



# County of Monterey

## Item No.1

### Board Report

Board of Supervisors  
Chambers  
168 W. Alisal St., 1st Floor  
Salinas, CA 93901

Legistar File Number: 26-569

June 15, 2026

Introduced: 6/5/2026

Current Status: Agenda Ready

Version: 1

Matter Type: General Agenda Item

#### **REF220021 Fort Ord Habitat Resource Management Plan**

- a. Receive a status update on the Habitat Resource Management Plan related to former Fort Ord properties owned by the County of Monterey and Monterey Peninsula College; and
- b. Provide direction to staff.

**Project Location:** Unincorporated County of Monterey, Fort Ord Master Plan

**Proposed CEQA Action:** Statutory exemption pursuant to Section 15262 of the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") Guidelines.

#### RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Alternative Energy and Environment Committee:

- a. Receive a status update on the Habitat Resource Management Plan related to the former Fort Ord properties owned by the County of Monterey and Monterey Peninsula College; and
- b. Provide direction to staff.

#### SUMMARY:

Preparation of the Habitat Resource Management Plan (RMP) for former Fort Ord lands owned by the County of Monterey (County) and Monterey Peninsula College (MPC) is to fulfill the County's and MPC's obligations as land recipients under the *Installation-Wide Multispecies Habitat Management Plan for Former Fort Ord* (HMP) (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers ["ACOE"], 1997). The RMP provides direction to manage the Plan Area for the continued viability of species and habitats pursuant to the requirements of the HMP for former Fort Ord lands designated pursuant to the HMP as Habitat Management Areas (HMAs) and Borderland Parcels (Borderlands) (**Attachment A**).

The County, in coordination with MPC, have developed a 2nd Administrative Draft RMP that was recently provided to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), and the United States Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for a requested 60-day review period, ending July 30, 2026. Staff met with agency staff on June 15, 2026 to provide an overview of the RMP and preliminarily discuss key policy issues including: a) meeting HMP goals and objectives while recognizing changes in 30 years; b) aligning management costs with resources, including potential funding mechanisms; and c) regulatory, land use and management approach for Borderland parcels that don't develop.

Following agency review, the Draft RMP, including cost estimates, will be updated and made public for review. At that time, staff will host another set of meetings with the community and its stakeholders,

as well as return to the Board of Supervisors for review and input. Today, staff is providing an update to the Alternative Energy and Environment Committee and seeking input and direction, as appropriate.

#### DISCUSSION

On April 20, 2021, the Board approved a Professional Services Agreement (A-15192) with a consultant to assist the County in completing a Habitat Resource Management Plan (RMP) on former Fort Ord lands owned by the County (approximately 2,077 acres) and owned by Monterey Peninsula Community College District (MPC) (approximately 485 acres), and has subsequently been amended to extend the term. On March 19, 2024, County and MPC entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to cooperate with the preparation and completion of the RMP, utilizing County's Professional Service Agreement A-15192 with Denise Duffy and Associates (DDA). The MOU outlines MPC's fair share contribution to DDA for preparation of the RMP, and a preliminary California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review to identify the appropriate scope of CEQA analysis.

The County owns and manages approximately 2,143 acres of land, including 1,540 acres throughout eight HMAs and 603 acres of Borderlands, within the Plan Area. The RMP will provide the guidance and restrictions for the land use and management of these parcels that are subject to the HMP (**Attachment B**). The HMP outlines requirements for properties transferred and owned by the County, as does the Fort Ord Master Plan, and this is carried forward into the Draft RMP. The historical intention of the Army, as outlined in the HMP and again in the draft RMP, was for the Borderlands to be developable, some with and some without restrictions.

#### Habitat Management Areas (HMAs)

County owns and manages 1,540 acres of land across eight designated HMAs. These areas are designated for habitat preservation, open space conservation, and public use. County is responsible for protecting these properties with the associated species and habitat in perpetuity. These parcels are accessed by the public for recreational uses such as hiking and biking. County of Monterey Park Rangers address illegal activity if and when it occurs. Special status species such as sand gilia and California tiger salamander have been observed in the HMAs, and habitat conservation efforts such as removal of invasive plants, soil erosion prevention, and exclusionary fencing are recommended in the Draft RMP.

#### Borderland Parcels

County owns and manages 603 acres of lands designated as Borderland parcels that are developable parcels that abut HMAs. Borderland parcels are to be managed prevent the loss and degradation of protected species on the Borderland parcels until such time that they are developed and to protect the HMAs from impacts resulting from the current uses, future development, invasive species, erosion and trespassing. The Draft RMP proposes ongoing active management until such time that the borderland parcels are developed. Significant constraints exist on the former Fort Ord that severely limit future development potential, such limited water resources, lack of existing infrastructure, presence of protected species, and residential unit caps. It is Staff's interpretation that eliminating or significantly reducing a Borderland's development land use designation (or on a portion thereof) could serve as a reasonable substitute measure in lieu of the minimal habitat management activity required until the Borderland parcels would be developed.

In 2016, the County accepted transfer of ownership of Assessor's Parcel No. 031-161-032-000 (L23.3.3.1 and L23.3.3.2) and Assessor's Parcel No. 031-161-040-000 (L23.3.2.2) (the "East Garrison II parcels") from the Successor Agency to the Redevelopment Agency of the County of Monterey (Successor Agency). These parcels were retained by the Successor Agency for Governmental Purposes Open Space/Recreation Parcels and are also designated as Borderlands in the HMP. The East Garrison II parcels are designated as "Planned Development Mixed Use" in the County General Plan, but the future development potential of these parcels is constrained. As part of the dissolution process, these parcels were identified in the Successor Agency's Long-Range Property Management Plan (LRPMP), approved in 2015 by the California Department of Finance (DOF), to be retained for governmental use and proposed to transfer to the County to retain as open space. Due to the County's acceptance of these East Garrison II parcels as governmental use as open space per DOF's approval of the LRPMP, which the County has accepted, these parcels cannot be developed in the future.

