

**STATE OF ALASKA
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF MINING, LAND AND WATER
SOUTHCENTRAL REGION**

**Administrative Decision
Knik River Public Use Area – Maud Road Extension Rifle Range
Reservation of Public Easement
ADL 230693**

Overview

The Department of Natural Resources, Division of Mining, Land, and Water, Southcentral Regional Office (DNR/DMLW/SCRO) has determined it is in the State of Alaska's best interest to reserve a ≈ 5 acre public recreation site easement specifically for the development of a small-scale rifle range and day use parking area for the benefit of the public's present and future needs of recreational target shooting within the Knik River Public Use Area (KRPUA). Development of a rifle range facility in the KRPUA is consistent with the management objectives adopted in the KRPUA Management Plan. This easement shall be held by the department and managed by the department. The department may enter into separate management agreements, which are not a disposal of an interest in state land, under AS 38.05.027. These cooperative resource management agreements may be used to facilitate maintenance and management of the rifle range for specific uses and goals.

Width and Acreage

The current proposal is for an easement approximately 750 feet long and 300 feet wide encompassing an area of ≈ 5 acres (Appendix C – Range Maps). Within the easement a range facility measuring approximately 600 feet long by 100 feet wide will be developed (Appendix B – Rifle Range Diagram).

General Location

The area is located approximately 50 miles north of Anchorage in the Knik River Valley, northeast of Butte, along the Maud Road Extension trail (ADL – 206989), near Mud and Jim Lakes within the KRPUA.

Background

The KRPUA was legislatively designated in July of 2006. It is roughly 260,000 acres (400+ sq. miles) in size, and located approximately 45 miles north of Anchorage in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough. The area provides a wide variety of multiple use recreational and utilitarian pursuits. The areas close proximity to the population base of southcentral Alaska make the Knik River Valley and surrounding State, borough, and federally owned public lands a popular destination for the public. Some of the more common recreational activities taking place in the KRPUA include: riding ATV's, OHV's, and motorbikes, horseback riding, camping, fishing, hunting, trapping, target shooting, and wildlife viewing.

The department proposes to construct an outdoor rifle range on State owned land within the legislatively designated KRPUA at a location identified for this purpose in the KRPUA Management Plan that went into effect on September 25, 2008.

Recently adopted enforcement regulations specific to State owned land within the KRPUA have put in place target shooting restrictions in areas commonly used by the public for target shooting. Areas of state land along the lower Knik River and the trails leading to Mud and Jim Lakes have received high concentrations of target shooting over the years. Often times the activity impacts the public safety of recreational users in the area due to the high volume of trails mixed in with make-shift target shooting spots. Other times environmental impacts become pronounced due to spent shell and bullet casings, litter, vandalized trees, and ground disturbance. The department proposes to construct a small rifle range to provide an opportunity for the public to partake in the practice of target shooting at a formal facility pursuant to the management objectives of the KRPUA Management Plan. A formal location is intended to increase public safety by concentrating the use in a specific area. A dedicated target shooting location coupled with target shooting restrictions in high use areas will help with the department's goal of decreasing unlawful activity and promoting public safety. This goal is accomplished by focusing shooting target shooting in a designated area.

The departments recently adopted target shooting restrictions along the lower flats of the Knik River, the Maud Road Extension Trail, and the Rippy Trail were well received by the public. The restrictions were implemented to improve public safety, increase environmental health, and eliminate litter associated with target shooting. Public support for the shooting restriction was strong with the condition that the department would identify a location and work towards development of a target shooting facility. The department solicited input from the public to locate a safe and convenient place to target shoot. The department identified two locations for this development, one site along the Maud Road Extension Trail (ADL – 206989) and another site in the vicinity of Jim Creek.

Project Overview

The KRPUA Management Plan identifies a site situated toward the terminus of the Maud Road Extension for the development of a formal target shooting area. The proposed easement will consist of approximately 5 acres of land, with the developed project area utilizing 3 of these acres for development of the rifle range, parking area, access trail, and restroom facilities. The remaining 2 acres will be reserved for future development to exclude any incompatible uses. The project site specific to the rifle range will incorporate earthen backstops and sidestops which are used to catch stray bullets (sidestops) and provide a bullet catch behind targets (backstop). The earthen berms will also aid in buffering noise. The range will incorporate three earthen berm backstops, and two earthen berm sidestops. A backstop will be constructed at 25 yards downrange of the firing line to accommodate pistols, 100 yards downrange of the firing line to accommodate rifles, and 150 yards downrange of the firing line to accommodate rifles. The backstops will be constructed at approximately 20 feet in height and 20 feet in width,

and the sidestops will be constructed at approximately 10 feet in height and 20 feet in width. The firing line will be covered, and consist of 5 shooting benches (Appendix B). A small parking area currently exists southeast of the project site, and to the north of the Maud Road Extension (Appendix D – Site Photos). This area can accommodate approximately 10 vehicles. From the parking site the public will utilize a short walking trail to access the range. The trail will be gated to prevent unauthorized vehicle access to the facility, and allow for authorized service vehicles to access the site for maintenance purposes. The parking area and associated access trail are incorporated into the site easement (Appendix B – Rifle Range Diagram).

Legal Description

The state land wherein this easement is located is described as follows:

Northwest ¼ Southwest ¼ of Section 16, Township 17 North, Range 3 East, Seward Meridian. Latitude/Longitude: 61.563,430° North, 148.932,052° West – NAD83.

Administrative Record

Easement application ADL 230693 received on March 6, 2009. Other actions impending on these lands are described in the KRPUA Management Plan.

Title

The State of Alaska received title to these lands pursuant to Section 6(b) of the Alaska Statehood Act of July 7, 1958, Pub. L. 85-508, 72 Stat. 339; Palmer Recording District, February 10, 1992 – Patent Number 50-92-0169.

Authority

The department has the authority to issue easements on state land under the following provisions: AS 41.23.180-230 (KRPUA Legislation), AS 38.05.850 (Permits), AS 38.05.020 (Authorities and duties of the commissioner), 11 AAC 51 (Public Easements), 11AAC 05.010 (Fees), and 11 AAC 55.040 (Classification).

Third Party Rights

There are no valid Third Party Rights within the lands specified for this project. Public Easement ADL 206989 lies adjacent and directly south of proposed easement ADL 230693 along what is commonly known as the Maud Road Extension. These easements will share a border in the NW ¼ of the SW ¼ of Section 16, Township 17 North, Range 3 East, Seward Meridian.

Public Easement ADL 206989 is 66' wide, 2,000 ft. long, and covers approximately 30 acres located within sections 7, 8, 16, and 17, Township 17 North, Range 3 East, Seward Meridian. This easement was issued in 1981 for the construction of a road to access a timber harvest site, and provides access to Mud Lake, Jim Lake, the Rippy Trailhead, and the shooting area.

Proposal for Early Entry Authorization and Public Easement

After finalization of the Administrative Decision the department proposes to authorize an Early Entry Authorization to facilitate construction of a rifle range in the KRPUA. This land use authorization will allow the department to construct the proposed rifle range, and complete a project location diagram (As Built Survey) for the overall site. The Early Entry Authorization will be granted for a term of two (2) years to facilitate site control and development. Following the construction and survey of the proposed range, a land use authorization in the form of a "Site Easement" will be issued until revoked.

Economic Benefit and Development of State's Resources

To determine whether this project provides a benefit to the state and the development of its natural resources, the department considered two criteria when evaluating this easement application, 1) the direct and indirect economic benefit, and, 2) facility development pursuant to the management intent for the area as written in the KRPUA Management Plan.

