

CREATION OF THE PAGE SHOOTING RANGE, ITS HISTORY, AND CURRENT STATUS

Construction of Glen Canyon Dam (1956 - 1966) and the Navajo Generating Station (1970 - 1976) are what brought development to this area. Page started out as a power plant town. Recreational shooting was a favorite pastime for construction workers at the dam and they created the Page Gun Club. The Page Gun Club would get together at makeshift shooting ranges to target practice and conduct shooting competitions.

As the area grew, urban sprawl interfered with where shooting could be conducted safely. The Page Gun Club had to move their makeshift shooting ranges several times between the 1960's and early 1980's. The City of Page incorporated in 1975 and demand to establish a permanent shooting range location increased as law enforcement officers also needed a place for firearms training.

In the early 1980's, the City of Page approved a half section of city land to accommodate a public shooting range and a place for law enforcement agencies to conduct firearms qualifications. This was a very generous and visionary action taken by the city. The location was the South Half of Section 8, Township 40 North, Range 9 East, Gila and Salt River Meridian. This land had been previously used as a landfill by the US Bureau of Reclamation during the construction of Glen Canyon Dam. The landfill was retired and buried in the late 1960's. The Page shooting range was created on top of the retired landfill.

The Page Gun Club registered with the AZ Corporation Commission to become a nonprofit organization and managed the shooting range for the City of Page through a lease agreement. To acquire enough funding to create a permanent shooting range, a grant application for matching funds was submitted by the Page Gun Club to the AZ Game and Fish Department (AGFD). The grant provided \$10,000 from the AGFD to match \$10,000 from the Page Gun Club toward a total project cost of \$20,000 to construct the new shooting range. The Page Gun Club provided volunteer labor to build the range and receipts for materials were paid for through the grant. The first projects completed were erecting a perimeter fence, rifle range, archery range, and a shotgun range.

When the range first opened in the mid 1980's, the Page Gun Club was not allowing access to people who were not annual members of the Page Gun Club. The public was retaliating by causing relentless vandalism to the entry gate and abusing the range. The AGFD required that the shooting range be open to the public as a condition to receive matching funds.

The AZ Game and Fish stepped in and constructed a public parking area by the entry gate so everyone could access the range. The AGFD also installed a sign along Coppermine Road for the shooting range turnoff, signage for the public parking area, and constructed a kiosk by the entry gate. All of the labor and materials were provided by the AGFD through their Land Access Program. The Page Gun Club then installed a day use fee system so people who were not annual members of the Page Gun Club could also use the shooting range. This greatly diminished vandalism to the entry gate and the day use fee increased revenue to maintain the shooting range.

The annual membership dues and day use fees were adequate to expand the shooting range without requesting additional matching funds from the AGFD. Other shooting stations added over the years included a law enforcement range, combat pistol range, silhouette pistol range, cowboy action shooting, and a 22 rimfire range.

The Page Gun Club is currently addressing the needs of improving access for people with physical disabilities, providing shooting bays for commercial businesses offering concealed carry classes and tactical training, installing a 1000 yard long distance shooting area, developing a 10 year shooting range management plan, lead abatement, and applying for more shooting range grants through the AGFD.

The Page Shooting Range has also become a hub for several law enforcement jurisdictions to conduct their training. There are federal, tribal, city, county, and state jurisdictions from AZ and UT that use the range. They have a need to expand their tactical training to include constructing a shoot house and obstacle courses.

Without a shooting range in Page, our surrounding public lands would become trashed with litter used as targets. People would be shooting in unsafe wildcat shooting areas. Land management agencies would be closing our public lands to recreational shooting. Citizens would not have a place for firearms training and hunter safety. Law enforcement agencies would not have a place for officers to qualify for required firearms marksmanship.

It is paramount that the Page shooting range is protected to ensure its longevity. Urban sprawl is the biggest cause for shooting ranges to close and finding alternate locations to build another shooting range is nearly impossible. It took Flagstaff 20 years to find a suitable location for a shooting range for their community because of opposition from special interest groups to build it on public land. The vision the City of Page had for this shooting range is envied by citizens in other communities. We are blessed to have this facility. Help protect your investment.