NORTHWEST
Training and Testing Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement

Scoping Information Materials

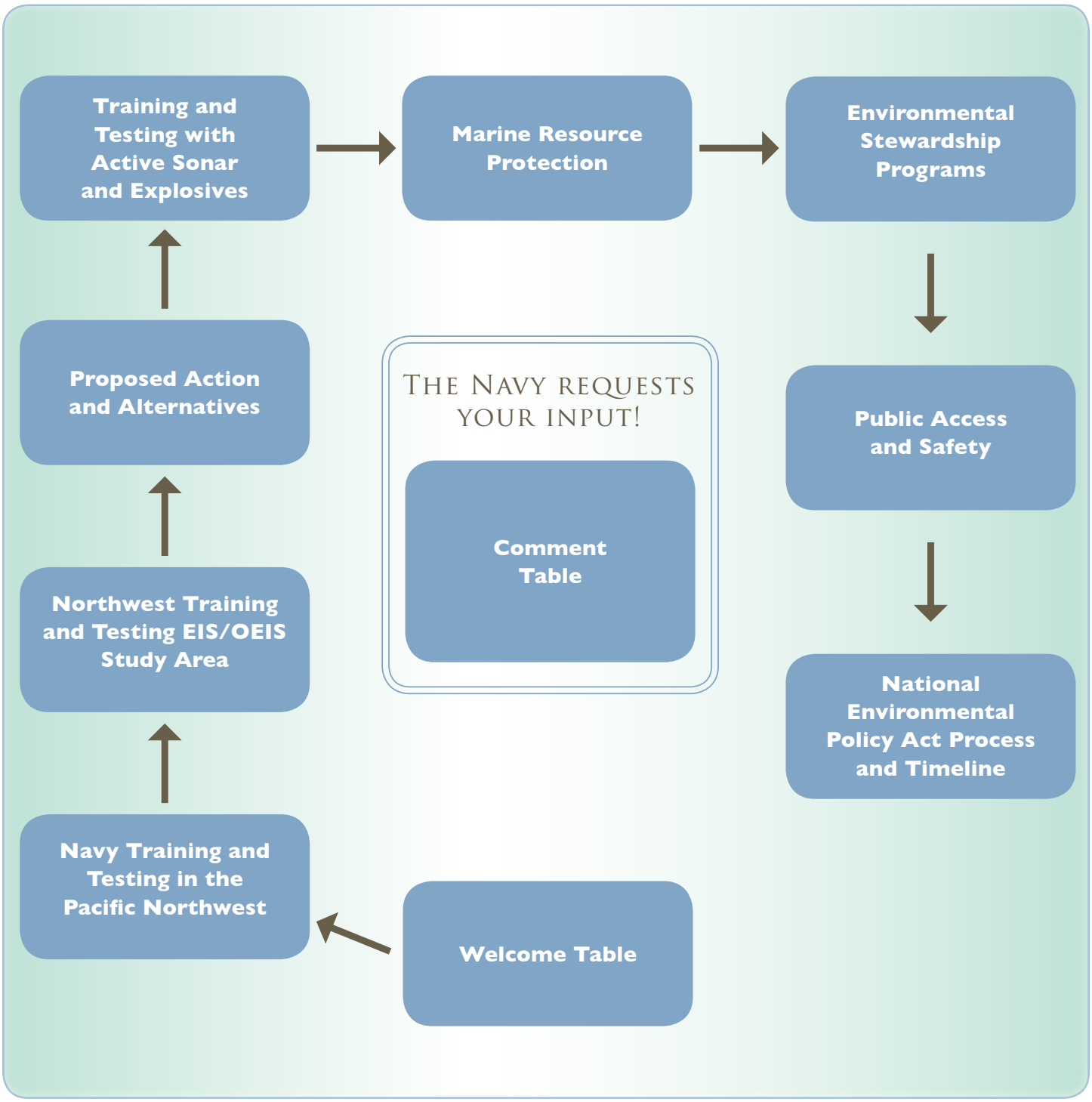
MARCH 2012

www.NWTTEIS.com

WELCOME TO THE U.S. NAVY'S OPEN HOUSE INFORMATION SESSION

Navy representatives are available at each station to provide information and answer your questions.

Open House Information Session: 5 to 8 p.m.



Introduction

The U.S. Navy conducts training and testing activities in many areas around the world, including the Pacific Northwest. Training and testing activities in the Pacific Northwest are conducted in designated military areas and ranges, including ocean areas offshore of Washington, Oregon and Northern California, and in the Western Behm Canal in southeastern Alaska. The Navy also conducts training and testing activities in certain locations within the Strait of Juan de Fuca and Puget Sound, and at Navy pierside locations (see Figure 1).

The Navy is preparing an analysis to assess potential environmental impacts from its training and testing activities and to ensure authorizations, permits and consultations are kept current. The authorizations, permits and consultations include those required under the Endangered Species Act and the Marine Mammal Protection Act. The Navy is in the beginning stages of preparing the Northwest Training and Testing (NWTT) Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement (EIS/OEIS) in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Executive Order 12114, *Environmental Effects Abroad of Major Federal Actions*. Conducting this analysis is important because it allows the Navy to identify and consider the potential environmental effects of its actions before a decision is made regarding testing and training activities to occur starting in 2015 when existing authorizations expire. The NWTT EIS/OEIS will combine environmental analyses of activities throughout the NWTT Study Area, including:

- Northwest Training Range Complex
- Naval Undersea Warfare Center Keyport Range Complex
- Naval Air Systems Command
- Southeast Alaska Acoustic Measurement Facility
- Naval Surface Warfare Center, Detachment Puget Sound
- Navy pierside locations in Puget Sound

Figure 1. The Northwest Training and Testing (NWTT) Study Area for the EIS/OEIS consists of established maritime operating areas and includes activities within four existing range complexes and facilities: the Northwest Training Range Complex, the Naval Undersea Warfare Center Keyport Range Complex, the Carr Inlet Operations Area and the Southeast Alaska Acoustic Measurement Facility. In addition to these areas, the NWTT Study Area includes pierside locations at U.S. Navy bases where sonar maintenance and testing occur, and inland waters that are not part of the range complexes where training and testing may occur.

