

Agency: Corporation for National and Community Service.

Title: Applicant Medical Prescreening Form.

OMB Number: 3045-0025.

Agency Number: None.

Affected Public: 18-24 year old AmeriCorps*NCCC applicants.

Total Respondents: Approximately 2,500.

Frequency: One time per selected applicant.

Average Time Per Response: .5 hours

Estimated Total Burden Hours: 1,250 hours.

Total Burden Cost (capital/startup): 0.

Total Burden Cost (operating/maintenance): 0.

Comments submitted in response to this notice will be summarized and/or included in the request for Office of Management and Budget approval of the information collection request; they will also become a matter of public record.

Dated: February 10, 1998.

Kenneth L. Klothen,

General Counsel.

[FR Doc. 98-3891 Filed 2-13-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6050-28-P

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Office of the Secretary of Defense

Department of Defense Wage Committee; Notice of Closed Meetings

Pursuant to the provisions of section 10 of Public Law 92-463, the Federal Advisory Committee Act, notice is hereby given that closed meetings of the Department of Defense Wage Committee will be held on March 3, 1998; March 10, 1998; March 17, 1998; March 24, 1998; and March 31, 1998, at 10:00 a.m. in Room A105, The Nash Building, 1400 Key Boulevard, Rosslyn, Virginia.

Under the provisions of section 10(d) of Public Law 92-463, the Department of Defense has determined that the meetings meet the criteria to close meetings to the public because the matters to be considered are related to internal rules and practices of the Department of Defense and the detailed wage data to be considered were obtained from officials of private establishments with a guarantee that the data will be held in confidence.

However, members of the public who may wish to do so are invited to submit material in writing to the chairman concerning matters believed to be deserving of the Committee's attention.

Additional information concerning the meetings may be obtained by writing to the Chairman, Department of Defense

Wage Committee, 4000 Defense Pentagon, Washington, DC 20301-4000.

Dated: February 10, 1998.

L.M. Bynum,

Alternate OSD Federal Register Liaison Officer, Department of Defense.

[FR Doc. 98-3784 Filed 2-13-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 5000-04-M

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Department of the Air Force

Notice of Intent To Prepare Environmental Impact Statement on the Proposal to Release Federal Funds to the University of New Mexico to Construct Enchanted Skies Park and Observatory, Near Grants, NM

The United States Air Force (Air Force) will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to assess the potential environmental impacts of the Air Force's decision to issue Department of Defense (DoD) grant funds to the University of New Mexico to construct an astronomical observatory on Horace Mesa, near Grants. The Air Force initiated an Environmental Assessment (EA) in May 1997 to analyze this proposal. Preliminary results from the EA indicated the potential for significant impacts to cultural resources. In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act, the Air Force will continue the analysis of this proposal through the preparation of an EIS. The EIS will be used by the Air Force in considering whether, and under what conditions, to approve the release of federal funds to construct the observatory on Horace Mesa and to document the Air Force's decision in a Record of Decision.

The University of New Mexico has proposed to use the grant funds to build the Enchanted Skies Park and Observatory near Grants, NM. This proposal involves the construction and operation of an astronomical research site with a publicly accessible park that includes educational opportunities and amateur viewing facilities. The project would consist of a Visitor's Center, Technical Center and amateur viewing area. The building and structures would occupy approximately 250 acres of land on Horace Mesa with interconnected transportation corridors for hiking, walking, delivery/maintenance, and tram/trolley traffic. Improvements to state owned access roads would also be required.

The scoping period for the Enchanted Skies Park and Observatory will extend through March 20, 1998. Written and oral comments received from meetings

and correspondence during the preparation of the EA will be considered in preparation of the EIS, as will comments received by the Air Force during this scoping period. To ensure the Air Force has sufficient time to consider public input in the preparation of the Draft EIS, comments should be submitted to the address below by March 20, 1998:

HQ AFCEE/ECR

ATTN: Ms. Julia Cantrell, 3207 North Road, Brooks Air Force Base, TX 78235-5363

Barbara A. Carmichael,

Alternate Air Force Federal Register Liaison Officer.

[FR Doc. 98-3906 Filed 2-13-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3910-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Department of the Air Force

Air Force Institute of Technology Subcommittee of the Air University Board of Visitors; Notice of Meeting

The Air Force Institute of Technology Subcommittee of the Air University Board of Visitors will hold an open meeting on March 15-17, 1998, with the first business session beginning at 8:30 a.m. in the Commandant's Conference Room, Building 125, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base (AFB), Ohio (5 seats available).

The purpose of the meeting is to give the board an opportunity to review Air Force Institute of Technology's educational programs and to present to the Commandant a report of their findings and recommendations concerning these programs.

For further information on this meeting, contact Ms. Beverly Houtz, Directorate of Plans and Operations, Air Force Institute of Technology, Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, 45433-7765 (937) 255-5760.

Barbara A. Carmichael,

Alternate Air Force Federal Register Liaison Officer.

[FR Doc. 98-3907 Filed 2-13-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3910-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Department of the Navy

Record of Decision for the Installation and Operation of a Relocatable Over the Horizon Radar (ROTHR) System in Puerto Rico

AGENCY: Department of the Navy, DoD.

ACTION: Notice of record of decision.

SUMMARY: The Department of the Navy announces its decision to install and operate a ROTH system in Puerto Rico.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ms. Linda Blount, Atlantic Division Naval Facilities Engineering Command (Code 2032LB), 1510 Gilbert Street, Norfolk, VA 23511-2699, telephone (757) 322-4892.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The text of the entire Record of Decision is provided as follows:

The Department of the Navy (Navy), pursuant to Section 102 (2) (c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), 42 U.S.C. § 4321 *et seq.*, and the regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) that implement NEPA procedures, 40 CFR Parts 1500-1508, hereby announces its decision to install and operate a ROTH system in Puerto Rico.

