

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge

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*Public Scoping Report*





Rocky Flats  
National Wildlife Refuge

Public Scoping Report

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## **Introduction**

The future Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) was established on December 28, 2001, when President George W. Bush signed the Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge Act of 2001 (Refuge Act)<sup>1</sup>. As directed in the Refuge Act, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) will accept administrative jurisdiction over most of the Rocky Flats site, currently administered by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). This transfer will take place following certification of site cleanup and closure by the Environmental Protection Agency.

The Refuge Act also directed that the Service develop a Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) for the future Refuge. Service policy requires that CCPs be prepared in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Service has chosen to proceed directly in preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for this CCP. The draft EIS will analyze several different Refuge management alternatives including a proposed action and a no-action alternative for the effects on people and the environment. The proposed action will be prepared as the draft CCP and will be integrated with the draft EIS. Following public comment, analysis, and response, the final CCP will represent the preferred alternative only, and it will provide long-range guidance for the management of Rocky Flats. The CCP will direct wildlife conservation, management and wildlife-dependent recreation at the Refuge for the next 15 years.

## **Public Scoping Activities**

The public scoping process is an important component of the CCP/EIS project. During this phase of the project, the Service sought input from the public and interested organizations and agencies to help direct the CCP/EIS process. This helped identify specific opportunities, issues, concerns and ideas related to the management of the future Refuge. A copy of the Rocky Flats NWR Public Involvement Process is included in Appendix A.

The Service used various methods to solicit guidance and feedback from interested citizens, organizations, and government agencies. These methods included public scoping meetings, public agency scoping meetings, briefings and presentations, issue-specific focus group workshops, as well as letters, email and telephone calls. Each of these methods is described in detail in the following sections.

The scoping process began with informal public agency consultations in February 2002. On July 23, 2002 Service staff met with the Rocky Flats Coalition of Local Governments (RFCLOG).

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<sup>1</sup> Signed as Title XXXI subtitle F of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2002.

The RFCLOG is a coalition of seven local governments (Boulder County, Jefferson County, City and County of Broomfield, and the cities of Arvada, Boulder, Westminster, and Superior).

The formal scoping period for the general public began on August 23, 2002, with the publication of a Notice of Intent (NOI) in the Federal Register. The NOI (Appendix B) notified the public of the Service's intent to begin the CCP/EIS process, set the dates for public scoping meetings, and solicited public comments. As stated in the NOI, the scoping period ended on October 31, 2002. Comments received after October 31, 2002 are not considered in this document, although they will still be considered by the CCP/EIS planning team.

### ***Public Outreach***

Public scoping meetings were conducted on September 9, 10, 11, and 12 in Broomfield, Arvada, Westminster, and Boulder. The following materials were used to inform the public of these meetings. Copies of these materials are included in Appendix C.

### ***Planning Update***

A *Planning Update* was mailed to 889 persons and businesses several weeks before the public scoping meetings. This newsletter, included in Appendix C, outlines the planning process, the draft vision and goals for the Refuge, and the dates, times and locations of the public scoping meetings. Information contained in the *Planning Update* also was announced at RFCLOG and Rocky Flats Citizen Advisory Board (RFCAB) meetings. The *Planning Update* distribution list consisted of individuals and organizations that had previously expressed an interest in Rocky Flats-related issues and were on the RFCAB, the DOE, or Kaiser-Hill (DOE contractor) mailing lists.

### ***Press Release***

A press release announcing the establishment of the Refuge and soliciting participation in the scoping process (Appendix C) was sent to 23 local and national media organizations:

- The Denver Post
- Rocky Mountain News
- Boulder Daily Camera
- Westminster Window
- Golden Transcript
- Arvada Sentinel
- Jeffco Sentinels
- Louisville/Lafayette Times
- Colorado Daily
- KHOW AM 630
- KOA AM 850
- Colorado Public Radio AM 1340
- KUVO Radio
- KYGO Radio
- KOSI Radio
- KXXL Radio
- KALC Radio
- KCFR Radio

- Longmont DTC
- Metro North News
- Boulder County Business Report
- Metro News Network
- KCNC Channel 4
- KDVR FOX 31
- KMGH Channel 7
- KUSA Channel 9
- KWGN WB2
- KCEC Univision Channel 50
- KBCO Radio
- KIMN Radio
- KNUS Radio
- Associated Press
- USA Today
- Washington Post
- Newshour
- Time Magazine
- Energy Daily
- Inside Energy
- Weapons Complex Monitor
- Radwaste Solutions

Several local communities included the details of the press release in their community bulletins.

These communities, and other non-media recipients of the press release included the following:

- City of Westminster
- City of Boulder
- Golden Chamber of Commerce
- City of Lakewood
- City of Thornton
- Town of Louisville
- City of Wheat Ridge
- Broomfield Chamber of Commerce
- Denver City Council
- Denver Metro Chamber
- NW Metro Chamber
- City of Northglenn
- Town of Superior
- Colorado Congressional delegation
- Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
- Colorado Attorney General's Office
- Governor's Office
- Colorado Department of Natural Resources
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- Rocky Flats Coalition of Local Governments
- Rocky Flats Citizens Advisory Board

***Paid Advertisements***

The Service placed advertisements (Appendix C) in seven newspapers to publicize the project and invite the public to the scoping meetings. Two advertisements (4.25 inch (two columns) x 4 inch) were placed in the Rocky Mountain News (August 27) and Denver Post (August 28).

Larger advertisements (4 inch (two columns) x 8 inch) were placed in the Boulder Daily Camera (August 28), the Westminster Window (August 29), Northglenn/Thornton Sentinel (August 29), Westsider (August 29), and Arvada Sentinel (August 29).

