

Shooting Range Grant and Match Application Staff Report

DATE: FEBRUARY 25, 2025
TO: DOUGLAS COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
THROUGH: DOUGLAS J. DEBORD, COUNTY MANAGER, DAN DERTZ, OPEN SPACE DIRECTOR
FROM: ANDY HOUGH, ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES COORDINATOR
FROM: ZAK HUMBLER, SPECIAL PROJECTS ENGINEER
SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR \$300K SHOOTING RANGE GRANT WITH \$100K CASH & \$100K IN-KIND MATCH

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS MEETING: MARCH 11, 2025 @ 1:30 PM

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is a request to apply for a \$300,000 shooting range grant from Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW). A match is required. Staff has calculated that for \$500,000 in cash and in-kind services, the recently approved Turkey Tracks shooting range near Westcreek in SW Douglas County can be made operational as an initial phase. This is in conjunction with the installation of \$400,000 of materials (steel targets, hangers, shooting benches, and gabions) purchased with an earlier grant. This application is offering \$100,000 in County cash and \$100,000 in in-kind services, bringing the total project funding to \$500,000. The purpose of the grant is to finalize design, conclude any preliminary permitting and approval conditions (e.g., lead baseline testing), and construct infrastructure and the first phase of shooting galleries.

II. REQUEST

A. Request

Staff is requesting approval of the proposed \$300,000 CPW shooting range grant application and authorization of \$100,000 cash and \$100,000 in-kind match.

B. Background

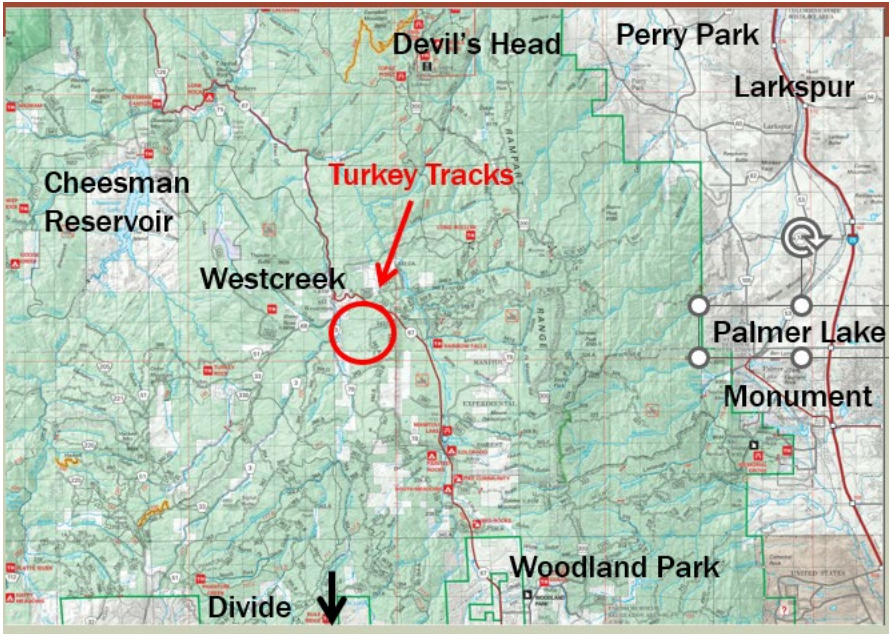
In January 2016, Douglas County signed the memorandum of understanding MOU convening the Southern Shooting Partnership (SSP).

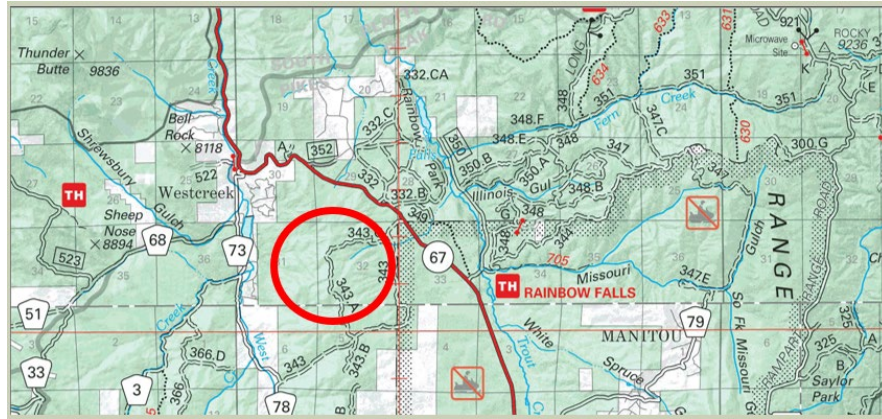
The SSP is a board made up of eleven landowning agencies with an area of interest between Pueblo and Denver. The SSP's mission is to address recreational shooting management and concerns on public land within this area of interest. As with all recreational uses, the volume of target shooting has increased significantly. Public safety and resource damage incidences have also increased. The SSP is addressing these concerns. One of the four central tenants agreed to in the MOU is cooperative efforts and sharing of resources across boundaries.

As part of the SSP's efforts, the US Forest Service (USFS) has now completed the 'Integrated Management of Target Shooting' decision process and concomitant National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) clearance. The intent of this decision process is to manage recreational shooting on the Pike National Forest. In summary, this decision process will close 73% of the Pike National Forest, including all of Douglas County, to dispersed shooting. It also authorizes the construction of five new shooting ranges and the expansion of a sixth to accommodate the shooters that will be displaced by the upcoming dispersed shooting closure. Turkey Tracks was one of six shooting range locations approved in this process. It is also the largest, at approximately 1,200 acres. It is the only range location within Douglas County.

C. Location

The Turkey Tracks shooting range is located along the USFS Road 343 complex off Highway 67, east southeast of the Westcreek community.





IV. RECOMMENDED ACTION

Staff has discussed the application with both USFS and CPW. All are in favor of the project and grant application. Staff recommends approval of the grant application and cost share match.

ATTACHMENTS

CPW Shooting Range Grant Application



Colorado Parks and Wildlife
Shooting Range Development Grants Program
APPLICATION FORM & INSTRUCTIONS
January 2025 version

- ✓ **PLEASE USE THE FORMS PROVIDED & FILL IN ALL SECTIONS!**
- ✓ **Contact the SRDG Program Coordinator if you have any questions.**

APPLICANT INFORMATION	
Applicant (Organization): Douglas County Government	
Project Title: Turkey Tracks Shooting Range Planning & Development Grant (Under USFS Integrated Management of Target Shooting on the Pike National Forest Final Decision)	
Project Costs: \$500,000 (portion of total project used for this application)	
Total Project Cost	\$3,464,273
Material Purchased & Ready to Install	\$400,000
Phase 1 Cost	\$500, 000
SRDG Funding Requested	\$300,000
Matching Funds to Be Provided	\$100,000 cash + \$100,000 in-kind
Source(s) and amount(s) of matching funds: County General Funds. Additionally, County staff time and equipment will be applied in support of the project above and beyond the matching cash as an additional in-kind match.	
General Location of Range: West of DC 67, SE of Westcreek. North of Manitou Lake and Woodland Park, due east from Rainbow Falls. See attached vicinity map.	
County: Douglas	
APPLICANT INFORMATION	
Applicant Organization Mailing Address: 100 Third St, Castle Rock, CO 80104	
Organization Website: https://www.douglas.co.us/	
Main Project Contact: Zak Humbles	Title: Special Projects Engineer
Contact Mailing Address: 100 Third St, Castle Rock, CO 80104	
Contact Phone Number: 303.660.7490	

Contact Email: zhumbles@douglas.co.us		
Organization Tax ID Number: 9804428		
Organization DUNS Number (required if application accepted for funding): 014842934		
Type of Organization: County Government		
Circle/Highlight Facilities at the Range: <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; text-align: center;"> Archery Shotgun Small Bore (.22) High Powered Rifle Handgun </div>		
<i>I certify that the information contained in this grant application is accurate. If awarded a grant, our organization will abide by the requirements of Colorado Parks and Wildlife. I acknowledge that failure to meet the requirements of the grant program will result in forfeiture of grant funds.</i>		
Signature of person who prepared grant application		DATE:
Printed name of above individual		
Signature of president of applicant organization		DATE:
Printed name of above individual		
PROJECT COSTS		
Amount of SRDG grant funding requested	\$300,000	Percentage of current phase: 60% (no more than 75%)
Amount of local cash match	\$100,000	Percentage of current phase: 40% (must total at least 25% of total project cost, i.e. 3:1 grant:match minimum)
Amount of local in-kind match	\$100,000	
Total match	\$200,000	
Total Cost of Project	\$500,000	Above percentages must total 100%
Sources and amounts of local match: Douglas County General Fund, Douglas County Engineering and Operations.		
PROJECT DESCRIPTION		
Need (Existing condition of range, opportunities to improve range and public access):		
Pursuant the Record of Decision, mirroring the FONSI, the USFS Integrated Management of Target Shooting on the Pike National Forest will be implemented. The southern shooting partnership fully supports the plan and Douglas County has volunteered significant support to implementing the plan at Turkey Tracks which is completely undeveloped. The current site lacks any range elements or		

mitigations. There is an abundance of opportunity to improve the condition thru even the most rudimentary elements and mitigations such as berms, signage, fencing, access improvement, and similar.

Purpose (Why are the planned improvements being made, range issues they will address):

The following explanation is a quote from the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) of the USFS Integrated Management of Target Shooting on the Pike National Forest NEPA review (pages 6-8) that explains the purpose, need, and environmental clearances completed for the Turkey Tracks Shooting Range.

In making my decision I looked to provide opportunities for target shooting, also called recreational sport shooting, in a sustainable manner so that forest resources and other uses are not compromised. As it is currently occurring, the number of people shooting in one area and the fraction of those doing so in an unsafe manner are too high to be a sustainable recreation activity (as described in the effects for alternative 1). This level of use has resulted in areas across the forest being inconsistent with direction for dispersed recreation management in the Pike-San Isabel Land and Resource Management Plan (e.g., Close or rehabilitate dispersed sites where unacceptable environmental damage is occurring, page III-21), contributing to the need for this project.

A primary concern, and one mentioned in many of the public comments received, is the risk to public safety resulting from how dispersed target shooting is currently managed. Unlike other forms of recreation in the forest, target shooting can become the sole use of an area because of the risks to other forest visitors who may be in the vicinity. Unlike hiking or camping, when visitors are target shooting, that area by necessity becomes available only to that single use. It would not be safe to hike through the shooting lane or ride a horse behind the target. Given the popularity of the Pike National Forest for recreation and other forest uses, especially those areas closest to the metropolitan areas of Denver and Colorado Springs, and given the increase in the number of people coming to the forest to shoot, I find that the closures described in alternative 2 are necessary to reduce these risks and return the potential for multiple use to some areas (as described in the EA pages 63, 70-71, 74-76). These closures are designed to be consistent with and will not supersede the prohibitions at 36 CFR 261.10(d).

If a large area of the Pike National Forest is to be closed to dispersed target shooting, then I recognize the need for the Forest Service to provide opportunities for that activity. As a result, I have identified five sites appropriate for new shooting ranges and one established range to be expanded. All shooting ranges will be developed in accordance with the required environmental and safety plans per Forest Service policy at FSH 2309.13, Chapter 50 and FSH 2709.14, Chapter 70. After full implementation, two shooting ranges on each ranger district will provide a variety of target shooting opportunities for forest visitors, ranging from pistol bays and omnidirectional galleries to long-range lanes (EA page 67). Some comments asked for shotgun range facilities in the project area. Since none of the conceptual designs for the selected locations included a shotgun range, and as the conceptual designs will need to be further developed into Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact – Integrated Management of Target Shooting Pike-San Isabel National Forests & Cimarron and Comanche National Grasslands 8 construction-quality designs, I have decided to add a shotgun facility to at least one site, where such a facility is feasible, as the construction designs are revised.

The sites are a similar distance to the metropolitan areas as areas that are currently used for dispersed target shooting (EA pages 55 and 68), indicating that minority or lower income populations should not be disproportionately affected by this decision. Some of the

locations, such as Turkey Tracks, are already popular locations for target shooting with volunteers who promote responsible behavior and help with site cleanup.

I understand the concern about the proximity of the Turkey Tracks site to adjacent private lands and neighborhoods. I decided not to exclude the site as suggested in some public comments because it has several characteristics that make it a viable shooting range location: the site is accessible by passenger cars (Colorado highway 67, not a route requiring high clearance vehicles), it is a relatively accessible from population centers (EA page 55), it has a topography that supports the development of shooting lanes, and it is within a fire scar, reducing the amount of fuel mitigation that will be required. In addition, Turkey Tracks is already a popular site for dispersed target shooting, so the public is familiar with it in name and location. In selecting the site for a shooting range, I carefully considered the possible risks and environmental effects. As described in the EA, the Turkey Tracks site was the subject of a traffic analysis considering auxiliary traffic lanes (pages 58-60), fire risk analysis (pages 92-98), and sound study (pages 85- 90), among other reviews. In addition, and separate from this NEPA project, the site has recently become the site of additional soil chemistry testing to identify any contamination issues related to its use for dispersed target shooting. Like all new shooting ranges, Turkey Tracks will be subject to a suite of adaptive management tools (EA table 3), best management practices (EA appendix D), and range management policies (FSH 2709.14, Chapter 70, EPA 20051) designed to reduce potential environmental harms. I find that building a range at Turkey Tracks will not result in significant environmental effects.

