

Environmental Cleanup 2001

Community health protection remains top priority

The end of 2001 will mark eight years that Fort Ord has been closed. It has been eleven years since the base was listed as a Superfund site and thirteen years since the first environmental cleanup project, a groundwater treatment plant, began operation in 1988. Each year the Army, as the responsible agency for the cleanup, provides the surrounding communities with a report on the progress in cleaning up the former Army base to protect human health, the environment, and prepare the property for reuse.

The costs of cleaning up

For size and complexity, the environmental cleanup of the former Fort Ord is a very big job. We estimate that the cost to complete the groundwater and OE remediation actions is \$326 million and that the program will take 15 or more years to complete at current funding levels. Between 1994 and 2001, the Army spent over \$267 million from the Base Reclamation and Cleanup account at the former Fort Ord. The fiscal year 2001 requirement has grown to over \$30.3 million, \$10.8 million more than originally programmed. This increase is primarily due to the Ordnance and Explosives response requirements. The Army will continue to allocate resources to the cleanup of developable lands at the former Fort Ord to ensure human health and safety are not compromised.

As the Fort Ord cleanup prepares to enter its fourteenth year, the potential of the former base continues to be redefined. With approximately 60 percent of the former base transferred for reuse, what remain are those areas with the most complex environmental and economic issues. The following pages provide a review of the Army's cleanup efforts over the last year and a look at the remaining challenges.

The communities surrounding the former Fort Ord have witnessed many changes since the base was closed in 1994 and the subsequent environmental cleanup began. With the closure of the base, millions of "soldier dollars" spent in local economies disappeared and more than 5,000 associated civilian jobs were lost. This had a great impact.

For more than a decade the prospect of the redevelopment of former Army property has sustained visions of new housing, business, and other

reuse opportunities. As the cleanup moves into its 14th year, many cleanup and reuse plans and objectives have been met while others remain to be completed.

As part of the Department of Defense Environmental Restoration Program, the Army continues to conduct environmental cleanup programs on the former Fort Ord. The primary objective of these programs is to protect the health and safety of local communities and those reusing the property. These programs can impact how and when property is available for reuse. The Army works with state and federal regulators, the Fort Ord Reuse Authority (FORA), and other interested community members concerning environmental issues early and throughout the cleanup process to ensure reuse planning is compatible with environmental conditions. This way, environmental priorities, and appropriate cleanup levels are established to reflect anticipated future land uses.