



# **Draft Environmental Assessment for Proposed Eelgrass Habitat Expansion San Diego Bay, San Diego, CA**

**Virtual Public Meeting**

**July 19, 2023**

**The Meeting Will Start at 5:30**

*This virtual public meeting is being recorded.*



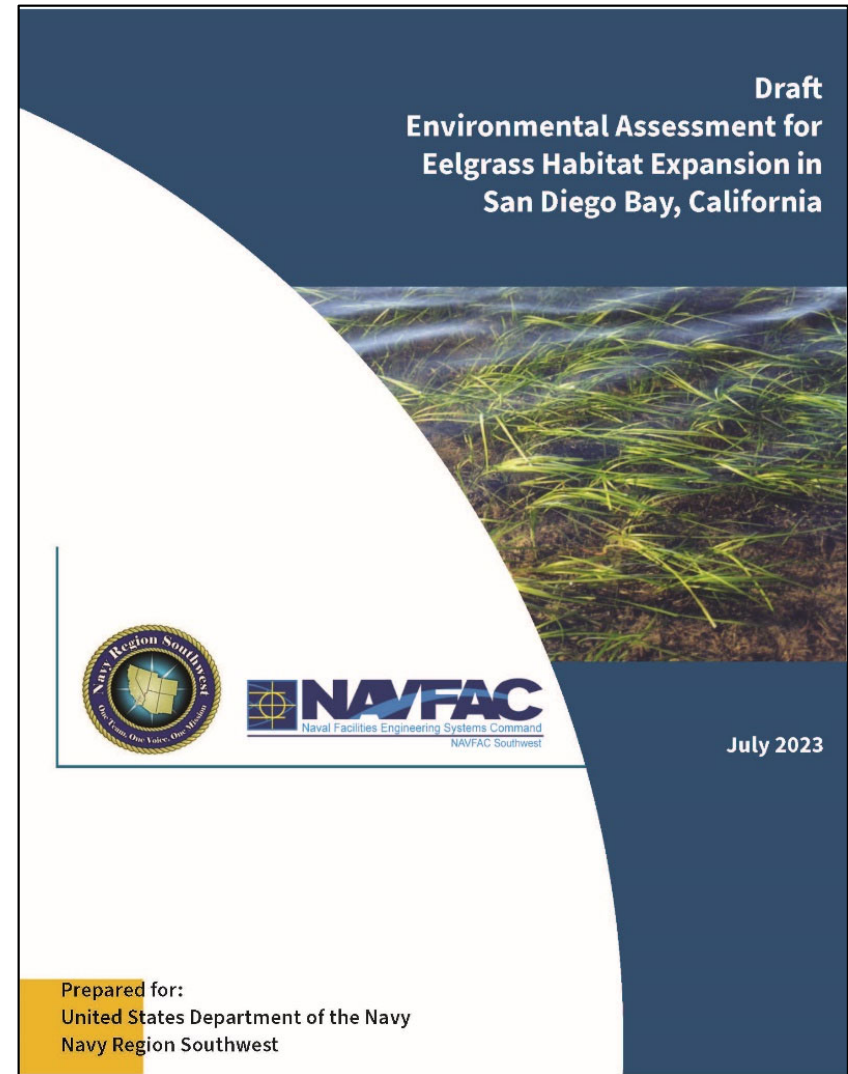
# Captain Clemons

*Navy Region Southwest Chief of Staff*



# Opening Remarks

- Welcome to the Public Meeting for the Draft EA
- The Navy is committed to the conservation and management of San Diego Bay and its resources
- Expanding eelgrass habitat supports the Navy mission and San Diego Bay resources
- Please provide your written comments on the Draft EA





# Jason Golumbfskie-Jones

*Navy Region Southwest Fleet Environmental  
and Government Affairs Director*



# Agenda

- Overview of:
  - Project Location and Background
  - Purpose and Need
  - Proposed Action
  - Eelgrass
  - Alternatives
  - National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Process
  - Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) Findings
  - Public Review and Comment Opportunities
- Written Comment Session



