

SHOOTING RANGE FACILITIES TASK FORCE
DRAFT APRIL MEETING NOTES
FWP HQ, HELENA
10:30 AM – 3:30 PM, APRIL 10, 2026

Facilitator: Deb O’Neill (FWP)

Notetaker: Natalie Schaus (FWP)

Task Force Members Present: Senator John Fuller (co-chair; Montana Senate), Representative Kerri Seekins-Crowe (co-chair; Montana House), Seth Berglee (Shield Arms), Senator Willis Curdy (Montana Senate), Mitch King (Montana Outdoor Legacy Foundation), Christie Knudsen (shooting association), Andy Larsson (Skinner Sights), Mandy Rambo (Department of Commerce), Richard Roth (Governor’s Office), Representative Courtenay Sprunger (Montana House), and Liz Whiting (Parks and Outdoor Recreation Board)

Task Force Members Excused:

Invited FWP Staff: Jeff Hindoen (Legal), Sam Hoggatt (Parks and Outdoor Recreation Division), Renee Lemon (Parks and Outdoor Recreation Division), and Marty Tuttle (Legal)

Invited Guests: John Kanta (SD Game, Fish and Parks)

Meeting Objective: Expand Task Force knowledge to gather targeted information.

Meeting Goals:

- 1) Learn from other states’ experiences.
- 2) Identify Task Force information needs and how to obtain it.

Friday April 10, 2026

10:30 a.m. Introduction—Deb O’Neill, FWP

- March meeting notes were moved to be accepted by Liz Whiting
- March notes were approved
- John will now present at 11 because he has to leave
- Jim Foster sent in an update on behalf of the North Valley Sportsman Club to say that they received their lease and instead of going up the 300% that they were warned about, the 10-year lease increased for the first year by 66%, from \$14,750 to \$24,538. While that is high, they feel that they can absorb this increase. It will go up about 2% each year thereafter, doubling the lease in 10 years. The Board still has concerns, but they will address those concerns with the DNRC Director next week.

10:36 a.m. Survey Update—Renee Lemon, FWP and Deb O’Neill (FWP)

- In March the surveys were reviewed, and comments were made
- Deb worked with Seth Berglee to compile edits and ask for more feedback

- There were no additional edits, so Liam Harry helped to finalize the survey
- Sam Hoggatt sent out the shooting range survey to the ranges and set the deadline as May 8th
- We have already received 6 responses from clubs
- After May 8th, FWP will summarize the survey responses through Survey Monkey and AI
- Deb sent out an email to all license ambassadors (about 112 people) to notify them that FWP will be sending out a flyer with a QR code
- Joey released a press release about the personal shooter survey
- FWP can print out more flyers to share with members
- The personal survey will be open for longer than the club survey because it will take longer to collect information (July 1st)

10:45 a.m. PR Subcommittee Update—Representative Courtenay Sprunger and Andy Larsson

- Rep. Sprunger worked with Joey to get the press release out
- Likely there will not be much press release
- Members of the task force are encouraged to take the press release and publish it on social media or email it to any list serves.
- Andy got the social media pages up, so they will send out this press release there
- FWP is also putting it out through their list serve
- Mandy Rambo has the Secretary of State, Montana Chamber, and their list serves that it will be sent out to
- Senator Fuller will also bring out flyers to disseminate
- Andy is struggling with Facebook because they keep trying to shut down any firearm posts
- Andy created a group instead of a page so that people can submit posts
- Rep. Sprunger, Rep. Seekins-Crowe, and Andy Larsson will be admins. It is not public yet, but it will be soon.
- Any photos can be posted on the page pending admin approval
- They will have to be careful not to censor people, but it has to be within the context (can be included in the group rules)
- A few videos should be made to be shared through other pages and boost engagement (Rep. Sprunger)
- The link to the survey should be on the page (maybe pinned so it doesn't get lost)
- Andy Larsson motioned to go live with the Facebook group
- Several people seconded the motion
- There were no objections, so the motion passed

11:00 a.m. Out-of-state presentation – SD CO John Kanta (SD Game, Fish and Parks)

- John would love for the committee to visit for a tour and meeting
- In 2019, the PR act was changed to emphasize shooting sports and hunter's education
- Along with the priority, the governor wanted to put together a big shooting range and John Kanta led the charge with the project
- The state had authority, but they wanted to include county concerns as well to make it a more cooperative project
- The complex is divided into a north (for the public) and south range (technical, advanced, LE training etc.)

