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WARNING: Persons on the Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge may become exposed to radioactive and other hazardous materials through dust in the air or through contact with the soil. These materials are invisible to the naked eye and may be carried home in dirt on shoes, bicycle tires, or other personnel effects. Plutonium is the primary radioactive contaminant on the Refuge. Plutonium emits alpha radiation, which cannot be detected by a Geiger counter, and it will remain radioactive for more than one hundred thousand

years. If outside the body, plutonium's alpha radiation is not harmful. However, if taken up into the body, even in small amounts by inhalation of dust, through a wound, or by accidental ingestion, it can cause cancer.

BACKGROUND: From 1950-1991 Rocky Flats manufactured plutonium pits (triggers) used for nuclear weapons. Surrounding the plant was a buffer zone. During its operations, the plant burned plutonium waste, causing plutonium to be spread to the buffer zone. It also buried and sprayed waste containing plutonium and other hazardous materials on the buffer zone. After closure, the manufacturing site was cleaned up to some extent and it was then designated as a Superfund Site closed to the public. The buffer zone was not cleaned up and it was converted into the Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge open to the public.

It is not disputed that the soil of the Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge is contaminated with plutonium, which emits a particularly damaging form of ionizing radiation.

There is controversy, however, within the scientific community regarding how much risk, if any, the level of plutonium contamination on the Wildlife Refuge poses to visitors. The EPA and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment maintain that the plutonium contamination on the Wildlife Refuge does not pose an unacceptable health threat to visitors. However, according to many scientists and health professionals, there is no safe level of human exposure to plutonium. If taken up into the body, plutonium's ionizing radiation damages the genetic material of

Attachment 1: Recommended Language by Stakeholders

nearby cells, increasing the risk for developing cancer. This risk is even greater for children and women than for men. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has written in its Toxicological Profile for Plutonium, “Breathing plutonium-contaminated air is the most dangerous way to be exposed to plutonium. If you know or suspect that plutonium has been released to the air, you should leave the area immediately.”

These considerations need to be weighed by individuals considering visiting the Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge.