



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

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ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

PART I. PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR ACTION

1. Project Title: Fallon County Trap Shooting Range Improvements Project

2. Type of Proposed Action:

The Fallon County Shooting Range (FCSR) proposes to improve their trap shooting range by:

- Widening the existing sidewalks on the trap shooting range and constructing new sidewalks around the clubhouse to meet ADA standards.
- Purchasing two new trap shooters with Voice Release Systems.
- Installing three baseboard heaters in the bathroom and mechanical room, and two forced air heaters in the main room of the club house.

3. Location Affected by Proposed Action:

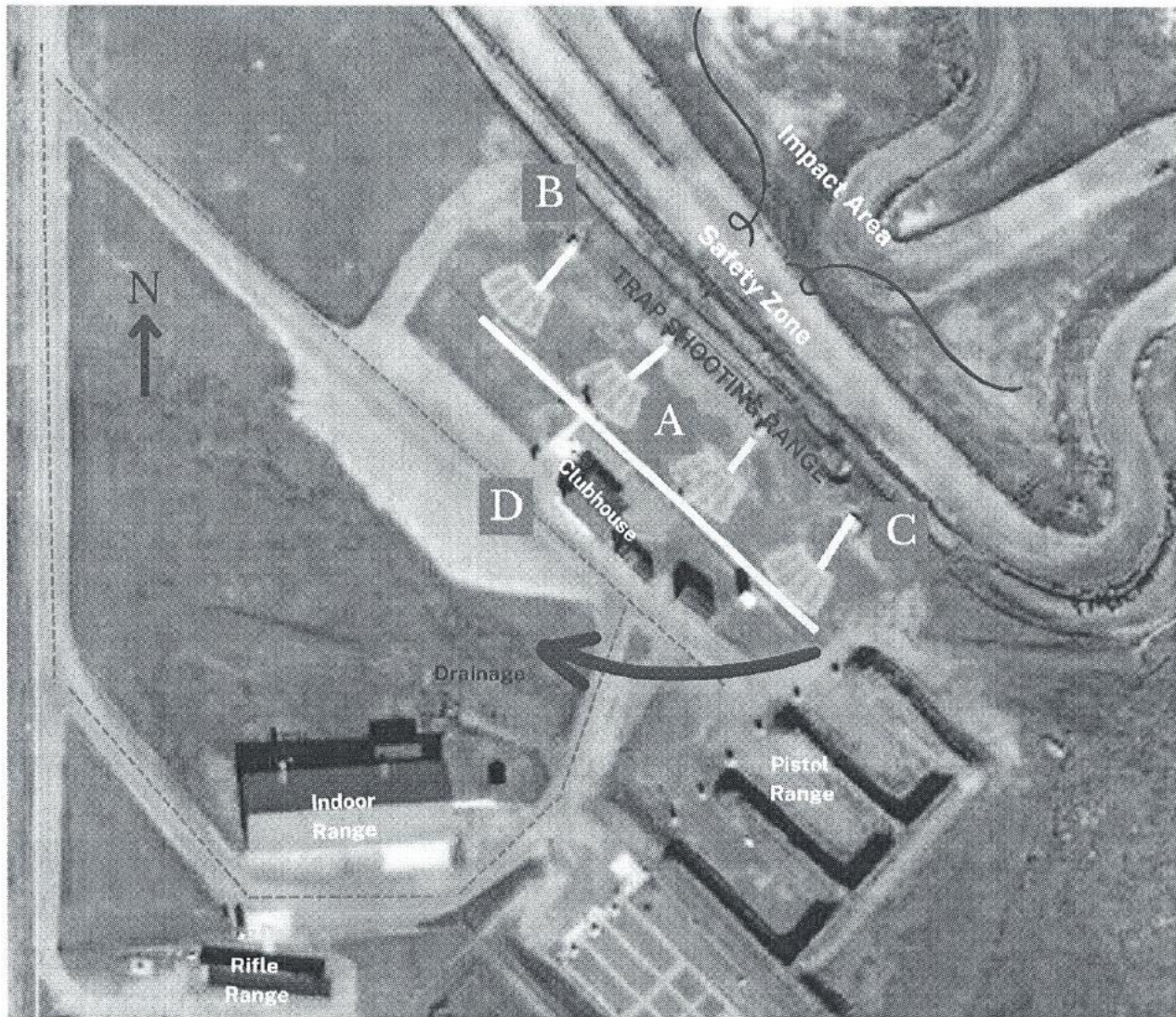
The Fallon County Shooting Range is located on 47 acres 3 miles west of Baker, Montana at 8006 Highway 12, Baker, Montana, 59313; Section 15, Township 7 North, Range 59 East.



