



**Montana Fish,
Wildlife & Parks**

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ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

PART I. PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR ACTION

1. Project Title: Polson Shooters Association (PSA)

2. Type of Proposed Action:

Construct storage and warming facility

3. Location Affected by Proposed Action:

The Polson Shooters Association (formerly known as the Lake County Rifle Range) leases their property from Lake County. This range is about 10 acres and is located on Kerr Dam Road, southwest of Polson, MT.



Map 1 – Polson Shooting Association Southwest of Polson, MT.

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):

Increased range use and the resulting increase of related range equipment have created the need for a safe and secure storage facility for that equipment and supplies.

Additionally, shooters and range officers need a handicap accessible, safe, observation point to provide shelter from inclement weather and provide a place to “warm-up.”

6. Objectives for the Action(s):

Construct a safe, handicap accessible, and secure storage facility that can also act as a warming station for shooters and range officers during inclement weather.

7. Project Size: estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected:

The proposed warming/storage building is anticipated to be a 10'x16' structure. The structure will be placed on the shooting range adjacent to the existing shooting stations. The new structure will be in the same location as the existing building that is currently in use, which is directly behind the handgun range.

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

The site for the range was formerly the Lake County Rifle Range, which was neglected, taken back by the county, and ultimately leased to the Polson Shooters Association. The range area was formerly grazing land, which is still the dominant land usage in the surrounding area. The property immediately on the north side of the road is tribal land. There are no surface waters or delineated wetlands within the lease area. Mostly dry land with prairie grasses. Existing range facilities include rifle and handgun shooting lanes. The rifle area shooting benches are under a roof cover.

9. Description of Project: (see figure 1)

- Construct a handicapped accessible building for safe and secure equipment storage, which will also serve as a “warm-up” area for shooters and range officers.
- With windows to provide visibility of range activities by range officers

10'X16' wood frame building on skids, which would minimize the construction costs, simplify the building design, allow for moving the building to another location on the range if a need to do so should be identified. However, at this time there are no plans to relocate the building,

- Constructed to accommodate future electric, lighting, and heat.

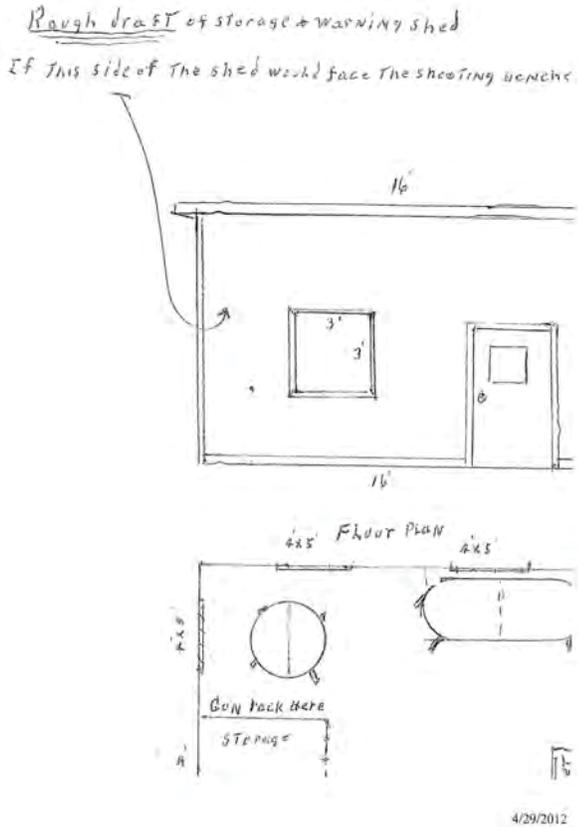


Figure 1 – Draft of storage/warming building

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

None

(a) Permits, Licenses and/or Authorizations:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Permit</u>	<u>Date Filed/#</u>
N/A		

Funding:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Funding Amount</u>
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks	\$4,071.00

11. Affiliations, Cooperating Agencies, User Groups and/or Supporting Groups: The organization has approximately 165 members with anticipated growth in both membership and affiliates. The range offers public shooting approximately three days a week. The USMC, 4-H, Lake County Sheriff’s Office, and Hunter Education currently use the range. In the past, the range supported about 125 shooter days per year.

12. History of the Planning and Scoping Process, and Any Public Involvement: Proposed range improvements/

proposals were discussed with the membership of the club, associated project vendors, contractors, and Tribal authorities.

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

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

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

Rob St. Clair, 502 9th Ave. W., Polson, MT 59860 (406) 270-8886

15. Other Pertinent Information:

Shooting range applications require the participating governing body to approve by resolution its submission of applications for shooting range-funding assistance. Resolution Date: April 30, 2012

PART II. IDENTIFICATION OF THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVES

The proposed alternative A, alternative B, and the no action alternatives were considered.

- **Alternative A (Proposed Alternative)** is as described in Part I, paragraph 9 (Description of Project). Construct a storage and warming facility

Alternative B (No Action Alternative) Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Shooting Range Development Grant money would be denied and the area will remain as an active shooting range without the proposed improvements. However, if the project funding was denied, the Range Officers would continue to be exposed to the elements; leaving their vehicles as their only refuge or protection from the elements and a limited view of the ranges. The new building would provide both shelter and serve as an observation post for the handgun and the rifle range.

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: Only the proposed alternative and the no action alternative were considered. No other alternatives were deemed reasonably available, or prudent. Neither the proposed alternative nor the no action alternative would have significant negative environmental or potentially negative consequences.

There are beneficial consequences to acceptance of the **Proposed Alternative (A)** for construction of a storage and warming facility.

The **No Action Alternative (B)** would be to not fund the improvements and the range will continue with present conditions. Land use would remain the same.

Describe any Alternatives considered and eliminated from Detailed Study:

NONE

List and explain proposed mitigating measures (stipulations): None

PART III. 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		#3
5. Water quality, quantity & distribution (surface or groundwater)				X		#5
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		#9
10. Demands on environmental resources of land, water, air & energy				X		
11. Aesthetics				X		

2. & 5. There are neither surface waters nor delineated wetlands on the leased property.

3. The warming/storage structure will be built on skids, so no impacts to existing ground cover vegetation are expected.

9. This project uses no federal funds nor does it take place on state owned or controlled 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		
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		

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 implemented are already on an existing range/altere areas that together with the insignificant environmental effects of the proposed action, indicates 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. The Polson Shooters Association's proposed alternative to provide a safe regulated shooting opportunity is supported by its members and the public. Therefore, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks should approve the proposed alternative (A) for the improvements as outlined in Part I, Para. 9.

PART V. 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? Individually, the proposed actions have minor impacts. However, it was determined that there are no significant or potentially significant cumulatively impacts. 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 new 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.

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.

PART VI. EA CONCLUSION SECTION

Individuals or groups contributing to, or commenting on, this EA:

Rob St. Clair, 502 9th Ave. W., Polson, MT 59860
MT Fish Wildlife and Parks

EA prepared by:

GENE R. HICKMAN
MS Wildlife Management
Ecological Assessments
Helena, MT 59602

Date Completed: June 29, 2012

Describe public involvement:

This draft EA will be advertised on FWP's web site and through a legal ad in the *Valley Journal* announcing a public comment period. A press release will also announce the project and comment period.