WHY THE NAVY TRAINS AND TESTS

Naval forces must be ready for a variety of military operations – from large-scale conflict to maritime security to humanitarian assistance and disaster relief – to be able to deal with the dynamic social, political, economic and environmental issues that occur in today's world. The Navy responds to a wide range of issues while maintaining a continuous presence on the world's oceans.

To learn the necessary skills, Sailors must train with the equipment and systems that will achieve military objectives. The training process provides Sailors with an in-depth understanding of their individual limits and capabilities.

Working in the real world also helps the Navy's research, development, test and evaluation community to improve new weapons systems. Test and evaluation of naval systems ensures reliability and availability of systems from laboratory concept to field demonstrations to the lifecycle as a deployed asset.

Military readiness training and testing activities must be as realistic as possible to provide the experiences necessary for success and survival. Navy range complexes, test ranges and operating areas in the Pacific Northwest have these realistic environments, with sufficient sea and airspace that are vital for safety and mission success.

NAVY TRAINING AND TESTING IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

The Navy historically has used areas in the Pacific Northwest for training and testing activities, some dating back to 1914. The proximity of the Navy range complexes to naval homeports is strategically important because the close access allows for efficient execution of training and testing activities and maintenance. The proximity of training areas to homeports also ensures that Sailors do not have to routinely travel far, thus reducing time away from their families as well as fuel costs and emissions.

Importance of Realistic Training and Testing

Ensuring Navy personnel are prepared to go into harm's way requires rigorous, real-life training and testing in the air, on land and at sea. Readiness training and testing activities must be as realistic as possible to provide the preparation necessary for the success and survival of U.S. service men and women. There is no substitute for training and testing in real-world environments. The Navy uses designated air, land and ocean areas where Sailors can safely train with aircraft, vessels and sophisticated systems, such as weapons, sensors and related equipment. In these designated areas, the Navy can practice real-life situations and provide feedback on how well personnel perform.

Test ranges provide facilities and capabilities to support Navy research, development, test and evaluation activities ("testing activities"). These activities may include testing of torpedoes, unmanned vehicles, submarine readiness, diver training or similar activities that are critical to the success of undersea warfare. Conducting testing activities in varying marine environments, such as differing water depths, seafloor types, salinity levels and other ocean conditions, and in simulated war-fighting environments allows for accurate evaluation of system capabilities.

Training Activities in the Northwest

Navy Sailors participate in four levels of training, from learning basic skills to participating in joint exercises. Training levels include:

- Classroom and simulation training, usually using computers.
- Basic level training, which may consist of individuals, small groups of personnel or a single crew (ship, submarine or aircraft) training on its own.
- Intermediate level training, which involve exercises of strike groups operating together as large forces and may last several weeks. After completing this training, Sailors are well-prepared and may be certified for deployment or other activities depending on the nation's needs.
- Advanced level training, which involve exercises during which a large grouping of forces is provided with a situation, and must plan and respond as if responding to a real crisis.

All of the skills necessary to conduct these activities safely and effectively are challenging to achieve and difficult to maintain without constant practice. While simulators and synthetic training provide early skill repetition and enhance teamwork, there is no substitute for live training in a realistic environment. The Navy must maintain a rigorous, comprehensive training regimen to ensure Sailors are ready to use these skills when called upon.

Realistic training and testing ensures Sailors maintain the highest level of readiness and capability. Diverse training ensures personnel are able to react swiftly and decisively to a wide range of potential situations, from combat to civilian evacuations and humanitarian or disaster relief.

The setting and environmental conditions of the Pacific Northwest provide the Navy with a range of training opportunities involving varying degrees of complexity and diversity. The proximity of the training areas to naval homeports allows Sailors to train nearby, reducing time away from their homes and families and improving their quality of life, as well as reducing fuel costs and emissions.

Tactical Skills Training

Tactical training includes activities where personnel and crews learn skills they need to operate machinery or weapons. These activities include:

- Operating vehicles, aircraft, submarines and ships
- Conducting weapons training
- Detecting and locating submarines
- Finding and removing underwater mines and other explosive ordnance disposal
- Training Navy divers in a cold-water environment

Testing Activities in the Northwest

Testing activities conducted in the Pacific Northwest are important for maintaining military readiness. New and emerging technologies are constantly being researched and developed by the U.S. Department of Defense, and eventually these technologies must be tested and evaluated before use by the fleet. The Navy uses a number of different testing methods, including computer simulation and analysis, in the development of ships, submarines, aircraft and systems.

Although simulation is a key component in the development of vessels, aircraft and systems, it does not provide critical data on how they will perform or whether they will be able to meet performance and other specification requirements in the environment in which they are intended to operate. For this reason, vessels, aircraft systems and system components must undergo at-sea testing at some point in the development process.

Navy vessels, aircraft and systems must be tested and evaluated within the broadest range of operating conditions available because Sailors must be capable of performing varying missions within the wide range of conditions that exist worldwide. Access to unique range attributes, such as diverse marine environments that simulate a threatening environment, allow vessels, aircraft systems and system components to be tested and improved before deployment. Navy personnel must be assured that vessels, aircraft and systems will meet performance specifications in the real-world environment.

Navy testing activities may include:

- Basic and applied scientific research and technology development
- Evaluation and maintenance of ships, submarines, aircraft and systems, such as sensors, active and passive sonar systems, unmanned undersea vehicles and unmanned aerial vehicles

Because sonar systems are critical to the Navy's ability to defend against adversary submarines and anti-ship mines, it is necessary to conduct scientific research, evaluate new sonar systems and maintain the operational capability of current systems.

