

NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA
FIELD OPERATIONS DIVISION
RANGE DEPARTMENT
WAPLES MILL ROAD
FAIRFAX, VA 22030
Telephone: 1-800 - 672-3888 Ext 1278
RECREATIONAL SHOOTING SITE REPORT

Nothing in the report that follows, verbal or written, should be considered as "requirements of the NRA." The informational items being furnished are suggestions. You may, or may not, choose to act on any or all of these suggestions. It should not be interpreted that a failure on your part to act on any or all of these suggestions is evidence of a "cavalier" attitude regarding firing range safety and/or health. Your firing range and its personnel may be very safety and/or health conscious without having to resort to any or all of these suggestions. There is not intention on the part of the RTTA or NRA Headquarters Staff to imply NRA approval or disapproval of this range as being safe or unsafe. It is merely a guide by which a range owner / operator can act to enhance a shooting range facility.


SIGNATURE OF RTTA

NAME OF RTTA: Don Turner
CASE NUMBER: CO-14-1-07
DATE CASE OPENED: March 2007
DATE ASSIGNED THIS CASE: March 2007
DATE SITE EVALUATION CONDUCTED: April 23, 2007
REPORT DATE: May 7, 2007

PRESENT STATUS:

Status 1 - Case open or re-opened - RTTA involved.

NAME OF SITE:
Rampart Range

LAND MANAGEMENT AGENCY/OPERATOR OF SITE:
US Forest Service, Pikes Peak Ranger District

CONTACT MANAGER NAME AND ADDRESS:

Frank Landis
Outdoor Recreation Planner
601 South Weber St.
Colorado Springs, Co. 80903
(719) 477-4203
flandis@fs.fed.us

INTRODUCTION:

The Rampart Range is a USFS designated recreational shooting area (DSA) which is experiencing high use with no supervision and low maintenance. This is the only public recreational shooting area near a major metropolitan area. There are two private ranges open to public use, and two other private ranges for members only which also provide recreational shooting opportunities. The demand for recreational shooting in this area is greater than the public facilities that are provided. This high demand for recreational shooting and the low level management of this DSA are creating substantial issues for land managers and for the public.

PROVIDE A BRIEF HISTORY OF SITE: (Date established / prior complaints / type of complaint / prior resolution if any, any problems or issues).

The site was established in 1989 when the USFS and El Paso County closed the county to dispersed recreational shooting. Two designated shooting areas were established to offset the closure. The other site was subsequently closed as it was next to private property and was creating problems with private property owners. There are two private ranges within 30 miles of this site that are open to public shooting, and two other ranges that are only open to members. This is the only public site available to residents of the Colorado Springs area.

PROVIDE A SYNOPSIS OF THE REASON FOR THE SITE VISIT:

USFS is experiencing difficulties with the public demand and use of the site, in conjunction with increasing use of the surrounding forest. They requested the site visit to obtain additional information for resolution of problems on the site, and for suggestions on how to remediate issues.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE:

(USA) Undesignated Shooting Area
 (DSA) Designated Shooting Area
 (DSR) Designated Shooting Range

APPROXIMATE SIZE OF SITE. (in Acres)

30 Acres

DESCRIBE THE TYPES OF USE FOR THE SITE:

The site allows for shotgun, rifle, and pistol shooting.

DESCRIBE WHAT DEVELOPMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE AT THE SITE:

Developments have been limited to providing a gravel parking lot, a specified area for shotgun (with manual clay bird use); a cleared firing line with metal benches, backstop with target frame holders at 100 yards for rifle shooting only (approximately 10 points); a cleared pistol bay for 50 yard shooting (approximately 5 points); and a cleared pistol bay for 24 yard shooting (approximately 5 points).

On a scale of 0-10 and rating, what is the level of development?

3 (circle one) none, (L), M, H

DESCRIBE WHAT MAINTENANCE HAS BEEN DONE AT THE SITE, AND ITS FREQUENCY AND TYPE:

The USFS has posted signs around the outside edges of the site to warn other users to avoid the area. Heavy duty, welded metal regulatory signs are placed to attempt to control use, but they are very shot up. Volunteers and USFS personnel are utilized four times a year for trash and site clean up. Trash is a significant problem. Signs are replaced as they become shot up and destroyed. No garbage cans are provided and there is no regular trash pick up. Lateral berm between the two pistol bays has not been maintained.

On a scale of 0-10 and rating, what is the level of maintenance?

