Chief of Naval Operations
Adm. Gary Roughead delivers remarks at the
Chief of Naval Operations Environmental Awards
June 7, 2011

Thank you very much and thank you all for being here, not just the members and the leaders of our Navy activities and our Navy team but I would also like to thank those from other agencies within the federal government and non-governmental organizations who are here with us today. I really appreciate the fact that you've taken time out of your schedules to be able to join in the recognition of the awardees. And I am pleased with the work that they have done for our Navy and quite literally for our environment in which our Navy does its business both ashore and afloat.

The commands we recognize today are at the leading edge of wider efforts within the Navy, but it is important to understand that they have been so effective in environmental stewardship due to the partnerships they have cultivated outside of the Navy – with other government agencies, non-governmental organizations, the general public – for the sake of our nation's asymmetric advantages. So while the commands and the individuals receiving these awards have set the bar for those of us in the Navy today, they are truly and positively affecting the viability of American fleet operating bases, industrial shipyards, and training ranges for many years to come.

I have spoken previously here on the special relationship that Sailors have with the maritime environment and indeed the environment at large. We, who wear this uniform, are privileged to see nature the way few others can. We know what happens in our environment and to our natural resources has security impacts that can be just as destabilizing as a massing army, and with greater frequency than armed conflict. In our increasingly interconnected world, the impacts of what has come to be termed 'natural security' travel further and faster, and demand action now as opposed to some later date.

If you find yourself asking what the actions of the individuals and commands we recognize today have done to prepare us as a Navy for such an environment, the answer is twofold: their programs of action have both made us contributors to a sea-change in conservation behavior, and they have made us more efficient and agile for the challenges that will invariably attend a future of greater natural resource constraints. What strikes me as I reflect on the advances that we have made in environmental stewardship over the course of my time as the Chief of Naval Operations is that we're beginning to come out of our turn away from a culture of consumption and are now picking up speed towards one of conservation, supported by our crucial, concurrent work in energy and climate change.

We have long seen firsthand the fragility and urgency of the environment, but we have never before been so actively, effectively, and comprehensively engaged. We recognize the valuable perspectives of science-oriented non-governmental organizations as we think about reducing our footprint. We value marine mammal research as we develop our training plans for a ready fleet today, and we are designing systems with 'green' lifecycles in mind to reduce total ownership costs for the fleet of tomorrow. But we must continue to widen participation. The cultural change is well underway, and it must be sustained by ensuring our strategic, operational, and practical imperatives remain aligned with our commitment to good stewardship.

As set forth in our Navy 2010 Energy Vision, our effort towards energy security and enhanced capability must support efforts to reduce our environmental impacts in order to be truly powerful. This is how we

must work towards the Department of Defense target of 34% greenhouse gas emission reductions by 2020 if we mean to do so without compromising the core capabilities our Navy provides to the nation. Phil Cullom had it right in his message to the fleet on Earth Day when he made the point that personal behavior must accompany new energy technologies for our conservation efforts to reach their full potential in our operations and in our larger contributions to our operating environment and the future of our children.

Last year, in applauding our environmental award winners, I challenged our commands to do even more, and this year's winners have responded markedly. From Combat Direction Systems Activity Dam Neck's foresight in reutilizing materials from obsolete tactical training systems in developing new synthetic trainers, to the Southern California Range Complex Environmental Planning Team's efforts to build transparency and trust into our live at-sea training. We hold up this year's awardees because they're out there making good on our commitment to be good stewards, and as we see more clearly each day, they have mastered the art of the long view better than most.

Our environmental award winners have demonstrated yet again that the Navy remains committed to leading change and that the Navy will always seek to expand the circle of people taking action in the interests of our environment, our Navy, and our nation. They have been for a long time, and remain, the three lines converging, and we must do everything we can to ensure that we're ready, and that these lines all trend the same way, when they meet.

I thank you for all that you have done in accomplishing the achievements that have brought you to the stage of winners of our environmental awards. It means so much for our Navy, for our nation, and for the environment. Through your example, through your hard work and through the hard work of the men and women that you are here to represent today, we have achieved much. But there is still a lot more to do. Congratulations and I look forward to being able to present and recognize the awardees but moreover I look forward to what you'll achieve in the coming year as you inspire others throughout the Navy.

Thank you very much.