1 Purpose and Need

1 PURPOSE AND NEED

1.1 Introduction

Major conflicts, terrorism, lawlessness, and natural disasters all have the potential to threaten the national security of the United States (U.S.). National security, prosperity, and vital interests of the United States are increasingly tied to other nations because of the close relationships between the United States and other national economies. The U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) carries out training activities to be able to protect the United States against its enemies, as well as to protect and defend the rights of the United States and its allies to move freely on the oceans, and provide humanitarian assistance and disaster relief to nations requiring such assistance. The U.S. Department of the Navy (Navy) operates on the world's oceans, seas, and within coastal areas—the international maritime domain—on which 90 percent of the world's trade and two-thirds of its oil are transported. The majority of the world's population also lives within a few hundred miles of an ocean.

The U.S. Congress, after World War II, established the National Command Authorities (DoD Directive 5100.30 dated 2 December 1971) to identify defense needs based on the existing and emergent situations in the United States and overseas. The National Command Authorities, which are comprised of the President, the Secretary of Defense, and their deputized alternates or successors, divide defense responsibilities among services. The heads (secretaries) of each service ensure military personnel are trained, prepared, and equipped to meet

Training activities that prepare the military to fulfill its mission to protect and defend the United States and its allies have the potential to impact the environment. These activities may trigger legal requirements identified in a number of U.S. federal environmental laws, regulations, and executive orders (EOs).

those operational requirements.

The Navy prepared this Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)/Overseas EIS (OEIS) pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) **Training.** Navy personnel first undergo entry-level (or schoolhouse) training, which varies according to their assigned warfare community (aviation, surface warfare, submarine warfare, and special warfare) and the community's unique requirements. Personnel then train within their warfare community at sea in preparation for deployment; each warfare community has primary mission areas (areas of specialized expertise that involve multiple warfare communities) that overlap with one another, described in detail in Chapter 2 (Description of Proposed Action and Alternatives).

and EO 12114. The purpose of this Supplemental EIS/OEIS is to update the *Final Gulf of Alaska Navy Training Activities Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement* (U.S. Department of the Navy 2011a), hereinafter referred to as the 2011 GOA Final EIS/OEIS, with new information and analytical methods developed and utilized by the Navy since 2011. The supplemental EIS/OEIS is being prepared pursuant to 40 Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.) §1502.9(c)(2). The Record of Decision (ROD) for the 2011 GOA Final EIS/OEIS was signed in 2011 (U.S. Department of the Navy 2011b). This Supplemental EIS/OEIS compares the environmental impacts predicted in the 2011 GOA Final EIS/OEIS to the environmental impacts predicted utilizing current circumstances and information. The 2011 GOA Final EIS/OEIS used an acoustic modeling methodology and marine mammal density information developed by the Navy in cooperation with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)—which is a part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration—that was the best available information at the time. A subsequent review on behalf of NMFS by the Center for Independent Experts analyzed the various approaches the Navy used for acoustic effects analyses, leading to the refinement

of the previous methodologies for determining acoustic effects. The result was the development of a standard Navy model for acoustic effects, the Navy Acoustics Effects Model (NAEMO). By using this more comprehensive modeling software, the inclusion of sources not previously analyzed, updated marine mammal densities, and revised acoustic criteria, the predicted effects are expected to change from those quantified in the 2011 GOA Final EIS/OEIS. This document presents the environmental consequences based on new marine mammal density data, a new acoustic modeling method, and new scientific information.

Although the new information and analytical methods which have emerged since the 2011 GOA Final EIS/OEIS do not present a substantially different picture of the environmental consequences or the significance of impacts resulting from the Navy's proposed action, the Navy has determined that preparing this Supplemental EIS/OEIS furthers the purpose of NEPA, pursuant to the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 C.F.R. §1500.1(b) and 40 C.F.R. §1502.9(c)(2)). This Supplemental EIS/OEIS identifies, presents, and evaluates new information that could be seen as applicable to the proposed action and its environmental impacts. Additionally, this Supplement is being prepared because NMFS-issued Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) Letters of Authorization (LOAs) for Navy training activities in the GOA (17 May 2011 through 16 May 2013, and 16 May 2013 through 4 May 2016) will expire in 2016. As such, this Supplemental EIS/OEIS supports issuance of a new LOA.

