

Frequently Asked Questions

Draft Decision Notice and Objection Period for Naval Training on Olympic National Forest

Q. What is the Draft Decision Notice and Objection Period?

A. Forest Service officials have released a Draft Decision Notice that would authorize a special use permit to allow the US Navy to conduct ground-to-air training using mobile electronic transmitters from 11 roadside locations on the Olympic National Forest for a period of up to five years.

Subsequent to the Draft Decision Notice being published in the Pacific Ranger District's newspapers of record, a 45-day objection period will start. Objections will only be accepted from those who submitted project-specific written comments during scoping or other designated comment periods. Issues raised in objections must be based on previously submitted comments unless based on new information arising after the designated comment periods.

To review the documents, or find information about the objection process, visit:

http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/nepa_project_exp.php?project=42759

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) was passed by Congress to foster better decision making by officials. Its mandate is to insure information is available and considered before decisions and actions are implemented. When an Environmental Assessment (EA) is conducted and it is concluded that no significant environmental impact will result from implementing the proposed action or an alternative to it, a Decision Notice may be issued.

Q. What do these Navy training operations entail for the Olympic National Forest?

The Draft Decision Notice would authorize a special use permit for use of mobile emitter trucks at 11 designated sites on the forest. Trucks would be parked at pull outs on existing, open National Forest System roads on the Pacific Ranger District of the Olympic National Forest. These sites have been selected because, in general, they are on a cliff or ridgeline and/or provide an open area to the west of the pull-out that enables the mobile emitters a clear line of sight to the west.

When supported aircraft are in the area, the crew within the mobile emitter would energize the emitter. The emitters, when activated, send a radar or communications signal that the aircraft will then detect and process. Emitters may be energized for short periods of time throughout the training activity, or continuously throughout the training exercise, or continuously the entire time the aircraft is airborne, depending on the training scenario.

After completion of the training event, the mobile emitters used in the Olympic Military Operations Areas would relocate to the next training site or return to Naval Station Everett

Annex Pacific Beach if there are no additional training evolutions scheduled for the day. Mobile emitter vehicles would not remain parked at training sites overnight.

On a typical training day, up to three mobile emitter trucks would each drive to one of the 11 training sites. Training could take place up to 250 days per year. Mobile emitter trucks could be in place for 8 to 16 hours a day, for an average of 12 hours a day. No training would take place on Federal holidays; activity would usually not occur on weekends.

Q. Why are military training operations being proposed on National Forest System lands?

A. National Forests are managed for multiple uses and military training activities are within statutory authority. In addition, the Forest Service works cooperatively with other government agencies, including the Department of Defense. A 1988 Master Agreement between the Department of Defense and the Department of Agriculture established procedures for planning, scheduling, and conducting authorized military activities on National Forest System lands. The Forest Service recognizes the Navy's need to adequately train their personnel.

Q. Will this training involve the use of weapons?

A. The training would not involve weapons. The emitters, when activated, send a radar or communications signal that the aircraft will then detect and process. Training with emitters enable aircrews to detect and identify the kind of electronic signals they might encounter flying in hostile territory.

Q. Where are the 11 designated training locations?

A. The 11 designated locations are located on open National Forest System roads on the north (3 sites) and south sides (8 sites) of the Pacific Ranger District of the Olympic National Forest (shown in the map below).

Q. How often will the training take place?

A. Training could take place up to 250 days per year. No training would take place on Federal holidays; activity would usually not occur on weekends. Mobile emitter trucks could be in place for 8 to 16 hours a day, for an average of 12 hours a day.

Q. How will these training operations impact the forest?

A. The potential impacts of the training are disclosed in the Navy's 2014 Pacific Northwest Electronic Warfare Environmental Assessment and the Forest Service's Draft Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact.

Impacts to Public Health and Safety:

- No significant public health or safety impacts would occur as a result of the training exercises due to the required Standard Operating Procedures outlined in the 2014 Pacific Northwest Electronic Warfare Range Environmental Assessment and Draft Special Use Permit.

Impacts to Wildlife Species including Endangered Species Act listed species:

- Consultation was conducted between the Navy and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to determine impacts of the proposed project on wildlife. The project effects are not anticipated to result in significant disruption to species.

Impacts to Forest Users:

- The draft decision is not expected to significantly impact users' recreation experience. It is possible, but unlikely that the average forest user would encounter a mobile emitter truck considering that the Olympic National Forest has over 1,300 miles of open roads. Eleven sites are designated for use and are located in remote locations on National Forest System roads. On any given day, up to three sites could be occupied by the mobile emitter trucks at any given time. Mobile emitter trucks would not operate on Federal holidays and usually not on weekends. Standard Operating Procedures outlined in the 2014 Pacific Northwest Electronic Warfare Range Environmental Assessment and Draft Special Use Permit require that emitter trucks suspend operations or relocate if people are within the immediate area.

