



PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT SUMMARY REPORT

Point Mugu Sea Range Draft Environmental Impact Statement/ Overseas Environmental Impact Statement

FINAL

July 2020

**Point Mugu Sea Range
Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement
Public Involvement Summary Report**

This report summarizes the public involvement and outreach activities the U.S. Navy conducted and the main issues heard from the public and agencies during the *Point Mugu Sea Range Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement (EIS/OEIS)* public review and comment period, which ran from April 24, 2020, to June 8, 2020.

The purpose of public involvement and outreach was 1) to notify and inform stakeholders and the public about the Proposed Action and the release of the Draft EIS/OEIS, and 2) to provide the opportunity for the public and stakeholders to comment on the Draft EIS/OEIS. Involvement and outreach efforts were conducted in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Navy guidance.

The Navy recognizes the importance of engagement with tribes, stakeholders, and the public. However, the Navy was unable to hold planned in-person public meetings in May 2020 in accordance with federal and state guidance on social distancing to prevent the widespread outbreak of respiratory illness from the novel coronavirus disease, designated as COVID-19. The Navy took additional steps to help facilitate continued communication about the Proposed Action and the environmental impact analysis, as described in this report.

Summary of Activities

A. GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT CONSULTATIONS

The Navy sent letters inviting Government-to-Government consultation to seven federally recognized tribes with affiliation with San Nicolas Island; the letters were dated Feb. 11, 2020.

- La Jolla Band of Luiseño Indians
- Pala Band of Mission Indians
- Pauma Band of Luiseño Indians
- Pechanga Band of Luiseño Indians (requested Government-to-Government consultation)
- Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians (requested Government-to-Government consultation)
- Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Mission Indians
- Soboba Band of Luiseño Mission Indians

B. PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

The Navy prepared materials to notify the public of the release of the Draft EIS/OEIS and provide information about the Proposed Action and the opportunity for the public to submit comments on the Draft EIS/OEIS. The following is a summary of notices informing the public of the Draft EIS/OEIS and the opportunities to provide comments. Public notices can be found on the [Public Notices page](#).

Federal Register Notices

Notices of the availability of the Draft EIS/OEIS were published in the *Federal Register* on April 24, 2020.

Newspaper Advertisements

Display advertisements were published in six local and regional newspapers five times each in daily newspapers, and twice each in weekly newspapers, beginning on April 24, 2020, through June 1, 2020. Table 1 shows the newspapers and corresponding publication dates for each advertisement.

Table 1: Newspapers and Publication Dates

Newspaper	Newspaper Coverage	Publication Frequency	Publication Dates
Los Angeles Times	Los Angeles County, CA	Daily	Friday, April 24, 2020 Saturday, April 25, 2020 Sunday, April 26, 2020 Wednesday, May 20, 2020 Wednesday, May 27, 2020
Santa Barbara Independent	Santa Barbara County, CA	Weekly - Thursday only	Thursday, April 23, 2020 Thursday, May 28, 2020
Santa Barbara News-Press	Santa Barbara County, CA	Daily	Friday, April 24, 2020 Saturday, April 25, 2020 Sunday, April 26, 2020 Friday, May 15, 2020 Monday, June 1, 2020
San Luis Obispo Tribune	San Luis Obispo County, CA	Daily except Saturday	Friday, April 24, 2020 Sunday, April 26, 2020 Monday, April 27, 2020 Monday, May 18, 2020 Monday, June 1, 2020
Ventura County Star	Ventura County, CA	Daily	Friday, April 24, 2020 Saturday, April 25, 2020 Sunday, April 26, 2020 Monday, May 18, 2020 Monday, June 1, 2020
Vida News (Spanish newspaper)	Ventura County, CA	Weekly - Thursday only	Thursday, April 23, 2020 Thursday, May 28, 2020

Postcard Mailer

A postcard was mailed first-class to 100 nongovernmental organizations; community and business groups; fishing, aviation, and recreational groups; and researchers and universities on April 22, 2020.

