
1 Purpose and Need

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1 PURPOSE AND NEED

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Major conflicts, terrorism, lawlessness, and natural disasters all have the potential to threaten national security of the United States. National security, prosperity, and vital interests of the United States are increasingly tied to other nations because of the close relationships between the United States and other national economies. The United States (U.S.) Department of the Navy (Navy) carries out training and testing activities so it can protect the United States from its enemies, protect and defend the rights of the United States and its allies to move freely on the oceans, and provide humanitarian assistance and disaster relief to failed states. The Navy operates on the world's oceans, seas, and within coastal areas—the international maritime domain—on which 90 percent of the world's trade and two-thirds of its oil are transported. Most of the world's population also lives within a few hundred miles of an ocean.

The U.S. Congress, after World War II, established the National Command Authority to identify defense needs based on the existing and emergent situations in the United States and overseas that must be dealt with now or may be dealt with in the future. The National Command Authority, which is composed of the President, the Secretary of Defense, and their deputized alternates or successors, divides defense responsibilities among services. The heads (secretaries) of each service ensure that military personnel are trained, prepared, and equipped to meet those operational requirements.

Training and testing activities that prepare the Navy to fulfill its mission to protect and defend the United States and its allies have the potential to impact the environment. These activities may trigger legal requirements identified in various U.S. federal environmental laws, regulations, and executive orders.

The Navy, in cooperation with the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), prepared this Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)/Overseas EIS (OEIS) to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Executive Order (EO) 12114. The Navy also prepared this EIS/OEIS to assess the potential environmental impacts associated with the two categories of military readiness activities mentioned above: training and testing. Collectively, the at-sea areas in this EIS/OEIS are referred to as the Northwest Training and Testing (NWTT) Study Area (Study Area) (Figure 1.1-1, also see Section 2.1 [Description of the Northwest Training and Testing Study Area]).

Training. Navy personnel first undergo entry-level (or schoolhouse) training, which varies according to their assigned warfare community (aviation, surface warfare, submarine warfare, and special warfare) and the community's unique requirements. Personnel then train within their warfare community at sea in preparation for deployment; each warfare community has primary mission areas (areas of specialized expertise that involve multiple warfare communities) that overlap with one another, described in detail in Chapter 2 (Description of Proposed Action and Alternatives).

Testing. The Navy researches, develops, tests, and evaluates new platforms, systems, and their corresponding technologies. Many tests are conducted in realistic conditions at sea and can range in scale from testing new torpedo guidance software to pierside calibration testing after a system upgrade to testing explosive sonobuoys at designated test ranges and operating areas. Testing activities may occur independently of or with training activities.

Throughout this EIS/OEIS, ships and aircraft may be referred to as "platforms"; weapons, combat systems, sensors, and related equipment may be referred to as "systems."

