



PUBLIC SCOPING SUMMARY REPORT

Northwest Training and Testing Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/ Overseas Environmental Impact Statement

FINAL

14 December 2017

**Northwest Training and Testing
Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement
Public Scoping Summary Report
Final**

This report summarizes the public involvement and stakeholder outreach activities conducted by the U.S. Navy (Navy) for the *Northwest Training and Testing (NWTT) Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement (EIS/OEIS)* during the public scoping period, which ran from Aug. 22, 2017, to Oct. 6, 2017. The purpose of public involvement and outreach was 1) to notify and inform stakeholders and the public about the Proposed Action, and 2) to provide the opportunity for the public to comment on the scope of the analysis, including potential environmental issues and viable alternatives. Involvement and outreach efforts were conducted in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Navy guidance.

Summary of Activities

A. PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

The following materials notified the public of the Navy’s intent to prepare a Supplemental EIS/OEIS and the opportunity to provide comments on the scope of the analysis to be considered during the development of the Draft Supplemental EIS/OEIS. Additional notifications were disseminated to inform the public of an extension of the public scoping comment period. Public notices can be found on the [Public Notices page](#).

Federal Register Notices

A Notice of Intent was published in the *Federal Register* on Aug. 22, 2017. At the request of the public and elected officials, the Navy extended the public scoping period to Oct. 6, 2017, and a Notice of Extension of Scoping Period was published in the *Federal Register* on Sept. 20, 2017.

Newspaper Advertisements

Display advertisements were placed in local newspapers to advertise the public’s opportunity to comment on the scope of the analysis. The advertisements were published for three consecutive publication days, beginning on Aug. 22, 2017. Publication dates were dependent on the newspaper’s publication frequency (daily, semi-weekly, weekly).

The display advertisement was published in the following newspapers on the corresponding publication dates.

Newspaper	Newspaper Coverage	Publication Dates
Juneau Empire	Juneau, Alaska	Tuesday, Aug. 22, 2017 Wednesday, Aug. 23, 2017 Thursday, Aug. 24, 2017
Ketchikan Daily News	Ketchikan, Alaska	Tuesday, Aug. 22, 2017 Wednesday, Aug. 23, 2017 Thursday, Aug. 24, 2017
Eureka Times-Standard	Eureka, California	Tuesday, Aug. 22, 2017 Wednesday, Aug. 23, 2017 Thursday, Aug. 24, 2017

Fort Bragg Advocate-News	Fort Bragg, California	Thursday, Aug. 24, 2017 Thursday, Aug. 31, 2017 Thursday, Sept. 7, 2017
The Daily Astorian	Astoria, Oregon	Tuesday, Aug. 22, 2017 Wednesday, Aug. 23, 2017 Thursday, Aug 24, 2017
Newport News-Times	Newport, Oregon	Wednesday, Aug. 23, 2017 Friday, Aug. 25, 2017 Wednesday, Aug. 30, 2017
The Oregonian	Portland, Oregon	Wednesday, Aug. 23, 2017 Friday, Aug. 25, 2017 Saturday, Aug. 26, 2017
The Daily Herald	Everett, Washington	Tuesday, Aug. 22, 2017 Wednesday, Aug. 23, 2017 Thursday, Aug. 24, 2017
The Daily World	Aberdeen, Washington	Tuesday, Aug. 22, 2017 Thursday, Aug. 24, 2017 Saturday, Aug. 26, 2017
Forks Forum	Forks, Washington	Thursday, Aug. 24, 2017 Thursday, Aug. 31, 2017 Thursday, Sept. 7, 2017
Journal of the San Juan Islands	San Juan Island, Washington	Wednesday, Aug. 23, 2017 Wednesday, Aug. 30, 2017 Wednesday, Sept. 6, 2017
The Kitsap Sun	Kitsap, Washington	Tuesday, Aug. 22, 2017 Wednesday, Aug. 23, 2017 Thursday, Aug. 24, 2017
Peninsula Daily News	Port Angeles, Washington	Tuesday, Aug. 22, 2017 Wednesday, Aug. 23, 2017 Thursday, Aug. 24, 2017
Port Townsend and Jefferson County Leader	Port Townsend, Washington	Wednesday, Aug. 23, 2017 Wednesday, Aug. 30, 2017 Wednesday, Sept. 6, 2017
The Seattle Times	Seattle, Washington	Tuesday, Aug. 22, 2017 Wednesday, Aug. 23, 2017 Thursday, Aug. 24, 2017
Sequim Gazette	Sequim, Washington	Wednesday, Aug. 23, 2017 Wednesday, Aug. 30, 2017 Wednesday, Sept. 6, 2017
Whidbey News-Times	Whidbey Island, Washington	Wednesday, Aug. 23, 2017 Saturday, Aug. 26, 2017 Wednesday, Aug. 30, 2017

