



United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
 Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge
 c/o Rocky Mountain Arsenal, Bldg. 121
 Commerce City, Colorado 80022

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
 April 03, 2003

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The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has developed management alternatives for the future Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge. These alternatives will be considered for possible adoption as the Service continues the public process of writing a Comprehensive Conservation Plan to guide the future management at Rocky Flats.

In late May, 2003, the Service will host workshops in communities surrounding Rocky Flats. The Service will present the alternatives and engage the public in small group discussions about the various management concepts.

The alternatives were developed based on public comments, guidance from Congress in the Rocky Flats refuge legislation and the policies and mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System. "Protection and conservation of wildlife is the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System", Refuge Manager Dean Rundle said, "and, at the same time, Congress has designated six priority public uses for refuges. Those uses, all forms of wildlife-dependent recreation, are wildlife observation and photography, hunting, fishing, interpretation and environmental education."

The Service will present four different alternatives for future refuge management. "We gathered nearly 1900 public comments during our extensive scoping effort last fall", said Rundle. "People provided us with very diverse, often conflicting ideas about how Rocky Flats should be managed as a refuge".

Nearly a third of all comments received related to future public access to the former nuclear weapons facility. Those comments ranged from "Allow a full range of access, including bicycle and horseback riding" to "No person should ever set foot on the place". Other significant issues raised by the public involved preservation of unique habitats, wildlife management, and weed control.

The public workshops in May will focus on refuge management alternatives, and will not address issues related to the cleanup and closure of Rocky Flats by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). The Service and DOE continue to coordinate the parallel, but separate planning efforts for cleanup and future refuge management.

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The future Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge was established by Congress in December 2001. The 6266-acre site at the foot of Colorado's Front Range was formerly home to DOE's Rocky Flats Plant, a weapons components production facility. The majority of the site was managed as a security buffer around the Plant, and remains in an undeveloped, near natural state. Following scheduled completion of DOE's cleanup and closure efforts, scheduled for accomplishment in 2006, most of the site will be transferred to the Service for refuge purposes while DOE will retain some lands for monitoring and management of remedy facilities.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service manages over 540 National Wildlife Refuges across America. In the Denver metro area, there are two other refuge projects - Two Ponds NWR in Arvada and Rocky Mountain Arsenal at Commerce City. The Refuge System is celebrating its 100th Anniversary in 2003.

Comments from the public on the management alternatives will be accepted through June 20th, 2003. Comments may be submitted by writing to:

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Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge
c/o Rocky Mountain Arsenal, Building 121
Commerce City, CO 80022

Upcoming public workshops will be held as follows:

Westminster

May 21, 2003, Wednesday, 6:00 pm to 8:30 pm
College Hill Library
Room L-107
Front Range Community College
3645 W. 112th Ave.
Westminster CO 80031

Boulder

May 22, 2003, Thursday, 6:30 pm to 9:00 pm
East Recreation Center
Mountain View and Flatirons rooms
5660 Sioux Drive
Boulder CO 80303

Broomfield

May 28, 2003, Wednesday, 1:00 pm to 3:30 pm
Broomfield Recreation Center
Lakeshore Room 3
280 Lamar Street
Broomfield CO 80020

Arvada

May 29, 2003, Thursday, 6:30 pm to 9:00 pm
Senior Recreation Center
Room E
6842 Wadsworth Blvd
Arvada CO 80003

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