

The Bald Eagle Sportsmen's Association was formed in 1942 by a group of friends who were interested in recreational shooting and the preservation of wildlife of all kinds. The original members had a small range on a property referred to as Ryan's Resort, on Route 8, Bald Eagle Lake, White Bear, Minnesota. It was located somewhere on the northwest corner on Bald Eagle Lake. The Bald Eagle name of our organization came from that original location.

The club grew in membership and became incorporated in on September 12, 1949. The original Board of Directors were W.C. Tuchfarber, Elmer F. Schroth, Roy H. Novotny, Richard Smith, and Ted Marcotte, all listing their addresses as Bald Eagle Lake, White Bear, MN.

Also, in 1949 Mr. Louis Arcand accepted \$5 (which was the going rate at the time) from Minnesota Pipeline Company for "right of way" to bury oil lines across a portion of his land in what was, at the time Oneka Township. These buried pipelines along with the pond and marshy area, made the parcel of land un-suitable for profitable farming, and those oil lines still run beneath our entry road, 100 yard range, the "down range" of the trap/skeet range, and portions of our archery course.

In 1957 a member of the club purchased our existing eighty-acre property from Mr. Arcand. This makes us one of the oldest residents of our portion of Hugo. In 1958 a Minnesota National Guard Construction Battalion built roads and ranges on the property. This has been our home since that time, providing a safe facility to the public for firearms safety training, law enforcement training and practice, and of course, the fellowship of interested sportsmen.

In 1972 Oneka Township was annexed by the City of Hugo. It was also during that time period that the first special use permit for our Association was issued by the City of Hugo. By that permit our membership was limited to 225 members. In subsequent years that limit was raised to 350.



100 yd. range cover circa 1989

In July of 1987, Mark Peterson, President of The White Bear Lake Archers, appeared before General Membership meeting requesting use of the facilities for his organization. Archers were then admitted for BESA membership. The first BESA Archery tournament was held in April of 1988. Today, our shoots draw as many as 70 archers and are held on Sundays.

The Seventies and Eighties were years of tree planting, and construction of range covers. These were the club's first attempt at sound abatement. Most of the pines on our land have been planted by club membership. There was great contention with the pipeline company that insists that the ground above and around the lines be cleared and visible from a plane for inspection. Some of our current trees were in payment from Minnesota Pipeline as a settlement for removing other trees. Members built the shooting covers too, eventually adding old carpeting to the sides to help muffle muzzle blast.



100 yd. range cover, before 2005

In 2005 the State Legislature passed the Minnesota Shooting Range protection act, voiding several points of the Hugo conditional use permit including the 350 membership limit. It took several months of discussions with the Hugo City council, but the revised conditional use permit was approved in August of 2007. In the mid 1990's as other ranges were pushed out of existence by the expansion of the metropolitan area, our membership reached the 350 limit and has stayed there. Our waiting list for membership had grown to over one hundred individuals and given the high membership renewal rate, the wait for admission was about 5 years long. From very early on, the club has been involved in several

competitive shooting events such as DCM shooting before it was replaced by the Civilian Marksmanship Program. The club still hosts 4 CMP shoots a year. The club offers one of the best Skeet and (3) Trap ranges in the Twin Cities.



New 100 yd. range cover

The club serves the community by providing a practical place for our local law enforcement agencies to log their required range practice time. We host several juvenile gun safety classes and Boy Scout troops every year, providing facilities to several different programs. Though we no longer host Bowling Pin shoots. Other events that have been added over the years have been The Pistol League, Cowboy Action Shooting, and the Cast Bullet League. After a long absence, Muzzle Loaders are allowed again. As the farmland around the club has been rezoned residential,

BESA has continued to work to be a good neighbor and has enlisted the help of the NRA and Minnesota DNR in improving the design and construction of range covers and course of fire to have modern facilities, and state of the art sound abatement. Bald Eagle Sportsman's remains an asset to the surrounding communities.

Compiled from BESA meeting minutes and the Articles of Incorporation.

David Arcand

Recording Secretary 2004

