



JEFFERSON COUNTY
2014 PUBLIC SHOOTING RANGE
WORKING GROUP

April 9, 2014

11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Jefferson County Open Space Office

Ponderosa Room

700 Jefferson County Parkway, Suite 100

Golden, Colorado 80401

Meeting Notes

Note:

Official (flip chart) meeting notes appear in bold

Transcribed notes (from Nancy York) appear in italics

Discussion of Subgroup Mission Statements

Sub-Group Missions Statements

- **Site Exploration Subgroup**
 - **Scope of facility (space requirements, feasible sites)**
- **Operations & Design**
 - **Facility design (components, space requirements, etc.)**
 - **Operational – safety main focus**
- **Financial Subgroup**
 - **Financial structure**
 - **Funding Opportunities**

Mission statements for each subgroup were discussed; the point people or "leads" for each group reiterated the tasks laid out for each subgroup and all agreed to general mission statements.

Site Exploration: Mission statement is centered on facility scope, desired acreage, number of lanes for each offering, site constraints and opportunities, etc.; Property evaluation criteria, etc.; the "givens" a site should have and then a preliminary list of feasible sites; what exists out there that has potential, public or private?

Financial Subgroup: Mission statement needs to have two more items: financial structure (public, private and non-profit structure and a fee structure for patrons should be discussed; capital development for a facility, as well as land acquisition should be part of what's focused on for funding potential.

Operations + Facility Design: Mission statement for this subgroup is what we will continue to talk about; operations dove tails into facility design.

Site Evaluation – Subgroup Report

- **Considerations**

- **Distance**

- From residential areas about ½ mile
- From recreational areas about ¼ mile
- Exact specs may be site specific
- Proximity to cell towers = non-issue

- **Site characteristics**

- **20 % grade**
- **Primarily to accommodate pistol/rifle**
- **Site access**
 - ❖ Drive time – 30 minutes from C-470/I-70 intersection
 - ❖ On already maintained reads (County/State)
- **Wildlife**
 - ❖ Considerations of animals' natural habitat, wetlands, etc
 - ❖ Endangered species
- **Zoning**
 - ❖ What land already zoned for
 - ❖ Process → Open Space
- **Distance**
 - ❖ Sound/noise pollution (also implies facility hours)
 - ❖ Testing may be required for each site
- **Mountain Backdrop**
 - ❖ Hogback preservation requirements
- **Directional Situation**
 - ❖ South facing ideal
 - ❖ Old quarries already available
- **Other considerations**
 - ❖ What is the minimum amount of buffering? (e.g. minimum amount needed land)
 - Natural vs. man-made
 - Can buffering be expanded/contracted?
 - Different “zones” of buffering
 - ❖ Number of Lanes
 - Enough lanes that are wide enough to safely accommodate the expected number of users
 - Range officer to shooters (1 to 4)
 - ❖ Would “Regional Events” be considered?
 - There are probably other facilities that would accommodate these.
 - Purpose? What is the Range intended to do?

- ❖ Population Growth coupled with growth of shooting sports in general – will increase ancillary activities (cars/people)
- ❖ Is this a “Rural” Range or a “Municipal” Range?
- ❖ Events are a possible source of revenue
- ❖ Shooting groups have money (as opposed to families)
- ❖ Site evaluation was focusing on “novice” shooting, not excluding shooting groups – just a focus
- ❖ Who you intend to serve is going to drive design tops
 - Purpose: Who is being served?
- ❖ Competing with clubs who serve specific purpose shooting – i.e., specific shooters may travel for their discipline
 - These clubs already exist
- ❖ How big of a group of people could feasibly be served?
- Scope of Site
 - ❖ Not constrained by request of Jeffco
 - ❖ Will be constrained by land available
 - ❖ Focus still on complementing private facilities available
- Analogy: youth recreation sports
 - ❖ 90% of users served at the recreational level through public agencies
 - ❖ Serious competitive level served by non-profits
 - ❖ Competitive Events would require more space (more lanes?)
 - ❖ Reservation System allows for events & public users
 - ❖ Archery
 - ❖ Trap & Skeet
 - Shooters at wagon wheel – shoot to 8 spots
 - Small group of people (about 5 people) on each site
 - ❖ Outdoor Rifle
 - Serving largest population?
 - 10 – 15 lanes/discipline
 - Requires lanes about 200 yards long & 40 yards wide – ideal
 - Longer than 200 yard lanes are commercially available rarely used
 - ❖ Facility for classroom education
 - ❖ Site subgroup developed list of criteria for minimum facility
 - Anything less not really worth building
 - Ideally, site would accommodate expansion based on public demand/participation
 - ❖ RSOs required
 - Limits scope/size of facility
 - ❖ Open Space Calculations
 - 6 acres + 1/2 mile buffer = 1 square mile
 - 6 acres + 1 mile buffer =
 - ❖ Finding sites
 - Computer overlay required space & excluding Hogback

