructors at a Mapleseed event are volunteers from across Canada who travel the nation (literally from coast to coast) to organize and run them.

The goal of a Mapleseed event is to provide the participant with the skills to shoot a 4 minute-of-angle (MOA) group. For reference, this is the size of a pizza box at 400 yards and is very close to the marksmanship standard that a Canadian infantryman must achieve to earn their "Marksmanship Badge".

SPFGA hosted two Mapleseed events in 2019, one in July and then an extra, last-minute event in November. These events were very popular, selling out in under an hour once registration opened. Participants ran the gamut of experience from a first-time rifle owner to long-time hunters, from families to solo attendees that just wanted to improve on their fundamentals.

When it comes to Project Mapleseed, Alberta is very fortunate to have an emergent core of enthusiasts (a large percentage of which are from SPFGA) who are stepping up to volunteer and help deliver more Mapleseed events here in Alberta.

Initiatives for 2020

Looking forward, and 2020 should be another eventful year ahead for SPFGA members. The first and most important thing is to renew the range certifications. The first thing

is some housekeeping, we need to be re-certified as an approved shooting range. In accordance with federal regulations, we have to undergo this process every five years. There shouldn't be any significant issues with our renewal thanks to the excellent state of our range.

We're also looking to schedule some Range Safety Officer (RSO) courses for our members in 2020. We have held two to date, the first on January 5th and the second on February 9th, both taught by an instructor from the Alberta Federation of Shooting Sports (AFSS). We plan on running more, so if you'd be interested in future RSO courses when they're offered please send an email to rifle@spfga.ca.

Other things to keep an eye out for in 2020:

- **Rimfire Raceguns** – a fast marksmanship competition using .22lr pistol or rifle, a low-cost version of Steel Challenge
- **Free .22lr** ammo for youths at ORPS and Metallic Silhouette
- **Scope mounting sessions**
- **A Canadian Rimfire Precision Series (CRPS) event** – the long range version of ORPS, shooting .22lr out to 300+ meters
- **Guest speakers at General meetings** on things like selecting your optics, reading the wind, firearms cleaning, etc.
- **More Mapleseed Events and ORPS matches**

It takes some time and effort to organize, setup, and run all these events, and it would be great to see more member-driven events happening. All of the events that we had in 2019 were made possible by a few key members who showed up and offered to help out where and how they could. We most certainly welcome more of this and invite you to join in. If you have any ideas or suggestions for activities or events, or would like to volunteer to help out, please send an email to rifle@spfga.ca.

As a closing note I'd like to pass on some feedback from the Mapleseed events we hosted. As mentioned earlier, Project Mapleseed instructors literally travel from coast to coast, and have first hand experience with a great variety of Canada's shooting ranges. It was shared with me several times that SPFGA has one of the nicest facilities Project Mapleseed has experienced in Canada. The Ketchamoot Creek property didn't happen overnight however, and we can thank the decades of work and effort put in by the volunteers and supports that started SPFGA. So, the next time you're at the Ketchamoot Creek property and out on a range, take a moment to look around you and feel a note of appreciation that everything there was made possible by those fellow members.



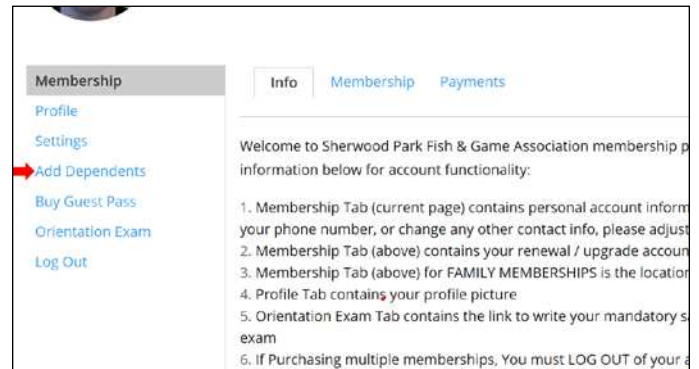
Membership cards: A couple of tidbits

Matthew Meier, 1st Vice President

Tidbit #1: If you purchased a family membership but only received your membership card and none for your other family members, you simply need to log into your account and add your spouse and kids in. To do this, log into your member account on the website & click **My Account** to take you to the Member Portal. The **Add Dependents** link is in the menu on the left.

Once you've done that, please let us know at memberservices@spfga.ca or call the office at 780-467-0085 so we can print your cards and send them to you.

Tidbit #2: If you were a member in the past and are just rejoining us this year after an absence, you may not have received a new gate access card along with your 2020 membership cards. If you did not, this is because we had the record of your old gate access card on file and simply reactivated it.



