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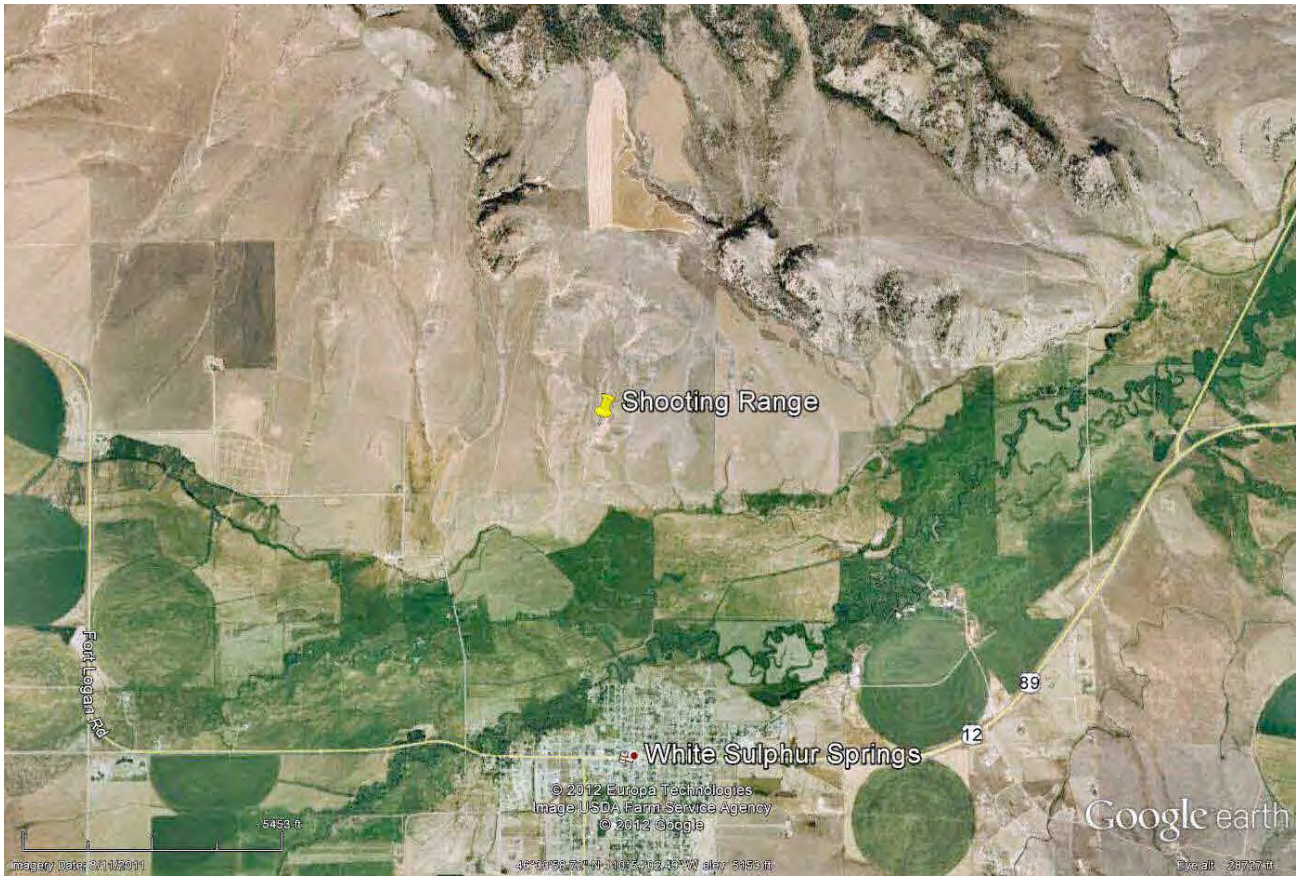
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

PART I. PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR ACTION

1. Project Title: Meagher County Sportsmen's Association

2. Type of Proposed Action:
Construct a secure storage structure

3. Location Affected by Proposed Action:
The range is located on a 66-acre parcel of leased land approximately two miles northwest of White Sulphur Springs on the Scott Jackson Ranch. The lessor is Scott Jackson, 116 Jackson Road, White Sulphur Springs, Montana 59645. The site occupies a portion of SE1/4 Section 1, R6E, T9N and portion of SW1/4 Section 6, R7E, T9N.



