

Union County Gun Club nearing 400 members

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The Union County Gun Club is rocking right along, having picked up 390 members since its initial meeting in July 2017.

In just over a year since its inception, the club has also assisted the Union County Commissioner's Office in gathering the appropriate documentation to apply for a gun range on U.S. Forest Service land located right here in Union County.

The club is still awaiting

word on the initial gun range application made earlier this year by the commissioner's office, but already, club members are thinking ahead.

Later this fall, the club plans to commission a noise study to determine if the proposed site will be eligible for the range before moving forward with extensive design work.

More information is available on the club website at UnionCountyGunClub.org or .com.

Of course, the commissioner's office is still the main

point of contact for the Forest Service concerning the proposed range, but Union County Sheriff Mack Mason, who advises the club, is asking residents to direct all questions and comments to gun club itself.

"Commissioner Lamar Paris is very enthusiastic about this gun club and the possibility of having a shooting range in Union County," said Sheriff Mason. "He's an extremely busy man, and he has requested that people get their information as to how the club's doing and what the club has going on through the club website.



L-R: Joan Moody, Paul Clark, Gene Cooley, Susanne Johnson and Bill Parker of the Union County Gun Club Board, with Union County Sheriff Mack Mason. Photo by Shawn Jarrard

"We love to talk to people about what's going on with the gun club and where we're at, but we also have our county functions to attend to. And we would also appreciate it if people would refrain from contacting the local Forest Service people in regards to the progress.

"They are working on the project, and David McDonald from U.S. Congressman Doug Collins' office is coordinating with them about this project. Everybody's enthusiastic about it, it just takes time."

The proposed site is a 14-acre piece of land off Georgia 180 near Blairsville that seems perfect for a range, a key aspect of which would be its ability to accommodate rifle shooting at 200-plus yards, pistols and potentially shotguns.

Club members would

have regular access to the range, with limited hours for the public, and local peace officers would have a home to train for firearms requalification.

Furthermore, the club would consider opening the range to students on the Union County 4-H Shotgun and BB Gun Teams.

"We are still looking for alternative sites should this one not work," said Sheriff Mason. "Anyone who knows of a site that might be suitable on Forest Service land, or on private land that might could be purchased or donated to us, please contact us."

In pursuit of the range, the club and Sheriff Mason have met with many officials from various agencies, including Forest Supervisor Betty Jewett, who oversees the Chattahoochee-Oconee

National Forests; Joyce White, Georgia Director for USDA Rural Development; Andrew Turnage of Georgia Secretary of State Brian Kemp's office; Col. Eddie Henderson of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources; and others.

The sheriff and club members have stated multiple times since the formation of the club that they are grateful for the community's assistance.

"We appreciate all the interest," said Sheriff Mason. We appreciate their good faith and want people to know that they're a part of this larger voice, which is better when we attempt something like this.

"We want to thank Commissioner Paris for everything that he's done in our endeavor to reach our goal to find a suitable site."