

CARRE BROWN
First District
Vice-Chair
TOM MITCHELL
Chief Executive Officer

JOHN MCCOWEN
Second District

JOHN PINCHES
Third District
Chair
KRISTI FURMAN
Clerk of the Board

KENDALL SMITH
Fourth District

J. DAVID COLFAX
Fifth District

JEANINE B. NADEL
County Counsel

MENDOCINO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA

MARCH 31, 2009 – 4:00 P.M.

501 LOW GAP ROAD • BOARD OF SUPERVISORS CHAMBERS • UKIAH, CALIFORNIA

THE MENDOCINO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETS CONCURRENTLY AS THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE: MENDOCINO COUNTY AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT DISTRICT, MENDOCINO COUNTY PUBLIC FACILITIES CORPORATION, MENDOCINO COUNTY WATER AGENCY, MENDOCINO COUNTY LIBRARY DISTRICT, REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF THE COUNTY OF MENDOCINO, AND THE IHSS PUBLIC AUTHORITY GOVERNING BOARD.

ORDER OF AGENDA

ALL ITEMS ARE PRESENTED FOR DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

1. ROLL CALL (4:00 P.M.)

- Roll Call will be conducted at 4:00 p.m.

2. MISCELLANEOUS:

- Informational Presentation by United States Naval Representatives Regarding the Northwest Training Range Complex Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Overseas Environmental Impact Statement (OEIS) (U.S. Navy Weapons Testing Program)

*The Formal Public Comment Period for the Northwest Training Range Complex Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Overseas Environmental Impact Statement (OEIS) Closes on **April 13, 2009**. Transmit Formal Comment to: Naval Facilities Engineering Command Northwest, 1101 Tautog Circle, Suite 203, Silverdale, WA 98315-1101, ATTN: Mrs. Kimberly Kler - NWTRC EIS*

- See Associated Press Release: <http://www.co.mendocino.ca.us/bos/cgi-bin/meetings.pl>
- Public Expression (For Items Not on the Agenda)

3. ADJOURNMENT

PUBLIC EXPRESSION: (PUBLIC COMMENT FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA)

The Board welcomes participation in the Board meetings. Comments shall be limited so that everyone may be heard. This item is limited to matters under the jurisdiction of the Board which are not on the posted agenda and items which have not already been considered by the Board. The Board limits testimony on matters not on the agenda to 3 minutes per person and not more than 10 minutes for a particular subject. No action will be taken.

ANNOUNCING EXPANDED ONLINE INFORMATION

- **NEW! LIVE WEB STREAMING OF BOARD MEETINGS:** www.uvctv.org (Requires Windows Media Player Version 9 – for Technical Assistance Please Contact Ukiah Valley Community Television 707/357-0624)
- Board Meeting Agenda Summary reports are available online. Please Access the Selected Agenda from the Board's Website to View Additional Information: www.co.mendocino.ca.us/bos

(Pursuant to Government Code §54954, this Special Meeting Agenda was posted 24 hours prior to the Special Meeting)



MENDOCINO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
ONLINE AGENDA SUMMARY

BOARD AGENDA # _____

- Arrangements for public hearings and timed presentations must be made with the Clerk of the Board in advance of public/media noticing
- Agenda Summaries must be submitted no later than *noon* Monday, 15 days prior to the meeting date (along with electronic submittals)
- Send 14 complete sets (original, single-sided+13 copies) – Items must be signed-off by appropriate departments and/or County Counsel
- Transmittal of electronic Agenda Summaries and associated records must be emailed to: bosagenda@co.mendocino.ca.us
- Electronic Agenda Transmission Checklist: Agenda Summary Records If applicable, list other online information below
- Executed records will be returned to the department within one week. Arrangements for expedited processing must be made in advance

TO: Board of Supervisors **DATE:** March 26, 2009

FROM: Clerk of the Board **MEETING DATE:** March 31, 2009

DEPARTMENT RESOURCE/CONTACT: Kristi Furman **PHONE:** 463-4221 Present On Call

Consent Agenda Regular Agenda Noticed Public Hearing Time Allocated for Item: 1 hour

■ AGENDA TITLE: Informational Presentation by United States Naval Representatives Regarding the Northwest Training Range Complex Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Overseas Environmental Impact Statement (OEIS) (U.S. Navy Weapons Testing Program)

■ PREVIOUS BOARD/BOARD COMMITTEE ACTIONS: February 24, 2009: Public Expression regarding concerns with the impacts of this proposed testing program in northern California; March 3, 2009: Board discussion followed by Board direction to send a letter of concern to State and Federal Representatives of both California and Oregon requesting a thirty (30) day extension of the public comment period and requesting a public hearing be held in Mendocino County.

