



REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

Office of the Commander

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center and Presidio of Monterey
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDER
1759 Lewis Road, Suite 230A
MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA 93944-3227

May 9, 2002

Diane Noda
Field Supervisor
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
2493 Portola Road, Suite B
Ventura, California 93003

Dear Ms. Noda:

The purpose of this letter is to request your concurrence that the enclosed *Assessment, East Garrison – Parker Flats Land Use Modifications, Fort Ord, California* is consistent with the Army's *Biological and Conference Opinion on the Closure and Reuse of Fort Ord, Monterey County, California (1-8-99-F/C-39R)*. In addition, we request that our September 18, 2001 request for conference to address the proposed critical habitat designation for Monterey spineflower (*Chorizanthe pungens pungens*) be modified to accommodate the enclosed assessment as a revision to the Army's proposed action.

The enclosed assessment was prepared in coordination with the affected reuse entities, Army, California Department of Fish and Game, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The proposed changes resolve long standing reuse conflicts that exist within the Parker Flats and East Garrison reuse parcels. The proposed changes continue to fulfill the goal of the HMP to promote preservation, enhancement, and restoration of habitat and populations of HMP species while allowing development on selected properties that promotes economic recovery after the closure of Fort Ord.

The enclosed assessment identifies temporary impacts to several species addressed in the Biological Opinion and Installation-Wide Multispecies Habitat Management Plan (HMP). Although the proposed land use modifications result in the temporary net loss of several HMP species, the County of Monterey and the Fort Ord Reuse Authority will be responsible to mitigate the temporary losses through several measures identified in the enclosed assessment and through implementation of the HMP. The Army believes the goals and objectives of the HMP as well as the terms and conditions of the biological opinion will be met through implementation of the enclosed land use modifications. The agencies responsible for implementing the enclosed assessment will sign the HMP and an associated amendment or agreement to accommodate the land use changes prior to property transfers.

Your review and concurrence on the proposed land use modification is requested by May 30, 2002. We appreciate your continued support and cooperation during the base closure and reuse process. If you have any questions or comments, please call Mr. Bill Collins at (831) 242-7920 or email collinsw@pom-emhl.army.mil.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin M. Rice". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kevin" being the most prominent.

Kevin M. Rice
Colonel, US Army
Commander

Enclosure

Copies furnished:
Michael Houlemard, FORA
Terry Palmisano, CDF&G
Dick Wright, SMART



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Ventura Fish and Wildlife Office
2493 Postola Road, Suite B
Ventura, California 93003

In Reply, refer to: 2002-7FA-251.2

May 28, 2002

Colonel Kevin M. Rice, Installation Commander
D.I.F.I.C. & POM
Office of the Commander
1759 Lewis Road, Suite 230A
Presidio of Monterey, CA 93944-3227

Subject: East Garrison – Parker Flats Land Use Modifications, Fort Ord, Monterey County, California

Dear Colonel Rice:

This is in response to your letter, dated May 9, 2002, and received by us on May 14, 2002, requesting our concurrence that a set of proposed land use modifications developed by the Department of the Army (Army), Fort Ord Reuse Authority (FORA), Monterey County, and other entities, are consistent with the most recent biological opinion (1-8-99-F/C-39R) we issued to the Army on the closure and reuse of former Fort Ord. That opinion was based on the proposed action described by the 1997 *Installation-wide Multi-species Habitat Management Plan for Former Fort Ord, California*, (HMP). In your May 9 letter, you also request that the proposed modifications be considered a revision to the proposed action you submitted in your September 18, 2001, request for conference with us on Monterey spineflower critical habitat. We have noted this change and will analyze these modifications as part of the proposed action for that conference request.

We have reviewed the proposed land use modifications, described in the *Assessment, East Garrison – Parker Flats Land Use Modifications, Fort Ord, California (Assessment)*, dated May 2002. The proposed modifications concern the post-transfer land uses at former Fort Ord described in the 1997 HMP. The modifications primarily involve the East Garrison area that is designated "Development with Reserve Areas or Development with Restrictions," the Parker Flats development parcels, and to a lesser extent the habitat reserve lands to the south of these parcels and the Military Operations/Urban Terrain (MOUT) facility. The proposed changes will allow residential and commercial development at East Garrison on an additional 210 acres of oak woodland, maritime chaparral, and grassland communities that would have been conserved under the existing HMP. It will designate as habitat reserve over 450 acres of land supporting these communities at Parker Flats that was previously designated for development, with no resource

Colonel Kevin M. Rice, Installation Commander

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conservation requirements. The proposal also involves modifying the configuration of the MOUT facility and the southern boundary between the Parker Flats parcels and habitat reserve lands. We met with representatives of the Army, FORA, Monterey County, Bureau of Land Management, and California Department of Fish and Game several times in March and April, 2002, to discuss and recommend revisions to the proposal where it would affect the conservation and management of HMP-covered resources.

We agree that the proposed modifications, as described in the May 2002 *Assessment*, are consistent with the resource protection goals of the HMP. When fully implemented, the proposed modifications should result in no-net-loss of the sensitive biological resources addressed in the HMP as compared to the development and habitat reserve configurations in the existing HMP. In several cases, the conservation of HMP-covered species is improved under the new proposal. The modifications will provide a net gain in overall habitat reserve area of almost 250 acres. In addition, they will result in a net gain in habitat protected for the federally threatened Monterey spincflower (*Chorizanthe pungens* var. *pungens*) and will not reduce the acres conserved for the federally endangered Monterey (sand) gilia (*Gilia tenuiflora* ssp. *arenaria*) beyond that described in the existing HMP. For these reasons, we have concluded that the nature of effects to these taxa is not different from, and the level of effects to these taxa does not exceed, those already addressed in biological opinion 1-8-99-F/C-39R. Therefore, reinitiation of consultation is not required.

We commend the parties involved for pursuing and achieving modifications which should, when fully implemented, result in a net gain in habitat reserve area and adequate protections for HMP species and natural communities. It is our understanding that the modifications described in the *Assessment* will be summarized into text and map changes and attached to the HMP. We expect the Army will coordinate further with us on this issue. We look forward to continuing to work with you on biological resource issues related to the closure and reuse of former Fort Ord. If you have any questions about this issue, please contact me or Diane Steeck, of my staff, at (805)644-1766.

Sincerely,



Diane K. Noda
Field Supervisor