

4.0 INTERPRETIVE SIGNS ABOUT SITE HISTORY, CLEANUP and ACCESS RESTRICTIONS

Signs with the following language will be erected at all trailheads and other public access points to RF NWR prior to the opening of those access points to visitors:

"What Happened Here?"

The land you are about to enter, Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge, is an historic Cold War site. Refuge lands are part of the buffer zone of the former Rocky Flats Plant that operated from 1951 until 1989, when it was closed. For nearly four decades, thousands of women and men worked here, building nuclear components for the United States' deterrent weapons throughout the Cold War period.

Weapon components production at the plant involved plutonium and other radioactive and hazardous materials. The work was dangerous and secret. Over the course of decades, there were accidents. Some of those accidents and some of the waste handling practices of the early decades resulted in releases of plutonium and other contaminants into the environment.

Beginning in 1995, many of the same Cold War veterans who had built weapons components at Rocky Flats, assisted with an unprecedented and enormously complex cleanup project to remediate contaminated buildings and soil on the site. They accomplished that difficult job in 2005, leaving the land as an asset for future generations of Americans. The Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge Act passed by Congress in 2001 designated a portion of these lands as a national wildlife refuge.

Is there Residual Contamination?

An extensive evaluation of contamination at Rocky Flats was conducted by the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE). The levels of contamination on refuge land are low, meet conservative state and federal cleanup standards, and are similar to adjacent lands. Both EPA and CDPHE have determined that the land is safe for public recreation, refuge workers, and resident wildlife. The refuge workers, the people most exposed to this environment, have a maximum life-time increased cancer risk of about 2 in a million due to residual contaminants. Environmental health risks to Refuge visitors, including children, are far lower than that.

There are hazards involved in any form of wildland recreation. Hazards at Rocky Flats include inclement or extreme weather conditions, the potential for trips, slips and falls; poisonous snakes; and unreasonable or illegal acts by other persons.

The refuge is open daily during daylight hours. Unless otherwise posted, stay on trails. Public access is not allowed on the central portion of Rocky Flats retained by DOE. Please observe "Area Closed" and other regulatory signs. Pets are not allowed on the refuge.