



The Wisconsin River Sportsmen's Club (WRSC), incorporated in the spring of 1959, has

been part of the Mazomanie community for more than 45 years. The club was formed one afternoon at the Friendly Inn tavern in Mazomanie where the Parkin Inn is now located. Robert (Bob) Stoller and fellow sportsman Clarence (Speed) Frey—the original club life members—helped organize the club. That same year, the club purchased 7.5 acres of land from William and Emma for the tidy sum of one dollar.

The club held clay target trap shoots north of Lion's Club Park and later, across from Lake Marion where the Jesse Duhr home now stands, until moving to its present location off Highway Y near the Wisconsin River.

After locating an old, unused chicken coop near Baraboo, members—armed with trucks, hay wagons and chainsaws—cut up, moved and rebuilt the coop on the club property. It still serves as part of the clubhouse today.

A clay target machine was installed in the early 1960s. Many trap shoots were held, complete with chicken barbeques and penny-a-pound plane rides on an airstrip located adjacent to the clubhouse grounds.

Through the 1980s, snowmobile drag races, sanctioned rope pulls, and coon dog trials were held as fundraisers. At coon dog trials, youngsters would drag a raccoon pelt through the marsh and back to the clubhouse. The dogs then were released and, following the trail, would race back to the finish line. On more than one occasion, the dogs were released too soon and the youngsters would have to climb trees to avoid the onrushing dogs.

An addition was made to the clubhouse in the mid 1970s, and another trap machine was installed. A refreshment stand for trap shoots was erected, but it was destroyed the next year when a severe storm moved through the area. It was rebuilt with materials donated by Alex Jordan, owner of House on the Rock.

In the early 1980s, WRSC was involved in negotiations with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources over Lake Marion. The lake, originally used as a fish-rearing pond, had been drained and left empty for some time. After several negotiation attempts and one "sit in" outside the DNR office, the Department relented and agreed to lease the lake and property to the Village of Mazomanie.

The club sponsored a Lake Marion fundraiser in the spring of 1985 and erected a shelter at the lake. After seining the rough fish, club members re added game fish to the lake. Lake Marion served as the site for several club-sponsored canoe races, chicken barbeques, and fishing contests for children. A handicapped-accessible fishing pier was designed and built by club members a few years later.

In the late 1990s, another addition was made to the clubhouse, complete with updated restrooms, kitchen, and a larger meeting room.

Over the years, WRSC has been involved with many activities in the Mazomanie area. As charter members of the Mazomanie Wild West Days Association, the club has provided leadership and labor for every Wild West Days since its inception. Club members have been involved in many conservation projects such as digging potholes in the marsh for nesting waterfowl, stocking fish, raising and releasing pheasants, and donating funds to the town of Merrimac to help purchase land for a park on Lake Wisconsin.

WRSC is a proud sponsor of the Adopt-a-Highway Project, cleaning Highway Y from the clubhouse entrance to Highway 78. It was presented with the "Citizen of the Year" award in 2001 by the township of Mazomanie for its contributions to local organizations. The Mazo Mustangs Home Talent baseball team, Mazo Barracuda swim team, the local Boy Scouts chapter, Hunters youth football, area Little League baseball teams,

youth wrestling, and the Wisconsin Heights Lutheran Family Services have all benefited from WRSC's efforts.

WRSC is a major contributor to the Wisconsin Heights Alumni annual fundraiser and has sponsored child safety, drug awareness and crime prevention programs. It has contributed toward Mazomanie's 4th of July fireworks, donated trigger locks for Pheasants Forever banquets, and sponsored *WOW*, a magazine designed to inform fourth graders about the importance of conservation. The club has received three national awards from the Future Farmers of America for sponsoring FFA trap shoots and other fundraisers that helped send local delegates to Washington, D.C. Every year since 1981, WRSC has conducted hunter safety classes to educate our youth in the safe and responsible handling of firearms.

Many WRSC members have helped establish local chapters of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, and the Wild Turkey Federation. One of WRSC's current life members was appointed by Wisconsin Governor James Doyle to serve as Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

In addition to community assistance, WRSC offers league trap shooting throughout the year along with sporting clays and merchandise shoots each summer.

Through its nearly 100-strong membership, WRSC continues to be an active, contributing member of the Mazomanie community, and it looks forward to the same level of involvement for years to come.



Written by C.Roberts, April 2005