This funding, if awarded, in conjunction with the \$400,000 worth of steel targets, target hangers, gabions, and shooting benches already stockpiled by Douglas County for this project, will be sufficient to make this range operational. It should take the project through testing, final design, and construction of the main infrastructure and first phase of ranges/galleries. The facility will be expanded in future phases. Any cost savings will be applied to building out more of the range.

Objectives (What specific improvements will be constructed):

In order to accomplish this, specific range elements that will be constructed to support free, safe, and common-sense use of the shooting sports site. These include but are not limited to the following:

- Road access substantially improved with criteria driven road design
- Site drainage managed thru criteria driven design to ensure prudent storm flow routing and debris containment
- Significant site safety improvement thru visual communication, access control, and substantial grading to assure public safety
- Accessibility enhancements to ensure equal opportunity to disadvantaged recreational shooters
- At least one traditional high power rifle target gallery, NRA and DOE criteria
- At least one traditional pistol gallery, 35 yard, NRA & DOE criteria
- One Long Range Precision Rifle (LRPR) range with reactive steel targets out to 1200 yd
- At least one traditional 2 bench gallery
- Steel silhouette targets already stockpiled will be installed in the LRPR Range.

If funding goes far enough, we will also attempt to complete:

- One Hunting Simulation Range with reactive steel targets out past 1000 yd
- At least one omnidirectional gallery, criteria applied as the first in Colorado for full impact berm enclosure

Approach (How will construction be performed, who will do it):

In keeping with the USFS adaptive management plan and ROD, the entire site will be designed to be scalable and built out as needed, directed, or funded. This application outlines phase one construction. Thru the Southern Shooting Partnership and Douglas County, multiple resource and asset pools exist to support the construction of the site. Final design will be performed by Douglas County, reviewed and accepted by the USFS prior to implementation. This application requests funds to be applied to any portion or phase of this process, in design or construction. This provision will allow the most efficient use of funding as certain elements may be completed before the requested funding may become available. As there are numerous constituents offering a wide variety of support in any and all phases, any additional resources would be applied where currently required to continue progressing the project.

Is any new ground disturbance part of the proposed shooting range improvement activities (e.g. new berms where there were none before, leveling raw ground) Was the area previously disturbed? Please include photos of the area to be improved. A Cultural and Historic Resources Survey may be required for previously undisturbed lands that are part of the project.

Yes. As a part of the multi-year NEPA process, full clearance was sought and studied. The proposed conceptual site plan indicates the approximate disturbance(s) and scale of the same. The entire range location has been fully cleared in the NEPA review. A FONSI was issued.

It should be noted that while this site is considered undeveloped, a USFS road through the site does exist. Additionally, the whole area has been a very popular dispersed shooting destination. It has been heavily impacted by continuous shooting activity for many years.

Expected Results & Benefits (How will range be improved and benefit to the public.):

Turkey Tracks is in the Pikes Peak Ranger District. The entirety of the Pikes Peak and South Platte Districts, and a portion of the South Park District will be closed to dispersed shooting through this ITMS decision. Six shooting ranges were designated in this decision and are intended to absorb the shooting pressure displaced by the dispersed shooting closure. Building the first phase of the Turkey Tracks shooting range will create the facility to absorb some of the shooters displaced by the upcoming dispersed shooting closure.

Additionally, this range will create opportunities not available in a dispersed shooting scenario, including steel reactive targets out to 1,200 yards, shooting benches, measured pistol and rifle galleries, omni-directional shoot houses, and drive-up shooting stations.

Furthermore, these improvements will provide berms and ballistic protection to shooters, restrict fields of fire to only safe directions, provide a 20-40 decibel sound reduction to both adjacent shooters and nearby communities, provide access drives and parking, along with other infrastructure and drainage improvements. This design will drastically reduce risk of wildfire ignition.

Planned Work Schedule: (when will work start, schedule, estimated time to complete)

All work is subject to USFS authorization. Douglas County staff is working with USFS personnel to finalize all requirements and authorization. We are hopeful that initial work will start as soon as possible in 2025. We anticipate 2 months for final design and 5 to 6 months for construction. Obviously, some of this work will have to wait for grant funding. If awarded, we anticipate the purchase order in first quarter 2026. Work funded by the grant will follow as quickly as weather allows after PO issuance.

Range Use --

Access type	Number of days currently?	Number of days after project?
Public Access (1)	365 limited dispersed only	365 formal range
Hunter Education	365 limited dispersed only	365 formal range
Hunter Sight-in Days	365 limited dispersed only	365 formal range
Youth Education	365 limited dispersed only	365 formal range
Youth Competition	365 limited dispersed only	365 formal range
Other	365 limited dispersed only	365 formal range

(1) Public access is defined as days when the general public can use the range (including paying reasonable access fees) without being accompanied by a club member or being part of an organized group such as a youth program or a competitive shooting event.

While the intent is for the facility to be open every day, there will be occasional closures for maintenance. These closures may be to only certain galleries or portions of the range. Of course,

portions of the area currently used for dispersed shooting will have to be closed during initial construction.

Please list types of youth groups or activities that the range will be available to after the project is completed -- This range will be available to the public constantly. It will be a new facility. Any youth-oriented group may use it for any youth education or competition activity, subject to space availability. Operational plans, oversight, and range assistance will evolve after construction and as the range is placed into operation.

RANGE ACCESS INFORMATION

(Please fill in all that apply or note N/A if it does not apply)

Initiation Fee: \$0

Annual Membership dues: \$0

Number of Members: 0

Cap on Membership Numbers?: N/A

Fee for Guests: \$0 to no more than \$10, TBD, but initially \$0

Public Access Fees: Nothing beyond a minimal daily fee, if a daily fee is even imposed.

PUBLIC USE / PRIVATE USE / ADA USE

Present **PUBLIC** Shooting Range Use (%): 100% (dispersed) After completion (%): 100%

Present **PRIVATE** Shooting Range Use (%): 0% (dispersed) After completion (%): 0%

Present Handicapped Shooting Range Use (%): Unknown After completion (%): Unknown, but facilities will be accessible.

Please describe type and average availability of public (i.e. non-member) access. This includes youth education programs, competitions, introductory programs, and general public (unstructured) access: Currently, the location is a wild, unorganized, site that is popular with dispersed shooters. There is no organization or organized programs. Once constructed, accessibility, safety, and capacity will be greatly increased. It will be 100% open to the public. Initially there will be no programming. Over time, as volunteers and management are emplaced, limited programming may be developed.

Project Budget:

Work Item	Work Activity	Unit of Measure-ment	Quantity	Cost Unit	Total Cost	Local Share	Federal Share
Earthwork	Earth Moving	CY	16,432	\$8	\$131,456	76%	24%

	ng						
Target Installation	Installation	EA	263	\$200	\$52,600	0%	100%
Culvert	Installation	EA	15	7000	\$105,000	0%	100%
Kiosk	Installation	EA	1	15000	\$15,000	0%	100%
Signage	Installation	Total	TBD	25000	\$25,000	0%	100%
Fence, 3 strand	Installation	LF	10,000	5	\$50,000	0%	100%
Fence, 1 strand	Installation	LF	15,000	2.50	\$37,500	47%	53%
CM	QA/QC	Total	15,000	1	\$15,000	100%	0%
AE	Decidel / Plan	Total	50,000	1	\$50,000	100%	0%
ENC QAS P	ENV QA	TO	15,000	1	\$15,000	100%	0%
Ditch Armoring Checks		EA	50	750	\$37,500	100%	0%
Road Grading		EA	1	\$50 K	\$50,000	100%	0%
Drainage		EA	1	\$25 K	\$25,000	100%	0%

Grading							
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ENGINEERING (if applicable)

Name: Zachary Humbles, P.E.

Qualifications: DOD Range Design, Construction, LEO Range Design, Construction

MAINTENANCE (Responsible Party)

Responsible organization: Currently US Forest Service. It may be delegated to Douglas County through a special use permit.

Contact Information: Carl Bauer, Pikes Peak District Ranger. If delegated to Douglas County, Andy Hough, Environmental Resources Coordinator.

SITE PLAN

Please include a map to show the general location of the range, including the nearest community and access roads. Also include a diagram of the range that includes existing and proposed range features. The diagram may be hand drawn.
 Vicinity Map, Entry Photo, and Conceptual design/site plan attached.

LAND OWNERSHIP

Property to be developed must be controlled by the local sponsor for the life of the project. A copy of the lease, easement, or title must be given to CPW to ensure public access to the property throughout the life of the project. Give the name of the landowner and the type of legal instrument guaranteeing public access for a minimum of the useful life of the project. If the project is selected the applicant will be required to furnish a copy of such document.

Property Owner: US Forest Service

Legal Instrument (including length of lease if not owned by project sponsor): Final Decision and FONSI, included.

MAIN CPW STAFF CONTACTED FOR PROJECT

Name, title, phone number (e.g., District Wildlife Manager, Regional Manager, Area Wildlife Manager, Hunter Education Coordinator):

DWM: Sean Dodd
 AWM: Matt Martinez
 CPW SSP Representative: Tim Kroening

Attachments:

- Vicinity map & entry photo
- Conceptual range design
- Photos of sample elements
- USFS Decision memo & FONSI

Acknowledgements:

By signing or submitting this application, the project sponsor acknowledges the following –

_____ An environmental stewardship (lead mitigation) plan has been or will be submitted.

_____ Public access will be allowed at the range, based on reasonable terms, conditions and fees agreed to with CPW, for the useful life of the range improvements.

_____ All information in the application is true and accurate.

_____ No construction work will commence prior to the issuance of a contract or purchase order from CPW.

_____ Credit signage for Colorado Parks and Wildlife participation in the improvements will be included in the final project.

SIGNATURE PAGE

Organization Name: Douglas County Government

Project Contact (name, title): Andy Hough, Environmental Resources Coordinator

Date:

CPW District Wildlife Manager: Sean Dodd

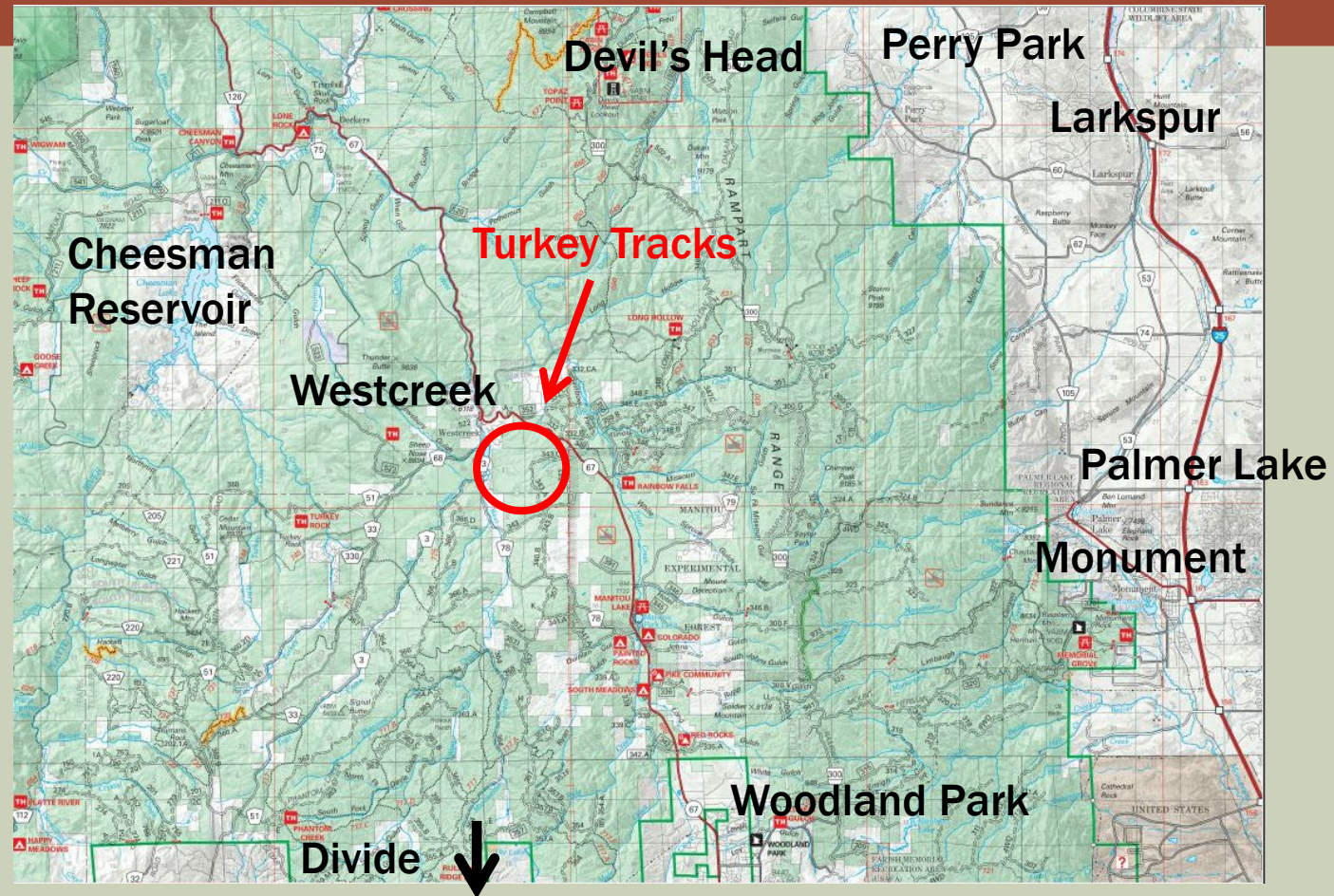
Date:

CPW Area Wildlife Manager or CPW Regional Manager: Matt Martinez **Date:**

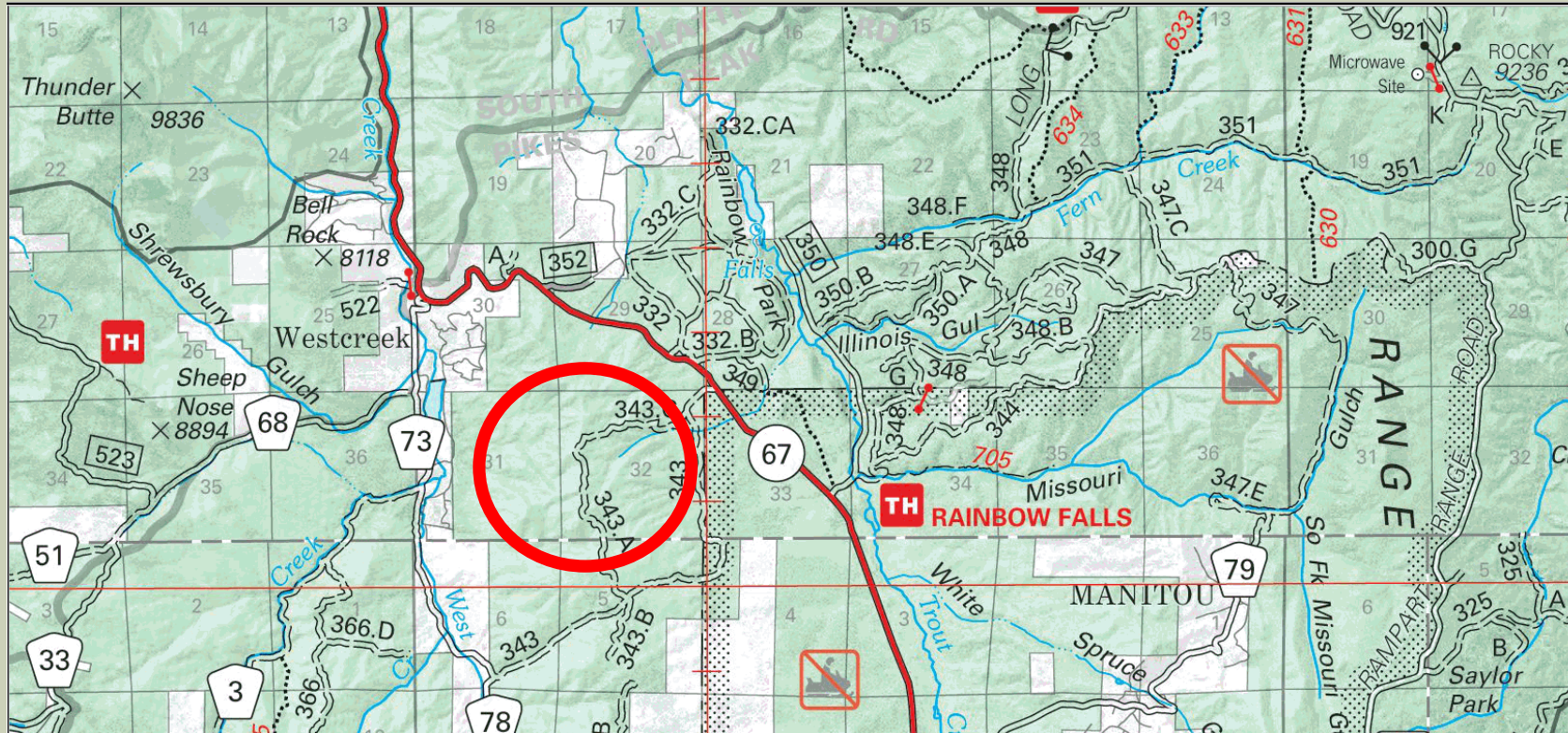
Region Comments:

Applications must have at least one Colorado Parks and Wildlife signature to be accepted. Please contact the SRDG Program Coordinator for contact information if needed.

VICINITY MAP

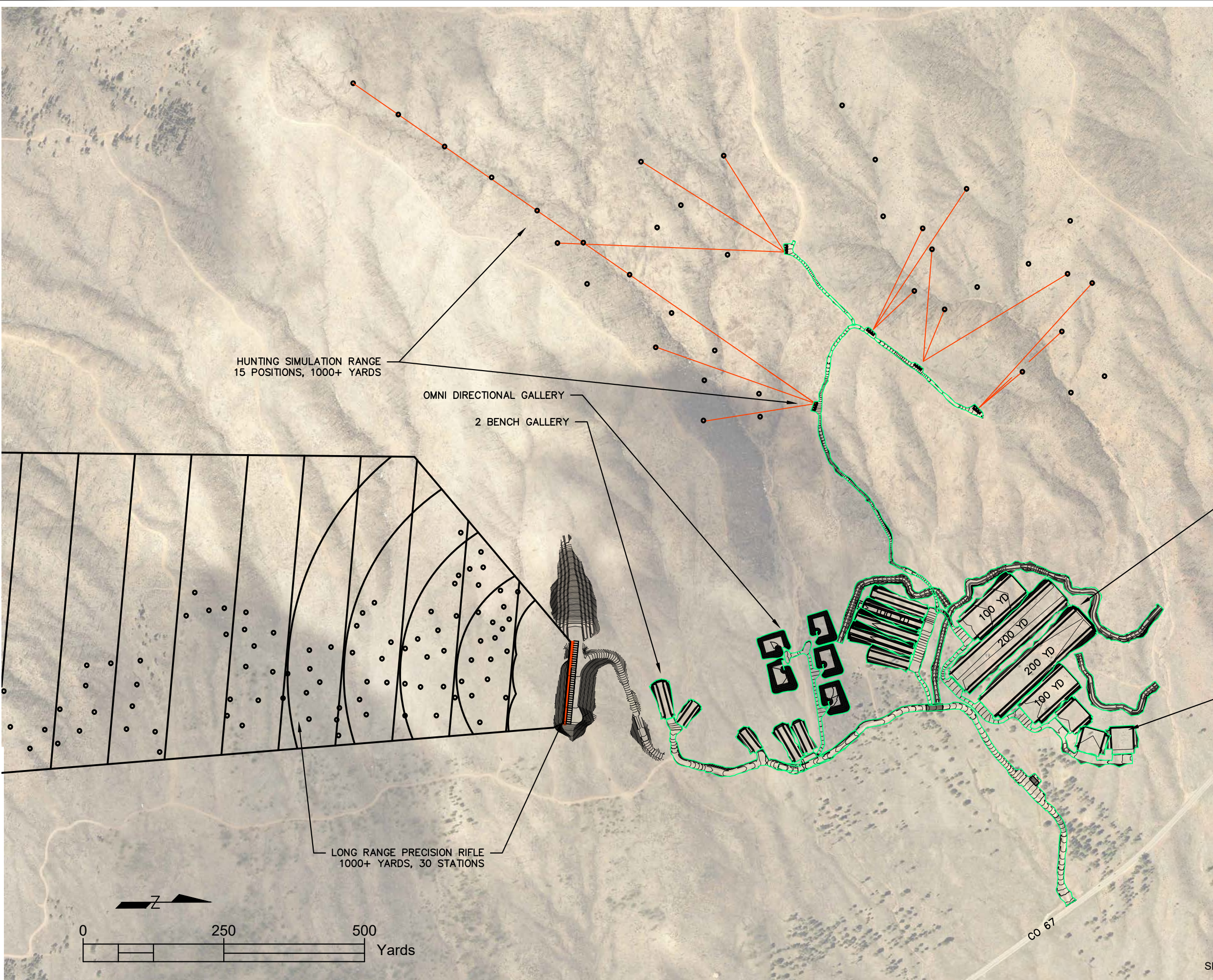


TURKEY TRACKS LOCATION



TURKEY TRACKS ENTRANCE AT FS ROAD 343 & HWY 67





HUNTING SIMULATION RANGE
15 POSITIONS, 1000+ YARDS

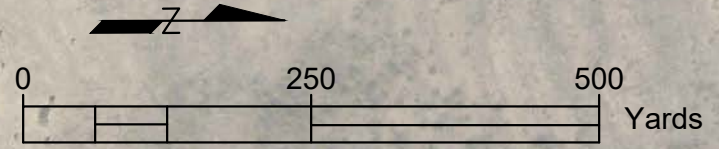
OMNI DIRECTIONAL GALLERY

2 BENCH GALLERY

LONG RANGE PRECISION RIFLE
1000+ YARDS, 30 STATIONS

TRADITIONAL GALLERIES
10 LANES EA

PISTOL
GALLERIES
10 LANES EA
30 YD LONG



Rev	Date	Description

DOUGLAS COUNTY COLORADO
 Engineering Division
 100 Third Street
 Castle Rock, Colorado 80104
 (303) 660-7490

TURKEY TRACKS

V6 05JUL2022

Design	Drawn	Checked	Date	Created	Date	Modified	Scale	Job No.

SHEET

SHEETS

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TURKEY TRACKS

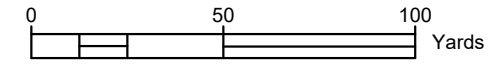
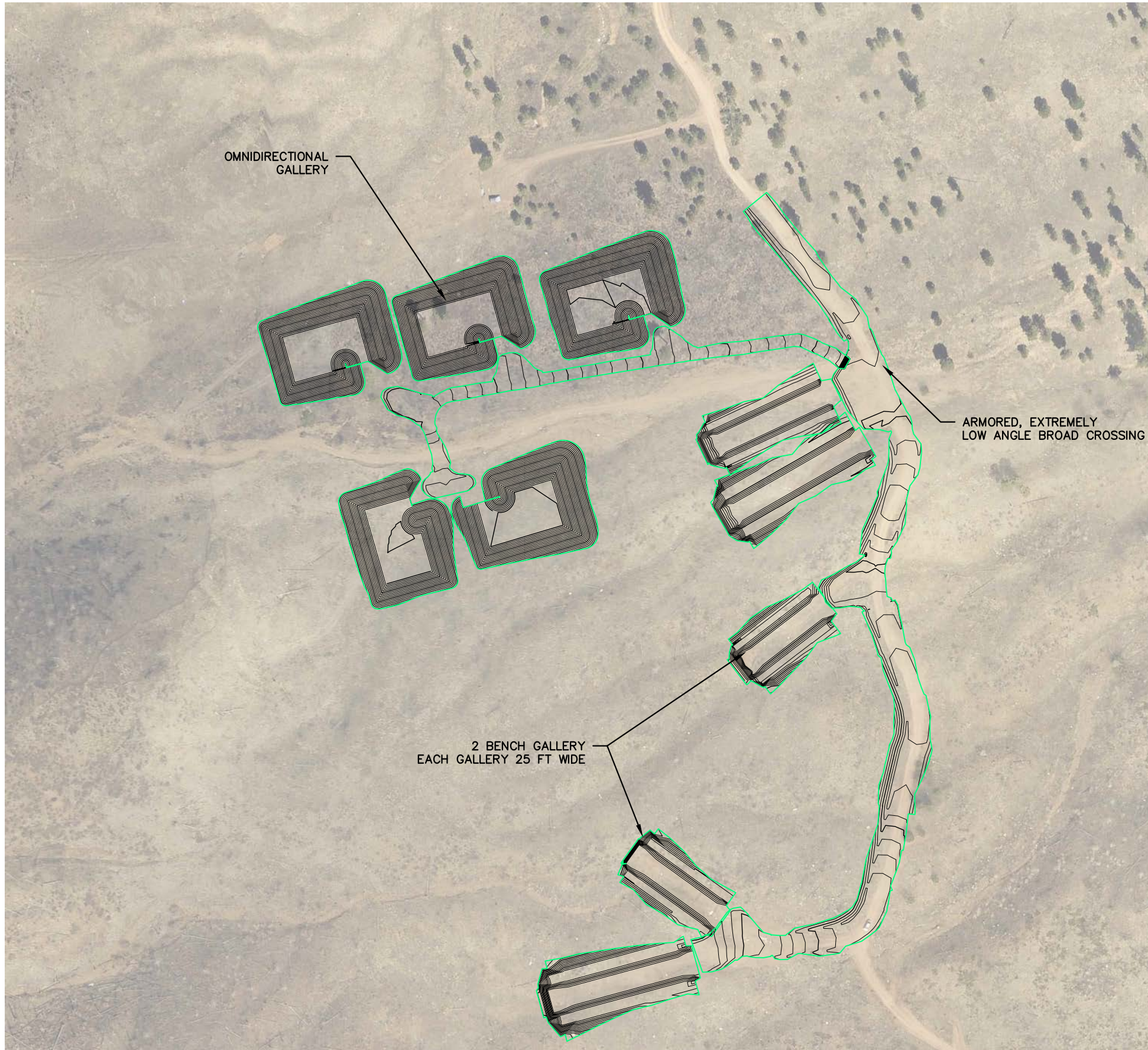
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SHEETS

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TURKEY TRACKS CENTRAL RANGE AREA

NOTES:

- 1: OMNIDIRECTIONAL GALLERIES PROVIDE 360 DEGREES OF CRITERIA COMPLIANT SHOOTING OPPORTUNITIES
- 2: TWO BENCH GALLERIES OFFER JUST TWO VEHICLE WIDTH GALLERIES FOR MORE INDIVIDUAL TARGET PRACTICE



Map Disclaimer. This map is intended to depict physical features as they generally appear on the ground and may not be used to determine title, ownership, legal boundaries, legal jurisdiction, including jurisdiction over roads or trails, or access restrictions that may be in place on either public or private land. Obtain permission before entering private lands, and check with appropriate government offices for restrictions that may apply to public lands. Lands, roads and trails within the boundaries of the National Forest may be subject to restrictions on motor vehicle use. Obtain a Motor Vehicle Use Map, or inquire at the local Forest Service Office for motor vehicle access information. Natural hazards may or may not be depicted on the map, and land users should exercise due caution. This map may not be suitable for navigation. For more information, contact the Pike & San Isabel NF, Cimarron & Comanche NG, Pueblo, CO. (719) 553-1400.

