



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

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ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

PART I. PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR ACTION

1. Project Title: Kootenai Valley Cross Country Ski Club Biathlon Range

2. Type of Proposed Action:

- Establish a biathlon range
- Provide participant equipment for development of a youth biathlon program.
- Construct a timing and storage cabin.

3. Location Affected by Proposed Action:

The Kootenai Valley Cross Country Ski Club (KVCCSC) Biathlon Range is located on 28 acres in Lincoln County 3.5 miles south of Libby, Montana on Flower Lake Road, Lat. 48.3436, Long. -115.57514; Section 21, T30N, R31W.



Figure 1. General Location of KVCCSC Biathlon Range



Figure 2. Proposed KVCCSC Biathlon Range

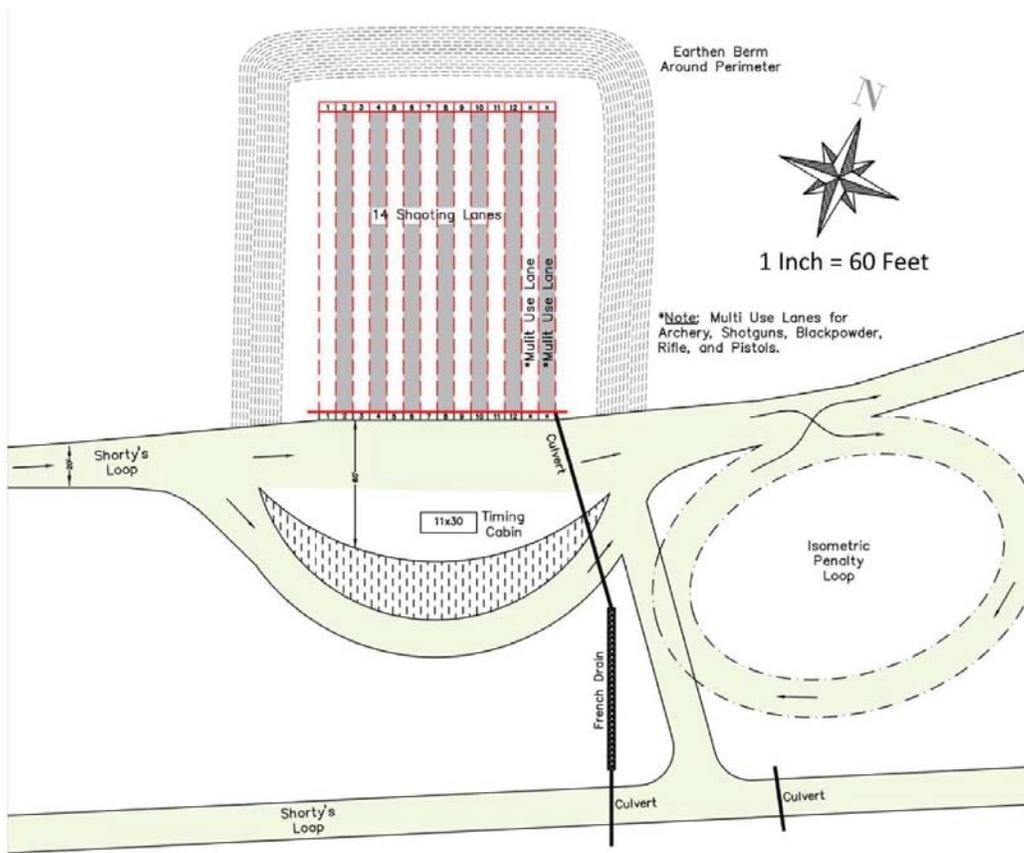


Figure 3. Concept Plan for the Proposed KVCCSC Biathlon Range

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):

KVCCSC now manages grooming and maintenance of 25 kilometers of cross-country ski trails on State, City of Libby, and USFS property. The club volunteers have also developed and manage an after school cross-country ski program and the Libby Youth Development Ski Team. KVCCSC wishes to incorporate a biathlon range into their existing programs for youth and adults. These facilities are available to the public and designed to be ADA compliant and serve a variety of shooters (archery, pistols, shotgun, rifle). The range will serve to 1) enhance the outdoor recreational activities for the local community, 2) provide economic benefits to the local community by attracting outside visitors and venues, and 3) build upon the present youth ski program. The range will also host hunter safety classes.

