

Kittitas County Conditional Use Permit Application
WDFW Durr Road Target Shooting Improvements

Project Narrative

WDFW is proposing to enhance an existing target shooting location on the Wenas Wildlife Area near Ellensburg. The parcels were acquired by WDFW in 1970 and 1997. The existing target shooting location is adjacent to Durr Road and has been in use for numerous years. The site is very popular and receives a high level of use, but does not currently contain any safety features.

WDFW has been working to address safety issues in the area while still providing recreational target shooting. Most recently, the Wenas Target Shooting Advisory Committee completed a review of the issues and recommended improvements at the Durr Road location to increase the likelihood of predictable behavior and encourage compliance with requirements and expectations. WDFW has been working with the Range Officer at the Yakima Training Center (YTC) and our engineers to develop a layout for the improved site. The goal is to provide a minimally enhanced target shooting area that will meet the community need and improvement safety for all users, while protecting wildlife habitat from additional impacts.

Primary current use of the site is recreational target shooting and that use will continue, the surrounding area is managed as wildlife habitat, and is used by the public for a variety of recreational activities including, hunting, hiking and mountain bike riding. There are no proposed changes to uses on the site. No structures exist on the site and no new structures are proposed in this project. Improvements will be divided into 2 phases.

Improvements include:

- Improving parking by grading, and graveling for a total of 26 parking spaces, including ADA parking (20 spaces in Phase 1 and 6 spaces in Phase 2).
- Developing a 25 yard and 100 yard target shooting features, to include a firing line and backstop with 10 spaces at each distance, including target stands (Phase 1).
- Construct side berms on 25 yard and 100 yard distances, develop a shotgun area and 6 parking spaces (Phase 2).
- Construct an ADA accessible path and ADA firing line at each distance and discipline (Phase 1 and Phase 2).
- Install informational signs, kiosks, and barrier rock (Phase 1).
- Install shooting benches, including ADA compliant ones at ADA accessible firing positions.
- Improvements include stormwater management.
- WDFW has a lead management plan that will be modified to meet the needs of this location.

Improvements are being designed using NRA range standards and input the Yakima Training Center Range Officer. The site will be open for use during daylight hours. Seasonal closures will still be implemented to limit target shooting to the hours of sunrise to 10:00 AM to reduce fire risk. WDFW will increase signage and public education/information efforts and staff presence to improve behavior and compliance with safe target shooting practices and provide for a better user experience.

WDFW has completed SEPA and coordination of cultural resource survey and review. Engineered drawings are included in application. Construction is planned for spring 2020 for Phase 2. Phase 2 work will begin when funding is secured, which is unknown at this time.

Conditional Use Permit Criteria

- A. The proposed use is essential and desirable to the public. The area is currently used for recreational target shooting and the intent is to improve the site by adding safety features and parking to improve safety and reduce habitat damage. The project is located on state land internal to the Wenas Wildlife Area managed for fish and wildlife habitat and compatible recreation. Recreational target shooting has a long history in the area and this will enhance that opportunity and improve conditions.
- B. The proposed use will not be detrimental to the economic welfare of the county and will not result in excessive public costs. The site will be maintained by Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, the area is accessed by county roads that are already used by the public for the proposed activity and use is not likely to significantly increase.
- C. The proposed use of shooting ranges, complies with the county development standards for areas zoned commercial agriculture. WDFW followed the design criteria in zoning code 23.
- D. The proposed use is designed to mitigate impacts. The use is already existing, the proposal will implement improvements to reduce those impacts and provide a safer location that protects the adjacent wildlife habitat.
- E. The site is surrounded by public land, nearby private land is zoned agriculture and no residences are nearby. The orientation of improvements are designed to reduce the threat to private property by directing shooting in a safe direction.
- F. The proposed use is consistent with the intent and character of the zoning district and is a permitted use in the zoning district.
- G. The project is outside of Urban Growth Areas, it is consistent with the intent, goals, policies and objectives of the Kittitas County Comprehensive Plan, including the policies outlined in Chapter 8. In addition the project preserves the rural character of the property as defined in RCW 36.70A.030(15), and will require only rural government services which would be limited to emergency services. Finally, the project does not compromise the long term viability of the lands which are designated as Commercial Agriculture and are owned and managed by WA Department of Fish and Wildlife to fish and wildlife habitat.