



JUL 22 2010

To all interested government agencies and public groups:

Under the National Environmental Policy Act, an environmental review has been performed on the following action.

TITLE: National Weather Service (NWS) Network Radar to Serve Coastal Washington

LOCATION: Grays Harbor County, Washington

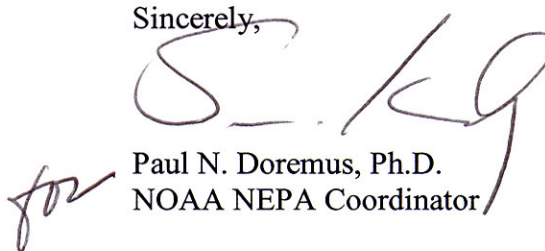
SUMMARY: Construction and operation of an NWS Network Radar to serve the Coastal Washington Area. The planned radar will be similar to the 159 Weather Service Radars, Model 1988 Doppler (WSR-88Ds) in the nationwide network operated by the NWS. The NWS will use the data collected by the new radar to assist in preparing meteorological forecasts and providing warnings of severe weather.

RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL: Richard Vogt, Director
NWS Radar Operations Center
1200 Westheimer Drive
Norman, OK 73069
(405)573-8803

The environmental review process led us to believe that this action will not have a significant effect on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared. A copy of the finding of no significant impact including the supporting environmental assessment is enclosed for your information.

Although NOAA is not soliciting comments on this completed EA/FONSI we will consider any comments submitted that would assist us in preparing future NEPA documents. Please submit any written comments to the responsible official named above.

Sincerely,


for Paul N. Doremus, Ph.D.
NOAA NEPA Coordinator

Enclosure



SRI International

Expanded Site Survey / Environmental Assessment Report • June 2010

FINAL

**EXPANDED SITE SURVEY /
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT REPORT
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE (NWS) NETWORK RADAR
TO SERVE COASTAL WASHINGTON**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Weather Service (NWS) proposes to install and operate an S-band Doppler, dual polarized weather radar in the Grays Harbor County area to improve analysis and prediction of strong winter storm systems that frequent the region. The NWS goals are to optimize radar coverage over areas not adequately served by the existing NWS radars in Seattle, Washington, and Portland, Oregon. Specifically, the radar will be sited to provide as much off-shore coverage as possible, while also covering the windward slopes of the Olympic Mountains, the Willapa Hills of southwest Washington, the Strait of Juan de Fuca, and the mouth of the Columbia River. The proposed radar would be similar to the Weather Surveillance Radar – 1988, Doppler and would be integrated into the NWS Radar Network.

In July 2009, SRI International prepared a Preliminary Site Survey report that identified 23 potential sites for the proposed radar in Grays Harbor County and adjacent northern Pacific County, because this area has the largest concentration of population and economic activity within the area of concern. Additionally, to effectively provide low-altitude coverage of the area not currently receiving network radar coverage, the proposed radar will have to be located in or very near Grays Harbor County.

The NWS selected three sites from the list of 23 original sites for further consideration. This Expanded Site Survey/Environmental Assessment report provides technical information on the three possible alternative sites for an NWS Network Radar to serve Coastal Washington. This report compares and describes in detail the alternative sites under consideration by the NWS, and recommends an operating frequency for the proposed radar. The three sites are termed Langley Hill, Ocean City, and Saddle Hill. Each of the three alternative sites was carefully evaluated against the following site selection criteria:

Property Size

(S1) Minimum site size is 210 feet (ft) × 210 ft

Radar Coverage

- (R1) Coverage would extend over the area of concern (that is, area not covered by existing NWS Network Radars), Pacific Ocean, and windward slopes of the Olympic Mountains
- (R2) High-value military assets and the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA's) National Airspace System receive radar coverage
- (R3) Terrain blockage of radar beam is minimized, particularly in weather approach directions of southwest through northwest
- (R4) Radar beam is not blocked by trees (antenna should rise above nearby trees, accounting for future tree growth)
- (R5) Structures (tall buildings, wind turbines) or terrain in vicinity will not cause excessive clutter returns

Infrastructure

- (I1) Site is within short distance of suitable electric power (that is, three-phase 200-A 208Y/120V)
- (I2) Site is served by commercial T-1 communication lines (or can receive T-1 service through minor line extensions)
- (I3) Site is accessible by good condition all-weather roads
- (I4) Construction access is not restricted by bridges or culverts with low weight capacity

Economic

- (EC1) Sites on suitable government property are preferred over private land
- (EC2) Site is available from a willing owner for purchase or 20 plus year lease
- (EC3) Likelihood of substantial environmental contamination of the site by regulated materials or hazardous wastes is low

Environmental

- (EV1) Radar would be compatible with nearby land uses and local zoning
- (EV2) Radar structure would comply with FAA height restrictions at 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 77
- (EV3) Site is at least 3,000 ft from an airport surveillance radar or airport traffic control tower
- (EV4) Site is sufficiently distant from radio transmitters or receivers to prevent electromagnetic interference
- (EV5) Site is not eroded or geologically unstable
- (EV6) Site is not within a 100-year floodplain or tsunami hazard zone
- (EV7) Site does not contain federal-jurisdictional wetlands
- (EV8) Construction of the radar will not cause significant conversion of farmland under the Farmland Protection Policy Act
- (EV9) No taking of threatened or endangered species or destruction of critical habitat
- (EV10) No significant effects on historic or traditional cultural properties
- (EV11) No significant effects on scenic viewshed, such as a scenic highway, or wilderness area
- (EV12) Not within one-quarter mile of a wild and scenic river

The results of the evaluation are shown in the table that follows.

ESS Findings for NWS Network Radar to Serve Coastal Washington

			Site Name		
			Langley Hill	Ocean City	Saddle Hill
Radar Siting Criteria	Property Size	S1	●	●	●
	Radar Coverage	R1	●	●	●
		R2	●	●	●
		R3	●	●	●
		R4	●	■	●
		R5	●	●	×
	Infrastructure	I1	●	●	■
		I2	●	●	■
		I3	●	●	●
		I4	●	●	●
	Economic	EC1	×	●	×
		EC2	●	●	●
		EC3	●	■	●
	Environmental	EV1	●	●	●
		EV2	●	●	●
		EV3	●	●	●
		EV4	●	●	●
		EV5	●	●	●
		EV6	●	×	●
		EV7	●	●	●
EV8		●	●	●	
EV9		●	●	●	
EV10		●	●	●	
EV11		●	●	●	
EV12		●	●	●	

Key:

- Meets Criterion
- Partially Meets Criterion
- × Does Not Meet Criterion

This report also includes an analysis of environmental impacts as required by National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Administrative Order 216-6. The environmental analysis determined that installation and operation of the proposed NWS Network Radar at any of the three alternative sites would not result in significant environmental impacts (see Section 7, Environmental Assessment of this report).

The NWS distributed the draft report to interested members of the public and government agencies for review, and accepted comments on the draft report during an official comment period with a duration of 31 days running from March 15, 2010 through April 16, 2010. The NWS responses to all pertinent comments received during the official comment period are provided in Section 8, Community Involvement of this report. The NWS will make a decision whether to install the proposed radar and at which site after this final report is issued.