The 2011 GOA Final EIS/OEIS Study Area consisted of three components: (1) GOA Temporary Maritime Activities Area (TMAA), (2) U.S. Air Force (Air Force) overland Special Use Airspace (SUA) and air routes over the Gulf of Alaska and State of Alaska, and (3) U.S. Army (Army) training lands. Collectively, for the purposes of this Supplemental EIS/OEIS, these areas are referred to as the Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex (JPARC).¹ The Study Area for this Supplemental EIS/OEIS is the TMAA only (Figure 1.2-1). The geographic boundaries of the TMAA have not changed since the completion of the 2011 GOA Final EIS/OEIS. The Air Force SUA and Army training lands were previously analyzed for NEPA purposes under separate environmental documents and are not included in the analysis in this Supplemental EIS/OEIS, but environmental analysis from those NEPA documents is incorporated by reference pursuant to 40 C.F.R. §1502.21, and listed in Section 1.9 (Related Environmental Documents), as applicable.

1.2 THE NAVY'S ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

The 2011 GOA Final EIS/OEIS document identified major training activities; analyzed potential environmental impacts; and supported the MMPA incidental take authorization (also known as an "LOA"), issued by NMFS, pursuant to Section 101(a)(5) of the MMPA, which was obtained for Navy training activities in the Gulf of Alaska for May 2011 through May 2016.

This Supplemental EIS/OEIS will also support the Navy's request to obtain an incidental take authorization under the MMPA from NMFS, beginning in May 2016 when the current authorization expires. To support the reissuance of the MMPA authorization, the Navy's re-analysis includes consideration of changes since the 2011 GOA Final EIS/OEIS, including new information related to the

¹ In the 2011 Final EIS/OEIS, the Navy defined these three training areas as the Alaska Training Areas (ATAs). After the publication of the ROD for the 2011 Final EIS/OEIS, the U.S. Departments of the Army and Air Force published a Final EIS, titled *Modernization and Enhancement of Ranges, Airspace, and Training Areas in the Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex (JPARC) in Alaska* (June 2013), for which a ROD was approved and signed on 6 August 2013. The EIS included the ATAs, and other training areas, and labeled them the JPARC. As such, the Navy has adopted the term "JPARC" when referring to the ATAs.

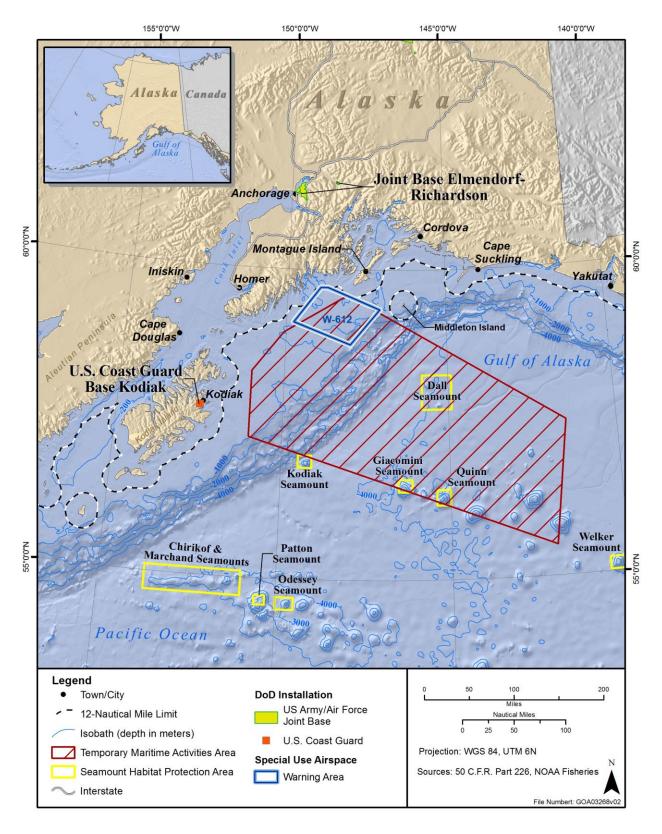


Figure 1.2-1: Gulf of Alaska Navy Training Activities Study Area

resources being analyzed, use of a new acoustic effects model, and consideration of evolving and emergent best available science.

