

**County of Appomattox  
Department of Community Development  
Staff Report**

---

**To:** Board of Supervisors  
**From:** Johnnie Roark  
Director of Community Development  
**Date:** January 20, 2026  
**RE:** Conditional Use Permit Application CUP250870

---

**SYNOPSIS**

Benton W. Bowman is requesting a conditional use permit to operate an Outdoor Shooting Range, to be known as the Rifleman's Resort on property located off of Wildway Road in the Oakville community.

---

**Specifics**

Applicant:	Benton W. Bowman
Property Owner:	Same
Current Use:	Vacant/Woodland/Agricultural
Proposed Use:	Shooting Range, Outdoor
Surrounding Uses:	Sporadic Residential, Agricultural, Woodland
Parcel Size:	Approximately 571.66 acres in 10 parcels
Zoning:	A-1, Agricultural
Surrounding Zoning:	A-1, Agricultural, R-1, Low-Density Residential (adjoins one parcel)
Tax Map Number(s):	20 (A) 41, 20 (A) 50, 12 (A) 32, 12 (A) 36, 12 (A) 33, 12 (A) 35, 13 (A) 36, 20 (1) 3, 20 (1) 4, and 20 (1) 5

---

**ANALYSIS**

This property is located off Wildway Road (Route 616) approximately 0.53 miles east of Walnut Hill Road (Route 615) in the Oakville Community. The property is currently used for woodland and agricultural purposes. Mr. Bowman states in his project overview that "Rifleman's Resort is proposed as a premier outdoor training and recreational facility designed to serve sportsmen of all ages, youth organizations, military personnel, law enforcement, and responsible citizens who value structured and safe marksmanship. The facility will provide controlled ranges for multiple shooting disciplines within a carefully engineered environment that prioritizes safety, education, and environmental stewardship while maintaining the rural character of Appomattox County." The facility will operate primarily on a membership basis, with public access on designated weekends and/or for scheduled competitions and training events.

The project is located in the Rural Preservation Area. The RPA areas encompass land with special natural characteristics that make their preservation in open space particularly important to the County's environmental health. These areas include active and passive farm land, stream or river areas, steep slopes, trails, forestland or other passive recreational areas. Economic Development and tourism goals and objectives are supported by the Comprehensive Plan.

All ten parcels within this proposed use are zoned A-1, Agricultural Zoning District. The use, Outdoor Shooting Range, is a conditional use within the district. The zoning around the area is predominantly A-1, Agricultural. However, along the backside of the property one parcel (TM# 13 (A) 36) is bordered by a parcel that is zoned R-1, Low-Density Residential. The Impact Zone at this location is shown to be 500 feet from the boundary line. There are no dwellings visible from most Shooting Positions, although a row of newly developed homes along Wildway Road (house #'s 4678, 4648, 4620, and 4610) would be visible from one Shooting Position and one Impact Zone (Tax Map # 20 A 41).

Noise is certainly one of the main considerations. The Appomattox County Noise Ordinance would apply to this use just like any other land use. Please note, VA Code §15.2-917 limits a locality from establishing more stringent noise requirements for sport shooting ranges. Noise would be mitigated to some extent by the terrain. All Shooting Positions are firing into Impact Zones situated at a lower elevation. Effectively, the Impact Zones are located in a “bowl”. However, the noise from repetitive firing will be heard at various levels by adjoining property owners. For comparison sake, some common sounds and common caliber weapons, and their corresponding decibel level:

Rock Concert	120 db	.22 Long Rifle	130 db
Football Stadium	100 db	.308 Rifle	156 db
Conversational Speech	60 db	9 mm handgun	159 db

There are many examples of noise levels related to firing of weapons. Generally, shotguns range in the 150 decibel range, long rifles are slightly higher in the upper 150’s to lower 160’s decibel level, while handguns can spike to around 165 decibels. What the decibel level is at the property line (where it is measured for purposes of the Noise Ordinance) is a question that has not been adequately addressed by the petitioner. The Board of Supervisors could request the petitioner to provide a Noise Study report. The petitioner has mentioned noise suppression apparatus for some circumstances, however; at this time only recommended condition #3 mentions the use of suppression devices during certain times.

