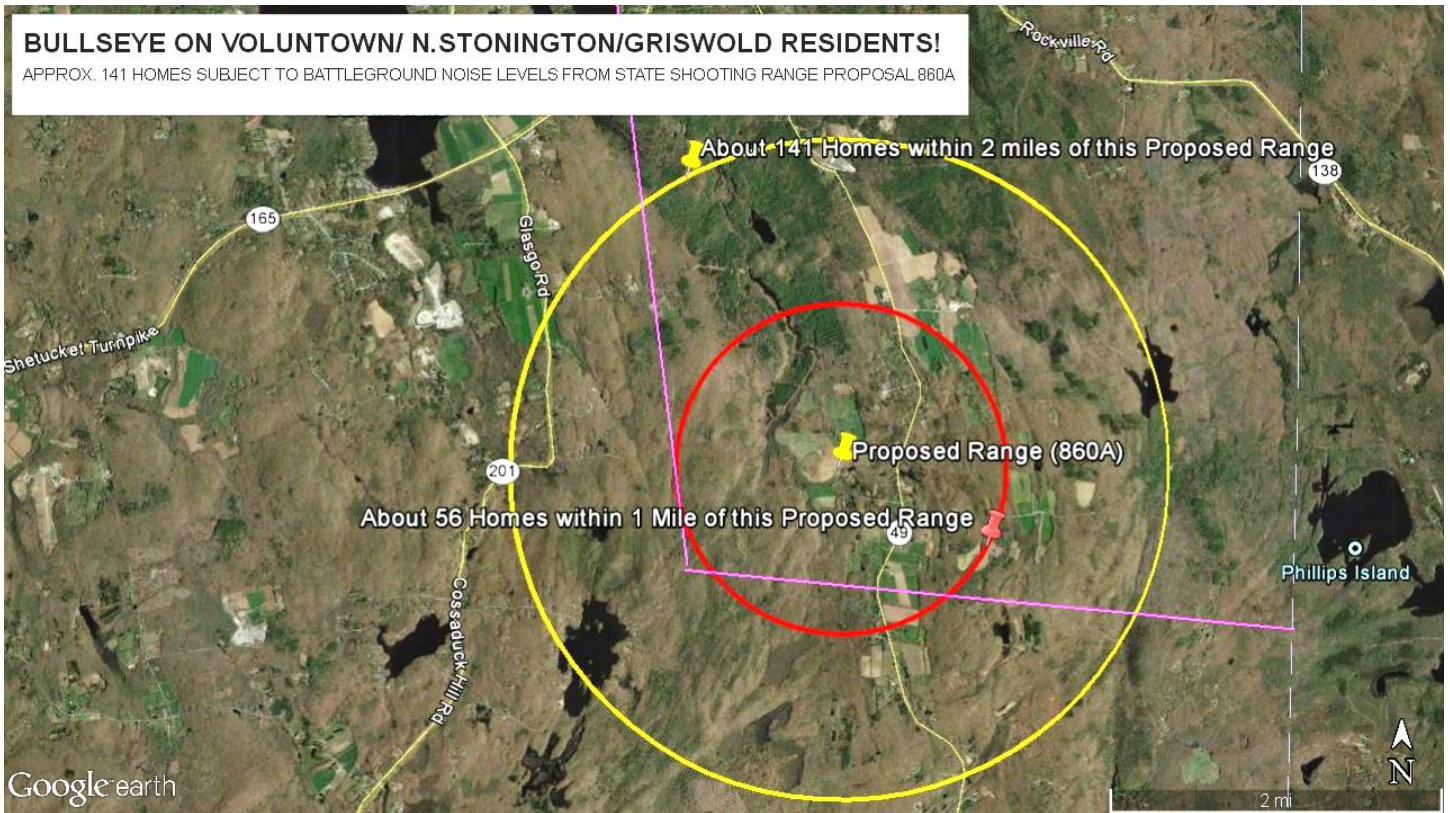
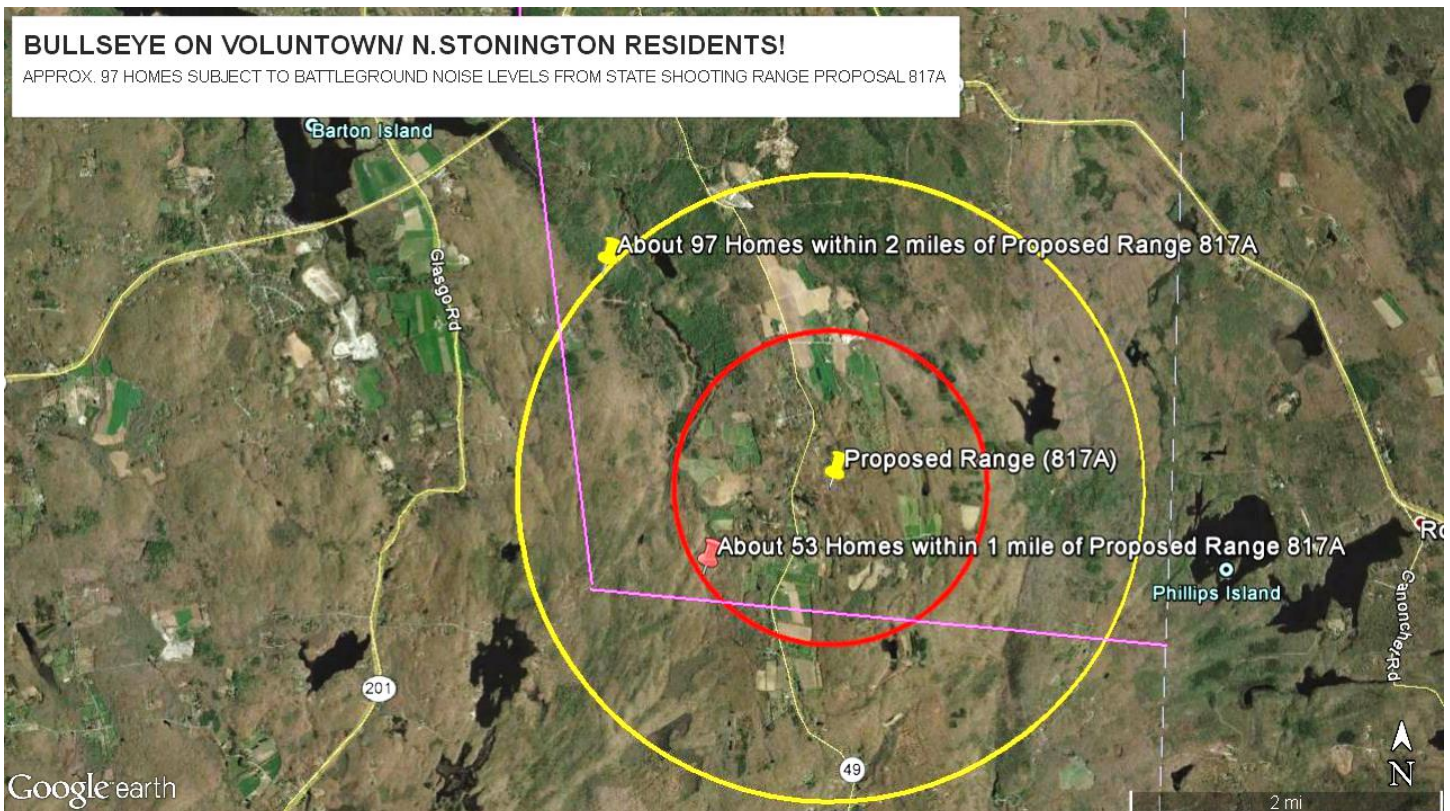


