

Pennsylvania Range Demand and Placement

NSSF[®]
*The Firearm Industry
Trade Association*

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About

- The National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF) works closely with federal and state wildlife agencies to increase participation in hunting and target shooting. These state-specific reports are designed to help state agencies determine potential locations for future target shooting ranges in their states.
- Specifically, this study explored existing shooting range locations and the types of opportunities they offer, current target shooting demand in Pennsylvania, and where demand is least served. The results will help the Pennsylvania Game Commission identify where the greatest needs are for additional shooting ranges.
- Understanding where demand is greatest, where current shooting range opportunities exist, and where potential new participants live are all factors that can inform shooting range development and placement to support the greatest number of people.



Locations of existing Pennsylvania ranges

- Range data from the Pennsylvania Game Commission plus industry sources were examined. The full list of ranges was vetted by internet searches to confirm that each shooting range was still operational, the types of shooting offered at each location, and whether the range was open to the public or not.
- A “public” range is any shooting range that is operated by a public entity such as a local, state, or federal government. A "private" range is any shooting range that is privately operated or requires membership.
- Any locations that offer hunting-affiliated services such as guided hunts, lodges, and more without also providing shooting opportunities were removed from the list.



ESRI's® ArcGIS

- Range locations were visually verified using Google's satellite data and mapped in ESRI's® ArcGIS software.
- ArcGIS was used to learn where target shooting participation in 2023, either archery or firearm, was clustered according to ESRI's Market Potential data service.
 - This service is based in part on a series of consumer surveys from GfK MRI, a media and consumer research firm, and helps explain existing demand within given areas for many different products, activities, and services, including target shooting.
 - ESRI's Market Potential data is best used to identify where specific types of consumers are clustered and not to quantify the actual number of consumers.
- Together, these data help to identify areas where shooting range demand may exceed opportunity.



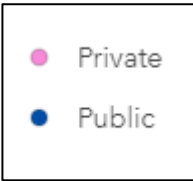
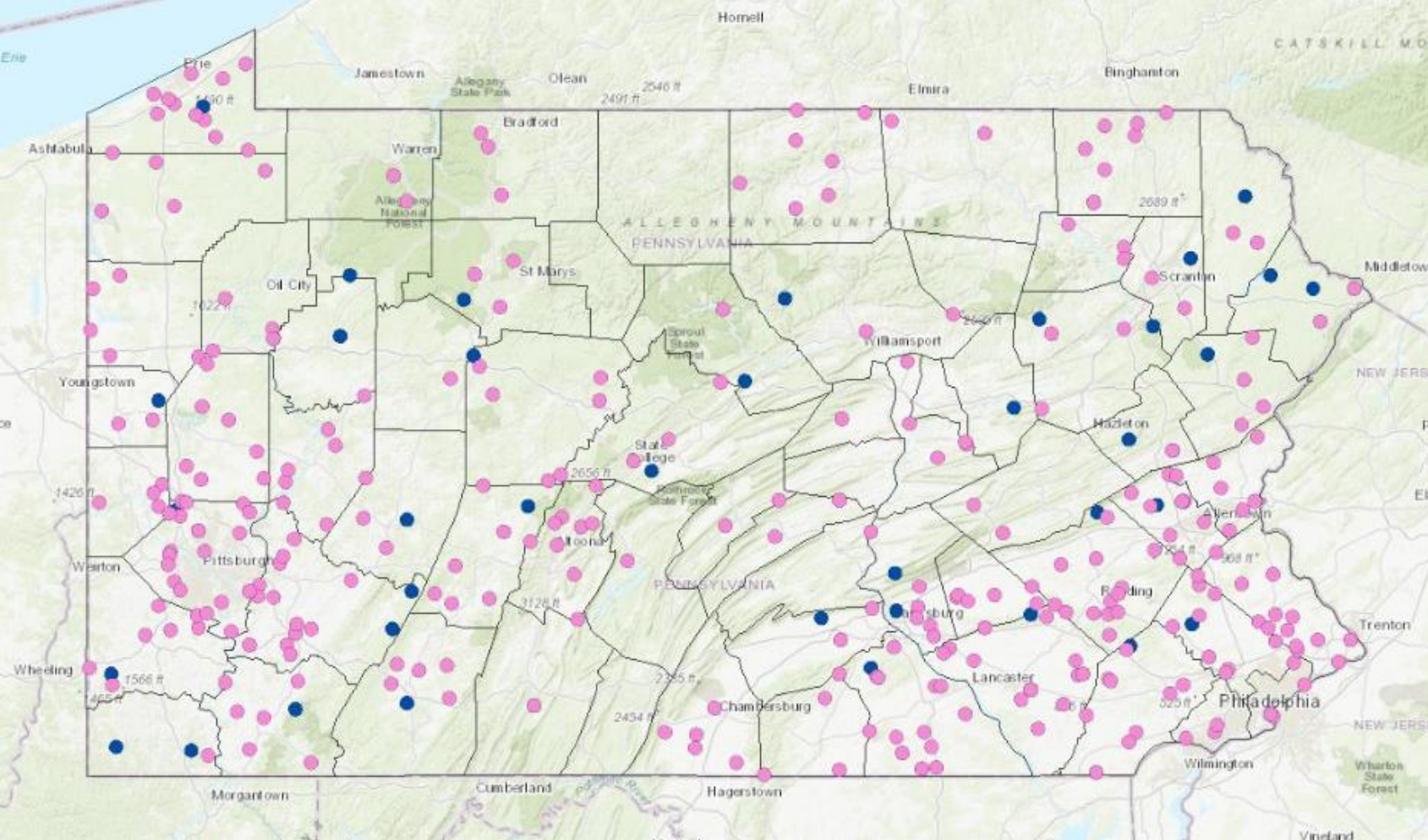
Existing ranges and characteristics

