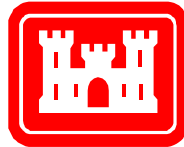


Draft Final
**AFTER-ACTION REPORT:
FORT ORD 2003 VOLUNTARY
RELOCATION PROGRAM**

April 6, 2004

Prepared for



U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Sacramento District

Prepared by



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AFTER-ACTION REPORT FORT ORD 2003 VOLUNTARY RELOCATION PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION

In September 2002, the US Army, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the California Department of Toxic Substance Control signed the Interim Action Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (IA RI/FS) Record of Decision. In this document the agencies concluded that prescribed burns would be used to remove vegetation on Ranges 43-48, Range 30A and OE-16 at the former Fort Ord. As part of this decision, the agencies decided to offer Monterey County residents temporary relocation during prescribed burns, on a voluntary basis. This part of the decision was documented in the 2002 Voluntary Relocation Plan which was one of the supporting documents for the Record of Decision. This plan described how the relocation would work and the community outreach program that would precede any prescribed burn.

During Nov 2002, the Army announced a prescribed burn and announced that the relocation would begin on Nov. 18, 2002. On the evening of Nov. 18, after many people had already relocated, the Army concluded that weather conditions had changed sufficiently that they would not proceed with the prescribed burn. People who had relocated were notified to return home and were reimbursed for their expenses for the time they were away.

On October 10, 2003, the Army announced that the postponed prescribed burn was scheduled for October 13, 2003. However, on October 11, the fire was postponed once again, this time before people had the opportunity to relocate.

On October 21, 2004, the Army announced that the prescribed burn had been rescheduled for October 24. Many families relocated on October 23, and the prescribed burn did occur on October 24. However, the prescribed burn escaped the primary lines of containment and burned nearly 1,500 acres, approximately 1,000 acres more than the intended 500 acres. This required additional follow-up burns and mopping-up operations. As a result, the relocation which was originally planned for three nights away was extended by two more nights.

This report describes changes made to the relocation program based on the experience of the 2002 relocation, and then describes the events that occurred during the 2003 relocation program.

THE 2002 VOLUNTARY RELOCATION PROGRAM

During the fall months of 2002, the Army accepted applications for voluntary relocation. Participants in the relocation program had the choice of making their own arrangements for meals and lodging then applying for reimbursement up to

the federal limits, or staying in hotel assigned by the Army and receiving meal vouchers to cover their meals.

The Army scheduled a prescribed burn on Ranges 43-48 for Nov. 19, 2002. Those individuals and families who had applied for voluntary relocation were notified that they should relocate on Nov. 18, 2002.

205 individuals and families relocated on Nov. 18, 2002. This was only 43% of the applicants, but it is likely that more would have relocated if the fire had actually occurred. However, late on Nov. 18th the Army concluded that weather conditions were no longer appropriate for a prescribed burn, and people who had relocated were told on return home on Nov. 19, 2002.

A total of 482 people applied for the relocation program, with nearly 150 people completing applications on Nov. 18, 2002. 154 people selected the pre-paid hotel option on their application, and 328 chose the reimbursement option.

Of the people who actually relocated on Nov. 18th, 80 families (the applicant plus spouse or dependents) stayed in pre-paid motels while 125 families stayed in hotels or motels of their own choosing and received reimbursement. The cost of meals, lodging and transportation for this relocation was less than \$50,000. The cost would have been higher had the burn not been cancelled.

Immediately following the end of the voluntary relocation, the Army mailed a reimbursement package to all people who had applied for relocation. This package included: (1) a cover letter, (2) a reimbursement request form, (3) instructions for completing the reimbursement form, and (4) a pre-paid return envelope addressed to the Army Corps of Engineers in Sacramento.

Several weeks later the Army sent a questionnaire to all people who applied for relocation. The questionnaire concentrated on their reasons for relocating, their experience during the relocation, and suggestions for improving the relocation program.

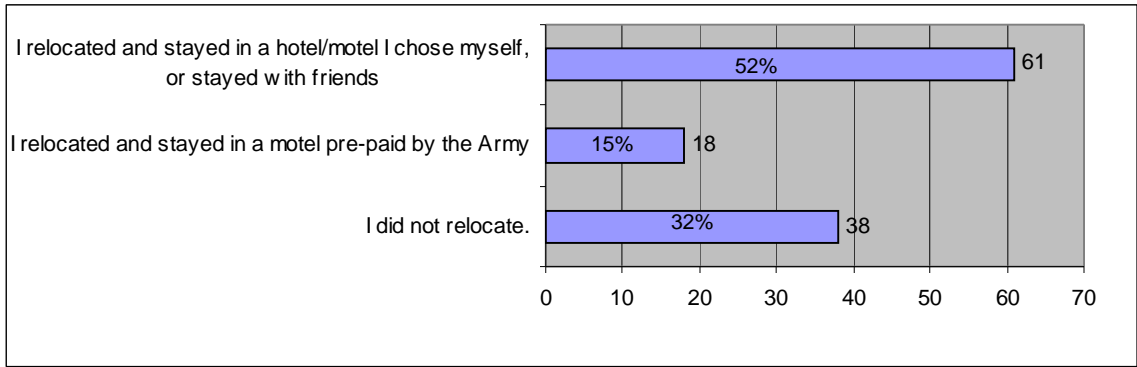
EVALUATION OF THE 2002 RELOCATION PROGRAM

Following the 2002 relocation the Army conducted an evaluation of the 2002 program. This evaluation was in two parts: (1) a questionnaire sent to all people who applied for relocation, and (2) meetings with all staff who had participated in the relocation and reimbursement process to identify issues and problems.

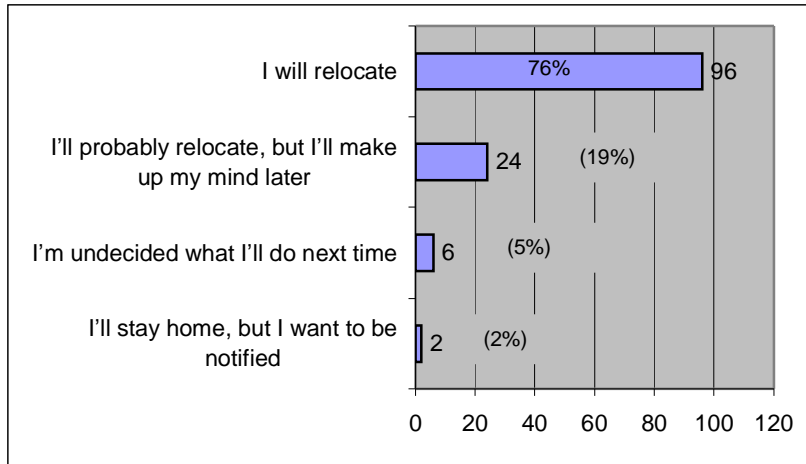
Results from the Questionnaire:

126 evaluation forms were returned to the Army by March 1, 2003. The results from the questionnaire are summarized below:

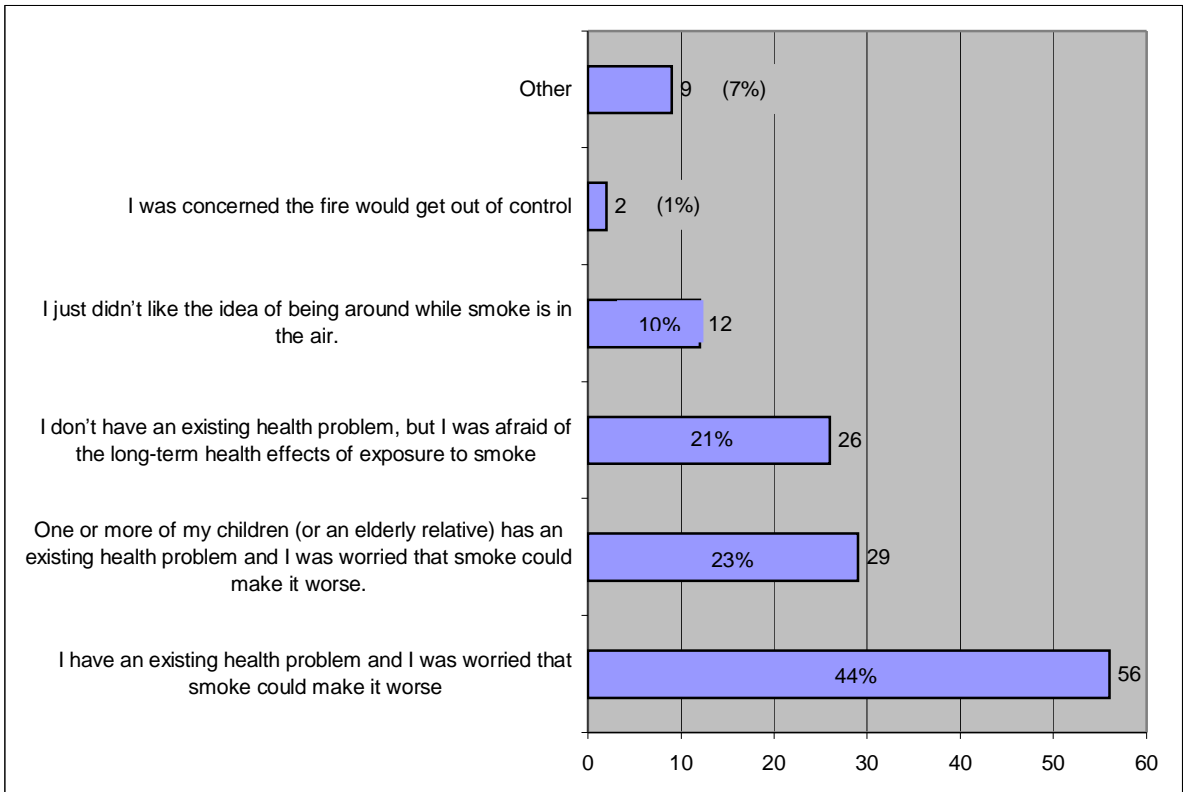
What did you do during the recent relocation?



