

Marine Corps aviation assets by significantly increasing air-to-ground training capabilities in the Beaufort, South Carolina Region. The Draft EIS has identified and considered four action alternatives and a No Action alternative.

More information of the Draft EIS can be found in the previously published NOA and NOPM (see **Federal Register** on Friday, July 13, 2012 (**Federal Register**/Vol. 77, No. 135, Pages 41385–41387 (NOPMs) and Page 41403 (NOA)). Federal, State, and local agencies, elected officials, and other interested parties and individuals, are invited and encouraged to review and comment on the Draft EIS. Comments on the Draft EIS can be submitted via the project email address ([townsendbombingrangeise@ene.com](mailto:townsendbombingrangeise@ene.com)), project Web site or submitted in writing to: Townsend Bombing Range EIS Project Manager, Post Office Box 180458, Tallahassee, Florida, 32318. All comments must be postmarked or electronically dated on or before September 27, 2012 to be sure they become part of the public record.

The Draft EIS has been distributed to various Federal, State, local agencies, and Native American Tribes, as well as other interested parties and individuals. In addition, copies of the Draft EIS are available for public review at the following public libraries: Ida Hilton Public Library, 1105 North Way, Darien, GA, 31305; Long County Public Library, 28 S. Main Street, Ludowici, GA, 31316; and Hog Hammock Public Library, 1023 Hillery Lane, Sapelo Island, GA, 31327.

An electronic copy of the Draft EIS is also available for public viewing at <http://www.townsendbombingrangeeis.com>.

To be considered, all comments on the Draft EIS must be received by September 27, 2012. The DoN will consider and respond to all comments received on the Draft EIS when preparing the Final EIS. The DoN expects to issue the Final EIS in spring 2013, at which time a NOA will be published in the **Federal Register** and local print media. A Record of Decision is expected in summer 2013.

Dated: August 17, 2012.

**C.K. Chiappetta,**

*Lieutenant Commander, U. S. Navy, Office of the Judge Advocate General, U.S. Navy, Federal Register Liaison Officer.*

[FR Doc. 2012–20872 Filed 8–23–12; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3810–FF–P**

**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE**

**Department of the Navy**

**Notice of Public Hearings for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Outdoor Research, Development, Test and Evaluation Activities, Naval Surface Warfare Center, Dahlgren Division, Dahlgren, VA**

**AGENCY:** Department of the Navy, DoD.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** Pursuant to Section (102)(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Council on Environmental Quality regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of NEPA (Title 40 Code of Federal Regulations Parts 1500–1508), the Department of the Navy (DoN) has prepared and filed with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to evaluate the potential environmental effects of expanding Naval Surface Warfare Center, Dahlgren Division's (NSWCDD) research, development, test and evaluation (RDT&E) activities within the Potomac River Test Range (PRTR) complex, Explosives Experimental Area (EEA) Range complex, the Mission Area, and Special-Use Airspace (SUA) located at Naval Support Facility (NSF) Dahlgren, Dahlgren, VA.

The DoN will conduct three public hearings to receive oral and written comments on the Draft EIS. Federal, state, and local agencies, elected officials, and other interested individuals and organizations are invited to be present or represented at the public hearings. This notice announces the dates and locations of the public hearings for this Draft EIS.

**DATES AND ADDRESSES:** Public hearings will be held on the following dates and locations:

1. September 11, 2012 at the Newburg Volunteer Rescue Squad and Fire Department, 12245 Rock Point Road, Newburg, MD 20664;
2. September 12, 2012 at the A.T. Johnson Alumni Museum, 18849 Kings Highway, Montross, VA 22520; and
3. September 13, 2012 at the Mary Washington University-Dahlgren Campus, 4224 University Drive, King George, VA 22485.

