



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

COMMANDER  
UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET  
250 MAKALAPA DRIVE  
PEARL HARBOR, HAWAII 96860-3131

IN REPLY REFER TO:

5090

Ser N01CE/0511

9 Jul 07

From: Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet  
To: Chief of Naval Operations (N456)

Subj: NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA) NOTIFICATION OF  
THE NORTHWEST TRAINING RANGE COMPLEX (NWTRC)  
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT/OVERSEAS ENVIRONMENTAL  
IMPACT STATEMENT (EIS/OEIS)

Ref: (a) SECNAVINST 5000.2  
(b) OPNAVINST 5090.1 Series  
(c) CNO ltr 5090 Ser N45/N4U732460 of 23 Sept 04  
(d) The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969  
(42 U.S.C. § 4321 et. seq.)  
(e) Executive Order 12114, Environmental Effects Abroad  
of Major Federal Actions  
(f) Undersecretary of the Navy Memorandum for the Chief  
of Naval Operations and the Commandant of Marine  
Corps, 28 December 2000, "Compliance with  
Environmental Requirements in the Conduct of Naval  
Exercises or Training at Sea"  
(g) Mid-Frequency Active Sonar Effects Analysis Interim  
Policy dtd 6 Mar 06  
(h) Update to Mid-Frequency Active Sonar Effects Analysis  
Interim Policy dtd Apr 07

Encl: (1) Draft Northwest Training Range Complex  
Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas  
Environmental Impact Statement (EIS/OEIS),  
Description of Proposed Action and Alternatives  
(DOPAA)  
(2) NWTRC EIS Milestone Schedule  
(3) Draft Federal Register Notice of Intent  
(4) Draft Public Involvement Plan (PIP)  
(5a) Draft Cooperating Agency Letters  
(5b) Draft Cooperating Agency Letters  
(6) Draft Early Consultation Letter  
(7) Draft Brief to ASN

1. Per references (a) through (h), Commander, U.S. Pacific  
Fleet (CPF) provides notice that CPF is preparing an

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Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement (EIS/OEIS) for the Northwest Training Range Complex (NWTRC). An EIS/OEIS is considered to be the appropriate document for this review because the Navy's proposed action may adversely affect marine resources and because of the potential scientific controversy surrounding sonar effects on marine mammals. The following information is being provided per reference (c):

a. Location: The NWTRC includes: Pacific Northwest (PACNORWEST) Ocean Surface/Subsurface OPAREA, special-use airspace, Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) underwater demolition areas and Naval Weapons Systems Training Facility (NWSTF) Boardman. NWSFT Boardman is being addressed in a site specific separate NEPA document. Therefore, the geographic scope of this EIS/OEIS (Study Area) will include only the PACNORWEST Ocean Surface/Subsurface OPAREA, special-use airspace (excluding the restricted air space associated with NWSTF Boardman), EOD underwater demolition areas. The PACNORWEST Surface/Subsurface OPAREA covers approximately 126,630 square nautical miles of ocean and the special use airspace is approximately 33,997 square nautical miles.

b. Cooperating Agencies: CPF plans to invite National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to be cooperating agencies. We plan on discussing potential impacts to marine mammals and threatened and endangered salmon species with NMFS. Discussions with USFWS will pertain to threatened and endangered birds and bull trout located in the study area.

c. The purpose of and need for the proposed action are as follows:

Purpose: The overall strategic mission of the entire NWTRC is to support naval operational readiness by providing a "backyard" range for basic and intermediate unit level training for forces homeported in the Pacific Northwest. The purpose of the proposed action is to:

- Achieve and maintain Fleet readiness using the NWTRC to support and conduct current, emerging, and future training activities and research, development, test, and evaluation (RDT&E) operations (primarily Unmanned Aerial Vehicles);

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- Expand Warfare Missions supported by the NWTRC, consistent with the requirements of the Fleet Readiness Training Plan (FRTTP) and other transformation initiatives; and
- Upgrade/modernize existing range capabilities to enhance and sustain Navy training and RDT&E operations.

Proposed future increases in the tempo of training activities are based upon the Navy's Ranges Required Capabilities Document, supplemented by interviews with range users and managers.

Need: The proposed action is needed to:

- Maintain current levels of military readiness by training in the NWTRC;
- Accommodate future increases in operational training tempo in the NWTRC and support the rapid deployment of naval units and/or strike groups;
- Achieve and sustain readiness of ships, submarines, and aviation squadrons using the NWTRC so that the Navy can quickly surge significant combat power in the event of a national crisis or contingency operation, and consistent with the FRTTP;
- Support the acquisition and implementation into the Fleet of advanced military technology. The NWTRC must adequately support the testing and training needed for new platforms and weapons systems;
- Reduce shortfalls in range capabilities, particularly training infrastructure and instrumentation, and address through range investments and enhancements; and
- Maintain the long-term viability of the NWTRC while protecting human health and the environment, and enhancing the quality and communication capability and safety of the range complex.