Figure 1. Fallon County Shooting Range, Baker, Montana.



Figure 2. Overhead view of Fallon County Shooting Range, Baker, Montana.



Project Key:

- A** Construct ADA Sidewalks on Trap Range
- B** Install Clay Target Machine and Voice System at Bunker 1
- C** Install Clay Target Machine and Voice System at Bunker 4
- D** Add HVAC to Trap Shooting Clubhouse

--- Access Routes

Figure 3. Proposed Improvements at Fallon County Shooting Range, Baker, 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):

Because the Fallon County Shooting Range is the only public shooting range in the county, it is critical that the facilities are available to a wide variety of sportsmen, hunters' safety classes, youth shooting organizations, local clubs, members, and competitions. Providing access to all is one of the goals of the FCSR. There are many sportsmen and women throughout the county who have disabilities, and it is the aim of the FCSR that all are able to participate without added barriers. The current sidewalks at the Trap Shooting Range are narrow and difficult to traverse. This project will widen the sidewalks to ensure that they are ADA-accessible. Access paths will be built with ample width and well-graded or paved turn-around or resting areas.

The purchase of the two Pat Trap Clay Target Machines will allow all four bunkers in the Trap Range to be utilized. The Clay Target Machine comes with a four case turret (540 target capacity) and can switch from singles to doubles easily. The Trap Voice Release System is equipped with 5 microphones that operate continuously, so there is no need to sequence, adjust, or reset the system if you have a "No Bird" or a short squad. This voice system is exceptionally helpful for handicapped shooters who may have difficulty with a manual pull cord. This total system will provide a more consistent target presentation.

The installation of HVAC in the Clubhouse includes the installation of 3 baseboard heaters in the bathroom and mechanical room, plus installation of 2 forced air heaters in the Main Room of the clubhouse. By creating a climate-controlled environment, Fallon County will be able to extend the life of the facility and provide a safer environment for storage of equipment and supplies.

It is the goal of the Fallon County Shooting Range to seek to provide additional events, and especially to accommodate Amateur Trapshooting Association competitions, which would not be possible without the upgrades proposed above. Other benefits resulting from these improvements include economic benefits for the community from hosting events, educational benefits for the youth and other participants who are learning new skills and how to be a responsible gun user, and accessibility benefits for those who previously

were not able to participate because of handicap accessibility barriers.

6. Objectives for the Action(s):

Objectives for these improvements include:

- To provide the most consistent target presentation available by installing new Clay Target Machines. This is key to ensuring that all projectiles are directed in the correct area so that people at the range are not at risk of being hit by these projectiles. By placing the new trap machines in the designated bunk house, the range will mitigate the risk that is associated with a manual machine. This adds a significant level of increased safety for range users. The Trap Voice Release System also adds a safety component by eliminating the need for a human puller, placing individuals away from any potential hazards. It also includes advanced filtering, which helps minimize unwanted noise related to triggering and eliminates false calls from background noise, gunfire, or calls from other fields.
- To increase safety and ADA-accessibility of the range by installing wider sidewalks. Improvements to the sidewalk corners will allow all users to get on and off sidewalks with more ease which reduces tripping and slipping hazards. These improvements will bring sidewalk access into compliance with the revised Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards, while also allowing greater access for guests of all abilities.
- To create a healthier and safer environment within the range's clubhouse by adding updated features and controls to the HVAC system. Having a climate-controlled building will prevent a build-up of ice inside the building. This reduces the likelihood of slippery ice or melted ice causing dangerous conditions within the building.