Q. Will the forest be safe for forest visitors during military training operations?

A. Yes. The Navy conducted an analysis of potential impacts to human health and safety as part of their Environmental Assessment. The Draft Decision would authorize a Special Use Permit that includes Project Design Features and Standard Operating Procedures as requirements that ensure protection of resources and public health and safety.

The emitters, which are at least 14 feet above the ground, put out directional electronic signals that will be pointed skyward toward the Pacific Ocean. Set up in this direction, the mobile emitters pose no threat to people or animals on the ground, below the emitters. Risk to animals or people would only occur if they put themselves in the direct path of the signal, above the emitter, and within 100 feet of the emitter beam for an extended period of time. As an added measure of

safety, the Special Use Permit requires that emitters be shut down or moved if people are within the 100-foot safety zone around the trucks when the systems are sending out the skyward signal.

Q. What is the likelihood of an average forest visitor encountering a military training operation?

A. Although possible, it is unlikely that the average forest user would encounter a mobile emitter truck considering that the Olympic National Forest has over 1,300 miles of open roads. Eleven sites are designated for use and are located in remote locations on National Forest System roads. On any given day, up to three sites could be occupied by the mobile emitter trucks at any given time. In addition, mobile emitter trucks would not operate on Federal holidays usually not on weekends, making forest users less likely to encounter them. Standard Operating Procedures are a part of the Special Use Permit and require that emitter trucks de-energize the emitters and relocate to another designated site if they encounter people within the immediate area.

Q. Will the training greatly increase military flights and noise pollution in the vicinity of Olympic National Park and the Olympic National Forest and Whidbey Island?

A. The Navy has estimated that the Electronic Warfare training proposed may increase the amount of military flights currently occurring for other military activities by approximately 10%, or less than one additional flight per day. The Navy's 2015 Northwest Training and Testing Final Environmental Impact Statement included an airspace noise analysis for the Olympic Military Operations Areas and a World Heritage Site Analysis for activities occurring on or over Olympic National Park (for more information on this EIS please visit: <https://nwtteis.com/>).

Q. What happens when the current permit expires in five years? Can the Navy renew the permit utilizing the existing EA?

A. The permit will expire after five years. According to the terms listed in the draft permit, the permit holder may apply for a new permit to renew the use and occupancy authorized by the permit. The application must be submitted at least 6 months prior to expiration of the permit. Renewal of the permit is at the sole discretion of the authorized officer. At a minimum, before renewing the use and occupancy authorized by this permit, the authorized officer shall require that (1) the use and occupancy to be authorized by the new permit is consistent with the standards and guidelines in the applicable land management plan; (2) the type of use and occupancy to be authorized by the new permit is the same as the type of use and occupancy authorized by this permit; and (3) the holder is in compliance with all the terms of this permit. The authorized officer may prescribe new terms and conditions when a new permit is issued.

Q. How was public input solicited and used in this decision?

A. Public involvement is an important part of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) planning process and was used to inform the Draft Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact. Opportunities to provide comments were offered by both the Navy and the Forest Service in 2014. Due to considerable public interest, additional time was provided to ensure adequate time to comment. About 3,500 public comments were received by the Forest Service. These comments were reviewed and considered by the Responsible Official. Responses to these public comments and concerns are included as Appendix B to the Draft Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact.

Q. How do I make objections during the objection period?

A. Objections must be submitted within 45 days following the publication of the legal notice in *The Daily World* (Aberdeen, Washington) and *The Peninsula Daily News* (Port Angeles, Washington). The date of this legal notice is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an objection. Those wishing to file an objection should not rely upon dates or timeframes provided by any other source. It is the objector's responsibility to ensure evidence of timely receipt (36 CFR 218.9).

