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DRAFT PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

COUNTY OF MONTEREY FORT ORD HABITAT RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN



SEPTEMBER 2021

PREPARED FOR:



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION	1
2.0 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN OVERVIEW.....	1
2.1 Purpose	1
2.2 Public Participation Plan Goals and Guiding Principles	1
2.3 Plan Implementation	3
3.0 OVERVIEW OF THE RMP PROCESS	3
4.0 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT	5
4.1 Public Participation Principles.....	5
5.0 GENERAL OUTREACH INFORMATION.....	5
5.1 Outreach Coordinator.....	5
6.0 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN	5
6.1 Stakeholder Notification List	5
6.2 Meetings and Public Presentations.....	6
6.3 Engagement Tools.....	7

FIGURES

Figure 1. Tentative Project Schedule.....	4
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Army's decision to close and dispose of the Fort Ord military base was considered a major federal action that could affect listed species under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA). In 1993, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) issued a Biological Opinion (BO) on the disposal and reuse of former Fort Ord requiring that a Habitat Management Plan be developed and implemented to reduce the incidental take of listed species and loss of habitat that supports these species. As a result, the U.S. Army prepared the *Installation-Wide Multispecies Habitat Management Plan for Former Fort Ord, California* (HMP) in 1997. The Fort Ord Reuse Authority (FORA) was in the process of preparing a Fort Ord Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) to support the issuance of base-wide incidental take permits, which incorporated the habitat requirements of the HMP. However, the base-wide permitting effort was discontinued, and the Fort Ord HCP is no longer proposed. As a result, the Service requested that the local jurisdictions initiate the steps necessary to comply with the approved HMP. Therefore, the County of Monterey (County) is preparing a site-specific Habitat Resource Management Plan (RMP or County RMP) to comply with the HMP.

This Public Participation Plan (PPP or Plan) summarizes the strategies to engage the public and other interested parties in the development of the proposed RMP. The implementation of this PPP for the RMP is the responsibility of the County. This Plan is intended to guide the public outreach efforts of the County and the project consultants. Goals and guiding principles for public participation and community outreach are described below, followed by a summary of specific outreach methods to be used during the development of the proposed RMP. The public participation program may evolve and change from that published in the Final PPP at the County's discretion to meet the project needs and accommodate varying circumstances.

2.0 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN OVERVIEW

2.1 Purpose

The purpose of the engagement and outreach strategies and activities presented in this Plan is to provide local communities, residents, stakeholders, interested parties, and other affected agencies and/or individuals with opportunities to become actively involved in the development of the County RMP. The public engagement and outreach program in this Plan will assist the County in both providing timely information to and receiving input from interested parties during the RMP process.

2.2 Public Participation Plan Goals and Guiding Principles

The goal of this PPP is to provide a robust opportunity for public participation in the development of the RMP. Public outreach and early coordination with stakeholders will be an important part of the development of the proposed RMP. Public outreach will be done in accordance with vision and values of the County Housing and Community Development (HCD), as stated below, and the County's Community Engagement Guide included as Appendix B to the Title VI-Civil Rights Act of 1964 Countywide Implementation Plan (December 2017), which can be found online at: <https://www.co.monterey.ca.us/home/showdocument?id=59883>. The Community Engagement Guide provides approaches to comprehensively involve the community to ensure that all groups are represented

and their needs are met. The HCD vision and values and Community Engagement Guide provide guiding principles for public outreach.

HCD Vision

- The Vision of the Monterey County Housing and Community Development is to enhance the quality of life and economic health of the community by providing responsive, efficient, and high quality public services and to promote good stewardship of natural and man-made resources.

