

PUBLIC INFORMATION FORUM ON
MILITARY AND COAST GUARD ACTIVITIES IN THE
CINMS MANAGEMENT PLAN STUDY AREA
FOUR POINTS SHERATON HOTEL
VENTURA, CA
APRIL 19, 2000, 6:30 – 9:00 P.M.

On April 19, 2000, CINMS and the SAC's Military Working Group [Link to: <http://cinms.nos.noaa.gov/sacwgsub.html>] co-hosted an evening Public Information Formation on Military and Coast Guard Activities in the Sanctuary's Management Plan Study Area. About 35-40 people turned out for the Forum, including six Advisory Council members.

The Sanctuary's goals of the Forum were:

- 1) To gain a better understanding of military and Coast Guard activities occurring within the Management Plan study area [LINK to <http://cinms.nos.noaa.gov/nmpmap.html>] (Pt. Mugu to Pt. Sal);
- 2) To increase community participation in the Management Plan process;
- 3) To raise public awareness about the Sanctuary, the Management Plan process, and the SAC.

Anne Walton, Management Plan Specialist with CINMS, opened the meeting by providing an overview of the Sanctuary's management plan revision process. Alex Stone, SAC Navy member and chair of the Military Working Group, introduced participants from the Navy, Vandenberg AFB and Coast Guard, and explained the meeting format.

Attendees then broke into three roundtable groups (Navy, Vandenberg, Coast Guard) where they heard presentations and engaged in question-and-answer sessions. The groups rotated to each station for a total of three forty-minute sessions.

Presentations at the round table sessions were focused largely on explaining the activities conducted within the Sanctuary's management plan study area (Pt. Mugu to Pt. Sal). Military and Coast Guard environmental protection and response programs were also highlighted. Questions and discussion at each group ranged widely, reflecting general interest with military operations and technology, specific concerns about environmental impacts (noise, overflights, pollution), and various questions and concerns about the Sanctuary. Sanctuary staff helped to facilitate group discussions, and took notes.

More detailed notes on the round-table sessions are provided below. For additional information about this event, please contact Anne Walton or Mike Murray at the Sanctuary office (805-966-7107) or Alex Stone, [E-MAIL LINK: Stoneam@navair.navy.mil] Chair of the SAC's Military Working Group.

Public Forum on Military and Coast Guard Activities in the MP Study Area

US Navy (Captain Mark Swaney, Mr. Paul Knight, Mr. Alex Stone, and Mr. Tony Parisi)

General Information

- The Navy operates two coastal sites: Naval Construction Battalion Center Port Hueneme and Naval Air Station Point Mugu.
- Most activity occurs within the Point Mugu Sea Range [LINK TO <http://www.nawcwpns.navy.mil/~pacrange/RngFac/Sea.htm>] which is 36,000 sq.mi. area established in 1946 for military operations.
- The main activities at the Sea Range are: land-sea-air systems testing and realistic training for fleet units
- Most of the activity occurs outside of the Sanctuary's current boundaries [LINK TO WWW.CINMS.NOS.NOAA.GOV/MAPS/IMAGEMAP.HTML]
- Sea Range activities are extremely important to national defense
- The location of the Sea Range is vital for weapons testing

Safety

- Safety is the first priority for all operations and activities.
- The public safety measures of the Navy include: notification (Notices to Mariners and Airmen and telephone system), surveillance (radar, aircraft patrol, ship), and positive control of all operations

Activities within the Sanctuary/Channel Islands

- San Miguel: weather station
- Santa Rosa: antenna site (GPS), Becher's Bay training area (used twice in the last 5 years to practice weapons delivery accuracy which included dropping simulated mines (concrete shapes)).
- Santa Cruz: underwater range (demobilized), instrumentation site, and target recovery area
- Military air route (primarily land-based)

Environmental Protection

- Millions of dollars spent annually on environmental protection. Approximately thirty full time people dedicated to environmental protection.
- Use animal density and abundance data to minimize effects
- Producing an EIS for Sea Range
- Dedicated to protecting the environment
- Every operation is reviewed for environmental effects
- No plans to increase activity in the Sanctuary study area