1 (circle one) none, (L), M, H

DESCRIBE WHAT SUPERVISION THERE IS OVER THE SITE, AND ITS FREQUENCY AND TYPE:

There is no supervision of the site.

On a scale of 0-10 and rating, what is the level of supervision?

0 (circle one) (none) L, M, H

DESCRIBE THE PUBLIC USE OF THE SITE (Demand for and pressure on site):

USFS management says it is usual to have over 150 people using the site on a weekend day. The use of this small site exceeds its ability to provide shooting opportunities, and there are not enough shooting sites in the vicinity of Colorado Springs to meet the recreational shooting demand. In addition, the county and forest are closed for dispersed shooting which has forced shooters to this site which is the only designated shooting area on the Forest.

On a scale of 0-10 and rating, what is the level of pressure?

8 (circle one) none, L, M, (H)

DESCRIBE ISSUES AND PROBLEMS WITH SITE AS EXPLAINED TO YOU BY THE LOCAL MANAGER:

Safety: USFS personnel are concerned that unsupervised rifle and pistol shooters are shooting on the shotgun range. A bike trail runs through the outside edge of this area. It is beyond the range of shot fall zone, but within the range of rifles. The main road runs behind this site uphill from it, and they have received complaints of ricochet's being reported by people walking on the roadway. They have observed people shooting from their vehicles in the parking lot onto the range area.

Environment: The site is located in a drainage of Williams Canyon. USFS personnel are concerned about lead migration, pH of soil is unknown. In the area of the shotgun range, pine trees have been shot down. There is an extreme amount of litter surrounding the area. The RTTA visit was after a volunteer clean up weekend, but the remaining trash was throughout the area.

Supervision: USFS personnel have attempted to have the site put out to concession, or to have a volunteer group "adopt" it. Both strategies have not been successful. At present there is no supervision of the site.

DESCRIBE YOUR EVALUATION OF THIS PARTICULAR RECREATION SHOOTING SITE, (use pictures as appropriate). Brief description of:

Facilities and structure: The site is approximately 30 acres and faces west and northwest. There is a gravel parking lot for about 30 cars.

A designated shotgun only area is provided with shooting down hill into Williams Canyon, it is signed with a damaged metal sign that says "shotgun only."

A designated 100 yard (approximately 10) point rifle only area, with five metal benches is provided with shooting going across a swale into the hillside with a hillside cut as a backstop, probably not over six feet in height. There is a 50 yard pistol only bay with approximately 5 firing points. It is adjacent to a 25 yard pistol only bay. Both pistol bays are hillside cuts.

A small grove of trees separates the shotgun area from the rifle area, which is angled away from the shotgun area in an uphill direction. The rifle area is over a depression and the rifle rounds are angled away from the pistol ranges.

There is no lateral berm between the shotgun area, the rifle area and the pistol bays. A highly eroded lateral berm separates the 50 yard pistol bay from the 25 yard pistol bay. The 25 yard firing line is in front of the 50 yard firing line and elevated above it as they are not level with each other. There is no lateral berm on the outside of the 25 yard pistol bay. Backstops of the rifle and pistol bays are hillside cuts with the adjoining hillside providing most of the bullet impact area. The pistol bays are shooting up hill and the rifle bay across a drainage.

With the exception of the damaged "shotgun only" sign, regulatory and safety signs are so damaged as to be unreadable.

There was a trash bin (roll off) present, but it was a result of the latest cleanup. The site is not furnished with trash cans and there is no regular trash pick up. Much of the trash is spent shotgun shells and target debris, although some general trash was also observed.

People were observed shooting rifles in the pistol bays, shooting at objects on the ground with the bullets skipping over the backstops, and the 25 yard shooters being in front of the 50 yard shooters. Rifle shooters were also shooting at objects on the ground with the bullets impacting above the backstop.

When is the site used?

Primary high period of use is on weekends, but site is never closed and has shooting seven days a week.

Is projectile escapement an issue?

YES. Backstops are short and people are shooting at objects well in front of the backstops creating ricochets over the backstops and into the surrounding hillsides. If people shoot rifles and pistols in the shotgun area, there is no backstop and the rounds go down into or across Williams Canyon.

Other environmental considerations:

USFS managers are concerned about migration of material off the site, and trash management.

Is the site engineered or designed to accommodate the current usage?

NO. The site was engineered for low use by people who were to follow the design criteria for the site, to be responsible for their actions, and to carry out their trash.

