PALM BEACH COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS WORKSHOP SUMMARY

Meeting Date: October 23, 2007 (9:30AM)

Department: Facilities Development & Operations

I. EXECUTIVE BRIEF

Title: PUBLIC SHOOTING PARK MASTER PLAN

Summary: For almost 20 years, the Board has recognized the need for a Public Shooting Park to meet the public safety and recreational needs of the community and has repeatedly directed Staff to secure land for such a purpose. In April 2007, that land was acquired, through donation by the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD), and since that time Staff has been working with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission Staff (FWC) and the public through a series of workshops to create a master plan for the Public Shooting Park. The Master Plan is being presented to the Board for consideration at this Workshop along with cost estimates, a schedule for development, approach to funding through public and private partnerships, and an operating approach. While the timing is awkward with the impacts of the tax reform, due to the long durations for design and permitting and the private fundraising efforts suggested, Staff believes it appropriate to begin the process now with existing allocated funds. Further, because of the amount of private and public capital funding participation and because the on-going operations are anticipated to be self-sustaining nor require additional County staffing, this Park project should have a high priority among funding available for capital improvements projects and parks in general. (FDO Admin) Countywide (JM)

Background & Policy Issues: There are three primary reasons that a Public Shooting Park is needed in Palm Beach County; 1) for public safety as there are limited opportunities in the area to practice safe and ethical shooting, 2) for hunter safety and related education programs as one of the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's (FWC) largest Wildlife Management Areas in the State is located in Palm Beach County, and 3) to support and diversify the recreational opportunities of the community.

Attachments:

Location Map - Public Shooting Park Site

2. Master Plan

Recommended By:	AM my Work	10/15/07
•	Department Director	Date
Approved By :	MANUE	(4~40)
	County Administrator	Date

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II. FISCAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

Five Year Summary of Fiscal Impact:

Fiscal Years	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Capital Expenditures	0-	-0-	0-		0-
Operating Costs	0-		0-	0-	0-
External Revenues	0-	-0-	0-	-0-	0-
Program Income (County)	0-	-0-	0-	0-	0-
In-Kind Match (County)		0-	-0-	0-	0-
NET FISCAL IMPACT	0-	<u>-0-</u>	-0-	-0-	-0-
# ADDITIONAL FTE POSITIONS (Cumulative)					
Is Item Included in Current B	udget?		Yes	No	
Budget Account No: Fund Department Unit Object Reporting Category					
B. Recommended Sources of Funds/Summary of Fiscal Impact:C. Departmental Fiscal Review:					
III. REVIEW COMMENTS:					
A. OFMB Fiscal and/or Contract Development & Control Comments:					
Elizaleth C	doese 10/	19/07	N	P	
B. Legal Sufficiency: Assistant County A	ttorney	8/7	Contrac	t Dev. and Cor	ntrol
C. Other Department R	eview:				

Background & Policy Issues (Cont'd)

Public Safety

In 1992, the BCC first recognized shooting ranges as the solution to the growing public safety issues associated with the discharging of firearms in developed areas. The County's Shooting Ordinance (which generally prohibits shooting east of 20 Mile Bend) was adopted as a direct result of encroachment of growth in the formerly undeveloped area where citizens previously were able to shoot safely, with the exception being established shooting ranges. While the Ordinance does not require the County to construct a public shooting park, it was discussed that the County would aggressively resume and continue its efforts to site and construct such a facility. Since the time of the ordinance, the need for a Public Shooting Park has been accelerated due to; 1) development pressures closing all private long arm, sporting clay, and skeet and trap ranges in Palm Beach County and all but a handful of indoor ranges exist for handgun use, 2) increases in the number of hunters, and 3) increasing population of recreational shooters.

The Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office recognizes that with the growth and development of the County, legal environments to participate in the shooting sports have become limited. Charged with the task of maintaining public safety, the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office supports the development of a County shooting park and encourages future partnerships and educational opportunities that foster the safe use, handling and storage of firearms.

The creation of a safe and legal venue for the residents of Palm Beach County to participate in the shooting sports is in the best interest of the community. This shooting park will afford the large number of legal firearms owners the opportunity to participate in the shooting sports and enhance their knowledge of being responsible firearms owners.