Some testing activities are similar to training activities and may appear to be the same to an observer. However, the purpose of the activity differs. For example, Sailors may fire a torpedo to practice the procedure, while researchers may fire a torpedo to assess the technology or to ensure that the torpedo meets performance specifications. Testing activities occur both at sea and in port and may occur independently or in combination with training activities.

Conducting testing activities in the varying marine environments of the Pacific Northwest allows for accurate evaluation of vessels, aircraft and systems before use by Sailors during deployment.

Navy Mission in the Northwest

The strategic mission of the Navy in the Northwest is to prepare Navy personnel for deployment and homeland defense by providing realistic training and testing environments.

The Proposed Action would ensure the Navy accomplishes its mission to maintain, train and equip combat-ready military forces capable of winning wars, deterring aggression and maintaining freedom of the seas.

MEETING FUTURE TRAINING AND TESTING REQUIREMENTS

Proposed Action

The Navy's Proposed Action is to conduct training and testing activities primarily within existing range complexes, operating areas, testing ranges and select Navy pierside locations in the Pacific Northwest. The Proposed Action includes pierside sonar testing conducted as part of overhaul, modernization, maintenance and repair activities at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard in Bremerton, Naval Base Kitsap at Bangor and Naval Station Everett.

The Proposed Action would ensure the Navy accomplishes its mission to maintain, train and equip combat-ready military forces capable of winning wars, deterring aggression and maintaining freedom of the seas. This mission is achieved by conducting realistic training and testing activities in the Pacific Northwest. The Navy's Proposed Action and alternatives will be evaluated in the NWTT EIS/OEIS to assess potential environmental impacts from proposed training and testing activities.

Through the NWTT EIS/OEIS, the Navy will:

- Reassess the environmental analyses of Navy at-sea training and testing activities contained in two previous EISs/OEISs and various environmental planning documents, and consolidate these analyses into a single environmental planning document. This reassessment will support reauthorization of permits under the Marine Mammal Protection Act and the Endangered Species Act. The two EIS/OEIS documents being consolidated are:
  - Northwest Training Range Complex EIS/OEIS, completed with community input in 2010
  - Naval Sea Systems Command Naval Undersea Warfare Center Keyport Range Complex Extension EIS/OEIS, completed with community input in 2010
- Adjust training and testing activities to support current and planned Navy requirements, including limited sonar use (high-frequency and not hull-mounted mid-frequency active sonar) in Puget Sound for homeland defense training activities. As part of the adjustment, the Navy proposes to account for other activities and sound sources previously covered in separate environmental analyses.
- Analyze the potential environmental impacts of training and testing activities in additional areas where they historically occur, including Navy ports and naval shipyards.
- Update the at-sea environmental impact analyses in the previous documents to account for force structure changes, including those resulting from the development, testing and use of weapons, vessels, aircraft and systems that will be operational prior to 2020.
- Update environmental analyses with the best available science and most current acoustic analysis methods to evaluate the potential effects of training and testing activities on the marine environment.

The Navy is preparing the Northwest Training and Testing EIS/OEIS to renew federal regulatory permits and authorizations for current training and testing activities and to propose future training and testing activities requiring environmental analysis.

Naval Undersea Warfare Center Keyport Range Complex

Puget Sound Naval Shipyard

Naval Station Everett

Evaluating Alternatives

The National Environmental Policy Act requires federal agencies to evaluate a range of reasonable alternatives to achieve the purpose and need of the Proposed Action. Two "action" alternatives (Alternative 1 and Alternative 2) that meet the Navy's purpose and need are currently under consideration. Analysis of a "no action" alternative is also required. These alternatives, and other reasonable alternatives identified during the scoping process, will be analyzed to help determine the appropriate level and type of training and testing activities to meet the Navy's requirements.

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the Navy would continue current training and testing activities as defined by existing environmental planning documents, including the Northwest Training Range Complex EIS/OEIS and the Naval Sea Systems Command Naval Undersea Warfare Center Keyport Range Complex Extension EIS/OEIS. The baseline testing activities also include other testing events that historically occur in the NWTT Study Area (see Figure 1) and have been subject to previous analysis pursuant to NEPA and Executive Order 12114. Analysis of the No Action Alternative provides a baseline, enabling decision makers to compare the magnitude of the environmental effects of no action (current activities) to the effects of the action alternatives. Baseline activities do not include training with sonar in Puget Sound.

Alternative 1

Alternative 1 includes adjustments to types and levels from baseline activities conducted in the NWTT Study Area to support current and planned Navy at-sea training and testing requirements. Under Alternative 1, sink exercises would be eliminated.

Alternative 1 includes:

- Testing activities at Navy pierside locations in Puget Sound, the Carr Inlet Operations Area and the Southeast Alaska Acoustic Measurement Facility
- Mission requirements associated with force structure changes, including those resulting from the development, testing and introduction of new vessels, aircraft and weapons systems into the fleet

Alternative 1 includes some activities that were not analyzed in previous documents. New activities being considered include:

- Use of new and existing unmanned vehicles and their acoustic sensors, in support of homeland security and anti-terrorism/force protection. This type of training is critical in protecting the nation's military and civilian harbors, ports and shipping lanes.
- Use of 0.50-caliber blanks in Puget Sound in support of force protection training of the Navy's Maritime Expeditionary Security Force.
- Addition of a biennial maritime homeland defense mine countermeasure training exercise in Puget Sound, and analyzing the amount of time acoustic sensors are used during that event.

Alternative 2

Alternative 2 includes all activities in Alternative 1 plus adjustments to the type and level of training and testing activities. Under Alternative 2, sink exercises would be eliminated.

Environmental Resources to be Analyzed

Some of the environmental resource areas and issues to be studied in the NWTT EIS/OEIS are listed below. The public is encouraged to provide input on these or other resource areas for consideration in the Draft EIS/OEIS.