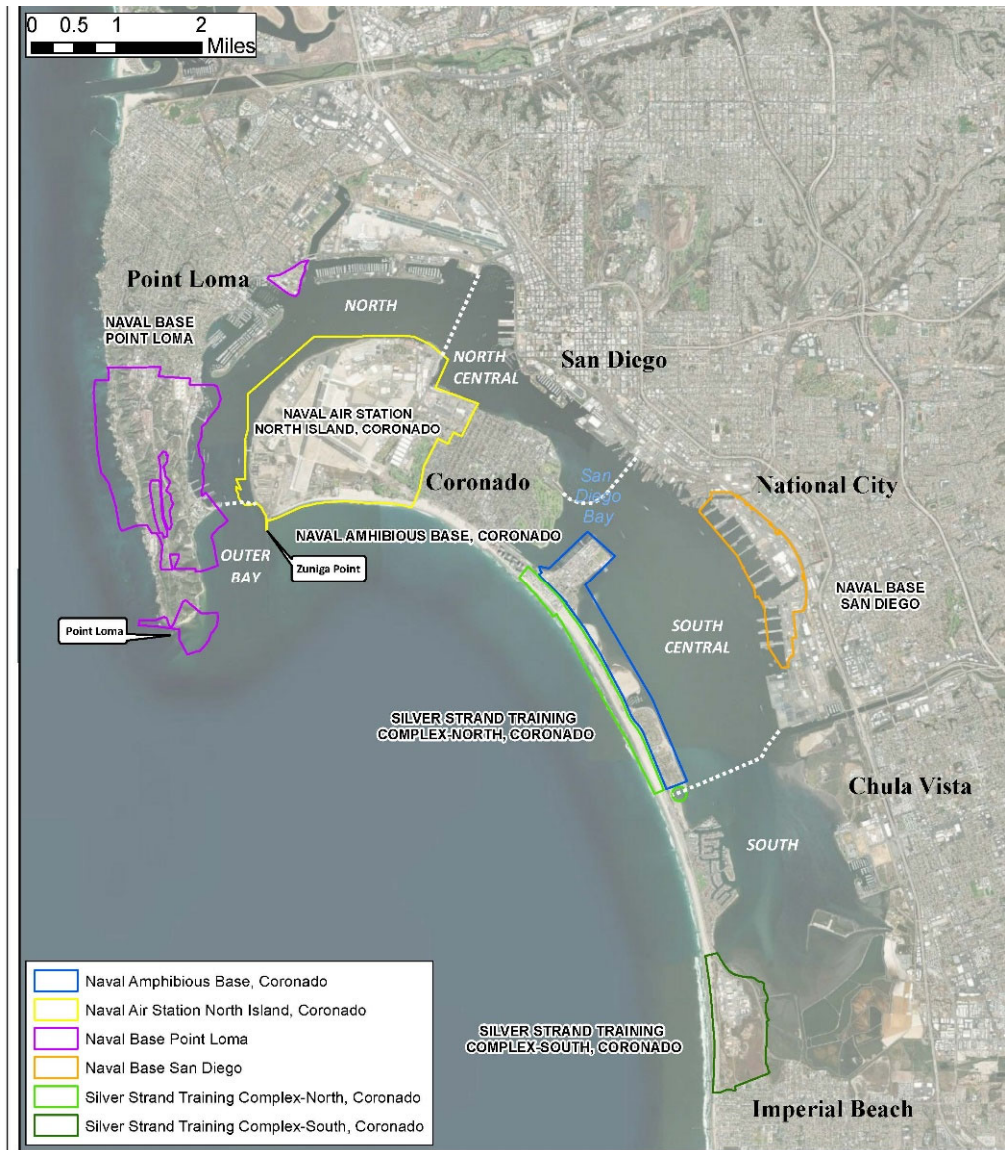
# Overview of Draft EA

## Overview

*Draft EA for Eelgrass Habitat Expansion*



# Project Location





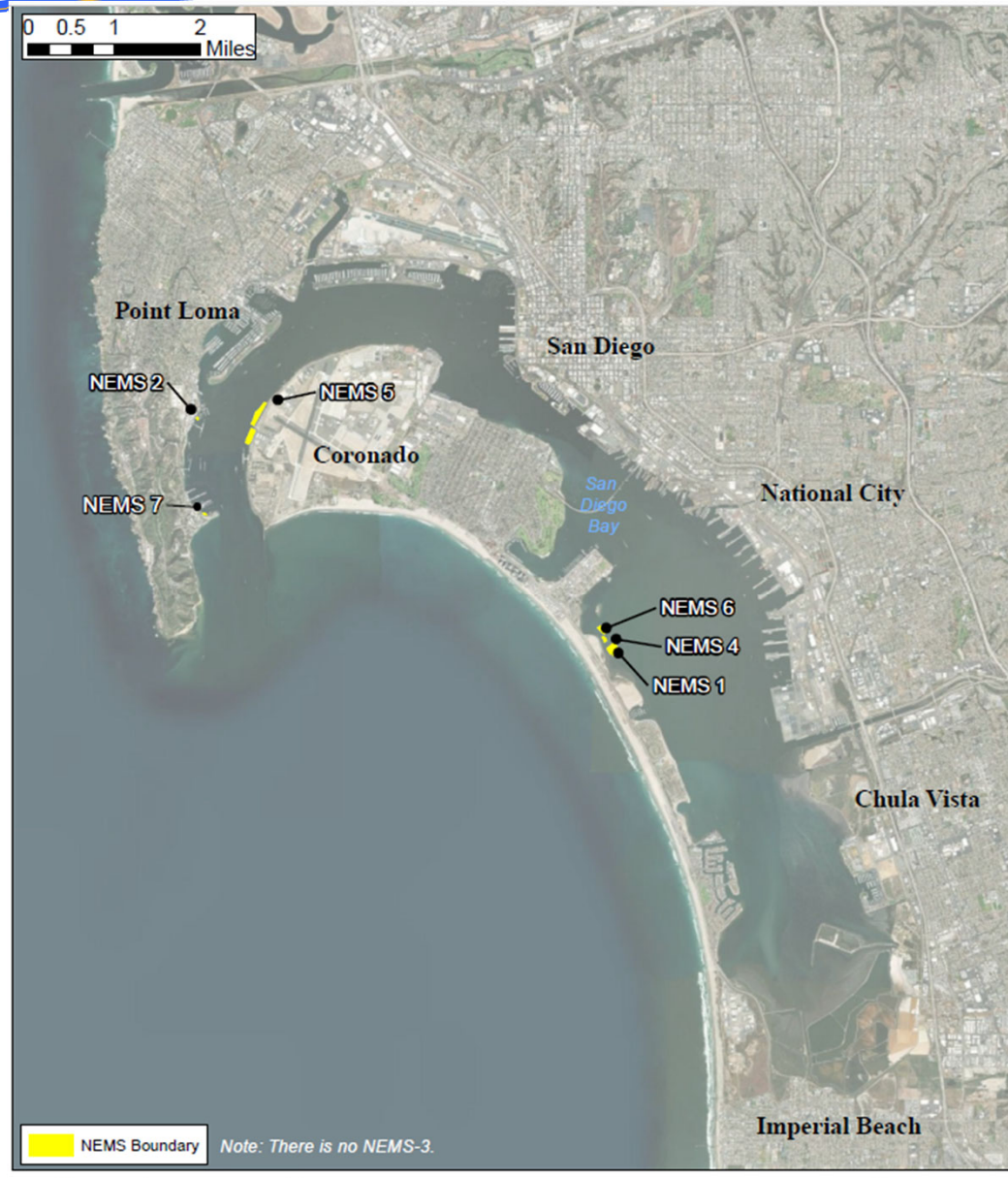
# Project Background

- Navy Region Southwest San Diego Bay Eelgrass Mitigation Bank (Bank) created in 2008
- Navy projects may result in unavoidable impacts to aquatic habitat
- Navy offsets impacts to aquatic habitat using the Bank
- Bank expansion is needed to support Navy mission-critical projects





# Existing Eelgrass Bank Sites





# Purpose and Need

- The purpose of the Proposed Action is to support Navy mission requirements while ensuring the continued commitment to conservation of the San Diego Bay ecosystem.
- The Proposed Action is needed to facilitate implementation of future Navy projects and activities in San Diego Bay that may have the potential to impact eelgrass habitat.



# Proposed Action

- The Navy proposes to add to the existing Eelgrass Mitigation Bank by expanding eelgrass habitat at one or more sites in San Diego Bay
- The Proposed Action consists of:
  - Site selection
  - Site establishment
  - Planting of eelgrass shoots
  - Monitoring, maintenance, and reporting
  - Adding credit to the Bank



**Jessica Curran**

*Navy Region Southwest Marine Biologist*



# About Eelgrass

- Eelgrass is a type of seagrass
- Eelgrass found in San Diego Bay consists of two species
  - Common eelgrass (*Zostera marina*)
  - Pacific eelgrass (*Z. pacifica*)
- Eelgrass is an important and productive habitat in San Diego Bay
- Eelgrass meadows serve as important nursery areas for numerous fish and invertebrate species





