



# ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

for Testing and Evaluation and Training Activities  
at the **CUDDEBACK RANGE** at  
Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake



The U.S. Navy is preparing an Environmental Assessment to analyze potential environmental impacts associated with expanding naval weapons research, development, acquisition, testing, and evaluation (hereafter known as “testing and evaluation”) activities and ground training into the former Air Force Cuddeback Air-Ground Gunnery Range, now part of the China Lake Ranges.

Throughout its history, Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake (NAWSCL) has supported the testing and evaluation of weapons systems for the Navy and the Department of Defense. To meet its mission, NAWSCL must maintain the ability to conduct a broad range of air and surface testing and evaluation activities required for the acquisition of systems.

Training conducted at NAWSCL involves the small-scale training of ground troops, such as force reconnaissance, insertion and extraction, close air support, fleet area control and surveillance, and other types of tactical exercises.

The Navy is proposing to expand testing and evaluation activities and ground training into the Cuddeback Range while meeting all safety and security requirements.

The Cuddeback Range would provide a safe and realistic environment to support the Navy’s mission at Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake.



# ABOUT THE PROPOSED ACTION



As part of the 2015 and 2016 National Defense Authorization Acts, approximately 33,096 acres of land, including the former Air Force Cuddeback Air-Ground Gunnery Range, was withdrawn on behalf of the Navy (Figure 1). This land withdrawal would support the Navy's mission to provide and maintain land, facilities, and other assets that support the testing and evaluation of cutting-edge weapons systems for use by service members during deployment.

The Navy is proposing to expand testing and evaluation activities and ground training into the Cuddeback Range, part of the China Lake Ranges, while meeting all safety and security requirements.

The Proposed Action would include:

- ▶ Expansion of testing and evaluation activities associated with test and training operations, utilizing the footprint of the former gunnery range
- ▶ Construction of perimeter fencing
- ▶ Construction of a new access road connecting the Cuddeback Range to the South Range
- ▶ Installation and placement of mobile structures, generators, communications equipment, and connectivity to instrumented targets within areas identified in Figure 2 shown on the following page
- ▶ Training in expeditionary or irregular warfare

Testing and evaluation activities and ground training would occur within the footprint of the existing gunnery range. No new ground disturbances would occur, other than those outlined above. Any action outside of the scope of this Proposed Action would require additional environmental analysis and the preparation of appropriate documentation.

