

PLEASANT RIVER FISH & GAME CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION  
PO BOX 261, COLUMBIA, ME 04623  
www.prfgca.org

## 2026 NEWSLETTER

Dear members and friends,

The past year has been another of growth in all regards, with continued improvements to our facilities, strong participation in events, and a renewed sense of momentum across all programs. We remain committed to providing a top-notch campus with a broad range of interesting and fun activities for members and the wider community.

### UPDATES FROM THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

2025 brought several transitions, and 2026 is shaping up to be a year of stability and expansion.

Our tech liaison and Membership Secretary, **Fred Urban**, continues to keep our digital infrastructure running smoothly, while volunteer **Grace Falzarano** maintains our books with precision and care. Treasurer **Mike Warnock** and the rest of the executive team remain hard at work ensuring the club's financial health and operational readiness.

### FROM THE RANGES

#### Down East Coast Action Pistol (DECAP)

DECAP continues to be one of our fastest-growing programs, with strong attendance at every event. Investments in infrastructure have paid off handsomely, enabling us to offer fun and challenging matches that draw participants from across the region.

The **Lobster Shoot** returns in **July 2026**, and participation in the match isn't required — stop by for a lobster lunch and support your club.



*DECAP Action Pistol Lobster Shoot 2025*

We congratulate our certified Range Officers and thank the volunteers who keep this program running safely and smoothly.

#### Steel Challenge

Steel Challenge saw a surge of interest in 2025, and we expect even more growth this year. This fast-paced activity remains a favorite for shooters looking to improve target acquisition speed or enjoy a competition that accommodates a wide range of mobility levels. As last year's newsletter put it, *"It's great fun, not to be missed!"*

The **Mother's Day Match** returns on **May 10, 2026**, followed by a grilled lunch.

#### Sporting Clays

Our longest-running program continues to meet year-round, braving all but the most ridiculous weather. The machinery upgrades completed in 2024 and 2025 continue to improve the shooting experience. New shooters are always welcome, and loaner shotguns remain available.

## .22LR Benchrest

This relaxing, precision-focused activity continues to draw a loyal group of shooters. Loaner rifles are available for those who want to try their hand at benchrest shooting. The first match of 2026 will be held **Saturday, May 23 at 9:00 AM**. 22LR Benchrest will alternate monthly with Military Rifle Competition.

**Remember!** Continuing the scheduled Range events depends on member participation. by knowing what's going on at your club!



## EVENTS, PAST AND UPCOMING

### Frozen Mosin Shoot — 21st Annual

The first event of 2026 was the **21st Annual Frozen Mosin Shoot**, which once again set attendance records. As last year's newsletter proudly noted, *"Once again, we had no safety issues, proving... that a hundred folks with guns can get together and have fun responsibly."* This event remains one of our major fundraisers and a highlight of the winter season.

### Fly Casting Competition & Gear Swap

After a successful inaugural event in 2025, the Fly-Casting Competition returns on **June 6, 2026**, in cooperation with the Downeast Chapter of Trout Unlimited. Categories include team, men's, women's, and youth divisions, with casting for both distance and accuracy.

### Puckerbrush Primitive Gathering — 11th Annual

**July 17-19, 2026** marks the annual **Puckerbrush Primitive Gathering**, themed **"Forging the Bonds of Friendship."** Last year's event featured the installation of a Barred Owl nesting box, visible from the clubhouse window — a detail highlighted in the 2025 newsletter. Workshops, demonstrations, and hands-on learning will once again be the heart of this beloved event.

### Late for Lunch River Race

Our recent Late for Lunch River Race was a great success. Everyone had a lot of fun and the weather was stellar. Several attendees joined the club at the event.



*2026 Puckerbrush forge action*



### Military Rifle Competition

Thanks to the popularity of the caliber 5.56/223 ammunition, the famous military rifle shoot is making a comeback. Bring your AR 15 and/or your MSR and try our 100 yard target area. Older military rifles are also welcomed, bring what you got. Schedule TBA. Special events need volunteers for setup, breakdown and administrative duties.





*Garand match competitors.  
The new improved kitchen to-go  
window featuring cranky Mike*

## WORK IN PROGRESS

Thanks to the generous grant from the Cascade Foundation, improvements continue. The **200-yard range environmental management project**, the **new clubhouse all house water filter**, **new LED lighting**, the **epoxy floor paint**, and long-overdue **restroom renovations**, all priorities identified in last year's newsletter, are completed.

A 20'x80' concrete slab was poured in the fall and plans are also advancing for the relocation and reconstruction of the **100-yard shelter**, transforming it into a multi-use space and expanding parking capacity.



*The new Pavillion foundation*



## COMMUNITY SERVICE AND EDUCATION

Our club continues to maintain two canoe landings for public use, and volunteers are working with the Downeast Salmon Federation on improvements to the Clifford Stevens Landing and the development of a primitive riverside campsite.



This year's knife raffle to benefit the Community Service fund features a knife handcrafted by Tom Bazzolo and accompanying sheath by Chris Kravitt. Tickets are available at all club functions.

Trail work on the DSF Community Forest continues, strengthening our partnership with organizations that share our mission.



*Raven Berry 2025 winner Custom Knife raffle*



*Skinning a beaver at Trapper Safety*

The Pleasant River chapter of the Maine Trappers Association, formed in 2024, continues to meet at the clubhouse. Trapper Education Courses, the first on April 11th, remain a vital part of our educational outreach.