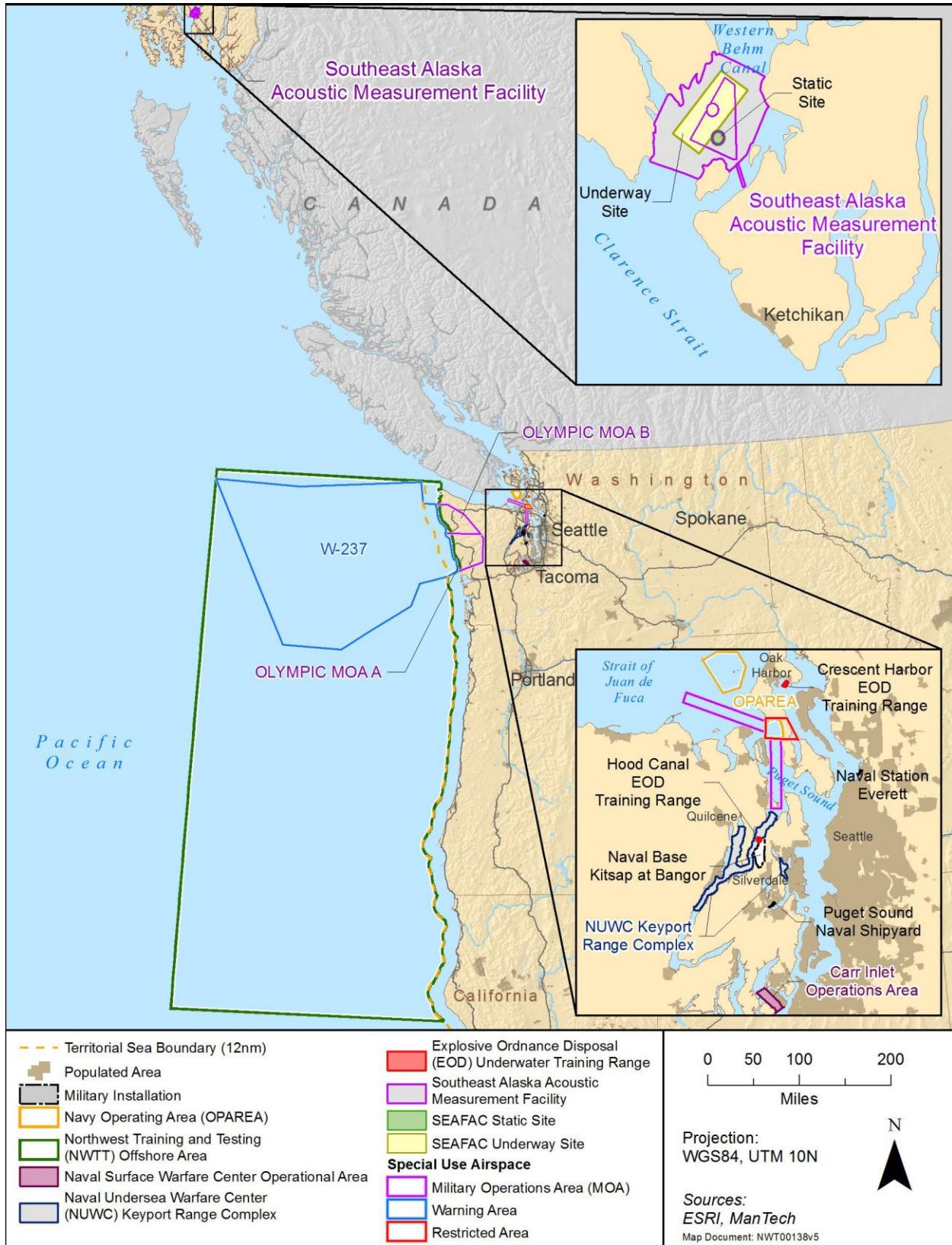


Figure 1.1-1: Northwest Training and Testing Study Area

The land areas and land activities associated with the range complexes and operating areas (OPAREAs) within the Study Area were covered in previous environmental documents (Section 1.9, Related Environmental Documents) and are not part of the analysis in this EIS/OEIS.

1.2 THE NAVY'S ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND AT-SEA POLICY

In 2000, the Navy completed a thorough review of its environmental compliance requirements for training at sea and instituted a policy designed to comprehensively address them. The policy, known as the "At-Sea Policy," directed, in part, that the Navy develop a programmatic approach to environmental compliance for exercises and training at sea for ranges and OPAREAs within its areas of responsibility (U.S. Department of the Navy 2000). Ranges affected by the "At-Sea Policy" are designated water areas and associated air space that are managed and used to conduct training or testing activities. OPAREAs affected by the policy are those ocean areas and associated air space, defined by specific geographic coordinates, used by the Navy to undertake training and testing activities (now referred to as Phase I and described below). To meet the requirements of the policy, the Navy developed the updated Concept of Operations for Phase II (described below) Environmental Planning and Compliance for Navy Military Readiness and Scientific Research Activities At Sea. The Concept of Operations laid out a plan to achieve comprehensive environmental planning and compliance for Navy training and testing activities at sea.

Phase I of the planning program. The first phase of the planning program was accomplished by the preparation and completion of individual or separate environmental planning documents for each range complex and OPAREA. The Navy prepared NEPA/EO 12114 documents (Section 1.9) for range complexes in the Northwest (as well as NEPA documents for other OPAREAs in the Study Area) that analyzed training and testing activities. Many of these range complexes and OPAREAs predate World War II and remain in use by naval forces. The previous NEPA/EO 12114 documents identified major training and testing activities, analyzed potential environmental impacts, and supported permit requests and other requirements under applicable environmental laws, regulations, and executive orders. As an example, Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) incidental take authorizations (also known as "Letters of Authorization"), issued by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), were obtained for two range complexes in the Northwest and will expire in late 2015 for the Northwest Training Range Complex (NWTRC) and mid-2016 for the Naval Undersea Warfare Center (NUWC) Keyport Range Complex.

