



JEFFERSON COUNTY
2014 PUBLIC SHOOTING RANGE
WORKING GROUP

May 8, 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

AGENDA
“Parking Lot” Written Comments & Public/Observer Comment Period
Site Exploration Subgroup Report & Discussion – Mapping Results
Design + Operations Subgroup Report & Discussion
Financial Subgroup Report & Discussion
Summary & Next Steps for Report Development

Meeting Notes

Note: Official (flip chart) meeting notes appear in bold

Transcribed notes (from Nancy York) appear in italics

- **Site Exploration Subgroup Report Out**
 - **GIS Mapping—“preliminary site evaluation criteria”**
 - **Looked at all public & private land in County**
 - **Overlay “National Land Covered Database” & slope analysis**
 - ❖ **Most developed area = plains; also flattest area**
 - **30 minute drive from C-470/I-70 & 285+; 6th**
 - ❖ **Eliminates Pike National Forest**
 - **Within ½ mile of County/State maintained roads**
 - **Also mapped reclaimed mined locations**
 - **Potential Locations**
 - **Rocky Flats—potential areas within Wildlife Refuge/Department of the Interior**
 - **Coal Creek Canyon—private land with unwilling sellers**
 - ❖ **High concentration of natural resources**
 - ❖ **4 private landowners—acquisition in their backyard**
 - ❖ **Backs up to conservation easement**
 - **Golden Gate Canyon State Park**
 - ❖ **Multiple sites off Golden Gate Road**
 - **Guy Hill Road/Guy Gulch**
 - ❖ **Privately owned—owner interested in conservation**

- ❖ Near Centennial Cone Park—north trailhead & hunting
- More exploration needed of southern sites
 - Chatfield Park
 - ❖ Formerly had shooting range
 - ❖ Eliminated because of development on Douglas County side
 - Ramstetter Property
 - ❖ Too close to homes to the east
 - Chatfield-Lockheed Property
 - ❖ Current Trail easement
 - ❖ End goal—to connect 3 parks (Hildebrand)
- To Explore Further
 - Mining sites
 - Sites that don't meet all criteria but may not need to due to specific traits (e.g.. bowl could contain noise reducing buffer requirement)
- Operations & Design Subgroup Report Out
 - Prepared basic points for inclusion in final report
 - Safety
 - ❖ Making facility safe for community & users (lead abatement)
 - Training & Education
 - ❖ Using internal site buffer for training/education area
 - Overall Design
 - ❖ Expansion
 - Personnel
 - Future Expansion
 - Specific design criteria depends on specific site
 - Important to have qualified personnel on site
 - Fee structure: revenue neutral as goal
 - Length of lanes –site specific
 - Potential to expand to include archery
 - Potential to host competitions
- Financial Subgroup Report Out
 - Ready to compile Draft Report
 - Where funding is needed
 - ❖ Acquisition
 - ❖ Operations
 - ❖ Construction
 - Sources of funding
 - ❖ E.g. Grant/Pittman Robertson
 - ❖ Restrictions to funding is important
 - ❖ Partnerships available
 - A condition is that property values in Jeffco are higher than other counties
 - It would be useful to have information about potential fee structures to consider future revenue structure, e.g., family/senior rates
 - Also some “Fact Sheets” from other Ranges

- Who owns the land can determine how it's run & vice-versa—non-profit/private or outside management
- A retail component? (Ammo/safety education)
- Next Steps
 - CC briefing is July 22
 - Have reports completed by the end of June because the documents need to be circulated by the first of July
 - ❖ Draft before June 4 would be optimal
 - ❖ Get it to Nancy one week prior
 - ❖ June 4 could be an “outline” report to be revised subsequently
 - How detailed does it have to be?
 - ❖ 3-5 sites selected
 - Site Selection Subgroup will need more meetings to explore more options
 - Distribute subgroup draft reports to others for review
 - Use existing Ranges as “benchmarks”
 - ❖ Funding, fee structures, hours of operation, customer use data
 - ❖ Recently developed County-operated Ranges may be best for this due to availability of data
 - Scale of operations needs to be in report
 - At what point will cost not be recoverable through revenue?
 - ❖ Is there a feasible cost recovery scenario?
 - A more comprehensive Range can contribute to greater forest safety
 - Are there opportunities to partner with adjacent Counties?
 - Other Counties are dealing with similar issues.
 - ❖ This can be an open-ended option in the Final Report.

Parking lot comments: Nancy York read the parking lot comments from the April 9, 2014 meeting and the group agreed to hold off on addressing them until Operation subgroup report out as the comments predominantly pertain to that group.