**PROJECT IMPACTS**

This use will have an impact on the surrounding area due to its size and the location of the designated shooting platforms and ranges, however; conditions recommended by the Planning Commission may offset some of the impact. The facility will utilize the existing terrain, natural buffers and the topography to reduce noise impacts. The range design will offset the expected noise by directing all firing lanes toward the interior of the property, surrounded by earthen berms and mature tree buffers. Normal hours of operation are proposed during daylight hours, with several nighttime events planned throughout the year. The Planning Commission recommendations address some of this concern.

There is minimal impact to public facilities. Traffic is not a concern from a daily use perspective, however, the Special Events could pose significant impacts to Wildway Road. The Virginia Department of Transportation will review any access points along Wildway Road and determine if further study is required. Their first review of the petition yielded no significant comments.

The closest dwellings are approximately 400 feet from the exterior property boundary along the northeast side. The adjoining property is zoned R-1, Low-Density Residential. There is an additional 500 feet of area between this property line and an Impact Zone, as shown on the

concept plan. There is a dwelling at 166 Walnut Hill Road that is within 400 feet of an exterior boundary, but the nearest Shooting Position is approximately 600 feet from the common boundary line. The dwelling at 4890 Wildway Road is approximately 600 feet from the nearest shooting position, although this property is positioned behind, or away from, the direction of the shooting. This adjoining property is zoned A-1, Agricultural, the same as the proposed shooting range. There are approximately ten (10) dwellings to the south/southeast of the facility (4600 block to 4800 block of Wildway Road). These dwelling are approximately 1,500 to 2,000 feet from the nearest Shooting Position. Again, noise will be a factor that should be considered.

### **Planning Considerations**

The Appomattox County Zoning Ordinance lists the following standards by which a conditional use should be evaluated.

1. Will be harmonious with and in accordance with the general objectives or with any specific objective of Appomattox Comprehensive Plan and/or this chapter.  
*The Comprehensive Plan shows this area as part of a Rural Preservation Area. These areas encompass land with special natural characteristics that make their preservation in open space particularly important to the county's environmental health. These areas include active and passive farm land, stream or river areas, steep slopes, trails, forestland or other passive recreational areas. The noise factor begs consideration as to whether this land use would be harmonious with the area. However, the planned layout of the shooting range is anticipated to mitigate noise to some extent.*
2. Will be designed, operated and maintained so as to be harmonious and appropriate with the existing or intended character of the general vicinity; and that such use will not change the essential character of the same area.  
*The proposed use is being designed to mitigate any impact to the greatest extent. The nearest existing residential use will be approximately 1000 feet from the active portions of the facility, however; the topography of the land places the facility at a slightly lower level with tree buffers offering additional noise mitigation. The development of an Outdoor Shooting Range could change or alter the essential character of this area. Noise and safety concerns, as well as, community environmental concerns have been mentioned by neighboring property owners as their greatest concerns.*
3. Will not be hazardous or disturbing to existing or future neighborhood uses.  
*The proposed use will not be hazardous to the neighborhood. The design of the facility is purposeful to limit hazards and promote safety. The facility will be fenced and warning signs will be placed incrementally along the exterior of the facility. The noise factor has to be considered a potentially disturbing to the existing residential neighborhood along Wildway Road.*
4. Will be served adequately by essential public facilities and services such as highways, streets, police and fire protection, drainage structures, refuse disposal, water and sewer and schools; or that the persons or agencies responsible for the establishment of the proposed use shall be able to provide adequately any such services.  
*The impact on public facilities is negligible.*
5. Will not create excessive additional requirements at public costs for public facilities and services; and will not be detrimental to the economic welfare of the community.

