

## BABCOCK/WEBB SHOOTING RANGE

### WORKING GROUP MEETING

April 14, 2011

**In Attendance:** Mel Webber, Robert Schettino, Anthony Frank, Walter Wolff, George Glunt, John Stischok, Robert Daisey, Maurice Boulanger, Dirk Krizan, Andrew Lima, Fred Christy, Ron Chervinski, Franz Hoffmann, Ron Gerard, Gus Nuckols, Steve Master, Richard Burley, James Wineman, Dave Hyre, Bill Rudd, Art Babiak, Greg Widmer, Bill Cline, Jason Burton, Chris Wynn, Mike Kemmerer, Lee Taylor, and Carrie Ream

#### Items of Discussion:

1. Jason Burton opens the meeting with the ground rules agreement of the meeting. Understanding what the meeting goals and objectives are, and explaining his role as a facilitator.
2. Introductions of all present.
3. Bill Cline thanked each of the participants for coming and explained that this group was assembled from a list of individuals who had written to the Commission giving ideas about problems and improvements needed at the facility, as well as a group of individuals that the Chief Range Safety Officer identified as excellent representatives of larger groups that constantly use the facilities. Mr. Cline explained how important it was to the Commission to have constructive feedback from users of the facility. He then thanked the group for giving their day to attend this meeting.
4. Mr. Cline then gave the overview presentation of the Babcock/Webb shooting range. He started by identifying some of problems the Babcock/ Webb range had with no oversights. The million dollars worth of upgrades that have been done to renovate the Babcock/Webb range in the past five years. The differences these improvements have made, especially the difference made after hiring Range Safety Officers. He then explained where the funding currently comes from to operate the facility: 1) Hunter Safety Section funds provided by the Pittman-Robertson Act; 2) Habitat and Species Section funds originally allocated to operate the wildlife management area are being used to pay the range safety officers salaries.
5. Gave insight on how the funding spent from the Hunter Safety and Public Shooting range section for this facility was more than any other facility the Commission operates. He then informed the meeting group that funding that the Habitat and Species Section is currently contributing to the operation of the shooting range (from C.A.R.L. money – Conservation and Recreational Lands – coming from doc stamps on the sale of homes) is going away completely. This is the main reason why we are developing a new management plan for the Babcock

- Webb Shooting Range – to be sure we can continue to operate this facility in safe, fun, secure, environmentally friendly fashion in the future.
6. How can we make the Babcock/Webb range better with the land that is useable? Possibilities are the enlargement of the pistol range, installing automatic trap machines and building a 3-D archery range/hunter safety skills trail. What must be considered is: safety, staffing, funding and environmental impacts. Bill then described the difference between having a Concessioner operate the facility and having a contract with a manager. The state prefers to contract with a manager to operate a facility in a prescribed manner. The work of this team, along with additional public input, will help formulate the new business plan for the operation of the Babcock-Webb Range. If there are fees charged to continue the operation of this facility, we must plan on how these fees will be used and what is a fair price to charge. This process will take a long time and will require that we get a lot of public feedback. This group is the first step in the fact-finding process to build this new business plan.

### **Participant's ideas:**

Several in the group gave some ideas on what they would like to see improved at the Babcock Webb Shooting Range.

1. Suggestions were made to enlarge trap area, but to not include automatic machines.
2. Make a plan and point out how it is to be put in place.
3. Have only one fee, not multiple fees (iron ranger, management area and per car fee).
4. Could a dollar amount be set; annual, semi, one time?
5. Have surveillance cameras on the range to help the Range Safety Officers.

All these were great suggestions that were leading into what was planned for the next brain storming session, so the group broke for lunch. After lunch the Jason Burton got feedback from the group on several thoughts. The follow are those lists:

### **What are we doing RIGHT?**

1. Proactive management
2. Range Safety Officers (RSO) on site at all times
3. Much safer (2 RSO minimum good)
4. Having the "right" person, i.e. John Snow
5. Providing a good and safe place to shoot
6. Rules are good, especially when known
7. Doing away with individuals shooting between the two shotgun wings
8. Doing away with the "cannons"
9. The hours of operations (dawn – dusk)
10. Golf cart for RSO's
11. Stakeholder outreach
12. Improvements (i.e., parking lot, road access, toilets)
13. Clean operations

