



# Monterey County Fort Ord Committee

## Agenda Item #3

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October 26, 2017

**Introduced:** 10/19/2017

**Current Status:** Agenda Ready

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**Matter Type:** General Agenda Item

- a. Receive a presentation on the Oak Woodland Conservation Plan Project on the former Fort Ord; and
- b. Provide direction for Oak Woodland Conservation Area concepts to use as the basis for the next collaborative planning steps.

### RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Fort Ord Committee:

- a. Receive a presentation on the progress of preparation of an Oak Woodland Conservation Plan (OWCP) on the former Fort Ord; and
- b. Provide direction for Oak Woodland Conservation Area (OWCA) concepts to use as the basis for the next collaborative planning steps.

### SUMMARY:

The County of Monterey (County) and City of Seaside (City) are addressing Fort Ord Base Reuse Plan policies and program obligations related to oak woodland protection and conservation (Attachment 1). The County and City are to collaboratively designate, then respectively manage and monitor, conservation of oak woodlands within their jurisdictional property (i.e., development polygons identified in the Base Reuse Plan). The Fort Ord Reuse Authority (FORA) contracted Denise Duffy & Associates, Inc. (DD&A) to identify a proposed OWCA and prepare proposed Oak Woodland Management and Monitoring Plans (OWMMPs) for the City and County. FORA is also assisting the jurisdictions in coordination and public outreach ([www.oakwoodlands.org](http://www.oakwoodlands.org)).

Working with the agencies, DD&A has prepared three draft alternative conservation area concept options for consideration based on research of where there are potential opportunities (Attachment 2). RMA staff has provided input on potential locations within the unincorporated area. Staff is bringing the concepts forward to receive committee input and direction on these efforts.

### DISCUSSION:

The main purpose of the OWCP effort is to designate corridors of oak woodlands across the development parcels of former Fort Ord that link the National Monument, the landfill, and the open space near East Garrison. The Plan also sets aside oak woodland areas within development parcels in a regionally mindful way that benefits the species while laying the groundwork for mitigation to allow for increased economic vitality. DD&A has completed the background research and field work for the project. Utilizing the data collected and public input, as well as staff recommendations from University of California Fort Ord Natural Reserve (UCFONR), California State University Monterey Bay (CSUMB), City of Marina, County Resource Management Agency, FORA, and City, DD&A

has prepared three draft alternative conservation area concept options for consideration.

This Project includes a full public participation process. To date, two public community project initiation meetings were held: the first on November 15, 2016, at the Seaside Community Center at Soper Field, and the second on November 19, 2016, at the Trackview Pavilion at Laguna Seca Recreation Area. At these meetings, the County, City, FORA and DD&A presented the proposed project to the public for comment and input. Input submitted by the public at these meetings is available on the oakwoodlands.org website.

Key conservation objectives identified in the Reuse Plan policies and programs include:

- designate an oak woodland conservation area that connects the Habitat Management Areas (HMAs) to the south (Bureau of Land Management Fort Ort National Monument HMA), east (Habitat Corridor/Travel Camp HMAs), and north (Landfill HMA); and
- maintain large, contiguous block of oak woodland habitat.

Biological surveys were conducted within the development polygons and HMAs identified in the Reuse Plan to identify and map vegetation types, non-native invasive plant species, and erosion features. In addition, a forestry survey was conducted to assess the health of the oak woodland habitat and estimate oak tree population by size class and density. Landmark trees were also identified where they occurred in the sample plots and where they were documented in previous surveys for the area.

Based on the Reuse Plan policies and programs, results of the biological surveys, recommended size (e.g., minimum 135 acres of oak woodland or oak woodland mix vegetation types and minimum 328 feet wide), and input from the public, landowners, and other stakeholders, three draft concepts were identified. One option is to be selected to serve as the basis of the draft OWCA map and OWMMP in the next steps of collaborative planning process.

Evaluation criteria to assist in identifying and prioritizing conservation areas were then established and applied to each of the three draft concepts:

- Composition, Integrity, and Functionality;
  - Habitat for Plant and Wildlife Species;
  - Human Interactions; and
  - Management Considerations.
- S t a n d

The three draft concepts were subsequently ranked. The following evaluation criteria resulted in the greatest differentiation between concepts:

- amount of interface with potential development parcels,

- presence and abundance of non-native invasive plant species,
- utilization by special-status species,
- level of management input required to attain or maintain sustainability, and
- influence of adjacent land uses or other external factors on management practices.

Of the three draft concepts, Preliminary Concept 3 was ranked the highest for conservation.

It is recommended that the Fort Ord Committee discuss the draft concept options, and provide direction to staff regarding selection of a preferred concept to use as the basis for the next collaborative planning steps. It is anticipated that the Seaside City Council will consider the OWCA concepts in November 2017. The next public workshop is tentatively scheduled for November or December 2017.

The action before the committee is limited to providing direction with respect to selection of an OWCA concept to serve as the basis for the next steps in the planning processes. Any agreement or approvals to establish an OWCA and associated CEQA analysis is separate.

Additionally, County staff has identified several policy issues and potential institutional hurdles that will need to be worked through as the planning process advances, including but not limited to:

- Coordination and compatibility with existing and proposed future roadway and trail projects
- Determination of standards and costs of on-going maintenance, identification of responsible entity/ies and a sustainable funding source
- Consistency with the FORA's BRP and HMP, and the County's Fort Ord Master Plan
- Existing utility easements/agreements on County properties - overhead electrical transmission lines and underground regional gas transmission mainline

#### OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

FORA has entered a contract with DD&A to assist the County and City of Seaside to complete the Oak Woodlands Conservation Planning effort. The County, City, FORA, and DD&A have met with the City of Marina, CSUMB, MPC, and UCFONR to discuss potential conservation areas and constraints with property owners.

#### FINANCING

In the future the implementation of the OWMMP will require funding. The amount and the entity responsible for such funding have not yet been determined, and will be the subject of future discussion as the OWCP is developed.

#### BOARD OF SUPERVISORS STRATEGIC INITIATIVES:

The recommended action complies with the Board's FY15-16 Strategic Initiative for Infrastructure, "Plan and develop a sustainable, physical infrastructure that improves the quality of life for County residents and supports economic development results," by implementing the Key Objective to "promote the use of best environmental practices for County facilities and operations." Designation of an Oak Woodland Conservation Area will provide oak protection areas to mitigate for impact of development projects in the former Fort Ord area while providing habitat and open space.

The recommended action will be measured under RMA Key Performance Measure No. 2, "Number of long-range planning projects completed in a year."

Check the related Board of Supervisors Strategic Initiatives:

- Economic Development
- Administration
- Health & Human Services
- Infrastructure
- Public Safety

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The following attachments are on file:

Attachment 1 - Fort Ord Reuse Plan Biological Resources Policy B-2

Attachment 2 - Oak Woodland Conservation Area Concepts