

Columbia County Ad Hoc Shooting Range Committee
February 19, 2014
Minutes

The meeting was called to order 6:35 P.M

Attendance

Casey Krueger – Regional Warden SCR, Paul Nadolski – Field Warden, Ryan Volenberg-Field Warden, Eric Lobner – SCR Wildlife supervisor, Jim Watson-Columbia County Sporting Alliance, Richard Swenson – Conservation Congress Columbia County, Clark Cupery - Columbia County Economic Development Committee Rep, James Foley – Columbia Count Board Rep, Keith Warnke – Hunting and Shooting Sports Coordinator, Debra Byars – Town of Dekorra Board of Supervisors, Sarah Kehrl – DNR wildlife manager , Nathan Nye – DNR fish biologist, Tim Ashley – Springvale, Absent: Becki Tomlinson – Town of Lowville Board member, Mark Aquino – Regional Director DNR.

Committee Materials: Keith Warnke distributed a series of photos of ranges and range improvements around the state. A PowerPoint presentation described various approaches and techniques for developing a safe and popular range while also putting noise mitigation tools that can be implemented. Committee members' questions were answered.

Funding

WDNR has Wildlife Restoration money that will be used to build the range. A 25% cost share is required. That can come in the form of in kind contributions, volunteer hours, donated materials or equipment, and/or money.

Committee charge:

- Evaluate seven potential DNR owned sites
- Develop criteria to identify most promising sites
- Advise the department on the public involvement process and help conduct the process
- Make a recommendation on a preferred site(s)
- Pros and cons of the seven sites were included in the binder and discussed.
- The county state land's master plan will have to be amended.
- Committee is to recommend two sites for rollout for public comment, then review public comment and make a recommendation to DNR.

Range Program: Keith Warnke gave overview of range construction and the state's range program. The plan is to build 100 yd., 50 yd., and 25 ft. ranges, and a 200 yd. range is an option.

Range Discussion:

- The committee again discussed the remaining six potential sites weighing the pros and cons of each to narrow the list down.
- Eric Lobner distributed an updated list of pros and cons.
- Discussed the archeological hits and ramifications.
- The general footprint for development is 400 by 800 feet to accommodate 25 ft., 50, 100, and 200 yard ranges.
- Discussed endangered species hits and the needed mitigation techniques.
- After recommendation from this committee, the DNR decides whether they wish to pursue building a range. If they decide to pursue, they will go to the NRB for an amendment to the master plan.
- Sarah Kehrli and Eric Lobner discussed the seven sites. Minimize residences within 1,000 foot buffer around the sites, avoid wetlands and SNA, avoid archeological sites, make site as accessible as possible, and minimize impact to other users. Find central location in the county.

Site Evaluations:

1. Dekorra location – Rest area and wastewater treatment plant. Homes along river, but topography will block the sound. Deer, turkey and squirrel hunters use the property. Access will need to be improved. Endangered reptile was observed on site last year. Town may be concerned with security of water treatment plant. Also town emergency management location. Rest area and wastewater plant are currently fenced. Additional berms can be used to deflect sound and create a safer situation. Placed in the top tier by a vote of 5 – 1.
2. Hinkson Creek Fishery area – Brook, brown trout fishery. Small parking area. Archeological hit. Only good access to brook trout stream in Columbia County. Town roads maintained by towns. Close to Poynette and the interstate, centrally located. Thoughts on Hinkson with the arch hit there? High likelihood of finding something archeological here. Doesn't seem to make sense to select this site.

Motion to rule out Hinkson due to archeological concerns and residences.
Location removed following consideration by the ad hoc team on 02/19/2014 (6 - 0).

3. Jennings Creek – Deer hunting and turkey hunting on this property. Fairly remote. Campground nearby could be a pro and a con for access to a range here. Not a great fishery area. Heavy beaver use. Location removed following consideration by the ad hoc team on 02/19/2014 (5 - 1)
4. Mud Lake, Conservation Rd/King Rd – Town road requires a lot of maintenance. Town likely not want to abandon road. Old home site. State natural area on top of the hill. Neighbors are a long way away. Some complications with placement of the range. Safety questions were addressed. Wet soil. Heavily hunted. How to prevent accidental ingress to ranges. Placed in the top tier by unanimous consent.

5. Mud Lake, Hagen Rd – Not heavily used by hunters. Topography conducive. Five residences within 1,000 yds. Trail used by hunters. Location removed following consideration by the ad hoc team on 02/19/2014 (6 - 0)
6. Peter Helland, Sawyer Rd – 1,000 yard buffer exists. Deer drives, trapping in wetlands. Not a lot of other use. Believe that there is enough material on site. Dumping concerns at this remote location. Substantial opposition from residents to a previous suggested range on county land. Terrible road conditions. Location removed following consideration by the ad hoc team on 02/19/2014 (4 - 2).

Follow up:

Visit with Dekorra Town Board. Town board chair invited DNR representatives to visit at a future date.

Public comment period of 30 days will be held and will include an open house for comments.

Go through feedback.

Committee will determine first choice to recommend to DNR

If DNR chooses to pursue they will go to the Natural Resources Board for a master plan amendment.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:00 p.m.