



PRESS RELEASE

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Navy's Environmental Stewardship Traveling Exhibit Opens at NASA's Wallops Flight Facility

By Lt. Lily Daniels, U.S. Fleet Forces Public Affairs

WALLOPS ISLAND, Virginia – United States Fleet Forces Command's "Stewards of the Sea: Defending Freedom, Protecting the Environment" interactive museum exhibit kicked off its traveling tour at NASA's Wallops Flight Facility Visitor Center during an opening ceremony March 17.

Rear Adm. Chris Sadler, USFF reserve deputy director of maritime operations, emphasized the local NASA and Navy bond as he cut the ceremonial ribbon.

Wallops Flight Facility is home to the Navy's Surface Combat Systems Center (SCSC) and also supports Hampton Roads-based E-2 Hawkeye and C-2 Greyhound aircraft Field Carrier Landing Practice operations.

The exhibit, focusing on Navy environmental stewardship, will be on display for visitors through Labor Day.

"Many nations and potential adversaries have ultra-quiet submarines with long range missiles and torpedoes that can directly threaten our homeland, naval forces, as well as the world's merchant shipping, which carries 90 percent of all international trade by volume," said Sadler.

"The exhibit highlights how the Navy is committed to protecting the environment as we perform the vital training and testing activities that are necessary to enable our Sailors to be prepared to perform the missions that are critical to our national security."

The Stewards of the Sea traveling exhibit is a scaled-down version of the permanent exhibit that is on display at the Hampton Roads Naval Museum at Nauticus, the National Maritime Center in downtown Norfolk.

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USFF ENVIRONMENTAL TRAVELING MUSEUM EXHIBIT OPENING-2-2-2-2

Like the permanent exhibit, the traveling exhibit features steps the Navy takes to protect marine life through shipboard plastic waste management and the mitigation measures the Navy employs to avoid harming marine species during training and testing activities at sea. The exhibit also explores the science of sound and the research the Navy conducts and funds to better understand the effects of manmade sound, like sonar, on marine animals.

“It explains the mitigation measures that we take before and during our exercises at sea, including activities that involve active sonar and munitions, in order to minimize any chance of our actions negatively impacting marine species,” said Sadler. “Nothing can replace actual training in a realistic marine environment... this exhibit will help us to tell that great story.”

Interactive displays enable visitors to listen to sounds that are present in the ocean, including natural sounds (such as those made by whales and other marine mammals), as well as man-made sounds. These interactive features are designed to demonstrate the challenges sonar technicians face when trying to detect ultra-quiet submarines.

“I didn’t know that the Navy was so involved with environmental protective measures and research. It’s pretty impressive,” said Accomack County District 2 Supervisor and Chairman Ron Wolff.

Visitors to the display can also experience interactive simulations allowing them to scan the horizon through giant “Big Eye” binoculars to look for whales, dolphins and manatees - just like a Sailor standing lookout duty would while underway. This simulation allows display visitors to “report” their sightings to the captain just as a Navy lookout would on a ship, to enable the ship to operate safely and to avoid causing harm to the marine environment.

“The folks coming will get a glimpse of the Navy outside of how they typically think of them as protecting our country. It adds a new sidebar that they are protectors of the environment and the U.S.,” said Wallops Flight Facility Director William Wrobel.

The Stewards of the Sea traveling exhibit is scheduled to be on display at locations in Washington, D.C. after Labor Day. It will continue touring at a variety of museums throughout the country over the next couple of years.

“For 2017, we’re targeting science and maritime museums in Chicago, Florida, North Carolina and New York to try to reach the public outside of fleet concentration areas to inform them about the Navy’s environmental stewardship efforts,” said Tracy Riker, USFF Environmental Resources and Planning Section Head.

The permanent exhibit at the Hampton Roads Naval Museum is expecting a display addition featuring the Navy’s energy program within the next couple of years.

For more information about the Stewards of the Sea program visit:
<http://www.public.navy.mil/usff/environmental/Pages/default.aspx>