



# MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS

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## ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

### PART I. PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR ACTION

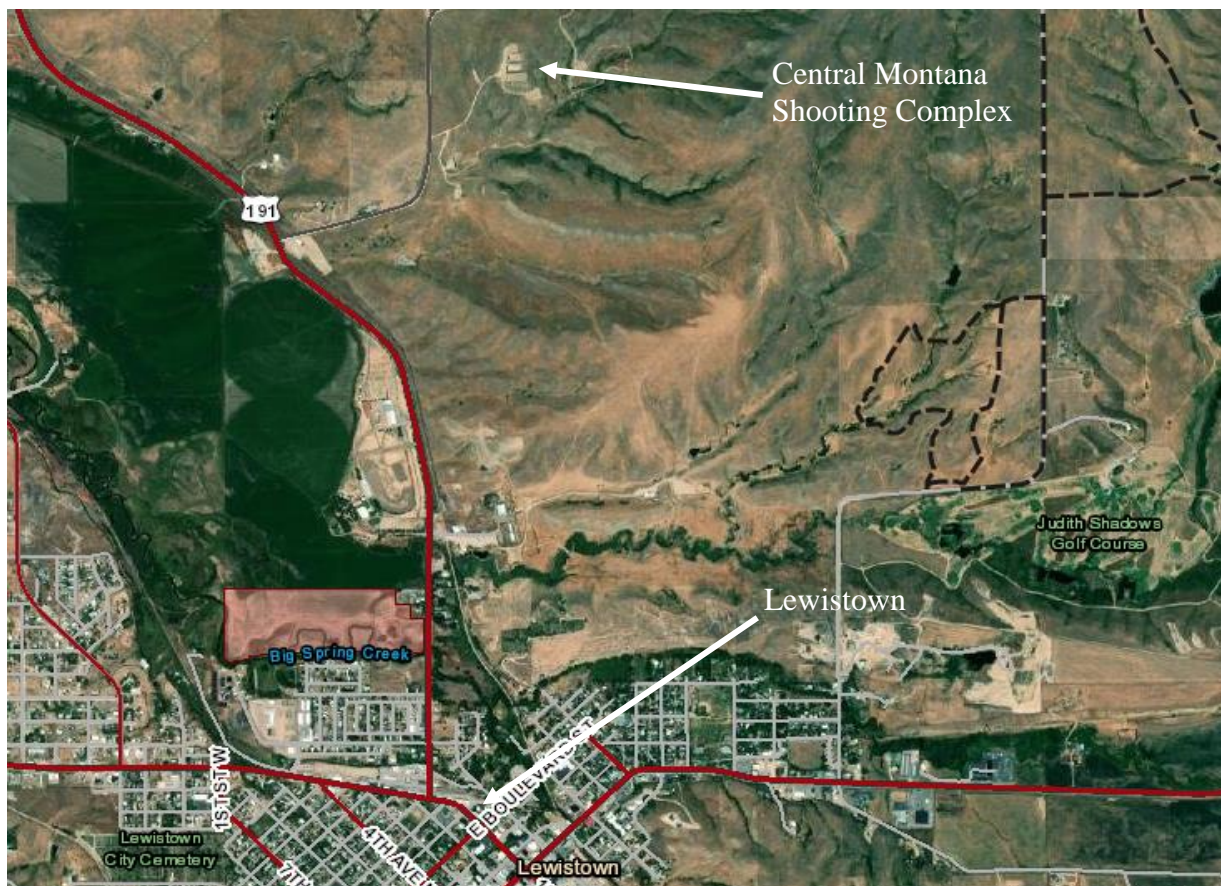
**1. Project Title:** Central Montana Shooting Complex

**2. Type of Proposed Action:**

Members of the Central Montana Shooting Complex (CMSC) propose to construct a storage building to store trap equipment, machines, and clay targets.

**3. Location Affected by Proposed Action:**

The CMSC is located off U.S. Highway 191 approximately 2 miles north of Lewistown, Montana at 520 Lime Kiln Road, Lewistown, MT 59457; Lat. 47.09489, Long. -109.42615; Section 3, Township 15 North, Range 18 East.