<u>Hunter Safety and Related Education Programs</u>. The FWC currently provides programs in the following areas; 1) hunter safety certification, 2) Becoming an Outdoors Woman, 3) National Archery in the Schools Program, 4) Youth Hunting Programs, and 5) Youth Hunter Education Challenge. Many of these programs are currently provided from the JW Corbett Wildlife Management Area, but limited classroom and range facilities constrain the programs offered and the number of people that can be served.

Florida Statute 372.5717 requires anyone born on or after June 1, 1975 successfully complete an FWC approved hunter safety course to be able to purchase a hunting license. All states require evidence of hunter and firearm safety training before issuing licenses to young hunters. Many states require safe hunter certification regardless of a hunters' age. Many hunters from South Florida travel across the nation and around the world on hunting adventures. Hunter safety training will be an integral part of the shooting activities a Public Shooting Park serving a large a population such as Palm Beach County.

Hunters realize ethical hunting requires them to have good marksmanship skills. Those skills must be practices. With one of the largest Wildlife Management Areas ion the State located in Palm Beach County, having a place to conveniently practice shooting skills benefits hunters. Advanced hunter education opportunities such as the Youth Hunting Program of Florida and the Youth Hunter Education Challenge have mandatory shooting event. Other youth programs such as the National Archery in the Schools Program and the 4-H Shooting Sports programs require safe places for youth to hone their skills and need facilities to host regional, statewide and national tournaments.

The fastest-growing segment in the hunting and shooting sports is women. The Becoming an Outdoors Woman (BOW) workshops teaches women to become more competent, more confident and aware. The workshops introduce women to a variety of activities equally balances between hunting shooting, fishing and non-harvest sports like canoeing and camping. Other programs such as Women in the Outdoors and Women on Target are also constantly seeking facilities to use in teaching women outdoor related skills.

<u>Recreational Needs.</u> The recreational needs of the shooting public are not new. The recreational needs of the shooting public and the initial proposal for a Public Shooting Park was first presented to the Board in the mid 1970's. At that time and still applicable today, shooting is an activity which can serve a broad spectrum of society as participants and not just spectators. The physically adept as well as the average person and the disabled can develop competitive level skills in the shooting sports.

Shooting and hunting develops important skills for participants. Gun handling teaches neuromuscular coordination, self-discipline, and teamwork. In addition, classroom instruction teaches respect for safe handling of guns as well as other specific skills and attitudes. In the case of youth, this type of training relates well to studies in other classes and can serve to motivate students in almost every other class. Problem solving skills in math or physics can be related to ballistics tests or studies of trajectory.

Shooting is a lifetime sport. Competitive sport teams such as football and basketball are normally limited to the school years. Very few play football in high school and those who do have few opportunities to pursue the sport in later years, even if their physical condition permits. Shooting and hunting on the other hand are sports that many people participate in even into retirement years. In this way, shooting and hunting have much in common with golfing - a sport which the County provides excellent public park facilities.

The National Shooting Sports Foundation estimates that about 10% of the total population is involved in shooting and hunting sports. In terms of population, Palm Beach County is the largest County in the State without a Public Shooting Park. The closest public ranges to Palm Beach County are Markham Park in western Broward County (to the south) and Sebastian in Indian River County (to the north). The National Shooting Sports Foundation's Market Report shows within a 45 minutes drive time of the proposed location of the Shooting Park there are the following number of shooters.

<u>Table 1</u> Potential Shooters within a 45 Minute Drive of Proposed Park

Categories of Shooters	Potential User	
Sporting Clay Shooters	4505	
Trap and Skeet Shooters	5389	
Handgun Target Shooters	23,453	
Rifle Target Shooters	22,261	
Bow Hunters	4,594	
Hunters w/ Firearms	14,222	

There are dozens of national recreational and competition associations involved in the shooting and archery sports. Both shooting and archery are also Olympic sports. The Master Plan as contemplated recognizes the design features and support amenities necessary to support local, State, national and Olympic trial events. The existence of this venue will increase the ability of the County to secure events such as the Sunshine State Games, Olympic Trials, and advancing competitions for both youth and adults. Staff has been working with the Sports Commission on not only the design but also in pre-marketing activities to identify potential event opportunities.