# Project Alternatives

- Navy initially identified 17 potential eelgrass sites
- Applied three screening factors
  1. Compatibility with Navy Training/Testing
  2. Compatibility with Public Land Uses
  3. Suitable Physical Conditions
- Navy coordinated internally with Navy operational commands and externally with the Port of San Diego and federal agencies
- Four sites grouped into three alternatives carried forward for analysis in Draft EA



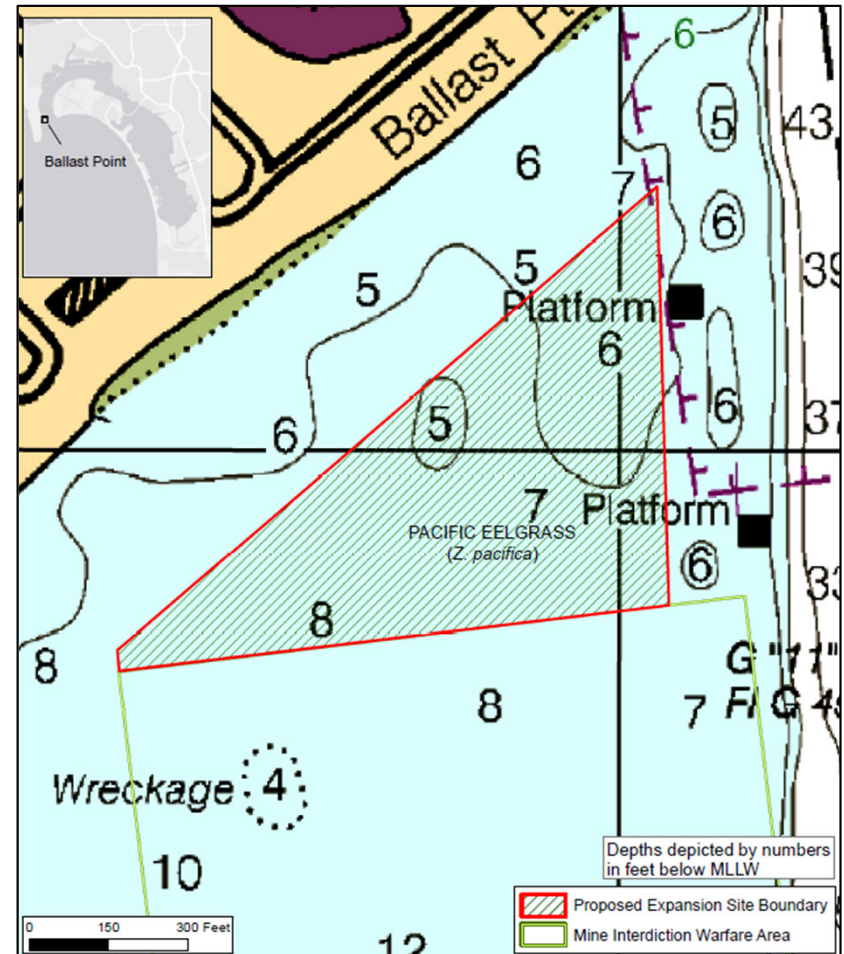
# Site Alternatives





# Alternative 1 – Ballast Point

- Ballast Point
  - 10.1-acre site
  - No fill of suitable dredged material required
  - Plant *Pacific* eelgrass shoots
  - Bank Yield: ~8.5 acres

