Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

1420 E 6th Ave, PO Box 200701 Helena, MT 59620-0701
(406) 444-1267

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

PART I. Purpose of and Need for Action

1. Project Title: Hellgate Civilian Shooters Association – West Riverside Range

2. Type of Proposed Action: Range Improvements**:** Construct dirt safety berm

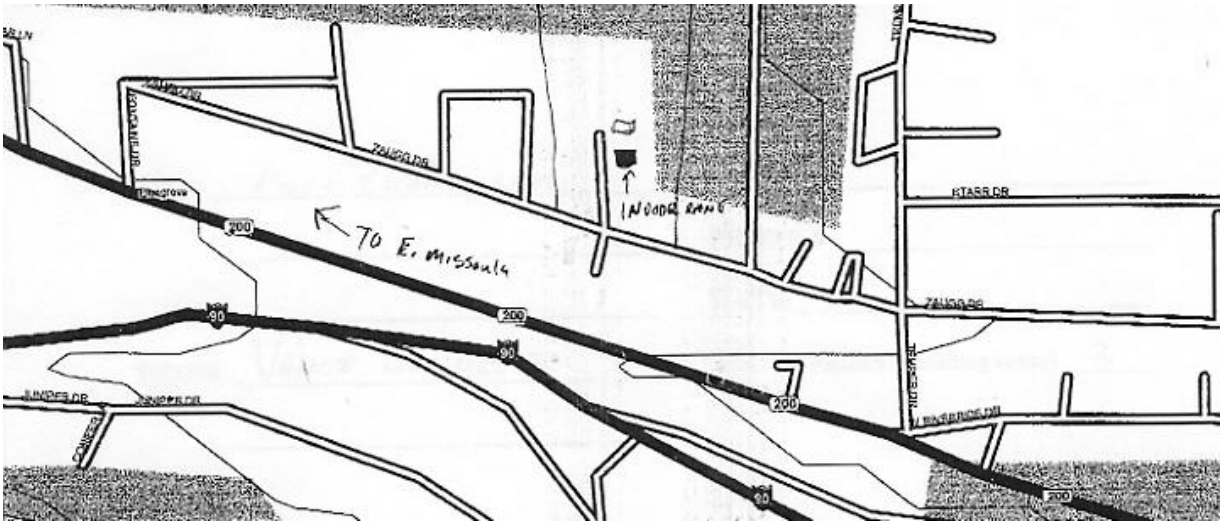
3. Location Affected by Proposed Action:
The Hellgate Civilian Shooters Association (HCSA) has two sites: (1) West Riverside Range (East Missoula), which has an indoor and outdoor small bore range, located off of Highway 200 east of Missoula. (2) The Deep Creek Site approximately 100 acres located on Fish, Wildlife & Parks leased property adjacent to the Deep Creek State Recreation Area about seven miles Northwest of Missoula, MT. This EA covers only projects on the West Riverside Range (See Maps 1 & 2).

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): There is the possibility of an inadvertent discharge of a firearm toward the east side of the range and toward a distant residential area.

6. Objectives for the Action(s): The objectives for the proposed projects answer the needs stated in item 5. The Westside range needs to construct a dirt berm on the east side of the firing line to prevent the inadvertent discharge toward the residential area on the far east side of the range. Consequently, this project improves safety, security and human health.

7. Area Maps



Map 1 – Area map the West Riverside site showing location of indoor range and adjacent outdoor range.

Map 2 – Aerial View of HCSA West Riverside shooting range.

8. Project Size: estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected:

The project covers an area 100’ long X 16’ wide.

9. Affected Environment (A brief description of the affected area of the proposed project):

This project is on the West Riverside site on the existing rimfire shooting range, located in a lightly forested area of predominantly Ponderosa Pine. There are no live streams, irrigation ditches or ponds on the site. The bullet impact area is into a very steep vertical slope to the north. There are no delineated wetlands.

10. Description of Project:

Construct a dirt berm 150’ long by 16’ high and approximately 16’ wide. Labor for constructing the berm wil be from the College of Technology heavy equipment class.

Figure 1 West Riverside range looking down range.
Figure is standing at approximate location of the proposed berm.