6. Objectives for the Action(s):

The 2016 goals for the KVCCSC are 1) to develop a biathlon range and timing and storage cabin in the current footprint of the cross-country ski course in Libby, Montana and 2) provide participant equipment for the early development of a youth biathlon program. The FWP grant will specifically fund materials and range construction.

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

Of the total 28 acres leased to the KVCCSC, the proposed project involves less than one half acre.

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

The 28-acre KVCCSC Biathlon Range is located on public land leased from the City of Libby with an 11-year lease from January 1, 2016 through December 31, 2026. The land is not within or adjacent to any floodplain. There are no permanent surface waters or wetlands on the property. Waterways on the property comprise only intermittent seasonal runoff.

9. Description of Project:

The KVCCSC proposes to develop a biathlon range and timing and storage cabin in the current footprint of the cross-country ski course in Libby, Montana.

1. Design/Engineering/Architect	\$ 750
2. Labor-Contracted/Paid & In-Kind	\$ 32,984
3. Materials-Miscellaneous	\$ 12,419
4. Equipment-Purchased	\$ 3,600
5. Concrete-Labor and Materials	\$ 9,350
6. Excavation/Logging/Slash Removal	\$ 3,222
7. Gravel-Labor and Materials	\$ 770
8. Lumber Package	\$ 3,200
9. Grant Preparation/Advertising/other Misc	\$ 5,250
Total Project Budget	\$ 71,546
Total Funding Requested	\$ 35,773

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>
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N/A

Funding:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Funding Amount</u>
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Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks	\$35,773
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11. Affiliations, Cooperating Agencies, User Groups and/or Supporting Groups:

The KVCCSC Biathlon Range is located on 28 acres of public land owned by the City of Libby and leased to the KVCCSC. This is a public range operated and maintained by the KVCCSC. Currently, membership to the KVCCSC is free and there is no day-use fee for visitors or guests. Because this range is not fully developed yet, no organizations have used the range. It is anticipated that various organizations and events will use the range in the future, such as for after-school programs for 5th and 6th grade students, cross country ski development teams, future biathlon competitions, and hunter education.

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

The KVCCSC Biathlon Range will be a public range operated and maintained by the KVCCSC. 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:

James Scott, 402 Montana Ave, Libby, MT 59923. (406) 293-5776.

15. Other Pertinent Information:

The KVCCSC Biathlon Range will be a public, non-profit range operated and maintained by the KVCCSC, a non-profit organization. The range is located approximately 3.5 miles south of Libby and will serve Libby as well as smaller communities within easy driving distance of the range. The closest range with similar shooting opportunities is located over 20 miles away near Libby, Montana.

Shooting range applications require the participating governing body to approve by resolution its submission

of applications for shooting range-funding assistance. Resolution Date: January 2, 2016.

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 develop a biathlon range and timing and storage cabin in the current footprint of the cross-country ski course in Libby, Montana and provide participant equipment for the development of a youth biathlon program. 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 was 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 the 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		#11

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 development of the biathlon range and construction of the shed 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 the developments will not substantially effect geological features or establish new erosion patterns. Soil disruption for this site will be localized. Erosion control measures will be in effect and disturbed area will be reseeded.

8. Minor and temporary dust and vehicle emissions will be created during construction of the Biathlon Range. However, the construction time is short and human effects will be limited due to the sparse population in the surrounding area.

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.

11. Less than one half acre will be affected by the proposed project so it will have no impact on the aesthetics of the property.

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		#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		
10. Demands for government services				X		
11. Industrial and/or commercial activity				X		

5. The proposed Biathlon Range will be designed and constructed to insure the safety of those using the range.

7. The proposed KVCCSC Biathlon Range 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 projects 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 KVCCSC'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:

- James Scott, 402 Montana Ave, Libby, MT 59923. (406) 293-5776.
- MT Fish Wildlife and Parks

EA prepared by:

Andrea Darling, Darling Natural Resource Consulting, Montana City, MT 59634

Date Completed:

April 27, 2016

Describe public involvement, if any:

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