

Army hosts vegetation removal discussion

September 19 symposium outlines need for prompt action on most dangerous ordnance and explosives ranges

The first of two public symposia designed to describe the need for the removal of vegetation on former Fort Ord ranges was held on September 19 at the Monterey Conference Center. Vegetation removal is part of the Army's continuing effort to explain the need to burn vegetation on former weapon ranges. The ranges that were the focus of the symposium are covered with thick brush that conceals a mixture of expended and unexploded grenades and rockets.

Burning cover vegetation would be part of the Army's effort to quickly remove unexploded ordnance from the ranges they consider to be an attractive hazard to local children and present a high risk to frequent trespasser. It is the Army's contention and that burning the brush is the safest and most environmentally sound method to allow the cleanup of unexploded ordnance on the former weapon ranges. Representatives from the Army Corps of Engineers, local city governments, and state and federal environmental agencies discussed the degree of urgency and possible results of the Army's proposed actions.

The Army scheduled a second public symposium to discuss alternatives for removing brush from their ranges. A bulletin was mailed to residents of communities surrounding the former base in early November describing the issues to be discussed at the second symposium. The symposium was held from 1-5 p.m. on November 14 in the Monterey Conference Center, Steinbeck Forum. Attendance was open to the public. Advanced registration was requested but not required. A summary of Symposium 2 will be included in the next edition of the Fort Ord News.