



## **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:** Broadwater Rod & Gun Club

**2. Type of Proposed Action:**

Black Ram Archery range and trail development at Indian Creek Shooting Range

**3. Location Affected by Proposed Action:** The range is located in the east foothills of the Elkhorn Mountains, in the Indian Creek watershed, about four miles west of Townsend in southwest Montana. Access is via the Indian Creek county road. In 2002 a direct patent was issued to Broadwater County for 400 acres of public land, to expand an existing shooting range and safety zone, leasing the 400 acres to the Broadwater Rod and Gun Club. Location of the patent for the following public land and Broadwater Rod & Gun Club is: T.7N., R.1E., Sec. 21: E1/2 & sec. 28: N1/2 NE1/4 (see Map. 1).

**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 purpose of the Montana Shooting Range Grant Program is to create a continuing program and mechanism to provide funding, through the department, to private shooting clubs, private organizations, local governments, and school districts for the establishment and improvement of a system of shooting ranges throughout Montana (87-1-276). 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,*

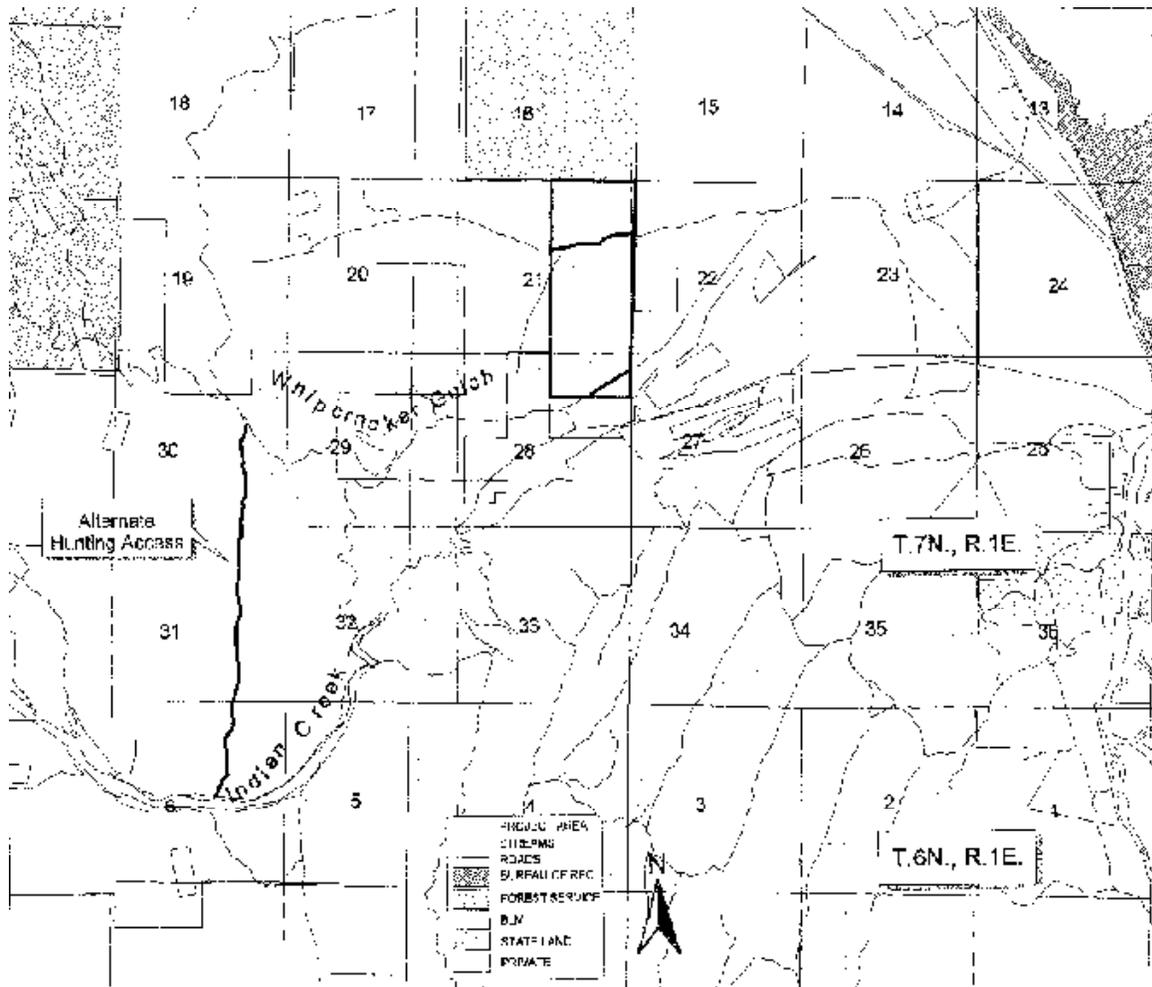
*improvement, and maintenance of shooting facilities and other membership services; and (iv) shall offer members occasional guest privileges at no cost to the member or invited guest and shall make a reasonable effort to hold a public sight-in day each September, when the general public may use the shooting range for a day-use fee or at no cost; or (b) shall admit the general public for a reasonable day-use fee.*