Phase II of the planning program. The second phase of the planning program will analyze the at-sea activities included in Phase I NEPA/EO 12114 documents and also will analyze additional geographic areas including, but not limited to, pierside locations, testing in Puget Sound, and operations of a test facility in Ketchikan, Alaska. The Navy is not proposing changes to land-based training activities that were analyzed in the NWTRC EIS/OEIS. Therefore, this EIS/OEIS does not include land-based training. This EIS/OEIS is part of the second phase of environmental planning documents needed to support the Navy's request to obtain an incidental take authorization under the MMPA and an incidental take statement under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) from both NMFS and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for marine species. The Navy is reevaluating impacts from historically conducted activities and has updated the training and testing activities based on changing operational requirements, including those associated with new platforms and systems. The Navy will use this new analysis to support incidental take authorizations under the MMPA and the ESA.

1.3 PROPOSED ACTION

The Navy's Proposed Action, described in detail in Chapter 2 (Description of Proposed Action and Alternatives), is to conduct training and testing activities—to include the use of active sonar and acoustic sources, and explosives—within the Study Area (Figure 1.1-1). The Proposed Action includes pierside sonar testing conducted as part of overhaul, modernization, maintenance, and repair activities at Naval Base (NAVBASE) Kitsap Bremerton, NAVBASE Kitsap Bangor, and Naval Station Everett, all located in Washington State.

1.4 PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR PROPOSED MILITARY READINESS TRAINING AND TESTING ACTIVITIES

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to conduct training and testing activities to ensure that the Navy meets its mission, which is to maintain, train, and equip combat-ready naval forces capable of winning wars, deterring aggression, and maintaining freedom of the seas. This mission is achieved in part by conducting training and testing within the Study Area.

The following sections provide an overview of the need for military readiness training and testing activities.

Title 10, Section 5062 of the U.S. Code provides, "The Navy shall be organized, trained, and equipped primarily for prompt and sustained combat incident to operations at sea. It is responsible for the preparation of naval forces necessary for the effective prosecution of war except as otherwise assigned and, in accordance with integrated joint mobilization plans, for the expansion of the peacetime components of the Navy to meet the needs of war."

1.4.1 WHY THE NAVY TRAINS

Naval forces must be ready for a wide range of military operations—from large-scale conflict to maritime security and humanitarian assistance/disaster relief—to deal with the dynamic, social, political, economic, and environmental issues that occur in today's world. The Navy supports these military operations through its continuous presence on the world's oceans: the Navy can respond to a wide range of issues because, on any given day, over one-third of its ships, submarines, and aircraft are deployed overseas. Naval forces must be prepared for a broad range of capabilities—from full-scale armed conflict in a variety of different geographic areas¹ to disaster relief efforts²—prior to deployment on the world's oceans. To learn these capabilities, personnel must train with the equipment and systems that will achieve military objectives. The training process provides personnel with an in-depth understanding of their individual limits and capabilities; the training process also helps the testing community improve new weapon systems.

Modern weapons bring both unprecedented opportunity and innumerable challenges to the Navy. For example, modern (or smart) weapons are very accurate and help the Navy accomplish its mission with greater precision and far less collateral damage than in past conflicts; however, modern weapons are very complex to use. Military personnel must train regularly with these weapons to understand the capabilities, limitations, and operations of the platform or system. Modern military actions require

¹ For example, Operation Iraqi Freedom in Iraq and Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan; maritime security operations, including anti-piracy efforts like those in Southeast Asia and the Horn of Africa.

² Such as evacuation of noncombatants from American embassies under hostile conditions, as well as humanitarian assistance/disaster relief like the tsunami responses in 2005 and 2011 and Haiti's earthquake in 2009.

teamwork—teamwork that includes the use of diverse equipment, vehicles, ships, and aircraft—between hundreds or thousands of people to achieve success.

Military readiness training and preparation for deployment include everything from teaching basic and specialized individual military skills to intermediate skills or small unit training. As personnel improve their skill levels and complete the basic training, they advance to intermediate and larger exercise training events, which culminate in advanced, integrated training events composed of large groups of personnel and, in some instances, joint service exercises. No major training exercises are conducted in the Study Area.

