

Shooting Facilities and Improvements Development and Oversight Task Force  
May 15, 2026, DRAFT Meeting Summary

**Introduction and Approvals**

Deb O'Neill gave an overview of the agenda. Seth Berglee moved to pass the April meeting notes as is and Rep. Seekins-Crowe seconded that motion. There were no objections, so the notes passed as is.

**Report Outs**

Many members have been giving flyers to local businesses with varying success. Overall, when committee members have spoken to members of shooting ranges, they have heard concerns about the increased cost of leases. These concerns should be part of any report that the committee gives to the legislature. Rep. Seekins-Crowe will be going to Rapids City in June, and members are welcome to join.

**Q&A with Meegan Bennett and Ron Steffen of McGough Construction**

The SD Shooting Complex project started with a design team, including an architectural firm, a landscape architect and a civil engineer. There was a hard bid, so McGough Construction came in after design and did the work. The programming timeframe for onboarding prior to construction usually takes 8-10 months and a project of this scale can be done in 2 years, but a hard bid lengthens the time. From groundbreaking to finish, it took 16 months, but other projects could be completed in 12 months or less. McGough Construction put in two wells and brought in half of the electric. The well and septic were all on site controlled. Since the project was hard bid, they didn't have change orders that weren't scope driven. Even so, they had less than 12 in total.

**PR Subcommittee Update—Rep. Sprunger**

There was statewide coverage of the survey in the media and newspapers. FWP and the Department of Commerce sent out the survey to their list serves. Next, we should focus more attention on social media.

**Shooting Facility Survey Update—Sam Hoggatt, FWP**

The club survey was emailed in early April, with a follow-up later in the month. Deb, Sam, and Natalie called all the ranges that did not fill out the survey. Overall, the results showed that ranges would like to add or expand on shotgun sporting clays, rifle ranges greater than 500 yards, and youth or beginner focused areas. Additionally, most ranges have buildings and indoor storage, restroom facilities, and electricity, but desire better range and facility infrastructure, access, and improvements to safety, water, and power. The committee agreed that they should investigate what the state needs to have better beginner shooter facilities. They also would like to know more about concerns regarding a state complex and other key takeaways from each question.

**Individual Survey Update—Deb O'Neill, FWP**

This survey is still out, but preliminary results from over 1,200 people in all but 12 counties show that most shooters shoot weekly and travel less than 25 miles to shoot. They would like to see year-round access and would participate more if the shooting facilities near them were new or improved, including long range rifle. Over 80% of the survey respondents said they would like to see a large shooting complex in the state and that they would drive 50-100 miles to go to a complex. The Bozeman area was where most people would like to see a complex and Kalispell was the least popular option for a complex, but this data is likely skewed because of where people taking the survey were from.

The committee would like to have more summarized data regarding what the shooting facilities are around the areas where people answered this survey. They would also like to know more about how many people live in one area but would like it in another area and what cities would be within a 6-hour drive of potential locations. Other areas that need more research are the economic impact of these complexes in other states and how other states, such as Wyoming, chose their location.

### **Public Feedback Session**

Ted Beardsley: Owns a gun shop in Manhattan and he is concerned that if there is a state facility, only the local city would benefit, but all tax dollars would be paying for it. He would like to know how to combat that.

Wes Oedekoven instructs 4H and would like to bring up that Flathead County is struggling to find facilities to host shooting sports events, and he feels that other counties have the same struggles. Their youth program is broad, and they do air rifles, air pistols, shotguns, muzzleloader, and archery. There are a lot of limitations in many facilities regarding safety, and it limits the number of kids that can participate in these programs.

### **Final Comments and Next Steps**

In order for the committee to start forming recommendations, they need to get the metric that WY used for grading the applications. They would also like more economic impact data and the numbers, rather than percentages, from the survey.

The June meeting will be Zoom-only for the purpose of getting more information from other states.

FWP will try to synthesize the information better for the July 7th (tentative) meeting and will send the survey out through 4H clubs