

Navy Warfare Weapons & Weather Control Testing in the State of Washington

Wenatchee Daily World March 3, 2009

By Carol Hiltner

Our Wenatchee Daily World guest columnist is Carol Hiltner. She is cousin of Rufus Woods, who once worked at the World. Carol is an author, artist, and activist who works collaboratively to access peace through multi-cultural awareness and friendship. She is currently focused on bringing forth the perspectives of the ancient indigenous culture of peace found in the Altai Mountains of Siberia.

E-mail: carol.hiltner@gmail.com. Websites: www.AltaiMir.org and www.Altaibooks.com.

I received an e-mail last week that caught my attention. It proclaimed that the U.S. Navy was planning to use the whole northwestern U.S. for military target practice. *Wait a second*, I thought. *Could this be true? Isn't the Navy supposed to be defending us?*

Apparently the Navy has prepared the required environmental impact statement (EIS) that is subject to public comment until March 11th, 2009, and this e-mail outlined the author's questions and concerns.

So I read the E-Mail. It was long, and contained a lot of technical information that I couldn't assess. The author wasn't so concerned that we would be shot at, as she was concerned about the airborne residues of chemicals the Navy admits are toxic, such as depleted uranium and white phosphorus; that American citizens would be breathing, eating, and drinking in perpetuity. There is no end date to be found in the Navy Environmental Impact Statement for their warfare testing program.

Most of the requested target practice area is just off the Washington coast, from which prevailing winds would carry persistent toxins progressively further inland. I wondered about the pollution of the orchards and wheat fields of eastern Washington, the forests and cities of western Washington, and the immediate impact on our beleaguered fisheries. Could we indeed be victims of our own defense efforts?

Democracy in action, I thought. I have watched the surge of citizen activism spawned by our presidential elections with hope and some amazement. I participated when our President-elect asked Americans to choose the priorities for his administration by voting on the Internet.

I was still caught up with the wave of people's empowerment when I got this E-Mail, and I was alarmed about the prospect of the Navy turning its weapons of war on us, even indirectly. So I glanced at the summary of the 1,000+/- page EIS, commented via the Navy website, sent messages to my Senators and Congressman asking them to look into this, and forwarded the original E-Mail to my networks requesting their involvement in protecting the western United States.

Back through my network came news that Senator Conrad of North Dakota had responded. His staff determined that, based on what they found in the EIS, the area under discussion was much smaller than stated, but still worth watching.

Concerned that I might have responded to a false alarm, but also recognizing that Senator Conrad's staff might not have found the proverbial needles in the 1000-page "haystack," I wrote the author, Rosalind Peterson, asking for citations to back up her assertions. She responded with a flurry of forwarded government reports and studies.

What I discovered shocked me. Mrs. Sheila Murray, Navy Region Northwest Environmental Public Affairs Officer, stated that this EIS addresses ever-increasing adjustments and areas needed for on-going warfare weapons testing (and possible weather control programs), along the West Coast areas of the United States and in the Pacific Ocean.

Mrs. Murray went on to state that the Hawaiian and Marinas Island, Alaska, Southern California, and parts of the East Coast already had ongoing programs. The actual operations areas may be mostly off-shore, but it is *our air, human health, and marine life* that is being experimented on for the purposes of war. It is our survival that is being tinkered with through persistent toxic chemical releases.

I personally live by the adage, "We get what we focus on." So, I focus on a humanity engaged in the wholeness of life. I see this situation as a wake-up call for us to individually and collectively participate in decision-making with a whole-system, long-term perspective. This official request for comments on the Navy EIS is an opening for citizens to impact the direction of the military that we pay for.

The U.S. Navy Environmental Impact Statement is posted at:
<http://www.nwtrangecomplexeis.com/>.

The original article that brought my attention to this is posted at:
<http://www.newswithviews.com/Peterson/rosalind114.htm>. Additional information can be found at:
<http://www.californiaskywatch.com>

We can comment on-line until the final deadline: March 11th, 2009, or we can write to the Navy at:
<http://www.nwtrangecomplexeis.com/NtrcCommentForm.aspx>, as well as contact our elected representatives.

Carol Hiltner: The *World* was started by my grandfather Rufus Woods back in early 1900s to provide local and national news to North Central Washington, and is now published by his namesake, who is my cousin. It is now one of the last family-owned daily newspapers in America -- one of the last places where journalism actually serves the community.

In response to my submission and letter, he wrote, "These are indeed fascinating times - lots of challenges yet amazing opportunities here at the newspaper. We're in total reinvention mode, getting back to the basics of **servng community** and in particularly more completely embracing the notion of **celebrating community successes** as a way to lift the conversation out of the morass of reactivity that is all too often the baseline of discourse."

If you'd like a whiff of nostalgia while supporting a rare and valuable American treasure, bookmark the link <http://wenatcheworld.com/> I'd like to see them with a national following.