



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

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(406) 444-9947

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

PART I. PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR ACTION

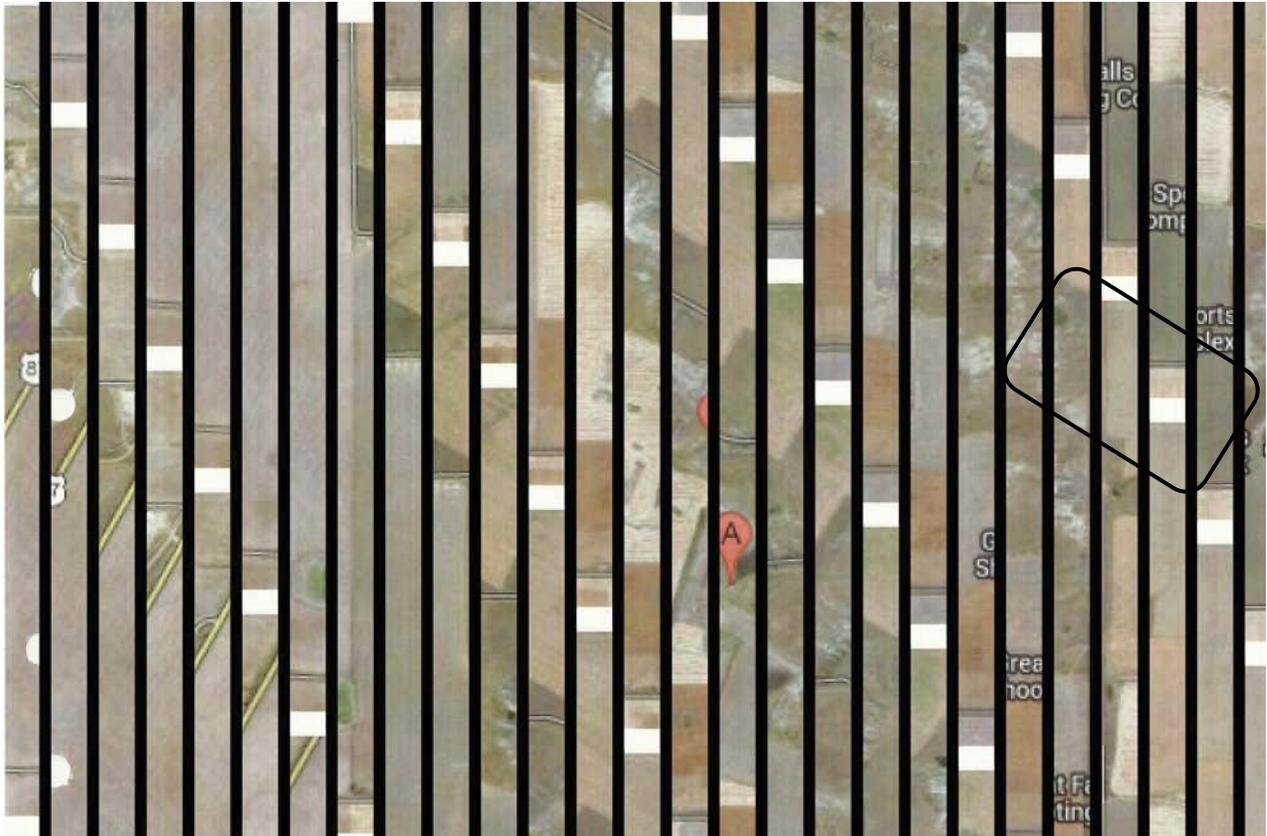
1. Project Title: Great Falls Shooting Sports Complex

