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FWP Notices

Environmental Assessment

Boone & Crockett Club Shooting Range Environmental Assessment

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Comments on this notice are due: **6/24/2002**

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MEPA/NEPA/HB495 CHECKLIST

PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

1. Type of proposed state action: Shooting Range Development Funding Assistance

2. Agency authority for the proposed action: Montana Legislature has authorized funding for the establishment of a Shooting Range Development Program, providing financial assistance for the development of shooting ranges for public purposes. Furthermore, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks has responsibility for the administration of the program, including the necessary guidelines and procedures governing applications for funding assistance under the program.

3. Name of project: Boone and Crockett Club/Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Ranch Rifle and Shotgun Ranges, Dupuyer, MT

4. Name, address and phone number of project sponsor (if other than the agency): Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks is project sponsor .

5. If applicable:

Estimated Construction/Commencement Date: July 15, 2002

Estimated Completion Date: August 15, 2002

Current Status of Project Design (% complete): 100%

6. Location affected by proposed action (county, range and township):

Shotgun Range: Teton County, Section 5, T27N, R8W

Rifle Range: Teton County, Section 17, T27N, R8W

7. Project size -- estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected that are currently: (total tract size = 10 acres)

Acres Acres

(a) Developed: (d) Floodplain

Residential

Industrial (e) Productive:

Irrigated cropland

(b) Open Space/Woodlands/Recreation Dry cropland

Forestry

(c) Wetlands/Riparian Areas Rangeland 5.1 Other

8. Map/site plan: Attach an original 8 1/2" x 11" or larger section of the most recent USGS 7.5' series topographic map showing the location and boundaries of the area that would be affected by the proposed action. A different map scale may be substituted if more appropriate or if required by agency rule. If available, a site plan should also be attached.

9. Listing of any other Local, State or Federal agency that has overlapping or additional jurisdiction.

(a) Permits:

Agency Name Permit Date Filed/#

None

(b) Funding:

Agency Name Funding Amount

None

(c) Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:

Agency Name Type of Responsibility

None

10. Narrative summary of the proposed action or project including the benefits and purpose of the proposed action:
Proposed Action: Construction of two shooting ranges on the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Ranch, Dupuyer, MT, a shotgun range and a rifle range.

The Boone & Crockett Club Foundation has a Deed of Conservation Easement with The Nature Conservancy on the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Ranch. Item 4D, of that Easement, under Consistent Uses of the Property, states that the following is consistent with the Easement: Construction, maintenance, repair and use of a Research and Education Facility, a skeet and trap shooting range and necessary outbuildings associated with the uses of the Property" and Item 4M, allows for: Construction, maintenance, repair and use of a shooting range and necessary outbuilding associated with the uses of the Property authorized by the Easement, so long as these actions conform to applicable federal, state or local laws, or regulations"

Both of the ranges meet the standards of design, siting, and safety established by the National Rifle Association for ranges of this type.

As required, Copies of the Applicant 's Project Resolution, notarized and signed by the executive director are attached. The Rifle Range is Resolution Number 0201 and the Shotgun Range is Resolution Number 0202 (See Attachment A, Project Resolutions).

Shotgun Range: A 5" Stand Sporting Clays range will be established for the shotgun area. The sporting clays machines will be mounted on wheeled carts, moved around the area for shooting, and then stored in the range control house when not in use. Sporting clays machines will be mechanical/electrical and powered with solar chargers. The range control house will consist of a 12'X24' wood frame building. There will be minimal ground disturbance on the shotgun range, and it will be limited to a 30'X90' area (See attachment B, Shotgun Range). Excavation and leveling will be to accommodate the range control house and a level area in front of it. The range control house will serve as a warming facility and a clay target and machine storage area. An ATV trail will be established from the main road to the facility to provide access. The range will encompass about 3 acres. Additionally a safety fan/impact area will extend out 300 yards beyond the end of the range and will encompass about 10 acres. There will be no concrete shooting pads, paths or machine pads other than the control house. There

will also be no utility trenches or lines.

Rifle Range: The rifle range will be 100' wide X 916' long and will encompass about 2.1 acres. Target lines will be set at 50, 100, 200 and 300 yards. Berms will be constructed at 100, 200 and 300 yards (See Attachment C, Rifle Range Layout). The slope of the site allows for the berms to be placed in line down range and allow for shooting over each target line to the next beyond it. The range will have a 12'X60' steel framed range control house, a 12'X60' lean-to shooting shelter, and a pre-cast concrete vault toilet (See Attachment D, Rifle Range).