■ SUMMARY OF REQUEST: On March 3, 2009, the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors transmitted a letter of serious concern to State and Federal representatives of both California and Oregon requesting that the public comment period for the Northwest Training Range Complex Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Overseas Environmental Impact Statement (OEIS) (U.S. Navy Weapons Testing Program) be extended for thirty (30) days allowing for thorough review of the document and to provide sufficient time to schedule a Public Hearing in Mendocino County. In response, Congressman Mike Thompson’s office contacted Naval personnel and was successful in obtaining an extension of the Public Comment period to April 13, 2009, along with securing a local hearing.

The Board of Supervisors will hold a Special Meeting with Navy representatives on March 31, 2009, at 4:00 p.m. to facilitate an informational presentation by the Navy, public comment, and a question and answer period related to the proposed expansion of the U.S. Navy Weapons Testing Program. Guest presenters include, John Mosher, Commander U.S. Pacific Fleet, Northwest Environmental Liaison and Project Manager; Kimberly Kler, Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Environmental Planner and Project Navy Technical Representative, and Brian Wauer, Project Operations Specialist.

■ SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION AVAILABLE ONLINE AT: <http://www.nwtrangecomplexeis.com/EIS.aspx>

■ ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON FILE WITH THE CLERK OF THE BOARD (CHECKED BY COB IF APPLICABLE):

FISCAL IMPACT:			
Source of Funding	Current F/Y Cost	Annual Recurring Cost	Budgeted in Current F/Y
N/A			Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

■ SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT: 1 2 3 4 5 All **■ VOTE REQUIREMENT:** Majority 4/5^{ths}

■ RECOMMENDED ACTION/MOTION: That the Board receive the informational presentation and facilitate public comment on the matter.

■ ALTERNATIVES: None recommended.

■ CEO REVIEW (NAME): _____ **PHONE:** 463-4441

RECOMMENDATION: Agree Disagree No Opinion Alternate Staff Report Attached

BOARD ACTION (DATE: _____): Approved Referred to _____ Other _____

RECORDS EXECUTED: Agreement: _____ Resolution: _____ Ordinance: _____ Other _____



Northwest Training Range Complex (NWTTC)

Draft Environmental Impact Statement/ Overseas Environmental Impact Statement (EIS/OEIS)

