



JEFFERSON COUNTY
2014 PUBLIC SHOOTING RANGE
WORKING GROUP

June 4, 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
Site Exploration Subgroup Report
Design + Operations Subgroup Report
Financial Subgroup Report
Summary & Next Steps for Report to Board of County Commissioners

Meeting Notes

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

Transcribed notes (from Nancy York) appear in italics

Tier 1 Properties

- **Arvada – Pattridge Park**
- **State Land Board/Jeffco Open Space/Jeffco**
- **Jeffco Open Space – Hildebrand Ranch (Chatfield/Lockheed Martin)**

Tier 2 Properties

- **Rocky Flats**
- **Jewell Mountain (Ranson-Edwards/City of Boulder)**
- **Jeffco Open Space – Coal Creek Canyon Park**
- **Golden Gate Canyon State park**

Limitations

- **Proximity to populations**
- **Natural resource pressures**

Properties that Require More Research

- **Lakewood Law Enforcement Range**
- **Bandimere Speedway**
- **“Anonymous” property in south Jeffco private property (challenges with residents close and roads)**

Discussion

- Does expanding drive time from 30 to 45 minutes open more possibilities?
- Pike Nation Forest – Buffalo Creek Gun Club (40 acres, but 1 drive)
- Properties requiring more research will be presented as such to the County Commissioners. Further research involves determining stakeholder, meetings, etc.

Design & Operations Subgroup Report

- Safety is overriding consideration

Goals

- Financially self-sufficient
- Make facility accessible to all levels, families
- Not geared for higher level users (rapid fire, holster shooting)
- Balancing events/completions with beginner and general public use. Goal is to maintain public access.

Operational Considerations

- Hours of operation (access, noise considerations)
- Fee structure (family rates, annual pass, employees able to shoot at discount etc.)
- Personnel – 1 general manager and full-time/part-time staff (dependent on the size and use of the facility)
- All staff education in firearm safety

Facility Design

- Lanes 5-6 foot, concrete buffers, flooring (concrete floor in bays only)
- Only lane is visible for the lane
- Safety features
- Lead management and brass recovery. Upfront costs, but recycling will bring in money plus avoid cleanup cost later. Will be periodic maintenance costs
- Baffle system still compatible with natural backdrop

Training & Education

- Should be levels with users. Beginner and Intermediate
- Basic safety certification/card, graduated training
- Facility needs space/room for training

Expansion Considerations

- Trap, skeet and clays. Design site – dependent
- Shared use facility, partnerships with law enforcement, etc.

Financial Subgroup

- Acquisition potential costs are \$10k to \$123k per acre (\$60k – 1 Million total)

Potential Funding

- Donation of property, leasing
- Grants – NRA (require matching funding and sometimes can be in-kind)

- Jeffco Funding
- Conservation Trust Funding
- Bond (County discretion)
- Special District

Development & Construction

Reid will be providing a range of potential costs from the most basic to the elaborate.

Potential Funding

- NRA grant (\$25k maximum that must be matched)
- Colorado Parks & Wildlife Shooting Range Grant (limited funding with the max of \$500k)
- Jeffco – funding discretionary by Commissioners
- Conservation Trust Fund
- Corporate Sponsorships/in-kind donations
- Partnerships (law enforcement, military)
- Free labor (military, inmates, boy scouts, etc.)