Public Questions

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- Q: Depth of Polaris underwater launches?
- A: Depth of missile launches from submarines varies. Actual launch depths are classified.
- Q: Are the concrete shapes cleaned up? Do they deteriorate? How big are they?
- A: The shapes weigh about 500 pounds and may deteriorate to some degree over time. Some of the shapes have been retrieved but some debris remains near Santa Rosa.
- Q: Who is involved with acoustic testing?
- A: No acoustic testing is done in the management plan study area.
- Q: Is there a tracking system for whales and if so, is that information shared with the oil rigs?
- A: The Navy uses available data from other agencies and organizations and does not track the whales themselves.
- Q: What is the status of the Sea Range Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)?
- A: Scheduled to be released this summer [LINK TO: WWW.NAWCPNS.NAVY.MIL/~PMEIS/]
- Q: Is there a relationship between the Navy's DEIS and the Sanctuary's DEIS?
- A: They're unrelated, but they are sharing data.
- Q: What is the altitude of overflights?
- A: The FAA restricts flight in the Sanctuary to above 2000 ft above ground level.
- Q: Are there any land-based activities creating impacts on shore?
- A: The Navy is dedicated to protecting the environment and has an excellent record including protection and restoration of the Mugu lagoon. Further, the Navy's Ventura county bases and activities comply with all Federal, State, and local environmental laws and regulations.
- Q: What will be the interaction between Mugu and the SWEF facility with the new EIS?
- A: The SWEF is safe for both people and wildlife and a critical national defense asset. Multiple Navy studies and an Expert Panel review have attested to the safety of the SWEF. The Navy has agreed to virtually all of the recommendations from the recently completed Expert Panel review. The SWEF will be discussed in the Sea Range DEIS.
- Q: What impacts do the new types of testing and training have on the Mugu Lagoon?
- A: The new types of testing and training being proposed in the DEIS occur primarily on the Sea Range with support from the base at Point Mugu. There are very few plans in the DEIS for actual increases in activities at Point Mugu and no plans for new activities in Mugu lagoon. Currently, there are very few activities in the Mugu lagoon.
- Q: How much of the activities are for commercial and foreign countries?
- A: The Sea Range mission is to support United States defense requirements. Through agreements with the US DOD, various foreign nation's military forces use the Sea Range and account for approximately 10% of all Sea Range activities. In addition, occasionally the Sea Range supports cooperative projects with US industries but no commercial activities occurred over the past year and none is currently planned.

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- Q: What if non-English speaking ships are in a hazardous area of the Sea Range during missile firing operations?
- A: Sea Range safety personnel will not allow firing operations to occur if a non-participant is in a potentially hazardous location. If a non-English speaking ship can not be moved, the event would be delayed until the area was clear or rescheduled.
- Q: Are there any plans to upgrade boats?
- A: Continually looking at modernization in general.
- Q: Is monitoring occurring for deep canyons that were used for dumping 50 years ago?
- A: The Navy no longer dumps, but there are ongoing monitoring programs along the Navy's coastal areas.
- Q: Is there a requirement for monitoring?
- A: No.
- Q: Is there going to be an expansion of testing?
- A: No expansion of Sea Range boundaries, but testing of new technology will continue.
- Q: Is safety planning addressed in the DEIS? Will an increase in testing activity described in the DEIS increase potential for Pt. Mugu to be a target?
- A: Foresee an overall increase in testing capabilities to keep pace with new technologies and new weapon systems requirements. Public safety in test operations is considered in all Navy activities. Protection from potential terrorist activities in the area is addressed through other Federal and local governmental agencies.
- Q: How many flights go over the Sanctuary? What disturbances are there? What is the potential for disasters to occur?
- A: The Navy does fly over the Sanctuary but generally above 2,000 feet. During one recent year, approximately 1,000 flights occurred and there were no reported disturbances.
- Q: If the Sanctuary's boundaries expand, there will be an increase in commercial overflight within the Sanctuary.
- A: Depends on where the boundaries would be.

Vandenberg Airforce Base [LINK TO: WWW.VAFB.AF.MIL/] (Col Kenneth Cinal, Major John Cherry, Mr. Ron Cortopassi, Mr. Walter Schobel, Mr. Jim Johnston, Mr. Greg Caresio, Mr. Glen Richardson, and Mr. Jim Rohr)

General Information

Operations

- operates and maintains the western range
- their primary mission is to spacelift satellites into polar orbit, support ICBM force development, evaluate, and test.