- Start with available sites then discuss what minimum criteria should be
- ❖ Trends – Archery fastest growing hunting sport
- ❖ All-weather facility (not all weather shooting range)
 - Sign-in, restrooms, classroom, office
 - About 1,000 square feet
 - Controlled access point
 - People can't access without check-in (during & after hours)
- ❖ Cost of facility
 - Not within scope of County charge for group but can't hurt to have sense of costs/potential income
- ❖ Family Facility
 - Separate area LIMITED to families/BBs separate from live fire
 - Can be function of scheduling
 - Not necessarily separate facility physically

Gene Adamson lead conversation on facility scope and the interrelated site evaluation criteria; we are trying to focus on one particular subgroup at a given plenary working group meeting; the group can now discuss the scope and where the group went in conversation.

Site Evaluation: what are reasonable distances on which to evaluate a property: minimum 1/2 mile required (for noise and other off-site impacts); also looked at distance from recreational development, such a trails, campgrounds, etc. Gene ran through the remainder of the preliminary evaluation criteria document; distance from communication tower doesn't seem as critical, so will be site specific consideration. Slope should be 20% or less; shotgun, trap/skeet shooting; site access was discussed as important. Drive time to a facility was set at 30 minutes from intersection of C-470 & I-70; Impact to wildlife for a facility was discussed as important along with other opportunities and constraints.

Mark Loye said a field test for impulsive noise was done 25 years ago as part of this same effort; impulsive and continual noise was studied and today noise studies can be done for a site when/if a site is identified.

Gene mentioned the Mountain Backdrop/Foreground Preservation Area and the importance of honoring that resource in this effort. Natural backdrops, however, have an appeal in terms of shooting range facility development.

Wildlife impacts were discussed 25 years ago, including federally protected, threatened & endangered species, as was again in this effort.

Russ Clark, Jeffco P&Z, mentioned the importance of discussing a minimum acreage for a facility, does that include a buffer that allows for safeguarding encroachment up to the boundary of a site. Buffering around the site (no build area or surrounding lands owned by others) versus buffering as part of the facility are both important to consider.

Natural buffers as part of the hogback are important; Buffering: is this area that's initially designated as no build, could that area then include other offerings beyond rifle and handgun?; concentric rings...allowing for growth expansion of the facility but still honoring the buffer to other lands/uses (e.g., residential, commercial, etc.).

Ed Sutton: 10-15 lanes...how did you arrive at that for outdoor pistol?; what size do we want to build? How many people do we think we'd reasonably expect to be at a range at a given time?; Cherry Creek Family Shooting Center discussed as a good example; we're not thinking of lanes where there may be very narrow space, but rather, wider for a family to congregate; could have 2-3 people on a lane.

Bob Swainson: we'd like to emphasize the family use of the lane, to accommodate a coach; what was the Range Safety Officer (RSO) to shooter ratio?; 1 instructor to 4 shooters; 10 -15 lanes would drive the width of the range.

Ed Sutton: Are you considering regional events taking place here?; Bob: no, we didn't discuss that, but rather who the clientele would be and who the end user would be (beginner shooter new to the activity); what is the purpose of the facility?; What clientele and what kind of population is this going to serve?

Ed Sutton: there are over a half million people in Jeffco, many ranges closed down and are no longer available, same time growth of shooting has happened; places for people to shoot at events...he'd like us to consider events, 200 cars, etc.; is this a rural type of shooting facility? Is this going to serve a half million people in an urban/suburban area like Jeffco?; events were discussed as a financial generator as long as they fit with the scope of the facility; possible revenue generation but on a small scale; shooting groups are the ones who spend money, not families; accommodating them for use of the range is important.

Gene Adamson: defensive pistol; western action shooting; size of lanes will be difficult to accommodate; rifle: 10 -15 lanes should handle a good amount, but not like Centennial Rifle Club?; private businesses...we don't want to be in direct competition with them; we're really not talking about an advanced shooter....they will be looking for competitive times and a group of shooter; the private operations are targeting those groups; we are focused on family and beginner.

