EXAMINING ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP IN GATES COUNTY, NC: 
THE COMPETING INTERESTS OF SOCIAL CAPITAL AND MILITARY 
READINESS

by

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ABSTRACT

Examining Environmental Stewardship in Gates County, NC: The Competing Interests of Social Capital and Military Readiness

Citizens of rural Gates County, NC, have organized to oppose the Navy’s siting of an outlying landing field (OLF) in their community, which would potentially displace people from their homes and businesses, restrict access to recreational land, and introduce noise and pollution. The Navy claims that it needs an OLF supplemental to its NAS Oceana base in Virginia to support its mission of military readiness. This study examines the myriad perspectives of the issue through the lens of environmental justice. Using case law, oral arguments, Navy environmental policy documents, and press interviews with Navy personnel attached to the OLF project, I draw a profile of the Navy as a utilitarian environmental citizen. In contrast, video interviews with members of the citizens’ group give voice and dimensionality to a population with a deep sense of community and a demonstrated history of environmental stewardship—and that defines itself as fiercely patriotic. Finally, I chart the trade-offs involved in pursuit of a resolution. Through my association with the Duke Environmental Law and Policy Clinic, findings from this study will contribute to a “citizens’ EIS” being conducted by the citizens group, simultaneous to the Navy’s EIS.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. Michael K. Orbach of the Duke University Marine Lab, for his guidance and advice over the past two years. I also thank Ryke Longest and the Duke Environmental Law and Policy Clinic for including me in the clinic’s research in Gates County, as well as Steve Roady and Charlotte Clark for their interest and assistance.

Above all, I acknowledge the members of Citizens Against OLF who invited me into their community and shared their histories, thoughts, and opinions with me. I hope this document proves worthy of their confidence.
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I. INTRODUCTION

To understand a particular rational comprehensive process, that is, how a specific issue moves through the public policy system, we must understand how the parties to the debate make decisions. This study examines an issue forged by both top-down and bottom-up forces. The US Department of the Navy (the Navy) believes that to fulfill its mandate of military readiness, some impacts on environmental quality must occur. Citizens of a targeted North Carolina rural county do not share this view; they believe that when social capital, which by their definition includes environmental stewardship, will be sacrificed in pursuit of debatable military support operations, then the criteria for evaluating military need must be strict and held to a high standard, including the potential abandonment of the military plans. For the Navy, the trade-offs are clear; for the citizens group, the decision-making process behind the Navy’s position is flawed, and the group will monitor statutory requirements of environmental law to ensure that the Navy has appropriately weighted and considered its alternatives, with which they reserve the ultimate right to disagree.

The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, NEPA, provides one area of engagement for the two competing interests. NEPA requires the Navy to conduct an environmental impact statement (EIS) before initiating a major project.\textsuperscript{1} Included in the Navy’s Notice of Intent to prepare the EIS was the action to “assess socioeconomic

\textsuperscript{1} 42 U.S.C. § 4332(2)(C).
consequences” 2 of any land acquisition; my research offers a perspective on that assessment.

This study appraises environmental values held by both stakeholders. After providing background to the OLF issue, a broader societal context is presented within a framework of human, institutional, and biophysical ecologies. Following is a discussion of research design and methods. The analysis section begins with a characterization of the Navy as an environmental steward, drawing on public records, documents, and case law. The results suggest an internal framework within which Gates County citizens and the public at large place current and future Navy statements and proposed actions. In other words, it identifies the “baggage” that the Navy, as a highly visible federal agency, brings to the table. Next, a publicly available audio interview with pertinent Navy personnel (Appendices A–C) and personal videotaped interviews with members of the Gates County-based group Citizens Against OLF (Appendix D) are analyzed, providing a vivid snapshot of attitudes and perceptions held by players in the debate in spring 2009. Finally, I offer observations and recommendations to help move the discussion forward.

There is a subtheme to my research that emerged during analysis which is related to one issue of contention: the “sound” of environmental justice. The noise of the jet engines is a multidimensional phenomenon. I recognized that the sources of analysis reflected successive dimensionalities of “sound”, yet in an inverse direction from the usual societal power structure. Documents, including Supreme Court decisions, are one dimensional; the Navy interview is two dimensional; and the videotaped interviews with the citizens are three-dimensional. In representing the three constituents in these media, I

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2 Department of the Navy. “Notice of Intent To...Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for Construction and Operation of an Outlying Landing Field...and To Announce Public Scoping Meetings.” Federal Register 73, no. 69 (Apr. 9, 2008): 19196-7. wais.access.gpo.gov; accessed Feb. 28, 2009.
sought to challenge the traditional representation of authority and give a greater presence to the people whose lives will be most affected by the OLF, but who do not historically have a broad platform of communication.

*Usefulness of Study*

The study will contribute to a “citizens’ environmental impact statement” that Citizens Against OLF is conducting simultaneously with the Navy’s EIS. Duke University’s Environmental Law and Policy Clinic, a joint undertaking of the Law School and the Nicholas School of the Environment, is assisting the group in compiling and organizing relevant information. This research will contribute to an examination of the socioeconomic impacts of siting the OLF in Gates County.
II. BACKGROUND

A. MILITARY READINESS

The US Navy runs readiness and preparation training at Naval Air Station (NAS) Oceana, located in Virginia Beach, VA. NAS Oceana’s primary mission is to train and deploy the Navy’s fighter-attack squadron, which includes F/A-18E/F Super Hornets. As a result of decisions made after publication of the 2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment (BRAC) Commission Report, use of NAS Oceana has increased to approximately 219,000 training operations annually, and friction with the local community over excessive noise generated by the 120dB-producing Super Hornets has intensified. This is particularly acute in the summertime when there is a reduced window for nighttime Field Carrier Landing Practice (FCLP), considered crucial to simulate real-world experience. There are two additional factors that provide incentive for the Navy to seek supplemental training airspace. The city of Virginia Beach has allowed commercial and residential development near the NAS Oceana perimeter, compromising the use of the base for training, and planes flying out of Langley Air Force base cause competition for airspace in the area. Options are limited by the Super Hornet’s relatively short operating range, 400nm, and combat endurance, 135 minutes.

The Navy identified five potential Outlying Landing Field (OLF) sites in October 2000, including one in Washington and Beaufort counties, NC, but withdrew those options in January 2008 after legal challenges and congressional withdrawal of funding. Based on site recommendations from the governors of North Carolina and Virginia, the

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Navy then immediately announced a new slate of options, and on April 9, 2008, published a Notice of Intent (NOI) in the *Federal Register* to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) “in accordance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA); the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations implementing NEPA (40 CFR 1500-1508); and Department of the Navy procedures for implementing NEPA (32 CFR 775).” The EIS will “address environmental consequences associated with construction of the airfield … [and] assess socioeconomic consequences associated with acquisition of property and property interests for the OLF and any relocation of residences within the proposed airfield safety and projected high-noise zones.” One of the proposed sites is in Gates and Hertford counties, NC, called the Sandbanks site. Over 90 percent of the proposed core area lies in Gates County, and this study concentrates on the effects of the proposed OLF only in Gates County. Of the other four sites, one is also in eastern North Carolina (the Hale’s Lake site in Camden and Currituck counties) and three are in Virginia (the Dory and Mason sites in Southampton and Sussex counties; and the Cabin Point site in Southampton, Sussex, and Prince George counties). (Figures 1-3)

**Figure 1: Proposed OLF Sites**

![Map of Proposed OLF Sites](http://www.olfeis.com/alternatives.aspx)

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Figure 2: Location of Gates County

Source: http://www.epodunk.com/cgi-bin/genInfo.php?locIndex=19306

Figure 3. Proposed site of Navy OLF in Gates County.


Note: Rectangle represents an 8,000-ft-long runway. Oval represents the essential "core" area of restricted usage and suggested appropriation.
B. SOCIAL CAPITAL

Research shows that for society to flourish, citizens need not only physical and human capital, but also social capital. In this study, the term refers to the connections among individuals, i.e., “social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them.” There is evidence that the greater a community’s social capital, the easier it is for its members to come together in collective action. Immediately after the Navy’s January 2008 announcement, a group of local Gates County citizens formed Citizens Against OLF, believing the Navy had not recognized the county’s rich social capital, or sufficiently valued its cultural heritage, which includes 24 North Carolina Century Farms, 6 sites registered on the National Historic Register, ante bellum African American cemeteries, Native American land, and a newly designated state game land.

The group contends that the Navy expansion needs are a direct result of poor land-use planning in Virginia Beach, VA, site of NAS Oceana and NALF Fentress. In 2004, “nearly one-third of [Virginia Beach’s] 439,467 residents live[d] in areas where the Navy views housing as incompatible with the base’s mission.” Encroachment on existing facilities has resulted in an intolerable exposure to noise for current Virginia Beach residents, who since 2001 have brought at least two successful class-action lawsuits against the Navy over jet noise. To put the sound levels in perspective, as one judge did in a case described below, “Decibels are a logarithmic measurement, such that an

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10 Id. at 4.
11 Id.
increase of 10 dB is equivalent to a tenfold increase in acoustic energy.... OSHA requires hearing protection to be used where workers are exposed to a sound level of 90 dB for eight hours or 110 dB for as little as thirty minutes. 29 C.F.R. § 1910.95(a).”

As required by NEPA, the Navy began scoping hearings in Gates County in May 2008. It expects to publish a draft EIS in July 2009, hold a 60-day comment period, and publish a record of decision in summer 2010.

C. Societal Context

The societal context of social capital and military readiness can be examined within a framework of human, institutional and biophysical ecologies. (Figure 4) This section briefly discusses each of these ecologies as it relates to the proposed OLF in Gates County, further distilling human ecology to the federal, state, and local levels. Also, by demonstrating the integrative nature of the ecologies across a horizontal and vertical landscape, I lay the groundwork to present the complexity of interlocking interests before capturing the views of a few people in a particular time and place.