Specifically, for the Marine Mammals analysis, these changes include the following:

- Integration of results from a new GOA survey and predictive habitat-based density modeling to derive improved marine mammal density data for the GOA Study Area
- Changes in the Endangered Species Act (ESA) status of certain species
- Integration of revised acoustic impact criteria and revised acoustic impact thresholds
- Use of a newly developed standard Navy model for acoustic effects analysis
- Consideration of research published since the 2011 GOA Final EIS/OEIS
- Integration of results from scientific monitoring and research relating to understanding impacts to marine mammals from Navy training activities

For resources other than marine mammals, such as fish and sea turtles, similar consideration of changes since the 2011 GOA Final EIS/OEIS were made through this analysis for those resources to determine if there was a need to re-analyze the potential for impacts accordingly.

1.3 PROPOSED ACTION

The Navy's Proposed Action is the same as the Proposed Action presented in the 2011 GOA Final EIS/OEIS (U.S. Department of the Navy 2011a) and *Record of Decision for Final Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement for the Gulf of Alaska Navy Training Activities* (U.S. Department of the Navy 2011b). The Proposed Action, described in detail in Chapter 2 (Description of Proposed Action and Alternatives), entails the military continuing training activities previously conducted and as described in the 2011 GOA Final EIS/OEIS, for which a ROD was issued.

1.4 Purpose of and Need for Proposed Military Readiness Training Activities

This is a supplemental document to the 2011 GOA Final EIS/OEIS and ROD (U.S. Department of the Navy 2011a, b) pursuant to 40 C.F.R. §1502.9(c)(2), and EO 12114. As identified in the 2011 GOA Final EIS/OEIS, the purpose of the Navy's Proposed Action is to achieve and maintain fleet readiness using the Alaska Training Areas to support and conduct current, emerging, and future training activities.

The following sections are an overview of the need for military readiness training activities.

Title 10 Section 5062 of the U.S. Code provides: "The Navy shall be organized, trained, and equipped primarily for prompt and sustained combat incident to operations at sea. It is responsible for the preparation of naval forces necessary for the effective prosecution of war except as otherwise assigned and, in accordance with integrated joint mobilization plans, for the expansion of the peacetime components of the Navy to meet the needs of war."

1.4.1 WHY THE NAVY TRAINS

Naval forces must be ready for a variety of military operations—from large-scale conflict to maritime security and humanitarian assistance/disaster relief—to deal with the dynamic, social, political, economic, and environmental issues that occur in today's world. The Navy supports these military operations through its continuous presence on the world's oceans; the Navy can respond to a wide range of issues because, on any given day, over one-third of its ships, submarines, and aircraft are

deployed overseas. Naval forces must be prepared for a broad range of capabilities—from full-scale armed conflict in a variety of different geographic areas² to disaster relief efforts³—prior to deployment on the world's oceans. To learn these capabilities, personnel must train with the equipment and systems to achieve military objectives. The training process provides personnel with an in-depth understanding of their individual limits and capabilities. Refer to Chapter 1, Section 1.2.1 (Why the Navy Trains) in the 2011 GOA Final EIS/OEIS for additional information on Navy training.

1.5 OVERVIEW AND STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF THE JOINT PACIFIC ALASKA RANGE COMPLEX.

The JPARC has a unique combination of attributes that make it a strategically important training venue to include:

- Location. The large contingent of Air Force aircraft and Army assets based within a few hundred miles of the TMAA creates the possibility of rare joint training opportunities with Navy forces. The TMAA provides a maritime training venue located within flight range of Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Eielson Air Force Base, Fort Wainwright, Fort Greely, and their associated air and land training ranges (see Figure 1.2-1). The abundance of commercial vessels in shipping lanes within the Gulf of Alaska provides additional valuable realistic training during exercise scenarios, specifically on avoiding conflicts between military and civilian air and marine traffic.
- Oceanographic conditions. The complex bathymetric and oceanographic conditions, including a
 continental shelf, submarine canyons, numerous seamounts, and fresh water infusions from
 multiple sources provide a challenging environment for training in the search, detection, and
 localization of submarines. The TMAA provides a safe, cold-water training environment in the
 summer.
- Area of Training Space. The JPARC is one of the largest air, surface, subsurface, and land training
 areas in the Northern Pacific. This vast area provides ample space to support a full range of joint
 training scenarios.

