

The Bullet – Mail Version of the MRGC Monthly Newsletter

Marion Road Gun Club Range Development Plan Funding (Voting on a bylaw change to increase annual dues in June 2018)

Our monthly business meetings are always held on the third Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the American Legion Post #3 on Thomaston Road in Macon.

When the members of the club voted unanimously to buy the property on Marion Road in 2013, it was to secure the future of the gun club. Having the club own the property instead of renting made it feasible to plan and make improvements to the ranges without fear of losing our investments. To further that effort, many members volunteered to help in the planning of future development of and in the cleanup of the property we now owned.

The long-range planning committee has done extraordinary work over the past several years in preparing a well thought out plan for measured, responsible range improvement and growth of our facilities. The plan they've developed will increase the number of ranges that we enjoy by 100% from four to eight ranges, will reduce the grades of the ranges to 2% or less to slow down rainwater runoff curtailing erosion and will provide for greatly increased safety by improving the berms in height and depth and slope. Ricochets have been an issue that we've begun to address by shortening (temporarily) the general purpose range. After the grading and berm improvements there should be no further issues with ricochets from the property.

In the last week of April, a special meeting was called at the range to review the development plan and cost estimates. Members present at the meeting discussed the order in which the plan should be executed and the amount of money needed to complete the seven projects. The members also debated the potential methods of financing and the period of time that it would take to complete based upon current membership levels and dues. Estimates from the engineers put the cost at approximately \$350,000. At present dues rates and membership turnover, it would take about 16 years to perform all the planned work. A motion was made to change the language in the bylaws to increase dues for all members (except children) to \$200 per annum. This would allow the completion of the range improvements in a much more timely 5-6 year time span, membership levels remaining somewhat constant. The motion was discussed and a vote approved the measure unanimously by the 18 members present.

The agreed upon language reads: "For the purpose of accelerating the completion of the range development plan, as presented by the LRPC, the annual dues for adult and senior members of the club will be increased from \$80 and \$50 respectively to \$200."

We will hold a vote of the members present in the monthly business meeting next Tuesday to change the bylaws of the club to approve or reject this new dues schedule.

During the regular May business meeting held at the American Legion Post #3 in Macon, we reviewed again the development plan and associated costs to complete it. We also discussed changing the club's bylaws to increase dues in order to pay the estimated \$350,000 cost of completing the 7 projects in the range improvement plan. A vote was held to approve the language change in the bylaws to be published in this newsletter in order to hold a vote at the June business meeting. The vote was 31 yeas, 0 nays and one abstention.

Activities to Secure and Prepare for Expansion and Development

Below is a brief recap of some of the activities performed by volunteers of the club or paid contractors to put us in our present state of preparedness to move forward with the improvement plans:

2013

The club voted to buy the land on which we've operated for over 20 years (former Macon Rifle & Pistol Club). We agreed to pay \$100,000 plus costs for 98+ acres to the Warchak Trust. \$50,000 was paid in cash and Mrs. Warchalk agreed to take back financing on the remaining \$50,000.

A survey of the property was contracted for and conducted by a local surveyor, and new markers placed. These markers were flagged and larger, more visible T-posts were painted and set in place at the pins.

2014

A motion was made at a regular business meeting to levy a \$100 assessment on each adult or senior member of the club so that we might satisfy the note held by Mrs. Warchak. The motion passed unanimously and the assessment was payable with 2015 dues.

Mrs. Warchak agreed to accept payment in full for the outstanding balance owed on the land. The club owns the land free of any encumbrance.

A Long-Range Planning Committee was seated with officers of the club and select volunteers, Richard Gambill as chairman.

Cleanup of the lower property was completed. 26 tons of trash were hauled off by a contractor after being collected by volunteers. And old storage building was demolished along with a large double wide trailer that had fallen into serious disrepair.

2015

A controlled burn was completed on the property to clear undergrowth and to allow planners to see the lay of the property.

Members donated shooting sport materials in support of a fundraising sale on the range property and raised over \$5,000. The money was allocated for range improvements.