The ROTH system is a high frequency radar that provides over-the-horizon detection and tracking of aircraft over a wide geographic area. Each complete ROTH system is composed of three major subsystems: the transmitter, receiver, and operation control center (OCC). The transmitter will be installed at a site on the southwestern coast of Vieques, Puerto Rico, north of the Laguna Playa Grande. The receiver will be installed at a site on Fort Allen in Juana Diaz, Puerto Rico. Both sites are on existing Department of Defense property. The OCC functions will be accomplished at an existing facility in Chesapeake, Virginia.

Background

In accordance with the President's National Drug Control Strategy and in consonance with Presidential Decision Directive 14, the purpose and need of the project is the early detection and monitoring of illegal international drug activity by providing air surveillance of the South American source countries of Peru, Bolivia, and Colombia. The existing ROTH systems in Virginia and Texas provide incomplete coverage of the source countries, resulting in gaps that are exploited by drug traffickers. Implementation of the ROTH system in Puerto Rico will complement the two existing ROTH systems, and, with existing surveillance strategies, will provide virtually complete coverage of this area. Early detection and tracking will improve reaction time for counter-narcotic forces.

Process:

In accordance with NEPA, a Notice of Intent (NOI) to Prepare an

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Construction and Operation of a ROTH, Puerto Rico was published in the **Federal Register** on May 25, 1994. That notice described briefly the proposed action, requirements for a transmitter site and a receiver site, and alternative site locations identified for the transmitter on Vieques (Playa Grande, Camp Garcia Airfield, and Camp Garcia East) and for the receiver in southwest Puerto Rico (Lajas A and Lajas B). Public scoping meetings were announced in English and Spanish in local newspapers and in direct mailouts. Following these notifications, two scoping meetings were held as follows:

- June 9, 1994 from 7:30 pm to 9:30 pm at the Community Center in La Parguera, Lajas, PR; and
- June 11, 1994 from 10:30 am to 1:00 pm at the Municipal Assembly Hall in Vieques, PR.

A total of ten individuals provided comments at the scoping meetings and three letters were received.

On July 18, 1995, the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the ROTH project was issued, and on July 24, 1995 a Notice of Availability was published in the **Federal Register**. The document was prepared in two versions, English and Spanish, and distributed to 118 parties including government agencies, groups, and individuals. Four public hearings were held to receive comments on the DEIS, with Héctor Russe Martinez, Esq., President of the Puerto Rico Environmental Quality Board (EQB), serving as Hearing Officer:

- November 27, 1995 hearing at the Multiple Services Center, Vieques, PR.
- November 29, 1995 at the Municipal Theater, Lajas.
- December 6, 1995 at the Municipal Theater, Lajas, PR.
- December 16, 1995 at the Municipal Theater, Lajas, PR.

The public comment period was open for the receipt of comments until December 31, 1995. During the public hearings, thirty-eight people spoke. Thirty-four letters from agencies, organizations, and individual concerned citizens were received by the Navy pertaining to the ROTH project.

Concerns expressed during the public review of the DEIS prompted the Navy to re-evaluate potential receiver sites. A new preferred site at Fort Allen in Juana Diaz, Puerto Rico was identified, and on February 7, 1997, a Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) was filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and a Notice of Availability was published in the **Federal Register** on February 14, 1997. The document was

prepared in two versions, English and Spanish, and distributed to over 200 government agencies, groups, and individuals.

A public hearing was held on March 15, 1997 in Juana Diaz, with Héctor Russe Martinez, Esq., President of the Puerto Rico EQB, serving as Hearing Officer. During the public hearing forty people spoke. The public comment period was open for the receipt of comments until March 31, 1997. Forty-nine letters from agencies, organizations, and individual concerned citizens were received by the Navy pertaining to the ROTH project.

Issues raised at the public hearings and submitted in writing were addressed in a Final EIS (FEIS). The FEIS was filed with EPA on September 19, 1997 and a Notice of Availability was published in the **Federal Register** on September 26, 1997. The document was prepared in two versions, English and Spanish, and distributed to over 200 government agencies, groups, and individuals. The public comment period was open for the receipt of new comments until October 27, 1997. A total of eight written comments were received on the FEIS.

Alternatives

NEPA requires the Navy to evaluate a reasonable range of alternatives. Determining an optimum location for the installation of the ROTH involved several factors including adequate coverage of the intended surveillance area, potential locations for sites which would meet the siting criteria, and suitable existing infrastructure.

Puerto Rico presents the best possible siting alternative and meets all the significant criteria for coverage: look angle; target area coverage; suitable terrain; sufficient land area; infrastructure; supportability; cost; and constructability. Additionally, Puerto Rico shares with the U.S. mainland an urgent need to combat drug trafficking. A federal/local interagency task force on the island is actively cooperating in this task. The location of the third leg of the system in Puerto Rico (in conjunction with the Texas and Virginia systems) will provide mutual benefits to Puerto Rico and the mainland U.S. that are in keeping with their common interest.

During the NEPA process, the Navy analyzed the environmental impacts of siting the ROTH system in different locations in Puerto Rico, including the island of Vieques. A preliminary assessment of potential locations for the transmitter and receiver subsystems was performed between May and November 1993 (Raytheon, October 1993). The following criteria must be met for the

ROTHR system to accomplish its mission:

- The transmitter and receiver sites must be separated by 50 to 100 miles (mi) (80 to 160 kilometers [km]) to permit bistatic operation;
- The sites must be generally level, for operational purposes of the antenna array; and
- The area to the south of the antennas must be clear of large or tall obstructions.

