

Scoping Notice for Fishtrap Target Shooting Safety Rule

Background:

BLM is considering supplemental rules for the Fishtrap Lake Recreation Area to improve visitor safety, specifically in regard to target shooting. In recent years, an increasing number of residents have expressed concerns about target shooting in, or near areas where other activities were occurring at the Fishtrap Lake Recreation Area. Livestock grazing lessees have also conveyed concerns about target shooting around cattle. The Fishtrap Lake Area is about 30 miles southwest of Spokane, WA, near the town of Sprague in Spokane and Lincoln Counties (see attached maps). The area includes approximately 9,000 acres of federal public land managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and is a popular area for hiking, fishing, boating, hunting, target shooting, and a number of other outdoor recreational activities.

BLM has responded to numerous complaints and incidents, and has enforced federal regulations. However, the concerns and conflicts among users have continued to increase. Current federal regulations already prohibit:

- Shooting on or across roads and trails
- Shooting across a body of water (except for waterfowl hunting)
- Shooting within or toward areas where people are camped, picnicking, gathered, etc.
- Shooting during hours of darkness (with limited exceptions)

The problems are likely a direct result of the increased use of the area. When investigating calls, BLM has found that some concerned citizens were simply unaware that target shooting was allowed in the area. There have also been a number of incidents involving target shooters who were unknowingly endangering other visitors and livestock.

There have been few incidents related to hunting, which is also popular in this area. The majority of incidents and concerns involve only target shooting.

Purpose and Need:

In the Fishtrap Lake Recreation Area, there are real and perceived safety concerns in areas where target shooting and other activities occur. There are several reasons for this:

- Some visitors may not be aware of target shooting regulations or locations where target shooting and/or other activities are taking place.
- Increased use of the Fishtrap Area for target shooting and other recreational activities has increased the potential for conflicting uses and accidents.
- In an area like Fishtrap Lake that receives high use, existing regulations are not adequate or may be too ambiguous to ensure the safety of all visitors.

Therefore, the purpose of the proposed action and alternatives is to:

- Enhance public safety
- Reduce user conflicts
- Increase public awareness regarding target shooting and other uses
- Clarify target shooting rules to facilitate compliance and enforcement
- Provide opportunities for multiple uses of public lands
- Address the concerns of stakeholders

Issues:

BLM identified the following related issues for consideration in our analysis:

- *Precedence*: Rules developed for this area may set precedence for other public lands managed by the BLM Spokane District Office. BLM manages over 400,000 acres of public land in Eastern Washington, most of which is popular for outdoor recreation, as well as other multiple uses. The means by which concerns at Fishtrap are resolved may later be applied to other areas with similar conflicts. The rule or decision should be similar to rules already established for other federal lands in the region.
- *Hunting*: Concerns and conflicts at Fishtrap have been primarily associated with target shooting, not hunting. Any rules or decisions regarding target shooting should not inadvertently or unnecessarily restrict hunting.
- *Right to Bear Arms*: The right to bear arms is protected by the U.S. Constitution. BLM decisions must not interfere with the right to possess fire arms.
- *Future Management*: BLM should consider long-range management of federal lands in this area. Population and urban growth in the greater Spokane area will likely continue, as will the trend of increasing recreational use of public lands in the vicinity
- *Hazardous Materials*: Concentrated target shooting at specific sites could deposit enough lead in the soil to become hazardous.
- *Available Resources*: The BLM Spokane District has very limited funding and personnel available for managing public lands and enforcing existing rules and regulations.

Alternatives:

Common to All Alternatives:

Restrictions only apply to target shooting and discharge of fire arms. They do not change existing regulations regarding possession of fire arms.

Alternative A (Minimal Buffer): BLM would develop a supplemental rule for the Fishtrap Lake Recreation Area which would create a 100-foot buffer zone in and around all roads, designated trails, trailheads, parking lots, kiosks/bulletin boards, corrals, etc. where firearms discharge would not be permitted (see attached Alternative A Map). BLM would install signs and add information to kiosks to inform visitors of the new rule.

Alternative B (No Target Shooting Area): BLM would develop a supplemental rule which would prohibit target shooting east of the Old Sprague Highway, north of the trail to Farmers Landing (see attached Alternative B Map). The no target shooting area would extend 100 ft south of the trail to Farmers Landing and include a 100 ft buffer along the south end of Fishtrap Lake. Federal lands east of Fishtrap Lake are excluded. BLM would install signs and add information to kiosks to inform visitors of the new rule. Hunting would still be allowed on all federal lands in the vicinity, in accordance with State hunting regulations.