Mark Loye: could be an open question in terms of what's available...keeping open more specialized offerings and how big a facility is; figure out who do you intend to serve and that determines what the facility is going to be; recreational shooting and informal shooting is what it sounds like is the target.

We need a facility for competitive shooters...we need to serve all the needs of the shooting public (competitive and beginner/family); this will depend on the site itself; if a site is large enough, the facility could accommodate the ends of the spectrum.

Bob Swainson: this would be a radical departure of what we're doing here; there are clubs on eastern slope with more select group of shooters; we want to introduce shooting to the general public, that will drive the site of the facility. this will drive land and all infrastructure that goes with that. introducing facility to larger segment of the population...that is the drive of this effort; Colorado Rifle Club in Byers...a very specific offering; not what we're doing here. at least that's his understanding.

Average competitive shooter will drive hours to shoot a particular discipline (competition); goal and direction of subcommittee is to introduce general public to shooting for personal and home protection; there are enough clubs out there to do specific discipline. Trying to satisfy too big of a group will cause this effort to fail; family and beginner is key and there's an incredible need; can be incredibly sustainable.

Mark Loye: is there a range in which some degree of this type of usage could be accommodated? Ed Sutton might want to sit in on a particular subgroup.

Gene Adamson: Boulder Rifle Club: small and narrow range; 8 year waiting list; building a regional facility would be good, but doesn't think Jeffco wants to get into this business; 10-15 lanes each for rifle and pistol; Ed Sutton has concerns that this will not accommodate the population.

Mark Loye: charge to this group was general and doors should be open to what we could do; certain size was not determined; once a site is decided, regional facility that's large versus a small scale operation are open.

Tom Hoby: important part of conversation: scope of facility...the larger it gets the more difficult it is to site. Think about Jeffco...very heavily populated county not much large tracts of vacant land left; trying to do things that aren't competing with private businesses but rather ones that compliment and feed that business would be good. Sport analogy: a public park and recreation agency doing youth sports work, this serves the recreation level youth sports...90% of kids, when you get into traveling teams, very competitive, these are typically run by a nonprofit organization that take a lot of energy and resources; if a public agency is going to provide a facility it's going to be at a recreational level. Where is that with respect to shooting sports?

Mark Loye: kernel is that the relationship between any sizeable facility and its impact an appropriateness of a site; will link back to what sites are considered.

Ed Sutton: Is this really what the county needs? Was the same problem. What about Open Space land?; a land proposition would need to go to the Open Space Advisory Committee (OSAC) and the site would need to be evaluated; if we've arrived at the scope of a range and it's beginner/family and it won't be designed to handle any kind of advanced shooting facilities; use; size will be restricted based on open space criteria for the range?

What makes it a competitive range?; all shooting disciplines can be accommodated at the range; not having to drive far to do so; weekend events: is it more lanes? more acreage? land availability and what's possible to do on it; availability of services such as restaurants and hotels; on the facility itself, some of these more advanced uses such as sporting clays, etc., require area that would be beyond the 6-8 acres and would require larger areas and more parking; footprint would need to be bigger; increased, more diverse activities would need to be accommodated;

Ed Sutton: moving from basic skills to more advanced...they'll be looking for bay space (cowboy action shooters, bull's eye shooters); other ranges are accommodating these other uses at a range; how open is this?

Tom Hoby: if we're looking at a facility that is managed and staffed with great demand; a reservation system may be appropriate; what time, etc.; organize it in such a way that you can accommodate a lot of people for when you're able to be at a range; this is commonly done at golf courses, etc. managed by public entities; a way to accommodate groups and general public.

Mark Loye: still evolving on what this could look like and middle ground is possible.

Gene talking about next section: facility scope and the interrelated site evaluation criteria.

Archery can be done at about any location; trap and skeet is set up in the form of a half wagon wheel and there's a natural drop from a shotgun; can be a relatively compact facility; outdoor pistol and rifle will accommodate the most number of people; 50 yards long and 20 yards wide.

Gene Adamson: if we get too big, there are concerns; let's aim for shooting to serve the greatest number of the general public; this facility will undoubtedly be filled; the demand is there; sighting in hunting rifle and those who may show up for fun, competitive events; crowding individual shooters is not good; we need to target beginner and intermediate shooters; driving all over for competitive shoots is part of the activity.

The 200 yards came up for rifle because for those of us who are competitive rifle folks, we can do that at a facility that has 200; the longer lanes don't necessarily get used; parking, restroom and storage are important considerations; basic firearms training can be accommodated, etc.; hunter education, etc. can be accommodated. a trailer or large tuft shed? A classroom type environment; based on demand the expansion of the facility could be accommodated.

