

Appendix D

Comments from Citizens

Wellman, Julia (DEQ)

From: MSmith620@aol.com
Sent: Wednesday, June 09, 2010 9:50 PM
To: Wellman, Julia (DEQ)
Subject: June 8 Meeting Firing Range
Attachments: Re: Agenda for June 8 Meeting

Julia,

Delegate Lee Ware held a meeting for the residents of Powhatan / Goochland counties and the Virginia State Police in order to share information.

Attached is the Resident Concern Report regarding the Proposed Firing Range on Old River Trail - Powhatan County, VA.

Maryclay Smith

Proposed Firing Range
on
Old River Trail – Powhatan County, VA
(Resident Concern Report)

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Noise Impact

The residents of Powhatan County, VA are concerned with the noise levels that would be introduced by the proposed firing range on Old River Trail and the potential **health**, **safety**, and **nuisance** effects that will impact approximately 482 homes and 1,248 people.

Below are our findings, since a Noise Impact Study is not available and one will **not** be created as per the EIR.

General Noise Information:

- There are two types of noise:
 - Constant Sound: Home Stereo, Power Tool, Motorized Vehicle
 - Impulsive Sound: Single Shot by a Firearm
- Noise is measure in dB (decibels) for constant sound and dBA for impulsive sound.
- The greatest hearing “acuity”, for humans, ranges from Sound Pressure Levels between 40dB to 80dB and Frequency between 300H to 5kHz.
- Multiple firearm shots are considered “Constant Sound” due to the combination of all the impulses plus a penalty of 2-10 dB per shot depending on the weapon.
- Sounds louder than 80 decibels are considered potentially dangerous to humans.
- Any noise above the typical background sound levels in specific surroundings is considered a “nuisance” to residents.

Sound Level Data:

- Typical background sound levels -

Time of Day	Rural	Quiet Urban	Noisy Urban
Day	45 dBA	50 dBA	50 dBA
Evening	40 dBA	47 dBA	45 dBA
Night	40 dBA	45 dBA	45 dBA

NOTE: *Any noise above the typical background sound levels in specific surroundings is considered a nuisance to residents. Based on the fact that Powhatan is in a rural setting any sound above 45dB will be consider a nuisance.*

- Typical sound pressure levels encountered in daily life -

Sound Pressure Level (dBA)	Description of Sound Source	Subjective Evaluation
140	Jet Engine	Deafening
130	Jet aircraft during takeoff (300 ft. away)	Painful
120	"Hard rock" band	Onset of pain
107	Air hammer	Temporary hearing loss
100	Crowd noise at football game	Very loud
92	Heavy city traffic	Very loud
80	Ringing alarm clock (at 2 ft.)	Very loud
70	B-757 aircraft cabin	Loud
65	Busy restaurant or canteen	Loud
60	Conversation speech	Moderate
55	Window air conditioner	Moderate
34	Soft whisper	Faint
20	Rustling leaves	Very faint
10	Human breathing	Very faint

NOTE: *Sounds louder than 80 decibels are considered potentially dangerous to humans. Each 10dB increase seems twice as loud to a human being.*

- Sound pressure levels of firearms (Measured at 32ft from the Muzzle) –

Name, Caliber and Ammunition of Weapon	Sound Pressure Level in dBA
Rifle M/96, 6.5mm, SK PTR M/94 PRJ M/41	126
Rifle M/96, 6.5mm, KPTR M/14	120
Hunting rifle, 7.62 mm, 30-60 Norma Jaktmatch	127
Hunting rifle II, 5.7 mm, 222 Remington N. Jaktmatch	124
AK 4, 7.62mm, KPTR 10	120
AK 4, 7.62 mm, SK PTR 10 PRJ	128
AK 5	125
CC 63 Junior, Cal. 22, NORMA 22 LR (pistol)	103
Pisto m/40, 9 mm, SK PTR M/39 B	126
Shottgun, Cal. 12, NIKE Skeet, 70 mm, 32 g, 2mm	127

NOTE: *Sounds louder than 80 decibels are considered potentially dangerous to humans. Firearms have a high probably of causing damage to the inner ear eventually causing hearing loss.*

Sound Propagation (Travel):

- There are several factors that affect sound propagation -
 - Distance to the receptor
 - Ground effect
 - Air absorption
 - Weather, Wind, and Temperature
- The ground type affects the reflection of the sound.
- Temperature inversion increases the distance of propagation.

- For outdoor shooting ranges, based on the noise source, direction, topography, and climatic conditions, noise would travel as far as **1 to 3km (0.69 – 1.7 miles)**.

Indoor range noise will travel as far away as **1km (0.69 miles)** and it is based on wall, roof, and terrain construction.

- The sound pressure level generated by a gun that was shot 3km (1.7miles) away will be between 70-90 dB without the proper sound barriers.

NOTE: *Today, 308 homes and 798 people (within 2 miles of the proposed site) will be affected by any noise generated by the outdoor firing range. In the future, 482 homes and 1,248 people (within 2 miles of the proposed site) will be affected by any noise generated by the outdoor firing range.*

Potential Health / Safety Issues:

- Noises that reach a decibel level of 85dB can cause permanent damage to the hair cells in the inner ear, leading to Hearing Loss...

NIDCD – National Institute of Deafness and Other Communication Disorders

NIEHS – National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences

NIOSH – National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health

- Noise **not** only affects hearing. It affects other parts of the body and body systems...
 - Increases blood pressure
 - Has negative cardiovascular effects such as changing the way the heart beats
 - Increases breathing rate
 - Disturbs digestion
 - Can cause an upset stomach or ulcer

- Can negatively impact a developing fetus, perhaps contributing to premature birth
- Makes it difficult to sleep, even after the noise stops
- Intensifies the effects of factors like drugs, alcohol, aging and carbon monoxide

NIOSH – National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health

- Decibel exposure time guidelines...

Accepted standards for recommended permissible exposure time for continuous time weighted average noise, according to NIOSH and CDC, 2002. For every 3 dBs over 85dB, the permissible exposure time before possible damage can occur is cut in half.

Continuous DB	Permissible Exposure Time
85 dB	8 hours
88 dB	4 hours
91 dB	2 hours
94 dB	1 hour
97 dB	30 minutes
100 dB	15 minutes
103 dB	7.5 minutes
106 dB	3.75 min (<4min)
109 dB	1.875 min (<2min)
112 dB	.9375 min (~1 min)
115 dB	.46875 min (~30 sec)

NOTE: *Sounds louder than 80 decibels are considered potentially dangerous to humans. Due to the fact that the firing range will operate for 12 hrs a day from Monday-Saturday, there is a HIGH probability that residents will be exposed to continuous noise levels beyond the allowable/recommended time by the NIOSH and CDC.*

Additional questions and concerns:

The following is a list of questions and concerns regarding the Sound Management Plan discussed in the EIR for the proposed firing range on Old River Trail. We feel that the Sound Management Plan is **insufficient, incomplete** and **does not** address all of the potential issues for a firing range of this magnitude.

The EIR references Sound Management in Section 5.14, page 5-4.

- It appears the “Sound Management Plan” is gratuitous at best with statements such as “sound mitigation”, “reduce noise”, and “eliminate noise”. What do these concepts mean relative to a SMP? There is little, if any basis, for any of it. Certainly more modern and thorough research is available other than a 39-year old research bulletin.
- The one reference to something more modern / high-tech: a “granular ballistic rubber media” berm material indicating that this sort of thing is available... but, only when funding is appropriated... implying that there is no intent to use it any time soon.
- It appears their entire SMP is based upon the statement: “...65-100 foot wide stand of trees and shrubs are need to reduce noise.” There’s going to be 80-plus firing lines and that’s all the effort put forth?!?
- They are adding 15-20’ high earthen berms which is obviously good but my guess is that that is more for common sense safety than noise abatement....the berms simply happen to affect sound.
- Additionally, it is misleading to suggest that there are miles of forest to the west and east when the entire southeast corridor is open field and there are residences within the “mature growth of hardwoods” buffers. The surround buffer and the affect on sound/noise seems important enough to be studied and mapped out.

Finally, the “Operational Controls” section is incomplete as there is colon and the next section starts.

It is not unreasonable to ask that more effort be put forth to determine the noise impact of a facility of this magnitude on the community and to establish some basis/decision making for a SMP.

Property Value Impact

The residents of Powhatan County, VA are concerned with the **NEGATIVE** impact, on current and future property value, due to the proposed firing range on Old River Trail.

Below are our findings as Property Value Impact has not been considered and Powhatan is one of the fastest growing counties in Virginia.