Executive Brief

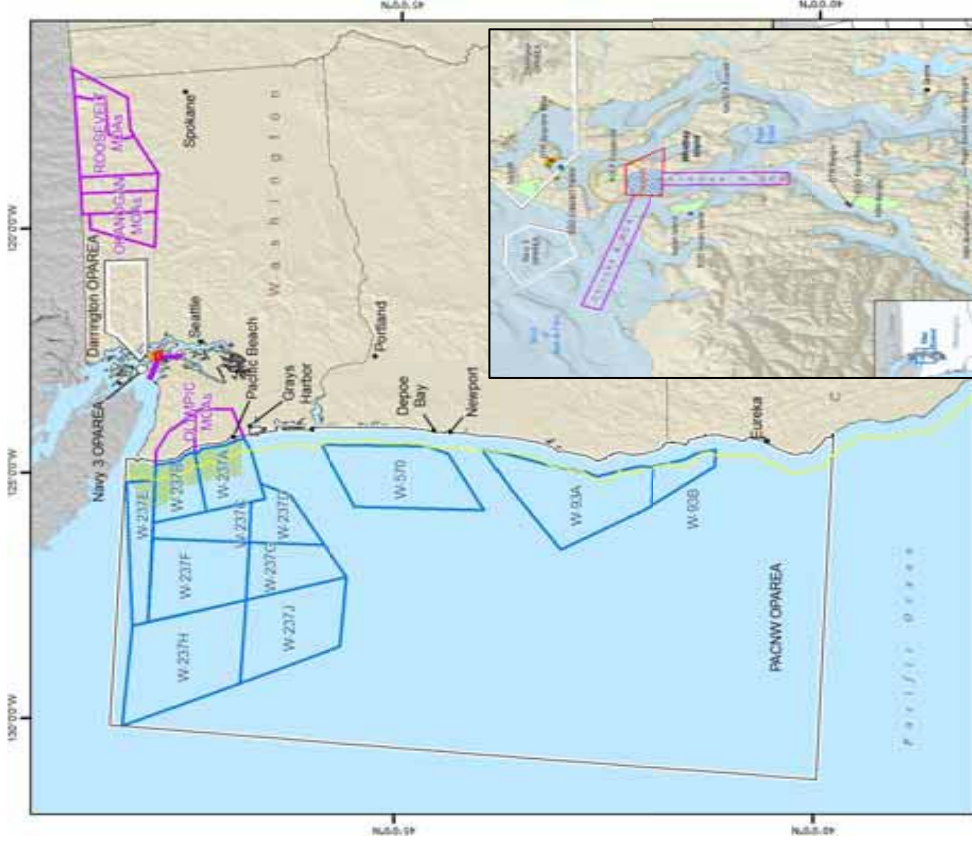
10 March 2009



NWTRC Mission & Components



- **Mission**
 - Principal backyard range for surface, submarine, aviation, and other local users within Puget Sound, Washington
 - No major U.S. Navy exercises conducted within the NWTRC
- **Two Primary Components**
 - Offshore:
 - 122,400 nm² of air/surface/subsurface ocean Operating Areas
 - Inshore:
 - 12,051 nm² of Special Use Airspace (all in Washington)
 - 875 acres of land (all in Washington)





History of NWTRC & EIS/OEIS



- The Navy has conducted training in the area of the NWTRC since World War II
- 2002: Navy launched its range sustainment program to include NEPA analysis
- 2005: Navy began range sustainment planning for ranges in the Pacific Northwest
- 2007: The EIS/OEIS for the NWTRC was initiated (Notice of Intent was published on July 31, 2007)

The NWTRC EIS is one of 13 Navy range complexes being analyzed for environmental impacts



Alternatives

- **No Action Alternative**
 - Activities at current levels
 - No proposed force structure changes
 - No range enhancements
 - Provides baseline for assessing impacts of Alternatives 1 and 2
- **Alternative 1**
 - Increased number of training activities
 - Force structure changes (EA-18G Growler, P-8A Poseidon, Guided Missile Submarine (SSGN) & Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS)).
 - New Weapons Systems (Air-to-Air Missiles, New Sonobuoys)
- **Alternative 2 (Preferred Alternative)**
 - Alternative 1 plus some additional increases in the number of training activities
 - Range enhancements:
 - Electronic Combat Emitter
 - Air and Surface Target Services
 - Portable Undersea Tracking Range
 - Small-scale Underwater Training Minefield

No alternatives propose an increase in size of range areas



Annual Training Activities

Warfare Area	Location	No Action	Alternative 1	Alternative 2
Anti-Air Warfare	Offshore Area (primarily Washington)	1,425	2,107	2,218
Anti-Surface Warfare	Offshore Area (primarily Washington)	115	131	212
Anti-Submarine Warfare	Offshore Area (primarily Washington)	366	381	387
Electronic Combat	Offshore Area (primarily Washington)	2,330	2,499	5,273
Mine Warfare	Inshore (Puget Sound, WA) Offshore Area (Washington)	162	114	121
Special Ops	Inshore (Puget Sound, WA)	143	155	155
Strike Warfare	Inshore (Washington) Offshore Area (Washington)	2,724	3,000	3,000
Support Activities	Inshore (Puget Sound, WA) Offshore (WA, OR, northern CA)	106	212	212



Sonar Sources Modeled

Warfare Area	System	Number or Duration of Events per Year		
		No Action	Alternative 1	Alternative 2
Antisurface Warfare -	MK-48 Torpedo	1	2	2
Antisubmarine Warfare Tracking Exercise – Maritime Patrol Aircraft	SSQ-62 Mid-frequency active (MFA) Sonobuoy	844	865	886
Antisubmarine Warfare Tracking Exercise - Surface Ships	AN/SQS 53C Surface Ship MFA Sonar	36 hours	39 hours	43 hours
	AN/SQS 56 Surface Ship MFA Sonar	54 hours	58.5 hours	65 hours