*Use will not negatively impact public facilities or services. Use provides added benefit by providing additional economic development and tourism opportunities to the county. Per the material handed out at the Planning Commission, the petitioner states that each event (approximately 150+ visitors) will bring \$30,000 to \$55,000 in local spending within the community.*

6. Will have vehicular approaches to the property which shall be so designed so as not to create any interference with traffic on surrounding public streets or roads.  
*Minimal traffic will be associated with this use, although at times, a specific event may cause increased traffic. Entrance upgrades will be made, if recommended by VDOT. VDOT has completed its initial review of the petition and had no comments.*
7. Will not result in the destruction, loss or damage of a natural, scenic, or historic feature of major importance.  
*The proposed use will not negatively impact natural, scenic or historic features based on the concept plan provided. The use will utilize the natural features of the property and, by nature, preserve the rural aspect of the property. Due to the size of the facility, wildlife habitats and/or migration patterns may be altered or disrupted by the gunfire.*

#### **PLANNING COMMISSION SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

At the December 10, 2025 regular meeting of the Planning Commission, the Commission held a public hearing regarding this matter. Ten (10) citizens spoke at the public hearing (6 opposed, 4 support) and one (1) email was submitted to the Planning Commission (opposed). There were approximately 100 citizens in attendance at the meeting. The main issues from the public were noise created by the gun range, hours of operation, general safety of the neighborhood, and proximity of the range to residential dwellings.

Following discussion by the Planning Commission, Mr. Adams, with a second by Ms. Blackwell, motioned that for reason of public necessity, convenience, general welfare, and good zoning practice, the Appomattox County Planning Commission moves to recommend approval of the Conditional Use Permit petition of Benton W. Bowman to operate an Outdoor Shooting Range (Rifleman's Resort), with the following conditions:

1. The Rifleman's Resort (Outdoor Shooting Range) will be constructed in general conformance with the concept plan submitted with the application dated November 10, 2025.
2. The hours of operation: The facility may have active shooting times starting from 8:00 a.m. until sunset, Monday through Saturday. Sunday shooting times starting from 9:00 a.m. to sunset. Special accommodations shall be made for up to five (5) Special Night Events, annually, which will allow shooting times to extend to 11:00 p.m. for these events. The Pro Shop may operate during all shooting times and one additional hour pre- and post-shooting hours.
3. In case of Law Enforcement training and/or Military training events, shooting activities may be extended into night-time hours as warranted by the training activity. Shooting activity beyond 11:00 p.m. for these specific training activities shall require suppression devices to be in accordance with the Appomattox County Noise

Ordinance. Law Enforcement training and/or Military training events are exclusive of the Special Night Events and do not count towards the limit in Condition # 2.

4. When the facility is open to non-members, i.e. the general public, then there shall be an on-site operator/owner present at all times during active shooting activities. When the facility is available to members-only, then no on-site staff is required, however; an emergency contact number shall be made available to the members by signage placed on or near the Pro Shop, or other structures within the facility.
5. A one hundred (100) foot wide buffer area shall be maintained around the perimeter property lines to the facility. Warning signs shall be placed at intervals of not more than 1000 feet around the perimeter of the facility to alert the general public of the shooting range. There shall be no buffer area required against any interior property lines, as shown on the Concept Plan submitted with the application. No Shooting Position or Impact Zone shall encroach on this buffer area. Interior trails or travel ways used to access Shooting Positions may be located within the buffer area.
6. All Shooting Positions shall be a minimum of three hundred feet (300) from any existing residential structure. Shooting positions should be positioned so discharging of weapons is directed away from residential structures.
7. All Impact Zone limits shall be a minimum of two hundred feet (200) from all exterior property lines.
8. The facility shall comply with the Appomattox County Noise Ordinance at all times.
9. The owner/developer of the facility shall maintain an accessible route for emergency services at all times during active shooting times.

The motion carried 6 to 1 (O'Brien dissenting).

**Board of Supervisors Action:**

Following the public hearing, a resolution, with the recommendation of the Planning Commission, has been prepared for your consideration. The Board may adopt the resolution in concurrence with the Planning Commission's recommendation, or amend the resolution/conditions, or the Board may reject the recommendation and deny the petition. The Board may also return the petition to the Planning Commission for further consideration.



## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

CURRENT ZONING DISTRICT:

A-1

IF REZONING, PROPOSED ZONING DISTRICT:

A-1

CURRENT LAND USE:

Agriculture

PROPOSED LAND USE:

Agriculture / Shooting Range

PLEASE DESCRIBE THE PROJECT IN DETAIL:

Rifleman's Resort is a proposed outdoor recreational and instructional shooting facility designed to promote safe firearm education, training, and competition within a controlled, low impact environment. The project will preserve the property's agricultural character while introducing limited-use shooting stations and safety berms. See attached detailed project description for full overview.

PROFFERS: (IF CONDITIONAL REZONING)

The applicant may proffer, in writing, reasonable conditions in addition to the requested zoning district regulations. All proffered conditions must be in writing, signed, and presented prior to the start of the Board of Supervisor's public hearing.

Are proffers being proposed?  YES  NO

(If yes, please submit proffer statement to staff.)

## JUSTIFICATION

The Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors will study the request to determine the need and justification for the change in terms of public health, safety, and general welfare. Attach additional information, if necessary.

Please explain how the request furthers the purpose of the Zoning Ordinance and the zoning district classification for which the project is proposed. You may find a copy of the Appomattox County Zoning Ordinance at [www.appomattoxcountyva.gov](http://www.appomattoxcountyva.gov), navigate to the Community Development Page.

The request supports the A-1 Agricultural Zoning District by providing a safe, low impact recreational use that preserves open space and promotes responsible land stewardship. Rifleman's Resort aligns with the County's goals for public safety, education, and balanced rural growth while maintaining the property's agricultural character.

See attached detailed justification for full explanation.



# Detailed Project Description — Rifleman's Resort

## Project Overview

Rifleman's Resort is proposed as a premier outdoor training and recreation facility designed to serve sportsmen of all ages, youth organizations, military personnel, law enforcement, and responsible citizens who value structured and safe marksmanship. The facility will provide controlled ranges for multiple shooting disciplines within a carefully engineered environment that prioritizes safety, education, and environmental stewardship while maintaining the rural character of Appomattox County.

## Purpose and Vision

The purpose of Rifleman's Resort is to create a safe, professional, and family-friendly environment for firearm education, training, practice, and competition. The project will promote responsible firearm use and outdoor recreation while supporting the Appomattox County community through local partnerships, tourism, and youth engagement. A key goal of the project is to provide a positive and supervised setting for the youth of Appomattox County and surrounding areas to learn and participate in shooting sports — building confidence, discipline, and respect for firearm safety.

## Facility Description

The proposed development will utilize existing open land with minimal alteration to the natural landscape. The project's design preserves the agricultural and rural character of the property while introducing a few modest, low-impact structures to support operations. These will include classroom space for educational and safety instruction, administrative use, and a small pro shop for the sale of ammunition, safety gear, and related shooting-sports equipment. Additional improvements will consist of designated shooting ranges for multiple disciplines, engineered earthen berms, limited-impact shooting platforms, controlled access points, and compacted gravel driveways.

## Operations and Membership

The facility will operate primarily on a membership basis, with public access on designated weekends or for scheduled competitions and training events. Normal hours of operation will be limited to daylight periods to minimize potential disturbance. Law enforcement and military units may schedule training sessions. The resort will host competitions, educational classes, and youth introduction programs focused on marksmanship, firearm safety, and outdoor ethics.

## Community and Economic Benefits

Rifleman's Resort will create local recreation and tourism opportunities while reinforcing Appomattox County's rural identity. The project will support local small-business growth, provide a training venue for law enforcement, offer youth programs, and maintain open-space and conservation goals through low-impact design.

## Safety and Environmental Commitment

All shooting ranges will be constructed according to NRA Range Source Book guidelines. Berms, firing directions, and safety zones will ensure full projectile containment and minimize off-site noise or environmental impacts. Staff: Andy Slade, USMC SSGT, worked as a CML (combat marksmanship coach), CMT (combat marksmanship trainer), and was instructed by the USMC on range safety, range operations, first aid, trauma care, as well as planning and execution of large range operations (over 150 marines at a time). Supervised over 1 million rounds fired with zero accidents or injuries. Andy has also extensive experience on the civilian side, training competitive shooters and high level military shooters alike. He has also been in charge of over 50 shooting competitions including national level events sanctioned by the Precision Rifle Series.

