



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

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ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

PART I. PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR ACTION

1. Project Title: Havre Rifle and Pistol Club Shooting Range Improvements Project

2. Type of Proposed Action:

The Havre Rifle and Pistol Club (HRPC) proposes to improve their shooting range by:

- Replacing the shooting range safety rules signage with updated, higher quality signage.
- Purchasing gravel and performing maintenance on the range's access road and target access areas.

3. Location Affected by Proposed Action:

The Havre Rifle and Pistol Club Shooting Range is located on 204 acres 6 miles northwest of Havre, Montana at 48.580000, -109.770000; Section 33, Township 33 North, Range 15 East.

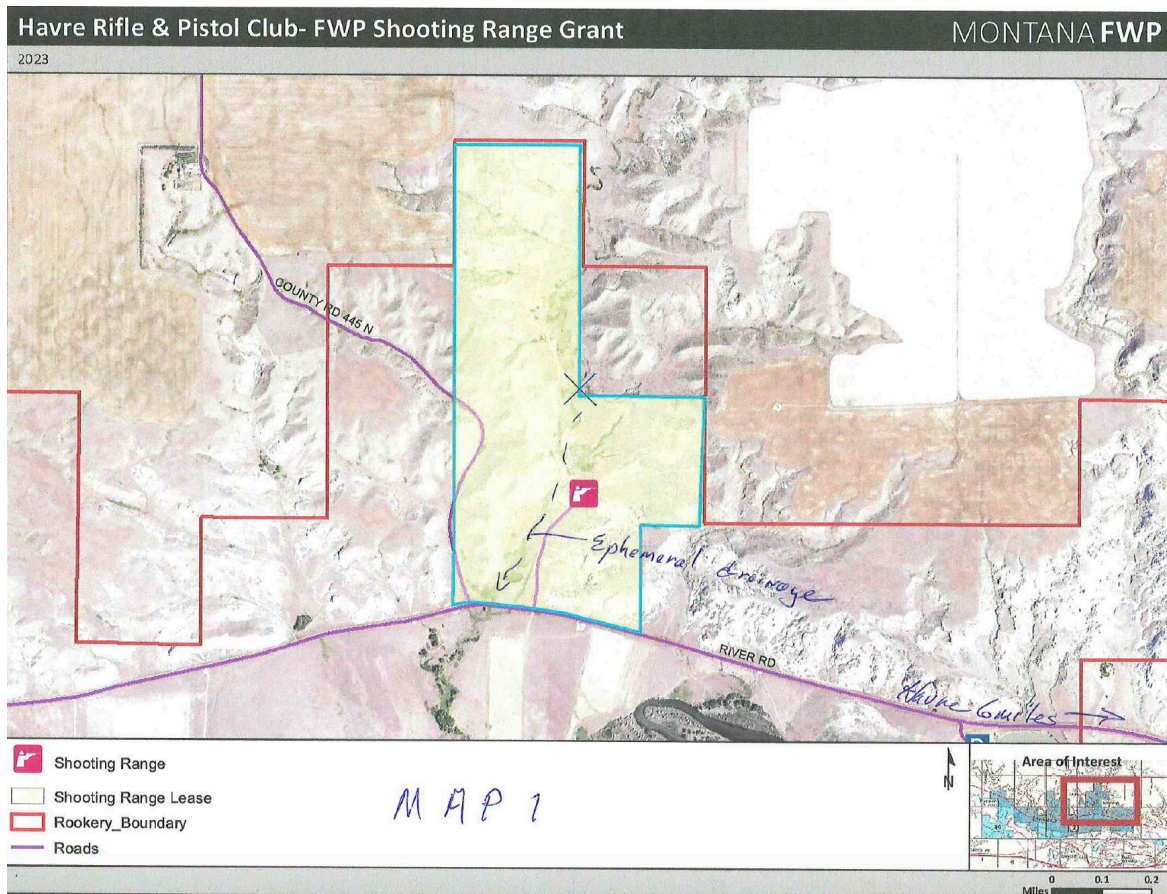


Figure 1. Havre Rifle and Pistol Club Shooting Range, Havre, Montana.