Events are conducted primarily off the coast of Washington



Explosive Sources Modeled

Warfare Area	System	Number or Duration of Events per Year		
		No Action	Alternative 1	Alternative 2
Antisurface Warfare – Bombex	Bombs	24	30	30
Antisurface Warfare – Gunex	5” / 76mm Gun rounds	84	93	168
Antisurface Warfare - Sinking Exercise	MK-48 Torpedo, bombs, gun rounds, missiles	1	2	2
Antisubmarine Warfare Tracking Exercise – IEER	SSQ-110A source sonobuoy	10	11	12
Underwater Detonations	EOD Explosive Charges	60	4	4

Events are conducted primarily off the coast of Washington except for Underwater Detonations which are conducted only inshore in Puget Sound



Analysis of Effects (cont)

- **Marine Mammals**
No significant impacts to non-listed species
May affect ESA-listed marine mammals
- **Birds**
No significant impacts to non-listed species
May affect ESA-listed species
- **Terrestrial Species**
No significant adverse effects
(No ESA species in land training areas)
- **Cultural Resources**
No significant impacts
- **Traffic**
No significant impacts
- **Socioeconomics**
No significant impacts; some potential economic impact from Portable Undersea Tracking Range & Underwater Non-Explosive Training Minefield
- **Environmental Justice & Protection of Children**
No significant impacts
- **Public Safety**
No significant impacts



Consultations Underway

- **ESA Biological Evaluation (BE):**
 - CNO N45 submitted to NMFS on 14 Nov 08
 - BE submitted to USFWS Western Washington Regional Office in Jan 09
 - NMFS is a cooperating agency
- **Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) Assessment:**
 - Complete; No adverse impacts to managed species or EFH.
 - Submitted to NMFS Seattle Office Jan 09
 - No additional mitigation measures required
- **Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA):**
 - Coastal consistency determination reports to be submitted to WA, OR, CA ~ Spring 09
- **Tribal Consultation:**
 - Invitation to Consult with over 30 Native American Tribes & Nations in WA, OR & northern CA initiated in Jul 2007 (during scoping period) on potential impacts to tribal rights & resources
 - Both Formal (3) & Informal (3) consultations are ongoing (WA only)
 - Affected Native American Tribes & Nations were sent a copy of the DEIS for review and comment
 - Anticipate completion of government-to-government and Section 106 consultations prior to publication of the FEIS

