

THE ADVISOR

A Publication of the Rocky Flats Citizens Advisory Board

Spring 1999

Second Annual "State of the Flats" Update Highlights Cleanup Progress and Pitfalls



New Congressman Mark Udall speaks to those gathered for State of the Flats meeting on January 27, 1999.

Last year, Rocky Flats initiated a January State of the Flats update to the community. This update consists of a written annual report and a State of the Flats public meeting. The purpose of this update is to report on the accomplishments of the preceding fiscal year, explain activities that were planned but not completed, and share plans for the current fiscal year. With this information, Rocky Flats stakeholders will be able to track the site's progress toward cleanup and closure.

In Fiscal Year (FY) 1998, Kaiser-Hill completed 104% of the work that had been planned for that year. This means that the work schedule was maintained and the contractor was able to accelerate two to three months of work planned for later years. However, the fee paid to Kaiser-Hill under the perfor-

mance measures system was lower than ever before because some key cleanup activities were completed behind schedule. The performance measures were written so that even if the work is completed, Kaiser-Hill will get a reduced fee or no fee at all if cost and schedule goals are not met.

According to the FY98 RFETS Annual Report, Kaiser-Hill met or exceeded planned goals in the areas of waste management, environmental restoration, facility disposition, and material removal. There were also some activities for which goals were not met, including residue processing and liquid systems removal. Since this time, Kaiser-Hill has been working on recovery plans for these activities and is making an effort to get back on schedule.

On January 27, 1999, DOE and Kaiser-Hill held their second annual State of the Flats meeting at the Arvada Center for the Arts and Humanities. About 75 members of the public attended to learn about the cleanup progress made last year at Rocky Flats and to hear about plans for the current year. Major presentations focused on the status of the closure project, health and safety issues, new strategies for closure, regulator reports and looking to the future.

The fundamental message from both DOE and Kaiser-Hill was that the ultimate success of the closure plan is most dependent on the availability of receiver sites for Rocky Flats' waste and nuclear materials. Even though there were several technical problems with residue processing during FY98, the site feels confident they have and will continue to find ways to address these problems and get back on schedule. However, if sites are not available to accept these materials, the entire closure schedule will be impacted.

DOE and Kaiser-Hill also reported that safety and health performance improved in each successive quarter during 1998. Statistics on radiological violations, lost work days, recordable accident case rates, and criticality safety all improved throughout 1998. The President of Kaiser-Hill, Bob Card, has set a goal of achieving "best in class"

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Rocky Flats Updates



WIPP Delays Force Site to Plan for Transuranic Waste Storage

Delays in opening the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in New Mexico for the disposal of transuranic nuclear waste have continued. The Department of Energy hopes by the time you read this article, that the first small shipment of waste (scheduled to be from the Los Alamos National Laboratory) will be making its way toward WIPP. Yet to be resolved are objections from the state of New Mexico and several citizens groups who have filed a lawsuit against the Department of Energy blocking WIPP's opening. The earliest the state of New Mexico would allow shipments would be after the final waste permit is issued sometime in the fall of 1999. Without this permit, New Mexico does not want any waste going to the facility.

The delays in opening WIPP have caused Rocky Flats to begin assessing alternative storage options at the site. Without a place to store the waste from the ongoing cleanup effort at Rocky Flats, work would need to come to a halt. To remedy this situation, officials at Rocky Flats have approved a short-term fix by opening several new waste storage locations in some of the no longer used buildings and also in some of the tents used in the past to store other waste forms. DOE also is investigating longer-term options that might include reuse of even more facilities or perhaps construction of new storage buildings.

A draft Environmental Assessment exploring these longer-term options will be out for public review in March 1999. After the public has an opportunity to comment on these plans, DOE must

make a decision by the end of this year as to whether it needs to start using or constructing these new facilities for transuranic waste storage. Otherwise, the cleanup work at the site would need to stop.

Rocky Flats Safeguards and Security Review Completed

In the latter half of 1998, former Congressman David Skaggs implemented a review panel to examine the status of safeguards and security at Rocky Flats. Mr. Skaggs undertook this effort because of community concerns raised about the security of the nuclear materials stored at Rocky Flats. In the dangerous world of the late 1990s, it is important that these materials not fall into the hands of terrorists or others who would seek to do harm.