Private vs. Public		Count	Percent	Shooting Range Type	Count	Percent
Public		37	11%	Shotgun only	52	15%
Private		305	89%	Archery only*	11	3%
Total		342	100%	Rifle only	12	4%
				Handgun only	8	2%
Outdoor vs. Indoor		Count	Percent	Rifle, Handgun	42	12%
Outdoor		231	68%	Rifle, Handgun, Archery	10	3%
Indoor		47	14%	Other**	10	3%
Both		64	19%	All firearms	103	30%
Total		342	100%	All firearms + Archery	94	27%
				Total	342	100%

*Source data prioritized firearm range listings and, as a result, not all archery ranges may have been captured in the count above.

**Other includes ranges with the following shooting opportunity combinations: Rifle/Archery, Shotgun/Archery, Rifle/Shotgun, Rifle/Shotgun/Archery.

The majority of Pennsylvania's ranges available to the public are privately operated or require a membership or payment of fees. Many offer shooting opportunities for most weapon types.

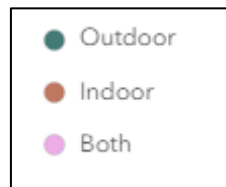
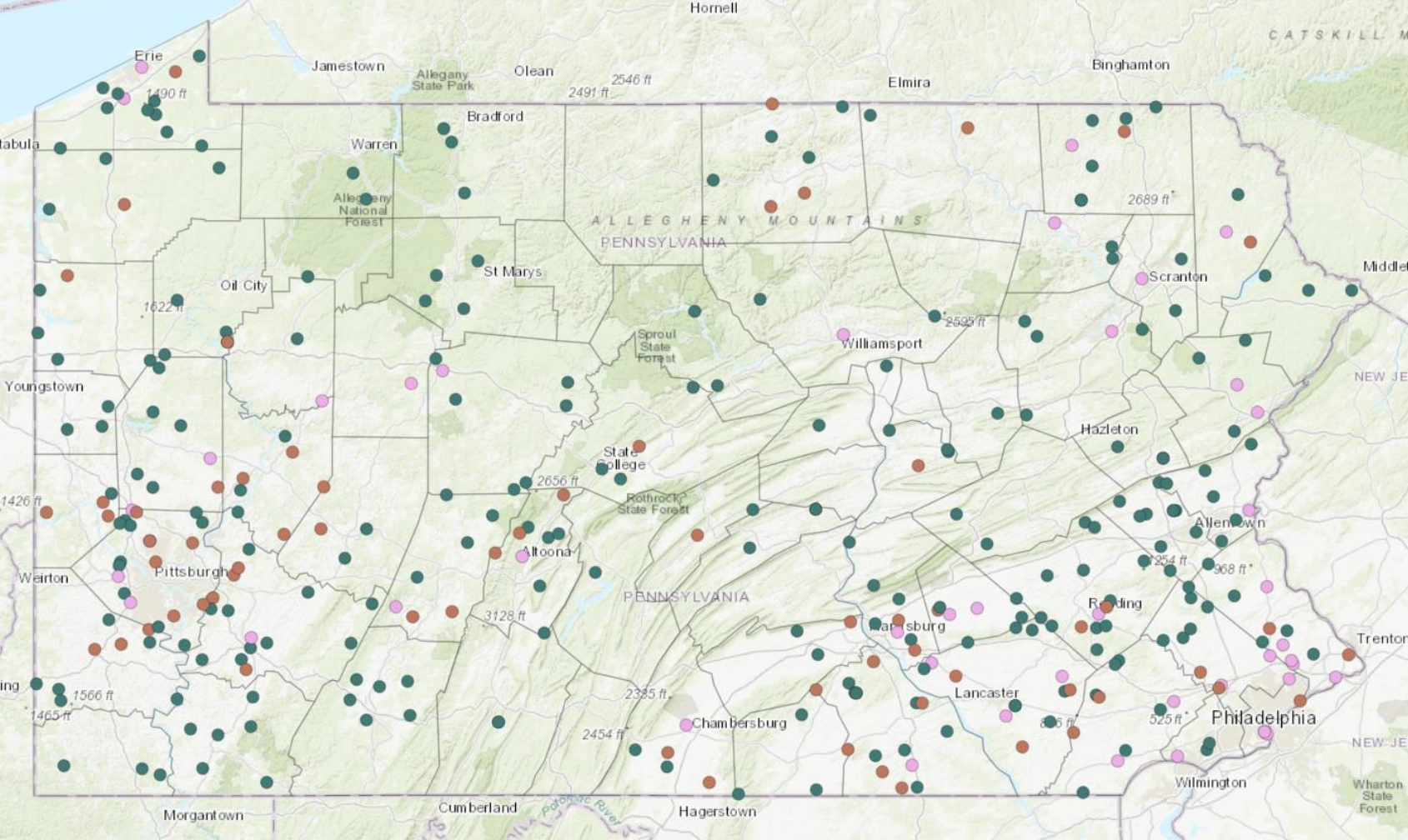


Geographical distribution of Pennsylvania's ranges

The distribution of ranges cluster toward population centers, like Pittsburgh and Philadelphia. The majority (89%) operate under a membership structure.

