

Additional copies of the DEIS have been placed in the Riverhead Free Library, 330 Court Street, Riverhead, New York.

Written comments on the DEIS should be mailed to the address noted below and must be postmarked not later than May 9, 1997 to be part of the official record.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Additional information concerning this notice may be obtained by contacting Mr. Kurt Frederick (Code 202) Northern Division, Naval Facilities Engineering Command, 10 Industrial Highway, MSC 82, Lester, PA 19113, telephone (610) 595-0728, facsimile (610) 595-0778.

Dated: March 27, 1997.

**M.A. Waters,**  
*LCDR, JAGC, USN, Alternate Federal Register Liaison Officer.*

[FR Doc. 97-8192 Filed 3-31-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3810-FF-P

**Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for; the Implementation of a Comprehensive Land Use Management Plan at the Naval Air Weapons Station, China Lake, CA**

**SUMMARY:** Per Section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as implemented by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR part 1500-1508) the Department of the Navy announces its intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to evaluate the potential environmental effects of implementing a comprehensive Land Use Management Plan for the Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division (NAWCWD), located at the Naval Air Weapons Station (NAWS), China Lake, California. The Navy is the lead agency in the preparation of the EIS. It is anticipated that other Department of Defense installations, and Department of the Interior agencies such as the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, will act as cooperating agencies.

The California Desert Protection Act (the Act) of 1994, reauthorized the Navy's continued use of public withdrawn lands to support China Lake's Research, Development, Test and Evaluation (RDT&E) and training mission. The Act requires the development of a land use management plan for these withdrawn lands, in accordance with the requirements of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, by October 1997. Additionally, in response to military downsizing initiatives and potential influences of

evolving technologies on weapons systems RDT&E and training requirements, the Navy recognizes the need to implement a comprehensive management system that integrates operational and environmental planning processes.

The Navy's proposed action is the implementation of a comprehensive Land Use Management Plan (LUMP) at NAWS China Lake for managing existing and proposed land uses authorized under the California Desert Protection Act. Proposed land uses include, but are not limited to, ongoing and future military operations, public health and safety practices, and ongoing and future environmental resources management and conservation at NAWS China Lake. The LUMP will be developed in conformance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA, 1976).

The EIS will also evaluate a range of land use management practices, including the "no action" alternative. Alternative land use management practices could include a range of activities of greater or lesser intensity of land use type or tempo. The "no action" alternative would implement a Land Use Management Plan that would not change the ongoing type or tempo of land uses and environmental resources management direction or emphasis currently in place at China Lake.

The EIS will evaluate the potential immediate and cumulative effects of implementing a comprehensive Land Use Management Plan on the physical, natural, and human environments of the affected geographic area. Major environmental issues that will be addressed in the EIS include, but are not limited to: geology/soils; biology; water resources/hydrology, noise, air quality (visibility & conformity), land use, non-military land use and access, cultural resources, socio-economics, transportation, public health and safety, and hazardous materials.

The Navy will initiate a scoping process for the purpose of determining the extent of issues to be addressed and identifying the significant issues related to the China Lake EIS. Scoping meetings will be held in the towns of Trona, Inyokern, Independence, Barstow, Johannesburg, and Ridgecrest. Meeting sites and times will be published in the **Federal Register**, and in local and regional newspapers. During the scoping meetings, presentation of information on the proposed action will precede the request for public comment. Navy representatives will accept comments from members of the public at the meeting. It is important that Federal, state, and local agencies, and

interested individuals take this opportunity to identify environmental concerns that should be addressed in the EIS.

**ADDRESSES:** Agencies and the public are invited and encouraged to provide written comments in addition to, or in lieu of, oral comments at the public scoping meetings. To be most helpful, scoping comments should clearly describe specific issues or topic which the EIS should address. Written comments must be postmarked by June 30, 1997 and should be mailed to Commander, Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake, Attn: Ms. Robin Hoffman, Land Use Planning Office, China Lake, CA 93555, telephone (619) 939-0935, fax (619) 939-2541.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Ms. Robin Hoffman at (619) 939-0935.

Dated: March 27, 1997.

**M.A. Waters,**  
*LCDR, JAG, USN, Alternate Federal Register Liaison Officer.*

[FR Doc. 97-8193 Filed 3-31-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3810-FF-P

**DEPARTMENT OF THE DEFENSE**

**Department of the Navy**

**Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for Implementation of the Draft Integrated Management Plan for the Patuxent River Complex, Maryland**

**SUMMARY:** Per section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 as implemented by the Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), the Department of the Navy announces its intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to evaluate the potential environmental effects of implementing the draft Integrated Management Plan for the Patuxent River Complex, Maryland. The Patuxent River Complex includes the Patuxent River Naval Air Station (NAS) including the Test Pilot School, Webster Field Annex (an Outlying Field), and the Chesapeake Test Range, which are assets under the exclusive control and scheduling authority of the Naval Air Warfare Center—Aircraft Division (NAWCAD).

The Patuxent River Complex is located 60 miles southeast of Washington, DC, in southern Maryland, where the Navy has actively conducted aircraft test and evaluation activities for more than 50 years. In recent years, the post-Cold War shift from the threat of nuclear superpower confrontation to regional conflicts has required the