



Rocky Flats Citizens Advisory Board Recommendation 2003-2

Wildlife Refuge Technical Review Group Recommendation Regarding the Purchase of Mineral Rights at Rocky Flats

Approved April 3, 2003

Letter to:
Eugene Schmitt, Manager
U.S. Department of Energy
Rocky Flats Field Office
Golden, CO

Dear Mr. Schmitt:

Most of the mineral rights on Rocky Flats are privately held and could potentially allow mining of sand and gravel and extraction of coal, gas and oil reserves at the future Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge. Portions of the sand and gravel deposits underlie some of the last remaining stands of xeric tallgrass prairie along the Colorado Front Range. These patches of prairie have remained relatively undisturbed, making them of scientific and ecological interest. They are of such value that they have been recognized by the Colorado Natural Heritage Program. Surface mining would present a threat to habitat resources at the future refuge and conflict with the special purposes of the refuge that were written into federal legislation establishing the Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge, to wit: to (1) restore and preserve native ecosystems, and (2) to provide habitat for and population management of native plants and migratory and resident wildlife. In addition, it may be wiser to keep the ground undisturbed in the event the Buffer Zone contains significant contamination.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund was established in law to purchase private property, such as the mineral rights at Rocky Flats. There may also be other sources of funding from the federal government that can be used to purchase these mineral rights.

For those reasons stated above, we, the members of the Rocky Flats Citizens Advisory Board Wildlife Refuge Technical Review Group, support the purchase of these mineral rights through additional appropriations from the Land and Water Conservation Fund, administered by the Federal Government, or other sources of federal funding.

Cordially,

William Kossack and Michelle Peterson, Co-Chairs

Wildlife Refuge Technical Review Group

cc:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Senators Wayne Allard and Ben Nighthorse Campbell

Representatives Mark Udall, Diana DeGette, Joel Hefley, Scott McClinnis, Tom Tancredo, Marilyn Musgrave, and Bob Beauprez

The Rocky Flats Citizens Advisory Board is a community advisory group that reviews and provides recommendations on cleanup plans for Rocky Flats, a former nuclear weapons plant outside of Denver, Colorado.

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