- Ocean and biological resources, including marine mammals and threatened and endangered species
- Terrestrial resources
- Air quality
- Sediments and water quality
- Airborne soundscape
- Cultural resources
- Transportation
- Regional economy
- Recreation
- Public health and safety

The Navy has invited the National Marine Fisheries Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to be cooperating agencies in preparation of the EIS/OEIS.

IMPORTANCE OF TRAINING AND TESTING WITH ACTIVE SONAR AND EXPLOSIVES

Need for Sonar Training and Testing

More than 300 extremely quiet diesel-electric submarines are operated by more than 40 nations worldwide, and these numbers are growing. These quiet, difficult-to-detect submarines, as well as in-water mines and torpedoes, are threats to global commerce, national security and the safety of military personnel. As a result, anti-submarine warfare is a top war-fighting and training priority for the Navy.

Navy anti-submarine warfare training and testing activities include the use of active and passive sonar systems and small explosives charges (used as sound sources), which prepare and equip Sailors for countering threats. The development of anti-submarine detection and weapons systems is also a priority for the United States.

Sonar Training

Sonar proficiency is a complex and difficult skill that requires constant training in realistic conditions at sea. Lack of realistic training could jeopardize the lives of Sailors in real-life combat situations. This training cannot be duplicated with simulators or other artificial means.

Sonar Systems Testing

Scientific research, acquisition, maintenance and repair require pierside and at-sea testing to deliver combat-ready systems to naval forces. Some of the systems that require testing are sonar systems. Conducting scientific research on new sonar technology and existing sonar systems, and acquiring new systems and maintaining current systems are necessary to equip and maintain combat-ready forces capable of winning wars. The Southeast Alaska Acoustic Measurement Facility is the Navy's primary acoustic engineering measurement facility in the Pacific Northwest and it provides the capability to perform research, development, test and evaluation activities to determine the sources of acoustic noise, assess vulnerability and develop quieting measures.

What is Sonar?

Sonar, an acronym for **SO**und **NA**vigation and **R**anging, uses sound energy waves to detect and locate submerged objects, such as submarines and mines. There are two types of sonar:

Passive sonar is a sound-receiving system that "listens" for sound waves generated by man-made or biological sources using underwater microphones that receive, amplify and process underwater sounds. Passive sonar does not put any sound energy in the water. Passive sonar can indicate the presence, character and movement of submarines if submarines are loud or operating at high speed. Passive sonar is less capable than active sonar of detecting quiet submarines operating in areas where background noise levels are elevated, such as coastal waters. Although improvements in passive sonar are continually being researched, passive sonar currently is less effective than active sonar against quiet, modern diesel-electric submarines.

Active sonar is the most effective means available for locating objects underwater. Active sonar sends out a pulse of energy, often called a "ping," that travels through water, reflects off an object and returns to a receiver on the ship. Skilled technicians can use the reflected sonar pulse to determine the range, distance and movement of an object. Common active sonars include echo sounders, such as depth sounders and fish finders; side-scan sonars; and military sonars (hull-mounted and/or sonobuoys).

Active sonar has the ability to locate objects that are too quiet to be detected using passive sonar technology. This makes active sonar invaluable for detecting modern, very quiet submarines. Active sonar is also effective for locating underwater mines. Although active sonar is the most effective way to detect quiet objects, such as submarines, Navy vessels use active sonar sparingly because sonar pulses can reveal a sending vessel's location, compromising the mission and safety.

There are three basic types of active sonar:

Low-frequency: <1 kilohertz
Mid-frequency: 1-10 kilohertz
High-frequency: >10 kilohertz

Low-frequency active sonar is not part of the Proposed Action.

Navy Sailors need to use active sonar for training purposes to develop and maintain the complex skills and systems needed to effectively detect and counter quiet submarines, and locate and characterize underwater mines.

Training and Testing in a Noisy Environment

Sound levels in the ocean are not constant, vary with location and change over time. Different sources of sound contribute to the ocean's overall noise level. Those sources include shipping, breaking waves, marine life and other man-made and natural sounds.

The ocean is generally noisier in coastal areas, where many natural and man-made sounds exist. Coastal waters present a complex environment of varying depths, coastal boundaries, tides and currents, weather patterns, and significant biological and commercial activities.

Coastal waters contain 80 percent of all ocean life and support many human activities, including commercial shipping ports, fishing fleets, and oil exploration and drilling. These activities bring significant noise to the coastal environment and, when combined with complex oceanographic features, create an extremely challenging and varied environment for sonar technicians. Such a complex environment is typically where most nations' submarines operate today.

Training and Testing with Explosives

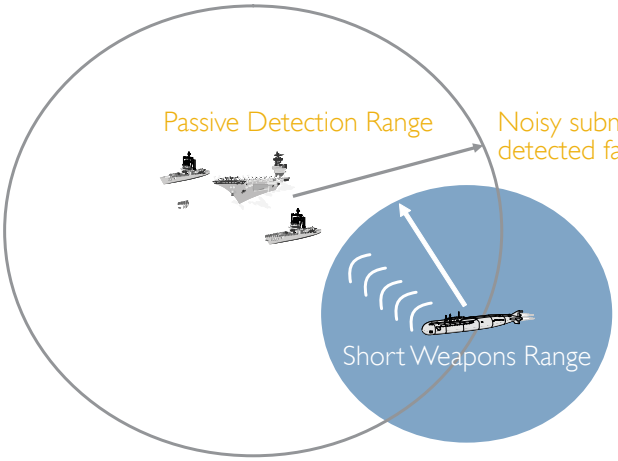
Training with explosives under real-life conditions is necessary for the readiness of military personnel who may be called to respond to emergencies and national security threats. Operating in a high-stress environment, including the use of and exposure to live ordnance and explosives, provides an opportunity for Sailors to practice the critical tasks and coordination essential to survival and success. Practicing these skills is necessary to ensure accuracy and instill confidence in military personnel.