1. Human Ecology

a. Federal Level

The human ecology encompasses not only the citizens of Gates County, but also a huge number of individuals who make up federal, state, and local governance bodies. The Navy is a federal entity, and as such the proposed OLF comes under federal jurisdiction,

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which in many cases supersedes state and local laws. At the federal level, the human face of the issue includes: Secretary of Defense Robert Gates; Secretary of the Navy Donald Winter; members of the Navy’s Judge Advocate staff; members of Congress, which allocates and approves military spending; President Barack Obama; the Council on Environmental Quality, chaired by Nancy Sutley, which advises the president on environmental policy and is charged with administering NEPA; the nine justices of the Supreme Court; federal departments and agencies personnel, such as Lisa Jackson,

Figure 4. Ecological Landscape of Gates County. On either side of the biophysical ecology lie competing ideologies of military readiness and social capital.

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18 U.S. Constitution, art. 4, cl. 2.
administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency; Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar, with jurisdiction over the Fish and Wildlife Service and endangered species habitat; Secretary of Commerce Gary Locke; Under Secretary of Commerce and Administrator for National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Dr. Jane Lubchenco; the justices of federal district courts; and staff of government oversight committees such as the Office of Management and Budget and Government Accountability Office.

My purpose in listing names and titles is to underscore that these people and institutions don’t make the public policy and effect the rules and regulations that influence the OLF decision-making process in a vacuum, that there is not a monolithic government separate from the people who elect it, and that officials are expected to reflect the values of a culture at any given time. Many of the names listed above have changed in the last few months, and the slate of officeholders and appointees can be surmised to accurately mirror our society in 2009.

b. State Level
North Carolina promotes itself as being the “friendliest state to the military.” It is the site of seven active military installations and 14 Coast Guard stations, and home to over 120,000 troops. The economic benefits to the state and its citizens are significant: in 2007, military activities contributed $23.4 billion, or 7 percent, of North Carolina’s state GDP. Nearly 417,000 individuals, or 8 percent of total state employment, are either directly employed by the military or Coast Guard, or have jobs that are supported by

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military installations in North Carolina.\textsuperscript{21} The importance of the military to the economy is evident in the cautious approach elected officials have employed when taking a stance against military ambitions. On March 31, 2009, the North Carolina House Judiciary Committee unanimously approved a bill\textsuperscript{22} that would rewrite the existing Federal Reservation Statute § 104-7 (a1) to include the following text:

\begin{quote}
...the consent of the State is not given to the acquisition by the United States, by purchase, condemnation or otherwise, of any land in a county or counties which have no existing military base at which aircraft squadrons are stationned, for the purpose of establishing an outlying landing field....
\end{quote}

The bill would allow the military to site an OLF at Cherry Point or Camp Lejeune, for example, but not in Gates County. The bill has now been presented to the House Homeland Security Committee, and if passed, will proceed to the floor of the House for a vote. Even if it passes into North Carolina law, it could face stiff constitutional opposition at the federal level.\textsuperscript{23}

c. \textit{Local Level}

Local constituents of the human ecology include a private timber company, full-time residents of the county, retired and active members of the military, tourists, sportsmen and -women, members of Gates County governments, congregations, associations, academic researchers, and members of the citizens’ advocacy group, some of whom will be given voice and image later in this study.


2. Biophysical Ecology
The proposed OLF site is included in the Chowan River Basin, part of the Albemarle-Pamlico Sounds Region, the second largest watershed in the United States. In an example of integrated interests, the Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Program (APNEP) is a cooperative effort jointly sponsored by the NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the US EPA in cooperation with the Virginia Department on Conservation and Recreation (DCR). Nearly 100 program partners are listed on APNET’s website, including US Fish and Wildlife and NOAA, but other than the Army Corps of Engineers, the branches of the military are conspicuously absent.

The OLF site overlaps the boundary of the Chowan Swamp Game Land, a 27,516-acre area of swamp and high ground that straddles the upper Chowan River for about 10 miles. Recently, the Nature Conservancy (TNC) purchased a 6,500 piece of swamp land from International Paper that has now become part of the game land. In 2007 Congress passed a bill sponsored by North Carolina Sen. Richard Burr that included $3 million to help purchase the site from TNC, matched by the state through the Clean Water Management and Natural Heritage trust funds. The North Carolina chapter of Environmental Defense Fund, the North Carolina Coastal Federation, and the Pamlico-Tar River Foundation contributed another $100,000, and North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission reimbursed the Nature Conservancy using these grants. All of

25 Id.
these organizations, departments, and agencies have a vested interest in ensuring the health, viability, and accessibility of the Chowan Gamelands.

The list of flora and fauna found in the area is impressive: Long leaf pine, one of the rarest ecosystems in North America, Atlantic white cedar, swamp tupelo, red maple, bald cypress, beech, a variety of oak species, and pine/oak scrub, prairie cordgrass, which is rare in North Carolina, wild rice, and arrow arum are all found in the area. The Chowan River is home to many breeding migratory birds, such as the prothonotary and Swainson's warblers, as well as non-migratory species such as wild turkey, bald eagles, and the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker. Mammals such as black bear, bobcat, river otter, and deer are also present. At present, birders, hikers, hunters, kayakers, horseback riders, and everyday appreciators of nature have unrestricted access to the gamelands.

On February 28, 2009, the North Carolina Wildlife Federation passed a resolution titled “Opposition to OLF at Sandbanks and Hale’s Lake,” due to the “negative and potentially irreversible wildlife and environmental damages they would cause.” The resolution stressed the value of the Chowan River and recognized the contributions of local citizens:

WHEREAS, the Chowan River, the cornerstone for the Chowan Gamelands and bottomlands, supplies most of the fresh water to the Albemarle Sound.... In 1979, the Chowan became the first river basin in NC to receive the “nutrient sensitive waters” classification. For the past two decades, concerned citizens and scientists have worked to restore water quality. The State’s Natural Heritage Program considers 100 miles of the Chowan and its tributaries significant aquatic habitat

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because of diverse, rare and vulnerable populations of freshwater mussels. The Chowan is also a critical and vast commercial and recreational fishery; 

and,

WHEREAS, the proposed Sandbanks site would include 435 acres of the Chowan and 1,629 acres of its watershed wetlands thus the North Carolina Division of Water Quality has recommended it should not be pursued and, in fact, this site was de-listed from considerations previously in 2003 due to federally protected species and potential bird “flight safety” concerns.
III. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

A. RESEARCH DESIGN

In order to assess environmental stewardship in Gates County, it is necessary to consider temporal realities, past and present, and so my research design straddles two schools of thought: historical criticism and phenomenology.\(^{30}\) Within these established theories I have employed at least three genres\(^{31}\): narrative, heuristic inquiry, and socio-communication. Overall, I worked in a subjective paradigm\(^{32}\) focusing on context and words to help address my research question:

> What are the perceptions and attitudes of members of:
> 1) a Gates County citizens’ group opposing a Navy OLF in their county, and
> 2) the Navy team charged with selecting an OLF site.

1. Historical Criticism

The Navy’s history of activity in Gates County ends with the Civil War and so I have conducted a critical historical assessment of the Navy’s environmental stewardship in other locations to characterize the Navy as an institution and as an environmental citizen. *Environmental citizenship* refers to the principle that individuals and organizations have environmental rights and duties as residents of the planet to consider their impact.\(^{33}\) To some, these duties “are owed, non-reciprocally, by those communities that occupy unsustainable amounts of ecological space to those who occupy too little.”\(^{34}\) As an

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\(^{34}\) Andrew Dobson, *Citizenship and the Environment* (Oxford University Press, USA, 2004).
organization with global environmental impact, the Navy certainly has opportunity to demonstrate its considered citizenship.

2. Phenomenological Study

Following the historical critique, I then conducted a phenomenological study of present-day discourse relating to the OLF siting to draw a contemporary, real-world snapshot. Members of the citizens group have had the opportunity to demonstrate environmental stewardship in the Sandbanks, and thus I examined their personal recounts of contributions to the well-being of Gates County, as well as their attitudes and perceptions of how the OLF would change their community. The Navy team charged with making a site recommendation to the secretary of the Navy has had opportunities to speak publicly about the issue, and I drew on one interview to assess their attitudes and perceptions.

B. METHODS

1. Historical assessment

a. Navy as Environmental Citizen - Text Analysis

My historical assessment of the Navy as an environmental steward was based on text analysis. I searched online using keyword combinations, which led to legal and administrative documents stating the Navy’s required environmental compliance, the US Navy environmental mission statement and guidelines, and many blogs and newspaper articles on the OLF issue. A similar search on Duke’s library search engine provided more academic-oriented books and articles, including theoretical issues of the military’s environmental compliance during times of war and peace and how to sustain military readiness in peacetime.
Two of my law classes at Duke had discussed a case that was the precursor to the Navy’s current OLF initiatives, *National Audubon Society v. Department of the Navy.*\(^{35}\) I investigated that case, and relevant commentary, for clues to the Navy’s environmental character. As I began my research for this project last October, a high-profile case concerning the Navy’s noncompliance with NEPA reached the Supreme Court. I chose to analyze that decision, *Winter v. NRDC,*\(^{36}\) as well as oral arguments, because its currency provided a very topical barometer of the Navy’s environmental practices.


a. Tidewater News *Interview with Navy Team*

On January 26, 2009, three members of the Navy team charged with overseeing the OLF siting process sat down with two reporters of the *Tidewater News*, published in Franklin, VA, for a two-hour interview. Franklin City is adjacent to Southampton County, VA, where the Navy has identified two potential sites for the OLF, and is 35 miles north of the proposed Sandbanks, NC, site. The Navy team was comprised of Rear Admiral David Anderson, vice commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command; Mark Anthony, director of fleet ashore readiness; and Ted Brown, media relations officer, U.S. Fleet Public Affairs Office. Most of the conversation addressed general issues related to the EIS process, and even topics that were specific to the Virginia sites had parallels with the Sandbanks situation and so proved instructive. It is interesting to note that in my conversations with Gates County residents, not only with my interviewees, many mentioned that because of

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the geographical division provided by the Chowan River and Albemarle Sound, the community favors news sources from Virginia.