### ***Project Web Site***

The Rocky Flats NWR web site (<http://rockyflats.fws.gov/>) was published for public access during the week of July 21, 2002, and contained information about the public scoping meetings, as well as downloadable versions of all of the available public scoping documents. A copy of the web site is included in Appendix C.

### ***Flyers***

Flyers announcing the public scoping meetings were posted in public buildings in several communities surrounding the Rocky Flats site. A copy of the flyer is included in Appendix C.

### ***Public Scoping Meetings***

The public scoping meetings on September 9, 10, 11, and 12 were a major component of the public scoping process. The purpose of these meetings was to solicit public concerns and planning ideas that will be considered in the CCP/EIS. Meetings were held at four locations (Table 1).

**Table 1. Public Scoping Meetings.**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Venue</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
Broomfield	September 9	Broomfield Recreation Senior Center	7:00 – 9:00 pm	5 public/8 agency
Arvada	September 10	Arvada Center for the Arts and Humanities	6:30 – 8:30 pm	11 public/10 agency
Westminster	September 11	West View Recreation Center	12:30 – 2:30 pm	10 public/11 agency
Boulder	September 12	Boulder Community Senior Center	6:30 – 8:30 pm	38 public/10 agency

### ***Meeting Format***

Following a brief welcome and introduction, Service staff made a 15-minute presentation that outlined the following points:

- Description of the Service and the purpose of the Refuge System
- Key points of the legislation establishing Rocky Flats NWR
- Natural features at Rocky Flats (slide show)
- CCP and EIS process
- Project schedule

At several points during the introduction and presentation, Service staff and the facilitator explained that neither the CCP/EIS nor the meetings themselves were intended to address issues related to the cleanup and closure of Rocky Flats. However, DOE representatives were available at all of the meetings to answer any cleanup related questions.

Following the presentation, the facilitator asked the participants to write down any questions, concerns, or ideas on note pads that were distributed during the presentation, and then post their notes on boards arranged according to topic.

For the second part of the scoping meeting, participants were then asked to break into small working groups (7 to 10 people) according to topic area that they were most interested in and wanted to discuss first. The facilitator explained that each group was encouraged to eventually move on to other topics. Each working group had a Service staff or planning team member to facilitate the group discussion and write down the ideas, issues, and concerns of group members.

The small working group format was chosen to allow interaction and dialogue among the members of the public, and to be inclusive of all of the participants. This format allowed many participants to generate ideas, questions and concerns that they had about qualities and issues to be addressed in the CCP/EIS. Refer to Appendix D for a summary of the comments that came out of these meetings and other elements of the scoping process.

### ***Meeting Summaries***

*Broomfield, September 9, 2002* — The Broomfield scoping meeting was attended by five members of the public. Following the presentations by Service staff, the meeting participants began an open discussion about Rocky Flats issues and concerns. Due to the small meeting size, small working groups were not necessary. Several members of the public expressed their concerns about cleanup and contamination issues, but declined to participate in the open discussion and immediately left the meeting.

*Arvada, September 10, 2002* — The Arvada scoping meeting was attended by 11 members of the public. Following the presentations by Service staff, meeting participants were arranged into working groups to discuss issues and concerns related to Rocky Flats. Several working groups were formed. While a full range of issues was discussed, most of the comments related to public use, infrastructure, and wildlife.

*Westminster, September 11, 2002* — The Westminster scoping meeting was attended by ten members of the public. This meeting was scheduled in the afternoon to offer a venue for members of the public that may find an afternoon meeting more convenient, and to minimize conflicts with evening events and memorials related to the September 11, 2001 attacks. During the introduction, Dean Rundle, Refuge Manager, thanked those present for participating in the democratic process, and asked for a moment of silence to commemorate a Service staff member who was killed in the attacks. Following the introduction and presentations, several working

groups were formed. While a full range of topics was discussed, a majority of the comments were related to public use, infrastructure, and cleanup and contamination issues.

*Boulder, September 12, 2002* — The Boulder scoping meeting had the largest attendance of any of the scoping meetings, with 38 members of the public. Following introductions and presentations by Service staff, several meeting participants expressed their desire to have the meeting follow an open hearing format rather than break into working groups. The facilitator and Service staff declined to change the meeting structure, but offered to consider a public hearing in the future. Several working groups were convened, and each working group had two Service staff members to facilitate the discussion and take notes. A full range of issues was discussed within the working groups, though the majority of the comments were related to public use, vegetation management, and cleanup and contamination issues.

### ***Public Agency Consultation***

Beginning in early 2002, Service staff met with representatives from communities, agencies, and businesses that may have an interest in the Rocky Flats CCP/EIS process. The purpose of these meetings was to brief the stakeholders on the planning process, and solicit their comments and concerns for the scoping process.

### ***Rocky Flats Coalition of Local Governments (RFCLOG)***

Between February 6 and April 12, 2002, Dean Rundle and Laurie Shannon met individually with each member local government of the RFCLOG. All the local governments had questions about the process of developing the Memorandum of Understanding between DOE and the Service in addition to the planning process. Copies of the Service's policy on Planning and Compatibility were distributed. The meetings and the main issues discussed are summarized as follows.

*City of Westminster* — (February 6, 2002). Westminster is looking forward to wildlife habitat, open space, and trails. Water quality is a key concern for Westminster, Thornton, and Northglenn. The city is interested in the establishment and location of a Cold War Museum, and considers Building 60 to be a good location for a Visitor Center. A copy of the Transition Memo between the U.S. Army and the Service for Rocky Mountain Arsenal was requested. Westminster wants to support the Service in accomplishing the mission and purposes of the Refuge, particularly in funding for the CCP and future management.

