

The Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge: A Constructive Approach

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Takeaway messages for nearby homeowners

[from a Candelas homeowner: woodmarv@gmail.com]

If you live in Candelas or Whisper Creek or Five Parks, you have already made your peace with the legacy of the Rocky Flats plant. Yet you will encounter plenty of misinformation by innuendo about the advisability of developing the areas around Rocky Flats, opening the Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge, and about the risks associated with building Jefferson Parkway. Any group attempting to ‘persuade’ you with 20-year old information and now-discredited ideas (e.g., “hot particles”) is doing so from naivete or ignorance, not based on recent DATA. Look for phrases such as “could be”, “might be”, gross overstatements about the toxicity of plutonium, and complaints about missing documentation about such and such with remarks about the motives for why this or that information was hidden. Most professional journals which publish research will not tolerate “serial publication” of the same article, but you can see the same old information rehashed every couple of months by Dr. LeRoy Moore.

We owe Dr. Moore a large debt for his focus on the gross mismanagement and malfeasance that went on at Rocky Flats until the late 1980s. But these disgraceful problems had a beginning, a middle, and an end. The Rocky Mountain Peace & Justice Center and Rocky Flats Nuclear Guardianship (both based in Boulder and creations of LeRoy Moore) lack the tools to carry the discussion forward. All they will ever be able to do is to say, in effect: there COULD be a problem; this MIGHT happen at some point in the next 48,000 years. The net effect is to confuse some people, muddying the waters about the actual risks of Rocky Flats, and to indefinitely block constructive use of the land available until every possible issue is clarified.

The large number of possible reasons they “cite” for opposing opening the wildlife reserve reminds me of the book *A Hundred Authors Against Einstein* (published in 1931), criticizing relativity. In response to the book, Albert Einstein noted, “*If I were wrong, one would be enough.*” My belief is that the HISTORY (who failed to report what, which documents are missing and why, etc) are of interest mostly to those who wish to “set the record straight” but are not directly relevant to proposed uses as a wildlife preserve. My view is that a only a handful of very concrete questions (that can be answered NOW or have already been satisfactorily answered) are the ones most neighbors of the preserve would want answered. In large part the actual data needed (based on monitoring and decent risk estimates) is already present and is quantitative, not qualitative.

These fundamental questions are NOT TECHNICAL.

They ARE:

Can we measure radiation accurately?

YES, for at least 60 years

Are the health risks of plutonium understood?

Reasonably well, for at least 30 years

Is the area being MONITORED for problems?

Yes, regularly: water, soil, air

Was the cleanup effective?

State, federal monitoring indicates yes

Is the wildlife preserve area safe for use by the public?

The cleanup level was targeted to assure the safety of a refuge worker, who spends **full days** in the preserve. Data I know of supports its safety.

Do you trust the federal government and state agencies to set standards?

You should make your OWN conclusions. (Do you drink municipal water? Why?) The DOE and EPA of 2016 undergo vastly more scrutiny now than it they in the mid-1980s

This is a quick introduction to a complex subject. You should prowl around the Web if you wish to educate yourself further.

Useful resources

The history of Rocky Flats is available from many sources, and is not pretty. A good book for HISTORY (with some statements misleading and unconfirmed statements) is *Full Body Burden: Growing Up in the Nuclear Shadow of Rocky Flats* (Kristen Iversen, 2013).

<http://www.rockyflatssc.org> The Rocky Flats Stewardship Council;
http://www.rockyflatssc.org/public_comment.html Commentary (large range of “signal to noise”)

Attend meetings of the Rocky Flats Stewardship Council if you can. Otherwise we risk public input and discourse being dominated by the Rocky Mountain Peace & Justice Center [based in Boulder] and Rocky Flats Nuclear Guardianship [based in Boulder].

Good sources of information (some cited because they have good links themselves)

<http://www.sandraborstein.com/assessing-risks-living-near-rocky-flats/>
(some links stale)

<https://arvadacenter.org/on-stage/rocky-flats-then-and-now-2014> (mostly an FYI)

<https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/rocky-flats> Good links to other information sources, state reports

<https://cumulis.epa.gov/supercpad/cursites/csitinfo.cfm?id=0800360> Environmental Protection Agency site related to cleanup

Radiation

<http://hps.org/hpspublications/radiationfactsheets.html> Health Physics Society information
<http://hps.org/publicinformation/>

Please contact David Wood wooddmarv@gmail.com if you'd like to be added to an (email) list devoted to keeping abreast of ongoing issues at the Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge, an important amenity for Candelas/Whisper Creek/5 Parks and other developments which border on Rocky Flats. This list is targeted at people ACTUALLY living near Rocky Flats, with an interest in seeing the wildlife refuge issues resolved in a constructive and reasonable way.