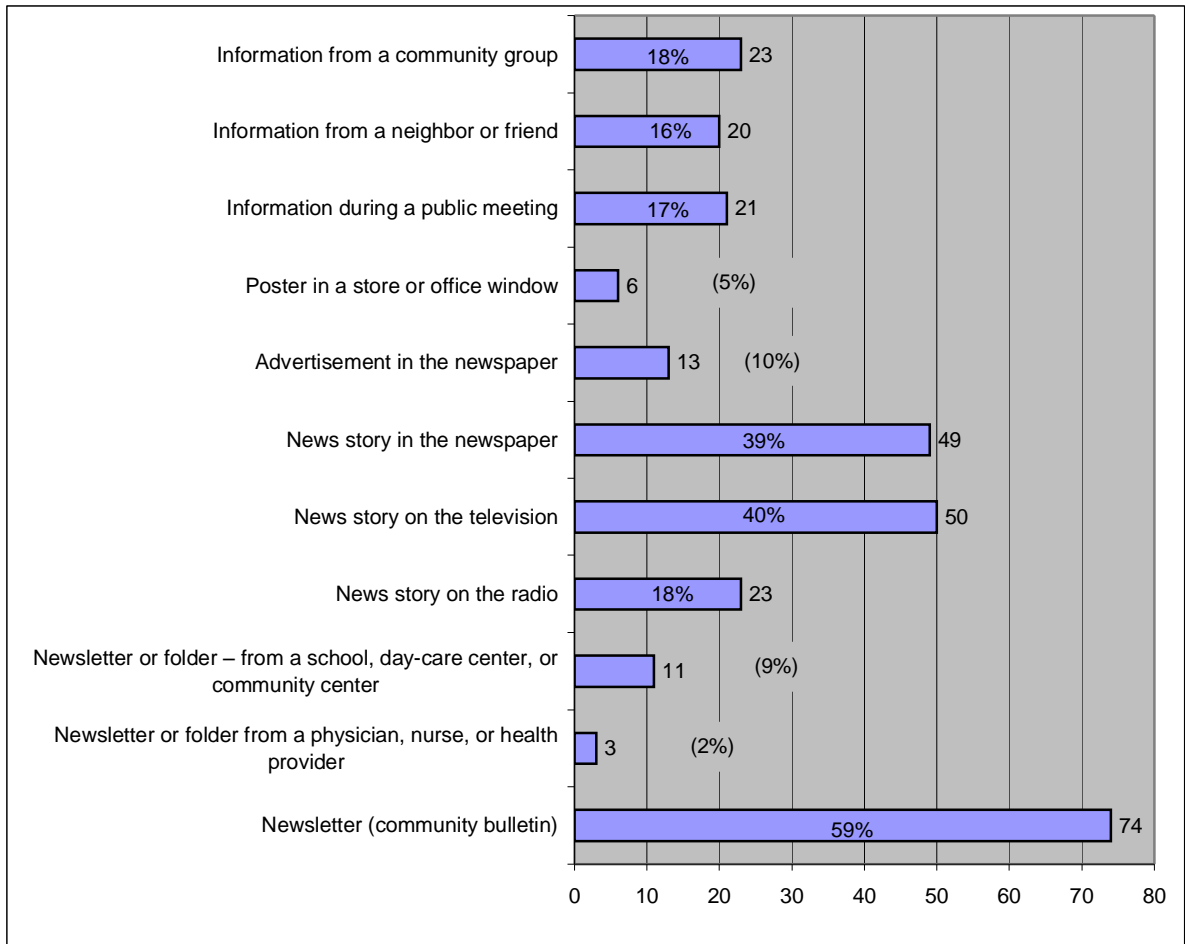
What do you plan to do when the Army announces that there will be a prescribed burn?



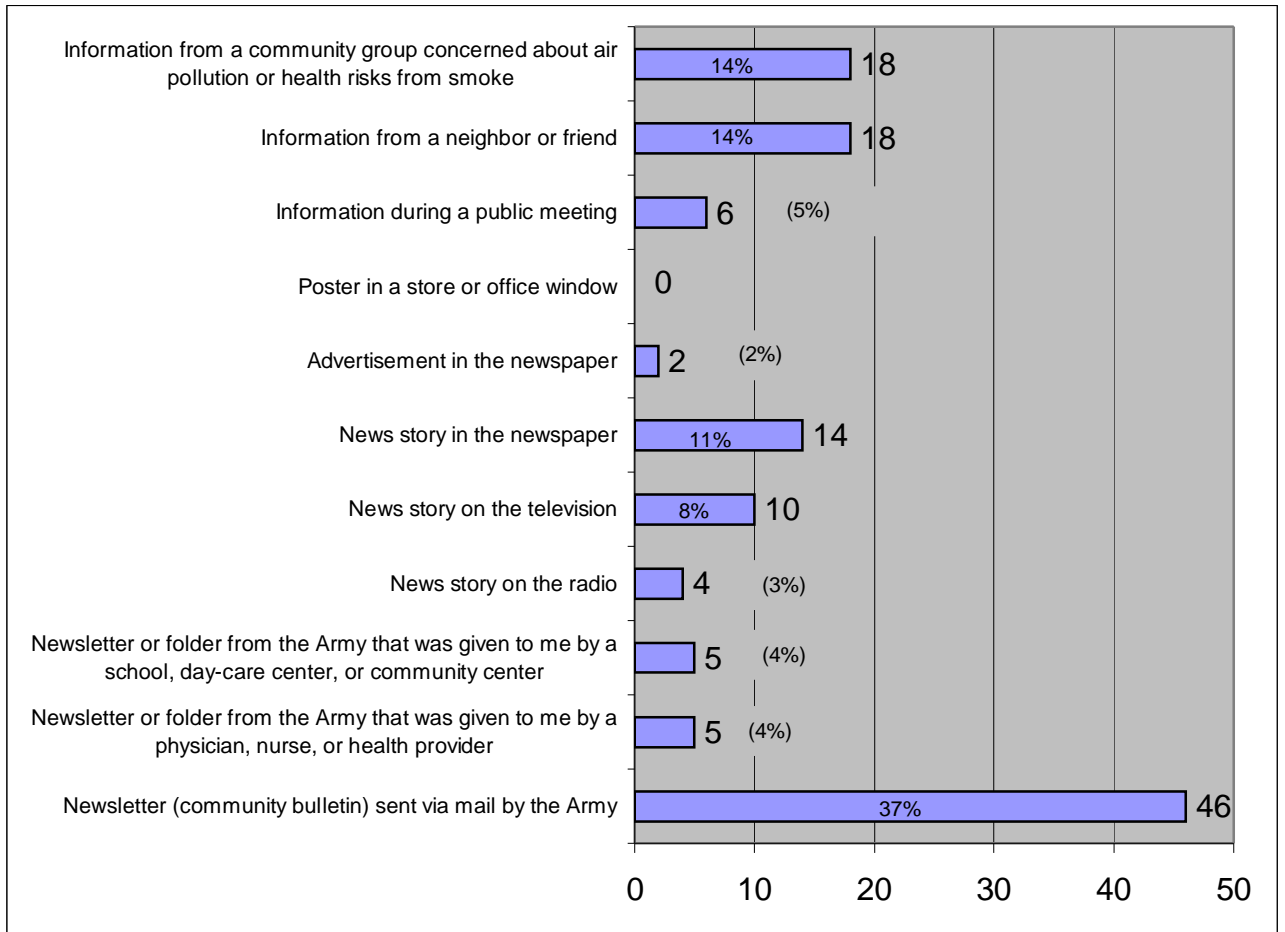
Why did you choose to relocate?



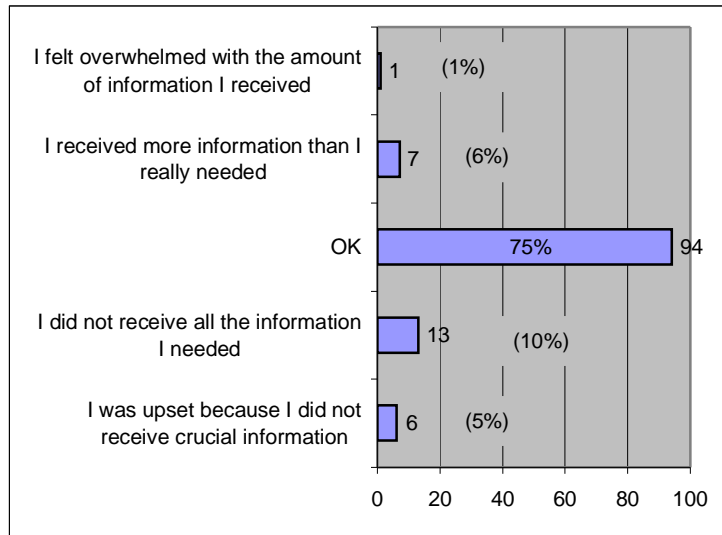
All of the information sources you saw or read before the relocation?



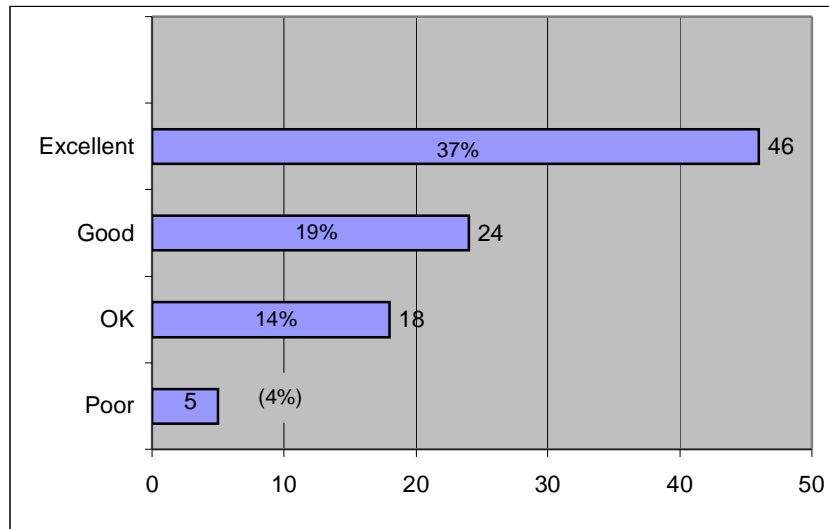
The one information source that was the most important in helping you decide to relocate?



Your reaction to the amount of information you received before the relocation.



How you were treated by the Army staff that helped you sign up or notified you that relocation was occurring



Respondents were also asked to submit written comments about problems that occurred during relocation. The most frequent complaints were that people had not received their reimbursement in a timely manner,¹ people were inconvenienced by receiving late notification about the motel to which they had been assigned (pre-paid motels), and people

¹ The envelopes mailed with the reimbursement form did not have the correct zip code. As a result, the Post Office held nearly 200 envelopes for more than a month before delivering them to the people processing reimbursements.

made reservations at a hotel with a 24 or 48 hour cancellation policy and had to pay an extra night of lodging.²

Staff Evaluation

Staff who were involved in conducting the relocation or reimbursement identified the following issues:

- The relocation office was flooded with nearly 150 people enrolling the day of relocation, and while these numbers were handled, it was with considerable difficulty and stress
- Because the decision to proceed with a prescribed burn occurred over a weekend, the Army Corps of Engineers had difficulty mobilizing people with the requisite authority to make contractual commitments on lodging and vouchers until the day before the burn. As a result, some people did not receive information about their motel assignment until very late the afternoon they were to relocate. This accounted for the vast majority of calls received on the relocation hotline.
- There was no direct telephonic communication between the staff answering the hotline and staff handling hotel room assignments, so hotline operators were unable to answer questions about hotel assignments.
- People answering the hotline did not have access to the computer database so they were unable to get information about hotel assignments from the database
- Procedures about where people were to get their food vouchers were not clear.
- There was some evidence of abuse of the program (e.g. Coast Weekly article referenced student parties at a local hotel and Big Sur at Government expense).
- Some applicants did not provide valid identification or proof of Monterey County residency (e.g. expired driver's licenses, P.O. Boxes).
- Meteorologists informed the Army that the policy of providing 7 days of notice was unrealistic since their ability to predict weather conditions even at three days was problematic.
- Many people were relocated just a few miles to hotels in Marina. A significant wind shift could have sent the smoke to Marina.
- Because of the influx of new applicants on the day of relocation, it was extremely difficult to arrange for pre-paid hotels. This resulted in many more people being relocated to Marina than had been planned.

² People who had to pay for an extra night's lodging were told to submit their receipts and explain the circumstances for consideration by the people preparing reimbursement. The Army then reimbursed people for the extra night of lodging.

POLICY CHANGES MADE IN 2003 RELOCATION PROGRAM

Based on this evaluation, the following changes were made in the 2003 Relocation Program.

Exclusion Zone:

The agencies established an exclusion zone to include any areas where wind shifts could bring smoke. Ultimately the decision was made to exclude all of Monterey County. All pre-paid hotels would be located outside this area, and the Army would not reimburse people for relocation to a hotel or residence of their own choosing within Monterey County.

Three-day Notification Period

The public was notified that three days was the maximum notice that would be given, and the public was informed that even at three days there would still be uncertainty about whether the prescribed burn would actually occur.

Enrollment Period for Pre-Paid Rooms

The public was informed that the Army would provide pre-paid rooms only to people who applied for relocation at least 48 hours before an announced prescribed burn. This would give the Army 48 hours to arrange rooms, notify people of their room assignments, etc.

