



UPDATED: Navy v. Us: Weapons Playgrounds on Both Coasts
by **Planet Waves**

Fri Feb 27, 2009 at 08:09:50 AM PST

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By **CAROL VAN STRUM**

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As we have been reporting throughout February, the U.S. Navy has declared dominion over all waters and air space along the Pacific coast from the Canadian border to northern California and inland to Idaho. With either totally incompetent or deliberately deceptive notice to coastal residents and state legislators, the Navy announced this move in a nearly invisible Environmental Impact Statement.

Coastal Oregon residents, learning by word of mouth of the Navy's plans, raised enough hell to alert Oregon's Congressional delegation, which – with increasingly outraged letters to the Secretary of the Navy – forced the Navy to concede, very grudgingly, to a half-hearted delay.

Oregon's legislators should not be the only ones raising questions about Navy activities. For one thing, the Navy's planned playground extends well into northern California waters, as well as air space. Moreover, the Pacific Northwest "Training Range Complex" **is only one of many such extensions of Navy dominion.**

During the last two years, the Navy has issued nearly identical environmental impact statements for

Training Range Complexes in waters off of:

the Mariana Islands

the Hawaiian Islands

Jacksonville, Florida

Cherry Point, North Carolina

the Gulf of Alaska;

and others Southern California

Thus the navy is assuming command over land, sea and air encompassing the entire Atlantic coast, Pacific coast, Alaska, and Pacific islands.

In addition to lies about the environmental consequences of Navy war games circumnavigating the continent, the Navy nowhere reveals the exorbitant costs of its high-tech toys and testing or training exercises. Nor, significantly, does it reveal the costs of keeping its expansion of territory under the radar of public opinion. Certainly the behavior of one of the public relations companies hired by the Navy to publicize the Pacific Northwest EIS – KATZ & Associates of San Diego – has either been grossly incompetent or intentionally obfuscatory. Nowhere has the Navy revealed how much it paid – and is paying – KATZ and Associates to prevent the public from learning about its plans. Nor do we know how much the Navy has paid to keep its other regional expansions secret.

While the nation's economy collapses, the Navy spends recklessly on war games that further jeopardize coastal resources nationwide. If ever there were a time to assert civilian control of the military, it is now. At the very least, Congress should force the Navy to withdraw its phony environmental impact statements and halt all testing and training activities until those activities and their true costs and effects are honestly identified.

The public comment period for the Pacific Northwest EIS has been extended until March 11, but the Navy is unlikely to budge without either a Supreme Court order or mass uprising or Congressional action. People should therefore be hounding their legislators to demand accountability.

THESE ARE THE QUESTIONS WE SHOULD BE ASKING OUR LEGISLATORS:

1. How much is all this -- both the EIS productions and all the enhanced war games costing?
2. In a time of recession, why are we wasting billions of dollars on expensive high tech weapons that will do nothing to protect us from box cutters, hijacked planes, or anthrax envelopes?
3. Why do we need enhanced war games -- aren't they getting enough real-time practice in the Persian Gulf?
4. Why haven't we successfully negotiated with the nation-states bordering the Indian Ocean to give the Navy some practice dealing with a real live "enemy," the Somalian pirates? Working out & implementing effective strategies for dealing with a REAL LIVE problem seems much more cost effective than playing WWII style war games.
5. How many years and how many thousands of pounds of depleted uranium has the Navy been dumping, into our territorial waters & Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)?
6. Does the Navy have ANY idea of the present & future environmental & public health impacts of those levels of extremely long lived pollutant? Why haven't any of the cookie cutter EISs even considered the potential very significant impact?

7. What is the estimated amount of total chemical munitions currently dumped or lost on the seafloor or near shore bottom, in the Puget Sound, seacoasts, and bays & inland waters of the continental US, Alaska, Hawaii, US possessions and/or protectorates?
 8. What toxic or potentially toxic compounds are known or can be reasonably expected to leak from those munitions or ordnance & why aren't the effects ever considered in the EISs?
- **UPDATED:** The military has been operating unmanned drone aircraft over Pakistan, Iraq and Afghanistan, with a notable excess of civilian casualties. **Now the Navy wants to practice with them right over our shores and our airspace: what will be the Navy's acceptable level of civilian casualties here at home?**

End

<http://www.dailykos.com/story/2009/2/10/122030/630/961/695678>



Navy vs. FERC: Update from the Front Lines
by **Planet Waves**

Tue Feb 10, 2009 at 09:44:16 AM PST

Originally posted at **Planet Waves**.

by **CAROL VAN STRUM**

Last Thursday, Feb. 5, we reported on conflicting claims to Pacific coastal waters by the US Navy and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, specifically citing FERC's surprise permit for a 17-square-mile wave energy project off the coast of Newport, Oregon, smack in the middle of the Navy's proposed target practice range.

