



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

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ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

PART I. PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR ACTION

1. Project Title: Crooked Falls Practical Shooters Improvements Project

2. Type of Proposed Action:

The Crooked Falls Practical Shooters Shooting Range (CFPS) proposes to improve their shooting range by purchasing additional steel targets and a storage conex for storing them and other equipment. Additional steel targets requested include one drop-turner, one swinger, and one clamshell target.

3. Location Affected by Proposed Action:

The Crooked Falls Practical Shooters Shooting Range is located on approx. 50 acres 26 miles east of Great Falls, Montana, at 963 Highwood Mountain Lane, Great Falls, Montana, 59405; Section 30, Township 21 North, Range 7 East.



Figure 1. Location of Crooked Falls Practical Shooters Shooting Range, Great Falls, Montana.



Figure 2. Location of Proposed Improvements at CFPS Shooting Range, Great Falls, 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):

Crooked Falls Practical Shooters is a relatively new shooting organization (a 501 3c) that is in need of additional steel targets and a storage conex to store them and other equipment in. Additional steel targets requested include one drop-turner, one swinger, and one clamshell target. This more diverse and challenging array of steel targets would help the organization attract a great cross-section of shooters to participate in their events.

6. Objectives for the Action(s):

Objectives for these improvements include increasing participation in CFPS events and attracting a more diverse group of local gun enthusiasts to participate in range activities. As the club teaches and demands safe gun-handling from the participants, greater participation in their club's activities will ideally lead to more safe and experienced gun handlers living in the local community.

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

The proposed project will cover approximately 20 acres of the 50-acre range.

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

The CFPS range is located on 50 acres of private leased land. The land is not within or adjacent to any floodplain. There are no permanent surface waters or wetlands on the property. Waterways on the property comprise only intermittent seasonal runoff.

9. Description of Project:

The Crooked Falls Practical Shooters Shooting Range proposes to improve their shooting range by purchasing additional steel targets and a storage conex for storing these targets and other equipment. Additional steel targets requested include one drop-turner, one swinger, and one clamshell target.

The estimated budget includes:

Storage conex	\$6,500.00
Steel challenge target	\$5,500.00
<u>Additional steel targets (1 drop-turner, 1 swinger, and 1 clamshell target frame)</u>	<u>\$1,350.00</u>
Total Budget for the Proposed Project	\$13,350.00
Total FWP Funding Requested	\$6,675.00

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 Date</u>	<u>Filed/#</u>
N/A		

Funding:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Funding Amount</u>
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks	\$6,675.00

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

The CFPS Shooting Range is located on 50 acres of private land and is a private range managed by a Board of Directors. CFPS charges an annual membership fee of \$40 for individuals and \$60 for families for use of the shooting range. There is a day use/guest fee of \$5 per day. CFPS typically hosts 2 events per year, and the range is primarily utilized by members. CFPS does offer a new shooters clinic in the spring to encourage new membership, and each event is preceded by a required safety meeting for those expecting to participate in that day's event.

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

Because CFPS is a non-profit, 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 Wolk, 610 Copper Court, Great Falls, MT 59405, (406) 552-3183.

15. Other Pertinent Information:

The Fallon County Shooting Range is located three miles west of Baker, Montana and serves Baker as well as smaller communities within easy driving distance of the range. The closest range that provides similar shooting opportunities, including an indoor live fire range, is a private range located 90 miles from the Fallon County Shooting Range in Glendive, Montana. The Fallon County Shooting Range offers opportunities for several shooting sports, including trap, shotgun, rifle, archery, pistol, black powder, and cowboy action.

Shooting range applications require the participating governing body to approve by resolution its submission of applications for shooting range-funding assistance. Resolution Date: July 25, 2023.

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 CFPS' shooting range by purchasing additional steel targets and a storage conex for storing these targets and other equipment. There are beneficial consequences to acceptance of the Proposed Alternative.
- **Alternative B (No Action Alternative)** would result from the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Shooting Range Development Grant money being denied. In this case, the area would remain as an active shooting range without the proposed improvements.

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:

Neither the **Proposed Alternative** nor the **No Action Alternative** would have significant negative environmental consequences.

There are beneficial consequences that would result from accepting the **Proposed Alternative**. CFPS' proposed improvements to their range's target offerings would increase participation in CFPS events and

attract a more diverse group of local gun enthusiasts to participate in range activities. This would ideally lead to more safe and experienced gun handlers living in the local community.

The **No Action Alternative** would have no significant negative environmental consequences; the range would continue on with present conditions, and land use would remain the same. Potential negative consequences for the **No Action Alternative** include failing to provide greater diversity of shooting opportunities to the local community.

Describe any Alternatives considered and eliminated from Detailed Study:

Only the Proposed Alternative and the No Action Alternative were considered. There was no other alternative that were deemed reasonably available, or prudent.

List and explain proposed mitigating measures (stipulations):

None

PART III. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Abbreviated Checklist – The degree and intensity determines 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		
5. Water quality, quantity & distribution (surface or groundwater)				X		5
6. Existing water right or reservation				X		
7. Geology & soil quality, stability & moisture				X		
8. Air quality or objectionable odors				X		
9. Historical & archaeological sites				X		9
10. Demands on environmental resources of land, water, air & energy				X		

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Below
11. Aesthetics				X		

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 road re-surfacing activity.

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.

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		
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		

7. The proposed improvements will expand the shooting range's offerings, which will improve the quality and accessibility of shooting sports 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 project 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 Crooked Falls Practical Shooters Board's Proposed Alternative, to provide a safe, accessible, and regulated shooting opportunity, 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 cumulatively 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 Wolk, 610 Copper Court, Great Falls, MT 59405, (406) 552-3183.
- MT Fish Wildlife and Parks

EA prepared by:

Amanda Darling, Hamilton, MT 59840

Date Completed:

July 25, 2023

Describe public involvement, if any:

This draft EA will be advertised on FWP's web site announcing the public comment period. A press release will also announce the project and comment period.