

## Summary of Public Comments Received About Department Shooting Range Strategic Guidance

A. **Overview.** The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) received two comments from two parties concerning our draft *Shooting Range Strategic Guidance*. Several improvements have been made to the final *Strategic Guidance* as a result.

B. **Summary of Comments.**

1. The Wisconsin County Forests Association is supportive of increasing the number of ranges in Wisconsin and made three suggested changes:

- Making renovation and maintenance at public ranges a higher priority than leasing at private ranges.

*DNR Response: This change had been implemented during internal review.*

- Add “if consistent with the County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan and the County Forestry committee is in favor” under criteria #1 for range development

*DNR Response: This text has been added to the final Strategic Guidance.*

- Add “County Forest Land hours, and management agreements are subject to approval of the County Forestry committee”

*DNR Response: This text has been added to the final Strategic Guidance.*

2. Kevin Kessler, Columbia County Board Supervisor, offered the following comments.

- **Page 2; “Vision.”** The vision ought to be to maintain and expand opportunities for recreational shooting.

*DNR Response: This text has been added to the final Strategic Guidance.*

- **Page 2; “Vision.”** Public safety ought to be a primary feature rather than an afterthought in the vision statement. Amend the vision statement by emphasizing the need to improve the protection public safety on DNR properties while providing increased opportunities for recreational shooting.

*DNR Response: The vision should describe a desired future condition. And so the vision in the document read as follows: “In order to maintain and expand recreational shooting opportunities and Wisconsin’s hunting heritage and the economic impact those activities have, we will increase opportunities for shooting in a safe environment within a reasonable travel distance for participants and in a location intended for recreational shooting.”*

- **Page 2; “Vision.”** As part of the DNR’s proposed vision to “maintain and expand recreational shooting”, this strategic planning document should propose that this antiquated regulatory framework be re-examined.”

*DNR Response: This strategic guidance was designed to guide range work on DNR properties for the maintenance and construction of new ranges. It is not intended to guide administrative code or statute changes.*

- **Page 3; "Goal 2."** This goal is to "Decrease shooting at non-range sites on public lands where necessary." The goal should be rewritten and the listed actions are entirely inadequate. Where there are public safety issues on DNR lands, the DNR should take stronger and more affirmative actions than just "clean up" and providing information. Problem sites, for example, that are close to residences and cause problems should be closed to recreational shooting when better alternatives are available. In the goal statement, strike the words "where necessary" and refer to "recreational shooting" rather than shooting in general. The goal shouldn't be to decrease shooting for hunting purposes at non-range sites that are not problematic.

*DNR Response: We believe that the broad actions in the guidance document are sufficient to allow for many and varied actions to take place where needed.*

- **Pages 4-6; "Master Planning Guidance."** This narrative and the accompanying Figures 1 and 2 on pages 5 and 6 are unclear and confusing. Illustrating both county populations as well as circles around existing shooting ranges is difficult to understand. It might be much clearer if there were only one map and if it were titled "Most of the Populous Areas of the State are not Near a Public Shooting Range."

*DNR Response: Both figures serve a purpose when considering master planning and siting a range. The phrase "Most of the Populous Areas of the State are not Near a Public Shooting Range" has been included in the final Strategic Guidance.*

- **Page 9; "General criteria for range development - - Location."** I have personal experience that noise disturbance can be a significant issue for residences that are more than 1000 yards away. For example, in my case, the noise disturbance issue is related in large part to noise being carried over a large body of water. Noise considerations should not be limited to any one particular distance.

*DNR Response: The DNR will not limit noise considerations to any one distance.*

- **Page 10; "Range Funding Priorities."** The section of this guidance document on priorities for developing new shooting ranges is the most important portion of the document and needs the most additional work in the writer's opinion:
  - ❖ All range renovation projects are not of equal priority and range renovation (for example for a little-used range isn't always a higher priority than new construction.
  - ❖ The list of priorities doesn't explicitly consider the 18 counties where there is presently a regulatory ban on recreational shooting on DNR properties. Shouldn't any county with a ban be a high priority?
  - ❖ Public interest, community support and public initiatives requesting new shooting ranges ought to be major factors in DNR priorities. The present text says only that those factors "will be considered."
  - ❖ Nuisance and public safety complaints related to existing recreational shooting on DNR lands ought to be major considerations in establishing DNR priorities for new shooting ranges. Those considerations are not explicitly listed or prioritized. In addition, it ought to be a priority for DNR to address existing problem nuisance and

public safety issues at sites concurrently with the development of new ranges. The present draft of the guidance contains no DNR commitment or priority to do so.

- ❖ There is no discussion, definition or prioritization in the draft document regarding shooting ranges for hand guns vs. rifles vs. shotguns. The writer presumes that the higher priority needs are for hand guns and rifles since shotgun shooting presents less of a public safety issue and the needs are largely addressed by private clubs. The document should be modified to explicitly address that issue.

*DNR Response: These comments were all considered and incorporated into the final Strategic Guidance as appropriate.*

**C. Summary of Changes.** As a result of the public comments received, several changes were made to the draft Shooting Range Strategic Guidance. See “*DNR Response*” interspersed above.

**D. Communication Efforts.** This document was posted on the DNR’s program guidance web page and outreach was conducted through DNR GovDelivery.

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