

Creating Opportunities for Recreational Shooters: Range Support from Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act Funding



In the Northeast, state fish and wildlife agencies use Wildlife Restoration funds and state hunting license revenues to provide shooting range opportunities to the public in multiple ways. Funds are used to buy lands to create Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs). These lands offer over 3.25 million acres for wildlife habitat and public hunting opportunities but in many locations they also provide public shooting ranges. Delaware, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Vermont, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Maine and Virginia all have ranges of varying capacity on their state lands. These state fish and wildlife agencies offer over 110 shooting ranges on 75 Wildlife Management Areas or State Game Lands. These ranges vary in type (rifle, pistol, shot gun, archery) and size. In some locations, sportsmens clubs work in partnership with the state agency to manage these ranges.

Wildlife Restoration funds are also used by state fish and wildlife agencies to support range enhancement and create public shooting opportunities on private, non-profit sportsmens clubs. In exchange for receiving grant funds for specific improvements, these clubs must open their facilities to the public for specific hours and are required to maintain that public access over a period of years. In

addition, the club must be available for state hunter education courses. States in the Northeast that offer these small grants for range improvement include New York, Massachusetts, Vermont, and Maine. Some state fish and wildlife agencies have also co-sponsored training workshops for sportsmens clubs in their state, providing the latest technical information for improving lead management and safety at ranges.

States can identify specific geographic areas with a shortage of public access, and prioritize work in that area. Grants in the Northeast have funded:

- improvements for disabled access, such as pads, paths, and shooting stations
- renovation of ranges
- modernizing electrical, water and sewage systems
- noise abatement structures
- lead recovery and recycling projects
- training and storage facilities
- construction of backstops and berms
- sky baffles and noise baffles
- security or safety fencing and gates
- air filtration systems for indoor ranges
- permanent target holder systems
- trap houses and throwing equipment
- storm drainage systems.

Whether on state property or at private facilities, these locations provide public access for recreational shooters, as well as needed venues for live fire exercises for hunter education classes.



Pennsylvania Game Commission operates over 38 shooting ranges on State Game Lands that receive tens of thousands of visitors each year.



Range grants to private clubs allow facilities improvements in exchange for allowing public access to ranges.



Shooting range enhancements in Vermont ensure safe and environmentally appropriate ranges are available to the public.

Wildlife Restoration Funding is also used to provide hunter education classes to the general public free of charge. These classes focus on firearm safety along with hunting ethics and conservation management. Northeast states train on average over 100,000 basic hunter education students annually. States are also teaching advanced classes, honing shooting skills and improving understanding of wildlife behavior to increase success in hunters.