

FORT ORD CLEANUP GETS A BOOST!

After several years of hoping that cleanup of the remaining areas contaminated with Munitions and Explosives of Concern (MEC) at the former Fort Ord could be accomplished more quickly, the Fort Ord Reuse Authority (FORA) decided to ask a question: “Was it possible to accelerate the MEC cleanup schedule at the former Fort Ord if the U.S. Army contracted with FORA to perform the work?” The Army responded with a willingness to consider FORA’s proposal.

In mid-March 2007, FORA received some exceptionally good news. After approximately two years of extensive discussion and negotiation, an agreement requiring approvals from the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the governor was signed. The agreement, accompanied by \$40 million in partial funding, authorized FORA to take over the MEC cleanup work process on the remaining redevelopment parcels at the former Fort Ord.

This “Early Transfer/Environmental Services Cooperative Agreement” (ET/ESCA) agreement is between FORA and the U.S. Army. It establishes terms and conditions for clearing remaining explosives and contaminants on designated former Fort Ord parcels. Under the agreement, funding for the work is provided by the Army and, in exchange for early transfer of lands slated for economic development, FORA will provide oversight management of the cleanup effort by contracting with companies specializing in munitions removal to perform the actual cleanup work.

The total estimated cost for the identified cleanup to be performed under FORA is \$100 million. The initial \$40 million funding installment received in April will be used to purchase liability insurance, cover mobilization costs, and pay for ongoing regulatory oversight work by DTSC and EPA. Lands covered by the cleanup 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 cleanup also include wildlife habitat areas, approximately 300 acres for future CSUMB housing, and open space.

The FORA environmental work related to the cleanup must comply with the same state and federal regulations that are required of the Army. Cleanup methods to be used will depend upon the location of the sites and the type of MEC contamination that has been identified in each area. Burning will still be needed to access areas contaminated with MEC; however, the amount of burning required will occur in small increments and on fewer land areas than has been required in the past.

The first cleanup activity will begin on approximately 850 acres along General Jim Moore Boulevard (GJMB) between Coe Avenue in Seaside and South Boundary Road within portions of the City of Del Rey Oaks. Cleanup along GJMB will not require burning and will ultimately provide approximately 500 acres of land for future development in Seaside, and allow for

installation of water lines to serve approximately 350 acres of land already transferred to Del Rey Oaks for development of a proposed hotel, golf and residential project in that city.

On portions of the former military base that have not required MEC cleanup, FORA and the local land use jurisdictions have been moving ahead with projects on land the Army has been able to transfer over the last few years. For example, in 2006, the Army transferred 1,026 acres to FORA from areas not subject to cleanup activity, and subsequently, FORA has transferred 870 acres to Monterey County for the East Garrison project.

In other areas not requiring MEC cleanup, buildings are already appearing in the University Village area by Hwy 1 and 12th Street/Imjin Parkway; land is being prepared for construction of homes in Marina Heights north of Imjin Parkway; and the Imjim Office Park is engaged in initial site preparation activities. At the “Main Gate” area of the former Fort Ord, the City of Seaside is continuing to review plans for a proposed mixed-use project called “The Strand at Seaside”. The proposed project includes a resort-style outdoor retail and hospitality area of shops, restaurants, walkways, public spaces, and a 180-room full service hotel with a separate spa and convention center and casita-style hotel accommodations.