Training and testing with explosives significantly enhances the safety of U.S. forces by improving combat readiness, equipment reliability and personal safety. Testing with explosives is necessary to fully test the effectiveness of devices. To the extent possible, simulators and other available technologies are used when training and testing. Simulation, however, cannot completely replace training and testing in a real-world environment. Limited training and testing with explosives occur only in established operating areas.

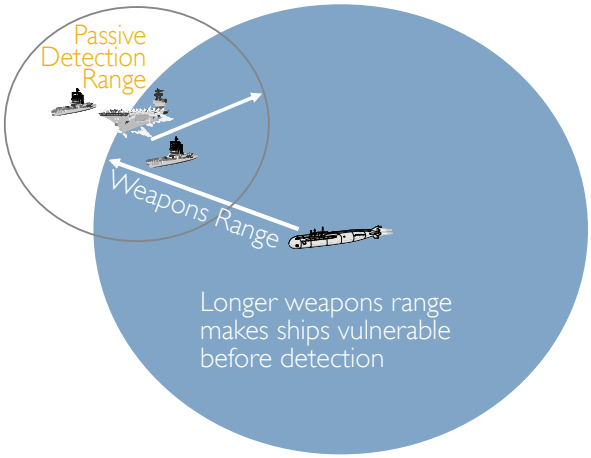
With advances in warfare technology, modern submarines using batteries and air-independent propulsion technology are extremely quiet and hard to detect in the noisy ocean environment. Currently, active sonar is the most effective method of detecting diesel-electric submarines.

Sonar: Then and Now

In response to Allied shipping losses from U-boat attacks during World War I, the Navy began using sonar to locate submerged objects. Today, sonar is used not only to identify, track and target submarines, but also to determine water depth and locate underwater mines. With advances in warfare technology, diesel-powered submarines operating on batteries and air-independent propulsion systems are extremely quiet and hard to detect in the noisy ocean environment. These modern submarines are relatively inexpensive and used by many nations around the world, posing a challenge for the Navy to locate, identify and track them.



Then – 1970s
Submarines of the previous generation were noisy and could be detected with passive sonar before they came close enough to deploy short-range weapons against a vessel.



Present Day
Modern, quiet submarines can approach close enough to deploy long-range weapons before entering the passive sonar detection range of U.S. vessels. Active sonar has a longer detection range that is needed for Sailors to detect a submarine before it is close enough to attack.

THE NAVY'S ONGOING MARINE PROTECTIVE MEASURES

The coastal and sea areas of the Pacific Northwest are critically important to the people who live here. These areas are places where people make their living or are used for recreational purposes. These areas are also home to a large variety of marine plants and animals, including baleen and toothed whales; porpoises; seals and sea lions; seabirds; and various fish species, such as salmon.

Protecting the marine environment of the Pacific Northwest is an important goal of the Navy. In its commitment to this region and in compliance with existing permits and authorizations, the Navy follows strict guidelines and employs measures to protect marine species and reduce environmental effects while training and testing at sea.

Protecting Marine Species During Shipboard Training at Sea

While training at sea, the Navy strives to protect the marine environment by operating in compliance with applicable environmental laws. By working with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and using the best available science, the Navy has developed a sophisticated set of procedures and tools to minimize effects of training and testing activities on the ocean environment. Navy personnel aboard ships are required and thoroughly trained to follow these procedures.

Pre-exercise monitoring

Many marine mammals vocalize underwater and are visible when on the ocean surface. Before using active sonar, Navy personnel scan the area visually and monitor with passive sonar, as appropriate, to detect the presence of marine species.

Posting highly trained lookouts

Navy Sailors undertake extensive training to qualify as a lookout in accordance with the Navy's Lookout Training Handbook. Additionally, all lookouts involved in anti-submarine warfare training events must review Marine Species Awareness Training material, approved by NMFS, prior to using active sonar. At least three Navy lookouts are posted on each ship at all times when it is underway. Additional lookouts are posted before and during training with active hull-mounted sonar. The Navy uses all available sensors and optical systems during mid-frequency active sonar training.

Establishing safety zones for marine species

During active sonar training, if a marine mammal is detected within 1,000 yards of the sonar dome, the vessel will reduce sonar transmission power. The vessel will further reduce sonar power if a marine mammal is detected within 500 yards. If a marine mammal is detected within 200 yards of the sonar dome, the ship will halt its active sonar transmissions.

Conducting safe navigation

While in transit, Navy vessel operators are alert at all times for objects in their path, use extreme caution, operate at a speed consistent with mission and safety, and take proper action if there is a risk of collision with a marine animal.

Reporting sightings

The Navy works closely with NMFS, including monitoring efforts during training, coordinating with the agency in the event of a stranding, and annual reporting of anti-submarine warfare activities and active sonar hours.

Marine Mammal Protection in Inland Waters

The Navy implements range operating procedures to protect and ensure minimal impacts on marine mammals during testing activities. Protective measures include:

- Conducting shore-to-shore surveillance of the range site to see and report marine mammals in the area
- Establishing a safety zone around active acoustic activities, and halting or delaying activities if marine mammals are observed within the zone
- Placing qualified lookouts on vessels
- Monitoring for marine mammal vocalization when the proper equipment is available during the event
- Reporting marine mammal sightings

Funding Independent Research

Much remains to be learned about how marine species live, travel and respond to human activities in the ocean. The Navy strives to be a world leader in marine species research and has provided more than $100 million over the past five years to universities, research institutions, federal laboratories, private companies and independent researchers around the world to increase the understanding of marine species physiology and behavior. This research helps the Navy to:

- Better understand marine species distribution and important habitat areas
- Develop methods to detect and monitor marine species before and during training activities
- Understand the effects of sound on marine mammals, sea turtles, fish and birds
- Develop tools to model and estimate potential effects of sound

The Navy also uses the results of these studies to develop new programs to safeguard marine protected species.

