

**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY**

**Finding of No Significant Impact for the Environmental
Assessment of the Pacific Northwest Electronic Warfare Range**

INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 Code of Federal Regulations [C.F.R.] Parts 1500-1508) implementing the procedural provisions of NEPA, and Chief of Naval Operations Environmental Readiness Program Manual (M-5090.1), the United States (U.S.) Department of the Navy (Navy) gives notice that an Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared. Based upon this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required for the installation and operation of an electronic warfare (EW) Range in the Pacific Northwest.

PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to sustain and enhance the level and type of EW training currently being conducted by Navy assets using the Northwest Training Range Complex (NWTRC), to provide the ability to accommodate growth in future training requirements, and to maximize the ability of local units to achieve their training requirements on local ranges. The Proposed Action is needed in order to support required EW basic, intermediate, and sustainment training activities and certifications for air, surface, and subsurface units in the NWTRC. This EA is tiered from the existing NWTRC Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement (EIS/OEIS) and Record of Decision, which analyzed the concept of an EW range and training activities associated with the placement of a fixed emitter located on the Olympic Peninsula to enhance EW training.

The Pacific Northwest EW Range EA was created in compliance with NEPA, the CEQ Regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of NEPA (40 C.F.R. Parts 1500-1508) and Department of the Navy Procedures for Implementing NEPA (32 C.F.R. Part 775).

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

The Navy's Proposed Action is to install and operate an EW Range in the Pacific Northwest in order to maintain, train, and equip combat-ready military forces in accordance with Title 10, United States Code. The Proposed Action consists of (1) the installation and operation of a Mission Control and Debrief Center in an existing facility at Naval Air Station Whidbey Island (NASWI), (2) the installation and operation of a fixed EW emitter at Naval Station Everett Annex Pacific Beach, to include renovation of Building 104, (3) the installation and operation of communication equipment on an existing tower in the Olympic Military Operations Area (MOA) at Octopus Mountain, (4) the operation of Mobile Electronic Warfare Training System (MEWTS) vehicle-mounted emitters within the Olympic MOAs on U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and Washington State Department of Natural Resources (WSDNR) lands, and (5) the operation of MEWTS vehicle-mounted emitters on USFS lands within the Okanogan and Roosevelt MOAs.

ALTERNATIVES

The Navy evaluated a range of reasonable alternatives to the action being proposed. All alternatives satisfy the purpose and need for the action. Three alternatives, described below, were carried forward for analysis in the Final EA.

No Action Alternative. Under the No Action Alternative, very limited EW training, without the enhanced capability of fixed and mobile emitters, would continue to be conducted in the NWTRC and intermediate-level EW training for certification would continue to occur at the Mountain Home Air Force Base approximately 400 nautical miles southeast of NASWI.

Alternative 1. Under Alternative 1, the Navy proposes to (1) install and operate a Mission Control and Debrief Center in an existing facility at NASWI, (2) install and operate a fixed emitter at Naval Station Everett Annex Pacific Beach, to include renovation of Building 104, (3) install and operate communication equipment on an existing tower in the Olympic MOA at Octopus Mountain, and (4) operate MEWTS vehicle-mounted emitters within the Olympic MOAs on USFS and WSDNR lands.

Alternative 2 (Preferred Alternative). Under Alternative 2, all elements, as described under Alternative 1, would occur. In addition, operation of MEWTS vehicle-mounted emitters on USFS lands within the Okanogan and Roosevelt MOAs would occur. Alternative 2 is the preferred alternative because it would afford the most flexibility and effectiveness in training capability to fulfill the purpose and need of the Proposed Action.

Only those alternatives determined to be feasible or reasonable relative to their ability to meet all of the selection criteria for the Proposed Action require detailed analysis. As determined in the EA, there are no other feasible or reasonable alternatives within the region based upon the selection criteria.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

The Final EA examined potential impacts on public health and safety, biological resources, noise, air quality, and visual resources associated with each alternative. The Final EA did not analyze any resource areas that were not impacted by the Proposed Action. Resource areas that did not require further analysis include the following: Geology, Water Resources, Land Use, Cultural Resources, Transportation, Socioeconomics, and Environmental Justice and Protection of Children. The results for those resources analyzed in the Final EA indicate that no significant impacts would occur as a result of implementation of the Proposed Action. A summary of impacts on each resource follows.

Public Health and Safety. The Navy's safety policies and procedures ensure that placement of and use of both the fixed and mobile emitters is conducted safely and monitored in all locations. These procedures minimize the potential for interaction between military and civilian activities by ensuring that emitter operators adhere to specific safety precautions designed to prevent electromagnetic hazards to people, schools, and childcare centers. Therefore, no significant impact on public health and safety would occur as a result of implementation of the Proposed Action.