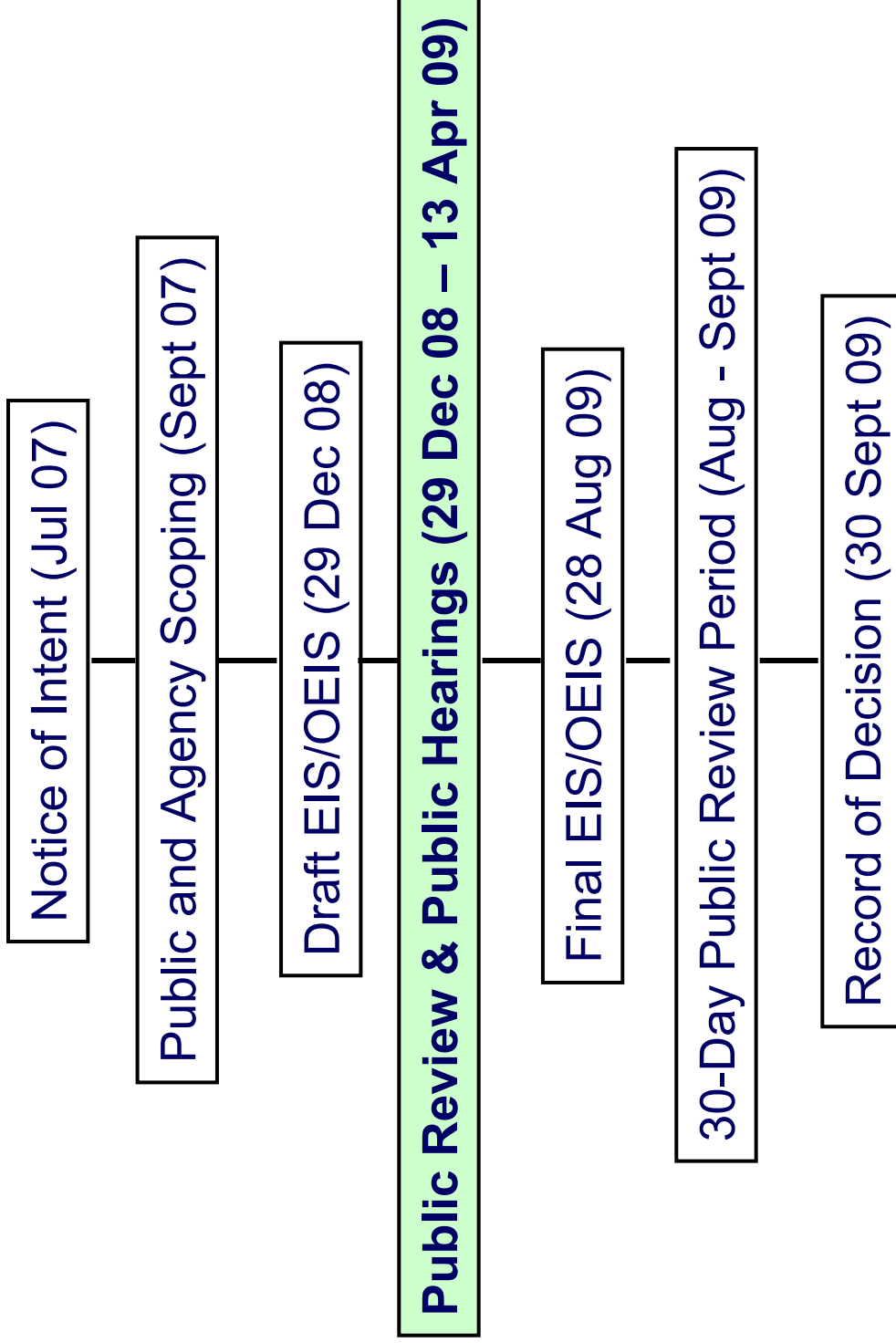


EIS/OEIS Notifications

- **Notice of Availability – Federal Register Notice (December 29, 2008)**
- **Notice of Public Hearing – Federal Register Notice (December 30, 2008)**
- **Newspaper Advertisements / Press Releases**
 - Display Advertisements on Dec 31, Jan 16, 21, 23 & 28, Feb 20, 24, 25 & 26
 - News Releases to Associated Press and specific newspapers on Dec 29, Jan 23 & Feb 20
- **Meeting Flyers**
 - Local community centers near hearing sites (i.e. libraries, post offices, Chambers of Comm)
- **Stakeholder Letters (accompanied Draft EIS/OEIS)**
 - Tribes and Nations
 - Elected Officials
 - Federal Regulatory and Government Agencies
 - State and Local Regulatory and Government Agencies
 - Individuals
- **Public Hearing Notification Postcards**
 - Same as Draft EIS/OEIS distribution above plus:
 - Non-governmental organizations
 - Fisheries groups
 - Media



NWTRC EIS/OEIS Overall Timeline



KRISTI FURMAN
Clerk of the Board



TELEPHONE: (707) 463-4221
FAX: (707) 463-4245
EMAIL: bos@co.mendocino.ca.us
www.co.mendocino.ca.us/bos

COUNTY OF MENDOCINO
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
501 Low Gap Road • Room 1090
Ukiah, California 95482

March 3, 2009

Ms. Kimberly Kler - NWTRC EIS
Naval Facilities Engineering Command Northwest
1101 Tautog Circle, Suite 203
Silverdale, WA 98315-1101

RE: Serious Concern regarding the Northwest Training Range Complex

Dear Ms. Kler:

On behalf of the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors, I am writing to express our serious concern regarding the United States Navy's Weapons Testing Program Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS/OEIS).

Unfortunately, the US Commander of the Pacific Fleet has given the citizens in the service area a very short time period in which to comment on the draft EIS/OEIS, published on December 30, 2008. The public comment period for the United States Navy's Weapons Testing Program Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) concludes on March 11, 2009. This document consists of approximately 1,000 pages of highly technical, complex materials for which the public should be afforded the opportunity to adequately assess and respond to the proposed environmental document.