On May 22, 2022, Staff brought an update on the Fort Ord RMP to the Board of Supervisors and asked for Board direction on the designation of the County-owned Borderlands, with three options presented:

*Option 1* - Maintain status quo that these Borderland parcels may be developed in the future and are therefore subject to interim habitat management requirements until such time as they are developed

*Option 2* - Recognizing the development constraints, acknowledge these Borderland parcels are developable, but try to negotiate a term that in the future should any parcels or portions thereof be formally designed for open space/conservation, at such time the interim habitat management responsibilities (and therefore associated costs) would no longer be required.

*Option 3* - Consider formally designating the Borderland parcels for open space/conservation now, and negotiate the term that interim habitat management is not required in the RMP.

The Board directed staff to proceed with on option 2; to try to negotiate a term that in the future should any parcels or portions thereof be formally designed for open space/conservation, at such time the interim habitat management responsibilities (and therefore associated costs) would no longer be required. Staff and the agencies will discuss the details and approach for Borderland parcels pursuant to the Board's direction during the 60-day agency review period.

For additional background and information, access the May 24, 2022 and March 19, 2024 Board of Supervisors reports and attachments at the following links:

[Legistar Link to A 24-096 \(March 19, 2024\) <https://monterey.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=6568389&GUID=A5EE612E-CED7-4561-A80B-2A76ACE979FB&Options=ID|Text|Attachments|&Search=Fort+Ord>](https://monterey.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=6568389&GUID=A5EE612E-CED7-4561-A80B-2A76ACE979FB&Options=ID|Text|Attachments|&Search=Fort+Ord)

[Legistar Link to 22-460 \(May 24, 2022\) <https://monterey.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=5658228&GUID=3587AFAB-8236-4D2A-91CC-5DA1E71B6B71&Options=ID|Text|Attachments|&Search=Fort+Ord>](https://monterey.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=5658228&GUID=3587AFAB-8236-4D2A-91CC-5DA1E71B6B71&Options=ID|Text|Attachments|&Search=Fort+Ord)

#### ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Pursuant to Section 15262 of the CEQA Guidelines, this presentation is statutorily exempt as early discussion on possible future actions that do not involve a commitment to a project.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT/COMMITTEE ACTIONS:

The RMP is being developed in coordination with Public Works, Facility, Parks (PWFP) staff. Staff have met with the following agencies to discuss the Draft RMP and seek input: US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), and Bureau of Land Management (BLM). MPC continues to coordinate with County, and to provide a fair share of funding for RMP development, per the MOU approved in 2024.

FINANCING:

Funding for staff time related to the Habitat Management Program for Fort Ord and the consultant work to develop the RMP is included in the Habitat Management Program FY 2025-26 Adopted Budget for Fund 029 Appropriation Unit HCD010. Funding for the portion of RMP development pertaining to MPC's lands are reimbursed to the County by MPC pursuant to the 2024 MOU, with \$70,000 designated for the completion of the RMP, of which \$28,480 remains, including funds spent prior to the MOU by MPC for DDA's environmental surveys. An additional \$30,000 is designated as MPC's fair share for environmental review, and there is a \$7,000 contingency added to MPCs contribution amount. The total consultant contract amount with DDA is \$616,205 of which \$332,412 remains.

County holds the Habitat Management Program fund dedicated to implementing the management activities laid out in the draft RMP. This habitat management fund does not commingle with other County funds and generates interest. The current Fund Balance for Fund 029 is approximately \$15 million. The Habitat Management Program fund generates approximately \$500,000 in annual interest revenue. In addition, the remaining development at East Garrison will pay an estimated one-time total of approximately \$2.5 million as the final phase of the development builds out. County received a preliminary RMP cost estimate for County-owned lands that estimates proposed start-up costs to be \$868,000 and ongoing management costs to be \$615,000 for the activities proposed by the RMP, including the cost of management within the Borderlands (to be updated following agency review and prior to public review). Other potential sources of revenue to fund on-going habitat management may include grants, mitigation bank/fees, alternative investment strategies to increase interest accrual, etc.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS:

Developing the Fort Ord Habitat Resource Management Plan supports the Board of Supervisors Strategic Plan Goal for *Well-Being and Quality of Life* to create safe and healthy communities where all can thrive (Key Objectives: Health and Facilities) and *Sustainable Infrastructure for the Present and Future* to provide for maintenance and sustainability of open space and habitat for recreating in and visiting Monterey County (Key Objectives: Master Planning and Policies) by developing a site-specific plan ensure species viability and habitat management to allow compatible recreation on the County-owned former Fort Ord lands, including fire fuel management, trail maintenance and signage, invasive species management, and habitat enhancement and monitoring.

- Well-Being and Quality of Life
- Sustainable Infrastructure for the Present and Future
- Safe and Resilient Communities
- Diverse and Thriving Economy

\_\_\_ Dynamic Organization and Employer of Choice

Link to the Strategic Plan:

<https://www.countyofmonterey.gov/home/showdocument?id=139569>

Prepared by: Shandy Carroll, Management Analyst III, (831) 784 5643

Approved by: Melanie Beretti, AICP, Chief of Planning

Attachments:

Attachment A - County of Monterey Plan Area (Figure 1-3 of the Draft RMP)

Attachment B - Plan Area HMP Land Use Designations (Figure 1-5 of the Draft RMP)

Attachment C - Presentation