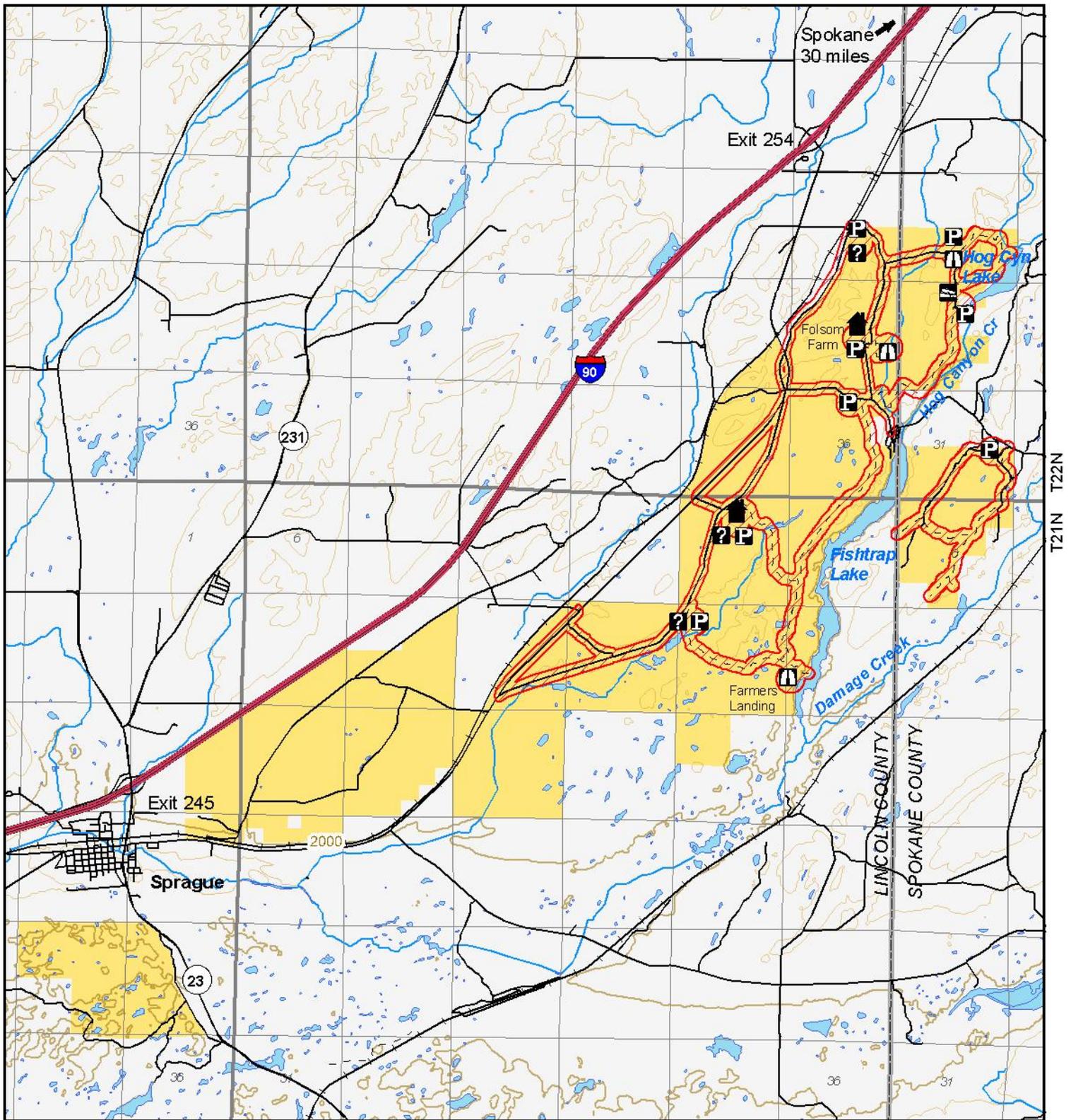
Alternative C (No Action): BLM would make no supplemental rule regarding shooting at Fishtrap Lake Recreation Area. Under this alternative, BLM could increase public awareness through posting of signs and adding information about target shooting to kiosks.

