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Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Washoe Fish Hatchery
Anaconda- Deer Lodge County, Pat Huber (e-mail)
Ray Haffey, (e-mail)
Others

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) released a Draft Environmental Assessment on August 30th to grant $11,535 to Anaconda-Deer Lodge County for a shooting range development grant to construct an archery range. The range is located on county property along Cable Road in Anaconda, Montana.

The Public Comment Period ran from August 30 to September 17, 2010. The Draft Environmental Assessment was placed on FWP's web site and legal ads ran in the **Butte Standard** and the **Anaconda Leader** newspapers. Also a news release was distributed from the FWP Region 3 Information Officer on August 30, 2010.

FWP received 6 comments public comments: 4 supportive of the project and 2 opposed. The following comments are the concerns expressed along with FWP's responses:

1. **Comment:** "The proposed location encroaches on prime wildlife habitat. I have seen moose, bear, foxes, deer and skunks in that location, and would like to see FWP proceed with their 2002 plan to make Hefners a bird sanctuary and wildlife refuge."

FWP Response: The area of the proposed archery range is just off Cable Road on the west side of Hefners Dam, next to a gravel pit. It will be located in area that is currently a field, maintained periodically by the county. This field adjoins the wildlife habitat area. The archery range will have minor to no impact on the riparian area surrounding Hefner's dam.

2. **Comment:** "The proposed location would endanger part of our city water resources, since it is so near one of the city wells."

FWP Response: The plan has been approved by the Anaconda City/ County Water Department. Fencing will keep archers away from the wells.

3. **Comment:** I know a lot of study has gone into this proposal, which is why I appreciate the chance to offer an opinion. Basically I would like to see the wildlife refuge idea pursued rather than turning Hefners into just another people place, with the accompanying vandalism, litter and graffiti. That area is a treasure just the way it is.

FWP Response: FWP appreciates your concern for this natural area and yes the addition of an archery range will impact the site; however, one of the reasons this site was selected is because it is located on an existing disturbed field that is very visible from Cable Road. This should help reduce the opportunity for vandalism.

4. **Comment:** "Please improve the archery range where it is and leave Hefners area for the deer."

FWP Response: The County intended for the current archery site to be temporary, as Cable Road and Warm Springs Creek border the present archery range and this causes user conflict. By moving the range to the Hefner site, there will be more space for an archery range while allowing additional public recreation opportunities at the present range site.

There are no modifications necessary to the Draft Environmental Assessment based on public comment. The Draft Environmental Assessment, together with this Decision Notice, will serve as the final document for this proposal.

Based on the Environmental Assessment and public comment, it is my decision that the project planned for Anaconda – Deer Lodge County will have no significant impacts on the human and physical environment and that the Environmental Assessment is the appropriate level of analysis, and that the project should proceed.

Sincerely,

Kurt Cunningham
Shooting Range Grant Coordinator