- The goals stressed having a safe and welcoming place to offer shooting sports and practice. They also wanted to make it inclusive for new shooters, youth, women, etc.
- They focused on the Grand Junction, CO and Phoenix, AZ ranges and they utilized their advice to come up with their plans
- The site is just North of Rapid City and includes shotgun, archery, long-range, and a meeting area for education and banquets
- The facility has action shooting areas as well that can accommodate more competitions
- The bigger bay is a versatile training bay for Law Enforcement from various agencies
- The indoor facility is just for air guns, so they would not have to deal with lead mitigation (costly)
- The sporting clays range is also available
- There is a big ridgeline between the different bays. They did not bring any dirt in, but they cut into the ridges to divide between the North and South ranges
- They offer opportunity for all levels of shooters, education and outreach, law enforcement training, and organized shooting competitions
- They had a Paralympian on their planning team to make it accessible to everyone
- They have a long list of competitions that will be coming in
- The range is open year-round. It has been open since November and they have already seen 30,000 visitors even when it is snowing (albeit it has been a mild winter).
- He estimated that they should see 30,000 visits annually, but they have already seen that in 5 months, and they are on track to see 80,000-100,000 visitors in the first year
- They have technology to link up the target with people's phones for more information
- They started by saying they would have one full-time staffer, but it has expanded and now they have 4 full-time staff and 15 seasonal staff members that work 15-40hrs per week. They also have several volunteers that help them out with various tasks as needed.
- There are no trap fields, but 3 fields offer skeet
- They have separate men and women vault toilets
- They can reclaim lead in several spots
- The 50-, 100-, and 300-yard bays are free to the public. Other areas are membership only for \$100-\$150
- They raised funds by naming sponsorships for each area
- Some of the most popular areas are a 50-yard bay and 300-yard bay with fun targets
- The archery range has distances from 20 to 80 yards
- The action bays and LE Training bays are 50-100 yards long
- LE folks get to shoot no matter what, but they help with some maintenance and operations costs (about \$70,000 annually) and they in turn offer storage on site and a minimum number of days
- Over \$400,000 annually in maintenance costs
- They help out with some competitions. Local clubs pay annual payments with a per person cost for competitions. All the funds go back into maintenance and operations
- Nonprofits use the facility at no charge
- Anyone under 18 is free of charge but they must have a responsible adult with them
- They received some grants for equipment and are getting \$30,000 from the FBI for maintenance in exchange for them using the facility to train
- They anticipated 1,000 memberships and already have 700 memberships

