

# Environmental Management

A Periodic Publication on Environmental Cleanup



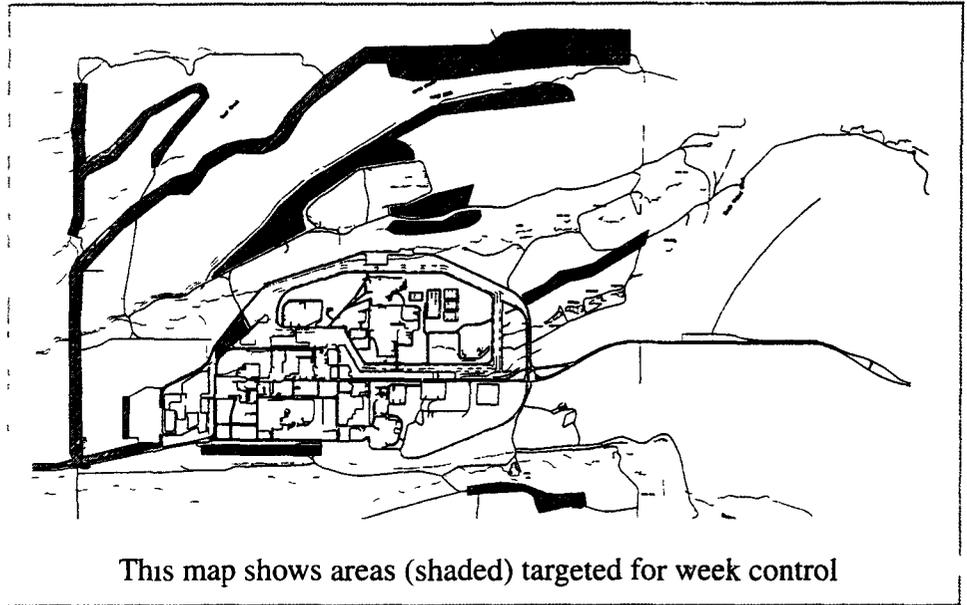
**October/November 1994**

**EG&G ROCKY FLATS**

## Weed Control Program Debuts This Fall

**T**here is a new program under way at Rocky Flats to control an insidious, rapidly-spreading organic contaminant. But the "contaminant" isn't radioactive or hazardous. It's not even a metal or a chemical. It's a weed!

Specifically, the offending foliage is diffuse knapweed and its prickly allies, the musk thistle and Canada thistle, non-native weeds that have invaded the fragile grassland around Rocky Flats. Knapweed is an extremely prolific, hardy plant which, if left on its own, will choke out virtually all other vegetation, thereby upsetting the ecological balance of a habitat.



This map shows areas (shaded) targeted for weed control

### Striking a Balance

Maintaining the Rocky Flats Buffer Zone as a balanced ecosystem is a high priority for land users in the area, including the Department of Energy, EG&G Rocky Flats, Inc., Boulder County, Jefferson County and

the City of Boulder. To that end, these five entities have begun a cooperative effort to rid a 575-acre tract around Rocky Flats of several weed species listed by the state as noxious: primarily diffuse knapweed, musk thistle, and Canada thistle. The "noxious"

classification means that these plants have no natural enemies in the ecosystem, so artificial control methods such as spraying, must be used.

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## **OPERABLE UNIT 16 IS CLOSED!**

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE), and the Department of Energy (DOE) have signed a Record of Decision signifying the closeout of Operable Unit 16. A collection of five distinct areas in different locations around the site that were identified as Individual Hazardous Substance Sites (IHSS)

### **No Cleanup Required**

Operable Unit 16 was identified in the original Interagency Agreement as a "Low Priority Site" meaning that contamination levels there were expected to be minimal. Soil sampling indicated that contamination levels in the IHSSs were, in fact, low enough to suggest that no remediation was

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**Weed Control- Continued from page 1**

The primary weapon in this weed war is a herbicide known as *Transline*. The spray program completed earlier this fall, targeted areas such as roadways and fencelines, where the soil and vegetation have been disturbed. The diffuse knapweed takes root in these disturbed spots then the purple or white-flowered plants expand their range, squeezing out less aggressive species.

**Handle With Care**

The use of herbicides and pesticides has become increasingly unpopular with the general public due to apprehension over possible negative health or environmental effects. To alleviate concern, the new weed control program will be well-investigated and closely watched. The monitoring and research capabilities already in place at and around Rocky Flats will be used to evaluate the safety and effectiveness of *Transline* and track any migration of the herbicide through surface water monitoring.

**Steps to Take**

There are several key steps in the weed control plan

- Decide on the areas at Rocky Flats to be targeted for fall weed control
- Evaluate *Transline* for use at Rocky Flats
- Obtain approval for using *Transline* at Rocky Flats under the National Environmental Policy Act
- Develop laboratory methodology to be used for analyzing *Transline* in water samples
- Plan the exact dates for herbicide application in cooperation with members listed above
- Take water samples from Rocky Flats ponds and affected drainages prior to any herbicide application and again after a precipitation event
- Monitor the success of the fall spraying effort for two months at monthly increments and again the following spring, for surviving rosettes of target species

Anyone wanting more information about weed control in general is encouraged to attend the Colorado Weed Management Association's Annual Conference/Tradeshaw, set for December 6-8, 1994 at the Estes Park Holiday Inn Conference Center of the Rockies. Topics of special interest include "Vegetation Management on Radioactive Waste Disposal Sites". For more details, please contact Cindy Owsley at (303) 441-4559 or the CWMA office at (303) 229-0352.