Absolutely minimum requirement is what this is; not a maximum or best case scenario...this was what is the smallest facility we can accommodate; potential for expansion should be built in; and aiming for an optimum facility, a site will drive what gets placed where;

Gene Adamson: hard core shooters, whatever the size facility when it opens, there is more than enough demand to fill facility; basic pistol and home protection classes fill and people are turned away; the county can make money on this endeavor; a huge facility isn't what we want. overseeing the operation is key; Gene believes we are not just appealing to JeffCo, but also to surrounding counties.

Tom Hoby: youth soccer analogy: finding land and parking requirement is challenging but less practical; what's available in an area and then see what can be accommodated in terms of soccer field offerings; take this approach conceptually and use it for a shooting range

Mike Poindexter: must be a computer program with topography and land use overlay and give me a section (640 acres) give me a topography overlay and rule out top of hogback; open areas that are suitable terrain; ownership overlay and land use overlay, etc; Tom Hoby: yes this can be done.

Next site exploration subgroup will focus on sites and bring back to the group (plenary) for next meeting; sites for facility and let's talk about them; if possible, where is it possible?; give us some options.

Reid Dewalt: Park County effort came up with minimum of what we wanted range to be and it was a 20 acre site, but ended up with 200 acre site because of generous land owner and a good deal; 5 stage development plan based on minimum criteria.

Reid Dewalt: Archery: trends with hunters...fastest growing section now because of Hunger Games and Brave; young girls getting into the sport and can't meet demand right now; this is an expanding population...if they're interested in other pursuits, great, but it's an entry point into this type of endeavor.

Mark Loye: The perfect should not be the enemy of the good; There's a perfect and there's a good facility. A good one is something to shoot for and practical and a perfect facility, maybe not.

Bill Jewel: all weather facility should be better defined; Bob Swainson said ancillary things like a structure where people show up, sign in and a classroom maybe are important; air conditions and heated in winter and access to restrooms; not an indoor facility. Registration process should be considered;

Tom Hoby: restrooms, small office space, classroom and storage (1000 sq. ft.); Lloyd Ackerman: 20-30 lane facility should have start with something like this and have controlled access points; a facility, growth expansion area and buffer that's set; until we decide a unit cost, we don't know whatever our funding potentials are; what can we turn that into in the future; need a basic idea of cost for a smaller more manageable area;

Financial subgroup will need something from operations and design subgroup; accessibility (fencing, signage, etc.);

Russ Clark: Family shooting area limited to bee bee, .22 caliber. etc.: Bob Swainson says it's easy to accommodate; separate from live fire?; As a stepping stone?; Air pistol accommodations, etc. should be considered in operations and design.

Bob Swainson: operations and design considerations; Reid Dewalt: was an old mine site in Park County; a given to shooting naturally. Bob Swainson says that's what we have going for us is that there are limited use; a special use permit is required or a rezoning or a site approval if it's a public entity pursuing; all have public involvement component in the process.

In terms of actual operations or design, won't be a huge expenditure to build a range; pretty Spartan facility; all weather and outside, not a huge capital cost; not asking for a great deal of capital development; Park County facility and Rooney Valley Law Enforcement Only are sparse facilities.

Gene Adamson: distressed properties because of mining, etc. are appealing; that would be a positive for shooters; landfills, mines, etc.;

Tom Hoby: need to consider environmental clean-up costs for specific sites;

Russ Clark: what about who would run it?

Sites proposed: we can start to get cost estimates.

Design + Operations Subgroup Report & Discussion

- **Design & Ops Considerations**
 - **South facing (GIS templates)**
 - **“Disturbed” sites might be available**
 - **Zoning of recreational facility (required)**
 - **Utilizing “distressed” property may be good for the County**
 - **Environmental concerns may be significant**