Pursuant to AS 41.23.180-230 which established the KRPUA, the primary objective of KRPUA management is to perpetuate and enhance public recreation and protection of fish and wildlife habitats. The development of a small scale rifle range will relieve some of the long term environmental impacts occurring throughout the KRPUA. These environmental impacts include the debris associated with indiscriminate target shooting, such as lead deposition from bullets, litter including casings, shotgun shells, cartridges, target materials, and trees being used as backstops for target shooters. By concentrating the activity in a sole location that is easily accessible for enforcement, maintenance, management, and remediation purposes the state will be diminishing some of the environmental impacts associated with target shooting, while at the same time implementing the management intent of the KRPUA Management Plan.

There is not a direct economic benefit to the state with this project. Indirect economic benefits include decreased costs associated with managing indiscriminate target shooting sites that involve litter cleanup, sign replacement, and restoration of public lands.

There is a direct benefit to the State of Alaska associated with the public benefit aspect of the proposed project because it supports a popular recreational activity. There is substantial public interest in protecting trailheads, lake shores, wetlands, trees, and parking areas from indiscriminate target shooting. This project promotes recreational target shooting in a managed environment which increases public safety, and encourages responsible target shooting, while adhering to the objectives put forth in the KRPUA Management Plan.

Easement Revocability

As per AS 38.05.850, the department has determined that this authorization will be functionally revocable due to the removable nature of the project. The materials utilized to complete the proposed project could potentially be removed, and the site returned to near its original condition. Due to the revocable nature of this authorization no notice is required however our policy is to issue a courtesy notice for projects authorized under AS 38.05.850.

Courtesy Public Notice

The department issued a courtesy public notice concerning this proposal on April 3, 2009. The comment period closed on May 6, 2009. The notice was posted for 34 days on the State of Alaska Public Notice website, US Post Office locations in Butte, Palmer, and Wasilla, and also announced through local newspaper and television news stories. Fifty-three (53) comments were received regarding this project (Appendix A – Issue Response Summary).

Location Diagram

The proposed easement shall be issued with a project location diagram depicting the approximate location on state land in the form of an “As-Built” survey.

Alaska Coastal Management Program Review

On March 9, 2009 the Coastal Project Questionnaire and Certification Statement was submitted to the Division of Coastal and Ocean Management (DCOM). On March 23, 2009, DCOM concluded that the project would need an ACMP Single Agency Review, and that an authorization for this project would be required from DMLW. Based on an evaluation of this project by the Alaska Departments of Environmental Conservation, Fish and Game, and Natural Resources, and the Matanuska-Susitna Coastal Resource District, the project was found to be consistent, and the Final Consistency Determination was issued on September 4, 2009 (State ID# ID2009-0318AA).

State Plans and Classifications

The project site is located within the boundaries of the legislatively designated Knik River Public Use Area. According to the Knik River Public Use Area Management Plan, this area was identified as a location for the future development of a small scale rifle range, with the purpose of improving public safety and enhancing public recreation. This decision finds the proposed project compatible with the KRPUA Management Plan intent, objectives, and guidelines. For more information please see the Knik River Public Use Area Management Plan, Chapter 2: 2-15.

Third Party Interests

No third party interests were found on review of DNR’s Land Administration System records.

Issues

Members of the public submitted timely comments regarding the proposed rifle range project described above. A total of fifty-three (53) comments were received. Comments were divided into the following categories – public process, fish and wildlife habitat, recreation, management, design/construction, and public safety (Appendix A – Issue Response Summary). Some local residents and recreational users expressed concern that the rifle range will affect fish and wildlife populations in the area, thus limiting their opportunities to view wildlife such as sheep, moose, bear, and swans. Other comments were specific to access, and worried that the Maud Road Extension will be difficult to pass during the winter months because it is an unmaintained road. Other comments spoke to noise concerns and felt that the discharge of firearms will echo off of the nearby

cliffs disrupting outdoor recreational pursuits. Some area users are pleased that the state is developing a place for safe and responsible target shooting activities. Some commenter's were concerned about the enforcement, management presence, and maintenance of the facility. Other comments voiced concerns about lead contamination. Although the site is intended to be open on a year round basis, use of this range will be restricted to hours of operation and routine closures for maintenance and management purposes (see Appendix A – Issue Response Summary).

Fees

Currently no user fees are proposed for this planned facility. In the future user fees may be implemented to help pay for maintenance or other costs associated with management of the facility.

Insurance

Insurance is not required. The State of Alaska is self insured. In the event that a 3rd party contractor is used to operate and manage the range, insurance may be required.

Recommendations

The KRPUA Management Plan identifies a site situated near the terminus of the Maud Road Extension for the development of a formal target shooting area. The proposed easement will consist of a total of 5 acres of land, with the developed project area utilizing approximately 3 of these acres. The remaining 2 acres will be reserved as an area to exclude any incompatible uses.

It is recommended that an easement be granted to the DNR/MLW/SCRO, pursuant to AS 38.05.850, for the proposed use. Initial development within the easement will include the range, access trail, and parking area. DNR will secure all other State, federal, and/or local authorizations that may be required.

DNR will implement facility rules based on input from the public and recommendations found in the NRA Range Source Book (Appendix F – Rifle Range Rules). Hours of operation will be administered, and Best Management Practices will be implemented to deal with used ammunition and bullets (Appendix E – Rifle Range Maintenance).

DNR may partner with local outdoor groups to help in the management of the facility. Depending on seasonal conditions and amount of use, management will include weekly, monthly, and annual maintenance of the covered firing line, shooting benches, firing alley, backstop/sidestops, garbage disposal, perimeter signage, informational signage, access trail, and parking area.

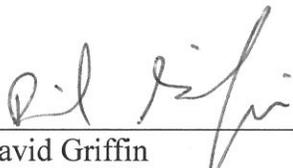
At this time there are no known competing projects for these same lands, making this project the only desired use of the land. There are no existing easements within the proposed project location, and the project area is identified in the KRPUA Management Plan as being an area where shooting can occur in a safe manner. For the future development of a target shooting facility, the department finds granting of this easement beneficial to the state.

Appeals

All appeals must be in accordance with 11 AAC 02. To be eligible to appeal a person must be affected by this decision. Any appeal must be received within twenty (20) calendar days after the date of "issuance" of this decision, as defined in 11 AAC 02(c) and (d). If no appeal is filed within the 20 days of "issuance" this decision goes into effect as a final order and decision thirty one (31) days after "issuance". An eligible person must first appeal this decision in accordance with 11 AAC 02 before appealing this decision to Superior Court. A copy of 11 AAC 02 may be obtained from any regional information office of the Department of Natural Resources.

Appeals should be directed to:

Tom Irwin, Commissioner
Department of Natural Resources
550 W. 7th Avenue, Suite 1400
Anchorage, AK 99501
Fax: (907) 269-8918
Email: dnr_appeals@dnr.state.ak.us



David Griffin
Natural Resource Specialist II

5/21/2010
Date

X I concur

_____ I do not concur



Rick Thompson
Regional Manager
Southcentral Region Office
Division of Mining, Land and Water

6/10/2010
Date

Appendix A – Issue Response Summary

Knik River Public Use Area Issue Response Summary ADL 230693 – Rifle Range Project

Public Process

1. *The proposed range does not comply with AS 38.05.850.*

AS 38.05.850 establishes the authority for the department to issue permits, rights-of-way, and easements on state land. An easement reserving land for the purpose of a specific use, including a recreational shooting facility, lies within the spirit and intent of AS 38.05.850.