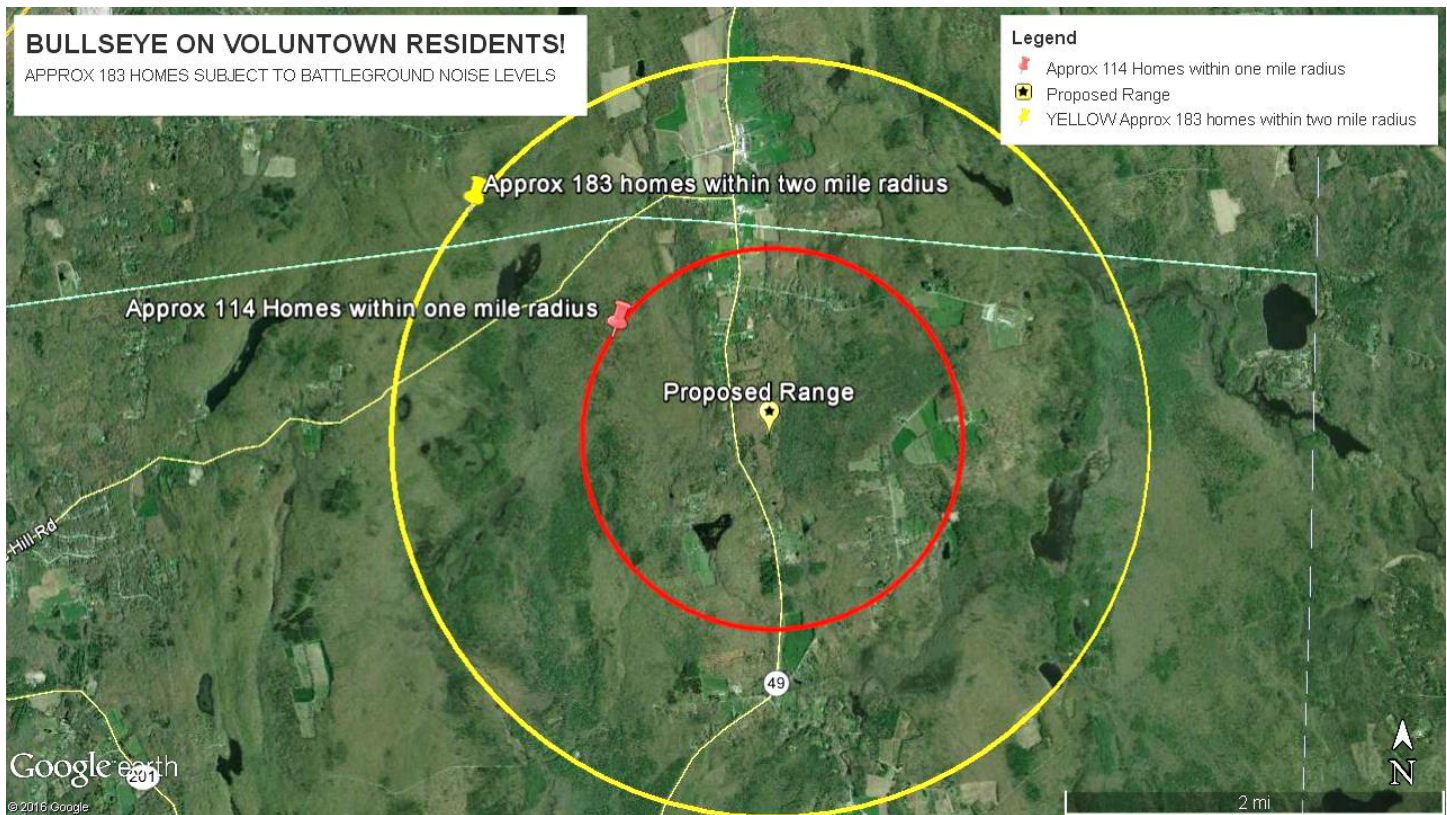
Pendleton Hill Site 860A-About 140 homes impacted