Because many of the hunting and fishing opportunities in Palm Beach County, the existence of the Public Shooting Park also increases Palm Beach County as regional and statewide attraction/destination for hunters and fisherman (as many participants also participate in fishing sports).

These numbers are also consistent with, or are supported by the numbers of shooters at other public ranges in the region and the number of gun and hunting permits issued locally.

The direction from the Board has been consistent since the first recommendation in the late 1970's, despite subsequent efforts to secure a location for the Public Shooting Park being unsuccessful.

In 1992, the Board reviewed a Staff report and task force recommendation (which included members of the public and industry) on potential sites for a Public Shooting Park and provided direction to identify a site and an appropriate approach for the construction and operation of a Public Shooting Park to meet the needs of the recreational/competition shooters.

In 1995, Staff recommended to the Board that the site for the Public Shooting Park be secured adjacent to the Law Enforcement Training Facility. That same item requested that Parks and Recreation approve the allocation of \$400,000 from Parks Impact Fees for the Public Shooting Park. It was anticipated that with this allocation, the State would commit federal funds of \$300,000 towards the Park development. The contributions from the State did not materialize, but the County's funds allocated to

this project grew to \$800,000. However; 1) the SFWMD was unable to commit to the disposal of the adjacent property due to the pending design of the STAs, and 2) the available County funds being insufficient to construct the Public Shooting Park with the diversity of the ranges as originally contemplated. As a result of the funding constraints, a programmatic decision to only proceed with the range facilities for long arms (at the time long arms were the only firearms where no private facilities existed to use them in PBC) impacted the financial viability of operating a separate Public Shooting Park. As a result of the lack of a site and insufficient funding, the project languished and the funding was ultimately reallocated by the Board.

In the summer of 1997, the Florida Conservation Council and the NRA identified an immediate need to provide a range for hunters to sight in their firearms prior to the fall and winter hunting seasons. That resulted in a plan to open the Law Enforcement Training Facility to the public for a three day weekend in September. Besides for the purposes stated by the FCC and NRA, Staff believed it an opportunity to see what the usage may be, what operating considerations may exist with utilizing the Law Enforcement Training Facility as a part time Public Range, and what amenities the users would need.

In June 1998 and in response to pressure from residents to provide for a public shooting park, the Board considered four possible options for the provision of shooting range facilities for the public.

- Proceed with the construction of a public shooting range
- Improve the Law Enforcement Training Facility for public use
- Revisit site selection and/or program in conjunction with the on-going park development program, or
- Interim accommodation at the Law Enforcement Training Facility and continue with the permanent site and program selection through the ongoing Park development Program.

The Board directed Staff to proceed with the fourth option of implementing a Public Shooting Program at the Law Enforcement Training Facility and continue to look for a permanent site and approach to delivering a Public Shooting Park. While this provided for a public range with very limited access and only accommodating one type of firearm, the use was severely limited in terms of availability and the design of the existing facility for law enforcement training is not completely conducive to public use. The participation in the Public Shooting Program in the period between 1998 and 2002 reflected the facility limitations. When the Public Shooting Program was first initiated in 1998 there were about 20-40 persons/weekend, usage in 2002 had increased to 140-180 persons/weekend. This was in large part due to a shift in the operational philosophy of the staff assigned to the Program to one that is consistent with that of a recreational and/or sport facility.

In addition to not seeing any progress on the Public Shooting Park combined with the limited days for public use and the prohibition of handguns were the two major issues that continued to be raised by the public. These issues are directly related to having to utilize the Law Enforcement Training Facility as a public range. Again the public wanted the Board to actively discuss the issue and that was done via a "Three Year Status Report." The following action items resulted from the status report and Table 2 shows the current status of each item.

