



Don Hoch  
Director

STATE OF WASHINGTON  
**WASHINGTON STATE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION**

1111 Israel Rd S.W. • P.O. Box 42650 • Olympia, WA 98504-2650 • (360) 902-8500  
TDD (Telecommunications Device for the Deaf): (360) 664-3133  
[www.parks.wa.gov](http://www.parks.wa.gov)

**STATE ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT**  
**MITIGATED DETERMINATION OF NON-SIGNIFICANCE**

**Project Name:** Naval Special Operations Training in Western Washington State  
**Lead agency:** Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission  
**Agency Contact:** Steve Brand  
Partnership, Planning, and Real Estate Programs Manager  
[Steve.Brand@parks.wa.gov](mailto:Steve.Brand@parks.wa.gov)  
(360) 902-8651

**Description of proposal:** The United States (U.S.) Naval Special Warfare Command (NSWC) is the U.S. Navy's special operations force and maritime component of the U.S. Special Operations Command. NSWC is proposing to conduct special operations training at multiple locations throughout western Washington, including twenty-eight state parks. The proposed action supports small-unit, intermediate and advanced cold-water maritime and land-based training activities for naval special operations personnel on selected nearshore lands in the inland waters of Puget Sound, including Hood Canal, as well as the southwestern Washington coast. Duration and frequency of activities vary, some sites could be used up to 36 times per year and for a maximum of 72 hours per training event. The Navy is requesting authorization from Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission (State Parks) to conduct training activities on twenty-eight state parks. Training activity descriptions, locations, durations are identified in the "Final Environmental Assessment for Naval Special Operations Training in Western Washington State".

**Location of Proposal:** The Navy has requested authorization for the following state parks: Blake Island, Cama Beach, Camano Island, Cape Disappointment, Deception Pass, Dosewallips, Fort Casey, Fort Columbia, Fort Ebey, Fort Flagler, Fort Townsend, Fort Worden, Grayland Beach, Hope Island, Illahee, Joseph Whidbey, Leadbetter Point, Manchester, Mystery Bay, Pacific Pines, Scenic Beach, Sequim Bay, Shine Tidelands, Skagit Island Marine, South Whidbey, Triton Cove, Twin Harbors, and Westport Light. For specific locations, please go to <https://parks.state.wa.us/1168/Navy-training-proposal>.

**Proponent:** The United States Navy – Naval Facilities Engineering Command Northwest

**Threshold Determination:** Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission (Lead Agency) has reviewed the SEPA checklist submitted March 11, 2020 as well as for reference, the November 2019 “Final Environmental Assessment for Naval Special Operations Training in Western Washington”, and the “Finding of No Significant Impact” signed December 18, 2019 and determined that this proposal will not have a probable significant adverse impact on the environment.

The Lead Agency considered the following information to identify the appropriate Threshold Determination: State Parks’ Classification and Land Management Plans (CAMP) land classification matrix, agency policy, GIS data for sensitive and listed species, and Tribal and public comment.

Pursuant to WAC 197-11-350(3), the Navy’s proposal has been clarified, changed, and conditioned to include necessary mitigation measures to avoid, minimize or mitigate for probable significant impacts. An environmental impact statement (EIS) is not required under RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c). This decision was made after review by the Lead Agency of a completed Environmental Checklist, the “Final Environmental Assessment for Naval Special Operations Training in Western Washington State”, the “Finding of No Significant Impact” and other information on file with the Lead Agency. These documents are available at: <http://bit.ly/ParksSEPA>.

State Parks will condition any future permit to conduct Navy trainings on state parks with the following mitigation measures listed below to avoid, minimize, or mitigate for any potential significant adverse impacts to Plants, Animals, Cultural and Historic Resources, Recreation. These conditions are in addition to the conditions and best management practices (BMPs) outlined in the “2019 Final Environmental Assessment for Naval Special Operations Training in Western Washington”.

#### **B.4. Plants**

- The Navy will follow all conditions and Best Management Practices (BMPs) described in the “2019 Final Environmental Assessment for Naval Special Operations Training in Western Washington” to avoid, minimize or otherwise mitigate impacts to plants.
- During training activities, Navy staff will monitor for the presence of listed state and federal species and trainees will stay on developed trails only in areas where sensitive species are presents.
- Trainees will avoid steep slopes and feeder bluffs.
- Trainees will avoid active restoration sites or any restored areas off limits to the public.
- All Natural Area Preserves (a Washington State Parks Classification and Land Management Plan classification) will be excluded from use areas.

#### **B.5. Animals**

- The Navy will follow all conditions and Best Management Practices (BMPs) described in the “2019 Final Environmental Assessment for Naval Special Operations Training in Western Washington” to avoid, minimize or otherwise mitigate impacts to animals.
- During training activities, Navy staff will monitor for the presence of listed state and federal spices and will not harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct.

- The Navy will avoid conducting trainings during nesting windows for listed species in parks where those species exists.
- The Navy will avoid areas within 300 feet of nest sites for identified raptor species during breeding seasons.
- No boats will be landed within shores designated within the Natural Areas classification.

