



# MEDIA ADVISORY

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## [Navy Announces Decision on Pinecastle Range](#)

The Navy announced today that it will implement expanded safety zones and additional mitigation measures while continuing training at Pinecastle Range. Roger Natsuhara, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Energy, Installations and Environment signed the Record of Decision (ROD) following completion of a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) in August.

Pinecastle Range is located entirely within the Ocala National Forest (ONF) and operates under the terms and conditions established in a special use permit issued by the United States Forest Service (USFS). Following the completion of a 2002 Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for renewal of the permit to use the range, Navy adopted a new, more technologically advanced safety modeling program, SAFE-RANGE. Use of the SAFE-RANGE modeling program resulted in changes to the previously modeled safety zones and the Navy prepared the SEIS for the limited purpose of supplementing the weapons impact analyses contained in the 2002 Final EIS. No changes to the targets, ordnance, method of delivery (air-to-ground), and volume of munitions utilized at Pinecastle Range for military training were proposed. In addition to the new information, the SEIS analyzed the effectiveness of existing mitigations to determine if additional measures were necessary. The SEIS found no significant direct or indirect impacts associated with the new Range Compatibility Zones. Associated safety risks continue to be negligible, approaching zero in most cases.

Three enhancements to existing range management procedures were identified to maintain public safety and ensure range sustainability. The first is to enhance notification, access control, and buffer zone clearance verification. Second, the Navy will ensure United States Forest Service (USFS) personnel are trained and aware of hazards and precautions associated with Navy training activities and unexploded ordnance assuring their personal safety, and to better educate the public using ONF. Lastly, the Navy will partner/coordinate with the USFS, Florida Trail Association (FTA), and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) to monitor and document the effects of increasing access limitations to portions of ONF and the Florida National Scenic Trail (FNST) to determine if additional improvements or enhancements to the Range safety procedures can be made.

The Final SEIS and the decision are available at [www.pinecastleseis.com](http://www.pinecastleseis.com).

*NOTE: For media requesting further information, please contact Julie Ann Ripley, Environmental Media, U.S. Fleet Forces Command, Norfolk, VA at (757) 836-4423 or email: [julie.a.ripley@navy.mil](mailto:julie.a.ripley@navy.mil)*