



## **NAVY ANNOUNCES RECORD OF DECISION FOR GROWLER ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

### **THE NAVY ANNOUNCED ITS RECORD OF DECISION FOR THE GROWLER ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR THE PROPOSED INCREASE OF EA-18G GROWLER AIRFIELD OPERATIONS AT THE NAS WHIDBEY ISLAND COMPLEX.**

After carefully weighing the strategic, operational, and environmental consequences of the proposed action analyzed in the Growler Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), the Navy has made the decision to implement Alternative 2A (the Preferred Alternative), which adds 36 EA-18G operational aircraft at Naval Air Station (NAS) Whidbey Island, stations additional personnel and their family members at the NAS Whidbey Island complex and in the surrounding community, constructs and renovates facilities at Ault Field, increases airfield operations at both Ault Field and Outlying Landing Field (OLF) Coupeville, and changes the distribution of field carrier landing practice (FCLP) to 20 percent occurring at Ault Field and 80 percent occurring at OLF Coupeville.

The proposed action will enable the Navy to augment its existing Electronic Attack community at NAS Whidbey Island complex with additional aircraft in order to provide Combatant Commanders with expanded electronic attack capabilities to support our national defense, consistent with the Navy's responsibilities under Title 10, United States Code (U.S.C), Section 8062.

In selecting this action alternative, the Navy carefully considered a number of factors, including the strategic and operational importance of augmenting our nation's electronic attack capabilities, ensuring quality of pilot training, and balancing the impacts of the proposed action on the human and natural environment. The preferred alternative places the majority of FCLP operations at OLF Coupeville because OLF Coupeville provides more realistic training for our aviators. OLF Coupeville has been continuously used for FCLP since the late 1960s. OLF Coupeville's pattern best replicates the aircraft carrier landing pattern, building and reinforcing the correct habits and muscle memory for pilots.

The implementation of Alternative 2A will include measures that reduce noise impacts in the community, including the mitigation measures identified in Appendix H of the Final EIS and the use of Precision Landing Mode (PLM, a.k.a. MAGIC CARPET) to reduce the overall number of FCLPs compared to the number proposed in the Draft EIS.

A copy of the Record of Decision is available on the Growler Environmental Impact Statement website: <http://www.whidbeyeis.com/>