

A Summary of the Major RCWA Board 2024 Activities

After another very busy year of RCWA range activities, the RCWA Board thought it would be appropriate to recap the major items that were addressed during 2024 that were above and beyond the normal day to day operational challenges. (as of 22 Nov. 2024)

- A. Shotgun field operations continued to be a busy area of activity.
 - a. The largest project involved refurbishing shotgun field 6. Lightning had hit the large iconic oak tree back in 2023 at the edge of the entrance road at shotgun field 6 which also apparently caused some electrical damage to the shotgun field 6 low house. Since there were some long term operational issues with the shotgun field 6 layout, it was decided to fix shotgun field 6 so it was a fully functional skeet field layout. This involved removing the old oak tree, removing the existing low house and removing an old nonfunctional trap house setting out front of the skeet houses. Dirt was then hauled in to fix the elevation difference problem between the old field 6 skeet houses. A new low house was then constructed and the electrical issues resolved. While they were at it, some additional concrete work was included to make shotgun field 6 ADA compliant. Shotgun field 6 is now a fully functional skeet field for member use and handling larger shotgun events.
 - b. A number of tweaks to the 5 stand operation were made during the year to provide a bit more support services available to those interested in using the 5 stand facilities since it is a very different operation process than the skeet fields. Continues to be a work in progress.

- B. RCWA range maintenance had a very busy year !
 - a. The most significant change involved how the RCWA Board managed the range facility maintenance activities for 2024. The RCWA Board decided to try a new range maintenance model since the number and complexity of the range maintenance activities had evolved to more than was easily managed on a day to day basis for an all volunteer board. Basically the range maintenance was outsourced to a private group for a fixed price. This removed the RCWA Board from day to day involvement in managing RCWA range maintenance and associated manpower management. Homescapes by Harris, owned by Harris Rummage was awarded the contract for 2024 since he has his own local company providing mostly residential construction work and property maintenance for many years. Harris and his long term associate, James Clubb, are both RCWA members and have been providing construction support for RCWA projects for a number of

years. You will now see Harris and James around on a regular basis along with Bill Klutz who provides part time support for them since his recent retirement.

- b. Maintaining the range equipment comprises a big part of this effort so that we have the right equipment to get the job done. Some of the challenge with range facility maintenance continues to be keeping a balance between what we do ourselves or contract out.
 - i. We contracted out some large tree removal work along the range road during the year – the bog oak tree on shotgun field 6.
 - ii. Landscaping changes involving moving dirt around on the range is another area we usually get outside help as noted in a number of projects in this report. We moved dirt for the shotgun field 6 repair/enhancement, rimfire range enhancement, the repair of the water management along the parking lot for Ranges 5 – 13 and the repair of the water settlement pond for the range lake.
 - iii. A decision was also made to purchase a new implement for the big JD tractor that will automate some of the manual weed eating around the range as well as providing the ability to mulch a lot bigger growth along the roads, facilities and property boundaries. This will reduce current manual labor activities and allow us to handle jobs we have been outsourcing.
- c. RCWA range infrastructure evaluations. Increasing discussions by the RCWA Board about future range improvements always get back to whether some of the range infrastructure (electrical, water and septic) and buildings have the capacity to support additional uses. So some activities have been started by the Board to answer some of the questions.
 - i. Clubhouse maintenance. The RCWA Clubhouse is beginning to need some maintenance. We had some leaks in the existing roof and scheduled to have a new roof on the Clubhouse which was completed at the end of 2024. That will be followed up with some eave/soffit repair with new siding and gutters.
 - ii. By opening up the Clubhouse to member access, there is now concern about the condition of the Clubhouse septic system including even verifying exactly where the septic field was located. The septic location was recently mapped and that process identified some potential plumbing issues at the tank. Those plumbing issues were resolved.
 - iii. Well and water capacity is being looked at. It appears a larger pump may be needed on the main well for increased water use. Water capacity looks to be sufficient.
 - iv. Electrical service is still an open question. If some minimal hookups are provided for campers and motorhomes, there may need to be some

additional electrical capacity at the Big Barn transformer feed. To be determined....

- C. Moving the RCWA financial system (QuickBooks) to the cloud. For multiple reasons, we have known for some time we needed to move the RCWA QuickBooks system from a laptop based system to the Intuit cloud based QuickBooks Online product. Not a challenge that anyone was in a hurry to take on. We finally took the first steps during 2024 after multiple notifications about Intuit discontinuing further enhancements to the desktop version of the product and the fact that we wanted to be able to use some online banking features that were not offered with the desktop version. First, we licensed the QuickBooks Online product and setup the initial RCWA account. Then in October, we converted the desktop version financial data to QuickBooks Online. We are now dealing with resolving the structural operational differences between the old and new QuickBooks environments. It will take most of 2025 to smooth out the operational differences – we hope. All of the RCWA member annual renewal process will have to be refined to work with the new QuickBooks Online data formats which is the current priority.