To accomplish the review, Congressman Skaggs assembled a panel composed of security experts from the military, state and federal law enforcement, as well as private industry. The panel conducted its review this past fall and issued a report in December. Overall, the panel believes that nuclear materials at Rocky Flats are safe. They did, however, offer suggestions to enhance security. In particular, they raised concerns about the age of the security systems and the need to better maintain the equipment as long as dangerous materials remain at Rocky Flats. They also recommended better coordination among the various entities responsible for planning, conducting, and overseeing security operations at the site.

Board Adds New Members

In December, RFCAB approved the addition of a new member to its ranks. Mary Mattson is a chemistry instructor at Front Range Community College. She has a BA in Math and Chemistry with a minor in Physics, as well as an MS and a Ph.D. in Chemistry. Mary was chair of the Front Range Community College Science Department for three years, and also was a replacement instructor at the

University of Colorado-Denver, teaching general chemistry courses. A resident of Broomfield, Mary is a member of the American Chemical Society.

In January, the Board approved two additional Board members - Joe Downey and Bill Kossack.

Joe Downey is a geohydrologist with Downey & Gutentag, and previously worked for nearly 30 years with the U.S. Geological Survey. He has a BSG from the University of Arizona, with specialized studies in lunar geology, limnology and computer science, among others. Joe has published more than 100 books, papers and professional journal articles in the fields of geology, groundwater, paleontology and hydrology. He is a resident of Arvada.

Bill Kossack is a statistical and data mining consultant with Qwest Communication, as well as serving as co-chair of the local Sierra Club chapter. He has a BS in Zoology, an MS in statistics, and has experience working in and supervising prairie management projects in Texas. A wildlife photographer, Bill lives in Westminster.

President Requests \$657 Million for RFETS in Fiscal Year 2000

About nine months prior to the start of each fiscal year, the President submits the administration's budget to Congress. In the Fiscal Year (FY) 2000 budget that was released February 1, the administration asked for \$657.2 million for Rocky Flats. This was approximately \$8 million more than the Department of Energy requested for Rocky Flats, and the same amount allocated to Rocky Flats for the current fiscal year. Rocky Flats officials feel confident that this budget would allow them to stay on track for accelerated closure.

The President's budget now goes to Congress where authorization and appropriations committees in both the House and the Senate will determine the final budget numbers.

Rocky Flats is currently developing its budget request for FY 2001, which must be submitted to DOE-Headquarters by April 15.

Soil Action Levels Review on Schedule for November Completion

The Soil Action Levels Oversight Panel has been meeting since the beginning of 1998 to independently review the cleanup levels that are used at Rocky Flats for radioactive contaminants. The Oversight Panel is composed of 13 citizen volunteers representing local governments, scientific fields and interest groups. In the fall of 1998, the Oversight Panel selected a contractor, Risk Assessment Corporation (RAC), to perform this review. To date, RAC has performed all tasks on schedule.

At monthly meetings with the Oversight Panel, RAC provides updates

on its progress and receives any necessary direction from the Panel. In October, these monthly meetings began with an introduction of the Oversight Panel and a discussion of RAC's proposed approach to the project. In November, RAC gave its first status report and discussed its methodology for determining a soil action level. In December, RAC outlined its progress in comparing the Rocky Flats cleanup level with those used at other radioactively contaminated sites.

The Panel is expecting the first draft report on cleanup levels at other sites in

April. Other reports to be submitted include a review of available computer models; a review of the inputs and assumptions used in the original determination; and recommendations for an appropriate cleanup level. The entire project should reach conclusion in November of this year. A final report will be available following completion of the review.

For more information about this project, visit RFCAB's website at www.rfcab.org/SALOP.html. Or, call Anna Corbett at (303) 456-0884.

RFCAB Forms Committee to Focus on Actinide Migration Studies

Kaiser-Hill has designed and funded an ongoing project, known as the Actinide Migration Studies (AMS), to provide scientists with a better understanding of how radioactive elements move through the environment at Rocky Flats. In response to community concerns and interest in these very important studies, RFCAB formed a committee to focus on the AMS. This committee, known as the Actinide Migration Studies Technical Review Group (TRG) met for the first time in late October 1998. The first order of business for the TRG was to produce a work plan for its activities in 1999.

General tasks of the group will include attending AMS meetings, reviewing reports and commenting on the reports. The TRG is in the process of hiring a contractor to provide

technical assistance to the group, which will include helping the TRG members gain a better understanding of some of the complex scientific concepts involved in this project.