### What can we do BETTER?

1. Improve safety for users (require users to have knowledge of protocol and safety rules)
2. More emphasis on NOT arriving with loaded guns
3. Full-time RSO w/LE ability
4. Implement a training program that ALL users would take
5. Use "chains" to activate and enforce hot/cold range (This quick-fix for safety will be implemented as soon as possible.)
6. Provide radios to RSO (improve response time)
7. Supply softer toilet paper
8. Make bathrooms unisex
9. Install bullet-proof cameras and P.A. system
10. Install green/red lights for hot/cold
11. Give the RSO's the training needed to have a professional demeanor with the public
12. Wear authoritative apparel
13. Too crowded (weekends especially)
14. Standardized operating procedures to guide user training
15. Install sporting goods (or other) store to generate money
16. Write a 2011 Webb Range Shooting Improvement Plan
17. Lump similar calibers together on the shooting lines
18. Use of picture ID

The last category of ideas - What changes would you like to see? - was ranked by each participant:

### What changes would you like to see

1. Expand pistol range - 5
2. Allow pistols on 50/100 rifle range - 3
3. Speed bumps - 3
4. Place to shoot buck shot - 1
5. Central RSO station - 2
6. Prone 200-yard rifle - 5
7. Install clocks - 2
8. User fee (daily and annual) - 2
9. Discounts for retirees - 0
10. Volunteer program - 3
11. Range rental for training w/specific areas - 1
12. Range rental for clubs w/specific areas - 0
13. No fees for youth - 3
14. Bigger iron ranger - 0
15. Range fees stays for range - 0
16. Have special events (youth) - 1
17. Shooting lane dividers (solid plexiglass for sound control) - 4
18. Dress code for safety (PPE) - 1

### Review ideas/prioritize

- 5 -votes**      Expand pistol range /Large calibers using 50/100 rifle range
- 4 -votes**      Shooter lane dividers for brass and sound barrier
- 3 -votes**      Anyone 16 and under shoot free

<b>3 -votes</b>	Speed Bumps
<b>3 -votes</b>	Discount for retirees or volunteers
<b>2-votes</b>	Central RSO station
<b>2-votes</b>	Clock for range Hot/cold
<b>2 -votes</b>	User fee – Daily or annual
<b>1 -vote</b>	Special Events – Kids Days
<b>1 -vote</b>	Dress code for Safety and proper protection for shooter

The group was then asked to provide input on the number of Range Safety Officers they would like to see at the facility.

**Minimum number of RSO's on Range (for Mon-Thur – onsite)**

- 2-3 during slow
- 3-4 during peak activity
- Gregg and Bill will work on scenarios on side as options to consider in the future

**What is the minimum number of RSO for operation?**

2 RSO's daily – Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday

3 or 4 Friday, Saturday and Sunday

**What prices are others in the area charging 1 hour rifle/pistol? What is a fair price to pay?**

The group suggested we look at staffing scenarios using the following figures:

- Daily: Residents \$10 Nonresidents \$15; Seniors \$5; Youth 15 and under Free
- Annual: Resident \$100 Nonresident \$150

**Wrap up**

This has been a fact finding meeting to help staff understand the concerns of the shooters at the Babcock/Webb shooting range. The information this group provided will help the Commission in writing a new draft business plan for the Babcock Webb Shooting Range. Staff needs to analyze the day use data, list all the expenses and get back with the group with different operational scenarios. After this data is compiled, staff will come back to this group, provide the requested information and gather additional feedback. After the group reviews the draft plan, staff will then take the recommendations of the group and share for public feedback.

All team documents will be posted at: [www.MyFWC.com/hunting/safety-education/shooting-ranges](http://www.MyFWC.com/hunting/safety-education/shooting-ranges) Look for the notes in PFD file under the Cecil M. Webb Public Shooting Range

Proposed date and time for the next meeting: May 10<sup>th</sup>. From 1 P.M. to 4 P.M. Please let Carrie Ream know if you are able to attend by calling her at 863-648-3200.

If you know of others who would like to volunteer their time to attend these preliminary meetings, please have them call Carrie.

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