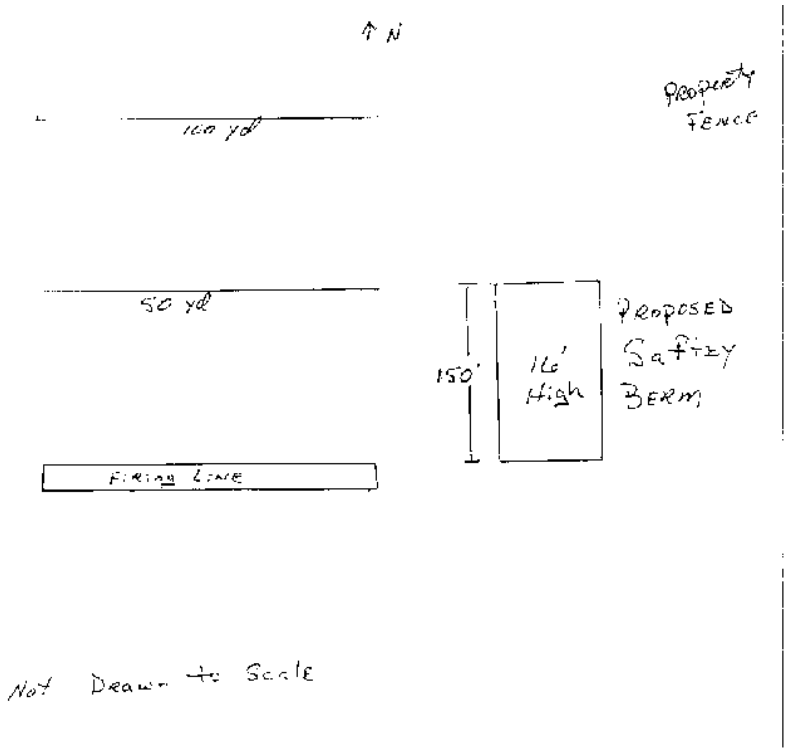


Figure 1 – Area for construction of the dirt berm to the east of the outdoor range.

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

None

(a) Permits, Licenses and/or Authorizations:

Agency Name	Permit	Date Filed/#
N/A		

Funding:

Agency Name	Funding Amount
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks	$4,325

12. Affiliations, Cooperating Agencies, User Groups and/or Supporting Groups: FWP-Hunter Education Program, Missoula Police Department, the Hunter Education Program, Army National Guard, and Army ROTC at the University of Montana

13. History of the Planning and Scoping Process, and Any Public Involvement: Proposed range improvements proposals have 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
Hellgate Civilian Shooter's Association project managers

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

Roger Hinther
3840 Spurgin
Missoula, MT 59804
543-3075

16. Other Pertinent Information:
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 15, 2009.

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		X
3. Introduction of new species into an area				X		
4. Vegetation cover, quantity & quality				X		
5. Water quality, quantity & distribution (surface or groundwater)				X		X
6. Existing water right or reservation				X		
7. Geology & soil quality, stability & moisture				X		
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, irrigation ditches or ponds on the site. No delineated wetlands.

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		X
6. Quantity & distribution of community & personal income				X		
7. Access to & quality of recreational activities				X		
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 and the public at large. A very comprehensive safety plan and well posted safety guidelines are in evidence throughout the range complex.

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? 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.

Identification of the Preferred Alternatives:
The proposed alternative A, alternative B and the no action alternative were considered.

- **Alternative A (Proposed Alternative)** is as described in paragraph 10 (Description of Project). Construction of a dirt berm along shooting range.
- **Alternative B (No Action Alternative)** Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Shooting Range Development Grant money would be denied and the area will remain as an active shooting range without proposed improvements and expansion.

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 significant negative environmental or potentially negative consequences. There are beneficial consequences to acceptance of the proposed alternative to build a safety berm along the east side of the shooting range. The no action alternative would be to not fund the improvements and the range will continue on with present conditions. Land use would remain the same. Therefore the proposed alternative is the prudent alternative.

Describe any Alternatives considered and eliminated from Detailed Study:
NONE

Individuals or groups contributing to, or commenting on, this EA:
Hellgate Civilian Shooters Association
MT Fish Wildlife and Park

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 implemented are already on an existing range/altered areas that together with the insignificant environmental effects of the proposed action, 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 long relationship that Hellgate Civilian Shooters Association has with hunter education, youth groups, local law enforcement and the local community all indicate support of the proposed alternative. Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks should approve the proposed alternative for the improvements of the West Riverside Shooting Range of the HCSA.

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

Date Completed: July 14, 2009

PART IV. EA CONCLUSION SECTION

Recommendation and justification concerning preparation of EIS:

None required.

Describe public involvement, if any:

This draft EA will be advertised on FWP's web site and through a legal ad in the **Missoulian** newspaper, announcing the 30-day public comment period. A press release will also announce the project and comment period.