

# Fort Ord Community Involvement Response to Community Comments

## **BACKGROUND**

Community involvement is the process of engaging in dialogue and collaboration with community members. The goal of the Fort Ord Superfund community involvement is to advocate and strengthen early and meaningful community participation during the Fort Ord Superfund cleanup. The Fort Ord cleanup staff strives to:

- Keep the community well informed of ongoing and planned activities.
- Encourage and enable community members to get involved.
- Listen carefully to what the community is saying.
- Take the time needed to respond to community concerns.
- Change planned actions where community comments or concerns indicate.
- Explain to the community what the Army has done at Fort Ord and why.

## **HOW THE FORT ORD CLEANUP PROJECT IS STRUCTURED**

The Fort Ord Superfund project began in 1990 and is expected to continue through 2035 (when the last groundwater treatment plant has cleaned up the groundwater). For many Superfund sites (especially those sites with groundwater cleanup), it is estimated that cleanup can take as long as 30 years. During the cleanup process, there are several key sections of the cleanup process for community outreach and involvement: site identification, site characterization, proposed plans for cleanup, the cleanup, and finally the long term management of areas which have been cleaned.

The Fort Ord Community Relations Plan outlines the processes and procedures used to identify community interests and concerns about the Fort Ord environmental cleanup and document the community relations program developed to address those interests and concerns. The plan identifies responsibilities and actions which will not only keep the community informed on the progress of the cleanup, but also sustain an open channel for community input into the decision-making process. There are many daily opportunities to allow for community dialogue and reevaluation of cleanup activities.

## **COMMUNITY COMMENTS WHICH MADE CHANGES**

**2006 Prescribed Burn Relocation Program:** In early 2006, the Army issued a Proposed Plan that proposed to eliminate the temporary voluntary relocation program from the 2006 burn at MRS-16. The public comment period on the Proposed Plan was held from January 27, 2006 to March 29, 2006. After reviewing the public comments and consulting with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), the Army decided to continue to offer the relocation program for the MRS-16 prescribed burn.

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**Information Repository:** Two information repositories are maintained to provide public access to cleanup information. The original information repositories were located at the Monterey County Library, Seaside Branch and the Ord Community Library. In response to requests by students and staff at California State University Monterey Bay (CSUMB), an information repository was created at the CSUMB Library. The availability of the information repository was announced at an introductory information session held at the Library and sponsored by the CSUMB Library staff on February 5, 1998.

**Carbon Tetrachloride Site Investigation:** A longtime Fort Ord employee (now retired and living in Marina, CA) indicated that there was a communications training shack in an area close to the carbon tetrachloride groundwater investigation area. He recalled that carbon tetrachloride was one of the solvents used to clean communication equipment in the carbon tetrachloride investigation area and took an Army representative on a tour of this training shack area. Although the carbon tetrachloride investigation was already underway, the information he provided helped to pinpoint the investigation onto a specific location. As a direct result of his help, the location of the contamination “a needle in a haystack” was pinpointed and the Army was able to focus on the source of the contamination.

**Carbon Tetrachloride Soil Vapor Extraction System:** The Soil Vapor Extraction system installed to remove carbon tetrachloride from the soil was modified as a result of community input from the January 13, 2004 Community Involvement Workshop. During this Workshop, a local family with an infant was seriously considering moving away to more expensive housing because of the perceived threat of carbon tetrachloride to their child. This concern resulted in an expansion of the soil vapor extraction system to include this family’s residence, although no legal or scientific requirement existed.

**Ordnance and Explosives Safety Alert:** The most widely distributed brochure of the Fort Ord cleanup is entitled “Safety Alert.” This small color brochure was suggested by a community member. This community member recommended that a brochure be prepared which included pictures of ordnance and explosives typical to Fort Ord and also have warning messages in English and Spanish. The brochure was developed based on her recommendations. The Safety Alert is annually distributed to organizations and individuals and it is key to our ordnance and explosives safety education program. Over 15,000 Safety Alerts have already been distributed.

Other examples:

- A confidential call to the California Regional Water Quality Control Board launched a soil investigation in the East Garrison area.
- A community member reported an old spill site at Fritzsche Army Airfield; in response, a site investigation was conducted in this area.
- The Bureau of Land Management has made several suggestions regarding long term management of the Impact Area; in response, these recommendations have been memorialized in the Impact Area Record of Decision.
- The web site ([www.FortOrdCleanup.com](http://www.FortOrdCleanup.com)) now includes a search tool, as requested by a community group.