Five potential transmitter sites were identified during the preliminary assessment: four sites on Vieques Island and one site on Puerto Rico. Three of the five sites were determined to be feasible: Playa Grande (the selected site); Camp Garcia Airfield; and Camp Garcia East. All three feasible transmitter sites are located on Navy-owned property along the southern coast of Vieques Island.

The Playa Grande Site is located on the southwestern coast, north of the Laguna Playa Grande Conservation Zone. It is within the Naval Ammunition Storage Detachment (NASD). The vegetation on the site includes a mahogany plantation planted with saplings in 1991 and thorn/scrub lowland forest, mixed with dense grassland.

The Camp Garcia Airfield site is located just west of the existing Camp Garcia Headquarters and Repair Compound and is intermittently used as a drop zone during training exercises. The graded area is now a mixed thorn/scrub habitat with grassland, dominated by opportunistic and pioneer species.

The Camp Garcia East site is located immediately east of the existing Headquarters and Repair Compound at Camp Garcia and is surrounded by a fuel storage area, a sewage lagoon, equipment and machinery repair facilities, and a helicopter pad. This site is currently densely vegetated with thorn/scrub vegetation and mixed scrub.

Based on operational criteria, the Playa Grande Site has been selected because it avoids conflicts with Camp Garcia training exercises. Training exercises at Camp Garcia would not interfere with ROTHR operations at the Playa Grande Site, but would have resulted in periodic shutdowns of ROTHR operations at either of the two Camp Garcia Sites.

Seven potential receiver sites on Puerto Rico were initially evaluated. Based on operational, environmental, and cost criteria, three receiver sites (Lajas Site A, Lajas Site B, and Fort Allen) were identified as feasible alternatives. Although the Fort Allen Site was not initially identified as a feasible site, the development of an

effective shortened receiver array has allowed it to be selected for the receiver site.

The Fort Allen Site is part of a 941 acre (381 hectare) facility located on the southern coast of Puerto Rico approximately 10 mi (16 km) east of Ponce within Juana Diaz. It is operated as a Puerto Rico Army National Guard (PRARNG) facility. Secondary successional vegetation dominates the receiver site. Use of this site for the receiver facility has been coordinated among the Navy, the PRARNG, and the US Army National Guard Bureau to ensure that there will be no incompatible uses at Fort Allen.

The use of a shorter receiver array at Fort Allen allows construction to remain entirely within the boundaries of existing federal property. Although the shorter receiver array will result in some minor loss of performance of the system, it will still be capable of performing its assigned mission. The ability to place the receiver entirely on government property is an important consideration. The Fort Allen Site would therefore, impact no private property, and would impact less wetland area than the two Lajas sites.

The no action alternative was also considered. Under the no action alternative the ROTHR system would not be constructed in Puerto Rico. While the construction and operational impacts associated with the ROTHR would be avoided, this option would preclude development of radar coverage beyond the range of the existing radar systems in Virginia and Texas. Without the Puerto Rico system, early warning of suspicious flights departing South America would not occur, thereby decreasing the opportunity for federal and commonwealth agencies to intercept and apprehend illegal air drug traffickers.

Environmental Impacts

The Navy analyzed the potential impacts of the transmitter and receiver alternatives for their effects on land use; socioeconomic; community facilities and services; transportation; air quality and noise; electromagnetic emissions; infrastructure; culture resources; biological resources; water resources; topography, geology, and soils; hazardous substances; and cumulative impacts. This Record of Decision focuses on the major impacts that will likely result from implementing the preferred alternative of installing and operating the transmitter at Playa Grande, Vieques, Puerto Rico and the receiver at Fort Allen, Juana Diaz, Puerto Rico.

Installation of a transmitter at the Playa Grande Site will be compatible with the mission of U.S. Naval Station, Roosevelt Roads and with the Navy's Memorandum of Understanding Regarding the Island Of Vieques (1983). About 22 acres (9 hectares) of an existing mahogany plantation consisting of about 1,650 trees will be cleared during construction of the transmitter facilities. The site will be compatible with existing land uses, will be located north of the environmental conservation zone, and will be away from public view. The towers and wires will be backdropped by hills and mountains, and, therefore, will not be readily seen from the sea.

Fort Allen is federally owned and operated as a Puerto Rico Army National Guard training facility. Installation of a receiver site at Fort Allen will be compatible with the facility's mission to provide training for the National Guard. The site will be away from public view because the receiver towers will project a maximum of 19 ft (6 m) above the ground surface, and are not expected to be visible beyond the immediate area.

While portions of the Fort Allen site are classified as prime farmland if irrigated, the construction site is within an existing military facility, and is not in agricultural use. Additionally, there is no existing irrigation. Constructing the receiver at the Fort Allen Site does not violate the objectives of the Federal Farmland Protection Act.

Temporary economic impacts on the area will result from the construction activities. Construction of the facility will be timed so that the facility can become operational in 1999. The estimated cost for site preparation and construction at the ROTHR transmitter site is approximately \$5.5 million. The estimated cost for site preparation and construction at the receiver facility is approximately \$4.5 million. It is expected that local construction workers will be employed by construction contractors. Some workers may reside in temporary housing during the construction period. They are not expected to remain in the area once construction is completed. Once operational, the facility will employ a total of 20 full-time persons at each site, who will, to the maximum extent practicable, be from the existing Puerto Rico labor force.

Air quality and noise impacts for the transmitter and receiver sites will be similar. There will be temporary minor increases in vehicle exhaust emissions (from construction-related vehicle combustion engines) and of direct emissions (from earth movement and

travel on unpaved roads) during construction of the transmitter and receiver facilities. These impacts will occur only during the construction process (short-term) and will not significantly degrade air quality in the area over the long term. No backup generators will be placed at the transmitter or receiver sites. There will be a permanent minor increase in motor vehicle emissions at the transmitter and receiver sites as a result of daily vehicular traffic of facility employees and dust from travel on unpaved roads. These emissions will be minor, however, as only a total of 20 people each will be working at the transmitter and receiver sites.