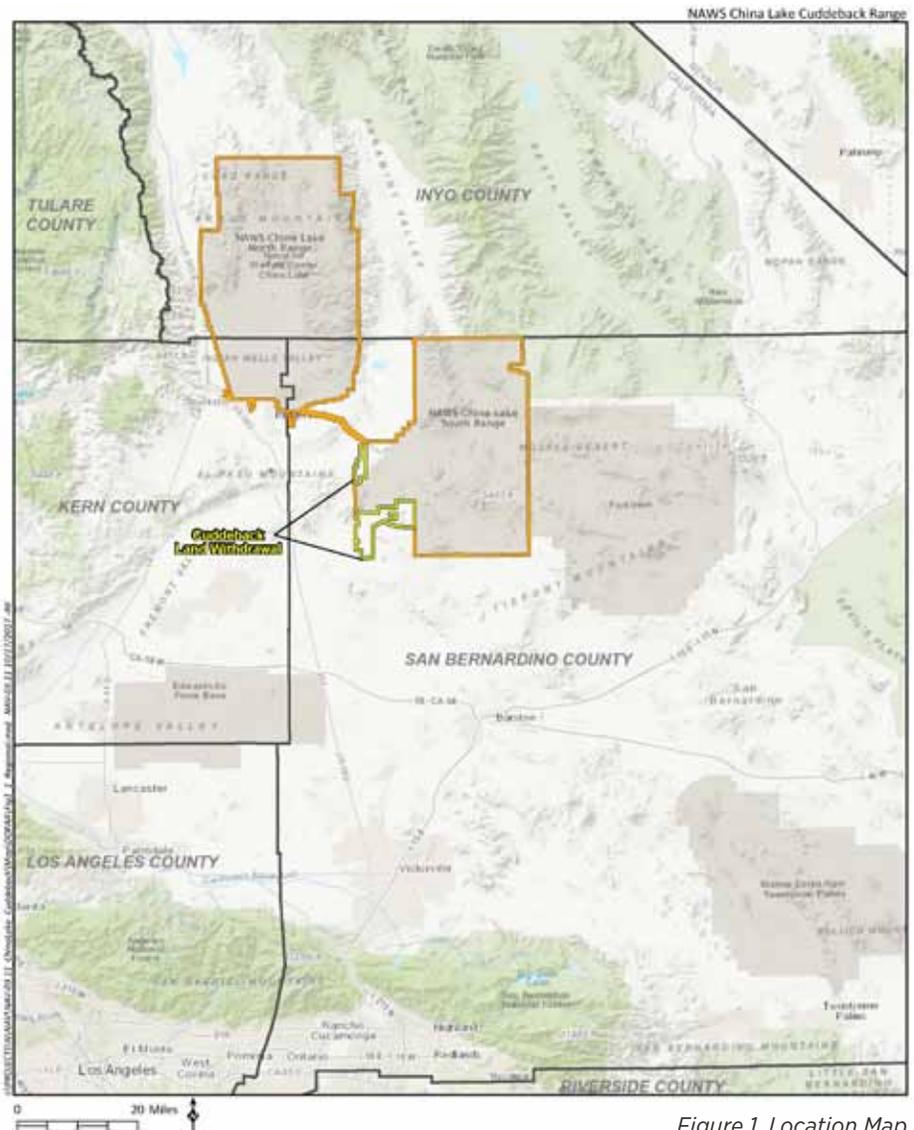


Figure 1. Location Map



Testing and evaluation activities and ground training would occur within the footprint of the existing gunnery range.



The Navy is requesting public input at the earliest stage to ensure community concerns are considered in the development of the Draft Environmental Assessment.

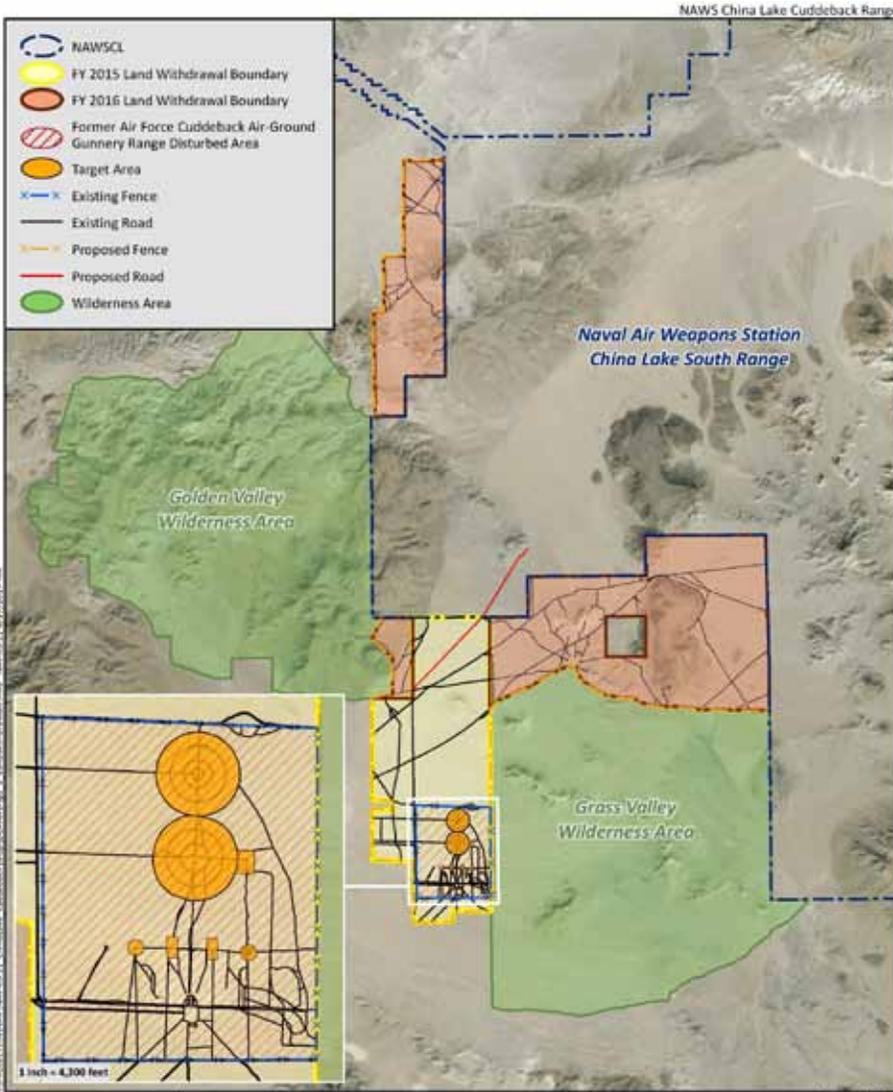


Figure 2. Cuddeback Range Land Withdrawals

Using the Cuddeback Range would improve the Navy's ability to conduct full-spectrum testing and evaluation of unmanned systems, miniature munitions, and integrated warfighting capabilities, as well as conduct ground troop training in expeditionary or irregular warfare.