Food Vouchers Pick-Up

The Army developed a delivery system for vouchers so that people would receive their food vouchers after they relocated to their assigned pre-paid motel.

Fixed Room Assignments

Applicants for pre-paid rooms were notified in advance of the type of motel that would be provided (e.g. Motel 6, Holiday Inn Express), and were informed that if they did not wish to stay in the assigned motel they would need to notify the Army and switch to the reimbursement plan.

Internal Coordination

The Army would make arrangements so that people handling the hotline and people handling room assignments and vouchers would be located in the same building during the 24 hours prior to the burn, and would all

share access to the database. Sufficient equipment would be obtained to handle any last minute influx of phone calls or applicants.

Update Letter

The Army would send a letter to all prior applicants informing them of the changes that were being made in the program. If they wished to continue to relocate they needed to complete and mail an acknowledgement form. The acknowledgement form would also be used to update any information, such as a change of address, etc., and people would be asked to sign an acknowledgment that they understood the changes in the relocation program (which will be spelled out on the acknowledgement page). This acknowledgment form would also ask people to acknowledge that by continuing in the program they are giving permission to the Army to retain their personal information in the database. The update letter would also include an announcement that if the letter was not returned by an established deadline, people would be removed from the database. If they decided subsequently that they want to relocate, they would have to re-apply.

Revised Voluntary Relocation Plan

The Army would revise the 2002 Voluntary Relocation Plan to reflect these changes and update publicity materials.

CHRONOLOGY OF 2003 RELOCATION PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

January

- Meetings were held with the Base Cleanup Team (BCT) to evaluate the relocation program and determine the changes needed in the program.
- A community relations plan was developed describing the activities needed to inform the public about the relocation program.
- A briefing on the status of the relocation program was conducted as part of the monthly Community Involvement Workshop.
- Work began on Community Bulletin #5.

February

- Revisions made to Community Bulletin #5.
- Relocation booth set up and staffed at former Fort Ord Open House event – attendance of 92 people at Open House.

March

- Community Bulletin #5 goes to final layout.
- Work began on Community Bulletin #6.
- A briefing on the status of the relocation program was conducted as part of the monthly Community Involvement Workshop.

April

- Draft guidance for hotline operators drafted.
- Report prepared summarizing the responses on questionnaires distributed to participants in the 2002 relocation program.

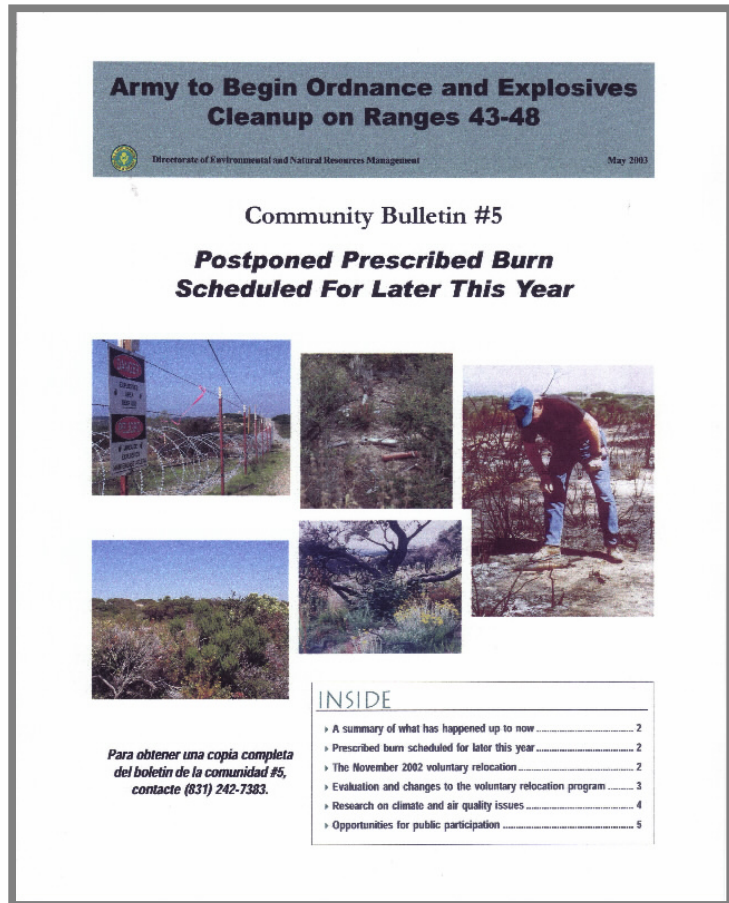
- The relocation program was a major agenda item at the monthly Community Involvement Workshop and the quarterly Technical Review Committee meeting.

May

- Community Bulletin #5 mailed to 50,000 Monterey County homes.
- Revised Voluntary Relocation Plan prepared, including revised publicity materials, press release, etc.
- Planning begins with the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) and California State University Monterey Bay (CSUMB) Environmental Sciences Department for a for CSUMB student symposium.
- Developed a relocation program tasks & schedule matrix.

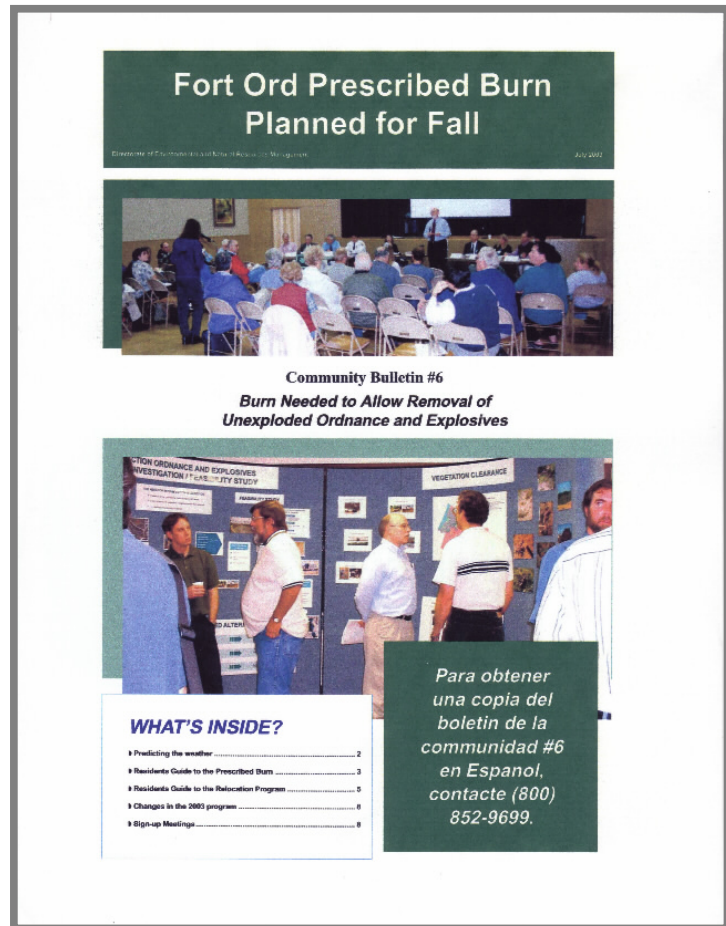
June

- Coordination with Army Corps of Engineers staff regarding database and relocation/reimbursement procedures.
- Prescribed burn booth at former Fort Ord Open House.



July

- Community Bulletin #6 mailed to 50,000 Monterey County households. Bulletin #6 contains two pull-outs: a Resident's Guide to Relocation and a Resident's Guide to the Prescribed Burn (shown on following pages). Community Bulletin #6 also announces sign-up workshops in Spreckels and Seaside, and opening of relocation office.



- Updated letter sent to all 2002 relocation program applicants informing them of program changes and asking them to return an acknowledgement letter. The Army received 173 responses to the update letter. It also received 61 returned envelopes that were not deliverable. Almost all of the undeliverable envelopes were addressed to CSUMB students. Of the 173 people who returned the update letter, 101 said they would be part of the “reimbursement” program,” 2 said they would want a pre-paid room but no food vouchers, 60 said they would want both a pre-paid room and food vouchers, and 10 said they should be removed from the relocation program.

RESIDENTS' GUIDE TO RELOCATION

The Army has established a voluntary relocation program so that people who wish to be relocated out of Monterey County during the upcoming prescribed burn can relocate at Army expense. The guide explains the relocation program.

What does relocation mean?

You can move yourself and your family members to stay with relatives or friends or you can stay in a hotel or motel for several days until all the smoke has blown away. The Army has made arrangements to provide meals, food, lodging, and special requirements for people who choose to relocate.

Why would I consider relocation?

Although the Army is doing all it can to reduce the amount of smoke, some people could have health problems from exposure to smoke. How can you decide whether there is a health risk for you? Public health officials generally agree that:

- 1) Exposure to high concentrations of smoke is not good for you;
- 2) The amount of smoke you will be exposed to from a well-managed prescribed burn should not be sufficient to cause health problems for people in good health; and
- 3) The health risks from exposure to smoke are higher for people with existing breathing conditions, such as asthma or emphysema.

If you believe smoke could be bad for you, the Army will assist you to relocate out of the area during the time the smoke is in the air. If you are not certain whether relocation is necessary, speak with a physician or other health professional.

What if I have health concerns but I don't want to relocate?

As stated above, smoke should not cause problems for healthy people. If you have health problems but decide to remain in the area, you can take the following precautions:

- Reduce outside activities, remain indoors as much as possible
- Limit physical activity.
- Stock adequate supplies and be especially vigilant about taking prescribed medication.
- Drink plenty of liquids.
- Consider using an over-the-counter nasal moisturizing spray (saline).
- Use humidifiers to ease any irritation caused by the smoke.
- Consider using a High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) room filtration unit
- Seek medical care if breathing becomes difficult.

Who qualifies for relocation?

This is a **voluntary** program open to residents of Monterey County. No one is required to relocate.

The Army will require proof of Monterey County residency and the head of household will be asked to sign a statement saying that he or she is a U.S. citizen or legal alien. Under U.S. law, any member of the household (including a child) who is a U.S. citizen can be considered to be the head of household. So if any child is a U.S. citizen, the Army can relocate other family members who are not citizens as well.

If you would like to be temporarily relocated, contact the Army regardless of your citizenship or resident status. The Army will refer anyone who cannot meet federal citizenship or residence requirements to the Monterey Chapter of the American Red Cross. The Red Cross does not require any statement regarding citizenship or immigrant status.

The Army will serve as the clearinghouse for these services, so make your application directly to the Army.

How do I qualify for relocation?

Call the Army at (831) 242-7383 or 1-800-852-9699. You will need to fill out some paperwork before the Army can pay relocation expenses. You will need to appear **in person** either at the Fort Ord Cleanup office, or at a sign-up meeting (see box). **You must bring: 1) photo identification (such as a current driver's license or passport) and 2) some form of proof that you are a Monterey County resident.** Proof of Monterey County residency could include a driver's license, checking account, electric or telephone bills, or a student body card.

We will help you fill out the forms. Fill out the forms **BEFORE** the Army announces the date for a prescribed burn, to avoid delays in getting relocation approved. If you fill out the paperwork but then decide you don't want to relocate for a particular burn, that's OK.

If I already applied for relocation, do I have to apply again?

If you applied for relocation during 2002, you will be sent a letter describing changes in the relocation program. Included in that letter will be a re-enrollment form that asks whether you want to continue to be in the relocation program and asks you to acknowledge the changes made in the program. If you complete this form and mail it to the Army by July 15, you will continue to be enrolled for relocation and do not need to complete any additional steps. If you do not complete and mail the form, or you did not apply during 2002, you must apply for relocation.

What if I don't relocate and then I have health problems during a prescribed burn?

