

Sunnybrook Catch & Release

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The Monthly Newsletter of Sunnybrook Trout Club – March 2024

Stream Stocking Jackpot Grows to \$9000.00

FROM MY DESK – The big news coming from my desk this month focuses on our upcoming Stream Stocking Raffle, Wild Game Dinner & Chinese Auction. Response has been quite good and we have reached our target and now look to go above and beyond.

We have sold all 100 spaces available for the dinner and no new reservations can be accepted. Raffle tickets however are still available and will be right up to the afternoon of the dinner. Currently the jackpot stands at \$9000.00 and continues to grow with each additional ticket purchased. Is \$10,000.00 prize money a realistic expectation? We will see.

This fun filled evening is the unofficial official beginning of the new spring season and the beginning of another great year at Sunnybrook. What's so great about the evening is that it's a win win situation for the members. 100% of the raffle money is either given back to members as cash prizes or used for the purchase of fish to stock the stream throughout the year. Even if you are not one of the 5 lucky cash winners, you are still a winner!

Here is an overview of the evenings activities.

Activity #1 - Chinese Auction & Happy Hour begins at 5:30 with complimentary appetizers, soft drinks and beer. During this social hour, guests will be able to enter a Chinese Auction for valuable prizes that have been donated to the club. Each guest attending the dinner will be given 3 tickets to enter the drawings for these prizes. Additional tickets will be available for purchase that night for those looking to increase their chances of winning.

Donations to the auction have been generous and we have an eclectic mix of prizes to give away. Several featured items include a 750ml bottle of Highland Park Scotch Whiskey that sells for \$175.00 and a 750ml bottle of Red Spot Irish Whiskey that sells for \$205.00 (think St Patty's Day which is the day after the dinner), a wheel tossed one of a kind ceramic platter that sells for \$325.00, a French Cristal Decanter that sells for \$65.00, Armani women fragrances that sell for \$213.00 and much more.

In addition there will be approximately 20 door prizes to be given away at the end of the evening. Every person attending the dinner will automatically be entered into a drawing for valuable door prizes. I am still soliciting donations of prizes. If you are able to help, give me a call.

Activity #2 - The Wild Game Dinner will be served at

approximately 6:30 - 6:45. Dan & Heidi will showcase their culinary skills preparing unique dishes from game harvested by our members or purchased by the club. This year's menu includes Alaskan Black Bear Stew, Ohio Venison Goulash, Farm Raised Pheasant Crescent Pockets, Lake Erie Walleye Gumbo, Alaskan Moose Meatloaf and Shredded BBQ Wild Boar Roast.

While the meal is truly wild game, it is not just a meal for the adventuresome souls. Some of the entrees border on fine dining and are well suited for even the pickiest of diners. While all dinner reservations have been spoken for, it's possible we may get a late cancellation. A waiting list has been created and you can call to add your name.

Activity #3 - The Stream Stocking Raffle follows the dinner and is the high point of the evening. As it stands right now, we will be giving away \$9000.00. Cash distribution will be as follows. Grand prize winner gets \$4000.00, runner-up gets \$2000.00 and 3 consolation winners will receive \$1000.00 each. It's possible these amounts will increase if ticket sales continue to grow.

Important note: Winners do not need to be present. Even if you are unable to attend you can still be a winner. Please support our effort and purchase your ticket(s). Also note that raffle tickets will **not** be on sale at the club that evening. All raffle tickets sold must be pre purchased. If you are bringing a guest and they would like to participate in the raffle, you will need to pre-purchase their ticket for them. I will bill your account for their ticket and you will collect the money from them.

This event is extremely popular and an important fundraiser that helps fill the coffers of our fish stocking budget. Our annual stocking budget of \$50,000.00 is one of the greatest individual expenses the club experiences. The funds raised with the raffle are necessary to maintain this budget. Your purchase of a raffle ticket(s) guarantees great fishing at Sunnybrook throughout all of 2024.

Cost to attend the evening is \$50.00 per person and includes the appetizers, open bar, three tickets to participate in the Chinese auction, the dinner and door prizes given away at the end of the evening. This cost does not include a raffle ticket. They also are \$50.00 and must be purchased separately.

STREAM REPORT – The stream is in great shape with plenty of hold over fish present. These fish have endured the lean winter months and have seen little fishing

pressure during that time. They are hungry and willing.

Fishing conditions are subject to change during the spring. On one day you may have crystal clear water or the next a roiled stream from runoff after a springtime shower. You will need to adjust your technique to match the conditions to be successful.

In the clear water smaller patterns and a lighter leader are your best choices. My suggestion would be general attractors such as Adams, black gnat or royal coachman if you are dry fly fishing and zebra, hares ear or copper john nymphs if you are fishing sub surface. The new spring foliage has not yet bloomed and fishermen will prominently stand out in the stark background. Stealth and presentation are extremely important in these conditions.

If the water is cloudy, don't be discouraged. These conditions typically produce outstanding results. An abundance of food is washing through the stream at this time and stealth is not as necessary. Patterns of choice include streamers, san juan worms and egg patterns. Larger patterns such as wooly buggers are always successful as hungry fish seek a larger meal.

STOCKING REPORT – The first stocking of the year is scheduled for Friday March 29 and will continue (weather permitting) every Friday morning through the end of October. If we get an early spring and if fishing pressure calls for it, I will move the stocking forward a week or two.



I'm often asked if we get any natural reproduction in the stream. We certainly have fish spawning both spring and fall, but do all the roe or small fry get gobbled up by the plentiful hatchery trout that are in the stream? This photo of a small rainbow caught by member Mark Nelson in mid January makes us wonder. Is it a native or an escapee from the state hatchery upstream? You decide.

CLUB RULES & REGULATIONS – Sunnybrook does not burden its members with a long list of rules & regulations, but there are some basic rules we do expect members to follow. As the new season approaches it seems a good time to refresh everyone's memory of club policy.

*Members are expected to be respectful of other fishermen along the stream. This includes not crowding other fishermen. Give them their space. If they are fishing one of your favorite spots, pass them by and return later after they have moved on.

*Fly fishing only is allowed. No spin or bait fishing is permitted. Chumming the water is forbidden.

*We practice catch & release by choice. No member is required to keep fish that they land. With this privilege members are required to fish with barbless hooks. This aids in the safe release and ensures survival of caught fish.

*Only approved catch & release landing nets are permitted. This includes soft mesh or rubber netting. Old school corded nylon nets are quite abrasive to trout and are not permitted.

*Members are expected to be knowledgeable of proper catch & release technique and practice same while fishing. It is also their responsibility to educate their guests and be certain they also are exercising proper technique.

*Fishing hours are from dawn to dusk. No fishing is permitted before sunrise or after sunset.

*Members are allowed to bring guests to the club but are limited to no more than 3 at any given time. If a member expects to bring more than 3 they must call the club for prior approval.

*If bringing a guest to the club, the hosting member should sign their guest in before heading out to the stream.

*Member's guests are allowed to fish only if the member is present. If the hosting member goes home early, the guest must leave also.

MUDDY GROUNDS – During spring the grounds can get quite muddy. It's easy for that mud to get tracked into the lodge on member's shoes or boots. Please help us keep the lodge clean by cleaning or removing dirty footwear before entering the lodge. There are boot brushes on both the front porch and back deck.

LUNCH RETURNS – We will return to regular lunch hours March 18 daily between the hours of 11:30-1:30. Our homemade soups will be a welcome treat to warm up fishermen that brave the cooler springtime weather. Give them a try on your next visit to the club.