HCD Values

- Honesty, hard work, and ethical behavior
- Transparency and Accountability
- Communication and Coordination with the public and partner agencies
- Empower staff and recognize superior performance
- Equitable treatment and respect of all constituents
- Excellence in service delivery

Community Engagement Guide – Community Engagement Spectrum

Inform – to provide the public with balanced and objective information to understand the problem, opportunities and/or solutions

Consult – to obtain and consider public input at set points in the process

Involve – to work directly with the public and consider their input throughout the process

Collaborate – to partner with the public in key activities and decisions during the process

The County is committed to providing the opportunity for public input with respect for the diversity of views expressed and to consider suggestions and concerns. Outlined below are the County’s commitment to stakeholders:

- Provide opportunities for public comment on project documents, such as the RMP and supporting studies.
- Schedule public meetings to update community members on the progress of the project and answer community members’ questions.
- Provide a website with project fact sheets and informational updates.
- Include multi-lingual translations of materials on the RMP website.
- Address comments and concerns at public meetings and events.
- Explain technically complex documents in public meetings.
- Develop and distribute information fact sheets to benefit community awareness, understanding, and education.

- Inform the public about meetings, events, document review, and public access via County’s official website, social media platforms and local media outlets.
- Inform local community groups about the RMP.
- Be responsive to community members and stakeholders for the RMP.
- Coordinate with the local governments and regulatory agencies in their corresponding public meetings and other community activities.
- Be available to speak to local community groups about the RMP.
- Regularly inform stakeholders and political leadership about the RMP.
- Frequently review program goals.

2.3 Plan Implementation

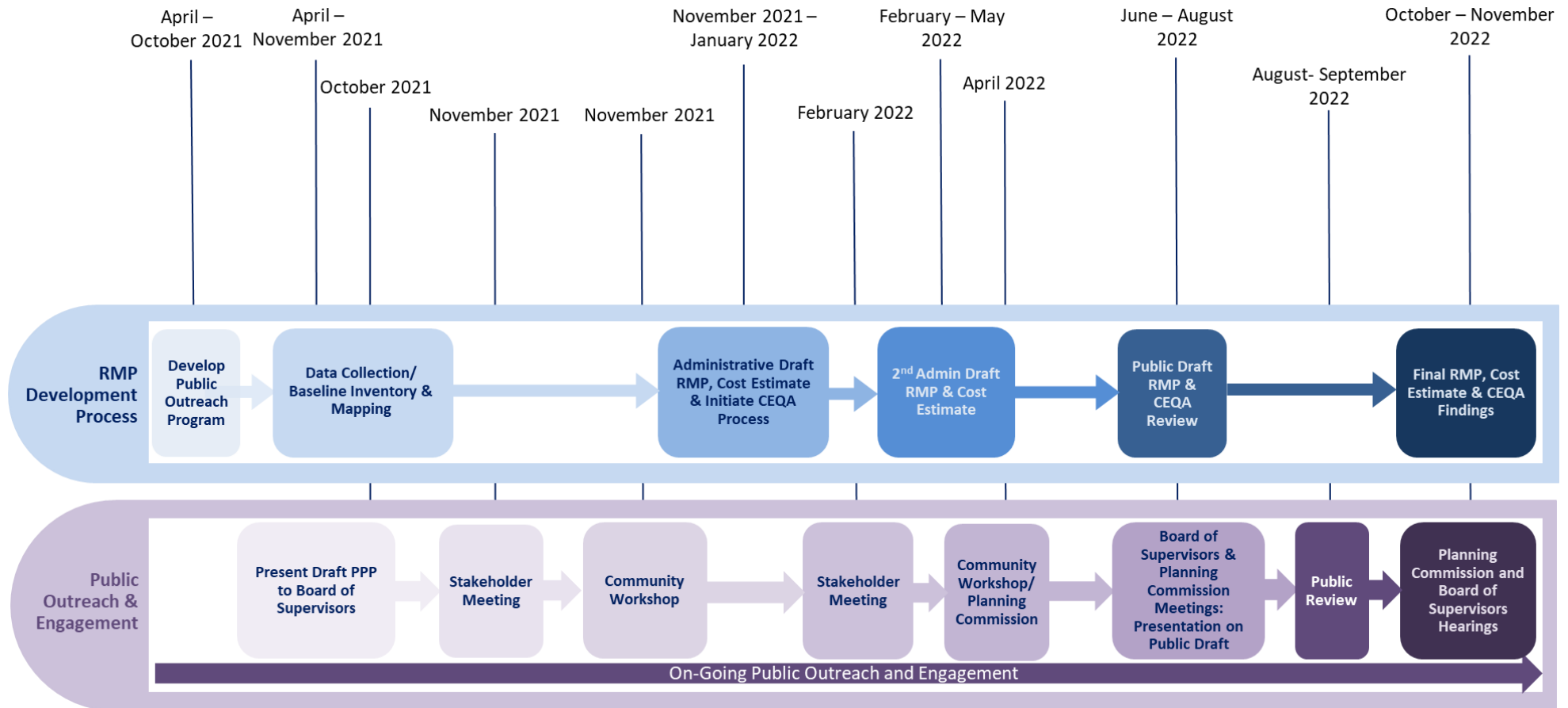
Throughout the PPP, the County will employ various methods to track and evaluate process effectiveness. Such methods include documenting, tallying, and responding to calls, emails, and public comment; documenting and posting comments and responses to comments; and documenting impact metrics, such as community meeting attendance, social media engagement, website analytics, and print/electronic media publications. Community members and stakeholders are encouraged to share PPP experiences and suggest potential improvements with the project team. Inevitably, differences in opinions will emerge during the RMP process. The County and the project team will communicate information, listen openly to concerns and views, and respond thoughtfully.

