FORT ORD BECOMES NATIONAL MONUMENT

On April 20, 2012 President Obama signed a proclamation designating as a national monument 14,600 acres of the former Fort Ord military reservation. The action was taken under the Antiquities Act of 1906, which gives the President authority, without Congressional action, to grant federal lands of historic or scientific interest the protective status of national monuments. The President's proclamation includes a provision that "All federal lands and interests in lands within the boundaries of this monument are hereby appropriated and withdrawn from all forms of entry, location, selection, sale, leasing or other disposition under the public lands laws"... The new national monument will be under the administration of the Bureau of Land Management, an element of the Department of the Interior.

Since its closure as a military base in 1994, the scenic Fort Ord coastal area has become a favorite of mountain bikers, hikers and nature lovers. It is a part of the rare central coast maritime chaparral ecosystem, and is home to protected wildlife and plants. It has 11 listed plant species, including the federally endangered, state-threatened sand gilia and the federally threatened Monterey spineflower. The unique chaparral ecosystem is a mixture of coast live oak, coastal shrub, mixed annual grassland and native perennial grassland.

The new national monument is not only recognition of the historic military importance of Fort Ord, but also a further recognition that California's wealth of native flora and special ecosystems are a national treasure - something we already knew.