

Rocky Flats Citizens Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes
March 4, 2004
6 to 9 p.m.
College Hill Library, Room L268
Front Range Community College, Westminster

Victor Holm, the Board's chair, called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

BOARD / EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS PRESENT: Joe Downey, Earl Gunia, Erin Hamby, Victor Holm, Bill Kossack, Mike Maus, Bill McNeill, Andrew Ross / Steve Gunderson (CDPHE), Dean Rundle (USFWS).

BOARD / EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS ABSENT: Jim Fabian, Anne Fenerty, Mary Mattson, Sean Rea / John Rampe (DOE), Joe Legare (DOE), Mark Aguilar (EPA)

PUBLIC / OBSERVERS PRESENT: Phil Tomlinson (Thornton resident), Alan Trenary (Westminster resident), John Corsi (Kaiser-Hill), Frank Gibbs (Kaiser-Hill), David Shelton (Kaiser-Hill), Barron Crawford (USFWS), Tom Ryan (Broomfield resident), Suzanne Allen (Westminster resident), Laurie Shannon (USFWS), Mark Sattelberg (USFWS) / Ken Korkia (RFCAB staff), Patricia Rice (RFCAB staff)

PUBLIC COMMENT / NEW BUSINESS:

New Business: Victor Holm: Victor Holm noted that the Board has two public workshops earmarked in its budget for 2004. He suggested the Comprehensive Risk Assessment (CRA) that will be done after cleanup is complete would be a good candidate for a workshop. The CRA will determine whether public health and the environment will be protected from the cleanup actions that took place. It must be completed before the Record of Decision (ROD) is made final and the site is delisted from Superfund. He noted with the current concern surrounding the refuge and any contamination that will be left behind, learning more about the CRA process would be valuable. Mike Maus questioned how the Board would promote a workshop. Victor noted that the budget includes money for facilitation and advertising, and that the Board might consider a co-host such as a university to sponsor the workshop. Mike also questioned why a facilitator was necessary. Ken Korkia pointed out that the facilitator should be thought more of as a neutral moderator to run the meeting. Having such a person frees up all the Board members to participate in the meeting without anyone having to worry about remaining neutral in order to guide the discussion. Victor suggested the Board should initiate an email discussion about the workshop over the next few weeks in order to bring a proposal to the Board next month for approval.

New Business: Earl Gunia: Earl asked about the 2003 Annual Report. Ken Korkia reported the first piece of information, the annual audit for 2003, is now complete and that he will be developing the report outline over the next month and that staff will begin

drafting sections. He noted that with staff reductions, it might be helpful for Board members to draft sections of the report. He suggested perhaps Board members write a section reflecting on what the past year has meant to them. Ken also noted that at the fall retreat, the Board decided to revamp its newsletter to focus on the cleanup progress, and that the annual report would serve as the first of four newsletters that would be produced this year.

Earl Gunia next noted that the Coalition of Local Governments has received its funding for 2004 after getting congressional representatives involved. He asked whether the Board should pursue a similar approach in raising our funding issues to these same representatives. Westminster resident Alan Trenary reported he had recently spoken to Congressman Udall about funding for the Coalition and the Board and was advised the Congressman was looking at these funding issues. Mike Maus asked whether we should reach out to more officials, not just Mr. Udall. Earl Gunia suggested the Board send a letter to a wide number of elected officials reminding them of our work and to ask that more funding be restored to the Board. Mike Maus suggested Victor Holm start drafting a letter that could be discussed at the March Committee Night. Steve Gunderson with CDPHE noted that the Coalition's money came from DOE Headquarters Office of Legacy Management as part of the worker and community transition program, while the Board's money comes from DOE's Office of Environmental Management. Victor Holm suggested the Board needs to point out that DOE's reason in reducing the Board's budget was that it saw the Board's workload decreasing as cleanup nears completion. This has not been the case, however. Also, the Board might consider whether to approach Legacy Management as a possible funding source since more of our work will begin to focus on stewardship issues. Finally, Victor noted that the Coalition can actively lobby Congress, while our Board is prohibited. The way around this is to address a letter to DOE and copy the elected representatives. Ken Korkia pointed out that continued support for the advisory boards at closure sites, such as Rocky Flats and Fernald in Ohio, is a topic for discussion at the upcoming Site Specific Advisory Board Chairs meeting in April. Earl Gunia asked who would be attending the chairs meeting and Victor replied that the official meeting notice had just arrived, and that he would begin contacting members this week.