3.0 OVERVIEW OF THE RMP PROCESS

The tentative project schedule, **Figure 1**, shows a brief overview of the development and planning process for the County RMP and how it connects to the outreach activities that are addressed in more detail in Section 6. The development of the proposed RMP is an iterative process informed by data collected, requirements of the HMP, input from the resource agencies, public comments, and professional standards. The development of the RMP is summarized as follows:

- Develop public outreach program.
- Collect data and prepare baseline inventory/maps.
- Prepare Administrative Draft RMP, Cost Estimate, and Initiate California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Process.
- Prepare 2nd Administrative Draft RMP and Cost Estimate.
- Prepare Public Draft RMP and CEQA Review.
- Prepare Final RMP, Cost Estimate, and CEQA Findings.

Figure 1. Tentative Project Schedule



4.0 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

4.1 Public Participation Principles

As outlined in Section 2.2 above, the County has developed a set of guiding principles related to community outreach and participation. These core principles will be followed during the development of the RMP.

5.0 GENERAL OUTREACH INFORMATION

5.1 Outreach Coordinator

The role of the Outreach Coordinator will be to serve as a central contact for the public and the stakeholders for the RMP. For this project, the Outreach Coordinator is also the Project Manager and will participate in and help coordinate all facets of the implementation of this PPP. Anyone seeking information on the RMP should contact:

Jacquelyn M. Nickerson
Housing and Community Development Department
1441 Schilling Place – South, 2nd Floor
Salinas, CA 93901
(831) 755-5240
nickersonj@co.monterey.ca.us

6.0 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

This PPP focuses on identifying and addressing issues and community concerns related to the County RMP. The principles outlined in Section 2.2 will be implemented through the specific methods of communication, participation, and outreach activities described below. In this way, the County is committed to helping the public to quickly and easily identify ways to become informed about or involved in the project process. Each method listed below includes a brief description along with an estimate of the following timing/project milestone indicator:

- **Timing/Project Milestone:** Indicates the best estimate of target date(s) or project milestone(s) of the process in which the method will be used.

6.1 Project Notification List

The County will research potential interested parties (e.g., stakeholders and public agencies) and compile an initial contact list. The notification list will be used as a means to notify interested parties of upcoming events and of postings of new materials on the project website. Persons will be added to the notification list throughout the project process and may sign up by sending a request to the Outreach Coordinator by emailing nickersonj@co.monterey.ca.us or calling (831) 755-5240.

- **Timing/Project Milestone:** Notification list will be completed in September and updated as needed during the project

6.2 Meetings and Public Presentations

The following sections detail the meetings and public presentations that are anticipated as part of this PPP. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, meetings and presentations may be virtual, in-person, or hybrid to ensure public input at various levels of pandemic restrictions.

6.2.1. Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors Presentations

County staff will present to the County Planning Commission (PC) and/or Board of Supervisors (BOS) in three (3) public meetings to solicit input on the Draft PPP, provide an overview of the RMP, updates on project status, and receive County and public comments/feedback during the development of the RMP.