Pendleton Hill Site 817A. About 100 homes impacted



Ekonk Hill-About 183 Homes Impacted



THEY SAID (As published in the Bulletin March 2 on line, March 3, 2016 in print):

- That the residents of Voluntown are accustomed to the noise of gunfire from hunters and target shooters, so this will not be a problem.
- That the Patchaug State Forest will buffer the noise from this range.

REALITY CHECK:

-As hunters and weapons hobbyists we all know the sound of gunfire travels a long way through the forest, sometimes for miles depending upon atmospheric conditions. There are approximately 100 to 183 homes within two miles of these proposed shooting ranges depending upon which site is selected.

Many of us chose to live in Voluntown due to its rural tranquility. The range the State is replacing was built in Simsbury in 1947. So decisions made now may last for the next 70 years in Voluntown / N. Stonington / Griswold.

Maybe it is true that most of us prefer our State Forest to be a quiet, natural place instead of being a sound buffer.

Don't take the tranquility of our forests and homes away from us from us for the sake of a few tax dollar benefits! Is a tax savings of \$100 / year worth it?

If you have received this flier it means there is an important issue for you to become aware of that has been pushed forward to the State of Connecticut by our town elected officials without our consult.

Suddenly, *without any discussion or vote among the residents of Voluntown*, the State has held a meeting in our Town to discuss locating a major statewide Police Shooting Range in our community. The towns of North Stonington and Griswold are also impacted by these two potential sites located within the town of Voluntown.

If you are receiving this packet of information it means your home is located within TWO miles of what is apparently the proposed sites within Voluntown. From what you read in the Bulletin they apparently have been moving ahead in Hartford without bothering to ask us first. It is time we raised our voice Pro or Con!

Meetings were held in Canterbury (March 14), Voluntown (March 15) and Griswold (March 16). There was likely no notification to the residents of North Stonington about the Voluntown meeting since the State really didn't realize you were potentially impacted. It is unlikely that at the Griswold meeting the impacts of the proposal within the Town of Voluntown that may impact Griswold residents south of SR 165 and east of 201 were mentioned or displayed on maps.

