



# Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

## Decision Notice Butte Trap and Skeet Club Shooting Range Grant Butte, Montana

October 14, 2011

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) released a draft Environmental Assessment (EA) on August 29, 2011 for public review and comment regarding a proposal to provide shooting range development funds to the Butte Trap Club, also known as the Butte Trap and Skeet Club, for the construction of a perimeter fence and property signage.

The range is located approximately five miles south of Butte, on Gun Club road.

The Draft EA was posted on FWP's website on August 29<sup>th</sup> and a legal ad announcing the public comment period ran in the Montana Standard on August 31<sup>st</sup> and September 7, 2011. The comment period ended on September 12, 2011 with no comments received. FWP did receive comments from two individuals after the comment period had ended and accepted these as part of the decision notice.

One person spoke in support of the project.

One person made the following comments:

- On the application #2 type of proposed action: Erecting perimeter fencing and warning signs. "is the application for a perimeter fence or is it for a security fence? The word security is defined by the Merriam Webster dictionary as freedom from danger: Safety. A perimeter fence simply will define the area on which it is installed."

*FWP Response: FWP concurs that the wording in the EA should read perimeter and not security fence. The Butte Trap Club's application uses the terminology of perimeter fence in their grant proposal as noted below:*

- *"Erecting fence around the perimeter of the club will enhance safety by preventing animals and humans from entering the range's shooting zone during practice or registered completion."*
- *"Placing specially labeled signs on perimeter fencing will warn of potential dangers and*

*risks of entering the shooting range and drastically reduce the possibility of potential accidents or injuries.*

- *“Perimeter fencing will deter theft or property damage by preventing easy access to trap club facilities and club house.”*

Public comment:

- On the application # 3 “The shot fall out zones and safety zones are not adequate for safe operation of the range. As determined by three independent parties listed as follows:  
A) Everly and Associates has done survey which you have a copy on file. This survey indicates that the shot fall zones are inadequate and this survey is backed up by information provided by Mr. Kenneth D. Green as follows:  
  
B) SAAMI (Sporting Arms and Manufactures Institute) Mr. Kenneth D. Green Green of SAAMI has provided information that states that at the elevation of 5590' above sea level (the altitude of the Butte Trap Club) that #7 1/2 shot will travel a distance of 867' when fired at a muzzle velocity of 1200 ft/sec. This information corresponds with the Everly survey verifying that the clubs shot fall zones are inadequate. This information confirms that the only trap house that can be used in a safe manner is #4. When the other trap houses 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, and 7 are used shot can travel beyond the clubs boundaries. This causes safety concerns.”

*FWP Response:*

*FWP acknowledges that there is an on-going dispute between the Butte Trap Club and a neighboring landowner who submitted the above comment. During the 2010 shooting range grant period, the Butte Trap Club submitted a grant proposal to install two automatic PAT trap machines in trap houses. The same individual expressed concerns then. FWP denied the grant and encouraged the parties to come to a mutually accepted resolution to this dispute. Until such an agreement is reached FWP will not grant any funds to the Butte Trap Club for construction of shooting related projects that have the potential to impact the neighbor in question. Because of the unresolved dispute, FWP denied funding a request by the Butte Trap Club's in 2011 to replace lights for night shooting activities. FWP feels the construction of a perimeter fence is independent of this ongoing dispute and if nothing else will make the range safer overall.*

Public comment:

- On the application #4 “Four-strand barbed wire is not a security fence. I do agree that warning signs should be placed. However, they should be placed along Basin Creek road to warn vehicles and pedestrians that they are traveling in the shot fall zone for the Butte Trap Club.”

*FWP Comment:*

*The Butte Trap Club plans to place property signs along the entire perimeter fence.*

Public comment:

- On the application #5 “It is unacceptable and irresponsible for Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks to provide public funding (i.e. grant money) to the Butte Trap Club when they are in violation of basic public safety laws by ignoring the boundary limitations of their property. As I have stated in prior communications with you that I am certain that there are regulations within your agency that prohibit citizens from shooting across major roadways such as Basin Creek road. Therefore I am objecting to the issuance of grant money at this time unless such money is used to place some sort of safety barrier that prevents the trespass of projectiles from the trap club onto other peoples' property.”

*FWP Comment:*

*FWP acknowledges that a perimeter fence along with property signage will help minimize the likelihood of a person inadvertently entering onto the range. During past grants FWP has been in contact with representatives of The City and County of Butte-Silver Bow about Basin Creek Road and the afore mentioned issue, and the county has taken no action to FWP's knowledge..*

### **Project Decision**

Based on the public comments received and internal review, the Draft EA will be adopted as the Final EA. This Decision Notice and the Final EA will serve as the final documents pertaining to this action. Funding for this project will be granted by FWP pending the completion of other administrative requirements by the Butte Trap Club as required by the Shooting Range Development Program.

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