We also continue to support MeSARD, the Epping Volunteer Fire District, the Machias Christmas Giving Tree, and local youth through camp and academic scholarships.



## MEMBERSHIP AND RENEWALS

A reminder: **The gate combination changes June 1.** As stated last year, *“If you don’t return your membership renewal/liability release in a timely manner, you’ll not be able to access the facility after that date.”*

Your renewal/liability release triggers your welcome letter which includes the gate code/membership ID card.

Membership numbers remain strong, and dues continue to support the recurring expenses and upkeep of the club, while Event income funds improvements and program expansion.

Unfortunately, the club lost 4 essential members during 2026. Steve and Karen Plumhoff from Columbia never missed a meeting and were always at the club helping with special events. Both were avid fly fishers and bird hunters. Their bird dog now resides with their daughter Eva. Dave Klausmeyer from Ellsworth passed after a long illness. Dave was a well-known author of several fly tying books and the managing editor of Fly Tyer magazine. Dave was on the PRFGCA board of directors and Membership Secretary. Dave’s bird dog now resides with Dave’s surviving wife, Diane. More recently we were saddened by the very unexpected passing of Mike Elkavitch. Mike was very active in the fishing component of the club, and also volunteered with Project Healing Waters, a veteran’s group. They will be missed and in our thoughts.



*Karen Plumhoff with Steve Plumhoff*



*Dave Klausmeyer*



*Mike Elkavitch*



## A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

If the membership at large comprises the body of the club, it is the active members who volunteer their time who are the heart — a sentiment expressed clearly in last year’s newsletter and still true today.

Whether you’re helping at events, maintaining the grounds, selling raffle tickets, or simply leaving the range cleaner than you found it, your contributions make our activities possible. For those who live far away or have limited time, even a modest donation to the Capital or Community Service Fund is deeply appreciated.

Let’s make 2026 another safe, productive, and enjoyable year at Pleasant River.

**Robin Burns, President**

## CLUB INFORMATION

Officers: President, Robin Burns  
Vice President, Larry Balchen  
Secretary, Rick Henion,  
Treasurer, Mike Warnock  
Membership Secretary, Fred Urban  
Chief Range Safety Officer, Skip Sprague

Executive Officers: George Openshaw  
Robert Jones  
Andy Hutnik

President Emeritus and  
wandering woodsbum: Larry Balchen

Governance advisor: Greg Campbell

Health Safety Officer: Joe Bragg

Bookkeeper: Grace Falzarano

Environmental stewardship officer: Andy Hutnik

Technical wizard: Fred Urban

Spiritual advisor: Tom "Blackfly whisperer" Bazzolo

Facebook administrator: RJ Heller

Contacts: President, Robin Burns [info@prfgca.org](mailto:info@prfgca.org), tel. 207-546-0368

Membership Secretary: Fred Urban, [membership@prfgca.org](mailto:membership@prfgca.org), tel. 704-728-7384

Range scheduling: Bob Jones, 207-483-4348

Hunter Safety: Larry Balchen 207-497-5621, [huntersafety@prfgca.org](mailto:huntersafety@prfgca.org)

Trapper safety: Paul Favolise, 207-483-4779

Special events: Larry Balchen 207-497-5621, [events@prfgca.org](mailto:events@prfgca.org)

Pleasant River Fish & game Conservation Association is a 501c3 non-profit corporation.  
The campus is located at 1597 Tibbettstown Rd., Columbia, ME 04623

# Range Safety

## *Range Safety Standard Operating Procedures*

**It is the responsibility of all range users to know and obey the range safety rules!**

Before using the range for the first time, all users must read the Range Safety Standard Operating Procedures (RSSOP), and sign an acknowledgment that they have read, understood and agree to abide by the (RSSOP). Orientation is required before using the range.

1. Shoot only at the down range backstop/berm. All bullets must impact the range backstop. Keep the muzzle low when chambering a round, and come up to your target, not down from a muzzle high approach. Targets must be placed no higher than seven (7) feet and no more than fifteen (15) feet from the base of the backstop/berm.
2. Do not handle or aim firearms when anyone is down range. Ensure the yellow "down range" flag at the end of the firing line is used when anyone is forward of the firing line.
3. Keep all actions open, magazines out and safeties "on" while away from the firing lines or whenever anyone is down range.
4. Any firearms requiring maintenance or sight adjustment shall be pointed down range and cleared of all ammunition. Work may only be performed when all persons have returned to the firing line and no personnel are down range.
5. No one under the age of 16 is to use the range unless supervised by a club member.
6. Pets other than service animals are not allowed on the Ranges unless they are under the full control of owners at all times while on the premises. Owners are expected to clean up after their pets if the waste is located in a well-traveled location.
7. Do not leave litter. Clean up your firing point and backstop before leaving.
8. Do not shoot at bottles, cans, trees, target frames or rocks. Use approved targets only.
9. Any persons within 20 feet of active firing on the ranges must wear appropriate eye and ear protection.
10. Obey any special directives given to you by a representative of this club. The Range Safety Officer's decisions are not debatable.
11. Report any infraction of these rules to a club representative after you have first reminded the shooter of the infraction and he/she still refuses to comply.
12. Continued infractions of safety regulations may result in revocation of your club membership.
13. Orientation is required before using the range.
14. THINK SAFETY!
15. LOCK THE GATE AND CLUBHOUSE IF YOU ARE THE LAST ONE LEAVING THE PROPERTY.