

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Department of the Navy

Rescheduling of Public Hearings and Extension of Comment Period for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for Developing Home Port Facilities for Three NIMITZ-Class Aircraft Carriers in Support of the United States Pacific Fleet

AGENCY: Department of the Navy, DOD.

ACTION: Announcement of rescheduling of public hearings and extension of comment period.

SUMMARY: The Department of the Navy has prepared and filed with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for Developing Home Port Facilities for Three Nimitz-Class Aircraft Carriers in Support of the United States Pacific Fleet. Public hearings previously announced in the **Federal Register**, Volume 63, No. 169/ Tuesday, September 1, 1998, pages 46420-46421, have been rescheduled. This notice announces the new dates and locations for the five public hearings and the extension of the public review period. Public hearings will be held in order to receive oral and written comments on the DEIS. Federal, state and local agencies, and interested individuals are invited to be present or represented at the hearings.

DATES: See Supplementary Information section for dates.

ADDRESSES: See Supplementary Information section for addresses.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. John Coon, telephone (888) 428-6440.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Pursuant to 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 has prepared and filed with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for Developing Home Port Facilities for Three Nimitz-Class Aircraft Carriers in Support of the United States Pacific Fleet.

A Notice of Intent (NOI) for this EIS was published in the **Federal Register** on December 3, 1996. Public Scoping meetings were held in Bremerton, WA, on February 3, 1997; in Everett, WA, on February 4, 1997; in Pearl City, HI, on February 6, 1997; and in Coronado, CA, on February 10, 1997.

The U.S. Navy has analyzed the environmental effects resulting from construction and operation of facilities and infrastructure needed to support the

home-porting of three aircraft carriers. Four possible alternative locations are being considered: Naval Air Station North Island (NASNI) Coronado near San Diego, CA; Puget Sound Naval Shipyard (PSNS) Bremerton, WA; Naval Station (NAVSTA) Everett, WA; and Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard (PHNS) Pearl Harbor, HI.

The Navy proposes to construct and operate facilities and infrastructure needed to support the home-porting of three Nimitz-Class aircraft carriers in the U.S. Pacific Fleet. Two Nimitz-Class aircraft carriers will join the U.S. Pacific Fleet, replacing two conventionally powered aircraft carriers (CVs) currently home-ported at NASNI in the Naval Port San Diego, CA. The current location of a third Nimitz-Class aircraft carrier at NAVSTA Everett is being reevaluated in order to increase efficiency of support infrastructure, maintenance, and repair capabilities, and to enhance crew quality of life.

From the four alternative sites locations (NASNI, PSNS, NAVSTA Everett and PHNS), six different alternative home-porting configurations, including the no-action alternative were developed and analyzed. The Navy currently prefers Alternative Two, which would home port two additional Nimitz-Class aircraft carriers at NASNI (for a total of three Nimitz-Class aircraft carriers), home port a total of two Nimitz-Class aircraft carriers in the Pacific Northwest (one at PSNS and one at NAVSTA Everett), and would not have any aircraft carrier at PHNS. Alternative Two would result in significant but mitigable impacts on marine biological resources at NASNI and PSNS. All other environmental impacts associated with Alternative Two would be less than significant.

Environmental resource areas addressed in the DEIS include geology, topography, and soils; dredging, hydrology, and water quality; pollution prevention; socioeconomic, environmental justice, schools, and housing; transportation/ circulation/ parking; public facilities and recreation; safety and environmental health; aesthetics; and utilities. Issue analysis includes an evaluation of the direct, indirect, short-term, and cumulative impacts; and irreversible and irretrievable commitment of resources associated with the proposed actions.

No decision on the proposed action will be made until the National Environmental Policy Act process has been completed and the Secretary of the Navy, or a designated representative, releases the Record of Decision.

