

Additional copies of the DEIS have been placed in the Riverhead Free Library, 330 Court Street, Riverhead, New York.

Written comments on the DEIS should be mailed to the address noted below and must be postmarked not later than May 9, 1997 to be part of the official record.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Additional information concerning this notice may be obtained by contacting Mr. Kurt Frederick (Code 202) Northern Division, Naval Facilities Engineering Command, 10 Industrial Highway, MSC 82, Lester, PA 19113, telephone (610) 595-0728, facsimile (610) 595-0778.

Dated: March 27, 1997.

**M.A. Waters,**

*LCDR, JAGC, USN, Alternate Federal Register Liaison Officer.*

[FR Doc. 97-8192 Filed 3-31-97; 8:45 am]

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**Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for; the Implementation of a Comprehensive Land Use Management Plan at the Naval Air Weapons Station, China Lake, CA**

**SUMMARY:** Per Section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as implemented by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR part 1500-1508) the Department of the Navy announces its intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to evaluate the potential environmental effects of implementing a comprehensive Land Use Management Plan for the Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division (NAWCWD), located at the Naval Air Weapons Station (NAWS), China Lake, California. The Navy is the lead agency in the preparation of the EIS. It is anticipated that other Department of Defense installations, and Department of the Interior agencies such as the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, will act as cooperating agencies.

The California Desert Protection Act (the Act) of 1994, reauthorized the Navy's continued use of public withdrawn lands to support China Lake's Research, Development, Test and Evaluation (RDT&E) and training mission. The Act requires the development of a land use management plan for these withdrawn lands, in accordance with the requirements of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, by October 1997. Additionally, in response to military downsizing initiatives and potential influences of

evolving technologies on weapons systems RDT&E and training requirements, the Navy recognizes the need to implement a comprehensive management system that integrates operational and environmental planning processes.

The Navy's proposed action is the implementation of a comprehensive Land Use Management Plan (LUMP) at NAWS China Lake for managing existing and proposed land uses authorized under the California Desert Protection Act. Proposed land uses include, but are not limited to, ongoing and future military operations, public health and safety practices, and ongoing and future environmental resources management and conservation at NAWS China Lake. The LUMP will be developed in conformance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA, 1976).

The EIS will also evaluate a range of land use management practices, including the "no action" alternative. Alternative land use management practices could include a range of activities of greater or lesser intensity of land use type or tempo. The "no action" alternative would implement a Land Use Management Plan that would not change the ongoing type or tempo of land uses and environmental resources management direction or emphasis currently in place at China Lake.

The EIS will evaluate the potential immediate and cumulative effects of implementing a comprehensive Land Use Management Plan on the physical, natural, and human environments of the affected geographic area. Major environmental issues that will be addressed in the EIS include, but are not limited to: geology/soils; biology; water resources/hydrology, noise, air quality (visibility & conformity), land use, non-military land use and access, cultural resources, socio-economics, transportation, public health and safety, and hazardous materials.

The Navy will initiate a scoping process for the purpose of determining the extent of issues to be addressed and identifying the significant issues related to the China Lake EIS. Scoping meetings will be held in the towns of Trona, Inyokern, Independence, Barstow, Johannesburg, and Ridgecrest. Meeting sites and times will be published in the **Federal Register**, and in local and regional newspapers. During the scoping meetings, presentation of information on the proposed action will precede the request for public comment. Navy representatives will accept comments from members of the public at the meeting. It is important that Federal, state, and local agencies, and

interested individuals take this opportunity to identify environmental concerns that should be addressed in the EIS.

**ADDRESSES:** Agencies and the public are invited and encouraged to provide written comments in addition to, or in lieu of, oral comments at the public scoping meetings. To be most helpful, scoping comments should clearly describe specific issues or topic which the EIS should address. Written comments must be postmarked by June 30, 1997 and should be mailed to Commander, Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake, Attn: Ms. Robin Hoffman, Land Use Planning Office, China Lake, CA 93555, telephone (619) 939-0935, fax (619) 939-2541.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Ms. Robin Hoffman at (619) 939-0935.

Dated: March 27, 1997.

**M.A. Waters,**

*LCDR, JAG, USN, Alternate Federal Register Liaison Officer.*

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**DEPARTMENT OF THE DEFENSE**

**Department of the Navy**

**Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for Implementation of the Draft Integrated Management Plan for the Patuxent River Complex, Maryland**

**SUMMARY:** Per section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 as implemented by the Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), the Department of the Navy announces its intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to evaluate the potential environmental effects of implementing the draft Integrated Management Plan for the Patuxent River Complex, Maryland. The Patuxent River Complex includes the Patuxent River Naval Air Station (NAS) including the Test Pilot School, Webster Field Annex (an Outlying Field), and the Chesapeake Test Range, which are assets under the exclusive control and scheduling authority of the Naval Air Warfare Center—Aircraft Division (NAWCAD).

The Patuxent River Complex is located 60 miles southeast of Washington, DC, in southern Maryland, where the Navy has actively conducted aircraft test and evaluation activities for more than 50 years. In recent years, the post-Cold War shift from the threat of nuclear superpower confrontation to regional conflicts has required the

military services to redefine their roles and identify the types of weapons and platforms most effective to future success in regional conflicts.