*City of Arvada* — (February 8, 2002). The appearance and configuration of perimeter fencing is a key concern. Regional economy is important, as most of the people who currently work at Rocky Flats live in Arvada. The city is interested in the transition of the site from DOE to the

Service. Arvada requested a copy of the transition memo between the U.S. Army and the Service for Rocky Mountain Arsenal. The representatives for the City of Arvada extended their support for the future Refuge and planning process. The city has a community newsletter that can be used to advertise public meetings.

*City of Boulder* — (February 13, 2002). The City of Boulder expressed interest in any regional trail connections that might occur, specifically in the northwest quadrant of the Refuge, and other recreational uses. Boulder's policy regarding grazing and recreation was discussed. The city offered to provide mapping of Boulder open space areas and background on the Lindsay family. Representatives provided information on the archaeology of the area. The Colorado Division of Wildlife's proposal to reintroduce sharp-tailed grouse on lands north of the future Refuge was also discussed.

*Town of Superior* — (February 27, 2002). Superior is interested in issues related to prescribed burning and wildland fire control. They would need to be convinced that prescribed fire is safe. The town representatives did not think that a separate public meeting for Superior was necessary.

*City and County of Broomfield* — (March 4, 2002). Broomfield expressed concern about potential impacts to their drinking water supply in Great Western Reservoir from Rocky Flats. The area around Great Western Reservoir is currently closed to recreation, and the reservoir may be expanded. Broomfield needs to be able to maintain its ditch to move Coal Creek water across the site. Information on Broomfield's water rights and how the water supply is diverted around Rocky Flats was provided. The discussion included off-site contamination, the possibility of a trail along a future regional transportation corridor, and prairie dog relocation. Broomfield has not taken a hard look at fire issues yet but did express a concern about wildland fire control in the future and what kind of interagency agreements might be needed for response efforts. Education of the citizens will be crucial. They stated that it could be a long time before people are comfortable with the open space plans as it relates to Rocky Flats.

*Jefferson County* — (April 4, 2002). The future transportation corridor and how it may or may not affect Indiana Street was a key concern for representatives from Jefferson County. A non-profit group has been set up to study the potential alignment of a corridor. The City of Golden does not support a huge transportation corridor through Golden. Jefferson County suggested that people like to use open space areas and the county supports public use of open space. The issue of a hunting program was discussed, and in general, representatives were not opposed to a hunting program. The county is interested in trail linkage. They would like to see a trail to the

Lindsay Ranch and preservation of the local heritage. They explained that the Rocky Flats area is popular for equestrian recreation. The county supports prescribed fire. They did not think that there was a need for a public meeting in Golden and thought a meeting location in Arvada would be sufficient. The Refuge Revenue Sharing Act and what it means to Jefferson County also was discussed.

*Boulder County* — (April 12, 2002). The meeting with Boulder County included a representative from the City of Boulder. The main concerns for Boulder County are open space and residual contamination. Boulder County supports the use of prescribed burns on county lands but has serious concern about prescribed fire on the future Refuge. They could support burning if they were assured that burn areas were not contaminated or fires could not escape to contaminated areas. They expressed concerns about escaped burns, whether plants are uptaking radioactive contamination, and potential health effects from fire. One representative supports the idea of a wildlife sanctuary with no public use and the potential reintroduction of bison. While Boulder's open space lands are heavily used by the public, previous surveys have indicated that open space users support preservation of wildlife habitat. An evolving ecosystem should be recognized in the plan. The county feels that mineral rights should be acquired.

*RFCLCLOG Subcommittee* — On July 23, 2002, the Rocky Flats Planning Team met with a RFCLCLOG subcommittee formed for the CCP process. The purpose of this meeting was to inform the subcommittee of the planning process, and solicit their input, questions, and concerns.

Following introductions and a discussion about the purpose of this project, Service staff presented the Draft Vision and Goals for the Refuge. The facilitator then had the RFCLCLOG subcommittee members list out the issues with which they are concerned or have questions. These issues included integration with existing land uses and open space, water quality, wildlife habitat, access and public use, cultural resources, fire management, mineral rights, the Refuge boundary, transportation, and contamination. The ensuing discussion focused on mineral rights, fencing, the Memorandum of Understanding between the Service and DOE regarding transfer of the property and what areas would be transferred, contamination issues, and the role of the CCP/EIS in cleanup and closure decisions.

### ***Native American Tribes***

Representatives from the Arapaho Tribe, Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma, Northern Cheyenne Tribe, the Ute Indian Tribe Business Council, Southern Ute Tribe, and the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe were contacted by the Service to solicit their input for the scoping process.

The Service has received responses from several tribes and will work closely with them during the planning process. The Service did not receive any scoping comments from the tribes.

### ***Public Agency Meeting***

On August 19, 2002, the Service hosted a meeting for representatives from various state and federal agencies that may be interested in the future management of the Rocky Flats site. The following agencies were represented:

- Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry
- City of Westminster
- Colorado Attorney General's Office
- Colorado Department of Agriculture
- Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
- Colorado Department of Transportation
- Colorado Division of Minerals and Geology
- Colorado Division of Wildlife
- Colorado Geological Survey
- Colorado Historical Society
- Colorado State Parks
- Denver Regional Council of Governments
- Federal Aviation Administration
- Governor Owens' Office
- Rocky Flats Coalition of Local Governments
- State Land Board
- Senator Allard's Office
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Department of Energy
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Urban Drainage and Flood Control District
- Xcel Energy

Following introductions, Service staff explained some aspects of the legislation that established the Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge. Service staff also explained the phases of the CCP/EIS process, including the scoping process. The ensuing discussion focused on integration of the Refuge with surrounding land use and open space, water rights, access and public use, wildlife, cultural resources, fire, mineral rights, boundary and fencing issues, the adjacent state-owned land, transportation, contamination, utility corridors, Jefferson County Airport, and drainage issues.

