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Sierra Club Praises Designation of Fort Ord National Monument

Washington, DC: President Obama today will designate the nation's newest national monument, Fort Ord National Monument in California. From 1902 to 1994, Fort Ord served as a unit garrison site and basic training base for Army soldiers who served in America's conflicts from the Spanish-American War to Operation Desert Storm. The newly named Fort Ord National Monument is a reminder of the service of over a million troops who trained on these lands and a recognition of the area's continuing historical and natural importance.

"We applaud President Obama for using his authority to protect this important piece of America. His decision will ensure long term protection of a piece of the past and lasting enjoyment for future equestrians, mountain bikers, hikers and nature lovers," said Michael Brune, Sierra Club executive director.

Fort Ord's public lands contain 86 miles of trails through some of the last remaining open space in the Monterey Bay area. Thousands of bicyclists, hikers, trail runners and horseback riders use the trails each year and enjoy sweeping views of Monterey Bay and the Salinas Valley. The grassland hills and the area's rare plants and wildlife also draw photographers and nature enthusiasts of all kinds.

"In addition to honoring the men and women who served our country at the former Fort Ord, the establishment of the Fort Ord National Monument will help preserve 44 rare, threatened or endangered plant and animal species. Among these species are the peregrine falcon, snowy plover, Smith's blue butterfly, Monterey spineflower, and sand gilia," said Dr. Tom Moore, Fort Ord committee chair for Sierra Club's Ventana Chapter. "The National Monument area is rich in wildlife, magnificent views and military history."

The establishment of Fort Ord National Monument is supported by county supervisors, city council members, recreation and conservation groups, and local communities.

"President Obama's announcement today reflects broad support among Americans for protecting public lands for future generations. We hope he will continue to heed the call to permanently protect our wild legacy," said Brune.

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