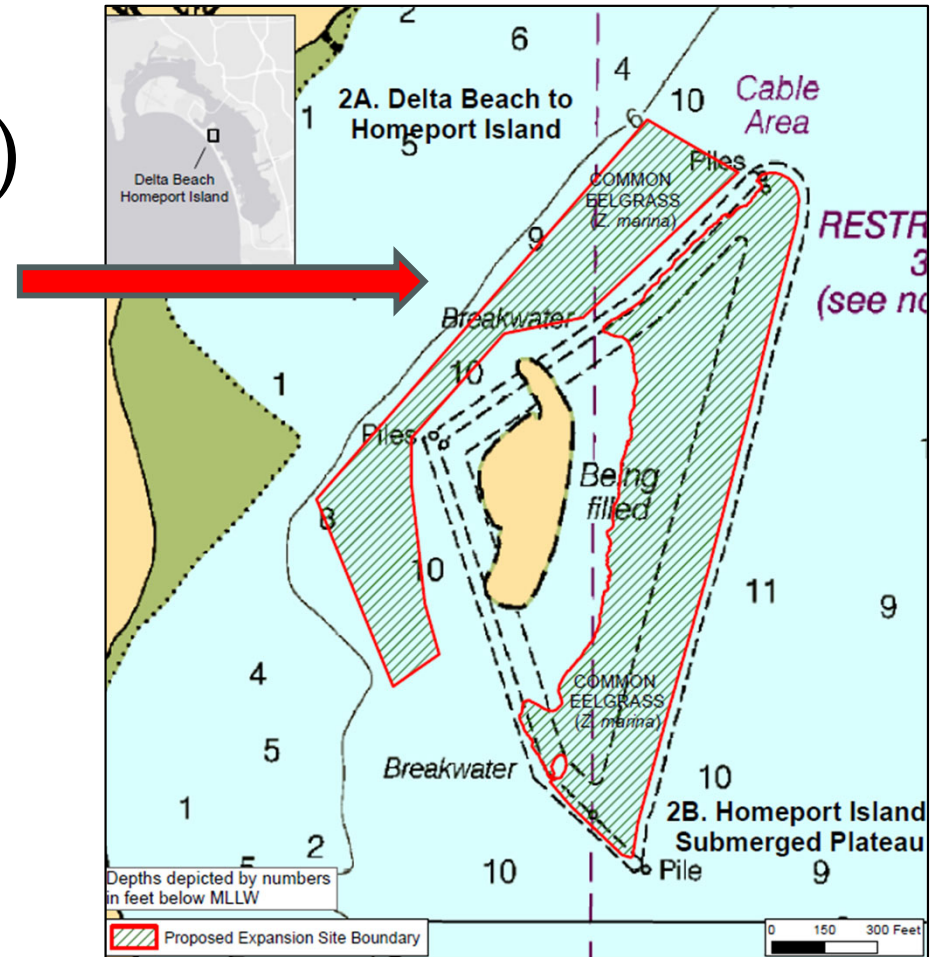






# Alternative 2 – Delta Beach to Homeport Island Submerged Plateau

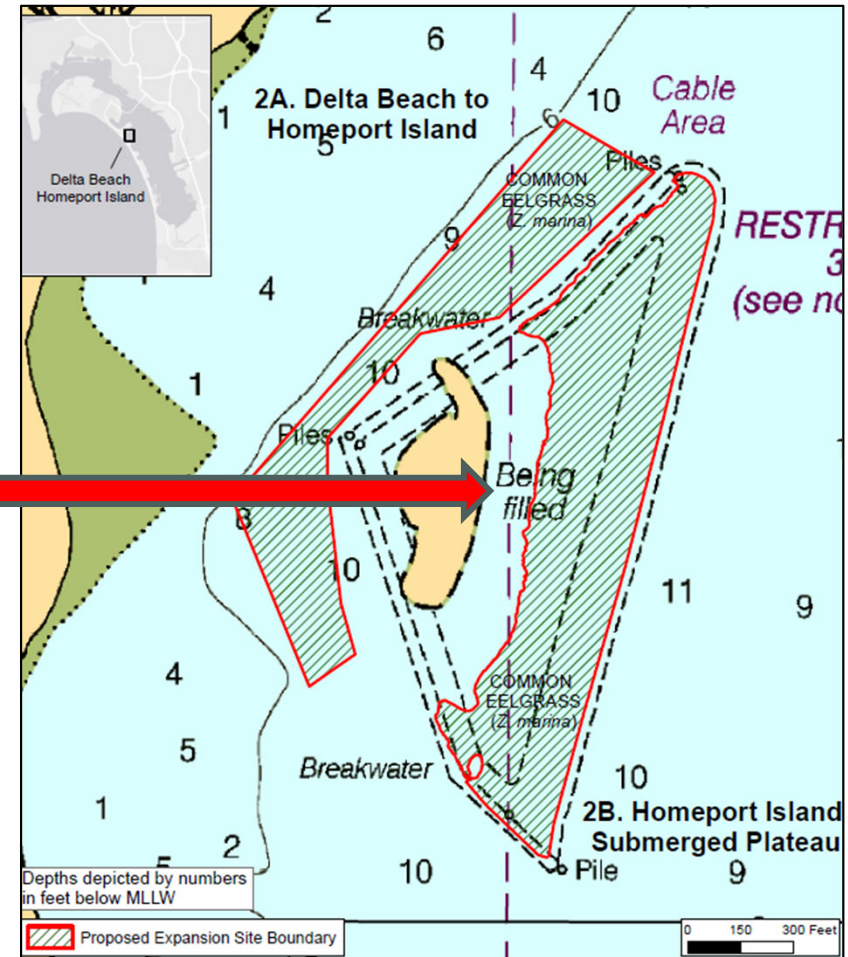
- Delta Beach to Homeport Island (2A)
  - 9.0-acre site
  - ~63,000 CY of suitable dredged material required
  - Plant *common* eelgrass shoots
  - Bank Yield: ~7.0 acres