The 2011 GOA Final EIS/OEIS analyzed Navy activities within the entire JPARC which included the TMAA, the Air Force SUA, and the Army training lands and associated airspace. For this Supplemental EIS/OEIS, only actions involving underwater acoustic impacts within the TMAA were analyzed, because the analysis of SUA and land-based training remains unchanged and was incorporated in the JPARC EIS.

TMAA. The TMAA is composed of the 42,146 square nautical miles (nm²) of surface and subsurface OPAREA and overlying airspace that includes the majority of Warning Area (W)-612 located over Blying Sound. W-612 is 2,256 nm² of SUA and is designated FAA airspace for U.S. Air Force (USAF) and USCG training. The TMAA is roughly rectangular shaped and oriented from northwest to southeast, approximately 300 nautical miles (nm) long by 156 nm wide, situated south of Prince William Sound and east of Kodiak Island. Except for Cape Cleare on Montague Island (12 nautical miles [nm] away), the nearest shoreline (Kenai Peninsula) is 24 nm north of the TMAA northern Boundary. Cordova is approximately 80 nm from the nearest edge of the TMAA and the center of the TMAA is approximately 170 nm offshore from Cordova.

² Operation Iraqi Freedom in Iraq and Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan; maritime security operations, including anti-piracy efforts like those in Southeast Asia and the Horn of Africa.

³ Evacuation of non-combatants from American embassies under hostile conditions, as well as humanitarian assistance/disaster relief like the tsunami responses in 2005 and 2011 and Haiti's earthquake in 2009.

Kodiak is approximately 45 nm from the nearest edge of the TMAA and the center of the TMAA is approximately 190 nm offshore from Kodiak. The TMAA is bounded by the following coordinates: 57° 30′N, 141° 30′W to 29° 36′N, 148° 10′W to 58° 57′N, 150° 04′W to 58° 20′N, 151° 00′W to 57° 16′N, 151° 00′W to 55° 30′N, 142° 00′W. The only Navy training activities that occur outside the TMAA are aircraft flights to and from USAF inland bases and ranges. Seamounts are depicted in yellow boxes on (Figure 1.2-1) and no Sinking Exercises will occur around those Seamounts.

Since the 1990s, the DoD has conducted a major joint training exercise in Alaska and off the Alaskan coast that involves the Departments of the Navy, Army, Air Force, and Coast Guard participants reporting to a unified or joint commander who coordinates the activities planned to demonstrate and evaluate the ability of the services to engage in a conflict and carry out plans in response to a threat to national security. Due to the severe environmental conditions during the winter months, the exercise normally occurs between April and October. Since the publication of the 2011 GOA Final EIS/OEIS, of the 10 exercises that were analyzed for effects from 2011 through 2016, only 2 exercises have occurred. In 2011, Northern Edge 11 was conducted in June under the 2011 GOA Final EIS/OEIS and associated Authorizations and Permits. No exercises occurred in 2012, 2013, or 2014. In June of 2015, Northern Edge 15, a 2-week exercise, also occurred under the 2011 GOA Final EIS/OEIS and associated Authorizations and Permits. Currently, there is no scheduled exercise for 2016.

1.6 THE ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING PROCESS

The NEPA of 1969 requires federal agencies to examine the environmental impacts of their proposed actions within the United States and its territories. An EIS is a detailed public document that provides an assessment of the potential effects a major federal action might have on the human environment. The Navy undertakes environmental planning for major Navy actions occurring throughout the world in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, and EOs.



