

WHITTECAR RANGE NEWS

PO BOX 2038
HAMILTON MT. 59840

(406) 363-7078

WWW.WHITTECARRANGE.COM

2011 Newsletter

The Boss' Column

President
Jim McCormack

Vice President
Jeff Jetter

Secretary-Treasurer
Dan Ashmore

Directors
Hoot Gibson

Marvin Eder

Pete Berube

John Marshall

Dave Hedditch

Lee Riffel

Tim Thomas

If you've been down on the range at all, you've noticed that the pistol ranges have been intermittently closed. You'll also notice that almost the entire pistol section has been reconstructed and reoriented toward the northwest. I would like to enlighten the members on the events leading up to these changes and explain the Board's plan for the future.

About two years ago, we received a concern from one of our neighbors. They were worried about spent rounds landing on their property. They informed us that several bullets were found as well. The Board decided on some minor changes even though we were not convinced that these spent rounds were actually coming from Whittecar. Whittecar has also experienced spent rounds landing on our property during periods when the range was closed. We decided to raise the berms slightly and positioned several backers within five feet of the impact berm. At that time, we felt that these changes would solve any problems of rounds leaving the property.

During 2009 & 2010, our neighbor found several more spent rounds and even attended a Board meeting to discuss their concerns with us directly. We initiated a few more changes such as attaching a 2X6 below the eaves to diminish the daylight over the top of the impact berms. Our neighbor continued to find spent rounds and eventually threatened legal action. The Board decided to initiate a comprehensive strategy to address the issue. The result was several in-depth discussions during several monthly meetings. We closed the ranges to all except sanctioned matches or training sessions. In other words, there would be no unsupervised use of the pistol ranges until the Board's changes were implemented.

Here is what was decided:

PHASE I: The two east bays would be rotated approximately 45 degrees to the northwest. The distances between the impact berm and the firing line would be decreased to prevent any possible bullet skips over the berm. The northeast corner of the impact berm would be raised slightly. The two east bays would become our covered facilities and the two west bays would be our open bays. The benches on the covered bays would be raised and 2X6 boards would be hung below the eaves to minimize the daylight above the berm. The roof immediately above the firing line would be reinforced to prevent any negligent discharges from leaving the property. Rimfire rifles would be moved to the rifle ranges and no longer allowed on any of the pistol ranges. Upon completion of Phase I, the pistol ranges would be reopened. This phase is almost completed. Work will resume this spring.



The Boss' Column continued

PHASE II: We intend to construct an “eyebrow” type structure against the two eastern berms further eliminating any possibility of rounds leaving the property. The old covered firing line will be converted into a storage facility for our shooting groups and our law enforcement organizations. We will attempt to fund phase II through the state and other grant programs.

The Board has heard from numerous range members and visitors about these changes. Reaction is varied. Some believe that we should not react to this situation at all because there are laws protecting existing range facilities. Some are of the opinion that our neighbor's claims are physically impossible. Many are concerned about the monetary cost of the changes. All I can say is that all of these people are entitled to their opinion. However, the Board is responsible to insure that our facility remains open. Safety is our main concern. Whether you believe our neighbor's claim or not is really immaterial. This situation has the potential to close our facility. This current Board has worked very hard to improve the quality of our facility and we are committed to keeping this facility open.

So in closing, please bear with us as we move through our upgrades. We will work to keep the costs as low as possible. In the end, we'll have a safe facility that will provide a quality experience for long into the future.

Please welcome the new caretakers, Glenna & Mark to Montana. They are good conscientious people and you've probably noticed how smooth the daily business is running. We are glad that they are here.

SAFETY

During sight-in season this year, I witnessed several inappropriate and downright unsafe firearms practices. I even barked at a few of the offenders. The most often observed offense is handling guns while people are downrange. I don't know how to say this politely anymore. **IF THE PADDLES ARE DOWN, KEEP YOUR DAMN HANDS OFF OF YOUR GUN!** Don't touch your gun, it's that simple. Hell, the paddles even have a sign on them. If you witness this behavior or any other safety violation, say something or notify the Caretaker immediately. Waiting to report this type of activity minimizes our ability to take action. Safety is everyone's responsibility.

