U.S. Department of the Interior
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
Region 8, Pacific Southwest

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)

White Pine County Shooting Range Project

The Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW), Hunter Education Division, has applied to the USFWS's Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program (WSFR) for Wildlife Restoration Act grant funds, to enhance the existing White Pine County Shooting Range (proposed project). The grant award was specially conditioned, requiring environmental compliance to be completed prior to final obligation and use of these funds. The enclosed *November 28, 2016, White Pine County Shooting Range Enhancement Final Environmental Assessment* (EA) was prepared to fulfill WSFR's environmental compliance obligations under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) prior to releasing funding to NDOW for the project.

The project includes doubling the rifle shooting distance currently available. The current Archery Range will be brought to National Field Archery Association (NFAA) standards. Additionally, a new trap range, pistol range, special use area, handicap access/parking, and concrete walkways leading from the parking area to shooting areas will be constructed. Furthermore, perimeter fencing will be constructed around the shooting range for safety. Additionally, a new training area will have a concrete pad constructed so that in the near future, when funding can be found, a building can be constructed to have meeting space available for classes, hunter safety training, etc. Figure 6 and Appendix A in the EA contains maps and diagrams of the proposed features.

Alternatives considered

An environmental impact matrix was constructed in the EA to evaluate the effects of three alternatives.

Alternative A (Proposed Action): The proposed action is the approval of the grant award to enhance the existing shooting range. See Figure 6 of the EA for a map of the proposed enhancement locations and Appendix A for diagrams of the proposed structures. More specifically, the enhancements are to:

- Double the shooting distance currently available.
- The current Archery Range will be brought to National Field Archery Association (NFAA) standards.
- Constructing new:
    - Trap range
    - Pistol range
    - Special use area (Area for special outdoor classes like tracking and survival)
    - Handicap access/parking
    - Concrete walkways leading from the parking area to shooting areas.
    - Perimeter fencing
    - Restrooms (Donated)
    - Earthen berms for safety and lead containment.

Alternative B (No Action): The no action alternative would be the disapproval of the grant award. With no action, funds for the project would not be secured and the range is not likely to be enhanced in the near future, and would likely continue to get used at its current level. Without the proposed

improvements, shooters who are currently using off-site public lands would be expected to continue doing so, contributing to more impacts on wildlife, habitat and the non-shooting public. Without a perimeter fence, the risk of a member of the public accidently travelling onto the range and being injured is increased. Without the improved parking areas and concrete walkways access to handicapped individuals will be limited.

Alternative C (Alternate Location): Under this alternative, a new shooting range at an alternate location would be constructed and no improvements would be implemented at the existing facility. This would likely have a greater impact on the environment in a new area that is not currently being used as a range. A new location would have to be identified with new assessments to be made. It would greatly increase the costs and time involved. Without having a suitable place already identified, other obstacles of more significant impact on wildlife, people, and the economy may occur. This alternative would also leave the existing shooting range unimproved and continue to be problematic for safety and access reasons.

Summary of Actions by Alternatives

ACTIONS	ALTERNATIVE A	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C
Land Ownership Currently Secured	YES	YES	NO
Public Accessibility	YES	YES	UNKNOWN
Site Development	YES	NO	YES
Disturbance Acreage	55 acres	0	500 acres
Utilities Present	Electricity Only	Electricity Only	UNKNOWN
Habitat Present	YES	YES	UNKNOWN
Risk of Conflicts	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
Meet WR Purpose	YES	NO	UNKNOWN

Impacts of Implementation

Table 1 of the EA contains details of the expected environmental consequences and impacts of each alternative. The following is a summary of those for each alternative:

Alternative A (Proposed Action): The proposed action would meet the stated purpose and need of the grant application. In addition, it is expected to provide recreational, economic, environmental, and safety benefits for the public and local communities, while minimizing any adverse impacts to an insignificant level.

Alternative B (No Action): The stated purpose and need of the project would not be met and the project site would continue to serve as a shooting range with no enhancements to improve the facilities for design standards, safety, and the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Best Management Practices (BMP) for lead containment on shooting ranges.

Alternative C (Alternate Location): The stated purpose and need of the project may be met depending on the practicability of obtaining an alternate location and land suitable to accommodate the purpose and needs. However, the time, costs and potential increase in adverse environmental effects over the proposed action does not appear to be a practical alternative.

As described in the EA, implementing Alternative A (proposed action) is not expected to have any significant impacts on the environment.

Public Review

The draft EA was circulated for public comment for 30 days, from March 28, 2016, to April 27, 2016. WSFR posted the public notice/draft EA on our web-site and sent hard or electronic copies of the notice to the following tribes and organizations; Te-Moak Tribe of Western Shoshone, Wells Band of Western Shoshone, Duckwater Shoshone Tribe, Elko Band of Shoshone, Ely Shoshone Tribe, U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM), NDOW, and the USFWS's Nevada Fish & Wildlife Office. With the help of NDOW and White Pine County, the draft EA was also posted in the City of Ely's local paper and a copy of it was also available at the following offices; (1) Nevada Department of Wildlife, 1218 North Alpha Road Ely, NV 89301, (2) White Pine County, 297 11th Street, Suite #2, Ely, NV 89301.

Comments were received from NDOW's Game Division and the BLM. On April 27, 2016, the BLM's Ely District-Schell Field Office provided written comments in an email and stated that the proposed project is in compliance with the Recreation & Public Purposes Act. The BLM also provided general comments and recommendations for updating and clarifying the draft EA with respect to vegetation, wildlife, land-use and utilities sections. These comments have been addressed and updated information is provided in the final EA. The BLM also requested a copy of the final EA and one will be provided to them once this FONSI is signed.

NDOW's Game Division provided wildlife occurrence updates that pronghorn, sage grouse, and sage grouse leks are known to occur around the project area. In addition, due to previous fires a significant portion of the area is now dominated by cheat-grass, reducing the quality of habitat for native wildlife. NDOW also suggested that due to the impacts of fire on the ecosystem in the area, "green-stripping" should be employed around the proposed project to minimize and mitigate the potential effects of fire on the area. WSFR requested NDOW's Hunter Ed Division address the potential to implement this measure and on August 28, 2016, NDOW's Habitat Division provided an email with a confirmation letter stating that they have committed to seeding a "green-strip" surrounding the shooting range.

All public comments received have been adequately addressed and resolved. There are no known outstanding or controversial public issues with the proposed project.

Conclusion

Based on review and evaluation of the information contained in the final EA, it is the USFWS' finding that the proposed action, Alternative A, does not constitute a major federal action which would significantly affect the quality of the human environment within the meaning of Section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. Accordingly, preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement on the proposed action is not required. Copies of the EA and this Finding of No Significant Impact are on file at the USFWS, WSFR, Region 8 Office.

Marie Strassburger 11/30/16

Marie Strassburger, Chief
Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration
Pacific Southwest, Region 8
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Date