Broadwater Rod & Gun Club fulfills the requirements listed under (a).

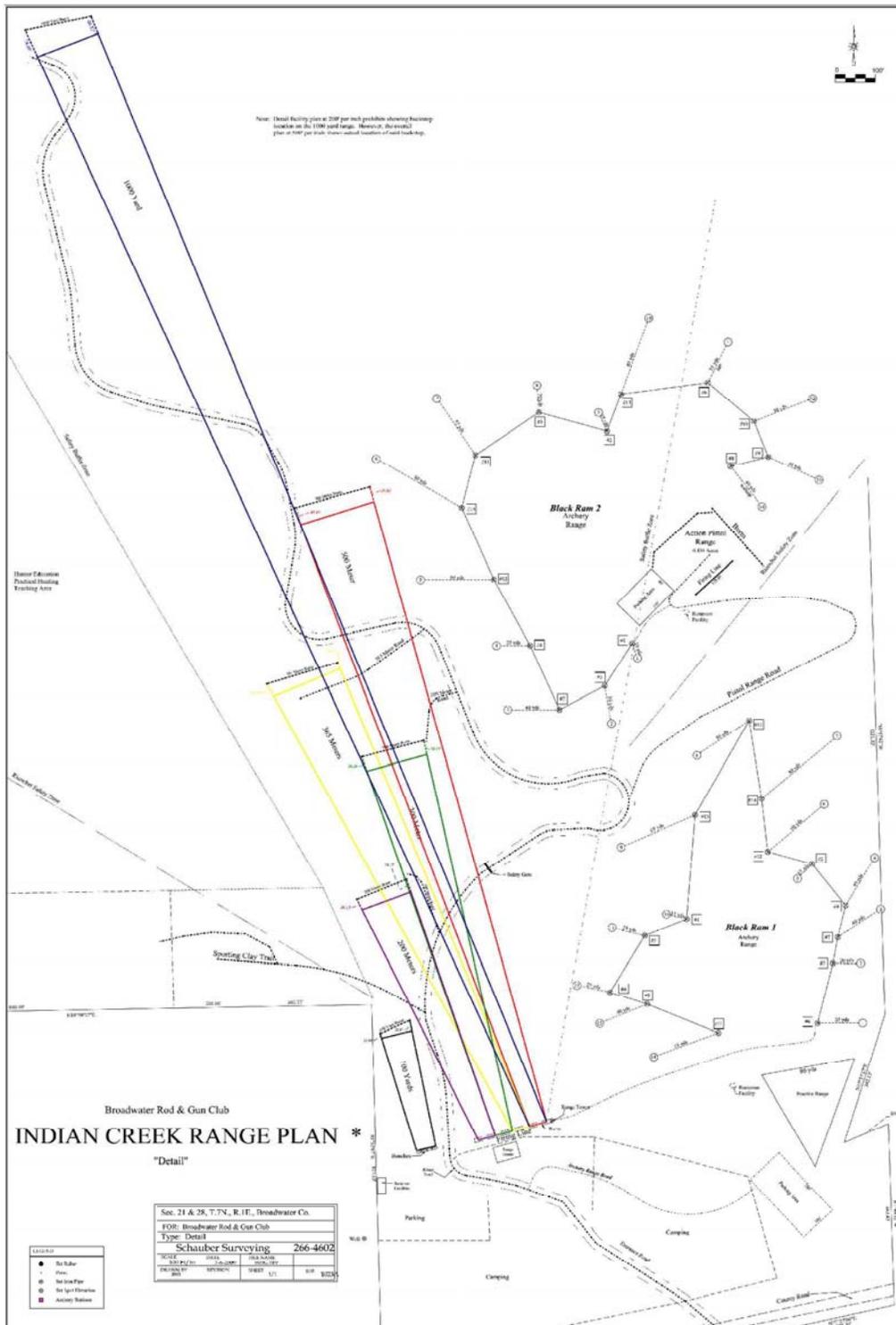
**5. Need for the Action(s):** There is no other field archery or 3D ranges available for shooters in Broadwater County.

