

Protecting endangered plants and animals

Wildlife habitats are safeguarded during environmental cleanup

The Installation-Wide Multispecies Habitat Management Plan (HMP) for the former Fort Ord requires action be taken reducing the impact of the cleanup on rare and endangered animals and plants and their habitat reserves. The habitats of Fort Ord are being protected during the excavation of contaminated soil, closure of the landfill, and cleanup of unexploded ordnance. How this is done is described in Chapter 3 of the HMP (available in the information repositories or the Administrative Record). The protective requirements of the HMP are applied according to the Biological / Conference Opinion issued to the Army by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) on March 30, 1999. Annual reports describing results of monitoring vegetation recovery following cleanup actions have been provided to the Service every year since 1994. Some of the HMP activities that have been done under the plan are:

Beach Ranges (Sand Dunes) Cleanup

- 150-acres of rare sand dune habitat has been cleaned and recontoured
- 2000 lbs. of native seed has been applied by California Department of Parks and Recreation
- Straw crimping has been completed on the 150-acre remediation area
- More than 24,850 native dune seedlings have been planted within the remediation area
- Exotic weed control is an ongoing process to control ice plant, European beach grass, ripgut brome and other exotic annual grasses, New Zealand spinach, veldt grass, jubata grass, kikuya grass and French broom.

Monitoring of the 150-acre Beach Ranges area continues and the first annual report for the site was submitted to the Service in January 2001. Habitat management of the beach ranges has been very successful. In addition to recontouring the dunes and controlling exotic weeds, the population of federally endangered sand gilia plants on the beach ranges, which was documented to be 600 plants in 1993, has reached a population of more than 1,715 plants.

Landfill Closure

The former landfill encompasses approximately 150 acres and the project to construct a capping system is approximately 95 percent complete. The landfill-cap, contaminated groundwater treatment wells and pipelines were constructed to avoid unnecessary impacts to two federally protected plants, endangered sand gilia and the threatened Monterey spineflower. Special controls have been used during the capping of the landfill to restore the vegetation and reduce the spread of exotic weeds.

Excavations

Excavations within the Multi-Range Area (MRA) to extract lead-contaminated soils and bullets have been limited to future development areas. Excavation of lead contaminated soils and bullets is expected to begin in habitat reserve areas of the former Fort Ord next year.

Vegetation Clearance Activities

Approximately 2,834 acres of vegetation has been either burned or cut to support Ordnance and Explosives (OE) removals. Approximately 1,652 acres of rare Maritime Chaparral plant community has been cut or burned to support OE removals since 1994. In habitat reserve areas, 637 acres have been burned and 148 acres cut. Some 6,629 acres of Maritime Chaparral remain to be cleared in Designated Habitat Reserve Areas and 706 acres in Development Areas.

Chaparral Monitoring

Chaparral that is cut or burned in OE sites located within designated habitat reserve parcels is being monitored to ensure a healthy recovery. The results of this monitoring are included in annual reports and submitted to USFWS each January.

Property Transferred to Date

As of January 2001, the Army has transferred 10,545 acres of former Fort Ord land. Approximately 75 percent of the land transferred (7,902 acres) is located in reserve areas where the habitat will be permanently managed and protected by the Bureau of Land Management. Approximately 8,000 additional acres of habitat reserves are yet to be transferred.

Some other projects where habitat management measures are being implemented include:

- Groundwater Remediation activities at OU-1 and Carbon Tetrachloride Plumes
- Remedial Investigation Site 39 Lead Remediation
- Ordnance Detection and Discrimination Study (ODDS)
- Concertina-Wire Emplacement
- Firebreak Construction
- Marina Coast Water District Pipeline Project
- Installation of Seaside Aquifer Injection Well adjacent to General Jim Moore Blvd.
- Fort Ord Reuse Authority (FORA) Infrastructure / Road-Widening Projects

To learn how you can participate in cleanup decisions that affect Fort Ord habitat, contact Lyle Shurtleff at (831) 393-9691 or visit our web site at: www.fortordcleanup.com.