

**Public Involvement Summary
October 29, 2005, Open House
Northern Arizona Regional Shooting Facility**

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Arizona Game and Fish Department



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Introduction

The Flagstaff area is the largest community in Arizona without a shooting facility. Many shooting enthusiasts use local cinder pits and other informal sites in the forest for recreational shooting. The law enforcement community also lacks facilities for specialized training; this forces officers to travel to Phoenix for training or use existing shooting areas that provide substandard training opportunities. The Arizona Game and Fish Commission, through the Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD) wants to provide a modern facility to meet the needs of the shooting sport and law enforcement community in a safe, convenient, and managed setting.

The AGFD held an Open House on October 29, 2005, for the Northern Arizona Regional Shooting Facility project. This meeting was held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the du Bois Center at Northern Arizona University. The Open House was the first in a series of meetings for the public to give the AGFD comments on the proposed shooting facility. The format of the Open House was interactive. People could view exhibit boards, draw on maps showing the project area to show where they felt the proposed shooting facility should be located, or talk with project team members to give comments or have their questions answered. Exhibits included boards showing the purpose and need; planning process; planning area; elements for rifle, shotgun, archery, pistol, and other facilities; Level I exclusionary criteria; Level I exclusionary areas, and the user group preliminary locations. Appendix A contains a copy of the exhibit boards.

The notification of the Open House was done by newspaper notice, flyer, and press release. Specifically, the newspaper notice was published in the *Arizona Daily Sun* on October 15 and 23, 2005. Flyers were mailed on October 18, 2005, to 912 people on the mailing list notifying them of the Open House. The mailing list was composed of names and addresses supplied by the Coconino National Forest Supervisor's office in Flagstaff. The press release was faxed on October 11, 2005, to six radio stations and nine newspaper publishers. Appendix B includes a copy of the newspaper notice, flyer, and press release.

A handout and comment sheet was distributed to everyone attending the meeting. The handout discussed the reasons for considering a shooting facility for northern Arizona, the planning process, the preliminary proposed elements for the facility, the process for locating the facility, and the next steps. Appendix C includes a copy of the handout and comment sheet. The comment sheet suggested that participants provide information about how they heard about the meeting, any other selection criteria for finding a location, any other activities or facilities that should be included, or any other comments. The reverse side of the comment sheet contained a map of the planning area and asked participants to circle the area they felt would be the best place to locate the facility. Participants were asked to return the comment sheet that day or mail it to the project team by November 12, 2005. Appendix D contains the comment sheets that were submitted by the public. Appendix E is a composite map reflecting all the areas that people submitting comment sheets circled suggesting possible shooting range locations.

Information on this project was also available online at the AGFD Web site. The Web site included current information on the selection study, general project area maps, public input comment form, and contact information for people with specific questions about the ongoing study. Some people who were unable to attend the Open House submitted comments electronically using the public input comment form. These comments are included in Appendix D.

Comments Submitted Prior To Open House

Prior to the Open House, three people sent comments by e-mail to the project team and one person submitted comments over the telephone. The following written comments were submitted (the number of people making the comment is shown in the parentheses following each statement):

Facility Location

- The location of the facility should be limited to within a 25-mile radius of Flagstaff rather than the 45-mile limit proposed by the project team. (1)

Facility Elements

- The facility should have a maximum long target range of at least 300 yards. The facility should also accommodate handgun and trap and skeet ranges. (1)

Miscellaneous

- I am unable to attend the Open House and would like the handout and comment sheet mailed to me. (3)
- Once the location is finalized, the construction process should be done quickly. (1)
- The local state representatives in the legislature should propose a "Range Protection Law" to prevent the lawsuits that derailed the proposed Belmont Shooting Facility. (1)

The person who left comments by telephone had the following comment:

Facility Location

- The facility should be located far enough so that the noise from shooting will not be heard in residential neighborhoods and stray bullets fired at the range will not be able to reach the neighborhoods.

Comments Submitted At Open House

Fifty-four people signed in at the Open House and twenty-six comment sheets were returned. Appendix D includes a copy of the returned sign-in sheets.

