



MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS

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ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

PART I. PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR ACTION

1. Project Title: West Yellowstone Shooting Sports Association

2. Type of Proposed Action:

The West Yellowstone Shooting Sports Association (WYSSA) proposes to improve the WYSSA Target Range by improving the range access road and constructing a path from the shooting benches to the 200-yard target.

3. Location Affected by Proposed Action:

The WYSSA Target Range is located approximately three miles south of West Yellowstone, Montana, on Park Edge Road; Lat. 44.6245166, Long. -111.098305; Section 10, Township 14 South, Range 5 East.

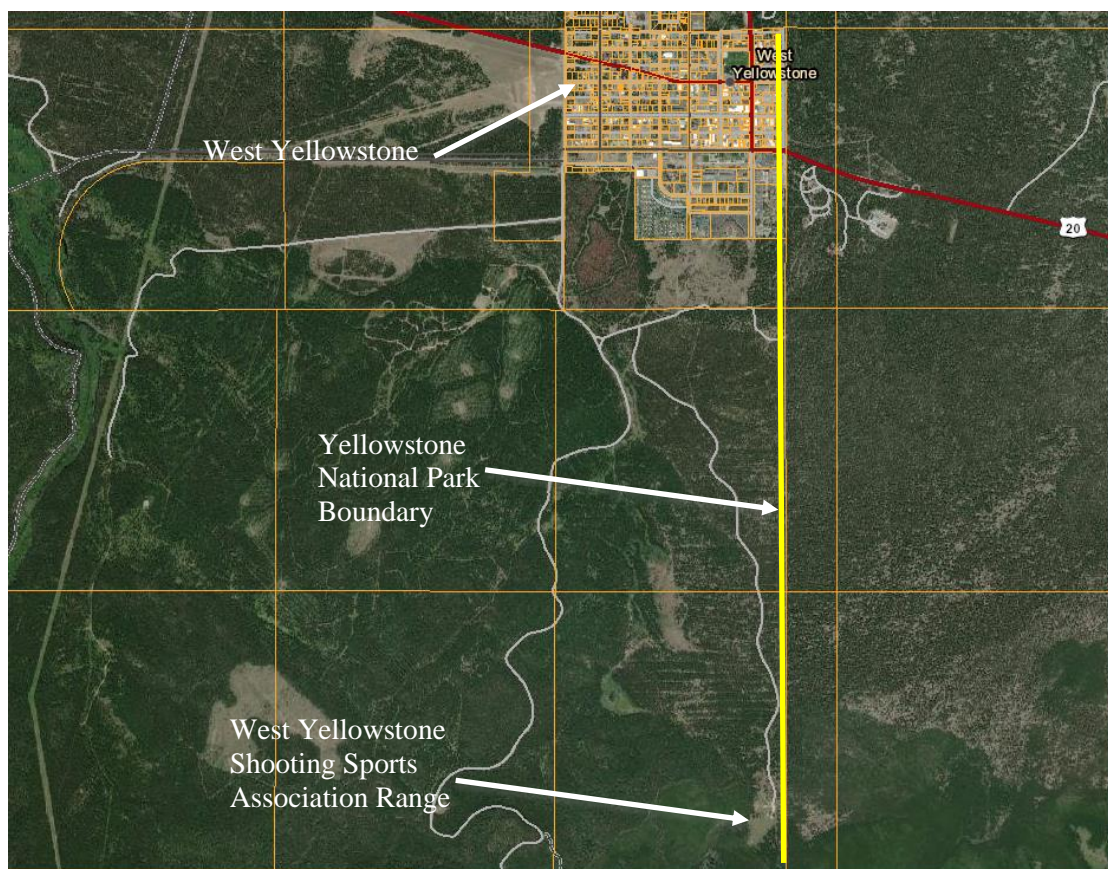


Figure 1 – Aerial view of WYSSA Target Range, West Yellowstone, Montana

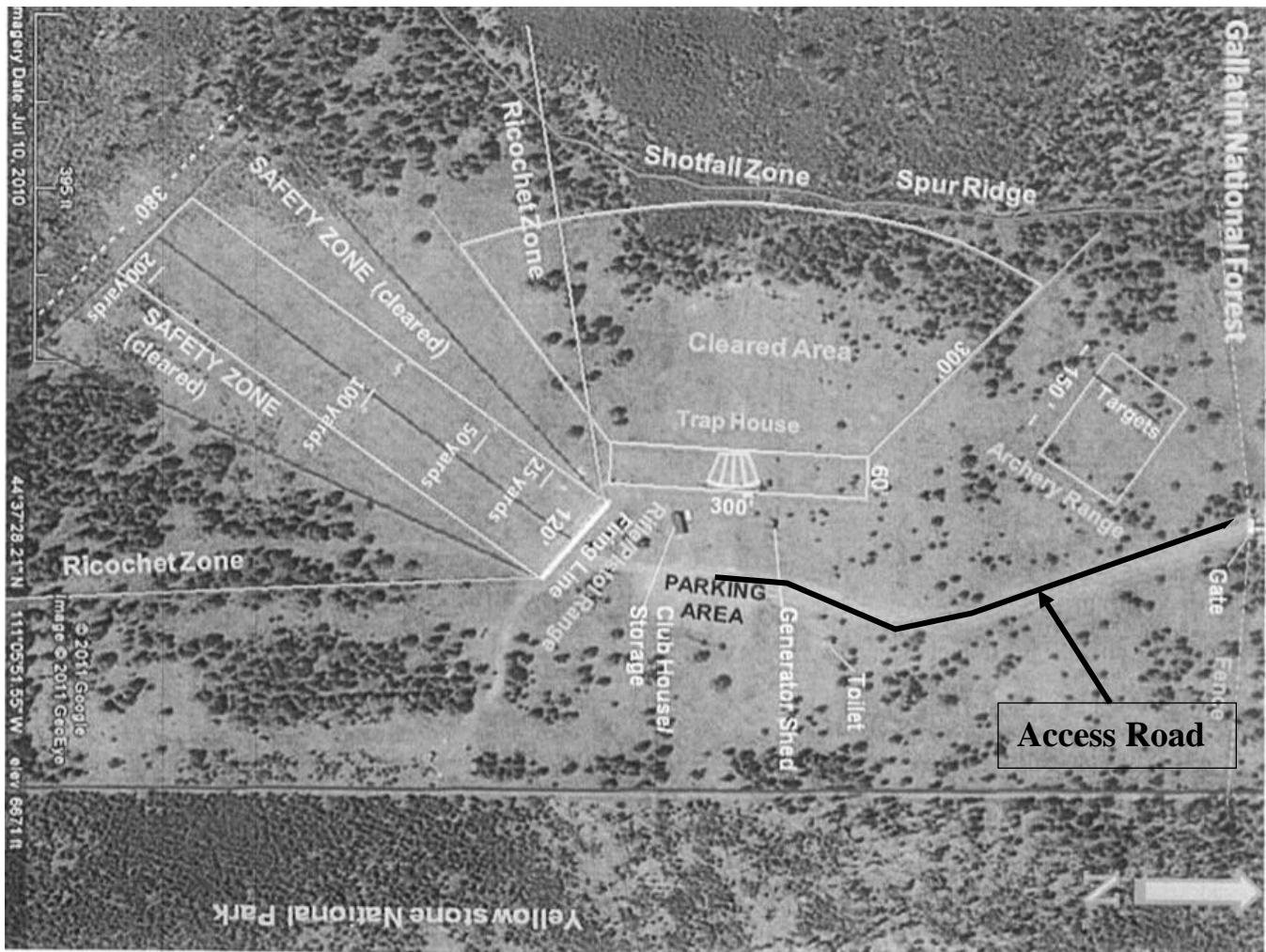


Figure 2- Project Map of WYSSA Target Range, West Yellowstone, Montana

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 the access road to the WYSSA Target Range is deeply rutted near the entrance and becomes difficult to navigate when wet from rain or snow. The roadwork will help improve the road from the property entrance to the range. A road mix will be laid to improve the road surface. In addition, there currently is not a developed path from the shooting benches to the target ranges. A path will be constructed to reach the 50-yard, 100-yard, and 200-yard targets. The proposed projects will contribute to the long-term convenience and usefulness of the facility for the club members, the local community, and the general public.

6. Objectives for the Action(s):

The goal of the proposed project on the WYSSA Target Range is to improve range facilities by improving the entrance road and developing a path to the shooting ranges.

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

The proposed project would involve approximately one acre of the 11.5-acre WYSSA Target Range.

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