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.

Tom Hoby presented mapping work that was done by Rob Thayer, GIS Analyst with Open Space. The maps represent the application of basic evaluation criteria developed and agreed upon by the Working Group; Rob used the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) ArcMap software, an industry standard used in mapping, and all data is contained within the Jefferson County system, either derived from County data or gleaned from other partner sources. As with any software program and the application of data across 778 square miles of Jefferson County, the analysis is not perfect.

Map 1 showed all public and private land in Jeffco. This is a base map.

Maps 2 and 3 demonstrated data in the form of a “heat map” (for lack of a better term) using the National Land Cover Database (NLCD); where there is developed land in the County, areas are shaded red and where there is vacant land (parks, etc.), the map is white. The next step was to buffer by ½ mile all residential and non-residential development identified using this data per the basic evaluation criteria developed and agreed upon by this working group.

Map 4 demonstrated a slope analysis, eliminating areas that have slope of 20% (roughly 11 degrees) or greater.

Map 5 demonstrated the application of the basic evaluation criteria of a maximum 30 minute drive time from three major crossroads in Jefferson County using Google maps (drive time). This criterion was based upon the Board of County Commissioners direction and this working group’s desire to have the public outdoor shooting range located in close proximity to the population, or as close as possible while still honoring all criteria. This map showed areas eliminated in the far northwest portion of County and the Pike National Forest to the south.

Map 6 demonstrated a truth testing of “occupied structures” that may have appeared in the areas remaining once the above criteria was applied. In other words, the NLCD data set is imperfect in capturing the level of detail that would show all structures across Jefferson County. The “pixels” in that data set are 30 meters x 30 meters and a color is then assigned based on what aerial imagery is detecting. Rob Thayer then examined the remaining areas after the exercise above and truth tested them by looking at aerial imagery. If a structure appeared, a ½ mile buffer around it was applied, thus eliminating additional land from consideration.

Also covered here are ¼ mile buffers from all trails, campgrounds, and other recreation areas in Jefferson County.

Map 7 demonstrated the areas remaining once adjacency to county or state maintained roads were taken into consideration. Staff determined ½ mile was as far from a county or state road as we were comfortable in being due to costs in constructing and maintaining an access road longer than that.

Map 8 demonstrated what was left after all above basic criteria was applied. There were very few locations left. However, there are sites that have met the criteria; these sites met all BASIC criteria except looking at communication towers, which the working group decided should be done on a site specific basis.

Map 9 showed the locations of communication towers in Jefferson County.

Map 10 demonstrated mine or quarry locations (type and status); these are still places that we can look at but it takes a lot of additional time and expertise; reclamation plans, etc. are filed with the Colorado Division of Mining and Reclamation. Some quarries are still active and others are terminated/abandoned. More work needs to be conducted to further explore these areas.

The group discussed the Rocky Flats area. Mark Loye, Lead Facilitator, said this site was discussed at length 25 years ago but that it went nowhere because it was still contaminated (on the Superfund site list at the federal level) and required extensive remediation; several locations within the Department of Energy land and the Fish and Wildlife Service’s National Wildlife Refuge land met the group’s basic evaluation criteria.

Important to note in the above mapping exercise is that there is a list of additional criteria that has not yet been discussed by either the Site Exploration Subgroup or the larger, plenary Working Group. Those are listed below.

Opportunities & Constraints/Additional Site Evaluation Criteria	
1	Wildfire Hazard
2	Wildlife/Natural Resource Impact
3	Proximity to bodies of water and/or wetlands
4	Land Entitlement/Zoning
5	Jeffco Open Space Restrictions, if applicable
6	City of Boulder/Boulder County Open Space Restrictions, if applicable
7	Sound impacts
8	Visual/Aesthetic Impacts
9	Aspect – Southern-facing is positive
10	Natural Backdrops
11	Quarries
12	Proximity to County and/or State maintained roads
13	Forbidden Firearms Discharge Area (Jefferson County Sheriff)

The Coal Creek Canyon Park area was discussed by the group, including the Ranson/Edwards property (undeveloped Jeffco Open Space parkland), as well as private property owners north of Jeffco Open Space and south of Boulder Open Space in Jefferson County. This area is rich in natural resources and the park vision for Coal Creek Canyon is inconsistent with a shooting range: <http://jeffco.us/parks/parks-and-trails/coal-creek-canyon-park>. A Natural Resource Summary was conducted on this property as well as the Colorado Natural Heritage Program study, and found that the xeric tallgrass prairie population along with rare species present on the land make this a challenge for the development of a shooting range.