The following written comments were submitted (the number of people making the comment is shown in the parentheses following each statement):

Selection Criteria for Facility Location

- The amount of land needed should be several thousand acres so that there can be a buffer zone between the shooting facility and any future development. (4)
- The location should be accessible to the maximum number of users. (4)
- The facility should be located in an area conducive to year-round use with limited snow and wind. (2)
- It is important that a medical facility be located in close proximity to the shooting facility. (2)
- The criteria should include the cost and availability of adequate properties. (1)
- The facility should be located near other services such as food, gasoline, lodging, and camping. (1)
- The availability of water should be an important factor in determining the location of the shooting facility. (1)

Facility Location

- The facility should be located as close to Flagstaff and the majority of the local population as possible. (5)
- The facility should not be located south of Flagstaff because people would just go to the Ben Avery Shooting Facility in Phoenix. (1)
- The facility should be located just north of the San Francisco Peaks. (1)
- The facility should be located at the Ashurst Lake turnoff, approximately one mile away from the lake. The area has a cleared gravel type spot just before the canyon. (1)
- The shooting facility should be located somewhere along Lake Mary Road, possibly near Happy Jack. (1)
- The facility should be located near Stoneman Lake. There is good access from the interstate. The lower elevation makes it more available for year round access. (1)
- The shooting facility should be located in Winslow, Arizona. (1)

Activities or Facilities

- The facility should include an indoor rifle and an indoor pistol range. (2)
- The first activities in place should be the ones that will bring income to the facility. This would include the trap, sporting clays, action pistol, and competitive meets. (2)
- The facility should include a 1,000-yard range. (2)
- The facility should have bulls'-eye competition including 50-yard stationary and 25-yard turning targets. (1)
- There should be indoor ranges for archery and handguns. (1)
- The facility should include a 200-meter rifle range. (1)
- There should be plinking/starter activities. (1)
- There should be a separate small bore range instead of it being incorporated into the silhouette range. (1)
- There should be an area for shotgun training. (1)
- The facility should include law enforcement training. (1)
- The facility should include as many activities as possible, even if some activities would need to be phased in over time. (1)
- Frangible ammunition should be used at the facility. It turns into powder on contact and would not be an environmental hazard. If the ammunition were sold at reasonable prices, it would be a plus. People at the Gunsite Shooting Range in Paulden, Arizona may know more since they use it. (1)
- There should be a shop at the shooting facility that sells and purchases firearms and ammunition. (3)
- There should be a shop at the shooting facility for a gunsmith. (2)
- There should be a coffee shop at the shooting facility with indoor seating and an outside ramada. (2)
- A snack shop should be incorporated as a part of the shooting facility. (1)
- The facility should include an area for camping. (1)
- The facility should include various retail opportunities. (1)
- There should be an area that has lockers that can be rented on a quarterly or yearly basis. (1)
- There should be an education component for new shooters and students. The project team should consider conducting a program at the facility that would work with the Flagstaff Unified School District. (3)

- There should be a program in place to involve the community to clean up and take pride in the facility. (1)
- The facility should incorporate targets geared towards involving the community's youth. It should not be for organized competitions, but rather something available for parents and their youth to use. (1)
- There should be various competitions/tournaments held at the shooting facility. (1)

Miscellaneous

- The facility needs to be built as soon as possible. (4)
- There should be shaded areas available where shooters can be protected from the sun. (2)
- The Winona Range should be expanded. (2)
- The facility should have signs to remind people to "keep safety first". (1)
- There should be other recreational activities located in the area for non-shooting family members (e.g. theme park, Grand Canyon). (1)
- The Range Master needs to have training in first aid, including experience with a defibrillator. (1)
- The facility should be as fully staffed as possible so that there is no waiting to use any of the ranges. (1)
- The facility should be open on weekends and keep longer hours during the summer months when the days are longer. (1)
- If the planning team needs help in designing the facility, they should ask for assistance from the National Rifle Association. (1)
- The facility should have year round availability with minimal area impact. (1)

Open House Survey Results

A survey regarding the notification of the Open House was included on the comment sheet. In response to the question, "How did you hear about today's Open House?", 15 people saw the newspaper notice, four people received a flyer in the mail, three people heard a public service announcement on the radio, and nine people mentioned that they heard about the Open House from some other means. From these nine people: five people received an e-mail from either the AGFD, Bill Gow, or the National Rifle Association; two people from word-of-mouth, one person saw a notice at the Flagstaff Police Station, and one person saw a notice on television.