### ***Briefings and Presentations***

Service staff met with representatives from nearby municipalities or other stakeholder organizations. These meetings were intended to inform these stakeholders about the CCP/EIS process, answer any questions about the project, and gather any issues or concerns. These meetings are described below.

*City of Golden* — On August 26, 2002, Dean Rundle, Refuge Manager, met with Golden representatives. Golden's primary concern is the proposed northwest transportation corridor. Golden supports the re-use of the Rocky Flats site as a National Wildlife Refuge, and supports safe public access to the future Refuge and trail connections to other open space parks. They expressed that the Lindsay Ranch should be preserved, that it might make sense to have a visitor's center on site, and that they support the protection of private property rights but would also support efforts to protect Refuge habitats from surface gravel mining.

*City of Louisville* — On September 4, 2002, Mr. Rundle met with Louisville representatives. They expressed that Louisville supported preserving the open space values of Rocky Flats and the Refuge legislation. Louisville supports resource preservation and would prefer that Refuge lands are not subjected to mining. Louisville does not oppose the concept of using fire in grassland management, but would need more assurance that burning would not release contaminants into the air and environment. Louisville would like to see cleanup levels that allow safe public access, and support connections to regional trail systems. However, they do not feel that the Refuge should be an intensive recreation area.

*Church Ranch Company* — On September 23, 2002, Mr. Rundle met with Mr. Charlie McKay and Ms. Kandi McKay, owners of the Church Ranch Company and the lands adjoining Rocky Flats to the west and south. Mr. McKay has significant property rights associated with Rocky Flats, including water and mineral rights. Mr. McKay expressed concerns about fence maintenance, migration of threatened and endangered species onto his land, coyotes preying on calves, prairie dog depredations, and other issues.

*City of Thornton* — On October 25, 2002, Mr. Rundle met with representatives for the City of Thornton. Thornton's main concern is water quality in Standley Lake, sediments in the containment ponds, and long-term stewardship. Thornton is not concerned about public use or the use of prescribed fire, and would probably support the acquisition of mineral rights to protect the future Refuge from surface mining.

*City of Northglenn* — On October 28, 2002, Mr. Rundle spoke with representatives of the City of Northglenn's Department of Public Works. The city's representative conveyed that Northglenn's primary issue is water quality protection in Standley Lake. The city feels strongly that all detention ponds on site should be maintained, and that existing wetlands be maintained in their current state, and not restored or converted.

*City of Lafayette* — On October 29, 2002, Mr. Rundle met with representatives for the City of Lafayette. Lafayette would like to see the planning process address regional trail connectivity, trails within the Refuge, and the acceptance of unwanted prairie dogs from other jurisdictions. Lafayette has no immediate concerns about clean up levels, prescribed fire, fire management, or water quality.

#### ***Rocky Flats Citizen Advisory Board***

The Rocky Flats Citizens Advisory Board (RFCAB) was formed in 1993 to provide independent, community-based recommendations on the cleanup of Rocky Flats. The Board is comprised of approximately 25 individuals representing a diversity of views and interests from the community around Rocky Flats. Service staff attends monthly RFCAB meetings and have been available to answer questions and clarify issues related to the Rocky Flats NWR and the CCP/EIS process.

#### ***Other Consultations***

*Rocky Flats Cold War Museum* — (January through May 2002). Service staff attended regular meetings to update the group on the status of the Refuge.

*North Jeffco Area Group (NJAG)* — (February and May 2002). Service staff attended NJAG meetings to answer questions regarding the Refuge.

*State Government* — (March 2002). Service staff met with officials to discuss the public involvement process, mining and other issues. Agencies included the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Governor and Attorney General's offices, and the Colorado Department of Natural Resources.

#### ***Focus Groups***

Six focus group meetings were held on October 28, 29, and 30, 2002. The purpose of the focus group meetings was to convene a forum to better explore key issues, as well as the potential management alternatives and their potential implications. Participants were invited because of their knowledge of a particular subject. Issues and recommendations provided by focus group participants have been compiled in Appendix D and are discussed in the *Summary of Scoping Comments* section. These meetings were open to members of the public invited to observe these meetings, but not participate directly in discussions. A copy of the invitation extended to public scoping meeting attendees is included in Appendix C.

Focus groups were convened around the following topics: Recreation; Environmental Education; Public Perception/Public Information: Managing a NWR in the Context of Remediation and Contamination; Trails; Vegetation Management; and Wildlife Management. These topics are

described below. All focus group meetings were held at the Jefferson County Airport Terminal building.

### ***Recreation***

The focus group on recreation met on October 28 at 9:00 A.M. The nine participants represented the Service, parks and open space departments of local governments, the Colorado Division of Wildlife, and trails, equestrian, and wildlife photography interests. The focus group discussion was centered on trail connectivity with surrounding open space, trail/wildlife interactions, wildlife viewing, the benefits and drawbacks to hunting on the site, undeveloped recreational opportunities, education about the history of the site, and quality of the recreation experience.

### ***Environmental Education***

The environmental education focus group met on October 28 at 1:00 P.M. The 12 participants included environmental education coordinators from local open space departments, Colorado State Parks, the Service, and other organizations, as well as a representative from Boulder Valley Public Schools. The focus group discussion focused on how the Service can target different audiences with their programs, how to address concerns about the history of the site, and how to structure effective programs that reach diverse audiences. Focus group participants discussed the importance of partnerships, promoting the uniqueness of the site, understanding of safety issues on the site, and the need to have infrastructure be driven by program needs. They also stressed the importance of fostering a positive impression of the Refuge through public outreach prior to developing environmental education programs.

