



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

PO Box 200701
Helena, MT 59620
406-444-1267

October 28, 2007

Subject: Decision Notice for the Butte Trap Club EA

Dear Interested Parties:

For the 2007/08 biennium, the Butte Trap Club submitted a request for funding (\$15,797.50) to FWP's Shooting Range Grant Program to assist with the upgrade of 3 trap clay throwers and the replacement of 2 trap houses.

As part of the review process, the department conducted an environmental assessment and this letter is to inform interested parties about FWP's decision to award the grant.

The department received 20 comments, 18 of which were in support and 2 were in opposition to the proposed project.

Based on concerns raised by an adjacent landowner, FWP decided to award a partial grant (\$6,038.75) to fund the purchase and installation of an automatic trap machine in trap house #4 as well as the removal and replacement of the associated trap-house structure as specified in the original grant application.

FWP reviewed existing expert testimonies in regards to the concern of shotgun pellets landing beyond property boundaries and determined that there is no such risk associated with trap house # 4. By choosing the option of partial funding, there's no change to the environmental impacts associated with this project.

FWP will consider awarding the remaining funds (\$9,758.75) to upgrade the other 2 clay throwers and replace the other trap house if and when the agency receives a signed written agreement between the Butte Trap Club and adjacent landowners about the above mentioned safety concern being addressed to mutual satisfaction.

FWP will hold the remaining funds until May 1, 2008 in hopes that this issue can be resolved. In addition, the department offers to assist parties by facilitating the necessary meetings to come to a mutually acceptable resolution.

If you have any questions, please contact Kurt Cunningham at (406) 444-1267 or kcunningham@mt.gov.

Respectfully,

Thomas Baumeister
Education Bureau Chief

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks

1420 E 6th Ave, PO Box 200701 Helena, MT 59620-0701
(406) 444-2452

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

PART I. Purpose of and Need for Action

1. Project Title: Butte Trap Club

2. Type of Proposed Action: Purchase Three Automatic Trap Machines
Remove and Replace 2 Traphouses

3. Location Affected by Proposed Action: The Butte Trap Club, also known as the Butte Trap and Skeet Club, is approximately 5 miles south of city center of Butte, Montana in Silver Bow County, on Gun Club road and occupies approximately 40 acres. The deed of title for transfer of the property on January 1938 is as follows: *...The south one-half (S 1/2) of the North one-half (N 1/2) of the Southwest Quarter (SW 1/4) of the Southwest Quarter (SW 1/4); also the southwest quarter (SW 1/4) of the southwest quarter (SW 1/4) of the southwest (SW 1/4) and the east half (E 1/2) of the south half (S 1/2) of the Southwest quarter (SW 1/4) of the southwest quarter (SW 1/4), all of Section eight (8), Township two (2) north, Range Seven (7) west of the Montana Principal Meridian, containing thirty (30) acres, more or less, excepting the west thirty (30) feet, for use as a public highway..*

4. Agency Authority for the Proposed Action: MCA87-1-276 through 87-1-279 (Legislative established policies and procedures for the establishment and improvement of shooting ranges) MCA87-2-105 (Departmental authority to expend funds to provide training in the safe handling and use of firearms and safe hunting practices). The 2007 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. 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.

5. Need for the Action(s): Modernization and expansion of the existing ranges is necessary for the increased number of shooters and shooting events in the Butte area. Additionally, the automatic trap machines will eliminate having a person in the trap house, further improving the safety and efficiency of range operations. Removing and replacing of the trap houses is necessary to accommodate the slightly larger automatic trap machines.

6. Objectives for the Action(s): The objective is to provide increased opportunity

to participate in safe organized and efficient operation with increased shooting opportunities.

7. Map:



Figure 1 - Location of Butte Trap Club on Gun Club Road just east of Basin Creek Road and south from Highway 2 and Butte.

8. Project Size: Estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected: Site is a 40 acre parcel of land located south of Butte, MT as described in Paragraph 3 and Figure 1. The trap club has been on this site since 1938. However, the improvements are limited to a much smaller area within the actual range area, specifically the three middle trap houses.

9. Affected Environment (A brief description of the affected area of the proposed project): The range parcel is located on club owned property. Club range has been in existence since at least 1892 and has been on its present site since at least 1938. The surrounding area was rural and over the years the surrounding area has grown into primarily light industrial and commercial properties. However there are a few scattered residences within the local area. The club properties, shot fall out zones and safety zones are more than adequate for safe operations of the range.

10. Description of Project: Purchase 3 new automatic single/double Pat traps and install them in trap houses replacing manual traps. Demolish and rebuild two trap houses, including rewiring of the electric and painting. Two houses require demolition as they are not deep enough to accommodate the new automatic traps.

11. List any Other Local, State, or Federal Agency that has Overlapping or Additional Jurisdiction:

(a) **Permits, Licenses and/or Authorizations:**

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Permit</u>
None Required	

Funding:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Funding Amount</u>
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks	\$15,797.50

12. Affiliations, Cooperating Agencies, User Groups and/or Supporting Groups: Butte 4-H holds shooting clinics at the club annually as do the Montana State Meatcutters who have a shoot during their annual meeting. In the past the FBI, Montana Power, Ducks Unlimited, and Boy Scouts have used the range for their shooting activities. The club ran 24 teams in their spring 2007 league and new shooters made up about 20% of the league. The club is open for public shooting and encourages other user groups, including Hunter Education, to use the range facilities. Improvements to the range are estimated to increase the range usage for league shoots, registered shoots, and public shooting and for other user organizations.

13. History of the Planning and Scoping Process, and Any Public Involvement: The current proposed range improvements and safety enhancements had been discussed within the membership of the club and with the associated project vendors and contractors.