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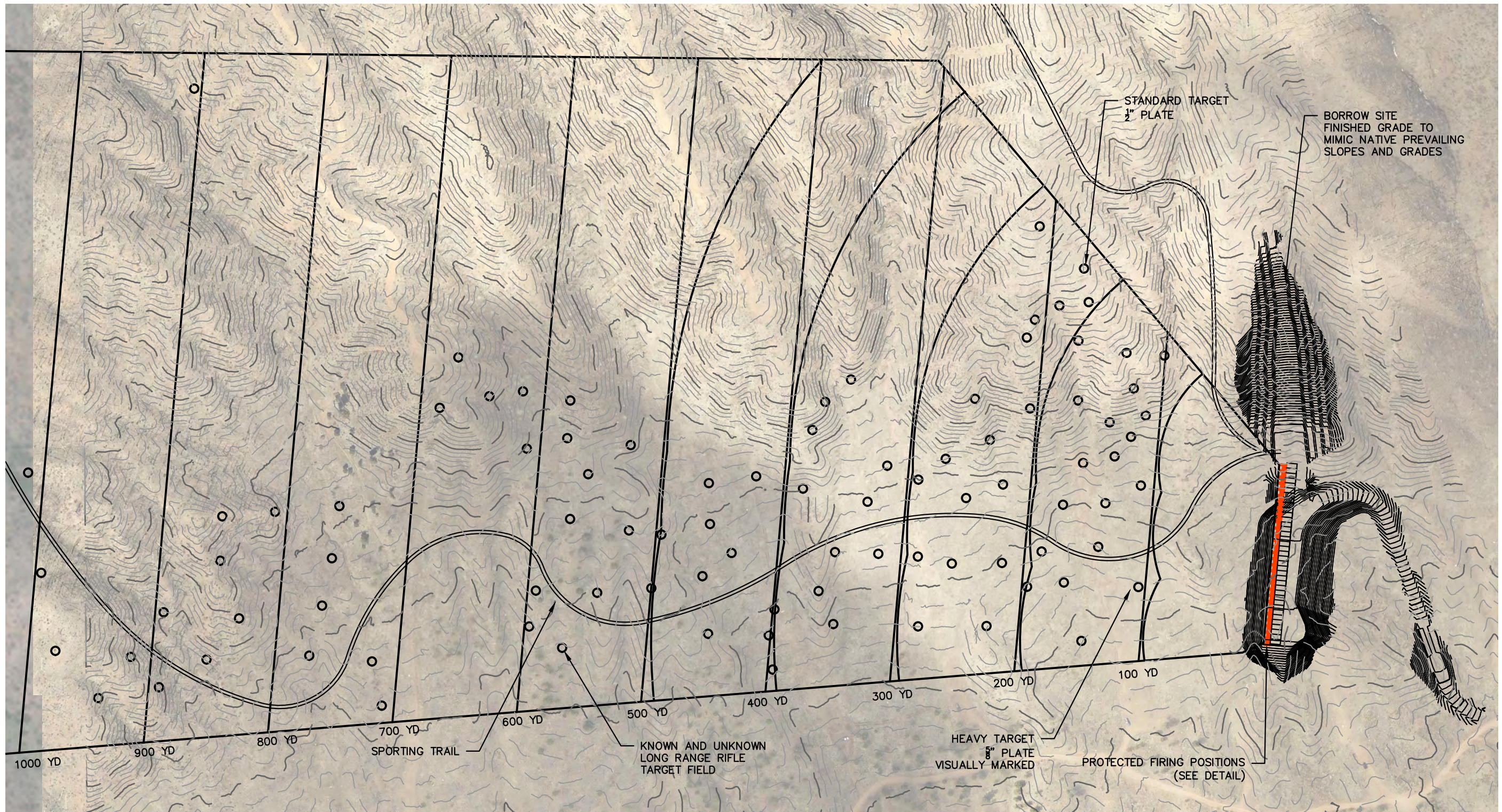
TURKEY TRACKS

V6 28JUN2022

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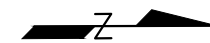
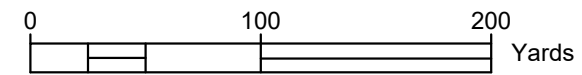
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NOTES:

- 1) TARGET FIELD OFFERS UNIQUE KNOWN, UNKNOWN SHOTS OUT TO 1000+ YARDS
- 2) TARGETS ARE REACTIVE, STEEL. LOW MAINTENANCE, THEFT RESISTANT
- 3) A WIDE VARIETY OF TARGET SHAPES MAY BE UTILIZED TO PROVIDE THE WIDEST VARIETY OF CHALLENGES TO USERS
- 4) LARGER, HIGHER ENERGY CALIBER TARGETS ARE MADE AVAILABLE AND IDENTIFIED IN THE RANGE WITH VISUAL INDICATORS
- 5) VISIBILITY ANALYSIS ALSO ENABLES ISOLATING TARGET TYPES TO SPECIFIC PORTIONS OF THE FIRING LINE WHICH ARE SIGNED TO INDICATE ACCEPTABLE CALIBER
- 6) SPORTING TRAIL ENABLES A UNIQUE, EVENT BASED FACILITY USE PROVIDING NEW CHALLENGE, ANALGOUS TO BIATHLON EVENTS. THIS ELEMENT IS NOT AVAILABLE DURING UNMANAGED RANGE OPERATION WITH STANDARD ACCESS DENIAL ELEMENTS.
- 7) TARGET LOCATION MAY BE ADJUSTED TO REFLECT MOST PRACTICABLE UTILIZATION, SAFE OPERATION, AND BEST MANAGEMENT

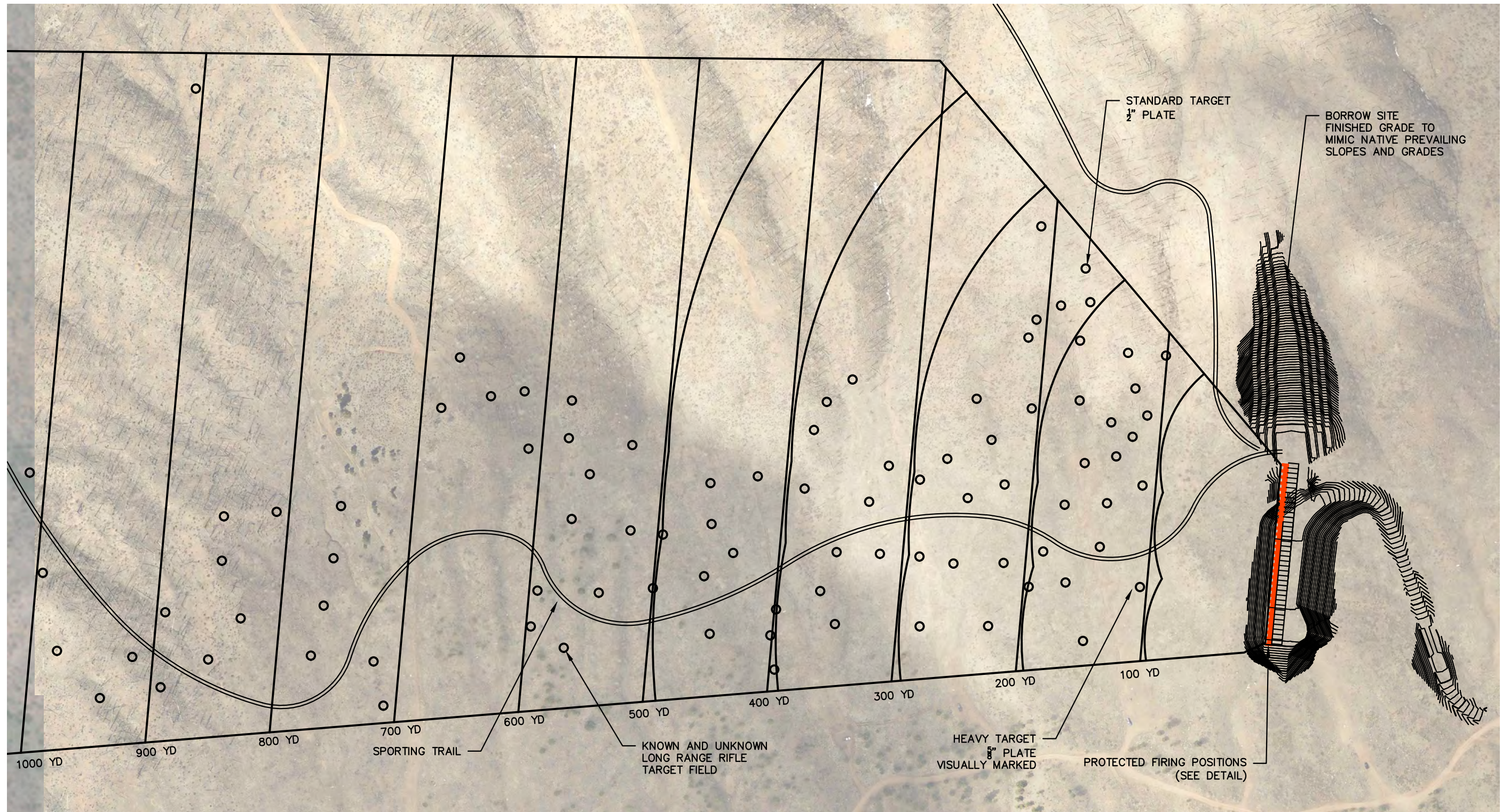


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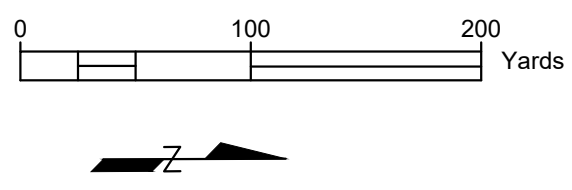
TURKEY TRACKS RANGE

Design	Drawn	Checked	Date Created	Date Modified	Scale	No.



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- NOTES:
- 1) TARGET FIELD OFFERS UNIQUE KNOWN, UNKNOWN SHOTS OUT TO 1000+ YARDS
 - 2) TARGETS ARE REACTIVE, STEEL. LOW MAINTENANCE, THEFT RESISTANT
 - 3) A WIDE VARIETY OF TARGET SHAPES MAY BE UTILIZED TO PROVIDE THE WIDEST VARIETY OF CHALLENGES TO USERS
 - 4) LARGER, HIGHER ENERGY CALIBER TARGETS ARE MADE AVAILABLE AND IDENTIFIED IN THE RANGE WITH VISUAL INDICATORS
 - 5) VISIBILITY ANALYSIS ALSO ENABLES ISOLATING TARGET TYPES TO SPECIFIC PORTIONS OF THE FIRING LINE WHICH ARE SIGNED TO INDICATE ACCEPTABLE CALIBER
 - 6) SPORTING TRAIL ENABLES A UNIQUE, EVENT BASED FACILITY USE PROVIDING NEW CHALLENGE, ANALGOUS TO BIATHLON EVENTS. THIS ELEMENT IS NOT AVAILABLE DURING UNMANAGED RANGE OPERATION WITH STANDARD ACCESS DENIAL ELEMENTS.
 - 7) TARGET LOCATION MAY BE ADJUSTED TO REFLECT MOST PRACTICABLE UTILIZATION, SAFE OPERATION, AND BEST MANAGEMENT