Biological Resources. The Proposed Action is not expected to result in any long-term consequences to individual vegetation, invertebrates, amphibians, reptiles, and other non-listed birds and mammals or their populations or habitat. Even

short term interaction will not be significant based on the relatively low intensity of the impacts, the localized nature of the impacts on pre-disturbed areas, the infrequent nature of the impacts due to the wide spread nature of the sites, and the brief duration of the activities. For Endangered Species Act (ESA) listed birds, the Proposed Action may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect, marbled murrelets or northern spotted owls in the study area. The Proposed Action may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect critical habitat of the marbled murrelet and the northern spotted owl. For ESA-listed mammals, the Proposed Action may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect, Grizzly bears and Canada Lynx in the study area. The Proposed Action will have no effect on the Gray wolf and Woodland caribou in the study area. There will be no effect on critical habitat of any ESA-listed mammal. The conclusions in this EA for ESA listed species impacts are consistent with the conclusions in NWTRC EIS/OEIS and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife (USFWS) Biological Opinion for Northwest Training Range Complex dated August 12, 2010. The new information regarding this proposed action does not change the amount or extent of incidental take authorized in that Biological Opinion. The United States Fish and Wildlife Service was notified of the additional details of the proposed action in a letter dated 18 August 2014. Since the Navy's effects analysis for these species within the study area had not changed; there was no change in amount or extent of incidental take previously authorized in the NWTRC Biological Opinion; and there was no new species listed or new critical habitat designation, the Navy determined that reinitiation of the ESA consultation was not necessary. Therefore, no significant impact on biological resources would occur as a result of implementation of the Proposed Action.

Noise. Under the Proposed Action, vehicle noise, noise from temporary construction, and noise associated with the fixed and mobile emitters would only occur on an intermittent basis and would not result in a substantial sound source within the study area. In addition, the number of sensitive receptors impacted from sound sources under the Proposed Action is expected to be low and only in areas immediately adjacent to the construction activities. Therefore, no significant impact on noise would occur as a result of implementation of the Proposed Action.

Air Quality. Even though the General Conformity analysis under the Clean Air Act is not required since the proposed action will occur within attainment areas, emission estimates for the Proposed Action do not exceed *de minimis* levels under

Clean Air Act requirements. Annual criteria and precursor air pollutant emissions would be less than the corresponding federal Prevention of Significant Deterioration increments. In addition, estimated emissions from the Proposed Action would not be considered regionally significant. Therefore, no significant impact on air quality would occur as a result of implementation of the Proposed Action.

Visual Resources. The Proposed Action would not substantially degrade the existing viewshed or alter the character of the viewshed. Views from affected residential properties are compatible with the existing visual setting that consists of forested areas, power lines, buildings associated with Naval Station Everett Annex Pacific Beach, and commercial-type buildings to the north of properties. The fixed emitter tower would blend in with the existing skyline and would not be lit at night. Therefore, no significant impact on visual resources would occur as a result of implementation of the Proposed Action.

The Navy consulted and coordinated with other federal and state agencies to include USFS and WADNR as necessary. In compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act, the Navy received concurrence from the Washington State Historic Preservation Officer that the proposed action would not constitute an undertaking and no historic properties would be affected by the proposed action.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

On 01 August 2014, the Pacific Northwest EW Range Draft EA was posted on the Naval Facilities Engineering Command Northwest documents website (<http://go.usa.gov/kQ6e>). The website address was published in all newspaper advertisements, tribal letters, postcard mailers, and informational fliers. The document was also made available at information repositories located at the following public libraries: Oak Harbor, Ocean Shores, Omak Municipal, Republic Community, Timberland Regional-Aberdeen, and Timberland Regional-Hoquiam.

On 29 July 2014, postcards were mailed to 141 elected officials, government agencies, Native American tribes, nongovernmental organizations, community and business groups, and individuals on the project mailing list. Postcards included project information, a description of the Proposed Action, information repository locations, and comment instructions.

On July 31, 2014, the Navy sent letters to notify five Native American tribes of the proposed action and availability of the Draft EA and seek input as to whether government to government consultation was desired. The five tribes were: Makah Indian Tribe of the Makah Reservation, Quinault Indian Nation, Quileute Tribe of the Quileute Reservation, The Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation and the Hoh Indian Tribe. Separate from Navy correspondence, the USFS, a coordinated agency for this proposed action, notified the Quinault Indian Nation, Quileute Tribe of the Quileute Reservation, The Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation and the Hoh Indian Tribe, and Yakama Nation in April and May 2014. There has been no request for Government to Government consultation to be initiated.

Display advertisements were published in each of the following newspapers: *The Seattle Times*, *The Daily World*, *the Olympian*, and *The Montesano Vidette*. The newspaper advertisements ran for three consecutive days, with the exception of the tri-weekly-published *The Daily World*, which ran on the first three days the newspaper was scheduled to publish, and *The Montesano Vidette*, which only had two runs. All advertisements included project information, a description of the Proposed Action, information repository locations, and comment instructions.

A two-page informational flier, which included project information, a description of the Proposed Action and alternatives, information repository locations, and comment instructions, was mailed to the Pacific Beach Conference Center and 20 local U.S. Post Offices on 30 July 2014.

On 15 August 2014, the 15-day public comment period closed. The Navy received no comments from individuals, elected officials, government organizations, or Native American tribes in response to the Draft EA.

FINDINGS

Based on the analysis presented in the EA and coordination with the USFS, the Navy finds that implementation of the Proposed Action (by the means identified in the Preferred Alternative) presented in the Pacific Northwest EW Range EA will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment and, as a result, an EIS need not be prepared. Therefore,

pursuant to NEPA, the Navy concludes with a FONSI for the Proposed Action.

The EA, which was prepared by the Navy addressing this action, is on file; interested parties may access the EA at the following location: <http://go.usa.gov/kQ6e>.

28 Aug 2014

Date

B. J. Muilenburg

Rear Admiral Bret J. Muilenburg
Fleet Civil Engineer, U.S. Navy