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* *alternate*
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Board Study Session *May 1, 2007*

Meeting Notes

Topic: *Navy's Swimmer Interdiction Security System & Environmental Programming*

Swimmer Interdiction Security System: Mark Xitco, SISS Program Manager

The United States Navy is proposing a Swimmer Interdiction Security System (SISS), to meet special government security requirements for military installations in response to terrorist concerns. In compiling the required Environmental Impact Statement the Navy is looking at the feasibility of four alternatives for implementing the SISS:

1. Marine mammals (Navy's preferred alternative)
2. Combat swimmers
3. Remotely operated vehicles (ROV's)
4. No action (no changes at Bangor)

The marine mammal preferred alternative utilizes specially trained marine mammals (sea lions and/or bottle nosed dolphins) with their human teammates. These teams would respond to security alerts by detecting, classifying, and marking the location of underwater objects or interdicting intruders. The human teammate would work aboard a small power boat where they would operate locating equipment corresponding to data received from sonar gear attached to the mammal. This alternative would require on-shore pools, trailers to house staff, lab, storage and food preparation; and a new floating dock attached to an existing Bangor (Hood Canal) pier.

Alternative methods to the marine mammal approach are not as attractive to the U.S. Navy. Combat swimmers require additional developmental tests and evaluation, are not readily available, and would be classified as a new mission that is not currently part of any Navy component. ROV's have been used in Operation Iraqi Freedom but require additional developmental tests and evaluation; are not readily available; and are considered a better futuristic method as technology advances.

Marine mammals are part of an existing program; the 1987 Defense Authorization Act gives military the right to recruit to 25 wild marine mammals annually for military use. The Navy considers this program a "proven solution" that was successful in prior wars (Vietnam and Iraq) and has been successful at Sub Base Kings Bay Georgia since 2005. Marine mammals are also preferred because they've shown to be an effective deterrent; are rapid responders, precise target locators, and can operate with multiple threats in multiple environments.

The dolphins and sea lions would mark intruders by attaching a leg cuff to the swimmer attached to a line that is retractable by the above-water human teammate. The mammals' capabilities include sentry (patrol) duty during ship movements, sonar abilities if the Navy's fails, basin sweeps after a swimmer is detected, and patrolling during heightened force protection conditions.

Prior litigation (*Progressive Animal Welfare Society, et al. v. Navy*) prevented installment of the SISS marine mammal project in the mid-1980s. Questions were raised about the dislocation of dolphins from the Gulf of Mexico and the effects of their health after being submerged in the different climate of the Puget Sound. The Navy lost the case, which declared their environmental assessment was legally insufficient. The Navy is now conducting a more thorough environmental study with an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Navy officials are also more willing to openly discuss the SISS with the public, as security guidelines permit

Some of the previous public comments included concerns relating to the ethical use of animals, disease transmissions from non-native marine species to an already stressed Hood Canal ecosystem, low oxygen affect of Hood Canal on non-native dolphins, total taxes used, and the reliability of marine mammals to conduct successful national security. Research addressing many of these concerns will be published with the environmental impact statement.

Should the marine mammal alternative be selected, the Navy declares:

- 17 years of continued operational improvements to include environmentally controlled enclosures as well as facilities, training and veterinary care.
- No new animals will be collected from the wild for this purpose.
- Public involvement in the decision making.
- Most marine mammal recruitment will come from zoos except for some wild sea lion's.
- Female dolphins work up to 40 years, when they are retired for breeding.

Scheduled legal and public process:

Notice of Intent Published	February 12, 2007
Scoping meetings	March 27/28, 2007
Draft EIS published	Mid-December 2007
Public Hearings	January 2008
Final EIS Published	June 2008
Record of Decision	August 2008

Navy Region Northwest's Regional Environmental Program Overview: Daniel Hayes, P.E.

The Navy Regional Northwest's Environmental Program is responsible for Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, Naval Magazine Indian Island, Naval Station Everett, Naval Base Kitsap and various Reserve Stations. Northwest staff consists of 57 civil servants, 8 full-time contractors, and other contract support. This team ensures environmental compliance of naval functions, coordinates naval environmental conservation/planning, and manages pollution prevention programs. Examples of program functions include:

- Waste management and disposal
- Permit management
- Community outreach
- Drinking water reporting
- Regulator interface
- Timber sales
- National environmental policy act (NEPA) documentation
- Endangered species act consultation

Community outreach by the program team includes various local committee memberships, as well as Federal and State affiliations. Established collaboration between the Navy and Western Washington Tribes has improved knowledge, sensitivity and trust.

Internal compliance within the program ensures continual field inspections and periodic independent staff review. Compliance goals monitor internal naval performance and correct/prevent problems. The spill prevention program has been very successful implementing plans, coordinating drills, responding to spills, and working together with other local spill advisory committees. The Spill Prevention and Response Program have responded to approximately 39 spills since 2005. The program team has received several awards for the Spill Prevention and Response Program.