A Request for Proposals for a technical assistance contractor was released in early 1999 and the group will make a selection by May 1999. With its contractor in place, the group will begin studying the work of the Actinide Migration Studies team. The TRG hopes to contribute positively to the credibility of the Actinide Migration Studies and ensure that communities surrounding Rocky Flats will be protected from the contamination left behind after the closure of the former nuclear weapons facility. For more information, please contact Brady Wilson at (303) 420-7855.

Looking for More Information? Want to Share Your Opinions? Here's How.....



Web Site or Email

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or
rfcab@indra.com

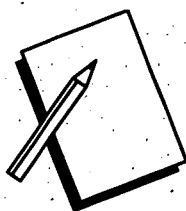
Our website contains Board recommendations, meeting minutes, newsletter articles, Rocky Flats information and more. You may also send us email.



Public Comment Message Line

(303) 637-4808

Call 24 hours a day to record your opinions, comments, or suggestions on Rocky Flats or RFCAB activities. All comments will be reviewed by the Board.



Letters to the Editor / Q&A

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9035 Wadsworth Pkwy, Suite 2250
Westminster, CO 80021

Send us a letter expressing your opinion or asking a question on a Rocky Flats issue and we will print as many as possible in each issue.

Second Annual "State of the Flats" (continued from page 1)



DOE Manager Jessie Roberson discusses Rocky Flats cleanup progress at the State of the Flats meeting.

safety performance with a zero safety incident objective. He reported that one of the most important accomplishments in FY98 was learning how to cope with surprises during cleanup activities and gave several examples of events in which workers successfully handled unexpected situations.

Bob Card stated that last year at this time, he was not even confident about being able to accomplish a 2010 closure. This year, however, he is

confident that Kaiser-Hill has the technical ability to achieve closure by 2006. Also according to Card, Rocky Flats has resolved any technical challenges in the areas of waste management and environmental restoration. The key areas that still have technical challenges associated with them are residue stabilization, packaging and shipping; plutonium packaging and shipping; and deactivation and decommissioning.

Also at this meeting, representatives from each of the regulatory agencies presented observations on the status of Rocky Flats cleanup. Howard Roitman from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment summarized that he was very pleased with the work that was done last year at the site. He emphasized the successful effort between the regulatory agencies and DOE to maintain a collaborative relationship regarding cleanup planning and execution. Max Dodson of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reported that his agency was impressed with the Trench 1 cleanup in 1998. He said it went very smoothly and was well-planned and executed. He also spoke well of the job Risk Assessment Corporation (RAC) is doing so far in its independent review

of the calculation of the soil action levels. He pointed to the pending re-issue of the site's NPDES permit as a high priority issue for EPA. Mark Sautman of the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (DNFSB) reported that none of the issues raised by the DNFSB in 1998 required issuance of a formal recommendation. Most of their time was spent resolving issues from previous recommendations. The Defense Board has been very involved in observing work done in the areas of D&D and residue processing. The Board also continues to give advice in all areas of nuclear safety at the site.

DOE next presented a critical path of key activities through the expected closure date of 2010. Even though Kaiser-Hill has made progress in developing plans to finish closure by 2006, DOE still does not have a detailed plan for this strategy and is therefore still officially using 2010 as the completion date. Key Fiscal Year 1999 and 2000 work will include processing two-thirds (60,000 kg) of the site's backlog of plutonium residues; bringing the plutonium packaging system online and operating; demolishing the 779 cluster; significant deactivation of 771 and 886; removal of

(continued on next page)

Kaiser-Hill Fiscal Year 1998 Available and Earned Performance Fees

	Regular available	Regular earned	Stretch available	Stretch earned
Safety and Health Program	\$1,632,000	\$1,632,000	\$0	\$0
SNM Shipment	\$1,632,000	\$1,060,800	\$1,000,000	\$200,000
Plutonium residue processing	\$3,264,000	\$326,000	\$2,500,000	\$780,000
SNM liquid processing	\$2,244,000	\$583,440	\$600,000	\$0
Waste shipment and disposal	\$2,754,000	\$2,652,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000
Building disposition	\$3,672,000	\$3,652,000	\$2,400,000	\$450,000
Environmental restoration	\$1,632,000	\$1,444,320	\$0	\$0
Habitat management	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Property disposition	\$0	\$0	\$550,000	\$0
Business management	\$2,958,000	\$642,600	\$30,000	\$0

(*These figures are as of December, 1998 and are from the RFETS FY98 Annual Report. Stretch performance measures are set to encourage Kaiser-Hill to complete work scheduled to be performed in later years. Regular performance measures are those that must be completed to stay on the current schedule for closure.)

