February 7, 2012

To all partners that utilize our firearms ranges:

Several years ago, as part of our environmental stewardship program at the Institute, we implemented a series of strategies to assess the impact and manage the migration of lead from its existing shooting ranges. These strategies were shaped after a careful review of geologic maps to assess drinking water sources, hydrologic maps to assess drainage patterns on and surrounding shooting ranges, soil maps to assess soil properties that affect the migration lead in the soil, wetland maps to determine any potential impact of lead into wetlands, and topographic maps to determine site elevations, drainage, and dissipation on the property. This effort led to a series of steps to improve the existing drainage collection system, reduce surface water runoff velocity, and assess the lead parameters found in water runoff. Today, the Institute monitors lead migration using three experimental ponds behind the earthen berms of its "dirty" ranges. In addition, the Institute has implemented "clean" ranges where only lead-free, non-toxic ammunition is permitted for use by agency personnel using the ranges. Finally, the Florida Public Safety Institute (Pat Thomas Law Enforcement Academy) converted the lead-free ammunition several years ago for the basic recruit classes along with the Florida Highway Patrol Training Academy to aid in this effort.

Recently we have had another assessment performed with regard to lead migration and in keeping with our environmental stewardship program, we are re-designing the ponds located behind the earthen berms to the style of pond that best “captures” the lead migration associated with the firearm ranges based on the assessment that was recently provided. In addition, it was discovered that to fully comply with the needed changes in our program, we will require all agencies that we serve to convert to what is considered “lead-free” ammunition in the coming year. There are several types of ammunition on the state contract that will satisfy our environmental needs. Our goal is to notify you in time to plan in your upcoming budget year for this change. You are welcome to use up your current supply of ammunition in the coming months. The change was needed so that we may continue to provide firearm ranges for your use for many years to come. Duty ammunition that is fully encapsulated or jacketed may still be used on appropriate ranges.
We also will require that ammunition used on all steel targets (fixed and portable) be frangible and lead-free. This is done because lead will enter the earth wherever the target is placed and does not include our earthen berms. This is also done for safety of all participants of our ranges and potential dangers of injuries caused from non-frangible ammunition use on steel targets.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to call me.

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