



Monterey County

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Board Report

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Item #5

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- a. Accept the Fort Ord Recreational Habitat Area Trail Master Plan with Open Space Management Strategy and support staff taking it forward to the Board of Supervisors
- b. Provide direction to staff

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Fort Ord Committee

- a. Accept the Fort Ord Recreational Habitat Area Trail Master Plan with Open Space Management Strategy and support staff taking it forward to the Board of Supervisors
- b. Provide direction to staff

SUMMARY:

The goal of the Fort Ord Recreational Habitat Area Trail Master Plan with Open Space Management Strategy (Trail Master Plan) is to formalize a diverse trail network on County-owned Habitat Management Areas (HMAs) and open space lands on the former Fort Ord, reflecting the varied needs of diverse user groups equally. Trail and recreation uses must also be consistent with the Habitat Management Plan (HMP) and Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) which define species protection for Federal and State listed species found within the HMAs.

On January 26, 2015 the administrative draft Trail Master Plan was presented to the Fort Ord Committee. As part of the process to finalize the Trail Master Plan, the County and consultant received agency and public stakeholder input through a number of public forums designed for the County to: 1) present and answer questions regarding the final administrative draft FORHA Trail Master Plan Amended with Open Space Management Strategy (January 2015); and 2) receive community input to the plan. In addition to these formal meetings, the County and consultant received Trail Master Plan comments from interested stakeholders, and worked with these stakeholders to ensure the Trail Master Plan is consistent with adjacent landowner plans (e.g. CSUMB, UCSC) and activities included in the HCP (e.g. FORTAG).

The final Trail Master Plan accommodates the needs of diverse user groups and stakeholders and provides a framework for the County to collaborate with regional trail planning efforts, adjacent landowners, and future development, as well as adapt trail management over time. This is one of multiple trail planning efforts in the former Fort Ord area and Monterey County in general. Trail planning will be coordinated through the Fort Ord Reuse Authority (FORA) and Transportation Agency of Monterey County (TAMC).

DISCUSSION:

The County has accepted ownership of a total of 1,500 acres of real property and 110 acres of public roads on the former Fort Ord. Other grant deeds totaling an additional 1,012 acres are expected over the next four years. Some of this land is designated for habitat management and some is not restricted. The 2001 Implementation Agreement requires that the County accept ownership of these properties. In addition, the Successor Agency to the Redevelopment Agency has submitted a Long Range Property Management Plan that proposes the State Department of Finance approve the transfer of 342 acres of additional land to the County. In all, the County may ultimately own and be responsible for management of 2,965 acres of land and roads on the former Fort Ord.

There are many existing trails through lands located in the former Fort Ord, some of which are to be maintained as trails and some that are to be restored as habitat under the Fort Ord Habitat Management/Conservation Plans. Identified properties/trails require appropriate management to ensure that requirements and restrictions related to the Habitat Management Plan (HMP), the future Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) and Base Clean Up are adhered to while achieving safe public access to open space and trails.

The goal of the Fort Ord Recreational Habitat Area Trail Master Plan with Open Space Management Strategy (Trail Master Plan) is to formalize a diverse trail network on County-owned Habitat Management Areas (HMAs) and opens space lands on the former Fort Ord, reflecting the varied needs of diverse user groups equally. Trail and recreation uses must also be consistent with the Habitat Management Plan (HMP) and Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) which define species protection for Federal and State listed species found within the HMAs.

Objectives of the Trail Master Plan which support this goal are:

- Provide users with safe connections to community and regional recreation facilities and trails
- Provide a variety of trail options for all users
- Establish design guidelines for trail types
- Provide policy consistency between HMAs and BLM lands
- Provide policy consistency with Monterey County General Plan and Fort Ord Base Reuse Plan
- Provide implementation and maintenance framework for the trail network
- Provide preliminary cost estimates for trail and facility upgrades
- Provide revenue scenarios for operations, maintenance and management

A draft trails master plan was prepared in 2012, but several issues arose that deferred adoption of the plan - the greatest of which was the termination of the Redevelopment Agency that led the trails planning effort. As open space land transfers are increasing and the Fort Ord Reuse Authority (FORA) reaches the end of its legislative term in 2020 the County will assume more land management responsibility with uncertain funding sources.