Area Statistics

Within one mile of the proposed site (Powhatan):

Current Actual: **58 Homes**
150 People
1670 Acres
\$34,324,400.00 Tax Assessed Property Value

Within the next few years

Future: **117 Additional Lots Already Approved For Building**
175 Total Homes
454 People

Note: Includes Aston Community to be completed.

Within two miles of the proposed site (Powhatan – includes above statistics for one mile):

Current Actual: **308 Homes**
798 People
5963 Acres
\$127,778,500.00 Tax Assessed Property Value

We cannot afford for our homes to be worth less than our mortgages.

Notes: Information above was gathered with the help of Powhatan County Commissioner of Revenue Tax Assessment as of December 2009, and by using the U.S. Census Bureau statistic of 2.59 people per household. This also includes a 13% loss in assessed value over the last two years.

This information does not take into account expected losses in Personal Property Tax, Retail Sales Tax, etc.

2 Mile Radius



Environmental Impact

The following is a list of questions and concerns after further review of the EIR for the proposed firing range on Old River Trail. We feel that the EIR is **inconsistent, is based on old data**, and is **incomplete**, as it does not address environmental impacts to people, animals, and nature in the surrounding area.

2.2.5 – What chemicals are stored for pH balance?

2.2.6 – Solid & Hazardous Waste

- Septic plan must be submitted
- Septic sized to 200 people and overage for guests
- Lead recovery “Best Practice” – what is it?
- On site visual inspections do not take into account lead contamination or substructure due to continued use.
- What plans or provisions are being made/considered?
- Where is soil test for site (to test that soil can support proposed firing range)?

3.1, 3.2, & 3.4 – These sections comment that the existing ranges would be financially cheaper to up fit, yet are “not recommended

- Where is that proposal for comparison against construction of a new firing range?
- Who are the entities that own/operate these ranges and their response to requests for upgrade or expansion?
- What is the total projected cost required for the new firing range and where are those monies coming from?

4.4 – Agriculture

- Documents state no report has been done for the checklist:
 1. Why?
 2. This document is dated 1/27/10. What has been done since then and why isn't it finished?

4.5 – Topography

- Site is “up gradient”; adjacent properties are “down gradient”. Where is the test report on impact review for these properties?
- EIR states that swells will be used to contain/direct runoff. Where is report showing that plan and that design is capable of sustaining intended use?
- Where is plan of swells showing placement and water direction?
- Why isn’t the “creek” between properties referenced or acknowledged in report and what the impact is accordingly?
- If environmental tests are not going to be considered, where are the tests for the neighboring properties that are impacted?
- Where is Geo-Tec study for soil and water table?

4.8 – Geology

- EIR states soil is “sandy loam”. The nature of this soil passes water and sediments at a quick rate and does not allow for proper filtration. Clay must be used to slow filtration process. Site must be dug out and backfilled with clay and then resoiled. Where is this plan?
- Basins/berms cannot be made of “sandy loam”, as erosion is immediate.
- How does storm drainage affect the 100 year plain?

4.9 – Wetlands

- Reports state none on property, yet there are wetlands adjacent. Where is that impact test/review?
- To protect the adjacent property wetlands, common practice is to use swells and berms. Where is that design, plan, and impact review?

5.1 – Land Use Zoning

- Paragraph states a “correctional facility”. In numerous sections it is referred to as farm/agricultural use. Which is it?

5.14 – Sound Survey

- Report must be done before construction. Sound survey must be at full firing range capacity at adjacent properties, witnessed by delegates, congressional rep.

5.15 – pH Testing

- Provide report stating impact of lead contamination is neutralized by existing natural pH levels; and if not naturally sufficient, where is the plan showing use, amount, frequency of chemicals and that impact.

5.15 – Lead Management Plan

- Where is the plan?
- What is best practice?
- How can a visual inspection insure sub-soil conditions and amount of lead in earth?
- Why isn't inspection a sample chemical test?
- The use of chemical "pH" is required to help neutralize the effects of lead contamination. pH has a direct negative impact on vegetation. What is the plan to offset/control this side effect to the existing or planned vegetation as this is part of the EIR plan to use vegetation as means of filtering?
- What is impact to adjacent properties in having to over use the pH as a means of control?

Historical Impact

The site of the proposed firing range is on a **Scenic Byway**, designated by the Commonwealth of Virginia not only because of its **aesthetic** value but because of the **rich history** of the road and the number of **historic farms, buildings, and churches** on the road. We are concerned with the **NEGATIVE** impact to Old River Trail as well the historic sites in the surrounding area.

The following is a statement prepared by members of the Powhatan Historical Society and the Michaux-St. James Foundation:

The site of the proposed firing range is on a scenic byway, designated as such by the Commonwealth of Virginia not only because of its aesthetic value, but because of the rich history of the road and the number of historic farms, buildings and churches on the road. Old River Trail and the surrounding area has been important to the cultures of the Monocan Indians, the French Huguenots, the early English settlers and African Americans.

The Monocan Indians inhabited the lands along the James River for centuries.

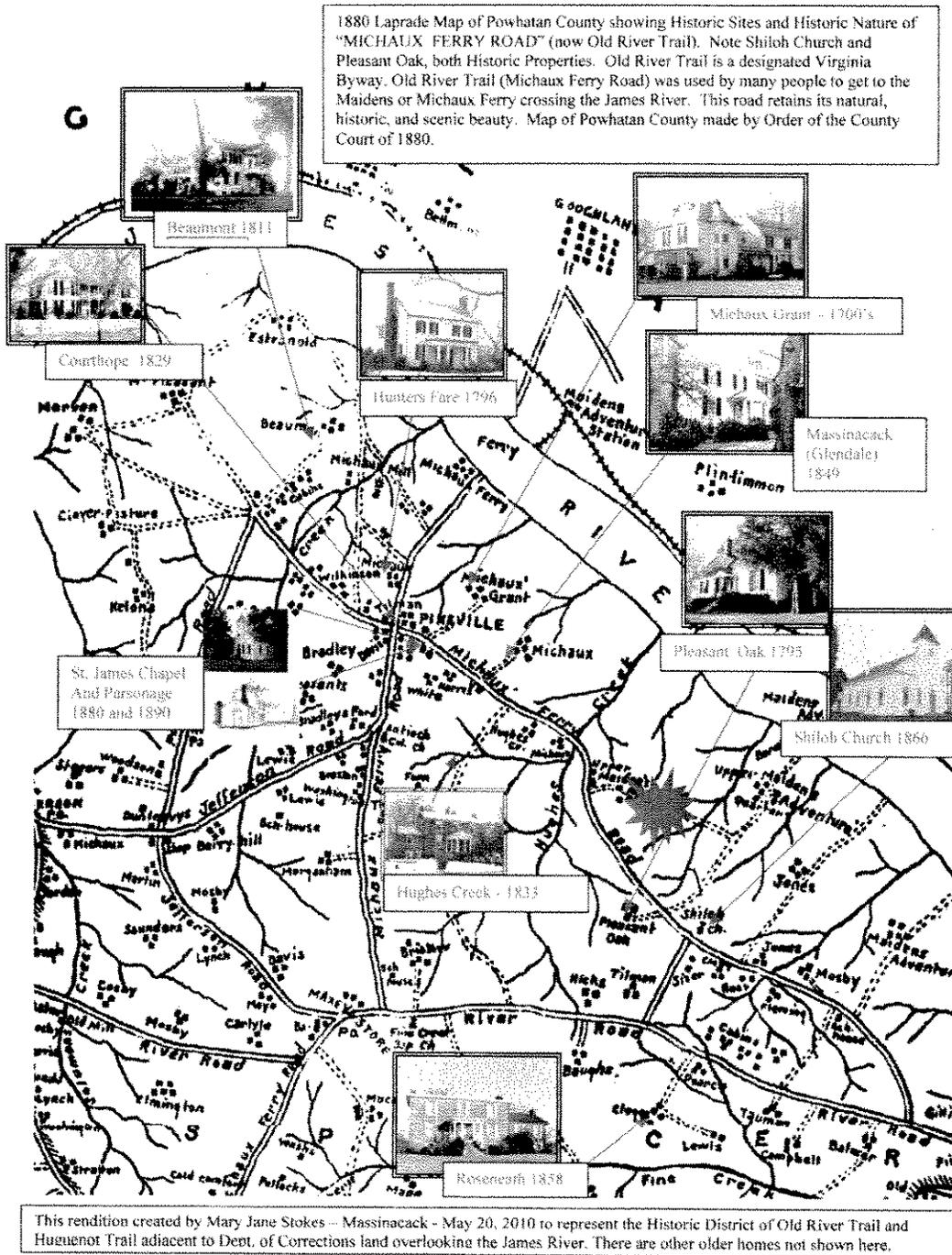
As you walk these fields and hills, you can still kick up Neolithic arrowheads and tools. The ancestral burial grounds of the Monocans lie in these fields along the river. Along what is now Old River Trail was Massinacack. This was one of the five Monocan Indian villages along the river and was the farthest point west reached by Captains John Smith and Christopher Newport in their exploration of the James River from Jamestown in 1608.

