

# THE ADVISOR

A Publication of the Rocky Flats Citizens Advisory Board

Winter 2000

## Rocky Flats Citizens Advisory Board Hosts Nuclear Weapons Complex Delegates

In late October, the Rocky Flats Citizens Advisory Board hosted a national workshop on long-term stewardship at U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) nuclear weapons complex sites. Representatives from ten national advisory boards attended the workshop, held in downtown Denver at the Executive Tower Hotel. The ten boards, which collectively comprise the Environmental Management Site-Specific Advisory Board (EMSSAB), include the following sites in addition to Rocky Flats: Fernald (Ohio), Pantex (Texas), Nevada Test Site (Nevada), Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory (Idaho), Sandia (New Mexico), Los Alamos (New Mexico), Hanford (Washington), Savannah River Site (South Carolina), and Oak Ridge (Tennessee). An eleventh member of the EMSSAB, Paducah (Kentucky), was not present.

Over 100 persons participated in the workshop, with more than 60 of those coming from other states. Besides members of the EMSSAB, other participants included representatives from the Environmental Protection Agency, state regulatory agen-

cies, universities, other federal agencies, and DOE. Jim Werner, director of the Office of Long-Term Stewardship at DOE-Headquarters in Washington, D.C., provided the keynote address.

Stewardship, in the context of environmental management for the Department of Energy, includes the activities that will be necessary after cleanup is complete to protect human health and the environment from any contamination that might remain. Because of the complexity in cleaning up the former nuclear weapons sites, and because of the long-lived nature of the radioactive contaminants prevalent at many DOE's facilities, stewardship will be necessary for generations to come.

Members of the EMSSAB began their conversations about stewardship last year at a workshop held in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. At that first workshop, the participants developed a set of statements, titled "Next Steps for Stewardship," which focused on areas such as public participation, funding for stewardship, stewardship plans, and information management. This most recent workshop was a follow-up conversation to last year's meeting. The "Next Steps" statements were used as a foundation to begin the discussion.

In planning for this year's workshop, the EMSSAB participants agreed to develop, during the workshop a set of draft recommendations related to stewardship that would be taken back to their home boards for consideration and ratification. After approval, these recommendations will be forwarded to DOE as a joint recommendation of the EMSSAB. The agenda for the workshop was structured to first bring the participants up to speed on what had happened over the previous year, to next allow them to evaluate what had happened, and then to look toward the future by developing recommendations for further action.

The workshop began with a tour of the Rocky Flats site, followed by two days of presentations and discussion. Jim

*(continued on page 6)*



*A group of workshop participants meets in a breakout session to draft recommendation language.*

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# Rocky Flats Updates



## **Update on Activities of the Joint RFCAB-Coalition Stewardship Working Group**

The Stewardship Working Group was started jointly by the Rocky Flats Citizens Advisory Board (RFCAB) and the Rocky Flats Coalition of Local Governments (Coalition) to create a method, or "toolbox," for applying stewardship considerations to the remedial selection process. The working group envisions the toolbox as a generic document that can be applied to other Department of Energy (DOE) legacy waste sites. A subcommittee of working group members has been working on the toolbox since April 2000.

In addition to the toolbox, the working group is drafting a site-specific report on stewardship to be submitted to RFCAB and the Coalition in 2001. The report will describe the fixed and variable stewardship considerations that will be applied to each cleanup decision at Rocky Flats, on a case-by-case basis. The report will also incorporate the toolbox and apply it to a case study of the Solar Pond Plume Remediation Project. Since this remediation project has been completed, the case study will examine how stewardship considerations influenced the remediation selection process and whether application of the toolbox would have changed the result.

The Stewardship Working Group meets the fourth Thursday of every month from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at Arvada City Hall. Please call Noelle Stenger at 303-420-7855 for more information.