The County of Mendocino strongly urges the US Navy and US Department of Defense to extend the public comment period by 30 days, to end on April 11th, 2009 to allow time for the County to fully review the Draft EIS/OEIS.

The proposed expansion of the service area of operation will include areas of northern, coastal Mendocino County, yet no public hearings were held anywhere throughout the county during the comment period and no notification was publicly distributed in our area prior to the February 2, 2009, hearing in Humboldt County.

The current proposal to expand ocean and land-based operations, conduct underwater demolitions, and test electronic communications, explosives and surveillance systems so as to increase baseline levels of training activities, may have considerable negative impacts to human and marine life in Mendocino County. We are seriously concerned about potentially harmful impacts to water quality,

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marine habitat, fisheries, the local commercial and recreational fishing industry, and the nesting and migration of numerous avian species. More specifically, we are highly concerned about the project's potential to cause psychological, physiological and behavioral harm to marine life from the introduction of new, non-native, mid and high-frequency active sonar. This is of great concern to the County, as it would be a first-time introduction of this technology to Mendocino County's delicate marine environment.

Should you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



John Pinches, Chair
Mendocino County Board of Supervisors

cc: **California Delegation**
US Senator Barbara Boxer
US Senator Dianne Feinstein
Congressman Mike Thompson, 1st District
Congressman Wally Herger, 2nd District
Congressman Tom McClintock, 4th District
State Senator Patricia Wiggins, 2nd District
State Senator Sam Aanestad, 4th District
State Senator Dave Cox, 1st District
Assemblymember Wesley Chesbro, 1st District
Assemblymember Jim Nielsen, 2nd District
Assemblymember Dan Logue, 3rd District

Oregon and Washington Delegation
US Senator Jeff Merkley
US Senator Ron Wyden
US Senator Maria Cantwell
US Senator Patty Murray



MENDOCINO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
ONLINE AGENDA SUMMARY

BOARD AGENDA # 16

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- Electronic Agenda Transmission Checklist: Agenda Summary Records If applicable, list other online information below
- Executed records will be returned to the department within one week. Arrangements for expedited processing must be made in advance

TO: Board of Supervisors DATE: February 24, 2009

FROM: Supervisor McCowen MEETING DATE: March 3, 2009

DEPARTMENT RESOURCE/CONTACT: Kristi Furman PHONE: 463-4221 Present On Call

Consent Agenda Regular Agenda Noticed Public Hearing Time Allocated for Item: 10 min.

■ **AGENDA TITLE:** Discussion and Possible Action Regarding the Northwest Training Range Complex Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Overseas Environmental Impact Statement (OEIS) (U.S. Navy Weapons Testing Program)

■ **PREVIOUS BOARD/BOARD COMMITTEE ACTIONS:** February 24, 2009: Public Expression regarding concerns with the impacts of this proposed testing program in northern California.

■ **SUMMARY OF REQUEST:** The United States Navy Northwest Training Range Complex (NTRC) consists of numerous training areas stretching from Washington to Northern California, extending 250 nautical miles west from the coastline into the Pacific Ocean, encompassing more than 126,000 square nautical miles of ocean area. The range complex also includes more than 34,000 square nautical miles of airspace. The land, air, and sea components of the NTRC provide the space and resources needed to realistically train Navy Sailors and aviators to achieve and maintain Fleet readiness.

To keep up with advances in technology and new national security challenges, the U.S. Navy occasionally must reassess and alter its operations, including its methods of testing weapons and training Sailor and aviators within the NTRC. These changes in the level and type of training and testing activities are called the Proposed Action. Furthermore, the Proposed Action serves to implement range enhancement within the NTRC, thereby ensuring fleet requirements are met. The Proposed Action is needed to provide a training environment consisting of ranges, training areas, and range instrumentation with the capacity and capabilities to fully support required training tasks for operational units and military schools. Elements of the training/testing program include: Maintaining current levels of military readiness, including ships, submarines, and aviation squadrons; accommodate future increases; adequately support the training need for new ships, aircraft, and weapons systems; identify and provide for range enhancements; and maintain the long-term viability of the range complex while protecting human health and the environment.