2. *The public notice provisions of AS 38.05.850 have been violated.*

The public notice provisions of AS 38.05.850 were not violated. Public notice for land use authorizations issued under AS 38.05.850 isn't required unless the authorization is a disposal of state interest. This proposed site easement is functionally revocable and the department gave public notice as a courtesy. The project was noticed for a total of 34 days on the DNR website, and at post office locations in Butte, Palmer, and Wasilla, between April 3, 2009 and May 6, 2009. During this time frame a news story and an opinion piece were published in the Frontiersman detailing the proposed project and department contact information. Furthermore, the Knik River Public Use Area Management Plan planning process began in the fall of 2006 and was adopted by the commissioner in the fall of 2008. During this time frame notice was given to the public online, in newspapers, and at post offices about the department's management objectives for the area, including proposals to develop two small scale target shooting facilities.

3. *DNR is violating the public review process by accepting funding for a range before the review process is completed.*

Grant funds are applied for and awarded independent of the review process for land use authorizations pursuant to AS 38.05.850. Despite being awarded a grant, construction will not occur until all land use authorizations and applicable permits are obtained.

4. *DNR began clearing the site prior to the end of the review period.*

The Division of Forestry conducted a commercial timber harvest at the site in which the easement ADL 230693 was applied on. The Division of Forestry handled the timber harvest authorization through their division's process (AS 38.05.810-120).

5. *Who is the beneficiary of the easement?*

The public will be the beneficiary of the easement. The easement will reserve state land for the opportunity of the recreating public to legally and safely practice target shooting.

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Fish and Wildlife Habitat

6. DNR neglected to perform an Environmental Impact Study.

Environmental Impact Studies are a pertinent to federal laws that apply to actions taking place on federal lands or projects utilizing federal funds. This proposed project is not taking place on federal lands and will not be developed using federal funds. The department submitted a project specific Alaska Coastal Project Questionnaire to the Division of Ocean and Coastal Management, and the project was found to be consistent with statewide standards and policies for activities taking place within the boundaries of the Alaska Coastal Management Zone (Final Consistency Determination, September 4, 2009, ID# ID2009-0318AA). Additionally the project benefited from two year public planning process that included agency input from the Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game.

7. DNR did not consider the effects of a rifle range on wildlife and anadromous fish.

Effects of a rifle range are a concern of the department, and one of the reasons the department gave courtesy public notice on this proposed project was to gain information and feedback pertaining to any effects this project may or may not have on wildlife and anadromous fish. The department included the Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game in the agency review, and ADF&G was also a member on the KRPUA Planning Team. Additionally, an Alaska Coastal Project Questionnaire was submitted to the Division of Coastal and Ocean Management, and the project was found to be consistent with statewide standards and policies for activities taking place within the boundaries of the Alaska Coastal Management Zone (Final Consistency Determination, September 4, 2009, ID# ID2009-0318AA). The department also included the Alaska Dept. of Environmental Conservation in the agency review. There are not any anadromous streams in the direct vicinity of the proposed project, and no comments were received from ADF&G or ADEC regarding the effects of a rifle range on anadromous and/or wildlife.

Recreation

8. DNR neglected to address potential threats of lead poisoning, noise pollution, and diminished quality of life for local residents.

A reason the department gave courtesy public notice on this proposed project was to gain information and feedback pertaining to lead poisoning and noise pollution, as well as concerns of nearby residents. The department has utilized the National Rifle Association's Range Source Book to develop several designs intended to reduce gunfire noise and facilitate the removal of lead. The department is addressing concerns of lead and noise in the design of the range. According to the Range Source Book by constructing earthen berm backstops and sidestops, and constructing a covered firing line noise will be reduced and lead will be concentrated in the earthen berm backstops. The department believes the range will actually improve the quality of life for area users and local residents by concentrating the activity in a formal location while restricting target shooting in high use areas, and enforcing the restrictions through regulations that are citable with violations (11 AAC 96.016(c)(14).

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The department vetted the concept of establishing a small rifle range on the Maud Road Extension trail during the Knik River Public Use Area Management Plan planning process that began in the fall of 2006 and was adopted by the commissioner in the fall of 2008. During this time frame notice was distributed to govt. agencies, and provided to the public in online documents, ads in newspapers, and bulletins at post offices noticing the department's management plans for the area, including the proposal to develop a small scale target shooting facilities.

9. Recreational shooting must not be limited in the KRPUA.

Recreational shooting has been a popular activity on state owned lands within the Knik River Valley for many years, and only recently has come under restrictions (11 AAC 96(c)(14)). The reasons for the target shooting restrictions are primarily due to concerns involving public safety, litter, and environmental health. These concerns played a significant role in the creation of the enabling legislation, and were concerns that were repeatedly addressed by the public during the management planning process. The department heard from local residents and area users that target shooting was a concern and should be concentrated in a formal location. Locations were identified in the management plan for the development of target shooting facilities.

10. The establishment of a shooting range will provide an area for safe target practice.

A designated shooting area will increase public safety, while preserving a popular outdoor activity.

11. A range will concentrate shooting in one place which will increase public safety.

Concentrating target shooting in a formal location will minimize indiscriminate target shooting in parking areas, trailheads, boat launches, and camp sites, which will increase the areas overall public safety. A range will also support enforcement activity over the larger area.

12. The range will negatively affect travel on the Maud Road Extension.

Target shooting has been a popular activity along the Maud Road Extension for many years. The development of a range will direct shooting away from the road and other travelled surfaces thereby making travel and recreation in the area safer.

13. Target shooting might displace quiet recreational activities in area around range.

A result of target shooting is noise. By constructing the range in a way that includes trees, earthen berms, and a covered firing line, the department hopes to reduce noise associated with discharging firearms, while concentrating it in one area rather than throughout the entire KRPUA.

14. DNR should deny land use authorizations for the KRPUA until litigation over the KRPUA Mgmt. Plan is complete.

The KRPUA Management Plan is in effect and being implemented as of September 25, 2008. The current lawsuit against DNR does not stay the effective date of the management plan therefore it is in full effect.

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15. *Have it in one spot instead of people shooting all over.*

Activities such as target shooting are best situated in a formal location so that the activity is concentrated in identified, regulated, and managed areas. A formal location will increase overall public safety and make enforcement of regulations more efficient.

16. *The range is not a compatible use for the area.*

Target shooting is a recognized and well-known activity in the Knik River Valley. In areas where the activity is a threat to public safety, the activity has been restricted, and is being enforced through regulation. Other areas were evaluated for the development of a formal shooting location. The evaluation incorporated input from the public through the management planning process, NRA development guidelines, and natural setting. The plan decided it was a compatible use, not the proposed easement. The easement only reserves an area for the intended use envisioned by the plan.

17. *The range will provide an opportunity to teach our children how to shoot guns safely.*

A designated shooting facility will enhance a popular activity, while at the same time providing a place reserved for safely teaching gun safety.

18. *The site should be regularly staffed.*

The area is small in size, and intended to accommodate fewer than 10 people at any given time. Based on the size and location of the proposed development the department does not see a need for regular staffing. The site will be patrolled regularly by law enforcement, local volunteers, and department management staff. The department looks forward to forming cooperative management agreements with interested clubs and/or organizations to help with efforts at management and maintenance operations. There will be rules to follow, and violators may receive citations.

19. *The public should be made aware that the formal range is the only legal place to shoot.*

Public education is an important component of land management within the KRPUA. The public will be informed about legal places to shoot via bulletins, maps, website, and field contacts.

20. *Lead bullets should not be allowed.*

At present, lead bullets are an integral part of target shooting. Until firearm technology evolves and lead bullets are eliminated, lead bullets will not be restricted. The department will encourage the use of steel shot versus lead shot when firing shotguns.