## **RFCA Stakeholder Focus Group**

The Rocky Flats Cleanup Agreement (RFCA) Stakeholder Focus Group was formed to improve public involvement in key environmental restoration decisions. The current agenda of the group includes the radioactive soil action levels (RSALs) review process, remediation of the 903 Pad, and the Sampling and Analyses Plan for the Industrial Area. Since the RSAL review is highly technical, the meetings are designed in part to educate stakeholders, including the public, on the regulatory and scientific basis for each proposed decision. Stakeholders are also invited to comment on proposed decisions. Representatives from the Department of Energy, the Environmental Protection Agency - Region 8, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, and the State Attorney General's Office attend every meeting.

Rocky Flats Citizens Advisory Board members hope the process will continuously remind the agencies of other related community concerns such as the protection of drinking water sources, the long-term effectiveness of engineering controls, and consideration of potential catastrophic events. The focus group is a public forum that meets to discuss these issues every second and fourth Wednesday, from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m., at Westminster City Hall.

## **Radionuclide Soil Action Levels (RSALs)**

In 1996, the Department of Energy (DOE), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) established the Radionuclide Soil Action Levels (RSALs) for cleanup at Rocky Flats. As has been reported in previous editions of *The Advisor*, these levels met with skepticism in the community for being too high. As a result, an independent analysis was set up and overseen by members of the community through the Radionuclide Soil Action Levels Oversight Panel. Risk Assessment

Corporation conducted the assessment and recommended revised action levels significantly lower.

This past summer, DOE, EPA, and CDPHE began a process to review the action levels, which includes an analysis of the work conducted by RAC. In this review, DOE and the regulators have identified five critical areas for examination. The first of these areas is a regulatory analysis to answer the questions whether any new laws or regulations have been adopted since 1996 that might have an impact on determining the action levels. The second focus area is an evaluation of computer models used to calculate the action levels. The third area is the selection of the input parameters that are used in the computer models. Whether there is any new scientific information that might be applicable to decisions made about the action levels is the focus of the fourth area for investigation. The final topic for evaluation concerns looking at cleanup standards at other sites where radioactive contamination similar to Rocky Flats exists.

DOE and the regulators have agreed to share draft versions of reports about the five focus areas with the community. After completing work on the five reports, DOE and the regulators will produce a draft document in which they will recommend, with justification, any revisions to the action levels established in 1996. The final draft document will be sent out for a 60-day public comment period, scheduled to begin by mid-May 2001. DOE and the regulators plan to publish final action levels by August 2001.

The Rocky Flats Citizens Advisory Board will closely track the RSAL review process. The Board's Environmental Restoration Committee will coordinate this effort. Members of the community are encouraged to participate in this review. If you would like more information on the Board's activities regarding the RSAL review, please contact Jerry Henderson at the RFCAB office, 303-420-7855.

# Fiscal Year 2000 Regulatory Milestones

Following are milestones for Fiscal Year (FY) 2000 under the Rocky Flats Cleanup Agreement (RFCA). The deadline for reaching these milestones was September 30, 2000, unless otherwise indicated.

- **Complete demolition of Building 779.** Building 779 was demolished on January 3, 2000.
- **Ship 6,000 cubic meters of low level/low level mixed radioactive waste offsite.** As of June 1, 2000, a total of 6,055 cubic meters of low-level and low-level mixed radioactive waste was shipped offsite for disposal, four months ahead of schedule. The majority of the waste was shipped to the Nevada Test Site. The low-level mixed waste was shipped to Envirocare in Utah.
- **Complete 86 shipments to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP), pending the issuance of the WIPP Hazardous Waste Facility Permit.** The milestone was not met because the Department of Energy (DOE) suspended waste shipments in November 1999 to implement the requirements of the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) Hazardous Waste Facility Permit. However, to date DOE has shipped approximately two shipments per week of transuranic and transuranic mixed waste to WIPP, and anticipates increasing that number to five shipments per week during FY 2001.
- **Begin storing transuranic waste in Building 906 by September 1, 2000.** DOE missed the deadline and was penalized \$40,000 by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CPDHE) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), after negotiations. Actual waste storage began September 22.
- **Complete 18 D&D worksets (groupings of equipment in buildings).** Workers completed 23 decontamination and decommissioning (D&D) worksets in FY 2000, five more than the 18 required by RFCA. Worksets are specific projects that must be completed before buildings can be torn down, including the complete removal of equipment, gloveboxes, liquid process systems, ventilation lines, wastes, etc.

