

# Sportsmen Assisting the Nation's Disabled Sportsmen



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## SANDS

The SANDS program got its start after I received an injury at work where I had to have five back operations, and then I had to go through all the physical therapy. I was locked away in my house for over five years recovering from everything that I had to go through. Being locked away in the house took all the life out of me, not being able to get out and do any hunting, fishing or camping, was a slow way of killing me. I was no longer able to do any outdoor activities with my wife and kids. I went on the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission's (NGPC) website and signed on to the forum page. I wrote "Disabled Hunter Needs Help." I received a dozen responses to my post, so after calling everyone and thanking them for offering to take me out. I got with Mike Freel and Rik Cutting. I talked with Mike about how this would be a pretty cool idea going on line and getting help with getting out. Mike and I put together a proposal and took it the Greg Wagner to get his opinion on it because we wanted to present it to the NGPC. We talked for over two hours and finally had enough information to finish what we started. That was the beginning of what has turned into one of the loves of my life. Being able to help people to get out and be apart of the outdoors is very exciting and I love being able to do it. But its not always as easy as it would seem. I try to reach out to everyone with a disability to get them fired up about SANDS, and to want to get outdoors. I offer free hunting trips and fishing trips but I get three or four people signing up for them, and its always the same people. When I talked to each of you about joining up with SANDS most of you were very excited about getting the chance at getting outdoors but you don't take me up on all that I am offering. I don't know why, but people don't seem to want to take me up on all that I am offering. You would think that everyone would be very excited about the chance to go hunting or fishing. Maybe you think there is a hidden fee for using the program? No SANDS is totally free for everyone to use as they want to.\*Continued on page 4\*

Here it is the first of many summer fishing events, I hope!!

Norm "Punch" Edwards is offering a two day fishing trip at lake McConaughy, in western Nebraska. Lodging for the two day trip will be provided by Punch, but you will have to bring your own food. You will be fishing from Punch's boat and it promises to be a really get adventure. If you would like the chance at this or other fishing trips contact Dave at 402-559-3743 or 402-650-0211 and get your name in the hat the drawing for this event is going to be May 15<sup>th</sup>. Don't let this one pass you by...

## **WANTED: Your Pictures!**

Do you have pictures of yourself while you're out on your fishing trip or hunt?

We need your photos for the newsletter! If you have some pictures of hunting or fishing events, send them to [sands@sandsusa.org](mailto:sands@sandsusa.org)

We really want to show off your smiling face to all the participants so send us your best.

## **SANDS Meeting**

SANDS held its first participants meeting on April 26th at the Cabela's boardroom. We had over 20 participants turn out for the meeting. Present at the meeting was Aaron Hershberger from the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and Joe Pepitone from Kohl's Pharmacy. Joe donated a wheelchair accessible van for SANDS to use to take people to any SANDS functions.

There was a lot of discussion about different events but the one that everyone talked most about was how to get more participation at the different events? One suggestion was to hold social events where people can get together and meet each other under relaxed conditions. The Fish Outing & Picnic would be a great chance for people to meet and plan fall hunts. We are going to look into the idea of holding a shoot at a rifle range so that people can get some practice and talk to others about going hunting. We would serve a lunch at this type of an event.

There was also a suggestion of having a rewards system in place. That idea didn't meet with favor from the majority of the people present. SANDS is a volunteer service that is offered through the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and the Munroe-Meyer Institute, I can't pay someone for assisting a person with a disability. And anyway you look at it rewards equal payment. We can do a recognition program where the top volunteer for the year would receive a plaque at the Banquet. We have to be very careful when we are doing anything that looks like rewards. SANDS is a volunteer service, if you need rewards or incentives to help someone with a disability to get out and enjoy the outdoors you may not be in the right program. SANDS is about assisting with no strings attached