If you no longer have that gate access card though, or are unable to find it, please let us know at memberservices@spfga.ca or call the office at 780-467-0085 so we can send you a replacement.

Website guest passes ready!

Roland Coppens, Communications Director

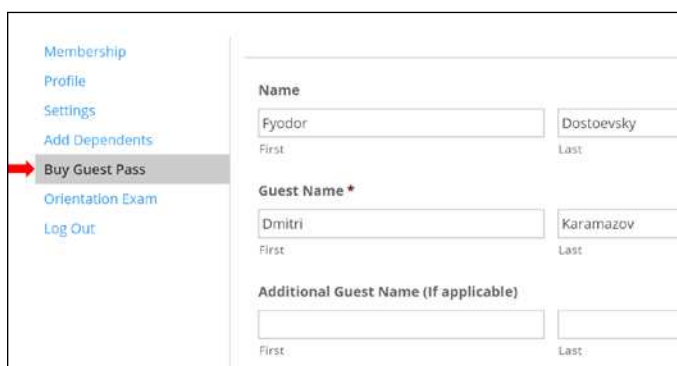
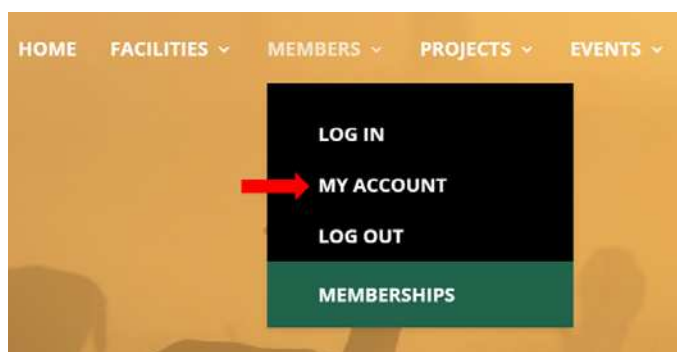
We're happy to announce that range guest passes can now be purchased through the website!

If you would like to purchase a guest pass to host a range guest, log into your member account on the website & click 'My Account' to take you to the Member Portal. The 'Buy Guest Pass' link is in the menu on the left.

Passes for adult guests are \$20 each. Passes for guests under 18 are no charge. The emailed receipt is your pass – please keep this with you in print or electronic form during the visit with your guest.

If you'd prefer to do things over the phone instead, you can contact the office at 780-467-0085 between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday to Friday for your guest's visit.

Please note that you must hold a membership with range privileges in order to purchase a pass. Take a moment to review the Range Guest Policy before heading out with your guest.



Did you know?



These **Did You Know?** articles, suggested by you as a source of quick reminders, highlight specific facility rules & briefly explaining their reasoning.

This **Did You Know?** deals with etiquette.

Not 'the fork goes on the left of the plate' sort of etiquette though, the 'leave things in the state you'd like to find them yourself' kind. It's the responsibility of each member to ensure they're leaving the area they've used clean and ready for the next member.

The **Facility Rules**, in the Etiquette section, state that prior to departing a range, targets must be removed from target boards and spent casings picked up using the brooms, magnets and dustpans provided. This same kind of ethic applies to all the parts of the property, whether it's the fishpond, campground, clubhouse or archery range—leave things tidy and ready for the next member. The gesture takes just a moment & only a little effort but will be sincerely appreciated by the next member coming along.

The attached photos were submitted recently by a member who found things in a less-than-ideal state and serve as an example of the kind of thing none of us would like to find when arriving at the range.



Narrow Lake Conservation Center (NLCC)

The Narrow Lake Conservation Center (NLCC) is an outdoor education center located on the eastern shore of Narrow Lake, approximately 35 km southwest of Athabasca. NLCC is managed by a partnership between AFGA Zones 4 and 5 through a volunteer board of directors.

The 300 acre NLCC facility includes many amenities including 10 small cabins, a bunkhouse, kitchen, wash

house, and two classrooms along with other buildings. The property also hosts a 100 m large bore rifle range, a small bore/handgun range, a trap range, and an archery range. There are two docks, one for swimming and one for boats, allowing for easy and direct access to the lake for activities such as canoeing, kayaking, and fishing. The facility has a small flotilla of canoes and kayaks available for use by facility users.



Narrow Lake and the neighboring Long Lake have very limited development in their respective watersheds and are a great location to access dark skies, clean water, and the peacefulness of the wilderness.

Camps at Narrow Lake

Each summer, the NLCC hosts the Narrow Lake Youth Conservation Camp during the 1st and 3rd weeks of July and the AFGA Becoming an Outdoor Woman (BOW) Camp during the 2nd and 4th weeks of July.

