

Big Bear Valley Sportsman's Club

A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION INCORPORATED IN 1946

Post Office Box 566 Big Bear City, CA 92314-0566

Big Bear Valley Sportsman's Club ***Chuck Thomas Shooting Range***

History and Operation

The Big Bear Valley Sportsman's Club is the oldest nonprofit organization in the Big Bear Valley, having been established in 1946. Since 1960 the club has operated the shooting range located at the intersection of North Shore and Division in Big Bear City under a USFS Special Use Permit.

The range is open to the public on most Saturdays and Sundays from late April through the end of October. When the range is open, certified Range Safety Officers (RSOs) supervise all activities. The club charges a fee of \$10 per day per shooter for non club members. A family membership is \$35 for the year and provides a 50% reduction in fees for all family members as well as any guests of the member. These are among the lowest fees of any recreational shooting range in Southern California. As a nonprofit, all of our RSOs are volunteers. For safety, we maintain a minimum ratio of one RSO for every twelve guests and usually have a higher ratio.

From a survey recently completed for the USFS we established that our "ticket sales" (daily use and trap tickets) total around 3,500 during our six month season, or about 60-75 individuals per day. As the other recreational shooting areas in the local vicinity (near Hanna Flats and Arrastra Creek) are generally closed due to fire hazard from early June thru October, we are the only viable recreational shooting location in the Big Bear Valley and surrounding area. We believe that the opportunity for shooting at our facility in a safe environment substantially reduces the incidence of unlawful and dangerous shooting in the forest surrounding Big Bear.

We are environmentally responsible. We allow only paper targets for rifle and pistol shooting and bio degradable clay targets for shotgun. Spent aluminum and brass is picked up at the end of each day and recycled. We also have a regular schedule for the recovery and recycle of lead and other metals.

We do our best to accommodate the disabled. We have a handicap accessible restroom and have created ramps to our shooting areas. Upon request, those with handicap automobile permits are escorted to a special parking area on the range. We have had several individuals in wheelchairs shoot on our range in recent years.

During the season and sometimes between seasons, we offer the range at no fee to government and nonprofit organizations. Our local Sheriff has used the range on numerous occasions for training of professional and volunteer staff. Other groups using the facility include Boy Scout troops, Police Explorers, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the California Highway Patrol, the USFS and service dog trainers. These activities generally occur when the range is closed to the public. We also offer basic firearm classes to members of our local community at a cost that only covers the required materials.

Over the past five years we have donated over \$40,000 to various youth programs and other worthy organizations in our community. We support all team sports of the Bear Valley School District and also support Parks and Recreation and other youth sport organizations such as Pony Baseball. We also support several academic activities. We offer an annual \$1,500 Mihaylo scholarship to a graduating senior from BBHS and another \$1,500 scholarship to a graduating senior from Chautauqua High School. We have given to individual students who received recognition for scholastic excellence and needed funds for transportation and accommodation at special events. When families in the Big Bear Valley have suffered losses due to illness, fire or accident, we have donated to assist their recovery. Our annual donations account for around 70% of our net income.

We believe that an opportunity for recreational shooting should be included in the many uses of our National Forest. While recognizing the current political issues surrounding the ownership and use of firearms, we believe that, while it remains a right of citizens, the opportunity for safe and responsible shooting should be provided. To that end the Big Bear Valley Sportsman's Club maintains the most accessible and safest environment for recreational shooting in the San Bernardino National Forest.

More information at: www.bbvsc.org or mail@bbvsc.org