# Alternative 2 – Delta Beach to Homeport Island Island/Homeport Island Submerged Plateau

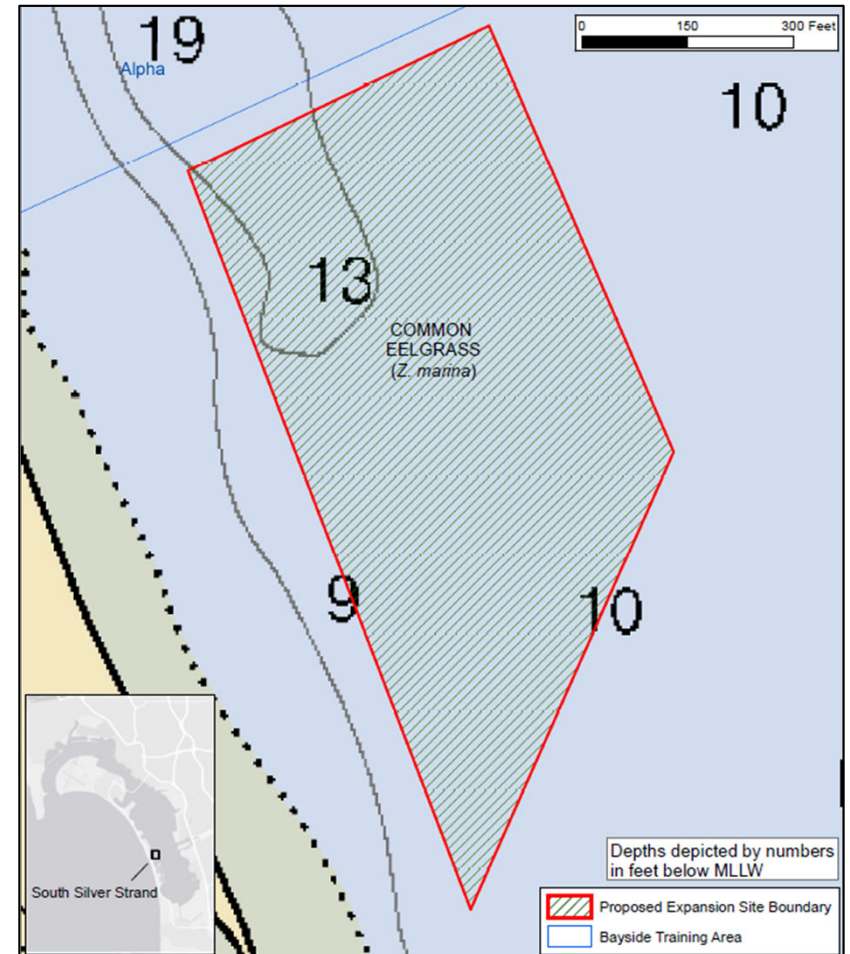
- Homeport Island Submerged Plateau (2B)
  - 13.0-acre site
  - ~95,000 CY of suitable dredge material required
  - Plant *common* eelgrass shoots
  - Bank Yield: ~12.6 acres





# Alternative 3 – South Silver Strand

- South Silver Strand
  - 10.0-acre site
  - ~130,000 CY of suitable dredged material required
  - Plant *common* eelgrass shoots
  - Bank Yield: ~9.8 acres





# No Action Alternative

- Would not create additional eelgrass habitat in San Diego Bay
- Would not provide ecological benefits or add to the Bank
- Would not meet the purpose and need for the Proposed Action
- Provides a baseline for measuring environmental consequences of the Proposed Action