THANK YOU
JIM McCORMACK
President

Secretary/Treasurer's Report

We had a good year as far as use and income are concerned. The biggest change is the addition of new caretakers Mark and Glenna Johnson. They are doing a marvelous job and are real nice folks to boot. Come up and meet them if you haven't already. We did get an old Dodge truck for range use and it has made repair and maintenance jobs easier. The biggest project underway is the revamping of the pistol range. The tab up to this point is over \$13,500 and we are still not finished with phase one. In addition to members and day-use shooters we host Schuetzen, Hunter Class Bench Rest, IPSC, Hunter Safety, Women's self defense, Cooper Shoot, big bore, muzzle loader, CCW classes, Thanksgiving Turkey Shoot, Ravalli County Sheriff's Department and Reserves, Hamilton Police, National Institutes of Health, Shield Services, Stevensville Police, and Forest Service. We have a busy range.

If you have comments, questions or would like to help, come to the monthly meetings at 7:00pm on the second Tuesday of the month.

See you at the range,
Dan Ashmore, Sec/Treas

Hunter Class Bench Rest

2010 was a pretty good year that saw the locals holding their own with the out-of-staters. Russell Cree was here for the first time and won the Montana State shoot.

2011 will have 4 matches:

April 3, 2011 – Annual Easter Egg shoot

May 1, 2011 – First NBRSA registered shoot

June 4-5, 2011 – NBRSA Montana State 100-200 Saturday
300 yards on Sunday

July 2, 2011 - Last NBRSA shoot

The National Bench Rest Shooters Association (NBRSA) voted this year to make varmint for score an officially recognized class and we will shoot it along with the Hunter Class matches. This should leave a lot of shooters without an excuse to get out of shooting in the matches.

I will be glad to help those interested in entering Bench Rest in any way I can. Rules, getting guns and ammo ready, shooting set up and could have an advanced reloading talk if there is enough interest.

This year's Turkey Shoot didn't make much money but was attended by some real die hard shooters in 10 degree weather. Guess we will do it again next fall – the Sunday before Thanksgiving.

The Darby Bunch is still shooting a 1 shot match here with light barrel, 6X scope, 243 and larger rifles on the 3rd Sunday.

For more information, call Jeff Jetter 777-5326 or John Germann 363-0102

RANGE FRIENDS AND SPONSORS

The Board of Directors want to thank the following local businesses that have supported Whittecar Range in many ways

BITTERROOT TRADING POST
DONALDSON'S CONCRETE
MONTANA SIGN COMPANY
HAMILTON PACKING COMPANY
BITTERROOT GLASS
BJ'S FAMILY RESTAURANT AND LOUNGE
THE COFFEE CUP CAFE
COFFIN GUNSMITHING
CUSTOM TRUCK OUTFITTERS
DEEP WOODS TAXIDERMY
DON'S HOME CENTER AND BUILDING SUPPLY
RAINBOW BAR AND POKER ROOM
VALLEY UNITED INSURANCE SERVICES
TURNKEY CONSTRUCTION

WOMEN AND GUNS

Women Only - Introduction to Defensive Handguns, a 2 day class, will be offered twice in 2011. Class 1 will be held on May 7 and May 21. Class 2 will be held on August 27 and September 17.

The first day is designed to assist you in choosing the right handgun for you. There will be discussions on handgun safety, basic operation of revolvers, semi-automatic handguns, and the cartridges used in each type of handgun.

Handguns will be provided so that you may handle the different types and models. Ammunition will also be provided for a live fire session on the range. A self defense book, specifically for women, will also be provided.

There will be a lapse of approximately 2 weeks in order to allow the student to purchase a firearm and become familiar with its operation for the conclusion of training on the second day.

The second day will consist of live fire on the open bay. The emphasis will be on safe gun handling. All exercises will consist of basic defensive shooting drills and training techniques. We will discuss the different types of ammunition available and their uses. We will also address, in a general manner, the legal aspects of the use of deadly force.

Upon successful completion of both days classes, this training will suffice as the required safety class for application to the state for a concealed carry permit.

The class is limited to 10 participants. For an application or further information call Lee at 642-3590 or write Box 159, Victor Mt 59875.

LEE RIFFEL
BOARD MEMBER

ALL RANGES FLAGS DOWN SAFETY

WHEN THE FLAGS ARE DOWN ALL SHOOTERS ARE TO MOVE BEHIND THE PAINTED LINE ON THE CONCRETE FLOOR. THERE WILL BE NO HANDLING OR TOUCHING OF GUNS UNTIL THE FLAGS ARE RAISED.

ALL RANGES CASED GUN SAFETY

WHEN GUNS ARE BROUGHT TO THE FIRING LINE IN CASES OR CONTAINERS THOSE CASES OR CONTAINERS MUST BE PLACED SO THAT THE GUN MUZZLE IS FACING DOWN RANGE BEFORE THE GUN IS REMOVED