PO Box 200701
Helena, MT 59620

July 12, 2010

Governor's Office, Mike Volesky; mvolesky@mt.gov
Environmental Quality Council, Maureen Theisen, mtheisen@mt.gov
Dept. of Environmental Quality, Tom Ellerhof, tellerhof@mt.gov
Dept. of Natural Resources & Conservation, P.O. Box 201601, Helena, MT 59620-1601
MT Historical Society, SHIPO, P.O. Box 201202, Helena, MT 59620-1202
MT State Library, 1515 E. Sixth Ave., P.O. Box 201800, Helena, MT 59620
Montana Wildlife Federation; csharpe@mtwf.org
Montana Audubon; jellis@mtaudubon.org
Montana Environmental Information Center; meic@meic.org
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Region 4, Bruce Auchly
Conservation District, danette.watson@mt.nacdnet.net
Town of Fairfeild, PO Box 8, Fairfeild, Montana 59436; Lillian Alfson, Mayor
Wind Ridge Trap Shooting Club, Jack Anderson

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) has released a draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for review and public comment regarding a proposal to provide funds for a shooting range improvement grant for the Windy Ridge Trap Club, located in the town of Fairfield, Teton County, Montana, on city Recreational Property.

FWP proposes to provide $8,700 in partial funding towards expanding the club house and by making the facility more handicapped accessible. A written copy can be obtained by writing FWP, PO Box 200701, Helena, MT 59620, or by kcunningham@mt.gov or by visiting http://fwp.mt.gov/news/publicnotices/notice.html?action=getPublicNotice&id=2441 . Written comments will be accepted at FWP, PO Box 200701, Helena, MT 59620 or by e-mail at kcunningham@mt.gov .

The comment period ends at 5:00 PM on July 30, 2010. This draft EA will be considered as final if no substantive comments are received by the deadline listed above.

Kurt Cunningham
Shooting Range Grant Coordinator

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: Windy Ridge Trap Club

2. Type of Proposed Action:
Expand current club house.

3. Location Affected by Proposed Action: The Windy Ridge Trap Club is located in the town of Fairfield, Teton County, Montana, on city Recreational Property.

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 Montana Legislature has authorizes funding for the establishment of a Shooting Range Development Program providing financial assistance for the development of shooting ranges. 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.

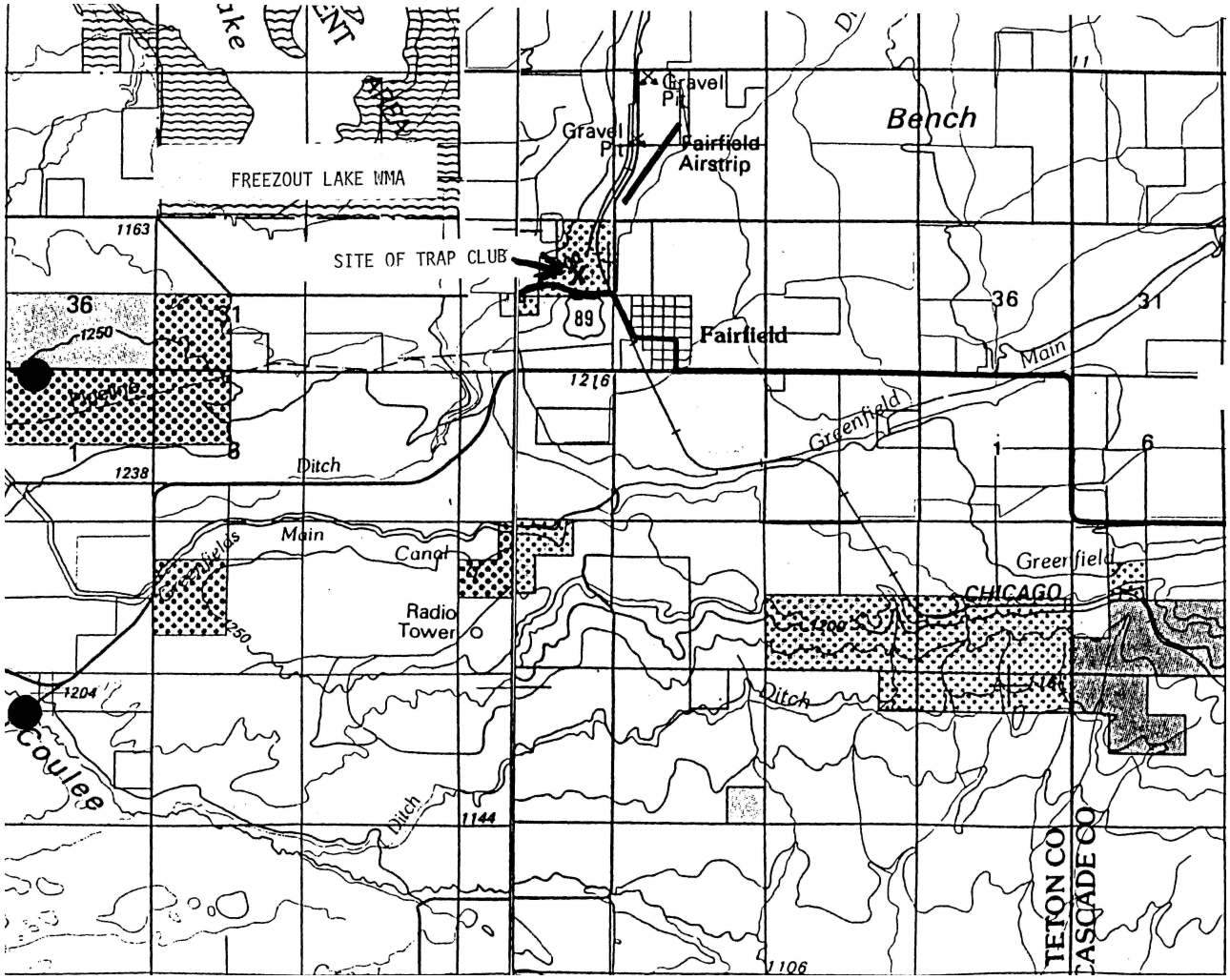
To be eligible for grant assistance, a private shooting club or a private organization:

(a)(i)shall accept in its membership any person who holds or is eligible to hold a Montana hunting license and who pays club or organization membership fees;
(ii)may not limit the number of members;
(iii)may charge a membership fee not greater than the per-member share of the club's or organization's reasonable cost of provision of services, including establishment, improvement, and maintenance of shooting facilities and other membership services; and
(iv)shall offer members occasional guest privileges at no cost to the member or invited guest and shall make a reasonable effort to hold a public sight-in day each September, when the general public may use the shooting range for a day-use fee or at no cost; or
(b) shall admit the general public for a reasonable day-use fee.

5. Need for the Action(s): Need more room in club house for increasing numbers of shooters and to adequately teach hunter education.

6. Objectives for the Action(s): Increased capability to accommodate more shooters, more shooting events and to teach classroom portions of hunter education.

7. Maps and Supporting Figures:



Map 1 – Area Map showing location of Windy Ridge Trap Club at Fairfield, MT.

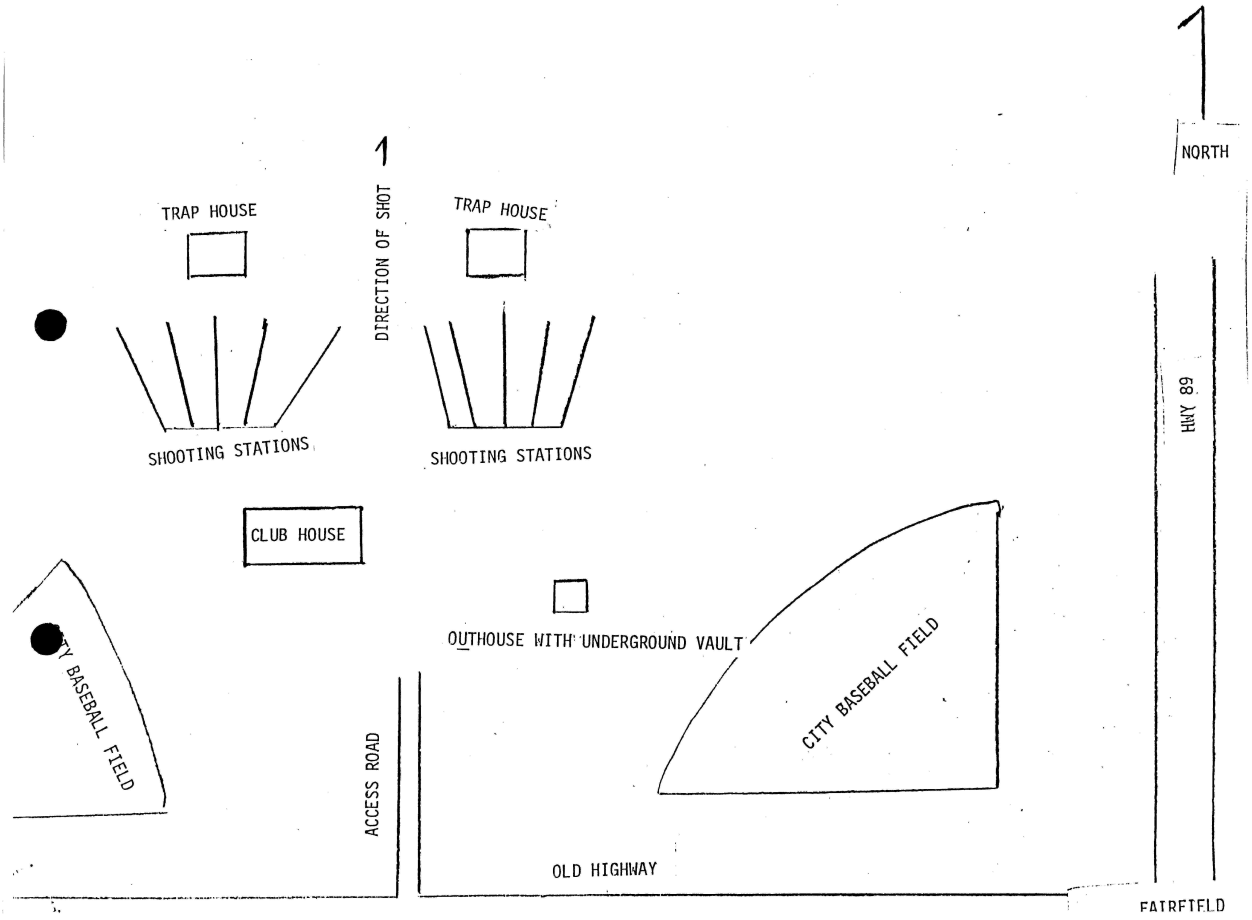


Figure 1 – Layout of Fairfield, MT recreational area showing trap club and club house.

Figure 2 – Existing Windy Ridge club house looking west, with pad on north and east sides. East pad will be taken out and club house extended east with new pad added on the east side and extended along the north side. New pads will be sloped for handicapped access.

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

The proposed improvements will be within a much smaller area on city property and expand the current club house (see Map 1 and Figure 1).

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

The trap club is located in the city of Fairfield's recreational area and has been on this property for +30 years. Adjacent to the trap club is the city baseball field (see Figure 1).

10. Description of Project: Expand and improve the club house from a 16'X20' to a 16'X40' handicapped accessible club house (see Figure 3):

- Remove 8'X16' concrete apron on East end of existing club house.
- Pour concrete monolithic slab for new addition on existing club house and new apron on the east and north sides.

- Construct wooden frame 16'X20' club house extension with handicap accessibility.
- Pour concrete apron from existing 8'X20' for and additional 8'X28' and 8'X16' aprons with handicap accessible slopes.

In Accordance With (IAW) contracts agreements with Fish, Wildlife & Parks, all projects are to be completed by June 30, 2011.

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

(a) Permits, Licenses and/or Authorizations:

Agency Name	Permit
None	

Funding:

Agency Name	Funding Amount
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks	$8,730

12. Affiliations, Cooperating Agencies, User Groups and/or Supporting Groups:

The Windy Ridge Trap Club is operated on City of Fairfield property for the whole community. The club is open to members and non-members alike with varying use fees. The club is available for Hunter Education, local law enforcement, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, 4H and other community organizations.

13. History of the Planning and Scoping Process, and Any Public Involvement:

Proposed improvements had been discussed within the membership of the club and at town council meetings of the town of Fairfield. Those meetings their minutes or transactions are open or available to the public. This range proposal had also been discussed with the associated project vendors and contractors. On April 1, 2010, the Windy Ridge Trap Club Board approved, through a resolution, the grant proposal for this project. Additionally on April 23 the Fairfield Town Council authorized the Windy Ridge Tap Club to continue to use the property and extended their stewardship for an additional 10 years.

14. List of Agencies Consulted/Contacted During Preparation of the EA:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

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

Jack L. Anderson, Box 205, Fairfield, MT 59436, 406-467-2582

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 8, 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**		
3. Introduction of new species into an area				**X**		
4. Vegetation cover, quantity & quality				**X**		
5. Water quality, quantity & distribution (surface or groundwater)				**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**		#9
10. Demands on environmental resources of land, water, air & energy				**X**		
11. Aesthetics				**X**		

Comments

9. This project uses no federal funds, therefore, the Federal 106 Regulations does not apply, but the State Antiques Act does apply, but it is on state owned properties. Previous archeological surveys on the shooting complex did not find any historical or archeological sites in the proposed project area.

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**		
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

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.

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 Part I paragraph 10 (Description of Project) to expand the club house.

- **Alternative B (No Action Alternative)** Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Shooting Sports Grant money would be denied and the area will remain an active trap club without the expanded club house.

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 to Acceptance of the **Proposed Alternative (A)** improved shooting sports facility in the Fairfield area by expanding the club house.
- The **No Action Alternative (B)** would be to not expand the club house, but to continue on with shooting activities without proposed improvements. Land use would remain the same. 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:

Jack L. Anderson, Box 205, Fairfield, MT 59436
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

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 Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. The low impact activities proposed, and the increased recreational opportunity, all indicate 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 (A). The Windy Ridge Trap Club's proposed alternative, to provide a safe regulated shooting opportunity is supported by its members and the public. Therefore, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks should approve the proposed alternative (**A**) for the expansion proposals outlined in Part I paragraphs 2 & 10.

EA prepared by: GENE R. HICKMAN
M.S. Wildlife Management
Ecological Assessments
Helena, MT 59602

Date Completed: July 5, 2010

PART V. EA CONCLUSION SECTION

Recommendation and justification concerning preparation of EIS:

None required.

Describe public involvement, if any:

Announcement for EA comment will be published in the Sun Times in Fairfield, MT and on the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks website to allow an opportunity for public review. Additionally the EA will be available for review on the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks website.