Comments Submitted After Open House

After the Open House, seven people sent comments by mail, five people submitted comments online on the AGFD Web site, and one person sent an e-mail. The following written comments were submitted (the number of people making the comment is shown in the parentheses following each statement):

Selection Criteria for Facility Location

- The facility should be centrally located near the several population centers that it services. It should also be in an area that can be accessed all year, in a safe environment, and that will minimally impact the area. (2)
- The location should not be chosen simply because the land is available. The location should be evaluated and selected so that it is in a place that does not have a great amount of wind and is located so that trees would surround the shooting ranges. (1)
- People from Phoenix will support this facility. Because of this, access from Interstates 17 or 40 is important. (1)

- The facility should be constructed in a location where local homeowners won't try to derail the process. (1)
- The location should be no closer than 10 miles to any substantial residential area for safety reasons and noise pollution. (1)
- The facility should be located near a major highway so as not to impede traffic while allowing easy access. (1)

Facility Location

- This facility should be located in Flagstaff. Currently, the only locations to shoot are cinder pits where it is difficult to set targets up over 150 yards away. (2)
- If the facility is located north or east of Flagstaff in the flat areas of land, the public will not support the project. (1)
- The Willard Springs area should be considered as a potential location for the shooting facility. (1)
- There is an area in Walnut Canyon that is being studied by the City Council and Coconino County Board of Supervisors for protection from development. This area should not be considered as a location for the facility. (1)
- The Verde Valley should be considered for the location of the facility since it is located in an area that has better weather than some of the other potential locations. (1)
- The facility should be located on the east side of Flagstaff or closer to the Winslow area. There are already shooting ranges near Prescott and Phoenix and we need something a little closer for the people in northeastern Arizona. (1)

Activities or Facilities

- There should be an opportunity at the shooting facility to shoot weapons that use black powder. (1)
- Trap fields should be the first activity available since it will be the leading revenue generator. (1)
- Pistol, rifle, and archery are all important activities, but if there is a limit on the number of activities, each must be prioritized accordingly. (1)
- It would be nice to have a range for patterning shotguns available. This would require a 48" x 48" target available for shooting at 25-, 30-, 35-, and 40-yard intervals. (1)
- There should be a three-dimensional archery course as an activity at the shooting facility. (1)
- Some of the shooting ranges should be indoors so during bad weather, the facility can still be in operation. (1)
- Bathrooms should be included in the facility. (1)
- It is important to involve activities for younger shooters and future hunters. (1)
- There should be public education at the facility for all shooting sports. There should also be a hunter safety-training course offered as well. (1)

Miscellaneous

- The design and construction of the shooting facility should be put on an accelerated schedule. (3)
- The facility should be geared towards safety. This would require proper supervision, embankments, and fines for misuse. (1)

- Targets should be used that are made of metal and covered with tar. The shooter could reuse the target by having him or her put a fresh coat of tar on the metal target from a nearby bucket and brush. (1)
- The cost for use of the facility should be kept relatively low so that more people use the range than continue to shoot in the forest. (1)
- As a member of law enforcement, I participated in the steering committee for the Bellemont shooting facility and would like the opportunity to participate in the steering committee for this project. (1)

Open House Survey Results

A survey regarding the notification of the Open House was included on the comment sheet. In response to the question, "How did you hear about today's Open House?", four people saw the newspaper notice, one person received a flyer in the mail, and two people mentioned that they heard about the Open House from some other means. From these two people: one person saw it on the National Rifle Association Web site and the other person did not specify how he heard about the meeting.