### ***Public Perception/Public Information: Managing a NWR in the Context of Remediation and Contamination***

This focus group met on October 29 at 9:00 A.M. Six people participated, representing the Service, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, the Rocky Mountain Arsenal, the RFCLOG, the DOE, and a private consultant. The discussion centered on current perceptions of Rocky Flats and a general mistrust of government officials and their statements about risk. Participants stressed the importance of gaining the public's trust by providing credible information about risk, and allowing the public to decide what levels of risk are acceptable. They noted the importance of educating and involving the public. They also stressed the importance of keeping the public informed about public agency involvement and responsibilities.

### ***Trails***

The trails focus group met on October 29 at 1:00 P.M. The nine participants represented city and county parks and open space organizations, Colorado State Parks, Boulder County Transportation, and the Service. Topics of discussion included trail connections and access points, permitted uses, the need for a regional vision for trails, wildlife habitat needs, and cleanup and remediation issues.

### ***Vegetation Management***

The focus group discussing vegetation management met on October 30 at 9:00 A.M. The 13 participants included representatives from Colorado State Extension Service, the University of Colorado, the Colorado Natural Heritage Program, City of Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks, the Colorado Department of Agriculture, Colorado Division of Wildlife, North Jeffco Area Group, Kaiser Hill, ESCO Associates, and the Service. Most of the discussion focused around the vegetation communities on site, the benefits and drawbacks of grazing and prescribed fire as management tools, the potential impacts of trails and recreational use, weed management, retaining a wide range of management tools, and the need for partnerships and collaboration.

### ***Wildlife Management***

The wildlife management focus group met on October 30 at 1:00 P.M. The 12 participants included the Colorado Division of Wildlife, several open space departments, Colorado State University, Boulder County Nature Association, ERO Resources, and Service staff. The discussion focused on issues related to hunting, wildlife habitat concerns related to trails, water, and weed management, the potential impacts of trails on Preble's meadow jumping mouse, wildlife movement and corridors, and species reintroduction.

## **Scoping Results**

### ***Methods for Comment Collection and Analysis***

Comments, questions and concerns about the future Rocky Flats NWR were collected by the Planning Team through public meetings, focus groups, letters, email, and other methods as described in the *Public Scoping Activities* section. Outreach materials are included in Appendix C.

During the course of the public scoping process, the planning team received 1,881 comments from the public or other stakeholders. Every comment was considered and grouped by topic area. The objective of the scoping process is to gather the full range of comments, questions and concerns that the public has about the future Rocky Flats NWR. For this reason, specific

comments, questions or concerns were added to the list of comments only once. It should be noted that public scoping is not a “voting process”; each comment is considered to be of equal importance. A summary list of comments received during the scoping process is included in Appendix D.

Comments from scoping meetings (including public scoping meetings, focus groups, and RFCLOG) were grouped by topic area during and after the meetings. Major topics included public use, cultural resources, real estate, infrastructure, vegetation management, and wildlife management. Other topics that have attracted comments include Refuge operations, cleanup level and remediation issues, and comments on the planning process.

Written submissions came in the form of letters, email, questionnaires and notes from telephone calls. Questionnaires were distributed at the public scoping meetings and could also be downloaded from the project website. A copy of the questionnaire is included in Appendix C. Sixty-two written submissions were received. Thirty-five were from individuals, 15 from organizations, 8 from public governments or agencies, and 4 from private businesses. From these 62 submissions, 421 substantive scoping comments were gathered. Appendix E includes a list of individuals or organizations that submitted written or phone comments, and a summary of their comments.

All written submissions were carefully read and evaluated to determine the specific issues or concerns that were being addressed. Most written submissions contained numerous individual comments relating to one or a few specific qualities, issues, or recommendations. Each specific comment was considered in developing the summary list of comments found in Appendix D.

**Source and Subject of Comments Received**

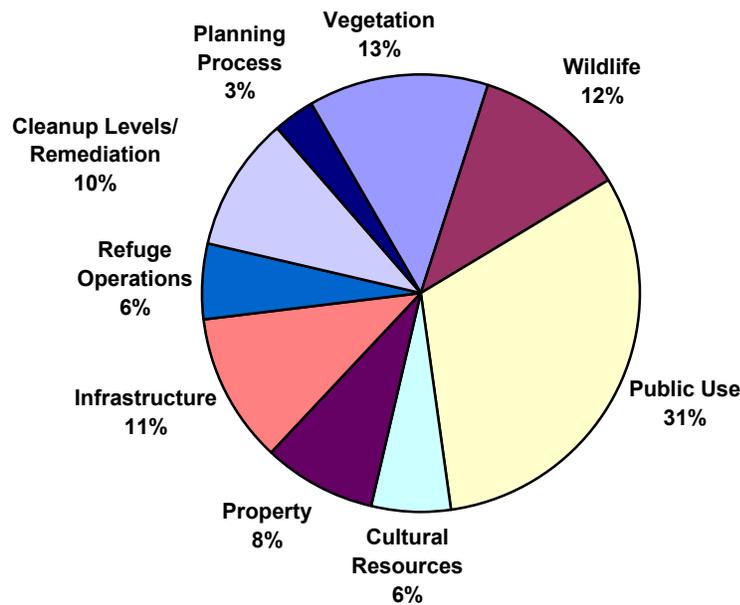
Table 2 provides the number of comments that were gathered from different scoping activities.

**Table 2. Scoping Comments Received by Activity.**

Scoping Activity	Comments Received
Public Scoping Meetings	667
Written Submissions	421
Focus Group Meetings	625
Public Agency Consultations	168
TOTAL	1,881

### **Comments Received by Topic Area**

The following chart illustrates the general topic of comments received. Comments received from the focus group meetings are omitted from these calculations because the focus group discussions were already targeted towards specific topic areas.