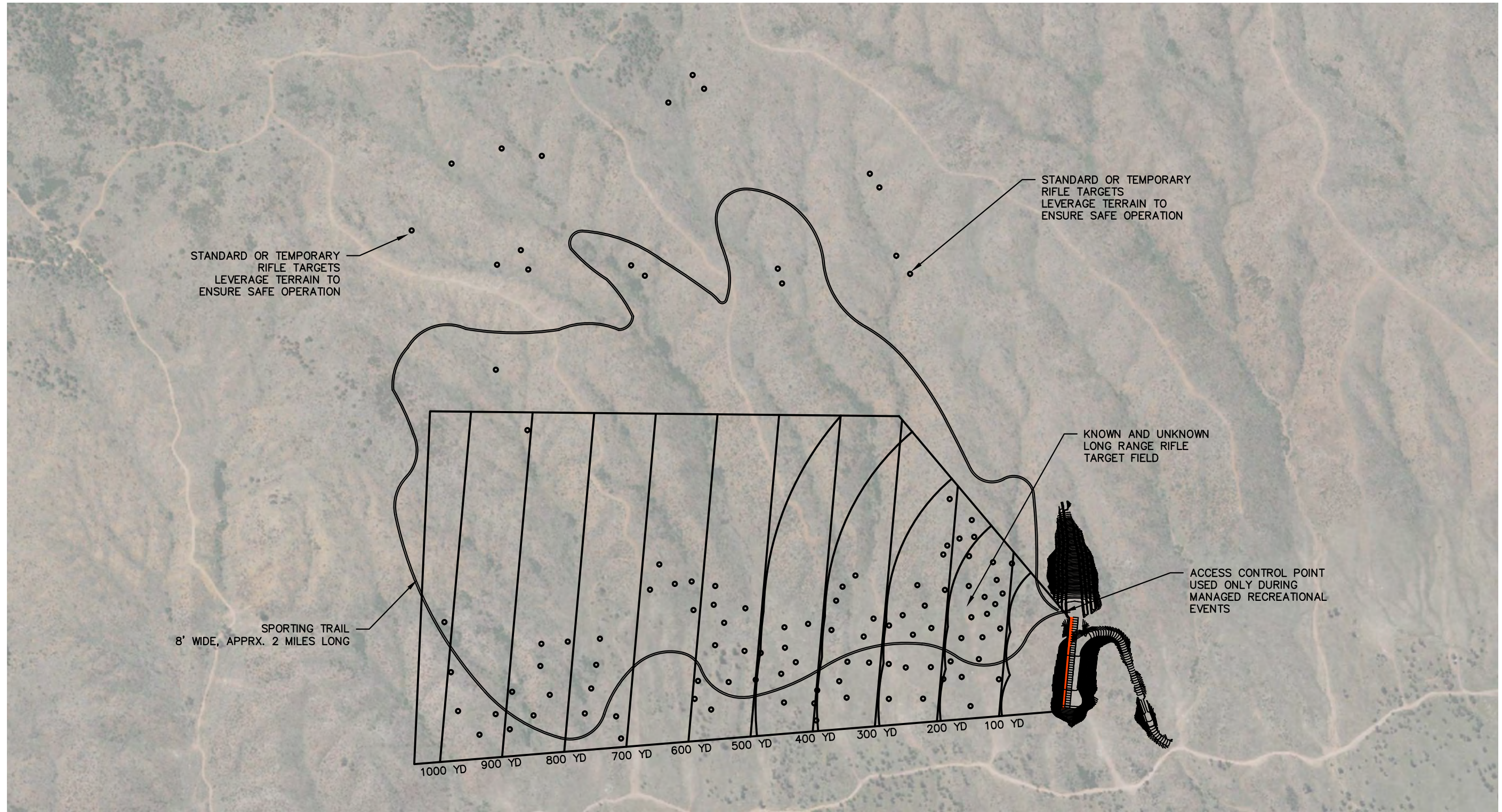


REV	DATE	DESCRIPTION

DOUGLAS COUNTY
 COLORADO
 Engineering Division
 100 Third Street
 Castle Rock, Colorado 80104
 (303) 660-7490

TURKEY TRACKS RANGE

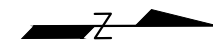
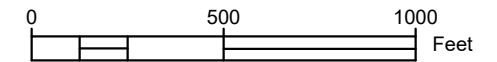
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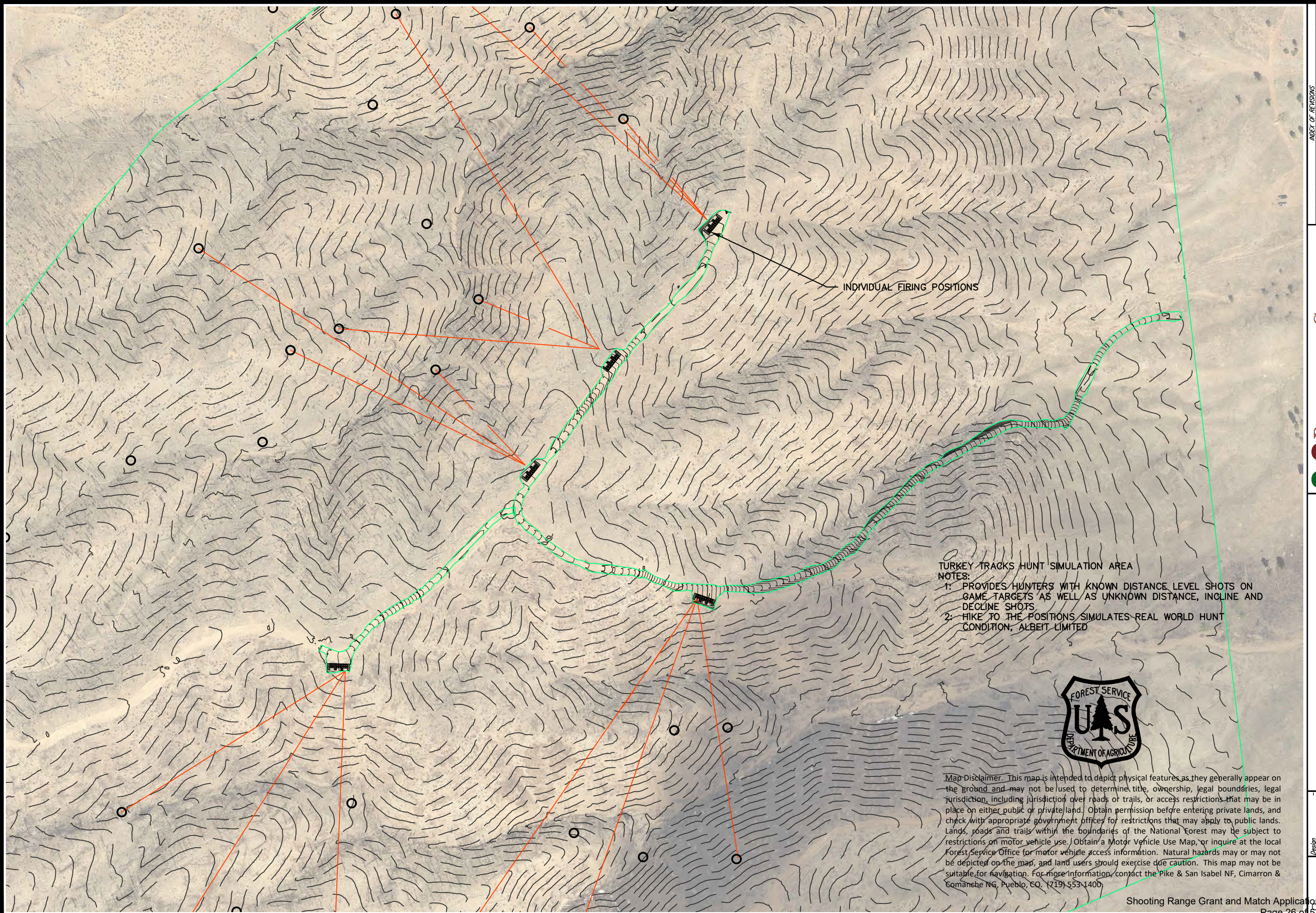
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 100 Third Street
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DESIGN	DRAWN	CHECKED	DATE CREATED	DATE MODIFIED	SCALE	NO.

SHEET

C:\Users\jshankel\OneDrive\Workspaces\2022\2022\Turkey Tracks\Turkey Tracks\Map\Map 174202222\MM172022\0 Hunt Site Map.mxd



- TURKEY TRACKS HUNT SIMULATION AREA
 NOTES:
 1: PROVIDES HUNTERS WITH KNOWN DISTANCE LEVEL SHOTS ON GAME TARGETS AS WELL AS UNKNOWN DISTANCE, INCLINE AND DECLINE SHOTS
 2: HIKE TO THE POSITIONS SIMULATES REAL WORLD HUNT CONDITION, ALBEIT LIMITED



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DOUGLAS COUNTY COLORADO
 Engineering Division
 100 Third Street
 Castle Rock, Colorado 80104
 (303) 660-7490

TURKEY TRACKS

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INDEX OF REVISIONS

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SHEET

Shooting Range Grant and Match Application
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SHEETS



Ballistically protected firing position constructed with either concrete block or gabion baskets. Proposed in the Long Range Precision Range (LRPR) and Hunting Simulation Range



Ballistically protected firing position construction details.



Reactive steel silhouette target.

Targets are various life-sized animals and geometric shapes.



Target stand and hanger system.
Mounted onto concrete block base.

File Code: 2300

Date:

Mr. Travis Long
Colorado Parks & Wildlife
Shooting Range Development Grant Program
6060 Broadway
Denver, CO 80216
Email: AHough@douglas.co.us

Dear Mr. Long,

On behalf of the Pike-San Isabel National Forests & Cimarron and Comanche National Grasslands (PSICC), I would like to offer my full support for Douglas County's application for funding to finalize design and begin development of the Turkey Tracks shooting range. Douglas County has been a partner with the Forest Service for the last eight years as an active member of the Southern Shooting Partnership (SSP). Supporting the application for funding helps us all meet the SSP objectives of promoting opportunities for recreational shooting, partnering and sharing resources to accomplish this goal.

I recently signed the final decision notice for the Integrated Management of Target Shooting (IMTS) project. Part of the decision was to designate the Turkey Tracks location as a formal shooting range. This site, along with five others on the Pike National Forest, may be constructed once designs are finalized, any required site clean-up is completed, and resources are allocated. Douglas County's assistance in any of these tasks for the Turkey Tracks shooting range will greatly accelerate its construction and opening.

As described in my decision for the IMTS project, we are exploring options of how this shooting range will be managed for public use. Regardless of the entity that will eventually manage the facility, it will be open to the public full time except for occasional closures for public safety, construction or maintenance.

Thank you for your consideration of this application. We look forward to partnering with CPW and Douglas County to open this facility and providing unique shooting opportunities for recreational shooters along Colorado's densely populated Front Range. If you have any questions regarding this project please contact Carl Bauer, Pikes Peak District Ranger at either carl.bauer@usda.gov or 719-477-4202.

Sincerely,

Ryan Nehl
RYAN NEHL
Forest and Grassland Supervisor

cc: lisa.maestas@usda.gov, brian.banks@ usada.gov, joshua.voorhis@usda.gov, carl.bauer@usda.gov





File Code: 1950

Date:

Dear Interested Party,

This letter is to inform you that I have made a final decision on the Integrated Management of Target Shooting on the Pike National Forest project. The final Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact (DN-FONSI) has been signed and is available for viewing on the project website at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=57807> in the "Decision" folder.

I have decided to implement a modified version of the proposed action, as described in the draft decision notice. The modified proposed action identified six locations for developed shooting ranges, will prohibit dispersed target shooting on about 73% of the Pike National Forest (mostly on the eastern side), and implement an adaptive management framework as described in the environmental assessment (also available on the project website). These increased management actions are necessary given the increasing popularity of the shooting sports across the forest. In this way, the Forest Service is managing target shooting as we manage other popular activities such as motor vehicle use and camping. The project activities will reduce use conflicts, improve the visitor experience, and protect natural resources.

The Forest Service released the final Environmental Assessment (EA) and draft DN-FONSI in November 2024 for the pre-decisional administrative review (objection) process. Deputy Regional Forester Bunni Maceo (as the Reviewing Officer) reviewed the objections submitted by six individuals and organizations who had standing to object, having submitted substantial comments during one of the three previous public comment periods. The Reviewing Official responded to the objections in a letter dated January 17, 2025.

This project has benefitted from the collaboration of the Southern Shooting Partnership, a group of 11 land management and utilities agencies. For eight years the Partnership has worked to find opportunities for target shooting in the area, manage impacts from that sport, and work to share resources in management and public outreach activities. The Partners provided critical input on the project alternatives and valuable support sharing the project details with the public.

I also appreciate the hundreds of individuals and organizations who participated in the public comment periods for this project. The comments received helped to refine the proposed action and alternatives, and focused discussions amongst Forest Service employees in addressing this complex issue. It is a better product because of the public input.



If you have any questions concerning this project, please contact Jennifer DeWoody, NEPA Planner, 601 S. Weber St., Colorado Springs, CO 80903, by phone at (970) 568-2692 or by email at jennifer.dewoody@usda.gov, or visit the project website at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=57807>. Thank you for your continued interest and participation in this process.

Sincerely,

RYAN NEHL
Forest and Grassland Supervisor

cc: brian.banks@usda.gov, carl.bauer@usda.gov, jennifer.dewoody@usda.gov,
lisa.heagley@usda.gov, lisa.maestas@usda.gov, joshua.voorhis@usda.gov

Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact for the Integrated Management of Target Shooting Project

USDA Forest Service
Pikes Peak, South Park, and South Platte Ranger Districts
Pike-San Isabel National Forests & Cimarron and Comanche National Grasslands
Clear Creek, Douglas, El Paso, Jefferson, Park, and Teller Counties, Colorado

Introduction

The Integrated Management of Target Shooting project was undertaken to address four needs on the Pike National Forest: to provide opportunities for target shooting (also called recreational sport shooting), to identify areas of the forest where dispersed target shooting is not appropriate (including those areas previously closed under temporary orders), to designate areas of the Forest as appropriate for developing shooting ranges, and to specify an adaptive management framework to manage target shooting into the future. These needs reflect the impacts that the increasing popularity of target shooting in recent years has had on natural resources, user conflicts, and the quality of the experience of forest visitors.

The environmental assessment documents the analysis of two alternatives to meet this need and the potential effects of taking no action.

Decision and Reasons for the Decision

Based upon my review of all alternatives, I have decided to implement a modified version of alternative 2, the proposed action.