## **Summary**

Rifleman's Resort will be a responsibly managed outdoor recreation facility that reflects the values of safety, education, and stewardship while preserving the agricultural landscape and providing structured training and youth development opportunities.

## Justification

This request supports the purpose of the A-1 Agricultural Zoning District by providing a compatible rural recreational use that preserves open space and promotes responsible land stewardship. Rifleman's Resort will utilize existing agricultural acreage for outdoor recreation while maintaining the property's natural character and minimizing development. The facility aligns with the zoning ordinance's intent to allow low-intensity, community-oriented uses that contribute to public welfare and rural identity.

The project encourages safe, educational, and family-friendly outdoor activity for residents, youth, law-enforcement, and military personnel. Through careful site design, safety berms, and limited daylight operating hours, Rifleman's Resort will operate harmoniously with surrounding agricultural and residential properties. The establishment promotes public safety education and supports the County's goal of balanced rural growth that enhances both economic opportunity and quality of life.

## Comprehensive Plan Conformity

The proposed Rifleman's Resort directly supports the goals and policies outlined in the Appomattox County Comprehensive Plan by promoting safe outdoor recreation, educational opportunity, and responsible rural economic growth. The Comprehensive Plan encourages preservation of open space and agricultural land while allowing compatible recreational uses that enhance the community's quality of life. Rifleman's Resort achieves these objectives by maintaining the property's natural character and introducing only low-impact improvements such as small shooting pads, compacted-gravel drives, limited parking areas, and a few modest structures to support operations — including classroom space for training and education, and facilities for administrative use or the sale of ammunition and shooting-sports equipment.

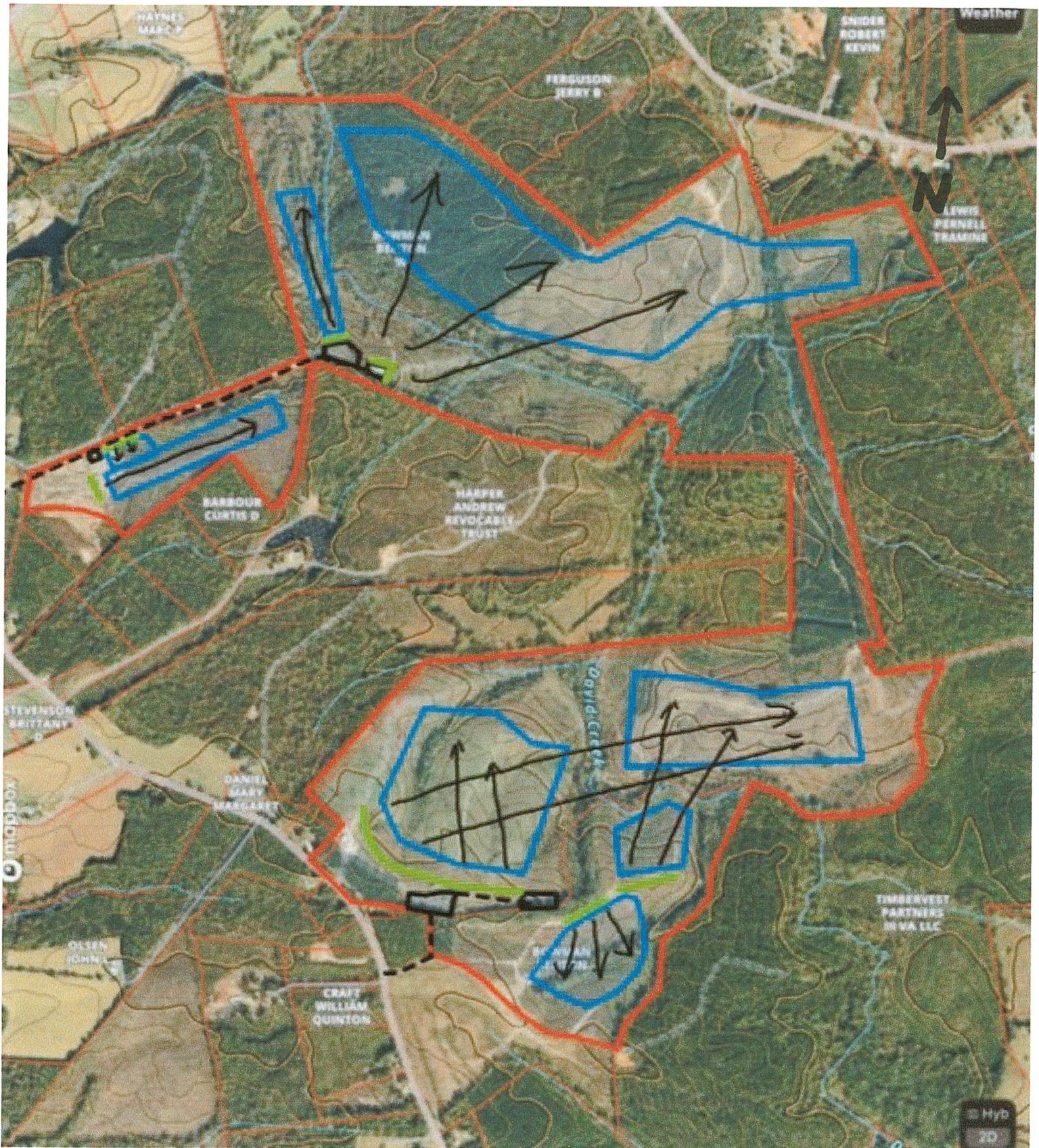
These limited structures will enhance educational and safety programs for youth, law enforcement, and sportsmen while supporting local commerce and tourism in a controlled, professional environment. The project also advances the Comprehensive Plan's goals for economic diversification by attracting visitors for competitions, training events, and firearm-safety education that reflect Appomattox County's rural heritage. Rifleman's Resort embodies the Plan's vision of sustainable rural development that provides community value, educational benefit, and economic opportunity while preserving the County's agricultural landscape.

