

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT FOR NAVAL SPECIAL WARFARE CENTER
DETACHMENT KODIAK COLD WEATHER MARITIME TRAINING IN KODIAK,
ALASKA

Pursuant to the Council on Environmental Quality regulations in 40 Code of Federal Regulations (parts 1500-1508), implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Department of the Navy (DON) NEPA regulations (32 CFR 775), the DON gives notice that an Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared and an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required for increasing training tempo and adding training locations within the existing general training study area in support of Naval Special Warfare Center Detachment Kodiak, Alaska (NSWCEN Det Kodiak) cold weather maritime training activities. These training activities will occur on and around Kodiak Island, Alaska as set out in Alternative 3. The U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) is a cooperating agency for this action.

Proposed Action: The proposed action is to continue and expand basic and advanced Naval Special Warfare (NSW) and U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) component cold weather land and maritime training at NSWCEN Det Kodiak and associated training areas in and around Kodiak, Alaska, to include the adjacent near-shore water areas. A modest increase is proposed in training throughput, classroom courses, and future field training activities, as well as additional training locations within the existing general training study area in and around Kodiak. The proposed action does not include the use of explosives or live ammunition.

Purpose and Need: The purpose of the proposed action is to sustain current training and support advanced NSW and USSOCOM component training in cold weather land and maritime environments. The proposed action is needed to maintain operational requirements under 10 U.S.C. §5062 to organize, train, and equip forces to provide prompt, sustained combat incident to operations at sea. To be combat-ready, NSW personnel must train in various environments, including cold weather maritime climates like that available in Alaska.

Alternatives Considered: The EA analyzes the following alternatives:

- **No Action Alternative:** The No Action Alternative consists of the baseline tempo of training activities conducted on and around Kodiak Island (collectively referred to herein as the Training Study Area) over the past decade and in the same locations within the Training Study Area.
- **Alternative 1:** Under this alternative, training tempo would increase by one class per training activity with approximately 50 additional students for qualification training and 20 additional students for each of the three other types of range training activities. Training locations in the Training Study Area would remain the same as under the No Action Alternative.

- Alternative 2: This alternative would support baseline training tempo activities, with approximately the same student class sizes. However, the number of training locations would expand within the Training Study Area boundary as determined by the NSWCCEN Det Kodiak staff. Specifically, training would occur in locations that have historically been used as well as include other locations within the Training Study Area.
- Alternative 3: Alternative 3, a combination of Alternatives 1 and 2, would increase training tempo and add additional locations within the Training Study Area. This alternative would support NSW and other USSOCOM units, including USSOCOM-sponsored allied personnel in meeting current and near-term cold weather maritime training requirements.

Environmental Effects: No significant direct, indirect, or cumulative environmental impacts would occur from implementing the proposed action. Certain environmental resources (geology and soils, water quality, air quality, noise, land use, socioeconomics, transportation, and hazardous waste and materials) were not analyzed in detail in the EA because implementation of the proposed action would not be likely to result in any potential environmental impacts on these resources or impacts would be negligible. Potential environmental impacts on marine and terrestrial biological resources, cultural resources, recreation, public health and safety, land use, and environmental justice are summarized below.

Marine Biological Resources: The Training Study Area supports marine vegetation, invertebrates, fish, sea turtles, birds, and marine mammals. Under the proposed action, there would be minimal, short-term and recoverable impacts to marine biological resources, all of which would not be significant. The DON determined that proposed training activities may affect but are not likely to adversely affect the leatherback sea turtle, Steller's eider, short-tailed albatross, humpback whale, fin whale, North Pacific right whale, Western North Pacific gray whale, Steller sea lion (western stock), and the northern sea otter (Southwest Alaska Distinct Population Segment). Accordingly, the DON consulted formally with the National Marine Fisheries Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. By letters dated May 22, 2015 and June 6 2015, respectively, the services concurred with the DON's determinations.

Terrestrial Biological Resources: Impacts to terrestrial biological resources from the proposed action would be minimal, short-term, and recoverable since: 1) training predominantly occurs on foot and for short durations; and 2) the same travel routes are used infrequently. Moreover, logistical support vehicles would use established roads. As a result, impacts to terrestrial biological resources would not be significant. There are no terrestrial ESA species present within the Training Study Area. In addition, there would be no significant adverse effects on migratory bird species subject to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

Cultural Resources: The DON has collectively consulted under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act with the Alaska State Historic Preservation Officer and Alaska Native tribes (Sun'aq Tribe of Kodiak, Tangirnaq Native Village, and Native Village of Ouzinkie) and corporations (Afognak Native Corporation; Koniag Incorporated; Leisnoi Incorporated; Natives of Kodiak, Inc.; and the Ouzinkie Native Corporation). By letter dated July 20, 2015, the Alaska State Historic Preservation Officer concluded the consultation with a finding of No Adverse

Effect. In addition, the Alaska Native tribes have not identified protected tribal resources within their Rights-of-Entry for the existing and future land-based training areas and the proposed cold weather training activities would not reduce or degrade harvestable marine resources.

Recreation: Cold weather maritime training activities conducted under the proposed action are not inherently dangerous and would not pose risks to recreational users of public or tribal lands. Interaction with recreational users in remote areas may occur; however, NSWCEN students would purposefully adjust routes and/or areas to avoid interference or prolonged contact with the public any longer than needed to depart the shared trail space.

Public Health and Safety: The cold weather maritime training activities that would be conducted on public and Alaska Native tribal or corporation land that is open to the public are not inherently dangerous and do not pose any significant public health and safety risks to civilian users of these lands; the public would continue to have access to these areas. Interaction with remote recreational users would be avoided as previously described. The proposed training activities would involve minimal or no change in the use of machinery, equipment, or vehicles; therefore, there would be no significant impacts related to hazardous materials and waste with implementation of the proposed action.

Environmental Justice and Protection of Children: Implementation of the proposed action would not result in disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority populations and low-income populations within the Training Study Area. In addition, implementation of the proposed action would not result in environmental health risks and safety risks that may disproportionately affect children within the Training Study Area.

Cumulative impacts: Cumulative impacts were analyzed for each of the resources addressed in this EA. When the proposed action was considered in combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects that could affect the Training Study Area, no significant cumulative impacts to marine biological resources, terrestrial biological resources, cultural resources, recreation, public health and safety, environmental justice, or protection of children were identified.

Mitigation Measures: Based on the analysis contained in this EA, the DON has determined that implementation of the proposed action (Alternative 3) would not result in significant impacts; therefore, there are no proposed mitigation measures.

Public Outreach: The DON coordinated with various federal and state agencies during the NEPA process. The Draft EA was released for a 30-day public review from March 30, 2015 to April 29, 2014. Notices were published in two local newspapers, The Alaska Dispatch News and The Kodiak Daily Mirror and copies of the EA were placed in the following public libraries: Z. J. Loussac in Anchorage, and Kodiak Public in Kodiak, Alaska. In addition, a digital copy of the EA was made available at <http://go.usa.gov/kQ6e>. No public comments were received.

Finding: Based on the information analyzed in the EA, which has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of NEPA and DON policies and procedures (32 CFR 775), the DON finds that the implementation of the proposed action as set out in Alternative 3 will not significantly impact the quality of the human or natural environment or generate significant controversy. Therefore, preparation of an EIS will not be required.

Electronic copies of this EA and FONSI may be obtained by written request to: Naval Facilities Engineering Command-Northwest, Attn: Charles Escola, 1101 Tautog Circle, Silverdale, WA 98315-1101.

19 AUGUST 2015

Date



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