

Plutonium at Rocky Flats (LeRoy Moore, PhD)

Rocky Flats Nuclear Weapons Plant made the explosive plutonium core of every nuclear weapon in the U.S. arsenal; about 70,000 from 1953-1989. Accidents and routine operations released plutonium into the environment. For more, see <http://www.rockyflatsnuclearguardianship.org/>

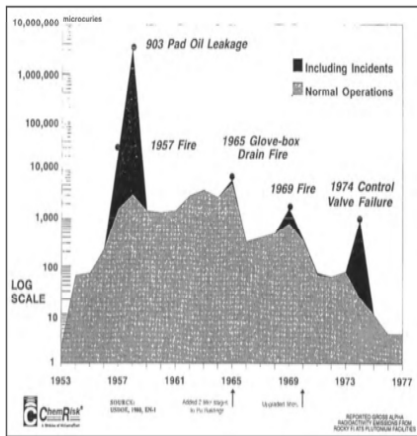
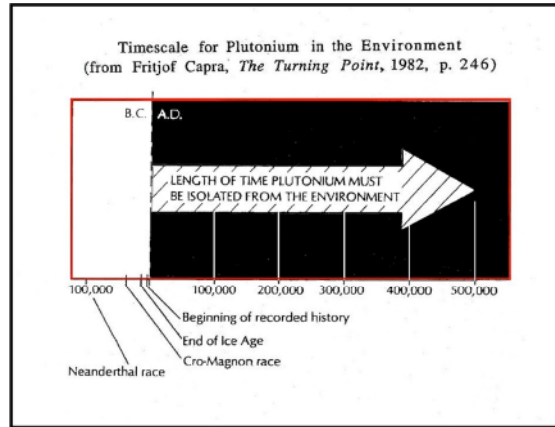
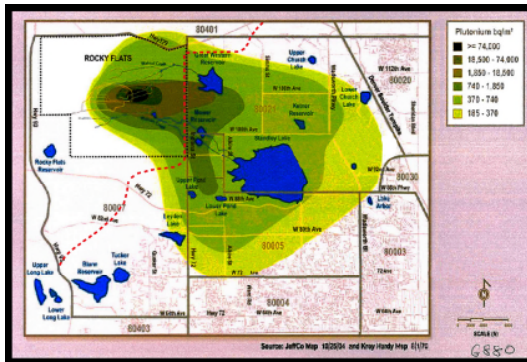


Figure 6. Reported gross alpha radioactivity emissions from Rocky Flats plutonium facilities.



Physicist Fritjof Capra says plutonium-239 must be isolated from the environment for 500,000 years (*Turning Point*, pp. 245-246)

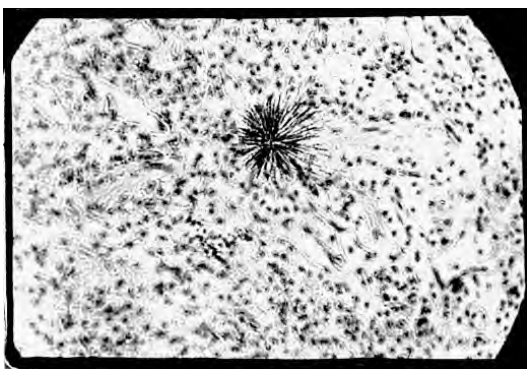
Plutonium emissions from the plant, 1953-1977 (ChemRisk diagram)



Krey-Hardy map showing plutonium contamination near Rocky Flats, 1970.



Plutonium on surface of soil can be blown by wind, as at SE corner of Rocky Flats site, June 2010 (Del Tredici photo).



Speck of plutonium in lung tissues of an ape –magnified 500 times. (Robert Del Tredici, *At Work in the Fields of the Bomb*)



After completion of the “cleanup” about 3/4 of the site was transferred to U.S. Fish & Wildlife to operate as a Wildlife Refuge. DOE retained the more contaminated core.

Assumptions of the “cleanup”:

- Plutonium in soil will not migrate.
- Not all areas need to be cleaned.
- Animals present no problem. But there are 18 species of burrowing animals at the site that constantly redistribute soil & its contents, disturbing on average 11-12% of RF surface soil in any given year. Examples are pocket gophers & harvester ants, which go down 16 to 20 feet.