Operations

Costs

- Employees, Range Safety Officer
- Maintenance
- Lead management
- Insurance

Potential Funding

- User fees
- CPW shooting range grant (limited)
- Volunteers (management reg. funding)
- Hunter Education Grant (capped at \$5k)
- Corporate sponsorships/partnerships
- Donations

Summary

Final Report

- Nancy compiling with input from subgroup leads over next 2 weeks.
- Report will be circulated to the group
- Deadline to submit 1 week prior
- Report will be expansion of current outline
- Feasibility analysis
- BCC Briefed on July 22nd

Final Considerations

- **At least one trap range , clays are too complicated as well as skeet**
- **1-2 trap ranges to provide access for families with shotguns**
- **A more expansive facility would get more support**
- **High price might seem more justified**
- **Involving more disciplines will bring more public support**
- **1991 proposed facility = \$6 million**
- **Higher end 1-2 acres**
- **Clays require 80 acres**
- **Would like RV park**
- **Examples of public/county ranges that are good see Arizona and Nevada/Clark County**
- **Contact NRA range development coordinator**
- **Include statistics in report. Growth of shooting sports and closures of local ranges in recent years**

Each subgroup reported out on their portion of the outline for the draft report of findings in preparation for presentation to the Board of County Commissioners now planned for July 22, 2014.

Site Exploration Subgroup

The Site Exploration Subgroup reported out with Tom Hoby walking through a spreadsheet and accompanying map of Jeffco showing potential properties that would all require more research in the next phase of this feasibility effort.

Tom mentioned the minimum size of the parcel that would be required was 6 acres and could accommodate primarily pistol and rifle. Per the entire Working Group's agreed upon proposed facility scope, it would be nice to have trap and skeet and archery, but if site constraints prohibit this from happening, they would be accommodated.

Tom reiterated the happenings at the Site Exploration Subgroup meeting where one member of the Working Group, Ed Sutton, concerned citizen, has expressed numerous times that if an outdoor shooting range facility were to be constructed in Jefferson County, it should have all of the possible offerings from short range pistol to highly advanced, more "boutique" shooting sports. Ed has expressed that it should be a regional-scale facility closer to 60 acres in size rather than a mere 6 acres.

Tom quickly walked through the results of the Site Exploration Subgroup's work and briefly discussed possible locations, none of which were ideal, and some of which were unlikely but until further research could be conducted, it was difficult to rule them out.

Tom discussed Tiers 1, 2 and "Needs More Research" categories. He mentioned that properties in Tier 1 have a greater likelihood than those in the second tier (a few more positive attributes) and the third category means that there would be quite a bit more research required.

Reid Dewalt asked about the properties that need more research and Nancy York mentioned that one could argue that each property really needs much more research, but one example, any opportunities on the National Wildlife Refuge or land controlled at Rocky Flats by the U.S. Department of Energy, would require meetings with appropriate staff members from various organizations to discuss a public shooting range as an allowable use. Examples like this are important to take note of at this point in

the process (feasibility phase), and that greater detail is needed to determine whether this is a viable location for the proposed use.

The group discussed that there will be challenges associated with any of the potential locations on the list. We all agreed that it was important to discuss the possible partnership with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) in the Pike National Forest, as they are considering closure of the Buffalo Creek area for dispersed shooting. Coupled with that closure could be the development of a staffed outdoor public shooting range. However, the drive time to such a facility might be longer than the Board of County Commissioners had anticipated. And no meetings have taken place with the USFS to-date on this topic. This would need to be addressed in the follow-on phase to this feasibility analysis.

Quarries were also discussed as a general topic that would require more detailed analysis beyond what time permits in this phase of the effort. The quarries (both inactive and active, but nearing the end of their useful life) in Jefferson County hold potential, but each must be analyzed for what the Reclamation Plan permits and this would require working with the landowner, possibly a third party permit holder for mining/quarrying, and the Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety.

Operations and Design Subgroup

Safety is the driver for all aspects of the Operations and Design Subgroup's work. Lloyd Ackerman mentioned the importance of instilling the feeling of safety in the facility for users (from beginner to advanced); Lloyd ran through the draft outline for the report and pieces of the subgroup's work.

Baffling, etc. should be as close to guaranteed as possible. Lloyd talked about inability to see sky means that this reduces likelihood of bullet leaving range. For a public range, Lloyd stressed the importance of clarifying the definition of uses and disciplines. The subgroup felt that competitions could work at a facility, but on a limited basis; general public availability is paramount.