The French Huguenots were Protestants that were expelled from France because of their faith. They were granted refuge on these lands by the King of England in 1702. They became the first non-Native American settlers of this area, which was then the Western frontier of the Colony of Virginia. The bodies of these Huguenot farmers and tradesmen – along with those of the English colonists who soon joined them – are buried along these rolling hills that they once farmed. These historic farms include Pleasant Oak (1795 – less than 1,300 feet from the proposed range); Upper Maidens Adventure (which was actually ON the prison property); Hughes Creek (1833); Roseneath (1858); Michaux Grant (first decade of the 1700's); Glendale (1849 - on the site of the old Monocan Indian village of Massinacack); Hunter's Fare (1796); and Courthope (1829). Old families like the

Tilmans, the Astons, the Hicks and the Baughs once raised their children on beautiful area farms where children are now again being raised in the neighborhoods of Aston and Oak Leaf Estates. Many of these families and their descendants attended worship services at nearby Fine Creek Baptist Church (which dates to 1777) or Episcopal worship services at the historic St. James Chapel (built in 1890) in what was then known as the village of Pineville. What is now Old River Trail was then known as the Michaux Ferry Road. Area residents traveled it to get to Goochland via the historic Maidens Ferry which was founded in 1729.

Speaking of Goochland, just across the river from the proposed range and in the line of fire is Mt. Bernard Farm. The farm dates to the pre-Revolutionary War era and its manor house dates to the 1840's. Mt. Bernard Farm is on both the Virginia Historic Registry and on the National Registry of Historic Places. Stray bullets will now endanger its current residents, as well as the surrounding neighbors and also people that enjoy swimming, boating and fishing in that part of the James River – all directly in the line of fire.

This is a map of Powhatan County showing Historic sites within the vicinity of the proposed shooting range:



Agricultural Impact

The site of the proposed firing range is next to cattle fields and homes. We are concerned with the NEGATIVE impact to the agricultural business in the surrounding area.

The following is a statement prepared by local Agricultural Businessman and long time Powhatan resident William T. Arrington:

I have been a resident here on Old River Trail for 5 generations now, with my young son being the 6th. My grandfather M.C. Arrington, served as a State Trooper for 30+ years in Powhatan and surrounding counties so I have no problem with law enforcement agencies.

The Tilman Family owns and operates about 300 acres of farm land on this road which dates back to my great great grandfather. We operate 60 head of beef cattle with various acreage used for raising hay to feed them. The proposed firing range is directly next to one of my cattle fields not to mention my home. I am concerned the noise of this project may force me to lose 12 acres of my 29 that I use on this part of my farm alone. Cattle are extremely sensitive to loud noises much less repetitive gun shots for 12 hours a day 5-6 days a week. These loud noises have been known to cause cattle to stampede fences and become excessively nervousness, which result in weight loss and reproductive problems, causing a danger to the farmer when trying to handle them.

This is just one of my concerns, the others include traffic and decreased property values.

This road that I have lived on my whole life has seen a great increase of traffic over the years, from residents, school buses, department of corrections and cut-through traffic. With the addition of this project it has been said that 200 people could be there at any given time. With the State exempting themselves from traffic and noise studies who knows for sure what might happen?

If later, the State deems the road is not safe for the amount of traffic brought on from this project, will they condemn my property to change the road? I find this unacceptable for having kept and operated this farm land for over 150 years.

As I have stated earlier, the worth of generations of hard work will be near worthless far as land sales are concerned.

In closing, I feel threatened that my family business is not going to be able to sustain here with the concerns I have listed above. I implore you to relocate this project for the benefit of myself and the community who lives here.

This is copy of a letter prepared by Billy Sifers, President of the Powhatan Farm Bureau expressing the discontent and strong opposition to the proposed firing range on Old River Trail:

Powhatan County Farm Bureau

May 28, 2010



Powhatan County Board of Supervisors
ATTN: Mr. Carson Tucker
3845 Old River Trail
Powhatan, VA 23139

Supervisor Tucker:

On behalf of the Board of Directors and members of Powhatan County Farm Bureau, I am expressing our strong opposition to the proposed Virginia State Law Enforcement Training facility being considered to be built on a parcel of state-owned farm land adjacent to the existing Deep Meadows Correctional Center on Old River Trail in Powhatan. This proposed training facility is a joint effort between two state agencies, the Virginia State Police and the Virginia Department of Corrections, with the Virginia State Police being the lead and sponsoring agency. As planned, this facility consisting of four shooting ranges with 81 firing lanes, a "live-fire shoot house", a classroom and a bunkhouse would destroy the historic integrity of Old River Trail and hinder agricultural production on adjacent farms.

Powhatan County Farm Bureau is opposed to the proposed Virginia State Law Enforcement Training facility for the following reasons:

1. Noise from this facility will be a major problem for animal agriculture near this facility. Cattle, horses, etc. are very sensitive to loud noises. Loud noise, such as the firing of guns, is disturbing to cattle and horses and could result in dangerous behaviors such as kicking/charging or may result in an attempt by the animal to escape. Farmers in the immediate area would more than likely be forced to remove animals from their farms due to the extreme noise and resulting problems.
2. There has been no traffic study done. According to Section 4.6 in the environmental impact review of this project by the Department of Environmental Quality, access to this facility will be through the prison property and no additional access to public roads is planned, however, it appears that an entrance from Old River Trail has already been started. With the heavy traffic in and out of this facility (up to 200 people using the ranges at any one time), there will be a need for continuous repairs/maintenance to the road and probable widening of the road. Much of this could be added expense to Powhatan County.
3. Tax revenue for Powhatan County will decrease as adjacent property (including homes and land) values will decrease and income from adjacent farm land will lessen due to the many negative impacts associated with this proposed training facility.

As a leader in Powhatan County, you have the opportunity to demonstrate your support for local agriculture by opposing the proposed Virginia State Law Enforcement Training facility. Powhatan County Farm Bureau recommends that the Virginia State Law Enforcement Training facility be located in an area where it will blend in and enhance the local community and locality. The proposed Powhatan location accomplishes neither.

Our members share your interest in the future of Powhatan County and we hope you will work with us to insure the continued success of our community. An informative meeting coordinated by Delegate Lee Ware will be held on June 8th, 2010 at 7 pm at the Powhatan Village Building. We would greatly appreciate your support on this issue and request your presence at this meeting.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Billy Sifers".

Billy Sifers

President, Powhatan County Farm Bureau

Office: (804) 598-3281 Fax: (804) 598-3289

2823 Old Buckingham Road, Powhatan, VA 23139 : VirginiaFarmBureau.com



Traffic Impact

The site of the proposed firing range is located on Old River Trail, which is a narrow tar and gravel road used by local residents and farming operations. We are concerned with the NEGATIVE impact the increased traffic will have on the safe operation along the road and area.

The following is a statement prepared by local Agricultural Businessman and long time Powhatan resident William T. Arrington:

Over the years traffic has greatly increased with the addition of 288. More and more motorists have discovered that Old River Trail connects Rt. 711 to US RT 522. Hence the increase of through fare traffic alone. One of the other increases is due to the rising population on this road and surrounding proximity's examples: Aston , Oak Leaf and other surrounding Sub-Divisions. Currently we have 3 school buses that transfer between 60 to 100 children twice daily on Old River Trail. The transfer times are early in the morning and late in the afternoon. Potentially, the times of the routes may be the same as the firing range participants' arrival and departures.

In the EIR report it is stated on page 4-8, the max capacity will be 200 in the classroom with a likely hood of 90 officers there on a consistent basis after Phase 2. Even with this number, we feel it places even more stress on a small road that is barely holding its own.

A Virginia State Park has been approved on the opposite end of Old River Trail, which as you can image will only increase motorists on this road. There has been no traffic study to date for the VSP project to determine potential impacts of this project.

However, there has been a study done on the park project. Even though the projects are not related, a concern has come from this report concerning the firing range. The report on the state park included condemnation of 13 properties and relocation of 3 other properties resulting from the construction of the park project. Our concern is that after construction of Phases 1,2,3,4 or even after 1, if the state deems the road inadequate what is to say we would not share the same fate? There are land owners who have owned and farmed land for over 150 years which happens to join the road all the way to Rt.711. This land of theirs is used for fences for containment of the livestock and has an even greater purpose for their way of life.