The interview was recorded and published on the News’s website. I downloaded the audio files (Appendices A–C), transcribed the interview almost in its entirety, and then coded the dialogue as described below. I also traveled to Virginia Beach to experience the Super Hornet take-off and landing (TOL) exercises at NALF Fentress firsthand.

b. Videotaped Interviews

i. Population selection and sampling strategies

Citizens Against OLF is a client of the Duke Environmental Law and Policy Clinic, and I gained access to its members through my informal association with the clinic. I first traveled to Gates County with the law clinic in October 2008 and met members of the group. In subsequent meetings at the law school, I approached the group’s leadership with the idea of conducting videotaped oral histories with some of its members. We agreed that the project could contribute to the “citizens’ EIS” that the group was conducting, concluding that it would add data to the “socioeconomic” and “social capital” concerns identified by the Navy in its Notice of Intent.

I have trained and worked as a film- and videomaker and am comfortable in the medium. Although I have extensive experience conducting interviews, I was aware I was working in an academic setting and within a social science worldview, and so conducted a literature review on oral history techniques. While that information didn’t radically alter


38 I had difficulty understanding Mr. Anthony and summarized his dialogue if I was unable, after repeated listening, to confirm content. This gentleman spoke far less than the admiral or Mr. Brown, and I do not think my analysis suffered from lack of a verbatim transcript.
my approach, it was useful as a refresher course on successful interviewing techniques, and valuable in reaffirming the need for transparency that I was trying to bring to the process. It also clarified that I was not engaging in oral histories, but semi-structured interviews.

Once I had the support of both the law clinic and the citizens’ group, I applied to Duke’s Internal Review Board for approval. At that stage, underlying theoretical queries that I expected would inform my interviews included:

- Is there an inclusive, underlying ethos to the community?
- How does access to and use of the land define the community?
- How do individuals identify their investment in the land?
- How does this area define their individual history and future?
- Are there distinguishing societal characteristics in that attachment?
- How does Sandbanks contribute to a sense of family, community, and nation?
- How do participants view the military?
- How has the Navy’s selection of Gates County as a potential OLF site affected lives?
- How has opposing the OLF changed the community?

Simultaneously, I compiled sampling parameters for an over-18 population based on 2006 US Census data. Categorical data disclosed the following statistics:

- Gender: 50% female/50% male
- Race: 35% African-American, 60% Caucasian, and 5% Native American and Hispanic
- Education: 10% college degree, 70% high school diploma, 20% grade school
- Age: 25% over 65, 75% 18–65 (adjusted for my desired over-18 population).

Once I secured IRB approval for the project and the participant consent form, I submitted my sampling criteria to the leadership of the citizens’ group. They were able to compile a large pool of residents that met all the criteria except “age,” telling me that the residents of the Sandbanks area, who would be most affected by the OLF, skewed older

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39 Titles read are included in the References section of this study.
than the county norm. After consulting with a Duke professor, I decided to go ahead with the group as presented. I then sent a biographical “wish list” of interviewee characteristics to the group leadership, composed in part with general characteristics that could give information about social capital, and in part with the reality of the OLF siting. The list is printed below.

- Owns a “Century Farm”
- Hunts and fishes in the area
- Farms (including bees)
- Has extensive family in the community
- Is new to the area
- Moved away and came back
- Has lived in Gates County his/her entire life
- Has a military background
- Has a child who is or recently was in the military
- Was baptized in the Chowan River
- Would have to move because of the OLF
- Would not have to move because of the OLF, but would be affected by the noise
- Would have restricted access to their traditional lands if the OLF is built

My primary contact from the citizens’ group worked very hard to accommodate my requests, and set up 10 interviews to take place over four days, February 21–23 and February 27, 2009. A map showing where my interviewees lived in relation to the planned runway and core section of the OLF is reproduced as Figure 5 below.

My contact accompanied me to each interview, made the introductions, and then left me alone with the participants. Some interviewees invited available family members to attend, and I spoke with 17 people in total. All of these additional participants were younger family members, and so my final sampling pool generally matched the census data in the age category.
I was not as fortunate in two other sampling categories, race and education. One expected participant, who is part Native American, decided the topic was too painful and declined to be interviewed, which meant my pool was composed of Caucasians and African-Americans and I did not have a representative of the other 5 percent of the population. I also discovered I had an unusually educated group, including one retired and two practicing schoolteachers, a retired economist, a forester, and a former agricultural consultant. Of the 17 people I spoke with, 9 had college degrees, 4 did not,
and 4 are “status unknown.” When I mentioned this discovery to my primary contact, she was surprised, but said, people aren’t valued in the community for their level of education, and that information is generally unknown.

Following the interviews, one person requested that I not use the videotape as portions of it would be available on the Internet, but offered that I use the information learned from the session as background. Five other people were uncertain about signing the consent form. I encouraged them all to review the document at their leisure and only sign it after considering the experience and ramifications. Two of those people returned the signed form to me within the week; the other three did not. The net result was 13 participants and eight videotape sessions.

ii. Fieldwork

The videotaped interviews lasted one hour each. Before setting up my lights and camera, I explained my project to my participants and answered any questions they had. I reiterated that I was not looking for any “correct” answers, that what was important to me was to hear their stories of life in Gates County. I also assured them that if they said anything that on reflection they would prefer not be included in the study, I would delete the dialogue from the master videotape and from my notes.41 Also, mindful of the access that was provided to me by Citizens Against OLF and of the power of visual media on the Internet, I considered how my interviews could be useful to the group in a more immediate way than contributing to the “citizens’ EIS.” I decided that once I had finished my semi-structured discussion, I would ask participants for a “soundbite” in which the interviewee spoke directly to the camera, introduced him or herself and gave any other information or opinion that they wanted the world at large to know, and that the citizens’

41 Two participants took me up on that offer, and I obliged as promised.
group could use on its website. Every interviewee agreed to do so.\footnote{The results can be viewed on YouTube in \textit{Voices of Gates County} at \url{http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kak03ktj3A}.} I did not include the “soundbite” in my analysis.

The discussion began with the request: “Tell me how you came to Gates County.” From there, the conversations ranged widely. I tried to ask a minimum of questions, and only interjected if the topic under discussion was obviously exhausted. I sometimes referred to what another participant had observed. Most my references to the Navy were based on information that the interviewee told me he or she already had. I asked what contact the person had had with the Navy, and based on that information confined my Navy-related questions to the participant’s personal experience. As I had visited NALF Fentress in Virginia Beach immediately prior to conducting the interviews, I discussed my trip and my observations about noise levels and development with some participants.

At about the 45-minute mark in my videotape, I asked the participant what he or she would like to discuss that I hadn’t thought to ask, or that was unrelated to a topic we’d discussed. At about 50 minutes, I asked to do the “soundbite.” I’m not sure why, but this invariably led to another story about life on the Sandbanks that had nothing to do with the Navy or the OLF. I gave an end-of-tape warning at 58 minutes, and turned the camera off when the tape ran out. On only one occasion did I start a second tape, and that was to catch the final two minutes of a story about Confederate activity in the Sandbanks area.
c. Content analysis procedures

1. Coding Structure
My analysis began with transcribing the Navy audio interview. This was a practical decision, as I was waiting for IRB approval to proceed with the video interviews, and the Navy interview was available. I initially coded by topic, category, and item, as shown in the example below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Tape</th>
<th>TC* Start</th>
<th>TC Finish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pilot Training</td>
<td>Alternatives</td>
<td>Offshore platforms</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>02:30</td>
<td>02:43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection process</td>
<td>Sites</td>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>23:14</td>
<td>23:50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Preliminary Coding Template

While this was useful for organizing the data, deeper subtext quickly emerged, such as “frustration at misunderstanding,” “excitement about innovation,” “pride in service,” and “optimism and confidence.” Because of the iterative nature of transcribing, vocal quality definitely influenced this level of coding. I noted these observations in the margin of my hard copy.