### **Summary of Scoping Comments**

Based on the scoping comments that are listed in Appendix D, this section provides a summary of the qualities, issues and recommendations that were obtained during the scoping process. The following descriptions represent a general summation of the range of comments that were received, and the topics that they addressed.

#### **Vegetation Management**

*General*—General comments about the qualities of vegetation at Rocky Flats included the unique and intact biotic communities, the native prairie grasses, and the tall upland shrubland. General issues related to vegetation management included preservation of the xeric tallgrass prairie community, restoration of native communities, grazing, and managing vegetation within the regional context.

General recommendations regarding vegetation management at Rocky Flats included the following:

- Active management to enhance and restore native plant communities
- Monitoring, evaluation and adaptive management
- Consideration of all management tools (grazing, fire, herbicides, etc.)
- Managing to protect and restore rare or imperiled plants
- Consideration of the effects of prairie dogs on plant communities

*Fire* — Issues related to fire and fire management included public interest in prescribed fire and the risk or fear of airborne contamination due to fire. Other issues included alternatives to burning, the objectives for burning, negative effects on wildlife, wildland fire control, and the risk of wildfires in the absence of prescribed fire.

Comments about fire management contained recommendations ranging from no burning, some burning in uncontaminated areas, to general statements supporting fire as a grassland management tool. Other recommendations included the ecological benefits and drawbacks to fire, the natural fire cycle (7 to 10 years), and considerations for planning prescribed burns.

*Weed Control* — Qualities related to weed control included the resilience and resistance of the site to weeds. Issues related to weed control included tools such as grazing, herbicides, and biological weed controls, and sources of weeds such as mined or disturbed areas, and horse manure.

Recommendations for weed control included methods such as herbicides, biological control, fire, and cultural and mechanical methods such as grazing and hand-pulling. Other specific comments recommended the use of various weed management tools, requiring manure catchers on horses, keeping trails out of weed-free areas, and developing an integrated weed management plan.

### ***Wildlife Management***

Wildlife qualities identified include the grassland, wetland and riparian habitats, the Rock Creek area in general, the Preble's meadow jumping mouse, songbirds, and diverse butterfly species.

General wildlife management issues included the protection of certain wildlife species and their habitat, the potential reintroduction of various species (including the plains sharptail grouse, pronghorn, bison, badgers and wolves), the impacts of Refuge wildlife on adjacent landowners, wildlife migration corridors, and wildlife impacts on sensitive vegetation. Issues related to prairie dogs included the relocation, Refuge carrying capacity, burrowing, and problems associated with contaminated areas. Issues related to the Preble's meadow jumping mouse include its habitat

requirements, habitat preservation, impacts from public use or management activities, and impacts from reduced water supply. Other specific wildlife issues include mule deer populations and carrying capacity, chronic wasting disease, West Nile virus, and the impacts of hunting on species reintroduction efforts. Wildlife management recommendations include:

- Use of underpasses and fencing to accommodate safe movement corridors
- Relocation of prairie dogs from nearby developing areas
- Consideration of impacts of burrowing species on or near areas with residual contamination
- Ensuring suitable habitat for reintroduced species
- Retaining and enhancing raptor habitat
- Coordination with wildlife managers on surrounding lands
- Consideration of wildlife needs in designing trails

### ***Public Use***

*General* — Many of the general comments related to public use addressed the scenic and recreational qualities of the site, and recommended that the Service focus on scientific research, wildlife-dependent recreation, conservation, and the purpose of the Refuge.

*Trails* — Comments about qualities related to trails included trail opportunities on the site and connections to trails on surrounding lands. The main trail issues include the impacts of trails on wildlife and natural resources, off-site connections, and constraints to trail placement in areas where residual contamination would remain. Recommendations for trails at Rocky Flats NWR include the following:

- Trail location, construction, and design (loop trails, soft/hard surface, ADA compatibility)
- Sensitivity to wildlife and natural resource impacts
- Connections to surrounding trail systems
- Intended use of trails (hiking only, horses, bikes)
- Trail planning, funding and management (trail planning grants, coordination with transportation plans, security and enforcement)

*Public Access* — Comments about public use and access raised issues about the types of permitted access, or whether access to the site should be permitted at all. Other issues included what activities may be permitted such as hiking, biking, horses, and dog walking, types of hunting allowed (if any), handicap accessibility, the timing/hours of access, seasonal closures,

and the impacts of public use on refuge resources. Specific recommendations about public use and access include:

- A full range of access from no public access to open access to a variety of public uses
- Modes of access to the site, including foot, horse, bike, car, bus, and light rail
- Safe access within the site, based on contamination levels
- A full range of hunting recommendations from no hunting to different types of hunting
- Whether dogs should be permitted on site
- Managing access through trail design, fencing, signage, and carrying capacity

*Recreational Facilities* — Issues related to recreational facilities at Rocky Flats centered on the development, location and existence of a visitor’s center, and whether a Cold War Museum should be on site. Other recreational facility issues included vehicular access, and future use of the existing firing range.

Recommendations for recreational facilities at Rocky Flats included construction of various features (interpretive overlooks, parking, motorized vehicle loop, and restroom facilities), levels of development, and the location and design of a visitor’s center (if any).

*Environmental Education and Interpretation* — Issues related to environmental education and interpretation focused on regional needs for education programs, public perceptions of site safety, and facility needs. Recommendations included types of programs (geology, weather, plant and animal conservation, ecological restoration, and history), the need to reach surrounding communities, and the need to develop programs prior to facilities, and providing information about residual contamination to enable visitors to make informed choices for themselves.

### ***Cultural Resources***

The cultural resource qualities identified during the scoping process include the Lindsay Ranch, Native American resources, and the historical significance of the site. Cultural resource issues identified in the scoping comments included the importance of the Lindsay Ranch and whether to preserve it, and how the legacy of the Cold War can be remembered at Rocky Flats.