**Figure 1. General Location of Central Montana Shooting Complex, Lewistown, Montana**



**Figure 2 – Aerial View of Central Montana Shooting Complex, Lewistown, Montana**

**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):**

Currently there is inadequate winter storage facilities for the trap range equipment. In addition, there is also no shop for working on equipment. The proposed storage building would provide an unheated, covered storage

facility at the CMSC to securely store trap range machines and other equipment during the off season and provide a place to work on and repair machines. In addition, the storage building would provide secure storage for clay targets for stocking traps.

#### **6. Objectives for the Action(s):**

The goals for the CMSC proposed project are to provide safe, secure, and convenient storage for trap range machines and other equipment during the off-season and a shop for working on equipment.

#### **7. Project Size: estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected:**

The proposed project would involve less than one-half acre of the 160-acre CMSC.

#### **8. Affected Environment (A brief description of the affected area of the proposed project):**

The CMSC is located on 160 acres of privately owned land deeded to the CMSC. The property is not located within a floodplain and there are no permanent surface waters or wetlands on the property. The range offers shooting opportunities for rifle, pistol, shotgun, cowboy action, long-range rifle, and black powder.

#### **9. Description of Project:**

The project involves hiring a contractor to build an 18' X 24' storage building at the CMSC, including Pro Panel siding and roofing, an 8' X 8' overhead door, and a 6' X 4' window. The estimated budget includes:

▪ Building Permit	\$ 523
▪ Complete Storage Building built by Birdwell Builders	\$ 24,877
▪	
▪ Total Project Budget	\$ 25,400
▪ Total Funding Requested from FWP	\$ 12,700

#### **10. List any Other Local, State, or Federal Agency that has Overlapping or Additional Jurisdiction:**

None

#### **Permits, Licenses and/or Authorizations:**

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Permit</u>	<u>Date Filed/#</u>
N/A		

#### **Funding:**

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Funding Amount</u>
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks	\$12,700

#### **11. Affiliations, Cooperating Agencies, User Groups and/or Supporting Groups:**

The CMSC is a private range with an annual membership fee of \$25 for individuals and families plus an additional \$25 annual maintenance fee. Open range days are offered at no cost to non-members and member guests and during organized matches, new shooter clinics, and other public events. Numerous organizations use the range each year, including Fergus County Sheriff's Department, Montana Highway Patrol, FWP Wardens, BLM Wardens, Petroleum County Sheriff's Department, Lewistown Police Department, Boy Scouts, 4-H, FWP Hunters Education, FWP Hunters Safety classes, FWP Becoming an Outdoor Woman classes, NRA Women on Target, NRA Training, Bureau of Land Management, and various church groups. In addition, over 20 events and activities are hosted by the Central Montana Shooting Club each year, including cowboy action, sporting clays, skeet, action pistol, steel challenge, precision rifle, various shooting competitions, shooting classes, and gun safety classes.

## **12. History of the Planning and Scoping Process, and Any Public Involvement:**

Because the CMSC is a nonprofit private shooting club for members, there has been no public involvement in the planning process. Proposed range development proposals have been discussed with the club members and the associated project vendors and contractors.

## **13. List of Agencies Consulted/Contacted During Preparation of the EA:**

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

## **14. Names, Address, and Phone Number of Project Sponsor:**

Rick Benton, 104 E Boulevard, Lewistown, MT 59457; (406) 535-3185.

## **15. Other Pertinent Information:**

The CMSC is a private nonprofit shooting range. The closest shooting range providing similar shooting opportunities is located in Great Falls, Montana 105 miles from the CMSC.

Shooting range applications require the participating governing body to approve by resolution its submission of applications for shooting range-funding assistance. Resolution Date: January 11, 2021 .