(d) Reasonable Range of Alternatives: The Navy has developed a set of factors for use in assessing whether a possible alternative meets the purpose and need for the proposed action. The following factors assume implementation of Navy-directed measures for the protection of natural resources where applicable in the context of training and RDT&E

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operations. These factors require that the NWTRC support or employ:

- All requirements of the FRTP as they apply to training conducted in the NWTRC;
- Achievement of training tempo requirements based on Fleet deployment schedules;
- Joint training events;
- Basic and Intermediate training of Navy forces across all applicable Navy Primary Mission Areas;
- Training requirements of formal schools located at Navy installations through the Pacific Northwest;
- Navy RDT&E activities associated with unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs);
- Allied military training and RDT&E activities;
- Alignment of the NWTRC infrastructure with Naval Force structure, including training with new weapons, systems, and platforms (vessels and aircraft) as they are introduced into the Fleet;
- Sustainable range management practices that protect and conserve natural and cultural resources; and
- Preservation of access to training areas for current and future training requirements, which addressing potential encroachments that threaten to impact range capabilities.

(1) No Action (Current Training Activities and Testing Events). Under the No Action Alternative, training activities and major range events would continue at baseline levels (see Enclosure 1). The NWTRC would not accommodate proposed force structure changes or provide range enhancements.

(2) Alternative 1 - Increase Operational Training and Accommodate Force Structure Changes. Alternative 1 is designed to meet Navy and Department of Defense (DOD) current and near-term operational training requirements. Alternative 1 consists of an increase in the number of training activities (see Enclosure (1)), from baseline levels, and force structure

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changes associated with the introduction of new weapon systems, vessels, and aircraft into the Fleet. In addition, training and testing events associated with force structure changes would be implemented for the EA-18G Growler, guided Missile Submarine (SSGN) and UAVs.

(3) Alternative 2 - Increase Operational Training, Accommodate Force Structure Changes, and Implement Range Enhancements (Preferred Alternative). Alternative 2 consists of all elements of Alternative 1 (accommodating training activities currently conducted, increase in training activities and accommodating force structure changes). In addition, Alternative 2 would:

- Increase the number of training activities over the levels identified in Alternative 1; and
- Implement enhancements, to include the establishment of an electronic combat emitter along the coast of Washington, increased net explosive weights for underwater demolition, development of air target services, and installation of surface targets.

e. Acoustic Thresholds: The methodology for assessing effects to marine mammals will be consistent with references (g) and (h).

f. Potentially Significant Environmental Issues:

- Sound in the water - the effects of sonar and impulsive sound sources on marine mammals, including listed threatened or endangered species of marine mammals;
- Threatened and endangered species - acoustical and non-acoustical effects of training activities on marine mammals, salmon, birds, and sea turtles; and
- Water quality - effects of routine discharges, accidental releases, and munitions constituents on marine resources.

g. Federal and State Coordination: Preparation of the EIS/OEIS, supporting studies, and required permits and approvals will require coordination with the NMFS and USFWS. In addition, coordination with the Washington Department of Ecology, Oregon Coastal Management Program, and California Coastal Commission will be required for Coastal Zone Management Act concurrence.

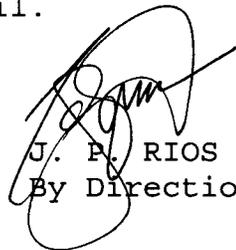
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h. Potential Controversy or Public Interest Issues:

- Acoustic and non-acoustic impacts on marine mammals and fish;
- Levels of potential "take" of marine mammals, including both species listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and those protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA);
- Potential impacts on the Usual and Accustomed Fishing and Hunting areas for Native American Indian Tribes and Nations; and
- Access to coastal resources by the public.

i. CNO Action: CPF requests that CNO coordinate the project review with Assistant Secretary of the Navy (ASN) and Office of Legislative Affairs (OLA) staff. N45 will be responsible for coordinating with NMFS on the sound-in-the-water issues. The proposed project schedule is provided in enclosure (2). The draft NOI to prepare an EIS/OEIS is provided in enclosure (3) for your review and approval. The draft Public Involvement Plan (PIP) is provided in enclosure (4). The draft cooperating agency letters are provided in enclosure (5). The draft early consultation letter is provided in enclosure (6). The draft ASN brief is provided in enclosure (7).

2. Our point of contact for this matter is Ms. Carolyn Winters, CPF Detachment Northwest Project Officer, (360) 315-5092 or email Carolyn.Winters@navy.mil.

  
J. P. RIOS  
By Direction

Copy to (w/o encls):

COMTHIRDFLT SAN DIEGO CA (J3, J7, J00J)  
COMNAVAIRPAC SAN DIEGO CA (N3, N00J)  
COMSUBPAC PEARL HARBOR HI (N3, N00J)  
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COMFLTFORCOM (N73, N77)  
COMNAVREG SW SAN DIEGO CA (N45, N00J)