



Technical Assistance Services for Communities Fort Ord Superfund Site

Introduction

This fact sheet accompanies a longer document that provides a summary and technical review of the Prescribed Burn 2013 After-Action Report for Units 7 and 10 of Track 3 Impact Area Munitions Response Area at the Former Fort Ord Superfund site in Monterey County, California.

Site Information

From 1917 until 1994, the U.S. Army trained infantry military personnel at Fort Ord. In 1990, EPA placed the 27,827-acre site on the Superfund program's National Priorities List (NPL). Site features included leaking underground storage tanks, a landfill, a former fire drill area, motor pool maintenance areas, small dump sites, small arms target ranges, a firing range and other limited areas that pose threats due to unexploded ordnance.

The Superfund Process

Superfund is the common name for the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (CERCLA). The program's name refers to the "super fund" of money that was set aside to clean up hazardous waste sites when it was established in 1980.

Figure 1 shows the Superfund process. It begins with a preliminary assessment and site inspection (PA/SI) and continues on to the NPL listing process. The remedial investigation and feasibility study (RI/FS) stage determines the nature and extent of contamination at a site and evaluates treatment technologies. EPA then selects a remedy for sites in a decision document called a Record of Decision (ROD).

Leading up to the ROD, EPA selects a preferred remedy and presents this remedy in a document called the Proposed Plan. Public comments are solicited on the Proposed Plan before the ROD is completed. After the ROD, detailed cleanup plans are developed and implemented during the remedial design/remedial action (RD/RA) stage, leading to the completion and monitoring of cleanups during the construction

completion and post-construction completion stages. Once sites are fully protective of human health and the environment, EPA deletes them from the NPL.

Site Cleanup

For cleanup of munitions and explosives of concern (MEC) at Fort Ord, the Army organized the areas by Track designations, zero through four, by anticipated occurrence of MECs. Track 0 designates no MEC use. Track 1 is suspected use but no cleanup is needed. Track 2 had munitions or explosives identified, but was cleaned up by the Army. Track 3 consists of areas where munitions and explosives are known to be present, but have not yet been cleaned up.

In 2008, the Army and EPA selected the cleanup plan for the 6,560-acre Impact Area Munitions Response Area (Impact Area MRA), one of the Track 3 MRAs in the site's ROD. It includes:

- Prescribed burning of up to 800 acres per year (in a series of several small, 100-acre burns).
- Technology-aided surface MEC remediation and detonations.
- Subsurface MEC remediation.
- Land use controls.
- Post-remediation habitat monitoring.

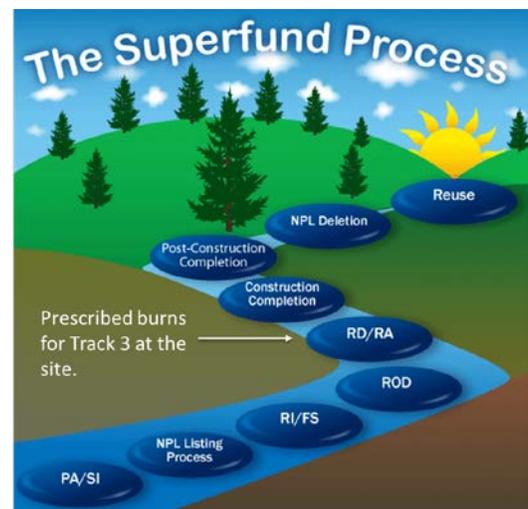


Figure 1: The Superfund Process

www.epa.gov/superfund/community/process.htm

The total area of subsurface MEC remediation is about 10 percent (656 acres) of the 6,560-acre Impact Area MRA.

October 2013 Prescribed Burns

In October 2013, the prescribed burn was planned for Unit 7 (341 acres) and Unit 10 (327 acres). Burning took place on October 14 and 15, 2013. The After-Action Report states that the burn achieved project goals, removing vegetation, minimizing smoke impacts on the community, avoiding injuries and keeping fire within fire containment lines.