# Resource Areas Analyzed

- Resource Areas Dismissed from Detailed Analysis:
  - Air Quality, Geological Resources, Cultural Resources, Visual Resources, Airspace, Noise, Infrastructure, Transportation, Public Health and Safety, Hazardous Materials and Wastes, Socioeconomics, and Environmental Justice
- Resource Areas Analyzed in Detail:
  - Marine Water Resources and Bathymetry
  - Marine Biological Resources
  - Land Use



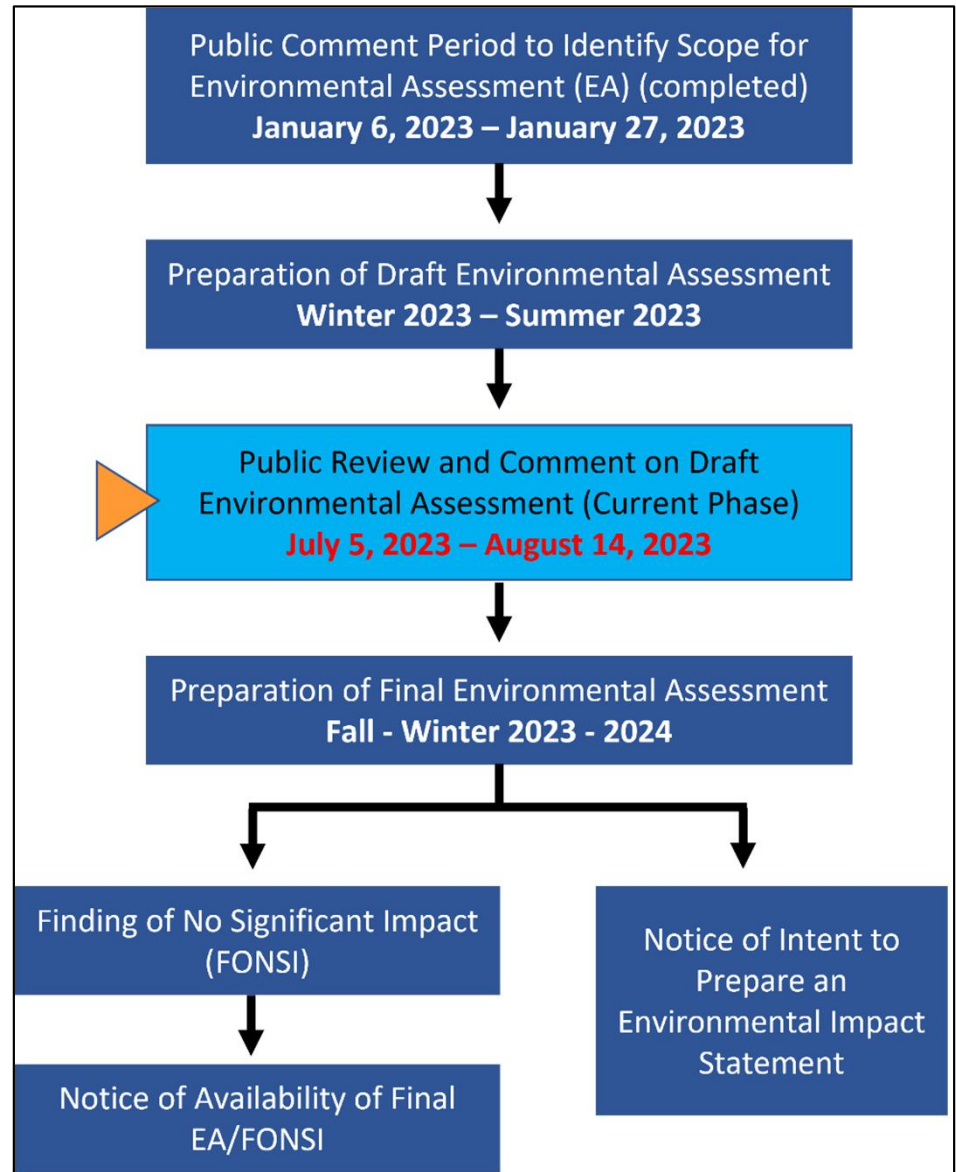
# Lieutenant Commander Alex Stormer

*Navy Deputy Region Environmental Counsel*



# The NEPA Process & Public Involvement

- Public involvement is a fundamental aspect of the environmental analysis process.
- The Navy welcomes and appreciates your written comments on the Draft EA.