21. *Shooting should occur on alternating days of the week so that at least one weekend day and 2 or 3 weekdays are quiet.*

Initially the range will be open everyday throughout the year with specific rules for use. The department has looked at noise reduction designs to minimize noise impacts. The construction of a covered firing line, the use of a backstop and sidestop earthen berms, and a treed buffer will help to minimize loud noise associated with target shooting.

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22. *A legal shooting range will give people a responsible alternative to shooting in unauthorized areas.*

A shooting facility will provide an alternative to other locations where target shooting has been restricted. The Mat-Su Valley has many residents who own and use firearms. This range will provide one more legal location to shoot.

23. *Properly placed and well constructed shooting ranges are in the best interest of our community.*

The general-public use a variety of places to practice target shooting such as public land, formal rifle ranges, and private property. It is technically legal to discharge firearms on state owned public land unless restricted by regulation. In the case of public lands in the Knik River Valley target shooting is commonplace. Other recreational uses are also common in the Knik River Valley such as camping, hunting, fishing, riding off-highway vehicles, horseback riding, boating, and biking. Target shooting in close proximity to these other uses is incompatible. By developing a designated area and formal facility the community will have a safe place to practice target shooting, in an environment that is designed and developed with their interests in mind.

Management

24. *Who is going to police the area?*

The area will be monitored and patrolled through an agreement with the Alaska State Troopers. The area will also be managed and maintained by commissioned Peace Officers from the department. The department is open to forming cooperative management agreements with local clubs and organizations, and will also encourage use of volunteers.

25. *Who is going to manage the area?*

The area will be managed by the department, department staff, and volunteers from local clubs. The department may also enter into 3rd party agreements with concessionaires to manage the facility.

26. *DNR does not indicate any funds for road maintenance.*

The department does not have road maintenance funds nor plans to fund road maintenance along the Maud Road Extension.

27. *DNR is constructing a rifle range before constructing or providing sanitary facilities or trash receptacles anywhere in the PUA.*

Facility development requires funding for construction and maintenance. The department understands the need to provide sanitary and trash facilities, and at present is actively working on ideas to address sanitary and garbage facilities on land near and/or within the PUA. With respect to development of a rifle range, the department has the opportunity to use grant funds to build a small rifle range facility. Now that target shooting restrictions

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have been promulgated it is pertinent to develop a facility in accordance with the management objectives set forth in the KRPUA Management Plan.

28. *Will you limit the days of operation?*

At this time the department does not plan to limit days of operation. The department may evaluate the need to limit days of operation for the site in the future.

29. *Will you limit the hours of operation?*

Hours of operation will be instituted.

30. *Will DNR partner with organizations to help manage the area?*

The department may partner with local organizations to help manage the facility.

31. *Can the shooting range be compatible with a campground at Jim Lake?*

The layout and development of the proposed target shooting facility is designed in such a way that it will be compatible with any future campground development at Jim Lake. The incorporation of noise abatement techniques such as a covered firing line, construction of earthen berms, orientation, hours of operation, and it's location in a treed perimeter help to meet the objectives for compatibility of other uses occurring in the vicinity.

32. *Please consider all possible noise abatement techniques.*

The department has considered a variety of noise abatement techniques, including ideas garnered from the NRA Range Source Book. These following noise abatement techniques currently being considered in the layout and design of the range include, location of range far away from residential areas, treed buffer zone, earthen berms, a covered firing line, orientation toward the mountains, and hours of operation.

33. *Will people be able to shoot at all hours of the night?*

The range will have limited hours of operation, and will not be open to target shooting during the nighttime.

34. *Are automatic weapons allowed?*

The department plans to restrict fully automatic weapons and .50 caliber rifles at the range site. The department may restrict specific types of weapons at the site in the future upon evaluation.

35. *Will there be a supervisor on site during the hours of operation?*

A supervisor will not be on site during the hours of operation. This will be an unmanned, unsupervised range however the area will be patrolled regularly by law enforcement, local volunteers, and department management staff. The department looks forward to forming cooperative management agreements with interested clubs and/or organizations to help with efforts at management and maintenance operations. There will be rules to follow, and violators may receive citations.

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36. *Will there be user fees?*

At present the department does not plan on instituting user fees. The department will closely monitor the user impacts of the facility, and may evaluate the need for user fees, particularly with respect to maintenance costs in the event that sanitary and garbage facilities are developed.

37. *The range will be a public safety issue.*

Public safety should be enhanced by developing a shooting area. The range project site is located a short distance off the main road, with the firing line aimed at a backstop situated at the base of the mountains. No reserved trail easements or facilities are in the downrange vicinity of the range. By concentrating target shooting at a single location, members of the public will have designated place to shoot, and others in the area will know where shooting can occur.

38. *Plans for the construction of a shooting facility should meet the needs of all users.*

The rifle range facility will be designed and developed for the specific purpose of target shooting. The department intends for the range to be a formal site dedicated to the needs of responsible target shooting enthusiasts. The range will be designed to facilitate 10 or fewer shooters at any given time that are interested in self-regulation based upon the rules and expectations established by the department specific to the facility. At present the range design will include space for handguns and rifles.

39. *A developed facility should accommodate parking, picnic, and restroom services.*

There may be an opportunity to place some picnic and restroom facilities in the direct vicinity of the rifle range. Parking will be located at a nearby pull-out for currently used for accommodating vehicles. At this point the department is proposing no other improvements to the site.

40. *I feel that the range would be a huge benefit to the environmental health and public safety of the area.*

Designating a facility for target shooting will increase public safety, and concentrate the environmental impacts associated with target shooting.

41. *Recruit on site staff/volunteers for weekends and busy periods of year.*

The department will support and encourage user groups, and local citizens to volunteer during high use times of year.

Design/Construction

42. *Use berms and covered areas to minimize noise and echoes.*

Per the decision document, the range design incorporates the use of berms (backstops and sidestops), as well as a covered firing line. Utilization of berms and a covered firing line will help to minimize noise.

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43. Minimize or restrict use of lead shot.

Most ammunition contains lead therefore restricting lead bullets is not practicable. Maintenance procedures will reflect the state's commitment to managing lead, and we will encourage the use of non-lead containing ammunition.

44. Regular trash cleanup through staff and volunteers.

Regular trash cleanup and maintenance will be handled by department staff, volunteers, and others.

45. Will there be regular patrols by DNR and state troopers.

To the extent practicable regular patrols by law enforcement and department staff along the Maud Road Extension will take place. These patrols will include stops and inspections of the rifle range, trailheads, and lake access points.

46. Annual review of site operations.

An annual review and evaluation of site operations is an appropriate measure to take in determining what's going well and what needs improvement.

Public Safety

47. The added traffic will be dangerous to children and animals.

The Maud Road Extension is open to the public for public recreation and traditional means of access. There is no substantial reason not to develop a facility in the KRPUA along the Maud Road Extension. There is no data on the traffic patterns in the area but it is not anticipated that this facility will result in an appreciable increase in traffic, or that the nature of the traffic will present any new concerns. The KRPUA as a whole is expected to rise in popularity in the coming years, and increased traffic may be a result of that increasing popularity.

48. Criminal activity will be directed into the Maud Road neighborhood.

State owned land at the end of the Maud Road Extension has been a popular location to practice target shooting for many years. The development of a formal rifle range in this area, coupled with the target shooting restrictions and enforcement regulations should enhance responsible use of state resources. There is no data suggesting that this facility will lead to increased crime in the general Maud Road community.

