

Range...continued from Page 1A



The proposed shooting range located off SR 180 in Union County.

comments to us, make them specific, put some thought into them. And understand that, when you do, they're part of the public record."

In order to meet the deadline and "establish standing for objection eligibility," scoping comments must be received by Nov. 13, 2018.

Comments can be submitted at the project page listed above; mailed to Andrew L. Baker, District Ranger, ATTN: Nelson Gonzalez-Sullow and/or Jerome Bennett, Chattahoochee-

Oconee National Forests, 1755 Cleveland Highway, Gainesville, GA 30501; or by fax at 770-297-3011.

As previously stated, following the Public Scoping Period, the Forest Service will conduct an Environmental Analysis at the proposed target range site, which, when coupled with a series of future public comment periods, will likely result in a final decision being reached by late Summer 2019.

Starting mid-November, the Forest Service will begin a four to six-month process

with the actual Environmental Analysis, or EA.

The EA will include examination by specialists on potential impacts to: soil, water and air quality; cultural and historical resources; local flora and fauna, with an eye toward threatened, endangered or sensitive species and special habitats; nearby residents; traffic in the area; other people using Forest Service land recreationally; and overall safety.

When that part of the project is complete, a draft analysis will be put before the public for another 30-day comment period, before a finalized version of the analysis is subjected to an additional 30 days of public comment followed by a 45-day Objection Period.

"So, we have this scoping period we're in now that helps us fine-tune the concept," said Baker. "Are there things we're not thinking about right now, that we're not considering in our environmental analysis? That's what the scoping period is for."

"Then, once the EA is done, you'll have another opportunity to comment. And once we finalize the EA and we respond to all the public comments, there's still one last Objection Period - this is an administrative appeal, if you will, and it basically allows you the option to object to this project."

"If you've looked through the Environmental Analysis and you still don't agree with what we've done, you have the opportunity to object, and then my boss will sit down with objectors and see if we can come to a satisfactory conclusion. If we can't or if we do, we will publish that final decision."

Following Baker's presentation, he and Commissioner Paris took turns answering numerous questions from the audience, many of which revolved around specifics that will be determined when the project is further along.

Concerning a potential skeet shooting range for shotguns, Paris said there simply wasn't adequate room at the proposed site off SR 180.

"The county will be continuing to look for a spot

on that," said Paris. "We've got some things in mind, but we don't have anything concrete. We do have a place for our 4-H kids to shoot skeet. Other than them, the biggest request is for a rifle and pistol range."

According to the official Project Proposal Description, Union County Government would be the primary permit holder for the range, and would assume "the responsibility of funding, maintenance and operation," though the Union County Gun Club would be in charge of the "day to day operation of the target range."

Joyce White, who is the Georgia State Director for the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development, also attended the Oct. 24 meeting.

Folks interested in learning more about the project can attend the Gun Club Annual Meeting on Thursday, Nov. 1, at 6 p.m. inside the Blairsville Civic Center.

The Gun Club now boasts at least 414 members and can be found online at UnionCountyGunClub.org or .com.



More than 200 people attended the Target Range meeting at the Union County School Fine Arts Center.

Photo by Shawn Jarrard

Marines celebrate 243rd birthday



The Marines of North Georgia and Western North Carolina are celebrating the 243rd Birthday of the United States Marine Corps on 10 November 2018 with a Birthday Ball at the North Georgia Technical College in Blairsville, GA.

If you are not able to at-

tend the event, there will be a USMC Birthday Party at Daniel's Steak House in Hiwassee GA on 10 November 2018.

The Meet & Greet will start at 1730 hours followed by a buffet meal and a program to celebrate the birthdate of the United States Marine Corps.

The cost per person is \$15. Checks for the party should be sent to: Unicoi Detachment 783, MCL, P.O. Box 701, Hiwassee, GA 30546.

Any questions or for more information, please call Walt Scott at 706-897-9610.

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