



NEWS RELEASE

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U.S. Navy seeks Corps authority to disestablish Restricted Area in Rhode Island Sound near Newport

CONCORD, Mass. – The U.S. Navy, Naval Station Newport, is seeking authority from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District for the disestablishment of a Restricted Area in Rhode Island Sound near Newport, Rhode Island.

The U.S. Navy (USN) has requested the disestablishment of a Restricted Area (RA) in the waters of Rhode Island Sound, approximately 4 nautical miles due south of Lands End in Newport.

In response to this request by the USN, and pursuant to its authorities in Section 7 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1917 and chapter XIX of the Army Appropriations Act of 1919, the Corps of Engineers is being asked to amend the regulations in 33 CFR Part 334. The purpose of the Restricted Area was to establish a practice minefield and conduct mine detection and mine sweeping exercises. Use of the RA by the U.S. Navy has been discontinued. Due to the inert practice materials that were used at the site, the U.S. Navy has determined that disestablishment of the area will not pose any hazard or threat to public safety.

The Corps of Engineers is seeking public comments on this proposal by the U.S. Navy. At this time, no decision has been made as to whether or not the action will be granted.

Additionally, the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) published a proposed rule in the Federal Register to establish an offshore anchorage in Rhode Island Sound south of Brenton Point, Rhode Island, for use by vessels waiting to enter Narragansett Bay. The proposed anchorage will overlap the formerly used RA. For more information on this proposed rule see Docket No. USCG-2009-1131.

The Corps public notice, with more detailed information, can be viewed on the Corps website at <http://www.nae.usace.army.mil>. Select Regulatory and then public notices or go directly to <http://www.nae.usace.army.mil/Regulatory/Public%20Notices/>.

The proposed rulemaking has also been published in the Federal Register for public comments for 30 days beginning April 17, 2012 (Docket Number COE-2012-0001).

Public comments on the Corps review of this USN proposal (file # NAE-2010-2411) should be forwarded no later than May 17, 2012 to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District, Regulatory Division (ATTN: Angela Repella), 696 Virginia Road, Concord, MA 01742-2751. Additional information is available from Permit Project Manager Angela Repella at 978-318-8639 or toll free 800-343-4789 or 800-362-4367 (if calling from within Massachusetts) or by email to: angela.c.repella@usace.army.mil.

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