New Business: Joe Downey: Joe asked about the status of our budget request for this year. Victor Holm reported that DOE locally has approved the budget. He noted DOE had told the Board in advance what to expect in funding and that is what the Board in turn requested. Dean Rundle with U.S. Fish and Wildlife asked whether EPA has Technical Assistance Grant money available for Rocky Flats. Bill Kossack noted that DOE has indicated in the past that if the Board sought funding from other sources, it would reduce the amount of money it provides to the Board.

New Business: Victor Holm: Victor noted the Board needs to start considering public participation in the long run, and that possibly this might make a good topic for a second workshop. Such consideration of future participation must be comprehensive, encompassing all participants in the community, so that we don't end up fighting for "the last scraps" of available funding. An outcome of the workshop might be an integrated public participation plan that would extend far into the future.

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION ON THE DRAFT COMPREHENSIVE CONSERVATION PLAN / ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR THE ROCKY FLATS NATIONAL WILDLIFE

REFUGE:

Laurie Shannon, refuge planner at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, gave a presentation on the draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (CCP/EIS) for the Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge (NWR). Under 1997 federal legislation, the Service is required to develop a 15-year management plan for each refuge.

The draft Rocky Flats NWR CCP outlines management alternatives for the future Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge. It also selects a preferred alternative. The EIS examines the environmental impacts from management decisions in the plan. Laurie said the comment period for the CCP/EIS has been extended to April 19, 2004.

Laurie outlined the steps that have been taken to develop the CCP. Preplanning began in February 2002. Public scoping meetings were held in September. From the scoping and focus meetings, the Service developed four alternatives for refuge management. The CCP was developed from an "alternatives analysis" prepared last year. The final CCP/EIS and Record of Decision are expected to be published by December.

Early in the process, the FWS adopted a vision and goals for the refuge. The Vision statement reads, "Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge is a healthy expanse of grasslands, shrublands and wetlands, including rare xeric tallgrass prairie where natural processes support a broad range of native wildlife. The Refuge provides striking mountain and prairie views and opportunities to appreciate refuge resources in an urbanized area through compatible wildlife-dependent recreation and education. Working with others, the Refuge conserves the unique biotic communities and sustains wildlife populations at the interface of mountains and prairies on Colorado's Front Range." Draft goals are directed towards wildlife and habitat management; public use, education and interpretation; safety; effective and open communication; working with others; and providing resources to fulfill the refuge vision and purpose.

The land for the refuge would not include any area that will be under the Department of Energy's jurisdiction. DOE land will likely include most of the Industrial Area as well as stream and drainage channels. The exact perimeter of that land will be determined by the parties to the Rocky Flats Cleanup Agreement – the DOE, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.

The CCP outlines objectives and strategies for each management alternative and for each goal. Alternative B is the preferred alternative and combines habitat and ecosystem restoration with public use.

Laurie said Alternative B had been altered somewhat from the one published in the Alternatives Analysis. Changes include allowing horse trails in the southern section of the site. The original plan was to allow for pedestrian and bike trails only. Laurie said horse trails would be allowed only if equestrian groups agree to help maintain refuge trails by picking up after the horses. Limited hunting would be allowed under Alternative B. That would include hunting by youth and the disabled with low-impact weapons. After two years, she said, able-bodied hunters may be allowed to hunt. Hunting would be limited to two weekends a year with a maximum of 10 people per hunt. The purpose of hunting would be to provide recreation and to manage herd populations. Laurie said the revised Alternative B allows for more connectivity of refuge trails to those on nearby open space.

Under the no-action alternative, Alternative A, the Service would continue to manage the Rock Creek Reserve but would have limited activities on the rest of the site. Originally, Alternative A had included construction of a chain-link fence around the site. However, a chain-link fence would be expensive and few people supported it. Also, construction of such a fence would no longer make it a “no action” alternative. All alternatives now would include maintenance of the existing stock, barbed-wire fence.

Alternative C would involve far more ecological restoration than any other alternative and would limit public use to guided tours on one trail. Under this alternative, the Lindsay Ranch would be dismantled.

Alternative D emphasizes public use, although it also calls for some restoration work. Alternative D includes construction of a visitor’s center, as well as 19 miles of trails. Alternative B would allow only a seasonally staffed contact station and have 16 miles of trails.