#### **B.12. Recreation**

- Surveillance of members of the public is prohibited.
- Use of campground areas or overnight accommodations for exercises is prohibited within 1,000 feet of said facility. Exceptions to this buffer may occur only when permitting staff identify appropriate geological features or site characteristics that would provide equal adequate separation from the public. If found appropriate to reduce the buffer, and/or consistent with other exceptions described in this section, trainings will occur no less than 500 feet from a campground or overnight accommodation.
- Replica weapons may be carried to simulate the bulk and weight of the gear that would be carried by personnel during an actual mission. Use or carrying of weapons capable of launching or firing projectiles of any sort for training or otherwise is prohibited.
- Boat launches may be used for launch and recovery trainings only and are otherwise exempted from exclusion areas.
- Vehicle and pedestrian ingress and egress access for support staff and staging may be exempted from exclusion areas. Vehicles will remain on park roadways or designated parking areas at all times.
- The public will not be excluded from any area that is otherwise open to public access. Observers and safety personnel may intervene in the event of imminent detection of the training in progress by a non-participant. Such intervention will be limited to informing the non-participant of the activity or as necessary to prevent injury.
- No trainings may occur if there is an existing public presence in, or approaching, the training area or, if the public enters the training area, training will either cease or be redirected to a different approved training area.
- For in-water activities, Coast Guard Navigation Rules and Regulations Handbook will apply. Vessels may be redirected from the training area or temporarily stopped as necessary for the safety of personnel in the water.

#### **B.13. Historic and cultural preservation**

- No permit will be issued until the Navy provides a monitoring plan consistent with the measures developed during Section 106 consultation (The NHPA Section 106 process concluded on July 23, 2019) which are as follows:
  1. Reopen consultation per 36 CFR 800.5(d) if necessitated by a change in the undertaking;
  2. Ensure a Secretary of Interior (SoI) qualified archaeologist reviews new and renewed real estate agreements for new information such as the presence of eroding archaeological deposits or features;
  3. Implement the Inadvertent Discovery Plan;
  4. Ensure a SoI qualified archaeologist provides awareness training prior to the start of each training block; and

5. Navy's SoI qualified archaeologist would periodically confirm to SHPO staff that adverse effects are being avoided.
- Consistent with the condition regarding public presence, no trainings may occur in areas where Tribal members are present. If any member of Tribe enters the training area, training will either cease or be redirected to a different approved training area. Prior to any training the Navy must verify with local tribal enforcement authorities that no cultural or traditional activities/events are planned to take place in the training area.
  - Any area identified by Tribes as an area of concerns over will require additional analysis and potentially will be prohibited from use for training activities
  - Digging or otherwise disturbing the substrate is prohibited

**Public Meeting:** This proposal will be considered by the Commission, in accordance with (RCW 42.30.080), during a Special Meeting via a Zoom/conference call to be held at the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission. The purpose of the January 26 special meeting is to hear oral public comment on Item E-1: Naval Special Operations Training in Washington State Parks – Requested Action.

This meeting begins promptly at 4:00 p.m. and runs until about 8:00 p.m. on January 26. You may participate remotely by listening and/or watching using one of the following phone numbers or web links:

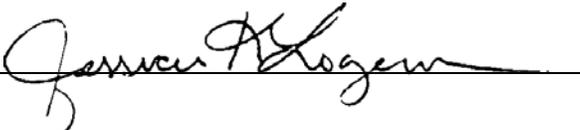
**Listen by phone:** 312-626-6799 or 888-788-0099 (Toll Free)  
**Webinar ID:** 979 7491 6906  
**Watch on TVW:** <https://www.tvw.org/watch/?clientID=9375922947&eventID=2021011044>

Members of the public may attend in person at the State Park HQ, 1111 Israel Rd. SW., Tumwater, WA 98501. The meeting can be viewed in our meeting space to comply with the Open Public Meetings Act unless this requirement is waived by gubernatorial executive order. Commissioners and staff will be attending remotely and will not be onsite/in-person. It is anticipated that the Commission will consider this item at their regularly scheduled commission meeting on January 28, 2021.

This Mitigated Determination of Non-significance (MDNS) is issued under 197-11-340 (2); the lead agency will not act on this proposal for 14 days from the date below.

Comments must be submitted by **January 6, 2021** or they may not be considered. Comments can be submitted online at <http://bit.ly/ParksSEPA>. For questions please contact:

**Responsible Official:** Jessica Logan  
**Position/Title:** Environmental Program Manager  
**Phone:** 360-902-8679  
**Email:** [SEPA@parks.wa.gov](mailto:SEPA@parks.wa.gov)  
**Mailing Address:** PO Box 42650 Olympia, WA 98504-2650

Date: December 21, 2020 Signature: 

"All Washington State Parks are developed and maintained for the enjoyment of all persons regardless of age, sex, creed, ethnic origin, or physical limitations."

There is no agency SEPA appeal; however, all comments are welcome and will be thoroughly considered.