Lloyd expressed concerns discussed at the Subgroup meeting with tying up the outdoor public shooting range with event competitions and that this was not the purpose of this Working Group; space, acreage, parking are all considerations, but this would require a larger facility; for a range on 6 acres or so, that would mean less event competitions, more about safety and training and general public use.

The fee structure utilized at the facility should be representative of people working there (need cost recovery for paid personnel), and it needs to be self-sustaining.

Who would manage the facility? The group discussed the importance of utilizing a full-time, paid Range Safety Officer (RSO) on-site and that from there many possibilities exist for part-time staff to volunteers, etc.

Lead abatement and management can be costly, and the group agreed that this is an important aspect to a well-managed facility. Recovery mechanisms that involve quality bullet traps and lead recycling allow for revenue as well as costs that you don't have to account for later; brass, aluminum, lead, etc. (there are local operations that take brass); and a price per pound is paid; easily captured and a steady profit.

Lloyd mentioned that every 5 years lead mitigation needs to be conducted; this is how often it should be addressed; 365 days per year is how often the Rooney Road Shooting Range is used by law enforcement agencies. The range is shut down and \$80,000 is general cost of lead abatement over 10 days of lost revenue.

Janet Shangraw mentioned that in the design considerations, a natural backdrop was mentioned as an attribute and wanted to know more. Lloyd mentioned that natural backdrops assist in keeping bullets where they need to be (bullet traps are needed regardless); baffle systems (blue sky systems) are used around the country; the backdrops add an extra layer of natural protection; with the Hogback at the Rooney Road site, there is a holding pond for runoff to be gathered for lead containment.

Lloyd mentioned that the Sheriff's Office is still actively looking for an expanded facility due to high demand from several area law enforcement agencies. For shared use, there would need to be a "separate but equal" approach since the law enforcement officers have scheduling and usage requirements that are structured; training on skills would need to be separate from public offering/lanes.

If the public facility would be expanded for trap, skeet, etc., "the nice to haves"...this would obviously impact design and operation considerations. This doesn't affect the overarching idea of what the theme would be (safety), but from a design standpoint, if land available, it would be a site design exercise. Fully staff and safety is number one priority. Just additional considerations for extra uses.

Russ Clark mentioned that concrete being mentioned as surfacing where the shooters are situated to where the target is would drive up costs of development due to impervious surface area.

Financial Subgroup

The group noted a range of costs for land acquisition, if needed, and that its variable based on location, current use of property, who owns it, etc. This broad range is intentional and not specific since there are too many variables at play.

National Rifle Association (NRA) grants could potentially be used for land acquisition, among other sources. Mike Pointdexter says NRA membership is not a string attached item for NRA grants.

Ed Sutton was asked about the Special District funding provision. He says that sources of revenue could be generated as part of this public shooting range...could it be a metro district?; the group needs to explore this further; Ed believes you can build range and acquire land without incurring debt.

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) receives Colorado Lottery funding (Great Outdoors Colorado/GOCO funds) and they are the agency charged with shooting range grants, not GOCO.

The group is working on a list of comparables along the Front Range of Colorado; going from bare bones facilities to facilities with all the bells and whistles; info forthcoming.

Reid Dewalt, CPW, mentioned the Pittman-Robertson funding from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (F&WS) that his agency administers. He said that in years past it has been \$500,00, but this past year there was only \$250,000 available STATEWIDE. There were 16 grant applications in the last funding cycle and the process is incredibly competitive. Funds can be used on public or private ranges open to public; CPW is committed to funding grant, and funding can be increased in coming years, but is not a large sum.

Partnerships can be explored with different agencies, neighboring counties, military (for construction), etc. (Ft. Carson battalion aided in range construction in Park County recently).

Lisa Heagley from the U.S. Forest Service mentioned that the Buffalo Creek Gun Club was developed as an Eagle Scout project, and the boys raised their own money to help. Labor or more funding through them might be a bit of an aid, but again, not a large sum.