With respect to noise impacts, construction activity will result in temporary increases in noise levels at the transmitter and receiver sites and along adjacent roads. Vehicle and heavy equipment traffic will be the primary noise sources. Blasting is required at the transmitter site to remove approximately 2,000 cubic yards (cu yd) (1,529 cubic meters [cu m]) of rock. Noise levels will be within noise standards presented in the Puerto Rico Regulation of the Environmental Quality Board for the Control of Noise Pollution, Amended Version, dated February 25, 1987, pursuant to Law Number 9, of June 18, 1970. Once construction is completed, operation of the system will result in imperceptible increases in noise levels.

In performing its function, the transmitter system will emit Radio Frequency (RF) fields. The RF fields occur via directional Frequency Modulation Continuous Wave (FM/CW) High Frequency (HF) transmissions at assigned frequencies between 5 and 28 megahertz (MHZ, million cycles per second). Concerns dealing with biological hazards from exposure to ionizing radiation do not apply to the ROTHr transmitter system. Biological effects associated with the ROTHr transmitter will be in response to thermalizing absorption of RF fields, which are a portion of the non-ionizing electromagnetic spectrum.

Questions about possible "nonthermal" effects of RF fields have been examined by the World Health Organization (WHO) at an international seminar held in November 1996 on the biological effects of low-level radio frequency fields. Their report concluded that "while hazards from exposure to high-level (thermal) RF fields were established, no known health hazards were associated with exposure to RF sources emitting fields too low to cause a significant temperature rise in tissue."

The Department of Defense (DoD) criteria for protection of personnel from exposure to RF fields are set out in DoD instruction 6055.11. These criteria are based upon consensus derived voluntary standards developed by the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), which is a Non-Governmental Standards Organization (NGSO). This standard was approved and adopted by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). The RF field emitted by the ROTHr transmitter will not expose the public to levels greater than those given in the ANSI/IEEE (1992) standards, and will not cause any detrimental health effects. Because RF fields in the immediate area of the transmitter may be higher than permissible exposure limits, public access will not be allowed. A personnel exclusion fence will be constructed at the transmitter antenna site to limit access and control exposures. This fence will be posted with standard warning signs in both English and Spanish. The personnel exclusion fence will be located so that RF fields at ground level outside the exclusion fence will meet DoD and ANSI/IEEE standards for uncontrolled environments.

At the receiver facility, only the calibration antenna will produce RF fields and only when the receiver equipment is being tested (about two hours each week). The signals from the calibration antenna will have a field power level adjacent to the antenna 1/1,000 of the power level of a portable phone and 1/500 of the power level of a television.

The receiver facility is sensitive to electromagnetic interference (EMI) from sources in the vicinity of the receiver site. While no buffer area extending beyond the boundary of Fort Allen will be required, the Navy will coordinate with the PRARNG and US Army National Guard to ensure proposed activities in the vicinity of the receiver will not create interference.

The power required to operate the transmitter site is not expected to adversely impact the power supply of the island of Vieques. According to the Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority (PREPA), there is suitable capacity to meet this requirement. At the Playa Grande Site, electrical power will be supplied by a new line constructed within a 25 ft (8 m) right-of-way adjacent to Route 201, impacting about 7.4 acres (3 hectares) of thorn/scrub vegetation. Electrical power is currently available at the Fort Allen Site. The power required to operate the receiver site (500 kVA) is not expected to adversely impact the power supply of

the island of Puerto Rico or the local area.

At the transmitter site during construction and operation of the facility, potable water needs will be met with bottled water. A non-potable well will be installed for sanitary use, cleaning, and showers. Impacts to local groundwater resources will be minimized by the proper construction, operation, and maintenance of the groundwater well system. The receiver facility at Fort Allen will use the existing adequate water supply system.

Sanitary sewer facilities are not currently available at the transmitter site. A "mound" type subsurface soil absorption and septic tank system will be installed. Sanitary sewer services at Fort Allen are supplied by the on-site wastewater treatment plant.

The wastes generated by the action are not expected to impact local solid waste disposal resources. The Vieques landfill in the Bastimento Ward is 10 acres (4 hectares) in size with an active life estimated at 17 to 20 years. Construction debris and rubble will be transported to this solid waste landfill. Minimal construction debris and rubble from the Fort Allen site will be transported by the construction contractor to a local solid waste landfill that has sufficient capacity.

An intensive archaeological survey was conducted in July 1996 at the Playa Grande site and no significant archaeological sites were located. An intensive archaeological survey was also conducted on 180 acres (73 hectares) at Fort Allen in July 1996. No significant archaeological sites were located. A preliminary disturbance study indicated that the majority of the area retained a low potential for intact cultural resources, due to landscape modification. Some isolated areas of moderate potential were located in the extreme western and southeastern portions of the testing area. These areas appeared to have been less affected by modern disturbances, but contained no pre-modern materials, features, or deposits. The Puerto Rico Historic Preservation Office has concurred with the Navy's finding that the installation and operation of the ROTHr will have no effect on historic resources.

No significant impacts to biological resources will occur at the transmitter site. Biological impacts to the Playa Grande Site will be the result of clearing vegetation and grading up to approximately 80 acres (32 hectares). The site occupies part of a mahogany plantation, a grass/low growing herbaceous community, and a lowland forest. The mahogany plantation was planted in 1991 from nursery stock.