## FISCAL YEAR 2001 "EARNED VALUE" APPROACH

*The Department of Energy and Kaiser-Hill renegotiated the incentives portion of their contract to allow for monetary awards based on the "earned value" of the work performed as a whole, rather than based on the completion of specific milestones. This approach has been incorporated into the FY 2001 contract. The "earned value" approach will reward Kaiser-Hill for all the work completed during the fiscal year and will allow Kaiser-Hill the flexibility to switch-out activities between years if extenuating circumstances arise.*

## Board Elects 2001 Officers



From left: Bryan Taylor (Treasurer), Jerry DePoorter (Chair), Jeff Eggleston (Secretary), and Victor Holm (Vice Chair).

In November, the Board held annual elections for officers. Their terms of office began in December. Serving in the following capacities for the year 2001:

**Jerry DePoorter, Chair.** Jerry is serving his second consecutive term as Chair. Jerry is an emeritus professor of Metallurgical Engineering at the Colorado School of Mines, and a resident of rural Boulder County near Superior.

**Victor Holm, Vice Chair.** Victor previously served two consecutive terms as the Board's Treasurer. Victor lives in Lakewood, and is a geological engineer with experience in mineral exploration and mine engineering in foreign countries.

**Jeff Eggleston, Secretary.** Jeff is serving his first term as an officer. A resident of Broomfield, he is an engineering manager in Research and Development at Valleylab, a medical device manufacturer.

**Bryan Taylor, Treasurer.** Bryan also was elected to his first term as an officer. Bryan is an Associate Professor with the Department of Communication at the University of Colorado-Boulder. He lives in Lafayette.

# National Wildlife Refuge Update

**O**n September 21, 2000, Senator Allard and Representative Udall set their political differences aside to take an important step toward preserving the unique natural environment at Rocky Flats. If enacted, their joint legislation would designate much of the site as a national wildlife refuge following cleanup and closure. In its current form, the bill addresses several issues identified by RFCAB in Recommendation 2000-4 (July 6, 2000), including provisions to ensure continued federal ownership and continued public involvement, to ensure that cleanup levels will not be reduced as a result of the national wildlife refuge designation, and to ensure that no cleanup funds will be used for the acquisition of mineral rights.

Because the bill enjoys bipartisan support from Colorado's representatives and senators, it will likely be reintroduced in the 107th Congress. The measure's proponents cite dwindling open space and wildlife habitat along the Front Range as compelling reasons

for its passage, along with the protection of threatened and endangered species at the site. Currently, a small portion of the site is protected by an agreement between the Department of Energy and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, signed in May 1999. That agreement formed the Rock Creek Reserve, an area of roughly 800 acres in the northwest Buffer Zone designated for habitat preservation.

Roughly the western third of Rocky Flats is covered by a rare ecological community, the xeric tallgrass prairie. Fewer than 20 examples remain worldwide. A study by the Colorado Natural Heritage Program concluded that Rocky Flats encompasses perhaps the largest such remnant in North America.

Located at the interface between plains grassland and the lower montane forest, the site actually features a variety of habitats important to wildlife, including wetlands, shrubland, and streamside woodlands. Given this habitat diversity, it is not surprising that

Rocky Flats is home to more than 200 species of mammals, birds, fish, reptiles, and amphibians.

Birds are notably abundant at Rocky Flats. In 1999, trained observers spotted a black vulture, the first official sighting of that species in the state of Colorado. Over thirty species of waterfowl use the various ponds and man-made impoundments on the site; some,





including mallards, spend the winter there. Various species of hawks can be seen alternately nesting in riparian woodlands or gliding over marsh and grassland in search of prey. American kestrels, on the other hand, are forest-hunters that feed primarily on songbirds. The great horned owl hunts nocturnally and roosts by day in shrubs, trees and even abandoned buildings.