Reid mentioned that a "cost neutral" scenario for County was assumption group operated on. Insurance questions were raised. What type would County need, or a third party carrier, this would need to be taken into account.

Ed Sutton: no idea on development costs?; Reid: we're getting comparables on facilities in area; so variable based on site selection.

Volunteers, if utilized, would need to be managed (time, qualifications, insurance costs for them as well, etc.).

The group discussed the scope of the facility. If it's going to be developed in Jefferson County, it should be well beyond bare bones; if lead abatement and management, etc. aren't happening, we will pay extra in clean up costs later.

If we go outside 30 minute transport time, USFS partnership could be considered.

Mike Pointdexter said that in terms of the scope of the facility, he believes it would be a mistake not to include at least one trap range, if not two, for the facility; sporting clays are too complicated; skeet more complex, but he believes that many families have a shotgun who don't have a handgun; we're excluding county shooters by not having one or two trap range facility.

Mark Loye: if we were to include trap and skeet would be have to eliminate sites on the list?; Mike said he believes there are pistol opportunities in many locations (indoor) and rifle would be good to have, but the others aren't offered locally; large facilities serving other uses does not exist.

Ed Sutton said he believes a trap range should be included, but not sporting clays; he says that national and local entities to support this both corporately and through retailers exist and could be pursued; with 6 acre range and all work we're going through, we wouldn't get the support for the facility that he believes is required for the area; he believes the cost of a facility could be \$5M-\$10M (maybe not even including land); all the things we'd need to do for a 6 acre range, we'd need to do for an 89 acre range; he believes we should show full range (minimal size facility and full size facility); so the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) can see the range of choices and cost estimates.

Ed said he thinks we should include examples of new ranges (development costs available to us for County facilities but less so for private facilities); development costs are based on property size and location, etc.; if I'm a BCC member, I'd want to know how much a 6 acre plot costs and how much for a range to serve the western metro area?; how long will it take to develop and when will it be operational?

Per Mark Loye, 25 years ago, the cost was \$6M to develop a range that included trap and skeet and sporting clays, and a sport cycle track; not just a shooting range. This plan never came to fruition.

Ed Sutton believes we should get funding from the U.S. Forest Service because of the pressure that would be taken off of dispersed shooting areas; this would relieve a lot of pressure there.

Bob Swainson asked Ed Sutton, out of curiosity, if he doesn't see a 6 acre site as worth pursuing, then what's the top end (desired number of acres) that this facility should be?

Ed: depends on where it is; level ground matters; right now, based on sites that we've looked at; somewhere in neighborhood of 100 to 200 acres for the site itself, and that's not level ground, and that's the high end for all facilities; no indoor facilities; don't want to compete with retail indoor

operations. 150-200 acres considering terrain and areas we're looking at; useable out of that is more like 100 acres; Sporting clays takes about 80 acres of that; it includes an RV park, too.

Bob: something like smaller version of Colorado Rifle Club?; Ed: no; too difficult to do that for long range rifle; 300 yard max.; three gun, cowboy action, IDPA; etc.; Bob: CO rifle club has similar set-up to what Ed is talking about; Ed: development costs would be higher here in Jefferson County because land is more valuable closer to the population on the western edge of metro Denver.

Ed mentioned two new, regional-scale facilities recently developed in Arizona and California, and that it's important in the next phase of this effort to be in touch with John Riedel, a range development officer with the National Rifle Association. Ed says he has talked to him about this effort and that John is a resource.

The Report of Findings for the Board of County Commissioners will offer a range of options and opportunities to explore for a public outdoor shooting range that's between minimum and maximum offerings.

Ed Sutton said he would provide statistics and information on facilities and shooters to Tom Hoby.

The Report of Findings will be developed in the next couple of weeks and a draft distributed to all Working Group members for review and comment.