I then worked with the video data, watching and indexing tapes. This is a loose transcription technique that accounts for the entire videotape by time code, but only transcribes the interview verbatim at certain points. I was already well immersed in the Navy interview transcript, and when reviewing the videos comparative themes quickly emerged. As my goal was not to analyze on a topic level or to judge which side had more “truth” informing their opinions, I used that topical coding structure for organization, and then looked for more organic themes beneath. First, some attitudinal categories emerged, in which I identified three common themes: blood, soil, and time, and they existed in multidimensional combination with four conceptual relationships: family, community,
nation, and isolation. These, I realized, are the building blocks of social capital. My findings served to support my overarching analytic goal. The coding structure is explained further in Findings-Interview Analysis, below.
IV. FINDINGS – DISCUSSION

A. NAVY ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

1. The Sliding Scale Theory

Fig. 5. The Sliding Scale Theory

The Navy’s environmental ontology can best be represented by the sliding scale theory\(^{43}\) (Fig. 5), where as military necessity increases, environmental protection decreases. Adjudicating the speed and force of this momentum are environmental laws. With one exception,\(^{44}\) the military is not granted blanket exemptions from environmental law, but must consider and protect the environment. Exemptions are granted due to special circumstances and must be approved by the president or cabinet-level personnel as specified in the individual statute. Table 1 summarizes the major environmental laws and the authority responsible for granting a temporary exemption. This approach and the attendant complexities it places on a military commander’s ability to reconcile competing operational and environmental obligations has been characterized by military theorists as “death by a thousand cuts.”\(^{45}\) I have included NEPA in the table even though there are no military exemptions \textit{per se} in the statute. Remedy for NEPA violations is sought under


\(^{44}\) Id. (During time of war or declared national emergency, ships are exempt from pollution laws.)

the Administrative Procedures Act (APA),\textsuperscript{46} which charges courts to review “agency actions.” The APA then qualifies the definition of “agency” to exclude “military authority exercised in the field in time of war.” This presents the nexus of the argument: whose definition of military readiness for “time of war” should prevail when addressing the environmental impacts of that preparation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environmental law</th>
<th>Addresses</th>
<th>Exemption-granting authority</th>
<th>Rationale for exemption</th>
<th>Statute</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Noise</td>
<td>Noise pollution</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>“national security”</td>
<td>42 USC § 4901(b)(2)</td>
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<td>Hazardous waste</td>
<td>President</td>
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<td>33 USC § 1323(a)</td>
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<td>CWA</td>
<td>Clean water</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>“paramount interest to US”</td>
<td>42 USC § 7418(b)</td>
</tr>
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<td>CAA</td>
<td>Clean air</td>
<td>President</td>
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<td>42 USC § 6961(a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCRA</td>
<td>Solid waste</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>“paramount interest to US”</td>
<td>16 USC § 1456(c)(1)(B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CZMA</td>
<td>State coastal zone mgmt. programs</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>“paramount interest to US”</td>
<td>16 USC § 1456(c)(1)(B)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| ESA              | Endangered species (ES) | Interior  
|                  |                      | ES Committee  
|                  |                      | Defense           | “national security” | 16 USC § 1536(j)  
|                  |                      |                  |                      | 16 USC § 1536(e)(2)  
|                  |                      |                  |                      | 16 USC § 1536(j)  |
| NEPA             | Environmental policy | APA                        | "in the field in time of war" | 5 USC § 701(b) (1) (G)  |
|                  |                      | CEQ                       | "emergency circumstances" | 40 CFR § 1506.11 |

Table 1. Military Exemptions to Environmental Law\textsuperscript{47}

2. Navy Environmental Mission Statement

In April 2008, the Navy published its comprehensive environmental strategy.\textsuperscript{48} A stated purpose of the strategy is to “strengthen the vital link between our warfighting mission

\textsuperscript{46} 5 U.S.C. §§ 551 et seq.


and our responsibility to *safeguard the environment,*”\(^{49}\) which immediately prioritizes the Navy’s duties: a mission is stronger than a responsibility. The environmental vision is given as “sustaining our environment, protecting our freedom.” The text then goes on to rationalize the strategy: it “helps meet mission requirements, protects and enhances the environment where we live, work and train, builds equity with our internal and external stakeholders, manages and even reduces costs, and enhances internal and external awareness of our commitment to environmental stewardship.”\(^{50}\) Each point is elaborated on, yet only reinforces this very utilitarian approach to environmental stewardship. There are costs for failing to pursue proactive environmental preservation, and those costs – be they financial, status, or time – should be avoided. The document recognizes that the Navy “holds many of the nation’s natural resources in a public trust” and advocates going beyond compliance, encouraging all Navy and Marine Corps personnel to internalize the goal of environmental excellence. These are laudable goals, but the strategy qualifies that position by adding, “when warranted by the potential benefit to the environment and our mission.” If this document can be seen as the Navy’s value statement, then the prioritizing of mission and duty lends clarity to Navy decision-making processes: military readiness is part of its mission; environmental stewardship is secondary.

### 3. Navy Environmental Initiatives

The Navy takes great pride in its environmental initiatives and has met success on many fronts. NAS Jacksonville is incorporating Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) technologies into $350 million of new construction projects and working with the St. John’s Water River Management District to design a wastewater reuse

\(^{49}\) Id. Emphasis in original.  
\(^{50}\) Id.
system. At sea, plastic waste processors compress and store plastic trash, eliminating the discharge of plastics into the ocean. Oil and water separators serve to keep petroleum products from polluting the sea, hazard waste management systems reduce the generation and offload of hazardous waste, and antifouling paints serve to decrease hull drag and fuel consumption. Each year, the Secretary of the Navy gives environmental stewardship awards. Categories include Cultural Resources Management, Environmental Excellence in Weapon System Acquisition, Environmental Quality, Environmental Restoration, Natural Resource Conservation, and Pollution Protection. 2006 winners from North Carolina included Camp Lejeune for team or individual pollution prevention, and MCAS Cherry Point for pollution prevention, installation environmental restoration, and team or individual environmental restoration. Of interest, and consistent with my findings in examining Navy environmental strategy, financial savings were highlighted in discussing the awardees’ initiatives.

4. Washington County, NC v. US Department of the Navy

In 2004, the Navy announced plans to site an OLF in Washington County, North Carolina, offering rural residents the option of selling their land or having it condemned. The site was near the Pocosin Lakes Wildlife Refuge, which is host to nearly 100,000 waterfowl every winter. A coalition of birders, farmers, and hunters

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52 Id.
brought suit. Aware of the “reality of military readiness and national security,” the presiding judge was clear that “the primary issue in this case is whether…the Navy has thoroughly considered the environmental consequences of its proposed action as required by NEPA” and that “a fair and balanced application of the law must be achieved regardless of the outcome.” (emphasis added) The judge found that “the Navy acted arbitrarily and capriciously in determining that the impact of an OLF…on waterfowl would be minimal,” embracing an “inadequate methodology” in assessing potential impacts, selectively citing a 1972 report on the effects of Cessna aircraft on snow geese. The Navy is required to take a “hard look” at the issue, and failed to do so, spending minimal time at the site and ignoring its own pilots’ disfavor of the location because of potential bird strikes. The environmental consultant hired to do a bird strike analysis cautioned that his study took place too late in the year to be useful, but that the Navy ignored his advice. In addition, the Navy had “intentionally discredited” evidence that the existing facilities (NAS Oceana) could handle training if necessary. Also damning was the reverse engineering employed by the Navy: faced with friction with the communities around NAS Oceana and auxiliary field Fentress, the Navy split the Super Hornets between the two fields and then announced it needed a site that could host all the F/A-18E-Fs together. The judge found that a “predetermined conclusion…links to a

56 Washington County 357 F. Supp. 2d at 865.
57 Id.
58 Id.
59 Id. at 472.
61 Washington County 357 F. Supp. 2d at 877.
62 Id.
63 Id.
64 Id. at 904.
65 Id.
preferred course of action and is not the ‘hard look’ required by NEPA.” The court concluded that the Navy would not face irreparable harm by delaying development of the site until a “proper NEPA assessment is completed” but irreversible harm would be inflicted on the wildlife refuge. An injunction was granted, and upheld by the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals.

The Navy continued to press for an OLF at this site, even though test flights were suspended because of near misses with birds. North Carolina economic development groups urged the Navy to consider alternate facilities in the MCAS Cherry Point economic region, including Open Grounds Farms Oak Grove OLF. The Navy pressed on, issuing a supplemental EIS in February 2006, which prompted an avalanche of opposition at the state and federal levels. In May 2007, North Carolina Rep. G. K. Butterfield and Rep. David Price succeeded in adding language to the National Defense Authorization Act of 2007 that repealed the authorization of funds for an OLF at the proposed site in Washington and Beaufort counties. However, President Bush objected to sections of the legislation that addressed the war in Iraq and in December 2007 used a pocket veto to shelve the act. In January 2008 Congress again took up the measure with the goal of over-riding the veto, but on January 22, 2008, the Navy announced it was abandoning plans to build the OLF in Washington and Beaufort counties, and after seeking input from the governors of North Carolina and Virginia, had instead selected five other potential sites for its OLF, including the Sandbanks site in Gates County.

66 Id. at 903.
5. Winter v. NRDC

In 2006 the Navy announced plans to conduct large-scale training exercises off the coast of southern California (SOCAL). The exercises would occur between February 2007 and January 2009 and included training in the use of mid-frequency active (MFA) sonar, a tool useful in detecting modern quiet-running diesel electric submarines operations by generating underwater sound at extreme pressure levels, but which has a potential side-effect of harming, and possibly killing, marine life. The SOCAL training waters contain at “least 37 species of marine mammals.” In 2006 the Navy issued an environmental assessment stating that the training would not have a “significant impact” on the environment, and concluding that, under NEPA, it was not required to prepare a full environmental impact statement (EIS).

Plaintiffs, including the National Resources defense Council (NRDC) and filmmaker Jean-Michel Cousteau, argued that marine mammals were harmed by the training in violation of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 (MMPA), the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA), and the Coastal Zone Management act of 1972 (CZMA) and that the Navy was required to conduct an EIS before beginning training. A district court judge agreed, calling the Navy’s planned protective measures “woefully inadequate and ineffectual,” and imposed an injunction on the remaining SOCAL

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73 40 C.F.R. §§ 1508.9(a), 1508.13 (2007).
76 Id. at *30.
training, requiring the Navy to conduct an EIS.\textsuperscript{77} In an echo of \textit{Washington County}, the court also found the “Navy has argued that its [own] environmental assessment, on which it based its decision not to prepare an EIS, is methodologically flawed and inaccurate.”\textsuperscript{78}

On appeal to the Ninth Circuit,\textsuperscript{79} the court agreed that preliminary injunctive relief was appropriate, but remanded the case to the district court “to narrow its injunction.”\textsuperscript{80} The district court did so, and in January 2008 issued seven mitigation measures; the Navy appealed two of the restrictions.