14. List of Agencies Consulted/Contacted During Preparation of the EA: Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

15. Name, Address and Phone Number of Project Sponsor:

Tim Cassidy
4 Bittersweet

Butte, MT 59701
533-3583

16. Other Pertinent Information: The earliest documented record for the Butte Trap Club (Formerly the Butte Rod & Gun Club, then the Butte Trap & Skeet Club) is 1892. The club moved to its current location in 1938, based on the deed of title for the current property.

Shooting range applications require the participant's governing body to approve by resolution its submission of applications for shooting range funding assistance. Resolution Date: April 27, 2007.

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Abbreviated Checklist - The degree and intensity determines extent of Environmental Review. An abbreviated checklist may be used for those projects that are not complex, controversial, or are not in environmental sensitive areas)

Table 1. Potential impact on physical environment.

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Below
1. Unique, endangered, fragile, or limited environmental resources				X		
2. Terrestrial or aquatic life and/or habitats				X		#2
3. Introduction of new species into an area				X		
4. Vegetation cover, quantity & quality				X		
5. Water quality, quantity & distribution (surface or groundwater)				X		#5
6. Existing water right or reservation				X		
7. Geology & soil quality, stability & moisture				X		#7
8. Air quality or objectionable odors				X		
9. Historical & archaeological sites				X		
10. Demands on environmental resources of land, water, air & energy				X		
11. Aesthetics				X		

Comments (A description of potentially significant, or unknown, impacts and potential alternatives for mitigation must be provided.)

2. & 5. There are no live streams or ponds on the site and no delineated wetlands.

7. Water & Environmental Technologies (WET) conducted a soil analysis in late 2006 to determine whether shotgun shot was present along the western border of the club's property boundary. Based on visible inspection, sieve analysis and gravity separation of select samples, no shot was found along the western property boundary. The report of the analysis and findings is dated December 15, 2006.

Table 2. Potential impacts on human environment.

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Below
1. Social structures and cultural diversity				X		
2. Changes in existing public benefits provided by wildlife populations and/or habitat				X		
3. Local and state tax base and tax revenue				X		
4. Agricultural production				X		
5. Human health				X		#5
6. Quantity & distribution of community & personal income				X		
7. Access to & quality of recreational activities				X		#7
8. Locally adopted environmental plans & goals (ordinances)				X		
9. Distribution & density of population and housing				X		
10. Demands for government services				X		
11. Industrial and/or commercial activity				X		

Comments (A description of potentially significant, or unknown, impacts and potential alternatives for mitigation must be provided.)

5. Range site plans, construction and the ongoing operational and maintenance plans meet the standards of safety for the range participants, the public at large, and improvements will further enhance safety on the range itself. The safety of motorists from shot fallout on Basin Creek Road, running along the western boundary of the club, had been questioned. Consequently the club contracted Water & Environmental Technologies (WET) to conduct a soil analysis in late 2006. This sampling and analysis was initiated to determine whether shot was present along the western border of the club's property boundary. Based on visible inspection, sieve analysis and gravity separation of select samples by WET, no shot was found along that western property boundary. The report of the analysis and findings is dated December 15, 2006. The newly modified trap houses in this proposal and the other operational houses currently in use on the range, meet the ATA standards for safety and shot fall out.

7. Range provides year round controlled access and fulfils a need for a range to accommodate both hunter education, and public shooting.

Part III. Environmental Consequences

Does the proposed action involve potential risks or adverse effects which are uncertain but extremely harmful if they were to occur? No

Does the proposed action have impacts that are individually minor, but cumulatively significant or potentially significant? No

Identification of the Preferred Alternatives:

- **Alternative A** is as described in paragraph 10 (Description of Project) Purchasing and installing three automatic trap machines, and removing and replacing two traphouses.
- **Alternative B (No Action Alternative)** area will remain as an active trap range using single load trap machines with an operator in the trap house and new replacement trap houses would not be built.

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:

Two alternatives have been considered, A (Proposed Alternative) and B (No Action Alternative). There were no other alternatives that were deemed reasonably available, nor prudent.

Neither the proposed alternative (A) nor the no action alternative (B) would have any significant negative environmental or potentially negative consequences.

- There are beneficial consequences for the acceptance of alternatives **A** to provide safe reliable and cost efficient new systems along with new and improved shooter's shelters.
- The No Action Alternative would be not to provide two new automatic trap machines, and not to replace two traphouses. The range would continue without these improvements. Land use would remain the same. Present activities of the range without the proposed improvements would continue. Therefore the proposed alternative is the prudent alternative.

Describe any Alternatives considered and eliminated from Detailed Study:

None

List and explain proposed mitigative measures (stipulations):

None

Individuals or groups contributing to, or commenting on, this EA:

Montana Fish, Wildlife, & Parks
Tim Cassidy, 4 Bittersweet, Butte, MT 59701

PART IV. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

All of the pertinent or potential impacts of the project have been reviewed, discussed, and analyzed. None of the project reviewed were complex, controversial, or located in an environmentally sensitive area. The projects being proposed are on properties owned by the Butte Trap Club of Butte, MT. The low impact routine activity proposed indicates that 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 115 year history of the Butte Trap Club providing safe shooting opportunities to its members and the public indicates support for the proposed alternative. Therefore, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks should approve the proposed alternative (**A**) for three new automatic trap machines, and remove and replace two traphouses, these proposals as outlined in Para. 2 & 10.

EA prepared by: GENE R. HICKMAN
Ecological Assessments
Helena, MT 59602

Date Completed: August 16, 2007

PART V. EA CONCLUSION SECTION

Recommendation and justification concerning preparation of EIS:

None Required

Describe public involvement, if any:

None