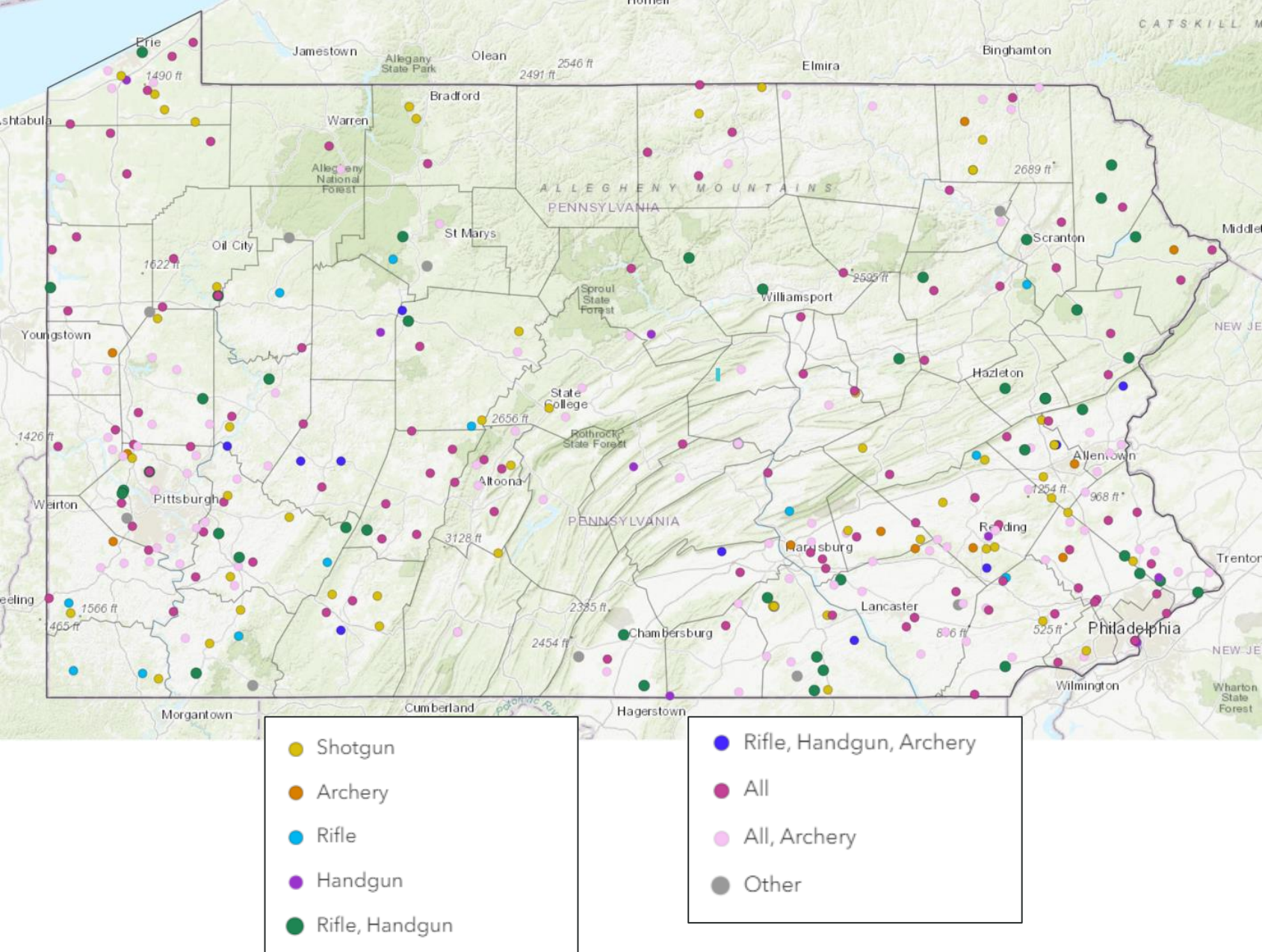
Diversity of Pennsylvania's range facilities

The majority (86%) of facilities provide outdoor target shooting opportunities.



Shooting opportunities offered by Pennsylvania's ranges

Many (57%) offer shooting opportunities for most weapon types. Another 15% offer shotgun only opportunities.



