

## **ACCESS ON LAND AT FORMER FORT ORD RESTRICTED DURING MUNITIONS REMEDIATION WORK**

As you have read in past issues, in March the Fort Ord Reuse Authority (FORA) received a major grant from the U.S. Army to complete munitions removal on remaining economic redevelopment properties on the former Fort Ord. In late August, FORA was notified by regulators that access to areas designated for Munitions and Explosives of Concern (MEC) remediation work would be off-limits for the next 7 years. The announcement meant that equestrians, bikers, hikers, walkers and volunteers who help every week in managing the vast open space owned by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) would be restricted from access to these areas.

The remediation process, performed under an Early Transfer (ET) and an Environmental Services Cooperative Agreement (ESCA), allowed FORA to accelerate remediation, but required environmental insurance to cover remedial activities and to reimburse regulatory oversight by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC).

While FORA's remediation contractor will conduct remediation on these parcels, the Army continues work on the Inland Ranges. The total estimated cost for the identified remediation work to be performed under FORA is \$100 million.

Unspent munitions pose a real danger to human health and safety. There have been incidents involving unspent munitions over the years since the former military base closed. A well known recent incident involved young students who found unspent munitions and took them to school to show them to others. Fortunately, most of the civilian contacts with MEC thus far have not resulted in injury from detonation of the materials.

FORA hired the firm of LFR Inc. to conduct the remedial work, along with Weston Solutions, Inc. to perform the remediation component of the program, and with Westcliffe Engineers, Inc. to provide regulatory liaison and community involvement expertise for the program. All three organizations are industry leaders in the areas of military base closure, munitions and explosives cleanup, regulatory oversight, and community involvement.

Lands covered by the remediation agreement include the site for a veterans cemetery; a portion of land for the East Garrison mixed-used housing and community-centered commercial development project; land adjacent to General Jim Moore Boulevard within the City of Seaside; the Monterey Horse Park equestrian area within the County of Monterey; expanded parking facilities at Laguna Seca Raceways; and an area scheduled for development of a police training academy by Monterey Peninsula College. Other lands involved in the remediation also include wildlife habitat areas, approximately 30 acres for future CSUMB housing, and open space.

The FORA environmental work related to the remediation must comply with the same

state and federal regulations that are required of the Army. The first activity will begin on approximately 850 acres along General Jim Moore Boulevard between Coe Avenue and South Boundary Road within areas of the City of Seaside.

In September, attention focused on how to balance concerns from regulators and the insurance carrier with reasonable access in certain areas during remediation as details of the planning and implementation for remediation progressed.

The ultimate result is that signs will be posted in areas that are completely off-limits during the remediation period — including dirt roads and trails. In addition, gates will be closed where access is prohibited. However, many paved roads will remain accessible to riders and walkers, except when specific remediation work is in progress or where specifically restricted, and there will be access to the BLM office and lands.

Central to having the paved areas remain open is responsible use by those who walk and ride in the areas. If difficulties occur over time, the question of access may have to be revisited.

Please note the map in this article which details the approved access corridors through the ESCA properties. Additional information may be found on the FORA website at [www.fora.org](http://www.fora.org). Should you have other questions about the map or access areas, please contact Stan Cook, FORA ESCA Program Manager at [esca@fora.org](mailto:esca@fora.org) or by calling (831) 883-3672.