- D. Rimfire range repair and enhancements. The original construction of the new rimfire range did not include any exacting specifications for range distances of berms from shooting positions. With increasing use of the rimfire range, we found a number of rimfire users involved in competition rimfire shooting venues wanting to resolve some original berm distances to make them consistent in distance from the shooting positions and of an exact distance used in competition. This was outsourced for some minor reconstruction and having some water issues at the 100 yard berm resolved. This was completed in October.

- E. The Lake and associated Wildlife area:
 - a. The lake aerators both succumbed to storm debris in the lake and a thunderstorm. After looking at options, it has been decided to replace both of them. The new aerators were delivered at the end of 2024 and will be installed in the spring of 2025.
 - b. While dealing with the failed lake aerators, it became obvious the range needed a small boat to use for lake maintenance activities. A used boat was purchased for use on the RCWA lake. We subsequently were gifted (thanks Fred Bowers) a boat trailer for storing and moving the new boat.
 - c. The long running dialogue with the NC dam inspection group over a number of years regarding the range lake continued thru 2023 and 2024 – new regulations that needed compliance and some lake drain valve repair work remain open items. We thought we would wrap this up in 2023 but it just will not go away. In some

discussion with previous Board members we found this effort has now been in process for over 10 years. Our contractor started a new cycle of paperwork due again to changing regulations. This has turned into a true example of bureaucracy at its finest. Hopefully in 2025.... We are also still waiting on availability of divers via our contractor to repair the lake drain valve – over three years on that list.

- d. We started some preliminary work on gathering information to use in locating the RCWA property boundary along the county park property. This became an open discussion with the crew doing the Colonial Pipeline right of way clearing when they were here in 2023. It was deferred to winter months when less vegetation was in the way. Also, looking for a metal detector someone might offer in locating some corner markers.
 - e. The settlement pond that handles all of the excess water flow via a small stream for the area north of the railroad tracks had filled up. The settlement pond was cleaned out and enlarged a bit. In addition, the immediate area around the settlement pond was leveled and seeded so it could be maintained going forward. As part of this project, we also found a second smaller pipe under the railroad tracks dumping water and added a small settlement area for that water before it entered the lake. This has become a bigger issue for RCWA since large scale development (currently apartments primarily) is dumping larger volumes of water on RCWA. We have engaged the Rowan County folks to stay on the developers to handle their run off.
 - f. Many may not be aware that much of the property used for wildlife/camping area is covered by a separate Board since the property was donated with the stipulation it be managed as a wildlife area. This responsibility requires time and effort to make sure those requirements are met. A major effort was completed in 2024, to fill all of these Board positions with current RCWA members after having lost a couple of long term Board members.
- F. The range front gate continued to be an area of on going activities in 2024 as well. It was a major effort in 2023 to move the front gate operational environment to the internet cloud. This provided the foundation for the expanded use in 2024.
- a. It had been discussed for some time about providing access to the RCWA Clubhouse to RCWA members. The DoorKing gate system used at RCWA does offer additional door/gate access options. It was decided to expand the RCWA DoorKing system to manage Clubhouse access using the same member front gate access card for access to the RCWA Clubhouse since this appeared to be an option available only using the DoorKing cloud based system implemented in 2023. This project included installing new Clubhouse door entry hardware including entry card readers at both doors and running cables from the door areas to a new DoorKing entry processor installed in Clubhouse. The two RCWA DoorKing

door/gate processors were then synchronized via the RCWA cloud based environment so both the RCWA front gate and the Clubhouse were using the same RCWA member gate access card database for access at both locations. This also required operational changes for the RCWA staff maintaining the RCWA DoorKing door/gate access system. This became fully operational in the summer of 2024.

- b. RCWA's supply of gate access cards was used up during 2024. It was found that there were new options available. After some testing, a new format gate access card was ordered and is now being issued. The new gate access card can now be fed through the existing RCWA badge printers which simplifies issuing new gate access cards.

G. The range wi-fi network had some pluses and minuses during 2024. On the minus side, we have experienced another external wi-fi antenna problem that has left no outside range wi-fi available. Since it has not been a pressing issue, resolving this issue has been on the back burner. On the plus side, we now have internet access in the Classroom and the adjacent Range Maintenance Shop area.

H. The RCWA membership administration process continued to undergo some adjustments in 2024 to reduce manpower needs and streamline the handling of the annual renewal process. We are currently involved with working out a new interface with the new QuickBooks Online system to drive the new RCWA membership administration. New member reports have to be developed. Also during 2024 the older of the two member badge printers failed for a second time and has recently been replaced by a newer model.

I. During 2024, RCWA applied to run an Adopt a Highway program for Majolica Road. We have recently been granted an Adopt a Highway contract to complete for RCWA to handle the associated Adopt a Highway activities for Majolica Road. Will be looking for some RCWA members to run the program.

In summary, the RCWA Board would like to thank all of the RCWA members for their cooperation and understanding as many of these projects impacted accessibility to some of the range facilities from time to time. We are trying to keep range impact information current on the RCWA web site and Facebook. There are a lot of moving parts to a fully functional Rowan County Wildlife Association range facility – keeps an all volunteer RCWA Board very busy.

The RCWA Board would like to wish all the RCWA members a happy holiday season and a happy and prosperous new year.