The DEIS has been distributed to various federal, state, and local

agencies, elected officials, and special interest groups and public libraries. The DEIS is also available for public review at the following libraries:

- Coronado Public Library, 640 Orange Avenue, Coronado, CA.
- San Diego Library (Science & Industry Section), 820 E Street, San Diego, CA.
- Hawaii State Library, 478 South King Street, Honolulu, HI.
- Aiea Public Library, 99-143 Moanalua Road, Aiea, HI.
- Pearl City Public Library, 1138 Waimano Home Road, Pearl City, HI.
- Ewa Beach Public and School Library, 91-950 North Road, Ewa Beach, HI.
- Everett Library, 2702 Hoyt, Everett, WA.
- Kitsap Regional Library, 1301 Sylvan Way, Bremerton, WA.
- Sno-IsL Library System, 7312 35th Avenue, Marysville, WA.

The Navy will conduct five public hearings to receive oral and written comments concerning the DEIS.

DATES: Public hearing dates are as follows:

1. October 19, 1998, at 7 p.m., Everett, WA
2. October 20, 1998, at 7 p.m., Silverdale, WA
3. October 22, 1998, at 7 p.m., Honolulu, HI
4. October 27, 1998, at 7 p.m., Coronado, CA
5. October 28, 1998, at 7 p.m., San Diego, CA

ADDRESSES: Hearing locations are as follows:

1. North Middle School, Cafeteria, 2514 Ranier, Everett, WA
2. Westcoast Silverdale Hotel, Marine Canal Room, 3073 NW Bucklin Hill Road, Silverdale, WA
3. Makalapa Elementary School, Dining Room, 4435 Salt Lake Boulevard, Honolulu, HI
4. Village Elementary School, Village Hall, 600 Block of H Avenue, Coronado, CA
5. San Diego County Administration Center, South Entrance, Room 310, 1600 Pacific Highway, San Diego, CA

A brief presentation will precede a request for public information and comments. Navy representatives will be available at each hearing to receive information and comments from agencies and the public regarding issues of concern. Federal, state, and local agencies, and interested parties are invited and urged to be present or represented at the hearings. Those who intend to speak will be asked to submit a speaker card (available at the door). Oral comments will be heard and transcribed by a stenographer. To assure

accuracy of the record, all statements should be submitted in writing. All statements, both oral and written, will become part of the public record in the study. Equal weight will be given to both oral and written comments. In the interest of available time, each speaker will be asked to limit oral comments to three minutes. Longer comments should be summarized at the public hearings and submitted in writing either at the hearing or mailed to Mr. John Coon (Code 05ALJC), Southwest Division, Naval Facilities Engineering Command, 1220 Pacific Highway, San Diego, CA 92132, telephone (888) 428-6440, fax (619) 532-4998, or e-mail address at CVN_HOMEPORING@efdswest.navfac.navy.mil. The public review period has been extended thirty-one days. Comments should be postmarked on or before November 12, 1998.

Dated: September 29, 1998.

Ralph W. Corey,

Lieutenant Commander, Judge Advocate General's Corps, U.S. Navy, Federal Register Liaison Officer.

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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Department of the Navy

Record of Decision For the Yuma Training Range Complex, Arizona and California

AGENCY: Department of the Navy, DOD.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to section 102(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, and the Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 CFR parts 1500-1508), the Department of the Navy announces its decision to upgrade the capability of the Yuma Training Range Complex (YTRC).

DATES: This decision takes effect October 2, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Questions regarding the environmental impact statement (EIS) prepared for this action may be directed to Commanding Officer, Marine Corps Air Station, Box 99160, Yuma, AZ 85369-9160.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Ron Pearce, Director, Range Management Department, (520) 341-3401, fax (520) 341-2216, e-mail pearcer@yuma.usmc.mil.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The decision has been made to approve the following actions, which are described in more detail in the EIS:

Discontinue authorization for and use of the low-level holding areas for fixed-

wing aircraft over the Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge (NWR). Allow the corridors for low-level overflights of the Cabeza Prieta NWR by fixed-wing aircraft to be activated for use on up to 60 days per year but not more than 7 consecutive days at a time; implementation of airspace proposals over the Cabeza Prieta NWR will require the renegotiation of the Memorandum of Understanding among the Marine Corps, Air Force, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service governing low-level military aircraft overflights of the Cabeza Prieta NWR. Replace the 11 existing corridor segments for low-level overflight of the Cabeza Prieta NWR by rotary-winged aircraft (i.e., helicopters) with three distinct corridors identified to resolve endangered species (Sonoran pronghorn and lesser long-nosed bat) protection issues (Alternatives 1-3, 1-4 and 1-5).