All meetings will be held from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. and will begin with a presentation followed by a public comment period.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Commander, Naval Surface Warfare Center Dahlgren Division, 6149 Welsh Road, Suite 203, Dahlgren, VA 22448–

5130, Attn: Code C6 (NSWCDD PAO), Fax: 1–540–653–4679, Email: [DLGR\\_NSWC\\_EIS@NAVY.MIL](mailto:DLGR_NSWC_EIS@NAVY.MIL), Phone: 1–540–653–8154, or Web site: <http://www.navsea.navy.mil/nswc/dahlgren/EIS/index.aspx>.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** A Notice of Intent to prepare the NSWCDD Outdoor RDT&E Activities Draft EIS was published in the **Federal Register** on June 18, 2007 (72 FR 33456–33457). Five public scoping meetings were held on the following dates and locations:

1. July 23, 2007, Shiloh Baptist Church, 13457 Kings Highway, King George, VA 22485;
2. July 24, 2007, Christ Episcopal Church, 37497 Zach Fowler Road, Chaptico, MD 20621;
3. July 25, 2007, La Plata Volunteer Fire Department, 911 Washington Avenue, La Plata, MD 20646;
4. July 30, 2007, Saint Mary's Episcopal Church, 203 Dennison Street, Colonial Beach, VA 22443; and
5. July 31, 2007, Callao Rescue Squad Hall, 1348 Northumberland Highway, Callao, VA 22435.

The proposed action is to expand NSWCDD's RDT&E capabilities within the PRTR Complex, the EEA Range Complex, Mission Area, and SUA. These RDT&E activities include outdoor operations that require the use of ordnance, high-power electromagnetic (EM) energy, high-energy (HE) lasers, and chemical and biological simulants (non-toxic substances used to mimic dangerous agents). Under the proposed action, the average number of events that could take place annually (with the exception of large-caliber gun firing events) would increase above current baseline levels. To ensure that equipment and materials work effectively, even in less-than-ideal conditions, some activities would take place under conditions in which activities are now rarely/never conducted, such as at dusk, dawn, and night and in adverse weather.

The purpose of the proposed action is to enable NSWCDD to meet current and future mission-related warfare and force-protection requirements by providing RDT&E of surface ship combat systems, ordnance, HE lasers and directed-energy systems, force-level warfare, and homeland and force protection.

The need for the proposed action is to enable the DoN and other stakeholders to successfully meet current and future national and global defense challenges required under 10 U.S.C. 5062 (2006) by developing a robust capability to carry out assigned RDT&E activities within the PRTR and EEA Range Complexes,

the Mission Area, and the SUA at NSF Dahlgren.

NSWCDD evaluated a range of alternatives that would meet action objectives, and applied screening criteria to identify those alternatives that were "reasonable" (i.e., practical and feasible). Reasonable alternatives were carried through the Draft EIS analysis. Screening criteria included:

1. Criterion 1—accommodate historical and current, baseline RDT&E mission requirements for activities that have the potential to affect human health and/or the environment; namely, those involving ordnance, the use of high-power EM energy, HE lasers, chemical simulants, and the use of the PRTR;

2. Criterion 2—accommodate known future requirements, which include the use of biological simulants alone;

3. Criterion 3—accommodate optimal potential future requirements by incorporating a margin of growth for the most actively evolving programs for which it is difficult to accurately forecast future needs, and include mixtures of biological and chemical simulants; and

4. Criterion 4—minimize impacts to commercial and recreational use of the Potomac River.

Reasonable alternatives were carried through the Draft EIS analysis. The Draft EIS considers three alternatives as summarized below:

1. No Action Alternative—maintains current operations and provides a baseline against which to measure the impacts of the other two alternatives.

2. Alternative 1—includes No Action Alternative plus growth above No Action Alternative levels necessary to meet RDT&E mission requirements in the near future.

3. Alternative 2—Provides for roughly 15% growth in activity levels above that of Alternative 1 to provide a margin of growth for the most actively evolving programs. It addresses current baseline requirements, known future requirements, and projected increases in the foreseeable future based on current trends. This alternative is the Preferred Alternative.

Alternatives 1 and 2 constitute increases in current activities of small-arms firing, detonations, high-power EM energy events, HE laser events, chemical and biological simulant (defense) events, and PRTR hours of use.

Alternative 2 (Preferred Alternative) satisfies current baseline requirements, includes the growth necessary to meet known RDT&E mission requirements for the near future and includes a margin of growth for the most actively evolving programs, namely those for which the

numbers of future annual test events, firings, and hours of use are harder to predict because of the uncertainties inherent in carrying out RDT&E.

The Draft EIS evaluates the potential environmental effects associated with NSWCDD's outdoor RDT&E activities. Alternatives were evaluated within resource areas including land use and plans, coastal zone resources, socioeconomic, environmental justice communities, protection of children, utilities, air quality, noise levels, cultural resources, hazardous materials and hazardous waste, health and safety, geology, topography, soils and sediments, water resources, and aquatic and terrestrial biological resources. The analysis includes an evaluation of the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts. Methods to reduce or minimize impacts to affected resources are addressed.