PROTECTION OF WILDLIFE AND HABITAT

The Navy continues to improve natural resource programs that care for and protect threatened and endangered plants and wildlife while conducting necessary training and testing. Some of these programs include:

- Developing and implementing Integrated Natural Resource Management Plans for resources at or near installations
- Using science-based methodologies for monitoring and evaluating endangered and threatened species
- Providing specialized training for civilian and military personnel on endangered and threatened species
- Reducing a vessel's environmental footprint by recycling waste fuel, preventing the introduction of non-native species through ballast water management and ensuring no plastic is discharged while at sea
- Discharging solid waste in an environmentally responsible manner

Bird Aircraft Strike Hazard Program

The Natural Resources Management Department at Naval Air Station Whidbey Island implemented the successful Bird Aircraft Strike Hazard program which has proven to be an exemplary program for the Navy worldwide. The program includes year-round airfield surveys for bird activity, an assessment of regional bird movements and concentrations, and the implementation of strike prevention measures. Since the program has been implemented, there has been a substantial reduction in reported bird strikes. In addition, the Bird Aircraft Strike Hazard program is used to protect and enhance the biodiversity of local songbirds by including the trapping of starlings and cowbirds.

Improving Energy Efficiency

The Navy continually works to strengthen its environmental, energy and transportation-related activities. Through its environmental management and sustainability programs, the Navy is exceeding its goal to reduce energy use by 30 percent and reduce water consumption by 16 percent by 2015. Since 2009, the Navy has been a partner in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Federal Green Challenge program. Additional initiatives continue to be implemented for alternative fuels, green buildings and management of electronics.

The Navy is committed to protecting the marine environment and employs protective measures to protect marine life and reduce potential environmental effects from training and testing activities.

PARTNERING FOR SUSTAINABILITY

In recent years, the Navy has focused additional efforts on developing partnerships and building coalitions with other government agencies and organizations to better manage and protect natural and cultural resources and leverage limited resources. Navy personnel at Commander, Navy Region Northwest and at individual installations have recognized the common goals, objectives and interests of the Navy and land conservancies; environmental groups; Native American tribes and nations; and federal, state and local government agencies in protecting endangered and threatened species and preserving critical habitat and open space. Programs promoting sustainability have helped to protect both the environment and the military mission.

Puget Sound Federal Caucus

In 2007, Washington launched a new state agency, the Puget Sound Partnership, to oversee restoration of the environmental health of the Puget Sound by 2020. To serve as the conduit between Washington's Puget Sound Partnership and the federal government, the Puget Sound Federal Caucus, consisting of 13 federal agencies, was formed to better integrate, organize and focus federal efforts in the Puget Sound ecosystem. Commander, Navy Region Northwest participates in the Puget Sound Federal Caucus and works closely with other federal agencies with the common goal of restoring and protecting Puget Sound. The Puget Sound Federal Caucus also meets regularly with federally recognized Puget Sound tribes to ensure tribal concerns and interests are considered and addressed in the plans and actions of the Puget Sound Partnership.

Dabob Bay and The Nature Conservancy

In October 2011, the Navy and The Nature Conservancy, an international nonprofit conservation organization, entered into a five-year agreement to help conserve Dabob Bay in northwest Washington. The Navy has a long history of working with The Nature Conservancy to protect the environment while also protecting the Navy's ability to perform its mission. Dabob Bay is one of the Navy's premier locations for research, development, test and evaluation of underwater systems. By partnering with The Nature Conservancy, the Navy can protect this critical range while also preserving water quality and wildlife habitat.

Marbled Murrelet Science Panel

In 2011, the Navy collaborated with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to develop recommended criteria for evaluating the onset of injury to the marbled murrelet from underwater sounds resulting from impact pile driving. The USFWS and Navy convened a multi-disciplinary scientific panel which represented technical experts and scientists affiliated with federal agencies, academia and consulting firms who have expertise in underwater acoustics (including pile driving acoustics); sound impacts on fish, marine mammals and terrestrial and marine birds; and the life history and demography of the marbled murrelet.

Recently, the USFWS has requested the Navy convene a second marbled murrelet science panel to address the sound pressure level at which non-injurious or behavioral effects may occur. The Navy is now collaborating with the USFWS in the coordination of this second science panel.

PUBLIC SAFETY MEASURES

The Navy understands Sailors are sharing the ocean and coastal areas with commercial and recreational users and recognizes the importance of public access. The Navy strives to be a good neighbor by maintaining access to public areas whenever possible and ensuring safety at all times. Some access restrictions must occur, however, for the safety of the public. The Navy has designated operating areas, warning areas, security zones and restricted areas both in the air and in marine waters to indicate where and when it may not be safe for recreational and commercial activities to take place.

To notify ocean users and minimize inconveniences, the Navy publishes, as feasible, scheduled airspace and marine activity dates and locations in advance, and distributes Notices to Airmen and Notices to Mariners. The schedule and the notices alert commercial and recreational ocean users of the Navy's plans and allows them to adjust their routes to avoid temporarily restricted areas. The Navy also ensures the area is clear of civilian vessels for safety purposes prior to conducting training and testing activities.

It is the U.S. military's policy to observe every precaution in the planning and execution of all training and testing activities to prevent injury to service men and women and for the safety of the public. Some protective measures include:

- Ensuring that impact areas and targets are clear prior to beginning potentially dangerous activities
- Cancelling or delaying activities if there is any doubt about the safety of the public or military personnel
- Notifying the public in advance of the location, date and time of potentially dangerous activities
- Implementing temporary or permanent access restrictions to training and testing areas

If a commercial or recreational vessel is within a designated restricted area at the time of a scheduled activity, Navy personnel will proceed and avoid the vessel if it is safe and possible to do so. If avoidance is not safe or possible, the activity may relocate or be delayed. In some instances where safety requires exclusive use of a specific area, civilian users in the area will be asked to relocate to a safer area for the duration of the activity.

