

## **NEWS RELEASE**

**U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
MOUNTAIN-PRAIRIE REGION  
ROCKY MOUNTAIN ARSENAL NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE COMPLEX  
Commerce City, CO 80022-1748**

For Immediate Release

July 12, 2007

Contacts: Steve Berendzen, (303) 289-0350  
Dean Rundle, (303) 236-4306

### **U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE ESTABLISHES ROCKY FLATS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service today announced the establishment of the Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge. Nearly 4,000 acres of the former defense site, located 16 miles northwest of Denver, Colorado at the intersection of Boulder, Broomfield and Jefferson Counties, was transferred by the U.S. Department of Energy to the Service following an extensive process to clean up contamination from nuclear weapons production at the site.

Rocky Flats will be administered by the Service as a unit of the National Wildlife Refuge System, the nation's premier network of lands and waters managed for the conservation of fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats. Created in 1903 by President Theodore Roosevelt, the refuge system has since grown to include nearly 100 million acres from Alaska to the Caribbean Sea. Rocky Flats is the 548<sup>th</sup> unit of the system, and is part of the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge Complex, which includes the Arsenal, located in Commerce City, Colorado and Two Ponds National Wildlife Refuge, located in Arvada, Colorado.

"With the transfer of nearly 4,000 acres from the Department of Energy, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will establish the Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge in order to conserve the rare and unique tallgrass prairie found along Colorado's Front Range. As intended by Congress, the refuge will preserve a lasting wildlife and habitat legacy for future generations," said Service Director H. Dale Hall.

Mitch King, the Service's Mountain-Prairie Regional Director, added: "The establishment of the Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge enhances the already outstanding wildlife-dependent recreation opportunities in this region. The Service is proud to partner with other federal agencies, the State of Colorado, local governments and others to provide yet another natural asset for the public to enjoy."

The Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge Act of 2001, which was sponsored by Senator Wayne Allard and Representative Mark Udall, designated the future use of the site as a national wildlife refuge. Physical completion of the Rocky Flats cleanup was achieved by Department of Energy in late 2005, and regulatory closure of the cleanup was achieved in September 2006. Earlier this

year, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, with concurrence from state and local public health agencies, removed Rocky Flats from the national list of “Superfund” sites, thus certifying the cleanup as complete and paving the way for the transfer of the site from DOE to the Service and the establishment of the refuge.

In 2005, the Service completed a comprehensive conservation plan and associated environmental impact statement for the refuge that creates a management framework for the next 15 years. The plan, which was developed over a three-year period that included extensive public involvement opportunities, emphasizes wildlife and habitat conservation with a moderate amount of wildlife-dependent public use. Pursuant to the plan, public use will increase gradually over the 15-year life of the plan, as resources become available.

Refuge-wide habitat conservation will include management of xeric tallgrass and native plant communities, as well as weed control, removal and revegetation of unused roads and stream crossings, management of deer and elk populations and black-tailed prairie dog colonies, and protection of habitat for the Preble’s meadow jumping mouse, a species listed as threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act.

Visitor use facilities will eventually include approximately 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 refuge conservation plan, the Service will develop a limited public hunting program.

The Service will publish official notice of the refuge establishment in the Federal Register within the next 30 days.

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 548 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.

- FWS -

For more information about the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, visit our home page at <http://www.fws.gov>