Military readiness training must be as realistic as possible to provide the experiences so important to success and survival. While simulators and synthetic training are critical elements of training—to provide early skill repetition and enhance teamwork—there is no substitute for live training in a realistic environment. The range complexes, test ranges, and OPAREAs have these realistic environments, with sufficient sea and airspace vital for safety and mission success. Just as a pilot would not be ready to fly solo after simulator training, a Navy commander would not allow military personnel to engage in real combat activities based merely on simulator training.

1.4.2 FLEET READINESS TRAINING PLAN

The Navy developed the Fleet Response Plan to ensure the constant readiness of naval forces. This plan maintains, staffs, and trains naval forces to deploy for missions. The Fleet Response Plan increases the number of personnel and vessels that can be deployed on short notice. For example, the Navy completed an unscheduled deployment of an additional aircraft carrier to the Middle East in January 2007 because of adherence to the Fleet Response Plan. Observance of the Fleet Response Plan allows the Navy to respond to global events more robustly while maintaining a structured process that ensures continuous availability of trained, ready Navy forces.

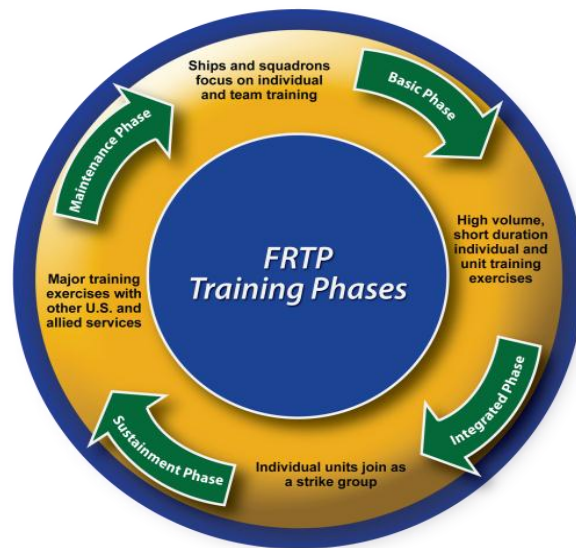


Figure 1.4-1: Fleet Readiness Training Plan

The Fleet Readiness Training Plan implements the requirements in the Fleet Response Plan. The Fleet Readiness Training Plan outlines the training activities required for military readiness that prepares Navy personnel for any conflict or operation. The Navy's building-block approach to training is cyclical and qualifies its personnel to perform their assigned missions. Training activities proceed in four phases: basic, integrated, sustainment, and maintenance, as depicted in Figure 1.4-1.

1.4.2.1 Basic Phase

The basic phase consists of training exercises performed by individual ships and aircraft; it is characterized mostly as unit-level training. Fundamental combat skills are learned and practiced during this phase. OPAREA and range support requirements for unit-level training are relatively modest compared to large-scale, major exercises. Training exercises with two or more units (ships, aircraft, or both), known as coordinated unit-level training exercises, are also included in the basic phase. These

training exercises further refine the basic, fundamental skills while increasing difficulty through coordination with other units.

Access to local range complexes and OPAREAs near the locations where Sailors and Marines are stationed reduces the amount of travel time and training costs.

1.4.2.2 Integrated Phase

The integrated phase combines the units involved in the basic, coordinated unit-level training into strike groups. Strike groups are composed of multiple ships and aircraft. Strike group skills and proficiencies are developed and evaluated through major exercises. The integrated phase concludes when the strike group is certified for deployment, meaning that the strike group demonstrated the skills and proficiencies across the entire spectrum of warfare that may be needed during deployment. The integrated phase for assets homeported/homebased in the Pacific Northwest takes place primarily in the Southern California Range Complex.

Major exercises in this phase require access to large, relatively unrestricted ocean OPAREAs, multiple targets, and unique range attributes (oceanographic features, proximity to naval bases, and land-based targets).

1.4.2.3 Sustainment Phase

The strike group needs continued training activities to maintain its skills after certification for deployment in the integrated phase; these continued training activities fall within the sustainment phase. Sustainment phase activities provide strike groups additional training, as well as the ability to evaluate new and developing technologies, and to evaluate and develop new tactics.

Similar to the integrated phase, sustainment exercises require access to large, relatively unrestricted ocean OPAREAs and unique range attributes to support the scenarios.