The DoN has made a preliminary finding that for all three alternatives there would be no significant impact to land use and plans, coastal zone resources, socioeconomic, low-income and minority populations, children, utilities, air quality, noise levels, cultural resources, hazardous materials and hazardous waste, health and safety, geology, topography, soils and sediments, water resources, and aquatic and terrestrial biological resources, and we are awaiting concurrence from the respective agencies.

All alternatives have the potential to affect fish and sea turtles species protected under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). In accordance with Section 7 of the ESA, the DoN consulted with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) for potential impacts to federally-listed species. NMFS concurred with the DoN's finding that the alternatives are not likely to adversely affect the endangered shortnose sturgeon, the Atlantic sturgeon, or ESA-listed sea turtles. No terrestrial animals or plants protected under the ESA, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, or Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act would be affected. Based on the DoN's analysis, the proposed action would not result in the incidental harassment of marine mammals protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

The DoN is also consulting with NMFS regarding potential effects on essential fish habitat under the Magnuson Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act with the release of this Draft EIS. The DoN has made a preliminary finding that there would be no adverse impacts on essential fish habitat under any of the alternatives,

and we are awaiting concurrence from NMFS.

Federal Coastal Consistency Determinations will be forwarded to Virginia and Maryland with the Draft EIS. Based on analysis, the DoN has made a preliminary finding that there would be no to minimal impact on coastal resources, and the Proposed Action is consistent to the maximum extent practical with Virginia and Maryland policies. We are awaiting concurrence from the Virginia and Maryland Coastal Management Programs.

The DoN consulted with the State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPOs) in Maryland and Virginia. Both SHPOs concluded there would be no adverse effect on National Register-listed or eligible resources in the areas of potential effect under all the alternatives.

NSWCDD will continue to adhere to general safety and environmental protective measures for all RDT&E activities and to implement specific protective measures for RDT&E activities using chemical and biological stimulants. No specific mitigation measures are required.

The Draft EIS was distributed to federal, state, and local agencies, elected officials, and other interested individuals and organizations. The public comment period will end on October 1, 2012. The Draft EIS is available for review or download at: <http://www.navsea.navy.mil/nswc/dahlgren/EIS/index.aspx>.

Copies of the Draft EIS are available for public review at the following libraries:

1. Lewis Egerton Smoot Memorial Library, 8562 Dahlgren Road, King George, VA 22485;

2. Cooper Memorial Library, 20 Washington Avenue, Colonial Beach, VA 22443;

3. Northumberland Public Library, 7204 Northumberland Highway, Heathsville, VA 22473;

4. Charles County Public Library, La Plata Branch, 2 Garrett Avenue, La Plata, MD 20646; and

5. St. Mary's County Library, Leonardtown Branch, 23250 Hollywood Road, Leonardtown, MD 20650.

Federal, state, and local agencies, elected officials, and interested individuals and organizations are invited to be present or represented at the public hearings where oral and written comments on the Draft EIS will be received. Oral statements will be heard and transcribed by a stenographer; however, to ensure the accuracy of the record, all statements should be submitted in writing. All

statements, both oral and written, will become part of the public record on the Draft EIS and will be responded to in the Final EIS. Equal weight will be given to both oral and written statements. In the interest of available time, and to ensure all who wish to give an oral statement have the opportunity to do so, each speaker's comments will be limited to two (2) minutes. If a long statement is to be presented, it should be summarized at the public hearing with the full text submitted either in writing at the hearing, or mailed, faxed, or emailed to Commander, Naval Surface Warfare Center Dahlgren Division, 6149 Welsh Road, Suite 203, Dahlgren, VA 22448-5130, Attn: Code C6 (NSWCDD PAO), Fax: 1-540-653-4679, or Email: [DLGR\\_NSWC\\_EIS@navy.mil](mailto:DLGR_NSWC_EIS@navy.mil) during the comment period. All written comments must be postmarked or received by October 01, 2012 to ensure they become part of the official record. All comments will be addressed in the Final EIS.

Dated: August 20, 2012.

