Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

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ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

PART I. Purpose of and Need for Action

1. Project Title: Toole County Shooting Sports Program (TCSSP)

2. Type of Proposed Action:
Renovate the exhibit building on the Marias Fairgrounds for the TCSSP with ADA compliant restrooms and new walk ways; modify the building to develop a safe indoor shooting range and a meeting/education area with new adjacent storage facility.

3. Location Affected by Proposed Action: Marias Fairgrounds southeast of Shelby, MT between Roosevelt Highway (Hwy 2) and Packing Plant Road (see Map1).

4. Agency Authority for the Proposed Action: MCA 87-1-276 through 87-1-279 (Legislative established policies and procedures for the establishment and improvement of shooting ranges) and MCA 87-2-105 (Departmental authority to expend funds to provide training in the safe handling and use of firearms and safe hunting practices). The Montana Legislature has authorized funding for the establishment of a Shooting Range Development Program providing financial assistance for the development of shooting ranges. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) 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): The community needs and indoor shooting facility and shooting sports education facility for both leisure and organized/ club shooting activities. The 4-H indoor archery program is temporarily housed in the civic center and it is a barely adequate facility with other uses. The 4-H Shooting Sports Program and other youth organizations have no indoor shooting facility, although there is an outdoor Archery and Trap Club, but these are only reasonably available during good weather and do not have adequate education or meeting areas. The hunter education program has no permanent facilities consequently a permanent facility is needed to optimize this program as well.

6. Objectives for the Action(s):

- Establish a permanent indoor range for the 4-H Shooting Sports Program.
- Provide permanent space for hunter education.
- Provide scouts and other youth organizations with opportunities for safe shooting sports activities.
- Provide the public opportunity to enjoy indoor leisure shooting opportunities.
- Create a facility for year-round training/qualification for local, state and federal law enforcement agencies.

