

# U.S. Army Fort Ord Environmental Cleanup Community Outreach Update

## **Long Term Actions Underway:**

1. Analysis of 2021 community survey (to be included in a report of 2021-2022 community outreach program)

## **Recent Activities:**

1. May 12: DLI Language Day Information Table (185)
2. May 15: Monterey County Weekly Inquiry
  - a. May 18: Article published
3. May 20: Guided Nature Walk (70)
4. May 23: Community inquiry via phone & email
  - a. Seeking information on “munitions sweeping procedures”
5. May 24: Corresponded with FOCAG regarding document notifications
6. June: Updated databases with emails and addresses
7. June 1: Provided CSUMB with “Safety Alert” brochure for student orientations (2,000)
8. June 8: Community inquiry follow-up
  - a. Seeking information on geology of Fort Ord / Monterey County
9. June 15: Updated factsheets on FortOrdCleanup.com
  - a. Fort Ord Munitions Response Site Prioritization and Sequencing (FS-04-05)
  - b. Maritime Chaparral: Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species at the Former Fort Ord (FS-05-04)
10. June 16: Community inquiries via phone
  - a. Seeking information on employment with Fort Ord Cleanup
  - b. Seeking information regarding PFAS
11. June 28: MEC counter added to Fort Ord Cleanup website
12. June 29: Technical Review Committee Meeting invitations emailed to members
13. June 29: Community Involvement Workshop (CIW) announcement mailed (737)
14. June 30: CIW announcement emailed (2,075)
15. July 6 – 12: CIW announcement published in Monterey County Weekly
16. July 9: CIW announcement published in Monterey Herald
17. July 10: Sign-ups for bus tours at the CIW begin online, phone, and email

## **Upcoming Activities:**

1. July 15: Community Involvement Workshop – Munitions cleanup, munitions site security, and Environmental Services Cooperative Agreement
2. July 18: Technical Review Committee Meeting
3. August 31: Monterey County Fair Information Table

## Community Comments

BW-2785R.2	Comments from Mike Weaver, Fort Ord Community Advisory Group <i>Quality Assurance Project Plan, Former Fort Ord, California, Volume I, Appendix A, Draft Revision 11, Groundwater Remedies and Monitoring at Operable Unit 2, Sites 2 and 12, and Operable Unit Carbon Tetrachloride Plume</i>
BW-2300M.3	Comments from Mike Weaver, Fort Ord Community Advisory Group <i>Comprehensive Basewide Range Assessment Report, Former Fort Ord, California, Revision 3</i>
OUCTP-0109.2	Comments from Mike Weaver, Fort Ord Community Advisory Group <i>Draft Operable Unit Carbon Tetrachloride Plume Upper 180-Foot Aquifer Remedial Design Addendum, Former Fort Ord, California</i>



DLI Language Day



Guided Nature Walk

## NEWS

### Bomb Away

Ordnance was uncovered in Marina on land long ago cleared by the Army. How did that happen?

By David Schmalz



The ordnance uncovered by a Marina Coast Water District employee on a tree-planting event April 21 was not explosive, fortunately.

On Friday, April 21, the day before Earth Day, staff from the Marina Coast Water District and other volunteers were planting trees at Hilltop Park in Marina. The park, which is not really a park yet, is just a stone's throw away from nearby houses in the Dunes development—it was conceived to be part of that development.

Around 11am, just before the planting event was set to end, a Marina Coast employee uncovered ordnance—a potentially explosive device—while digging. That piece of ordnance, says MCWD General Manager Rem Scherzinger, was then moved to a pile of scrap metal—rebar, car shocks—and other debris uncovered throughout the morning's event, during which staff and volunteers put almost 900 trees and plants in the ground.

**"It was determined a munitions cleanup was not necessary."**

Scherzinger thought it might be a hazard, and asked someone to call the local Base Realignment and Closure office. John Short, deputy chief of the CSU Monterey Bay Police Department, soon arrived at the scene.

Tom Moore, a Marina Coast board member who served for 30 years in the Army, says it is "a little bit surprising" that ordnance was found at the site, because it was "never a firing point or a place anyone shot at."

Moore recalls that there were military exercises decades ago—World War II era, he presumes—when ships in Monterey Bay would fire rounds into Fort Ord, and says some of them could be buried 20 feet deep in sandy soil. Munitions removal continues on large swaths of the former Fort Ord.

But there was never an unexploded ordnance (UXO) clearance of the Hilltop site, which the Army conveyed to the city of Marina in 2006. Jason No, a community outreach specialist with Chenega, a private contractor now administering the cleanup operations at Fort Ord, says there was no initial evidence of or any reason to think there would be, UXO on the site, "so it was determined a munitions cleanup was not necessary."

In this case, the ordnance was not explosive—a determination Short made on site—so the Monterey County Sheriff's Office Bomb Squad was never notified. Nor was Chenega—it was only when the Weekly started asking questions that No learned it happened. Ditto for the Marina Police Department.

"With these properties, once we transfer to a local jurisdiction, they're not obligated to tell us if they find anything," No says. "But we do ask them to do that."

No says a Chenega mechanical specialist, looking at a photo of the ordnance, thinks it was the propulsion part of a 3.5-inch rocket from the Korean War or Vietnam War era. In other words, there was no longer any explosive attached to it.

But there is always the possibility that more UXO is out there—about 10 to 15 years ago, No recalls, someone in northeast Marina dug up two live hand grenades in their backyard, and on April 19, the county bomb squad responded to a report of ordnance dug up at 8th Street and Second Avenue in Marina. It turned out to be just a piece of foam made to look like ordnance, once used for training. ✦

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