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## Navy weapons program expanding on coast

By **MONICA KRAUTH** The Daily Journal

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The U.S. Navy is about to get the go-ahead on expanding a weapons program known as the Northwest Training Range Complex. Affected areas will include Washington, Oregon and Northern California, including Mendocino County.

The program is proposed to expand ocean and land-based operations and will be conducting underwater demolitions, electronic communications and testing explosives and surveillance systems. According to the training range's Web site, [www.nwtrangecomplexexis.com](http://www.nwtrangecomplexexis.com), the affected sites are "numerous individual training areas in the Pacific Northwest." The range complex extends westward in the Pacific Ocean (to 250 nautical miles beyond the coast of Washington, Oregon, and Northern California) and east to Idaho.

The training complex encompasses more than 126,000 square nautical miles of ocean area, and the range complex also includes more than 34,000 square nautical miles of airspace.

While the site uses extremely vague language to describe the specific weapons that the program intends to use, it attributes the reason behind putting the program in place to Title 10 U.S. Code Section 5062, which 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."

Public safety issues, that the site lists, include:

"potential hazards inherent in flight activities, vessel movements, underwater detonations, offshore use of sonar, and onshore explosives training."

While the Navy held public meetings about the environmental impacts in various cities in Washington and Oregon, the only city in Northern California that had a public meeting was Eureka. The public, in those places, were concerned about effects on sediment quality, water quality; impacts to marine life and habitat that may be affected from sound, hazardous materials and pollution; noise from aircraft; underwater detonations; the disturbance of nesting or migratory waterfowl, shore birds, or other avian species; habitat fragmentation from land use; damage to cultural and historical resources, interference with tribal fishing and tribal ceremonial harvesting and potential impacts to commercial and recreational fishing.

Because there were no public hearings in Mendocino County, Redwood Valley resident Rosalind Peterson said she got on the phone Tuesday as soon as she found out and called friends, the media and her representatives.

"When I called Feinstein and Boxer's office, they didn't know what I was talking about," Peterson said. "When did we become the enemy and become test subjects for the Navy? ... That's what this is over our property, our land," she said.

The Navy is considering a few alternatives and a "No Action Alternative." Under Alternative 1, most baseline-training activities would be increased. Under Alternative 2, the "preferred alternative," there would be an increase of training activities, an accommodation of force structure changes, and the implementation of range enhancements.

The public comment period ends today; contact Naval Facilities Engineering Command Northwest

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