The range control house will be steel framed construction with a steel roof. Additionally 12' Powder River horse panels" will be used to encircle the range house to preclude livestock damage when house is not in use and range is open for grazing.

The 12'X60' lean-to shooting shelter will be divided into five 12'X12' shooting bays for covered bench-rest shooting. Each bay (5) will have a 4'X5' concrete pad with anchors for shooting benches. A weather proof shooting bench and a storage box will be installed on each concrete pad. An additional uncovered 40' level area will be located adjacent to the shooting shelter and will complete the 100' shooting line.

Cut and fill or approximately 2460 yards will be necessary to create the 100'X916' shooting range, as follows:

A 10'X100' level area for 50' target line.

Three 8'X100' berms for the 100, 200 and 300 yard target lines.

A 16'X100' level for the 12'X60' range control house.

A 16'X100' level for the 12'X60' lean-to shooting shelter and uncovered 12'X40' shooting area.

Excavation for the pre-cast concrete vault toilet.

Provisions to provide electrical service are incorporated within the design and electrical service is readily available at the site, but it is not in the current construction plan.

Statement of Need and Benefits:

Need: To enhance the general public's opportunity for ethical and quality outdoor hunting and shooting experiences. Outdoor shooting & field exercises conducted at the rifle and shotgun ranges will be held in concert with hunter education courses held at the Rasmuson Wildlife Conservation Center. These experiences will aid in the understanding of hunter and conservation ethics, hunter safety, and ethical and accurate marksmanship. It is very important that safe designated ranges be developed for these purposes.

Benefits: The ranges will be an integral part of the hunting and conservation education and ethics programs taught through the Elmer E. Rasmuson Wildlife Conservation Center. The benefits of these ranges for the public will be many. The setting will provide a location for hunters to setup organized shooting events for Hunter Education, 4H Shooting Sports, Federal and State agencies requiring a facility for continuing education with shooting ranges, and local sportsman groups in cooperation with the Boone & Crockett Club. Ranges such as these, which are well constructed and managed, will strive to enhance the safety skills of all participating hunters.

11. *List of agencies consulted during preparation of the EA:*

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks:

Gary Olson, Area Wildlife Biologist, Conrad, MT

Tom Flowers, Fish & Game Warden, Choteau, MT

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Evaluation of the impacts of the Proposed Action including secondary and cumulative impacts on the Physical and Human Environment.

A. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. <u>LAND RESOURCES</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. ** Soil instability or changes in geologic substructure?		X				
b. Disruption, displacement, erosion, compaction, moisture loss, or over-covering of soil, which would reduce productivity or fertility?		x				1b.
c. ** Destruction, covering or modification of any unique geologic or physical features?		X				
d. Changes in siltation, deposition or erosion patterns that may modify the channel of a river or stream or the bed or shore of a lake?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to earthquakes, landslides, ground failure, or other natural hazard?		X				
f. Other:		X				1f.

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

1b. Soil disruption is minimal for this site and is very localized. Approximately 2460 yards will be disturbed to build the rifle range. This will be for the construction of three 8'X100' berms and leveling for firing line, target line, range control building, and lean-to shooting shelter.

1f. The Boone & Crockett Club Foundation has a Deed of Conservation Easement with The Nature Conservancy. Item 4K3 of that deed says: Areas of surface disturbances shall have only limited and localized impact, shall be in places approved by the Conservancy, and shall be mitigated by restoring soils to the original contours and replanting native vegetation." Additionally Item 5D of the Deed, prohibits the mining of sand, gravel, rock, topsoil and similar materials except for the use by the Grantor for road maintenance on the property."

2. AIR Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. * * Emission of air pollutants or deterioration of ambient air quality? (Also see 13 (c).)		X				
b. Creation of objectionable odors?		X				
c. Alteration of air movement, moisture, or temperature patterns or any change in climate, either locally or regionally?		X				
d. Adverse effects on vegetation, including crops, due to increased emissions of pollutants?		X				
e. * * * For P-R/D-J projects , will the project result in any discharge, which will conflict with federal or state air quality regs? (Also see 2a.)		X				
f. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Air Resources (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

This area is in attainment for air quality. The proposed alternative does not directly impact air quality on or near the proposed area.