<u>Table 2</u> <u>Summary of Action Items from Three Year Status Report</u>

Action Items - 3 Year Status Report (2002)	Current Status
Increase the number of days that the Range is open to the public.	Implemented
Provide for make-up days when the Range has to be closed due to weather.	Implemented
Create a way for users to call the Range directly on days when it is open for Public Use and get information about the weather.	Implemented
Increase marketing efforts to boost usage, with a focus on getting new shooters to the Range	Implemented
Allow for expanded use by minors	Implemented
Have a stock of safety basics and targets available for sale at the Range.	Implemented
Clarify the types of ammunition allowed at the Range	Implemented
Provide a process for outdoor recreational clubs to use the	Implemented
facilities for club sponsored events on public weekends.	
Develop a curriculum for the classrooms	Limited implementation due to limited
* " * "	availability of program support facilities.
Provide more amenities for recreational shooters such as style of benches, rifle racks, additional shade cover, etc.	Limited implementation due to limited existing facilities.
Keep looking for a permanent site for a public range which will also allow for the continuous use and the use of handguns.	Completed, land for the public shooting park was secured in April 2007.
Allow the use of handguns	Dependant on delivery of facility designed and staffed for a safe public shooting environment

There are two items that have had limited implementation opportunities as a result of existing facility limitations and a third that is dependent on the delivery of public shooting park designed and staffed specifically for that purpose. The major directions to Staff as a result of the status report were to 1) increase participation in the program, and 2) keep searching for sites for a stand alone Public Shooting Park.

In 2005, the Staff of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) Hunter Safety Division contacted County Staff regarding the need to work together to deliver a Public Shooting Park in Palm Beach County due to their analysis of the unmet needs of hunters and recreational shooters in the area. Their independently collected data is confirmed by the increases in participation in the Public Shooting Program. The FWC also indicated that this was a priority to them and would participate in the funding, which is discussed later.

In a January 23, 2007 BCC Workshop, Parks and Recreation Department recognized the need for this specialized recreational facility and identified \$3,000,000 in its 10 Year Capital Improvement Program for this purpose.

Table 3 identifies the program participation since 2002. The number of participants continues to grow and the overall growth in the last six months (since the land was secured and the public workshops initiated) has been remarkable. Going into the opening of hunting season (the busiest time for the Program), the Program has already achieved the same level of participation as last year. The number of new participants has grown as well.

<u>Table 3</u>
<u>Public Shooting Program Participation 2002-2007</u>

Year (days open)	Total Usage	New Persons Registered
2003 (27 days)	1184	297
2004 (21 days)	1005 *	274*
2005 (26 days)	1082 **	349**
2006 (30 days)	1478	450
2007 (Jan -Sept)	1300	405
2007 - Projected	1800	590

- * Lost 6 public shoot days to Hurricanes Frances and Jeanne
- ** Lost 3 public shoot days to Hurricane Wilma

In April 2007, the Board approved an exchange agreement with the South Florida Water Management District, which among other things, provided for the donation of approximately 84 acres for a Public Shooting Park to the immediate southwest and abutting the Law Enforcement Training Facility. It is this donation of land that started what looks to be a series of public/private partnerships to make this facility a reality. As part of this item, the Board directed Staff to continue discussions with the FWC to develop a plan for the Public Shooting Park and to conduct public workshops to identify and prioritize the needs for the Park, prepare a development plan including and costs estimates and delivery schedules, and identify funding sources for the development and on-going operation of the Park.

In conjunction with FWC, Staff conducted its first public workshop on June 12, 2007, and there were over 250 persons in attendance. In addition to the feedback received at the meeting, over 185 comments were received on desired features, range amenities and operations. It was the feedback received from the public which identified the features of the range most critical to the public. That list along with significant design and technical guidance from the Public Shoot Coordinator, a lot of site plans and conceptual engineering work that allowed us to develop the Master Plan presented as Attachment 3.