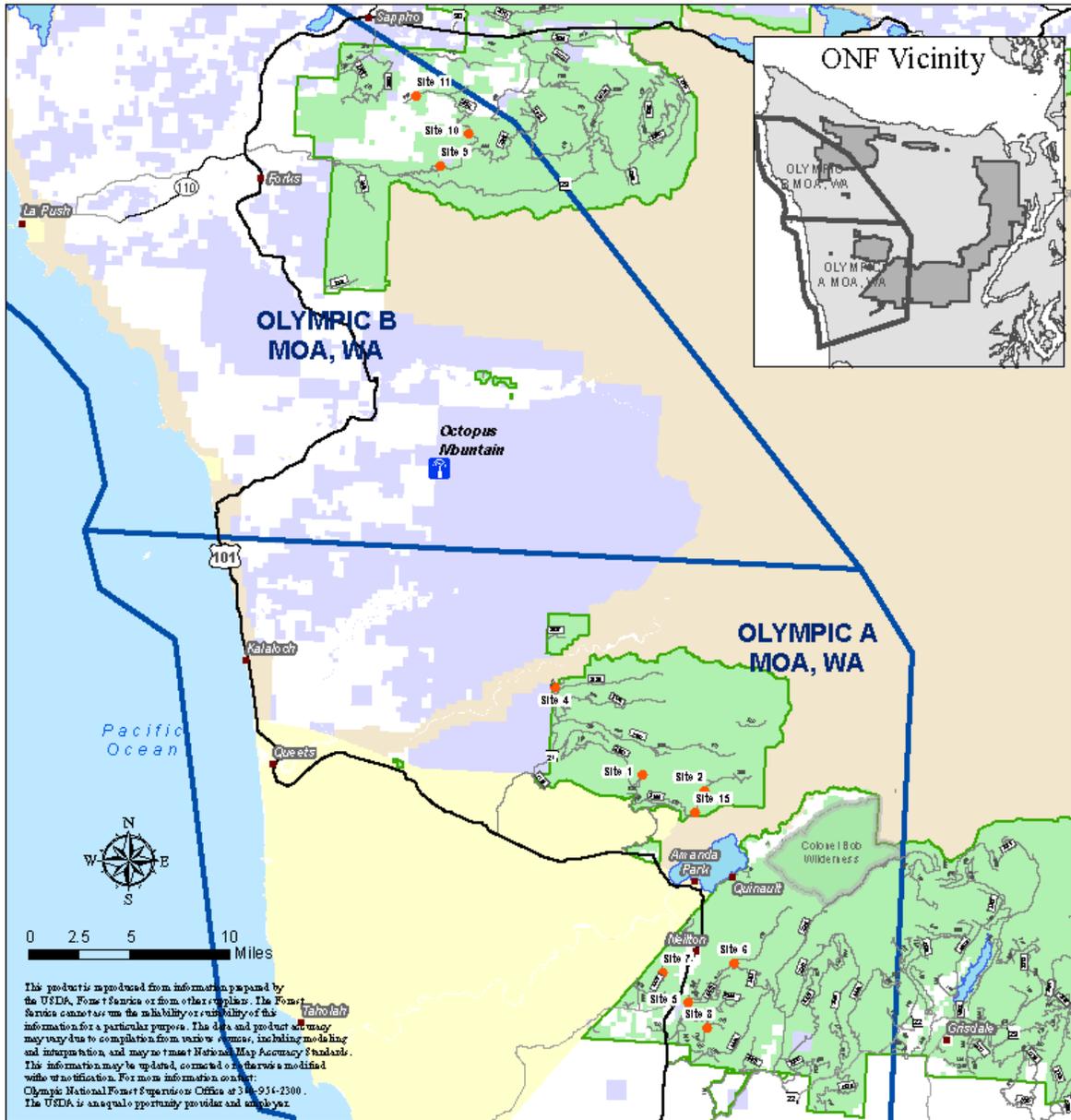
Objections must be submitted to Reviewing Officer Reta Laford. Electronic objections should be submitted to: <https://cara.ecosystem-management.org/Public/CommentInput?project=42759>. Objections may alternatively be submitted by FAX (360-956-2330) and by mail or in person (1835 Black Lake Blvd. SW, Olympia, WA 98512) during business hours (M-F 8:00am to 4:30pm). In all cases, the subject line should state "OBJECTION Pacific Northwest Electronic Warfare Range".

Objections must include (36 CFR 218.8(d)): 1) the objector's name, address and telephone; 2) the objector's signature or other verification of authorship; 3) identification of a single lead objector when applicable; 4) the project name (Pacific Northwest Electronic Warfare Range), Responsible Official name (Dean Millett) and title (District Ranger), and name of affected National Forest (Olympic National Forest) and/or Ranger District (Pacific Ranger District); 5) reasons for, and suggested remedies to resolve, your objections; and, 6) description of the connection between your objections and your prior comments. Incorporation of documents by reference may occur only as provided for at 36 CFR 218.8(b).

Q. Where can I learn more?

A. Additional Information is available on Forest Service and US Navy Websites:

- The Forest Service’s Draft Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact as well as related documents are available for review at:
http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/nepa_project_exp.php?project=42759
- Objections and Electronic Objection Submission: <https://cara.ecosystem-management.org/Public/CommentInput?project=42759>
- Forest Service NEPA process website: <http://www.fs.fed.us/emc/nepa/>
- Northwest Navy NEPA Documents: <http://go.usa.gov/kQ6e>
- 2015 Northwest Training and Testing EIS: <https://nwtteis.com/>
- Information about the Electronic Warfare Training: <http://go.usa.gov/36s35>



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U.S. Navy Proposed Mobile Emitter Sites on Olympic National Forest

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Towns ● Proposed Mobile Emitter Site Cellular Transmitter Forest Service Existing Roads | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wilderness National Forest Administrative Boundary MOA | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Olympic National Forest Breat of Land Management Tribal Land Olympic National Park | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other Federal Land WASTate Land Other Land, Including Private |
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August 2016