## **It's Up and It's Working!!**

That's right! it is finally up and running. The new SANDS email address [sands@sandsusa.org](mailto:sands@sandsusa.org) is finally fixed. It took a lot of work but Matt finally got all the bugs out of it. You wouldn't believe all that we had to do to get a simple email. Here is one for the I can't believe its true file. Matt and myself had to do a three way conversation with yahoo to get the email problem worked out. We finally ended up buying a new email so we could have the address that we started out with. I really want to thank Matt for all his work and patience with me and Yahoo. They can be trying at times. So now if you want to get in touch with me you can reach me at [sands@sandsusa.org](mailto:sands@sandsusa.org). That is the official email of the SANDS program. [sandsnebraska@yahoo.com](mailto:sandsnebraska@yahoo.com) is still up and working and I do check both emails daily so don't worry if you use that email, you will get through to me. I look forward to hearing from you

Welcome, Welcome, Welcome. SANDS has a new Field Coordinator for the Southwest region in area 4 of the Nebraska map. Norm "Punch" Edwards, Punch as he likes to be called came to us from the Thunder Bear Foundation and we are very excited to have him with us. Punch has a real fire in his stomach for the SANDS program and he is really fired up about helping people with disabilities to get out and enjoy the outdoors. Punch will be working to get the SANDS program going in Southwest Nebraska. I have talked with Punch and he has some great ideas for expanding the program in his area. We are planning to get booths in different County Fairs over the next couple of years. And some outdoor expos that he has attended. If you are a SANDS participant in this region you may want to give Punch a call and introduce yourself. Let him know what you are looking for and how he might help you to get the most out of SANDS as you are able. PUNCH's contact information is 308-778-9546. Thanks Punch for coming on board with us, I look forward to working with you.

## Last Chance at The Hunt of a Life Time

We are keeping the story about the South African hunt in our news letter for another month. We want to give everyone a chance at signing up for this hunt. It truly is a "hunt of a life time" and everyone out there should be putting their name in the hat for this one. Are you disabled, but still like a challenge? Are you able to take care of your needs around the house or in the field? Would you like to go on the hunt of a life time? Then read on. If you like the challenge of a hunt and like the adventure of going some place new then this is the hunt for you. The Safari Club International held its banquet on February 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> 2008 at the Holiday Inn Central (72<sup>nd</sup> & Grover) in Omaha, NE. Last year the club donated a deer hunt with a mount that Dave Duncan won. This year the club donated a huge hunt to SANDS. There are some conditions that you must meet in order to put your name in the hat for the drawing of this hunt. You must be able to travel by air and ground. This hunt is a long ways away and you will have to spend some time in an airplane. You must be able to go away for 7 days plus travel time. You have to be able to take care of all your needs with out an attendant. That means being able to totally care for yourself before the hunt, during the hunt and after the hunt. If you have made it this far get



ready here it comes. The Safari Club has donated a 7 day African Safari to go to one person with a disability. You must be **DISABLED!!!** This hunt includes your air fare that is paid for as well as your hotel and meals. You will be able to hunt 1 impala, 1 warthog and 1 blesbok (similar to antelope). After your hunt you will want to have something to remember the event so Steve Evers of Wildlife Creations has donated mounting 2 of the animals your choice. The only other condition is that the hunt must be used in one of the following months, October of 2008, March of 2009 or October of 2009. If this sounds like something you would like to do then call Dave at 559-3743 and put your name in the hat. The drawing for this hunt of a life time will be held August 20<sup>th</sup> of 2008. So don't waste any time getting signed up for this wonderful prize package.

## SANDS– Continued

Maybe you can't afford to pay for the license or tag? That is not a problem, if you are disabled and can't afford your license or tag SANDS will purchase it for you. Maybe you can't hold the weapon you hunt with any longer? Okay, SANDS has bought some equipment that will hold any rifle, shotgun, black powder rifle or crossbow so you can shoot it. Equipment is lent at no cost to you, by the way. Maybe you don't have a weapon, SANDS does have a crossbow that can be borrowed, if you have the proper permit to hunt with a crossbow.

SANDS has always been about team work. A person with a disability teamed up with an able-bodied outdoors man or woman to assist the disabled get around. Mentored or buddy hunts is what the program has always been the focus of SANDS. If you go out on a hunt ask someone to come along with you. You will get a whole lot more out of the experience. Even on the SANDS patch you see two hands shaking each other, team work.

