

Engaging the Public in the FORA ESCA RP

FORA held public meetings on May 12th and June 19th. The May 12th session was focused on the upcoming Parker Flats work. The Parker Flats MRA work has been divided into Phase One (work performed and completed by the Army) and Phase Two (work to be accomplished by the FORA ESCA RP Team). The May 12th meeting introduced community members to the Parker Flats RI/FS process, including the development of the Draft Group 1 RI/FS Work Plan. The FORA ESCA RP Team presented a draft Work Plan overview and encouraged participants to inquire and learn about the process, the document, and the timeframe for the completion. FORA intends these informal document-focused workshops to be a regular component of the community involvement program.

The June 19th FORA ESCA RP Community Workshop highlighted first-year accomplishments and provided an ESCA RP overview including:

- Completing four primary program documents

- Establishing the CIOP and ESCA RP newsletter
- Initiating field activities within the program schedule
- Completing the majority of Seaside MRA fieldwork
- Establishing a critical species and habitat monitoring program
- Developing and initiating dust control and air monitoring procedures
- Implementing effective soil erosion controls
- Designing and implementing independent third-party Quality Assurance Program
- Participating in over 270 public outreach activities including Monterey County Fair, Earth Day, CSUMB Welcome Days, Army bus tours, and open houses

The June 19th Community Workshop successfully initiated dialogue between community members and the ESCA RP Team. Participants made numerous inquiries, and engaged program staff in one-on-one discussions about a full range of project-related subjects.

Supporting the Quest for a Veterans Cemetery

Over the life of Fort Ord, men and women who were stationed at the former base have retired in the Monterey Bay Region. For many, Fort Ord was their last duty station, and they have affection for the area and strong ties to all aspects of the community. A lot of these same people are dedicated members of the Veterans Cemetery Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) and are working to establish a Central Coast Veterans Cemetery on land within the Parker Flats MRA, located in the jurisdictions of the City of Seaside and the County of Monterey.

The County of Monterey has been facilitating the Veterans Cemetery design under the guidance of the CAC and with financial support from FORA and member jurisdictions. To assist, the FORA ESCA RP Team has identified site constraints with respect to munitions remediation activities. The ESCA RP Team is working with the regulatory agencies and the Army to identify the most expedient path forward to gain approval needed to support the transfer of the Cemetery property. Stan Cook, the FORA ESCA Program Manager, regularly briefs the CAC on current program activities and is dedicated to including them in the ESCA RP outreach activities.

Many veterans have taken time to participate in FORA ESCA community outreach activities and have provided us with important input and perspectives. The CAC is working hard to make this Veterans Cemetery a reality. Their commitment to and enthusiasm for this project is contagious as the ESCA RP Team joins the Central Coast Veterans Cemetery partnership.

Project Update: Seaside MRA

Fieldwork in the Seaside MRA continues to make significant progress where munitions and explosives of concern (MEC) remediation is occurring on the Special Case Areas (SCAs). Major SCA activities include visual surface inspection for MEC items, brush removal, soil scraping, site preparation, surveying, soil sifting, sub-surface investigations, biological monitoring/investigations, and quality assurance and quality control measures. As of July 2008, the following has been accomplished at the Seaside MRA:

- Fence replacement: 100% complete
- Brush removal: 33 acres: 95% complete
- Soil scraping: 89,300 yards: 95% complete
- Soil Sifting: 79,350 yards: 95% complete
- Demolition activities: asphalt and debris removal: 100% complete
- Subsurface investigations and mapping: 25% complete
- Quality Control and Quality Assurance measure: 25% complete
- Suspected MEC item reacquisition and excavation
- Known MEC item recovery and disposal

The FORA ESCA RP Team is implementing best and appropriate construction management practices to address and control dust and stabilize soil. A biodegradable cover has been placed over 17 acres and air monitors have been installed to ensure compliance with regional air quality standards.

Biological monitoring is another important part of the ESCA fieldwork. In the first year a monitoring system has been initiated for two critical species, the sand gilia and Monterey spineflower. A monitoring program for the California Tiger Salamander is also in place. To date, 27 non-threatened animals have been removed or relocated to protect them from harm that may result from fieldwork.



Monterey Spineflower

Field activities have uncovered some remnant munitions and munitions debris. In all instances, the FORA ESCA cleanup team enacted required safety procedures, the Army was informed, and items were removed and disposed of safely. Discovered items consisted of munitions debris, fragments, or items that contained little or no explosive material. On two recent occasions the ESCA RP Team recovered munitions during field work and appropriate demolition measures were taken.

Q & A

Q: Will FORA use burning as a method for brush removal?

A: FORA must comply with habitat preservation requirements for brush removal, but will investigate alternative methods for brush/vegetation removal. Brush removal activities will be reviewed with the Army to ensure consistency with the existing biological opinion. Due to the nature of some of the plant life on the former Fort Ord, burning of some acreage in order for certain species to regenerate properly may be required. FORA will keep the community updated as all alternatives are considered. No burning activities will be considered for any ESCA parcels in the coming year. The Army burn season will begin in July and end in October 2008. The Army has scheduled burns on non-ESCA parcels, but can only carry them out if weather conditions permit. To find out more about the Army's burn program, please visit the BRAC cleanup website at: <http://www.fortordcleanup.com>

Q: I've noticed some very large piles of dirt along General Jim Moore Boulevard. Are they part of a new overpass roadway?