**FEEDBACK**

Let us know what you think about this Update.

Fax or mail your comments, questions or suggestions to:

George Zepernick

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## Accelerated "Hot Spot" Cleanup Completed

The planned accelerated cleanup of so-called hot spots located in Operable Unit 1, as reported in these pages last May was completed in early October. The operation was the first of its kind undertaken at Rocky Flats.

The six spots increased from the original four had been found to contain radionuclide contamination measuring up to a thousand times greater than background levels. Their removal should eliminate a major threat to human health and the environment from OU 1, also known as the 881 Hillside.

**No Hitches or Glitches**

The remediation went off as planned. The contaminated soil was softened up with a backhoe before workers in protective clothing shoveled it into twenty-one 55-gallon waste drums. These drums were then characterized for future offsite disposal and the excavations were extensively monitored to make sure that all the hot "had been removed from the spots.

The actual cleanup work the culmination of five months of planning and review by EG&G, the Department of Energy, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Colorado

Department of Public Health and Environment, took only four working days. The cooperation among many site organizations that led to the operation's speedy and successful conclusion "has laid the groundwork for future accelerated response actions" according to Sue Stiger, director of EG&G's Environmental Restoration Program Division.

Shawn Cox, Rocky Flats *Horizon* writer contributed to this article.

# Public Invited to Use Reading Rooms

The following reading rooms contain current information technical reports and reference documents on environmental restoration at the Rocky Flats Plant

## Rocky Flats Plant Reading Room\*

Front Range Community College Library  
3645 West 112th Avenue  
Level B, Center of Building  
Westminster, Colorado 80030  
(303) 469-4435

### Hours

Monday - Tuesday 10 30 am - 6 30 pm  
Wednesday 10 30 am - 4 00 pm  
Thursday - Friday 8 00 am - 4 00 pm

## Citizen's Advisory Board

1536 Cole Boulevard, Suite 325  
Denver West Office Park, Building 4  
Golden, Colorado 80401  
(303) 232-1966

### Hours

Monday - Friday 8 30 am - 5 00 pm

## EPA Superfund Records Center\*

999 18th Street, Suite 500  
Denver, Colorado 80202-2405  
(303) 293-1807

### Hours

Monday - Friday 8 00 am - 4 30 pm

## Colorado Department of Health\*

### Hazardous Materials and Waste

### Management Division

4300 Cherry Creek Drive South  
Bldg A

Denver, Colorado 80222-1530

(303) 692-3312

### Hours

Monday - Friday 8 00 am - 5 00 pm

## Standley Lake Library

8485 Kipling Street  
Arvada, Colorado 80005  
(303) 423-4600

### Hours

Monday - Friday 10 00 am - 9 00 pm  
Friday - Saturday 10 00 am - 5 00 pm  
Sunday 12 00 pm - 5 00 pm

## United States Department of Energy Freedom of Information and Privacy Branch Office

1000 Independence Avenue, S W  
Washington, D C 20585  
(202) 586-6025

### Hours

Monday - Friday 9 00 am - 4 00 pm  
(Eastern Time Zone)

\*Information Repository

## Environmental Management

Published by EG&G Rocky Flats, Inc  
Community Relations,  
P O Box 464, Golden, CO 80402-0464  
Editor - Tom Forbes 966-6616  
Writer - George Zepernick  
Graphics and Layout - Carol Robinson

### Operable Unit 16 is Closed - Continued from page 1

necessary in Operable Unit 16. The cooperative interagency effort that resulted in a "No Further Action (NFA) Justification" document for the unit was significant, however

The NFA Justification document resulted from a review of historical information about spills and subsequent cleanup measures at the five IHSSs, and an examination of the natural breakdown of contaminants over time. The interagency Record of Decision signifies agreement by all parties that no further sampling or remediation of Operable Unit 16 is necessary.

### All Procedures Followed

The joint agreement to close OU 16 without remedial action was solidly based on procedure-driven site analysis and characterization. We have successfully completed extensive

procedural requirements and evaluations necessary to meet Superfund and RCRA regulations," said DOE's Rocky Flats Site Manager

Mark Silverman "This is an important first step in accomplishing cleanup at Rocky Flats."

## Want to see Rocky Flats for yourself? We can arrange that...

Would you like to find out what's really going on at Rocky Flats? Come take a tour of the site. Tours are routinely conducted on the first or second Monday of each month. You must be a U.S. citizen, at least 12 years of age. Bring a picture ID (a driver's license or?), but no cameras, binoculars, cellular phones or tape recorders, please. Special group tours are also available. Call Cathy Carlson, EG&G Community Relations, at 966-4261 to schedule a tour or to get more information about the Rocky Flats tour program.