In January 2008, the Navy then sought a presidential exemption to obligations under the CZMA, which was granted under 16 U.S.C. § 1456(c) (1) (B), with the president stating that “the use of mid-frequency active sonar in these exercises [is] in the paramount interest of the United States.”\textsuperscript{81} That same week, the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) “authorized the Navy to implement ‘alternative arrangements’” to NEPA in light of “emergency circumstances,”\textsuperscript{82} a provision that has been requested only 41 times since the regulations went into effect in 1978.\textsuperscript{83} Armed with presidential level exemptions, the Navy applied to the circuit court to vacate the injunction, and the circuit court remanded the action to the district court. The district court questioned the CEQ’s assumption of authority to lift the regulations\textsuperscript{84} stating that the “CEQ apprehended the phrase ‘emergency circumstances’ to refer to sudden,

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{77}] Id. at *34.
\item[\textsuperscript{78}] Id. at *16.
\item[\textsuperscript{79}] \textit{NRDC v. Winter}, 518 F.3d 658, 664 (9th Cir. 2008).
\item[\textsuperscript{80}] Id.
\item[\textsuperscript{84}] \textit{NRDC v. Winter}, 527 F. Supp. 2d 1216 (2008).
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
unanticipated events, not the unfavorable consequences of protracted litigation.”85 The district court also reviewed the constitutionality of the presidential CZMA exemption but did not rule on it.86 The Court of Appeals concurred,87 and questioned the Navy’s “cry of ‘emergency’”88 when it had planned the exercises two years prior to its CEQ petition. In a separate opinion, the circuit court modified two of the mitigation measures required by the circuit court and allowed the Navy to conduct its exercises if it conformed to those measures.89 However in March 2008, the Navy petitioned the Supreme Court for review, and certiorari was granted.

Oral arguments were held October 8, 2008. Justice Souter repeatedly sought a basis for the statutory authority of the CEQ’s actions, as:

Where was the statutory authority suspending the obligation to provide an EIS? You mentioned a regulation. Where in the statute does it say that the Council on Environmental Quality can dispense with this requirement?90

In the same vein, Chief Justice Roberts asked:

Why CEQ? I mean, NEPA doesn’t really give anybody any regulatory authority – EPA, CEQ. And it seems to me that CEQ is an odd entity to be doing this. They’re more or less an office in the White House, rather than a free-standing agency.91

Of the justices, only Justice Kennedy referenced the president’s CZMA exemption:

...the president had made a determination that this was in paramount interest of the United States. The Defense and Commerce Department jointly had made a determination that this is necessary for the national defense. And it seems to me, even if those determinations don’t resolve

85 Id. at 1229.
86 Id.
87 NRDC v. Winter, 518 F.3d 658, 681 (9th Cir. 2008).
88 Id. at 682.
91 Id. at 15, lines 5–20.
the EIS statement, they certainly must be given great weight by the district court in determining whether to continue the injunction.\footnote{Id. at 50, lines 6–13.}

In two telling comments, Justice Breyer tipped his hand to his position:

...When I think of the armed forces preparing an environmental impact statement, I think, the whole point of the armed forces is to hurt the environment.\footnote{Id. at 44, lines 6–9.}

And:

You are asking us who know nothing about whales and less about the military to start reading all these documents to try and figure out who’s right in a case where the other side says the other side is totally unreasonable. And the issue at law seems to be something that is going to last for two months.\footnote{Id. at 41–42, lines 22–3.}

In the final decision, the Court reversed the circuit court’s decision and vacated the injunction. Writing for the majority, Chief Justice Roberts stated that:

...the proper determination of where the public interest lies does not strike us as a close question.\footnote{Id. at *16.}

And:

...even if plaintiffs have shown irreparable injury from the Navy’s training exercises, any such injury is outweighed by the public interest and the Navy’s interest in effective, realistic training of its sailors.\footnote{NRDC v. Winter, 2008 U.S. Lexis 8343, *13 (No. 07-1239).}

But the chief justice mitigated the forcefulness of that statement by adding:

Of course, military interests do not always trump other considerations, and we have not held that they do.\footnote{Id.}
In her dissent, Justice Ginsburg, joined by Justice Souter, commented on the Navy’s compliance with NEPA, and her opinion could make anyone within the sights of a Navy federal action uneasy:

...the Navy thwarted the very purpose an EIS is intended to serve...98 the Navy’s actions undermined NEPA and took an extraordinary course.99...The Navy had other options. Most importantly, it could have requested assistance from Congress.100

Finally, as one commentator has noted, the Court’s “limited acknowledgement of NRDC’s arguments does not do justice to the record before the District Court, which contained thousands of pages of scientific evidence, expert declarations, and the Navy’s own internal documents.”101

6. Summary of Findings - Navy Environmental Stewardship

The Navy brings a utilitarian perspective to environmental stewardship. There are costs for failing to pursue proactive environmental preservation, and those costs – be they financial, status, or time – should be avoided. Driving all Navy actions is its mission to “maintain, train and equip combat-ready Naval forces capable of winning wars, deterring aggression and maintaining freedom of the seas.”102 If pursuing a high degree of environmental citizenship will help it attain that goal, then the support is there. Otherwise, environmental laws and regulations are seen as barriers to successfully fulfilling its duty. To answer a question posed earlier, whose definition of military readiness for “time of war” should prevail when addressing the environmental impacts of that preparation?, based on Winter and Washington County, the Navy clearly believes its

98 Id. at *36.
99 Id. at *39.
100 Id. at *41.
definition should prevail. One could assess the Navy’s environmental citizenship status as immature in terms of demonstrated responsibility, and based on an expectation of success in the courts, or when that route is unsuccessful or lengthy, political support at the federal level. The environment and citizens are clearly not the winners: the Navy has come to rely on its privileged position and treats NEPA as bothersome hurdle without truly engaging with the very people, land, and seas the Navy purports to protect. It is essential for activists to engage politically at the local level and not rely on the courts or environmental laws to protect them. The idea of social capital as an environmental component is given little attention in the Navy purview, and although one of the purposes of NEPA is to “encourage productive and enjoyable harmony between man and his environment,”¹⁰³ that is reduced to an assessment of socioeconomic repercussions of property takings in the current EIS and an inventory of cultural heritage.

**B. INTERVIEW ANALYSIS**

With this analysis as background, the discussion now turns to the attitudes and perceptions of members of Citizens Against OLF and the Navy team charged with making a site recommendation to the Secretary of the Navy. The entire *Tidewater News* audio interviews are included as Appendices A–C, and a compilation of the audio and video clips discussed are included, in order they are presented in the document, as Appendix D. Time codes for each are noted in the text. I encourage the reader to open Appendix D and watch and listen to the citizens and the Navy speak for themselves.

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¹⁰³ NEPA, 42 USC § 4321(2).
As I reviewed the audio and videotapes, I became very aware that even while topics, categories, and even my structured concepts of blood, soil, and time and family, community, nation, and isolation aligned between the Navy and members of the citizens group, the frame giving voice to a concept was often starkly different.

Frames are “are mental mechanisms by which we organize our thoughts, ideas and world views.... Our use of these mechanisms is generally unconscious, yet they critically color the reality we see in the world.”

The excerpts from the audio and video interviews presented here contrast the realities that the Navy personnel and the Gates County citizens live by. If, indeed, frames reveal an attitude toward a story, which “illuminates the relationship between its tellers and hearers,” it is clear that the Navy’s and citizens’ expected audiences bring a very different worldview to the experience.

As an example, the concept of time appears to have intrinsically different units for Rear Admiral Anderson and Ed Miller, one of the citizens:

I’ve been working this for a little over two years now as the sole lead for the Navy, Mr. Anthony’s been on this project for...eight years, Ted’s [Brown] been on it since ’01. We’ve got a lot of background and a lot of scar tissue here we’d be happy to share with you. R.A. D. Anderson [Appendix A, Navy Tape 1, 01:40] [Appendix D, 00:05–00:28]

This house was built for my great-great grandmother, who was named Texas Anna Parker. And I have a daughter now named Texas Anna Parker Miller. We live in the house that was built for her great-great-great grandmother. They’re buried out there in the cemetery by the road – my great-great-grandparents and my great-grandparents. And my grandparents are actually buried up there at Holy Neck. But we’ve been here a long time. E. Miller [Appendix D, 00:28–01:19]

The Millers have been in the Sandbanks since the 1700s.

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105 Katharine Young, “Frame and Boundary in the Phenomenology of Narrative,” in *Narrative Across Media*, ed. Marie-Laure Ryan (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 76.
1. FINDINGS

A fundamental finding is that while both sides recognize the negative effects the EIS process is having on people’s lives, they vary widely in their assessment of responsibility and possible solutions. In other words, what they have here is a failure to communicate.

