



New-Aroostook County White-tailed Deer Collaborative

Less than a lifetime ago, white tailed deer were the heart and soul of rural Maine hunting culture. Sportsmen and women from all over the country traveled to wild areas in northern Maine for the chance to harvest trophy deer. Hunting camps, guides and families-built friendships and shared stories about their deer hunting adventures through the generations.

Unfortunately, predation and habitat loss have led to the collapse of the deer population in these same regions. At one time, ten percent of the landscape was deer wintering habitat, now it is just three percent. This loss of older growth forest habitat has created a one-dimensional forest that is unable to sustain deer and the other important wildlife species that depend on the same forest structure.

In an effort to end this death spiral and loss of habitat, the Sportsman's Alliance of Maine's sister organization, the Sportsman's Alliance of Maine, Institute for Legislative Action (SAM-ILA) has spearheaded three initiatives to restore habitat to these special places.

- First, we introduced and passed legislation to change the Land for Maine's Future Program to prioritize land purchases that include deer wintering areas where the population and suitable wintering habitat is in decline and then successfully negotiated a \$40 million, 4-year General Fund Appropriation, matched by federal money at a \$3 to \$1 ratio of which a portion is dedicated for deer yards.
- Second, in the last Legislative session, the SAM-ILA successfully lobbied lawmakers to reform our antlerless deer permit system and dedicate all new monies from this system to the same mission of restoring deer in Maine. This effort means another \$4 million in state and federal monies will be available to restore deer per year.
- Third, we are creating the Aroostook County Whitetail Deer Collaboration.

The First Task of the ACWDC Collaboration is to Establish a Leadership Team

- The two organizations created a small committee of SAM leadership (4) and membership from the Aroostook County Conservation Association (ACCA) (4) to coordinate and hold annual fundraising activities, as well as determine how the money is spent.
- The second task of the Committee is to Determine a Mission for the Collaborative. For example, to raise money in support of purchasing, managing, and enhancing deer wintering areas in Aroostook County

purchased by Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, including predator control.

- Four members of the committee have been chosen by the Sportsman's Alliance of Maine (SAM) and four from the ACCA. They met in early May to announce the new collaboration in Presque Isle and met again in Brewer to plan fundraising activities for 2022. In less than a month, the collaborative has raised just under \$17,000.00. With \$3 to \$1 matching federal funds, we have nearly \$70,000.00 to start this effort.
- SAM staff, in partnership with the ACCA will maintain the account at an Aroostook County bank.
- All funds raised will be deposited into the account and Jerry McLaughlin and SAM Executive Director, David Trahan, or an ACCA/SAM-Board appointee will be the only individuals authorized to sign checks drawn from the account.
- The advantages of such a collaborative effort are, all money raised privately for the purchase and management of deer wintering areas, (if approved by IFW) is eligible for \$3 to \$1 Federal, (Pitman-Robertson) match, including a credit for volunteer hours.

Restoring deer wintering areas in Aroostook County is good for deer and all sorts of other wildlife that depend on the same older growth timber. Many of these parcels will be over 1,000 acres, many in the 5,000-7,000-acre scale. They contain year-round recreational opportunities and with carefully planning, especially during winter months, will become destination sites that will draw visitors from all over the country.

Having the residents of Aroostook County and others passionate about deer involved in the management, purchase and protection of these lots will be crucial to success. The money raised through our efforts will be used to add smaller parcels of land to the wintering complexes and when needed, used to enhance habitat, and reduce predation. Our efforts will be in partnership with regional biologists at the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.

Finally, with the leadership of the Sportsman's Alliance of Maine and the Aroostook County Conservation Association we are building a conservation model for other Maine counties to emulate. This important work will build stronger local economies, create diverse healthy forests and bring new recreational opportunities for all County residents.

We have all the tools we need for success; we hope the people of Aroostook County will join us in our efforts and make a tax-deductible donation to support this exciting new program.

Sincerely,

David

David Trahan
SAM Representative

Jerry

Jerry McLaughlin
ACCA Representative

The Aroostook County Whitetail Deer Collaborative has raised nearly \$17,000.

These pioneers have been the first to contribute. Thank you, we hope others will match their contributions. Individuals interested should contact SAM or the ACCA at: david@samofmaine.org, (207)-623-4589 or Jerry McLaughlin, at: (207)-592-2516 or jmguideservice@gmail.com.

JM Guide Service	New Sweden	\$1000.00
Aroostook County Cons. Assoc.	Aroostook	\$1000.00
Sportsman's Alliance of Maine, ILA	Augusta	\$1000.00
County Sports	Caribou	\$100.00
Al Murphy	Portage	\$ 50.00
Sportsman's Inc.	Stockholm	\$1000.00
Leo Long	Woodland	\$100.00
Norm Poitraw	Van Buren	\$100.00
Fred Moreau	Presque Isle	\$100.00
Albro Cowperthwaite	Houlton	\$200.00
Michael Welch	Fort Kent	\$100.00
Longroad Energy	Portland	\$10,000.00
Wildlife Farms	Caribou	\$1000.00
Staples Construction	Caribou	\$1000.00
Anonymous		\$100.00
	Total	\$16,850.00