49. Range location is far away from homes and has a natural backdrop.

The location of the range is situated on the Maud Road Extension, which is at the end of Maud Road. The nearest occupied residence from the range location is 2.5 miles. There is also a mountain backdrop directly behind the proposed range backstop.

50. The area has been used for target shooting for years.

The area has a long history of target shooting. The location of the proposed range is located adjacent to a popular pull out where area users have discharged fire arms for many years. The development of a range will allow this activity to take place under a managed and regulated condition, and is considered to be a public benefit.

Appendix A – Issue Response Summary

51. *The Maud Road Extension is not wide enough to handle the traffic.*

The Maud Road Extension accommodates two-way traffic of trucks and trailers on a regular basis on a reserved easement that is 66 feet wide. It is expected that with increased use of the area the road will be upgraded and improved over the coming years.

52. *The site will be easily enforceable because there is only one way in and one way out.*

The Maud Road Extension is a dead end road so enforcement should be enhanced.

53. *The development of the range will bring more responsible users to the area.*

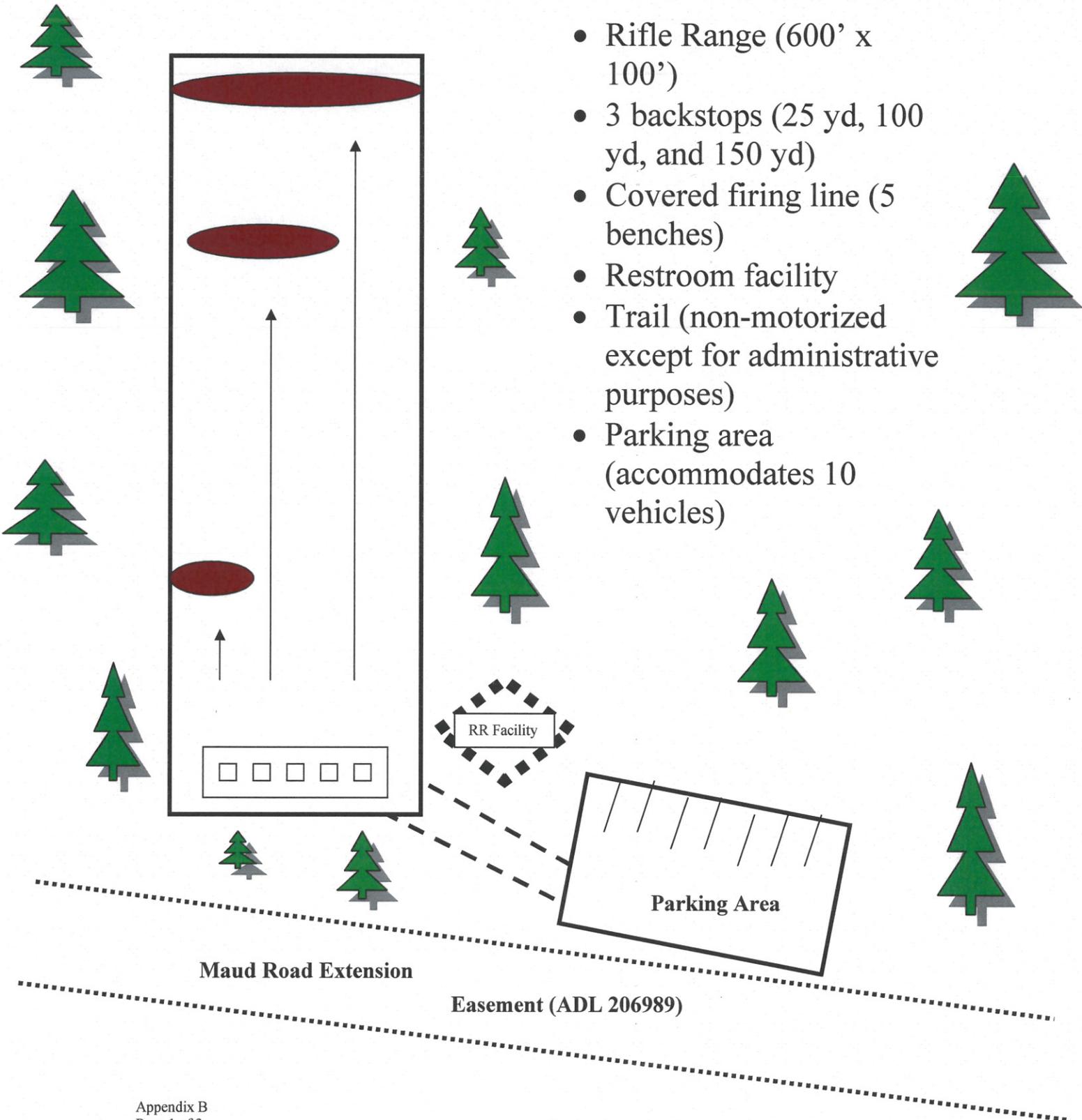
The development of a facility within the KRPUA coupled with enforceable regulations and administrative oversight will add value to the area thus bringing more responsible users into the KRPUA.

