

President Obama to Sign Proclamation Designating Ford Ord National Monument

National Monument will honor veterans, serve as hub for conservation and recreation

President Obama today will sign a Proclamation to designate federal lands within the former Ford Ord as a National Monument under the Antiquities Act. Fort Ord, a former military base located on California's Central Coast, is a world-class destination for hikers, mountain bikers, and outdoor enthusiasts who come to enjoy the area's history and scenic landscapes.

"Fort Ord's dramatic landscape lives in the memories of thousands of veterans as their first taste of Army life, as a final stop before deploying to war, or as a home base during their military career. This national monument will not only protect one of the crown jewels of California's coast, but will also honor the heroism and dedication of men and women who served our nation and fought in the major conflicts of the 20th century," said President Obama.

"Already, over 100,000 people come every year to enjoy all that Ford Ord has to offer. President Obama's action, with the strong support of the people of California, will ensure that this special place continues to thrive for generations to come. This national monument will not only preserve one of the crown jewels of California's coast, but will provide a link to the heroism and dedication of men and women who served our nation," said Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar.

President Obama first used the Antiquities Act in November 2011 to designate the Fort Monroe National Monument, a former Army post integral to the history of slavery, the Civil War, and the U.S. military. First exercised by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1906 to designate Devils Tower National Monument in Wyoming, the authority of the Antiquities Act has been used by 16 presidents since 1906 to protect unique natural and historic features in America, such as the Grand Canyon, the Statue of Liberty, Colorado's Canyons of the Ancients, and the Papahānaumokuākea marine protected area of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands.

Today, Fort Ord provides exceptional recreational opportunities to over 100,000 visitors annually, offering 86 miles of hiking, biking, and horseback riding trails. The area is an economic engine for the community and serves as a key venue for the annual Sea Otter Classic, one of the largest bicycling events in the world with approximately 10,000 athletes and 50,000 spectators every year.

Nearly two and a half centuries ago, the area was traversed by a group of settlers led by Spanish Lieutenant-Colonel Juan Bautista de Anza, whose diaries were used to identify the route of the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail. The area's open, contiguous landscape owes its undeveloped state largely to its role as a U.S. Army facility. From World War I through the early 1990s, the area's rugged terrain served as a military training ground for as many as a million and a half American soldiers.

The Fort Ord National Monument will be managed by the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The BLM currently manages approximately 7,200 acres of the area, and the Army will transfer approximately 7,450 acres after clean-up under an existing base

closure agreement between the Army and the BLM. The BLM will continue to work closely with its many community, state, and Federal partners to effectively manage the new national monument, which will become part of the Bureau's 27-million-acre National Landscape Conservation System.

The Department of the Interior lands support \$363 billion in economic activity and 2.2 million jobs annually, with BLM public lands in California alone hosting more than 10 million recreation visitors a year. This translates to an estimated contribution of \$980 million to local California economies and 7,600 recreation-related jobs.

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