

OBJECTION: Necessity of Supervision at Turkey Tracks - Recent observations

Lead Objector: Russell Zittlosen

Project Name: Integrated Management of Target Shooting on the Pike National Forest #57807

Responsible Official: Ryan Nehl, Forest and Grassland Supervisor

One topic that has repeatedly come up in regards to Turkey Tracks is the need for supervision. I had not covered this topic in my previous comments/objections, instead concentrating on the science, environmental and engineering aspects. As much as I believe my areas of coverage more than suffice in proving the unsuitability of the Turkey Tracks site:

- Environmental concerns, noise, no lead cleanup plan (very difficult to accomplish);
- High risk fire shed; High number of fires (85 documented; 9 in 2024, 5 of these in the last 70 days of range being open) - Note Turkey Tracks was closed from Oct 10 to around Nov. 10;
- Too close to residential communities;
- Flawed shooting gallery plans – galleries aimed at communities with minimal backdrop;
- Bullets escaping the range and entering surrounding communities, which will increase with the planned development;

I'm prompted to write this last objection due to recent observations which can only be resolved with an onsite Monitor.

The 9 fires this year, 3 of which occurred after a heavy November snow storm and a few small ones afterwards. Five fires in the last 70 open days!!!

Shooting occurring during heavy winds and/or dry conditions. Whereas Teller County issued Fire Restrictions due to heavy winds, Douglas County, typically being slow in the matter of Fire Restrictions, issued NONE. The USFS issued NONE. Meanwhile, multiple shooters were shooting as if nothing was amiss.

In the past even while a wildfire was being fought, shooting still occurs. Several firefighters have complained about bullets flying overhead while they're fighting fires.

Shooters do not adhere to time restrictions nor disallowed ammunition. For example, last night, 01/04/25, well after dark, shooters were onsite shooting tracer bullets. My understanding is that night time shooting is not allowed, yet even in the summer it occurs, often as late as 11:00 PM.

Trash still accumulates (26 tons removed in 2023).

An onsite Monitor, complete with firefighting equipment is required. The Monitor would be able to close the site during dry or windy conditions or when firefighting was occurring. Rules could be enforced. Events such as those in 2015 Rainbow Falls Campground and 2009 Rampart Range might be avoided. For the record, Rampart Range was closed and not reopened due to the "designated" need for supervision. Turkey Tracks is much closer to residents and in a higher fire risk zone. The question is begged, why is supervision not required?

Of course supervision will not resolve all the problems. The lead cleanup problem, inherent fire danger and noise residents have to put up with would still exist, but at least the number of fires would be reduced, trash reduced and potentially less bullets in residential neighborhoods.

Russell Zittlosen