Other management considerations:

Trash management and lack of supervision are major issues.

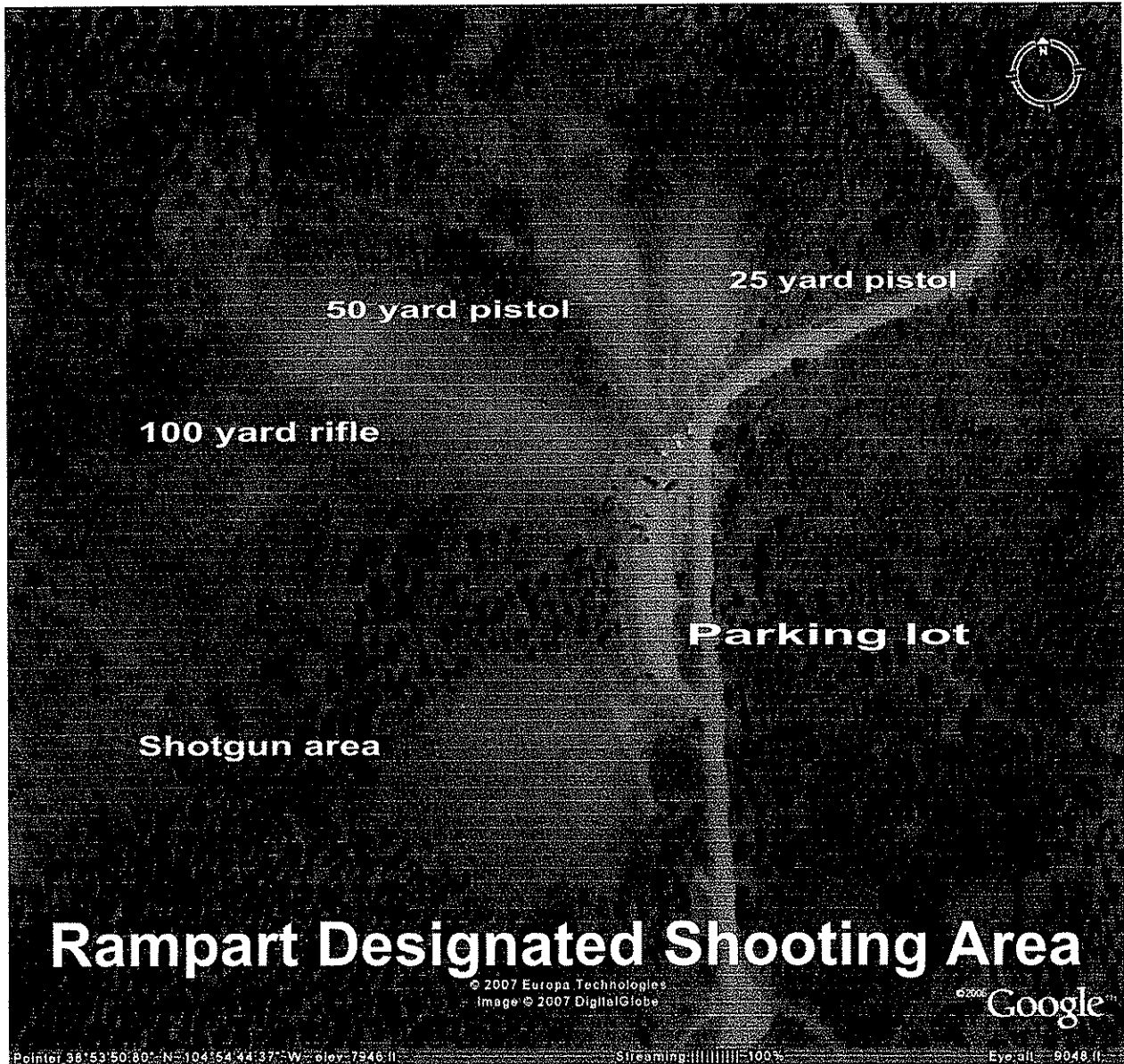
DESCRIBE ISSUES WITH SITE THAT YOU OBSERVED THAT NEED TO BE ADDRESSED BY SITE MANAGERS: (use pictures as appropriate):

Lateral Berms have eroded. Signs are constantly being damaged. Trash volume is extremely heavy. Use of site is greater than design. Safety rules are not being followed. Lack of supervision and demand are acerbating the design issues.