A: There is no roadway overpass being built or planned. The stockpiles of clean dirt that are visible from General Jim Moore Boulevard are part of the soil sifting activities for the munitions removal process in the Seaside MRA. SCA soil was scrapped, transported to the sifting area and then screened to remove remnant metals. The collected metals were inspected to remove any munitions or munitions scrap.

Q: What type of an organization is FORA?

A: FORA is a quasi-governmental entity legislatively established after Fort Ord was put on the BRAC list. FORA is responsible for the redevelopment of the former Fort Ord, a 45-square-mile, 28,000-acre facility located on Monterey Bay along the Monterey Peninsula. FORA implements this mission by overseeing replacement land use; removing physical barriers to reuse; financing and constructing major components of the required infrastructure and base-wide demands; and protecting identified environmental reserves. Under state law, FORA exercises its planning, financing, and monitoring responsibilities in the best interest of the Monterey Bay Community.

2008 Project Document Schedule

Upcoming Documents:

- Draft Final Group 1 RI/FS Work Plan
Targeted comment period: August 1st
- Draft Group 2 RI/FS Work Plan
Targeted comment period: mid-August – mid-September
- Draft Final Group 2 RI/FS Work Plan
Targeted comment period: mid-October – mid-November
- Draft Group 2 RI/FS Report
Targeted comment period: mid-December – late-January 2009

*The above document timeframes are based upon multiple agency work schedules and are subject to change. For the most current information please contact FORA's ESCA hotline at (831) 883-3506 or send an email to esca@fora.org.



Making Your Voice Heard:

Commenting on Remediation Documents

The FORA Environmental Services Cooperative Agreement Remediation Program (ESCA RP) is addressing residual munitions on 3,470 acres of land on the former Fort Ord. An important feature of the program is the multiple public involvement opportunities through workshops, meetings, quarterly newsletters, dedicated telephone hotline, and the public comment process on program documents. Of all the avenues, the public comment process to program documents is perhaps the most important. But what does “public comment” mean?

Reviewing, understanding, and commenting on ESCA RP documents is a very effective way for citizens to engage in this important program and have their individual or group concerns about the safety of this community addressed. By submitting comments in the FORA ESCA RP process, these concerns are documented, addressed, and recorded in the official Administrative Record.

Program Documentation

Before remediation begins, the FORA ESCA RP Team prepares documents to be reviewed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), the U.S. Army (Army), and the public during a designated comment period. For each ESCA parcel, four major documents are produced.

1. Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (RI/FS) Work Plan. Describes the process for collecting data and investigating the specified Munitions Response Area (MRA).

2. RI/FS Report. An RI identifies the nature and extent of munitions contamination and possible threats to people and the environment. The FS outlines and defines remediation options. An RI/FS Report summarizes the investigation and study phase findings.

3. Proposed Plan. Identifies different remedial options and the preferred remediation method of the FORA ESCA RP.

4. Record of Decision. Documents the final EPA, DTSC, and Army agreed remedy decision.

Each document has three versions: a draft, draft final, and final.

Public Comment

The public is encouraged to review each of these documents, make inquiries, attend meetings, and provide comment during the review period. Comments will be reviewed, analyzed, and noted or addressed in the document (appearing in the appendix of the draft final and/or final version). Comments become part of the permanent FORA ESCA RP Administrative Record.

The ESCA RP documents may be sizeable volumes, defining multiple actions, and are technical in nature. FORA will provide notice of documents available for comment, comment deadlines, and instructions on how to obtain copies. For comments to be effective, reviewers are asked to focus on document segments most relevant to their concerns. When drafting comments, FORA requests that reviewers reference the associated document, section and page number.

All comments must have a cover letter, may be submitted electronically or by U.S. mail, and must be received prior to the designated comment period deadline to be considered and filed in the Administrative Record. Comments transmitted electronically must be followed by a hard copy sent through the U.S. Mail. FORA cannot guarantee that comments received after the deadline will be incorporated in the document or Administrative Record. Send comments to esca@fora.org and via mail to FORA, Attention: Stan Cook, 100 12th Street, Building 2880, Marina, California 93933.

Current Documents for Review

FORA ESCA RP documents are posted at www.fortordcleanup.com. Currently there are two ESCA RP documents available for public review and comment:

- Draft Final Summary of Existing Data Report (SEDR), Administrative Record index number: ESCA-0079 (Comments are due by close of business Monday, August 15th 2008)
- Draft Group 2 RI/FS Work Plan (Comments are due by close of business Thursday, September 4th 2008)

Members of the public may also review documents at the BRAC Office, Building 4463 Gigling Road, Ord Military Community. Call the Administrative Record coordinator at (831) 393-9186 for further details.



July 2008 • Volume 2, No. 3

THE FORA ESCA REMEDIATION PROGRAM

the future of Fort Ord

QUARTERLY UPDATE ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT

FORT ORD REUSE AUTHORITY

100 12th Street, Bldg. 2880
Marina, CA 93933