Spot fires occurred on both burn days. On October 14, burning of Unit 10 went as planned; one unintentional spot fire in Unit 7 was quickly put out. On October 15, spot fires breached the Unit 7 primary containment line and unintentionally burned Unit 33 and small areas of Units 4 and 6. The fire did not breach tertiary containment lines or burn any land outside of the impact area. Smoke was reported on the night of October 15 along the Highway 68 corridor from Laguna Seca to Toro Park and in areas of Carmel Valley and Seaside. The burning of the acreage in units 33, 4 and 6 was reported as the likely cause of the smoke. A total of 693 acres were burned.

During the two burn days and the day following the burns, the Army and Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District (MBUAPCD) monitored the air. The Army sampled air for particulate matter less than or equal to 2.5 micrometers in diameter (PM_{2.5}) continuously, 24 hours a day, during the three days at seven monitoring stations. Figure 2 shows the locations of the stations.

MBUAPCD collected real-time data for PM_{2.5} at five locations and made this information available to the public on its website (<http://www.mbuapcd.org>) during the burns.

Air monitoring identified PM_{2.5} above the 24-hour screening level at three monitoring locations on the first burn day (Manzanita School, Ingham School and Monterey County Regional Fire District Laureles Station) and at two monitoring locations on the

second burn day (Marshall Elementary School and Manzanita School).

Particulate matter can cause health problems if inhaled. Because PM_{2.5} particulates are very small, they travel deeper into the lungs. Because PM_{2.5} particulates are typically made up of more toxic compounds (such as heavy metals and cancer-causing organic compounds), inhaling them can have worse health effects than inhaling larger particles.

The report states that lessons learned for the next burn include improving the fire containment line, modifying radios for better communication and improving communication of habitat protection plans to contingency agencies.

The Army is receiving comments on the Prescribed Burn 2013 After-Action Report until April 29, 2014. Mail comments to:

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Comments from community members will help inform planning for future prescribed burns at the Former Fort Ord Superfund site. If you observed any effects from the prescribed burns or have other suggestions, please send your comments to the Army by the comment period deadline.

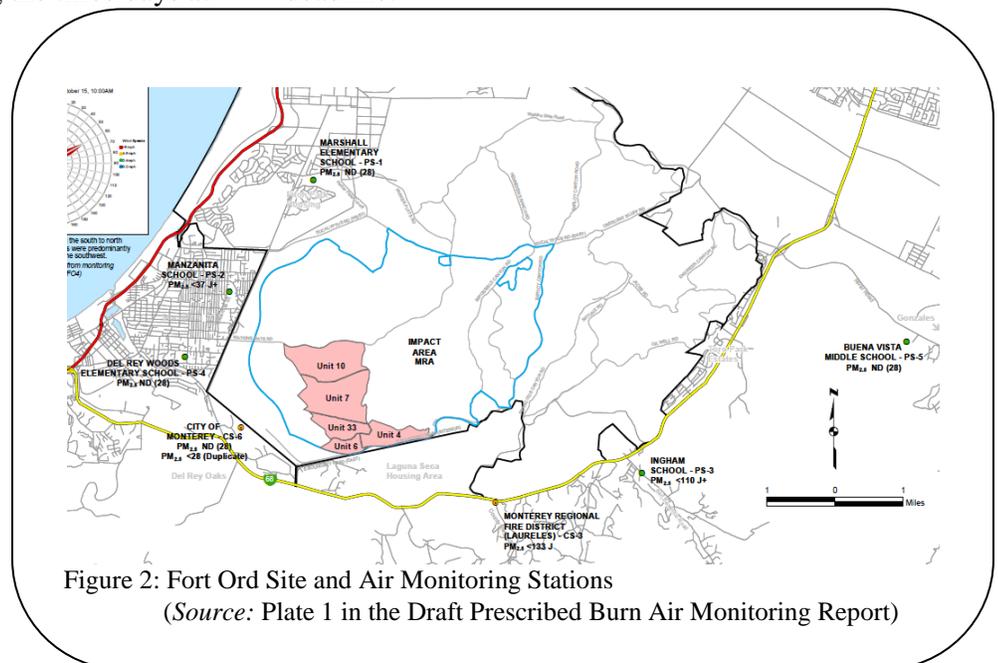


Figure 2: Fort Ord Site and Air Monitoring Stations
(Source: Plate 1 in the Draft Prescribed Burn Air Monitoring Report)