3. WATER	IMPACT *					Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Will the proposed action result in:	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. * Discharge into surface water or any alteration of surface water quality including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen or turbidity?		X					
b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff?		X					
c. Alteration of the course or magnitude of floodwater or other flows?		X					
d. Changes in the amount of surface water in any water body or creation of a new water body?		X					
e. Exposure of people or property to water related hazards such as flooding?		X					
f. Changes in the quality of groundwater?		X					3f.
g. Changes in the quantity of groundwater?			X				3f.
h. Increase in risk of			X				3f.

contamination of surface or groundwater?	X
i. Effects on any existing water right or reservation?	X
j. Effects on other water users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quality?	X
k. Effects on other users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quantity?	X
l. * * * * For P-R/D-J, will the project affect a designated floodplain? (Also see 3c.)	X
m. * * * For P-R/D-J, will the project result in any discharge that will affect federal or state water quality regulations? (Also see 3a.)	X
n. Other:	

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Water Resources (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

Under the proposed construction and operation of the shooting ranges, it is not expected to directly or indirectly affect the water resources of Montana.

3f. The Boone & Crockett Club Foundation has a Deed of Conservation Easement with The Nature Conservancy. Item 5E of that deed prohibits, The manipulation of wetlands, the construction of pond, the drainage of surface or sub-surface waters and any uses or activities which would pollute or degrade the surface or sub-surface waters on or underlying the Property."

4. <u>VEGETATION</u>	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Will the proposed action result in?	Unknown *	None	Minor *		
a. Changes in the diversity, productivity or abundance of plant species (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)?		X				4a.

b. Alteration of a plant community?	X				
c. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?	X				
d. Reduction in acreage or productivity of any agricultural land?	X				
e. Establishment or spread of noxious weeds?	X				4e.
f. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project affect wetlands, or prime and unique farmland?	X				
g. Other:	X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Vegetation (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

Construction of the shooting ranges results in the elimination of native vegetation (if present) within the disturbance areas. However, the areas of the proposed projects occupy a very small portion of the individual properties and are determined to have an insignificant impact on native vegetation in the area.

4a. The Boone & Crockett Club Foundation has a Deed of Conservation Easement with The Nature Conservancy. Item 4K3 of that deed says, Areas of surface disturbances shall have only limited and localized impact, shall be in sites approved by the Conservancy, and shall be mitigated by restoring soils to the original contours and replanting native vegetation."

4e. Introduction of noxious weed seeds may occur from vehicles that are carrying weed seeds. The increases in traffic to the property therefore have the potential to increase the spread of noxious weeds to the area. Landowners are required to control noxious weeds on their property. The established and projected weed control programs on the ranch would preclude the spread of noxious weeds. Additionally, the Deed of Conservation Easement's item 5B with The Nature Conservancy, prohibits the conversion of native vegetation to exotic cover species or the introduction of non-native plant species"

* * 5. FISH/WILDLIFE	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
Will the proposed action result in:		X				

a. Deterioration of critical fish or wildlife habitat?						5a.
b. Changes in the diversity or abundance of game animals or bird species?		X				
c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of nongame species?		X				
d. Introduction of new species into an area?		X				
e. Creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of animals?		X				
f. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				5f.
g. Increase in conditions that stress wildlife populations or limit abundance (including harassment, legal or illegal harvest or other human activity)?		X				
h. * * * For P-R/D-J, will the project be performed in any area in which T&E species are present, and will the project affect any T&E species or their habitat? (Also see 5f.)		X				5f.
i. * * * For P-R/D-J, will the project introduce or export any species not presently or historically occurring in the receiving location? (Also see 5d.)		X				
j. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Fish and Wildlife (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

5a. The proposed shooting range sites are in mule deer, *Odocoileus hemionus*, winter range. However, to avoid any sensitive wintering wildlife conflicts the shooting ranges will only be operated from May 15 to October 1. The comparatively small area being disturbed, the relative frequency of range usage, and the seasonal limitations will result in little or no impact on mule deer and other wildlife in the area.

5f. The Grizzly Bear, *Ursus arctos horribilis*, is a threatened species under The Endangered Species Act and is further classified by the Montana Natural Heritage Program as a Species of Special Concern". South of Canada, there are five grizzly bear subpopulations and the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Ranch is within one of those five subpopulation's region, the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem. However, Gary Olson, the area biologist for Region 4 of FWP, stated that he had no concerns for the Grizzly Bear and this project. The proposed sites are out in

open rangeland and are not in riparian areas, which are the areas used by the bears.

B. HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

6. NOISE/ELECTRICAL EFFECTS Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Increases in existing noise levels?			x			6a.
b. Exposure of people to serve or nuisance noise levels?		X				
c. Creation of electrostatic or electromagnetic effects that could be detrimental to human health or property?		X				
d. Interference with radio or television reception and operation?		X				
e. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Noise/Electrical Effects (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

This is a rural area with a low population density. Consequently, no significant direct or indirect effects on noise levels are expected under the proposed project. Additionally, the project does not involve the creation of any electrostatic or electromagnetic charges.

6a. The nearest neighbors, about two miles from the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Ranch, have been contacted about the future construction and operation of the shotgun and rifle ranges. They had no objections to their construction and operation.

7. LAND USE Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of or interference with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use of an area?		X				7a.
b. Conflicted with a designated natural area or area of unusual scientific or educational importance?		X				
c. Conflict with any existing land use whose presence would constrain or potentially prohibit the proposed action?		X				
d. Adverse effects on or relocation of residences?		X				
e. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Use (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

The proposed ranges are to be constructed on a very small portion of rangeland and will not affect any existing land uses nor will they adversely effect or relocate and residences.

7a. The ranch has historically been used as rangeland for grazing of livestock. The Deed of Conservation Easement with The Nature Conservancy recognizes that historic use and permits the ranch to graze and pasture cattle, horses, and/or llamas" recognizing that the ranch currently remains in a substantially undisturbed, natural state and has significant ecological and open-space values as defined in Montana's Conservation Easements' statues and it provides significant relatively natural habitat for native plants and wildlife. Consequently, historic levels of grazing have not impacted the natural value of the property and these practices will be allowed to continue in the future, unless it causes accelerated erosion or damages the productivity of the soil. The relatively small area disturbed by the construction of these two ranges will have an insignificant impact on the either the wildlife use or the grazing practices on the area.

8. <u>RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS</u>	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Will the proposed action result in:	Unknown *	None	Minor *		
a. Risk of an explosion or release of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to oil, pesticides, chemicals, or radiation) in the event of an accident or other forms of disruption?			X			
b. Affect an existing emergency response or emergency evacuation plan, or create a need for a new plan?			X			
c. Creation of any human health hazard or potential hazard?			X			
d. * * * For P-R/D-J, will any chemical toxicants be used? (Also see 8a)			X			
e. Other:			X			

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Risk/Health Hazards (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

Some potential human health hazards are always possible on shotgun and rifle ranges. However, with the safe construction and operating procedures in this proposal the potential hazard is extremely small. Both of the ranges meet the standards of design, siting, and safety established by the National Rifle Association for ranges of this type.

9. <u>COMMUNITY IMPACT</u>	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Will the proposed action result in:	Unknown *	None	Minor *		
a. Alteration of the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area?		X				

b. Alteration of the social structure of a community?		X				
c. Alteration of the level or distribution of employment or community or personal income?		X				
d. Changes in industrial or commercial activity?		X				
e. Increased traffic hazards or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods?		X				
f. Other:		X				9e.

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Community Impact (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

9e. Approximately 22 individuals and officials from the surrounding areas and communities were present at a public meeting held on April 10, 2002. There were no negative comments or opposition to the construction of the ranges at that time (See Attachment E). Comments from that meeting were all positive and constructive, and will be incorporated into the construction and operations plans.

10. PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Will the proposed action result in:	Unknown *	None	Minor *		
a. Will the proposed action have an effect upon or result in a need for new or altered governmental services in any of the following areas: fire or police protection, schools, parks/recreational facilities, roads or other public maintenance, water supply, sewer or septic systems, solid waste disposal, health, or other governmental services? If any, specify:			X			
b. Will the proposed action have an effect upon the local or state tax base and revenues?			X			
c. Will the proposed action result in a need for new facilities or substantial alterations of any of the following utilities: electric power, natural gas, other fuel supply or distribution systems, or			X			

communications?						
d. Will the proposed action result in increased use of any energy source?		X				
e. ** Define projected revenue sources		X				
f. ** Define projected maintenance costs.		X				
g. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Public Services/Taxes/Utilities (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

The proposed construction of the shooting ranges will not have an effect the governmental services needed in the area and no additional demands would be placed on the local government.

** 11. <u>'STHETICS/RECREATION</u>	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
Will the proposed action result in:						
a. Alteration of any scenic vista or creation of an 'sthetically offensive site or effect that is open to public view?		X				
b. Alteration of the 'sthetic character of a community or neighborhood?		X				
c. ** Alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational/tourism opportunities and settings? (Attach Tourism Report.)		X				11c.
d. *** For P-R/D-J, will any designated or proposed wild or scenic rivers, trails or wilderness areas be impacted? (Also see 11a, 11c.)		X				
e. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on 'sthetics/Recreation (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

Recreational opportunities would increase with the construction of the proposed ranges.