Distribution of population with range overlay

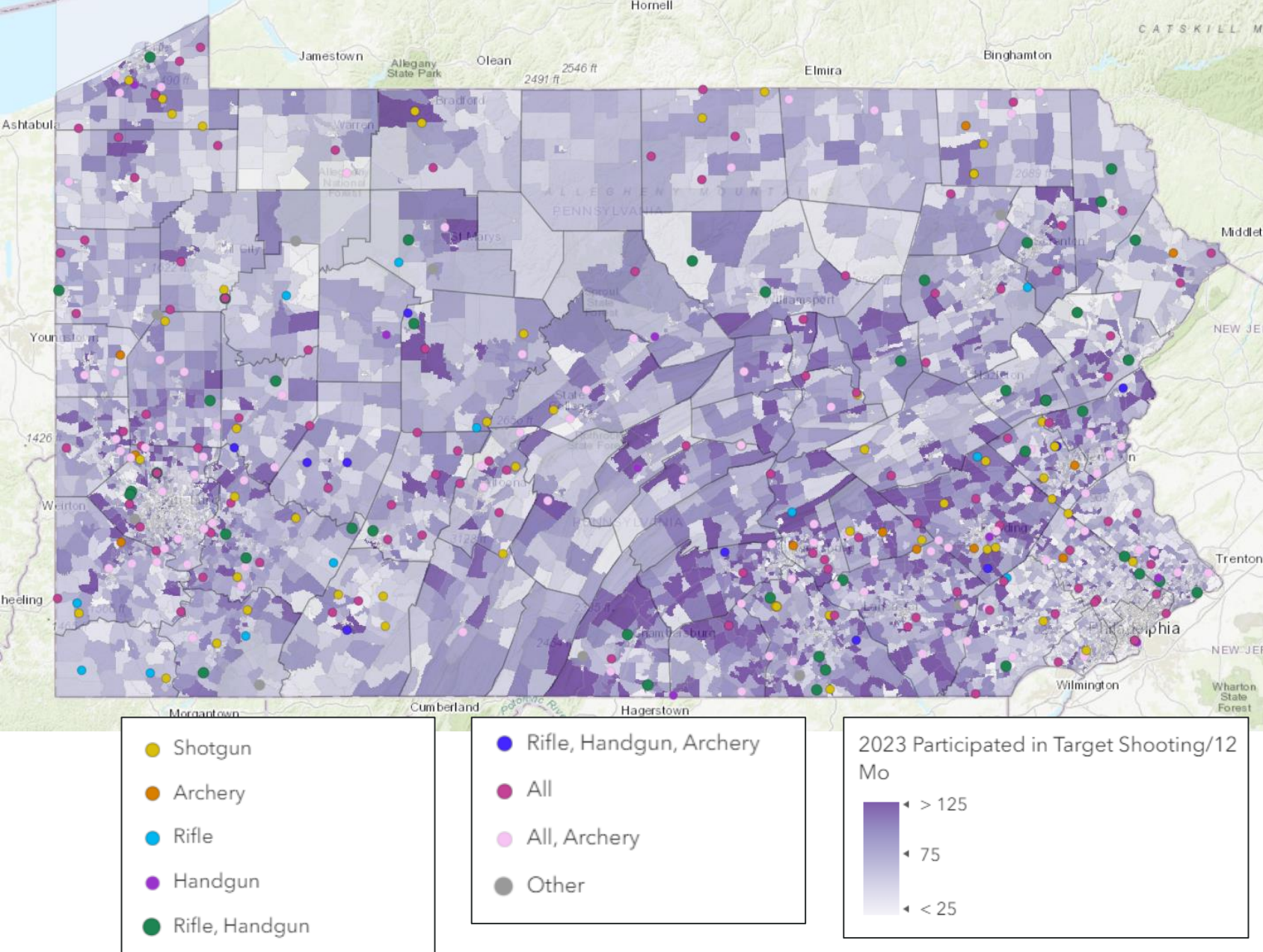
All data was explored at the block group scale. Block Groups (BGs) are statistical divisions of census tracts, are generally defined to contain between 600 and 3,000 people. Block groups are smaller divisions than zip codes and allow us more granularity in looking at data, especially for urban areas.



Distribution of target shooters with range overlay

Though a greater proportion of rural residents participate in target shooting, urban and suburban areas have a greater number of adults who participate due to greater population densities, resulting in overall greater demand.