## Impacts of the Request

The proposed Rifleman's Resort will have minimal impact on the property and surrounding area. The facility will occupy existing open agricultural land and maintain the natural landscape, using small shooting stations, compacted-gravel access drives, and limited parking areas. No public water or sewer service is required; restrooms will rely on self-contained systems. Access will be provided by existing rural roadways with clear signage and controlled entry points to ensure safe, low-volume traffic.

Noise and safety have been carefully addressed through the range design. All firing lanes will be directed toward the interior of the property, surrounded by earthen berms and natural vegetation buffers that reduce sound and ensure projectile containment. Normal hours of operation will be limited to daylight periods, further minimizing potential noise or disturbance to neighboring properties.

The project will not impact schools, parks, or public utilities. Fire and rescue services will have full access via designated entry routes, and emergency procedures will be posted on site. Overall, Rifleman's Resort is designed to operate safely and quietly within the rural character of the area while enhancing recreation, education, and economic opportunities for Appomattox County.



- Property Lines 
- Shooting Platforms 
- Impact Zone 
- Access Roads 
- Direction of Fire 
- Parking Area 

0.84 mi  
 1 inch = 375 yards



**APPOMATTOX COUNTY  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

P.O. Box 863, Appomattox, VA 24522 Phone: (434) 352-2637  
www.AppomattoxCountyVA.gov

---

**A RESOLUTION GRANTING A  
CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT (250870) IN THE PINEY MOUNTAIN DISTRICT  
FOR BENTON W. BOWMAN (APPLICANT/OWNER),  
TO LOCATE AN OUTDOOR SHOOTING RANGE, KNOWN AS THE 'RIFLEMAN'S  
RESORT' OFF WILDWAY ROAD IN THE OAKVILLE COMMUNITY**