Postcard Mailer

A postcard was mailed first-class to 1,655 individuals, community groups, tribal staff, and nongovernmental organizations on Aug. 21, 2017. Forty postcards were returned to sender, and the mailing list was updated accordingly. The postcard provided information about the Proposed Action and how to submit public comments.

Stakeholder and Tribal Notification Letters

Tribal letters were mailed on Aug. 18, 2017, via priority mail to 56 tribal chairpersons of federally recognized tribes. Stakeholder letters were mailed first-class on Aug. 21, 2017, to 614 federal, state, and local elected officials and government agencies. Five stakeholder letters were returned to sender, and the mailing list was updated accordingly.

News Releases

Commander, Navy Region Northwest Public Affairs Office distributed a news release to local and regional media outlets on Aug. 22, 2017. A second news release was distributed to media outlets on Sept. 15, 2017, and that same exact news release was redistributed on Oct. 2, 2017. The first news release provided information on the Proposed Action and how to submit comments. The second news release provided information on the public scoping comment period extension, the Proposed Action, and how to submit comments.

Subscriber Email Notifications

Email subscribers from Phase II were carried forward into Phase III to start with 166 initial website subscribers. An email notification was sent to these 166 website subscribers on Aug. 22, 2017, announcing the Navy's intent to prepare a Draft Supplemental EIS/OEIS. A second email notification was sent to 181 website subscribers on Sept. 15, 2017. The email informed the subscribers of the public scoping comment period extension dates. As of Nov. 2, 2017, there are currently 183 website subscribers.

B. PUBLIC INFORMATION

Project Website

A project website was established to provide the public with project information and to accept comments electronically. The project website went live on Aug. 22, 2017. The public notices, the fact sheet booklet, maps, frequently asked questions, public involvement information, and informational videos were posted on the website. The website was periodically updated with project announcements and other updates. For example, the following key points were added to the Comment Page:

- This project supplements the 2015 Final EIS/OEIS, supporting training and testing activities conducted within the same Study Area beyond 2020.
- The Navy will analyze training and testing using the best available scientific information, including an updated acoustic effects model and updated marine mammal density data.
- As part of this project, the Navy will seek the renewal and issuance of federal regulatory permits and authorizations under the Marine Mammal Protection Act and Endangered Species Act to support military readiness activities within the Study Area beyond 2020.

The project website address is www.NWTTEIS.com.

Expanded Outreach

Navy personnel conducted expanded outreach with stakeholders between Jan. 23, 2017, and Oct. 4, 2017. Expanded outreach will continue throughout the development of the Supplemental EIS/OEIS to

ensure stakeholders are kept informed. Expanded outreach occurred throughout the scoping period and included phone calls, emails, face to face meetings and briefings, and distribution of outreach materials related to the project scope.

Fact Sheet Booklet

A 16-page fact sheet booklet was developed to provide project information to the public and included the following topics:

- Introduction to the Navy’s intent to prepare a supplement to the 2015 Final NWTT EIS/OEIS
- Public scoping process
- Importance of military readiness
- Importance of training and testing in the Pacific Northwest
- Meeting future training and testing requirements beyond 2020
- Key updates to the 2015 Final EIS/OEIS resulting in the need for a Supplemental EIS/OEIS
- Importance of training and testing with active sonar and explosives
- Marine resources protection
- Environmental stewardship programs
- Public access and safety
- Overview of the NEPA process and opportunities for public involvement

The fact sheet booklet was distributed to stakeholders during briefings and posted on the [project website](#).

C. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC SCOPING COMMENTS

This section is intended to illustrate the main issues heard from the public during the public scoping period; it is not meant to capture all aspects of the comments or to serve as a legal record.

The public scoping period was planned to run from Aug. 22, 2017, to Sept. 21, 2017. In mid-September, the Navy provided a public comment period extension through Oct. 6, 2017. Throughout the public comment period, a total of 786 comment letters were received. Comment letters were submitted via the project website’s electronic comment form (745) and via postal mail (41).

Each comment letter was reviewed and categorized into specific resource areas or topics. One comment letter may include comments on multiple resource areas or topics. This comment summary provides a brief overview of the general issues or concerns expressed by the public. All substantive issues and concerns addressed in the comment letters will be considered during the development of the Draft Supplemental EIS/OEIS.

Resource Area/Topic	Issue/Concern
Scoping Extension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request for a 60 day comment period extension
Revised Notice of Intent and NEPA Notification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request the Navy issue revised notices clarifying specific actions the Navy will analyze in the Supplemental EIS/OEIS to provide clarity on the scope of analysis • Request the Navy issue a revised Notice of Intent mentioning the Proposed Action’s potential effects and proximity to Olympic National Park
NEPA Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objection to developing a Supplemental EIS/OEIS rather than a new EIS/OEIS • Determination whether a revised or updated Coastal Zone Management Act compliance document is required

Resource Area/Topic	Issue/Concern
NEPA/Public Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern that inadequate time was available to review the materials • Request for public scoping meetings • Concern that the materials were unsubstantial and lacking significant information • Request for responsive documents to comply with Freedom of Information Act request • Concern that only measurable facts will be considered and not personal experiences or public sentiment • Concern that the Navy does not review public comments
Cooperating Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request Navy invite the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, and U.S. Forest Service to be cooperating agencies to more comprehensively evaluate impacts
Study Area/Location of Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request the Navy research other locations for training and testing • Request to use other areas where the Navy trains and conducts tests, and not in the marine waters of the Pacific Northwest, Alaska, and California • Concern about ocean areas off the Northern California coast being used for chemical tests • Should not test live ammunition or explosions of aerial or underwater ordnance • Evaluate alternate areas that would have less impact on residents and economy
Proposed Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for clarity on the Navy's Proposed Action • Overview requested on how the Proposed Action fits within the broader Department of Defense training and testing occurring throughout the Pacific Northwest, western regions and states, marine coastal and oceanic environments, and Alaska • Concern about expansion • Opposition to expansion of the use of sonar and explosives • Concern about the impacts of dipping sonar • Concern for activities that are perceived as a waste of taxpayer dollars • Concern about the Navy conducting war games in the Pacific Northwest and creating war zones in the area • Recommendation to evaluate the efficacy of sonar with computer modeling rather than performing experiments in the ocean • Request for the Navy to broadly define the scope of the project and re-evaluate the spectrum of naval training exercises conducted in the Pacific Northwest
Alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider an alternative that maximizes opportunities to limit sound exposures to marine mammals to a level that would likely result in behavioral harassment only • Include a range of alternatives that meet the stated purpose and need, goals and objectives, and responds to issues identified during the scoping process • Encourage selection of alternatives that protect, restore, and enhance the environment • Provide greater details on whether Navy exercises would expand onto public beaches • Develop reasonable alternatives that inform decision-makers and the public of how the agencies can, in accordance with Council on Environmental Quality regulations, avoid or minimize adverse impacts or enhance the quality of the human environment • Evaluate an alternative that would exclude ocean waters off the California coast from all training and testing
Segmentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request to conduct EISs associated with the geographic area being impacted, rather than by broad resource category • Concern the Navy is segmenting and limiting its analysis to individual training exercises or actions to characterize its activities as minimal