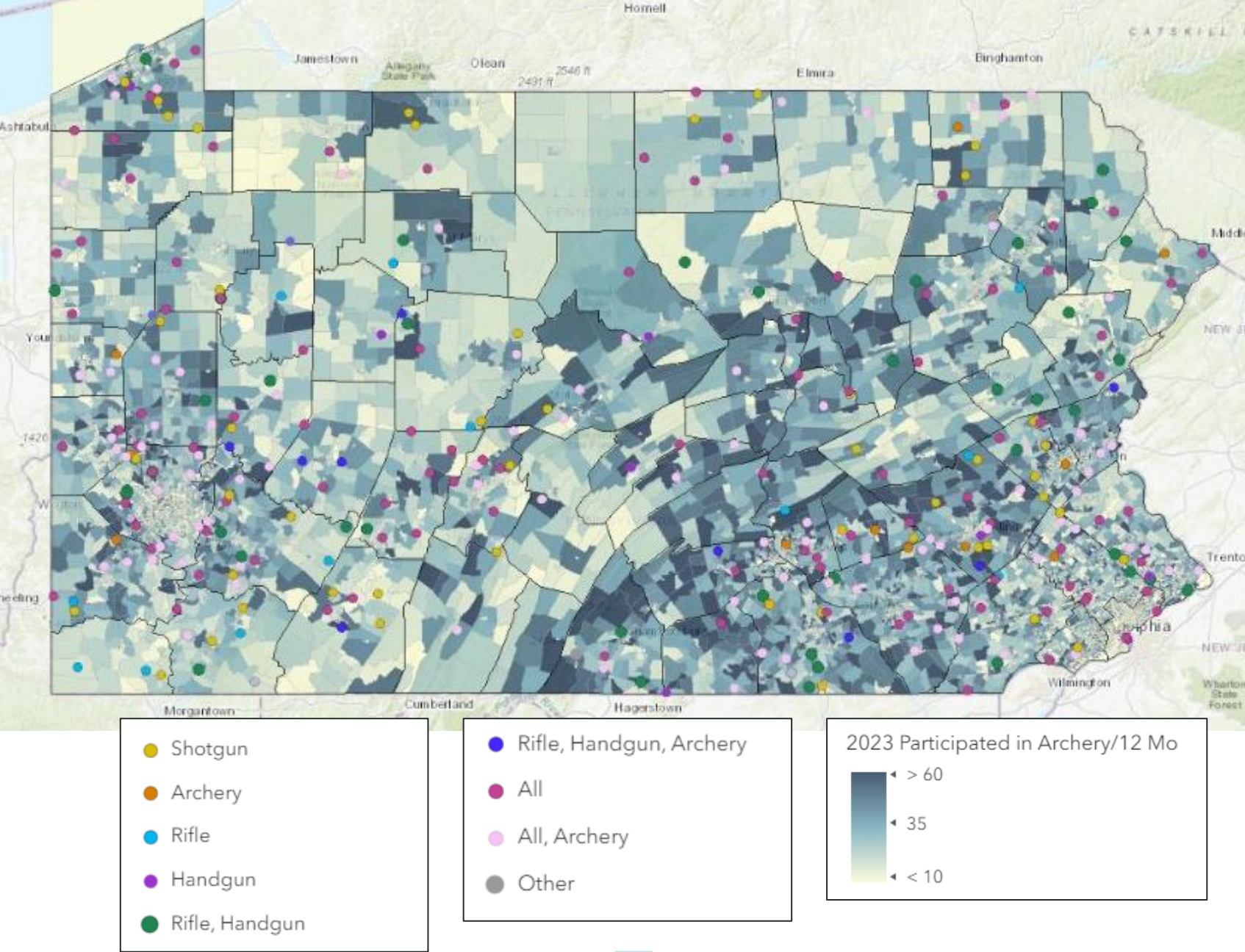
Open spaces to safely shoot are much more available to target shooters in rural areas.



Distribution of archery shooters with range overlay

The geographic distribution of archery shooters is largely similar to that of firearm target shooters.

Please note the participation results, archery & firearm, only show areas where current target shooters live. There may be many more interested in participating who do not due to a lack of convenient ranges, crowding, and/or poor experiences.



