

## **Residents get taste of F/A-18 Super Hornets**

Residents of Washington County, N.C., heard the sound of four Navy F/A-18 Super Hornets during a flight demonstration at the site of the Navy's new practice landing field. The flyover was conducted Feb. 28 so residents of the area could assess volume levels from the aircraft. Nearly 800 observers were on hand as the jets roared only 600 feet overhead as they approached the site, where they dropped to 200 feet before climbing to circle again. The flyover was rescheduled from Feb. 27 due to inclement weather conditions.

The Navy sent four jets from Naval Air Station Oceana to simulate the practice carrier landings that will become routine there when the outlying landing field is constructed along the Washington County-Beaufort County line in 2007.

The Navy encouraged people to observe the flyover from their homes, churches or schools - wherever they were most concerned about noise. Navy representatives were at three locations around the area to answer questions. The Saturday afternoon drew most people to a spot about a half-mile from the future runway.

According to the Navy, the flight demonstration was requested by a number of landowners in the area who are selling their land to the Navy. Commander Navy Region Mid-Atlantic Rear Adm. Stephen Turcotte planned the demonstration in an effort to answer the landowners' questions about sound levels at the location. The jets flew overhead for an hour. The purpose of the flyover was to show residents the volume level will be tolerable.

The Navy has also said it plans to base new squadrons of the jets at both bases.

The Navy plans to purchase 30,000 acres in the county to allow pilots to practice carrier-type landings.

Opponents of the landing field say the jets could endanger wildlife, including migrating waterfowl, and that the noise will disrupt residents' lives. Lawsuits have been filed to stop the proposal.