


**ADMINISTRATION MEMORANDUM**  
**15-3**

**DATE:** January 12, 2015  
**TO:** Honorable Mayor Joyce Downing and City Council Members  
**FROM:** John R. Pick, City Manager   
**SUBJECT:** CR-10 – Opposing Controlled Burn Plan at Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Council is asked to adopt the attached resolution authorizing Mayor Downing to send a letter opposing the plan for a controlled burn at Rocky Flats National Wildlife.

**BACKGROUND:**

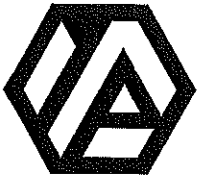
The United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is proposing to conduct a controlled burn on the grounds of the Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge for this spring. This action is being proposed to conserve rare plant species, to reduce the spread of invasive weeds and to reduce the risk of wild fires. The Rocky Flats Stewardship Council, which is chaired by Mayor Downing, has taken an official position in opposition to this action because a burn will cause widespread community concern that will not be sufficiently alleviated through any public education process and, given that concern, there are other management options USFWS can employ, thereby obviating the need to burn at this time. The cities of Arvada and Superior have written letters to the USFWS opposing the controlled burn (see attached). The attached resolution would authorize Mayor Downing to send the attached letter to the USFWS on behalf of the City.

**BUDGET/TIME IMPLICATIONS:**

Support of this request would have no impact on the City's budget.

**STAFF REFERENCE:**

Please contact John Pick at [jpick@northglenn.org](mailto:jpick@northglenn.org) or at 303-450-8706.



# CITY OF ARVADA

OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER  
FACSIMILE: 720-898-7515 ▲ TDD: 720-898-7869  
PHONE: 720-898-7500

November 11, 2014

Mr. David Abelson  
Rocky Flats Stewardship Council  
P.O. Box 17670  
Boulder, CO 80308-0670

Dear Mr. Abelson:

This letter is provided in response to your memo to the Rocky Flats Stewardship Council Board of Directors dated October 16, 2014. Your memo summarized the Board's action in response to a proposal from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to conduct a prescribed burn on the Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge in the spring of 2015. The memo described a motion approved by the Council Board on October 27. Specifically, the motion reads: "The Rocky Flats Stewardship Council opposes USFWS's plan to conduct a prescribed burn at the Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge. Our opposition rests primarily on two factors: (1) A burn will cause widespread community concern that will not be sufficiently alleviated through any public education process; (2) given that concern, there are other management options USFWS can employ, thereby obviating the need to burn at this time."

After receiving a copy of your memo, I felt it was my duty to report this matter to the Arvada City Council and to our development partners associated with Candelas. This information was reported to the City Council on October 31 and discussed briefly during the November 3 City Council meeting. The council expressed its serious concerns with the proposed prescribed burn. The city council's concerns are consistent with the concerns expressed in your memo.


On November 4, I discussed this matter during a monthly meeting with the Candelas development partners. One of the partners, Charles McKay, has offered the alternative option to resume controlled grazing in sections 13, 14 and 15 of the Rocky Flats site. Mr. McKay points out that these sections have been historically grazed by the Church Ranch before they were included as a buffer zone.

Mr. McKay's proposal demonstrates that there are alternatives to the proposed USFWS prescribed burn that would be much less controversial and may be able to accomplish the objective of controlling invasive weeds and grasses. Therefore, the City of Arvada supports the Rocky Flats Stewardship Council Board of Directors opposition to the prescribed burn and offers any assistance to the Council Board in working with the USFWS to develop alternatives to the proposed action.

As you know, Arvada is represented on the Rocky Flats Stewardship Council by Mayor Pro Tem Mark McGoff. Arvada's Utilities Project Manager Sandra McDonald supports Mayor Pro Tem McGoff's responsibilities as Arvada's representative. Please transmit any further information regarding the prescribed burn to Mayor Pro Tem McGoff so that we may be able to work collaboratively with the Stewardship Council and the USFWS to develop another acceptable alternative.

Thank you for your service to the Rocky Flats Stewardship Council and diligent response to the proposal from the USFWS.

Sincerely,

  
Mark G. Deven  
City Manager

c: Mayor and City Council



December 8, 2014

Mr. Dan Ashe  
Chief  
United States Fish and Wildlife Service  
1849 C. Street, NW, Room 3331  
Washington, DC 20240

Mr. David Lucas  
Project Leader  
Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge Complex  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
134 Union Blvd  
Lakewood, CO 80228

Dear Mr. Ashe & Mr. Lucas:

On behalf of the Superior Town Board of Trustees, I am submitting this letter as formal comment and protest of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) plans to conduct a prescribed burn at the Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge) in the spring of 2015.

