



November 21, 2014

Greg Wahl, Environmental Coordinator
Olympic National Forest
1835 Black Lake Blvd. SW
Olympia, WA 98512

RE: Pacific Northwest Electronic Warfare Range Environmental Assessment #42759 – Comment submitted online

The Mountaineers is submitting this letter as comment for the Pacific Northwest Electronic Warfare Range Environmental Assessment #42759.

Founded in 1906, The Mountaineers, founded in 1906, is a nonprofit outdoor education, conservation, and recreation organization whose mission is “to help people explore, conserve, learn about and enjoy the lands and waters of the Pacific Northwest and beyond.” Based in Seattle, Washington, The Mountaineers has over 13,000 members and guests in seven branches throughout Western Washington. We support over 1,500 skilled volunteers who lead 3,200 outdoor education courses and activities on everything from backcountry skiing, wilderness first aid, and avalanche safety to conservation education and advocacy. In addition, we provide over 4,000 opportunities for youth to get outside each year.

The Olympic Peninsula is home to the Olympic National Forest and Olympic National Park, where thousands of hikers, campers, snowshoers, climbers, backcountry skiers and photographers head for their adventures each year. Many of our members travel to the Olympic Peninsula for the unique experiences that the peninsula offers from sandy beaches with haystack rocks to mountain meadows with clear, cold streams.

The Mountaineers is concerned with the potential impacts of the Proposed Action on hikers, trail runners, campers and others who enjoy recreating on the Olympic Peninsula.

Visitor Access and Enjoyment

According to the Environmental Assessment (EA), “the Proposed Action would not change or alter transportation and circulation activities of surrounding areas. Therefore, this resource area was not carried forward for detailed analysis.” Yet the EA further states, “mobile emitter sites would be monitored during training activities to ensure that non-authorized personnel remain outside controlled and action level environments at all times.”

With over three million people visiting Olympic National Park and Olympic National Forest each year, and with the mobile emitter sites located within the national forest and on the periphery of the park, The Mountaineers is concerned that access will be limited to recreationists. We request that any negative impacts on access are carefully considered through further analysis and limited in duration and location.

In addition, increased overflights that occur from this project will negatively impact the visitor experience to Olympic National Park and Olympic National Forest. According to the EA, up to 2,900 training events per year over the course of 260 days may be conducted, consisting of 2,340 hours of emitter use during which multiple aircraft may be doing maneuvers above Olympic National Forest and



Olympic National Park, at altitudes as low as 6,000 feet (according to the Northwest Training and Testing EIS/OEIS). Olympic National Park is the home to the quietest place in the United States ("One Square Inch of Silence). Designated on Earth Day 2005, One Square Inch of Silence protects and manages the natural soundscape in Olympic National Park's wilderness. The potential negative impacts on the soundscape and visitor experience is significant and should be further analyzed and limited in duration and location.

In conclusion, we thank you for considering our comments on the Pacific Northwest Electronic Warfare Range Environmental Assessment #42759. We look forward to receiving additional information and ask that we be placed on the mailing list for this project.

Sincerely,
Martinique Grigg,
Executive Director