The admiral speaks to this and talks about a high-level solution:

I’m very mindful what I’m doing to people at all five of these sites. I would do anything if I could accelerate this or get to where it’s just one site. Not only for helping me work on that economic solution or focusing my activity on one site, but to cut out the churn in people’s lives at the other sites. I’m incredibly mindful of that. One of the other by-products of this is we’re pushing hard...to try to do some type of lean Six Sigma type of activity with the way the federal government does EIS process.... Because we know what we’re doing to people’s lives, and we don’t like it. R.A. D. Anderson [Appendix C, Navy Tape 3, 40:10-40:57] [Appendix D, 01:20–01:53]

But at the ground level, there was a missed opportunity – by both the state and the Navy – to connect with citizens and local government in the very beginning phases of the OLF initiative. Cathy Jurnigan, who is married to a county official, explains:

We got a phone call that somebody from the media in Raleigh had called our county office and wanted to know how we felt about being put on an OLF list. People in Raleigh didn’t even have the respect for us and people in the Navy did not have the respect for us to contact us and let us know. They let us find out through the media. C. Jurnigan [Appendix D, 01:55-02:20]

Another citizen expressed his frustration at being excluded from the decision-making process:

Somebody in Raleigh, Governor Easley and his committee, put us on the list without our knowledge whatsoever. We didn’t know anything about it until the Navy was in here already telling us this. E. Harrell [Appendix D, 02:23–02:38]

The admiral’s frustration by the challenge of having a “focused discussion” can be more easily explained when one understands the citizens’ initial perception of the siting:
First of all, getting to having a focused discussion for each site is a challenge, but then getting that to where it goes beyond just the very vocal opposition right now, to everyone who could be affected, economically. That’s the challenge we’re facing right now. R.A. D. Anderson [Appendix C, Navy Tape 3, 20:00] [Appendix D, 02:40–02:57]

We feel betrayed, feel that was wrong, we should have had some foreknowledge that our county was being considered for not just—two separate sites in our county were considered. One of them came off when the shorter list was done, but still, to think that the county was up for two separate sites ...that’s unforgivable as far as I’m concerned. J. Ashley [Appendix D, 03:00–03:32]

Resident Debra Vaughan sought to explain the differences in approach between the Navy and the citizens of Gates County, weaving concepts of time, soil, and family:

I also understand that we come from two different ways of life. People that are in the military move all the time…. Whereas for us, we built this house and moved in it on our wedding night, and we’ve been here ever since, and it will be 29 years in June…. We have trees that... [are] over 100 years old... We try to keep it basically as nature would have it. We try to keep our land that way. D. Vaughan [Appendix D, 03:34-04:44]

Her husband had his own observations on how the interaction had proceeded so far:

... I wish the military would talk to us, and listen to us, and try to understand how we feel. They say they want to listen at us and they want to have dialogue with us. We have meetings, the Navy comes down, they want to show us what they want to do, but they won’t want to listen to why we don’t want it. They turn a deaf ear to it. They say we can make your life better, we can give you a few jobs, but we’d lose more than we’d gain. TC Vaughan [Appendix D, 04:46–05:22]

The admiral and Mr. Anthony spoke proudly of the skilled jobs that the OLF would bring to the area and their plans to prepare the communities to serve that demand,

We made a decision at our level - I was going to civilianize every one of the jobs that will support this field. About 62 jobs are going to be required to support this field.... These are not just cutting grass. These are some skilled jobs, and when we did the analysis of the economic impact it would have, it would raise the median salary across that county for almost every one of these counties we came into. So we started saying, well let’s
work with the community colleges to make sure that these jobs stay with the local people. That we’re not having people who would move in to take these jobs. So those are some of the things we started questioning, the paradigms we worked under before. *M. Anthony* [Appendix B, Navy Tape 2, 26:14 [Appendix D, 05:24–06:05]

But first the runway has to be built, and while there was a clear estimate on the number of jobs that effort would require, there were no guarantees that the labor pool would come from the impacted community.

This field, it’s going to bring, for over a three and a half year period for me to build it, it’s going to bring about five to six hundred jobs, and it’s going to bring over $200 million worth of building, construction-related stuff. *M. Anthony* [Appendix B, Navy Tape 2, 34:06 [Appendix D, 05:26–06:21]

... possibly we can make it so that the employment and jobs go to the folks living right there, and aren’t imported from folks living in Virginia Beach. *M. Anthony* [Appendix B, Navy Tape 2, 27:31 [Appendix D, 06:21–06:30]

I can’t promise – but what we can do, we can write in to the RFP, any company, if they were to hire local… you could make it so it is very much an incentive for a local contracting company to want to take this offer, take the job for this RFP, build the runway, benefit the local folks. *Anthony* [Appendix B, Navy Tape 2, 34:55-35:36 [Appendix D, 06:30–06:56]

The Gates County citizens were more concerned about losing the jobs that already exist in the community. As this clip shows, the concern was for the community’s present as well as its future:

We’ve got 13 people hired, that work, some are part-time, we’ve got 4 high school students. But that’s 13 jobs that won’t be here. That’s the other concern I had. I don’t know how many applications have been turned in this year, with the economy the way it is, adults as well as young people. We hire as many as we can. I know it’s going to hurt the county if we lose this business, Tar Heel BBQ, several farming operations.... I know Tar Heel at one time had at least 28 employees. And that’s a significant number in our little community of Eure – that’s a lot of jobs. *P. Johnson* [Appendix D, 06:55–07:52]

Since the 2007 announcement that Gates County had been selected as a potential OLF site, citizens have tried to get information on issues that were immediately
impacting their lives. Although the admiral said, “I’m trying to think of the things that keep popping up that if I were an individual who thought I was going to be affected I’d want to know the answers to,” citizens are apparently asking questions he hasn’t thought of yet. This is a clear example of a disconnect in framing construct.

Arnold Beard is within two years of completing a house that his wife designed and he has built by hand. Before beginning construction, Beard and his wife saved for over 10 years. He questioned how the Navy would value his in-progress home - not that he’s looking to sell. And he was concerned about his neighbors, as well.

A lot of people around here have lived here all their lives, and some homes have depreciated in value. Would they offer us double the market value at current conditions of their homes? Would they see this home as an uncompleted structure and condemn it, and offer me nothing? I don’t want their money. I want my home. A. Beard [Appendix D, 07:54–08:22]

Veterinarian Dr. Peggy Johnson was on the verge of expanding her practice when the news came about the OLF. She has been in professional limbo ever since.

I nixed the plan with the building because I wasn’t going to borrow the money to build a building I was going to have to leave in three years. And one reason was when I called the Navy, I called the governor’s office, I called the whole list to try to get answers, as to if I do put this building up, how are you going to compensate me for that? They say, we pay tax value. Well, most of us have paid lots more than tax value for our homes or our farmland, especially if you look at the tax value now, with the economy the way it is.

So I never got a straight answer from anyone as to how they really compensated someone for a business. I did a little bit better with the housing but not with the business. They said, well, you can relocate, but where am I going to go? Clients can’t drive but so far, and there’s just no compensation. They may purchase the building, but what about my practice? P. Johnson [Appendix D, 08:24–09:32]

Another discrepancy arose between the admiral’s public assurances that citizens would have access to the Chowan River, and the answers citizens got when they sought this information for themselves. According to the admiral,
Hunting and fishing. What we’re going to do is completely compatible with people who want to keep hunting and fishing any of this land. We don’t want to impact that. *R.A. D. Anderson* [Appendix C, Navy Tape 3, 00:00–00:10] [Appendix D, 09:33–09:42]

But either the admiral’s message wasn’t getting out to the community, or to people in his office who serve as the first line of contact:

> The Navy has never answered whether or not we would have access to these areas, or that people outside of this area would have access to the river and to enjoy the river and the gamelands and what’s around it. They’ve never answered that question. *E. Miller* [Appendix D, 09:44–10:05]

This leads to an observation that there seems to a forum for information exchange lacking between the Navy and impacted citizens:

> All I’m looking for is the opportunity to share the information and to have a meaningful dialogue, not “no OLF” debates. *R.A. D. Anderson* [Appendix C, Navy Tape 3, 56:44–56:56] [Appendix D, 10:07–10:15]

> ... It’s been hard for us to find out what’s going on. We’ve had to seek out information instead of information coming to us. *J. Ashley* [Appendix D, 10:17–10:25]

A stark contrast in perceptions on information exchange is exhibited in the following quotes from Admiral Anderson and Dr. Johnson.

> But again, all I can do is keep putting the information on the table. But there is no door closed. I don’t care if somebody has written me 15 letters telling me how much they hate me – I think that’s probably the high count right now – or why they hope I’ll go away or go to jail, if that person comes back and still wants to have serious dialogue, we will be on their doorstep tomorrow. *R.A. D. Anderson* [Appendix B, Navy Tape 2, 17:41–18:03] [Appendix D, 10:27–10:47]

> I think part of my suspicion was raised when I called all these people just trying to get answers... It’s very difficult when you get the runaround and you get no answers. And it wasn’t just that I didn’t like the answer they gave me, they didn’t give me an answer. *P. Johnson* [Appendix D, 10:49–11:03]

While the admiral didn’t address the issue of cemeteries, it was certainly on the citizens’ minds, as this clip with Carolyn Hurdle demonstrates:
We also have a lot of cemeteries. We have a lot of graveyards that are right in the zone. And the thing about it is that the Navy could not address to us when the question was proposed to them, “What happens to them? What happens to our people that we have planted, and we can go back and revisit, and we can pull up history from just the gravesite,” and they couldn’t answer that. C. Hurdle [Appendix D, 11:05–11:38]

The Navy has said that they would like to continue farming practices in the area, but with a caveat:

If there’s a landowner that wanted to keep farming...that’s fine. As long as he’s not planting crops that attract migratory waterfowl. And there are very few crops that do that. R.A. D. Anderson [Navy Tape 2, 30:27] [Appendix D, 11:40–11:53]

Unfortunately, one of those “very few crops” is farmed in Gates County. As farmer Ed Miller explained,

They don’t want any wheat, which we’ve gotten into. Wheat’s a profitable crop at the moment. The wheat and soybean system is also an awesome rotation for cotton. Our land will not support continual cotton like some areas of the nation will. Ours will not - you’ve got to rotate it to maintain high yields and wheat and soybeans is the best rotation to put cotton behind. That would be, we’d miss it greatly.... The other areas in Washington County, where they were talking about putting the OLF site, they were proposing no wheat to draw the migratory birds. You know the geese love young wheat. They pull it up and eat it. E. Miller [Appendix D, 11:55–13:04]

Another participant linked the results of this restriction to environmental stewardship:

One of the ladies at one of the scoping meetings said, well they can always plant cotton. We know historically that cotton wears out the land. That means a lot of fertilizers on the land, that means a lot of pollutants are going to end up in the Chowan River. Cause there’s going to be runoff. It’s not a good sound environmental practice; they need to plant different things, they need to rotate their crops with the corn and the soybeans and peanuts that add things back into the soil. C. Jurnigan [Appendix D, 13:06–13:39]

The admiral spoke starkly of the importance of live training for his pilots. It was, in a sense, his family, his “blood,” but he was also enough of an objective professional to
realize that what could drive the discussion at the national level was budget over lives lost.