**WHEREAS**, Benton W. Bowman has applied for a conditional use permit to locate an Outdoor Shooting Range off Wildway Road, on multiple tax parcels in the Oakville community. The zoning of the properties is A-1, Agricultural Zoning District. The properties are further identified as Tax Map Identification Number 20 (A) 41, 20 (A) 50, 12 (A) 32, 12 (A) 36, 12 (A) 33, 12 (A) 35, 13 (A) 36, 20 (1) 3, 20 (1) 4, and 20 (1) 5 and is located on the north side of Wildway Road, between Wildway Road to its south and Watt Abbitt Road to its north, in the Oakville community; and

**WHEREAS**, the petition was referred to the Planning Commission, which held a duly advertised and noticed public hearing on December 10, 2025, where the Planning Commission received comments from the general public; and

**WHEREAS**, the public hearing identified two main concerns: noise and general safety of the community; and

**WHEREAS**, on December 10, 2025, the Planning Commission weighed the information related to the zoning, land use, transportation, environment, the comprehensive plan, comments from the public, and other factors; and found that for reason of public necessity, convenience, general welfare, and good zoning practice, the Planning Commission, by a vote of six to one recommended approval of the petition with conditions; and

**WHEREAS**, the Planning Commission, the following conditions are being recommended by the Planning Commission in order to mitigate concerns of the neighborhood and adjoining property owners;

1. The Rifleman's Resort (Outdoor Shooting Range) will be constructed in general conformance with the concept plan submitted with the application dated November 10, 2025.
2. The hours of operation: The facility may have active shooting times starting from 8:00 a.m. until sunset, Monday through Saturday. Sunday shooting times starting from 9:00 a.m. to sunset. Special accommodations shall be made for up to five (5) Special Night Events, annually, which will allow shooting times to extend to 11:00 p.m. for these events. The Pro Shop may operate during all shooting times and one additional hour pre- and post-shooting hours.
3. In case of Law Enforcement training and/or Military training events, shooting activities may be extended into night-time hours as warranted by the training activity. Shooting

activity beyond 11:00 p.m. for these specific training activities shall require suppression devices to be in accordance with the Appomattox County Noise Ordinance. Law Enforcement training and/or Military training events are exclusive of the Special Night Events and do not count towards the limit in Condition # 2.

4. When the facility is open to non-members, i.e. the general public, then there shall be an on-site operator/owner present at all times during active shooting activities. When the facility is available to members-only, then no on-site staff is required, however; an emergency contact number shall be made available to the members by signage placed on or near the Pro Shop, or other structures within the facility.
5. A one hundred (100) foot wide buffer area shall be maintained around the perimeter property lines to the facility. Warning signs shall be placed at intervals of not more than 1000 feet around the perimeter of the facility to alert the general public of the shooting range. There shall be no buffer area required against any interior property lines, as shown on the Concept Plan submitted with the application. No Shooting Position or Impact Zone shall encroach on this buffer area. Interior trails or travel ways used to access Shooting Positions may be located within the buffer area.
6. All Shooting Positions shall be a minimum of three hundred feet (300) from any existing residential structure. Shooting positions should be positioned so discharging of weapons is directed away from residential structures.
7. All Impact Zone limits shall be a minimum of two hundred feet (200) from all exterior property lines.
8. The facility shall comply with the Appomattox County Noise Ordinance at all times.
9. The owner/developer of the facility shall maintain an accessible route for emergency services at all times during active shooting times.

**WHEREAS**, the petition has been duly advertised and noticed for public hearing before the Board of Supervisors on January 20, 2026, with said public hearing being held and comments received; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board of Supervisors has considered the recommendation of the Planning Commission and it finds that the proposed use is consistent with the comprehensive plan, the zoning ordinance, and good zoning practice and would generally promote the health, safety, and general welfare of the public;

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, the Board of Supervisors hereby GRANTS Benton W. Bowman, a conditional use permit, including said conditions as recommended by the Planning Commission, to locate an Outdoor Shooting Range on property herein described.

Adopted: January 20, 2026

---

John F. Hinkle, Chairman  
Appomattox County Board of Supervisors

ATTEST:

---

Susan M. Adams, Clerk to the Board