Many of these raptors suffered from the decline of the black-tailed prairie dog, an important prey species in the prairie ecosystem, whose population was decimated by disease in 1994. Prior to that time, prairie dogs thrived in numerous colonies at the site. As of the end of 1999, three of those former colonies have repopulated. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has listed the black-tailed prairie dog as a candidate species, which means it is being monitored for upgrade to threatened or endangered status. This has implications for future compliance with the Endangered Species Act. However, according to the latest wildlife survey, no colonies exist in areas where remediation is planned.

Although the site contains no "critical habitat" as defined under the Endangered Species Act, two threatened species occur at Rocky Flats: the Bald Eagle and the Preble's



Meadow Jumping Mouse. A resident of riparian woodlands and pond margins, the Preble's mouse is found in all major drainages at the site. Rarely do Preble's mice stray from the protection of dense vegetative cover. Through techniques such as radio telemetry, ecologists have conducted an extensive, ongoing monitoring program in the Walnut Creek and Rock Creek drainages and thereby increased our understanding of Preble's mouse ecology, including its population size, home range, and critical habitat. With this data, scientists have a baseline that can be used to identify, and perhaps reverse, any major population decline that may strike this vulnerable species in the future.



There are at least a dozen other special-concern species with known habitat at Rocky Flats. These include the Eastern Short-Horned Lizard, the Northern Leopard Frog, the Western Burrowing Owl, and the Loggerhead Shrike. Additionally, there are several endangered, threatened, or candidate species with potential habitat at Rocky Flats, including the Colorado Butterfly Plant, the Whooping Crane, the Piping Plover, and the Black-Footed Ferret. The Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge Act would go a long way toward protecting these imperiled species from the threat of encroaching development.

## EMSSAB Stewardship Workshop (continued from page 1)

Werner provided the opening presentation and informed the group of DOE's activities related to stewardship, and how the EMSSAB "Next Steps for Stewardship" had been incorporated into DOE's planning and activities. DOE's main focus has been on producing two major reports. The first of these is a *Report to Congress* on DOE's long-term stewardship needs. The second is a report entitled *Long-Term Stewardship Study* that outlines DOE's understanding of its long-term stewardship responsibilities and activities. Information about these reports can be obtained by checking the DOE website at:

<http://its.apps.em.doe.gov/>. After Mr. Werner's presentation, the participants engaged in a dialogue with him. Following this dialogue, the agenda next moved to presentations from representatives of each of the advisory boards participating in the workshop. The representatives focused their presentations on the most critical long-term stewardship needs at their sites. Prepared with the information from Mr. Werner's and the local sites' presentations, the participants next moved to breakout discussion sessions focused on specific core topic areas.

The core topics were identified in advance of the workshop and included the following: 1) timing for stewardship, 2) funding for stewardship, 3) roles and responsibilities, 4) public involvement, and 5) information management. Each of the core topic breakout groups was tasked with preparing draft recommendations to present back to all the workshop participants for consideration. Members from each of the site delegations attending the workshop were urged to split up among the core topic discussion so that each site was represented. Non-EMSSAB members also participated in these small group discussions.

After several opportunities for fine-tuning, the workshop

participants approved ten draft recommendations that they will forward to their home boards for review and approval. It is hoped that each the local boards will approve the recommendations, after which they will be forwarded to DOE as a joint recommendation of the national EMSSAB. While the final wording of these recommendations remains to be approved by the individual advisory boards, some of the major themes in the draft recommendations ask DOE to:



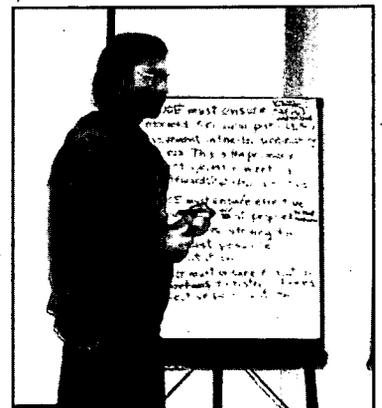
Mike Schoener, facilitator for the Savannah River Site Citizens Advisory Board, leads the breakout session on timing for stewardship.