Following that article, Friday, Feb. 6, was a red-letter day. The Oregon Congressional Delegation **wrote Secretary of the Navy Donald Winter**, demanding an extension of the comment period on Navy plans until April 11. **While this is an important and welcome event, it is significant only if Secretary Winter agrees to the demands.**

In this regard, a Congressional investigation of the Navy's plans and its inadequate notice to the public **may be paramount**. We learned that the notice provided by the Navy of its proposed plans and EIS was even worse than the Navy itself admitted. The Navy EIS asserts that its notice of availability of the EIS – and notice of public meetings -- were placed in the (Lincoln City) News Guard, the only Oregon newspaper mentioned.

According to Allyson Longueira, the editor of the News Guard, however, "We didn't find out about the (Jan. 30) meeting until it had already been held," and only learned of it through a colleague who found reference to it online on Feb. 2. Furthermore, according to a Driftwood Library (Lincoln City) librarian, the only hard copy of the Navy EIS in the state was indeed sent to that library, but is to this date un-catalogued and unavailable to the public because it was sent undated, without any cover letter explaining its content or significance.

On Friday, two major impediments to FERC's plans emerged. First, the legality of FERC's permits for wave energy projects in Pacific coast waters was challenged by Fishermen Interested in Safe Hydrokinetics (FISH). The FISH Committee's "Motion to develop comprehensive plan and to deny or hold in abeyance preliminary permit application for the Green Wave Mendocino Project" asks that FERC develop a comprehensive plan for hydrokinetic energy development in the Pacific Ocean as required by the Federal Power Act, and that FERC delay or deny the Green Wave project until such a comprehensive plan is completed.

FERC, the FISH motion asserts, has been authorizing numerous hydrokinetic energy projects in the Pacific Ocean off California, Oregon, and Washington on an ad hoc basis without the comprehensive plan required by law. Such a plan would require FERC to 1) collect baseline environmental data and furnish it to the permittees; 2) include uniform study criteria and guidelines in preliminary permit articles; and 3) require permittees to conduct studies to provide data by which cumulative impacts of proposed projects can be assessed.

The FISH motion cites Ninth Circuit law holding that "the requirement for FERC to develop a comprehensive plan applies before the issuance of preliminary permits, and not just before licensing, if the ecological system is complex, and the proposed projects are numerous."

As of Monday, Feb. 9, some 35 parties have intervened in support of the FISH motion, including the Sierra Club, Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations and the County of Mendocino and the City of Fort Bragg.

Late last week, Finavera, a Canadian developer who was granted the first wave energy license from FERC for the much-touted Makah Bay project off the Washington coast, surrendered its license for the project "due to the current economic climate and the restrictions on capital necessary to continue development of this early-stage experimental Project." This was to be FERC's landmark project, "intended to demonstrate the economic and environmental benefits of wave energy conversion power plants near coastal communities."

It appears FERC and the U.S. Navy have been demonstrably cavalier both in assuming power to decimate our coastal waters and spending large amounts of taxpayer money to do so with little or no oversight. Alerting our legislators to these developments and demanding accountability are imperative, particularly in our current economic crisis.

Update: Thanks to news alerts and phone calls, the Driftwood Library in Lincoln City has located the EIS and placed it in their reference section. **End**

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Story Updated.



Updated x 3 public hearing notice for TONIGHT: Navy plan would turn Pacific Coast into firing range by [Planet Waves](#)

Mon Feb 02, 2009 at 09:15:36 AM PST

For the original publication of this diary visit [Planet Waves](#).

By CAROL VAN STRUM

The Bush Administration will haunt this nation for many years. Among its most egregious and devious legacies was a 2007 proposal to expand US Navy control over territorial waters beyond Puget Sound in Washington to include the entire coast of Oregon as well as part of northern California. This plan was effectively concealed from public view to the extent that to this day very few Oregonians know about it, much less the rest of the country. And because no one knew about it, no objections were raised and the plan is well on the way to execution.

The Navy has had a strong presence and active training grounds in the Puget Sound area since World War II, and the economy of Washington is in many ways dependent on military funding, directly and indirectly. Oregon has no Navy bases and has little or no military funding except for the notorious Army chemical weapons depot in Umatilla. Oregon's coastal waters have long been a valuable resource for fishing, tourism, sports, recreation and wildlife preservation, with almost no military presence or activity.

