

Windage

Benton Gun Club Newsletter

February 2008

Range and Match News

The 600-yard range is open! There are no sheds, and no pads, but the range is now available for use. If you have any questions about what kind of firearms can be used on this range, please consult your copy of the club bylaws, or contact a club officer or match director. Please note that work on this range continues, so please be sure to call the club information line to make sure the range is open BEFORE you drive out to the range. (Choose option 4 to get the current status.) The range will definitely be unavailable while the sheds are being built.

In other news, a motion was made to upgrade range four, the so-called "plinking" range. In an effort to increase the capacity and usefulness of this range, a number of changes were proposed. The plinking range will be expanded in width, and divided into two halves. The left half will feature 24 feet of target board at 10 and 25 yards, and 16 feet of target board at 50 yards. There will be an 80-foot long shed to shoot from. A new berm would be erected between this side of the plinking range and the right side. The right side will have target boards at 50, 100, and 200 yards for long range shooting. All together, these changes will double the amount of available range space for plinkers.

The proposal requests up to \$25,000.00 to cover this work. However, work will not be started until all of the funds are available. The motion merely outlines the work to be done and requests that funds be reserved for it. The motion was seconded and passed. Per our club bylaws, an expenditure of this size requires a follow-up vote for confirmation. This vote will be held at the March club meeting.

Lastly, a motion was made and approved to add another portable toilet to range 2. The cost will be \$800 per year, which will be covered by match income.

Thanks!

We'd like to extend our thanks to all of the members who turned out for the recent work day. We got a lot of stuff done, despite a smaller than usual turnout. The next work day will be May 4, from 9:00 a.m. to noon.

NRA-ILA Donation Approved

Each year the club receives a rebate from the NRA for all of the NRA memberships and renewals that are processed through the club. This year's rebate came to \$3,061.00. A motion was made and passed to once again donate these funds to the NRA-ILA, the NRA's legislative arm, which does not receive any funding from the NRA itself.

Renewal Forms Mailed

All 2007 members in good standing have been mailed the 2008 membership renewal form. If you have not received yours, please call the club phone number (315-3071) and leave a message with your current address and another form will be sent to you. The current deadline for renewing your 2008 membership is February 11, 2008.

Please Observe All Range Rules

Anyone observed violating the club range and safety rules is subject to dismissal from the club. New members, make sure that you know what type of firearm may be used on each range. If you don't know, read your bylaws.

Shotgun shooters should use #4 shot or smaller. Shotgun slugs and #2 shot are absolutely against the rules.

Someone has caused severe damage to some of the target board posts on the plinking range. Hidden, motion-sensitive security cameras have been installed to find out who is doing this. James Squires once again asks that shooters PLEASE stop shooting at the posts. If you need a practice target, contact James and he'll get you one.

We'd also like to remind club members not to move target stands closer to the sheds or pads. All target stands must be placed directly in front of a designated berm or backstop. Failure to comply with this rule, or

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Newsletter Editor: Craig Boyd. Send newsletter submissions and "for sale" notices to the club P. O. box.

www.bentongunclub.org

Range and Club Information Hotline..... 501-315-3071

Club Meetings

Meetings are held the second Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the Ramada Inn in Benton (I-30 Exit 117).

Officers

President..... Paul Stiedle (517-0756)
Vice-President..... Pat Holsted (766-4942)
Secretary-Treasurer..... Rex Gismond (315-3071)
Range Maintenance Officer..... Bob Elrod (778-2165)
Range & Safety Orientation..... James Squires (847-2147)
Youth Program Coordinator.....
..... Chuck Anderson (602-2971 or 951-3066)

Range Subcommittee

Chairman..... Pat Holsted (766-4942)
Smallbore Rifle and Pistol Silhouette.....
..... Frank Bray, Jr. (653-0630) or Jim Wood (847-9244)
High Power Rifle..... Open
Pistol..... Larry Egger (803-9002)
Rifle, up to 200 Yards..... Open
Shotgun..... James Squires (847-2147)
Plinking Range..... Open

any other range rule, may result in revocation of your membership.

New Members

We welcomed nineteen new members at the February meeting. They are Larry Reed, Dan McDonald, Penni Harris, James Ruherford, Jeremy Newlin, Norman Floyd, Scott Dannelley, Darrel Hicklin, Michael Funderburg, Mark Madison, Ben Lonsdale, Lou Reid, Steven Shackelford, Kyle Fleming, Robert LeHoullier, Michael Taylor, John Allen, Jeffrey Garcia, and Matthew Brown. Welcome to the club, folks!

If you are a new club member and a new member of the NRA, please send a copy of your membership card or the label from your NRA magazine to the club post office box. This will enable the club secretary to update the files with your NRA number and correct expiration date.

Please note that all new members must attend the mandatory range and safety orientation before using the range. You are not a fully qualified member until you attend the orientation.

