



Edward Hill/News staff

Bruce Somers (left) and Al Wills hold weekly target practice sessions at the new Bowmen Archery field in View Royal. The 60-year club was nearly defunct after DND reclaimed its land.

Archers find a home

Bowmen club restarts region's only outdoor target range

Edward Hill
News staff

Under high voltage power lines, in sight of a youth detention centre and on rutted, uneven ground, it's home sweet home for archers in Victoria.

On a wedge of land between Burnside Road, Watkiss Way and the Trans-Canada Highway, the Victoria Bowmen have found a new permanent range

after a two years of being an archery club without a home.

Now with three acres of land surrounded by berms and brush, the region's only outdoor archery range this side of the Malahat is up and running, albeit under less than ideal conditions.

"This was a dump pile from when they built the (Trans-Canada) highway. It was full of cement and plastic and all kinds of crap in here," laughed club vice-president Bruce Somers. "But this is an ideal spot."

After nearly 45 continuous years of archery, the club was evicted from Department of National Defence land in Colwood in October 2009. The navy

reclaimed the space for its own uses.

Somers and Bowmen president Al Wills — both 40 year veterans of the 60 year club — investigated leasing land at Luxton Fairgrounds, the old police gun range near Thetis Lake and the Boys and Girls Club in Metchosin, but all had discouraging logistical hurdles.

Long-idle land owned by Provincial Capital Commission at Burnside and Watkiss proved to be as good as it gets. The parcel is isolated from neighbourhoods and is large enough to hold lower-level competitions.

PLEASE SEE:

Full archery field, Page A6



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