Rocky Flats Considers Options for Disposal of Tons of Concrete Building Rubble

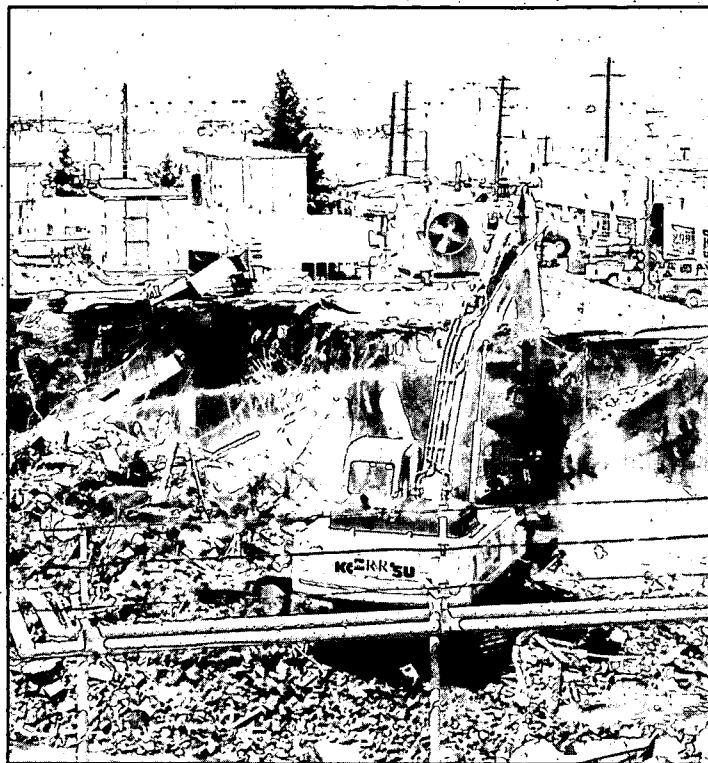
According to the Rocky Flats closure plan, all of the buildings onsite will be demolished in the next seven to ten years. This will create enormous quantities of concrete rubble. DOE and Kaiser-Hill are now discussing with the community what should be done with this 111,000 cubic meters of building rubble.

The rubble under consideration would be clean enough to meet the standards used at Rocky Flats for release of equipment for any use. Three options are being considered for disposal of this rubble.

The first option is to totally remove all of the rubble and the building foundations and dispose of the waste at the Nevada Test Site as low level radioactive waste. The Nevada Test Site is the receiver site for all of Rocky Flats low level waste. Some other variations for this option are to perform full surface decontamination and dispose of the "clean" rubble in a sanitary landfill in Erie, Colorado; or to perform smart characterization and decontamination by decontaminating only "unclean" surfaces.

The second option under consideration is to dispose of clean building rubble at the Erie landfill, leave building foundations in place and fill them with offsite clean fill. Under this option, buildings would also undergo either full surface decontamination or smart characterization and decontamination. This option would require the site to purchase large quantities of a fill material to allow contouring of the soil surface. All under-foundation contamination would be characterized and removed as appropriate prior to backfilling the foundation.

The third option is to leave building foundations in place, but to fill two foundations (Buildings 371 and 771) with the "clean" building rubble instead of purchasing offsite fill materials. For this option, the rubble produced during demolition will be stockpiled onsite until it is used as fill. When the two foundations are prepared for the fill materials, the stored rubble will be used. The total quantity of material needed to fill these foundations exceeds the quantity of rubble expected to be produced. Therefore, some amount of offsite fill will be required, although in much smaller quantities than needed for option two. With this option, buildings would also undergo either full surface decontamination or smart characterization and decontamination. One additional variation to this option would be to crush and separate the rubble.



The demolition of buildings at Rocky Flats, such as this one in 1998, will create large volumes of concrete rubble.