Resource Area/Topic	Issue/Concern
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request aircraft training be split into a separate analysis to allow the public to engage in a more meaningful way • Provide information on impacts of the EA-18G Growlers in the analysis
Olympic National Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern over aircraft training and expansion of training areas over Olympic National Park • Disruption to National Park will result in increased noise complaints from the public • Assess impacts of alternative on the resources and values of Olympic National Park • Develop and fully analyze alternatives that avoid aviation training over Olympic National Park and that minimize impacts on the Park • Include Olympic National Park World Heritage Site and the International Biosphere Reserve designation of Olympic National Park in the analysis
Environmental Impact Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate direct and indirect impacts • Recommend a detailed table identifying the proposed type and frequency of specific potential stressors be developed; provide to the public in advance of the release of the Draft Supplemental EIS • Monitor depleted uranium in the ocean • Evaluate impacts of aircraft noise and the use of sonar and live explosives on humans, animals, and marine life • Request for comparison of baseline activities versus proposed activities • Concerns that training and testing exercises involving marine vessels and aircraft, explosives, electromagnetic devices, or sonar technology have the potential to negatively impact terrestrial and marine resources and diminish visitor enjoyment of national parks in the Pacific Northwest • Natural and cultural resources and visitor experience in three units of the National Park System may be impacted by the activities identified in the Supplemental EIS/OEIS and should be evaluated in detail: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve ○ Olympic National Park ○ San Juan Island National Historical Park • Request for appropriate density estimates for expended training debris, which should be calculated using the footprint area of the specific exercise • Focus impact discussion on specific resources and locales and avoid basing significance conclusions on averaging impacts over large areas of ocean • Avoid equating a lack of information with a lack of impact • Use project-specific thresholds to determine levels of impact to focus analysis on potentially significant environmental impacts
Airborne Noise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop on-the-ground noise data instead of a model • Include health impacts from noise, including effects of post-traumatic stress disorder • Analyze Growler noise complaints and impacts noise would have on tourism, residents, health, and quality of life • Recognize predicted noise and actual noise produced by aircraft deviates significantly • Concerns that models are producing wrong results • Request the Navy fund the collection of baseline ambient acoustic data in Olympic National Park and include the results in the Draft Supplemental EIS/OEIS

Resource Area/Topic	Issue/Concern
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request to continue Navy flight training in Montana and other locations already disrupted by aircraft noise • Impact of aircraft and helicopter noise on farm animals and other species found in National Parks, such as the Olympic marmot • Analyze the impact noise would have on property values • Analyze effects related to the scenic, aesthetic, and cultural components of the Olympic Peninsula, including impacts on visitors to Olympic National Park who are seeking solitude and/or natural ambient noise levels • Analyze the impacts on nesting colonies of gulls as a result of aircraft noise over Lopez Island
Sediments and Water Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the applicability of national standards under development by the Environmental Protection Agency under Section 312(n) of the Clean Water Act to establish the Uniform National Discharge Standards to control discharges incidental to the normal operation of military vessels • Include relevant updates to the fate, transport, and bioaccumulation of toxics in expended materials • Include relevant updates on areas that contain hazardous materials, and evaluate the potential for training and testing to resuspend contaminants • Evaluate whether the Navy is putting depleted uranium into marine waters • Concerns for groundwater or other contamination associated with Navy operations on Whidbey Island
Air Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantify the contribution of carbon pollution from projected military activities • Concerns about aerosol spraying and resulting impacts on critical habitat and species • Include in the scope of the analysis the greenhouse gas emissions resulting from the project, and all the effects of those emissions, including ocean acidification, climate change, and loss of species • Consider in the analysis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Any adverse impact on air-quality-related values in a federal Class I area or state wilderness area ○ Whether there are annual emissions greater than the basic Prevention of Significant Deterioration emission thresholds ○ Any new violation of state or federal ambient air quality standards ○ Interference with the maintenance or attainment of any state or federal ambient air quality standard in the project area ○ Increases in the frequency or severity of existing violations of state or federal ambient air quality standard in the analysis area ○ Exposure of nearby populations to increased levels of diesel particulate matter and other air toxics ○ Delays in the timely attainment of any standard, interim emission reduction, or other air quality milestone ○ Exposure of sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations
Terrestrial Species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern that the analysis may be limited to just effects at sea, but proposed analysis of impacts on terrestrial environments should be included • Analyze the impacts on terrestrial species from Navy overflights • Impacts on wildlife that may experience increased and prolonged stress levels