Appendix B – Rifle Range Diagram

ADL 230693

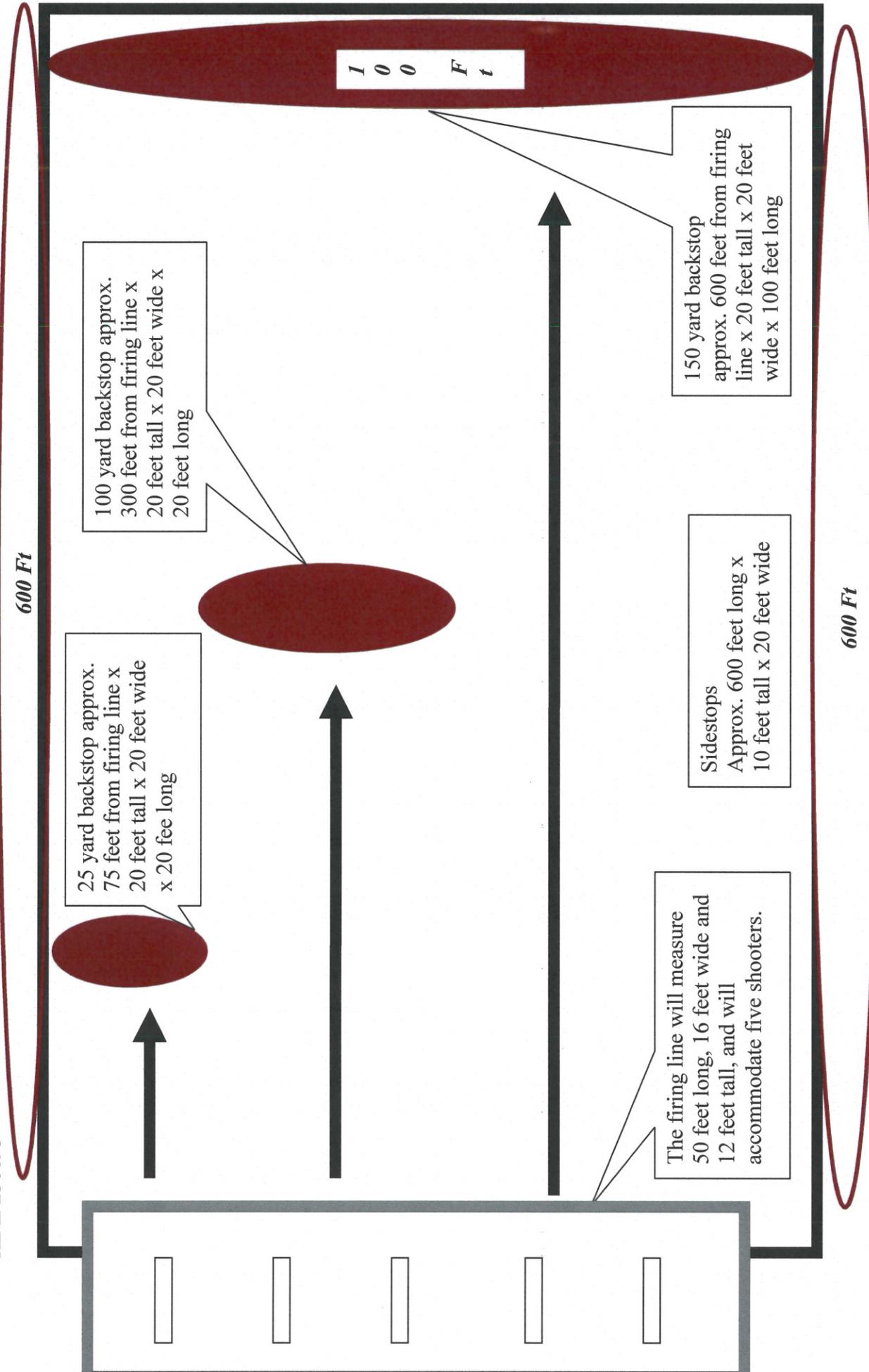
Rifle Range Attributes

- Rifle Range (600' x 100')
- 3 backstops (25 yd, 100 yd, and 150 yd)
- Covered firing line (5 benches)
- Restroom facility
- Trail (non-motorized except for administrative purposes)
- Parking area (accommodates 10 vehicles)



Appendix B – Rifle Range Diagram

ADL 230693



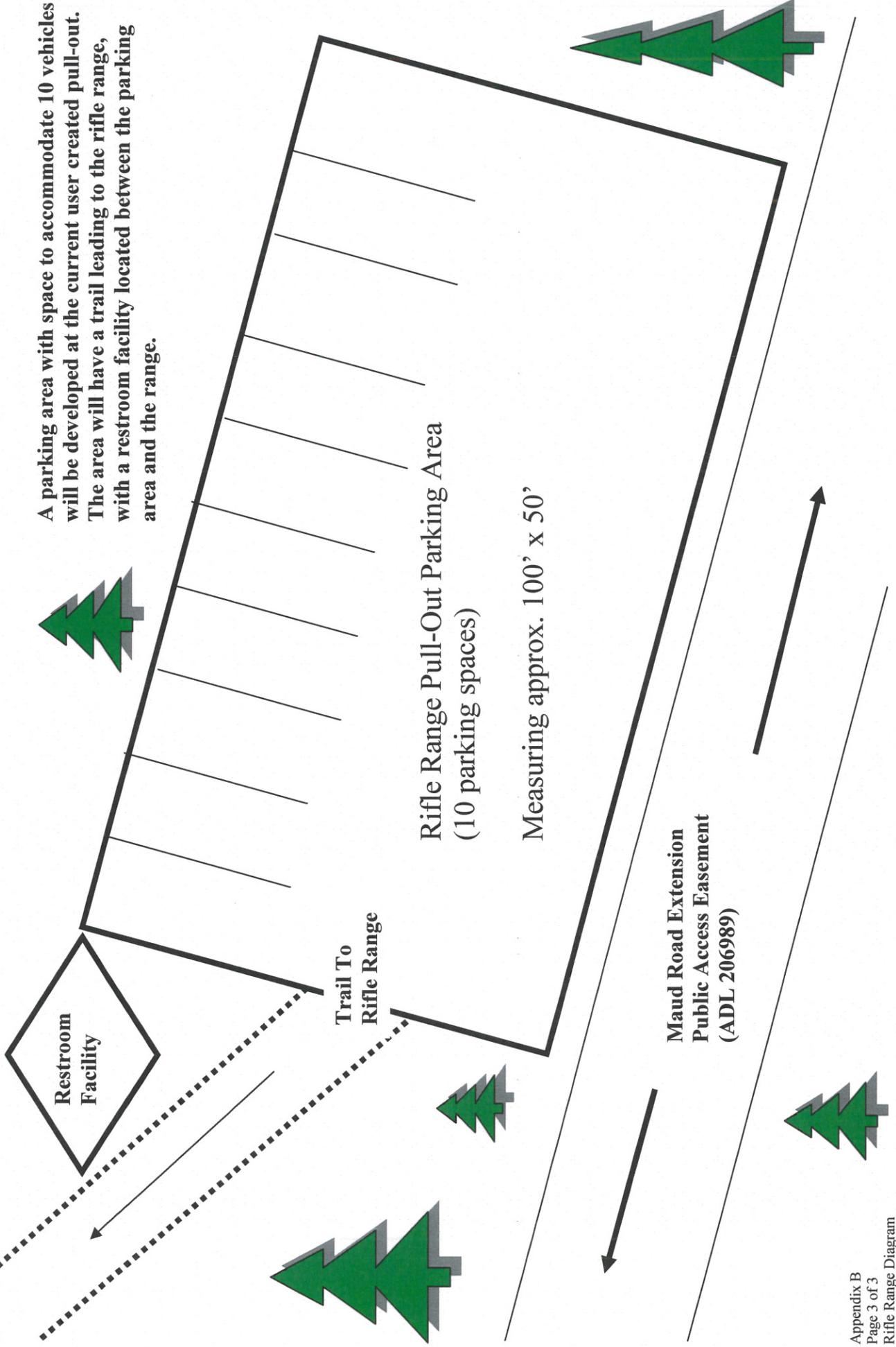
This small outdoor rifle range will include a covered shooting area, steel support posts, sheet metal roofing, and a concrete slab.

Appendix B – Rifle Range Diagram

ADL 230693

Parking Area

A parking area with space to accommodate 10 vehicles will be developed at the current user created pull-out. The area will have a trail leading to the rifle range, with a restroom facility located between the parking area and the range.



