



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

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ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

PART I. Purpose of and Need for Action

1. Project Title: Five Valley Archery Club (FVAC)

2. Type of Proposed Action: Proposed new V- shaped field target range along with over-all range safety and access enhancements:

1. Install Bow Butt Backstops;
2. Build picnic “type” shelter with tables;
3. Improved road access;
4. Build backstop shelters and fence target area on the field archery range;
5. Install benches on the existing 3-D target range.

3. Location Affected by Proposed Action: The Five Valley Archery Club (FVAC) is on property owned by Northwestern Energy and the club has a Recreational Use Agreement with Northwestern Corporation. The club has approximately 80 leased acres just off of Miller Creek Road in Missoula, Montana, located within Township 12 North, Range 20 West, M.P.M.

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) 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 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): There are no other 3D archery ranges in the Missoula area and there is also a growing demand for all types of archery opportunities for all levels of shooters. New bow butt backstops are needed for increased safety and retrieval of arrows. There is a need for a covered shelter for visitors, observers, shooters waiting to participate, for meetings and educational programs, etc. The road is only maintained from the entrance to the power sub-station and from there to the archery range parking area the road can get very muddy, necessitating closing of the road and range. The bow butt backstops will require a shelter to protect them from the elements and ensure the longevity of the backstops. There is a need for a safe place for “on-deck” shooters and observers to gather as they move along the 3D shooting trails.

6. Objectives for the Action(s): To further promote different styles of archery to the general public and provide excellent range facilities for all levels of archers to practice. Install bow butt backstops on stands. Provide shelter for shooters, visitors, and educational programs. Improve the road so that range may be kept open after rain or snow events. Install shelters to protect the bow butt backstops. Provide a safe place for shooters and observers to gather as they move along the 3D shooting trails.

7. Maps and Supporting Figures:



Map 1 – Area of the FVAC. Improvement areas are highlighted: Orange line is portion of road that will be improved from the Northwestern Energy Substation to the range parking area. The picnic shelter is green, the purple V is the fenced target area, and the benches are in red.

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

The proposed improvements will be safely spread within a small portion of the 80 acre area on the leased properties. Although the property leased is 80 acres, 15 acres is fenced for the archery range. With the exception of the road, the proposed projects would be within a portion of those 15 acres.

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

The surrounding area and most of range is or was formerly grazing and with some other agricultural to the west, south, and east. The leased properties are owned by Northwestern and grazing has and still is allowed on the properties. Miller Creek, which runs through the property, is essentially an irrigation ditch that “runs” about 3 months of the year. Water rights to the creek/ditch belong to an adjacent landowner.

10. Description of Project:

Install Bow Butt Backstops –install Pacific Bow Butt Backstops on both the existing 3-D target range and the new field target range; Build Picnic “type” Shelter with tables– Build

- a 20x40 “picnic” type shelter and tables;
- a) Improved Road Access – The road is only maintained from the entrance to the power sub-station and from there to the archery range parking area the road can get very muddy, necessitating closing of the road and range.
- b) Build Backstop Shelters – Install shelters with metal roof to protect the 16 bow butt backstops and a fenced “V” for the field target range.
- c) Build and Install Benches – Install wooden benches along the trail of the existing 3D target range.

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:** None

Funding:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Funding Amount</u>
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks	\$ 28,148

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

Fish, Wildlife and Parks Bow Hunter Education, 4H, and Boy Scouts.

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

Involvement: Extensive public involvement was not deemed necessary due to the minor nature of the projects, and the fact that the range has been in operation on this site for 5 ½ years. Proposed range improvements and safety enhancements had been discussed within the membership of the club and with the associated project vendors, contractors and Northwestern Energy.

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

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

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

Paul Roush, PO Box 5083, Missoula, MT 59806, (406) 544-2169

16. Other Pertinent Information: The Five Valley Archery Club has been in existence since 1974 and has been on the current leased properties for 5 ½ years. The current range is accessible for handicapped shooters with the current 3D setup. Proposed improvements will further enhance handicapped access.

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 12, 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		#2
3. Introduction of new species into an area				X		
4. Vegetation cover, quantity & quality				X		#4
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		#8
9. Historical & archaeological sites				X		#9
10. Demands on environmental resources of land, water, air & energy				X		
11. Aesthetics				X		

Comments: 2. & 5. Miller Creek runs through the site from the northeast to the southwest. Miller Creek is essentially an irrigation ditch and flows about 3 months out of the year. The range is built all along both sides of the creek/ditch. An adjacent land owner with water rights on the ditch and dredges the ditch every few years.

4. The elimination of vegetation for the implementation of the proposed action will not change the overall abundance and diversity of plant species within the area. The project occupies a very small portion of the individual properties and native vegetation is minimally present. Therefore it is determined to have an insignificant impact on native vegetation in the area.

7. The project will cause limited displacement of soils but these improvements and construction will not substantially effect geological features or establish new erosion patterns. Soil disruption for this site is localized.

8. Minor and temporary dust and vehicle emissions would be created by construction equipment during the proposed improvements within this project area. However the construction time is short and human effects will be limited due to the sparse population in the surrounding area.

9. This project uses no federal funds, nor is it on state property; therefore, the Federal 106 Regulations and the State Antiques Act do not apply.

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		#4
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

4. The site is adjacent to surrounding on three sides by agricultural land, and the Missoula city limits to the north. Small scale grazing continues on the Northwestern Energy properties.

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.

7. FVAC is the only range in Missoula offering 3D shooting. The range promotes safe, ethical, archery shooting for all levels of shooting from beginners to advanced. The range complex provides year round controlled access and fulfils a need for a range to accommodate public shooting opportunities, bow hunter education, 4H, Boy Scouts, etc.

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 improve the road, the range target areas and add a picnic shelter and benches.
- **Alternative B (No Action Alternative)** Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Shooting Sports Grant money would be denied and the area will remain an active archery range without road and range improvements.

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)** which would increase archery opportunities in the Missoula area with an improved access road, sheltered backstops, fenced field target area, benches and a picnic shelter.
- The **No Action Alternative (B)** would be to not new covered backstops with fenced field archery target area, a picnic shelter, and benches and without improving the road, but to continue on with archery activities without these proposed improvements. Land use would remain the same.

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:

Paul Roush, Club President, Missoula, MT

Nichol Billingsley, Club Secretary, Missoula, MT

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 Northwestern Energy and leased by Five Valley Archery Club. 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 Five Valley Archery Club's proposed alternative, to provide a safe regulated archery opportunities 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: June 15, 2010

Amended by FWP

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 an EIS is not required.

Describe public involvement, if any:

Announcement for EA comment will be published in the Missoulan 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. The public comment period deadline is November 15, 2010.