Map 1 – Location of Meagher County Shooting Range north of White Sulphur Springs

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):
Increasing range usage and equipment inventories require additional secure storage space onsite.

6. Objectives for the Action(s):
Increase safe and secure storage for associated range equipment and shooting supplies with handicap accessibility.

7. Project Size: estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected:
The proposed additional storage facility would be built as an addition to an existing building at the range with an expected footprint of 10'x16'.

8. Affected Environment (A brief description of the affected area of the proposed project): The range parcel is located on a private ranch, which is primarily agricultural and grazing land. The area is used for grazing cattle during calving season and the land adjacent to the range site is all grazing or hay land. According to retired local FWP Wildlife Biologist Dick Bucsis, the area is considered open rangeland and primarily provides habitat for antelope, a few mule deer and a few common non-game species,. The area is primarily covered with common grasses including crested wheat grass, June grass, and Idaho fescue. The area has been disturbed in the past by concentrated use of cows and calves in the spring. No surface water is present on the property or closer than approximately ¼ mile.

The shooting range currently includes an all weather indoor range and an outside firing line with 16 positions. The indoor range is for a .22 caliber rim fire rifle and pistol shooting. The outdoors range includes ranges at 25 to 300 yards, a one hundred yard gong, and a 400 hundred yard gong.

9. Description of Project:
Construction of a 10'x16' secure storage facility through an addition to the existing range building.

- Excavate and pour 10'X16' concrete monolithic concrete slab
- Construct storage facility as an addition to the existing building
- Install a steel framed steel door

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	$3,337

11. Affiliations, Cooperating Agencies, User Groups and/or Supporting Groups: About 15% of the town's population (White Sulphur Springs) is members of the Meagher County Sportsmen's Association, and the County Commissioners are Among the Association's main supporters. The range currently supports Hunter Education, Bowhunter Education, and 4-H air gun shooting. The range accommodates both recreational and competitive shooting and is open to the public, community organizations, and local law enforcement.

12. History of the Planning and Scoping Process, and Any Public Involvement: Proposed range improvements proposals have been discussed within the membership of the club, the associated project vendors, contractors, and the lessor.

13. List of Agencies Consulted/Contacted During Preparation of the EA:
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

14. Names, Address and Phone Number of Project Sponsor:
Pat McCoy, 34 Bingham Lane, White Sulphur, MT. 59645, (406) 547-2437

15. Other Pertinent Information: Meagher County Sportsmen Association has been in existence since 1993 and the current range has been in use since 2003.

Shooting range applications require the participating governing body to approve by resolution its submission of applications for shooting range-funding assistance. Resolution Date: April 16, 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). Construct a safe and secure storage facility as an addition to existing building. There are beneficial consequences to acceptance of the **Proposed Alternative (A)** to construct safe and secure storage facility as an addition to existing building.

- **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. In the future the Shooting Association may have to store additional range equipment off-site or risk the possibility of theft at the range.

Describe any Alternatives considered and eliminated from Detailed Study:
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.

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**		
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 no delineated wetlands on the property. No surface water is present on the property or closer than approximately ¼ mile. A small footprint is all that is required for the construction of the proposed clubhouse. No critical wildlife habitat would be affected. Any resident or transient wildlife may leave the immediate area while the construction is taking place.

9. No prehistoric, historic, or paleontological sites are known to exist in the area of the proposed construction. 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		
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		

4. The surrounding land ownership is private and the previous use was solely for livestock grazing.

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/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 history of the Meagher County Sportsmen Association providing shooting opportunities to its members and the public indicates support for the proposed alternative. 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:

Pat McCoy, 34 Bingham Lane, White Sulphur, MT. 59645
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, if any:
This draft EA will be advertised on FWP's web site and through a legal ad in the *Meagher County News* announcing a public comment period. A press release will also announce the project and comment period.