These trees are still saplings and are not currently economically viable for wood product. Construction of the transmitter facility will require the clearing of approximately 22 acres (9 hectares) of the mahogany plantation (about 1,650 trees). As mitigation, mahogany saplings will be planted between and adjacent to the trees which will not be disturbed by the construction. The restriction area will be cleared of vegetation and graded above the 16 ft (5 m) contour and the Laguna Playa Grande Conservation Zone boundary. No construction will occur within the conservation zone. Additionally soil erosion control measures will ensure no indirect impacts occur to the conservation zone.

No significant impacts to biological resources will occur at the receiver site. A large majority of the Fort Allen Site is densely vegetated with thorn/scrub community. The 117 acre (47 hectare) site consists of approximately 110 acres (45 hectares) of secondary successional growth, approximately 4 acres (2 hectares) of secondary successional growth/grassland mix, and approximately 3 acres (1 hectare) of grassland which will be cleared.

The Navy's analysis in the FEIS indicated 0.95 acres (0.4 hectares) of wetlands would be impacted as a result of the construction of the receiver facility. Subsequent to issuance of the FEIS, the boundaries of the wetlands area were further defined, and design revisions were made. Consequently, the amount of wetlands which will be displaced is now estimated at less than 0.25 acres (0.12 hectares) of which only 0.08 acres (0.03 hectares) will be permanent wetlands loss. There is no practicable alternative to these wetlands impacts. The proposed action includes all practicable measures to minimize impacts to wetlands.

No threatened or endangered species will be impacted by construction or operation of the ROTH in Puerto Rico.

Construction of the transmitter site will require leveling the ground surface supporting the transmitter antennas. In order to meet specific criteria for the designed system, approximately 10 acres (4 hectares) of the transmitter site must be permanently leveled. An additional 70 acres (28 hectares) will be smoothed, and sloped with the natural terrain toward the lagoon. This grading will result in a permanent change to topography in the area of the transmitter site. To meet specific criteria for the designed receiver system at the Fort Allen site, approximately 117 acres (47 hectares) will be permanently leveled and the soil will be redistributed. Best management practices, controls, and procedures will be utilized at the

construction sites to reduce the potential for stormwater runoff.

Based on available information and limited field surveys, there is no evidence of hazardous waste contamination at the transmitter site. Based on environmental site investigations performed by the U.S. Army over the past three years, 3 potential areas of concern (AOCs) were found to be within the receiver site boundary. Additional site inspections and a geophysical survey performed by the U.S. Navy during the fall of 1996 revealed several suspect features at two of the AOCs. However, based on results of a human health risk evaluation, the site was determined to be a suitable location for the ROTH receiver array.

The Puerto Rico Planning Board has concurred that the ROTH project is consistent with the Puerto Rican Coastal Zone Management Plan.

The potential effects of the proposed construction of the ROTH system have been evaluated in accordance with the requirements of Executive Order 12898, Environmental Justice. The direct and indirect effects of the proposed ROTH system are not expected to significantly affect human health or the environment. The proposed action will not cause adverse environmental or economic impacts to the general population or, specifically, to any groups or individuals from minority or low-income populations. No residences will be directly impacted. In addition, publication of the newspaper notice announcing the availability of the environmental impact statement allowed the total public (including minority and low-income individuals and populations) the opportunity to comment on the proposed action. The EIS and all notices were published in both English and Spanish to maximize public awareness of the proposal.

The existing ROTH systems in Virginia and Texas provide incomplete coverage of the South American source countries, Peru, Bolivia, and Colombia, resulting in gaps that are exploited by drug traffickers. Implementation of the ROTH system in Puerto Rico, which will complement the two existing ROTH systems, will provide virtually complete coverage of this area. The action can, therefore, be regarded as having a cumulatively positive effect, since the project will be an essential component in the curtailment of drug trafficking, which is a top priority of the U.S. Government and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

No significant cumulative impacts to human health, land use, socioeconomic, community facilities and services, transportation, infrastructure, air

quality, noise, and natural or cultural resources are anticipated.

Mitigation

To prevent potential adverse effects to human health at the transmitter site, a fence will surround the antennas and groundscreen area. The fence, demarking a "Personnel Exclusion Area," will be conspicuously marked with warning signs in both Spanish and English. The fence will be located at a safe distance from the transmitter antennas so that no harmful effects could occur to humans. The safe distance for setting the fence will be determined by measurement of the RF fields and reference to the maximal permissible exposure levels as defined in DoD instruction 6055.11 and ANSI/IEEE standards (1992). Measurements of electromagnetic fields and currents will be conducted by qualified engineers. In the unlikely event that the initial measurements indicate that the ANSI/IEEE standards are not being met, the Navy will adjust the fence location, as needed. If measurements taken at the southernmost position of the proposed fence exceed the standards, then the Navy will reduce power levels to achieve compliance. The Navy will reduce the power versus move the fence because of a Navy commitment to avoid any construction in the conservation zone, which lies to the south of the site. In the event the Navy must reduce the power level, the ROTH will still be able to effectively accomplish its mission. The Navy will also work with the Puerto Rico EQB to ensure a suitable third party takes part in the initial system testing.

RF fields also generate potential hazards to Electro-Explosive Devices (EED) or Cartridge Actuated Devices (CAD) found in aircraft. An exclusion zone will extend to 700 ft (213 m) above ground level. This airspace should be avoided by all untested aircraft equipped with EED-or CAD-actuated systems that are exposed. The existence of this EED zone will be published as a Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) on aeronautical charts and contained in flight information publications handled by the FAA.

