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TAKE 5: Lee Wildlife Club to host open house

Sep. 20, 2014 @ 05:01 AM
 From the Sanford Herald

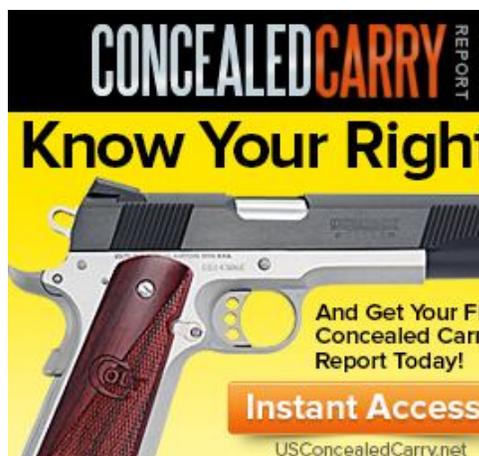
This week, we Take 5 with Bob McCorkle, the president of the Lee County Wildlife Club, which is hosting an open house from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. today at its facilities on Club Lane off of Deep River Road. The Lee County Wildlife Club was established in 1947 by a group of conservation-minded residents, and its property today includes a two-acre fishing pond, a clubhouse building, and archery and firearms ranges.

McCorkle, who retired in 2013 after 45 years as a construction project manager, has been a hunter, trapper, fisherman and sport shooter since his early days growing up on a small farm in Connecticut. He's a life member of the National Rifle Association, a NRA-certified pistol and rifle instructor, an NRA-certified chief range safety officer, a state of North Carolina hunter education safety instructor and a state of North Carolina Department of Justice concealed handgun carry instructor. For more information about the club, visit its website at <http://www.leecountywildlifeclub.com/>.

What are the purposes and objectives of the Lee County Wildlife Club?

The primary mission of Lee County Wildlife Club is natural resource preservation and conservation. We pursue our mission working with numerous civic organizations, including Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts, Girl Scouts and 4-H clubs, and work with North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission teaching hunter education classes. We believe education regarding the proper use of and respect for our natural resources is the best way to assure these precious resources will be available for generations to come. Over the last 12 years our volunteer instructors have taught wildlife resources preservation, conservation and safety courses to hundreds of youth and adults.

The Lee County Wildlife Club has more than 200 members, all of whom share a common interest in wildlife and natural resources. Why should someone consider being a member, and what are the benefits of membership? And we imagine that most wildlife clubs' members share an interest in hunting and fishing ... but for



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those not interested in those pursuits, what does the club have to offer?

The Lee County Wildlife Club membership is about 200 strong with a membership cap of 300. Our membership includes military personnel, blue collar, white collar and retired folks who all share an interest in wildlife and natural resource conservation and various shooting sports, including pistol, rifle, shotgun and archery. Another primary membership interest is passing on knowledge to young people, and the club devotes a considerable amount of its resources in support of youth education.

Many of our members share interests in hunting, fishing, kayaking or canoing local rivers and lakes, and several members enjoy teaching about the history of the Sanford area. Members have formed informal clubs to hike local trails, kayak or canoe local rivers and lakes, and if someone is interested in learning to hunt or fish, they would find our members are eager to help them get started.

Firearms and archery education, including safety classes, are available for a nominal fee to members and the public. Many of our members are certified instructors and can teach pistol, rifle, shotgun and archery classes, which we schedule on the club calendar each month. We now have more than 50 certified range safety officers who volunteer their time to work with various youth groups shooting at our club.

We hold club meetings at 6:30 p.m. on the third Monday of each month at our clubhouse, where we accept new members, review club business and enjoy a catered meal and general fellowship.

The club is holding its first open house today. What will take place?

The primary reason for the open house is that we have never advertised the club. We're a private club, but open to new members, and we found over the last couple of years that even very local folks did not know we are here and what we are about.

We will have volunteers to discuss membership, provide tours of our facilities and discuss our mission and available activities. We invited Lee County Sheriff Tracy Carter, also a member of the club, to speak regarding The Second Amendment and The Castle Doctrine. The sheriff kindly offered to bring one of the department's K-9 unit dogs for a demonstration as well.

The Lee County Wildlife Club hosts and manages a Youth Hunter Skills Program in cooperation with the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission. We have approximately 100 middle school, high school and home school youths who learn hunter safety skills, including safe handling of firearms, archery and compass orienteering, at our club. We will have a few of the youth set up to demonstrate their skills and discuss the program.

What kinds of facilities does the club have?

The Lee County Wildlife Club has a clubhouse with kitchen facilities and restrooms and seating for about 60 people, along with a large outdoor barbecue pit. The clubhouse is available to rent for parties and other events. We have a 100-yard rifle range with covered shooting benches, a 50-yard small bore/pistol range with covered shooting benches, a 40-yard archery range, two automatic sporting clay throwers and a trap thrower for the shotgun enthusiast. Our two-acre pond is a very good fishing spot, and I have personally caught crappie, bream, catfish and bass out of this pond. Members have access to all facilities as they wish, although we do not shoot before 2 p.m. on Sundays because there is a nearby church and



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we want to be good neighbors.

In what other ways is the club involved in the community?

The Lee County Wildlife Club hosts the local Youth Hunter Skills Program consisting of about 100 local children of middle school and high school age. Starting in November each year and running through April of the next year, we have about 25 volunteers who teach rifle shooting, archery, shotgun clay shooting and compass orienteering, along with skills out of the North Carolina Hunter Safety Course, to as many as 100 students. The kids practice each Sunday from 2-5 p.m. and compete in March at a district tournament and in April at the state tournament. The National Rifle Association provides a grant each year including .22 ammunition and shotgun shells to support our program. Our instructors and range safety officers are NRA certified.

We also host the local 4-H shooting teams by allowing them to use our facilities to practice, and we offer volunteer range safety officers as needed.

Each year the Boy Scouts/Cub Scouts spend a full week at our club learning new skills by shooting air rifles, fishing and compass orienteering. And each year, the Girl Scouts spend a weekend at the club also learning various new skills and enjoying the facility.

Our instructors teach NRA pistol and rifle safety courses and also North Carolina concealed handgun carry courses, all for a nominal fee that covers the costs only. We do not make a profit to teach the courses.

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