**6. Objectives for the Action(s):** To provide a safe, controlled area to participate in field archery practice and competition. Develop 3D field archery ranges (Black Ram Archery Range) on the east side of the club properties. The Black Ram archery range is in two parts, range 1 and range 2. The Black Ram Archery Range 2 will be built around the Action Pistol Range and Black Ram Range 1 will be to the south of range 2. Range one will be constructed to accommodate wheel chair shooters.

## 7. Maps and Supporting Figures:



**Map 1 – Broadwater Rod & Gun Club**



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

Range is approximately 425 acres, but improvements are limited to an area on the east half of the properties and east of the rifle ranges (See Map 2).

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

The Broadwater Rod & Gun Club range is located in the east foothills of the Elkhorn Mountains, in the Indian Creek watershed. Surrounding land ownership is mixed private, BLM, State and county. Historic and present land uses are primarily mining and livestock grazing. Greymont Western U.S. (formerly Continental Lime) has a large limestone quarry about one mile southwest of the range. The Montana Army National Guard operates the 20,000 acre Limestone Hills training range just two miles to the south. Precipitation in the area averages about 11 inches per year. Vegetation consists of native grasses and shrubs, with patches of small Douglas-fir in some of the draws. Some noxious weeds, most notably spotted knapweed, exist on these tracts. Mule deer, antelope, and numerous species of small birds and mammals utilize the tracts. There are no perennial streams, and the water table is estimated to be low.

**10. Description of Project:** Construct two 3D archery ranges with trails and installation of 2 concrete vault toilets. Most work will consist of constructing trails for the two ranges. Trails will be leveled and graveled with lime rock. Handicap accessible trails will be approximately 5’- 6’ wide to accommodate wheelchairs on range one. The range two will have similar trails, but they will not be handicapped accessible so they are narrower being only 2’-3’ wide.

In Accordance With (IAW) contracts agreements with Fish, Wildlife & Parks all projects are to be completed by June 30, 2010.

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

**(a) Permits, Licenses and/or Authorizations:**

<b>Agency Name</b>	<b>Permit</b>
N/A	

**Funding:**

<b>Agency Name</b>	<b>Funding Amount</b>
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks	\$38,550

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

The addition of the proposed Black Ram archery ranges will provide for an outdoor 3D field archery competition range with at least two competitive matches each year and the ability to host other 3D shoots. Other competitive events include black powder silhouette shooting up to 500 yards, .22 rim fire rifles for metallic competition up to 100 meters, and a cowboy lever action rimmed cartridge shoot up to 200 meters. There are other rifle & pistol competitions and recreational shooting available at the Indian Creek range. Estimates for the competitive shooting are 200 shooters per year on the archery range and 100 shooters on the silhouette matches. Recreational sporting clays shooting are estimated at about 150 shooters per year. Recreational shooting on the 100 and 200 yard ranges is estimated to be 500 shooters per year. Local law enforcement agencies, Broadwater Sheriff, Us Forest Service and FWP also use the range for practice and qualification.