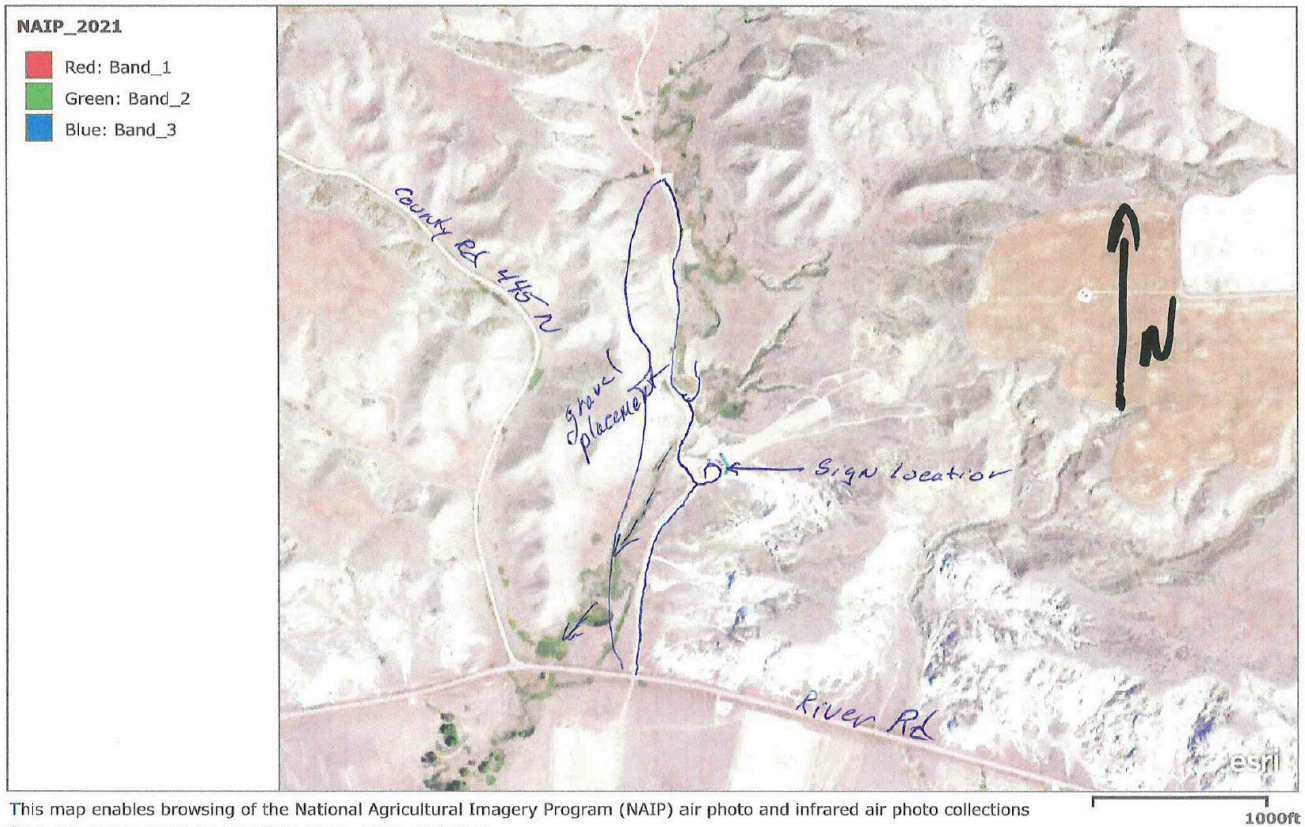


Figure 2. Location of Proposed Improvements at HRPC Shooting Range, Havre, Montana.