The WYSSA obtained a 20-year Special Use Permit from the Gallatin National Forest on March 21, 2013 effective through December 31, 2032 on 11.5 acres for the purpose of establishing a Target Range. 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, archery, and black powder.

9. Description of Project:

WYSSA plans to improve the WYSSA Target Range by improving the access road from the entrance to the range. The road will be graded and crowned and covered and packed with a road mix to make a stable road that will not rut when wet. The unimproved path will be graded to ease access to the targets. Proposed expenses include:

Material, equipment, and labor	\$ 5,228
Total Project Budget	\$ 5,228
Total Funding Requested from FWP	\$ 2,614

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	\$2,614

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

The WYSSA Target Range is a non-profit private range with an annual individual membership fee of \$30 and for families of \$40. The range is open to visitors for a day-use fee of \$5 and at no charge during organized matches and public sight-in days. Members are welcome to bring guests at no charge. Several organizations use the range each year, including the West Yellowstone Shooting Sports Association, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, FWP Hunter's Education, .22 Marksman Challenge, Southwest Montana Bear Education Working Group, Trap

Shooting Clinic, and Smoking Waters Mountain Man Rendezvous. In addition, 20 events sponsored by the WYSSA are held at the range, as well as various shooting and gun safety classes.

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

Because the WYSSA 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:

Mark Freedman, P.O. Box 2030, West Yellowstone, MT 59758; (406) 580-8402.

15. Other Pertinent Information:

The WYSSA Target Range is a private, nonprofit shooting range. The closest shooting range providing similar shooting opportunities is located in Manhattan, Montana about 100 miles from the WYSSA Target Range.

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 improve the access road and develop a path to the shooting ranges . 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 were 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.

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

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 temporarily leave the immediate area during construction of the proposed project.

4. The implementation of the proposed project 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 is localized. Erosion control measures will be in effect and any disturbed areas will be reseeded.

9. The project site is located on federally-owned and controlled property so the Federal 106 Regulations apply. Though the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) has not conducted a search of historical or archaeological resources on the project site, the project site is located on the existing access road and next to the existing shooting ranges. These areas have been disturbed by range activities for years and it is unlikely that cultural resources would be disturbed by the improvement of the access road and development or a foot path. According to the terms of the USFS Special Use Permit, if cultural resources are discovered during construction of the proposed project, all work would cease until USFS has been notified.

11. The property is already used as a shooting range so the proposed project will have no additional impact on the aesthetics of the property.

Table 2. Potential impacts on human environment.

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Below
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		
5. Human health				X		5
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		
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5. The proposed projects would improve the safety for members and the public using the range.

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 or altered areas 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 WYSSA Proposed Alternative, to improve the accessibility of the WYSSA Target Range, 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 actions have 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:

Mark Freedman, P.O. Box 1145, West Yellowstone, MT 59758; (406) 580-8402.
MT Fish Wildlife and Parks

EA prepared by:

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

Date Completed:

May 5, 2021

Describe public involvement, if any:

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