



**FISCAL YEAR 2024 MONTANA SHOOTING RANGE DEVELOPMENT GRANT PROGRAM AWARDS
RECORD OF DECISION
August 31, 2023**

Montana Shooting Range Development Grant Program Authority and Scope

The Montana Shooting Range Development Grant Program (SRDG) is implemented by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) and provides grant funding to successful applicants for the development, renovation, and maintenance of shooting ranges. The Montana Legislature has established policies and procedures pursuant to § 87-1-276, Montana Code Annotated (MCA), through § 87-1-279, MCA, for the establishment and improvement of shooting ranges throughout Montana.

Funding for the SRDG comes from FWP general license dollars. A total of approximately **\$300,000** is available for grants during the FY 2024 grant cycle. An FWP internal review committee met in April 2023, to review grant applications and make grant award recommendations for projects proposed during the FY 2024 SRDG grant cycle.

Grant Application Process and Awards

During the FY 2024 SRDG grant application cycle, which occurred between November 15, 2022, and February 1, 2023, the SRDG received 12 applications requesting a total of \$290,794 in grant funding for proposed projects. After consideration of the applications and assessment of potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed projects, grant funding has been awarded to all FY 2024 SRDG grant applicants. Table 1 (attached) reflects the approximate funding amount to be awarded to each grant recipient in the FY 2024 SRDG grant cycle.

Environmental Review of SRDG Applications

For each of the 12 recommended FY 2024 SRDG projects FWP must complete environmental review according to the applicable requirements of the Montana Environmental Policy Act or MEPA (Title 75, Chapters 1 through 3, MCA). Pursuant to MEPA, each of the proposed projects required preparation of an environmental assessment or EA, which was subjected to public comment for a period of 21 days from July 25 through August 15. Adequate documentation of the required environmental review process, including any public comments and agency responses, is on file with FWP and available for public review upon request.

The major environmental resource categories for which impacts were reviewed include the following:

Soils: Maintenance and renovation of existing shooting ranges will have immediate, short-term, and minor adverse impacts to affected soils during the time of on-ground maintenance and/or construction but ultimately would be expected to result in long-term, beneficial impacts to soils. Soil erosion will be reduced, and water runoff will be diverted gradually off surfaces. No significant adverse impacts to any affected soils would be expected because of the approved FY 2024 SRDG projects.

Vegetation: Grant recipients will carry out defined best management practices or BMPs, which are designed to limit potential adverse impacts. Therefore, no significant adverse impacts to any vegetation resources, including any threatened and endangered plant species, would be expected because of the approved FY 2024 SRDG projects.

Water Quality, Hydrology, Fisheries: Maintenance and renovation of existing shooting ranges will have immediate, short-term, and minor adverse impacts because of the necessary disturbance of soils during the "construction" phase, including the potential for localized run-off and associated sedimentation of nearby waterways. However, ultimately, long-term, beneficial impacts that reduce or mitigate impacts to soil and vegetation resources would be expected because of the approved FY 2024 SRDG projects.

Wildlife: Review of potential impacts to affected wildlife was completed for each of the FY 24 grant projects. No significant adverse impacts to any affected wildlife species or habitats would be expected because of the approved FY 2024 SRDG projects.

Land Use: FY 2024 SRDG projects will not change the existing types of recreation at developed shooting ranges. Therefore, no adverse impacts would be expected because of the approved FY 2024 SRDG projects.

Economic Impacts: Numerous studies conclude that outdoor recreation benefits local economies. Generally, shooting ranges help preserve natural amenities and provide the affected public with greater opportunities for safe shooting practice within an environment managed for such purposes. Therefore, no significant adverse impacts would be expected because of the approved FY 2024 SRDG projects.

Outdoor Recreation Impacts: The FY 2024 SRDG projects will benefit outdoor recreation. Maintenance and renovation of shooting ranges will enhance the user's experience while protecting resources. Therefore, no significant adverse impacts to outdoor recreation would be expected because of the approved FY 2024 SRDG projects.

Cultural Resources: FWP assessed the potential for cultural resource impacts associated with each approved FY 2024 SRDG grant project. No adverse impacts to cultural resources were identified. If cultural resources are unexpectedly discovered during project implementation, the affected awardee must cease implementation and contact FWP for further evaluation. Therefore, no significant adverse impacts to cultural resources would be expected because of the approved FY 24 SRDG projects.

Cumulative Impacts: For the purposes of MEPA, "cumulative impact" means the collective impacts on the human environment of the proposed action when considered in conjunction with other past and present actions related to the proposed action by location or generic type. Related future

actions must also be considered when these actions are under concurrent consideration by any state agency through pre-impact statement studies, separate impact statement evaluation, or permit processing procedures. ARM 12.2.429(7). No significant adverse cumulative impacts would be expected because of the approved FY 2024 SRDG projects.

Public Comment Summary

FWP held a Public Comment Period for all proposed FY 2024 SRDG grant awards and their associated project-specific MEPA review beginning July 25 through August 15, 2023. Comments were invited and submitted through the FWP website and mail.

During the public comment period, FWP received nineteen comments. There were fourteen comments in support of the awards and projects. There were five that opposed the projects. Reasons for the opposition included no new public taxes, more lead mitigation, and more shooting safety oversight at ranges. A more detailed compilation and analysis of comments and FWP responses is on file with FWP and available for public review by request.

Decision

Based on review of the applications, MEPA review documents, and public comments received, it is the decision of FWP to approve all the proposed FY 2024 SRDG grant awards, as listed in Table 1 (attached).

Please direct questions to:



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Table 1: 2023 Montana Shooting Range Development Grant Program Awards

Organization	Project Description	Award Amount
Billings Rod and Gun Club	Phase II five stand improvements	\$55,706.00
Boone and Crocket	Improve safety and accessibility, and install permanent targets	\$17,500.00
Butte Trap Club	Adding ADA camping pad and updating electrical wiring in clubhouse	\$7,300.00
Chinook Rod and Gun	Improve Safety at Gun and Archery Ranges	\$16,605.00
Crooked Falls Practical Shooters	Purchasing Steel Targets and Storage Conex	\$6,675.00
Custer Rod and Gun Club	New Rifle Shooting Range Gate Improvements	\$8,000.00
Fallon County	ADA Facility Improvements, New Trap Shooters, Install Heaters in Facilities	\$23,382.00
Gallatin Sporting Clays	Purchase and Install 6 New Mobile Clay Target Traps	\$12,065.00
Havre Rifle and Pistol	New Signage and Road Maintenance	\$4,916.00
Helena Trap Club	Phase II of ADA accessible lanes and sidewalks	\$31,992.00
Thompson Falls Trap Club	Create New Skeet Field	\$15,746.00
Western Montana Fish and Game Association	Construct Youth Shooting Sports Complex	\$90,907.00