There is no reason to sit at home alone slowly wasting away when you have lots of people will to go out with you. These people are as far away as a phone call or an email. We have private land you can hunt on you just need to call them and set it up. I can't tell you when to go or where to go or to go with this person over the next but I can tell you that not teaming up with someone is a waste on your part. These people are there for you whenever you need them. But let's be real about it you should be calling these people now and setting up with them to go to the range to do some shooting together build trust and confidence in each other. You should be picking your dates and times now and getting things ready for the fall now. Don't wait till the last minute to find someone and then be upset because no one wants to go out with you. That is not fair to them or the program. If you need a list of names for in your area or the area you plan to hunt give me a call and let me know what you need and I will print it off and mail it to you.

If you would just call me and tell me what it is you need, I am certain we can find away to help you get outdoors. There is no reason to sit at home and waste away. Enjoy life, you only get to go through it once.

## Fish Outing & Picnic



Come out and fish- June 21st from 9a to 1p at Branched Oaks in Lincoln, Nebraska. This is a team fishing event and each team must have one person with a disability and one able-bodied team mate. You can get the names of the disabled or able-bodied from the SANDS website at ([www.sandsusa.org](http://www.sandsusa.org)) Then stick around for a great picnic from 1pm to 3pm. This is a chance to socialize with other SANDS participants. You don't have to fish the event to enjoy the picnic. To sign up for this dual event contact Dave Burgess at 402-559-3743.

There will be trophies and prizes for the top 5 teams and a separate trophy for big fish. There will be door prizes for everyone who enters the fishing event. At the picnic there will be brats with side salads, chips, pop and water. If you would like to make a dessert for the event let Dave know. This will be a great chance to meet people and if you need transportation to the event there will be rides to and from the events for any SANDS participants with disabilities. Courtesy of Kohl's Pharmacy. The Schedule is 8:30am to 9:00am register/ 9:00am– 1pm Fish/ 1:00pm to 3:00pm, weigh in, awards and Picnic.

**Come out and enjoy the day with us!!!!**

## SANDS New Equipment



The SANDS program has lots of different equipment for people with disabilities to use to make their time in the field or by the lake much more enjoyable. This equipment like SANDS is free for anyone who needs it. There are no fees for you to use it. Pictured at the right is our latest purchase. It is the HQ100 adaptive device. It will hold a shotgun, rifle, black powder or crossbow. It is battery operated device to allow quadriplegics to hunt. With the use of an actuator arm and a sip & puff you can move the weapon to your target and then shoot it with very little assistance. We are trying to get the feel of hunting back to you. We also have a limited mobility device and an extra sip & puff switch that can go on any weapon. To use these pieces of equipment you will have to fill out an equipment



request form and you will be allowed to use the item for one week. If know one else wants it at the end of that week you can extend your use of it by one more week and then it must be turned in. If you have any questions or to sign it out contact Dave at 402-559-3743 or 402-650-0211.

## SANDS Meeting

The next meeting for the SANDS participants will be on May 15th 2008. The meeting will begin at 7:00 pm and will last about an hour to and hour and a half. This month the event will be held at the Bass Pro Shop in Council Bluffs, Iowa. This is an open meeting and everyone is welcome, we will be discussing ideas on how to improve participation in the program as well as reaching out to the western Nebraska participants. We will be talking about up coming events and expo's and where the SANDS program is heading and where you would like it to go. Please come to this meeting it is there for you. If you need transportation please let Dave Burgess know at least one week in advance of the meeting.

## Up Coming Events

Date	Event	Location
June 21 <sup>st</sup>	Fish Outing & Picnic	Branched Oak
August 22-29	Nebraska State Fair	Lincoln Fair Grounds
September 13 <sup>th</sup>	Fall Classic Fishing	Branched Oak
September 20 <sup>th</sup> or 27 <sup>th</sup>	Upland Game Bird hunt	Eustis Nebraska