



## Trashed Redington areas will be fenced off, cleaned



In the background, shooters leave one of the trash-filled Redington Pass areas used for target practice. The Forest Service plans to fence off the area - one of three such sites - starting this week. A new management plan also is in the works. **KELLY PRESNELL**

By Doug Kreutz  
ARIZONA DAILY STAR

Federal officials plan to close three unsupervised, trashed-out shooting sites in Redington Pass today and begin a cleanup.

They will follow up with risk assessment studies and a new management plan aimed at making the pass east of Tucson safe not only for shooters - but also for hikers, mountain bikers, campers and other users.

Among the options under consideration: A proposal by the Tucson Rod and Gun Club to operate a managed shooting range in the pass.

One reason for the changes is that many non-shooters have complained about shooting debris, noise and potential danger.

"We're taking a holistic look at Redington Pass with the idea of making it a welcoming and enjoyable destination for all users," said Heidi Schewel, spokeswoman for the U.S. Forest Service. The agency manages the area, which lies along the unpaved Redington Road.

### WELCOME NEWS

The cleanup plans were welcomed by hikers, mountain bikers and others - including Pima County Supervisor Ray Carroll, whose

district includes the Redington Pass area.

"You would not believe the damage out there," said Carroll, who is himself a recreational shooter. "I've been pretty much shocked that some shooters don't pack out what they bring out there. It's littering."

"They've created a dilemma for the Forest Service and the county," said Carroll, who said responsible shooters decry the actions of those who leave debris on public lands. "I'm pleased that there's going to be a site cleanup."

Hiker, mountain biker and trail builder Mark Flint said, "This trashing is not just a matter of

aesthetics - it leaves dangerous and hazardous materials for future generations.”

### CLOSURE IS INDEFINITE

Officials decided to temporarily close the three shooting sites - all of them between the 5.9-mile and 6.5-mile points on the road - to deal with extensive shooting debris and concerns about public safety.

It's not certain when, or if, the sites will be reopened for shooting, Schewel said.

“The areas are littered with things that were used as targets - appliances, furniture, beer kegs, glass and electronics,” she said. Other debris at the sites includes spent bullets, shell casings and garbage.

The Forest Service will hire contractors to remove the debris as quickly as possible, Schewel said.

Then they'll conduct a soil analysis to determine what residues are present from the shooting and the various objects that were shot up there.

### A MULTIPLE USE SITE

When the assessment is complete, the Forest Service will produce a Redington Pass Collaborative Management Plan to guide future recreational use of the area.

Schewel said uses include camping, hiking, mountain biking, hunting, picnicking, wildlife watching and nature study as well as shooting.

Recreational shooting is legal on forest lands “if it's done in a responsible and safe manner,” Schewel said. But regulations note that shooting is prohibited “within 150 yards of a residence, building, campsite,

developed recreation site or occupied area; across or on a forest development road or a body of water adjacent thereto.” Mutilating, defacing, excavating, littering or otherwise damaging forest land is also prohibited.

“We'll be looking for ways to accommodate all of the uses while minimizing user conflicts,” Schewel said.

### SHOOTERS FENCED OUT

Enforcing the closure of shooting sites in the somewhat remote area will require special measures.

“We will be fencing the sites off,” Schewel said. Workers will begin erecting fences today.

“The sites will be posted as temporarily closed, and there will be law enforcement officers in the area,” Schewel said. “We need to have the area cleared of people so we can clean up the debris and trash, and not have more deposited.”

### NEW RANGE PROPOSAL

Forest Service officials confirmed that they are considering an application for a managed shooting range in Redington Pass.

The website of the Tucson Rod and Gun Club describes it this way: “Tucson Rod and Gun Club is planning the construction of a nonprofit, public shooting range on the east side of Tucson in the Redington Pass area. This range will be surrounded by federal land, well over four miles from the nearest private land, so there can never be homes built next to the range and the very distant neighbors will never hear us.”

Efforts by phone and email to get further comment from club officials were unsuccessful.

Schewel, of the Forest Service, said the proposed shooting range on forest land would be considered a “special use - like ski areas, a shuttle service, outfitters who guide on the forest, and electronic sites on Mount Lemmon.”

She said the range proposal, which will go through a National Environmental Policy Act analysis, “would provide a developed site for safe and responsible shooting.”

County Supervisor Carroll said a managed range on the pass “could be an answer to the problem created by a few of the wildcat shooters out there. It deserves a hearing.”

### DID YOU KNOW?

Supervised shooting sites in the Tucson area include Pima County's Southeast Regional Park Shooting Range at 11296 S. Harrison Road. Call 877-6036 for information.