- Timing/Project Milestone(s):
 - Present and Solicit Input on Draft PPP – BOS in October 2021
 - Present and Solicit Input on 2nd Admin Draft RMP – PC in April 2022
 - Present and Solicit Input on Public Draft RMP – BOS and PC in August 2022

6.2.2. Community Workshops

The County will conduct two (2) public workshops during the project process wherein members of the public will be able to receive up-to-date information and provide input. Workshops will be designed so the community can actively engage in discussions regarding the project, and may include question-and-answer sessions, break-out sessions, and other techniques. The County will provide information, encourage discussion, answer questions, and be on-hand to discuss issues of importance to the local community. The County will announce these workshops via the County's website (<https://www.co.monterey.ca.us/government/departments-a-h/housing-community-development>), social media (County of Monterey Facebook pages), and press releases to the stakeholder notification list.

- Timing/Project Milestone(s):
 - Overview of Purpose and Process/Solicit Input – November 2021
 - Joint Community Workshop and PC Meeting to Present and Solicit Input on 2nd Admin Draft RMP – PC in April 2022

6.2.3. Stakeholder Meetings

County staff will consult a broad group of stakeholders throughout the area. These two (2) meetings could include representatives of public agencies, business organizations, environmental conservation groups, and other interested parties. The County will be available to respond to requests to provide information. Potential stakeholders may include but are not limited to, the following:

- California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW)
- Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
- Fort Ord Coordinated Resource Management Planning team (CRMP)
- Adjacent property owners
- Keep Fort Ord Wild (KFOW)
- California Native Plant Society (CNPS)

- Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) (as related to the Fort Ord Regional Trail and Greenway Project)
- LandWatch
- Timing/Project Milestone(s):
 - Solicit Input on RMP – November 2021
 - Present and Solicit Input on Admin Draft RMP – February 2022

6.2.4. Public Hearings

County staff will present to the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors in two (2) public hearings to present the Final RMP and CEQA Findings.

- Timing/Project Milestone(s): November 2022

6.3 Engagement Tools

6.3.1. Project Webpage

County staff will develop a project webpage on the official County website (<https://www.co.monterey.ca.us/government/departments-a-h/housing-community-development/planning-services/current-major-projects>) dedicated to the proposed RMP to provide pertinent project details. Interested parties will be able to sign up for the email notification list, view proposed project documents, and find contact information to send comments and suggestions. Background information, maps, reference documents, and other information will also be available on the webpage.

- Timing/Project Milestone: Website available in October 2021 and updated as needed during project

6.3.2. Electronic Mail Notifications

Using the stakeholder notification list (please see Section 6.1, above), County staff will send email updates at key milestones in the project process. Information will also be available on the project webpage found on the County's website at <https://www.co.monterey.ca.us/government/departments-a-h/housing-community-development/planning-services/current-major-projects>.

- Timing/Project Milestone: Notifications and postings at least a week prior to meetings and the day a document is released for public review

6.3.4. Fact Sheets

Fact sheets will be published as necessary to either address specific community concerns or provide information about specific project issues. Fact sheets will also contain "Frequently Asked Questions" to address questions from stakeholders and other interested parties. Fact sheets will be posted on the project webpage found on the County's website at <https://www.co.monterey.ca.us/government/departments-a-h/housing-community-development/planning-services/current-major-projects>, made available at community events, and distributed to identified stakeholders and community members via the stakeholder notification list (please see Section 6.1, above).

- Timing/Project Milestone: As needed

6.3.5. Media Information

Media alerts/releases will be circulated to announce public meetings and community workshops.

- Timing/Project Milestone: Contact media/releases prior to major milestones in the process, such as meetings, workshops, hearings, document releases, public review periods, etc.

6.3.6. Social Media

The County will use social media (County of Monterey Facebook pages) to alert followers of outreach activities and share outreach materials and project relevant information.

- Timing/Project Milestone: As needed

6.3.7. Community Group Involvement

Many local community groups have an interest in the RMP. The County is committed to providing robust and diverse community group involvement. To that end, the County will seek to provide information throughout the public review process to religious organizations, business organizations, environmental and economic interest groups, recreational groups, cultural organizations, and such other organizations that may wish to participate.

- Timing/Project Milestone: Stakeholder Meetings and Community Workshops