Also, don't forget that all new members are entitled to shoot in one club match per shooting discipline free of charge. Look over that match schedule, and come out and experience the fun of competition shooting.

The Shooters Corner, Vol. II

by Pat Holsted

Well it has been a month already. If you remember from last month's issue, I told you I would go over the current state of the club and look into the future.

At last check we have 633 members. I believe this should make us one of the largest clubs in Arkansas. As you know, the dues for this year were increased from \$60.00 to \$75.00. I personally think this is a great deal for everything we have to offer. If the club were to perform a poll you would find that our membership spans from doctors, lawyers, engineers, factory workers, construction workers and just about any trade you can think of. Of these you will find that some use the range from one to two times a year to sight in their deer rifles to those that use the range a few times a week and compete in multiple club matches as well as competing in state and national level matches. With the increase in dues, we did have a small percentage of members that did not renew their membership for 2008. However we experience this every year, and in the past we have always made up for it throughout the year with new members. The start of 2008 is looking great and the increase in dues has not slowed down the number of requests to join the club. In January alone we had over 30 prospective members fill out applications and join the club and in February we had over 20. So, all in all, I do believe we are headed in the right direction for our membership dues.

We were able to get a lot of work completed last year. And with the extra proceeds from the dues increasing we should be able to get a lot more completed this year. The contractor the club hired to complete the dirt work on

Range 1 started moving dirt on November 17th. This work was to expand Range 1 from a maximum distance of 300 yards to 600 yards and build new impact berms at 200, 300, 400 and 500 meters. As of this writing, all of the major dirt work for this range is complete and it is now open for business even though there is still some other work to be preformed. Keep in mind that this range will need to be closed from time to time to finish the remaining work. We will send out notices in the newsletter and on the club website at www.bentongunclub.org. We are still waiting on requests for bids to get the construction for the new shed started. I hope we can have all of them back this month and get the contractor started sometime in February. With any luck we can have the shed up and finished sometime in April, maybe sooner depending on the weather. Once the shed is finished the last remaining item that will need to be completed is the placing of the rails for the silhouette animals to sit on at 200, 300, 400 and 500 meters. This will take some time to complete but the labor will be performed by volunteers from the club. This being said, if you would like to volunteer please contact me and I can get you in touch with the right person. When the rails are in place all of the budgeted items that were voted on last year for this range will be complete.

With all the work that has been and will be completed this year, there is still more to do on this range. With the current layout of this range it will primarily be used for shooting High Power Silhouette matches. There is also a strong interest in holding Prone Center Fire Matches and Cross the Course Matches. In order to hold these matches we would have to construct what is known as a "pit" area with retractable target boards. This would allow the shooters of these matches to see where their rounds are impacting the targets when they are shooting at 600 yards. We are in the process of getting plans drawn up for this and getting them out to quote so that an estimated cost can be presented to the membership some time this year and hopefully voted on and approved to start construction at the beginning of next year.

With the rise in membership there has also been a rise in range use. One of the ways we want to make more room for the average member is to add a new plinking range. This range would sit on the left side of range 4 and would provide 24' of target board at 10 and 25 yards and 16' of target board at 50 yards. We would construct an 80' shed to shoot under and a new berm would be constructed that would run between the new shed and the existing shed on range 4. The berm would run down to the 10 yard target board then cut back to the left running behind the 25 and then 50 yard target berm and terminate into the existing berm. This would split range 4 up into two separate ranges. The first would be called Range 4A The Short Plinking Range and the second would be called Range 4B The Rifle Range. Once construction on this range is completed we would then remove the 10 and 25 yard target boards on the existing

plinking range (to be renamed Range 3 The Long Plinking Range) and place more target boards at 50, 100 and 200 yards. This would double the amount of dedicated range space for our plinkers in the club. We have the plans drawn up for this and plan on getting quotes for the dirt work and for the construction of the shed out as soon as possible. I would love to be able to make the first motion to secure funds for this project at the February meeting and get this project started around April and maybe finished sometime in June or July.

Looking into the future there are a few items I would like to go over and get the membership thinking about. In the next 4 to 5 years I would like to see the road from the gate down to each range be paved with asphalt. The road would be 14 feet wide and at each range we would have a paved parking lot. At the same time this work is being performed we would also work on drainage throughout the whole range. We also need to start working on this next item right now for this will have to involve the county and will take a few years to get anything done. We need to start calling and e-mailing the Saline County Judge and working on him and his office to make plans to pave Mt. Olive Cut Off from Mt. Olive Road to our gate.