Establish a new restricted area, designated R-2507E, contiguous with the northeastern side of R-2507S, that will increase the restricted airspace available to support aviation training operations without exceeding land boundaries of the Chocolate Mountain Aerial Gunnery Range (Chocolate Mountain Range) (Alternative 2-3).

Establish an overlying controlled firing area contiguous to R-2507N to support overhead firing for Naval Special Warfare Group One training (Alternative 3-2).

Add new target scenarios to the existing Moving Sands and Cactus West target inert impact areas in the Barry M. Goldwater Air Force Range (Goldwater Range) (Alternative 4-2).

Construct a narrow-width runway/roadway for AV-8B roadway operations at auxiliary airfield two in the Goldwater Range (Alternative 5-2).

Relocate the parachute drop zone for cargo recovery to a position southeast of auxiliary airfield two (Alternative 6-2).

Establish three ground support zones in the Goldwater Range to consolidate existing ground support areas in selected intensive use locations, designate four new individual ground support areas in unserved locations west of the Gila Mountains, and inactivate the use of four ground support areas that are not currently needed. The designation of one new individual ground support area near Stoval Auxiliary Field inside the retired Multiple Aimpoint Validation test area but outside of the Mohawk Mountains and Sand Dunes Areas of Critical Environmental Concern was proposed as part of this alternative. The Marine Corps will not establish this additional ground support area at this time (Alternative 7-3).

Install five new Tactical Aircrew Combat Training System range threat emitters in the Goldwater Range (Alternative 8-2).

Increase the maximum net explosive weight limits for air-to-ground ordnance delivery at the Chocolate Mountain Range to twelve MK-82 (500-pound) bombs, six MK-83 (1,000-pound) bombs, or four MK-94 (2,000-pound) bombs per aircraft pass (Alternative 9-2).

Rescind the prohibition on night ordnance delivery training on the Chocolate Mountain Range between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. No specific proposal currently exists to implement this action alternative. Subsequent environmental documentation will be completed as required prior to implementing night ordnance delivery under this alternative (Alternative 10-2).

The proposal to authorize air-to-ground delivery of live ordnance in the southwestern portion of R-2507 of the Chocolate Mountain Range has been withdrawn from further consideration (Alternative 11-2). Any future proposal to authorize air-to-ground delivery of live ordnance in this area would be evaluated in subsequent environmental documentation, as appropriate, once a proposal is ripe for consideration.

Develop three new individual targets and redevelop targets at seven inactive individual target sites in the Chocolate Mountain Range (Alternative 12-2).

Relocate the two off-range ground support areas and drop zone to positions inside the Chocolate Mountain Range boundary (Alternative 13-2).

Inactivate use of Training Area 1 and Firing Zones 1 and 2 for ground training activities, and relocate the Naval Special Warfare Group One training activities conducted in those locations to Training Area 2, to be redesignated Special Warfare Training Area 4. In addition, develop Special Warfare Training Area 4 to accommodate relocated weapons training by Naval Special Warfare Group One. As a result of this action, a training requirement of Naval Special Warfare Group One currently cannot be met. A proposal may be developed by the Department of the Navy to establish a range capable of supporting a 360 degree field of fire. Though no proposal currently exists, it seems likely an alternative that would be evaluated is the Chocolate Mountain Range. Environmental documentation would be prepared, as appropriate, once a proposal is ripe for consideration. In addition, any proposal to expand Naval Special Warfare Group One training activities or construct new facilities on the Chocolate Mountain Range would be evaluated in subsequent environmental