The Master Plan, at build out, is proposed to contain the following features:

- Rifle range consisting of 1) 50 meter positions 30, 2) 100 meter positions 30, 3) 200 meter positions 15, and 4) 300 yd positions 15.
- Pistol range consisting of 75 positions in 5 separately operating bays.
- Shotgun range consisting of 1) 3 trap and skeet combined fields, 2) 3 trap fields, and 3) 10 sporting clay positions.
- Archery range consisting of 20, 30 meter positions.
- Education Center and Pro Shop building
- Maintenance and target storage building
- 291 parking spaces

This is a park development, much like any district park or golf course with environmental considerations and permitting requirements and on-going considerations. In this case, the development also has substantial structural engineering considerations for the berms, the need to complete the land restoration and change the use of the property from agriculture, and the construction of safety features into the physical design. The entire Park will be designed, engineered and subject to regulation. In addition to code, producing a thought out, design and engineered park; 1) preserves the County's investment allowing for maximum usage and lowers maintenance time, 2) reduces the likelihood of failure and 3) reduces long term operating costs which is effective for long term operators such as the County. These are the same principles employed in the County's overall development program.

In preparing this Master Plan, Staff went significantly further with its developability study. Specifically, planning and conceptual engineering was conducted far in excess of the traditional due diligence study as with the constraints mentioned above, any single incorrect planning or design assumption made could result in a fatal flaw to the project.

The cost estimate for the build-out of the master plan is \$19,700,000 and is made up of the following major components.

<u>Table 4</u> <u>Cost Estimate for Master Plan</u>

Expense Category	Estimated Cost (2010 start)	
Land restoration/development	\$ 5,472,801	
Facilities development	\$ 8,318,249	
Range development	\$ 5,887,431	
Total cost	\$19,677,761	

Again, much like other district parks, Staff considered phasing the improvements to deliver the most needed facilities first and match available, or likely funding. In this case, trying to achieve a Phase 1 package that was within a realistic funding range was even more challenging due to the unique operational and safety issues associated with continuing the use of Phase 1 improvements while subsequent phases were developed, and the practical inability to phase the land restoration/development component of the work.

The cost of the Phase 1 package as contemplated is \$12,100,000 (2010 construction start) and results in the postponement of the following features/amenities until funding is available for Phase 2 or portions thereof:

- Education center and pro shop building
- Sporting clay throwers and stations
- Shooting line canopies, baffling, target stands and benches at 3 of 11 ranges
- Night lighting at 1 range and skeet/trap field
- Remote target storage sheds

Besides for the education center and pro shop building the other delayed elements do not actually decrease the delivered product but only make the use of the ranges/features more primitive, less convenient or require the use of temporary benches instead of permanent.

There are a variety of sources of funding proposed for Phase 1 of the Public Shooting Park; some already appropriated, some anticipated in future capital budgets and the remainder through various public and private partnerships. The following table summarized the sources.

<u>Table 5</u> <u>Required Funding Sources - Phase 1</u>

Source	Funding Amount	Status
Board of County Commissioners		
Parks Bond	\$ 500,000	Existing
FY 2011 Public Building Improvement CIP ¹	\$ 3,000,000	Recommended
FY 2011 Public Building Improvement CIP ¹ - Add'l for \$1:\$1 Match	\$ 2,000,000	Recommended
Private Funding		
Fundraising Campaign	\$ 5,000,000	Recommended
Grants	\$ 200,000	Estimate
Fish/Wildlife Conservation Commission		
Pittman Robertson Annual Funding	\$ 1,000,000	Existing
Pittman Robertson (FY 08/09 & FY 09/10) Funding	\$ 400,000	Recommended
Total Phase 1 Funding Availability	\$ 12,100,000	

In January 2007, the \$3,000,000 was identified as coming from Parks Impact Fees. If directed by the BCC to include the \$5,000,000 total in the 2011 CIP it will be included in the Public Building Improvements CIP with ad valorem as the source. Staff will revisit the availability of both Parks and Public Building Impact Fees during the preparation of the 2011 Capital budget to determine if the ad valorem contribution can be reduced.

It has been suggested that private firms may be interested in either; 1) constructing the range and leasing it back to the County, or 2) constructing/leasing and operating the range on behalf of the County. Similar construction/lease-back financing proposals for other County facilities have been determined not to be advantageous to the County as they increase the overall capital cost of the project due to the private financing being more costly than financing by the County (or than just paying cash) as well as the cost of managing/administering the agreement. However, in the case of this facility, there may be an opportunity to find an individual/firm willing to "donate" the financing and management costs to facilitate the delivery of the Park in a timely manner. Staff will continue to investigate the viability/availability of these options and report its findings to the Board prior to a recommendation for the award of a design contract for the project.