I have decided that five of the sites examined in alternative 2 are appropriate for developing a shooting range: NFSR 255A and NFSR 865 on the South Park Ranger District, Turkey Tracks and NFSR 370i on the Pikes Peak Ranger District, and NFSR 528G-North on the South Platte Ranger District (figure 1). Due to the mixed ownership of the site at NFSR 370i, this location may only be developed if the US Forest Service acquires the parcel of land on the south side of that road, adjacent from the proposed shooting range infrastructure. In addition, I have decided that expanding the existing Camp Fickes facility operated under permit to the Buffalo Creek Gun Club (BCGC) is an appropriate use of that site. This decision means that six shooting ranges may be developed on the Pike National Forest.

I have also decided that one site, NFSR 704 on Wilkerson Pass, is not appropriate for a shooting range and will not be developed under this project. I am making no decision on the other two sites, NFSR 536 and NFSR 553, and any future development of these locations would require an additional decision and consultation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

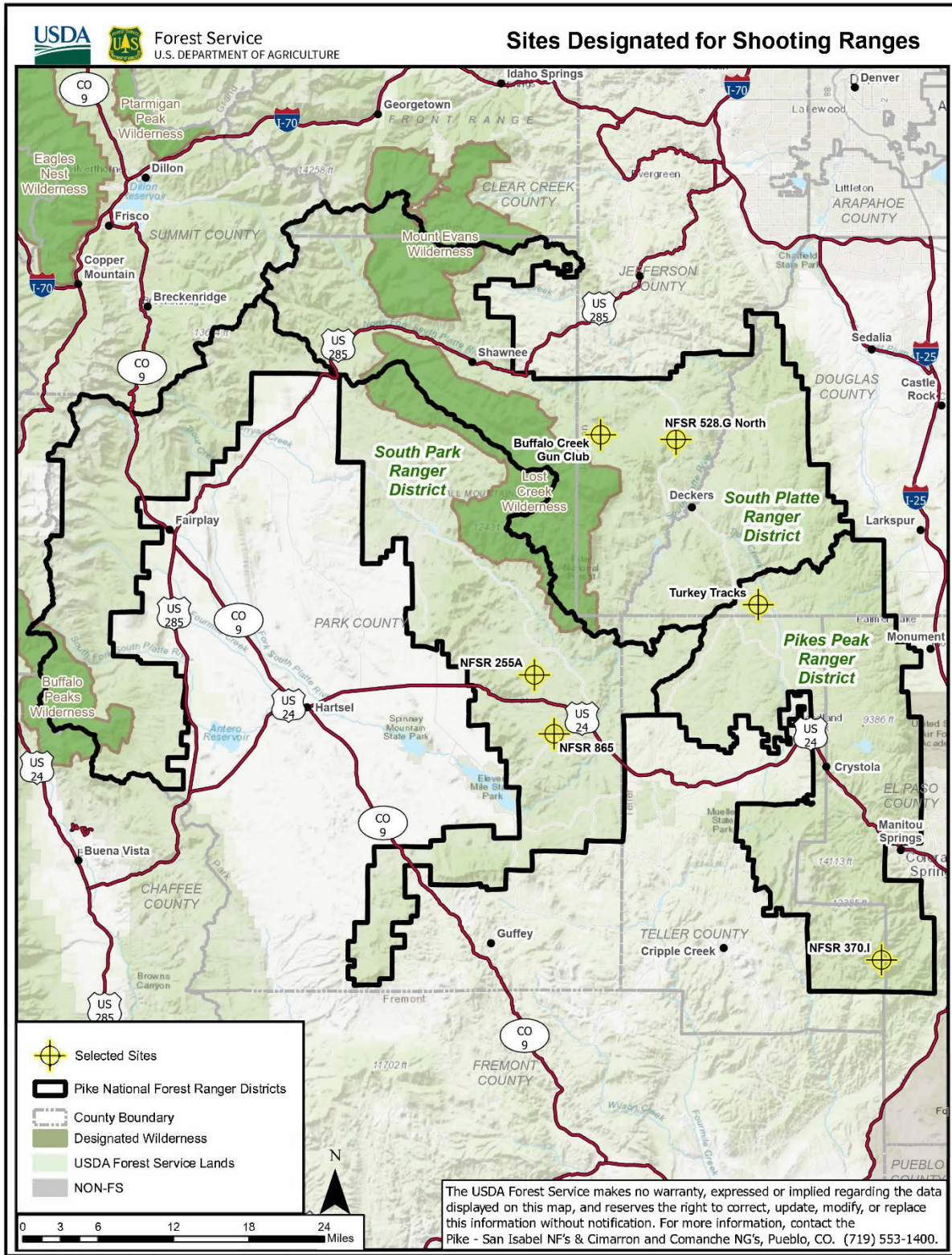


Figure 1. Six sites appropriate for developed shooting ranges on the Pike National Forest. One location is already a shooting range but can be expanded (Buffalo Creek Gun Club).

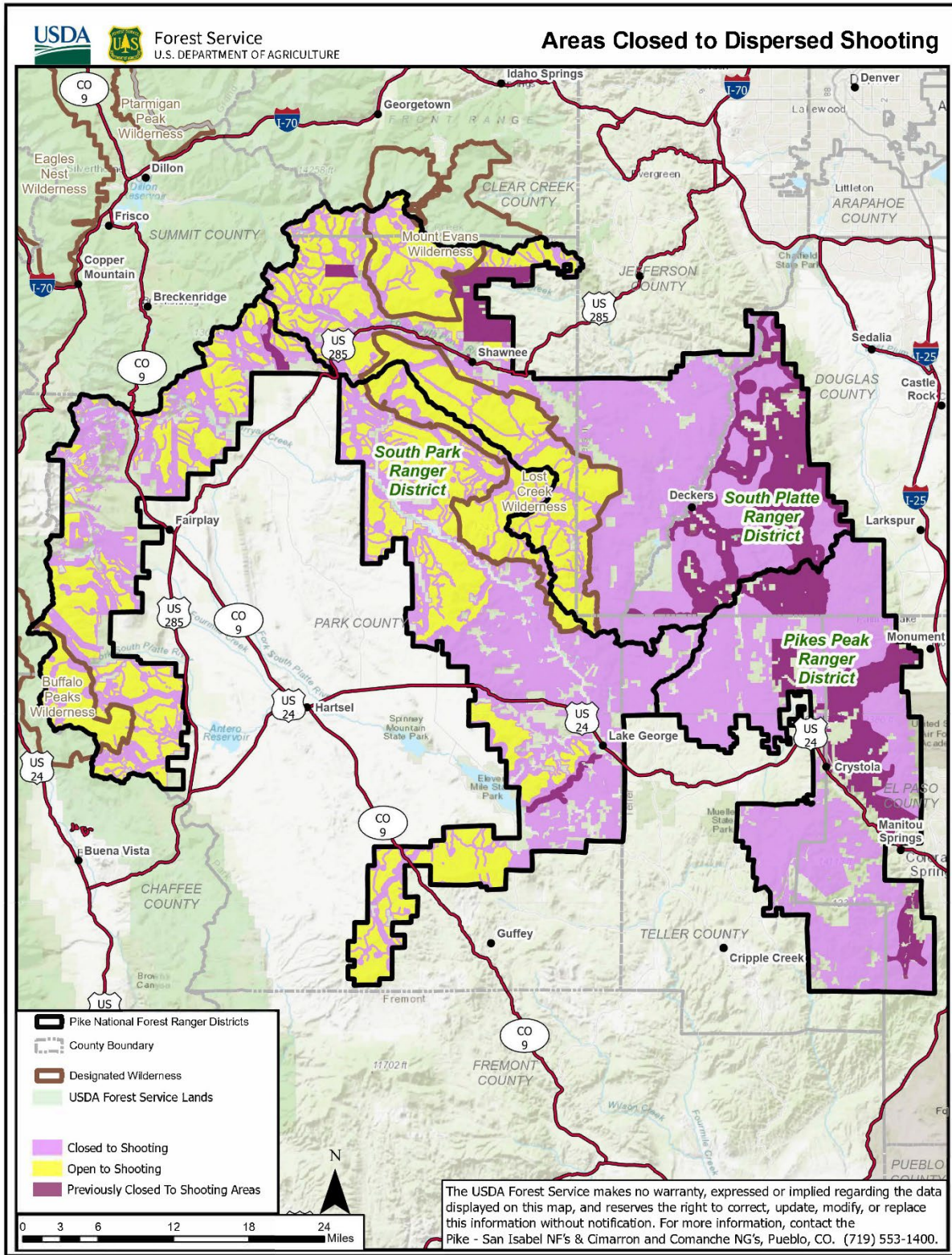


Figure 2. Areas selected to be closed to dispersed target shooting (lavender and dark purple).

I have decided to close to dispersed target shooting those areas described in alternative 2, the proposed action (figure 2), with minor changes. First, corrections were made to the maps depicting areas that would remain open to dispersed target shooting. The definition of areas inappropriate for dispersed target shooting includes areas less than 5 acres in size (EA page 18), but that condition was erroneously left out of the calculations and maps in the preliminary environmental assessment. Polygons less than five acres in size are included in the area of land to be closed to dispersed target shooting, and the final EA has been corrected to reflect this. Second, I have decided to change the areas for two features based on comments received from the public. I have decided a larger area around historic properties should be inappropriate for dispersed target shooting, so that distance has been changed from 50 feet to 150 yards. I have also decided a larger area around wilderness trailheads and around the trails within the first quarter of a mile (1/4 mile) of each wilderness boundary is inappropriate for dispersed target shooting. Those distances have been changed so that dispersed target shooting will be prohibited within 1/2 mile of each trailhead listed in table 1 (instead of 1/4 mile) and within 1/2 mile of the trails located in wilderness listed in table 2 (instead of 150 yards). Together, these changes mean approx. 73% of the Pike National Forest will be closed to dispersed target shooting (table 3).

Table 1. Areas within one half (1/2) mile of these trailheads that lead into wilderness areas will be closed to dispersed target shooting.

Wilderness Area	Ranger District	Trailheads
Buffalo Peaks	South Park	North Salt Creek Buffalo Peaks Lynch Creek Rich Creek
Lost Creek	South Park	Rock Creek Long Gulch North Fork Lost Park Ute Creek Twin Eagles Spruce Grove
Lost Creek	South Platte	Goose Creek Wigwam Rolling Creek/Hopper Brookside-Payne Creek Ben Tyler
Mount Evans	South Platte	Deer Creek Threemile Burning Bear Abyss/Burning Bear Guanelia Pass

Table 2. For the first quarter of a mile (1/4 mile) inside the wilderness boundary, dispersed target shooting will be prohibited within one half (1/2) mile of these trails. For the rest of each trail, dispersed target shooting will be prohibited within 150 yards or one quarter mile (for highly visible trails, EA appendix C).

Wilderness Area	Ranger District	Trails
Buffalo Peaks	South Park	NFST 616 Rich Creek NFST 617 Tumble Creek NFST 618 Salt Creek NFST 656 Ridgeview NFST 656.A Ridgeview Spur
Lost Creek	South Park	NFST 606 Ben Tyler NFST 607 Brookside-McCurdy NFST 609 Wigwam NFST 609.A Wigwam Spur NFST 629 Ute Creek NFST 630 Hankins Pass NFST 658 Lizard Rock NFST 1776 Colorado
Lost Creek	South Platte	NFST 606 Ben Tyler NFST 606.A AG to Ben Tyler NFST 607 Brookside-McCurdy NFST 609 Wigwam NFST 612 Goose Creek NFST 612.A Harmonica Arch NFST 630 Hankins Pass NFST 637 Payne Creek NFST 663 Rolling Creek NFST 719 Brookside AG NFST 1776 Colorado
Mount Evans	South Platte	NFST 602 Abyss Lake NFST 603 Rosalie NFST 635 Threemile NFST 636 Tanglewood NFST 711 Mt. Bierstadt

Table 3. Acres to be open and closed to dispersed target shooting on the three ranger districts of the Pike National Forest.

Ranger District	Total Acres	Acres Open to Dispersed Target Shooting	Acres Closed to Dispersed Target Shooting
Pikes Peak	231,123	0	231,123 (100%)
South Park	457,651	182,622	275,029 (60%)
South Platte	408,366	118,006	290,360 (71%)
Total (Pike National Forest)	1,097,140	300,629	796,511 (73%)

Acres approximate based on available GIS data.

The closures will occur in phases: those areas previously closed to dispersed target shooting (dark purple on figure 2) will be closed first, after the public notification process required by the Dingell Act is complete. The remaining areas of each ranger district will be closed after a shooting range is developed on that district and the requirements of the Dingell Act are completed.

My decision includes all the design criteria described on pages 40-43 of the environmental assessment.

I have based my decision on my review of the Integrated Management of Target Shooting Project Environmental Assessment (EA) and project record.

Decision Rationale

In making my decision I looked to provide opportunities for target shooting, also called recreational sport shooting, in a sustainable manner so that forest resources and other uses are not compromised. As it is currently occurring, the number of people shooting in one area and the fraction of those doing so in an unsafe manner are too high to be a sustainable recreation activity (as described in the effects for alternative 1). This level of use has resulted in areas across the forest being inconsistent with direction for dispersed recreation management in the Pike-San Isabel Land and Resource Management Plan (e.g., Close or rehabilitate dispersed sites where unacceptable environmental damage is occurring, page III-21), contributing to the need for this project.