The Youth Conservation Camp offers attendees Hunter Education, the Canadian Firearms Safety course and the Boat Safety Course. In addition, campers enjoy activities like canoeing, archery, rifle, pistol, shotgun, and black powder shooting, wilderness overnight camping, outdoor survival skills, swimming, and fishing.

The Becoming an Outdoor Woman (BOW) program is designed for ladies interested in taking part in a myriad of outdoor activities they have never tried but would like to, or beginners wanting to improve upon their skills. Activities include archery, rifle/pistol/shotgun/muzzleloader shooting,

canoeing, GPS locating, outdoor cooking, and survival skills. Attendees of the five-day course also complete the Canadian Firearms Safety Course.

For information on registering at these camps, contact:

Youth Conservation Camp: Samantha Wulff at (780) 720-0912 or narrowlakeyouthcamp@outlook.com

BOW Camp: Robyn Karpinski (780) 977-0725 or robystarnes@live.com

SPFGA Sponsored Members

Each year SPFGA sponsors **four** youth members between 12 and 16 years of age to attend the Narrow Lake Youth Conservation Camp. This year, we plan on sponsoring **four** female members to attend the full five-day BOW camp.

Members wishing to put their names forward for club sponsorship to attend these camps are encouraged to contact the President at president@spfga.ca by March 31. Names of the successful candidates will be announced at the May 30 General meeting.



Range hours

Shooting hours begin at 9:00 a.m.. daily and end according to the following:

2nd Sunday in March – April 14	6:30 p.m.
April 15 – September 21	8:00 p.m.
September 22 – 1st Saturday in November	6:30 p.m.
1st Sunday in November – 2nd Saturday in March	4:30 p.m.

All firing must cease at the posted hours. These times are posted at the gate, on the website and in the newsletter.

Wildlife issues—who to call?

Fairly regularly, we receive questions in the office regarding who to contact regarding issues with wildlife. To the right is a contact list based on animal type:

- **For issues with migratory birds** (e.g. ducks, geese), contact **Canadian Wildlife Services** at **1-800-668-6767**
- **For issues with large wildlife** (e.g. bears, cougars, moose, etc.) contact **Report a Poacher** at **1-800-642-3800**
- For issues with smaller animals such as squirrels or skunks—these are dealt with on your own, or a third party animal removal company can be help with the issue.



Before you leave home

We have many amenities at our facility that our members use. It's fairly common for us to have received bookings for them, so to avoid frustration or surprises, make sure you've checked the calendar on the website before leaving to come out: <https://www.spfga.ca/events>.



You're always invited!

You're not just invited to General Meetings, but to Board meetings too!

Members are always free to attend & observe Board meetings on the **second Tuesday of each month at 7 pm at the Chamber of Commerce offices in Sherwood Park, 100 Ordze Rd. (The door to get in is the side entrance along the south side of the building).**

If you have a topic you'd like to speak about at a board meeting, all you need to do is provide advance notice by sending an email to the President at president@spfga.ca and the Secretary at secretary@spfga.ca to have it included in the agenda.

We'd love to see you, so please come on out!