Figure 1.6-1:
National
Environmental Policy
Act Process

Pursuant to 40 C.F.R. §1502.9(c), a supplemental EIS is prepared when the agency makes substantial changes in the proposed action that are relevant to environmental concerns; or there are significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns and bearing on the Proposed Action or its impacts. An agency may also supplement a final EIS when the agency determines that the purpose of NEPA will be furthered by doing so. The Navy's original purpose and need and Proposed Action, as identified in the 2011 GOA Final EIS/OEIS, have not changed and are applicable to this Supplemental EIS/OEIS. Although new information and analytical methods have emerged since the 2011 GOA Final EIS/OEIS, this new information is not significant and does not present a substantially different picture of the environmental consequences or the significance of impacts resulting from the Navy's proposed action. Nonetheless, pursuant to the CEQ regulations (40 C.F.R. §1500.1(b) and 40 C.F.R. §1502.9(c)(2)), the Navy has determined that preparing this Supplemental EIS/OEIS furthers the purpose of NEPA by updating the 2011 GOA Final EIS/OEIS with new information relevant to the public's concerns. This Supplemental EIS/OEIS updates the marine mammal resource analysis in the 2011 GOA Final EIS/OEIS (U.S. Department of the Navy 2011a) and ROD (U.S. Department of the Navy 2011b). There is no significant new information relevant to the other resource areas evaluated in the 2011 GOA

Final EIS/OEIS. Additionally, there is no additional information that changes the best available science for those resource areas. For these reasons, re-analysis of the alternatives in relation to the other resource areas is not warranted. The alternatives analysis for these resource areas in the 2011 GOA Final EIS/OEIS is still valid and is not being re-analyzed in this Supplemental EIS/OEIS. (Refer to Chapter 3, Introduction, and the individual resource sections of this Supplemental EIS/OEIS for detailed discussions.)

1.6.1 NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT REQUIREMENTS

The NEPA process for an EIS is displayed in Figure 1.6-1. As was done for the 2011 GOA Final EIS/OEIS, the Navy complied with all the NEPA process requirements for this Supplemental EIS/OEIS. It should be noted that in accordance with the CEQ regulations for implementing the requirements of NEPA, scoping is not required for a Supplemental EIS; however, in an effort to maximize public participation and ensure the public's concerns are addressed, the Navy chose to conduct a scoping period for this Supplemental EIS/OEIS. The 60-day scoping process period for this Supplemental EIS/OEIS was initiated by publication of the Notice of Intent in the Federal Register (January 16, 2013) and local newspapers (Anchorage Daily News, Cordova Times, Juneau Empire, Kodiak Daily Mirror, and Peninsula Clarion) (See Appendix D for more information on the Navy's scoping process for this Supplemental EIS/OEIS).

1.6.2 **EXECUTIVE ORDER 12114**

Executive Order 12114, Environmental Impacts Abroad of Major Federal Actions, directs federal agencies to provide for informed environmental decision-making for major federal actions outside the United States and its territories. Presidential Proclamation 5928, issued on 27 December 1988, extended the exercise of U.S. sovereignty and jurisdiction under international law to 12 nm; however, the proclamation expressly provides that it does not extend or otherwise alter existing federal law or any associated jurisdiction, rights, legal interests, or obligations. Thus, as a matter of policy, the Navy analyzes environmental effects and actions within 12 nm under NEPA (an EIS) and those effects occurring beyond 12 nm under the provisions of EO 12114 (an OEIS).

1.6.3 OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL REQUIREMENTS CONSIDERED

The Navy must comply with all applicable federal environmental laws, regulations, and EOs as discussed in the 2011 GOA Final EIS/OEIS (Table 6-1). With the exception of effects analysis conducted for compliance with the MMPA and the ESA-listed marine mammal species under NMFS jurisdiction, there are no changes from 2011 GOA Final EIS/OEIS analyses. Analysis of impacts under the MMPA and the ESA can be found in Chapter 3 (General Approach to Analysis) of this Supplemental EIS/OEIS. Additionally, Chapter 6, Table 6.1-1 (Summary of Environmental Compliance for the Proposed Action) provides an updated listing of the Navy's compliance status.

1.7 Scope and Content

In this Supplemental EIS/OEIS, the Navy reevaluated potential impacts from the ongoing military training activities in the GOA TMAA. Unlike other Navy training areas, separate testing activities are not currently conducted in the GOA TMAA. Therefore, separate testing activities are not part of the Proposed Action of this Supplemental EIS/OEIS. Additionally, the alternatives analysis presented in the 2011 GOA Final EIS/OEIS and ROD does not change under any resource area except marine mammals, taking into account the new information and analytical methods. As such, those other resource areas are not carried forward for re-analysis in this Supplemental EIS/OEIS. Through the application of new scientific information and the NAEMO acoustic effects model, the Navy reanalyzed direct, indirect, cumulative, short-term, long-term, irreversible, and irretrievable impacts that result from the Navy's training

activities upon marine mammals in this Supplemental EIS/OEIS. Although the 2011 GOA Final EIS/OEIS Preferred Alternative (Alternative 2) was selected by the Navy in the ROD, this Supplemental EIS/OEIS analyzes the impacts to marine mammals under all three alternatives—the No Action Alternative, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2.