Participation and population in Pennsylvania's urban areas

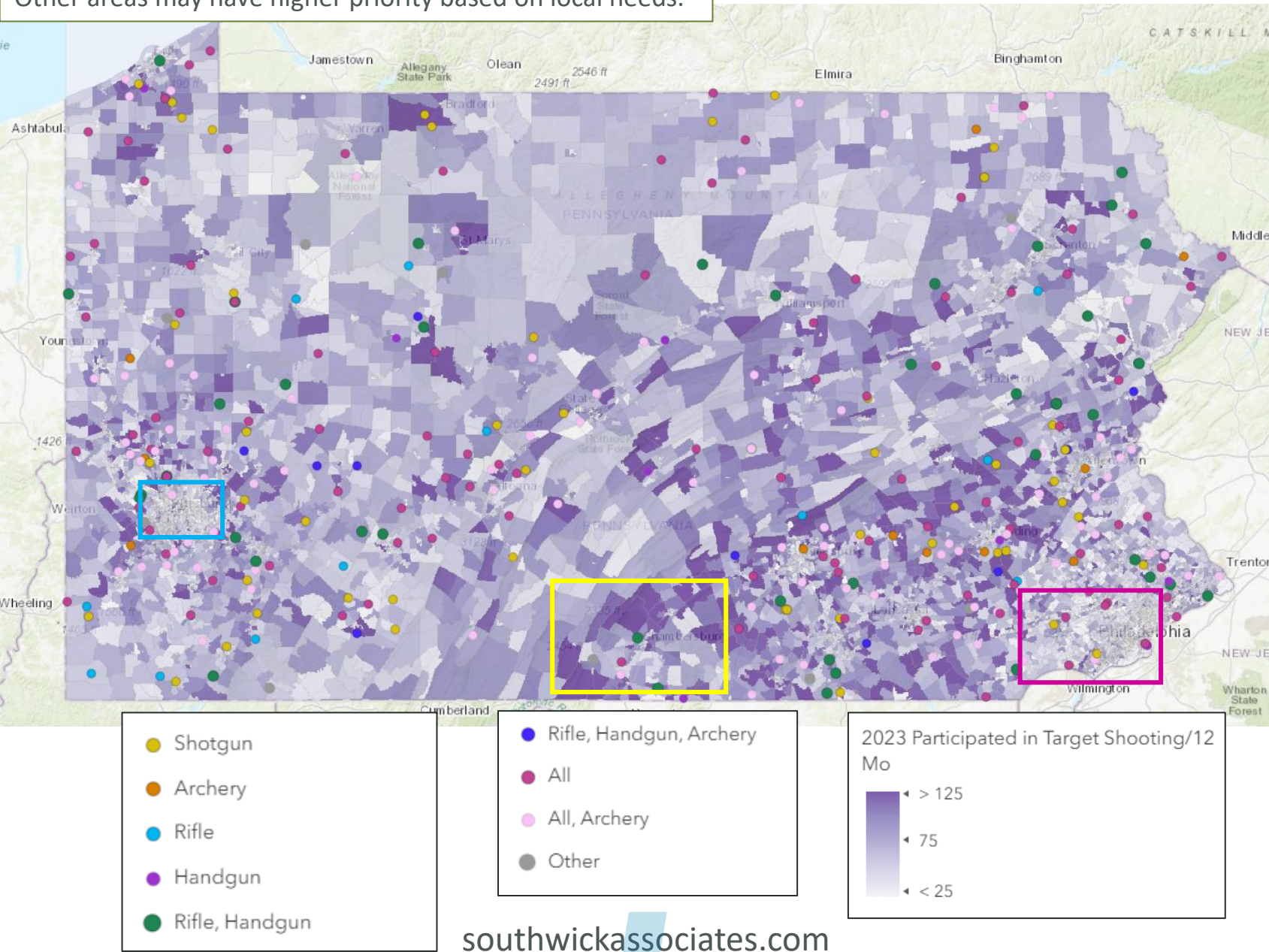
Pennsylvania's MSAs	Percent of the state's ranges	Percent of the state's population	Percent of the state's adult target shooters
Philadelphia	12%	33%	25%
Pittsburgh**	21%	19%	20%
Harrisburg	3%	5%	5%
Allentown/Bethlehem	6%	6%	6%
Scranton	3%	4%	5%
Total	45%	66%	60%

*Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA)

** Pittsburgh remains a potential priority area based on the absence of ranges in and around the core of the MSA.

Pennsylvania's metro areas, especially Philadelphia, are among the top locations with the highest need for additional ranges, as the existing ranges are serving more than 2 ½ times the number of target shooters than others across the state. Currently, demand is high in these areas and will likely continue to rise as populations increase. Though the availability of land is a limiting factor and major cost driver, these areas have the greatest need for range development and/or expansion.

These priority areas are not presented in any specific order.
Other areas may have higher priority based on local needs.



Possible priority areas for range development

Three areas are identified as priority regions for additional ranges or range expansion based on:

- 1) The number of ranges within reach of people and the diversity of range types available, and
- 2) The proportion of the surrounding public engaged in target shooting – OR –
- 3) For denser urban areas, the total number of people participating in target shooting.

- Philadelphia area
- Chambersburg area
- Pittsburgh area*

*Pittsburgh is included as a potential priority area based on the absence of ranges in an around the core of the MSA, despite the area accounting for 21% of the state's ranges.

Closing thoughts

Building new ranges and increasing capacity at existing ranges is one step to meeting statewide demand for target shooting. A need also exists to ensure current and potential new target shooters are aware of any new opportunities and that any new ranges offer the types of shooting they want in a safe, welcoming environment.

These results only show areas where current target shooters live. There may be many more people interested in participating who do not due to a lack of convenient shooting locations, crowds, and/or poor experiences. Also, these results do not explain the capacity or quality of existing ranges and the shooting experiences and offerings desired most by current and would-be target shooters.



In 2023 and 2024, multiple projects were funded by the FWS Multi-State Conservation Grant program, covering resources for range managers to boost operations, the types of shooting activities people desire most at a public range, and how to increase the number of non-traditional range consumers to range. These are all available at no cost.

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