Alternatives

The following is a list of alternative options to the proposed firing range on Old River Trail. After looking at numerous alternatives it was concluded that A.P. Hill, Fort Pickett, Quantico Marine Corps Base and the Brunswick Correctional Center yielded the most promise.

Overview

According to the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services there are already 96 firing ranges in Virginia including the Federal Reserve Firing Range, Langley AFB Firing Range, Richmond Police Department Outdoor Range, Richmond Police Department Training Academy and Fort Lee POW Range

A.P. Hill

- Caroline County
- 35 miles north of Richmond
- 76,000 acres
- Rural setting and large land mass makes it an ideal location for live firing
- Already in existence, 27,000 acre range complex capable of accommodating conventional weapon systems
- Ranges 1&2/Combat Pistol Qualification Course Ranges with 15 firing hires each. Targets consist of 7 automated pop-up targets per lane
- ranges 4,8,9,14,23 and 35 can be used to fire the Alternative Pistol Qualification Course and the Military Police Firearms Qualifications Course

Fort Pickett

- Nottoway, Brunswick and Dinwiddie Counties
- 45,867 acres
- Diverse terrain with few environmental constraints
- Non-military organizations using Pickett include FBI, ATF, Virginia State Police and local law enforcement agencies
- Virginia State Police is in process of building a “drivers training” facility and overnight barracks

- Existing firing ranges already in place at Pickett

Quantico Marine Corps Base

- Prince William, Stafford and Fauquier Counties
- 64,000 acres
- Location of FBI Academy, the principal research and training facility of the FBI and the principal training facility for the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) are located on the base
- Firing ranges in existence

Brunswick Correctional Center/Meherrin Regional Jail

- Brunswick County/Town of Lawrenceville
- 700 acres/127 acres
- Owned by state, available, surplus property
- Range wanted by county and town officials
- Brunswick County has high unemployment rates, low income levels, high out migration and stable to declining population

Concluding Comments

- With existing federal and state options already in place and other localities welcoming such a facility, why spend unnecessary tax payers dollars to duplicate exiting facilities in Powhatan County which ranks as one of the state's twenty fastest growing localities. In addition, Powhatan residents and officials have expressed objections regarding the proposed location near residential areas, a scenic by-way and historic buildings and sites.
- A.P. Hill, Fort Pickett, Quantico and the Brunswick Correctional Center sites could save millions of dollars by not duplicating existing facilities and would not negatively affect residential areas.
- An observation comes to mind regarding the firing range at Camp Pendleton which was originally founded in 1912, as the state rifle range. It was located in a remote area of the state at that time. Since that founding date in the early

1900s, population growth and residential encroachments have created safety issues which will be difficult and expensive to address.

- Closing thoughts for state officials considering the Old River Trail location - - conserve tax payer dollars, utilize existing facilities, build successes, work with local partners as well as other state and federal partners, strive not to degrade residential neighborhoods, scenic by-ways and historical sites, create good will, not negative will, and promote win-win situations by placing new state facilities in willing recipients localities and communities with willing recipients.

General Questions

The following is a list of general questions and concerns generated by the residents of Powhatan County, VA.

1. What is the problem with the current range in Goochland County?
2. What is the mitigation plan for misdirect shots?
3. What type of weapons will be fired on this range? How can we be assured that other weapons will not be added in the future?
4. Why are you spending 1.89 million dollars for a firing range for a minimal number of people to use, when there are other existing facilities available within a reasonable driving distance?
5. Ft. Pickett will have a training driving course for the VSP. Why would you not use Ft. Pickett firing range facilities as well when the officers are there for training?
6. Goochland and Powhatan rank among the fastest growing localities in the state. Have you taken this into account when choosing this site? Other firing ranges have been relocated due to population growth.
7. Is there Federal Money involved in this project? If so, is there a protocol that needs to be followed by NEPA regulations?
8. In your email to the County, why did you ask about noise and light ordinances when you have no plans to abide by the county's policies?
9. Why do you refuse to do a sound study?
10. What is our recourse when noise levels impact our families health in stress, heart, hearing damage, etc.?
11. Why is there no traffic study? Not only is there a severe curve on Old River Trail near the proposed range but there is the also the intersection on Rt. 522 and Old River Trail that has been identified by the County and VDOT as dangerous and life threatening.

12. In the ERI report there was no mention of Old River Trail being a Scenic Byway, there was no recognition of the Shiloh Church and cemetery, and NO historic homes or sites. Why was this omitted? The ERI is flawed and it makes you look like you do not care about the about Virginia's historical heritage.
13. What is the plan for ricochet bullets?
14. How is this project funded?
15. Why is the Federal Trust funding VSP 1.2 million for this project?
16. Is this project subjected to Federal or State regulations?
17. Were other site locations researched at all?
18. Who exactly will be using this facility? Can you guarantee it will only be those listed?
19. The County has deemed recreation and tourism as an area to be expanded. Will recreational river traffic have their safety compromised?
20. Why was the ERI not certified by a PE (Professional Engineer)?
21. Who will maintain the range to ensure BMPs for lead, lights, safety, theft, and unauthorized persons using the range?
22. Who do we call with a range problem after hours.? The DOC has made it clear they are not the contact.
23. Why is the data used in the ERI report decades old and not current?
24. What chemical would be used in training i.e. tear gas, etc.
25. Why was there no County dialogue when planning this project?

Correspondence

These are copies emails and letters submitted by Powhatan residents expressing their discontent and strong opposition to the proposed firing range on Old River Trail:

Governor Robert F. McDonnell
Patrick Henry Building
1111 East Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23218

May 28, 2010

Dear Governor McDonnell,

I am writing to you regarding the Virginia State Police Training Facility to be located in Powhatan, Virginia, on the James River. It is my understanding this is Public Land, donated by the Department of Corrections, to the Virginia State Police, 1.290 million dollars, of the project to be funded by the Federal Trust.

The Chesapeake 2000 Agreement, signed by then Governor Gilmore, states that Virginia will "Government by Example" to ensure that all properties owned, managed or leased by the Commonwealth are developed, redeveloped and used in a manner consistent with the "Sound Land Use" goals and commitments of the agreement. I have enclosed a copy of the Chesapeake 2000 Agreement for your perusal. I am hopeful, you will honor this agreement.

The construction of such a facility, 81 firing ranges, bunkhouses, classrooms accommodating up to 200 people per day on prime real estate on the James River, effecting flood plains, 100 year old hardwood forest, endangered migrating birds, wildlife, endangered fish and our pair of nesting Bald Eagles, questions "**Sound land use**"!

Governor McDonnell, I can not understand why a site adversely effecting so many would be considered at all, particularly when the Lawrenceville site has just been closed and is begging for this facility.

As a highly successful business man I am confident you can see the negative impact of developing this site, taking so many environmental risks and risks of public safety.

There are many other issues that can be addressed such as the distance of 900 feet from homes, lead contamination, upgrading scenic byways to accommodate 200 vehicles per day, serious risk of injury, even death from stray bullets, noise impact will effect (at least) a 2 mile radius and river enthusiast just floating by.

Studies alone on noise and lead contamination should clearly cease this project!

So Dear Governor, I implore you to lead Virginia in a progressive environmentally protective decision that future generations will praise you for!

I thank you for your time and consideration and I am confident you will protect Virginia's Natural Resources, particularly in the midst of the disaster of our Gulf Waters.

Sincerely,

Margaret Martin Fralin
3945 Hughes Creek Rd
Powhatan, VA 23139

cc: Congressman Randy Forbes
cc: Senator John Watkins
cc: Delegate Lee Ware
cc: Delegate Bill Janis
cc: Supervisor 5th District Carson Tucker
cc: Powhatan County Administrator Carolyn Bishop
cc: Dept. of Public Safety Vickie George

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MAY 17 2010

DEQ-Office of Environmental
Impact Review

Maryclay Smith
3665 Old River Trail
Powhatan, Virginia 23139

Julia Wellman
Environmental Impact Review Coordinator
Virginia Department of Environmental Quality
P.O. Box 1105
Richmond, Virginia 23218

May 14, 2010

Dear Ms. Wellman;

Enclosed is a response to the Environmental Impact Review for the Virginia State Police Training Facility on Old River Trail in Powhatan, Virginia.

Please note the issues we are terribly about; noise, traffic, safety of a farming neighbor and changes in Old River Trail By-Way which is fortunate to have six historic features.

At this time we understand there will be no noise study and traffic study, therefore we are pleased to have a process where we can express our concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Maryclay Smith", written in black ink.