With respect to public use, Alternatives A and C would allow guided tours and no facilities; Alternatives B and D call for environmental education. Alternative D would include extensive facilities.

Laurie said environmental impacts of the proposed Alternative B, in general, would result in the long-term productivity of the refuge. She said the restoration would benefit existing species.

For staffing, Alternative A would require two full-time equivalent employees; B would require 4, C would require 5 and D, 8. D is the most expensive and A the least. Alternative B would require about \$8.6 million over 15 years.

In answer to a question, FWS Refuge Manager Dean Rundle said the Memorandum of Understanding being negotiated between the Fish and Wildlife Service and the DOE covers how the transition of the land will occur between the two agencies. The MOU was supposed to be published in December 2002. However, DOE and FWS cannot agree on which agency should have jurisdiction over land on which there are existing mineral rights. Dean said his agency does not want to take any land on which there is permitted or “permissible” mineral rights. He said the agency cannot preserve native ecosystems when there is no authority to prevent the land from being destroyed by strip mining for sand and gravel.

In answer to another question, FWS Refuge Manager Dean Rundle said the Service will leave the door open to allow refuge management activities on land retained by DOE if it makes sense. The Service will not get involved in monitoring or stewardship activities, however. Dean mentioned “fire suppression” as one such activity the Service might coordinate for the area under DOE jurisdiction.

A board member suggested that under Alternative B, the service should allow environmental education for those in kindergarten through college. Alternative B as currently drafted would only include environmental education for high school to college-age students. Dean Rundle responded that the main consideration is commitment of resources. If they focus on environmental education for younger students, they would need to hire full-time people to develop curricula that meets state education requirements.

Laurie said when the Alternatives Analysis was published, the public provided no feedback on a “no-dog” restriction. However, recently the proposal to exclude dogs has drawn unfavorable comments from members of the public. Dean said dogs are not appropriate on a refuge. He said dogs might be prone to

prey on the Preble's Meadow Jumping Mouse, listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act.

An audience member was concerned about hunting, but Laurie said they would allow only low-impact weapons, such as bows and arrows or muzzleloaders. The audience member was also concerned that wildlife would have a difficult time crossing Indiana if the proposed Northwest Parkway were built. Another was concerned about allowing motor vehicles on a refuge.

A board member asked how the FWS would involve the public in refuge operations. Laurie said the Service is committed to developing a strong program of partnerships with the public sector, including having a formal volunteer program at the refuge.

At the end of the presentation and question-and-answer session, Ken Korkia said the board would meet March 18 to continue a discussion of the refuge issues and perhaps develop a recommendation on the alternatives. In advance of the meeting, the staff will develop a list of issues and questions from board member comments. Board members agreed to discuss the issues through e-mail.

UPDATE ON RECENT SITE EVENTS:

Dave Shelton with Kaiser-Hill began with an overview of the recent safety stand down at the site where workers and management stopped work for a day to discuss work safety. Kaiser-Hill CEO Alan Parker called the stand down due to a cluster of recent safety concerns. Dave reported that overall the site continues to operate safely, however, these incidents could be viewed as leading indicators that something is going wrong. Kaiser-Hill's bottom line is that safety is essential and that good safety practices result in increased productivity. The stand down sought to reaffirm communication between workers and management on safety related matters, with workers themselves ultimately being responsible for safe operations.

Dave next reported on the Price-Anderson fines totaling a half-million dollars that had been levied against Kaiser-Hill. Price-Anderson is the name of the federal legislation that allows the Department of Energy to hold its contractors accountable for safe operations and fine them if there are problems. The key under Price-Anderson is that contractors themselves identify unsafe activities, report them to DOE, and then take corrective actions. The latest fines imposed on Kaiser-Hill were for a variety of events that in total caused DOE concern. These events included a glovebox fire in Building 371, combustible control issues, materials management, and a ventilation system air-flow reversal incident that resulted in positive rather than negative air pressure in a work area that caused contamination outside the work area.

Dave identified the root cause of these incidents as weaknesses in work planning and control, cause analysis and corrective actions, emergency response, and work planning and assessment process training. Kaiser-Hill has responded to DOE's fine assessment, but will not be contesting it. They have developed an executive safety review board headed by Alan Parker. They also will be bringing in independent safety reviewers as well as focusing on more thorough pre-work evolution briefings where safety concerns are discussed before work activities begin.