Attachments:

Map of Alternative A

Map of Alternative B

Fishtrap Lake - Target Shooting Restriction Alternative A

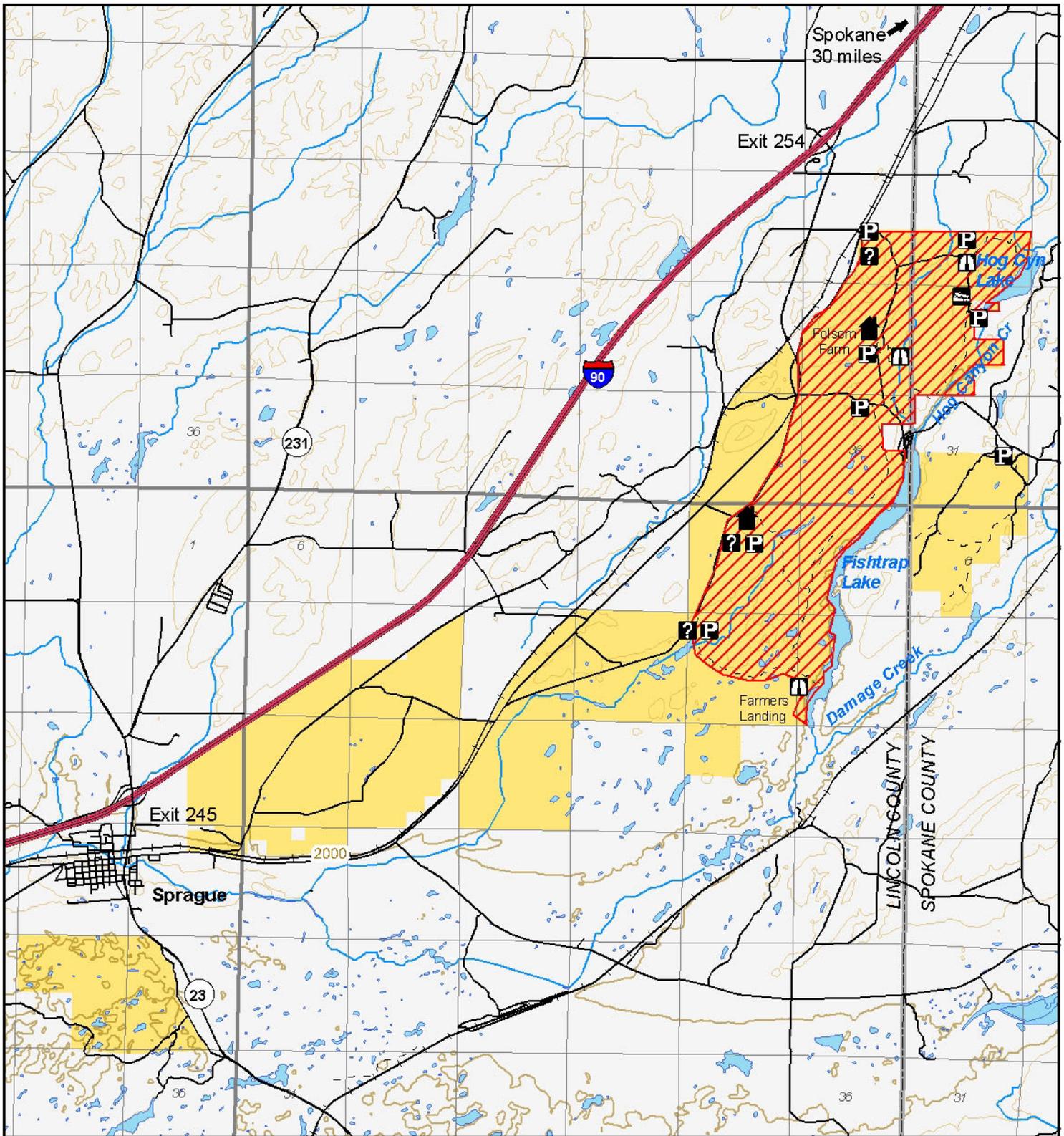


- BLM Administered Land
- Private Land
- ? Kiosk/Information
- P Parking Area
- W Wildlife Viewing
- Building
- / No Target Shooting Area
- Boat Launch



No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual or aggregate use, with other data. Original data were compiled from various sources and may be updated without notification.

Fishtrap Lake - Target Shooting Restriction Alternative B



- BLM Administered Land
- Private Land
- ? Kiosk/Information
- P Parking Area
- A Wildlife Viewing
- Building
- / No Target Shooting Area
- B Boat Launch



No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual or aggregate use, with other data. Original data were compiled from various sources and may be updated without notification.