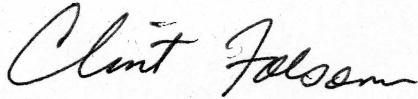
While we appreciate the efforts of the USFWS to work with the communities surrounding the Rocky Flats site to reach common goals and objectives, the Town of Superior strongly opposes any plans to conduct prescribed burns at the Refuge. A prescribed burn will cause unnecessary concern to the residents of Superior and has the potential for airborne contamination from the site. The potential harm that could be done if there were any radioactive matter released as a result far outweighs the benefit. It is the Board's position that there are other viable options available to USFWS to achieve the same result as a prescribed burn for effective management of the site.

The Town of Superior:

- strongly recommends that prescribed burns never be used on DOE retained lands
- recommends the USFWS engage in alternative methods to control invasive weeds throughout the site

We look forward to continued cooperative efforts to make the Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge an asset for all our communities.

Sincerely,



Clint Folsom  
Mayor

Cc: Superior Town Board of Trustees  
Matt Magley, Town Manager  
Joyce Downing, Chairman Rocky Flats Stewardship Council  
David Abelson, Exec. Dir., Rocky Flats Stewardship Council  
Senator Michael Bennet  
Senator Mark Udall  
Senator-elect Cory Gardner  
Representative Ed Perlmutter  
Representative Jared Polis  
Scott Surovchak, Department of Energy  
Carl Spreng, CDPHE

SPONSORED BY: MAYOR DOWNING

COUNCILMAN'S RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION NO.

No. CR-10  
Series of 2015

\_\_\_\_\_  
Series of 2015

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO EXECUTE AND SEND CORRESPONDENCE TO THE UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE ON BEHALF OF THE CITY STATING THE CITY'S OPPOSITION TO THE PLAN FOR A CONTROLLED BURN AT THE ROCKY FLATS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NORTHGLENN, COLORADO, THAT:

Section 1. The City Council hereby declares its opposition to the plan for a controlled burn at the Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge, and authorizes the Mayor to execute and send the attached correspondence to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

DATED at Northglenn, Colorado, this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2015.

\_\_\_\_\_  
JOYCE DOWNING  
Mayor

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
JOHANNA SMALL, CMC  
City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

\_\_\_\_\_  
COREY Y. HOFFMANN  
City Attorney



11701 Community Center Drive  
PO Box 330061  
Northglenn, Colorado 80233-8061  
Phone (303) 451-8326  
FAX (303) 450-8708  
TDD (303) 450-8805

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January 13, 2015

Mr. Dan Ashe  
Chief  
United States Fish and Wildlife Service  
1849 C. Street, NW, Room 3331  
Washington, DC 20240

Mr. David Lucas  
Project Leader  
Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge Complex  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
134 Union Blvd  
Lakewood, CO 80228

Dear Mr. Ash & Mr. Lucas:

On behalf of the City Council of the City of Northglenn, I am writing this letter to formally register our opposition to the plan by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS, Service) to conduct a controlled burn on the grounds of the Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge this spring. A controlled burn has the potential, and at a minimum creates the perception of the danger of the release of plutonium particles into the air posing an inhalation risk to citizens living adjacent to the Refuge. The Service has not provided the data on the types of weeds, aerial extent, nor density of weeds being controlled to justify burning over use of alternative management options such as grazing. The lack of justification and potential health risk, more than outweighs the benefits from the planned controlled burn.

We are joining with the Rocky Flats Stewardship Council, as well as other area municipalities, in urging the USFWS to continue the use of livestock grazing as a means of controlling invasive weeds and reducing the risk of wildfire on the Refuge.

The motion approved by the Rocky Flats Stewardship Council at their meeting on October 27 states our position very clearly: "The Rocky Flats Stewardship Council opposes USFWS's plan to conduct a prescribed burn at the Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge. Our opposition rests primarily on two factors: (1) a burn will cause widespread community concern that will not be sufficiently alleviated through any public education process; (2) given that concern, there are other management options USFWS can employ, thereby obviating the need to burn at this time."

Furthermore, Northglenn requests that the USFWS actively engage the Stewardship Council as well as citizens living in communities adjoining the Refuge concerning future management activities on the site. The City of Northglenn's drinking water supply, or the public's confidence in the City's

drinking supply, could also be potentially impacted by your actions. Thus, the courtesy of engagement is requested.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and considering the concerns of the Northglenn City Council.

Sincerely,

Joyce Downing  
Mayor

cc: Northglenn City Council  
John Pick, City Manager  
David Abelson, Executive Director, Rocky Flats Stewardship Council  
Senator Michael Bennet  
Senator Cory Gardner  
Representative Ed Perlmutter  
Adams County Board of County Commissioners  
Scott Surovchak, Department of Energy  
Carl Spreng, CDPHE