Some modern aircraft controls and navigation systems are comprised of electronic devices. The potential exists for induced currents from electromagnetic fields to cause these devices to malfunction or produce erroneous data. Transmitter electromagnetic emissions will not interfere with Instrument Landing Systems (ILS) or aircraft navigation and control systems that are beyond 700 ft (213 m) of the transmitter antennas. To

prevent the accidental disruption of aircraft controls and instruments in the airspace of the transmitter site, a NOTAM will be published through the FAA advising aircraft to stay clear of the affected airspace, so that safe separation distances will be maintained between all aircraft and the transmitter antennas (airspace restrictions for commercial EEDs, are actually larger than this area and therefore only one NOTAM will be published for the EED restricted airspace).

The high frequency (HF) radio spectrum is utilized by numerous licensed users in the Fixed and Broadcast Service frequency bands. To prevent ROTHr transmissions from interfering with other users of the HF spectrum, ROTHr will be licensed to transmit on a "not-to-interfere" basis. The ROTHr system will not transmit in the licensed frequency bands of the Broadcast Services (emergency, amateur, commercial, etc.) in the region of the transmitter site. These frequencies will be permanently blocked out within the ROTHr control system. In the available frequency bands, ROTHr will avoid interference by continually monitoring the HF spectrum for unused frequencies. Transmissions will only occur at frequencies that have been monitored and determined to be clear of activity. If an interference does occur between ROTHr and another HF user, a formal complaint can be filed through the FCC to resolve further conflicts.

The total wetlands impact of 0.25 acres will be offset by the construction of approximately 7618 linear feet of new ditch, approximately 4 feet deep and 6 feet wide. The area of ditch bottom (1.05 acres) will rapidly evolve to a state of equal wetland function-and-value to the displaced wetland. Therefore, in accordance with the Navy No-Net-Loss-of-Wetlands-Policy, an effective ratio of 4:1 compensatory mitigation will be achieved on site.

Relative to potential for bird strikes at the transmitter, along the antenna support wires, 3 in (7.6 cm) diameter white ceramic insulators will be placed at approximately 15 foot (4.6 m) intervals to break up the cable sections, making them less conductive for electricity. These ceramic insulators will make the wires more visible to birds than unmarked electrical wires. The support wires extend from the structures to the ground in a vast network and are more visible than electrical wires which are generally parallel with the horizon, and, therefore, should reduce potential effects from bird strikes.

The Laguna Playa Grande is located approximately 300 ft (91 m) south of the

transmitter site. Laguna Playa Grande Conservation Zone is one of seven zones established by the Navy as a result of the 1983 MOU regarding the island of Vieques between the Navy and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. The cleared area outside the fence line for construction of the transmitter facility will be located above the 16 ft (5 m) contour of the Laguna Playa Grande Conservation Zone boundary, and, therefore, the Conservation Zone will be avoided. In addition, best management practices for erosion control at the transmitter site will be implemented to avoid indirect impact. These will include the use of silt fences, diversion ditches, and sedimentation basins.

To diminish light potentially reaching the beach, the Navy, where possible, will orient outside lights away from the beach. Additionally, the Navy will use low-pressure sodium vapor luminaries (LPS) which emit only yellow light, and which have been demonstrated to have minimal effect on sea turtle adults or the ability of hatchlings to find the sea. These two measures in concert will mitigate potential effects on sea turtles.

About 22 acres (9 hectares) of the mahogany plantation will be impacted by construction of the transmitter facility at the Playa Grande Site. Planting of mahogany saplings in a suitable location will be conducted as mitigation. The mahogany trees will be planted between and adjacent to the trees which will not be disturbed by the construction. The replacement mahogany trees will be purchased under a guaranteed contract so that the supplier will be responsible for replacement of any trees that die.

During construction of the transmitter facility on Vieques, including roadway relocation and parking lot construction, soils will be exposed to rain and wind. Best management practices for sediment and erosion control will be used at the transmitter site to ensure that a majority of the eroded sediments are prevented from entering the Laguna Playa Grande. Details of the project specific soil erosion control plans are included in the FEIS.

The receiver site is in the 100-year floodplain. Design considerations to reduce obstructions to the water flow and to prevent damage to the receiver system are specified in the FEIS.

Measures to minimize the impact of construction of the receiver array, related support facilities, and clear zones will be taken in areas where contaminants have been detected at Fort Allen. These measures are outlined below and will be included in the project health and safety plan, and soil erosion control plan.

- Surface and subsurface debris encountered during construction will be removed and disposed of in an appropriate manner. The debris, such as old tent canvases and bags of refuse, will be collected and disposed offsite in landfills. The Navy will perform any testing required prior to landfill disposal.

- Debris removal will be limited to the intrusive ground activities required for the construction of the ROTHr antenna array and will be supervised by an environmental engineer.

- Construction activities will be conducted in a way to minimize windborne dust. Appropriate health and safety measures will be implemented to protect workers from inhalation or ingestion of dust.

- Appropriate measures will be taken to minimize the potential for overland flow of runoff and associated sediment from the site (*i.e.*, areas will not be flooded during construction, or if required temporary containment ponds will be built).

- The area will be revegetated as soon as feasible after construction to minimize soil erosion due to wind or precipitation. Native vegetation will be planted if the speed of natural revegetation processes allows excessive opportunities for soil erosion.

Comments Received on the FEIS

A total of eight comment letters were received on the FEIS. Two letters merely reiterated comments previously submitted on the DEIS and SDEIS and identified no new issues. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) submitted a letter stating that EPA did not anticipate that the project will cause any significant adverse environmental impacts, provided that the Navy follows the identified mitigation measures. EPA expressed no concerns with the project as proposed.