On June 23, 2014 an overview of the issues was presented to the Fort Ord Committee, and on September 22, 2014 the Committee received an update on these activities. This overview included the concept of focusing resources on an 800-acre "Phase I" area that would provide the

most logical initial trail connections to the BLM National Monument and that requires immediate property management attention. Activities to be performed by the RMA and the associated costs (for FY 2014-15 and FY 2015-16) that relate to this Phase 1 management strategy include basic property maintenance and minimal enforcement. An additional Open Space Management Strategy section was added to the report to provide additional direction and detail for open space management decisions. On January 26, 2015 the administrative draft Trail Master Plan was presented to the Fort Ord Committee.

As part of the process to finalize the Trail Master Plan, the County and consultant received agency and public stakeholder input. In an effort to reach as broad an audience as possible the County organized and participated in a number of public forums designed to receive community input to the plan:

- January 20, 2015 - Agency stakeholder meeting to present Trail Master Plan and discuss the Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) Grant application
- January 21, 2015 - Fort Ord Trails Symposium poster to present and discuss Trail Master Plan. County staff also participated in the Local Officials Roundtables to discuss Trail Master Plan and other trails-related items raised by the attendees.
- March 18, 2015 - Public stakeholder meeting to present Trail Master Plan and receive community input (agenda attached). This meeting was broadly publicized through email distribution lists, public announcements in local newspapers, and posted at Fort Ord trailhead parking areas (Jerry-Smith and 8th & Gigling).

In addition to these formal meetings, the County and consultant received Trail Master Plan comments from interested stakeholders, and worked with these stakeholders to ensure the Trail Master Plan is consistent with adjacent landowner plans (e.g. CSUMB, UCSC) and activities included in the HCP (e.g. FORTAG).

The County's contract with BFS ends June 30, 2015. Staff proposes to forward the Trail Master Plan to the Board of Supervisors (BOS) before the end of FY14/15. Once the Trail Master Plan is accepted by the BOS, the final Trail Master Plan must go through FORA for a consistency determination to the Fort Ord Base Reuse Plan. Staff anticipates returning in the last quarter of 2015 to the BOS with the final draft after completing CEQA for the Trail Master Plan's adoption (anticipated Initial Study with Mitigated Negative Declaration).

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

Agencies participating in the continued development of the proposed management strategy include the Resource Management Agency (including the Public Works and Planning Departments), the County Parks Department, the US Bureau of Reclamation, the Fort Ord Reuse Authority, and the Cities of Seaside and Marina.

FINANCING:

On July 29, 2014 the Board of Supervisors approved a transfer of \$150,000 from General Fund Contingencies to the RMA budget to fund increased FY 2014-15 costs for managing County properties in the former Fort Ord area. Ongoing management activities include administrative management, minimal law enforcement, clean up and safety activities. A FY15/16 budget augmentation request has been submitted asking for \$95,000 to continue this minimal level of

management and for signage installation.

The Trail Master Plan includes a five-year transitional program budget that estimates between approximately \$126,000 and \$188,000 per year for the County to provide administrative and support services, a minimal level of maintenance, and trail signage-only for capital improvements during this time.

The Trail Master Plan also provides recommendations regarding trails that will require drainage control, realignment or closure as well as guidelines and cost estimates for other capital improvements such as trailhead parking, bathrooms, tables, interpretive signage and fencing. County staff are working with partners to identify alternative sources (e.g. grants, volunteer work) to fund trails work and other capital improvement projects. Implementation of these projects may formally begin once the HCP is adopted (planned spring 2016).

On January 27, 2015 the Board of Supervisors authorized submittal of a grant application to the Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) that would fund design and construction of a trailhead parking area at the Travel Camp parcel. This grant application was not selected for funding.

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Approved by: Carl P. Holm, AICP, Acting Director RMA

Attachments:

1. Fort Ord Recreational Habitat Area Trail Master Plan with Open Space Management Strategy, Final Draft, April 21, 2015
2. Agenda - Public Workshop, March 18, 2015