

Track 3 Issues

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FOEJN

- The Fort Ord Environmental Justice Network (FOEJN) was formed in 1995
- Outgrowth of community concerns over the cleanup and reuse efforts of the former Fort Ord Army Base.
- With an EPA Technical Assistance Grant, FOEJN represents the views of the community in the cleanup process, so the Army meets community needs.



FOEJN and the Cleanup

- FOEJN has organized community meetings
- Submitted comments on reports and plans for cleanup
- Informed the community
- Informed elected officials



Technical Issues – Track 3

- Comments prepared by Dr. Peter L. deFur, ESC, TAG consultant to FOEJN
- Proposed Plan for the Track 3 properties
- In the context of the whole cleanup
- Keeping the Community Concerns in the forefront
- With community health a concern
- Involvement of the community improves the effort

Track 3 Sites: How They Affect the Community

- Areas designated as Track 3 are dangerous and off limits to the public
- Until the rockets, mortars, etc. are cleaned up, the areas cannot be developed to improve the community economically
- Until then, they represent a continuing risk to public health

How Track 3 Sites Are Cleaned Up

- First Step: Clear vegetation (manual cutting, prescribed burns, “crush and burn”)
- Second Step: Remove all uncovered MEC from the surface
- Third Step: Use magnetometers to find and mark the locations of MEC below ground
- Fourth Step: Carefully remove or detonate located items from the soil

Prescribed Burns

- The preferred method used by the Army to clear vegetation
- Used to try and limit impacts to federally protected chaparral
- Difficult and dangerous to start and maintain
- Can significantly impact human health via smoke and chemical exposures
- Still requires manual clearance
- Opposed by FOEJN
- Chooses between wildlife and human health



Courtesy www.dmimaging.com

Health Risks From Smoke Exposure

Risks are scientifically well established:

- Difficulty breathing
 - Higher risk of asthma attacks
 - Higher risk of heart attack or stroke
 - Coughing/wheezing
 - Eye irritation
 - Releases dioxins and metals
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- The Army has continually dismissed or ignored these concerns
 - The young and elderly are most at risk from air pollution



The Need for a Voluntary Relocation Program During Burns

- If the Army continues to perform burns at Fort Ord, they must continue the voluntary relocation program
- Helps ensure that those most at risk from smoke exposure can avoid associated health problems
- Was almost discontinued before the last burn



Limits of the Cleanup

- Prescribed burns still require manual cutting of remaining and burnt vegetation
- The Army's equipment can only detect items less than three feet below the surface reliably
- Even after the cleanup high risks remain for individuals digging into the ground



What Needs To Be Done

- The Army must evaluate options for vegetation clearance such as “crush and burn” that protect wildlife without risking public health
- If burns do continue, steps must be taken to reduce risks to the public including the continuation of the relocation program
- Safety training for all workers digging in the soil at Fort Ord must be required
- Assess cumulative risks to the community

Continuing Issues

- The need for a RAB to increase community involvement
- The plan to effectively reopen the OU2 landfill to dispose of hazardous waste from on base
- Economic injustice
- Community health clinics
- The agreement between the Army and FORA to transfer property and cleanup responsibilities across the base

Agreed Order on Consent

- Will transfer numerous properties including Track 3 areas such as Ranges 43-48 to FORA
- Was negotiated in secret
- Opposed by groups across the country
- These concerns were ignored and no community outreach efforts were made
- Will be further addressed at the CIC tomorrow night

Questions?

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