1.4.2.4 Maintenance Phase

Naval forces enter the maintenance phase after forces return from deployment. Maintenance may involve relatively minor repair or major overhaul, depending on the system and its age. The maintenance phase also includes testing a ship's systems; these tests may take place pierside or at sea. Naval forces reenter the basic phase at the completion of the maintenance phase.

1.4.3 WHY THE NAVY TESTS

The Navy's research and acquisition community conducts military readiness activities generally classified as testing. The Navy tests ships, aircraft, weapons, combat systems, and sensors and related equipment, and it conducts scientific research activities to achieve and maintain military readiness. The fleet identifies military readiness requirements to support its mission; the Navy's research and acquisition community, including the Navy's systems commands and associated scientific research organizations, provides Navy personnel with ships, aircraft, weapons, combat systems, sensors, and related equipment. The Navy's research and acquisition community is responsible for researching, developing, testing, evaluating, acquiring, and delivering modern platforms and systems to the fleet—and supporting the systems throughout their service lives. This community is responsible for furnishing high-quality platforms, systems, and support matched to the requirements and priorities of the fleet, while providing the necessary high return on investment by the American taxpayer.

The Navy's research and acquisition community operating in the Study Area includes the following:

- The Naval Sea Systems Command, which develops, acquires, delivers, and maintains surface ships, submarines, and weapon system platforms that provide the right capability to the fleet.
- The Naval Air Systems Command, which develops, acquires, delivers, and sustains aircraft and systems with proven capability and reliability to ensure that Sailors achieve mission success.

The Navy's research and acquisition community, in cooperation with private companies, designs, tests, and builds systems and platforms to address requirements identified by the fleet. Private companies are contracted to assist the Navy in acquiring the platform, system, or upgrade. The Navy's research and acquisition community must test and evaluate the platform, system, or upgrade to validate whether it performs as expected and to determine whether it is operationally effective, suitable, survivable, and safe for its intended use by the fleet.

Testing performed by the Navy's research and acquisition community can be categorized as scientific research testing, private contractor testing, developmental testing and operational testing (including lot acceptance testing), fleet training support, follow-on test and evaluation, or maintenance and repair testing. Fleet training events often offer the most suitable environment for testing a system because training events are designed to accurately replicate operational conditions. System tests, therefore, are often embedded in training events such that it would be difficult for an observer to differentiate the two activities.

- **Scientific research testing.** The Navy's research and acquisition community conducts scientific research to evaluate emerging threats or technology enhancement before developing a new system. As an example, testing might occur on a current weapon system to determine if a newly developed technology would improve system accuracy or enhance safety to personnel.
- **Private contractor testing.** Contractors are often required to conduct performance and specification tests before delivering a system or platform to the Navy. These tests may be conducted on a Navy range, in a Navy OPAREA, or seaward of ranges and OPAREAs; these tests are sometimes done with fleet training activities.
- **Developmental testing.** A series of tests is conducted by specialized Navy units to evaluate a platform or system's performance characteristics and to ensure that it meets all required specifications.
- **Operational testing.** A platform or system is evaluated as it would be used by the fleet to test particular systems in the operating environment.
- **Fleet training support.** Systems that are still under development may be integrated on ships or aircraft for testing. If training has not been developed for use of a particular system, the Navy's systems commands may support the fleet by providing training on the operation, maintenance, and repair of the system during developmental testing activities.
- **Follow-on test and evaluation.** This phase occurs when a platform receives a new system, after a significant upgrade to an existing system, or when the system failed to meet contractual performance specifications during previous testing. Tests similar to those conducted during the developmental testing or operational testing phase are conducted again, as needed, to ensure that the modified or new system meets performance requirements and does not conflict with existing platform systems and subsystems.
- **Maintenance and repair testing.** Following periodic maintenance, overhaul, modernization, or repair of systems, testing of the systems may be required to assess performance. These testing activities may be conducted at shipyards or Navy piers.

Preparatory checks of a platform or system to be tested are often made before actual testing to ensure that the platform or system is operating properly. This preparatory check is similar to checking the wipers and brakes on a car before taking a trip. These checks are done to ensure that everything is operating properly before expending the often considerable resources involved in conducting a full-scale test. Pierside platform and systems checks are conducted during ship maintenance activities and are essential to ensure safe operation of the platform or system at sea.