- Make stewardship funding a national priority, with distinct budgets that do not compete with other projects on a year-to-year basis;
- Issue a national stewardship policy, followed by stewardship plans;
- Consider stewardship as part of its ongoing operations, make stewardship planning decisions when cleanup strategies are being developed, and revisit past decisions to determine the stewardship needs;
- Identify and preserve information that future generations will need to know related to their stewardship responsibilities that includes historical and cultural information;
- Provide concerned stakeholders with educational and communication activities related to stewardship planning and implementation, and respond to concerns and questions raised by the community in a timely manner; and
- Do all of the above in consultation with stakeholders in the communities surrounding its sites.

The actual text of the draft recommendations can be obtained by contacting the RFCAB office at 303-420-7855. Once the final recommendations are approved, they will be posted on the RFCAB website at [www.rfcab.org](http://www.rfcab.org). The time-frame for each of the local boards to consider and approve the draft recommendations is by February 2001, with final transmittal to DOE scheduled for early spring.



Jerry DePoorter, RFCAB chair, gives a presentation about Rocky Flats stewardship issues to EMSSAB delegates on the first day of the workshop.



During a breakout session on public involvement, Earle Dixon (with the Nevada Test Site Community Advisory Board) facilitates a discussion.

# Meet RFCAB's Newest Board and Staff Members



Board members from left: Curtis Watts, Robin Byrnes, Paul Jurasin, Nancy Peters, and Bill Petersen.

This fall, the Board added three new members to its roster, and made two additions to its staff. (Note: the photo at left also includes two Board members who were introduced to you in our last newsletter, Nancy Peters and Bill Petersen.)

**Robin Byrnes.** Robin works for the City of Westminster in housing and community development. She has worked in this field for many years, focusing on state and federal programs. In the past, Robin worked for the Adams County Office of Community Outreach, the Energy Conservation Association, and the Community Resource Center in Denver. She serves as a member of the City of Arvada Human Service Advisory Committee. A resident of Arvada, Robin has a Masters degree in Social Work from the University of Denver, and a BS in Social Work from State University College at Buffalo, New York.

**Paul Jurasin.** Paul is chief executive officer of a Boulder-based business specializing in outdoor, recreational, and safety gear for dogs. He also serves as a member of the Boulder Chamber of Commerce, specifically on the Chamber's E-Commerce Committee. Paul previously worked in the telecommunications and computer systems industry. Paul has a BS in Geology from Western Michigan University, an MS in Systems Science from the University of Louisville, and an MBA from DePaul University in Chicago. He lives in Boulder.

**Curtis Watts.** Curt is the property tax manager for Western Gas Resources, Inc., a company involved in the gathering and processing of natural gas. He has lived near Rocky Flats for the past 10 years, both in the Standley Lake area and now in Coal Creek Canyon. Curt is specifically interested in matters involving the oversight of Rocky Flats in the future, and determining the site's best and safest use. He has a BS in Accountancy from the University of Illinois, and has been a CPA since 1979. Curt is also involved with the American Institute of CPAs and the Colorado Society of CPAs.

## Noelle Stenger, Program

**Coordinator.** Noelle has over five years experience as Project Scientist with Roy F. Weston, an environmental consulting firm. She also worked part-time as a Legislative Researcher in the Hawaii State House of Representatives, and has experience dealing with radioactive and hazardous waste remediation sites. Noelle has a law degree from the University of Oregon School of Law, where she specialized in Environmental Law, as well as a BA in English from the University of Hawaii.



## Jerry Henderson, Program

**Specialist.** Jerry recently relocated to the Denver area from Indiana, where he received a BS in Biological Sciences from Purdue University. He also studied environmental science at the Indiana University School of Public and Environmental Affairs. Jerry has previously worked as an auditor for non-profit organizations, to assure compliance with regulatory and grant funding requirements, and also worked as a technologist at the Indiana University genetics laboratory.