2. Type of Proposed Action:

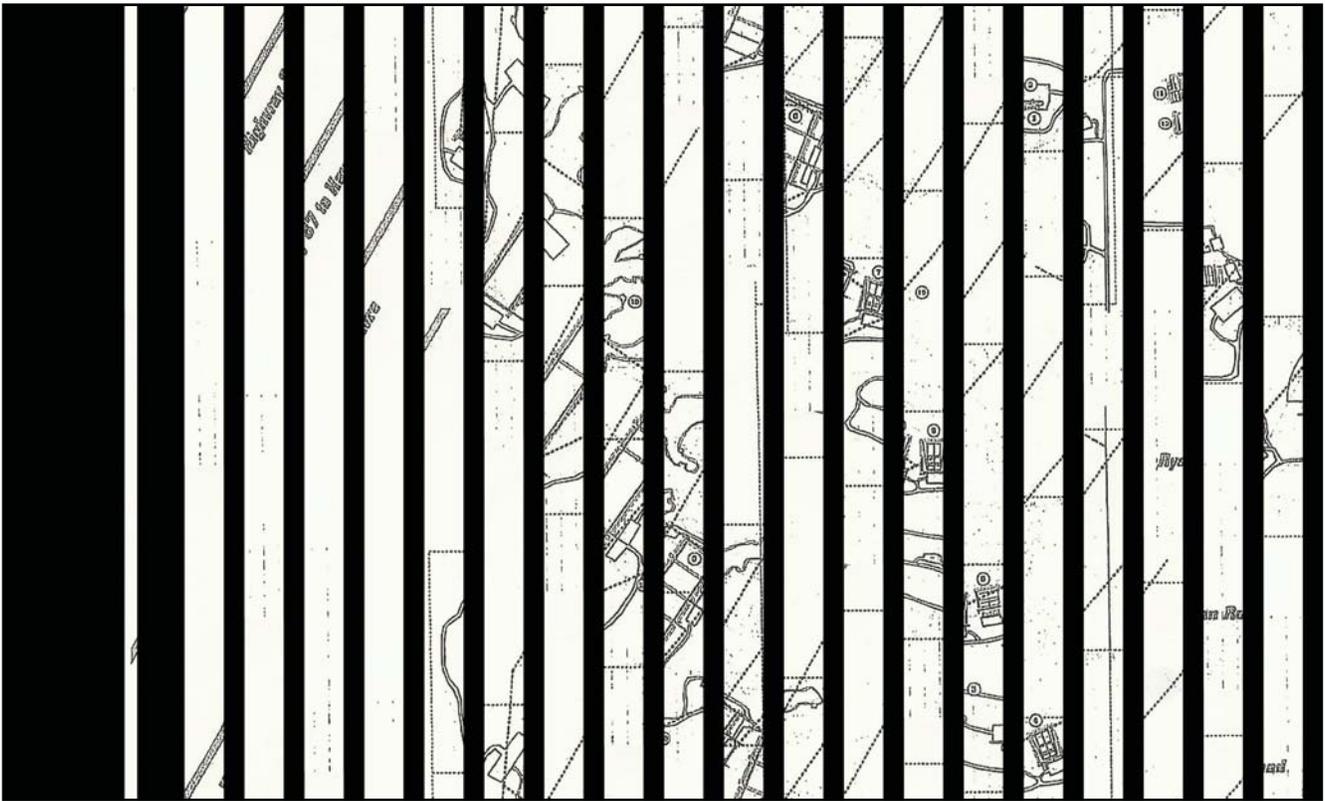
Installation of a cement garage floor; installation of a concrete threshold to the clubhouse; parking lot improvements; and trap range improvements.

3. Location Affected by Proposed Action:

The Great Falls Shooting Sports Complex is located approximately 5 miles north of Great Falls, Montana, 1 mile east of Highway 87, at 30 Sportsman Trail, Great Falls, MT, 59404, Lat. 47.5730378, Long. 111.223764.



Map 1 – Aerial View of Great Falls Shooting Sports Complex, Great Falls, Montana.



Map 2. Site Plan for the Great Falls Shooting Sports Complex.

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):

The Great Falls Shooting Sports Complex (GFSSC) receives heavy use from both members and the general public. The proposed improvements are necessary to improve the safety of shooters and spectators, to provide secure equipment storage, and to improve the enjoyment of those that the use the GFSSC.

6. Objectives for the Action(s):

The objectives for the GFSSC proposed improvements are to improve the safety and security of the range, to provide secure equipment storage, and to provide for safe pedestrian access by installing a concrete floor to the storage garage, installing concrete stairs, installing referee chairs and scoring stands, and constructing a fence.

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

The proposed improvements would involve approximately 1 acre of the 960-acre Great Falls Shooting Sports Complex.

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

The property is located on 960 acres of both privately owned and leased land. The GFSSC entered into a 50-year lease agreement with Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks in 2003 to lease 600 acres of state-owned land. In addition, the GFSSC purchased 360 acres in fee title in 2004. The property is not located within a floodplain and there are no permanent surface waters or wetlands on the property. The range offers shooting opportunities for rifle, pistol, shotgun, archery, and black powder shooting.