A detailed survey of the 13 (approx.) acres on which we operate was conducted by Ocmulgee Engineering and markers placed for reference. Detailed drawings with grid lines denoting elevations were used as the basis for planning and development.

2016

An anonymous member made a large donation of goods that were sold at the club or at auction on consignment and the club raised \$16,000 for use in development. A sale was conducted on the range where most of the materials were sold. Unsold merchandise was consigned to local shops.

At Christmas, club member Ben Stephens made a generous donation of goods to be sold for the benefit of the club. This sale has yet to be conducted as other activities have taken precedence. Estimated value of goods is \$5,500.

2017

The club authorized the sale of 15 Lifetime memberships at \$1,000 each in order to pay for the engineering and design plans for the development and improvement of the ranges. The memberships were sold and the program ceased in December of 2017.

The approximately 5 acre tract to the left side of the 200 yard rifle range was cleared of trees in preparation for the pistol pits at a cost of \$10,000.

2018

The general purpose range was shortened (temporarily) to 50 yards due to concerns expressed by a neighbor over ricochets and falling bullets. This report further strengthens the argument that the berms must be improved and the grades leveled to prevent further lead fall outside the boundaries of the property.

LRPC reviews and approves the plan for improvement as presented by Lance Woods at Ocmulgee Engineering. (Ocmulgee Engineering has planned and managed the construction of several ranges in the Southeast) Ocmulgee Engineering has been selected as the managing agent for the range improvement work to include managing bids and issuing contracts. They will manage the contractors on site.

The following is a short recap of some of the investments the club has made in securing and improving the property from 2012 to 2018 and in preparation for completing the additional range improvement plans:

1. A metes and bounds survey was executed prior to the club purchasing the property. The cost of this survey was \$2,400.
2. An appraisal was approved and performed on the property and the club extended the first two Life Memberships to the surveyors. Value at that time the appraisal was completed was \$5,000.
3. The club voted to purchase the property after negotiations set the price at \$100,000.
4. A survey was conducted that produced topographical maps for the property we use today (about 15 acres). This survey was used to supply data for the final drawing plans listed below.
5. This topo survey cost \$5,000 (Ocmulgee Engineering).
6. A controlled burn was conducted with the assistance of the Georgia Forestry Commission at a cost of \$800.
7. The club called a work day and we gathered many tons of trash on the lower property for removal. We emptied an abandoned storage building and the scale house (now disused).
8. A contractor tore down the storage building and hauled it and the accumulated trash from the lower property (25 tons approx.) for \$2,600.
9. A contractor was hired to remove the derelict double wide trailer and remove rubbish from the area surrounding the home site. Cost \$1,900.
10. A contractor was hired to remove the trees from the approximately 5 acres of land next to the 200 yard rifle range in preparation for the construction of the pistol pits. Cost \$10,000.
11. A complete design plan for the 7 projects requested was completed with cost estimates for \$15,000.
12. The club acted to reduce the possibility of ricochets landing on the adjacent property by temporarily shortening the general purpose range and erecting two carports for overhead cover and covering the ground with crush 'r run. Cost \$2,600.

To date, the club has invested over **\$145,300** in securing the property for future use, free of any encumbrance and preparing it for improvements and additional development. Many members have donated tremendous amounts of time, money and materiel to further the safety, development and expansion of this gun club. I have been honored to serve as the president of the club during the past four and a half years and grateful to have such a cadre of officers and volunteers that make Marion Road Gun Club the best club in Middle Georgia.

No dues increase is ever popular but bear in mind that we've had no significant increase in dues in more than 14 years. We've driven as much operating costs from the club as possible while retaining the downtown office and one paid position (elected Secretary/Treasurer). The monies raised by the increase, if approved, will be used solely for the improvement and development of the property on Marion Road. This is an exciting time for the club to grow and offer first rate, safe and environmentally friendly shooting ranges to the membership. I hope you'll see the value in the plans presented over the past two months and join the effort to keep our momentum going. Thank you for your continued support while we are improving the club! It will make a huge impact on future generations of members of the club.