The Navy uses different testing methods, including computer simulation and analysis, throughout the development of platforms and systems. Although simulation is a key component in the development of platforms and systems, it cannot provide information on how a platform or system will perform, or whether it will meet performance and other specification requirements, in the environment in which it is intended to operate without comparison to actual performance data. For this reason, platforms and systems must undergo at-sea testing at some point in the development process. Navy platforms and systems must be tested and evaluated within the broadest range of operating conditions available (e.g., bathymetry, topography, geography) because Navy personnel must be capable of performing missions within the wide range of operating conditions that exist worldwide. Furthermore, Navy personnel must be assured that platforms and systems will meet performance specifications in the real-world environment in which they will be operated.

1.5 OVERVIEW AND STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF EXISTING RANGE COMPLEXES AND TESTING RANGES

The Navy has historically used areas in the Study Area for training and testing. The Navy has grouped areas used for a common purpose into “range complexes.” A range complex may include adjacent areas of sea space, undersea space, land ranges, and overlying airspace designated for military training and testing activities. Range complexes provide controlled and safe environments where military ship, submarine, and aircraft crews can train in realistic conditions. The combination of ranges, OPAREAs, inland waters, and pierside testing sites is critical to realistic training and testing, which allows electronics on the range to capture data on the effectiveness of tactics and equipment—data that provide a feedback mechanism for training and testing evaluations.

The range complexes and testing ranges analyzed in this EIS/OEIS have each existed for decades, some dating back to the 1910s. Range use and infrastructure have developed over time as training and testing requirements in support of modern warfare have evolved.

The proximity of training areas to naval homeports is strategically important to the Navy because the close access allows efficient execution of training activities and non-training maintenance functions. The proximity of training to homeports also ensures that Sailors and Marines do not have to routinely travel far from their families. For example, the areas of western Washington encompassing Kitsap County, Island County, and Everett are home to thousands of military families. The Navy is required to track and, where possible, limit the amount of time Sailors and Marines spend deployed away from home. Less time away from home is critical to military readiness, morale, and retention. The proximity of the testing ranges to technical centers of expertise (e.g., NUWC Keyport) is crucial to the successful completion of testing activities.

Major components of the Study Area are briefly described below, with more detailed information provided in Section 2.1 (Description of the Northwest Training and Testing Study Area). The Study Area also includes open waters of Hood Canal, Puget Sound, and the Strait of Juan de Fuca.

Northwest Training Range Complex. The NWTRC encompasses land (not analyzed in this EIS/OEIS), air, and sea areas that extend westward into the Pacific Ocean from the Strait of Juan de Fuca to 130 degrees west longitude (approximately 250 nautical miles [nm]), and southerly parallel to the coasts of Washington, Oregon, and northern California (approximately 510 nm) (see Figure 1.1-1). The eastern boundary of the Offshore Area lies 12 nm off the coastline for most of the Study Area, including southern Washington, Oregon, and Northern California.

Naval Undersea Warfare Center Division, Keyport Range Complex, Washington. The NUWC Division Keyport Range Complex is composed of the Keyport Range Site, Dabob Bay Range Complex Site, and Quinault Range Site. The Keyport Range Site is within Kitsap County and includes portions of Port Orchard Reach (also known as Port Orchard Narrows) and the southern tip of Liberty Bay. The Dabob Bay Range Complex Site is in Hood Canal and Dabob Bay and is within Jefferson, Mason, and Kitsap counties. The Quinault Range Site is off the coast of Jefferson and Grays Harbor Counties; it is within the Pacific Northwest Ocean Surface/Subsurface OPAREA and also includes a surf zone area at Pacific Beach, Washington.

Southeast Alaska Acoustic Measurement Facility, Western Behm Canal, Alaska. The Southeast Alaska Acoustic Measurement Facility consists of three major functional components: (1) the Back Island Operations Center and supporting facilities on shore (not analyzed in this EIS/OEIS), (2) the Underway Measurement Site, and (3) the Static Site. These components are distributed within five restricted areas (see Figure 1.1-1).

Carr Inlet Operations Area, Washington. The Carr Inlet Operations Area is a 12-square-nautical-mile area between Fox and McNeil Islands in the southern end of Puget Sound, west of Tacoma. The area has been used for acoustic testing and for research, development, test, and evaluation activities. There is no permanent instrumentation or land infrastructure in place or required for the testing proposed for the Carr Inlet OPAREA.