Tribal and Stakeholder Notification Letters

Tribal letters and a fact sheet booklet were mailed on April 22, 2020, to 17 tribal chairpersons, founders, presidents, executive directors, and administrators of federally recognized and non-federally recognized tribes and tribal groups who have an interest in the Point Mugu Sea Range Study Area. The seven federally recognized tribes discussed in Section A above also received a CD-ROM of the Draft EIS/OEIS. Subsequent mailings of letters and fact sheet booklets were sent to an additional 20 tribes or tribal members on May 15, 2020, May 20, 2020, and May 21, 2020.

Stakeholder letters and a fact sheet booklet were mailed on April 22, 2020, to 194 federal, state, and local elected officials and government agencies.

News Releases and Media Outlets

The Naval Base Ventura County Public Affairs Officer distributed a news release to local and regional media outlets on April 24, 2020, and May 15, 2020.

Website Subscriber Email Notifications

Nineteen website subscribers from the scoping phase were carried forward into the Draft EIS/OEIS

phase. An email notification was sent to subscribers on April 24, 2020. As of June 12, 2020, there were 36 website subscribers.

Frequently Asked Questions

Frequently asked questions were developed to provide the public with additional project information and can be found on the [FAQs page](#).

C. PUBLIC INFORMATION

Project Website

A project website was established to provide the public with project information and to accept comments electronically. The project website address is www.pmsr-eis.com and updates to the project website for the Draft EIS/OEIS phase went live April 24, 2020.

The website address was included in the *Federal Register* notice, newspaper advertisements, stakeholder letters, tribal letters, media releases, and postcard mailers.

The public notices, fact sheet booklet, posters, maps, frequently asked questions for the public, Draft EIS/OEIS and technical reports, informational videos, and other public involvement information were made available on the project website and will be available throughout the course of the project.

Voicemail and Email Address

A dedicated voicemail line and email address were set up to facilitate public questions about the project in lieu of Draft EIS/OEIS public meetings, which were unable to be held due to COVID-19 guidance. The Navy replied to questions from the public in a timely manner.

Fact Sheet Booklet

An eight-page [fact sheet](#) was developed to provide project information to the public and included the following topics:

- Introduction to the project and Study Area
- Importance of the Point Mugu Sea Range for military readiness
- Proposed Action and alternatives
- Primary mission areas
- Summary of the Draft EIS/OEIS findings
- Public access and safety
- Environmental protection measures, including protective measures at sea, at San Nicolas Island, and Naval Base Ventura County Point Mugu
- NEPA process, public and community involvement, and project timeline
- National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 consultation

The fact sheet booklet was distributed via mail to stakeholders and tribes, and posted on the project website. The Navy also provided 25 copies of the booklet to the Ventura Council of Governments.

Posters

Seven [posters](#) were developed and included the following topics:

- Military readiness for today and tomorrow
- Biological resources
- Public access, health, and safety
- Cultural resources

- Section 106 process and public involvement

The posters were made available for viewing and download on the project website.

Stakeholder Brief

A stakeholder briefing presentation was prepared for Navy personnel to brief stakeholders and tribes during the Draft EIS/OEIS public review and comment period. The Navy briefed the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Committee on May 15, 2020, where there were 49 attendees.

D. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

This section is intended to illustrate the main issues heard from the public during the Draft EIS/OEIS public review and comment period; it is not meant to capture all aspects of the comments or to serve as a legal record.

The public review and comment period was open from April 24, 2020, to June 8, 2020. The Navy received six comment letters throughout the comment period. Comment letters were submitted via the project website’s electronic comment form (4) and postal mail (2).

Each comment letter was reviewed and categorized into specific resource areas or topics. One comment letter may include comments on multiple resource areas or topics. All comments were compiled, logged, and distributed to the EIS/OEIS project team and appropriate subject matter experts. The EIS/OEIS project team considered the impact, significance, and relevance of the comments to the preparation of the Final EIS/OEIS. Issues and concerns provided in the comment letters will be responded to in the Final EIS/OEIS.

