



ENERGY,  
INSTALLATIONS  
AND ENVIRONMENT

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MEMORANDUM FOR DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY  
(ENVIRONMENT, SAFETY AND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH)  
DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE NAVY  
(ENVIRONMENT)  
DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE  
(ENVIRONMENT, SAFETY AND INFRASTRUCTURE)

SUBJECT: Guidelines for Streamlined INRMP Review

I am forwarding the attached final *Guidelines for Streamlined INRMP Review* for your dissemination and use. Your representatives have provided valuable comments on earlier versions of this document.

These *Guidelines for Streamlined INRMP Review* are intended to clarify and describe the process for reviewing and concurring on updates to existing Integrated Natural Resource Management Plans (INRMPs), as described in the recent *Memorandum of Understanding between the U.S. Department of Defense and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies for a Cooperative Integrated Natural Resource Management Program on Military Installations* (Tripartite MOU, July 2013).

The USFWS finalized its own internal Guidelines on June 15, 2015. Their Guidelines also reflect this new streamlined process for review INMRP updates, as defined in the Tripartite MOU. DoD's new *Guidelines for Streamlined INRMP Review* do not apply to newly developed INRMPs or to INRMPs undergoing major changes (i.e., revisions). The new process established in the MOU and described and clarified in these Guidelines will:

- Facilitate faster review and approval of INRMPs requiring updates;
- Reduce the number of non-complaint INRMPs; and
- Improve coordination and collaboration among installation personnel and USFWS regional reviewers.

My point of contact is Mr. Peter Boice at (571) 372-6905 or [l.p.boice.civ@mail.mil](mailto:l.p.boice.civ@mail.mil).

Maureen Sullivan

Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense  
Environment, Safety and Occupational Health

Enclosures:  
As stated

# Mutual Department of Defense & U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Guidelines for Streamlined Review of Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan Updates

**PURPOSE:** These *Guidelines for Streamlined Review* are intended to clarify and describe the process for reviewing and concurring on updates<sup>1</sup> to existing Integrated Natural Resource Management Plans (INRMPs), as described in the recent *Memorandum of Understanding between the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies for a Cooperative Integrated Natural Resource Management Program on Military Installations* (Tripartite MOU, July 2013). These Guidelines do not apply to newly developed INRMPs or to INRMPs undergoing major changes (i.e., revisions). Changes that are expected to result in significant biological differences from those identified in an existing INRMP typically require revision—rather than an update—of the INRMP as well as appropriate consideration under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). These Guidelines will remain in effect until explicitly rescinded or superseded by mutual agreement of the signatories.

**BACKGROUND:** It is DoD policy to review INRMPs annually, and a statutory requirement to have INRMPs reviewed by the USFWS and the appropriate state fish and wildlife agency or agencies (hereafter “states”) for operation and effect no less often than every five years. To more effectively respond and rapidly adapt to ongoing natural resource activities (e.g., monitoring, recreational fishing) and to changes that are administrative, process-oriented, or minor (e.g., expanding an existing trail, conducting biological surveys), the three partners (USFWS, DoD, and the states as represented by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies) included a provision in the Tripartite MOU to streamline the review process for incorporating minor changes or “updates” to existing and approved INRMPs. INRMP updates are minor changes to an INRMP that do not result in new biophysical effects, do not change the management prescriptions set forth in the INRMP, and do not require analysis under the NEPA nor associated public review.<sup>2</sup> The use of updates is intended to reduce the workload for all involved agencies while maintaining both INRMP currency and mission flexibility.

## FORMAT, COORDINATION, AND RESPONSIBILITIES

*Format:* When installations update an INRMP, the update should be clear and concise, and its format should match or be complementary to the INRMP. The update shall clearly describe the scope and location of all proposed changes in an accompanying text, table, or matrix format, and the changes themselves shall be captured in the INRMP using the track changes function. A transmittal letter to the states and USFWS summarizing the changes should accompany the package, which will include the track changes INRMP and the text, table, or matrix describing the proposed update. All proposed changes should be clear and easy to understand.

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 1, page 5, for definitions.

<sup>2</sup> Sikes Tripartite MOU: <http://denix.osd.mil/nr/upload/Sikes-Tripartite-MOU.pdf>.

*Coordination:* Early coordination among the installation, states, and USFWS is essential to successful review and approval of INRMPs, Annual Reviews, Reviews for Operation and Effect, and INRMP updates. The installation will submit the draft update to the appropriate state and USFWS offices and, when needed, to the USFWS Regional Sikes Act Coordinator (Sikes Coordinator). Once finalized, the installation shall submit the final update to the states and to both the USFWS field office working with the installation and the Sikes Coordinator. The Sikes Coordinator will help marshal USFWS resources and coordinate with all parties when review timelines described below are in question or are unable to be met.<sup>3</sup>

*Responsibilities:* The assigned USFWS field office will coordinate review of the draft and/or final update with other USFWS programs or field offices (e.g., the Migratory Bird Program or Ecological Services Office) as appropriate. If requested to do so, the installation will provide copies of the update to other USFWS offices. If cross-program or multiple-office review of an update has occurred, the lead USFWS field office will specify any additional time needed to complete the expedited review and will, by the agreed-upon deadline, provide consolidated comments to the installation. When timing allows, INRMP update discussions should occur annually when metrics are discussed<sup>4</sup>.