Rocky Flats currently prefers the third option with the smart characterization and decontamination variation. This preference is a result of an analysis of costs, transportation requirements, schedule performance, and technical feasibility. The schedule performance analysis was done to determine whether a particular option could fit into the current closure schedule.

Presentations have been given to several stakeholder groups, including RFCAB and local governments, and input has been recorded. A policy document is expected within the year. For more information on this issue, please contact John Rampe of the Department of Energy at (303) 966-6246.

State of the Flats (continued from page 4)

45% of all plutonium liquid systems; shipping all plutonium pits and highly enriched uranium; shipping over 14,000 cubic meters of waste; and beginning shipments to Savannah River and WIPP.

DOE also discussed opportunities for

public involvement in 1999. There are several upcoming cleanup policy decisions, including the interim storage of transuranic waste; disposition of clean building rubble; industrial area characterization strategy; Colorado low-level waste

repository; water management strategy; and 903 Pad remediation strategy. RFCAB will be involved in each of these discussions throughout the year. Please call RFCAB at (303) 420-7855 or DOE at (303) 966-5993 for more information.

**Site-Specific
Advisory Boards**

A R O U N D

THE DOE WEAPONS COMPLEX

This Issue: Pantex Plant Citizens Advisory Board

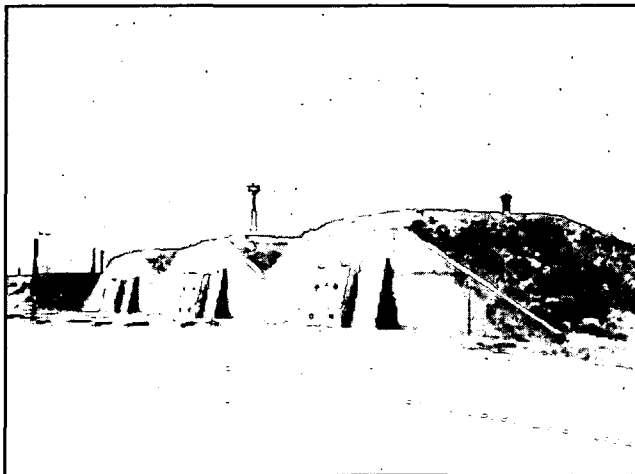
The Rocky Flats Citizens Advisory Board is one of several Site-Specific Advisory Boards (SSABs) that have been formed at former nuclear weapons production sites. In each issue of The Advisor, we spotlight the activities of one of these boards.

Pantex Plant is the nation's only remaining nuclear weapons assembly and disassembly facility. It is located on the high plains of the Texas panhandle, a 16,000-acre site just 17 miles northeast of Amarillo. DOE owns about 9,100 acres at the site. Approximately 2,500 acres are used for industrial operations, including the burning ground and firing sites. Texas Tech owns another 6,000 acres at the site, located just south of DOE's property. These lands are managed for a variety of agricultural programs, which DOE uses for safety and security purposes.

The industrial area is split into functional areas, or zones, including the weapons assembly/disassembly area, a weapons staging area, an area for experimental explosive development, as well as areas for explosive test-firing and a burning ground for controlled open burning of explosive materials. The weapons assembly/disassembly area is about 200 acres and contains more than 100 buildings. This is where nuclear components and other parts received from other DOE plants and explosive and metal parts fabricated at Pantex are assembled into nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons are also disassembled in this area.

Pantex also has an interim storage facility for plutonium pits removed from disassembled nuclear weapons. Each pit is contained inside a 30-gallon container; each container is then stacked in a horizontal fashion. This configuration is called "Stage Right." Recently the site had to stop accepting additional plutonium pits while it repackaged the pits already on

hand. The "Stage Right" type of storage is considered safer because it reduces radiation exposure to employees and maximizes the safety and security of pit storage. An added benefit is that it helps increase the site's storage capacity. Pits are then stored in several bunkers located at the Pantex facility (see photo).



Plutonium pits are stored in bunkers such as this one.

In August 1998, DOE submitted a petition to the Environmental Protection Agency to remove the Pantex Plant from the Superfund program, also known as the National Priorities List. Site officials hope that deletion as a Superfund cleanup site will allow their cleanup activities to be regulated solely under RCRA, and they expect all active site cleanups to be completed or be in remediation by the year 2000.