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- Their primary concern is public safety
- can launch on southern trajectory without going over land masses
- Will occasionally overfly the Sanctuary for launches along the 210-158 Azimuth
- Missiles are launched along the 275 – 239 Azimuth
- Aeronautical Operations

Environmental Management

- Received three awards on environment programs
- They have 35 miles of pristine coastline
- 2000 archeological sites
- 13 endangered/threatened species on base
- They've had 119 environmental inspections and 0 notices of violations
- There is ongoing dialogue between state and local agencies.

Public Questions

- Q: How many commercial launches are there?
A: Approximately 10/year
- Q: Will there be more commercial launches in the future?
A: Yes
- Q: When a launch is aborted, does it come nearshore?
A: Anytime a Mission Flight Controller determines that a launch is bad, he/she can abort/destroy a rocket. Within the last 20 years, there have been 3 aborted launches that would have impacted within the Sanctuary's management plan study area.
- Q: Where are the tracking stations?
A: From Pillar Point to Pt. Mugu
- Q: Are there any offshore tracking stations?
A: No.
- Q: What is the synergism between the Navy and Vandenberg?
A: At times, they share instrumentation.
- Q: Are there any proposals for anti-missile testing?
A: Yes. Ballistic Missile Defense program tests.
- Q: Are there any rail launch interceptors?
A: There are several proposals for a rail launch from Vandenberg, but we have not heard of any formal interest in the last 2-3 years.
- Q: Is coordination between the Navy and VAFB intensifying?
A: The relationship is outstanding.
- Q: Are there any flight-basing proposals?
A: No additional aircraft at this time but commercial rocket launches will expand.
- Q: Will there ever be a shuttle launch from VAFB?
A: No.
- Q: Were there any clean-up measures taken when the launches were aborted and the rocket destroyed?
A: No.

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- Q: Are there any Indian burial grounds onsite?
A: Yes. Chumash ceremonies are held on base.
- Q: Are upgraded facilities from the Shuttle being used?
A: Yes.
- Q: What happens if a launch needs to be aborted over or near the Sanctuary?
A: The Missile Flight Control Officer (MFCO) destroys the vehicle when necessary. They will not wait for the vehicle to clear the sanctuary.
- Q: How would possible expansion of the Sanctuary affect operations at VAFB?
A: They are currently working with NOAA on those issues.
- Q: What happened when the islands were evacuated due to toxic clouds in the past?
A: In 1986, there was an incident with the Titan 34D. Not sure why the islands were evacuated. Due to results from current modeling of potential toxic clouds, we do not foresee having to evacuate islands in the future.
- Q: How many launches go over the Sanctuary?
A: 2-4 out of 20 per year fly over the current Sanctuary. All launches will go over the Sanctuary's management plan study area.
- Q: Is Lockheed going to upgrade old vessels to meet pollution requirements?
A: VAFB uses the same Navy vessels for site clearance before launches. They do not regulate those vessels.
- Q: How many aeronauticals does Vandenberg support each year.
A: 75 – 120 missions per year over the study area, but not over the present Sanctuary boundaries.
- Q: Are you connected to fiber optics?
A: They are connecting radar on base with fiber optics going off base with microwaves.
- Q: What kind of environmental impacts would relate to the study area?
A: Does not see VAFB affecting the study area. There will always be overflights, but they don't foresee any greater impact on the study area than is occurring now.. This includes, but is not limited to jettisoned rocket/missile hardware and debris, due to a rocket/missile failure, which may fall into the study area..
- Q: Do you assess sound impact to natural resources of the area?
A: All launches are regulated by necessary services. They do a regular assessment of launch noise on marine mammals near the base. Only a few launches could potentially affect the study area.
- Q: How would you assess the potential environmental impacts of daily activities of the base?
A: Not only address launches but also study helicopter overflight effects on marine mammals. They also work with the Water Quality Control Board.
- Q: Are you doing developmental launches?
A: They are looking at different propulsions of fuel in rocket tests and they perform evaluation launches.

