



# Navy Cherry Point Range Complex

Environmental Impact  
Statement/Overseas  
Environmental Impact  
Statement (EIS/OEIS)

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## BACKGROUND

The Navy Cherry Point Range Complex is the sea surface and subsurface space and overlying airspace off the North Carolina coast where the Navy and Marine Corps train. The Navy is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement (EIS/OEIS) to comprehensively evaluate effects of current and future Navy and Marine Corps activities within the Navy Cherry Point Range Complex on the environmental, natural, cultural and socioeconomic resources. This comprehensive evaluation is part of a larger Navy program, the Tactical Training Theater Assessment and Planning (TAP) Program. Under the TAP Program, the Navy will for the first time manage its training areas within broad geographic locations known as range complexes. The Navy Cherry Point Range Complex is one of several range complexes on the east coast.

## WHY IS THIS EIS/OEIS NEEDED NOW?

Realistic training is the single greatest asset the Navy has for preparing its personnel to defeat the enemy while protecting themselves. "Train As We Fight" is not just a phrase - it is a statement of the absolute necessity to realistically train Navy personnel for the conditions in which they may find themselves while protecting our nation.

International events, changes in technology, base closures, and population growth are increasing the challenges the Navy faces in training its personnel to be prepared to defend our nation. To face these challenges and continue to provide combat capable forces that are ready to deploy worldwide, the Navy is comprehensively evaluating and planning activities at the range complex level. The purpose for the proposed action is to:

- Achieve and maintain Fleet readiness using the Navy Cherry Point Range Complex to support and conduct current, emerging, and future training operations and Research, Development, Test and Evaluation (RDT&E) operations;
- Expand warfare missions supported by the Navy Cherry Point Range Complex; and
- Upgrade and modernize existing range capabilities to enhance and sustain Navy training and RDT&E.

The need for the proposed action is to provide range capabilities for the training and equipping of combat-capable naval forces ready to deploy worldwide. In this regard, the Navy Cherry Point Range Complex furthers the Navy's execution of its Congressionally mandated roles and responsibilities under Title 10 U.S.C. § 5062.

## WHAT IS PROPOSED?

The Navy proposes to:

- Maintain training and RDT&E operations at current levels if the No Action Alternative is selected.
- If either Alternative 1 or Alternative 2 is selected, then:
  - Increase or modify training and RDT&E operations from current levels as necessary in support of the Fleet Readiness Training Plan (FRTP).
  - Accommodate mission requirements associated with force structure changes, including those resulting from the introduction of new platforms (aircraft and weapons systems).
  - Implement enhanced range complex capabilities.



## WHAT WILL BE EVALUATED?

The Navy understands and recognizes training activities may have potential effects on the environment, as well as to the community and the stakeholders that rely on these resources. The Navy will analyze several alternatives to determine the effects of potential actions on natural, cultural and socioeconomic resources. Additionally, public input received during the scoping phase and Draft EIS public comment period will be carefully considered in the environmental analysis. Three alternatives have been identified and analyzed:

**No Action Alternative:** The No Action Alternative analyzes a variety of training and testing activities that currently occur within the Navy Cherry Point Range Complex. Under the No Action Alternative, training and testing operations would continue at current levels. No new or additional training and testing operations or infrastructure improvements would be implemented. Current operations include surge level operations consistent with the Fleet Readiness Training Plan.

**Alternative 1** – Includes all operations under the No Action Alternative, plus a 10% increase in most training and testing operations, plus changes in type and quantity of operations and tactical employment of forces to accommodate expanded mission areas, force structure changes, and new range capabilities. These would include:

- a) Train tailored surface strike groups to conduct rapid response anti-piracy, anti-terrorism and maritime interdiction operations;
- b) Conduct surface-to-air missile training;
- c) Train with new MH-60R/S helicopters and Organic Mine Countermeasures systems;
- d) Increase use of contractor-operated aircraft as opposition forces in air defense, strike and electronic combat operations, and as banner-towing aircraft in air-to-air and surface-to-air gunnery exercises; and
- e) Upgrade electronic warfare anti-ship and anti-aircraft threat emitters.



MH-60 Helicopter

**Alternative 2 (the Preferred Alternative)** includes all operations under Alternative 1 with the exception that all High Explosive Bombing Exercises (BOMBEX) would be eliminated. This alternative would also include designating mine warfare training areas, some of which can accommodate temporary deployment of training mines, in support of Strike Group mine warfare training events during major exercises.



Explosive Ordnance Disposal divers train with non-explosive mines in the Range Complex



MH-53 towing a MK-105 minesweeping sled

**Under Alternative 2, the Navy proposes to eliminate the use of all high explosive ordnance from its at-sea bombing exercise training.**

Public involvement is a fundamental part of the Navy Cherry Point Range Complex EIS/OEIS development and the Navy wants and appreciates your comments. The Navy has established several venues and informational resource areas for the public to learn and provide input.

Comments on the Draft Navy Cherry Point Range Complex EIS/OEIS will be accepted via mail, fax, or the project Web site. All comments should be submitted no later than October 27, 2008 for consideration in the Final Navy Cherry Point Range Complex EIS/OEIS.

**THE NAVY  
WANTS  
YOUR  
INPUT!**

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