If you know you are sensitive to smoke, you may want to consider relocating before the fire is lit so this circumstance doesn't occur. If you begin to have health problems during a prescribed burn, **call your health care provider or call 911.** Individuals who cannot afford medical insurance should still request medical treatment. Government programs are available to cover emergency medical treatment for low-income people.

If individuals choose not to relocate, but experience health difficulties during a prescribed burn and wish to be relocated, they can call the Army at (831) 242-7383 or 1-800-852-9699 or the American Red Cross at (831) 424-4824. Both organizations will provide temporary lodging, meals, and transportation. The

Army will require proof of Monterey County residency and the head of household will need to sign a statement saying that he or she is a U.S. Citizen or legal alien. The Red Cross does not require proof of residency nor any statement regarding citizenship or immigrant status.

A live operator answers the Army's hotline only during working hours (8 AM – 5 PM, weekdays), so if you must relocate during other hours please call the American Red Cross, or relocate and we will arrange reimbursement upon your return.

How will I be notified before the prescribed burn?

After you complete the application for relocation benefits, you will be put on a notification list. The Army will contact you, and at that time you can let the Army know the best way to notify you of any scheduled prescribed burns, whether by e-mail, phone, or fax. Because you will only receive 3-days notice, U.S. Mail may not reach you in time to be of any value. It is your responsibility to keep the Army informed about how to contact you. So if you move, or your phone number changes, it is your responsibility to tell the Army about that.

The Army will not know exactly on which day the prescribed burn will occur, because it depends on weather conditions. **The Army will only be able to give you three days notice that a burn could occur.** Otherwise the Army could be giving you a number of false alarms. The Army will only make one effort to contact you, using the method you specified, so be sure to keep the Army updated about any changes in address, phone numbers, or e-mail address.

Once you get this notice you need to do two things: 1) Let the Army know for sure whether you plan to relocate; and 2) check in daily on the hotline (831) 242-7383 or 1-800-852-9699 or check the web site (www.FortOrdCleanup.com) to get daily updates.

The final decision to go ahead with a burn, or postpone it, is made first thing in the morning, after the wind conditions are known. So you will need to relocate the afternoon before the burn. There will not be time to notify you to relocate the day of the burn. If the Army tells you about a burn and you relocate, but then the Army decides not to light the burn because of wind conditions, the Army will pay your expenses until you are told to return.

If you are not sure whether a burn is scheduled, call the hotline at (831) 242-7383 or 1-800-852-9699 for the latest information on the burn schedule.

How long will I be away from my home?

You'll be away from home three nights, beginning the night before the burn. If there is still too much smoke in the air, the Army may extend the relocation period. Of course you can return to your home anytime, since your relocation is voluntary. But if you do come home, the Army will only reimburse you for the time you were away. You can also stay away longer, but the Army will only reimburse you for your relocation expenses during the "official" relocation period.

What should I do about my pets and houseplants?

You will need to make arrangements for your pets and for your houseplants. Speak with your neighbors, friends, or relatives, who may be able to care for your pets or plants during your temporary relocation. If this doesn't work, an Army representative will help you arrange to place your pets (except fish) in a kennel. The Army will pay for this. Some hotels will accept small pets. Be sure to discuss your needs with an Army representative when you register for relocation.

Where will I be relocated?

You can stay with a relative or friend or you can stay in a motel or hotel.

If you choose to stay in a motel or hotel provided by the Army, the Army has made arrangements with some motels so your lodging costs will be billed directly to the government. The Army will make arrangements with motels in areas outside the Monterey County exclusion zone. For example, they could be in Gilroy, Morgan Hill, or in Santa Cruz. If you wish to stay in a room provided by the Army, you must apply for relocation at least 48 hours prior to the announced date of a prescribed burn. **People who register after that time will have the choice of relocating at their own expense, receiving reimbursement after the fire is over, or they may receive emergency housing through the American Red Cross.** Be sure to submit your application early – you will have several weeks at the beginning of "burn season" to apply before any burns will be announced – so that the Army can ensure that a pre-paid room will be available.

The pre-paid rooms that the Army will provide are in nationally recognized motel chains in the "moderate" price range. You will be asked to state your preferences for which city in which you are relocated, and the Army will try to respond to your preferences. However, once an assignment has been made to a pre-paid hotel, no changes will be made in that assignment. You can either stay in that motel, or you can inform the Army that you will be staying in a motel of your own preference and request reimbursement upon your return.

If you choose to make your own arrangements, the Army will reimburse you for your room up to the limit that applies to all government travel. However, the Army will NOT reimburse you for lodging in Marina, Seaside, Monterey, Pacific Grove, Carmel, Carmel Valley, Spreckels, Salinas and Castoville (or rural areas adjoining these cities). These areas are excluded to ensure that if you relocate, there is close to zero chance that smoke from Fort Ord will affect you.

The reimbursement limit in Monterey is \$75 per night per family from November to April, and \$94 per night per family from May through October (because of tourist season). Some larger families may need more than one room – be sure to

RESIDENTS' GUIDE TO RELOCATION

RESIDENTS' GUIDE TO RELOCATION

discuss this with the Army representative when you enroll in the program. The reimbursement rate above is the 2003 rate. These rates change each year, and will change again on October 2003. Normally these changes are increases.

When you stay any place other than the motels arranged for by the Army, you would pay the motel directly, then receive reimbursement from the Army. Be sure that the hotel or motel you pick is located outside of Monterey County. You will not be reimbursed if you relocate within Monterey County. If you choose to stay with relatives or friends, you will not be reimbursed for lodging, but you will still receive money for meals.

When you fill out the forms requesting relocation assistance, an Army representative will talk with you to discuss any special needs you may have.

You should receive your reimbursement check within 30 days after the Army receives your reimbursement request and receipts.

What will I receive for meals?

People who relocate on their own and then request reimbursement will receive a daily meal allowance based on a limit established for the Monterey area. This is the same limit paid to all Federal employees – for all agencies, military and non-military – when they travel in the Monterey area. The limit through September 30, 2003 is \$46 a day for adults. Children under 12 receive 50% of the adult daily rate (\$23). These limits are adjusted each year, based on surveys of costs for meals in the Monterey area, and might change slightly on October 1.

If people travel only part of a day, the daily rates for meal reimbursement rates are prorated based on the portion of the day that was traveled. If you leave your home before 7 AM, you will receive \$46 per adult (or whatever the per diem is after October 1, 2003). If you leave before 1 PM, you will receive \$34.50. If you leave before 7 PM, you will receive \$23. If you leave after 7 PM, you will receive \$11.50.

Do I have to spend my own money for meals?

People who choose to relocate to a motel selected by the Army may also choose to receive food vouchers. If you request vouchers, they will be delivered to you at your motel or at a nearby facility within east walking distance (you will be told exactly where to get your meal vouchers when you are assigned to a motel). These vouchers can only be used at certain specified restaurants at which the Army has arranged payment based on vouchers. **Individuals who wish to receive vouchers should request them when they complete their application for relocation.**

How do I move?

The Army will pay transportation costs to relocate. Normally you would use your personal auto to move members of your household and the personal belongings and medications necessary for three nights. If you don't have a car, ask a friend or relative to help. If none of those options works for you, call the Army hotline so that other arrangements can be made.

The Army will reimburse transportation costs from homes to the place where people are relocating, and back again, at a standard federal mileage rate. The 2003 rate is 36.5 cents per mile. The Army will reimburse a maximum of 300 miles.

If individuals do not have access to private autos, the Army will arrange alternative transportation so long as the request is made in advance when the individual applies for relocation.

What if I have special requirements?

You may request reimbursement or ask that arrangements be made to meet special requirements such as moving bed-ridden people, moving medical equipment, moving or kenneling pets. Under some circumstances, home security during the time away may also be appropriate. If a minor is relocating without an adult member of the family, special arrangements will be necessary. All special requirements must be identified when you initially request relocation. The Army must pre-approve expenditures for special requirements.

Which of my expenses will **not** be covered?

The Army will not pay your rent, mortgage, or the utilities on your home during your temporary relocation. These payments are not considered to be additional costs caused by your relocation, even though you will not be living in your home.

Federal law does not allow the Army to pay for lost wages, or for leave that is lost, during relocation. You need to consider this when you decide whether to relocate.

Expenses for which you will NOT be reimbursed include:

- Expenses other than meals, lodging and transportation that the Army has not approved in advance;
- Damage caused by pets;
- Damage that you, your family or your guests cause to your temporary housing, its furniture, or recreation equipment;
- The cost of temporary housing beyond the date on which your temporary relocation period ends;
- Expenses related to accidents, injuries, or illnesses that you may experience during your temporary relocation period;
- If you are housed in a motel or hotel, any charges to your room other than lodging (such as room service or other food, beverages, telephone charges, video rentals, pay-per-view television programs, damages to the hotel, etc.);
- Expenses for searching for temporary housing; and
- Duplicate benefits – expenses that have already been paid by someone else, such as a social welfare agency.

How will I be reimbursed for approved costs that I pay out of my own pocket?

If you pay for expenses out of your own pocket, you will be reimbursed for meals, lodging, transportation, and pre-approved special requirements. Keep your receipts for lodging, transportation and special requirements to show your expenses. You do not need to keep receipts for meals, since you will be paid a flat per diem rate for meals. Upon your return you will need to fill out a reimbursement request form and submit copies of your receipts. Call the Army hotline at (831) 242-7383 or 1-800-852-9699, and we can help you fill out the form. Approximately 30 days after the form has been completed and approved, you will receive a U.S. Treasury check made out to the person designated as the head of your household.

The head of household will be asked to provide his or her social security number on the reimbursement request form. The Internal Revenue Service requires this information before federal agencies can issue checks. The Army will ensure the privacy of this information.

How will I be notified that relocation is over?

You will be responsible to call the hotline at (831) 242-7383 or 1-800-852-9699, or check the web page (at www.FortordCleanup.com), daily during relocation. There will be announcements in both English and Spanish telling you when relocation will end. For planning purposes, assume that you will be gone three nights/four days. This could change if the burn is cancelled, or if there is more smoke in the air than anticipated.

What other responsibilities do I have while I am receiving this assistance?

Your responsibilities include:

- Keeping your receipts, so you can be reimbursed for any approved costs that you pay out of your own pocket.
- Helping the Army determine the types of assistance that you and the other members of your household will require by providing the information that is requested at the time that you are interviewed by an Army representative;
- Informing the Army about any special needs (for example, arrangements for pets and medical problems or disabilities of members of your household);
- If you are staying at a motel, keeping any rules made by the motel, as well as obeying the normal rules of courtesy at a motel;
- Making arrangements on your own for transportation to work, to the post office, and to medical or other appointments;
- Taking care of your temporary residence;
- Leaving your temporary residence when the prescribed burn is completed, and
- Keeping the Army notified about where you can be reached.

What happens when the prescribed burn is over?

If your temporary housing is in a hotel or motel, the checkout time is posted in your room, or the clerk at the front desk can give you this information. Be sure to check out by this time or you could be charged for another day's lodging.

When you leave the hotel or motel, you must check out by going to the main desk and informing the clerk that you are checking out. At that time, you will have to pay all bills for services other than the cost of your room. If you are staying in a motel or hotel other than those assigned by the Army, you will also need to pay for your lodging. Be sure to keep your receipt so you can get reimbursed.

What if I am asked to leave my temporary housing before the relocation is over?

If the manager of your temporary housing determines that you or other members of your household are not following the rules of that housing, you may be asked to leave.

If — as a result of breaking rules or regulations — you are asked to leave the temporary housing that the Army arranged for you, the Army will NOT move you a second time. Your relocation assistance may be terminated, and you may have to find and pay for temporary housing on your own.

Reasons for terminating relocation assistance include, but are not limited to the following:

- Failure to take care of your temporary housing;
- Failure to comply with hotel or motel rules;
- Failure to pay charges for which you are liable;
- Misrepresentation or fraud;
- Criminal activities;
- Failure to vacate your primary residence after being provided relocation assistance.