Planes cost more, but lives are still important as they ever were. But I think the thing that got the visibility, unfortunately, was not the life and limb, it was the cost – now you have airplanes that are 50 million dollars up, and we can’t afford to take risks with them. R.A. D. Anderson [Appendix B, Navy Tape 2, 02:30] [Appendix D, 13:41–14:03]

For many of the citizens, “blood” is intertwined with soil and responsibility. In reviewing footage, this was one of the most moving concepts for me, where the ethos of this particular community seems clearly defined, and I think it’s worthwhile to give a few citizens their voice:

One of the things that bothers me so bad about it: when I decided to live in the county, stay in the county, I went to my parents and asked then for land to live on, and they were able to give me some land. But I have three children, my wife and I do, and they won’t be able to live on this land if they come ask me for some land to live on, I can’t give them any of this land because the OLF will have an easement on it saying no one can live there anymore. TC Vaughan [Appendix D, 14:04–14:33]

It’s like my daddy said... you don’t own anything unless you own a piece of dirt, and he said, they don’t make any more land. He was scared we were going to sell, He raised us all with the attitude, don’t ever sell the family farm. So we all made promises and it might be promises that we might not be able to keep, we made promises to our parents and our grandparents, that we were going to hold on to this piece of land. C. Jurnigan [Appendix D, 14:35–15:06]

It’s been hard for my father to hold onto that farm... he quit school and farmed that farm as a teenage, or a very young man, and provided for his family. And then as an adult he worked two jobs to continue to hold onto that farm and eventually buy it from his siblings... To see someone try to take that away from him, hurts me greatly. He did that so I would one day have it, and the last thing that I would want to happen to it, I would not want to be the generation that let it go. Or that couldn’t maintain it. That’s a terrible thing to think. He worked so hard for it, and I’m the one that could maybe drop the ball. And that’s hard. J. Ashley [Appendix D, 15:08–16:33]
It is ironic that one of the goals of NEPA is to “fulfill the responsibilities of each generation as trustee of the environment for succeeding generations.”

One topic that got both sides riled up was patriotism. In the videotaped interviews, in some cases I asked how people felt about the Navy’s characterizations of people opposed to the OLF, but in others, people offered their opinions before I brought up the issue. The following excerpts show how patriotism interacts with concepts of blood, soil, time family, community, and nation.

A Navy representative wants to remind the listener that there is a direct link between the nation’s sons and daughters, the wars they fight, and the reasons for those wars.

And the other thing I don’t want to see get lost is that the Navy does has a legitimate need for this. And our sons and daughters from these counties as well, aren’t necessarily always going to be the ones who fly the jets although some of them might, but there might be a soldier on the ground in Afghanistan or a SEAL on the ground in Afghanistan whose life is saved by one of these jets that was trained at this outlying landing field – I don’t want to see that get lost in the discussion either because, like the admiral said, we’re are not Virginia’s jets; these are America’s jets, and they’re here to defend everybody. T. Brown [Appendix C, Navy Tape 3, 1:07:13] [Appendix D, 16:35–17:07]

Of the citizens I spoke with, at least seven had children or grandchildren engaged in recent, current or pending military service. Older participants had parents and uncles who had served in WWII, and at least one participant served himself. One woman had recently collected soil from the Gates County family farm and given it to a cousin to take to France, where it was scattered over an uncle’s US military grave. A letter to the uncle telling him where the soil was from was read aloud and left on the grave. The woman was

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aware that Virginia supporters of the OLF had criticized the group for a lack of patriotism.

My granddad had four sons, they all served in WWII. One lost his life, one was injured. He never married, we think as a result of that. When I was small he slept in the bedroom next to mine and we heard him scream at night... So we are patriotic. I don’t think that my uncle that died or my uncle that was critically injured at the Battle of Anzio, which was a very bloody battle, I don’t think they would approve of a branch of the armed services taking their family land away. The reason I share that story is because I read all the articles and comments about the OLF and I get real discouraged when people say we are not patriotic. C. Jurnigan [Appendix D, 17:07–18:09]

Another citizen had a different interpretation of the word patriotic:

Being patriotic doesn’t mean that you have to give up what is rightfully yours...What I really think they saw in Gates County, they thought it was just a bunch of dumb farmers and rural people that didn’t know any better and that they could sneak it in and we wouldn’t fight for what was ours, and we were rural so we didn’t have a lot of people and we didn’t have a lot of money and that’s probably true, we don’t, but that doesn’t make what we have any less valuable. We have something that has been the heart of what all America wants, and that’s holding our family and our community close. J Ashley [Appendix D, 18:11–18:56]

One citizen remembered that the military had already used the Sandbanks for training:

As a little girl, I can remember...hearing shots or activity going on ...and I was like - ... “what in the world,” I was very small, I don’t even think I was in high school. But I can remember people saying that’s the army, doing their training on the Sandbanks. Now if the Navy wants to say, why would we not have their pilots trained? we’ve done our share, we’ve given our land in order for the military to train. I think we’ve done our due and they need to move on. C. Hurdle [Appendix D, 18:58–19:54]

Mr. Bonnie Boone’s service to the Navy was of a different nature, lasted 20 years, and that service is now on his mind:

I really enjoyed working for the Navy.... I went there in 1976, and I was there till ‘96, and that’s when I retired. And I worked building a submarine base down there in King’s Bay, Georgia. When I went down there they had one boat, one sub..., and they were dredging the channels because they weren’t deep enough to get your subs in, and now it’s the largest base in the world. But I helped start that base. And that runs through my mind. Bonnie Boone [Appendix D, 19:56–20:49]
At one point in the Navy interview, the admiral expresses his pride in the Navy’s capabilities around the globe. This is another example of the difference in scale in what the parties mean when they speak of community, and what the admiral sees when he looks at the future.

But if you look at what our carrier force has the ability to do, the sheer volume of aircraft we put on board, the amount of sorties, how many times we can launch and recover, the distances they can go, and we can put them anywhere in the world and replenish them.... that’s the reason what you see now is the number of Navy sorties being generated say today in Afghanistan. Afghanistan is not close to the coast. Navy’s flying over 50% of the sorties overhead in Afghanistan for the kids on the ground, the soldiers and sailors and marines on the ground right now. That’s the benefit, that’s what we get, you don’t have to go ask, Mother may I, can I borrow your field to put my air force in. ... and that’s the reason the president has called on us so many times. And we don’t see that trend changing. R.A. D. Anderson [Appendix B, Navy Tape 2, 06:02 – 07:33] [Appendix D, 20:51–21:51]

This, of course, could also be interpreted as a contrast between globalization and localism. Within localism, at a far more organic and historical level, and within coding attributes that cross all parameters, Mr. Bonnie Boone describes how his African-American grandmother’s family came to acquire land in Gates County, North Carolina, circa 1869.

My parents on my mother’s side, they were here at the beginning but they worked for these people – the Gatlins and the Langstons – they worked for them. Times got tight and they [landowners] decided to get rid of some of that land, so by my people working with them, they decided to let my people have that land instead of somebody else. Somebody that they knew, you know. So they bought that land, and we have had it ever since, that’s been over 130 years. Been 150 years I guess....It’s unusual, that’s right. Now you just buy land. Back then, we couldn’t get land. You had to have some mighty good people to let us have land. That’s how we got it. B. Boone [Appendix D, 21:56–22:57]

In terms of land stewardship, the citizens have a well-established record, validated by the State of North Carolina:
My husband’s been a very good steward of the land.... I spend many a Saturday with him making sure the pine trees were not being cluttered by the hardwoods so the long-leaf pine could come back. *D. Vaughan* [Appendix D, 22:58–23:12]

This really goes right along with how the state thought about the Sandbanks area. They decided to purchase that and preserve it because they saw an area up there that was much like it seemed to be when the first Englishman sailed up that Chowan River and saw it. It looks very similar – just like it did back then. The state decided it was an area worth conserving, worth preserving.... That’s no different from how we feel about it. *TC Vaughan* [Appendix D, 23:14–23:52]

And finally, citizens recognize the value the Sandbanks has to the greater population:

> Even people who don’t live here know and value the Sandbanks. That’s a great thing because it’s just like the Millpond. We don’t have an official site set up where you can control or count the number of people coming and going, I would say throughout my lifetime of being here living in Gates County and this area we probably have just as many people visiting the Sandbanks as they do visiting the Millpond. *C. Hurdle* [Appendix D, 23:53–24:28]

The interview analysis afforded the opportunity to identify attitudes and perceptions held by representatives of the citizens’ group and the Navy, resulting in a complex, multidimensional portrayal of the people involved. It is possible to note general trends in the analysis and apply those observations, taken from a single interview, to the dynamic OLF EIS process. This could provide valuable information about how interaction between the two groups occurs. There is then the option to offer recommendations for change that may effect a better outcome, if not for this situation, then for others like it in the future. My observations and recommendations are presented in the next section.
V. OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This examination of environmental stewardship in Gates County, NC, points to clear differences between the competing interests of military readiness and social capital, beginning with how each interest’s human representatives in this study, the Navy and members of Citizens Against OLF, incorporate environmental stewardship into their value systems. Further, on the field of engagement that NEPA provides, poorly structured or missing channels of communications are responsible for high levels of frustration on both sides. This is exacerbated by the distrust and reserve engendered by the Navy’s national reputation for avoiding the EIS process. Where a framework for communication does exist, the information made available by the Navy does not always address citizens’ needs. Sometimes this is because of faulty background research on Gates County, other times it is because the groups use different frames of discourse. Finally, the rich social capital of Gates County is inadequately valued by the NEPA EIS process, but fortunately, its vibrancy also accounts for the community’s advocacy and involvement in the political processes that can determine its future. Each of these points is elaborated on below, and a recommendation for action offered.