ENVIORNMENTAL IMPACT REVIEW
VIRGINIA STATE LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING FACILITY

RESPONSE

Old River Trail Road is an historical By-Way of importance. By have the training facility so close to many of the homes, church and cemetery the integrity of the historical atmosphere is compromised.

2.1.1. Historical Property*

Pleasant Oak circa 1780, 1,444' from training facility

Shiloh Baptist Church 3,000' from training facility

Established by freed slaves, Julian Binford bartered mural on baptistery "Crossing the Jordan"

Hughes Creek Farm circa 1833, 1.8 miles from training facility

Massinacac circa 1810, 2.2 miles from training facility

St. James Episcopal Church circa 1830, 2 miles from training facility

2.1.2. Surrounding Area

Two subdivisions less than a mile . Within .26 of a mile from the training facility lies six Old River Trail residences, homes to 10 children.. Within .5 miles lies the neighborhood of Aston with numerous children.

2.2.4. Traffic Pattern

Old River Trail is used as a connector road from Rt. 522 and Rt. 711. Since the establishment of 288 the road has seen far more traffic. With the completion of the State Park the road would again experience a higher traffic pattern. Additionally, within .2 miles of the proposed facility is a dangerous blind curve in the road.

2.2.6 Environmental Management

Within 1,950' from the facility there are ten young children residing. It has been proven there is considerable concern with lead contamination in the soil, ground water and air. In children lead exposure can cause behavioral and learning problems, hearing problems, impairment of vision and motor skills, hyperactivity, and developmental delays (ATSDR, 1999: U.S. EPA, 2001a, 2002b). In adults, lead may increase blood pressure and cause anemia. Also, irritability, poor muscle coordination, muscle and joint pain, memory and concentration problems, digestive problems, and hearing and vision impairment(U.S. EPA, 2001a,2002b).....

** Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act requires federal agencies prior to taking any action, to take into account the effect of their undertaking on historic properties*

3.0 Alternative Analysis

3.1 Alternative A

While the alternative was to renovate an existing site; what about using a site within Fort Pickett? The parcel of land (over 2,000 acres) currently has firing ranges and training facilities within their property. It is located in one of the twenty counties that this facility would be serving.

4.0 Affected Environment

4.1 Land Use

“Area adjacent to the project site within the large parcel included wooded area, open fields and farm lands” The adjacent property to the east is void of vegetation and trees. It is a working farm with grazing cattle. The owner works the land that lies adjacent to and north of the proposed firing ranges. There is a concern for human safety from stray bullets. There is also a concern for the potential fire hazard that the rubber granule containment device presents. Also see 5.15 Bullet containment design

4.2 Community Facilities:

State owned wildlife area is at least 20 miles away
State Park is 7 miles away

4.4 Agriculture

The land is productive for farming. Corn has been grown and currently the field shows its productivity with remaining harvested corn stalks.

4.6 Traffic Pattern

“.....to the facility will be through the prison property. “ The property conveyed to VSP is accessible from roads within the DOC land but the planned entrance will be through a small DOC road off Old River Trail. The road off of Old River Trail is approximately 10’ wide and 1600’ long.
Old River Trail cannot handle the increased traffic flow especially as the facility increases. There is a dangerous curve in the road by Shiloh church. Visibility is cut short not only by the road pattern but also by corn planted in the summer months. Old River Trail is a rural road already used to its maximum.

4.7 Air Quality

There is the possibility of eighty one shooters participating in the firing ranges. As stated earlier the requirements for a “little used range versus a range in full capacity are very different. Who will monitor the use and keep it within EPA standards? We are concerned about our children!

4.8 Geology and Soils

“The soil is not “ponded” and is not flooded.” This statement is in question. After heavy rains there is “ponding” in the field. This “ponding” allows for contamination of ground water, runoff water, and is a threat to the wildlife that could drink the water.

4.10 & 4.11 No ponds are located on the property but there is a wet weather creek that flows into pond and then into the river.

5.1 Animal Habitat

Deer, turkey, squirrel and rabbit have long been hunted on the lands and surrounding lands. Lead exposure to a food source is concerning for those eating wild game. We as a family and many of our neighbors enjoy both venison and turkey.

5.14

Sound Management Plan

“The site is located in an area up to 50 (1’ wide) natural vegetation immediately downrange of the firing range. A mature growth of hardwoods (30’ in height) is located to the north (55’ thick), west (over 2 miles thick) and east (1 mile thick) of the proposed ranges. The vegetation continues around to the end (500’ thick) of the field where the ranges are proposed.”

I totally disagree with the distance stated. I have no way to exactly measure for this is restricted land. I will say our property lies to the south and we can see the field in the winter.

The plans call for 20’ berm backstop and the three other sides are 15’ berms. The berms will vary in height according to the contour of the land. Part of the entrances to the ranges have no berms to mitigate the noise.

Currently there are no plans for a noise study. 85 decibels or greater causes permanent hearing damage. Children are more susceptible to damage because their inner ears have not fully developed. Extended time /exposure to this noise increases the damage.

5.15

Lead Management Plan

Which ever system is used for BMP for the bullet containment there is still a possible scenario with missed shots for lead in the soil, air and water. There is also room for human error in proper management of the site especially as the facility increases in usage and as time continues. See study *Best Management Practices for Lead Outdoor Shooting Ranges* written by EPA and OSHA.

We are concerned about our children’s health. Lead is toxic in young children causing developmental delays, behavioral and learning problems.....

Bullet Containment design

“The document states that granular ballistic rubber backstop” will be used. The EPA-902-B-01-001 states that they are a “potential fire hazard and that scattered lead fragments mixed with rubber can migrate-lead contaminated granules are hazardous and require special handling” Hence there is great concern for the residents.

Wellman, Julia (DEQ)

From: Snyder, James F. [jsnyder@icslights.com]
Sent: Friday, May 28, 2010 10:11 AM
To: Wellman, Julia (DEQ)
Cc: kks1997@msn.com; MSmith620@aol.com
Subject: Powhatan Firing range
Attachments: EIR.doc

Ms. Wellman

Attached is a list of questions that have been put together in review of the EIR document for the proposed firing range in Powhatan.

I had this document reviewed by professional engineers and the question that I had posed to them, is what is "missing" or only referenced as a surface comment or action.

The questions attached are to be addressed per the numerical subsections, which is how I have them listed.

There are numerous contradictions that should truly be answered. Description of the current use of the land being one of them. The document implies that the 35 acres of subject are "idle" or zoned for correctional facility use. Other comments state that the land is being farmed and has been for numerous years. There are huge concerns on our side as to how the septic system is to be constructed and to what size. References are made that "best practice" policies are to be used, but there is no specific mention as to what that is and the referenced data included is pulled from reports that are up to 20 years in age.

While we understand that there is an underlying imply about "sovereign exclusion" due to state/federal owned properties, the concerns are how are we as residents/property owners, protected from the impact of the firing range and the maintenance from chemical use to neutralize lead and other contaminations. Without these reports being done, there is no guarantee that we will be protected.

Another of our concerns & wonderment, is where is the documentation for the current firing range operators at? Have they been approached to increase the size and capacity of the current facility? The attached document implies they have and even states it is a more economical solution, but no where do we have documentation supporting or acknowledging this subject. If the reasoning for a new firing range is the current one is worn out, is that because of overuse and lead contamination and that the current maintenance model is insufficient? We do not know either. But these are all questions that should be tabled and discussed openly for everyone's understanding and protection.

If you have any specific questions or comments that I can help address, please do not hesitate to call.

My cell is 804-400-4020

Thank you in advance for your assistance

James F. Snyder

ICS

6/1/2010

4904 W. Clay Street

Richmond, Va. 23230

****Please note my new e-mail address jsnyder@icslights.com****

o) 804-358-2300

f) 804-358-2573

Questions Concerning the Environmental Impact Report

-Ricochet Plan –

Where is this plan?

Has to be above berm and middle to top of tree height.

-Need sound test at full capacity, which equates all 80 firing lanes at full capacity. Test should be at adjacent property line(s)

-Site assessments from the existing firing range defining why it is not or cannot be used. This is to include soil erosion, lead contamination.

2.2.4 Traffic Study

- Traffic study needs to include 200 vehicle count plus an overage for events/guests.

2.2.5 – What chemicals are stored for pH balance?

2.2.6 – Solid & Hazardous Waste

- Septic plan must be submitted
- Septic sized to 200 people and overage for guests
- Lead recovery “Best Practice” – what is it?
- On site visual inspections do not take into account lead contamination or substructure due to continued use.
- What plans or provisions are being made/considered
- Where is soil test for site (to test that soil can support proposed firing range)?

