

Subject: OBJECTION, Pacific Northwest Electronic Warfare Range

From: Sierra Club North Olympic Group (NOG) part of Washington Chapter of Sierra Club

Sierra Club NOG PO Box 714, Carlsborg, WA 98324 360-808-2672
Objector's Name address and telephone

/s/ Robert K. Sextro

Lead Objector's signature, if more than one Objector

Project Name: Pacific Northwest Electronic Warfare Range
Responsible Official Name: Dean Millett, District Ranger
Affected National Forest: Olympic National Forest, Pacific Ranger District

Dear Ms. Laford and Mr. Millett,

On behalf of the Sierra Club North Olympic Group (NOG), WA State Chapter of Sierra Club and our thousands of member activists and supporters here on the Olympic Peninsula and in WA state we object to the pending decision by the Forest Service to grant a five-year special use permit to the US Navy to conduct electronic warfare training in the Olympic National Forest (ONF), for the following reasons:

FOLLOWING TWO OBJECTIONS ARE BASED ON NEW INFORMATION NOT PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED BY EITHER USFS OR US NAVY AND ARE ISSUES THAT AROSE AFTER THE DESIGNATED OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMENT IN 2014.

Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact, November 2016, page 4:

1988 Master Agreement with the Department of Defense

"In making my decision, I considered the 1988 Master Agreement between the Department of Defense and the United States Department of Agriculture concerning the use of NFS lands for military activity. I determined that my decision is consistent with and supports the intent of the 1988 Master Agreement."

This "determination" by Mr. Millett is completely unsupported by any details and facts which the public can review as required by the NEPA process. In fact, the stipulated requirement of the 1988 master agreement referenced is that "in all cases where a special use authorization to use National Forest System lands is proposed, the DoD will forward its analysis and determination as to the unsuitability or unavailability of DoD land to the affected forest supervisor". Any such DoD analysis and determination omitted by the USFS materially prejudices Sierra Club's ability to effectively prepare for and respond to this new information, THEREFORE WE OBJECT.

SOLUTION: WITHDRAW THE CURRENT USFS DRAFT NOTICE OF DECISION, ISSUE/POST DoD'S OFFICIAL (DATED AND SIGNED BY AUTHORIZED DoD PERSONNEL) ANALYSIS AND DETERMINATION AS TO THE UNSUITABILITY OR UNAVAILABILITY OF DoD LAND OR PRIVATE LANDS TO USE FOR THESE TRAINING ACTIVITIES; ANNOUNCE AND ALLOW FOR A PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD OF THIS DoD ANALYSIS; APPEND SAID DoD ANALYSIS TO THE DRAFT NOTICE OF DECISION; THEN RE-ISSUE THE DRAFT NOTICE OF DECISION WITH A NEW 45-DAY OBJECTION PERIOD.

Special Use Permit, Appendix C, Exhibit B, page 11

FOREST SERVICE PROJECT DESIGN FEATURES—bullet #7

“The Permit Holder will not usually conduct activity on weekends. The Permit Holder (Navy) may request specific limited weekend activity 30 days in advance of desired use, which is at the sole discretion of the Forest Service to grant or deny”.

All previous and current Navy and USFS documentation in the final EA and this draft notice of decision (NOD) stipulates that the Navy will use our forest service roads for mobile emitters about 250 days per year. NO WHERE DOES THE NAVY SPECIFICALLY ASK FOR USE OF OUR ONF ROADS FOR TRAINING ON THE WEEKENDS, THEREFORE WE OBJECT.

SOLUTION: FREEZE THE 45 DAY OBJECTION PERIOD; REMOVE BULLETT #7 AND ANY REFERENCE TO ALLOWABLE WEEKEND TRAINING; RE-ISSUE/POST A REVISED APPENDIX C; RESTART THE OBJECTION PERIOD BUT EXTEND THE PERIOD FOR 10-15 DAYS AFTER RE-ISSUANCE OF APPENDIX C.

OBJECTION BASED ON OUR PREVIOUS 2014 COMMENTS TO USFS

Comment from November 2014 Sierra Club letter—“Finally, the Department of Defense and US Navy do not have the right to override the Forest Service’s own management plan and the National Forest Management Act. Electronic warfare training is not consistent with the public purposes for which national forests are reserved. According to the US Forest Service’s own regulations, military use our public lands is not permissible if the military has other “suitable and available” lands for their proposed action. Additionally, the Forest Service’s own management policy states that when considering issuing such a permit, “the interests and needs of the general public shall be given priority over those of the applicant.””

There is no information and discussion in the USFS’s current draft NOD as to how and why the USFS has determined that the interests (unrestricted use of Olympic Nation Forest) and needs (a quiet natural soundscape in our national forests and our Olympic Nation Park) of the public have not been given priority over those of the applicant (US Navy), THEREFORE WE OBJECT.

SOLUTION: WITHDRAW THE USFS’S DRAFT NOTICE OF DECISION; REQUEST THE US NAVY PREPARE A FULL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT WITH COMENSURATE AND NEEDED MITIGATIONS; ALLOW THE REQUIRED NEPA PROCESS FOR SIGNIFICANT AND HIGHLY-CONTROVERSIAL PROJECTS TO GO FORWARD INCLUDING FORMAL PUBLIC HEARINGS TO FULLY DETERMINE THE “INTERESTS AND NEEDS” OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC YOU ALL WORK FOR; AND RE-EVALUATE USFS’S FLAWED CONSIDERATION OF THE US NAVY’S REQUESTED SPECIAL USE PERMITS TO USE OUR PUBLIC LANDS FOR MILITARY TRAINING WHEN MILITARY-CONTROLLED LANDS ARE AVAILABLE.

WE, SIERRA CLUB, REQUEST, AT THE END OF THE OBJECTION PERIOD, A RESOLUTION MEETING WITH RESPONSIBLE USFS REPRESENTATIVES IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE OBJECTION PROCESS OUTLINED IN 36 CFR 218. FOR IMMEDIATE RESPONSE TO SCHEDULE AND COORDINATE THE REQUESTED RESOLUTION MEETING PLEASE CALL 360-808-2672 OR EMAIL northolympicgroupsc@gmail.com OTHERWISE PLEASE ALLOW US SEVERAL DAYS TO RESPOND TO A HARD-COPY LETTER SENT TO OUR PO BOX.