The Navy is the lead agency for the Proposed Action and is responsible for the scope and content of this Supplemental EIS/OEIS. The NMFS is a cooperating agency pursuant to 40 C.F.R. §1501.6, because of its expertise and regulatory authority over marine resources. Additionally, this document will serve as the NMFS's NEPA documentation for the rulemaking process under the MMPA.

At the end of this process, the Navy will issue a ROD that will be based on factors analyzed in this Supplemental EIS/OEIS, including military training objectives, best available science and modeling data, potential environmental impacts, and public input.

1.8 ORGANIZATION OF THIS SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT/OVERSEAS ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

To meet the need for decision-making, this Supplemental EIS/OEIS is organized as follows:

- Chapter 1 describes the purpose of and need for the Proposed Action.
- Chapter 2 describes the Alternatives analyzed and presented in the ROD for the 2011 GOA Final EIS/OEIS (U.S. Department of the Navy 2011b).
- Chapter 3 describes the existing conditions of the affected environment and potential environmental consequences on those resources requiring additional discussion or analysis beyond what was analyzed in the 2011 GOA Final EIS/OEIS (U.S. Department of the Navy 2011a).
- Chapter 4 describes the analysis of cumulative impacts, which are the impacts of the Proposed Action, as described in the 2011 GOA Final EIS/OEIS (U.S. Department of the Navy 2011a) when added to past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions.
- Chapter 5 describes and focuses on the measures the Navy evaluated that could mitigate impacts to marine mammal resources as well as mitigations beyond those discussed in the 2011 GOA Final EIS/OEIS (U.S. Department of the Navy 2011a) for other resource areas.
- Chapter 6 describes other considerations required by the NEPA and describes how the Navy
 complies with other federal, state, and local plans, policies, and regulations. Additionally, this
 chapter describes the Navy's government-to-government consultation with federally recognized
 Alaska Native Tribes in accordance with EO 13175, Consultation and Coordination with Indian
 Tribal Governments
- Chapter 7 includes a list of the Supplemental EIS/OEIS preparers.
- Appendices provide technical information that supports the Supplemental EIS/OEIS analyses and its conclusions.

1.9 RELATED ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS

The progression of NEPA/EO 12114 documentation for Navy activities has developed from planning individual range complex exercises and testing events to theater assessment planning that spans multiple years and covers multiple range complexes. The following documents are referenced in this Supplemental EIS/OEIS where appropriate:

• Gulf of Alaska Navy Training Activities Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement (U.S. Department of the Navy 2011a) – This EIS/OEIS is the initial document

- that analyzes environmental compliance coverage for Navy training activities in the Gulf of Alaska. This document provides the basis for this Supplemental EIS/OEIS.
- Record of Decision for Final Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact
 Statement for the Gulf of Alaska Navy Training Activities (U.S. Department of the Navy 2011b) —
 This document, signed on May 11, 2011, is the formal decision document that identifies and
 explains the reasoning and decision on the selected alternative in the 2011 GOA Final EIS/OEIS.
- Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Modernization and Enhancement of Ranges, Airspace, and Training Areas in the Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex (U.S. Departments of Army and Air Force 2013a) This EIS analyzes the need to modernize and enhance the range and airspace infrastructure of the training ranges in Alaska to meet DoD Service component training requirements. Current and future Navy training activities are included in this document and it provides environmental coverage for Navy overland activities.
- Record of Decision for Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Modernization and Enhancement of Ranges, Airspace, and Training Areas in the Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex (U.S. Departments of Army and Air Force 2013b) – This document, which was approved and signed on 6 August 2013, provides the reasoning and decision on the selected alternative in the JPARC EIS.

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- U.S. Department of the Navy. (2011b). Record of Decision for Final Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement for the Gulf of Alaska Navy Training Activities. (pp. 24).
- U.S. Departments of Army and Air Force. (2013a). Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Modernization and Enhancement of Ranges, Airspace, and Training Areas in the Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex.
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