

UNITED STATE NAVY 5-YEAR WARFARE TESTING PROGRAM EXPANSION

EXPANSION AREAS: CALIFORNIA, OREGON, WASHINGTON, IDAHO

KTVU Channel 2 – Oakland / San Francisco, CA
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Naval War Games Threaten Tranquility On Lost Coast

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MENDOCINO, Calif. -- A remote and windswept area of the Mendocino-Humboldt shore called the Lost Coast is set to become a battleground if the U.S. Navy gets its way.

The sea-faring branch of the U.S. armed forces plans to hold live-fire, anti-submarine war games along the coastline. "The Navy has the title requirement to train its sailors and airmen before they go into harm's way," said U.S. Navy spoke person Kimberly Kler.

Not surprisingly, area environmental activists are making a stand against the Navy's proposed plans. It is not the right thing to do, said Hawk Rosales of the Intertribal Sinkyone Wilderness Council. "The effects could be irreversible, and that's something we're not willing to allow."

Recently peace activists delivered to Mendocino County Congressman Mike Thompson petitions signed by many opposed to the war games. (May 8, 2009)

"We collected thousands and thousands of signatures protesting the Navy's attempts to militarize the ocean," said Judith Vidiver of the Ocean Protection Coalition.

The Navy acknowledges more than a half million marine mammals -- mostly whales and dolphins - could be harmed by explosions and especially by sonar. But environmentalists say the true numbers could be as high as 11 million, even when warships are miles away. "This technology is known to severely impact marine mammals, easily tens of miles away," said Michael Jasny of the Natural Resources Defense Council.

See: U.S. Federal Register NOAA-Department of Commerce – May 11, 2009 – Navy Permit Request for the "Taking" of 32 different species of marine mammals in 5-Year Warfare Testing Program to being September 2009, in Oregon, Washington, California, and Idaho.

Navy Environmental Impact Statement: www.nwtrangecomplexeis.com

California Congressman Mike Thompson prevailed upon the Navy to add another public hearing in Mendocino County, CA, on March 31, 2009, which lasted for almost 5 hours due to the number of people asking questions or and giving public comments. Lack of participation, in previous public hearings conducted by the Navy, caused due to public notification deliberately being limited by the Navy.

Critics say the public hearings were disingenuous and that the Navy was really trying to fly under the radar, employing a kind of stealth maneuver to avoid public scrutiny. Activists say the Navy will not get away with it.

It was truly appalling, said Mendocino resident Meredith Smith. "It had so many frightening aspects and no real information."

Another Mendocino resident, Ron Eich, agreed: "I'm hoping there's going to be more information made available before a decision's made."

Activist Rosalind Peterson pored over the Navy's thousand-page environmental impact statement and raised the alarm. "I think that everyone along the way kept quiet about this; hoping it would go through without us really knowing and having a voice in the process," said Peterson.

The Navy says it wants to expand its anti submarine warfare training because of a growing threat from small, stealthy submarines that run quietly on diesel or advanced non-nuclear power. 40 countries from China to Chile and even Iran now operate such submarines. "That is...one of the reasons why we train and [a reason] we need to train with sonar," said Navy spokesperson Kler. "To detect diesel submarines."

The United States Navy is current conducting warfare practice in the following ocean areas according to Sheila Murray, Navy public relations, and California Congressman Henry Waxman:

The Marinas Islands	The Hawaiian Islands	The Gulf of Alaska
The Atlantic Ocean	The Gulf of Mexico	Oregon
Washington	Southern California	*Northern California to be Added in 2009

Just how many places does the Navy need to conduct warfare practice in at this time?

The Navy says it plans lookouts to watch for marine mammals. "We are in compliance with the Marine Mammal Protection Act and the Endangered Species Act and under consultation with national marine fisheries service," defended Kler. In fact, the Navy says it will scale down exercises when animals are spotted. Environmentalists call that mitigation "laughably inadequate."

If this Navy statement is true then why do they need a permit from the National Marine Fisheries Services to "take" marine mammals?