A primary concern, and one mentioned in many of the public comments received, is the risk to public safety resulting from how dispersed target shooting is currently managed. Unlike other forms of recreation in the forest, target shooting can become the sole use of an area because of the risks to other forest visitors who may be in the vicinity. Unlike hiking or camping, when visitors are target shooting, that area by necessity becomes available only to that single use. It would not be safe to hike through the shooting lane or ride a horse behind the target. Given the popularity of the Pike National Forest for recreation and other forest uses, especially those areas closest to the metropolitan areas of Denver and Colorado Springs, and given the increase in the number of people coming to the forest to shoot, I find that the closures described in alternative 2 are necessary to reduce these risks and return the potential for multiple use to some areas (as described in the EA pages 63, 70-71, 74-76). These closures are designed to be consistent with and will not supersede the prohibitions at 36 CFR 261.10(d).

I also considered how the agency will be able to enforce this decision and find that alternative 2 presents a more efficient set of rules to convey to the public and reduce confusion about what areas of National Forest System lands are available for dispersed target shooting. Given the pattern of land ownership and infrastructure on the eastern half of the forest, the areas that would be available for dispersed target shooting under alternative 3 were complex and would be difficult to enforce. Thus, I have selected alternative 2. In order to help the public understand and comply with these prohibitions, the Forest Service will maintain and release free to the public maps of areas closed to dispersed shooting (for example, GPS-enabled maps for navigation systems, or other technology in the future) (EA page 18).

As reflected in multiple public comments, risk to adjacent landowners is one component of public safety. I considered these risks in making my decision to close areas to dispersed target shooting. Given the potential for and experience of dispersed target shooting resulting in property damage and close calls on adjacent lands of other ownerships and given the complex land ownership pattern on the Pike National Forest, I have decided to prohibit dispersed target shooting on National Forest System lands near property boundaries, as described in alternative 2.

I decided to incorporate suggestions from public comments to increase the areas that are inappropriate for dispersed target shooting around historic properties, trailheads leading to wilderness areas, and trails within the first ¼ mile of each wilderness area. Given the non-renewable nature of historic features and the sensitive nature of wilderness characters, I find that these are reasonable protections to help ensure future target shooting activity does not damage these resources. The environmental analyses included the assumption that additional acres would be closed to dispersed target shooting in the future through the adaptive management process (EA page 51), so this change is still within the disclosed range of potential effects.

Several areas on the Pike National Forest have become known as shooting ranges even though they are not designed or designated for that sole use. When dispersed target shooting is concentrated in one area for a number of years the natural resources will suffer, and hazardous conditions may result. Trees have been shot and tons of litter abandoned, reducing the health of the ecosystem. Considered another way, the high use of sites for target shooting reflects the growing popularity of the activity with forest visitors. Given that this popularity is likely to continue to grow, as is the population in the area (EA page 2), I realize that the Forest Service should take this opportunity to prevent popular sites from being degraded to such a level in the future by implementing the modified alternative 2.

If a large area of the Pike National Forest is to be closed to dispersed target shooting, then I recognize the need for the Forest Service to provide opportunities for that activity. As a result, I have identified five sites appropriate for new shooting ranges and one established range to be expanded. All shooting ranges will be developed in accordance with the required environmental and safety plans per Forest Service policy at FSH 2309.13, Chapter 50 and FSH 2709.14, Chapter 70. After full implementation, two shooting ranges on each ranger district will provide a variety of target shooting opportunities for forest visitors, ranging from pistol bays and omnidirectional galleries to long-range lanes (EA page 67). Some comments asked for shotgun range facilities in the project area. Since none of the conceptual designs for the selected locations included a shotgun range, and as the conceptual designs will need to be further developed into

construction-quality designs, I have decided to add a shotgun facility to at least one site, where such a facility is feasible, as the construction designs are revised.

The sites are a similar distance to the metropolitan areas as areas that are currently used for dispersed target shooting (EA pages 55 and 68), indicating that minority or lower income populations should not be disproportionately affected by this decision. Some of the locations, such as Turkey Tracks, are already popular locations for target shooting with volunteers who promote responsible behavior and help with site cleanup.

I understand the concern about the proximity of the Turkey Tracks site to adjacent private lands and neighborhoods. I decided not to exclude the site as suggested in some public comments because it has several characteristics that make it a viable shooting range location: the site is accessible by passenger cars (Colorado highway 67, not a route requiring high clearance vehicles), it is a relatively accessible from population centers (EA page 55), it has a topography that supports the development of shooting lanes, and it is within a fire scar, reducing the amount of fuel mitigation that will be required. In addition, Turkey Tracks is already a popular site for dispersed target shooting, so the public is familiar with it in name and location. In selecting the site for a shooting range, I carefully considered the possible risks and environmental effects. As described in the EA, the Turkey Tracks site was the subject of a traffic analysis considering auxiliary traffic lanes (pages 58-60), fire risk analysis (pages 92-98), and sound study (pages 85-90), among other reviews. In addition, and separate from this NEPA project, the site has recently become the site of additional soil chemistry testing to identify any contamination issues related to its use for dispersed target shooting. Like all new shooting ranges, Turkey Tracks will be subject to a suite of adaptive management tools (EA table 3), best management practices (EA appendix D), and range management policies (FSH 2709.14, Chapter 70, EPA 2005¹) designed to reduce potential environmental harms. I find that building a range at Turkey Tracks will not result in significant environmental effects.

However, I find that the site on Wilkerson Pass at NFSR 704 is not appropriate for a shooting range due to the use of the area by big game species (EA page 117). As a wildlife corridor, the site presents a particular benefit to these species, and the risk of target shooting disrupting their movement and foraging outweighs the potential benefit of the site, especially with two other options in the vicinity (NFSR 255A and NFSR 865). As a result, I have decided to remove NFSR 704 as a possible location for a shooting range and will not develop it as such.

This decision does not include the operational details of how each shooting range will be funded and managed. I am open to using a variety of partnership or funding tools to implement this decision. As a member of the Southern Shooting Partnership, the Forest Service is committed to fulfilling the agreement made to cooperate to find solutions to the management of target shooting in the region. In addition, numerous public comments provided suggestions or offers to help design or manage new shooting ranges. Given how different the six sites are in location and

¹ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). 2005. Best Management Practices for Lead at Outdoor Shooting Ranges. https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/documents/epa_bmp.pdf. Revised June 2005. (Accessed October 13, 2022).

potential facilities, I anticipate that each shooting range may use slightly different management plans.

I considered the environmental effects of each alternative when making my decision to close areas as described in alternative 2. When compared to the other alternatives, the selected alternative will reduce the potential of further natural resource damage including potentially hazardous conditions at areas popular for dispersed target shooting. The effects analyses summarized in the EA demonstrate that alternative 2 provides greater protection to sensitive resources than the other alternatives. Closing the areas described in alternative 2 to dispersed target shooting will better protect habitat for threatened and endangered species and those proposed for listing (EA pages 107-108 and 117-118) and will help prevent waste from dispersed target shooting activities from entering waterways by prohibiting dispersed target shooting along perennial and intermittent streams (EA pages 80-84). As the majority of the Pike National Forest is in a watershed that provides water to municipal sources such as Denver and Colorado Springs, I found this protection important to balancing multiple uses. In addition, closing the eastern side of the forest, which happen to be the lower elevations, to dispersed target shooting should reduce the potential for wildfire ignitions from shooting activities (EA page 96-98).

In addition to the effects to big game at the NFSR 704 site, I considered the environmental effects of developing shooting ranges at each proposed location. Developing shooting ranges and installing appropriate containment and migration control systems will reduce the potential for lead and other wastes to move off site and potentially contaminate other areas (EA pages 11-12 and 80, Soil and Water Specialist Report). I recognize the potential impacts to Preble's meadow jumping mouse, a federally protected species, if a range were built at the NFSR 536 site. However, as there is another site available in the vicinity (NFSR 528G-North) to meet the needs of this decision, and as design criteria were identified to reduce adverse effects (EA page 43), I will not determine if building a range at the NFSR 536 site is appropriate or not at this time. A small amount of designated recovery habitat for the Mexican spotted owl will be impacted by the development of the shooting range at NFSR 370i and the expansion of the Camp Fickes site (Buffalo Creek Gun Club) (Biological Assessment). However, the acres affected will be extremely small compared to the acres of recovery habitat available in the vicinities, and both sites are already used for shooting sports, meaning the areas already experience regular noise. Finally, I considered the potential risk of wildfire at each proposed shooting range location. By implementing the suite of fuels reduction treatments at each location (EA page 12) and designing ranges to reduce the potential of fire ignitions, the risk of wildfire starting will be reduced. In addition, the risk of wildfire spreading out of the shooting range to sensitive sites in the vicinity (such as communication sites) or to neighboring properties will be reduced even further (EA pages 12 and 97; Wildfire Risk Effects Analysis report).

Other Alternatives Considered

In addition to the selected alternative, I considered two other alternatives. A comparison of these alternatives can be found in the EA on pages 49-50.

Alternative 1, No Action

Under the no-action alternative, current management plans would continue to guide management of target shooting in the project area. Issues resulting from dispersed target shooting at popular locations, resource damage, and public safety concerns would continue to be addressed on a case-by-case basis. Given the ongoing risks to public safety and resource damage resulting from target shooting, I decided the no action alternative would not meet the needs of the project, and so decided not to select it.

Alternative 3

Alternative 3, the minimum action alternative, differs from alternative 2 only in the areas that would be closed to dispersed target shooting. The same nine sites were considered for developed shooting ranges, and the same adaptive management tools were included in the alternative. However, the areas that would be closed to dispersed target shooting would be smaller under alternative 3, which would not close areas on the eastern side of the forest to help improve communication and enforcement, nor would it close areas next to the forest boundary or intermittent streams. As alternative 3 would not provide the same resource protection and risk reduction as the selected alternative and would present additional difficulties for limited enforcement resources, I decided not to select it.

Public Involvement

As described in the environmental assessment (EA), the need for this action arose during discussions with the Southern Shooting Partnership around 2019. A proposal to close areas, build shooting ranges, and adaptively manage target shooting was listed in the Schedule of Proposed Actions on April 1, 2020. The proposed action was provided to the public and other agencies for comment during two scoping periods (January 2021 and December 2023). In addition, as part of the public involvement process, the agency hosted public meetings during each scoping period.

The draft EA was released on August 5, 2024 for a 30-day public comment period. The following week, three public information sessions were hosted to provide additional information and answer questions from the public. To provide additional tools to explore this project, a StoryMap was created for the initial scoping and the 30-day public comment periods.

Using the comments from the public, other agencies, and partners (see the *Issues and Concerns Raised* section in the EA), the interdisciplinary team identified several issues regarding the effects of the proposed action. Main issues of concern included public safety, opportunities to target shoot, soil and water resource damage, noise from target shooting activities, and social and economic effects, among others (EA pages 8-9). To address these concerns, the Forest Service updated the proposed action and focused the analyses to determine if there would be significant effects. To address the issue of access to dispersed target shooting opportunities, and whether closing a smaller area would suffice, the Forest Service created alternative 3 described above.

The legal notice of the 45-day opportunity to object to the final EA and draft Decision Notice was published in *The Pueblo Chieftain*, the newspaper of record, on November 20, 2024. A total of 18 objection letters were received during the objection filing period from 14 agencies and

individuals. Nine objection letters were received from six individuals that were eligible to object, submitted previous written comments, and contained information sufficient for review. The Reviewing Officer conducted an administrative review of the eligible objections and statements and the project record and issued a letter in response to the objections on January 17, 2025. Objectors raised issues relating to the National Environmental Policy Act requirements (e.g., best available information, alternatives), range design and safety, enforcement, wildfire risk, lead contamination, and impacts to residents (e.g., noise impacts, property values). After reviewing the project record, the Reviewing Official identified no instructions to be addressed.

Finding of No Significant Impact

The justification for the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is described below. A more in-depth discussion of the effects related to the FONSI can be found in the EA.

Pertinent specialists have reviewed the proposal and based on their input, I have made the following determinations with regards to the potentially affected environment and degree of effects considered for a Finding of No Significant Impact.

Context

For the proposed action and alternatives, the context of the environmental effects is based on the environmental analysis in the environmental assessment (EA).

Context of the effects from the proposed actions depends on which piece of the proposal (building a shooting range versus closing an area to dispersed target shooting) and what resource is being considered. The entire approx. 1.1 million acres of the Pike National Forest was included in the project activities, but the size of the area considered for potential effects varied as described in the EA and the resource reports (in the project record). For threatened, endangered, or sensitive species, the overlap of potential or known habitat with project activities was considered. For economic effects, a 12-county area was considered. For soil and water resources, impacts were considered both in the vicinity of proposed shooting ranges and across the forest (where dispersed shooting may occur). For effects of noise, the effects considered both sounds occurring at developed shooting ranges and at dispersed shooting sites. For risks of wildfire, the analysis considered the potential and severity of wildfire at a developed range and from dispersed target shooting at an undeveloped location.

Intensity

Intensity is a measure of the severity, extent, or quantity of effects, and is based on information from the effects analysis of this EA and the references in the project record. The effects of this project have been appropriately and thoroughly considered with an analysis that is responsive to concerns and issues raised by the public. The agency has taken a hard look at the environmental effects using relevant scientific information and knowledge of site-specific conditions gained from field visits. As this project was initiated before the CEQ revised the definition of context and intensity as it relates to significant effects (September 14, 2020), my finding of no significant impact is based on the context of the project and intensity of effects using the ten factors identified in 40 CFR 1508.27(b).

