

Fact Sheet

Natural and Cultural Resources



Wetlands

Wetland ecosystems are diverse, and provide habitat for a variety of plants and animals. Wetlands include swamps, marshes, bogs, wet meadows, sloughs, potholes, river overflow lands, and tide flats.

Wetland areas are found throughout NWS Earle. As part of this EIS, a wetlands survey will be conducted along, and in the vicinity of, each alternative alignment to precisely locate the boundaries of wetland areas. The Navy will attempt to avoid and minimize impacts to wetlands and assist the developer with studies necessary to comply with applicable laws and regulations prior to implementing the proposed action.

Rare, Threatened and Endangered Species

Threatened and endangered species are plants and animals that are at risk of becoming extinct. An endangered species is a species in immediate danger of becoming extinct. A threatened species is likely to become endangered if conditions surrounding the species continue to deteriorate. There are more than 600 federally threatened and endangered species in the United States today. The Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, declares that threatened and endangered species shall be protected by law. This law prohibits “harming” or otherwise taking a listed species by any person and prohibits federal agencies from performing any action likely to jeopardize the existence of the species.

Rare, threatened, and endangered species are known to occur at NWS Earle. As part of the EIS process, a habitat evaluation survey and a presence or absence survey for rare, threatened and endangered species will be conducted in the study area. Surveys will be conducted during appropriate seasons to accurately account for species presence or absence. The survey will include both federal- and state-listed species such as:

Plant Species

- Swamp pink
- Knieskerns beaked rush
- New Jersey rush
- Pine barrens reed grass
- Barratt’s sedge
- Pale beaked rush

Animal Species

- Bog turtle
- Pine barrens tree frog
- Northern pine snake
- Barred owl



The Navy will attempt to avoid or minimize impacts to species and comply with applicable laws and regulations prior to implementing the proposed action.

Cultural Resources

Cultural resources are subject to review under both federal and state laws and regulations. Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 empowers the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation to comment on federally initiated, licensed, funded, or permitted projects affecting cultural sites listed or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Once cultural resources have been identified, they are evaluated for their eligibility for inclusion into the NRHP. If the resource is determined to be eligible, an assessment is undertaken to identify any impacts that may result due to the proposed action. Only cultural resources determined to be noteworthy (i.e., eligible or potentially eligible for listing in the NRHP) are protected under the NHPA. The intent is to coordinate federal project planning with historic preservation issues.

In addition, Section 110 of the NHPA mandates that federal agencies establish, in consultation with the Secretary of the Interior, a preservation program for purposes of identifying, evaluation, nominating to the NRHP, and protecting historic properties.

Cultural resources are found in some areas of NWS Earle. The Navy is undertaking a thorough evaluation to determine whether cultural resources are present within the right-of-way of each of the proposed alternative alignments. Evaluation of potential cultural resources at a location is an iterative process, and includes several steps. First, an archives search is conducted, including a search of historical records such as aerial photographs, property records and other literature. Using this information in conjunction with a site visit, experts in the field can then assess whether certain areas have a high, moderate, or low probability of containing cultural resources. Additional studies would be conducted in areas of moderate or high probability, including shovel test pits.



Conducting a Shovel Test Pit

As part of the Environmental Impact Statement process, a survey (shovel test pits) is being conducted within the right-of-way of each proposed alternative alignment to determine the presence or absence of any artifacts. Any artifacts that are found will be analyzed and categorized to assess their potential historical significance.

Based on the outcome of the cultural resources survey and as required by the NHPA, the Navy will coordinate with the New Jersey State Historic Preservation Office prior to implementing the proposed action.



Historic Structure