Resource Area/Topic	Issue/Concern
Marine Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate the pollution from activities in marine waters, and state what pollutants are being added to marine waters from Navy activities • Concerns about disruption to the marine environment and marine species, especially from the use of active sonar and explosives • Refrain from measuring impacts on the marine environment according to whether population impacts would occur; harm to smaller areas and groups should be considered • Analyze how stressors affect habitat, as well as the physiology and behavior of marine life • Revise thresholds and weighting system for auditory impacts • Revise behavioral impact thresholds to incorporate best available science
Marine Mammals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Navy and National Marine Fisheries Service should include information needed to evaluate compliance with the Marine Mammal Protection Act/Endangered Species Act • Concerns that the Navy lies about marine species takes and mortalities to gain permits from federal agencies • Concerns on incidental takes and general impacts on marine species • Analyze the impact of pinniped colonies found near Lopez Island as a result of aircraft noise • Impacts on the ocean food chain due to the loss of large mammals • Concern that low-frequency active sonar systems violate the Marine Mammal Protection Act
Mitigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendations to establish additional mitigation areas (geographic) and time-area management (temporal) areas • Provide specific clean up measures that will be taken on the terrestrial and marine environment • Recommendation to use thermal detection for marine species • Concerns about inefficiencies and inadequacies of human Lookouts, and requests to analyze the effectiveness of visual monitoring • Move training and testing activities outside of the annual gray whale migration path, and suspend training activities during gray whale migration • Recommendation for Navy to engage in direct dialogue with the trawling community and develop a mutually acceptable warning system to alert trawlers when submarines are operating in the area • Follow current mitigation measures, including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Do not operate at night or in specific ocean areas ○ Conduct air flights to search for species ○ Do not operate when a species is within a certain range ○ Do not operate when bow-riding dolphins are present ○ Operate at less than full power ○ Reduce speeds as directed • Reduce impacts to the lowest possible level • Provide training to Navy personnel on a tribe's history, culture, and subsistence uses • Consider habitat-based management and important feeding areas • Avoid areas of biological and ecological importance • Include an adaptive management plan, including monitoring the effectiveness of mitigation commitments

Resource Area/Topic	Issue/Concern
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include more monitoring results in the Supplemental EIS/OEIS • Include the public in mitigation planning
American Indian and Native Alaskan Traditional Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns about the evaluation of impacts on the marine environment, cultural resources, and areas of importance • Consider impacts on cultural practices, which have religious and spiritual meaning • Concerns that mitigation measures are inadequate • Best available science should include Tribal Traditional Knowledge • Request the Navy continue to fulfill its obligation for meaningful government-to-government tribal consultation • Concern about impacts on usual and accustomed treaty rights • Consider a tribe’s human-environmental relationship • Consider the economic impact on the tribe • Concern about diminished treaty rights • Evaluate the possible disruption to tribal cultural practices • Determine public health effects from chaff and other toxins • Determine impacts from exposure to electromagnetic radiation • Determine impacts of noise on the cultural landscape • Impacts on salmon and other fish that provide subsistence to neighboring indigenous populations
Fish and Essential Fish Habitat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impacts on migrating salmon populations, damage to honing mechanisms, and takes of endangered species, including salmon and steelhead • Analyze impacts of noise on fish and stress hormone production from sound • Reach out to the Alaska Ocean Observing System for fish population/migration data • Incorporate latest understanding of important marine habitats reflected in current management documents
Cumulative Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess cumulative impacts of naval activities on marine biota • Assess impacts at sea and throughout the region • Characterize resources, ecosystems, and communities in terms of their response to change and capacity to withstand stress
Socioeconomics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate economic impacts on tourism, property values, health, and well-being • Impacts on commercial fishing industry

D. MEDIA COVERAGE

The following news articles discussed the NWTT EIS/OEIS scoping period.

Summary

There were six articles or announcements published in various local and regional media outlets between Aug. 21, 2017, and Oct. 6, 2017. Articles published the dates of the scoping period, the project website, and commenting methods. The lengthier articles also included information similar to the NWTT Supplemental EIS/OEIS news release, such as project background and the Proposed Action.