Recommendations related to the Lindsay Ranch included whether to preserve the site and comments on how or if the public should access the site. While some comments recommended restricting access and allowing the public to view it from a distance, others preferred using the Lindsay Ranch as a picnic or rest area. Recommendations related to Cold War remembrance at Rocky Flats included retaining key structures in the Industrial Area, and the construction of a monument to honor former site employees.

## ***Property***

*General* —General comments related to property included consideration of the final configuration of lands that are transferred from DOE to the Service, the relationship of the Refuge with adjacent private and state-owned (Section 16) lands, and potential opportunities for land acquisitions and trades. Other general comments pertained to the impact that the Refuge would have on the regional road system.

*Mineral Rights* —Comments about mineral rights reiterated the presence of privately owned mineral rights on the Refuge property and the potential for those areas to be mined. Other issues included the impacts that mining would have on the Refuge, the potential to restore mined areas, and the compatibility of surface mining with the vision, goals and mission of the Refuge.

Recommendations related to mineral rights ranged from accommodating private mineral rights to acquiring them. Several comments recommending the acquisition of mineral rights emphasized the need to acquire them from willing sellers.

*Transportation Corridor* —Comments about a future transportation corridor along the eastern edge of the Refuge related to the consideration of regional impacts, the transfer of the right-of-way to other government entities, potential air quality impacts, and the compatibility of the corridor with the draft Refuge vision and goals. Recommendations related to the transportation corridor were given:

- Plan for a 300-foot right-of-way or a narrower corridor
- Plan for a 50-foot wide corridor
- Impacts from the future development of the corridor on site resources
- Impacts of the transportation corridor on the regional environment
- Alternatives to the transportation corridor

## ***Infrastructure***

*General* —General issues related to Refuge infrastructure included the future use of internal roadways, the location and nature of parking areas, the location of restricted areas, staffing issues, and the overall appearance and character of the Refuge. Specific recommendations included not building additional roads or powerlines, use or removal of existing infrastructure, maintaining existing roads as firebreaks, minimizing light pollution and other aesthetic impacts from facilities, and gas wells on the Refuge.

*Fencing/Signage* —Issues related to fencing and signage included the outer boundary of the site and the public image of the boundary, measures to keep visitors away from any contaminated

areas, and appropriate fencing for the wildlife species on the Refuge. Recommendations related to fencing and signage ranged from no fences to a fully enclosed site covered with a giant mesh. Specific recommendations include clearly directing visitors away from areas where they are not permitted, and minimizing the aesthetic impacts of fencing.

*Water Resources* — Scoping issues related to water resources at Rocky Flats included the potential absence of water for facilities and operations, reduced impermeable surfaces, subsequent impacts on natural resources due to reduced runoff, measures to retain water quality, the retention of existing ponds, and the protection of surface water rights held by other entities.

### ***Refuge Operations***

This topic includes various issues related to Refuge management and administration, including collaboration with other jurisdictions, management methods and philosophies, funding, and staffing. Specific refuge operations comments included issues related to integration of the site into regional planning efforts, coordination and integration with nearby landowners and communities, site funding issues, law enforcement and maintenance staffing, and impacts to Jefferson County's tax base.

Recommendations related to refuge operations include:

- Identifying management priorities before budgeting for them
- Long-term funding for stewardship and operations
- Funding levels that can support planning goals
- Keeping a resident manager on site,
- Management philosophy emphasizing monitoring, evaluation and adaptive management
- Building relationships with local governments and area tribes
- Educating the public about the differences in management between the Refuge and nearby open space

### ***Cleanup Levels and Remediation***

One quality related to cleanup level and remediation issues identified in the scoping comments was the opportunity to study the effects of contamination. Scoping issues related to contamination at Rocky Flats included cleanup levels that are safe for public access, coordination between the Refuge planning effort and the cleanup record of decision, mistrust of the DOE and their contractors with respect to contamination levels, re-suspension and dispersal of contamination due to Refuge management activities, and the reliable communication of risk to the public. Recommendations about contamination issues include:

- Allowing an independent and reliable assessment of risk

- Building trust and convincing citizens that the site is safe for human access
- Minimizing potential danger to the public
- Identifying contaminated areas
- Testing deer carcasses for contamination
- Providing personal protections for staff and visitors
- Acknowledging and addressing public concerns
- Using the latest exposure risk data and clean-up technologies
- Conducting on-going monitoring
- Using phytoremediation to draw contaminants from the soil

### ***Planning Process***

During the scoping process, the Service received comments about the process itself. These comments were considered by the Service, but will not be addressed in the CCP/EIS.

Qualities identified in the comments about the Refuge planning process included support for the re-use of the site as a National Wildlife Refuge, and a statement that the public scoping meetings were a productive step. General issues about the planning process included the opportunities for public discussion and comment at the public scoping meetings, concerns about the implications of the “proposed trails” shown on land use maps, concerns about political manipulation of the process, and the appropriateness of the site for a National Wildlife Refuge. Recommendations about the planning process include:

- Working with RFCAB and other community groups
- Coordinating with other planning efforts
- Outreach for public meetings
- Public meeting format — providing an open forum
- Planning process timeframe and opportunities for public involvement
- Environmental viewpoints at focus groups
- Convenience of focus groups for citizen participation
- Extending the EIS scoping period and conducting additional meetings
- Conducting a field trip for stakeholders

### **Significant Issues to be Considered in the CCP/EIS Process**

Based on the qualities, issues and recommendations identified in the scoping comments, as well as guidance from the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act, the NEPA, and the

Service's planning policy, the planning team has selected seven significant issues that will be addressed in the CCP/EIS:

1. Vegetation Management
2. Wildlife Management
3. Public Use
4. Cultural Resources
5. Property
6. Infrastructure
7. Refuge Operations

### ***Rationale for Selecting Significant Issues***

The planning team considered every comment received during the public scoping process. These comments were grouped for consideration into relevant topics and subtopics, as described in the *Summary of Scoping Comments* section. Based on guidance from NEPA and Service Planning Policy, the planning team determined which topics would constitute significant issues, and which were outside the scope of the planning process. Issues that are deemed to be significant are typically those issues that are within the Service's jurisdiction, suggest different actions or alternatives, and will influence the Service's decision. Issues identified in the scoping process that were not considered to be significant issues are described in the *Issues Outside the Scope of Refuge Planning* section.

