

ROCKY MOUNTAIN ARSENAL NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Visitor Fact Sheet

Background

In April 2004, approximately 5,000 acres of the 17,000 acres comprising Rocky Mountain Arsenal were transferred from the U.S. Army to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service formally establishing Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge. Located approximately 10 miles northeast of downtown Denver, the Refuge offers opportunities for visitors to learn about the site's diverse wildlife, unique history, and active environmental cleanup program. Wildlife viewing tours, seasonal catch-and-release fishing, nature programs and environmental education programs are available to the public. Since portions of the Arsenal are still undergoing an active cleanup, access is carefully controlled and coordinated by the Service, U.S. Army and Shell Oil Company. Visitors who participate in Refuge programs are permitted only in areas deemed safe and appropriate for public access.

In 1942, the U.S. Army acquired the 27 square-mile site to construct facilities to produce chemical munitions for WWII. Some of the facilities were then leased to private industry, including Shell Chemical Company, for the production of industrial and agricultural chemicals. The accepted disposal methods at the time used by both the Army and Shell led to contamination in specific areas of the site's soil, groundwater, and structures. These areas, which are still Army property, are located primarily in the central core of the Arsenal and are currently undergoing a cleanup of the contamination. In June 1996, a "Record of Decision" detailing the cleanup was signed, outlining 31 cleanup projects. The cleanup program is managed by the Remediation Venture Office, a partnership between the U.S. Army, Shell Oil Company, and the Service. The cleanup is regulated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and the Tri-County Health Department under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act. As cleanup progresses, land will continue to be transferred from the Army to the

Service. Once cleanup is complete, which is anticipated by 2011, a total of 15,000 acres of land will be administered by the Service as Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge.

Access

The Refuge is open Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays from 6:00 am until 6:00 pm. Reservations are required for all visitor programs, with the exception of visits during the drop-in program, special events, and seasonal catch-and-release fishing. Programs may be canceled if inclement weather or Arsenal cleanup activities dictate. Visitors access the Refuge at 56th Avenue and Havana Street and are restricted to the Visitor Center and trails. Self-guided auto tours are not permitted.

Safety Overview

Visitor safety is a top priority of the Service at the Refuge. You are entering an area where some natural hazards may be present. Service staff, law enforcement officers and Refuge volunteers are present on the Refuge. Children under the age of 18 must be supervised by an adult at all times. Visitors are responsible for their own safety and actions. Please read the following sections carefully:

Wildlife

Feeding or intentionally disturbing wildlife is illegal and dangerous - keep a safe distance. All Refuge animals are wild. Be aware of what is going on around you. Watch wildlife from a distance using binoculars or a telephoto lens to enhance your view. Following animals too closely to get a photograph or a better look can cause stress to wildlife and threaten their health. If animals notice you or if they seem nervous, you are too close. Move away quietly.

Remember to:

- Sit quietly to observe and listen for wildlife. Talk quietly only when necessary, so you don't disturb the animals or other wildlife watchers.



Trails

The Refuge has approximately nine miles of trails for wildlife observation and photography. These trails range from flat lakeside strolls to sloping prairie hills. If you are new to the Refuge, Visitor Center staff can provide advice on trails that are appropriate for different fitness and experience levels. Trail maps are available upon check-in.

Weather

A bright, sunny day can turn windy and wet within a matter of minutes with high winds and driving rain or snow. Come prepared for changing conditions with these essentials: rain gear, sunglasses and sunscreen, a hat, water, extra layers of clothing, sturdy shoes, and a first aid kit.

Personal Safety

For your safety, all visitors please:

- Obey all signs identifying closed areas. Closed areas are established to provide undisturbed sanctuaries for wildlife and to prevent unauthorized persons from entering Army property.
- Help protect resources. All plants, wildlife, and cultural features on the Refuge are protected and it is illegal to remove them.
- Be particularly watchful for prairie rattlesnakes when near prairie dog towns and rocky areas.
- Keep in mind that you may encounter biting or stinging insects.
- On tours, practice standard bus safety procedures, including keeping hands and heads inside the bus windows and remain seated.
- Remember due to the history of this landscape, there is an extremely remote chance you may encounter munitions debris that could be hazardous. Do not pick up any unnatural objects you may encounter, especially metallic or fabric covered items. If you observe unidentified items during your visit, report them to Refuge staff.

- Dress appropriately for weather.
- Carry drinking water with you. There is none along the trails.
- Keep to designated trails; shortcutting is illegal and can cause habitat erosion.
- Supervise children carefully.

Emergencies

Contact Service staff or Refuge volunteers for immediate assistance.

Leave No Trace

With increasing visitor use, it is important to minimize our impacts and **Leave No Trace** of visits to the Refuge. Please take your trash with you when you leave the Refuge. Following **LNT** principles and combining them with your personal judgment, awareness, and experience will help protect natural and cultural resources and preserve the Refuge experience for you and for future visitors.

For information contact:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge
Building 111
Commerce City, Colorado 80022-1748
(303) 289-0930
www.fws.gov/rockymountainarsenal.

Visit the Rocky Mountain Arsenal Homepage on the Internet at www.rma.army.mil

For Your Protection

While visiting the Refuge, please ensure that you lock your vehicle and do not leave valuables unattended. Report any unusual behavior immediately to Service staff on duty.

