

# **COLORADO WILDLIFE COMMISSION POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

**POLICY:** B-15.5 SHOOTING RANGES  
**EFFECTIVE DATE:** July 1, 2004  
**APPROVED:** July 1, 2004  
**POLICY NUMBER:** B 15.5

## **Introduction**

In the policy developed in May, 1981, the Wildlife Commission recognized the role of the Commission and the Division regarding the teaching of the principles of safe hunting and proper hunting ethics. This policy validated the need for an aggressive hunter education program. Included in the policy was a statement of the primary purposes of the Division's hunter education program, including, among other items, the need to: "Provide shooting ranges for hunter safety education and sport hunting purposes to enhance the proficiency in firearms and archery equipment use."

## **Objective**

The objective of this policy is to foster the development of programs that encourage people to begin and continue to hunt. The Wildlife Commission and the Division recognize the role that we play in ensuring safe and available shooting opportunities throughout the state. We believe that the future of hunting can be positively influenced based upon expanded, convenient, safe sport shooting opportunities and the continued development of broad based public support for both hunting and sport shooting. This objective supports two of the goals identified in the Colorado Division of Wildlife 2002-2007 Strategic Plan: the directive to take proactive steps to ensure that the public recognizes that hunting is legitimate, ethical, and important; and the commitment to aggressively increase and pursue hunter recruitment programs.

The Colorado Wildlife Commission acknowledges the important role that the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation plays in Colorado shooting sports. Therefore, the Colorado Wildlife Commission supports a strong cooperative shooting sports effort (archery and firearm) between the Division of Wildlife and the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation where and whenever opportunity and resources permit.

## **Authority**

Section 33-1-105(1)(c), C.R.S., authorizes the Commission to construct or otherwise establish public facilities at any site or on any land in which the Commission holds an interest and operate and maintain such lands and facilities. This authority would include the establishment, operation, and maintenance of shooting ranges.

Section 33-1-105(1)(e), C.R.S., authorizes the Commission to enter into cooperative agreements with state and other agencies, educational institutions, municipalities, political subdivisions, corporations, clubs, landowners, associations, and individuals for the development and promotion of wildlife programs. This provides the authority to enter into cooperative agreements to provide more access to shooting ranges on public ground or at private establishments.

In addition, Commission action under the above statutory authorities to develop shooting ranges and increase sport shooting opportunities is clearly appropriate to facilitate compliance with the hunter education requirement found in statute (Section 33-6-107 (8), C.R.S.), as well as the overall competence and proficiency for hunters for wildlife management purposes (see Section 33-1-101 (4), C.R.S.).

## **Policy Statements**

The Commission recognizes several priorities with respect to shooting ranges:

1. The support of the hunter education program;
2. The need to provide safe shooting opportunities for hunters throughout the state;
3. An effort to support other shooting sports that promote firearms safety, and an understanding of firearms and shooting skills;
4. The benefit of working in cooperation with private shooting ranges; and
5. The advantage of cooperation with other public land management agencies to develop additional shooting and sight-in opportunities.

Therefore, to advance these priorities, the Commission adopts the following policy statements:

**IT SHALL BE THE COLORADO WILDLIFE COMMISSION'S POLICY TO PROVIDE AND MAINTAIN AN ADEQUATE NUMBER OF SHOOTING RANGES WITHIN REASONABLE DISTANCES OF POPULATION CENTERS TO MEET THE NEEDS OF HUNTER EDUCATION PROGRAMS.**

Any person born after January 1, 1949 wishing to hunt in Colorado must successfully complete a Hunter Education course. Each course mandates the firing of a minimum of 10 live rounds. In Colorado more than 18,000 students are graduated from more than 700

Hunter Education classes each year. Because of the population densities along the Colorado front-range between Pueblo and Fort Collins, and the continued growth of Colorado's human population, there is a need for additional indoor shooting ranges, particularly along this front range corridor. Elsewhere, both indoor and outdoor ranges are necessary to meet the needs of Hunter Education instructors and students. (See also Commission Policy #B-15.)

**IT SHALL BE THE COLORADO WILDLIFE COMMISSION'S POLICY, WORKING IN COOPERATION WITH BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERS, TO IDENTIFY AND/OR PROVIDE ADEQUATE LARGE BORE, SMALL BORE, AND ARCHERY SHOOTING RANGES OR SHOOTING OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN REASONABLE DISTANCES OF POPULATION CENTERS TO ACCOMMODATE SIGHT-IN OR PRACTICE FOR COLORADO HUNTERS.**

Outdoor shooting ranges that offer sight-in and practice opportunities for rifle shooting hunters can be encouraged in several ways. The Division can contract with private shooting ranges to increase public opportunities on those ranges. The Division can construct low cost and low maintenance 25-200 yard ranges on public lands in a variety of jurisdictions including federal lands, state lands, state wildlife areas, county, and city properties.

**IT SHALL BE THE COLORADO WILDLIFE COMMISSION'S POLICY TO SUPPORT A WIDE VARIETY OF SHOOTING SPORTS ACTIVITIES THAT PROMOTE SAFETY, AN UNDERSTANDING OF FIREARMS AND ARCHERY EQUIPMENT, AND AN INCREASE IN OVERALL SHOOTER SKILLS.**

The safe use of firearms and archery equipment is a key element in maintaining the support of the public for hunting and shooting sports. Likewise, organized efforts to improve shooter skills and increase shooter knowledge will help maintain the long-term viability of hunting.

**IT SHALL BE THE COLORADO WILDLIFE COMMISSION'S POLICY TO WORK WITH THE OWNERS AND OPERATORS OF PRIVATE SHOOTING RANGES TO INCREASE PUBLIC ACCESS TO THESE RANGES TO ENHANCE AND SUPPORT HUNTER EDUCATION EFFORTS AND TO ACCOMMODATE SIGHT-IN AND SHOOTING PRACTICE FOR COLORADO HUNTERS.**

There are many private ranges throughout Colorado. Through their own efforts or through existing agreements with the Division of Wildlife, many of these ranges already provide some free or low cost public access. Continued and additional cooperation and partnership with private shooting ranges has the potential to satisfy much of the needed access to sight-in and practice opportunities and could play an important role to ensure such ranges continue in operation.

**IT SHALL BE THE COLORADO WILDLIFE COMMISSION'S POLICY TO WORK IN COOPERATION WITH OTHER PUBLIC LAND MANAGEMENT AGENCIES, BOTH STATE AND FEDERAL, TO DEVELOP ADDITIONAL SHOOTING RANGES TO ACCOMMODATE SIGHT-IN AND PRACTICE OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLORADO HUNTERS.**

It is vital that the Division of Wildlife work in cooperation with other public land management agencies to help provide the public with additional sight-in and practice opportunities. Cooperation and partnership with these agencies will allow the pooling of resources such as land, expertise, and staffing.

**Adopted: July 1, 2004**