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 and Executive Order 12114, Environmental Effects Abroad of Major Federal Actions, the Navy is preparing an (EIS/OEIS) to evaluate the potential environmental effects of maintaining Fleet readiness to support current, emerging, and future training activities. The public comment period for the United States Navy's Weapons Testing Program Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) concludes on March 11, 2009.

Alternative 2 (the Preferred Alternative) is designed to meet current and near-term training requirements. Alternative 2 is the Navy's preferred alternative because it would fully support the type and frequency of activities required to achieve complete Fleet readiness and allow the Navy to carry out its mission in the Pacific Northwest, and includes increasing the level of training activities and implements range enhancements, including: new air and sea surface targets; new electronic signal emitters; development of a small-scale underwater training minefield, and development of a portable undersea tracking range.

This item has been scheduled to facilitate Board discussion as to the impacts to marine life, the environment, and other impacts, to determine whether the Board wishes to transmit formal comment on the Proposed Action. If so directed, staff will prepare and transmit a letter prior to close of the public comment period on March 11, 2009.

BOARD ACTION (DATE: 3.3.09): Approved Referred to CEO to prepare letter Other _____

RECORDS EXECUTED: Agreement: _____ Resolution: _____ Ordinance: _____ Other _____



MENDOCINO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
ONLINE AGENDA SUMMARY

BOARD AGENDA # _____

- SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION AVAILABLE ONLINE AT: <http://www.nwtrangecomplexeis.com/EIS.aspx>
- ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON FILE WITH THE CLERK OF THE BOARD (CHECKED BY COB IF APPLICABLE):

FISCAL IMPACT:			
Source of Funding	Current F/Y Cost	Annual Recurring Cost	Budgeted in Current F/Y
N/A			Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

■ SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT: 1 2 3 4 5 All ■ VOTE REQUIREMENT: Majority 4/5ths

■ RECOMMENDED ACTION/MOTION: That the Board discuss the matter, and if desired, direct staff to transmit formal comment on the Proposed Action prior to the close of the public comment period on March 11, 2009, authorizing the Chair to sign same.

■ ALTERNATIVES:

■ CEO REVIEW (NAME): _____ PHONE: 463-4441

RECOMMENDATION: Agree Disagree No Opinion Alternate Staff Report Attached

BOARD ACTION

- Approved _____
- Records Executed _____

Date of Meeting _____

- Referred to _____
- Other _____

- Northwest Training Range Complex
- What is a Range Complex?
- Proposed Actions and Alternatives
- Background
- Why is the proposal needed?
- What is proposed?
- What has been evaluated?

EIS/OEIS

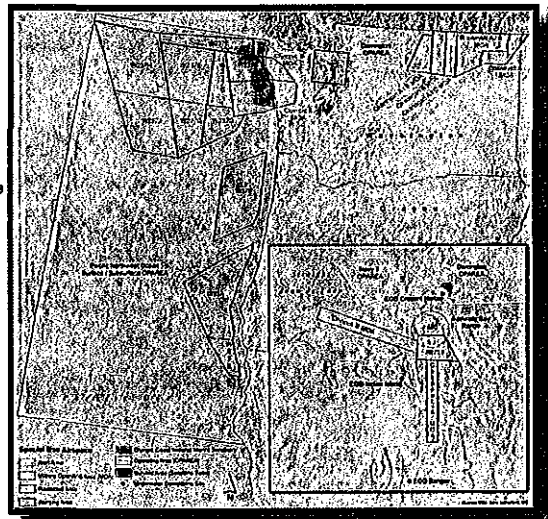
What is a Range Complex?

A "range complex" is an organized and designated set of specifically bounded geographic areas which can encompass a landmass, body of water (above or below the surface), and/or airspace. Range complexes are used to conduct training, research, development, and test and evaluation of military hardware, personnel, tactics, munitions, explosives, or electronic combat systems.

Ranges and operational areas (OPAREAs) are locations where Navy personnel train to accomplish their mission for national defense. The Navy has geographically grouped its ranges and OPAREAs to form range complexes, which are organized and managed to optimize training opportunities in a safe and controlled environment. The ranges and facilities of the Northwest Training Range Complex are unique and provide training opportunities essential for the safety and readiness of military personnel and the success of the military mission. The protection of natural and cultural resources is also an integral component of this training. Navy training activities incorporate protective measures as standard operating procedure to promote environmental conservation.