- Staff salaries are generated through several different fees, but it is not fully decided where the salaries will be funded from
- Shooters are charged for the clay targets (with the exception of youth competitions)
- They are not allowing silhouettes in the general use area, but it is allowed on the North range
- Most local shooting clubs are looking for a home base. Their memberships have been increasing now that they have a bigger range
- The authority lies with the Game, Fish, and Parks with the help of the commission and stakeholder group (no authority with the group, but they offer feedback)
- The stakeholder meetings can get contentious, so be prepared for that
- Outside of the competitions, they are mostly getting folks from within a 6-hour radius using the facilities
- They are using PR advertising and Chambers of Commerce that promote the complex
- There is not a campground at the range so that a private campground can benefit from that. It hasn't happened yet, but it is in the works. If that falls through, they will consider opening a campground.
- An economic company put together an economic impact estimate
- The total project cost was just over \$20 million, and the fundraising goal was \$10 million. They are still actively fundraising and currently have \$6.8 million plus in donations and pledges
- Once it is built, it is easier to get donations
- The naming rights were sold for \$500,000-\$2 million over 5 years maximum
- Enforcement is managed through the local LE as needed, but there are often officers shooting in the range.
- All staff are trained as range safety officers and can address issues. Most users have never been to a range before, so it is generally a nice conversation if something needs to be addressed.
- They have had issues and had to trespass one individual and they have had other more minor incidents.
- On Saturdays they are going to have open houses to talk about range etiquette, how to use a range, etc.
- They do not require waivers, sign-ins, etc. Rules are posted, but it is all at your own risk.
- They do not sell gear and ammo on site. They do sell hats, shirts, and souvenirs. Since there is a big demand, they may sell ammo
- They have gear for free to check out because they didn't want to sell stuff and take business away from local stores.
- The NRA competition shoot is July 28th-August 2nd
- He will send us cost and income numbers along with other data

12:19 p.m. Lunch Break

12:52 p.m. Wyoming Process-- Jeff Hindoien

- 2023 Wyoming Process
 - o WY Legislature created a State Shooting Complex Development and Oversight Task Force (similar structure to this one)

- The differences are that they were legislatively tasked with coming up with a single site for a shooting complex though an RFP
- The bill had a \$10 million dollar appropriation for it subject to further Legislative action
- The task force developed and transmitted a letter of interest for cities, towns, counties, groups, etc. to see who would be interested in being considered
- They received 8 responses from local government entities
- The task force developed and posted a formal RFP solicitation in Spring 2024
- 4 local government agencies submitted responses
- Cheyenne withdrew their proposal, and the task force visited the sites
- Park County (Cody) was chosen, but not unanimously (8-4)
- The task force recommended that a joint powers entity to be created for siting, construction, and operation with general oversight going to Wyoming Department of State Parks and then Wyoming Game and Fish was involved in planning construction and operation of hunter education programs
- The 2025 legislature changed around where the money was coming from and approved the general site layout
- They have started initial road construction and water supply well-draining
- Comments
 - It might be helpful to reach out to League of Cities and Towns and Economic Development agencies to gauge interest and feedback
 - Jeff Hindoien will get the CEO's information
 - It would help to understand the pitfalls and who was against this project and the SD one and why
 - The Colorado Cameo facility numbers would be helpful to see the differences between the projects, especially given the longevity of the Colorado project
 - We should look into the numbers of what grants are out there and what would be sustainable for Montana
 - Mandy Rambo can send out questions to local Economic Development Organizations or Tourism regions
 - Commerce could reach out to Cameo to pull economic impact data

1:29 a.m. May Field Trip and Member Comments—Seth Berglee

- Nephi is going to a shooting match (the day before), and anyone is welcome to join. It will be on May 15th in Great Falls and there will be lunch at the local office along with public comments and a brief meeting and then the group will go to the event area by 1:30
- This is a hunter-style match hosted by the NRL
- For the potential trip to Cody, Rep. Seekins-Crowe could work with them to figure out travel and lodging using the funding
- As people go on their own trips, they will visit additional shooting complexes and report back
- The committee moved to pre-approve \$400 for travel. If it is more than that, it must be requested, and all travel should be communicated with the committee.
- There were no objectives, so the motion passed.
- Another shoot is the 20th and 21st of June and it is the biggest shooting event in Montana and is held in Forsyth, MT (international)

- If you decide to go to the shoot for the day, you can count that as travel and mileage

1:52 p.m. Public Feedback Session

- There was no public comment (no one in person and no one raised their hand online)

1:56 p.m. Review and Close

- Reach out to Deb with any meeting conflicts and whether you will be attending the May meeting and need lodging

2:02 p.m. Adjourn