



Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Navy to Host Public Meetings on NAS Whidbey Island EIS

A Notice of Intent (NOI) will be published in the Federal Register on October 10, 2014, announcing the Navy's intent to revise the scope of the ongoing Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for EA-18G Growler airfield operations at Naval Air Station (NAS) Whidbey Island and to announce public scoping meetings. The EIS will now address the environmental impacts associated with the potential addition of up to 36 EA-18G Growler aircraft.

Last September, the Navy began an EIS to evaluate the potential environmental impacts associated with the addition of two new expeditionary squadrons and additional Growler aircraft to the training squadron. Scoping was conducted between September 2013 and January 2014 on that proposed action, and open house scoping meetings were held in December 2013 to discuss the proposal.

During spring 2014, the Chief of Naval Operations submitted an Unfunded Requirements List as part of the President's Budget for Fiscal Year 2015 that included a request to purchase 22 additional Growler aircraft. While it is unclear whether more Growlers will ultimately be procured, the Navy is electing to analyze the potential for these aircraft in order to be proactive and transparent. Therefore, a new scoping process is needed and has been initiated based on the proposed action.

To meet current and future mission and training requirements, the Navy proposes to: (1) continue and increase the existing VAQ operations at NAS Whidbey Island's Ault Field and OLF Coupeville; (2) increase VAQ capabilities and augment the training squadron by adding up to 36 aircraft to support an expanded Department of Defense mission for identifying, tracking, and targeting in a complex electronic warfare environment; (3) construct and renovate facilities at Ault Field to accommodate additional aircraft; and (4) station additional personnel and their family members to NAS Whidbey Island and the surrounding community.

The Navy will host three open-house scoping meetings to provide members of the public with the opportunity to review project-related information, ask questions of Navy representatives, and submit comments on the scope of the analysis and content to be addressed in the EIS. Each of the meetings will be informal and consist of information stations staffed by Navy representatives. The meetings will be conducted between 4 p.m. and 8 p.m. on the following dates and locations:

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WHIDBEY SCOPING MEETINGS -2-2-2-2

Tuesday, October 28, 2014
Coupeville, Washington
Coupeville High School (Commons Area)
501 South Main Street Coupeville WA 98239

Wednesday, October 29, 2014
Oak Harbor, Washington
Oak Harbor Elks Lodge
155 NE Ernst St, Oak Harbor, WA 98277

Thursday, October 30, 2014
Anacortes, Washington
Anacortes High School Cafeteria
1600 20th St, Anacortes, WA 98221

Additional information about the EIS can be found on the project website at: <http://www.whidbeyeis.com>. The public website includes up-to-date information on the project and schedule, as well as related documents associated with the EIS.

Written comments may be submitted to the EA-18G EIS Project Manager, Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) Atlantic, Attn: Code EV21/SS, 6506 Hampton Blvd., Norfolk, VA 23508. Written comments may also be submitted online at the project website (<http://www.whidbeyeis.com>) on the "Comments" page. Additionally, written and oral comments may be submitted at the scoping meetings. The names, street addresses, email addresses and screen names, telephone numbers and other personally identifiable information of individuals who provide comments will be kept confidential and will not be released, unless otherwise specifically indicated by the commenter or as required by law. The city, state and 5-digit zip code of individuals who provide comments may be released.

Comments may be submitted anytime during the public comment period which will run through November 24, 2014.

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NOTICE TO MEDIA: Members of the media are invited to participate in a media availability Monday, October 27, to discuss all aspects of the Environmental Impact Statement with Navy subject matter experts. Broadcast media will be afforded the opportunity to obtain b-roll of Growler operations as well. RSVP to U.S. Fleet Forces Environmental Public Affairs Officer Ted Brown (757-836-4427) or NAS Whidbey Island Public Affairs Officer Mike Welding (360-257-2962).