The existing/operational INRMP remains in effect while the update is under review. Once all parties agree to the requested changes, the designated states, USFWS, and DoD representatives will sign the update. The signed update will carry the full effect of the INRMP, and will be considered reviewed for operation and effect and approved as part of the compliant or operational INRMP. While not a signatory to the Tripartite MOU, when proposed changes affect resources managed by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), NOAA will be included in the review process.

These guidelines need not apply to DoD components or installations that have already implemented a successful method for updating INRMPs with their USFWS field offices and state agencies.

#### **DRAFT AND FINAL UPDATE REVIEW AND CONCURRENCE**

- 1) Once the DoD component or installation determines that an INMRP update is appropriate, personnel will notify the USFWS and/or state offices with which they coordinate regarding their INRMP. This notification should be initiated by the DoD component or installation as soon as possible, and no less than 30 days prior to submitting the draft update for review.
- 2) The installation will submit a **draft update** to the appropriate state and USFWS field offices.
  - a) The USFWS staff will review the draft update and respond to the installation within 15 calendar days of receipt.

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<sup>3</sup> [http://www.fws.gov/fisheries/sikes\\_act/documents/Regional\\_Sikes\\_Coordinators\\_and\\_Military\\_Liaisons.pdf](http://www.fws.gov/fisheries/sikes_act/documents/Regional_Sikes_Coordinators_and_Military_Liaisons.pdf) See [http://www.fws.gov/fisheries/whatwedo/sikes\\_act/index.html/Sikes](http://www.fws.gov/fisheries/whatwedo/sikes_act/index.html/Sikes) for list of Regional Sikes Act coordinators.

<sup>4</sup> See DoDI 4715.03, Enclosure 5.

- b) The USFWS field offices and states will provide comments (if any) on the draft update to the submitting installation a maximum of 60 calendar days, but preferably within 30 days, of receipt, unless the affected parties (i.e., the DoD component or installation and the states and/or USFWS offices) agree to a longer timeline for review.
  - c) If either state or federal review of a draft INRMP cannot be completed in the timeframe described above, then the USFWS and/or state office will notify the DoD component or installation, and provide an alternate timeline for the INRMP update review. If the parties cannot agree to a review timeline, the field office and/or installation may contact the Regional Sikes Act Coordinator who may help the field office(s) complete its review.
  - d) If there is disagreement concerning the conservation, protection, and management of fish and wildlife resources proposed in an INRMP update, all efforts will be made by the DoD component or installation, involved agencies, and Regional Sikes Act Coordinator to resolve those issues within the stated review timelines.
  - e) If USFWS and/or the states do not provide notification that an alternative timeline is needed within 60 days, the installation may, at its discretion, finalize the update.
- 3) Once complete, the installation shall submit a **final update** to the appropriate USFWS and state field offices, and to the Sikes Coordinator.
- a) The states and USFWS field offices will respond and provide signature on the final update within a maximum of 60 calendar days, but preferably within 30 days, of receipt, unless the affected parties (i.e., the DoD component or installation and the states and/or USFWS offices) agree that a longer timeline for review is acceptable.
  - b) If the states and/or USFWS are unable to provide signature coordination within the applicable timelines, that agency will advise the DoD component or installation and the Regional Sikes Act Coordinator, explaining why the review and signature process cannot be completed within the designated timeframe, and offering an alternate date by which the review and signature can be completed. This notification will be given to the installation and the Regional Sikes Act Coordinator within 10 days of receipt of a final update. The Regional Sikes Act Coordinator will then coordinate with the states and the USFWS field office to ensure review and comment on the final update, discuss comments with the Regional Director, and prepare the Regional Director's response to DoD, if needed.
  - c) Once finalized, the updated INRMP will be considered reviewed for operation and effect, and will restart the five-year window for being compliant.
- 4) The USFWS field office will return the original concurrence letter or signature page to the DoD component or installation, and provide a copy of such (by mail, facsimile or electronic mail) to the Regional Sikes Act Coordinator and to the states.

## APPENDIX 1: KEY DEFINITIONS

**Compliant INRMP:** An INRMP that has been both approved in writing, and reviewed, within the past five years, as to operation and effect, by authorized officials of DoD, USFWS, and each appropriate State fish and wildlife agency.

**INRMP Revision:** Any new natural resources management actions necessitated by changes to the military mission, the condition of the land, or the status of the species present and not previously considered by the parties to the INRMP when the plan was last approved and/or reviewed as to operation and effect. All such revisions require approval by all parties to the INRMP, and will usually call for a new or supplemental NEPA analysis.<sup>5</sup>

**INRMP Transmittal Letter:** A cover letter to an INRMP Update that summarizes changes to the compliant or operational INRMP.

**INRMP Update:** Any change to an INRMP that, if implemented, is not expected to result in consequences materially different from those in the existing INRMP and analyzed in an existing NEPA document. Such changes will not result in a significant environmental impact, and installations are not required to invite the public to review or to comment on the decision to continue implementing the updated INRMP.

**Operational INRMP:** The most recent version of an installation's INRMP that was reviewed for operation and effect. The USFWS will consider that INRMP currently being used to guide natural resource management on a given installation, irrespective of signature date, to be the operational equivalent of a compliant INRMP.

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<sup>5</sup> At the request of the Military Services, this definition has been modified from the one developed in collaboration with USFWS. Modifications are intended to add clarity, and do not contradict the premise of the agreed upon definition.