US Coast Guard (Mike Hamerski)

General Information

- Regionally, there are 60 people in the Coast Guard affiliated with Search and Rescue.
- The Coast Guard maintains 3 boats and 2 cutters in the area of the Channel Islands.
- The missions of the Coast Guard, and percentage of operating expenses include:
 - Aids to navigation/ice operations: 23.01%
 - Search and Rescue: 14.81%
 - Marine Safety: 13%
 - Fisheries Law Enforcement: 12.98%
 - Drug Interdiction: 12.43%
 - Marine Environment Protection: 9.16%
 - Migrant Interaction: 8.28%
 - Defense Readiness 3.95%
 - Other Law Enforcement: 2.38%
- We've recently distributed 1000's of dive flag safety alerts locally
- Many operations are staged out of Santa Cruz Island
- Johnson's Lee on Santa Rosa Island is a critical area for USCG use
- CG Maintains the Anacapa Lighthouse

Public Questions

- Q: What can you do with out-of-date flares?
A: One way to use expired flares is for training. If you decide to use them for training, notify as many people as you can think of (whoever would see the flare go off) especially the Coast Guard, before setting off the flares.
- Q: Was the Coast Guard in charge of jet fuel recovery at the recent Alaska Air crash?
A: No, the fuel evaporated and dissolved quickly. Life protection and search and rescue supercedes environmental protection when these events occur.
- Q: Who runs spill response?
A: The preferred method is to use the ICS format. The Coast Guard will be the Federal on-scene Coordinator for spills that occur near the Channel Islands.
- Q: Are there any oil rigs in the Sanctuary boundaries?
A: No, but there are five rig leases grandfathered into the Sanctuary. These leases partially overlap the Sanctuary.
- Q: Can oil tankers go through the Sanctuary waters?
A: Yes, there is a traffic lane that passes through one corner of the Sanctuary.
- Q: How does the Coast Guard interact with the California Department of Fish and Game? If the Coast Guard is boarding fishing boats, is DFG involved?
A: Half of the Coast Guard's boardings are on fishing vessels. The Coast Guard deals with enforcement and is trained to look for CDFG areas of concern.
- Q: Is there any way to determine which vessel oil came from?

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- A: We will board tankers, collect samples, and match it to the discharge.
- Q: What happens if there is a match?
- A: A Marine violation is processed.
- Q: Where does the money from fines go.
- A: To the Government General Fund.
- Q: Where does the tax money from oil go?
- A: Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund pays for cleanup contractors, and Coast Guard costs and damages incurred during a federalized cleanup.
- Q: How many marine violation cases have you processed?
- A: 30 cases over the last 5 years
- Q: Why aren't large red dive flags used?
- A: They're not required. Blue dive flags are required.
- Q: Who maintains the lighthouses?
- A: The Coast Guard Station at Channel Islands maintains the lighthouses on Pt. Conception and Anacapa Island.
- Q: Can the Coast Guard do drug enforcement in the Santa Barbara harbor?
- A: The Coast Guard has blanket authority when the vessel is floating and moving. Enforcement is connected to the marina and city officials in this case. When the boat is tied to the dock, the Coast Guard authority is limited. We usually have local law enforcement to assist in drug investigations at the dock.
- Q: If there is an expansion of the Sanctuary's boundaries, will the Coast Guard expand as well?
- A: Can't see immediate increases in personnel if boundary expansion occurs. The eventual increase would more than likely be tied to an increase in funding necessary for increased patrols and wear on equipment at the stations.
- Q: Do you have any information about the possibility of a freighter line (traffic lanes) running outside of the islands?
- A: A risk-analysis was done and it was found that it is safer to have the lane inside the islands.
- Q: Was a formal study of safety performed by the Coast Guard?
- A: It was discussed and a risk-analysis was done. It is being re-evaluated now.
- Q: What is the jurisdiction for fisheries?
- A: Out to 200 miles.
- Q: Who protects Anacapa Island when it comes to brown pelicans?
- A: Department of Fish and Game
- Q: Can a dive flag be exhibited when not diving?
- A: No, it's a violation to display a flag while in transit.
- Q: Where are the Coast Guard stations?
- A: Santa Barbara, Channel Islands Harbor, Long Beach, and Morro Bay.
- Q: Have there been any instances of transport disruption within the Channel?
- A: I can think of one very recent incident with the Alaska airlines crash when the Captain of the Port created a safety zone around the crash site to protect search and rescue and recovery operations. In this instance vessel traffic was temporarily routed outside the islands.
- Q: What issue is the biggest problem with the Coast Guard regarding funding?
- A: I'm not that familiar with funding problems to answer this question.