Appendix C – Range Maps

ADL 230693

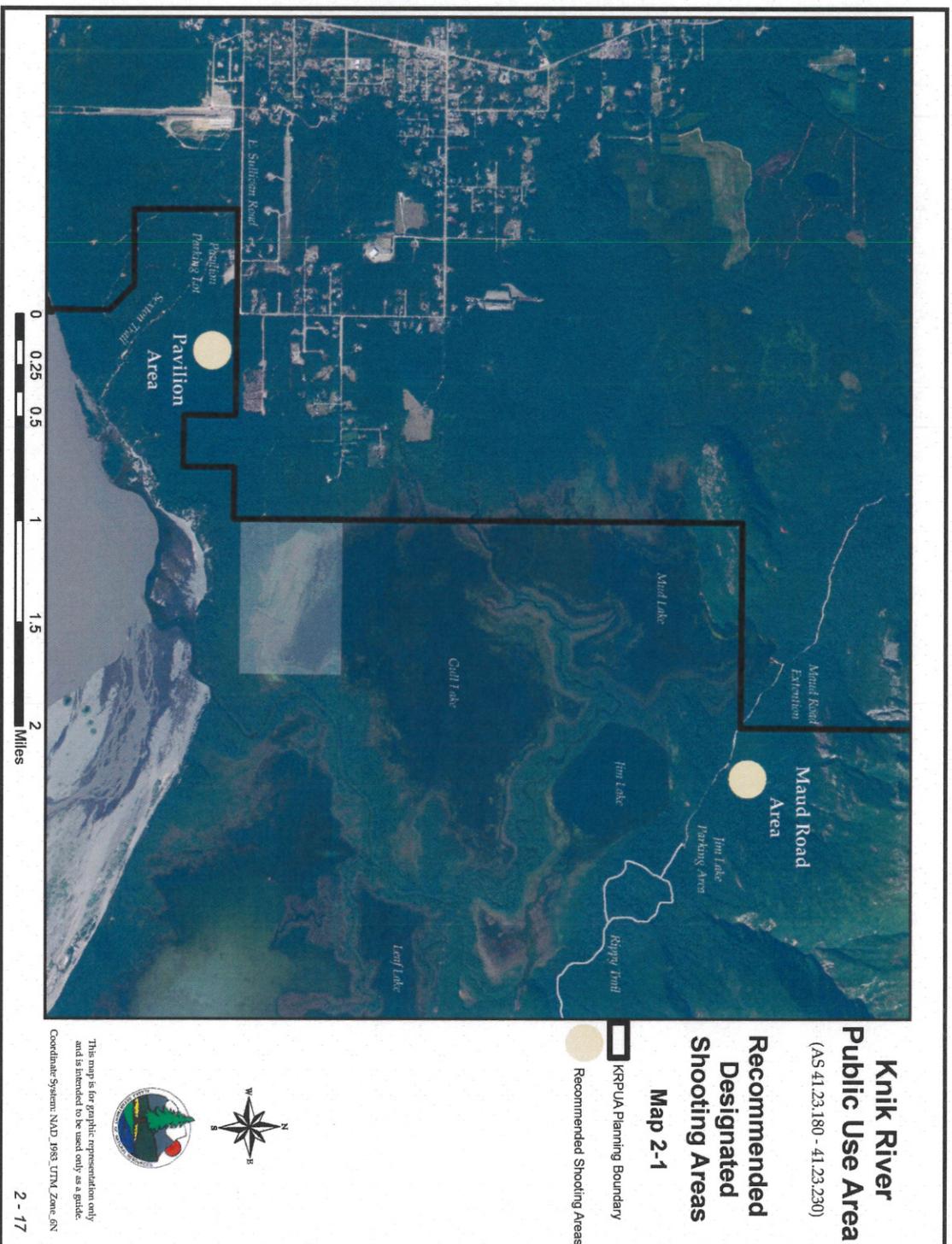


Figure 1 – Map depicting “Designated Shooting Areas” in the KRPVA Management Plan.

Appendix C – Range Maps

ADL 230693

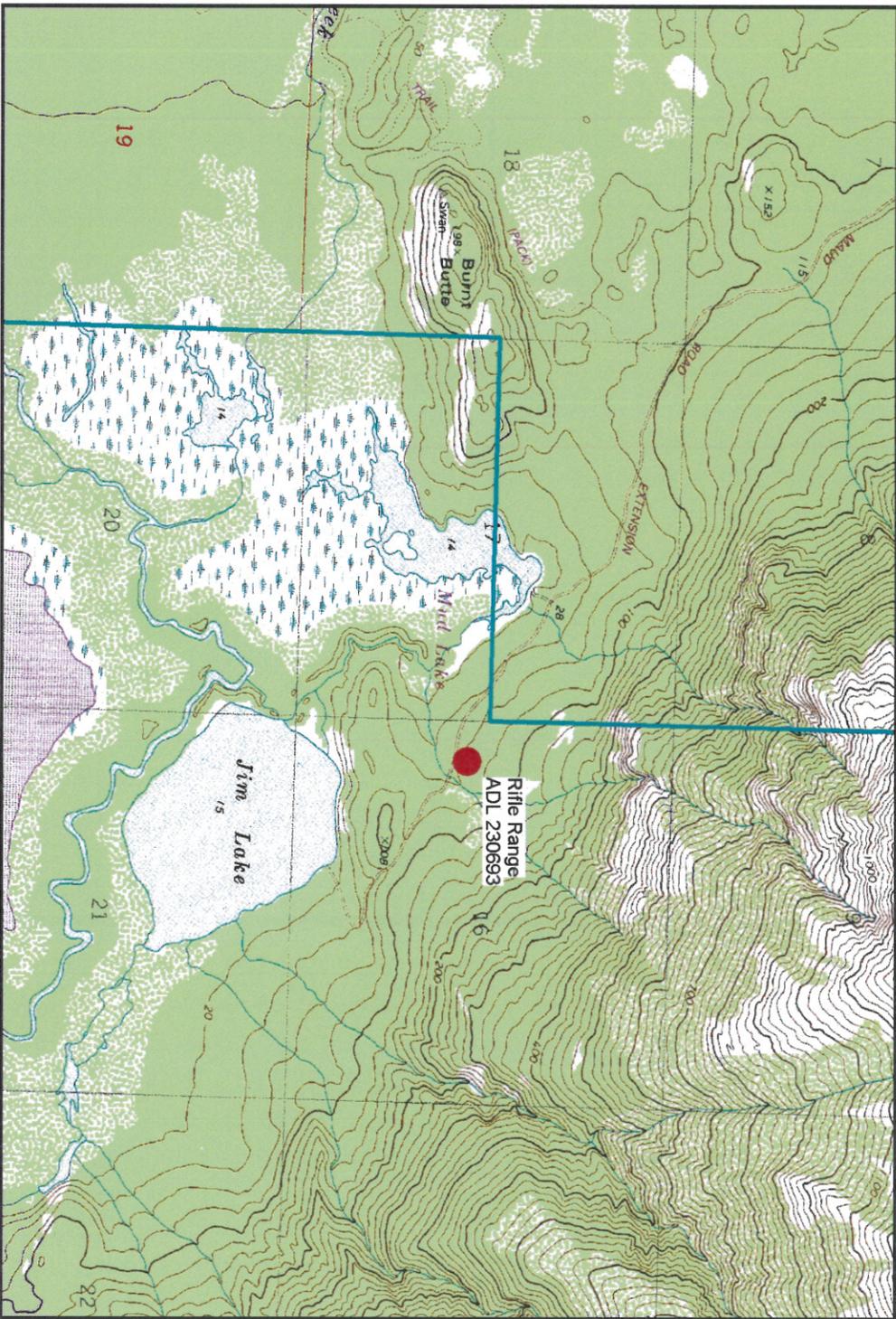


Figure 2 – Topographic map depicting approximate location of range site.