Concurrent with the rise of regional conflicts has been a trend of significant reductions in national defense spending. The Patuxent River Complex has been affected by the 1991, 1993, and 1995 Base Realignment and Closure Act (BRAC) decisions to relocate Naval Aviation Research, Development, Test and Evaluation (RDT&E) facilities from Warminster, Pennsylvania and Trenton, New Jersey and Naval Air Systems headquarters from Arlington, Virginia to the Complex. (Environmental Impact Statements were prepared in 1993 and 1994 to assess this realignment of these functions; issues addressed in these NEPA documents will be incorporated by reference only in the EIS for the Patuxent River Complex Integrated Management Plan.) These realignments and consolidation of their assets will better position NAWCAD to carry out its mission as the Navy's principal RDT&E, engineering, and fleet support activity for Naval fixed and rotary wing aircraft and associated systems from acquisition through all life cycle phases.

In response to these changes, NAWCAD recognized the need to initiate a strategic planning initiative that included the preparation of an Integrated Management Plan for the NAWCAD-controlled assets in the Patuxent River Complex. The implementation of the plan will enable the Navy to meet its commitment to conserve and protect the unique natural and cultural resources of the Patuxent River Complex and Chesapeake Bay while protecting human health and welfare.

The Integrated Management Plan will provide a framework within which NAWCAD can efficiently and effectively utilize the assets under its control to meet its strategic planning initiatives while complying with applicable local, state, and Federal laws. However, prior to NAWCAD adoption of the Integrated Management Plan, compliance with NEPA is required. The preparation of an EIS will meet these NEPA requirements. The EIS will address a range of alternatives that focus on varying workload levels associated with both RDT&E and military training support activities: (1) Level I Workload Alternative will consist of RDT&E activities at recent levels and an increase in military training support activities for a combined total of approximately 22,000 flight hours per year; (2) Level II Workload Alternative will consist of increases in RDT&E activities and military training support

activities for a combined total of approximately 24,000 flight hours per year; and (3) Level III Workload Alternative will consist of increased RDT&E activities and military training support activities for a combined total of approximately 26,000 flight hours per year. As required by NEPA, the EIS will also consider the No Action Alternative. This alternative would consist of RDT&E activities and military training support activities at existing workload levels.

Topics to be addressed in the EIS will include, but are not limited to, noise, air quality, vegetation and wildlife, water quality, and socioeconomic impacts, including environmental justice. Federal, state, and local agencies, and interested individuals are encouraged to participate in a scoping process to determine the range of issues related to the proposed action.

Five public scoping meetings will be held to receive oral and written comments. Each scoping meeting will provide opportunities for clarification of the draft Integrated Management Plan and alternatives and solicit input from representatives of government agencies and interested individuals. The Navy will set up information stations at these scoping meetings that will describe the Patuxent River Complex, the scope of Integrated Management Plan, and the NEPA EIS process. Each information station will be attended by a Navy presenter who will be available to answer questions from meeting attendees. Comments will be entered into the official record in several ways: written comments sheets available at each meeting; tape recorders located throughout the meeting area; and via a stenographer who will be available to transcribe statements. Written comments will also be accepted via mail or fax. Regardless of the commenting method chosen, all comments will receive the same attention and consideration during EIS preparation.

The five public scoping meetings will be held at the following times and locations: (1) Prince Frederick, Maryland on May 6, 1997 at the Calvert High School from 3:30 pm–5:30pm and 6:30 pm–8:30 pm; (2) Leonardtown, Maryland on May 8, 1997 at the Leonardtown High School from 3:30 pm–5:30 pm and 6:30 pm–8:30 pm; (3) Burgess, Virginia on May 12, 1997 at the Fairfields Baptist Church from 3:00 pm–6:00 pm; Westover, Maryland on May 14, 1997 at the JM Tawes Technical Center from 3:00 pm–6:00 pm; and (5) Cambridge, Maryland on May 15, 1997 at the Christ Episcopal Church from 2:00 pm–5:00 pm and 6:30 pm–8:30 pm. The schedule for the public scoping

meetings will also be available by calling (888) 276–5201.

**ADDRESSES:** The Navy will accept comments at the address below at any time during the environmental impact statement process. To ensure that the Navy has sufficient time to consider public input during preparation of the Draft EIS, scoping comments should be submitted to the address below by June 1, 1997. For further information concerning the preparation of the EIS, or to provide written comment, contact: Cathy A. Partusch, Public Affairs Officer, Naval Air Station Patuxent River, Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division, Naval Air Station Patuxent River, Maryland, telephone (301) 342–7512, ext. 24; fax (301) 342–7509; Internet: PartuschCA%am5@mr.nawcad.navy.mil.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Additional information concerning this notice may be obtained by contacting Ms. Cathy Partusch at (301) 342–7512.

Dated: March 21, 1997.

**M.A. Waters,**

*LCDR, JAG, USN, Alternate Federal Register Liaison Officer.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

### Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance; Meeting

**AGENCY:** Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance, Education.

**ACTION:** Notice of upcoming meeting.

**SUMMARY:** This notice sets forth the schedule and proposed agenda of a forthcoming meeting sponsored by the Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance. This notice also describes the functions of the Committee. This document is intended to notify the general public.

**DATES:** Monday, April 21, 1997, beginning at 9:00 a.m. and ending at approximately 5:00 p.m. and Tuesday, April 22, beginning at 8:30 a.m. and ending at approximately 2:00 p.m.

**ADDRESSES:** Radisson Barcelo Hotel, 2121 P Street, N.W., National A Room, in Washington, D.C. 20037.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Dr. Brian K. Fitzgerald, Staff Director, Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance, 1280 Maryland Avenue, S.W., Suite 601, Washington, D.C. 20202–7582 (202) 708–7439.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Advisory Committee on Student