Pierside Testing Facilities, Washington. The Navy conducts some testing at or near Navy piers. Most of this testing is sonar maintenance and testing while ships are in port. These piers within the Study Area are all within Puget Sound and include NAVBASE Kitsap Bremerton in Sinclair Inlet, NAVBASE Kitsap Bangor Waterfront in Hood Canal, and Naval Station Everett in Possession Sound.

1.6 THE ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING PROCESS

The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 requires federal agencies to examine the environmental impacts of their proposed actions within the United States and its territories. An EIS is a detailed public document that assesses the potential effects that a major federal action might have on the human environment. The Navy undertakes environmental planning for major Navy actions occurring throughout the world in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, and executive orders.

1.6.1 NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT REQUIREMENTS

The first step in the NEPA process (Figure 1.6-1) for an EIS is to prepare a Notice of Intent to develop an EIS. The Notice of Intent was published in the *Federal Register* on 27 February 2011 and provides an overview of the proposed action and the scope of the EIS. The Notice of Intent is also the first step in engaging the public.

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 scoping, the public helps define and prioritize issues through public meetings and written comments. Details of the public participation process, including comments received for this EIS/OEIS, are available in Appendix I.

After the scoping process, a Draft EIS (DEIS) is prepared to assess the potential impacts of the proposed action and alternatives on the environment. When completed, a Notice of Availability is published in the *Federal Register* and notices are placed in local or regional newspapers announcing the availability of the DEIS. The DEIS is circulated for review and comment; public meetings are also held.

The Final EIS (FEIS) addresses all public comments received on the DEIS. Responses to public comments may include correction of data, clarifications of and modifications to analytical approaches, and inclusion of new or additional data or analyses. Supplements to either the Draft or Final EIS may be prepared if the agency makes substantial changes in the proposed action or if there are significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns.

Finally, the decision-maker will issue a Record of Decision, no earlier than 30 days after a FEIS is made available to the public.

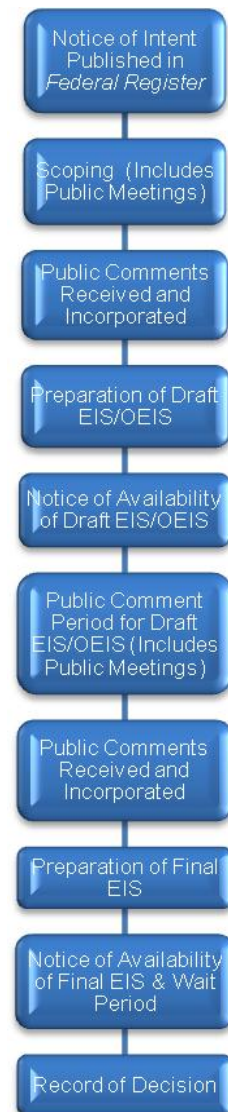
1.6.2 EXECUTIVE ORDER 12114

Executive Order 12114, *Environmental Impacts Abroad of Major Federal Actions*, directs federal agencies to provide for informed environmental decision-making for major federal actions outside the United States and its territories. Presidential Proclamation 5928, issued 27 December 1988, extended the exercise of U.S. sovereignty and jurisdiction under international law to 12 nm; however, the proclamation expressly provides that it does not extend or otherwise alter existing federal law or any associated jurisdiction, rights, legal interests, or obligations. Thus, as a matter of policy, the Navy analyzes environmental effects and actions within 12 nm under NEPA (an EIS) and those effects occurring beyond 12 nm under the provisions of EO 12114 (an OEIS).

1.6.3 OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL REQUIREMENTS CONSIDERED

The Navy must comply with all applicable federal environmental laws, regulations, and executive orders, including, but not limited to, those listed below. Further information can be found in Section 3 (General Approach to Analysis) and Chapter 6 (Additional Regulatory Considerations).