Appendix C – Range Maps

ADL 230693

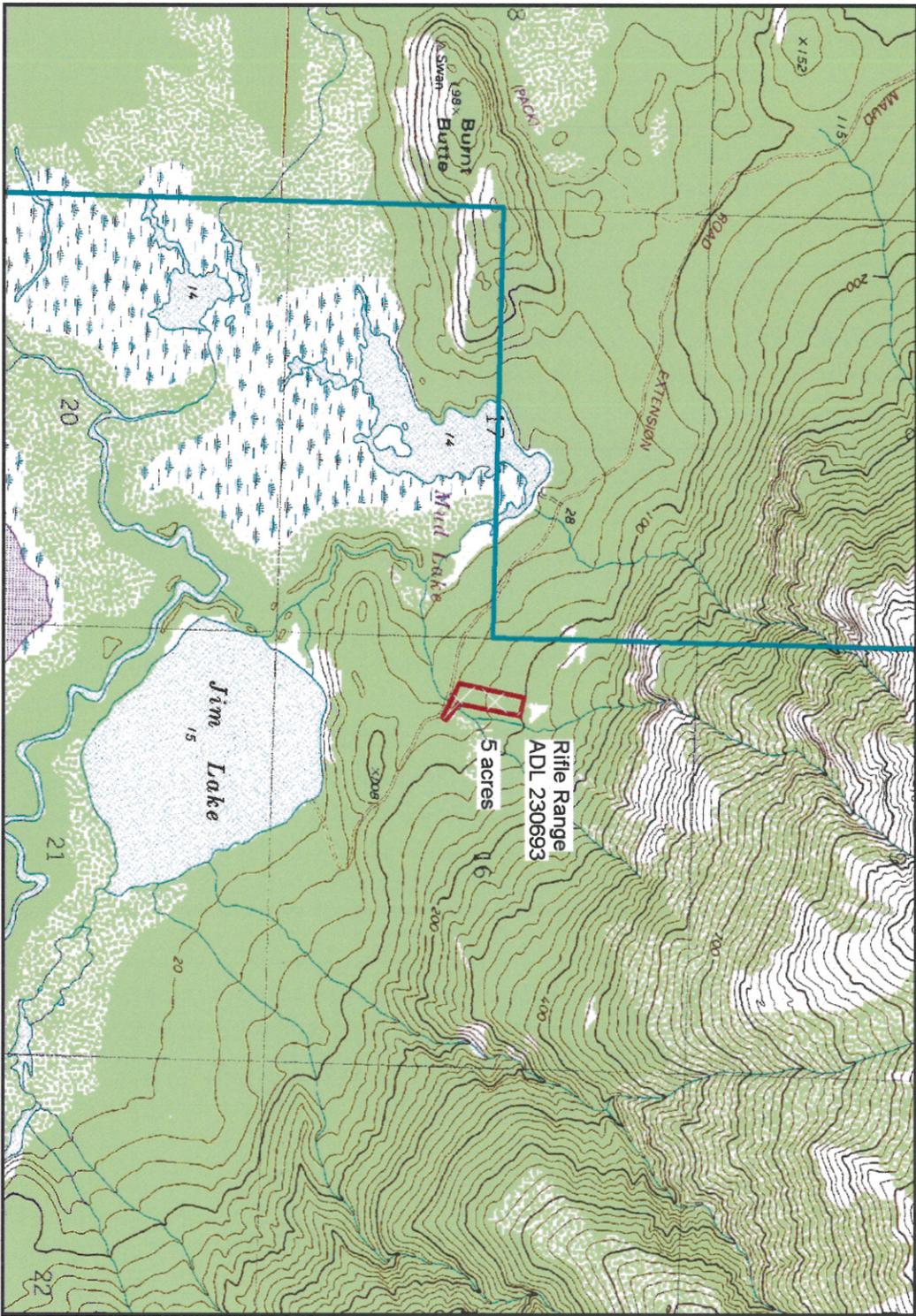


Figure 3 – Topographic map depicting approximate footprint of easement.

Appendix D – Site Photos
ADL 230693



Figure 1 – Rifle Range Site Development Area

Appendix D – Site Photos
ADL 230693



Figure 2 – Parking Lot Site Development Area (access trail and restroom facility location in the background)

Appendix D – Site Photos
ADL 230693



Figure 3 – Access Trail Site Development Area

Appendix E – Rifle Range Maintenance

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A properly maintained outdoor range is in the best interest of the recreational target shooter and the surrounding community. Range maintenance should strive to be environmentally conscious, aesthetically pleasing, and protective of human health, the environment, and wildlife.

During the active life of a range steps can be taken to reduce impacts to the environment. The implementation of a “range management/maintenance program” that utilizes a set of Best Management Practices (BMPs) will provide a range with a variety of benefits.

Some of the benefits a range may realize from implementing BMPs include:

- Increased protection of the environment
- Evidence of proactive stewardship
- Documentation of environmental concerns
- Identification of effective and appropriate solutions for any environmental concerns encountered
- Development of information on which to base prudent decision making
- Planning and soliciting support for funding range improvements
- Enhanced community relations
- Better range aesthetics

To operate a range that complies with these goals requires implementing a management/maintenance program that incorporates a variety of BMPs.

The following BMPs will be incorporated into the management/maintenance program for ranges in the Knik River Public Use Area:

1. Preventing Lead Migration – The following options may be used:
 - Lime Spreading (monitors and adjusts soil pH)
 - Phosphate Spreading (immobilizes lead)
 - Vegetative Ground Cover (controls runoff)
 - Earthen Backstop (bullet containment devices)
 - Removal and Recycling of Lead (hand raking and sifting, and screening)
2. Record Keeping – The following records should be kept:
 - Log of routine range activities (inspections, pH testing, and lime/phosphate addition)
 - Photographs (before/during construction, during active range use, lead removal projects, documenting special projects or changes in range design and operation)
 - Log of BMP implementation (dates and descriptions of reclamation activities, problems addressed, costs/expenditures, range conditions, follow-up actions)

Appendix F – Rifle Range Rules

ADL 230693

A public rifle range provides a safe and enjoyable place to practice handling and shooting firearms in a communal environment. To ensure that our rifle range remains safe we need to establish expectations and rules for use of the facility. Range managers and the public expect safety rules to be followed and enforced. Gun handling rules, general range rules, and specific range rules, will be posted in a conspicuous location so that the public is aware and informed of the department's expectations for using the range facility. Gun handling and range rules will be changed or modified based on annual department review and assessment, and recommendations from the public. Range rules will be posted on site.

Below is a list of *proposed* rules for public rifle ranges in the Knik River Public Use Area. These rules may be modified as needed.

Gun handling rules are of primary importance, and will be prominently displayed on site. At a minimum the following gun handling rules (from the NRA Range Source Book) will be posted:

1. Always keep the gun pointed in a safe direction.
 2. Always keep your finger off the trigger until ready to shoot.
 3. Always keep the action open and firearm unloaded until ready to use.
 4. Know your target and what is beyond.
 5. Be sure the gun is safe to operate.
 6. Know how to use the gun safely.
 7. Use only the correct ammunition for your gun.
 8. Wear ear and eye protection.
 9. Never use alcohol or drugs before or while shooting.
 10. Store guns so they are not accessible to unauthorized persons.
 11. Be aware that certain types of guns and many shooting activities require additional safety precautions.
-

General range rules will be prominently displayed on site. At a minimum the following range rules will (from the NRA Range Source Book) be posted:

1. Know and obey all posted range rules.
2. Know where others are at all times.
3. Shoot only at authorized targets.
4. Ground level targets are not authorized without a proper backstop.
5. Designate a range officer when none is present or assigned.
6. Unload, open the action, remove the magazine and ground and/or bench all firearms during a cease fire.
7. Do not handle any firearm or stand at the firing line where firearms are present while others are down range.
8. Always keep the muzzle pointed down range.

Appendix F – Rifle Range Rules

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Specific range rules will be prominently displayed on site. Failure to adhere to the posted range rules may subject users to a citation. At a minimum the following range rules will be posted:

1. Hours of operation (8am till 8pm).
2. No motorized or non-motorized vehicles allowed on range (ATV's, bicycles, etc.).
3. No shotgun shot (slugs and sabot slugs only)
4. No fully automatic weapons.
5. No .50 caliber (due to loud report and muzzle blast)
6. No unauthorized targets (cans, bottles, plastic, etc.)
7. No littering (pick up all brass, paper, and other debris, and dispose of in provided containers).
8. No damaging, defacing, or removal of public property.
9. No fires (warming fires).
10. No discharging of fireworks.
11. No alcoholic beverages.
12. No reckless discharge of firearms.

Range rules will be reviewed, evaluated, and assessed on an annual basis. On occasion rules will be amended to reflect safety and environmental concerns, public use patterns, and development projects occurring in the general vicinity.