NOAA Definition: "TAKE"

- **Defined under the ESA as "to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct."**

"The only effective mitigation currently known is for the Navy to stay out of areas that are particularly biologically important," said Jasny. "And that they have refused to do." Another concern that has arisen is the question of who will clean up leftover chemicals, depleted uranium and shell casings produced by the war games that will pollute the sea.

"When you're dropping bombs and missiles in the ocean, it's impractical to talk about clean up," said Mendocino County Supervisor John McCowan. "That's really the heart of my concern; the impact that this will have on the commercial and sport fishing industry."

North Coast fishermen are struggling after back-to-back canceled salmon seasons. Second generation fisherman Bill Forkner says he's all for national security, but is concerned about the impact the war games could have on his livelihood. "It needs to be done, but you don't want it done in your backyard," said Forkner. "So where do you do it though?"

Around usually serene North Coast towns, the answer from area resident is growing louder: "Not here." Posters on bulletin boards and newspaper petitions have gone up. And people are beginning to hear about the navy proposal.

The petitions were paid for by long-time resident, first-time political activist and cafe-owner Meredith Smith. "The idea of taking on the military and all of the fear-mongering that happens with national security and issues we're not allowed to look at in full light makes me even more motivated," said Smith.

Activists are demanding congressional hearings. In fact, member of the Cahto Tribal Council Atta Stevenson said the Navy broke the law by failing to consult with ten coastal tribes that are, in fact, sovereign nations. "When does it stop, this intrusion from outsiders?" asked Stevenson. "This is our land; always has been."

Hawk Rosales of the Intertribal Sinkyone Wilderness Council promises civil disobedience. "All people have the responsibility to be the caretaker for Mother Earth," said Rosales.

END

KTVU Channel 2 News

John Fowler, Science Editor – Special Presentation – May 18, 2009

Note from Rosalind Peterson:

Congressman Mike Thompson's Office was presented with 1,500+ signatures from Mendocino County Residents on May 8, 2009, opposing the "taking" of marine mammals and the Navy Warfare Testing Program in Oregon and Northern California. If citizens don't prevail in stopping this Warfare program 2.3 million mammals (32 species), will be killed or harmed each year during this five-year warfare testing program according to Congressman Henry Waxman.

The protest rally was one of many planned for Mendocino, and other Northern California counties, during the spring and summer months. "It is time to protect ocean tourism and our fishing industry, protect our salmon, and human health from the toxic chemicals that will be used for five years during the Navy Warfare Testing program."

If you would like to read the Navy Environmental Impact Statement go to www.nwtrangecomplexeis.com and click on documents. You will find the Navy plans for land, onshore, and Pacific Ocean Warfare Testing. The Mendocino County March 31, 2009, Board of Supervisor's Navy public hearing is online: <http://www.uvctv.org/vid/033109/>

If you would like to see the Navy request for a permit to "take" 32 species of marine mammals go to the March 11, 2009 Federal Register NOAA Notice (Page 10557) online: <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2009/pdf/E9-5085.pdf> NOAA Definition: "TAKE"

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The Navy Warfare Testing Program will "...utilize mid- and high frequency active sonar sources and explosive detonations. These sonar and explosive sources will be utilized during Antisubmarine Warfare (ASW) Tracking Exercises, Mine Avoidance Training, Extended Echo Ranging and Improved Extended Echo Ranging (EER/IEER) events, Missile Exercises, Gunnery Exercises, Bombing Exercises, Sinking Exercises, and Mine Warfare Training..." which has the potential to trigger earthquakes, pollute the ocean, and harm other marine life, and human health.

KTVU Channel 2 Oakland/San Francisco, CA was in Mendocino County, CA between May 7th & 8th, 2009, investigating the 5-Year U.S. Navy Warfare Testing Program. The KTVU presentation will air on Please feel free to contact us and sign petitions or volunteer to stop this senseless "taking" of marine mammals in this warfare testing program. For More Information: Rosalind Peterson (707) 485-7520 or E-Mail: info@californiaskywatch.com or contact Meredith Smith at the Mendocino Café merrie@mcn.org.

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