Table 2 includes a summary of public comments to provide a brief overview of the general issues or concerns expressed by the public. All substantive issues and concerns provided in the comment letters will be considered during the development of the Final EIS/OEIS.

Table 2: Summary of Public Comments

Resource Area/Topic	Issue/Concern
Testing and Training Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommend to exclude close-to-shore areas as target areas to avoid any impacts of explosives, thereby preserving these areas for further research of submerged archeological resources. • Request reports be provided on testing and training activities to the extent the reporting does not contain classified information. • Question about whether radar equipment testing in the Naval Surface Warfare Engineering Facility area is included in the Proposed Action.

Resource Area/Topic	Issue/Concern
Marine Species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern about the potential impacts on marine species, sea turtles, and sea birds, including disruptions to feeding and breeding and impacts on state-listed species, fully protected species, and species of special concern. • Concern about marine species entanglement from training materials not recovered. • Concern about the impacts testing and training will have on marine species habitat. • Recommend the Navy incorporates seasonal and geographic avoidance areas for the Santa Barbara Channel and the San Miguel Biologically Important Area since they are heavily used by blue whales and least used by the military. • Request for the Navy to provide additional information in the Final EIS/OEIS regarding entanglement impacts on sea turtles from decelerators/parachutes. • Request to discuss the acoustic monitoring efforts the Navy is funding and any coordination occurring with the ocean research community's efforts to use passive acoustic monitoring to detect marine mammals to reduce commercial ship strikes.
Mitigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommend the use of time-area management to mitigate harm expected to vulnerable marine mammal populations, including management measures that reduce harm to the endangered blue, humpback, fin, and gray whale populations. • Recommend the Navy recover as much ocean expended testing and training materials as possible and consider rectifying the impacts from materials that are not recoverable. • Recommend the Navy implement better mitigation to reduce entanglement of marine species, such as enhancing the visibility of parachutes in the water column.
Public Health and Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern about the Navy polluting the ocean with plastic expended military materials that cannot be easily recovered. • Recommend discussing the potential for chaff and flare cartridges to be produced without plastic components in the future to reduce plastic pollution.
Cultural Resources and Historic Properties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General concern about impacts on historic and cultural resources, including historic properties. • General concerns about how found items of significant cultural value could be disturbed or destroyed. • Request the Navy to consult with affiliated tribes to ensure any impacts on culturally significant resources would be handled in accordance with the customs and traditions of each tribe. • Request for the Navy to notify affiliated tribes of any cultural resource discoveries and that the significance of tribal cultural resources and the treatment of any findings will be determined in consultation with the affiliated tribes. • Request no further ground disturbance within 100 feet of a discovery until the Naval Base Ventura County Cultural Resources Manager in consultation with affiliated tribes approves the measures to protect cultural resource(s).

Resource Area/Topic	Issue/Concern
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request for additional language to be included that will clarify the term “vicinity” in nautical miles or other commonly used measure. • Request for an annual report on impacts on birds, marine mammals, sea turtles, and Endangered Species Act-listed species, and all cultural resources information be provided to affiliated tribes. • Request that, in consultation with affiliated tribes, the Navy develop measures to offset impacts on natural and cultural resources by developing, enhancing, and creating protected natural habitats, further survey work, and exploring recovery methods to excavate remnants due to military use. • Recommend the Navy choose Alternative 2 as it appears to be the environmentally preferable alternative. • Request clarification as to whether the Navy will be submitting any monitoring reports to the National Marine Fisheries Service that are not listed on the Navy’s Marine Species Monitoring webpage, and request to submit such reports. • Request to confirm the Navy has informed and coordinated with all tribes listed by the California Native American Heritage Commission as interested in activities in San Luis Obispo through Los Angeles counties.