Obligation to Provide Factual Information

Please be aware that it is criminal offense to receive funds from the federal government based on false information. You will be asked to sign a statement certifying that the information you provide is accurate and honest.

Who do I call if I have questions?

Call the hotline at (831) 242-7383 or 1-800-852-9699.

RESIDENTS' GUIDE TO RELOCATION

RESIDENTS' GUIDE TO THE PRESCRIBED BURN

What is a prescribed burn?

A prescribed burn is a fire that is ignited, under very tightly controlled conditions, to burn off vegetation on a particular piece of land.

Why is the Army conducting a prescribed burn?

The Army will use prescribed burns to burn off brush so the Army can safely remove unexploded ordnance and explosives. This unexploded ordnance and explosives was left over from when the Army used Fort Ord to train soldiers to fire artillery and use explosives. Hundreds of thousands of rounds of artillery and rockets were fired while Fort Ord was a training center. Some of the shells and explosives didn't explode. So they still remain on the ground, particularly in former firing ranges.

The Army wants to clean up this land as soon as possible. Otherwise, anyone who trespasses on the land could be killed or seriously injured. But the land is covered with brush. Before it is safe for cleanup workers to enter the land, the Army has to burn off the brush. Cleanup workers will then be able to see the ground and can avoid stepping upon or kicking something explosive. Prescribed burns are the only safe way to remove the vegetation.

Once the vegetation has been cleared, the Army will use sophisticated detection equipment to find the unexploded ordnance and explosives. Then the Army will detonate any unexploded materials, and will remove remaining materials from the land. When the cleanup is over, some of the land will be developed, but more than 85% will remain as open space. These lands will become part of the largest park in Monterey County.

Where will the prescribed burn be?

The prescribed burn planned for autumn 2003 will be at Ranges 43-48, former firing ranges. [See map] The Army has identified these areas as high priority for cleanup because of the dangerous nature of the explosives remaining on this land. These former firing ranges are also near residences and schools, and there is a history of people trespassing on these lands, at considerable personal risk.



How long will the fire last?

The fire will probably only last one day. The fire itself may last as little as 5 hours but smoldering could keep smoke in the air for 1-2 days after the fire. If there are areas that did not completely burn, the Army might light small fires the day after the larger burn, to ensure that the area is clear of vegetation so cleanup work can begin.

How will the fire be controlled?

Last year, the Army prepared a Prescribed Burn Plan that looks at specific site conditions and describes the staff, organization and equipment required to conduct a safe burn. It also describes the "prescription" for how the fire would be ignited, and under what atmospheric conditions. The draft plan was reviewed by a number of local and state fire organizations to ensure it is fully adequate.



The Army will follow the same burn plan as last year. Fire Stop, the same fire control contractor that the Army hired for the 2002 burn season has been re-hired for 2003. The Army has already created "defensible polygons" – small areas surrounded by existing roads – throughout the 8,000-acre Multi-Range Area (which includes Ranges 43-48). [See photo showing defensible polygons] The areas alongside these roads have been cleared, providing a 45-foot wide firebreak. Before the fire, the fire control team will be certain that the roadways and fuel breaks around the perimeter are clear of vegetation. In addition, the team will treat a strip 100 feet wide outwards from the containment roads to increase the effectiveness of the firebreak.

The fire will be controlled using helicopters and air tankers. Firefighters cannot be on the roads surrounding the burn once the fire has started, because they could be exposed to explosives detonated by the fire. Except in a few places where terrain provides protection, firefighters on the ground will remain at least 1,700 feet from the boundary of the fire, based on estimates of the maximum distance that a projectile set off by the fire could fly.

On the day of the fire, the first step will be to light a small test burn. This is a

way to make certain that the vegetation burns as expected, and that the atmospheric conditions are within the desired range.

If the test burn goes as planned, two helicopters will ignite the fire from the air, starting at the outer edges of the area to be burned so that the fire burns towards the center. Two additional helicopters can be used for ignition and can also be used for fire suppression. Two more helicopters are used for fire suppression only. In addition, two air tankers that can rapidly transport large quantities of water will be stationed at the Marina Airport, just a minute or two away.



The entire operation will be supervised from two command helicopters. The Air Ignition Specialist/Air Attack Supervisor will be in one helicopter, and the Incident Commander/ Fire Boss will be in the other, providing overall management of the fire. They will be in communication with a Fire Weather Meteorologist/Smoke Specialist and Fire Behavior Analyst, who will be tracking the fire and weather conditions moment by moment. A Holding Group Supervisor, on the ground, will be responsible for pre-treatment of the site, and will supervise the fire suppression forces on the ground.

One of the helicopters is equipped with infrared technology that allows the team to "look through" the smoke and detect any fires that start outside the containment area. Another helicopter is equipped with a camera and video. Any spot fires outside the burn area can be quickly identified using this infrared and video surveillance. Spot fires can be quickly extinguished with foam or water from the helicopters or tankers. The infrared technology, because it can see through the smoke, also permits the Incident Commander to adjust the location where the foam or water is being delivered.

Three fire engines will be stationed at the Fitch Park Housing as a safety precaution. Fire Stop will provide an additional task force of fire engines and bulldozers that can be deployed in any areas free of unexploded ordnance at the direction of the Incident Commander.

If you wish additional information about how the fire will be controlled, the Prescribed Burn Plan is posted on the Fort Ord cleanup web site (www.FortOrdCleanup.com), and can be downloaded for viewing.

Could any homes be hit by flying shrapnel when ordnance or explosives are detonated during the fire?

The fire may set off some of the unexploded items in the training ranges, including rockets and projectiles. The Army has considerable knowledge about the characteristics of each of the shells and explosives at the site, and has calculated the maximum distance that one of these items could fly. The maximum distance a projectile could fly is 1,701 feet.

The Army believes this is a considerable over-estimate, using the most cautious assumptions. In addition, rockets and projectiles were always aimed towards the center of the land, not out towards the boundary. Even if a projectile did fly 1,701 feet, much of that distance would occur inside the boundary of the firing range.

There are 26 homes at Fitch Park (an area of military housing at Fort Ord) that are located slightly less than 1,701 feet from the outer boundary of the land where the fire will be set. As an added safety precaution, the Army will ask residents of these homes to stay inside the morning of the burn, even though the Army believes no projectiles will come anywhere near these homes. Security personnel will also be patrolling at Fitch Park during the fire.

Will the fire cause smoke that could affect neighbors?

The fire will produce smoke. Unfortunately there is no way to avoid that. But the Army is doing everything it can to minimize the amount of smoke and its impact upon its neighbors. The fire will be lit on a day when weather conditions allow the smoke to be lofted high in the air, where it can disperse without much impact upon people on the ground. There could be smoldering after the fire, which also puts smoke into the air. But areas that are smoldering will be watered down as quickly as possible. These actions will minimize smoke, but can't eliminate it completely. Nor can the Army control the weather. If weather conditions change rapidly, neighbors could be exposed to more smoke than expected.

Where does the smoke blow?

The normal winds in the area blow from the ocean towards the land. Because of this, during past fires smoke blew to the east and southeast of Fort Ord along Highway 68 and towards Salinas. The Army hopes to light the fire on a day when, during the morning at least, the wind is blowing from the land toward the sea, or there is little wind. If weather conditions

(continued on page 6)

RESIDENTS' GUIDE TO THE PRESCRIBED BURN

RESIDENTS' GUIDE TO THE PRESCRIBED BURN

(continued from page 3)

are right, the smoke will go high in the air where it will disperse before the afternoon winds come in from the sea.

Is smoke a health risk?

A number of federal agencies, particularly the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and fire fighting organizations like the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management have conducted numerous studies on the substances in smoke, the exposures people receive—including fire fighters and nearby communities—and the possible health consequences. The results of these studies show two things: 1) breathing high concentrations of smoke is not good for you, and 2) the concentrations to which people are exposed by smoke from prescribed burns seldom reach the point that they pose a health risk to the general population, although sometimes smoke can be an irritant or health risk for people with existing health problems.

Linda Velasquez, M.D., acting Monterey County Public Health Officer says that: "Breathing lots of smoke isn't good for you, but how harmful it is depends on how much you breathe and your own state of health. The amounts of smoke that results from a properly conducted prescribed burn should not pose a health risk to healthy people. If there is any discomfort it should be temporary and minimal, like the effects of sitting around a campfire. But people with existing breathing conditions, such as asthma or emphysema, may want to take reasonable precautions like staying indoors or might consider relocating during the fire."

The Army offers a program for people who want to relocate during the fire. See pages 4 and 5.

Is a fire at Fort Ord different because of the explosives and other materials on the ground?

There is one way in which a fire at Fort Ord is different. When a fire burns on land where there is unexploded shells or explosives, some percentage of those materials are detonated or burn during the fire, releasing emissions into the air. The Army, in consultation with both the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the California Department of Toxic Substances Control, conducted an air emissions study that addressed the issue of whether the emissions from incidental detonation or burning are significant in either quantity or health risk. The study received a technical peer review from the California Air Resources Board, air-modeling staff from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's headquarters office, and the Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District.

After calculating the air emissions that would result from incidental detonation of ordnance and explosives during a fire, researchers compared the emissions from incidental detonation to the emissions of the same contaminants if just the vegetation alone were burned. The study concluded:

- 1) Air pollutant emissions from incidental ordnance and explosives detonation during a prescribed burn will be minor compared to emissions contributed directly by burning vegetation.
- 2) Incidental detonation of ordnance and explosives will result in pollutant concentrations well below health-protective regulatory screening values.

In less scientific language: *A fire at Fort Ord is essentially no different than a fire anywhere else.*

Can the Army predict exactly what the concentrations of smoke will be?

No, there are too many things to take into account. This includes the characteristics of the fire itself, the vegetation type and density, weather conditions, distance from the fire, and many other things. But the Army has provided funding to the Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District to conduct a computer modeling study to predict the concentrations of smoke in different locations surrounding Fort Ord. After the Ranges 43-48 prescribed burn this fall, the predictions from the computer modeling will be compared with the actual results from the air monitoring. This will allow the agencies to "fine tune" the model to produce increasingly accurate predictions.

How will the Army monitor concentrations of smoke during the prescribed burn?

The Army has developed a monitoring program to measure the concentrations of pollutants in the air during the upcoming prescribed burn at Ranges 43-48. This program is described in an Air Sampling and Analysis Plan, and will soon be available on the Fort Ord web site at www.FortOrdCleanup.com. Because the amount of unexploded ordnance and explosives on Ranges 43-48 is the densest of any site at Fort Ord, monitoring of this prescribed burn will provide a "worst-case" scenario for making decisions about future prescribed burns at Fort Ord.

The purpose of the air-monitoring program is to detect and measure air emissions resulting from incidental detonation of unexploded ordnance or explosives. The monitoring program will also help determine how much smoke blows downwind during the fire, and where.

The regulatory agencies have established "health-protective screening levels" for contaminants. Whenever the concentrations of contaminants are below these screening levels, the agencies believe the public is "safe" with a high margin of safety. If there are concentrations of contaminants that equal or exceed the screening level, then a more detailed health risk assessment

must be made to determine whether public health is protected.

Air quality samples from the prescribed burn on Ranges 43-48 will be sent to a laboratory for analysis, and these results will be compared with the screening levels. If the concentrations for any of the measured contaminants exceed the screening levels, then the Army will need to conduct a health risk assessment. This could result in modifications to future prescribed burn operations.

Will the fire release radioactivity into the air?

No. There are no radioactive materials on the land at Fort Ord.

Will the public be exposed to dangerous levels of poison oak in the air?

Poison oak does contain a substance called *urushiol* that causes the poison oak rash. This substance can be carried in smoke when poison oak is burned.

