



NORTHWEST TRAINING AND TESTING Supplement to the Draft EIS/OEIS

On Jan. 24, 2014, the U.S. Navy released the Northwest Training and Testing (NWT) Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement (EIS/OEIS) for public review. Since that time, the Navy has determined that updated training requirements would result in substantial changes to the Proposed Action or the environmental analysis. The Navy has prepared a Supplement to the Draft EIS/OEIS, which is now available for review and comment through Feb. 2, 2015. The National Marine Fisheries Service and U.S. Coast Guard are cooperating agencies on this EIS/OEIS.



The training conducted in the Pacific Northwest is critical for military readiness and defending and securing the United States and its interests abroad.

Supplement to the Draft EIS/OEIS

The Supplement includes a description of the changes to the Proposed Action due to updated training requirements and new information relevant to environmental concerns (per 40 Code of Federal Regulations § 1502.9). Changes to the Proposed Action include updated or additional training requirements for two activities: *Maritime Security Operations* and *Tracking Exercise – Maritime Patrol (Extended Echo Ranging Sonobuoys)*.

The Supplement includes new or revised environmental impact analyses for the additional activities, as well as non-substantial and minor corrections to the Draft EIS/OEIS, which did not alter the analysis of impacts. Other than these changes, the Draft EIS/OEIS remains valid and will be merged with the Supplement into the Final EIS/OEIS.

Maritime Security Operations

Ongoing Maritime Security Activities conducted in the NWT Study Area were not previously analyzed in the Draft EIS/OEIS, but are now added to the training activities proposed under Alternatives 1 and 2 and analyzed in the Supplement. Activities are conducted in inland waters and could include:

- Transit Protection System activities
- Coastal Riverine Group activities
- Visit, board, search and seizure exercises
- Maritime interdiction operations
- Force Protection exercises
- Anti-piracy operations

Transit Protection System and Coastal Riverine Group activities provide security escorts for Navy vessels. Maritime Security Operations could occur up to 286 times per year.

Tracking Exercise – Maritime Patrol (Extended Echo Ranging Sonobuoys)

Tracking Exercise – Maritime Patrol activities are conducted offshore (at least 12 nautical miles off the coast) and are described in the Draft EIS/OEIS in terms of the number of activities per year and the type and number of sonobuoys proposed for use per year. In the Supplement, both the type and number of sonobuoys used during these exercises would substantially change as compared to the Draft EIS/OEIS. These changes are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Changes in the Supplement to the Draft EIS/OEIS for Tracking Exercise – Maritime Patrol

Alternatives	Type of Sonobuoy	Number of Sonobuoys Per Year*	Number of Activities Per Year*
No Action Alternative	Explosive Improved Extended Echo Ranging or Non-explosive Multistatic Active Coherent	Reduced from 150 to 149	Reduced from 54 to 12
Alternatives 1 and 2	Explosive Improved Extended Echo Ranging	Reduced from 150 to 0	Increased from 17 to 24
	Non-explosive Multistatic Active Coherent	Increased from 20 to 720	

* As compared to the NWT Draft EIS/OEIS (January 2014)

Summary of the Supplement to the Draft EIS/OEIS Impact Analysis

In preparing the Supplement to the Draft EIS/OEIS, the Navy evaluated each resource area discussed in the Draft EIS/OEIS to determine if reanalysis was necessary due to changes to the Proposed Action. The Navy concluded that potential impacts on the resources below would likely change and therefore were reanalyzed. Other than these changes, the Draft EIS/OEIS remains valid and will be merged with the Supplement into the Final EIS/OEIS. A summary of the potential impacts is provided here. For more detailed information, please refer to the Supplement, available at www.NWTTEIS.com.

Air Quality

Maritime Security Operations would increase emissions of six criteria air pollutants and greenhouse gases as compared to the Draft EIS/OEIS. However, changes to air quality would be considered minor and localized, and are not expected to be detectable. Proposed sources of air emissions are mobile and would not impact current air quality attainment status. Air pollutants emitted over nonterritorial waters within the Study Area would be dispersed over vast areas of open ocean and would not cause significant harm to resources in those areas.

Marine Mammals

The increased use of non-explosive sonobuoys may increase the number of marine mammals exposed to underwater sound. However, these increases would not result in long-term consequences for any marine mammal populations or species. The conclusions in the Draft EIS/OEIS are based on the latest science and eight years of research and monitoring of Navy activities and remain valid. The Navy would continue to implement mitigation measures to reduce potential effects on marine mammals.

Sea Turtles

The endangered species-listed leatherback sea turtle is the only species of sea turtle likely to be found in the NWTT Study Area. Underwater sound from the increased use of non-explosive sonobuoys could impact sea turtles, and the analysis indicates the number of behavioral exposures to sea turtles would increase from zero to one as a result of the changes in the Proposed Action. However, impacts would be short term, would not impact population levels, or result in substantial changes to an individual sea turtle's behavior, growth, survival, reproductive success (fitness) or species recruitment. The Navy would continue to implement mitigation measures to reduce potential effects on sea turtles.

American Indian and Alaska Native Traditional Resources

Navy activities may impact American Indian tribal resources and access to fishing grounds in Puget Sound as identified in tribal treaties. The Navy will continue to consult on a government-to-government basis with potentially affected tribes. Changes to the Proposed Action and the environmental analysis would not affect proposed activities in Alaska and would have no impact on Alaska Native protected tribal resources or other traditional resources.

Socioeconomic Resources

Changes to the Proposed Action would have minor impacts on commercial transportation and shipping; commercial and recreational fishing; or tourism because public access restrictions would be localized and temporary. Maritime Security Operations would continue to impact vehicular traffic through traffic queues as a result of Hood Canal Floating Bridge openings, which may last 30-60 minutes. These activities would also impact marine vessel traffic, requiring vessels to move outside the Security Zone or Regulated Navigation Area for no more than 15 minutes. The vast majority of aircraft activities would occur in remote areas, far from areas typically used for tourism and recreational purposes. There would not be disproportionately high or adverse effects on low-income populations or minority populations. The Navy would continue to implement standard operating procedures, to the extent practicable, to minimize impacts.

Cumulative Effects

Cumulative effects are impacts on the environment when added to other past, present and reasonably foreseeable future actions. While a single project may have minor impacts, overall impacts may be collectively significant when considered on a regional scale.

Navy activities analyzed in the Supplement are expected to incrementally increase impacts on marine mammals, sea turtles and air quality; however, these incremental increases would not significantly alter the cumulative impacts on these resources. With the changes to the Proposed Action, an increase in the incremental contribution to greenhouse gas emissions would occur; however, the contribution to the total remains insignificant. Additionally, there could be cumulative impacts on American Indian traditional resources and access to fishing grounds in the inland waters of the Study Area from the new training activities.