Regardless where the range is ultimately located all of our towns are involved and this is an issue that should be discussed on a regional, not town by town, basis.

YOUR opinion is important, and although the meetings are done there is still time for you to submit your comments and concerns both Pro and Con. Your comments must be received in Hartford by Tuesday March 22 so the deadline is short!

Connecticut State Police Training Facility Informational Meeting Contact Information

Parcels in town have been presented by private citizens to the Department of Administrative Services for consideration for the Connecticut State Police Training Facility. Two sites are located on Pendleton Hill Rd, and one is located on Ekonk Hill Rd. A great deal of specific information, including downloadable maps have all been recently posted at the following State website:

<http://www.ct.gov/dcs/cwp/view.asp?a=4224&Q=566446&PM=1>

If you were unable to attend the Connecticut State Police Training Facility Informational meeting, or if you attended and have questions, comments or suggestions, a please send a letter to Jeffrey Beckham, DAS Staff, 195 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT, 06106, or at Jeffrey.Beckham@ct.gov . Letters will be received up to one week (3/22) from the meeting.

Things we have been told by the State Police and by the Connecticut Department of Administrative Services at the State meetings held in Canterbury and Voluntown

1. **The residents of towns will never be given an opportunity to vote on this issue.** It is a State project and they will make the ultimate decision of what site would be selected. There would be both a detailed scoping process and Environmental Assessment Evaluation process of any selected site during which time public comments will be solicited, including additional public meetings.
2. **The State does not have to follow town zoning,** but must consider it as part of the States Environmental Impact Evaluation.
3. **Although the State built its current shooting range in Simsbury in 1947 the soils at their range have never been sampled for lead contamination.** For cost savings reasons the CSP shoot their qualification rounds with lead “wadcutter” ammunition. Various points were discussed about possible “lead dust” contamination which includes both lead vapor and dust produced by shooting lead bullets. The State currently removes lead bullets from its berms and backstops every two years.
4. **The State announced throughout the State it was requesting to hear from landowners who would be interested in selling their property for this project.** Based upon landowners submittals the State then contacted Selectmen of those towns, and then set up meetings. The State came to hear citizens opinions about whether the residents in these towns would be receptive to such a project in their town.
5. **The State did not do any “vetting” of these sites prior to these meetings** other apparently than to ensure they met the minimal acreage requirement public in their criterion.
6. **Although Canterbury resoundingly said NO we don’t want this in our community at their meeting, both Jeffrey Beckham (State DAS project manager) and DAS Commissioner Melody Currey stated that the State process would continue and that a Canterbury choice was still in play.** She also stated that the Town of Willington also was still in play. Willington had a meeting a few weeks ago, and the Town of Willington Selectmen have even set aside town funds to fight the project.
7. **Officers would not be dispatched from the range except under very exigent circumstances such as an “active shooter”.** Other than that officers would not be dispatched off the range and the normal officers on duty on patrol would be dispatched as just as it works right now. Officers at the range would travel in both marked vehicles and private vehicles and for the most part would be out of uniform, but would have clothes to change into in case they were called to respond off the range.
8. **Under the current State Police policy, the 1100 State Police Officers that make up the CSP force must requalify with their .45 caliber Sig Sauer sidearms once annually.** All officers are also required to requalify in night/low light conditions once every three years. They also must qualify with rifles and shotguns annually. The range would also occasionally be used by CSP Cadets from their Academy (80/class), as well as CSP SWAT teams. According to the CSP Fact Sheet the current range is used 80% by the CSP and 20% by cooperating federal, state and municipal agencies generally in joint training with CSP.
9. **Generally they said the range would be used Mon-Fri from 8am to 4pm.** Presently the CSP alone use their range 240 days / year, but the present range is limited by size and orientation (you can’t shoot rifle/shotgun courses at the same time pistol courses are being conducted). With this new range different courses could be run simultaneously making for more efficient use (and maybe less needed shooting days to qualify their own force). They staff the range, however, year round Mon-Fri.
10. **During a qualification day there are typically 30 officers assigned for qualification shooting.** They fire about 100 rounds each from their pistols staggered through various relays of drills. (Ergo one day = 3000 rounds, not counting rifles/shotguns).
11. **With a new state of the art range they would welcome more range time.** When I (Bob Panko) asked a CSP Major after the Canterbury meeting about how come the CSP only requalifies once a year (while many police agencies require bi-annual requalification) and is there any possibility that they may change this CSP policy in the future, he said that the current Simsbury range limits how much firearms practice

or qualification they can get, Basically he said when they have this state of the art facility, they would welcome using it more for more range time. Ergo maybe they will be shooting more days.