Although poison oak is prevalent in a number of places in California, even at Fort Ord, the amount of poison oak depends on the type of vegetation in a particular area. Studies show that far less than 1% of the vegetation where the burns will occur is poison oak. The training ranges where the prescribed burn will occur are a vegetation habitat known as Maritime Chaparral. Very little poison oak grows in maritime chaparral.

There have been numerous fires and prescribed burns at Fort Ord in the past, and the Army has not received reports of poison oak cases during these past fires. The Army checked with fire departments that managed fires at Fort Ord in the past to get their reports on poison oak cases. The Fire Departments reported that there were occasional cases of "contact" poison oak, when firefighters walked through poison oak and then took their clothes home to be washed. [Contact with poison oak is enough of an issue for the cleanup workers removing ordnance and explosives that Fort Ord has their overalls cleaned for them, rather than risk exposure to workers or their families.] But there were no reports of poison oak cases from smoke exposure among local fire fighters. Nationally the U.S. Forest Service has reported cases of poison oak among fire fighters exposed to dense smoke, but again there were few, if any, reports of poison oak cases in nearby communities.

Were chemical weapons used at Fort Ord that could be put into the air by a fire?

There is no evidence that chemical weapons were ever used at Fort Ord. The Army did find one test kit containing dilute samples of chemical weapon used during and after World War I. This kit was used to train soldiers to recognize the odor of chemical weapons, but is not evidence of the use of chemical weapons at Fort Ord.

What impact does a fire have on the natural habitat?

Approximately 473 acres of the 490-acre proposed burn area at Ranges 43-48 is a natural habitat called Central Maritime Chaparral. This habitat type has evolved with fire being a critical part of its natural life cycle. This plant community—and the animal species that dwell in it—are dependent on fire to recycle the nutrients, expose the mineral soil and stimulate germination of the seeds in the soil that have accumulated since the last fire. This natural succession allows the plant community to rejuvenate itself and enhances the natural diversity of this rare and unique habitat.

Central Maritime Chaparral is an extremely rare plant community. Approximately 85% of the worldwide distribution of several rare and endangered plants in central maritime chaparral exists on Fort Ord. Because they are rare and endangered, they are protected by law. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service is the federal agency responsible for enforcing this law—the Endangered Species Act.

In 1997, the Army and many other entities (such as the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, Monterey Peninsula College, City of Marina, etc.) signed a Habitat Management Plan (HMP) with the Fish & Wildlife Service to protect rare and endangered species and their habitats at the former Fort Ord and to allow the development of other areas. Under the terms of the Habitat Management Plan, the Army is supposed to use prescribed burns as the primary method of brush clearance in designated habitat reserves containing central maritime chaparral. To protect and enhance the health of the plant community, the Habitat Management Plan limits the burning of Central Maritime Chaparral in designated habitat reserves to no more than 800 acres a year.

Will there be other prescribed burns in future years?

Yes. The Army's decision in 2002 to use prescribed burns on Ranges 43-48 also applied to other land known as Range 30A and OE-16. After those parcels are cleaned up, the Army will continue to clean up the entire multi-range area. The Army may conclude that the same safety and habitat considerations that made it decide to use prescribed burns on Ranges 43-48, Range 30A and OE-16 may make prescribed burns the best option to remove vegetation on other portions of the multi-range area.

In addition, the Bureau of Land Management will continue to conduct periodic prescribed burns on lands turned over to them. There are two reasons for this: (1) as noted above, fires actually reinvigorate the central maritime chaparral habitat, including a number of rare or endangered species that are part of that habitat; and (2) occasional fires help control the amount of "fuel" on the land, so that any fires caused by an accident or natural events (such as lightning) won't burn out of control, endangering nearby residences.

RESIDENTS' GUIDE TO THE PRESCRIBED BURN

CHRONOLOGY OF RELOCATION PROGRAM ACTIVITIES - continued

- The relocation program was a major agenda item at the monthly Community Involvement Workshop and the quarterly Technical Review Committee meeting.
- Relocation Office set up, with staff person on site 10 AM – 5 PM Monday – Friday, except holidays. Other times available by appointment. People who walked in between 8 AM-10, or between 4-5 PM, were signed up for the relocation program by Community Relations staff.
- Sign-up workshops held in Spreckels and Seaside. Less than 10 applicants in Spreckels, but nearly 50 people signed up during the Seaside workshop.

August

- Information provided for a news story about relocation in the Seaside Post.
- Presentation to American Lung Association staff.
- Phone calls to community groups, school districts, and health facilities offering to provide information about the relocation program.
- Mailing sent to elected officials announcing the beginning of “burn season.” (Copy of mailing shown below).
- Coordination with Monterey County Public Health Officer regarding notice to be given to the medical/health community.
- Full-page or half-page advertisements placed in Monterey Herald, Monterey County Post, Coast Weekly, Salinas Californian, and El Sol (Spanish-language). Advertisements announced that “burn season” had started and a prescribed burn could occur anytime (advertisement shown below). The availability of the relocation program is described in the advertisement. Advertisements appeared one time only in each newspaper.

MAILING TO ELECTED OFFICIALS (AUGUST 2004)



Aren't prescribed burns bad for the environment?

The habitat on the former Fort Ord is adapted to fire. As a result, it is actually rejuvenated by fire. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (which protects endangered species) supports prescribed burns for this habitat.

How is the fire controlled?

The Army has cleared a 45-foot wide firebreak around the area to be burned. Before the setting the fire, the fire control team will treat a strip 100 feet wide outwards from the containment roads to increase the effectiveness of the firebreak. The fire will be fought from the air, using helicopters and air tankers. The fire management plan has been reviewed by a number of state and local fire departments to make sure it is adequate to control the fire. These fire departments can be called upon to help if there are any problems.



Need more information
or want to apply for relocation?
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U.S. Army Fort Ord BRAC Office



The Army plans to conduct a prescribed burn at the former Fort Ord sometime before the end of the year. The prescribed burn will be a carefully controlled fire that will be set under ideal weather conditions to both burn off vegetation and minimize smoke impacts. The burn will last just one day, with the possibility of a smaller fire the second day to be sure all the vegetation is burned off. The total area that will be burned is 490 acres.

The Army must burn off the vegetation so that workers can safely locate and remove dangerous ordnance and explosives left over from when Fort Ord was a training facility. Workers need to see the ground where they are working because some of the ordnance and explosives could explode if it were bumped or disturbed in any way. The Army is cleaning up the ordnance and explosives to protect public safety and allow the land to be used. More than 80 percent of the land being cleared will be used for open space and recreation.

Here are answers to questions that are frequently asked about the prescribed burn:

When will the fire occur?

The "burn season" has begun. The fire could occur anytime between now and the end of the year.

What determines when the fire will be started?

Weather conditions. The Army wants to reduce the amount of smoke. So the Army will pick a day when weather conditions will allow smoke to rise high into the upper atmosphere, away from people. In the Monterey area, these atmospheric conditions occur only a few days a year, mostly in the fall.



How much warning will we receive?

The Army will put ads in the paper and issue press releases to the media **three days** before it plans to start a fire. If the Army were to give an announcement earlier than three days, there would be a lot of "false alarms." It is hard to predict the ideal weather conditions more than a few days in advance.

How is the prescribed burn different from the wildfire at Fort Ord several weeks ago?

The wildfire last month started as an accident on leased property no longer under Army management. The wildfire burned during poor weather conditions that kept the smoke close to the ground and populated areas. The wildfire burned for several days because it was not set in a controlled manner. The prescribed burn will be set under carefully selected weather conditions, which will direct most of the smoke away from populated areas. The burn will involve considerably less acreage than the wildfire and will only last a few hours over one to two days.

Will there be as much smoke during the prescribed burn as there was during the recent accidental fire?

There will be less smoke during the prescribed burn—probably considerably less smoke—because the fire will be set when the weather conditions allow the smoke to blow away at higher altitudes, and the fire will burn a much shorter time.



What if I am sensitive to smoke?

If you know you have a respiratory condition or any other condition that makes you sensitive to smoke, you may want to stay indoors, avoid vigorous exercise, and make sure you have your prescriptions on hand during the fire. If you wish, the Army will also relocate you outside of Monterey County for three nights. To discuss relocation, call (831) 393-9691 or 1-800-852-9699. If you want to enroll, enroll NOW. The Army can provide pre-paid rooms and meal vouchers, but only if you register at **least 48 hours before the fire**. Or you can make your own arrangements and file for reimbursement, subject to federal limits. It's okay to register now, and then decide later whether you want to actually relocate.

How can I tell if I need to relocate?

Dr. Linda Velasquez, the County's Acting Public Health Officer says: "The amount of smoke that results from properly conducted prescribed burns should not pose a health risk to healthy people. If there is any discomfort, it should be temporary and minimal, like the effects of sitting around a campfire. But people with existing breathing conditions—such as, asthma or emphysema—may want to take reasonable precautions, like staying indoors; or they might consider relocating during the fire."



Did the recent accidental fire cause lots of people to go to emergency rooms for treatment?

The Monterey County Health Department made a quick check of all the hospitals in Monterey and Salinas during last month's fire. Two people came to emergency rooms with respiratory problems that could have been brought on by exposure to smoke, but the actual cause was not determined. They were treated and released.

Will the fire set off explosives?

The fire will set off some explosives, just as the wildfire did last month. However, most of the popping noises during previous prescribed burns and wildfires were from blank small arms ammunition and burning vegetation. Safety measures will be in place to protect the public and workers from ordnance that may detonate during the burn.



Will the detonation of explosives put contamination into the air?

Explosives that may be set off by the fire will put very small amounts of contaminant material into the air. However, the amounts are so small that Federal and state environmental regulators agree that a fire at the former Fort Ord is essentially no different than a fire anywhere else with similar vegetation.

Will the fire put poison oak in the air?

Yes, but only very small amounts, so small that there have been no reported cases of poison oak during past fires. Did you or anyone you know catch poison oak during the fire last month? You should be even less exposed during the prescribed burn.

Did You Have Health Problems During Last Month's Fire?

If you had no health problems during last month's fire, you are unlikely to have any health problems during the prescribed burn. There should be less smoke during the prescribed burn.

FULL OR HALF-PAGE ADVERTISEMENT PLACED
IN NEWSPAPERS BY ARMY (AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 2004)



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U.S. Army Fort Ord BRAC Office

September

- Presentation to Monterey County Farm Bureau Board of Directors.
- Fact sheet on prescribed burn provided to CSUMB for posting on their web site.
- Symposium conducted for CSUMB students, co-sponsored by ATSDR and CSUMB Environmental Sciences Department.
- Presentation to Fort Ord Reuse Authority (FORA) Board of Directors.
- Relocation database revised for easier access and sorting of information.
- Weekly advertisements placed in legal notice section of the Monterey Herald and Salinas Californian announcing the plan to conduct a prescribed burn and the availability of the relocation program. Weekly notices continued until the prescribed burn was conducted.

October

- Provided information to CSUMB newspaper reporter for a story in CSUMB student newspaper.
- Prescribed burn announced for October 13th. Relocates notified by e-mail or phone (auto-dialer), and announcements put on web page and hotline. Local press coverage arranged by Presidio of Monterey Public Affairs Officer (see Figure 1, next page). Relocation Office was open from 8 AM – 9 PM on October 11th, and 8 AM – 5 PM on October 12th.
- On October 12th, the prescribed burn scheduled for October 13 was postponed. Public notified of postponement on October 13th, before relocation began. Notification by e-mail or phone (auto-dialer), and announcements placed on web page and hotline.
- On October 21, a prescribed burn was announced for Oct. 24. People registered for relocation notified by e-mail or phone (auto-dialer), and announcements on web page and hotline. Presidio of Monterey Public Affairs Officer arranges for newspaper, radio and television coverage.