**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, BLM, the county, and with the associated project vendors and contractors.

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

Broadwater Rod & Gun Club – Virgil Binkley  
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

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

Virgil Binkley, P.O. Box 641, Townsend, MT 59644, (406) 980-1548

**16. Other Pertinent Information:**

This proposal is part of an on-going multi-year range expansion and improvement program. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks first funded a portion of this program in 2002 after completion of an assessment by BLM (MT-070-01-09) on 6/4/02. The Broadwater Rod & Gun Club had an existing gun range located near the Broadwater County transfer station at Indian Creek, Townsend, MT. The club contacted the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in 1991 concerning the lease of an adjacent 400 acre BLM property. In 2002, after a complete review, BLM provided Broadwater County with a 50 year lease and a notice of Realty Action for a proposed Recreation and Public Purpose Act patent on 400 acres of public land in the county. The 400 acres were then leased by the county to the Broadwater Rod and Gun Club for the expansion of its existing outdoor shooting and hunter education ranges at Indian Creek.

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 9, 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		#2
3. Introduction of new species into an area				X		
4. Vegetation cover, quantity & quality				X		
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		
9. Historical & archaeological sites				X		#9
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 annual streams, permanent ponds or delineated wetlands on the site. There are, however, occasional surface water runoffs in the coulees on this tract, primarily in Whipcracker Gulch.

**7.** All of the lands are included in mining claims held by Broadwater County.

**9.** A Class III cultural inventory was performed in June & July of 1997 by the Butte Field Office (BLM). Two sites, 24BW680 & 24BW681, & two isolated finds, 1XBW31 & 1XBW32, were recorded. Was the exact boundary was determined 24BW681 was outside the boundaries of the range. Site 24BW680 was determined to be ineligible after failing to qualify for the listing on the National Register of Historic Places under any of the four criteria.

**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		#1
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		#7
8. Locally adopted environmental plans & goals (ordinances)				X		
9. Distribution & density of population and housing				X		#9
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.)

- 1.** According to the 2002 BLM Decision of Record (MT-070-07-09) Expansion of the existing range would have positive social impacts.
- 5.** Range site plans, construction, and ongoing operational and maintenance plans meet the standards of safety for the range participants and the public at large. The range has been developed IAW the NRA's The Range Manual, a Guide to Planning and Construction. The club's safety plans addresses those range requirements. The Black Ram outdoor archery range will not affect operations of other ranges. If archery competition requires the use of both archery ranges the rifle ranges will be closed.
- 7.** Range will provide year round controlled access fulfilling a need for a range to accommodate law enforcement training, hunter education, and public shooting.
- 9.** The nearest residences are about two miles to the east and three miles to the north.

### **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 construct two 3D archery ranges and install vault toilets to the existing rifle and pistol range.
- **Alternative B (No Action Alternative)** Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Shooting Sports Grant money would be denied and the area will remain as an active rifle and pistol range without proposed 3D archery ranges.

**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)** increasing shooting sports opportunities on the Indian Creek Ranges of the Broadwater Rod & Gun Club, Townsend, MT area are to building two 3D archery ranges to existing leased club properties.
- The **No Action Alternative (B)** would be not to expand the range with the addition of 3D archery ranges and to continue on with present shooting activities and facilities. Land use would remain the same. Present activities include a rifle, pistol, shotgun and black powder shooting without any archery range access. 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:**

Virgil Binkley, P.O. Box 641, Townsend, MT 59644  
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 leased from Broadwater County by the Broadwater Rod & Gun 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 positive history of the Broadwater Rod & Gun Club providing shooting opportunities to its members and the public indicates support for the proposed alternative. Therefore, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks should approve the proposed alternative (A) for the modernization and expansion proposals outlined in Part I, paragraphs 2 & 10.

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

**Date Completed:** August 5, 2009

**Section 4 of Part I; and Table 1, #7 of Part II: Amended December 24, 2009**

**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 Townsend Star 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.