



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
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The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) announced today that it is releasing its draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (CCP/EIS) for the future Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge. The public is invited to participate in upcoming public meetings and learn more about the proposed action for managing the former nuclear weapons production facility.

The draft plan outlines strategies for managing wildlife and habitat and for providing the public with opportunities to enjoy wildlife-dependent activities for the next 15 years. In addition to a proposed action, the document evaluates and compares three additional alternatives for managing wildlife, habitats and public uses of the future Refuge. It also analyzes the impacts of habitat restoration and visitor use on the Refuge's important physical, biological, social and cultural resources.

The Service developed the alternatives based upon public input, guidance from Congress in the Rocky Flats Refuge legislation, and the policies and mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System. These alternatives represent a range of viable Refuge management strategies. The alternatives were first presented at public workshops held in May 2003 and later modified based upon input received from the public. "We sought out people's opinions of what worked and didn't work with the alternatives by holding public workshops and soliciting written comments," said Refuge Manager Dean Rundle. "People were not afraid to voice differing views about how Rocky Flats should be managed as a refuge."

In mid-March, 2004, the Service will host public meetings in communities surrounding Rocky Flats for the public to voice their opinions on the draft plan and to have their questions answered. The focus of the meetings will be about managing the future wildlife refuge and not about issues related to the cleanup and closure of Rocky Flats by the U.S. Department of Energy. Rocky Flats is being safely cleaned up and closed in accordance with a cleanup agreement negotiated in 1996 among the Colorado Department of Public Health and the Environment, The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the U.S. Department of Energy.

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 U.S. Department of Energy's Rocky Flats Plant, a weapons components production facility. The majority of the site was managed as a security buffer around the Plant and is home to a variety of wildlife species. A remnant piece of rare native tallgrass prairie is found on the site. Following completion of cleanup and closure efforts, scheduled for accomplishment in 2006, part of the site will be transferred to the Service for refuge purposes. The U.S. Department of Energy will retain portions of the site for monitoring and management of remedy facilities.

The Service manages over 540 National Wildlife Refuges across America. Within the Denver metro area, there are two other refuges, Two Ponds National Wildlife Refuge in Arvada and Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge in Commerce City.

The public is invited to learn more about the draft plan by visiting the Refuge's website at <http://rockyflats.fws.gov> or by calling (303) 289-0980 to request further information. Comments from the public on the draft CCP/EIS will be accepted through April 12th, 2004. Comments may be submitted by writing to:

Laurie Shannon

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

Upcoming public meetings will be held as follows:

Westminster

Wednesday, March 10, 2004
6:30 - 8:30 pm
College Hill Library
Front Range Community College
Library, Room L-211
3645 W. 112th Avenue
Westminster, CO 80031

Boulder

Thursday, March 11, 2004
6:30 - 8:30 pm
East Recreation Center
Mountain View & Flatirons Rooms
5660 Sioux Drive
Boulder, CO 80303

Arvada

Wednesday, March 17, 2004
6:30 - 8:30 pm
Arvada Center
6901 Wadsworth Boulevard
Arvada, CO 80003

Broomfield

Thursday, March 18, 2004
6:30 - 8:30 pm
Broomfield Recreation Center
Lakeshore Room 3
280 Lamar Street
Broomfield, CO 80020