The Golden Gate Canyon State Park area was also discussed by the group. There is a parcel of land less than 7 acres in size on the northeast corner of the park in Jefferson County. Follow up with Golden Gate Canyon State Park official would be needed to pursue this.

Other collections of privately held land (multiple landowners) located North of Golden Gate Road and south of Crawford Gulch Road area were discussed. Some are on tops of ridges and there may be conservation easements in place in the vicinity with terms that may be in conflict with a developed shooting range.

Ed Sutton & Tom Hoby: Centennial Cone Jeffco Open Space Park land was eliminated from this mapping exercise due to lack of public vehicular access. The area that met the criteria was central to the park and surrounded by trails on all sides. The slope is suitable but there is no public vehicular access. There are three trailheads far from interior; loop trail (16 miles) were developed strategically to preserve the natural habitat; while this is the only park in the Jeffco Open Space system where hunting is allowed as a wildlife management technique, the was park acquired for natural resource values. There are park closures for hunting and elk calving closures and alternating days for hiking and mountain biking for this reason. So even if public vehicular access existed, this location still would not meet the additional criteria noted above.

Ed Sutton asked that the group explore Chatfield State Park further, but due to the proximity of residences and trails/recreational amenities in the area, this site was not found to meet the basic site evaluation criteria.

Tom Hoby mentioned to the group that Jeffco Planning & Zoning staff (Russ Clark) is interested in exploring a separate data set apart from the National Land Cover data set that Rob Thayer, Jeffco Open Space GIS Analyst has used to-date. The data set involves address points, but is not entirely accurate for large parcels (points may not be located on structures but rather in the center of a large acreage, meaning data points need to be truth checked, which is time-consuming and tedious work).

County Staff (Open Space and Planning & Zoning) will work together in the coming weeks to make the best use of data sets available to us for this exercise.

Tom Hoby mentioned the need to check into quarry locations heading into the future, again, being time-consuming work in collaboration with the State Division of Mining and Reclamation.

Gene Adamson mentioned the dirt road access to the Lockheed Martin shooting range as a possibility to access Jeffco Open Space land on Hildebrand Ranch Park. Mark Loye mentioned vibration of land and uses on land that may be sensitive to Lockheed Martin work.

Lisa Heagley (USFS) mentioned an old quarry (Deer Creek) that could be looked into further for use as a public shooting range. It has a natural backdrop and buffers for trails could decrease because of site specific conditions; we could be working with military on leveling site; this is a good point on site specific considerations with regard to blanket application of basic site evaluation criteria.

Mark Loye: Conclusions from Tom Hoby and County staff is that there are some areas that meet basic criteria that have challenges and that we can look deeper into some of them and into mine sites. Tom Hoby encouraged the group to work with staff on sites with which people have familiarity as potential locations.

Mark Loye stated that the next phase of this effort is for the Site Exploration Subgroup to look at sites discussed today. The other two Subgroups need to have this information for their portions of the Report of Findings to the Board of County Commissioners. What could result is that there are 2-4 sites that deserve further study and have some potential; data could be in report and if we did this, here are ways to finance it and here's what it would look like. Report framework should be outlined.

Dave Davenport reported out on the Operations & Design Subgroup meeting. He said that it is not productive to talk about site design until we have specific sites; talked about general items (5: Safety Personnel, Overall design, Training and education and Future expansion) that we want to be sure are in the final report. On safety: design and operations thesis and justification of why other decisions are made; feeling of safety for users; number of lanes; operation; lead abatement; Lloyd Ackerman was going to do more research on this; training and education are important; buffer zone within facility itself didn't have to be total "no man's land," could be flexible in use and language on future expansion possibilities would be important; partnerships with law enforcement and military, etc. could be options, and possible "would be nice" items (trap, skeet, etc.); based in site size could be covered. All basics (pistol and rifle lanes) would be accommodated (number of lanes, etc.).

Mark: how big would site be? Dave said they assumed a 6 acre site and discussed items that would need to be discussed regardless of site; this would all be addressed in report; Any challenges? Dave reiterated that the site would need to be staffed for feeling of safety; undesignated sites not good for this; having Range Safety Officer onsite that is qualified and trained is key; having staff onsite could

help quell concerns by those against site; financial group would need to address this; operations looked at revenue neutral versus profit.