9. Description of Project:

The GFSSC proposed parking lot improvements include gravel, fabric, fencing, and cement steps. Improvements to the range access include installing a concrete threshold for safe access to the ranges from the clubhouse. The proposed trap range improvements include installing 5 new scoring stations. A cement floor would be installed for the garage for secure and dry equipment storage.

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

None

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	\$9,897

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

The Great Falls Shooting Sports Complex (GFSSC) is located on 960 acres of both private land deeded to the GFSSC and land leased to the GFSSC by Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP). This is a private range with a membership fee, though the range is open free to the public on select days and for a day use fee on other days. The Skeet Club is open free to the public any day the skeet range is open. In both cases, there is a fee for the targets used. Approximately 15 organizations use the range each year, including: Missouri River Shooters; Sun River Skeet Club; Ed McGivern Pistol; Black Horse Shootist; Rattle Snake Butte Archers; Montana Weapons Collector Society; Boy Scouts; NRA; Appleseed Project; MT FWP; Cascade County Sheriff; MAFB; and MT Highway Patrol.

12. History of the Planning and Scoping Process, and Any Public Involvement:

Because the Great Falls Shooting Sports Complex is a nonprofit private shooting club for members, there has been no public involvement in the planning process. Proposed range improvement proposals have been discussed with the club members and the associated project vendors and contractors.

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

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

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

Bill Cady, 226 9th Avenue South, Great Falls, MT 59405, (406) 453-0393.

15. Other Pertinent Information:

The Great Falls Shooting Sports Complex is a nonprofit private shooting club. The range provides the only shooting range in 20 miles of the property, with the closest near Great Falls, Montana.

Shooting range applications require the participating governing body to approve by resolution its submission of applications for shooting range-funding assistance. Resolution Date: April 29, 2013.

PART II. IDENTIFICATION OF THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVES

Alternative A, the **Proposed Alternative**, and **Alternative B**, the **No Action Alternative**, were considered.

- **Alternative A (Proposed Alternative)** is as described in Part I, paragraph 9 (Description of Project): to improve the parking lot and trap range, install a concrete threshold for the range access, and install a cement garage floor. There are beneficial consequences to acceptance of the **Proposed Alternative**.
- **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. The no action alternative would have no significant negative environmental or potentially negative consequences. The range will continue on with present conditions. Land use would remain the same.

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. There were no other alternatives that were deemed reasonably available, nor prudent. Neither the proposed alternative nor the no action alternative would have significant negative environmental or potentially negative consequences.

Describe any Alternatives considered and eliminated from Detailed Study:

None. Only the proposed alternative and the no action alternative were considered. There was no other alternative that were deemed reasonably available, or prudent. Neither the **Proposed Alternative** nor the **No Action Alternative** would have significant negative environmental or potentially negative consequences.

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 environmentally 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		

2. & 5. There are no delineated wetlands and no natural water sources within the area proposed for development. No critical wildlife habitat would be affected. Any resident or transient wildlife may leave the immediate area during road re-surfacing activity.

4. The elimination of vegetation for the implementation of the proposed project will not change the overall abundance and diversity of plant species within the area. The proposed project occupies a small portion of the property. Due to prior land use, native vegetation has been disturbed in the area of the proposed project. Therefore, the proposed project will have a minor impact on native vegetation in the area.

7. The proposed 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. Erosion control measures will be in effect and disturbed area will be reseeded.

8. Minor and temporary dust and vehicle emissions would be created by construction equipment during construction. However, the construction time is short and human effects will be limited due to the sparse population near the property.

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		#4
5. Human health				X		
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		
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4. The site is adjacent to surrounding agricultural land used for grazing and hay production.

7. The proposed improvements will improve the quality of the shooting sports within the community.

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 or altered 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 Great Falls Shooting Sports Complex’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, Paragraph 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 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.

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:

- Bill Cady, 226 9th Avenue South, Great Falls, MT 59405, (406) 453-0393.
- MT Fish Wildlife and Parks

EA prepared by:

ANDREA DARLING

Darling Natural Resource Consulting

Montana City, MT 59634

Date Completed:

July 15, 2013

Describe public involvement, if any:

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