7. Maps and Supporting Figures:

Map 1 – Marias Fairgrounds southeast of Shelby, MT

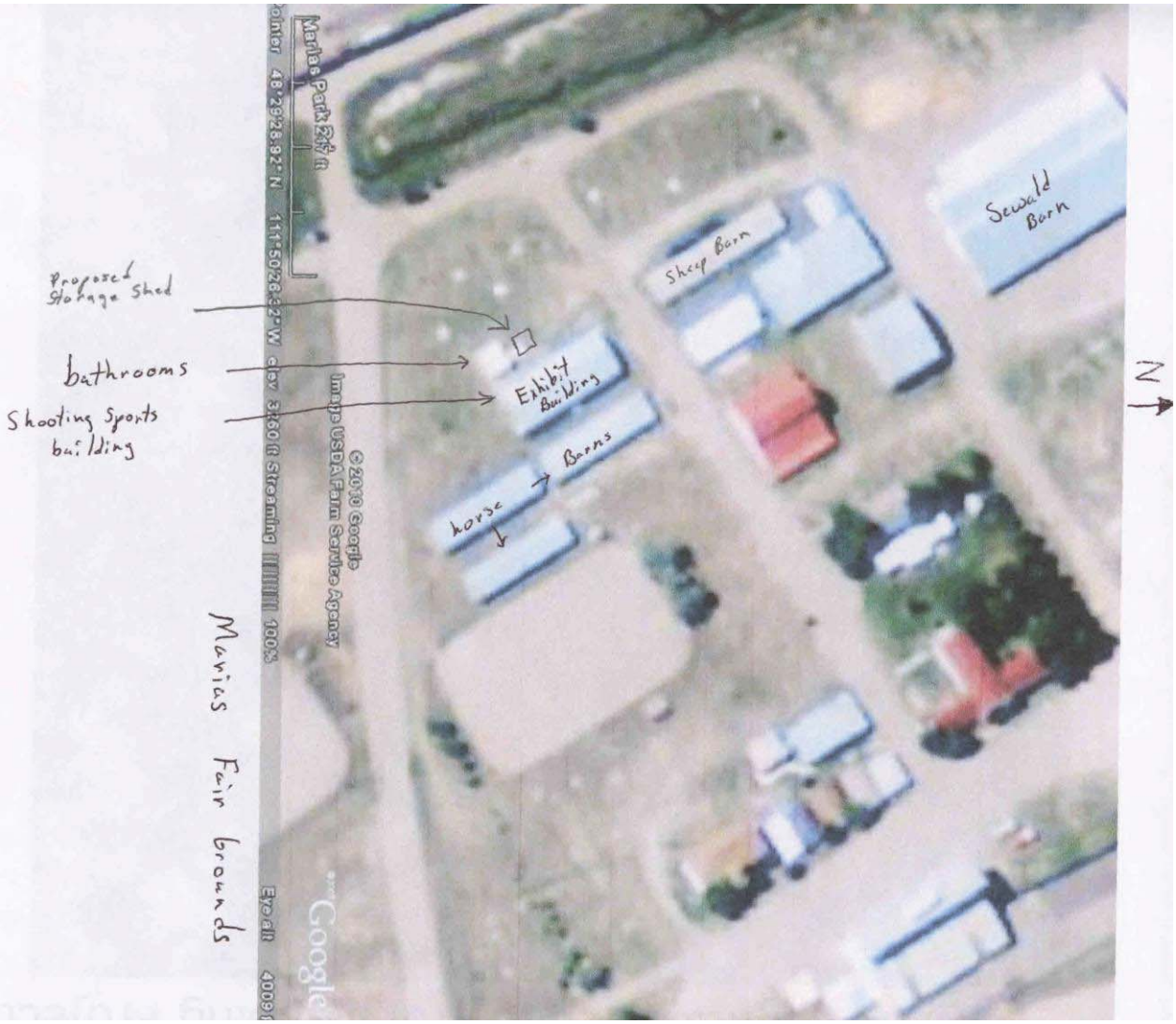

Figure 1 – Marias Fairgrounds showing location of Exhibit Building, Existing Bathrooms and new storage shed.

Figure 2 – Old 4H exhibit hall, gray metal building, where new indoor shooting range will be installed. Existing bathrooms are in the "beige" building with white trim.

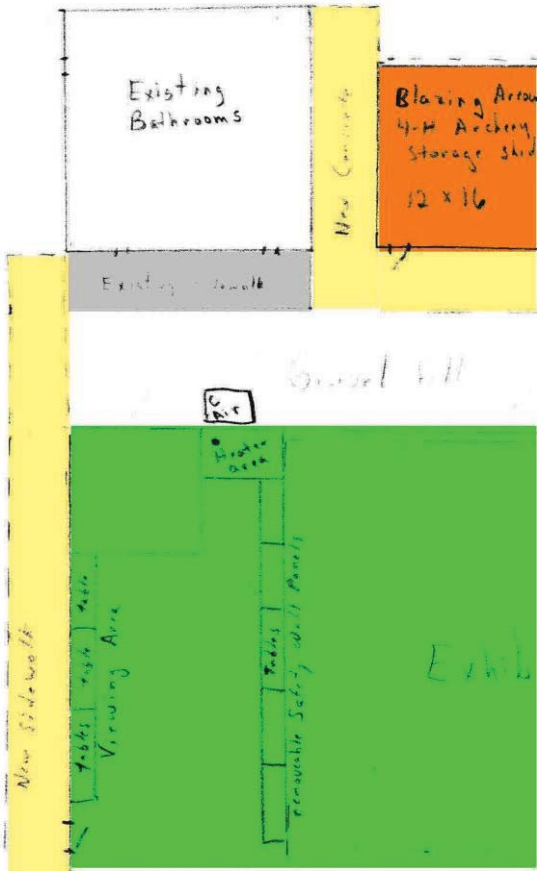

Figure 3 – Shows new sidewalks in yellow, joining old sidewalk (Gray) from the main building (portion of building shown in Green) to the Existing Bathrooms and the new storage facility (Orange).

8. Project Size: Estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected: The proposed improvements will be within a much smaller area on the existing Marias Fairgrounds and located in or adjacent to the "Exhibit" Building. The project is mainly concerns renovation and ADA modifications to the existing fairgrounds exhibit building and bathrooms, with added storage facility and connecting sidewalk (see Figure 3).

9. Affected Environment (A brief description of the affected area of the proposed project): The project is limited to the older "exhibit" Building and immediate area on the Marias Fairgrounds, which has been in place for many years (see Figures 1 & 2). Consequently the project is located on an area that was disturbed or modified long ago and has been in continued usage since the fairgrounds were established.