The U.S. Department of Interior (DOI) expressed continued concern over the potential for impacts to the Laguna Playa Grande and surrounding mangroves from increased sedimentation. They requested that best management practices for sediment and erosion control be incorporated into the project plans and specifications prior to request for bids. They also recommended that storm water management measures should be installed during and prior to completion of the construction process, with the purpose of reducing pollutants in storm water discharged after construction is completed. In addition to soil stabilization and structural practices, they recommended that a vegetated buffer be established adjacent to the

project boundary to further minimize runoff into the lagoon. As stated in the FEIS, the sedimentation and soil erosion control plan is the responsibility of the construction contractor, subject to Navy review and EQB approval. However, the Navy will encourage the contractor to use soil stabilization and structural practices, as appropriate. Additionally, the design includes erosion and sediment control measures, both during construction and as a permanent facility upon completion of the project. During construction, a series of silt dams will be provided to control the site runoff. A sediment basin will also be installed during the first phase of construction, before land clearing begins. All of the site drainage is directed toward this approximately 10 acre basin. The basin will remain in place after construction. A vegetated buffer was not included as part of the project since all site drainage will be directed toward the basin, and there will be no sheet flow into the lagoon. However, as previously stated, no clearing will occur below the 5 meter contour, therefore, existing vegetation adjacent to the lagoon will be maintained.

DOI also recommended that soil erosion control measures be implemented at the Fort Allen receiver site in order to restrict sediments and other contaminants from entering the on site wetlands and adjacent water bodies. A sedimentation and soil erosion control plan for the Fort Allen receiver site will be prepared by the construction contractor. As with the Playa Grande transmitter site, the plan will be subject to Navy review and EQB approval.

DOI also requested that the Navy consider using Swan Flight Diverters (spiral vibration dampers) or similar devices at the transmitter to minimize bird strikes, and requested an opportunity to review plans for their installation. The Navy will investigate the possibility of using these devices, and will coordinate with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Caribbean Office. DOI also recommended that the Navy direct lights away from the beach and use low-pressure sodium vapor luminaries for all light sources that may affect sea turtles. As previously stated, the Navy will direct lights away from the beach, if possible, and will use low-pressure sodium vapor luminaries for all exterior lighting. DOI's additional comments on the mahogany forest mitigation were previously addressed in the FEIS.

Four letters were received from private citizens and citizen groups, and focused on issues related to the Navy's compliance with Article 4(C) of the Puerto Rico Public Policy Act (Act No.

9) and the Navy's adherence to direction provided by the Puerto Rico Environmental Quality Board (EQB) based on its review of the Navy's NEPA documentation. Article 4(C) of Act No. 9 and implementing regulations establish the environmental review requirements that Commonwealth government entities must follow when proposing a project or granting necessary approvals before a project may proceed. The Commonwealth process is comparable to that required of Federal government entities under NEPA.

The Navy voluntarily complied with Article 9 and solicited EQB review and comment on the project's NEPA documentation for two purposes. First, under NEPA, the Navy must solicit comments from appropriate State and local agencies that are authorized to develop and enforce environmental standards. Second, as recognized in the Navy's NEPA documentation, Commonwealth permits and other regulatory approvals will be required for the project. When issuing these permits and approvals, Commonwealth government entities must comply with Act No. 9 requirements. EQB regulations allow a Commonwealth government entity to comply with Act No. 9 by "adopting" a Federal EIS prepared for a project. In an effort to ensure that the adoption process could be utilized, the Navy has coordinated with EQB from the early stages of the EIS development to guarantee that the procedural requirements of Act No. 9 were followed.

EQB issued a resolution on September 16, 1997. The resolution offered EQB's comments on the project SDEIS and certified that the SDEIS complied with all requirements of Article 4(C) of Act No. 9. Motions for Reconsideration of this resolution were considered by the EQB, and on December 16, 1997 the Board determined that the Motions were "without cause" and reaffirmed its decision that the environmental document submitted by the Navy was in conformance with Article 4(C) of Act No. 9.

The four letters received from private citizens and citizen groups expressed concerns that the Navy prematurely issued the FEIS prior to completion of the administrative appeals process under Act. No. 9. Under NEPA, the Navy may publish a notice of availability of an FEIS once it receives and analyzes comments on a draft document and addresses in the FEIS those comments that are relevant. The FEIS prepared by the Navy addressed comments made by the public and agencies during the public participation

process. For Act No. 9 compliance, EQB regulations require that an FEIS for a proposed project be made available for public review and that notice of the availability be published. This notice may be published upon receipt of EQB comments on the environmental documentation.

As noted above, the EQB resolution offering their comments was issued on September 16, 1997. Distribution of the FEIS to the public began on September 19, 1997; and the Notice of Availability of the FEIS was published in local newspapers on September 27, 1997. There is no Commonwealth statutory or regulatory requirement to delay issuance of the FEIS until completion of the administrative appeals process.

Accordingly, with respect to publication of the notice of availability of the FEIS, the Navy has complied with both NEPA and Act No. 9 requirements.

The letters also expressed concern that the Navy did not properly discuss the findings of EQB's consultant, Dr. Arthur Guy. The Navy did include in the FEIS a summary of Dr. Guy's recommendations (p. 10-77). Although Dr. Guy's calculations for Radio Frequency Radiation (RFR) levels exceed the ANSI/IEEE standards for some scenarios, he acknowledges in the report that the calculations are conservative and that the projections do not account for attenuation resulting from a variety of factors. Dr. Guy also acknowledges in the report that his theoretical analysis represents a worst case scenario. The Navy's analysis of anticipated field strength values indicates that the ANSI/IEEE standards will be met at the proposed fence location. Dr. Guy states that it will be necessary to conduct actual field measurements to determine if the facility is in compliance with ANSI/IEEE. As stated previously, in the unlikely event that the initial measurements indicate that the ANSI/IEEE standards are not being met, the Navy will adjust the fence location, as needed. If measurements taken at the southernmost portion of the proposed fence exceed the standards, the Navy will reduce power levels to achieve compliance. The Navy will reduce the power versus move the fence because of a Navy commitment to avoid any construction in the conservation zone, which lies to the south of the site. In the event the Navy must reduce the power level, the ROTHF will still be able to effectively accomplish its mission.