Observation - Environmental Stewardship

The Navy values environmental stewardship as a utilitarian factor in achieving military readiness. While the Navy has laudable environmental initiatives of its own, such as waste recycling and fuel efficient technologies, the cost savings these programs bring are valued more highly than the ethics of environmental citizenship. The Navy promotes awareness that it “holds many of the nation’s natural resources in a public trust,” but Winter v. NRDC proved that the question of where that public trust lies often tips in favor
of military readiness. The citizens, on the other hand, see environmental stewardship as an integral component of their highly valued social capital. This includes generational stewardship of the land, reflecting the great respect that people have for the sacrifices their forebears made to hold the land, and a continued expression of that ethic by saving for and building new homes that integrate well with the present social fabric. For the citizens, environmental stewardship of the Sandbanks extends beyond responsibility to immediate family and community but also considers the needs and enjoyment of a broader society.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It would be helpful for both sides to acknowledge their differences in defining environmental stewardship and its importance to their identity. At this point to the process, I do not see the realistic possibility that either party will be “won” over to the other’s ontology. By eliminating judgment, and accepting that there is a difference, both parties will arrive at an advantageous position to understand motives and action, reduce emotion-driven argument, and aid in coherent movement forward. Members of the citizens’ group of Gates County have enough personal experience with the military that I believe this level of understanding is partially possible.

**OBSERVATION - COMMUNICATION**

A communication gulf exists between the Navy and members of the citizens’ group. NEPA doesn’t specify guidelines for communication and in this situation there was no advance communication at all, which made the interaction begin on an adversarial note. The scoping meetings required under NEPA and the “OLFEIS” website maintained by the Navy have not proved to be robust communication channels, and citizens are
dependent on outside institutions such as the press, church, and advocacy groups to forge that conduit. If the Navy wants to focus on the big picture, and if the Navy truly wants to reduce “churn” in people’s lives, someone at the state or department level must focus on the individual throughout the process and not confine that attention to required meetings and the comment period. The time required to conduct a thorough biophysical assessment of the area is too lengthy to expect potentially affected citizens to live in isolation.

RECOMMENDATION

According to the CEQ publication *A Citizen’s Guide to the NEPA: Having Your Voice Heard*, it is in a community’s interests to become involved as soon as the EIS process begins. However, there is an interim period between when the action is planned and the start of the EIS process, and I suggest that outreach to the community begin as soon as possible. The Army requires that “interested parties” be made aware of an impending environmental assessment (EA), and I suggest that the Navy consider adding that milestone to its guidelines. In situations where it is obvious that an EA is not necessary, it is even more important to demonstrate respect for the impacted community and immediately open channels of communication. I also suggest that the CEQ amend its *practitioners’* guidelines to stress importance of communication with local citizens. As one commentator on the NEPA experience notes, “only if cultural conservation issues become apparent early in the planning process can their policy implications be examined;

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otherwise… [it] will remain a modestly expanded form of documentation to support historic preservation efforts.”

**Observation - Reputation**

The Navy expects the community mindset to be a *tabula rasa*, devoid of prior knowledge or opinion of the Navy as an environmental citizen. A Navy representative expressed frustration that citizens’ opinions and suspicions were based on the Navy’s prior actions to avoid performing an EIS and reputation for relying on its supporters in high level federal positions to achieve its plans. The Navy’s OLF requirements may have evolved from the circumstances that gave rise to *Washington County v. Navy*, yet while times and military needs may have changed, the scathing language directed at the Navy by the courts still stands. It is illogical to expect people to disregard the court’s findings, just as it would be illogical for the citizens to dismiss the Supreme Court’s deference to the Navy as demonstrated in *Winter v. NRDC* and factor in how that decision may drive action.

**Recommendation**

The Navy must understand the effects that high-profile cases have on its other undertakings and realize that the microscopic review of legal scrutiny can focus attention on environmental conduct unbecoming their institution. There is a public relations construct. I would suggest that the Navy accept that its reputation may not advance support in potentially impacted communities and conduct an EIS with as much integrity and transparency as possible. The CEQ handbook notes that “Collaboration works best when interested and affected parties believe they can individually and collectively

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achieve better outcomes by working together rather than by pursuing their interests unilaterally.” However, that belief is difficult to subscribe to when one party is doubtful of the commitment of the other and has seen it depicted as a bully in the courts.

The citizens would be advised to scrutinize the Navy and its EIS contractor’s efforts and contribute individual knowledge to preserve “the important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage” that NEPA solicits. In addition, I suggest citizens continue to form alliances with other environmental, social justice, and political associations that are not directly related to the NEPA process.

**Observation - Information**

There is a profound lack of targeted information available to members of citizens’ group. Some information that exists is merely confusing as it addresses a different ecology from what exists in Gates County. As an example of high level goals not matching reality on the ground, the Navy would like the OLF not to affect agriculture, with some exceptions – yet the exception, winter wheat, is an integral crop to the agriculture planted in Gates County. The alternative, adding fertilizer, is at odds with the standard of environmental citizenship that group members uphold. Another high level goal was to bring an innovative economic solution to the process, and while commendable, it raises more uncertainty than it provides answers. This is not the time to use a community as a test case for economic solutions. During the *Tidewater News* interview, the Navy team was asked about the actual acreage required for the siting, and was uncertain in the answer. This is the kind of specific information people want to know so they can make informed decisions about their present life, not how their tax base could change 10 years out. I am

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not advocating discarding the attempt to offer economic incentives to the siting – I am
advocating that details of interest to the citizens should be readily available and
consistent.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Appoint a point person to organize and disseminate information that is already available
and update it accordingly. This person could be a state or agency employee. The timely
dissemination of information is vital and it is important to realize that in rural
communities, high-speed Internet service may not be available, as was the case until
recently in Gates County. Other options, including the US Postal Service, should be
considered, as well as radio, newspaper, and television announcements. Additionally, it is
imperative that Navy representatives who attend scoping meetings be prepared to answer
at least some questions specific to the community and offer a clear method and timeline
for distributing answers to questions they do not have the answers to. The benefits to this
good-faith effort of involvement could be significant.

**OBSERVATION - FRAMING**

While some of the disconnect results from the availability, quality, and relevance of
information, at another level it arises from the radically different framing each side uses
to discuss the issue. For example, for the Navy, *patriotism* is framed by the experience of
following orders given by a commanding officer, and there is an inherent expectation that
civilians will follow suit. For the citizens, *patriotism* results from participating in the
social fabric of a community. That may include military service, and indeed the citizens I
spoke with take enormous pride in the contributions their community has made to defend
the United States. But military service is not the only component of patriotism, and
patriotism does not lead to unquestioning support of military readiness. Indeed, an informed, engaged citizenry is an essential element of dynamic social capital. While I didn’t see evidence that the citizens questioned the overall need for military readiness, they questioned the decision-making behind this need, wanting outside validation that alternative training techniques and alternative sites had been adequately explored, and that the aircraft that would use the facility are already not being rendered obsolete by the next generation of planes.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is extremely difficult to ask participants to reframe ideas because of the cultural construct inherent in the concept. Yet it is important to identify the differences and make them as explicit as possible as early in the process as possible to resolve misinterpretation and clarify constraints. For issues where the framing is very different, especially when the issue touches personal buttons, as, for example, “patriotism” can, I would suggest using a different word to describe what people are talking about to diffuse the anger and abate the wounds that arise from misunderstood cultural constructs. Again using *patriotism* as an example, *special national security interest* and *local community prerogative* are possible substitute phrases to explain the Navy’s and the citizens’ usage, respectively.

**OBSERVATION - SOCIAL CAPITAL**

I did not see any evidence that the social capital of Gates County was considered before the county was suggested as a site. To use Arthur Miller’s famous phrase, “Attention must be paid” to elements of social capital such as generational stewardship, a sense of community, military service, patriotism, and respect for the land, soil and water and trees,
and the repercussions of decimating that capital evaluated against the bone fide requirements of military readiness. Part of NEPA’s mandate is to document “any irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources which would be involved in the proposed action.” One irreversible resource of Gates County is its social capital. Fortunately, the vibrancy and native resources of the community are such that the citizens are investigating all avenues of protecting their social capital, including to the state legislature and to Congress, where they have found allies.

**RECOMMENDATION**

In recognition of the variability and complexity of social capital from one community to the next, and to give it the weight it deserves in the overall environmental impact analysis and not exist only as an insubstantial component of “socioeconomic consequences,” I recommend that the comment function of the EIS process invite video responses. It is easy to dismiss form emails, but much harder to dismiss the visual and sonic representations of the people whose lives are being so impacted by the “major federal action.”

Examining environmental stewardship in Gates County by investigating the competing interests of social capital and military readiness has provided the opportunity to observe two cultures whose alignment, usually supportive, is in a state of tension. The recommendations offered above, however ambitious or presuming, serve as a reminder that social policy issues are forged by dynamic, engaged individuals at all stages of the process and that effective solutions must incorporate and address the values of all interested parties.
REFERENCES