# Draft EA Findings

- Less than significant impacts to all resource areas
- Some short-term adverse impacts to marine water quality and some marine species; however, overall long-term beneficial impacts to most resource areas
- Compatible with existing military and public land use
- Navy may select one or more alternatives for implementation





# Resource Agency Consultations & Final EA and Decision Document

- The Navy is coordinating/consulting with the following:
  - Port of San Diego, California Coastal Commission, National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- The Navy will integrate the outcome of coordination/consultation into the Final EA
- The Navy will publish the Final EA and decision document



# How to Review Draft EA

- Download from Navy website:
  - <https://www.cnrc.navy.mil/navysouthwestprojects>.
  - Website also includes a fact sheet
- Review at public libraries:
  - San Diego Central Library, 330 Park Blvd., San Diego, CA
  - Point Loma Branch Library, 3701 Voltaire St., San Diego, CA
  - Coronado Public Library, 640 Orange Ave., Coronado, CA
  - Imperial Beach Library, 810 Imperial Beach Blvd., Imperial Beach, CA
  - Chula Vista Civic Center Branch, 365 F St., Chula Vista, CA
- Navy published Notice of Availability of Draft EA in area publications, sent stakeholders notification letters and postcards, and notified media



# Navy Website

- View the Draft EA and Fact Sheet from here:

Operations and Management ▶ Environmental Support ▶ **Public Information Access to Navy Projects**

## PUBLIC INFORMATION ACCESS TO NAVY PROJECTS

- **San Diego Bay Eelgrass Habitat Expansion Environmental Assessment**
  - **Draft Environmental Assessment (Section 508 Compliant)**
  - **Project Fact Sheet**
  - **Project Fact Sheet (Section 508 Compliant)**
  - **Virtual Meeting Presentation (to be provided after July 19, 2023)**

<https://www.cnmc.navy.mil/navysouthwestprojects>



# Public Review and Comment

- Comments must be postmarked or received by Monday, August 14, 2023
- Submit comments:
  - Via email:  
[navfac\\_sw\\_eelgrass\\_ea\\_public\\_outreach@us.navy.mil](mailto:navfac_sw_eelgrass_ea_public_outreach@us.navy.mil)
  - Via mail:  
Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command Southwest  
Attention: Code EV26.SVR  
750 Pacific Highway (12th Floor, Environmental)  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190
  - Or provide written comments at this meeting



# Conclusion

- The Navy values and appreciates your input
- The Navy is committed to the conservation and management of San Diego Bay and its resources
- For more information, to include the Draft EA, Fact Sheet, and this presentation, visit:  
<https://www.cnmc.navy.mil/navysouthwestprojects>.
- Submit your comments on the Draft EA by Monday, August 14<sup>th</sup>
- Thank you for participating



# Comment Session

## Written Comment Session

*Draft EA for Eelgrass Habitat Expansion*

All comments will be part of the public  
record



# How to Provide your Comment During Virtual Meeting

- Zoom desktop or mobile application:
  - Click on Q&A icon
  - Type your comment
  - Comment will be received by the moderator
  - Moderator will confirm receipt of your comment



# Meeting Summary I

- *This has been the virtual public meeting for the Navy's proposed eelgrass habitat expansion project in San Diego Bay, CA.*
- *The presentation is over, but the Navy is accepting your written comments tonight until 7:00 pm, or by August 14<sup>th</sup> via email/mail.*
- *This presentation and the Draft EA are available at this website:*  
<https://www.cnmc.navy.mil/navysouthwestprojects.>





## Meeting Summary II

- *The Navy has prepared a Draft EA and provided a summary of the Draft EA at this meeting.*
- *The Navy requests public review and written comments on the Draft EA.*
- *The Navy welcomes and appreciates substantive written public comments on the Draft EA.*



# Meeting Summary III

- *Comments must be postmarked or received by Monday, August 14, 2023*
- *Submit comments:*
  - *Via email:*  
*navfac\_sw\_eelgrass\_ea\_public\_outreach@us.navy.mil*
  - *Via mail:*  
*Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command Southwest*  
*Attention: Code EV26.SVR*  
*750 Pacific Highway (12th Floor, Environmental)*  
*San Diego, CA 92132-5190*
  - *Or provide written comments at this meeting*



## Meeting Summary IV

- *Zoom desktop or mobile application:*
  - *Click on Q&A icon*
  - *Type your comment*
  - *Comment will be received by the moderator*
  - *Moderator will confirm receipt of your comment*



Thank You

Thank you for participating  
This concludes our presentation

