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U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
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News Release



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SERVICE TO HOLD PUBLIC SCOPING MEETINGS ON PROPOSED HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN FOR FORMER FORT ORD

Public meetings to be held October 13

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has published a notice of intent to prepare either an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement on the proposed habitat conservation plan (HCP) for the former Fort Ord in Monterey County, Calif.

The Service will hold public scoping meetings on Wednesday, October 13, 2004, on former Ford Ord, inviting public input to assist in determining the scope of the environmental documents, significant issues to be addressed, and alternatives to be considered.

The meetings will be held from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. and from 7 to 9 p.m. in the FORA Conference Facility/Bridge Center at the Ford Ord Reuse Authority offices, 13th St., Building 2925, Marina. The same information will be presented at both sessions. The Service will accept comments and information from interested parties until October 29, 2004.

The 28,000-acre former Fort Ord U.S. Army installation is being cleaned up and transferred to local municipalities, and Federal and State agencies. When finalized, the draft HCP will minimize the “take” of listed species on the former base and mitigate for impacts to plants, wildlife and their habitats resulting from proposed commercial, residential, and recreational development associated with the base reuse. Under the Endangered Species Act, “take” means to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct.

The proposed HCP will cover about 6,000 acres slated for development, 4,000 acres of partially developed lands that will be redeveloped, and 18,000 acres that will be managed as habitat reserves. The proposed development and habitat reserve plan areas are essentially the same as those in the Army’s 1997 Habitat Management Plan and the Ford Ord Reuse Authority’s base reuse plans, which were finalized in the mid-1990s after public review. The Fort Ord Reuse Authority plan can be found at: www.fora.org

The Notice of Intent can be found at: <http://ventura.fws.gov> under “Information & Education.” Comments should be submitted in writing to: Field Supervisor, Ventura Fish and Wildlife Office; 2493 Portola Road, Suite B; Ventura, CA 93003, or they may also be faxed to: 805/644-3958.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 544 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 63 Fish and Wildlife Management offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assistance program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies

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