Thorough environmental and safety reviews are conducted for all test systems before tests are conducted on any of the range sites. Prior to going into the water, most systems go through land-based testing and many have been tested in smaller fresh water areas or tanks. After an initial review, modifications are made, as needed, to minimize the potential impacts on public safety and the natural environment.

Other procedures to ensure public safety during testing activities include:

- Notifying the U.S. Coast Guard, Federal Aviation Administration and/or interested parties of upcoming testing events
- Communicating test activities at the Dabob Bay Range Complex Site to tribes, regulators and the public
- Placing Navy personnel on guard boats to communicate with non-military vessels unaware of test restrictions
- Using marine radio channels, which are monitored by all range craft and range control during range activities in accordance with safety afloat regulations

Navy-maintained yellow and red warning lights at various locations within the Dabob Bay Range Complex Site warn non-military craft of the status of range use. Descriptions of these lights are posted at local boat ramps and marinas. To further ensure public safety, minimum separation distances must be maintained between non-military vessels and Navy vessels.

SHARING THE SEA

Many people in the Pacific Northwest use and depend on the coast and the ocean for recreational purposes or to earn a living. Tourism, shipping, boating and commercial fishing, including crab, salmon and shellfish harvesting, have a significant impact on the regional economy. Recreational activities, including swimming, kayaking, sailing, fishing and scuba diving also contribute to the economy and the quality of life.

While these activities are critical to the people of the Pacific Northwest, it is also important for the Navy to be able to train realistically to protect themselves and the United States. The Navy knows that, for safety reasons, this training could occasionally limit public access to coastal and ocean areas. Most marine areas around Navy training and testing ranges are accessible to the public for commercial and recreational purposes when they are not being used for Navy activities.

Navy activities in the Northwest have substantially contributed to the social and economic well-being of the region. Each year, the Navy spends more than $4.3 billion in the Pacific Northwest, with more than $2.9 billion in the Puget Sound area alone. The Pacific Northwest is home to more than 21,000 Navy active-duty members, 5,800 reservists, 15,500 civilian employees, 42,000 family members and 55,500 retirees.

The Navy takes active steps to minimize restrictions on public access to ocean areas whenever possible, but some access restrictions are necessary for public safety.

USUAL AND ACCUSTOMED FISHING AND HUNTING TREATY RIGHTS

According to the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission, Native American tribes and nations' "usual and accustomed" harvest areas reflect the historical region in which finfish, shellfish and other natural resources were collected. Native American tribe and nation members are allowed to exercise their treaty-protected harvest rights only within their tribe or nation's usual and accustomed area.

Under the U.S. Supreme Court ruling known as the "Boldt Decision" (U.S. v. Washington, 1974, upheld in 1979), the treaty rights of 15 western Washington tribes and nations to fish in usual and accustomed areas were reaffirmed, and 50 percent of the annual catch was allocated to them.

NAVY REGION NORTHWEST NAVY TRIBAL COUNCIL

To facilitate government-to-government consultations and relations, Commander, Navy Region Northwest chairs the Northwest Navy Tribal Council. This forum, established in 2003, serves to build strong relationships among tribal leaders and Navy senior leadership at the region and installation level and promotes a spirit of cooperation for identifying solutions to regional issues. These relationships help to develop mutual trust and improve knowledge, sensitivity and communications among the Navy and the federally recognized tribes of western Washington. Open dialogue with tribes on issues such as effective consultation processes, training and operations, marine mammal issues, natural and cultural resources, shellfish and water quality allows the Navy and the tribes to care for the land and water they share in the Pacific Northwest.

In accordance with Government-to-Government consultation responsibility under Executive Order 13175, the Navy is open to engaging in consultations with federally recognized Native American tribes and nations on the coasts of Washington, Oregon, Northern California and southeastern Alaska whose tribal rights and resources are potentially significantly affected by Navy activities.

NEPA PROCESS AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The National Environmental Policy Act

Before U.S. federal agencies proceed with major federal actions, they must consider the potential effects their proposed activities may have on the human, natural or cultural environment. An environmental analysis is mandated by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969. NEPA requires federal agencies to examine the potential environmental effects of their actions to allow for more informed decision-making.

An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is a detailed public document that provides an assessment of the potential effects a federal action may have on the environment. An Overseas Environmental Impact Statement (OEIS) is prepared to comply with Executive Order 12114, *Environmental Effects Abroad of Major Federal Actions,* of 1979. The Executive Order requires federal agencies to consider the potential effects of their actions on the environment outside the U.S. territorial sea. The Navy's analysis under NEPA extends through the U.S. territorial sea (from shore to 12 nautical miles).

Scoping is an early and open process for developing the scope of issues to be addressed in an EIS and for identifying significant issues related to a proposed action. The scoping process for an EIS is initiated by publication of the Notice of Intent in the *Federal Register* and local newspapers. During the scoping phase, the public helps define and prioritize issues by participating in open house information sessions and submitting comments for consideration.

Sailors supporting a tribal canoe journey by helping carry Tribes' canoes out of the water and up onto shore.

Community Involvement

Community involvement is a critical part of the NEPA process and there are a number of opportunities for the public to participate throughout the EIS/OEIS development. In March 2012, the Navy is holding nine open house information sessions to inform the public about the Proposed Action and to receive public comments on resource areas and issues to be studied in the environmental analysis. During each open house, informational poster stations and project team representatives are available to provide the public with an opportunity to learn more about the NEPA process, the Proposed Action and alternatives currently under consideration.