3.1, 3.2, & 3.4 – These sections comment that the existing ranges would be financially cheaper to up fit, yet are “not recommended

- Where is that proposal for comparison against construction of a new firing range?
- Who are the entities that own/operate these ranges and their response to requests for upgrade or expansion?
- What is the total projected cost required for the new firing range and where are those monies coming from?

4.4 – Agriculture

- Documents state no report has been done for the checklist:
 1. Why?
 2. This document is dated 1/27/10. What has been done since then and why isn't it finished?

4.5 – Topography

- Site is “up gradient”; adjacent properties are “down gradient”. Where is the test report on impact review for these properties?

- Why isn't inspection a sample chemical test?
- The use of chemical "pH" is required to help neutralize the effects of lead contamination. pH has a direct negative impact on vegetation. What is the plan to offset/control this side effect to the existing or planned vegetation as this is part of the EIR plan to use vegetation as means of filtering?
- What is impact to adjacent properties in having to over use the pH as a means of control?

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JUN 15 2010

DEQ-Office of Environmental
Impact Review

June 13, 2010

Ellie Irons
Department of Environmental Quality
Office of Environment Impact Review
P.O. Box 1105
Richmond, VA 23218

Re: Proposed Shooting Range

Dear Ms. Irons:

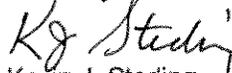
I am writing you today in regards to the proposed joint Virginia State Police, Game and Inland Fisheries, Department of Corrections, and FBI shooting range project in Powhatan County on Old River Trail.

This proposed shooting range would have a significant negative impact on the surrounding and families and community where it is to be built. The Environmental Impact Study that was completed to evaluate the appropriateness of this project has serious flaws and omissions. It is obvious that the firm conducting the evaluation started with the outcome in mind and built a case to support it omitting facts that would have impacted the recommendation of the report had they been included. I point to one significant fact. Two large subdivision developments have been opened that when complete will have 176 home sites. Photos included in the report were from 2007, prior to development, although the report was issued in 2010.

The property values in the location of this shooting range will drop dramatically due to the noise impact from the facility, yet no noise impact study is being conducted.

I respectfully request that you review the details of this project. If you do, I think you will come to the same conclusion as the residents of Powhatan – that this project is being built in the WRONG location and that the negative impact to citizens, community, and property value do not justify the project.

Sincerely,



Kevin J. Steding
3602 Archers Hill
Powhatan, VA 23139
804-240-0828

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JUN 17 2010

DEQ-Office of Environmental
Impact Review

3566 Old River Trail
Powhatan, VA 23139
June 14, 2010

Ellie Irons
Department of Environmental Quality
Office of Environmental Impact Review
P. O. Box 1105
Richmond, VA 23218

Dear Ms. Irons:

As a life-long, 60 year, fourth generation resident of Old River Trail, I urge you to make a very careful consideration of the proposed gun range directly beside my boyhood home and less than 2000 feet from my current home. Much of the area surrounding the proposed site is my family's farm. True, there is plenty of Department of Corrections farm land there too—farm land with a corn crop growing right in the proposed entrance—but this is a rural, residential and farm area, not part of the operating prison complex.

This morning, as my wife and I took our walk for exercise between our home and Huguenot Trail, we heard the noise of a loud vehicle coming from behind us. When we both turned around and looked but saw nothing, we realized what we were hearing was a train running along the tracks on the Goochland side of the James River, even more distant than the proposed site of the shooting range. Imagine what that noise will be like with eight hours of shooting. Noise studies need to be made for this site and the impact on the residents needs to be considered. No one has the right to deafen a whole neighborhood.

Will it even be safe for us to walk on this narrow, unmarked road with the increased traffic? Up to 38 vehicles arriving for shooting at 8:30 am will certainly cause an intense concentration of traffic that will threaten not only our physical safety but also our rural way of life.

I listened carefully to the State Police presentation of the proposed project on June 8 in Powhatan County. What I did not hear was any reason given why any range needed to be built. A question from a neighbor brought to light the fact that the project was proposed because there was \$1.2 million dollars from sale of seized property available that was the impetus. It seems to me that having funds for a project is in no way a viable reason to ruin the quality of a tranquil life for a whole neighborhood. Move this proposed gun range away from my residential area.

Thank you,



Edward R. Tilman, Jr.

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JUN 21 2010

DEQ-Office of Environmental
Impact Review

June 13, 2010

Ellie Irons
Department of Environmental Quality
Office of Environment Impact Review
P.O. Box 1105
Richmond, VA 23218

Re: Proposed Shooting Range

Dear Ms. Irons:

I am writing you today in regards to the proposed joint Virginia State Police, Game and Inland Fisheries, Department of Corrections, and FBI shooting range project in Powhatan County on Old River Trail.

I've read the Environmental Impact Study and there is no doubt in my mind that the study is flawed and the company conducting the study was biased and did not do a thorough job of evaluating the area. For example, the study clearly indicates that the adjacent land to the proposed site is farmland. The study further states that there are wooded areas to the west and north of the proposed site. There is NEVER any mention of the surrounding homes and subdivisions located in those "wooded" areas. In fact, the study makes it appear as if no families or children live in the surrounding area when in fact there are currently 308 homes within 2 miles of the site. Within the next few years there will be over 500 homes in the area. The study never takes into account the noise impact on these families not to mention the lost property value and ultimately lost revenue for the county.

Furthermore, this area of Powhatan County is of significant historic value. There is no mention of the impact the site will have on the tourists, families, and bicycle enthusiasts who enjoy our county.

There are many other sites where this shooting range could be located, yet there has been no other studies conducted. There are other counties who welcome the shooting range, yet no mention of these sites has been discussed. Powhatan residents are gracious people who willingly accept the fact that our county houses more prisoners than anywhere else in Virginia. When will it be someone else's turn to shoulder the burden?

I implore you to review the Environmental Impact Study more carefully and consider moving the range to an area that will have far less impact on families and lives.

Best Regards,



Karen M. Steding
3602 Archers Hill
Powhatan, VA 23139
804-248-8882

Wellman, Julia (DEQ)

From: MSmith620@aol.com
Sent: Monday, July 12, 2010 5:25 PM
To: Wellman, Julia (DEQ)
Subject: VSP Firing Range on Old River Trail

Julia,

I am responding to the letter from VSP re: the firing range on Old River Trail.

The VSP say they have responded to our concerns and are requesting to move ahead with the project where in truth they have not touched our concerns as citizens living next door and within a 3 mile radius of the proposed 81 lanes. Our lives are being disrupted and with only a slight regard to our issues.

Let me truly address the issue of 81 lanes not just the primary range that is being used for the projected traffic patterns, noise levels, and the amount of use for the multiple ranges and fire house.

We both know it is not the VSP but the FBI who are the controlling leaders. Who knows about the DGIF.

We have deep fear, yes, fear not just concerns because we are living very close to the projected site.

We were told by the VSP they did not have to do any noise or traffic studies when we requested the studies. I am confused for David Paylor stated in an email to a Goochland resident "state agencies are not 'exempted' as you wrote, from studies of traffic, noise and other impacts of a new facility."

NOISE: First why are the residents of Goochland County in constant complaint about the current firing range noise? This is only one range. Why can I hear this at my house across the river and perhaps four miles away?

The sound study conducted in the Goochland location is invalid for the following: the closest residence was stated to be 2400' where in actuality my home is but 1400' and there are some closer. This information is from Powhatan County's GIS. If there is a disagreement to the distance why has not the VSP discussed with Powhatan County's Planning Department the disparity? Is it our problem to defend the actual distance or is it the VSP responsibility?

The ambient noise level was stated as being 65 db. A conversation you and I would have is a sound level of 65 db. I would say the ambient level on Old River Trail is not 65 db. I have lived there over 25 years and have spent much of my time out of doors and unless you count the birds or an occasional large truck from the DOC there is no way the 65 db is reached.

I have information regarding decibel noise in a letter from Col. Flaherty stating one of the rifles to be used on the range is a .223 with a db of 120.6 at firing line. The other rifle is the .308 and he did not give the db for this rifle. The sound study in the letter from Mr. Rice stated the .308 rifle has a db of 118.6 at weapon. I consider this study flawed for a 30 caliber is more db than a 22 caliber.

Again the issue becomes, is it my responsibility to run a sound study to refute the VSP statement?

Permeant hearing loss happens at 85 db, especially in children and yes that is my

concern for I have two young grandchildren living next door to me. As a responsible adult it is my right and personal duty to protect my family especially when the powerful FBI is not willing to look at alternatives because of "their certain restrictions on how far they can travel." God help us if we are subject to such self-centered agencies.