### ***Significant Issues***

*Vegetation Management* — Rocky Flats contains xeric tallgrass prairie, riparian and wetland communities, and other shrub and grassland communities. Preservation and restoration of these communities, including noxious weed management, fire management and grazing, are important issues in the planning process.

*Wildlife Management* — Rocky Flats provides habitat for a variety of wildlife including deer, migratory birds, raptors, prairie dogs and the threatened Preble's meadow jumping mouse. Preservation and enhancement of habitat for these species as well as population management and species reintroductions are important issues in the planning process.

*Public Use* — Rocky Flats provides potential opportunities for wildlife-dependent public use and recreation. The types of public uses that might be permitted such as hiking, biking, equestrian use, wildlife observation, education, interpretation and hunting, as well as the trails, visitor's center and other facilities and programs that are needed to support these uses, are important issues in the planning process.

*Cultural Resources* — Rocky Flats contains several types of cultural resources, including the Lindsay Ranch and the site’s Cold War heritage. Preservation and recognition of these resources is an important issue in the planning process.

*Property* — Privately owned mineral rights and a transportation right-of-way are issues that will influence the future condition, use, and configuration of the site. Management strategies and recommendations related to these topics are important issues in the planning process.

*Infrastructure* — Rocky Flats contains a significant amount of infrastructure including roads, fences, water management structures, and water supply. Some of this infrastructure is likely to change prior to Refuge operation. These and other infrastructure issues are important issues in the planning process.

*Refuge Operations* — Rocky Flats and its resources are ecologically and socially significant. Management of these resources in ways that are effective for their preservation, are financially responsible, and are integrated with surrounding communities is an important issue in the planning process. Managing the future Refuge in the context of residual contamination is also an important issue.

## **Issues Outside the Scope of the CCP/EIS Process**

Several issues that were identified during the scoping process were not selected for detailed analysis in the CCP and EIS. In accordance with NEPA requirements, the Service identified and eliminated from detailed study the topics and issues that are not significant, discussing those issues only briefly. These issues, and the rationale for not selecting them as Significant Issues, are described below. These issues are:

1. Cold War Museum
2. Cleanup Levels and Remediation

*Cold War Museum* — Some scoping comments addressed whether a Cold War Museum should be located on the Refuge, and whether the museum should be co-located with a visitor’s center. The Refuge legislation states it is DOE’s responsibility to determine if a museum would be established and where it would be located. The CCP/EIS process will not address whether or not the museum should be established. If during the planning process, DOE determined that a museum should be established and a joint partnership either on or off Refuge lands was determined to be mutually beneficial, any agreed partnership would be addressed in the CCP/EIS.

*Cleanup Levels and Remediation* — Several comments addressed issues related to existing contamination at the Rocky Flats site and the extent and reliability of remediation efforts. These issues will not be addressed in the CCP/EIS. Instead, these issues are being addressed in the Rocky Flats cleanup process administered by DOE, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. The Service and the DOE are developing a memorandum of understanding that will, among other things, identify which areas will be transferred to the Service and which areas will be retained by DOE for the purposes of monitoring and/or remediation. The transfer of land from DOE to the Service will not occur until the Environmental Protection Agency certifies that the cleanup and closure at Rocky Flats has been completed. The Service will address management of its jurisdictional land in the context of residual contamination and analyze how refuge management corresponds to DOE’s jurisdictional controls.

## Summary of Future Actions

The valuable information that has been gathered during the scoping process will assist the Service in the development of alternatives for the Draft CCP/EIS. Table 3 outlines the schedule for developing the Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge CCP/EIS.

**Table 3. Rocky Flats CCP/EIS Planning Schedule.**

Planning Stage	Timeframe	Public Involvement Opportunities
1. Preplanning	Completed	
2. Public Involvement and Scoping	Completed	Public Scoping Meetings – September, 2002
3. Review Vision Statement and Goals and Draft Proposed Action	Nov. 2002 – Dec. 2002	
3. Develop and Analyze Alternatives	Jan. 2003 – May 2003	Public Meetings – Alternative Plans/ Draft Proposed Action Spring/Summer, 2003
4. Prepare Preliminary Draft CCP/EIS	June 2003 – Jan. 2004	
5. Prepare Public Draft CCP/EIS	Feb. 2004 – June 2004	Public Meetings – Draft Plans Summer, 2004
6. Final CCP/EIS and Record of Decision	July 2004 – Dec. 2004	Public Celebration – Final Plan December, 2004

Although the formal scoping period has passed, there will be two additional opportunities for official public involvement before completion of the Final CCP/EIS. At anytime during the planning process, the Service welcomes any comments from the public.

For information and updates about the planning process, please visit the project website at <http://rockyflats.fws.gov>. Additional comments, questions or concerns, at any time during the planning process, can be directed to:

Rocky Flats NWR  
Comprehensive Conservation Plan  
Attn: Laurie Shannon, Planning Team Leader  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Building 121  
Commerce City, CO 80022  
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**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
<http://www.fws.gov>  
<http://www.r6.fws.gov/larp>**

**For Refuge Information  
1 800/344 WILD**

**January 2003**