The private fundraising effort/campaign proposed is significant and contemplates the sale of naming rights for the Public Shooting Park itself, features/amenities within the Park and through a variety of community based fundraising efforts. In order to ensure that an organization with the technical knowledge of the Park, the resources to manage a large fundraising program and contacts with likely donors; Staff is proposing that the Wildlife Foundation of Florida be the organization to whom the County sells the naming rights and manages the fundraising campaign on an on-going basis.

The Foundation is a non-political, not for profit corporation established to help preserve Florida's fish and wildlife for future generations. The primary function of the Foundation is to raise funds and build support for the FWC as well as other organizations and engage in nature conservation and management. The Foundation's activities including financing programs to preserve and restore the plant and animal communities of Florida as well as creating opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy and learn about the State's fish and wildlife resources.

An agreement with the Foundation is being proposed (via companion regular item) which accomplishes the following.

- Identify the features of the facility to which naming rights may be sold.
- Establish a minimum dollar value for the sale of the naming rights for the entire Public Shooting Park.
- Identify the types of community based fundraising programs that can be undertaken.
- Prohibit the inclusion of any terms in the donation agreement which provide operational control to donors.
- Prohibit the sale of advertising rights.
- Specify fundraising milestones so as to monitor performance and increase probability that private funding is available concurrent with project schedule. The final fundraising milestone is December 31, 2010, to allow for the award of the construction contract in early spring 2011.
- Identify the maximum fee that will be retained from all donations by the Foundation for administration of the fundraising contract and requiring disclosure of same in all donation agreements and advertisement.

The duration for the delivery of Phase 1 is approximately five years (August 2012) assuming approval to proceed today and typical durations on permitting. Construction is anticipated to begin in late 2010 or early 2011. It should be noted that originally the development of the Public Shooting Park was contingent on the start of development of the PBCC project for access, utilities or storm water management facilities. However during the development of the master plan, conceptual engineering work that was completed, and the postponement of the educational center until Phase 2; it was more beneficial to provide for independent access from CR 880 and allowed for the installation of temporary water and sewer service. This allows the Public Shooting Park to follow whatever schedule the Board determines for it.

Ongoing operations of the Public Shooting Park is a significant factor in considering whether to undertake this project. Four different operating models were considered; 1) County operated, staffed with County employees, 2) County operated via contract with a competitively selected private vendor, 3) FWC operated, staffed with State employees, and 4) FWC operated via contract with competitively selected private vendor.

Both County and FWC Staff both recommend pursuing the operating model where the Park is County operated via a contract with a competitively selected vendor. The agreement with the Public Shooting Park operator would be managed by a FDO employee. The advantages of this option are:

- most amount of local control during project development,
- direct and highest level of control, accountability and access to local decision makers by the public on overall range performance including providing input into changes in range operations, and
- most favorable balance of local public oversight over vendor's performance and compliance with County's objectives for the Park with the private sector expertise in managing the Park as business enterprise.

Staff believes that it would receive a substantial number of proposals from potential operators based on previous and current interest expressed and that the Public Shooting Park could be operated at no on-going operational expense (except the contract administrator's time which is not a full time position) to the County while maintaining the daily usage fees to the residents (and non-PBC residents) at a reasonable level.

The master plan, cost estimates, schedule and operating models were presented to the public at a workshop on August 16, 2007 and received favorable comments. Staff has also solicited input from the public since that time. A copy of all comments received will submitted as a receive and file action at the Workshop.

In conclusion, Staff is requesting that the Board consider taking action on the following:

Approval the Public Shooting Park Master Plan.

2. Authorization for Staff to initiate selection of an engineering team to commence design and permitting of the Public Shooting Park utilizing the \$500,000 allocated in the Parks Bond for this purpose.

3. Approval the fundraising/naming rights agreement with the Wildlife

Foundation of Florida.

 Authorization for Staff to include \$5,000,000 in the 2011 Public Building Capital Improvement to reflect a \$1 to \$1 match for funds privately raised. Public Shooting Park Site



