



## Individual survey open response summary (AI Generated)

### Question 16: In your opinion, what is the single most important improvement needed to support shooters in Montana?

#### 1. Access to more and better ranges. (160 responses)

A very large share of responses ask for “more places to shoot,” “more ranges throughout the state,” or “local ranges,” often explicitly saying that a single premier facility would not work for a state as big as Montana. People want ranges near population centers and small towns, with enough lanes and capacity to reduce overcrowding and long travel distances.

#### 2. Safe, designated public areas and long-range capability (110 responses)

Many responses emphasize designated, safe public ranges and shooting areas, with proper backstops, defined firing lines, and separation from informal “pull off the road” spots. A substantial subset specifically call for long-range rifle opportunities (500–1,000+ yards), structured long-range schools/competitions, and multi-discipline facilities that include long-range, shotgun sports, and other disciplines.

#### 3. Education, safety, and youth opportunities (90 responses)

Education appears repeatedly: firearm safety, hunter education, range rules and etiquette, clinics, youth programs, school/4-H/collegiate shooting, and fun entry-level training. Many comments link education to stopping trash and unsafe behavior on public lands, and several explicitly say investment in youth shooters is vital because “they are our future.”

#### 4. Support and funding for existing local ranges (45 responses)

A significant number of responses ask the state to focus on supporting and upgrading existing non-profit/local ranges rather than building one big complex. Themes include grants for infrastructure and maintenance, helping clubs with leases and land access, keeping ranges from being closed by development or neighboring landowner pressure, and legislative/regulatory protection for local clubs.

#### 5. Affordability and cost concerns (35 responses)

Respondents frequently mention cost barriers: high range memberships, lease increases, ammunition prices, and desire for “low cost or free public ranges” and

“reasonable fees.” Some explicitly tie affordability to equitable access, arguing that PR-funded or state-supported ranges should offer at least some free or low-fee opportunities for the average shooter and youth.

**Question 17: Is there anything else you would like decision-makers to know about shooting access in your area?**

**1. Lack of access and overcrowding (195 responses)**

Many people say their community has “very limited” public shooting access or no safe public facility at all, forcing them to travel long distances—often 40+ miles—to shoot. Overcrowding at the few available ranges (Logan, rod and gun clubs, informal state-land sites) is a frequent complaint, especially around Bozeman, Livingston, Helena, and other growing communities.

**2. Multiple local/simple ranges instead of one large complex (130 responses)**

Respondents repeatedly oppose spending money on a single “premium” or mega-facility that would be far from most users, arguing instead for many small, simple ranges near communities. They emphasize local access, keeping smaller club ranges open, and building modest state-land ranges with berms and basic amenities across the state rather than centralizing everything.

**3. Safety, trash, and stewardship on public lands (115 responses)**

A major theme is unmanaged shooting on public land: people describe recreational shooters leaving behind appliances and trash, unsafe cross-directional shooting, fires, noise conflicts, and adjacent landowner complaints. Many survey participants call for designated public shooting areas on state/BLM land with clear rules, berms, enforcement, and trash service, plus education and penalties to improve stewardship rather than simply closing long-used sites.

**4. Long-range and discipline-specific facilities (90 responses)**

A substantial number of comments ask for more long-range rifle access (300–1,000+ yards), including public facilities capable of competitions and hunter-relevant practice. Others highlight needs for trap/skeet/sporting clays, archery, youth trap, and separation of shotgun/archery disciplines from rifle/pistol ranges so each can operate safely and comfortably.

**5. Funding, support, and governance of existing ranges (75 responses)**

Respondents talk about club ranges facing lease loss, limited budgets, volunteer burnout, and misused or under-used Pittman-Robertson funds. Several raise concerns

about “clique-run” or unfriendly boards and range officers, asking that state support go to existing non-profit clubs while ensuring accountability, welcoming atmospheres, and fair use of grant money.