Financial Subgroup Report & Discussion

- **Financial Considerations**
 - **Funding = Land acquisition constraints and opportunities**
 - **Grant funding/Private**
 - **What funding is available?**
 - **Financial Operations**
 - **Paid employees**
 - **Hire an external management company?**
 - **Long term maintenance costs**
 - **Is this a profit making entity or cost neutral?**
 - ❖ **This is dependent on scope**
 - **Funding Partnerships**
 - ❖ **Road & Bridge**
 - ❖ **Corporate sponsorship**
 - ❖ **Military**
 - ❖ **Inmate labor**
 - **Use recently built ranges as examples**
 - ❖ **Pawnee Grasslands**
 - ❖ **South Park**
 - ❖ **Cheyenne Mountain**
 - ❖ **Cherry Creek**
 - ❖ **Rooney Range (Law Enforcement Only)**
 - **Action Plan**
 - **Use the examples given above**
 - **Partnerships with other user groups**
 - **Potentially lay out cost structures**
 - ❖ **Facility costs/expenses/recouping**
 - ❖ **Bullet trapping – recycling of ammo can be source of income**
 - **Other grants/funding sources**
 - ❖ **Some grants have specific requirements, e.g. NRA membership required, funding matching requirements (NRA grants on-line don't have NRA membership requirement)**
 - ❖ **NSSF (National Sport Shooting Federation) potential source for grants**

Reid Dewalt reported out on the April 1st Subgroup meeting. There were many questions raised; how to pay for building of the facility; considering purchase of land needs to be factored in as well; public and private grant sources; how much funding is needed? What are we looking at funding?; providing info to group on what's available through grants, etc. and other mechanisms.

Financial considerations: what is structure of range?; paid employees, special district, third party vendor, etc.; conversation on what long term costs could be; replacing target stands, damage to range and lead abatement; is this cost neutral?; is this a profitable endeavor?; what's the scope and what are we looking at funding; we can now go back as a group and consider these question again; we also had a good discussion on funding and partnerships (who is out there to help with project?)

Use inmate labor?; using road and bridge?; getting corporate sponsors and using military and construction battalions, etc.; CEs, donations, etc. all open.

We want to go and consider all ranges in area that have been built; 5 ranges: new and comparable: see Financial meeting notes for list; close, front range comparable, etc.

Action plan going forward is to look at handful of ranges and what cost of acquisitions could be and operation model; getting cost of building arranged, etc.; what are we talking about for building the range?; look at partnerships?

Lloyd Ackerman: bullet trap systems?; majority are dirt berm ranges; environmental concerns with flat properties and water quality impacts; trapping system developed up front (spent casings and brass and lead can be recycled); this cuts back on concerns; up front expenses, but built well and long term, so little maintenance required beyond standard upkeep; Denver does indoor range recovery; Lloyd can help research this if desired.

Janet Shangraw: question for financial group: She's aware of conversations in Durango on a shooting range owned by the County but run privately and requirement for members to be National Rifle Association (NRA) members...controversial in community; any funding sources requiring this that could cause this kind of conflict?; we haven't gotten into this yet; some matching requirements that might ask that; we need to consider this; NRA grants don't say that NRA membership is a criteria, but they do give a list of sites that have obtained NRA grants.

Summary & Next Steps

- **Next Time**

- **Site evaluation/actual sites to consider**
 - **Proceed with caution – actual sites can create “Not In My Backyard” (NIMBY) issues**
 - **May want to consider executive session**
- **Thursday, May 8 – 11:00 am – 1:00 pm**

All subgroups now need to schedule meetings. This will be coordinated with Nancy York.

Site Exploration Subgroup: take site evaluation criteria discussed here today and have County staff help us with looking at ownership, and other pieces through Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping system.

Financial Subgroup: Continue to refine aspects of the financial structure and funding potential and work with cost estimates once sites are defined by Site Exploration Subgroup.

Design + Operations Subgroup: This group can further refine elements of a facility and design considerations.

We will then come back together in the plenary Working Group to discuss results; Next meeting May 8th and then June 4th.

“Parking Lot” Written Comments & Public/Observer Comments

Comments posted to the “Parking Lot”:

David Dolton – Would like to see at least 200 yard lanes for rifle lanes.

Gary Uhland – Should include archery range in plan. Bear Creek Lake is problematic because you must pay a fee to enter with no guarantee of a lane being available. They will not issue refunds even if you are unable to use a lane. We don’t go there anymore because this has happened too many times. A waste of money.

Gary Uhland – Ability for range to host competitions (3-Gun, Cowboy, USPSA, etc.) is highly desirable. Nearest 3-Gun range is Byers which is 90 minutes away – too far. Entry fee would help support the range. Private ranges are not suitable for competitions. Private ranges attract new shooters and defensive handgun shooters.

Parking lot was intended for comment on preceding meeting, but some folks maybe weren't there and are now able to make comment if they so choose, but the 10 minute limit (total) for people is important. No one from the public made comment, verbally, but the parking lot is still available for written comments on sticky notes, if people so choose.