Frank Gibbs with Kaiser-Hill next updated the Board on the February 12 Building 991 fire, where a spray foam that was being used to fill the void of several tunnels and a room in the building began smoking. The foam fills the void in these areas and hardens by way of an exothermic reaction. An exothermic reaction is

one that generates heat. Frank explained that they had used this product successfully for other applications at the site, such as to fix contamination in ventilation ducts, pipes and other smaller spaces. They decided to use it in areas of Building 991 that they did not plan to demolish in order to prevent water intrusion and also to limit any subsidence that might occur over time when these areas are covered with dirt. The building was used for most of its life as a storage facility for weapons assemblies before they were transported offsite. In its early days of operation, there was some weapons production work done in the building.

After the foam had been sprayed in Room 402 of the building, workers noticed smoke coming out of a conduit within the ceiling of the room. While no flames were evident, the fire department was called and they began applying water to the foam material. They continued to monitor and spray water in the area for three days before it completely cooled. Frank noted that the room had been decontaminated and that air monitoring at various distances up to 200 feet outside the building did not pick up any contaminants from the smoke. Water used during the fire suppression was diverted into pond B-1.

Investigations into the incident revealed that workers were supposed to have applied the foam in two-foot drifts that should have been allowed to harden before additional foam was applied. Instead, they applied the foam all at once. The foam product manufacturer has been assisting in the investigation. It appears that for an application of foam in an area this large, approximately 3,000 square feet, another type of product should have been used. Because a subcontractor was used in this project, there was a lack of direct communication between the manufacturer and Kaiser-Hill managers. The manufacturer knew of other similar incidents involving this particular product that were not communicated to facility managers.

The Board was shown pictures of the charred foam that was just inside a loading dock door. All of the foam in the room will be removed. The site is also sampling foam used in other areas of the building to determine whether it also was impacted. If so, it too will be removed. Frank also reported that they are revising the demolition strategy for this building and will be demolishing most of the structures that they originally had planned to leave in place by filling them with the foam. All foaming activities at the site have been stopped for now.

An audience member also inquired about a recent fire in Building 371 where a hot spark from machining operations ignited buildup in a ventilation system. Workers in this instance did not immediately call the fire department, but attempted to contain it themselves. Eventually the fire department was called in and fortunately, no major damage occurred. Frank noted that because of the recent work stand down associated with safety concerns, the message that the site emergency services are to be called in immediately has been reinforced to the workers.

DISCUSSION OF FUTURE MEETINGS:

At its March Committee Night, the Board will discuss and prepare its recommendations on the Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan / Environmental Impact Statement for the Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge. At the April Board meeting, first priority will be given to finalizing and approving the recommendation. As time permits, the Board also will begin an educational presentation on groundwater modeling in preparation for commenting on the Industrial Area Groundwater Interim Measure / Interim Remedial Action document that will be released for public comment later in the spring.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

The Board met in Executive Session to discuss and vote on candidates to fill membership vacancies that currently exist. They approved the following three members:

- **Suzanne Allen:** Suzanne is returning as a Board member, having left the Board for personal reasons in April 2003. Suzanne is Vice-President Information Security for SunCorp Corporate Credit Union. A resident of Westminster, she will serve as a Business Representative on the Board.
- **Vanessa Safonovs:** Vanessa is a student at Colorado State University in Fort Collins, Colorado studying Environmental Health. Currently living in Fort Collins, Vanessa will serve as a Student Representative on the Board.
- **Phil Tomlinson:** Phil has over 40 years experience in the nuclear industry and has worked at major DOE sites including Rocky Flats and the National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory in Idaho. He also served 20 years in the United States Navy. He holds a Bachelors Degree in Electrical Engineering and a Masters in Radiological Health Sciences. A resident of Thornton, Colorado, Phil will serve as a Technical Representative on the Board.

NEXT MEETING:

Date: April 1, 6 to 9:00 p.m.

Location: College Hill Library, Room L268, Front Range Community College

- Agenda:*
- *Discussion and Approval of a Recommendation on the Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan / Environmental Impact Statement for the Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge*
 - *Educational Presentation and Discussion on Groundwater Issues at Rocky Flats*

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 9:00 p.m. *

(* Taped transcript of full meeting is available in the RFCAB office.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Anne Fenerty, Secretary
Rocky Flats Citizens Advisory Board

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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