11c. The increased recreational benefits to the community are in providing safe supervised range facilities for Hunter Education training, 4-H shooting sports, shooting instructor training, sportsman's clubs, etc., plus the availability of ranges for Federal, State and local law enforcement organizational uses.

12. CULTURAL/HISTORICAL RESOURCES	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Will the proposed action result in:	Unknown *	None	Minor *		
a. * * Destruction or alteration of any site, structure or object of prehistoric historic, or paleontological importance?			X			
b. Physical change that would affect unique cultural values?			X			
c. Effects on existing religious or sacred uses of a site or area?			X			
d. * * * * For P-R/D-J, will the project affect historic or cultural resources? Attach SHPO letter of clearance. (Also see 12.a.)			X			
e. Other:			X			

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Cultural/Historical Resources (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

There are no known historical, archeological or cultural sites within the proposed area of the project.

SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

13. SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Will the proposed action, considered as a whole:	Unknown *	None	Minor *		
a. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (A project or program may result in impacts on two or more separate resources that create a significant effect when considered together or in total.)		X				

b. Involve potential risks or adverse effects, which are uncertain but extremely hazardous if they were to occur?	X				
c. Potentially conflict with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan?	X				
d. Establish a precedent or likelihood that future actions with significant environmental impacts will be proposed?	X				
e. Generate substantial debate or controversy about the nature of the impacts that would be created?	X				
f. * * * For P-R/D-J, is the project expected to have organized opposition or generate substantial public controversy? (Also see 13e.)	X				
g. * * * * For P-R/D-J, list any federal or state permits required.	X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Significance Criteria (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

This proposed action has no impacts that are individually minor, but cumulatively significant or potentially significant. Cumulative impacts have been assessed considering any incremental impact of the proposed action when they are combined with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, and no significant impacts or substantially controversial issues were found. There are no extreme hazards created with this project and there are no conflicts with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan.

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW (CONTINUED)

1. Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented: *Only the proposed alternative and the no action alternative were considered. There were no other alternatives that were deemed reasonably available, nor prudent. Neither the proposed alternative nor the no action alternative would have any significant negative environmental or potentially negative consequences. There are beneficial consequences to Acceptance of the proposed alternative (construction of the ranges), such as increased recreational opportunities, firearms and hunter safety training, and law enforcement training within the community. The no action alternative would be not to build the shooting ranges and continue on with present activities. Land use would remain the same (rangeland and grazing). Present activities also include occasional shooting activities on temporary ranges. However, using safely designated, designed and supervised ranges, such as the proposed alternative is the prudent alternative.*

2. *Evaluation and listing of mitigation, stipulation, or other control measures enforceable by the agency or another government agency:*

None proposed.

PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

All of the pertinent or potential impacts of the project have been reviewed, discussed, and analyzed. Due to the minor nature and insignificant effects of the proposed action, this should be considered the final version of the environmental assessment. There are no significant environmental or economic impacts associated with the proposed alternative. The strong, positive public comments and attendance at the public hearing, combined with the potential for adding an important resource to the shooting sports and hunter education resources for the Dupuyer area and the State of Montana all support the approval of the proposed alternative. Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks should approve the proposed alternative for the construction of the shooting ranges for the Elmer E. Rasmuson Wildlife Conservation Center on the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Ranch.

PART IV. EA CONCLUSION SECTION

1. *Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required (YES/NO)? If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action.*

An EIS is not required. There were no significant environmental or economic impacts discovered in the assessment process.

2. *Describe the level of public involvement for this project if any, and, given the complexity and the seriousness of the environmental issues associated with the proposed action, is the level of public involvement appropriate under the circumstances? A public hearing was held on April 10 to seek comment on the proposed construction of the ranges on the ranch. Notices were also published in three local newspapers. Minutes of that meeting are attached. There were no negative comments or objections to the project from those present at the meeting, nor have any negative comments been received from the public or any governmental entity. Comments from that meeting were all positive and constructive, and will be incorporated into the construction and operations plans (See Attachment E).*

3. *Duration of comment period, if any.*

A 15 day public comment period will be implemented upon staff review of the EA.

4. *Name, title, address and phone number of the person(s) responsible for preparing the EA:*

*Gene R. Hickman
Wildlife Biologist and Sole Proprietor of
Ecological Assessments
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