

Risks of Residing in proximity to Rocky Flats

1 ROCKY FLATS THEN (PRE-2002)

Rocky Flats was a nuclear weapons component-production facility from the early 1950's, which was in active production of plutonium triggers for atomic bombs. In 1983, it would become one of the largest employers in the State with over 9,000 persons employed via Department of Energy subcontractors whom ran the plant.

In 1989, the FBI raided the Plant in light of an investigation into environmental crimes. With a lengthy indictment, the subcontractor at the time, Rockwell, plead guilty via plea bargain to a multitude of charges. Production of components ceased in 1989. By 1992, the Department of Energy declared that a certain building at the plant was "the most dangerous building in the country." Clean up operations began shortly thereafter. There were four lawsuits concerning the land surrounding/adjacent to the Plant beginning in the 1970s until this day. The residents of Northwest Denver Metro were contaminated on a regular basis from 1952-1989. The land surrounding the Plant is noted as being heavily contaminated, and several cities had their water supplies contaminated with plutonium (Pu) including Westminster, Broomfield, and Thornton in the 1970s. Standley Lake still has measurable quantities of Pu in its soil bed, and remains the water supply for Thornton and Northglenn.

The clean-up efforts are of considerable controversy and risk. While certain buildings of the several hundred building site were demolished, the cost and time prevented a full remediation at the site, and the State of Colorado decided that there would be zero restrictions as to how much radiation remained in the soil at the site, as long as it was buried below a depth of 6 feet. As a result, the "core" of the site is the property of the Department of Energy for eternity with up to 50 pCi/g of Pu allowed in the top 3 feet of soil and 1000 pCi/g of Pu allowed in the next three feet below that.

2 ROCKY FLATS NOW (POST-2002)

Located within the center of the newly founded Rocky Flats Wildlife Refuge, the core has little fencing to prevent children from walking on to the property. There are two toxic landfills within the core site and the Department of Energy and The Rocky Flats Stewardship Council continue to report ongoing leaks of higher than allowed concentrations of chemicals from the site, including Plutonium and Americium. A five year federal mandated review of the status and state of affairs is underway currently. NO clean-up efforts of any kind were performed outside of the core-site, including the wildlife refuge, and not the private owned land now known as Candelas, or Whisper Creek. With a half-life of over 24,000 years, the plutonium contamination in the area does not just "go away." It migrates through the environment and is recirculated with every new dig, build, and burrowing animal reanimating the Pu dust and contaminates that lie trapped in the soil there.

The Manhattan Project ultimately created hundreds of sites similar in scope of work as Rocky Flats, nationwide. To date, none of those sites have had a developer open a housing development directly adjacent to a site. None of the other sites had the distinction of having the "most dangerous building in the country" either, nor did they get shut down following an FBI raid, and worldwide attention for the level of environmental crimes committed that affected their neighboring communities. Candelas is essentially the very first housing development to be built knowingly on the downwind heel of a nuclear landfill.

3 THE RADIOACTIVE RISKS AND CHEMICAL RISKS

Rocky Flats was much more than just a production facility. It housed a very rare “Critical Laboratory” – which meant, all day long, experiments were conducted to make criticalities occur. The Rocky Flats Plant worked with every radioactive element known at some point in its tenure. Plutonium and Uranium are the most well known, as those were directly vented from the site during two separate fires in the 1950’s and 1969. They are also prevalent in the land out there, because spray-irrigation was an illegal method of disposing of their nuclear waste. Up until 1989, spray irrigation was in use. Nearly 1,000 chemicals are known to be in the ground where the former site existed, these are mostly contained within the original two landfills (which are leaking.) The failure of the landfills occurred in September of 2013, when a 1,000 year flood occurred. For three days the area now known as Candelas was under water, while Rocky Flats was also flooded, and pools of water came down the hillsides at Rocky Flats. While monitoring equipment was in place to monitor the amount of radioactivity passing off-site, the equipment was washed out the first day of the flooding. As a result there is no record of how much radiation and toxic chemicals fled the site downhill into the soil at Candelas and Whisper Creek. The lifespan of radiation such as Plutonium and Uranium is 52000-450,000years.

4 THE NEVERENDING LAWSUITS

Look at Google Maps at the area surrounding the Rocky Flats Wildlife Refuge. Notice anything interesting? All adjacent land is a declared “Open Space” except for Candelas and Whisper Creek. Up until the 1980s this was all farm land, privately owned. Starting in the 1970s when the severity of the contamination was being discovered, and numerous mutilations to the farm animals were occurring, private landowners began to file suit against the contractors operating the Rocky Flats Plant. Once scientists proved Plaintiffs claims as to the extent, the Federal Government had to start buying the land from the farmers, and recognizing the risk the land presented, one by one, the individual cities declared the sites “Open Space”. The first lawsuit, was Church v. Rockwell filed in 1979. Plaintiff prevailed. Next up was McKay v. Rockwell. McKay prevailed financially, but as a land developer he refused to hand over the last of his property in the Rocky Flats area. The area which is now Candelas. In 1989, Arvada homeowners filed suit for the contamination from the Plant, known as Environmental Trespass. In the last two weeks, this case was settled, 27 years later. Homeowners from 1989 and prior are now set to receive around \$ 10,000 per household for the damage the Plutonium did to us. The City of Arvada was the only City to accept the land south and east of the site. City Council believed in the dream of McKay to develop the land, which he has planned since 1995.

5 OTHER RISKS TO CONSIDER AS A HOMEOWNER

- 1) No shopping sources in the vicinity, nor are any planned in the current land use development plans.
- 2) No more roads are going in to ease the burden of traffic along Indiana. Actually 10,000 more homes are planned in the next five years along Indiana.
- 3) A Federal Health Study is being done via Metro State College currently. This will be the first for the Rocky Flats downwinders. Negative findings are sure to reduce appeal and value at Candelas.
- 4) Developers were deceptive to homebuyers by advertising they had performed beta-radiation testing at the site. Plutonium and Uranium emit Alpha-radiation, and current private party

testing has revealed extremely high levels of alpha radiation at the site.

5) The most severe of the contamination was to the east and south of the site. Candelas and Whisper Creek are essentially Ground Zero.

6) One particle of Plutonium in the human body can lead to the formation of a cancerous change. Because it takes years for cancerous changes to morph into cancer, many people suspect in about 7 years the cancer rates at these subdivisions will be much greater than that of a similar community in Highlands Ranch or Parker.

7) Remember no remediation was performed at Candelas/Whisper Creek, etc. The State said it was perfectly okay for any level of radiation below six feet deep to exist. The basement excavations at these neighborhoods went deeper than just that. No one has tested the topsoil since the excavations.

6 REFERENCES

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Websites:

www.rockyflatsglows.com

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