Finally, commenters questioned whether EPA's concerns about wetlands and impacts on the Playa Grande Conservation Zone in Vieques had been resolved. As previously indicated, the

EPA has concluded that the project will not cause any significant adverse environmental impacts.

The remaining issues identified in the comment letters dealing with the effectiveness of the system, use of ANSI/IEEE standards, compliance with the 1983 MOU, impacts to the mahogany trees, environmental justice and the potential for cumulative impacts have been previously addressed in the FEIS and require no further discussion.

Conclusion

Existing ROTH systems in Virginia and Texas have already demonstrated the ability to reliably detect, track, and aid in the interception of light civil aircraft of the type used by drug traffickers. However, the Virginia and Texas ROTH systems and other surveillance methods provide incomplete coverage of the South American source countries, resulting in gaps that are exploited by drug traffickers. Early detection and tracking provided by the Puerto Rico ROTH will improve reaction time of counter-narcotic forces, increasing their efficiency and effectiveness.

Although the no action alternative would result in no environmental impacts, the minimal impacts associated with construction at the selected locations, as well as the benefits which will result from the ROTH, make the selected alternative the environmentally preferred alternative.

Questions regarding the Environmental Impact Statement prepared for this action may be directed to: Commander, Atlantic Division Naval Facilities Engineering Command, 1510 Gilbert Street, Norfolk, VA 23511-2699 (Attention: Ms. Linda Blount, Code 2032LB), telephone (757) 322-4892, E-mail blountld@efdlant.navfac.navy.mil or fax (757) 322-4894.

Dated: February 11, 1998.

Duncan Holaday,
Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy
(Installations and Facilities).

Dated: February 11, 1998.

Lou Rae Langevin,
Lt, JAGC, USN, Alternate Federal Register
Liaison Officer.

[FR Doc. 98-3903 Filed 2-13-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3810-FF-P

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Submission for OMB Review; Comment Request

AGENCY: Department of Education.

ACTION: Submission for OMB review;
comment request.

SUMMARY: The Deputy Chief Information Officer, Office of the Chief Information Officer, invites comments on the submission for OMB review as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995.

DATES: Interested persons are invited to submit comments on or before March 19, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Written comments should be addressed to the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Attention: Danny Werfel, Desk Officer, Department of Education, Office of Management and Budget, 725 17th Street, NW., Room 10235, New Executive Office Building, Washington, DC 20503. Requests for copies of the proposed information collection requests should be addressed to Patrick J. Sherrill, Department of Education, 600 Independence Avenue, S.W., Room 5624, Regional Office Building 3, Washington, DC 20202-4651.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Patrick J. Sherrill (202) 708-8196. Individuals who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339 between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m., Eastern time, Monday through Friday.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Section 3506 of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U. S. C. Chapter 35) requires that the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) provide interested Federal agencies and the public an early opportunity to comment on information collection requests. OMB may amend or waive the requirement for public consultation to the extent that public participation in the approval process would defeat the purpose of the information collection, violate State or Federal law, or substantially interfere with any agency's ability to perform its statutory obligations. The Deputy Chief Information Officer, Office of the Chief Information Officer, publishes this notice containing proposed information collection requests prior to submission of these requests to OMB. Each proposed information collection, grouped by office, contains the following: (1) Type of review requested, e.g., new, revision, extension, existing or reinstatement; (2) Title; (3) Summary of the collection; (4) Description of the need for, and proposed use of, the information; (5) Respondents and frequency of collection; and (6) Reporting and/or Recordkeeping burden. OMB invites public comment at the address specified above. Copies of the requests are available from Patrick J. Sherrill at the address specified above.

Dated: February 10, 1998.

Gloria Parker,
Deputy Chief Information Officer, Office of
the Chief Information Officer.

Office of Educational Research and
Improvement

Type of Review: Reinstatement.
Title: Field Test New Assessment
Items for Third International
Mathematics and Science Study
Replication (TIMSS-R).

Frequency: Field test for new
assessment items.

Affected Public: Individuals or
households; Not-for-profit institutions.

Reporting Burden and Recordkeeping:
Responses: 625. Burden Hours: 1,563.

Abstract: In order to provide
international benchmarks against which
to measure the mathematics
performance of American students as
part of the President's new voluntary
test, and to measure progress toward the
U.S. national goal of being first in the
world in mathematics and science in the
year 2000, the National Center for
Education Statistics (NCES) desires to
repeat TIMSS in the U.S. in 1999.

Office of the Under Secretary

Type of Review: Revision.
Title: Longitudinal Evaluation of
School Change and Performance
(LESCP).

Frequency: Annually.
Affected Public: State, local or Tribal
Government, SEAs or LEAs.

Reporting and Recordkeeping Hour
Burden: Responses: 13,690. Burden
Hours: 45,901.

Abstract: The LESC is being
conducted in response to the legislative
requirement in P.L. 103-382, Section
1501 to assess the implementation of
Title I and related education reforms.
The information will be used to
examine changes—over a 3-year
period—that are occurring in schools
and classrooms. Teachers and teacher
aides will complete a mail survey, and
district Title I administrators,
principals, school-based staff, and
parents will be interviewed during on-
site field work.

[FR Doc. 98-3820 Filed 2-13-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4000-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for Alternative Strategies for the Long-Term Management and Use of Depleted Uranium Hexafluoride

AGENCY: Department of Energy.

ACTION: Notice of availability.