## RFCAB Website: [www.rfcab.org](http://www.rfcab.org)

*The Advisor* is published quarterly by the Rocky Flats Citizens Advisory Board (RFCAB). The Executive Editor is Jerry DePoorter. Please send your questions, suggestions and ideas to:

Deb Thompson, Managing Editor  
Rocky Flats Citizens Advisory Board  
9035 Wadsworth Parkway, Suite 2250  
Westminster, CO 80021  
Phone: (303) 420-7855 / Fax: (303) 420-7579  
Email: [debt@rfcab.org](mailto:debt@rfcab.org)

Except as noted, all articles are written by RFCAB staff: Ken Korkia, Deb Thompson, Noelle Stenger, and Jerry Henderson. To request a change of address or to add or remove your name from the mailing list, contact Deb Thompson at the above address and phone number. Material may be reprinted if credit is given. RFCAB is funded under a 2000 grant of approximately \$300,000 sponsored by the U.S. Department of Energy.

## RFCAB MISSION STATEMENT

*The Rocky Flats Citizens Advisory Board, a nonpartisan, broadly representative, independent advisory board with concerns related to Rocky Flats activities, is dedicated to providing informed recommendations and advice to the agencies (Department of Energy, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and the Environmental Protection Agency), government entities and other interested parties on policy and technical issues and decisions related to cleanup, waste management and associated activities. The Board is dedicated to public involvement, awareness and education on Rocky Flats issues..*

# Rocky Flats Public Meeting Calendar

## December

4	<i>Rocky Flats Coalition of Local Governments</i>	8 - 11 a.m.	Jeffco Airport
7	<i>Rocky Flats Citizens Advisory Board Work Session</i>	6 - 9:30 p.m.	Arvada Center
11	<i>Environmental Restoration Committee</i>	6 - 8 p.m.	College Hill Library
13	<i>RFCA Stakeholder Focus Group</i>	4:30 - 6:30 p.m.	Location TBD

## January

3	<i>RFCA Stakeholder Focus Group</i>	4:30 - 6:30 p.m.	Broomfield City Hall
4	<i>Rocky Flats Citizens Advisory Board Work Session</i>	6 - 9:30 p.m.	College Hill Library
8	<i>Rocky Flats Coalition of Local Governments</i>	8 - 11 a.m.	Jeffco Airport
8	<i>Environmental Restoration Committee</i>	6 - 8 p.m.	College Hill Library
17	<i>RFCA Stakeholder Focus Group</i>	4:30 - 6:30 p.m.	Broomfield City Hall
22	<i>Environmental Restoration Committee</i>	6 - 8 p.m.	College Hill Library

## February

1	<i>Rocky Flats Citizens Advisory Board Work Session</i>	6 - 9:30 p.m.	College Hill Library
5	<i>Rocky Flats Coalition of Local Governments</i>	8 - 11 a.m.	Jeffco Airport
7	<i>RFCA Stakeholder Focus Group</i>	4:30 - 6:30 p.m.	Broomfield City Hall
21	<i>RFCA Stakeholder Focus Group</i>	4:30 - 6:30 p.m.	Broomfield City Hall

ALL MEETINGS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE, PLEASE CALL BEFORE YOU GO - (303) 420-7855.

**Arvada Center for the Arts and Humanities, 6901 Wadsworth Boulevard, Arvada**  
**Broomfield City Hall, One Descombes Drive, Broomfield**  
**College Hill Library, Front Range Community College, 3705 West 112th Avenue, Westminster**  
**Jefferson County Airport Terminal Building, Mount Evans Room, 11755 Airport Way, Broomfield**

## Rocky Flats Citizens Advisory Board

9035 Wadsworth Parkway, Suite 2250  
Westminster, CO 80021

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The Advisor is printed with soy-based inks on 60% recycled paper (30% post-consumer)

