

## NEWS RELEASE

**U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE**  
**134 Union Boulevard**  
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For Immediate Release

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### **U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE PUBLISHES FINAL COMPREHENSIVE CONSERVATION PLAN FOR ROCKY FLATS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service today announced that it has published the final, stand-alone Comprehensive Conservation Plan for Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge. The final plan describes the Service's proposal for management of the Refuge for 15 years, starting at the time the Refuge is established. The Service anticipates Refuge establishment will occur sometime between 2006 and 2008.

The final plan is the end result of a planning process that began in 2002 and was completed earlier this year when the Service's Regional Director signed the Record of Decision for the process. The stand-alone CCP consists of "Alternative B," (*Wildlife, Habitat, and Public Use*), as detailed in the Final CCP and associated Environmental Impact, which the Service published in December, 2004.

While the formal planning process has concluded, the cleanup of Rocky Flats is ongoing. Transfer of the site from the Department of Energy to the Service will not occur until the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, with concurrence by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, certifies that the cleanup and closure has been completed by the Department of Energy.

Significant issues addressed in the final plan include: vegetation management, wildlife management, public use, cultural resources, property, infrastructure, and refuge operations.

The CCP emphasizes wildlife and habitat conservation with a moderate amount of wildlife-dependent public use. Refuge-wide habitat conservation will include management of native plant communities, weeds, restoration tools, removal and revegetation of unused roads and stream crossings, management of deer and elk populations, prairie dogs, and protection of Preble's meadow jumping mouse habitat. Visitor use facilities will include about 16 miles of trails, a seasonally-staffed visitor contact station, trailheads with parking, and developed overlooks. Most of the trails will use existing roads and public access will be by foot, bicycle, horse, or car. Pursuant to the plan, the Service will develop a limited public hunting program.

The Service received over 5,000 public comments throughout the planning process. Some of the changes to the draft CCP and associated environmental impact statement resulting from public comments included: changes to trail alignments, more flexible trail implementation, changes to the types of weaponry allowed for hunting, more discussion about issues related to cleanup and contamination, and additional discussion about potential

impacts from transportation improvements. Public outreach included public open houses, public hearings, individual outreach activities, planning update mailings, and Federal Register notices.

For further information, or to request a copy of the final CCP, contact: Planning Team Leader, Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge, Rocky Mountain Arsenal - Building 121, Commerce City, Colorado, 80222.

Additionally, copies of the final CCP may be downloaded from the project website: <http://rockyflats.fws.gov>. The final CCP is available for reading at the following main branch libraries: Arvada Public Library, Boulder Public Library, Daniels Library, Golden Public Library, Westminster Public Library, Front Range Community College, Louisville Public Library, Thornton Public Library, and Mamie Dowd Eisenhower Library in Broomfield.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 545 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resources offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign and Native American tribal governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assistance program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.

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