

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

EARLY NOTICE AND PUBLIC REVIEW OF A PROPOSED ACTIVITY IN A FLOODPLAIN

Pursuant to Executive Order 11988, Floodplain Management, the United States Department of the Navy (Navy) gives notice that the Navy is conducting an evaluation of a proposed action which may involve construction in a floodplain to determine the potential effects that its activity in the floodplain would have on the human environment. The Navy will be identifying and evaluating practicable alternatives to locating the action in the floodplain and the potential impacts on the floodplain from the proposed action, as required by Executive Order 11988.

Naval Air Station (NAS) Pensacola, located in Escambia County, Florida, is proposing to expand the Aviation Rescue Swimmer School (ARSS) to accommodate an additional training class. As required by EO 11988, a more detailed description of the proposed action is available below.

There are three primary purposes for this notice. First, people who may be affected by activities in floodplain and wetlands and those who have an interest in the protection of the natural environment should be given an opportunity to express their concerns and provide information about these areas. Commenters are encouraged to offer alternative sites outside of the floodplain and wetlands, alternative methods to serve the same project purpose, and methods to minimize and mitigate impacts. Second, an adequate public notice program can be an important public educational tool. The dissemination of information and request for public comment about floodplain and wetlands can facilitate and enhance Federal efforts to reduce the risks and impacts associated with the occupancy and modification of these special areas. Third, as a matter of fairness, when the Federal government determines it will participate in actions taking place in floodplain and wetlands, it must inform those who may be put at greater or continued risk.

Interested parties may submit written comments no later than 5:00 PM Central Time on May 28, 2021 by email to Joelle.odaniellopez@navy.mil or by mail postmarked no later than May 28, 2021 to:

NAS Pensacola
Joelle O'Daniel-Lopez, NEPA Program Manager,
310 John Towers Road
Pensacola, FL 32508

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Proposed Action is to modify the Aviation Rescue Swimmer School, building 4142 at NAS Pensacola. The new addition includes classrooms, locker rooms, storage, and administrative space comprising of four new expansions to the existing building. During design and construction, temporary trailers, located adjacent to Building 4142, may be leased to provide the needed training spaces required until a permanent addition is constructed. These temporary trailers would require replacement every five years due to wear and tear.

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to increase training conducted at the ARSS on NAS Pensacola from two classes to three classes taught simultaneously at the facility to meet the increased training mission for aviation rescue swimmers. The Proposed Action is needed because the current classroom space at the ARSS is insufficient to meet an increase of aviation rescue swimmer students and satisfy their U.S. Fleet Forces training requirements. The increase in student throughput is expected to increase the pool of Naval Aircrewmen, and so reduce stress, strain, or injuries to Aircrewmen caused by an inadequate pool or inadequate manning for flight missions.

The Navy is proposing the action in a floodplain because the existing Aviation Rescue Swimmer School, building 4142, is located within the boundaries of floodplains associated with Pensacola Bay and the expansion of the existing building is the most cost-efficient and least destructive alternative for increasing the ARSS training spaces to meet military mission and training requirements. Alternatives to repair actions include new construction and no action. New construction outside of the floodplain would be constructed at much greater economic and environmental costs than expansion of the existing building. If no action is provided, the current facilities will continue to be insufficient to support training needs. This will negatively affect military and training missions. Expansion of the existing building is the most cost-efficient alternative, will ensure that short and long-term military mission requirements are met, and allow for minimal effects to the floodplain and the natural environment.

Interested parties may submit written comments no later than 5:00 PM Central Time on May 28, 2021 by email to joelle.odaniellopez@navy.mil or by mail postmarked no later than May 28, 2021 to:

NAS Pensacola
Joelle O'Daniel-Lopez, NEPA Program Manager,
310 John Towers Road
Pensacola, FL 32508

Figure 1 - Location Map



Figure 2 - Site Map

