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Welcome to the SOCAL Range Complex EIS/OEIS Website

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS/OEIS). The SOCAL Range Complex is the principal training range for aviation, surface, submarine, amphibious, and special warfare units located in Southern California. The SOCAL Range Complex is an area of about 120,000 square nautical miles off the coast of southern California. The Navy's Proposed Action consists of increases in the number of training operations, changes in the Navy's force structure (such as new weapons systems), and additional enhancements in the range facilities. The Navy's Proposed Action is necessary for the SOCAL Range Complex to support current, emerging, and future training operations and thus achieve and maintain Fleet readiness. This EIS/OEIS examines the potential environmental effects of the Navy's Proposed Action and alternatives to that action. The Navy is the lead agency for this EIS/OEIS.

The Record of Decision Has Been Signed

On January 21, 2009, the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Installations and Environment, B.J. Penn, signed the record of decision, marking completion of the EIS/OEIS process for the Southern California Range Complex. With the record of decision, the Navy selects alternative 2, the preferred alternative among three that were analyzed.

Why did the Navy Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement?

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 requires Federal agencies to examine the environmental effects of their proposed actions if they have the potential to significantly affect the environment. An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is a detailed public document that provides an assessment of the potential effects a Federal action might have on the environment. An Overseas Environmental Impact Statement (OEIS) has been to comply with Executive Order 12114, Environmental Effects Abroad of Major Federal Actions, signed by President Carter in 1979. This order requires Federal agencies to consider the effects of actions that may affect the environment outside U.S. territorial waters.

Realistic training requires access to areas and environments that closely match the locations where our military may face combat or complex situations. International

events, changes in naval strategy, force structure, base closures, and population growth are increasing the challenges the Navy faces in training its personnel to be prepared to defend the nation. To respond to these challenges and increase the sustainability of Navy ranges, the Navy has launched efforts to preserve training ranges while also minimizing environmental effects of training activities. One such effort is the transition to manage training at a range complex-wide level to optimize the use of Navy ranges and provide for the efficient use of resources.

Protection of our environmental and natural resources is an integral part of the Navy training program. The Navy prepared the SOCAL Range Complex EIS/OEIS to assess the potential effects of training on environmental, cultural and socioeconomic resources in and around the range complex.

The SOCAL Range Complex EIS/OEIS also gives the Navy the opportunity to review its procedures and ensure that the benefits of recent scientific and technological advances are applied toward minimizing environmental effects.

What is a Range Complex?

A “range complex” is a designated area that can encompass a landmass, body of water (above or below the surface), and/or airspace. Range complexes are used to conduct operations, training, research, development, 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, facilities, and installations of the SOCAL 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 procedures to promote environmental conservation.

SOCAL Range Complex

The Navy has been training in the Southern California (SOCAL) Range Complex for national defense purposes for over 70 years. The SOCAL Range Complex is a suite of existing land ranges (on San Clemente Island) and training areas, surface and subsurface ocean ranges and operating areas, and military airspace that is centrally managed and controlled by the Navy. The SOCAL Range Complex encompasses ocean operating areas and military Special Use Airspace; the SOCAL Range Complex’s boundaries extend more than 600 nautical miles to the southwest in the Pacific Ocean covering approximately 120,000 square nautical miles of ocean area. San Clemente Island is within the SOCAL Range Complex. The SOCAL Range Complex includes the land ranges and training areas on San Clemente Island and near-island ocean operating areas and ranges. Collectively, the components of the SOCAL Range Complex provide the space and resources needed to execute training events across the training continuum, from individual skills training to complex joint exercises. The mission of the SOCAL Range Complex is to support Navy, Marine Corps, and joint (multi-service) training by maintaining and operating range facilities and by providing range services and support to the military services. The Commander, Fleet Forces Command and Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet are responsible for operations, maintenance, training, and support of this national training asset.

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Background

The SOCAL training areas are known as “ranges” and are present on San Clemente Island, sea and air spaces in the region. To optimize the use of these vital training

ranges, the Navy is managing training at a range complex-wide level. In line with range complex-wide management practices, the Navy has prepared an Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement (EIS/OEIS) to comprehensively evaluate the effects of current and future Navy activities within the range complex on the environmental, natural, cultural and socioeconomic resources. In addition to the EIS process, the Navy is also complying with other applicable laws and regulations. [Genomma Lab](#)

Why is the proposal needed?

Evolving training requirements determine current, emerging, and future requirements for training access to the SOCAL Range Complex. 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 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 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, operating areas (OPAREAs), and airspace where they can develop and maintain skills for wartime missions and conduct RDT&E of naval weapons systems. As such, Navy ranges, OPAREAs, and airspace must be maintained and/or enhanced to accommodate necessary training and testing activities in support of national security objectives.

Which Alternative was chosen?

After carefully weighing the operational and environmental consequences of the proposed action, the Department of the Navy has selected Alternative 2. Alternative 2 best responds to the Navy's need to:

- (1) maintain current levels of military readiness by training in the SOCAL Range Complex at current levels;
- (2) accommodate future increases in operational training tempo in the SOCAL Range Complex and support the rapid deployment of naval units or strike groups;
- (3) achieve and sustain readiness in ships and squadrons so the Navy can quickly provide significant combat power in the event of a national crisis or contingency operation.
- (4) support the acquisition, testing, training, and introduction into the Fleet of advanced platforms and weapons systems; platforms and weapons systems; and,
- (5) maintain the long-term viability of the SOCAL Range Complex as a premiere Navy training and testing area while protecting human health and the environment, and enhancing the communication capability and safety of the range complex.

What was evaluated?

The Navy understands and recognizes the potential effects training activities may have on the environment, as well as to the community and the businesses that rely on these resources. Additionally, public input received during the entire process was carefully considered as the alternatives to the Navy's Proposed Action were refined. Currently, the three alternatives analyzed were:

The No Action Alternative is comprised of baseline operations and support of existing range capabilities.

Alternative 1 is comprised of the No Action Alternative plus additional operations on upgraded/-modernized existing ranges.

Alternative 2 is comprised of Alternative 1 plus new ranges, new dedicated capabilities, and additional increased tempo (beyond Alternative 1) to optimize training in support of future contingencies.

Comments are closed.

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