**C.K. Chiappetta,**

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

[FR Doc. 2012-20937 Filed 8-23-12; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3810-FF-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

### Proposed Agency Information Collection

**AGENCY:** U.S. Department of Energy.

**ACTION:** Notice and request for OMB review and comment.

**SUMMARY:** The Department of Energy (DOE) has submitted to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for clearance a proposal for collection of information under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995. The proposed collection will enable DOE to have current knowledge of Federal employees and contractors conducting foreign travel to a non U.S. territory on the behalf of DOE. Information gathered will include dates of travel, destination, purpose, and after-hour contact information in case of emergency.

**DATES:** Comments regarding this collection must be received on or before 30 days after date of publication in the **Federal Register**. If you anticipate that you will be submitting comments, but find it difficult to do so within the period of time allowed by this notice, please advise the DOE Desk Officer at OMB of your intention to make a submission as soon as possible. The

Desk Officer may be telephoned at 202-395-4650.

**ADDRESSES:** Written comments should be sent to the DOE Desk Officer, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget, New Executive Office Building, Room 10102, 735 17th Street NW., Washington, DC 20503, and to Julie Squires by fax at (202) 586-0406 or by email at [julie.squires@hq.doe.gov](mailto:julie.squires@hq.doe.gov).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Requests for additional information or copies of the information collection instrument and instructions should be directed to Julie Squires at [julie.squires@hq.doe.gov](mailto:julie.squires@hq.doe.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** This information collection request contains:

- (1) OMB No. 1910-5144.
- (2) Information Collection Request Title: records, and secures approval of all foreign travel conducted by DOE federal employees and contractors. The system allows DOE to have full accountability of all travel and in cases of emergency DOE is able to quickly retrieve information as to who is traveling, where the individual is traveling, and the dates of travel. Information gathered is listed under three categories: (1) Traveler Information which requests traveler's name, passport information, site, position, and contact information, (2) General Trip Information which consists of estimated travel costs, and (3) Trip Itinerary Information which consists of destination, dates of travel, and purpose.

(3) Type of Respondents: DOE Federal employees and contractors traveling on behalf of DOE.

(4) Estimated Annual Number of Respondents: 8,313.

(5) Estimated Annual Number of Burden Hours: 4,228.

(6) Estimated Annual Cost Burden: None.

**Authority:** DOE Order 551.1D (April 2, 2012), regarding "Official Foreign Travel."

Issued in Washington, DC, on August 14, 2012.

**Umeki G. Thorne,**

*Director, Office of Management, Office of International Travel and Exchange Visitor Programs.*

[FR Doc. 2012-20840 Filed 8-23-12; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 6450-01-P**

## ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

[ER-FRL9004-7]

### Amended Environmental Impact Statement Filing System Guidance for Implementing 40 CFR 1506.9 and 1506.10 of the Council on Environmental Quality's Regulations Implementing the National Environmental Policy Act

#### 1. Introduction

On October 7, 1977, the Council of Environmental Quality (CEQ) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that allocated the responsibilities of the two agencies for assuring the government-wide implementation of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). Specifically, the MOA transferred to EPA the administrative aspects of the environmental impact statement (EIS) filing process. Within EPA, the Office of Federal Activities has been designated the official recipient in EPA of all EISs. These responsibilities have been codified in CEQ's NEPA Implementing Regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), and are totally separate from the substantive EPA reviews performed pursuant to both NEPA and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.

Under 40 CFR 1506.9, EPA can issue guidelines to implement its EIS filing responsibilities. The purpose of the EPA Filing System Guidelines is to provide guidance to Federal agencies on filing EISs, including draft, final, and supplemental EISs. Information is provided on: (1) How to file EISs; (2) the steps to follow when a Federal agency is adopting an EIS, or when an EIS is withdrawn, delayed or reopened; (3) public review periods; (4) issuance of notices of availability in the **Federal Register**; and (5) retention of filed EISs.

The guidelines published today update the previous guidelines, which were first published in the **Federal Register** on March 7, 1989. These updated guidelines have been modified to incorporate changes necessary to implement the *e-NEPA* electronic filing system.

#### 2. Purpose

Pursuant to 40 CFR 1506.9 and 1506.10, EPA is responsible for administering the EIS filing process, and can issue guidelines to implement those responsibilities. The process of EIS filing includes the following: (1) Receiving and recording of the EISs, so that information in them can be incorporated into EPA's computerized