

Deer hunt outfitter enjoys Carroll County venture

By Rod Butcher
Contributing Writer

Carroll County is known for many things but probably not as a destination to hunt trophy deer. However that may have changed due to one entrepreneur.

Mark Liebner opened Camp Kay Outfitters last year to sell deer hunts on 13,000 acres of leased land in Carroll, Cass, and White counties. The official Web site displays several beautiful trophy deer pictures from the local area.

Liebner started hunting a little later than most, during high school and college at Purdue. He grew up in Cass County and has hunted the surrounding areas. After graduating from Purdue with a management degree, Liebner worked at different jobs but said he always returned to hunting.

"This is my passion," he said recently.

Liebner said he enjoys people and promoting the area as well as the state of Indiana. He said he was fortunate to be able to work near where he spent his childhood years. Most of the 2,100 leased acres in Carroll County is located about five minutes northeast of Delphi, stretching around five miles along the south edge of the Wabash River.

Liebner explained his local hunting operation is different from a confined-space commercial operation. He said he leases land and provides a service to hunters who chase deer that run free.

Hunting clients become aware of the hunting opportunity by word of mouth, the web site, hunting brokers and the media. Liebner said the business provided service to about 70 clients last season and more than half of them were bow hunters. The average cost of a hunt is \$1,800.

Liebner said most clients are from out of state. They schedule six-day hunts in advance and can choose to hunt during four seasons - bow, gun, muzzleloader and then bow again. Hunters are limited to one buck per season by bow, gun, and/or muzzleloader, but depending on the county, may take as many as three does. Liebner said about 1,000 pounds of minerals designed for deer health and bone growth is placed as a form of animal management on the property.

He further explained clients arrive at the base camp located in Monticello, check in and sign a waiver. They are able to sight-in weapons at the range and are then taken to the hunting area. Liebner said hunts

take place from a stand located in a tree or from a ground blind. Hunters are not permitted to wander. He said property lines are marked by orange paint or orange ribbons in Carroll County.

Once a deer has been shot, hunters are required to notify one of five guides, who assist in retrieval. According to Liebner that additional service improves the odds of animal recovery.

Camp Kay will soon introduce entire-season membership hunts for a set price. Duck and goose hunts will be available in the upcoming season. Liebner said he has a long-term plan to build a lodge and will strive to accommodate those individuals with physical limitations.

Liebner stated the economic impact to Carroll County will be gas, food and incidental purchases. He said the State of Indiana would benefit most from the sale of out-of-state hunting license fees, which are \$150. The fee for Indiana residents is \$24.

"We have just scratched the surface of hunting opportunities that Indiana has to offer," Liebner concluded.

Liebner can be contacted for information or to schedule a hunt at campkayoutfitters.com.

SFLECC applies to join Adopt-A-River program

The Shafer and Freeman Lakes Environmental Association (SFLECC) have filed an application with the Indiana Department of Natural Resources to join Indiana's Adopt-A-River (AAR) program.

The AAR is similar to INDOT's Adopt A Highway program. In doing so SFLECC is committing to organizing local citizens to help clean trash and litter from a half-mile section of the banks of the Tippecanoe River as it flows through Lake Freeman. The cleanup will occur twice a year.

SFLECC has chosen the half-mile section of banks downstream of the Norway Dam Bridge to the Riverside Restaurant for adoption. The first cleanup is scheduled for

Sept. 12.

According to Daryl Johns, SFLECC executive director, "SFLECC is committed to improving the natural environment of the twin lakes. We think that the goals of the Adopt-A-River program match our mission and activities as we strive to keep our lakes clean."

Litter on the shoreline of the lakes is normally the responsibility of individual owners and licensees. The area SFLECC has chosen to adopt is one that sees high use by the public.

In addition to the SFLECC board, committee members, and administrative staff, SFLECC hopes to energize people living or owning adjacent properties in the adopted stretch of the river to assist, for an hour or two twice a year, in

cleaning the banks of the river of trash and litter.

President Obama will soon designate Sept. 11 every year as a National Day of Service similar to Martin Luther King Day in January and Earth Day in the spring. SFLECC has scheduled the first cleanup as part of the September event. The cleanup will be Sept. 12 to allow more people to attend. The second cleanup will take place as part of the Earth Day observance in April next year. It is scheduled for next April 17. SFLECC Board Member Lee Kreul will chair the cleanups.

The SFLECC board of directors meets at 7 p.m. on the third Thursday of each month at the White County REMC. Meetings are open to the public.

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