



Don Hoch
Director

STATE OF WASHINGTON

WASHINGTON STATE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

1111 Israel Road S.W. • P.O. Box 42650 • Olympia, WA 98504-2650 • (360) 902-8500

TDD Telecommunications Device for the Deaf: 800-833-6388

www.parks.state.wa.us

VIA E-MAIL

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Special Operations Training EA Project Manager
Naval Facilities Engineering Command Northwest
Attn: Code EV21.AW 1101
Tautog Circle, Suite 203
Silverdale, WA 98315-1101

To whom it may concern:

The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission (State Parks) manages a diverse array of 125 camping and day-use parks throughout Washington State. The Draft Environmental Analysis (EA) for the U.S. Naval Special Warfare Special Operations Training concept involves training exercises in 29 of these parks. In light of that fact, State Parks staff is providing the following comments for your consideration.

The Draft EA looks at three alternatives with various training exercises in a variety of locations. The analysis concludes that there would be no significant impacts from the referenced training. Some of the exercises identified are the same as those for which State Parks issued the Navy a Right of Entry (ROE) permit in 2015, while some of the exercises analyzed in the Draft EA would be new. We understand that, once the EA process has been concluded, the Navy will be submitting an application to State Parks for a new ROE permit to conduct Special Operations training that would replace the existing ROE.

We strongly encourage the U.S. Navy to consult the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Washington Department of Natural Resources Natural Heritage Program and interested Tribal Governments to ensure adequate consideration has been given to the environmentally and culturally sensitive areas proposed within the EA. Although recreation is most commonly associated with State Parks, we are equally committed to the protection of natural resources. Several of our parks have unique and fragile ecosystems that must be protected.

Consistent with the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), State Parks reviews all proposals it receives to identify and, if necessary, to mitigate any potential adverse environmental impacts that could result. In addition to environmental impacts, several factors will be considered for a Navy proposal before it could be taken to the State Parks Commission for a decision. Some of these considerations include internal policy and statutory requirements, potential operating impacts, compatibility with existing park use and public comments.

State Parks appreciates the strong and positive relationship it has with the Navy. Historically, State Parks and the Navy have had productive partnerships, including sharing services, such as water and sewer provision, for our respective facilities. We welcome military personnel and their families to our parks. Moving forward, we recommend that the Navy continue to engage in public outreach to inform, remedy and mitigate concerns and misinformation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Donald Hoch". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "D".

Donald Hoch
Director

cc: Mike Sternback, Assistant Director Operations, WSPRC
Peter Herzog, Assistant Director Parks Development, WSPRC
Jon Snyder, Policy Advisor, Governor's Office