

Pamlico-Tar River Foundation

Education • Advocacy • Research

January 23, 2006

Mr. Keith Jenkins
Naval Facilities Command Atlantic (code EV21Kj)
6506 Hampton Blvd
Norfolk, VA 23508

Re: Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Undersea Warfare Training Range

Dear Mr. Jenkins:

The Pamlico-Tar River Foundation (PTRF) would like to express its concern about the proposed Undersea Warfare Training Range to be located off the coast of North Carolina adjacent to Camp Lejeune. PTRF is a grassroots environmental organization dedicated to the protection and improvement of the Tar-Pamlico River and watershed including those waters to which its basin drains. Over 1450 members sustain PTRF's programs of education, advocacy and research which support its mission of water quality protection.

PTRF feels that the development of an active sonar training range off North Carolina's shore could permanently change NC's coast into an oceanic sonar epicenter from one currently used for recreation and commercial fishing. The project's impact may negatively affect migrating whales and off-shore fisheries. It could also cause damage to coral and hard-bottom habitats.

The Pamlico-Tar River Foundation supports the opinions of the many national, state-wide, and regional organizations who feel that the Navy's DEIS has not adequately addressed the environmental impacts one could expect from an undersea warfare training range. Early in 2005, a total of 37 whales representing three different species (pilot, sperm and minke) beached themselves on the Outer Banks following the Navy's use of sonar in the vicinity off shore. Although mass strandings are extremely rare—the current DEIS does not even mention this extraordinary event. Ironically, the National Marine Fisheries Service recently completed a report on these strandings. For some unknown reason the Navy chose to publish its DEIS and close its public comment period before the NMFS report was available to the public. The public's right to know all the facts regarding possible environmental impacts has been denied.

Additionally, the current DEIS inadequately addresses the possible impact of active sonar on fish populations off our coast. The implications and possible impacts of a project of this type and magnitude must be thoroughly examined.

PTRF requests that a new DEIS be prepared for the undersea sonar training range -- a DEIS inclusive of all possible risks and impacts to our coastal environment, one which would, therefore, afford public access to all information on which to base comment.

Sincerely,

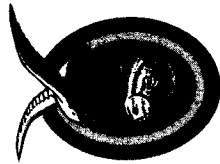
Mary Alsentzer
Executive Director



"The Voice for the River Since 1981"

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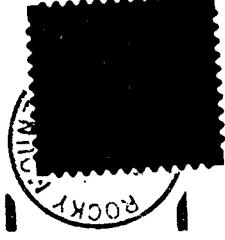




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