## **PART II. IDENTIFICATION OF THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVES**

**Alternative A, the Proposed Alternative, and Alternative B, the No Action Alternative,** were considered.

**Alternative A (Proposed Alternative)** is as described in Part I, paragraph 9 (Description of Project): to construct a storage building to store equipment at the CMSC. There are beneficial consequences to acceptance of the **Proposed Alternative**.

**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 the proposed improvements. The No Action Alternative would have no significant negative environmental or potentially negative consequences. The range will continue on with present conditions. Land use would remain the same.

**Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the No Action Alternative) to the Proposed Action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented:** 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.

### **Describe any Alternatives considered and eliminated from Detailed Study:**

None. Only the Proposed Alternative and the No Action Alternative were considered. There was no other alternative that was deemed reasonably available or 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 determine extent of Environmental Review. An abbreviated checklist may be used for those projects that are not complex, controversial, or are not in environmentally sensitive areas.

**Table 1. Potential impact on physical environment.**

<b>Will the Proposed Action result in potential impacts to:</b>	<b>Unknown</b>	<b>Potentially Significant</b>	<b>Minor</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Can Be Mitigated</b>	<b>Comments Below</b>
1. Unique, endangered, fragile, or limited environmental resources				<b>X</b>		
2. Terrestrial or aquatic life and/or habitats				<b>X</b>		<b>2</b>
3. Introduction of new species into an area				<b>X</b>		
4. Vegetation cover, quantity & quality				<b>X</b>		<b>4</b>
5. Water quality, quantity & distribution (surface or groundwater)				<b>X</b>		<b>5</b>
6. Existing water right or reservation				<b>X</b>		
7. Geology & soil quality, stability & moisture				<b>X</b>		<b>7</b>
8. Air quality or objectionable odors				<b>X</b>		<b>8</b>
9. Historical & archaeological sites				<b>X</b>		<b>9</b>
10. Demands on environmental resources of land, water, air & energy				<b>X</b>		
11. Aesthetics				<b>X</b>		

**2. & 5.** There are no delineated wetlands and no natural water sources within the area proposed for development. No critical wildlife habitat would be affected. Any resident or transient wildlife may leave the immediate area during construction and fence installation.

**4.** The construction of the storage building for trap equipment at the CMSC will not change the overall abundance and diversity of plant species within the area. The proposed project occupies a small portion of the property. Due to prior land use, native vegetation has been disturbed in the area of the proposed project. Therefore, the proposed project will have a minor impact on native vegetation in the area.

**7.** The proposed project will cause limited displacement of soils but the developments will not substantially affect geological features or establish new erosion patterns. Soil disruption for this site would be localized. Erosion control measures will be in effect and disturbed area will be reseeded.

**8.** Minor and temporary dust and vehicle emissions would be created by construction equipment during construction. However, the construction time is short and human effects will be limited due to the sparse population near the property.



9. 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.**

<b>Will the Proposed Action result in potential impacts to:</b>	<b>Unknown</b>	<b>Potentially Significant</b>	<b>Minor</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Can Be Mitigated</b>	<b>Comments Below</b>
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		7
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 site is adjacent to agricultural land used for grazing and hay production.

7. The proposed developments will increase shooting opportunities within the community.

#### **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 projects reviewed were complex, controversial, or located in an environmentally sensitive area. The projects being implemented are already on an existing range 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 CMSC's Proposed Alternative, to construct a storage building for trap range equipment, is supported by its members and the public. Therefore, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks should approve the Proposed Alternative (A) for the improvements as outlined in Part I, Paragraph 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 Action has minor impacts. However, it was determined that there are no significant or potentially significant cumulative 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 extreme 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:**

- Rick Benton, 104 E Boulevard, Lewistown, MT 59457; (406) 535-3185.
- MT Fish Wildlife and Parks

#### **EA prepared by:**

Andrea Darling, Darling Natural Resource Consulting, Montana City, MT 59634

#### **Date Completed:**

April 20, 2021

#### **Describe public involvement, if any:**

This draft EA will be advertised on FWP's web site and through a legal ad in the *Lewistown News, Lewistown, MT* announcing a public comment period. A press release will also announce the project and comment period.