DESCRIBE ANY SUGGESTIONS TO RESOLVE ANY ISSUES/PROBLEMS OBSERVED:

- USFS should provide immediate supervision of the site. Either USFS personnel or a private security company should be assigned to the site to ensure compliance with safety rules and to control littering. Once supervised, trash cans, frequent trash pickup, and more instructive safety and regulatory signage may be provided.
- USFS should immediately repair lateral berm between the two pistol bays and develop rifle and pistol backstops.
- USFS should prepare a short term and long term management plan for the site, in order to meet the increasing demands for recreational shooting in the area of the Pikes Peak Ranger District.
- Specific Site Planning should include: Master plan and re design of the area to include limiting access to the site except during open hours; providing full time supervision to the site; charging a small fee for use of the site to provide much needed supervision and maintenance monies; testing the pH of the soil; developing an Environmental Stewardship Plan for the site; redesigning the site to monitor run off, even out the floor of the various bays, develop backstops, construct lateral berms. This may include transferring the site from a Designated Shooting Area to a Designated Shooting Range. Management strategies could include issuance of a special use permit to a non governmental organization (NGO), or a commercial lease to a private contractor.
- Shooting Recreation Planning should include: Analysis of demand in local area. The development of partnerships with other government recreational programs to provide strategies to meet the demand. This may include the issuance of special use permits to NGOs or commercial leases. All areas need to provide shotgun, rifle and pistol opportunities to meet demand. The private sector may also be considered as partners to meet the identified demand as well. High demand areas exceed the ability of designated shooting areas to meet that demand. The prescription to solve high recreation shooting demand is by the development of designated shooting ranges. These ranges provide the facilities, amenities and supervision to safely meet the high demand needs. Their management may be by: USFS personnel, contract labor, special use permits to NGO, or by commercial lease to commercial operator.

- In summary, it should be noted that safety is provided by a combination of physical structure and supervision. Low use designated shooting areas may be safe by providing a physical structure that limits the ability for mishaps. However, high demand areas can only be safe by a combination of physical structure and supervision and upgrading to a designated shooting range.

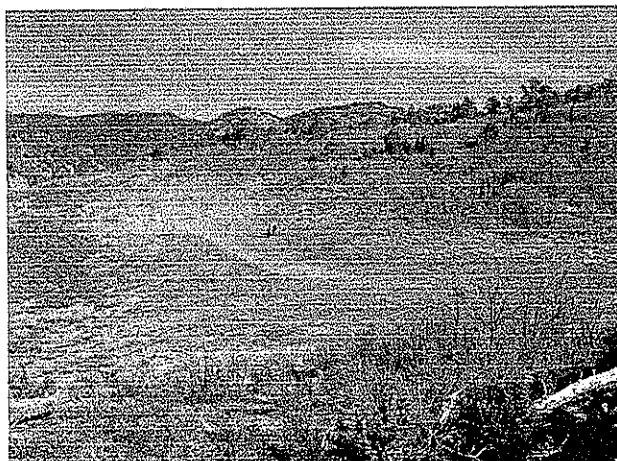




Shotgun Area



100 Yard Area (after clean up)



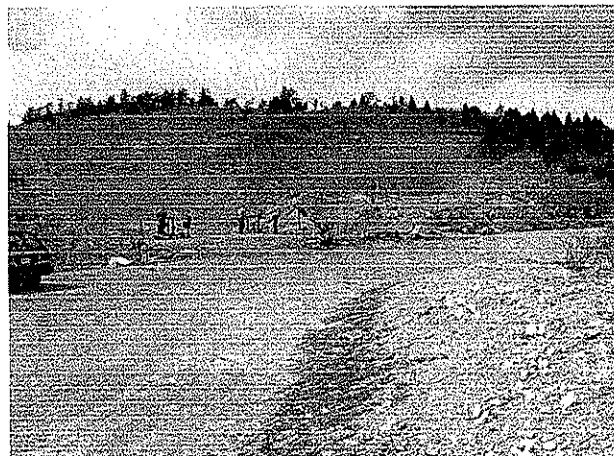
100 Yard Area



50 Yard Pistol Bay



25 Yard Pistol Bay (after clean up)



Parking lot, 50 yard and 25 yard pistol bays



Damaged Shotgun Area Sign



Damaged Sign between 50 and 25 yard bay
note eroded lateral berm



Damaged Sign 25 yard bay



Signs posted around Shooting Area
note mountain bike path



Damaged trees near Shotgun Area



Small sample of site litter (after cleanup)