The only answer to noise is to have a sound study done on the exact location and readings taken by our homes. What option is there for us if you accept the inaccurate study and the decibels are beyond acceptance? Who protects the "ants" against the "elephants"? I am in total hope it is the responsibility of the DEQ.

TRAFFIC: It is a concern with school buses running the same time as the incoming firing range traffic and they with ammunition in the vehicles. Has anyone from the DEQ been out to the site to see the location and the close proximity to homes and the condition of the road? I can speak all day but until you see ... well. Where is the traffic study? It is stated 35 vehicles traveling to the range site for the beginning, what happens when the project is complete with 3 pistol and rifle ranges? Do not tell me there will only be 35 vehicles.

HISTORIC Properties: I live in one of the historic properties and while it is not listed on the state historic register the DHR is aware of this property for it is listed as one of many on Old River Trail. Let me take this opportunity to tell you why there are so many historic properties on this road. Old River Trail was originally called the Michaux Ferry Road and was established in 1729. It is short road running from the James River to "River Road" better known today as RT. 711. Homes were built and land was farmed. There are 6 properties dating back well over 150 years.

Shiloh Church is one such site with a state historical marker recalling its history and historical attributes. As you know an active church does not just have services on Sunday and there is not a firm schedule for events such as Vacation Bible School, Bible Studies, fellowship, etc. I am speaking about church life that is constantly interrupted by the concern of the noise from the ever increasing firing ranges and fire house.

PUBLIC SAFETY: This is a major concern for those who enjoy the James River as well as those living and those driving on RT 6 for they could be in harms way. The rifle used for training on the range is a .308 caliber capable of traveling 15,842'. The closest neighborhood across the James River is but 9,200'. An errant shot can happen when those using the range are trainees and even with seasoned shooters. The river is used by Virginia residents and tourist for fishing, canoeing, kayaking and tube floating. Families also live along the river and many enjoy outdoor activities. What would happen if an errant shot were to hit a human? Heaven forbid but then it is too late. The backstop is but 20' and a slight elevation of the rifle puts many in harms way.

In summary why would this Old River Trail property be a consideration when there are other alternatives? The FBI is putting up the monies for this project and if it were not for them we would not be having this discussion. They would sacrifice the possibility of human injury or life and public safety just because 50 persons from the Richmond District Office want to have a training facility close to the Richmond office. For the record A.P. Hill is but 7 miles farther in distance than Powhatan. What is the real reason? Is this just political shenanigans and the people suffer? Are we indeed "ants" and they are the "elephants?"

Julia, I am fearful and I am fighting for what I believe to be citizen rights.

Maryclay Smith

Wellman, Julia (DEQ)

From: TLF1521@aol.com
Sent: Monday, July 12, 2010 5:39 PM
To: Wellman, Julia (DEQ); sops-cs
Cc: jnwatkins@johnwatkins.org; carsontucker@verizon.net; MSmith620@aol.com; bill@billjanis.com; DellWare@House.State.Va.Us
Subject: Public Safety at Powhatan Firing Range

Ms. Julia Wellman:

I am a member of the Powhatan/Goochland Citizens Committee opposed to the Virginia State Police Firing Range and as such have read the letter dated June 28, 2010 from Mr. Rice with the VSP to you requesting the final decision from your department for permission to proceed with this project. Please allow me to make a couple of comments about what he states in his letter.

(1) NoiseMeasurement

Mr. Rice states that the noise measurements were taken at the range in Goochland and the planned range in Powhatan is similar. I can tell you, Ms. Wellman, as a retired Corrections Officer who worked and fired on the range at Goochland, many times, nothing could be further from the truth. There is no comparison to the two locations. The Goochland location is ideal for a range. It fires from low elevation directly into a 75 foot tall bluff and away from the James River. The rifle range is about 100 yards long and there is virtually no chance for an errant round to escape and do harm to the public. All of the concussion and most of the sound is absorbed by the tall bluff. The Powhatan location is on the highest ground in the Deep Meadow complex. The land slopes downward and the direction of fire is toward the James River. Sound measurements could in no way be compared to what they would be if taken at the Powhatan location. This has been my position from the very first moment I learned of this dangerous plan.

(2) Errant Ammunition Rounds

Mr.

Rice states, "all gun firing will occur towards the James River ..." This idea is the most outrageous, dangerously unsafe and environmentally damaging plan any state agency or individual could possibly propose. A lead collection backstop is fine for rounds that stay in the target area, but it will not collect rounds that errantly fly over the top. They will be deposited into the river. He states there are no risk areas within 10,000 feet of the backstop. This is absolutely incorrect. The James River, our most precious and enjoyable natural resource in this area, which is a public waterway and very busy this time of year, is located just 8,000 feet downrange and exactly in the line of fire. Col. Flaherty of the VSP, responded to my request and sent me data stating that his tactical team fires weapons capable of reaching 15,842 feet. The closest home on the Goochland side of the river is 9,200 feet and My home is approximately 10,000 feet, not to mention ST. RT 6, about 12000 feet. **NO** citizen on the Goochland side of the river or any citizen enjoying the river wants to take this "very remote" chance of being hit.

I respectfully request that you not approve this most dangerous project.

Thank you,

Wellman, Julia (DEQ)

From: Walters Eric [ericradio@verizon.net]
Sent: Sunday, July 18, 2010 1:11 PM
To: Wellman, Julia (DEQ)
Subject: VSP Range

Dear Ms. Wellman,

We live on six acres in a small seven home subdivision in Goochland County. We are directly across the river from the proposed State Police 81 lane firing range. We are extremely concerned about this facility being built.

I can't understand why this site is being considered at all. There are too many residents in very close proximity to the proposed site. Why are the state police ignoring what a very large group of Powhatan and Goochland county residents are saying loud and clear that they do not want. This will destroy our quiet enjoyment of our property. We live just across the river from the proposed range, and we already hear firing from hunters in Powhatan, which we expected when we moved here. We can handle occasional shotgun blasts during hunting season but are horrified to think of having to listen to constant and very loud firing from an 81 lane range. Who in their right mind would want to live anywhere near a facility like this?

I'm sorry, but the steps that are being mentioned by the state police to dampen the noise just don't hold water. They may make sense on paper but not in real life situations. Considering that we now hear target practice already coming from Beaumont and from hunters across the river, I just can't imagine that we will not be disturbed by this facility.

We are also avid Kayakers, and we are on the river constantly paddling by the site. I just can't imagine anyone wanting to paddle and / or fish anywhere near that area of the range.

We had hoped to live here in Goochland a very long time. If this range gets approved, which is looking very likely, we would rather leave the area. I would think that trying to sell our home after the range is built would be next to impossible.

In an article from The Richmond Times Dispatch, dated 5/16/2010, State police spokeswoman Connie Geller stated:

"It's a best-case scenario," she said. "We built ranges decades ago and, as those areas have built up, we'd have to close them."

Many would not consider our area to be all that rural anymore. We have homes on less than an acre in our county (and Powhatan as well), and I would imagine denser development is coming to both counties in the future.

Why is state government not listening to the tax paying citizens of these two counties and moving it to more appropriate sites that were recommended?

Some call this nimby-ism, however, if you lived near this site would you be in favor of having it built so close to your home? Would you want your kids playing in the back yard of your home that is close to this range? What do you think your home would be worth once this range is built? Do you think you would have quiet enjoyment of your property, the real reason we all live out here in the first place.

I hope that common sense will prevail and this facility will be moved to either a nearby military base, or elsewhere where it is not in such close contact with so many homes and a beautiful natural resource like the James River.

Sincerely,

Eric & Maxine Walters

1387 River Cliff Drive

Maidens, Virginia 23102

Robert C. Williams
2551 River Road West
Maidens, VA 23102
rcwill33@aol.com
Telephone – 804-556-6500
Fax – 804-556-4040

July 20, 2010

To: Julia Wellman, David Payne, DEQ
julia.wellman@deq.virginia.gov, david.paylor@deq.virginia.gov

Subject: **Proposed Firing Range in Powhatan**
(Goochland County is in the line of gun fire and noise as well)

You have received many letters regarding the above subject. I would like to add several considerations that possibly have not been communicated and correct some of the inaccurate data you have been given.