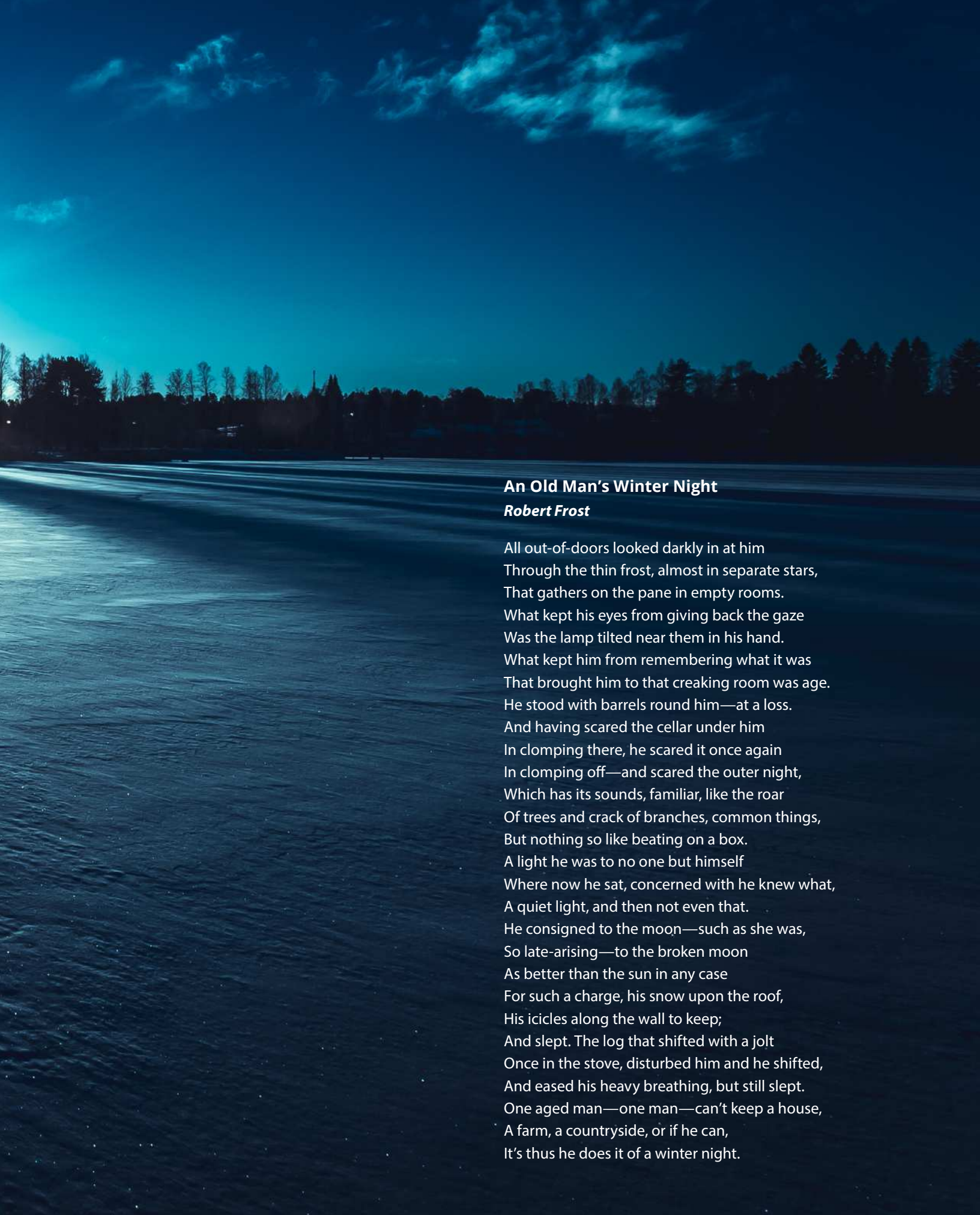
We'd love to hear from you!

Share your wildlife, conservation, hunting, fishing, scenic, and shooting sports photos, stories, and videos with us. We'd love to feature them here in our newsletter, on the website and on our social media. Wild game recipes are especially welcome!

Send your shareable items to communications@spfga.ca







An Old Man's Winter Night

Robert Frost

All out-of-doors looked darkly in at him
Through the thin frost, almost in separate stars,
That gathers on the pane in empty rooms.
What kept his eyes from giving back the gaze
Was the lamp tilted near them in his hand.
What kept him from remembering what it was
That brought him to that creaking room was age.
He stood with barrels round him—at a loss.
And having scared the cellar under him
In clomping there, he scared it once again
In clomping off—and scared the outer night,
Which has its sounds, familiar, like the roar
Of trees and crack of branches, common things,
But nothing so like beating on a box.
A light he was to no one but himself
Where now he sat, concerned with he knew what,
A quiet light, and then not even that.
He consigned to the moon—such as she was,
So late-arising—to the broken moon
As better than the sun in any case
For such a charge, his snow upon the roof,
His icicles along the wall to keep;
And slept. The log that shifted with a jolt
Once in the stove, disturbed him and he shifted,
And eased his heavy breathing, but still slept.
One aged man—one man—can't keep a house,
A farm, a countryside, or if he can,
It's thus he does it of a winter night.



Join us on social media!

SPFGA is active on **Facebook**, **Twitter** & **Instagram** and would we'd love to see you come and join in with us. Go to the **spfga.ca homepage** & click on the social media buttons or click the links below to connect to us.

Please like & follow us to receive news, updates & information about upcoming events. Invite family, friends and other association members to do the same!

If you have social media-related questions, or questions about the website, please contact the **Communications Chair** by email or by direct message

Feel proud:

You make this possible!

As SPFGA members, each of us also has membership in the AFGA. Take a moment to look at some of the conservation projects we all make possible through our involvement:

<https://www.facebook.com/letsgooutdoorsca/videos/723164378084733/>



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@shpkfga



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Editor: Roland Coppens

Design: Vance Yung



SHERWOOD PARK
FISH & GAME ASSOCIATION