12. **The CSP does not stagger its night time qualifications, but does all 1100 officers every third year.** These drills were mentioned above. During these drills the officers shoot from dusk until 9pm at the latest. **With 30 officers/session this will require about 40 nights of shooting every three years.** It is also worth noting that a 1998 state law directed the commissioner of the Department of Public Safety (now Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DECSPP) to appoint and maintain at least 1,248 sworn state police officers, so future usage requirements may increase.
13. **There is no positive number about how much money could be paid to the sponsoring town thru the State PILOT (payment in lieu of taxes) for this range.** Estimates at the Voluntown meeting were thrown out at about \$100 per household of tax savings. But please understand that was just some ones rough estimate, although the State did not dispute it during the meeting.
14. **There was considerable discussion of whether property values of private lands nearby the range would drop.** Generally it appeared most people felt that they would.
15. **Meeting results as far as public inputs.** At the Canterbury meeting the tone was overwhelmingly NO. Of about 40 people who spoke at the public mike no one in Canterbury expressed approval of the proposal. At the Voluntown meeting the vast majority of comments made at the mike were opposed to the proposal, but several people expressed support for the proposal at the public comment mike. At the Griswold meeting the majority of comments apparently were in favor of the proposal.
16. **Couldn't all this be done on an indoor range, thus eliminating many concerns?** The CSP made it very clear that certain types of training can occur indoors and certain types of training and qualification need to occur outdoors. Outdoors officers need to train in real life environments including stuff like driving a patrol vehicle up to a range and either shooting from or using the vehicle for cover. Hard to do that indoors! There are also things like shooting a rifle over long distances. You need to account for wind etc. and that could be hard to replicate indoors. For the indoor facility they envision having a tactical range that could be changed for specialized training. A school, an office building etc. Hey they made a great and real point they need to have a facility that mimics what they need to train for for what they have to respond to for both their and our safety. Just need to add they said this is to be a shooting range, not a commando style training camp. No tanks, no tactical courses going out through the woods. Just dynamic shooting ranges. And they need this type of facility. No question. Another potential issue was also addressed at the meetings. Why such a big parking area and 100 person classroom. The CSP made it very clear that the intent of the large parking area and the large classroom was to accommodate occasional use of this range by their Academy students (80/academy class). The main purpose of the classroom was for pre-qualification shooting activities to update their officers about current weapons use policies and firearms instruction before they went out to shoot on the range.
17. **There was discussion about how businesses would benefit in Voluntown because of the range (such as food and gas stations)** but several private business owners existing in Voluntown expressed concerns about how their businesses that are based on Voluntown tourism, agricultural interests and livestock interests could be negatively impacted.

The PLAN OF CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT 2010 of the Town of Voluntown states the following
“COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GOALS”

- Retain Voluntown's rural character throughout as much of the town as possible.
- Protect the natural resources of Voluntown, particularly the quality of surface and ground waters.
- Maintain a safe, attractive, and socially sound living environment for present and future residents of all ages.

These were goals 1, 2 & 5 of 16 in this Plan. Does this proposal seem compatible with these goals to you?

Next Steps

There are two Bills waiting in Hartford for vote by the Legislature that address and modify this program of proposals by the State DAS and Connecticut State Police. These bills apparently rose out of previous site proposals for the same thing in other towns in Connecticut. They are Bill No. 234 and 235. Please research their content and voice your opinion to our local State Representatives and Senators as soon as possible.

To view these bills please visit the website:
<https://www.cga.ct.gov/>

Bill No. 234 – Statement of Purpose: To require (1) the construction of a firearms training facility to be located on previously purchased state-owned or leased property, and (2) the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection to conduct a study regarding its firearms training needs. **Recently an addition was made to this Bill that adds a requirement that any state firing range project be approved by a town referendum**, and that it include sound baffling. It also requires that a feasibility study on the need for a new state police firearms training facility, including the desirability of using existing ranges, be done by Jan. 1, 2017, and that no potential site EIE be embarked upon until the study is finished.

Bill No.235- Statement of Purpose: To establish requirements for the construction of a firearms training facility by a state agency. Recently an addition was made to this Bill upgrading the abutting open space minimum to 300 acres. The dimensions start with requiring 30 acres for the range itself and then a contiguous amount of space that would be deeded back to the host town for open space but remain a part of the PILOT computation the state would have to pay the town.

Prepared and distributed by Bob Panko, 259 Brown Road(860-564-8310) and Dorothy Ford King, Pendleton Hill Road (860-376-2004)

Many of us chose to live here with the values of rural tranquility in mind. We certainly did! We hope you share our views and values that **that** is worth more than some small tax break!