- Abandoned Shipwreck Act
- Antiquities Act
- Clean Air Act
- Clean Water Act
- Coastal Zone Management Act



**Figure 1.6-1:
National
Environmental
Policy Act Process**

- Endangered Species Act
- Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act
- Marine Mammal Protection Act
- Migratory Bird Treaty Act
- National Historic Preservation Act
- National Marine Sanctuaries Act
- Rivers and Harbors Act
- EO 12898, *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations*
- EO 12962, *Recreational Fisheries*
- EO 13045, *Protection of Children from Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks*
- EO 13089, *Coral Reef Protection*
- EO 13158, *Marine Protected Areas*
- EO 13175, *Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments*
- EO 13547, *Stewardship of the Ocean, Our Coasts, and the Great Lakes*

1.7 SCOPE AND CONTENT

In this EIS/OEIS, the Navy assesses military readiness training and testing activities that could potentially impact human and natural resources, especially marine mammals, sea turtles, and other marine resources. The range of alternatives includes the No Action Alternative and other reasonable courses of action. In this EIS/OEIS, the Navy analyzes direct, indirect, cumulative, short-term, long-term, irreversible, and irretrievable impacts. The Navy is the lead agency for the Proposed Action and is responsible for the scope and content of this EIS/OEIS. The USCG is a cooperating agency as this document assesses potential impacts of USCG activities that occur in the Study Area. The NMFS is a cooperating agency because of its expertise and regulatory authority over marine resources. Additionally, this document will serve as the NMFS's NEPA documentation for the rule-making process under the MMPA.

The Navy prepared a Supplement to the NWTT Draft EIS/OEIS to address changes made to the Proposed Action following release of the Draft EIS/OEIS and to consider new information relevant to the impact analysis. The Supplement to the NWTT Draft EIS/OEIS was released on 19 December 2014 and public comments were accepted through 2 February 2015. Information from the Supplement to the NWTT Draft EIS/OEIS and public comments from that process have been incorporated into this Final EIS/OEIS. In accordance with Council on Environmental Quality Regulations, 40 Code of Federal Regulations § 1505.2, the Navy will issue a Record of Decision that provides the rationale for choosing one of the alternatives.

Organization of this Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement

To meet the need for decision-making, this EIS/OEIS is organized as follows:

- Chapter 1 describes the purpose of and need for the Proposed Action.
- Chapter 2 describes the Proposed Action, alternatives considered but eliminated, and alternatives to be carried forward for analysis (including the preferred alternative).
- Chapter 3 describes the existing conditions of the affected environment and analyzes the potential impacts of the training and testing activities in each alternative.

- Chapter 4 describes the analysis of cumulative impacts, which are the impacts of the Proposed Action when added to past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions.
- Chapter 5 describes the measures the Navy evaluated that could mitigate impacts to the environment.
- Chapter 6 describes other considerations required by NEPA and describes how the Navy complies with other federal, state, and local plans, policies, and regulations.
- Chapter 7 is a list of the EIS/OEIS preparers.
- References are provided at the end of each section.
- Appendices provide technical information that supports the EIS/OEIS analyses and its conclusions; a summary of public comments received during scoping; and public comments and responses for the Draft and Supplemental Draft EIS/OEISs.

1.8 RELATED ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS

The progression of NEPA/EO 12114 documentation for Navy activities has developed from planning individual range complex exercises and testing events to theater assessment planning that spans multiple years and covers multiple range complexes. In addition to completed environmental studies considered in this NWTT EIS/OEIS, the Navy considered a homebasing EIS that is underway to evaluate EA-18G Growler airfield operations at Naval Air Station Whidbey Island's Ault Field and Outlying Field Coupeville. That EIS is evaluating adding up to 36 aircraft and associated aircrews. The number of training activities within the NWTT Study Area analyzed in this document would accommodate training activities associated with a potential increase in aircraft and aircrew training requirements. The following documents are referenced in this EIS/OEIS where appropriate:

- *Final Environmental Impact Statement for Introduction of the P-8A Multi-Mission Maritime Aircraft into the U.S. Navy Fleet* (March 2009) and *Supplemental Final Environmental Impact Statement for Introduction of the P-8A Multi-Mission Maritime Aircraft into the U.S. Navy Fleet* (April 2014)
- *Final Environmental Assessment for Replacement of EA-6B Aircraft with EA-18G Aircraft at Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, Washington* (January 2005)
- *Final Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact for the Transition of Expeditionary EA-6B Prowler Squadrons to EA-18G Growler at Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, Oak Harbor, Washington* (November 2012)
- *Pacific Northwest Electronic Warfare Range Final Environmental Assessment* (September 2014)
- *Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for Surveillance Towed Array Sensor System Low-Frequency Active (SURTASS LFA) Sonar* (April 2007)
- *Northwest Training Range Complex Final Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement* (September 2010)
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