10. Description of Project: This project is to renovate the Marias Fairgrounds exhibit building into an ADA compliant indoor shooting range and meeting/education facility with an added storage facility. Additional the outside restrooms will be upgraded and made ADA compliant with additional sidewalks and "plumbing" work. Sidewalks will join the main building to the restrooms and storage facility making them also ADA compliant (see Figure 3).

These projects will entail the following:

- Concrete work for sidewalk and storage facility pad.
- Installing storage building.
- Renovation for main building includes: Electrical work, Walls & Doors, Insulation, and Heating system.
- Purchase and install indoor range equipment.
- Bathroom waterline installation.

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	$ 46,924

12. Affiliations, Cooperating Agencies, User Groups and/or Supporting Groups:
Blazing Arrows 4-H Archery Program, Marias Valley Archers, Boy Scouts, Shelby Air Rifle/Pistol Junior Shooting Program, Toole County/City of Shelby Department of Public Safety, U.S. Border Patrol, Crossroads Correctional Center, FBI/Task Force Services, Montana Highway Patrol-Shelby Division, Hunter Education, and other local shooting clubs or associations.

13. History of the Planning and Scoping Process, and Any Public Involvement: Scoping was internal within the supporting Marias Valley Archery and Shelby Trap clubs, the 4-H Archery and Shooting Sports Program, the MSU Extension Office in Toole County. Further discussions and meeting took place within the Toole County and City of Shelby government along with the Marias Fairgrounds board. Many of the meetings were open to the public along with their minutes.

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

15. Name, Address and Phone Number of Project Sponsor:
Allan Underdal, 226 1st St. So., Shelby, MT 59474, 424-8310

16. Other Pertinent Information: The Toole County Shooting Sports Program has partnered with Toole County and the Marias Fair Board to establish a long-term lease for the Exhibit Building at the Marias Fairgrounds. The building will be renovated to develop a permanent home for local Shooting Sports Programs.

Shooting range applications require the participant's governing body to approve by resolution its submission of applications for shooting range funding assistance. Resolution Date: 26 April, 2010.

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		
10. Demands on environmental resources of land, water, air & energy				X		
11. Aesthetics				X		

Comments

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**		
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

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 and alternative B (the no action alternative) were considered.

- **Alternative A (Proposed Alternative)** is to provide Toole County a shooting range grant as partial funding to accomplish the projects described in Part I, paragraph 10 (Description of Project) to modify and develop and indoor Shooting facility and associated structures on the Marias Fairgrounds at the existing Exhibit building.

- **Alternative B (No Action Alternative)** FWP Shooting Sports Grant money would be denied and the area may remain as an active part of the Marias Fairgrounds without indoor shooting sports.

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): to** increase and enhance the shooting sports opportunities in the City of Shelby and Toole County community by developing an indoor shooting facility.

- The **No Action Alternative (B)** would be to not provide FWP funds to increase shooting sports opportunities or to renovated and install a shooting sports facility at the Marias Fairgrounds.

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:
Allan Underdal, 226 1st St. So., Shelby, MT 59474
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

PART IV NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

All of the pertinent or potential impacts of this proposal have been reviewed, discussed, and analyzed. No part of the proposal reviewed was complex, controversial, or located in an environmentally sensitive area. The projects being proposed are on properties owned by Toole County and administered by the Marias Fair Board. The low impact activities proposed to continue, 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 City of Shelby's and Toole County's proposed alternative, to renovate and install a safe regulated indoor shooting range is supported by other local shooting sports programs its members and the public. Therefore, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks should approve the proposed alternative (**A**) developing and indoor shooting facility as outlined in Part I paragraphs (sections) 2 & 10.

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

Date Completed: August 10, 2010

Approved By FWP: August 30, 2010

PART V. EA CONCLUSION SECTION

Recommendation and justification concerning preparation of EIS:
There are no significant environmental or economic impacts associated with the proposed alternative; therefore, the EA is the appropriate level of analysis, and an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required.

Describe public involvement, if any:
Announcement for EA comment will be published in the Shelby Promoter and on the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks website to allow an opportunity for public review. Additionally the entire EA will be available for review on the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks website. The public comment period ends at 5:00 PM on September 24, 2010.