



## DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

COMMANDER  
U.S. FLEET FORCES COMMAND  
1562 MITSCHER AVENUE SUITE 250  
NORFOLK, VA 23551-2487

5090  
Ser N4/N7/118  
May 14, 2009

Mr. Frederick Gaske, Director  
Office of Historical & Cultural Programs  
500 South Bronough Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0250

Dear Mr. Gaske:

The U.S. Navy is preparing a Final Overseas Environmental Impact Statement (OEIS)/EIS to assess the potential environmental impacts over a ten-year planning horizon associated with the instrumentation of a 1,713-square-kilometer (km<sup>2</sup>) (500 square nautical mile [NM<sup>2</sup>]) area of the ocean with undersea cables and sensor nodes, and to use the area for anti-submarine warfare (ASW) training. The landward edge of the Undersea Warfare Training Range (USWTR) would be located approximately 93 km (50 NM) offshore of northeastern Florida. A trunk cable connecting the range to a shore facility at Naval Station (NAVSTA) Mayport would be buried to a depth of approximately 0.3 to 0.9 meters (1 to 3 feet). The purpose of the USWTR is to enable the U.S. Navy to train effectively with mid-frequency active sonar in littoral conditions supporting the requirements of the Fleet Readiness Training Plan, and in a location suitable for Atlantic Fleet ASW capable units. Enclosed is a CD-ROM of the USWTR pre-release Final OEIS/EIS. Note that this document is not for public release at this time.

The OEIS/EIS identifies two shipwrecks within the proposed USWTR range boundaries and additional shipwrecks in the area between the proposed range and the shore. A detailed description of the training proposed in this area is also presented in the OEIS/EIS. In December 2008, a hydrographic survey of the seafloor was undertaken on the proposed trunk cable corridor between the range site and the landfall site at NAVSTA Mayport. While the data collected on that trip is still being processed, and the report is not complete, surveyors present on the study vessel indicate that no shipwrecks or other obvious submerged cultural resources were found to be present within the area proposed for installation of the trunk cable. A similar survey is slated to begin on the range area later this year. Information obtained during these surveys is intended to assist the U.S. Navy in avoiding cultural resources in the installation of the range cables and nodes. The results of both of these surveys will be provided to your office once they are completed.

Once operational, it is possible that expended materials such as sonobuoys, torpedo control wires, and flex hoses, would fall onto submerged cultural resources, such as shipwrecks, within the range. However, it is anticipated that these expended materials would not

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likely damage the physical character of the cultural resources or affect the historic properties of these sites.

Based on the results of the enclosed OEIS/EIS, and pursuant to the requirements set forth in Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S. Code § 470(f)), the U.S. Navy has made the determination that no historic properties would be affected by the installation of the USWTR and no historic properties would be adversely affected by the operation of the USWTR. Your concurrence with this assessment will be presumed if a response is not received by the U.S. Navy (Atlantic Fleet) within 30 days from receipt of this determination. Your response should be sent to: Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC), Atlantic, ATTN: Code EV22LL (USWTR OEIS/EIS Project Manager), 6506 Hampton Boulevard, Norfolk, VA 23508-1278; or Facsimile (757) 322-4894. If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Lesley Leonard of NAVFAC Atlantic, (757) 322-4645.

Sincerely,



D. F. BAUCOM  
Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff  
for Fleet Readiness and Training

Enclosure: CD-ROM of USWTR pre-release Final OEIS/EIS