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ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

PART I. PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR ACTION

1. Project Title: Cut Bank Sportsman Association (CBSA)

2. Type of Proposed Action:
Construct the following:

- Two concrete firing line slabs
- Cart path connecting parking lot to firing lines
- Covers for two firing lines
- Three new berms

3. Location Affected by Proposed Action:
The Shooting Range is 3 miles southwest of Cut Bank, in Glacier County, MT at 48°36’20.29”N, 112°21’24.49”W. The property is owned by the City of Cut Bank and Glacier County, and is controlled by the Cut Bank Airport Authority (CBSA). A long-term lease has been granted to the CBSA to establish and manage a shooting range on this site.

Map 1— Range Site on Old Race Track off of the Valley Highway 3 southwest of Cut Bank, MT.

Map 2- Aerial view of old race track, site of the CBSA shooting Range with Glacier County Sheriff's department range adjacent to the south side of the race track.

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): to construct -

- Firing line slabs and covers to enhance general and handicapped usability and accessibility
- Handicapped accessible path between the parking area and the firing lines
- Safety berms on north and south sides and between the rifle and pistol range firing lanes

6. Objectives for the Action(s):

- Improve usability of the firing lines, including handicap accessibility and enhanced shooting experiences for members and guests by creating limited shelter from the sun and inclement weather.
- Provide a concrete walkway for handicap and general access between the parking area and firing lines.
- Enhanced range safety with the construction of perimeter berms on the north and south and an additional berm between the rifle and pistol ranges.

7. Project Size: estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected:
The approximate size of the range located on the old racetrack site is 6.8 acres. The proposed improvements cover a much smaller area than the total acreage and will be safely spread within the leased properties.

8. Affected Environment (A brief description of the affected area of the proposed project):
The property is leased from the Cut Bank Airport Authority. Glacier County and the Cut Bank Airport Authority own the surrounding property on the range side of the road. The Glacier County Sheriff's Office has a firearms range adjacent to the south side of the leased property. The proposed project is on an old racecar track (See maps 1 and 2), situated just east of the Cut Bank Airport. Consequently, the immediate area has been significantly altered for a number of years through construction and use of the racetrack. The altered or disturbed area(s) can easily be seen in the aerial photo labeled map 2.

9. Description of Project:

- Pour two concrete slabs for firing lines on the rifle and pistol ranges.
- Construct a concrete cart path from the parking lot to the ranges.
- Build two covers over the firing line slabs on two ranges.
- Construct three earthen safety berms, two perimeter berms, and a berm between rifle and pistol ranges.

10. List any Other Local, State, or Federal Agency that has Overlapping or Additional Jurisdiction:
None

(a) Permits, Licenses and/or Authorizations:

Agency Name	Permit	Date Filed/#
N/A		

Funding:

Agency Name	Funding Amount
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks	$15,000

11. Affiliations, Cooperating Agencies, User Groups and/or Supporting Groups: FWP Hunter and Bowhunter Education Programs, 4-H Clubs, Boy Scouts; other shooting organizations from the Shelby, Conrad, Valier, Choteau and Chester communities.

12. History of the Planning and Scoping Process, and Any Public Involvement: Proposed range improvements and safety enhancements have been discussed within the membership of the club, the Cut Bank Airport Authority, and with 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:

Mike Boyd, 417 Circle Drive, Cut Bank, Mt 59427, 799-5945

15. Other Pertinent Information:
Plans for the CBSA are to have a shooting complex offering rifle and pistol ranges, archery range and trap ranges. This process was started in 2010, and an EA in conjunction with an FWP grant was completed in 2011. The new proposed improvements described in the EA build upon the previous assessment documents for this location for background information for the location and CBSA's plans for the shooting range.

Shooting range applications require the participating governing body to approve by resolution its submission of an application for shooting range funding assistance. Resolution Date: April 24, 2012.

PART II. 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 9 (Description of Project). Safety and access improvements on rifle and pistol ranges with concrete slabs, protective covers, access path and safety berms.
- **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 improvements proposed. The no action alternative would not have significant negative environmental or potentially negative consequences. The range will continue on with present conditions. Land use would remain the same.

Describe any Alternatives considered and eliminated from Detailed Study:
NONE. Only the proposed alternative and the no action alternative were considered. There were no other alternatives that were deemed reasonably available, nor prudent.

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**		
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**		
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**		

4. The old racetrack has been heavily compacted in places and vegetation is sparse and consists of a few grasses and noxious weeds. With projects that include the disruption of the earth, there is an increased potential for noxious weeds to present in those areas. In order to mitigate those impacts, a weed mitigation plan was created. The plan includes reseeding the disturbed ground with native grasses, hand-pulling weeds and other low-intensity weed control methods will be ongoing, and where appropriate, the application of herbicides by licensed applicators.

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		#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		

7. Proposed improvements to the CBSA 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 project reviewed were complex, controversial, or located in an environmentally sensitive area. The projects to be implemented will be on an existing range or altered areas that together with the insignificant environmental effects of the proposed actions, 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 Cut Bank Sportsman 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:

Mike Boyd, 417 Circle Drive, Cut Bank, MT 59427
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

EA prepared by:

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

Date Completed: June 26, 2012

Describe public involvement, if any:
This draft EA will be advertised on FWP's web site and through a legal ad in the *Pioneer Press* announcing a public comment period. A press release will also announce the project and comment period.