The Proposed Action is needed to expand and improve the Navy's ability to ensure military readiness.

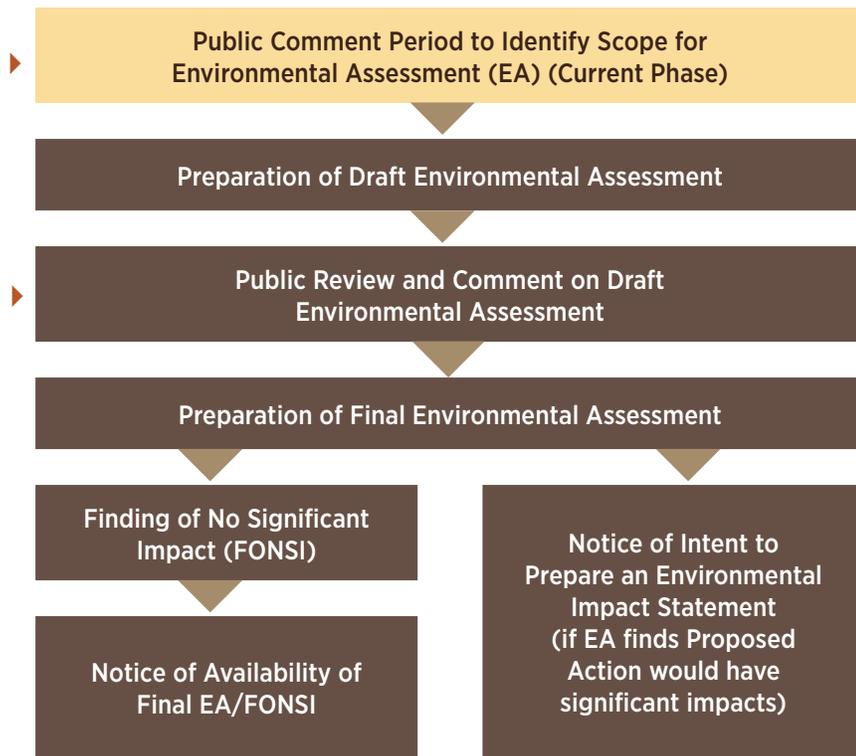


# THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA) PROCESS AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

NEPA is a U.S. federal law that requires federal agencies to identify and analyze the potential environmental impacts of a proposed action before deciding whether to proceed with that action. The public participates in the NEPA process during the following stages:

- ▶ **Scoping Period:** The public helps identify the scope of the analysis, including potential environmental issues and viable alternatives.
- ▶ **Draft Environmental Assessment Public Review and Comment Period:** The public evaluates and provides substantive comments on the draft analysis.

## NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT PROCESS



Boxes with ▶ indicate opportunities for public involvement

### HOW TO SUBMIT PUBLIC SCOPING COMMENTS

Submit substantive comments by mail or email to:

Naval Facilities Engineering  
 Command Southwest  
 Attn: Code JE20.TB  
 1220 Pacific Highway  
 Building 131  
 San Diego, CA 92132

Email: [margo.allen@navy.mil](mailto:margo.allen@navy.mil)

Scoping comments must be postmarked or received via email by **Dec. 4, 2017**, for consideration in the development of the Draft Environmental Assessment.



## PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING

The Navy is holding an open-house public scoping meeting to provide information and an opportunity for the public to comment on the scope of the analysis for consideration in the development of the Draft EA. The public scoping meeting will include an open-house information session, during which time Navy representatives will be available to provide information and answer questions.

Written comments will be accepted during the scoping meeting, which is being held at the following location:

**Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2017 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.**  
 Kerr McGee Community Center  
 Half Hall Pinnacles Room  
 100 W. California Ave.  
 Ridgecrest, CA 93555