Figure 1
 MEDIA COVERAGE BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER OCTOBER 24
 PRESCRIBED BURN

Date	Media Source	Title
PRIOR TO BURN		
9/8/2003	Herald	Event Will Discuss Fort Ord Burning
9/10/2003	Herald	Meeting on Ord burns is today
9/11/2003	Herald	Army clears the air on coming Ord burn
9/11/2003	Californian	Experts say Ord burns no worse than big fire
9/28/2003	Herald	Q & A Gail Youngblood Up in smoke: Monterey community braces for
10/2/2003	Otter Realm	Ft. Ord prescribed burns
10/11/2003	Californian	Ord is ready to burn
10/11/2003	Herald	Fort Ord burn is set for Monday
10/12/2002	Herald	Ord burn postponed
10/13/2003	Californian	Fort Ord burn is postponed
10/22/2003	Herald	Fort Ord burn set Friday
10/22/2003	Californian	Fort Ord burn set for Friday
10/23/2004	Herald	Army, residents ready for Ord burn
DURING PRESCRIBED BURN		
10/24/2003	KSBWChannel.com	Fort Ord Burn 85 percent contained
10/24/2003	Herald	Army's burn good to go
10/24/2003	Californian	Army proceeds with Fort Ord burn plan
10/24/2003	Herald.com	Fort Ord burn spreads too far Fort Ord Fire Brings Smoke, Ash to Surrounding Areas - Some Residents having
10/24/2003	KSBWChannel.com	difficulty breathing Smoke, Ash over Monterey Bay from Fort Ord
10/24/2003	ABC news	Burn
10/24/2003	County of Monterey	Physician Alert
10/25/2003	Herald	Residents voice anger
10/25/2003	Herald	Burn takes unseen twists, turns
10/25/2003	Herald	Officials on defensive about fire "Snowing ash" Flames Head Toward Seaside
10/25/2003	Californian	As Former Fort Ord Burn Gets out of Control Prescribed burn rages on at former Fort Ord
10/25/2003	Mercury News	artillery range
10/25/2003	Herald.com	Fire's course surprises educators Monterey Count Health Department Offers
10/25/2003	County of Monterey	Information About Possible Health Effects of

		Smoke from Fort Ord Burn
10/26/2003	Herald	Smoke, Questions, Linger
10/26/2003	Californian	Ord fire proves stubborn
10/26/2003	Zwire	Fort Ord burn rages
		Fort Ord Burn Contained - 1,500 Acres
10/27/2003	KSBWChannel.com	Charred Since Friday
		Firefighters expect to control Fort Ord fire by today
10/27/2003	Herald	Letters to the editor: "Who made the decision," & "Sights and sounds of fire"
10/27/2003	Herald	
10/28/2003	Californian	Fort Ord fire still smolders
10/28/2003	Herald	Army Burning debate persists
		Letter to the editor: "Why fuss over the smoke?"
10/28/2003	Herald	
10/28/2003	Herald	Fort Ord burn new challenge for company
10/29/2003	Herald	Farr: Army 'blew it' on burn
		POST-BURN
		Letter to the editor: "Fire Starters were unfit" & "Thank the firefighters"
10/29/2003	Herald	
10/29/2003	Californian	Farr to seek Ord fire hearing
10/30/2003	Herald	Agencies OK'd Fort Ord burn
10/30/2003	Herald	Letter to the editor: "Put Burn in Perspective"
10/31/2003	Herald	Natural fires are worse
10/31/2003	Herald	Leave the Land alone
10/31/2003	Californian	Army makes case for burns
10/31/2003	Herald	Fort Ord fire report issued
10/31/2003	Herald	The Herald's View: Burned Credibility
10/31/2003	Herald	Bad Day for a Fire
10/31/2003	Herald	Who made the decision?
11/1/2003	Herald	Ord fire toll on wildlife
11/1/2003	Herald	Letter to the editor: "Practice fire safety"
11/2/2003	Herald	Army explains burn claim procedure
11/5/2003	Coast Weekly	Cloud of Smoke Has Silver Lining 10/30/03
		Letter to the editor: "Time to pay the piper" & "Who's to blame for fires?"
11/5/2003	Herald	
11/6/2003	Californian	Fort Ord fire foes should be ashamed
		Cold War Carnage: Burn site littered with rockets
11/6-12/03	Coast Weekly	Letter to the editor: "Smoke screen" & "Red flags"
11/9/2003	Herald	
		Do you want to give us your opinion about the Army's recent prescribed burn
11/10/2003	Herald	

11/10/2003	Herald	Letter to the editor: "Ord burn in Control" & "Get over Ord fire"
11/11/2003	Herald	Thursday forum to explain Ord Burn
11/12/2003	Herald	Farr's true face
11/13/2003	Herald	Army holds public meeting today to discuss burn
11/14/2003	Herald	Ord burn forum tries to clear air
11/14/2004	Californian	Burn on hot seat
11/17/2003	Herald	Why was there ordnance there?
11/18/2003	Herald	MPC to hold forum Thursday on nonburning alternatives at Ord
11/20/2003	Californian	Army explains burn claim procedure
11/20/2003	Herald	Letter to the editor: "Ordnance explanation"
11/21/2003	Herald	Letter to the editor: "It's no treasure hunt"
11/22/2003	Herald	Claims from Fort Ord Burn Solicited
11/26/2003	Coast Weekly	Fort Ord still blazing: Debate continues about the necessity or harmfulness of October burns
11/30/2003	Herald	No easy solutions to complex problems
11/30/2003	Herald	Alternates to burning at Fort Ord
12/16/2003	Californian	Burn rules may change - Army ponders weather limits for Fort Ord fires; county air quality officials study data from October blaze

OCTOBER - continued

- Relocation Office open:
 - Oct. 22-23 8 AM – 9 PM
 - Oct. 24 8 AM – 10 PM
 - Oct. 25-26 8 AM – 8 PM

Both the Relocation Coordinator and Assistant Relocation Coordinator were present during these hours, assisted by two other staff members, and with support from the Community Relations Office. Hotline calls were handled by the Relocation Office staff. However when lines were busy (which occurred frequently), calls were automatically rolled over to other Directorate of Environmental and Natural Resources or Base Realignment and Closure staff.

Number of (800 number) hotline calls:

Entire month of October – 4,667 (a typical month has approximately 100 calls to the hotline)

Week of the prescribed burn: 3496 calls

October 22 – 189 calls
October 23 – 611 calls
October 24 – 1273 calls
October 25 – 709 calls
October 26 -- 150 calls
October 28 -- 95 calls

Average call length = 2 minutes, although some calls were up to 30 minutes.



- The relocation period that was originally intended to last three days (ending on October 26) was extended two extra days (to end at noon on October 28) due to continued fires. People were notified by e-mail, auto-dialer, and announcements on the web page and hotline.

November

- Advertisement placed in newspaper announcing public comment meeting and poster-board session. Army solicited public comment by e-mail, regular mail, or attendance at the poster-board session or public comment meeting.
- Public meeting and poster-board session held November 13th – 125 people signed in for the meeting.



DO YOU WANT TO GIVE US

YOUR OPINION

ABOUT THE ARMY'S RECENT PRESCRIBED BURN?

The Army is currently preparing an "after action" report analyzing what happened during the recent prescribed burn. This report will address such topics as:

- **Why did the fire escape the primary containment lines and burn a larger area than planned?**
- **What were the smoke impacts upon the community?**
- **Was the fire set under the appropriate weather conditions?**

We don't have complete answers for all these questions yet, but we're working hard to get the answers. If you would like to make comments or tell us about the questions you would like to see addressed in our report, here are the ways you can participate:

SEND US YOUR COMMENTS

If you would like to send us an e-mail, go to <http://www.fortordcleanup.com/comments.asp>

Or send us a letter at:

**Prescribed Burn Program
Fort Ord Environmental Cleanup Program
Presidio of Monterey
Attn: ATZP-EP
P.O. Box 5004
Monterey, CA 93944-5004**

ATTEND A DROP-IN POSTER BOARD SESSION AND TALK TO THE EXPERTS

Talk with the technical experts about:

- The reasons for the prescribed burn
- Weather conditions and smoke management
- Fire management
- Health concerns
- Unexploded ordnance and explosives
- Impact upon flora and fauna
- Relocation program

**3:30 PM – 7 PM
November 13, 2003
Embassy Suites, Del Monte Room
1441 Canyon Del Rey, Seaside**

SPEAK AT A PUBLIC COMMENT MEETING

Senior officials from the Army, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and California Department of Toxic Substances Control will be present to hear your opinions and comments.

Comments will be limited to 3-5 minutes per person depending on the number of speakers.

A court reporter will be present to keep a full record of your comments.

**4:30 - 7 PM
November 13, 2003
Embassy Suites, Salon C
1441 Canyon Del Rey, Seaside**

U.S. Army Fort Ord BRAC Office
For more information, call 1-800-852-9699
or visit: www.FortOrdCleanup.com

U.S. Army Fort Ord BRAC Office



Public Meeting, Nov. 13th

Poster Board Session, Nov. 13th



DECEMBER

- A letter was sent to everyone enrolled in the relocation program announcing a reimbursement application deadline of December 15, 2003.

JANUARY

- All reimbursement applications processed within 30 days from the time they were received by the Army Corps of Engineers.

CURRENTLY PLANNED COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

The current plan is to publish two community bulletins during the first six months of 2004, as follows:

- Community Bulletin #7 will be prepared beginning in late January, once all the draft after-action reports are submitted. This community bulletin will summarize what actually happened during the burn, how the burn escaped the containment lines, the contents of the smoke, the relocation program, and changes in procedures that are being considered for future prescribed burns. Community Bulletin #7 should be mailed in Late-April/early-May.
- Community Bulletin #8 will be published mid-year. It will discuss the decisions made about future burns and how they will be conducted, and will announce any burns planned for the second half of 2004.

In addition, information about the Range 43-48 burn will be discussed in monthly Community Involvement meetings and quarterly Technical Review Committee meetings.

If there is a prescribed burn in 2004, the relocation program will be offered and there will be a communication program comparable to that implemented during the Range 43-48 prescribed burn.

TOTALS FOR RELOCATION PROGRAM ENROLLMENT

The dates and numbers of enrollment in the relocation program are shown below:

<u>Enrollment Date</u>	<u># of Enrollments</u>
Re-enrolled from 2002	219 ³
January – June 2003	2 ⁴
July 2003 (signup workshops)	48
August 2003	16
September 2003	20
Oct. 1 – October 21, 2003	89
October 22, 2003	40
October 23, 2003	78
October 24, 2003 (day of burn)	119
October 25, 2003	35
October 26, 2003	11
October 27, 2003	38
October 28, 2003 (relocation ends)	11
October 29, 2003	6
October 30, 2003	5
October 31, 2003	1
Nov. 1 – Dec. 31, 2003	<u>30</u>
	768

RELOCATION PROGRAM COSTS

The Army received 493 reimbursement claims. 427 families made their own arrangements, while 66 requested prepaid rooms. The Army has processed all claims, at a cost of \$291,309.

The overall per-family average payment was \$596.42. The average payment for people who made their own arrangements was \$629.14. The average payment for people who received prepaid rooms was \$343.41.

³ These are individuals who registered in 2002 and completed a form acknowledging the changes in the program and asking that they remain enrolled.

⁴ There was no announced relocation enrollment during this period. The two individuals who enrolled during this period walked into the building and were registered by Community Relations staff.

Prepaid rooms paid for directly by the Army Corps of Engineers cost a total of \$39,357.50, and food vouchers cost \$33,111.50. An additional \$800 was paid for rooms reserved for the postponed Oct. 13th fire.

Total relocation expenses -- including motel rooms and meal vouchers paid for directly by the Army -- were \$364,578.