Directly across the James River on hill tops well above the river bank are about 20 homes that have a market value of around \$55 million. These homes are within 9,000 to 10,000 feet of the firing line. Projectiles from high powered rifles shooting toward the river at 300 yard targets can carry over 16,000 ft. (3 miles) with a slight elevation error or a dropped gun or a trigger pulled in error or with distraction could hit these houses. Many people using the James River for boating and fishing are less than 8,000 ft. away and are also at risk. This is an unnecessary and avoidable danger. Around large firing ranges (Fort Pickett, AP Hill) the US Government continues to buy peripheral real estate as available and has worked out **noise easements** that bring property owner signers 35 to 45% of market value. The Fort Pickett site covers **46,000 acres** and AP Hill, **55,000 acres**. The firing range proposed in Powhatan jams an 81 gun firing line with a hotel, parking lot, roads, storage and berms into **35 acres** owned by the state. Construction will take (1/2) of this area. There are at least (7) alternatives.

There has been no discussion of practice with hand grenades, shock and awe or stun grenades, rifle propelled grenades, rockets, machine guns, shot guns or 50 caliber super high powered very long range rifles. There has been no indication of expansion possibilities including skeet, trap and sporting clays.

Property values directly across the river will be degraded substantially and the more expensive homes could be unsaleable to more demanding buyers. Liability for the State of Virginia and the Federal government could range from \$ 25 million (50% loss) to \$ 50 million (100% loss). If you add surrounding properties in Goochland and Powhatan the number could increase by \$ 100 million. This is too much money for the Federal government and taxpayers to risk and is a liability the state of Virginia needs to avoid.

More importantly this shooting complex would be in the middle of many people, their homes, churches, schools, historic land marks and noise sensitive animals on bordering farms. Their peaceful, unbothered enjoyment of some of the most beautiful, scenic and valuable property in rural Virginia would be lost forever. This just cannot be allowed to happen. With all due respect this decision goes beyond the DEQ. Boards of Supervisors for Powhatan and Goochland have both expressed unanimous, emphatic disapproval of the proposed firing range. These Boards (and possibly others) need to be heard by the Governor of Virginia.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bob Williams', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Robert C. Williams

P.S. - I would be glad to host such a meeting at our home (Lioncrest), located two (2) miles west of the western property line of the (old) State Farm on Rt. 6 or River Road West. Here you can see the issues first hand.

Wellman, Julia (DEQ)

From: TLF1521@aol.com
Sent: Monday, July 26, 2010 4:08 PM
To: jnwatkins@johnwatkins.org
Cc: Wellman, Julia (DEQ); sops-cs; Hicks-Thomas, Lisa (GOV); bbuniva@eckertseamans.com
Subject: Virginia State Police Firing Range

Mr. Watkins,

I am sending this reminder to you with hope that you can work with the Virginia State Police to find a suitable location for their firing range. I wrote you a letter back on May 29th ,and even sent you a print showing the range and my house. Nothing has changed. If they fire from this location in the direction they have on the plan, sooner or later they will hit someone over here. Please try to work this out so that they get their range and we don't get hit. I've heard the reports of their not wanting to be inconvenienced by having to drive too far, but *we feel our safety is more important than there inconvenience*

Thank You,
Thomas L. Ford
1521 Hilltop Circle
Maidens, Va. 23102
Goochland County

7/26/2010

Wellman, Julia (DEQ)

From: Amy Galloway [agalloway.mre@comcast.net]
Sent: Wednesday, August 18, 2010 12:49 PM
To: Wellman, Julia (DEQ)
Cc: bill@billjanis.com; jnwatkins@johnwatkins.org
Subject: Proposed Rifle Range
Attachments: Aerial Photo of 2285 River Road West.pdf

William E. Goode, Sr.
2285 River Road West
Maidens, VA 23102
Home (804) 556-3210
Work (804) 741-6061

August 18, 2010

To Whom It May Concern:

I live at 2285 River Road West Maidens, VA 23102. My home is approximately 9,000 feet down range from the proposed State Police Rifle Range and well in harm's way from the range of the two rifles the State Police use.

The attached aerial photo clearly demonstrates that danger where an errant round discharged at only a twenty degree angle could easily hit my home and yard.

If my wife or I hear shots, we will have to tell our five grand children who visit us frequently and swim in our pool to take cover.

I fully understand the risk of an errant round hitting us is unlikely. However, I do not and will not take the responsibility for my grand children and guests to be outside or even near a window at my home when we hear shots.

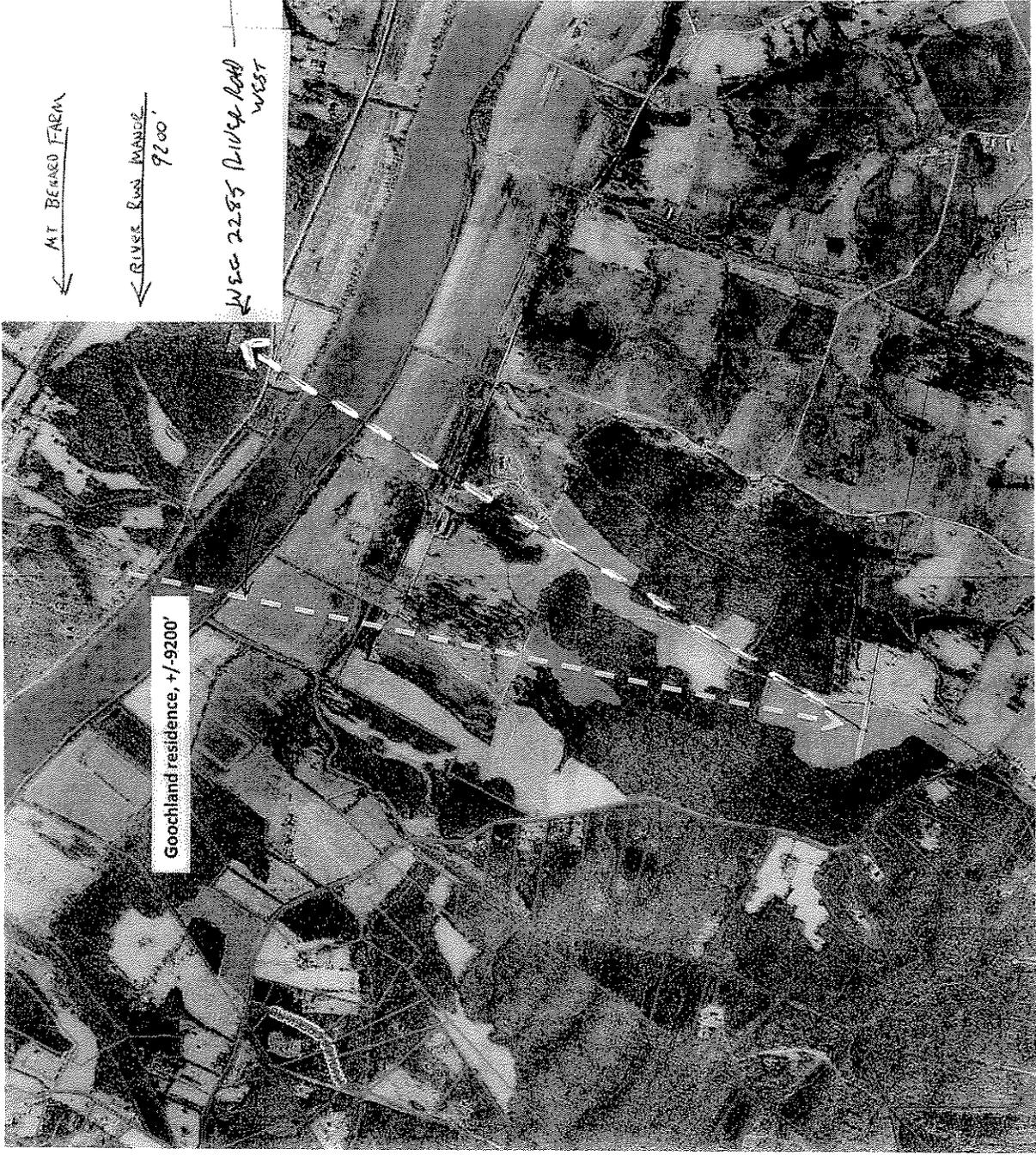
I am appalled at the audacity of the State Police and the Commonwealth of Virginia for proposing such an ill conceived project with the disadvantages of safety and noise completely being disregarded.

There are many alternatives available at no additional tax money being spent. Please find another site for the proposed rifle range.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter,



William E. Goode, Sr.



← MT BEARD FARM

← RIVER RUN MAJOR 9200'

← W. 2285 RIVER RD WEST

Goochland residence, +/- 9200'

LESS THAN 9200' (APPROX)

ANGLE APPROXIMATELY 20°

1ST COURSE APPROX. 250' ABOVE SEA-LEVEL

RANGE @ APPROX 290'

ALSO SEE 11/11/11