The site's Citizens Advisory Board, or PPCAB, recently met to discuss its work plan for the coming year. The delisting of Pantex is one of its top priorities for oversight and study over the coming year. If the site's request for delisting is approved, the earliest it would take effect would be December of 1999. In addition to this issue, PPCAB plans to review and study such topics as groundwater, scientific and ethical assessment of nuclear issues, off-site safety emergency response, site ecology, and transportation issues. The Board currently has 14 members, representing broad stakeholder categories such as area/regional residents, site workers, labor organizations, agricultural sector, business interests, environmental organizations, local governments, and academia.

New Rocky Flats Coalition of Local Governments to Begin Work in April

Since 1992, the Rocky Flats Local Impacts Initiative (RFLII) has been working to address impacts resulting from the loss of jobs caused by the cleanup and closure of Rocky Flats. RFLII, like RFCAB, was funded by the Department of Energy to carry out its mission. Over the past several years, RFLII has implemented several projects to help transition workers laid off from RFETS, as well as to create jobs in the local community to offset those lost at Rocky Flats. The organization was also instrumental in arranging for the sale of excess equipment from Rocky Flats and in co-sponsoring two Rocky Flats Summits.

As part of the inter-governmental agreement under which RFLII was chartered, the organization was intended to "sunset," or disband, once its work was completed. The RFLII Board of Directors determined that its sunset date would be December 31, 1998. As plans to close RFLII's doors proceeded, representatives from the local governments contiguous to Rocky Flats began discussions for a new organization. This new organization is to be called the Rocky

Flats Coalition of Local Governments. The governments included in this organization are Jefferson and Boulder Counties; Arvada, Boulder, Broomfield, Superior and Westminster. Its mission will be to "...provide an effective mechanism for local governments in the vicinity of Rocky Flats and their citizens to work together on issues of mutual concern relating to the safe, prompt and effective cleanup and closure of Rocky Flats, its future use and long term protection, and to serve as a focal point for local government communication and advocacy with state and federal agencies regarding Rocky Flats issues." This new organization will also seek to replace RFLII as the DOE-designated Community-Reuse Organization. Each local government is now in the process of ratifying the inter-governmental agreement.

The entity plans to officially begin operations April 1. The organization will hire three staff members. It will be occupying RFLII's office space in Arvada through the end of the summer. For more information, please call (303) 940-6090.

DEDICATED VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

*The Board has openings
for new members.*

*Key criteria for Board
membership include a
time commitment, and
the desire and ability to
work toward consensus
recommendations. We
also have various
representational
categories we need to fill
to maintain our diversity.
For details, please call
the CAB office at
(303) 420-7855.*

**RFCAB Website: www.rfcab.org
Public Comment Message Line: (303) 637-4808**

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

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Except as noted, all articles are written by RFCAB staff: Ken Korkia, Erin Rogers, Deb Thompson and Brady Wilson. 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 1999 grant of approximately \$325,000 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

With its new work plan, CAB has decided to suspend all of its focus group meetings for a number of months.
During this time, the full Board will meet two times per month.

March

4	<i>Rocky Flats Citizens Advisory Board Work Session</i>	6 - 9:30 p.m.	Location TBD
10	<i>Rocky Flats Soil Action Level Review Public Meeting</i>	6:30 - 9:00 p.m.	Westminster City Hall
11	<i>Rocky Flats Soil Action Levels Oversight Panel</i>	4 - 7:00 p.m.	Broomfield City Hall
15	<i>Rocky Flats Citizens Advisory Board Study Session</i>	6:30 - 9:30 p.m.	College Hill Library

April

1	<i>Rocky Flats Citizens Advisory Board Work Session</i>	6 - 9:30 p.m.	College Hill Library
8	<i>Rocky Flats Soil Action Levels Oversight Panel</i>	4 - 7:00 p.m.	Broomfield City Hall
19	<i>Rocky Flats Citizens Advisory Board Study Session</i>	6:30 - 9:30 p.m.	College Hill Library

May

6	<i>Rocky Flats Citizens Advisory Board Work Session</i>	6 - 9:30 p.m.	College Hill Library
13	<i>Rocky Flats Soil Action Levels Oversight Panel</i>	4 - 7:00 p.m.	Broomfield City Hall
17	<i>Rocky Flats Citizens Advisory Board Study Session</i>	6:30 - 9:30 p.m.	College Hill Library

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

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Broomfield City Hall, One Descombes Drive

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