

United States Senate

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February 29, 2012

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I am writing to urge you to formally recognize the Fort Ord Public Lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) as a National Monument.

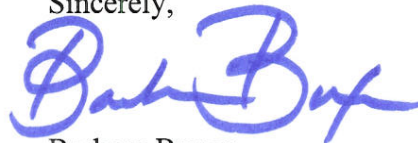
Fort Ord is an important historical site for veterans, Californians, and the nation. Throughout the Twentieth Century, Fort Ord was one of the most significant U.S. Army training bases, and it saw over 1.5 million soldiers through basic training from World War I through Operation Desert Storm. During the Vietnam War, it served as the leading training center and staging ground for deployment to Southeast Asia. In 1994, the Department of Defense moved most of its Army mission from Fort Ord, and 15,000 acres of land were set aside for management by the BLM.

These acres of vibrant landscape support a diverse habitat, including 35 species of rare plants and animals. In fact, about 50-90 percent of the worldwide habitat for many of rare plants is found at Fort Ord. Mountain lions, black-tailed deer, bobcats, coyotes, badgers, turkeys, golden eagles, red tailed hawks, Canada geese, California quail, coast horned lizards, and gopher snakes, inhabit these lush landscapes. These lands provide a scenic backdrop for the 86 miles of trail on 7,200 acres that are open every day for hikers, mountain bikers, horseback riders, photographers, and nature enthusiasts.

And above all, Fort Ord stands as a tribute to the men and women who served our military and trained on those grounds. Today, these lands provide therapeutic opportunities for the many veterans who visit seeking quiet enjoyment of open space.

I encourage you to designate the Fort Ord Public Lands as a National Monument to ensure that veterans and visitors can enjoy the rich history and natural beauty of these lands for generations to come.

Sincerely,



Barbara Boxer
United States Senator

cc: The Honorable Ken Salazar, United States Secretary of the Interior