1) Impacts may be both beneficial and adverse. A significant effect may exist even if the Federal agency believes that on the balance the effects will be beneficial.

Based on the issue-based analysis presented in the EA (pages 51-125), no significant effects were identified for any of the affected resources either specific to the project or cumulatively when combined with the reasonably foreseeable future actions. While the selected alternative will provide beneficial effects for several resources [such as improving public safety (EA page 63), reducing impacts to livestock (pages 74-76), soil and water (pages 80, 83-84), and rare plant and animal species (pages 107-108, 116-118) and reducing the areas where noise from target shooting may reduce the visitor experience (pages 88-90)], the analyses also identified, and I considered, the negative effects that may occur to resources [such as to livestock and rangeland resources (EA pages 72-73), soil and water resources (pages 80-82), plant and animal species (EA pages 99-100, 107-108, 110-118) and wilderness areas (pages 120-122)] and the public experience [such as to local economies (page 54), the opportunities for dispersed target shooting (pages 69-70), and from noise from shooting activities (pages 88-90)]. A suite of project-specific design criteria is included in the selected alternative to reduce or eliminate negative effects (EA pages 40-43). When negative environmental effects are likely from project activities, the application of Best Management Practices (EA appendix D) will prevent significant effects. As a result, the selected alternative (alternative 2 as modified) will not cause significant effects.

2) The degree to which the proposed action affects public health or safety.

The current management of dispersed target shooting on the Pike National Forest presents risks to public health and safety, as described in the project background (EA page 2). These risks are among the factors I considered in deciding to implement a modified alternative 2. In addition, numerous comments received during all three of the public response periods described near-misses or unsafe shooting occurring within the project area (comments available in the Reading Room on the project website). The EA describes how closing areas as described in alternative 2 to dispersed target shooting would reduce the risks to public safety (EA beginning page 62).

In addition, when dispersed target shooting occurs for many years in one location, the trash, lead, and other materials concentrated in that area may present a public health risk. The EA describes how the selected alternative would reduce the potential for the hazardous materials to accumulate by closing areas to dispersed target shooting and managing shooting ranges according to the EPA regulations and Best Management Practices (beginning page 77).

3) Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.

Although the project area includes the entire 1.1 million acres of the Pike National Forest, most project activities would not occur in areas with unique characteristics. No park lands or prime farmlands would be affected by the project activities. The EA discloses effects to wetlands and other hydrological features and demonstrates how reducing the area open to dispersed target shooting will reduce risks to those features (EA pages 77-80). In addition, the selected alternative (alternative 2 as modified) will close areas near rivers and perennial and intermittent

streams to dispersed target shooting, protecting those features from potential damage (EA beginning page 77; Soil and Water Specialist Report). The EA describes potential effects to cultural resources and historic properties (page 122-123). The selected alternative would not adversely affect any historic or cultural properties because, when such resources are present they can and will be avoided. The only proposed site where avoiding such resources may not be feasible (NFSR 704) was determined to be inappropriate for a shooting range. In addition, the modified alternative 2 will prohibit target shooting in a greater radius around known historic properties, providing greater protection to those sites.

4) The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.

The term “controversial” in this context refers to cases where substantial scientific dispute exists as to the size, nature, or effects of a major Federal action on some human environmental factor, rather than to public opposition of a proposed action or alternative.

The activities described in the proposed action are not novel and have well established effects. The Forest Service has decades of experience managing shooting ranges and implementing adaptive management techniques for recreation activities. In addition, the EA cited regulatory and scientific references related to shooting range construction and management, as well as dispersed target shooting, in describing effects to soil and water resources (EA beginning on page 77), the risk of wildfire (page 95), rangeland resources and range management (page 72), noise from shooting activities (page 85), and botanical and wildlife species (page 99). A list of relevant laws, regulations, and policies were provided to the public on the project webpage and in the project record. The effects of the selected alternative (alternative 2 as modified) are expected to be within the range of effects described for other similar projects, and will not be controversial in this sense.

5) The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.

The Forest Service has experience managing dispersed target shooting and developed shooting ranges, including a shooting range in the South Platte Ranger District in the project area, operated under special use permit. In addition, the development of a shooting range and potential effects from shooting activities on soil and water will be regulated by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) (EA page 77-78). As the development of any shooting ranges will follow EPA guidance and regulation as well as other standards (EA pages 11-12, 77, and 80, and as listed in the relevant law, regulation and policy document), the effects are not uncertain or involve unique risks. Noise from the shooting ranges is expected to travel across the landscape in a complex pattern depending on the direction of shooting and the surrounding topography, meaning that the exact level of noise in each area cannot be predicted (EA pages 87-90). The adaptive management criteria for shooting ranges include management actions to reduce the noise using range design and other built structures (EA table 3, beginning page 31). In reviewing the potential noise from the proposed action in general and the shooting ranges in particular, I find that, while the surrounding areas will experience some level of noise from shooting activities, the changes would not be a significant effect. The Forest Service has decades

of experience implementing a range of adaptive management tools such as those described in the proposed action (alternative 2, EA tables 2 and 3), and the effects are not uncertain and do not involve unique or unknown risks.

6) The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.

This project only applies to the actions and sites described in the environmental assessment. The action is not likely to establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects, because the proposed action adheres to agency regulations and policy (see the list of relevant law, regulation, and policy in the project record, the discussion of each resource in the environmental assessment, and the individual resource reports). Since the action falls within the framework of this regulatory process it would therefore not establish any new precedents or principles for decisions involving significant effects on the environment.

7) Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.

Cumulative effects were considered in the analysis in order to determine if any of the activities that may be individually insignificant could result in cumulatively significant impacts. For instance, the analyses considered the effects of building a shooting range at all nine locations in order to determine if the combined effects would be significant (EA page 12). A range of ongoing and reasonably foreseeable future actions were considered for cumulative effects (EA appendix E). Together, the analyses did not identify potentially significant cumulative effects (cumulative effects are summarized in each resource section, beginning on page 51 of the EA).

8) The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant cultural or historical resources.

As described in the EA (beginning page 122) the nine sites considered for shooting ranges were surveyed for historic and cultural resources. Those resources eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places will be avoided at the sites determined to be appropriate for shooting ranges (NFSR 528G-North, NFSR 536, and Buffalo Creek Gun Club). The resources at one site (NFSR 704) may not be easily avoided, but this location was determined to be inappropriate for the development of a shooting range, so the selected action (alternative 2 as modified) will not adversely affect any such resources. In a letter dated December 18, 2024, the Colorado State Historic Preservation Officer concurred with the finding that, with the avoidance of eligible sites, the project will have no adverse effect on historic properties eligible for listing.

9) The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act.

Eight species that are federally listed as threatened or endangered or proposed for listing have the potential to occur in the project area (one plant species and seven wildlife species; EA pages 99 and 110-112; Specialist Report for Wildlife and Fish; Biological Assessment for Threatened, Endangered, and Proposed Plant Species). The effects analyses considered impacts from

building shooting ranges, from allowing or prohibiting dispersed target shooting as proposed in each alternative, and the from the adaptive management activities. Closing areas to dispersed target shooting would have a beneficial effect on these species since the potential for direct or indirect effects would be reduced. Alternative 2 in particular will eliminate impacts to the designated critical habitat for Mexican spotted owl and Preble's meadow jumping mouse (EA page 112) and designated potential habitat for Preble's meadow jumping mouse, Pawnee montane skipper, and tricolored bat (EA page 112) by closing areas to dispersed target shooting. Alternative 2 would also reduce potential impacts in designated habitat for Canada lynx, greenback cutthroat trout (EA page 112), and Mosquito Range mustard (EA page 108).

No federally protected plant species were found in surveys of the nine locations considered for developed shooting ranges, so building ranges would have no effect on these species. Of the 1,744 acres that were considered for developed shooting ranges at the nine sites, about 15 acres (i.e., <1%) of the forest stands that would be impacted are classified as Mexican spotted owl Forested Recovery habitat, and approximately 7 acres (0.02%) are identified as potential habitat for Preble's meadow jumping mouse (EA page 112). However, the selected alternative would impact only about 8 acres of Mexican spotted owl Forested Recovery habitat, and none of the potential habitat for Preble's meadow jumping mouse since six of the nine shooting range locations were selected (Biological Assessment for Fish and Wildlife).

When the effects from the closures to dispersed target shooting, construction of shooting ranges, and adaptive management tools were considered in combination it was determined alternative 2 would have varying impacts on threatened, endangered, and sensitive species. It was determined that alternative 2 *may affect*, but is *not likely to adversely affect* Mosquito Range mustard since the number of known occurrences in areas open to dispersed target shooting would be reduced. In addition, alternative 2 *may affect*, but is *not likely to adversely affect* Mexican spotted owl, Pawnee montane skipper, Canada lynx, and greenback cutthroat trout. It was determined that alternative 2 is *not likely to adversely affect* and is *not likely to jeopardize the continued existence* of the tricolored bat and gray wolf. When all nine shooting range locations are considered, alternative 2 *may affect*, and is *likely to adversely affect* the Preble's meadow jumping mouse; and *may affect*, and is *not likely to adversely affect* the critical habitat of this species. However, the proposed range location that would impact the Preble's meadow jumping mouse (NFSR 536) was not selected to be a shooting range in this decision, so the Biological Assessment for Fish and Wildlife determined that the modified alternative 2 *may affect*, but is *not likely to adversely affect* the Preble's meadow jumping mouse or the critical habitat of this species. Thus, the project would result in no significant adverse effects to federally protected species or designated habitat. In a letter dated November 15, 2024, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service concurred with these determinations.

10) Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.

The selected alternative will not violate Federal, State, or local laws or requirements for the protection of the environment. A summary of relevant laws is available on the public website and in the project record. All applicable laws were considered in the development of the proposed action and my decision to implement a modified version of the alternative. The

selected alternative meets the requirements of the Clean Water Act, the Safe Drinking Water Act, the Clean Air Act, the Wilderness Act, the Endangered Species Act, the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, and Executive Orders 11988, 11990, and 12898. Given the application of Best Management Practices and Design Criteria (EA appendix D), the selected alternative is found to comply with Federal and Colorado State water regulations.

Conclusion

After considering the environmental effects described in the EA and specialist reports, I have determined that alternative 2 as modified will not have significant effects on the quality of the human environment considering the context and intensity of impacts (40 CFR 1508.27). Thus, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared.

Findings Required by Other Laws and Regulations

This decision to implement alternative 2 as modified is consistent with the National Forest Management Act (NMFA) and the intent of the forest plan's long-term goals and objectives. The project was designed in conformance with land and resource management plan standards and incorporates appropriate land and resource management plan guidelines for specific activities (per the Land and Resource Management Plan, 1984).

I have determined the selected alternative is consistent with the Clean Water Act, the Safe Drinking Water Act, Executive Order 11988 regarding Floodplain Management, and Executive Order 11990 regarding Protection of Wetlands. I find the selected alternative is consistent with Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-income Populations. I also have determined that the selected alternative is consistent with the Wilderness Act of 1964, the Endangered Species Act, the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Consultation with the Colorado State Historic Properties Officer is ongoing per the National Historic Preservation Act.

The John D. Dingell Jr. Conservation, Management, & Recreation Act Section 4103 (the Dingell Act) authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to close National Forest System lands to recreational shooting (here called dispersed target shooting) and describes a public notification process required to do so. Eventually, the closures described in this decision will be implemented through the issuance of forest orders identifying areas of each ranger district that will be closed to recreational shooting. Such forest orders will not be issued until the public notification and review process described in the Dingell Act are complete.

The U.S. Forest Service is aware of the November 12, 2024 decision in *Marin Audubon Society v. Federal Aviation Administration*, No. 23-1067 (D.C. Cir. Nov. 12, 2024). To the extent that a court may conclude that the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations implementing NEPA are not judicially enforceable or binding on this agency action, the Forest Service has nonetheless elected to follow those regulations at 40 C.F.R. Parts 1500– 1508, in addition to the Forest Service's procedures/regulations implementing NEPA at 36 C.F.R. Part 220, to meet the agency's obligations under NEPA, 42 U.S.C. §§ 4321 et seq.

Implementation

This decision identifies a suite of actions to be implemented across a large landscape. While the NEPA process has been completed, there are many other steps required before the shooting ranges can be built or forest orders can be issued prohibiting dispersed target shooting.

Developing shooting ranges will require identifying partnership and funding opportunities for each site (FSH 2709.14, Ch. 70). The pace of construction will also depend on the condition of each site, as some areas that are currently popular shooting locations may require clean up and remediation before construction can begin. In addition, the US Forest Service will need to acquire land at the NFSR 370.I site before development could begin. The time required to finalize construction designs, generate funding, and conduct any remediation may be months or even years for some locations.

Areas will be closed to dispersed target shooting in phases. The first areas will be those included in the past closures, such as portions of Rampart Road. These areas will be included in the first public notice process required by the Dingell Act, and no forest order will be issued until that process is completed, which will likely take a few months. The remaining areas of each ranger district will only be closed to shooting after a shooting range is opened on that district and the additional Dingell Act notice process is complete. These efforts are expected to take several years.

For further information concerning the Integrated Management of Target Shooting Project, contact Jennifer DeWoody, NEPA Planner, via phone at (970) 568-2692 or email at jennifer.dewoody@usda.gov during normal business hours.

RYAN NEHL

Forest and Grassland Supervisor

Pike-San Isabel National Forests & Cimarron and Comanche National Grasslands

Date

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