



Fort Ord Environmental Justice Network, Inc.

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Over the past six months, the Ford Ord Environmental Justice Network has addressed a number of issues that are important to the community, by filing official comments on Army reports; conducting community outreach; and issuing press notices. The Army's remediation efforts at Ford Ord have continued to impact neighboring communities, and through public participation and representation by Environmental Stewardship Concepts, FOEJN has acted as the voice for the public's concerns.

Community members express concerns about Army activities at Ford Ord

A Marina community member contacted FOEJN concerning run-off of contaminated groundwater from Fort Ord and the way in which it was handled, as well as Army drilling, which resulted in noise and dust. The Army has a responsibility to pay attention to the community's needs and to communicate more frequently and openly about actions affecting area residents. FOEJN objected to a massive drill project in Preston Park, which was conducted with very little information or interaction from residents. Residents are concerned that drilling could trigger earthquakes or land shifts, impacting flow of carbon tetrachloride in groundwater. LeVonne Stone, FOEJN Executive Director, was given a tour of Fort Ord after submitting comments concerning very limited outreach or input from residents and other impacted community members.

FOEJN requested a separate public meeting beyond the Army's (CIW) Community Involvement Workshop that provides a forum on prescribed burning. The public should be granted multiple chances to speak with Army representatives regarding cleanup at Fort Ord.

A prescribed burn in December, 2008 at sites 18 and 22 sent smoke into Fort Ord and Marina housing areas, causing respiratory illnesses. FOEJN received many calls, took pictures showing the direction of the smoke, contacted EPA, Cal-EPA, Air District, and media about the amount of smoke and chemicals in the air.

We responded to a *Monterey Herald* article about volunteering at BLM public lands, criticizing the lost employment opportunities for the local economy and lack of safety precautions. The Army needs to be more proactive about the clean-up efforts providing jobs in the impacted communities.

ESC reviews official documents with public health in mind

A review of the Draft Work Plan for Track 3 included: continued objection to prescribed burning, contention that the Army did not publish a final work plan before authorizing site-specific burns in Track 3, and concern about debris that will persist at Ford Ord once the munitions are detonated.

The Army's Community Survey revealed several oversights that presented an unfair representation of community opinion regarding the environmental cleanup at Fort Ord. Certain community subgroups were unfairly discriminated against in their chance to voice opinions on cleanup, specifically those who speak a primary language other than English or who do not read above a certain level. Twenty-five percent of the Monterey adult population cannot read above 4th grade level in English, and a large percentage of the population is international, mostly Spanish-speaking. Secondly, the number of surveys returned was too small a sample to represent the opinions of the community.

A review of the carbon-tetrachloride plume clean-up discussed monitored natural attenuation with back-up plan for the lower 180-ft aquifer. This aquifer is the source of Marina's drinking water, and the Army is taking a "wait-and-see" stance in regards to the possibility of carbon tetrachloride contaminating the water.

FOEJN objected to the prescribed burn plan for MRS-BLM Units 18 and 32. The Army allowed the voluntary relocation program to lapse, eliminating the only means of escaping polluted smoke for residents unable to relocate on their own. Secondly, the Army is continuing to test for dust particles at PM10, rather than PM 2.5, which permits oversight of smaller toxic particles in the air.

FOEJN submitted comments on site 39 and OU2 landfills, objecting to the Army putting lead contaminated soil on top of a landfill that is already leaking. The existing landfill cover has proven to be faulty and is not prepared to act as a bottom layer. FOEJN contends that Army should not place soil with high levels of lead into a leaking landfill.

The past six months have been busy with monitoring the progress of clean up at Ford Ord. We look forward to continued community involvement and greater Army cooperation in 2009.

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"Balancing People With The Environment"