

[Home](#) [EIS/OEIS](#) [Range Sustainability](#) [Natural Resources](#) [Get Involved](#) [Documents](#)

Northwest Training Range Complex

[What is a Range Complex?](#)

Proposed Actions and Alternatives

[Background](#)

[Why is the proposal needed?](#)

[What is proposed?](#)

[What will be 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

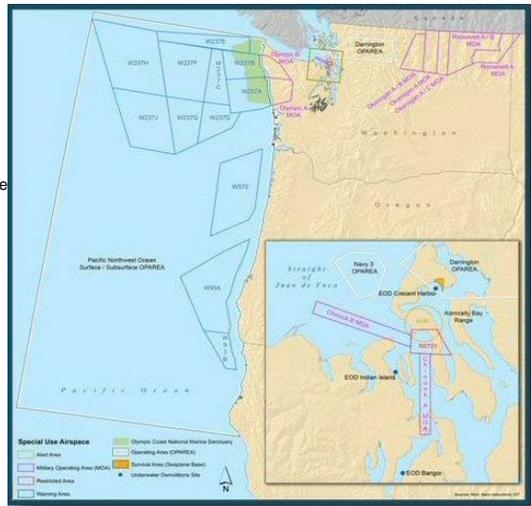
To keep up with advances in technology and new national security challenges, the U.S. Navy occasionally must reassess and alter its operations, including its methods of testing weapons and training Sailor and aviators within the Northwest Training range Complex. These change in the level and type of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