COMMENTS FROM STAFF:

Below are evaluation comments generated by the relocation registration and travel arrangements/contracting staff:

1. It really paid off having enough people. There was a good fit (in terms of the personalities of the staff) among those people working in relocation.
2. Having the registration staff and the travel arrangements/contracting staff in the same building was very helpful. It led to easy communication between staff signing up people for relocation and the staff actually doing the placement.
3. It made a big difference (compared to the 2002 relocation) having enough computers, phone and faxes.
4. During the relocation itself, the Army Corps of Engineers making travel arrangements were located at motels in Gilroy (the same hotels where all pre-paid relocatees were housed). This made communication difficult for registration staff in Building 4463 when they needed to check with Army Corps of Engineers staff on the availability of rooms for emergency relocations. The cell phones were not always working, nor were people always available through the Gilroy hotel phone number.
5. There were problems with the Army network connections to access the relocation database. Fortunately, a method of access was found using an alternate (in-house) Internet connection (Redshift).
6. About 160 families received meal vouchers. All the vouchers were for Denny's, located in walking distance from the hotels where people who selected the pre-paid options were housed. There were long lines at Denny's for the people using vouchers.
7. The number of people who requested pre-paid rooms but were "no-shows" just about balanced out the number of people who required emergency placement due to a combination of significant health problems/financial hardship.

8. Some people did call to change from pre-paid rooms to reimbursable travel. This made it possible to change their status or cancel their prepaid arrangements.

COMMENTS RECEIVED FROM THE PUBLIC

Most of the comments received from the public regarding the Ranges 43-48 prescribed burn discussed the burn itself, the prescription for the burn, and the impacts of the burn. The responses to these comments will be posted soon on www.FortOrdCleanup.com. However, several comments were received about the communications with the public prior to the burn, and the relocation program itself. These comments are summarized below. Responses to these comments are provided in Appendix 1.

COMMENTS REGARDING COMMUNICATIONS

- Some people felt they had not been properly informed about what they should expect from a prescribed burn. One urged the Army to take significant steps to restore public trust before carrying out any future burns
- Some people said that enough information was available prior to the burn and felt well informed
- One individual said there was no real public involvement
- Several comments reported difficulty getting up-to-date information from organizations such as the American Red Cross, local fire and police agencies and nearby businesses, and suggested that more needed to be done to inform these organizations
- Some people requested adequate advance notice to the public and better follow-up information as the burn is happening
- One comment suggested a “prescribed burn registry” program, under which people who would be directly impacted by a burn would get calls from the Army’s staff
- One person commented that the web site (www.FortOrdCleanup.com) was useful
- One individual stated that the Army should post warning signs about the potential danger of unexploded ordnance, although this should not be necessary in housing projects
- The comment was made that the amount of smoke and ashes caught many people by surprise, and the Army should promote awareness of the consequences of the burn so people could avoid being exposed to hazardous chemicals
- One commenter urged the Army to educate the public on the environmental benefits of a controlled burn

- Several people asked for more information about how and why the community was so impacted by smoke, and requested an opportunity to discuss the fire with the people who made the decision to proceed with the burn

COMMENTS REGARDING THE RELOCATION PROGRAM

- Several people expressed their appreciation of and support for the relocation program and said they would be relocating during any subsequent burns
- Two people said they had difficulty finding the relocation office
- One person said she was told that only 300 people would be relocated because there was not sufficient funding to relocate more people
- One person said there should be consideration for people who are unable to leave the area for work-related or other reasons

CHANGES NEEDED IN THE RELOCATION PROGRAM

The Army did not send a questionnaire to people who relocated during the 2003 relocation program. The Army was focused primarily on addressing concerns raised by the escaped fire. The comments received by the public during the November public meeting, or sent to the Army by mail or e-mail, are summarized above, with a full list of comments and responses in Appendix 1.

As discussed earlier, there were policy changes in the relocation program based on the 2002 relocation. These policy changes were largely effective. Establishing a Monterey County exclusion zone, coupled with closer coordination with the CSUMB administration does appear to have significantly reduced potential abuses of the program. All reimbursement requests were paid within 30 days of actual receipt of the request, although there continued to be some delays in delivery of mail by the U.S. Post Office. These delays are outside the control of the Army Corps of Engineers. The requirement that pre-paid rooms be requested at least 48 hours prior to relocation did permit the Army Corps of Engineers to make commitments on the number of pre-paid requirements. However, some applicants with genuine financial need did request pre-paid rooms after the 48-hour cutoff, and were given pre-paid rooms if they were available. The 48-hour cutoff needs to be emphasized in all communications to the public.

Based on staff analysis, the one possible policy change required would be a redefinition of the Monterey County exclusion zone. Relocation staff had difficulty explaining why relocation to places as distant as Big Sur, Lucia and Parkfield could be impacted by smoke. The argument in favor of continuing the present policy of excluding all of Monterey County is that the boundaries are well defined and there is no smoke exposure within those boundaries. Attempts to narrow

down the boundaries could lead to confusion and arguments over which areas are exposed to smoke and which are not.

The other changes recommended by relocation program staff and the public are operational in nature and will be addressed during planning for any future prescribed burns. These recommendations include:

1. When most of the travel arrangements/contracting staff relocate to Gilroy to be available to pre-paid relocatees, one travel arrangement/contracting person should stay at Building 4463 (registration center) to address questions related to emergency pre-paid relocations.
2. Purchase 50% of the meal vouchers from Denny's and 50% from Fresh Choice (the other restaurant within walking distance of the motels where pre-paid relocatees are housed). This would distribute the crowds between the restaurants, shortening the lines, and providing for greater variety.
3. There needs to be a clear, well communicated cut-off time for those families who have been assigned prepaid rooms, (i.e. if they do not check in by a certain time, their room will be given to an emergency pre-paid family).
4. There needs to be a review of all relocation literature to ensure there is a consistent message about when people who apply for reimbursement will receive their reimbursement check. For example, the 30-day pay period starts when the Army Corps of Engineers receives the request for reimbursement, not when the request is mailed.
5. Both relocation registration and travel arrangements/contracting staff should be provided special identification to show they are "official." This will help relocatees know who can give definitive information.
6. Once people have completed the relocation program application they should be given a signed piece of paper stating that they are enrolled in the relocation program. This is needed to reassure people that the transaction has been completed. It doesn't have to be fancy, but it should look official.
7. Registration staff needs to discuss newly completed applications with applicants to determine whether special arrangements are needed for pets. Arrangements for pets require extra coordination and need to be done well in advance.
8. A list of the motels where pre-paid relocatees will be housed, including addresses and phone number, should be published in advance and given to individuals or families requesting pre-paid accommodations.
9. Relocation literature needs to stress that, for people receiving pre-paid rooms, there will be no hotel changes from city to city once a burn is announced. Their preferences from the application will be recorded, and

their wishes will be accommodated if possible before the burn is announced. However, once a burn is announced there will be no changes.

10. The relocation insert from Community Bulletin #6 was too large. Something smaller would work better. For example, there could be a wallet-sized card showing abbreviated “rules of the road,” especially for people assigned to prepaid rooms.
11. Despite substantial notice that no pre-paid rooms would be available for people who signed up later than 48 hours before the prescribed burn. Many of the people who signed up after the 48-hour cutoff and still expected pre-paid rooms were military personnel. Information should go out from the Garrison Commander’s Office offering relocation but emphasizing the 48-hour cutoff for pre-paid rooms.

Appendix 1
PUBLIC COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

COMMENTS REGARDING COMMUNICATIONS	ARMY RESPONSE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some people felt they had not been properly informed about what they should expect from a prescribed burn. One urged the Army to take significant steps to restore public trust before carrying out any future burns. 	<p>The amount of information provided to the public was extensive. It included two community bulletins, each sent by direct mail to 50,000 households, full and half-page advertisements in local newspapers, a number of front-page newspaper stories, and radio and television stories. People may have been taken by surprise at the amount of smoke, which exceeded the Army's expectations as well.</p> <p>The Army did conduct a public meeting and poster session during which citizens could talk directly to senior decision makers from the Army and regulatory agencies.</p>
<p>Some people said that enough information was available prior to the burn and felt well informed</p>	<p>No response required.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One individual said there was no real public involvement 	<p>The Army provided a number of forums -- including public hearings -- during 2002, before the decision was made to conduct prescribed burns, to provide opportunities for the comment on this decision. During 2003, the primary focus was on providing public information, as discussed in this report.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Several comments reported difficulty getting up-to-date information from organizations such as the American Red Cross, local fire and police agencies and nearby businesses, and suggested that more needed to be done to inform these organizations 	<p>American Red Cross staff was briefed prior to the prescribed burn, and information was provided by phone to a Red Cross staff member. The Fort Ord hotline number was advertised extensively as the preferred method for providing up-to-date information. The hotline was called by 3496 individuals during the week of the prescribed burn.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some people requested adequate advance notice to the public and better follow-up information as the burn is happening 	<p>As noted above, advance notice included two community bulletins, each sent by direct mail to 50,000 households, full and half-page advertisements in local newspapers, a number of front-page newspaper stories, and radio and television stories. A media room was established, and briefings were given to the media as new information became available. The hotline was available for people requesting additional information.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One comment suggested a “prescribed burn registry” program, under which people who would be directly impacted by a burn would get calls from the Army’s staff 	<p>Such a prescribed burn registry already exists. People who wish to receive direct notice of prescribed burns may complete a relocation application and will receive direct recorded phone messages from the Army.</p>
<p>One person commented that the web site (www.FortOrdCleanup.com) was useful</p>	<p>No response required</p>
<p>One individual stated that the Army should post warning signs about the potential danger of unexploded ordnance, although this should not be necessary in housing projects</p>	<p>Numerous explosives warnings signs are posted on all the fences surrounding areas where unexploded ordnance or explosives could be located.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The comment was made that the amount of smoke and ashes caught many people by surprise, and the Army should promote awareness of the consequences of the burn so people could avoid being exposed to hazardous chemicals 	<p>Due to the fire escaping the primary containment lines, the amount of smoke generated by the fire exceeded the Army’s expectations as well. Community Bulletin 5 & 6, which were each sent by direct mail to 50,000 households, described the constituents in smoke and the assessment potential health impacts.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One commenter urged the Army to educate the public on the environmental benefits of a controlled burn 	<p>The community bulletins, paid advertisements, and media releases, have all discuss the environmental benefits of prescribed burns, specifically the rejuvenation of maritime chaparral following a prescribed burn.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Several people asked for more information about how and why the community was so impacted by smoke, and requested an opportunity to discuss the fire with the people who made the decision to proceed with the burn 	<p>The Army will soon be mailing Community Bulletin #7, which addresses directly the issue of how and why the community was so impacted by smoke. The Army did conduct a public meeting during which the public could present comments directly to key decision makers from the Army and environmental regulatory agencies.</p>
<p>COMMENTS REGARDING THE RELOCATION PROGRAM</p>	
<p>Several people expressed their appreciation of and support for the relocation program and said they would be relocating during any subsequent burns</p>	<p>No response needed</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two people said they had difficulty finding the relocation office 	<p>Comment noted. Directions to the Relocation Office were recorded on the hotline. Additional street signs were posted during the prescribed burn period pointing out the location of the relocation office.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One person said she was told that only 300 people would be relocated because there was not sufficient funding to relocate more people 	<p>This information is incorrect. Everyone who requested relocation was relocated. There was a constraint on the number of pre-paid rooms based on the number of people who requested them 48 hours prior to relocation. People who requested pre-paid rooms during the prescribed burn itself were accommodated if unused rooms were available.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One person said there should be consideration for people who are unable to leave the area for work-related or other reasons 	<p>The Army provided information in Community Bulletins about steps that people who remained in the community could take to reduce exposure to smoke.</p>