In July 2007, the Navy published notice in the Federal Register of its intent to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) on its proposal to expand its Puget Sound activities down the coastline to northern California. Those activities include extensive air combat maneuvers, missile and gunnery exercises, antisubmarine warfare exercises, electronic combat exercises, mine countermeasures (including underwater “training” minefields), intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance operations and extensive unmanned aerial systems operations (i.e., drones), in an area of ocean from the coastline to beyond the 12-mile territorial limit. During its activities in these waters the Navy could prohibit entry into its training or exercise area. The excuse for preempting commercial fishing, tourism, surfing, sports fishing and boating over the entire Pacific Northwest coastline is – you guessed it – the old Bush juggernaut, national security.

The Navy published its notice in five Washington newspapers, including the state-wide Seattle Times, but in only a single small-town weekly paper from Lincoln City, in north coastal Oregon, and a small California paper from Eureka.

In September 2007, the Navy held hearings on developing the scope and number of significant issues to be covered in the EIS, holding three meetings in Washington, one in Eureka, California, and one in the tiny town of Depoe Bay, Oregon. Unless Oregonians from other parts of its 262-mile coastline happened to read the weekly Lincoln City paper, they had no way of knowing about the meeting or the Navy's proposal to take over Oregon's territorial waters.

Fast forward to December 2008. As the Bush administration packed up to depart this vale of tears, the Navy rushed its 700-plus page draft environmental impact statement into print. The EIS, predictably, concluded that its missiles, bombs, guns, sonar and other explosive operations would have no significant impact on marine mammals, birds, or fish and no significant impact on humans along the Oregon coast.

The Navy announced publication of the EIS in the same newspapers as before, giving the public 45 days to submit comments on its proposal. The Navy thus presumed it served adequate notice to the entire population of Oregon, which has a vested interest in the state's valuable coastal waters and coastline, by printing a notice in a tiny weekly paper in a single coastal town. In addition, the only hard copy of the EIS provided for the entire population of Oregon was lodged in the library of the same town.

During January 2009, the Navy placed ads in the weekly newspaper of Newport, Oregon, midway down the coast, announcing a meeting for public comments on the EIS in nearby South Beach on Jan. 30, 11 days before the public comment period ended. The ads were in very small type, buried in back pages, such as the sports section, of the Newport paper. Very few people noticed them. On the day before the meeting, news spread by word of mouth from people whose friends in Seattle had read of the meetings in the Seattle Times. Very few of those who were informed could travel all the way to Newport to attend the meeting.

Among these were a marine mammal expert, Bruce Mate; a county commissioner and commercial fisherman, Terry Thompson; at least one other fisherman; an 80-year-old activist on marine reserves and coastal conservation issues; at least one lawyer, and other local residents. Every person who commented complained

about the absurdly inadequate notice given to the Oregon public about Navy usurpation of its coastal waters. The other comments criticized the Navy's abysmal ignorance of the people, economy, geography, wildlife and politics of the area they proposed to control.

"I asked the Navy officials how their activities would affect the marine reserves off the coast, and they just looked blank and said they knew nothing about any marine reserves," 80-year-old Charlotte Mills reported. "And when I asked how a press release to the Lincoln City News Guard could possibly give adequate notice of their proposal, their PR person said she thought the News Guard was the same as the Newport News Times.

"They simply didn't bother to do their homework," said Susan Hogg, a Newport lawyer who attended the meeting. "I only heard about the meeting the day before and hadn't had time to read the EIS, but it was obvious from other commenters that the Navy hadn't bothered to talk to any local people or experts. Now that I've looked at it, the document is so vague and contradictory it doesn't reveal their real intentions at all. What the Navy's asking is a blank check to do whatever it wants over the whole Pacific Northwest coast."

Oregon's territorial waters, of course, are a resource of the entire nation, and the issue of a Navy take-over is of national as well as state concern. Ceding all peaceful uses and enjoyment of our coastal waters to military war preparations reflects a monumental change in our national identity, economy, society and philosophy. The US Navy should have notified not only the people of Oregon but of the whole nation of such a drastic shift in public policy.

UPDATE #1: Here is the [link to the Environmental Impact Statement](#) produced by the Navy.

Written responses should be sent to:

New Facilities Engineering Command NW

1101 Tautog Circle - Suite 203

Silverdale, WA 98315-1101

attn: Mrs. Kimberly Kier

online comments can be made [here](#).