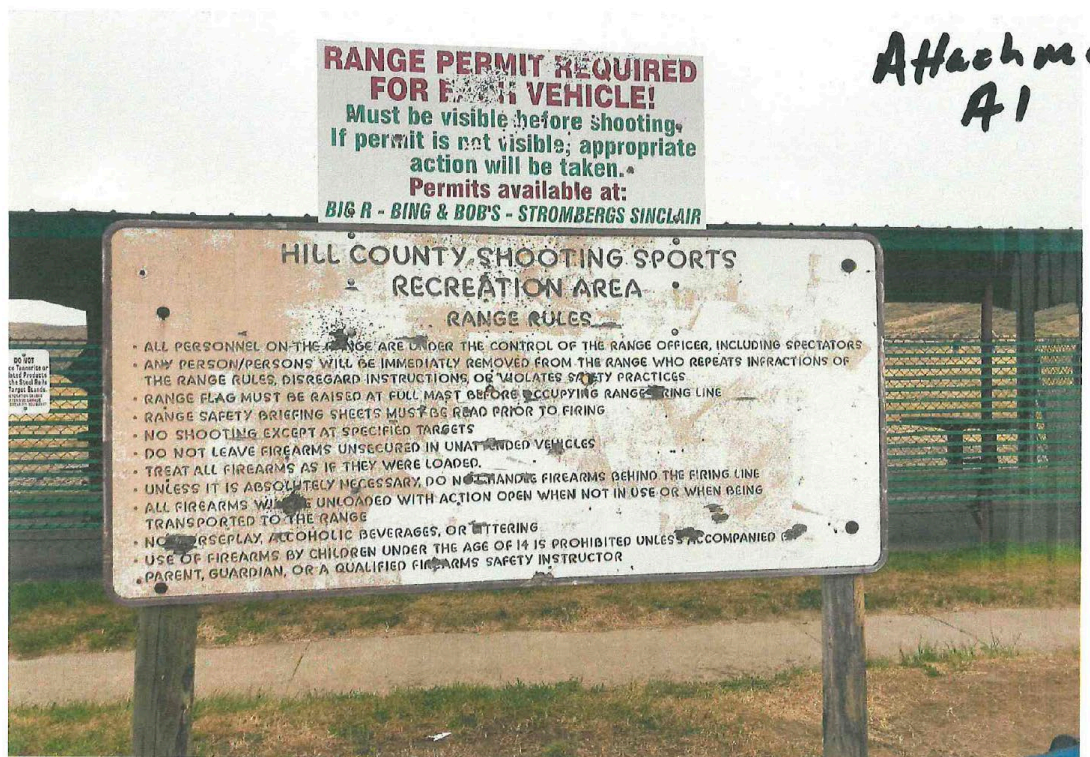


Figure 3. Old Sign to Be Replaced at HRPC Shooting Range, Havre, Montana.

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 HRPC's signage detailing the rules and regulations for the shooting range is outdated and in poor shape. Replacing the existing sign with a sign made of more durable materials detailing updated rules will improve the safety and aesthetics of the shooting range. HRPC's main entrance road into the range and the approach to the target areas are also in need of maintenance. Purchasing gravel for filling in and leveling these areas will facilitate easier access for guests of the range, and it will also help reduce erosion and future maintenance costs.

6. Objectives for the Action(s):

Objectives for these improvements include: 1) providing updated rules to improve safety compliance around the range, and 2) improving access to the range from the county road and to the targets, along with reducing erosion and future maintenance costs.

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

The proposed project will cover approximately 2 acres of the 204-acre range.

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

The 204-acre Havre Rifle and Pistol Club Shooting Range is located on public land owned by the State of Montana Fish & Game. The HRPC holds a renewed 10-year lease, running from January 1, 2018 through December 31, 2027. 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 Havre Rifle and Pistol Club proposes to improve their shooting range by:

- Replacing the shooting range safety rules signage with updated, higher quality signage.
- Purchasing gravel and performing maintenance on the range's access road and target access areas.

The estimated budget includes:

Replacement range rules sign plus installation materials	\$608.00
Value of volunteer labor for sign installation	\$275.00
<u>Delivery and placement of 12 loads of 1" gravel</u>	<u>\$8,950.00</u>
Total Budget for the Proposed Project	\$9,833.00
Total FWP Funding Requested	\$4,916.00

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	N/A	N/A

Funding:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Funding Amount</u>
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks	\$4,916.00

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

The Havre Rifle and Pistol Club Shooting Range is located on 204 acres of public land deeded to the State of Montana Fish & Game. HRPC Shooting Range is a public facility, managed by a Board of Directors. A range maintenance fee of \$20 for individuals is charged for use of the shooting range. HRPC hosts around 12 events per year, and organizations including the Bullhook Bottoms Blackpowder Club, MT FWP Hunter's Safety, and various law enforcement agencies.

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

Because the Havre Rifle and Pistol Club Shooting Range is a public range, 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:

Louis Hagener, 612 17th St, Havre, MT 59501, (406) 390-5536.

15. Other Pertinent Information:

The Havre Rifle and Pistol Club Shooting Range is located six miles northwest of Havre, Montana. The closest range that provides similar shooting opportunities is a private range located 25 miles from the HRPC Shooting Range in Chinook, Montana. The HRPC Shooting Range offers opportunities for several shooting sports, including rifle, pistol, shotgun, archery, black powder, cowboy action, metallic silhouette, and long range rifle.

Shooting range applications require the participating governing body to approve by resolution its submission of applications for shooting range-funding assistance. Resolution Date: June 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 replace the shooting range safety rules signage with updated, higher quality signage, and to purchase gravel and perform maintenance on the range's access road and target access areas.

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**. HRPC's proposed improvements to their access roads will allow for improved vehicle and pedestrian, as well as ADA-accessibility to their facilities. The replacement of their signage detailing safety rules and regulations of the range will help ensure guests are familiar and compliant with the range's rules of operation, in addition to improving the overall aesthetics of the range.

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 necessary gravel road maintenance and therefore accessibility, and potential safety issues caused by poor readability of signage 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				X		2

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Below
life and/or habitats						
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		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 leave the immediate area during road re-surfacing activity.

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 maintenance of gravel access roads. 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.

11. The proposed improvements to the range's signage would improve the overall aesthetics of the range.

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 maintenance of access roads and new signage would improve the accessibility and safety for all members and guests using the facility.

7. The proposed improvements to the Havre Rifle and Pistol Club 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 Havre Rifle and Pistol Club'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:

- Louis Hagener, 612 17th St, Havre, MT 59501, (406) 390-5536.
- MT Fish Wildlife and Parks

EA prepared by:

Amanda Darling
Hamilton, MT 59840

Date Completed:

June 23, 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.