Dave addressed Parking lot comments noted above; would need to be site specific; archery was considered in possible future expansion, but with Bear Creek Lake Park and Golden (Tony Grampsas Park) archery facilities, they feel the need for this use may be met. This could be explored further in the future, and they didn't want that to be a limiting factor in their work; shooting competitions were mentioned, as well as events, and all are possible, but not overtaking facility and leaving facility open to the public as much as possible is important.

Mark Loye: there are a few sites where archery and maybe trap/skeet could be put and within those facilities, given acreage, but at least a basic facility could be accommodated.

Joy Lucisano reported out on the Financial Subgroup since Reid DeWalt (CPW) is out sick. She said they are ready to put together 3-4 page submittal for BCC Report of Findings based on what's been developed so far; acquisition of land, funds for long term costs for facility; many sources looked at for funding, including several grants, NRA, Pittman Robertson funds, etc.; CPW has funding; GOCO, Land and Water Conservation Fund; partnerships; potential for County General Fund leverage for bonding or even Open Space revenue (sales tax) and any other granting agency?; discussed special district potential for funding;

Mark Loye: There are several potential funding sources for land acquisition and capital development and any and all could be explored; amount of funds needed to be expended for what we're talking about? Reid has information on Park County experience; cost could be \$0 to \$2M.

Plan to put in full facility for Thunder Valley 25 years ago (per Mark Loye) was \$6M; this was for a much more elaborate facility than what we're talking about and was 25 years ago.

Just a few homework points, but the Financial Subgroup is getting close to submitting their portion of the Report of Findings.

Gene Adamson asked if the Financial Subgroup discussed fees and Joy said yes but that it depends on operations and design.

Tom Hoby said it would be hopeful for those with knowledge to identify a range of reasonable costs for fee for this kind of facility. It could have a senior, adult, youth, etc., fee structure and that this should be captured to be able to do revenue calculations; Gene Adamson mentioned the Golden shooting range and the Boulder facility where high power shoots charge competitors \$20 for activity per person; family rates and kid rates exist, too.

Who would operate this? This should be covered too; number of unknowns on this; could be private, public or non-profit.

Russ Clark asked about a potential retail component to the facility that sells guns and ammunition. Mark Loye said this is a good question to raise in the final report; retail component might be competing with the private sector, but is a consideration; possible expansion consideration but not addressed right out of gate.

Site specific data and potential mining sites that could be identified, and any other sites that others have thoughts on should be in final report (possibly 4-5 sites in a general area). The Operations and Design Subgroup has finished work, but it could be tailored to a site or sites chosen by the Site Exploration Subgroup. They need to meet again.

The Financial Subgroup can pull together a draft report of 3 pages or so; design group getting with financial people to be on same page on what we're actually proposing to finance would be good.

Tom Hoby mentioned the importance of some simple benchmarking; we could look at 3 or 4 outdoor ranges that would be good benchmarks/examples. This could include: hours of operation, annual use (visitor days), fee structures, etc. Ed Sutton says he can provide that data and will send it to Dave Davenport on the Operations & Design Subgroup.

Ed Sutton expressed concern with trying to accommodate 2.6 million people in the metro area and that there have been dramatic closures of private ranges in recent years. The only public range in the Denver metro area (Cherry Creek) is not sufficient. Ed is concerned that this effort we're working on won't get at what the Board of County Commissioners want; we need a scale of a facility for what we can afford, and a scale of operation to allow us to do this; keep door open for larger facility; 6 acres versus 6,000 acres; based on sites available, accommodate all disciplines and then arrive at development and operational costs and then provide information on other public ranges is what Ed wants to see.

Tom Hoby: There is an important order of magnitude here as well. If other facilities are charging \$10, we need to be competitive; we also need to give the Board of County Commissioners a sense of what other facilities cost to build; to get a sense of range of financial commitment and whether it's a truly workable cost recovery scenario; will it pay for itself? pay for operation and capital costs?; Criteria has been developed by the group: how much land do we need to get to the minimum offering for a range; 6 acres; then a chicken and egg problem with site issue; hold out for bigger range?

Mark Loye stated that what we're really doing here is searching for a potential shooting range site in Jeffco that would serve reasonable needs of shooters in area. If this group is successful in the feasibility analysis, then it needs to be proceeded with Phase 2: follows on to the first phase.

Lisa Heagley brought up the possibility of partnering with adjoining counties in this effort.

Mark Loye said next steps are getting a report put together.

NEXT MEETING: JUNE 4, 2014, 11AM – 1PM JEFFERSON COUNTY OPEN SPACE BUILDING