Government agencies, elected officials, organizations and individuals are encouraged to participate and comment in any of the following ways:

- Submit oral or written comments at the public open house information sessions
- Submit comments via the project website at: **www.NWTTEIS.com**
- Mail comments to:
  Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Northwest
  Attn: Mrs. Kimberly Kler – NWTT EIS/OEIS
  Project Manager
  1101 Tautog Circle, Suite 203
  Silverdale, WA 98315-1101

All comments must be postmarked or received online by **April 27, 2012**, to be considered in the development of the Draft EIS/OEIS.

Public involvement is a fundamental part of the development of the Northwest Training and Testing EIS/OEIS. The Navy welcomes and appreciates your comments.

For More Information

Informational materials and project documents will be made available on the project website at **www.NWTTEIS.com** and at the following locations:

WASHINGTON:

Everett Main Library
2702 Hoyt Ave.
Everett, WA 98201

Gig Harbor Library
4424 Point Fosdick Drive W.
Gig Harbor, WA 98335

Jefferson County Library (Port Hadlock)
620 Cedar Ave.
Port Hadlock, WA 98339

Kitsap Regional Library (Poulsbo)
700 NE Lincoln Road
Poulsbo, WA 98370

Oak Harbor Public Library
1000 SE Regatta Drive
Oak Harbor, WA 98277

Port Angeles Main Library
2210 S. Peabody St.
Port Angeles, WA 98362

Port Townsend Public Library
1220 Lawrence St.
Port Townsend, WA 98368

Sylvan Way Library (Bremerton)
1301 Sylvan Way
Bremerton, WA 98310

Timberland Regional Library – Aberdeen
121 E. Market St.
Aberdeen, WA 98520

Timberland Regional Library – Hoquiam
420 7th St.
Hoquiam, WA 98550

OREGON:

Driftwood Public Library
801 SW Highway 101
Lincoln City, OR 97367

Lincoln County Library District
1247 NW Grove, No. 2
Newport, OR 97365

Newport Public Library
35 NW Nye St.
Newport, OR 97365

Tillamook Main Library
1716 Third St.
Tillamook, OR 97141

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA:

Fort Bragg Branch Library
499 Laurel St.
Fort Bragg, CA 95437

Humboldt County Public Library
Eureka Main Library
1313 3rd St.
Eureka, CA 95501

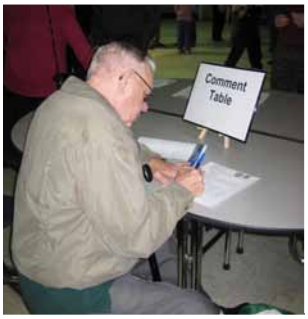
Humboldt County Public Library
Arcata Branch Library
500 7th St.
Arcata, CA 95521

SOUTHEASTERN ALASKA:

Juneau Public Library – Downtown Branch
292 Marine Way
Juneau, AK 99801

Ketchikan Public Library
629 Dock St.
Ketchikan, AK 99901

*For more information about the NWTT EIS/OEIS, visit **www.NWTTEIS.com.***



MARCH 2012
PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

NEPA Process and Timeline

The public participates in the NEPA process by helping to identify environmental issues and potential alternatives during the scoping period and by evaluating the analysis of the Proposed Action and alternatives during the public hearings and comment period. All public comments are considered, and the Navy will not proceed with the Proposed Action until the NEPA process is complete.

The table below describes the steps of the NEPA process and identifies the opportunities for public involvement.

MILESTONES	DESCRIPTION	SCHEDULE
Notice of Intent (NOI) to Prepare an EIS/OEIS	Publication of the NOI in the Federal Register starts the initial public involvement phase. Notices are also published in local newspapers.	Feb. 27, 2012
➤ Scoping Period	The scoping process actively involves the public and other agencies in identifying the environmental issues to be addressed in the EIS/OEIS and other potential alternatives to accomplish the purpose and need. The scoping period for this EIS/OEIS provides for nine open house information sessions and a 60-day public comment period.	**Scoping Period:** Feb. 27, 2012 – April 27, 2012 **Open House Information Sessions:** Oak Harbor, WA – March 13 Quilcene, WA – March 14 Silverdale, WA – March 15 Aberdeen, WA – March 16 Tillamook, OR – March 19 Newport, OR – March 20 Eureka, CA – March 22 Fort Bragg, CA – March 23 Ketchikan, AK – March 27
Draft EIS/OEIS	The Draft EIS/OEIS presents the analysis of potential environmental impacts for the Proposed Action and each of the identified alternatives, including a no action alternative. Public comments received during the scoping period are considered in the development of the Draft EIS/OEIS. A notice announcing availability of the Draft EIS/OEIS is published in the Federal Register and local newspapers. The Draft EIS/OEIS will be filed with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and made available to interested parties.	Fall 2013
➤ Public Hearings and Comment Period	NEPA regulations require a minimum of 45 days for the public to comment on the analysis presented in the Draft EIS/OEIS. Comments may be submitted at public hearings, via U.S. mail or on the project website.	Fall 2013
Final EIS/OEIS	The Final EIS/OEIS is an update to the Draft EIS/OEIS and includes responses to all comments received during the public hearings and comment period. A notice announcing availability of the Final EIS/OEIS is published in the Federal Register and local newspapers. The Final EIS/OEIS will be filed with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and made available to interested parties.	Spring 2015
➤ 30-Day Wait Period	Regulations provide for a 30-day wait period after the Final EIS/OEIS is published before the agency may take final action. During the wait period, in addition to the agency's own internal final review, the public and other agencies can comment on the Final EIS/OEIS before the agency's final action on the proposal.	Spring 2015
Record of Decision	After the 30-day wait period and considering public comment on the potential environmental impacts, the Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Energy, Installations and Environment) will select an alternative and issue a Record of Decision. A notice of the Record of Decision is published in the Federal Register and local newspapers and made available to interested parties.	Summer 2015

➤ Opportunities for Public Review and Comment Complete In Progress Next Steps