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

The proposed project will cover approximately 2 acres of the 47-acre range.

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

The 47-acre Fallon County Shooting Range is located on land owned in fee title by Fallon County. 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 Fallon County Shooting Range proposes to:

- Widen the existing sidewalks on the trap shooting range and construct new sidewalks around the clubhouse to meet ADA standards.
- Purchase two new clay trap shooters with Voice Release Systems.
- Install three baseboard heaters in the bathroom and mechanical room, and two forced air heaters in the main room of the club house.

The estimated budget includes:

Equipment purchase (Clay trap machines and parts, Voice Release Systems)	\$21,665.00
Concrete labor and materials (for ADA sidewalks)	\$20,000.00
Electrical labor and materials (for HVAC)	\$5,100.00
Total Budget for the Proposed Project	\$46,765.00
Total FWP Funding Requested	\$23,382.50

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>
State of Montana Electrical Permit	Not yet obtained	N/A

Funding:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Funding Amount</u>
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks	\$23,382.00

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

The Fallon County Shooting Range is located on 47 acres of public land deeded to Fallon County. Fallon County Shooting Range is a county owned facility, managed by a Board of Directors. An annual membership fee of \$100 for individuals and \$150 for families, which includes the gate fee, is charged for use of the shooting range. There is also a day use/guest fee of \$5 per day. FCSR hosts around 18 events per year, and approximately 10 organizations, including Fish and Game Wardens, Fallon County Sheriff, City of Baker Policy, Carter County Sheriff, USPA, Fallon County Trap Club, Hunter Safety, 4-H, Boy Scouts, and High School Rodeo.

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

Because the Fallon County Shooting Range is a public range owned by Fallon County, there has been public involvement in the planning process. Range improvement proposals have been discussed with the public, Board 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:

Brenda Wood, 10 West Fallon Ave, Baker, MT 59313, (406) 778-8182.

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: January 23, 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 widen existing sidewalks on the trap shooting range and construct new sidewalks around the clubhouse to meet ADA standards; to purchase two new clay trap shooters with Voice Release Systems; and to install three baseboard heaters in the bathroom and mechanical room, and two forced air heaters in the main room of the club house.

Alternative B (No Action Alternative) would result from Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Shooting Range Development Grant money being denied, in which case the area will remain as an active shooting range without the proposed improvements. The No Action Alternative would have no significant negative or potentially negative environmental consequences. The range would continue on with present conditions, and 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:

Neither the **Proposed Alternative** nor the **No Action Alternative** would have significant negative environmental consequences; however, the **No Action Alternative** would leave unresolved potential safety and accessibility related issues.

There are beneficial consequences that would result from accepting the **Proposed Alternative**. FCSR's proposed improvements to their sidewalks will allow for improved ADA-accessibility to their facilities. The purchase and installation of two new clay trap shooters with Voice Release Systems will improve the safety and accessibility of the range's clay trap shooting offerings. And the improved climate controls in FCSR's clubhouse will improve the range's building safety, their ability to reliably store equipment during the winter season, and their ability to offer access to the shooting range facilities earlier in the spring and later into the fall.

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 leaving unresolved some accessibility and potential safety issues at the range.

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				X		

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Below
species into an area						
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		

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.

4. The elimination of vegetation for the installation of wider sidewalks 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 already 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 are expected to be in effect.

8. Minor and temporary dust and vehicle emissions would be created during installation of the widened sidewalks. However, the construction time is short and human effects will be limited due to the sparse population in the surrounding area.

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
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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		

5. The proposed installation of widened sidewalks and new clay trap systems would improve the convenience and safety for all members and guests using the facility, but especially those in need of ADA accommodations.

7. The proposed improvements to the Fallon County Shooting Range 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 Fallon County Shooting Range 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:

- Brenda Wood, 10 West Fallon Ave, Baker, MT 59313, (406) 778-8182.
- MT Fish Wildlife and Parks

EA prepared by:

Amanda Darling
Hamilton, MT 59840

Date Completed:

June 14, 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.