Northwest Training Range Complex

The Northwest Training Range Complex consists of numerous individual training areas that stretch from Washington to Northern California. Extending 250 nautical miles (about 288 miles) west from the coastline into the Pacific Ocean, the Northwest Training Range Complex encompasses more than 126,000 square nautical miles of ocean area. The range complex also includes more than 34,000 square nautical miles of airspace. The land, air, and sea components of the Northwest Training Range Complex provide the space and resources needed to realistically train Navy Sailors and aviators to achieve and maintain Fleet readiness.



Background

To keep up with advances in technology and new national security challenges, the U.S. Navy occasionally must reassess and alter its operations, including its methods of testing weapons and training Sailor and aviators within the Northwest Training range Complex. These change in the level and type of training and testing activities are called the Proposed Action.

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 and Executive Order 12114, Environmental Effects Abroad of Major Federal Actions, the Navy is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement (EIS/OEIS) to evaluate the potential environmental effects of maintaining Fleet readiness to support current, emerging, and future training activities. Furthermore, the Proposed Action serves to implement range enhancement within the Northwest Training Range complex, thereby ensuring fleet requirements are met.

Why is the proposal needed?

Naval transformation initiatives determine current, emerging, and future requirements for training access to the Northwest Training Range Complex. Moreover, recent world events have placed the U.S. military on heightened alert in the defense of the U.S., and in defense of allied nations. At this time, the U.S. military, and specifically the U.S. Navy, is actively engaged in anti-terrorism efforts around the globe. Title 10 U.S. Code Section 5062 directs the Chief of Naval Operations to maintain, train, and equip all naval forces for combat so that they are capable of winning wars, deterring aggression, and maintaining freedom of the seas. To achieve this level of readiness, naval forces must have access to ranges, OPAREAs, and airspace where they can develop and maintain skills for wartime missions and conduct Research Development Test and Evaluation (RD&E) of naval weapons systems. As such, Department of Navy (DON) ranges, OPAREAs, and airspace must be maintained and/or enhanced to accommodate necessary training and testing activities in support of national security objectives.

What is proposed?

The Proposed Action is needed to provide a training environment consisting of ranges, training areas, and range instrumentation with the capacity and capabilities to fully support required training tasks for operational units and military schools. By Federal

mandate, the navy needs to:

Maintain current levels of military readiness, including ships, submarines, and aviation squadrons, and accommodate future increases;

Adequately support the training need for new ships, aircraft, and weapons systems;

Identify and provide for range enhancements; and

Maintain the long-term viability of the range complex while protecting human health and the environment.

What has been evaluated?

The Navy understands and recognizes the potential effects training activities may have on the environment, as well as on the communities and the businesses that rely on these resources. Additionally, input received during public hearings on the Draft EIS/OEIS will be carefully considered for incorporation into the Final EIS/OEIS. Three alternatives have been analyzed:

The No Action Alternative is comprised of baseline operations and support of existing range capabilities. Training and unit-level activities would continue at baseline levels. The Northwest Training Range Complex capabilities would not accommodate proposed force structure changes or provide range enhancements.

Alternative 1 is a proposal designed to meet Navy and Department of Defense current and near-term training requirements. In addition to accommodating training activities currently conducted, this alternative proposes an increase in the number of training activities to accommodate force structure changes associated with the introduction of new weapons systems, vessels and aircraft into the Fleet. Specifically, Alternative 1 proposes to:

- Increase baseline levels of training activities; and
- Implement training activities associated with proposed force structure changes for the EA-18G Growler Aircraft, Guided Missile Submarine, P-8 Multi-mission Maritime Aircraft, and Unmanned Aerial Systems.

Alternative 2 (the Preferred Alternative) is also designed to meet current and near-term training requirements. Alternative 2 is the Navy's preferred alternative because it would fully support the type and frequency of activities required to achieve complete Fleet readiness and allow the Navy to carry out its mission in the Pacific Northwest. Alternative 2 includes all elements of Alternative 1, plus:

- Increase the level of training activities over levels identified in Alternative 1; and
- Implement range enhancements, including: new air and sea surface targets; new electronic signal emitters; development of a small-scale underwater training minefield, and development of a portable undersea tracking range.