In the next 5 to 10 years I would like to see the club start working on its own club house. The next time you are the range when you start to go down the big hill look over to your right. I think this would be a great spot to have a club house with power and running water. We could start holding our monthly meetings on our own land and stop having to pay to rent a spot to hold them. We could also rent this space out to members to use for family gatherings and such. I would also like to have electricity to every range along with running water. One other item I would like to see happen is to have a men's and women's restrooms installed where the existing portable toilets are now. I know some will read this and think that this is a far cry but just think about the following. In the next few years we should have all the major range construction complete on the whole range. We should by then have a yearly maintenance budget in place to make sure that all the construction that has taken place is kept up and in a good working order at all times. This would then allow a majority of our dues proceeds to be used to fund these other types of projects.

I truly believe this is a sound plan for the next few years and will keep the club growing and heading in the right direction. When all of these projects are complete we will have the best range in Central Arkansas, if not the whole state.

Patrick Holsted
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News from the NRA-ILA

The following items come from the NRA-ILA web page, www.nraila.org. Reprinted with permission.

Update On Right-To-Carry In National Parks And Wildlife Refuges

The current regulations on possession of firearms in national parks--which generally prohibit possession, carry or transportation of loaded or uncased firearms--were proposed in 1982 and finalized in 1983. Similar restrictions apply in national wildlife refuges. It is now time to amend those regulations to reflect the changed legal situation with respect to state laws on carrying firearms.

The effect of these now-outdated regulations on people who carry firearms for self-protection was far from the forefront at the time these regulations were adopted. As of the end of 1982, only six states routinely allowed average citizens to carry handguns for self-defense. Now, 48 states have a process for issuance of licenses or permits to carry firearms, and 40 of those states provide the opportunity for average citizens to legally carry firearms for self-defense.

Starting in 2003, NRA staff began meeting with officials at the U.S. Department of the Interior to change this regulation and allow state law to govern the carrying and transportation of firearms in national parks and wildlife refuges -- as it does in national forests and on BLM lands. There was little resistance to such a policy change but also little action to make this change. Bureaucrats involved in this issue would move on and others would replace them, needing to be educated from scratch about the need and importance for this change.

As the second term of the Bush administration began in 2005, there was more of a sense of urgency to get this regulation changed given the uncertainty of the outcome of the 2008 presidential election. NRA asked several key Members of Congress, by virtue of their leadership roles as committee or subcommittee chairmen, to write letters to then-Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton in support of this policy change. All of those letters went unanswered.

After the 2006 elections, NRA asked House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Nick Rahall (D-WV) and Ranking Member Don Young (R-AK) to write another letter in March of 2007 requesting revision to the Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) to apply state law regarding concealed weapons statutes in National Park Service (NPS) areas and National Wildlife Refuges. Eight months later, they finally received a "thanks but no thanks" response from National Park Service Director Mary Bomar and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Dale Hall.

In January of 2007, NPS Visitor and Resource Protection Associate Director Karen Taylor-Goodrich wrote in a letter that "(1) Parks are safe places," "(2) 'Right to carry' laws do not reduce crime," and "(3) 'Right to carry' laws do not protect visitors from wildlife."

On December 14, Senator Mike Crapo (R-ID) and 46 of his Senate colleagues (including eight Democrats) sent a letter (www.nraila.org/Media/PDFs/kempthorne_ltr.pdf) to former Idaho Governor and now Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne asking for the restoration of the right of law-abiding citizens to carry a firearm for self-defense in national parks and wildlife refuges. (NRA-ILA initiated and worked closely with Senator Crapo on this letter.)

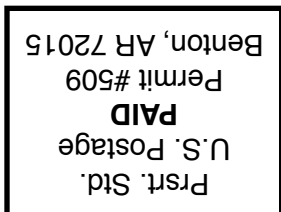
Two months later, there had been no response from Kempthorne. So on February 11, four more Senators sent another letter (www.nraila.org/media/PDFs/npsltr2.pdf) to Kempthorne requesting this same policy change. Now 51 Senators -- a majority of the upper chamber of the United States Congress -- have publicly sought this regulatory change.

Finally, Kempthorne appeared on February 13 before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, and on February 14 before the House Natural Resources Committee, for the annual department oversight hearings. Members of both committees asked

Kempthorne about the delay in responding to the letters from 51 Senators, and the Department's position on allowing those with valid state licenses or permits, to carry firearms in national parks. Following his admission that some parks are unsafe due to drug trafficking, Kempthorne was pressed on the need to allow law-abiding citizens the opportunity to legally carry firearms in national parks for personal protection and whether he believed that Right-to-Carry doesn't reduce crime.

Congress has rightly become frustrated over the years of inaction at Interior. Members of both houses have introduced legislation -- H.R. 5434 by Reps. Jeb Hensarling (R-TX) and Doug Lamborn (R-CO), and S. 2619 by Sen. Tom Coburn (R-OK) -- within the past week to change the policy relating to carrying and transportation of firearms in national parks and wildlife refuges.

The U.S. Congress and NRA are anxiously awaiting a response from the Interior Department.



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