

DECADES OF ACTION AROUND ROCKY FLATS

Local governments and school districts have repeatedly taken extraordinary steps in response to Rocky Flats exposure and contamination concerns.

A TIMELINE OF PROTECTIVE, LEGAL, SCHOOL, WATER & ACCESS ACTIONS



THE PATTERN IS THE POINT.

These actions span more than three decades. Communities have protected drinking water. School districts have kept children away. Cities have abandoned transportation and recreation projects. Municipal governments have sued federal agencies. And local officials are still warning the public about potential radioactive exposure.

Actions this serious are not taken, repeatedly and across generations of local leadership, without reason for concern.

Compiled from official municipal, school-district, court, federal and public-source records in the Rocky Flats community protective-actions timeline. Actions reflect documented precautionary or legal responses; they do not, by themselves, establish disease causation.

COTTER MILL / LINCOLN PARK

A Government Record of Protective Action, Regulation & Cleanup

For nearly seven decades, federal, state and local governments have responded to uranium-mill contamination and exposure pathways affecting Lincoln Park and the Cañon City area.

1959–1968	Federal regulators cite radiation-protection and license violations beginning in 1959.
1971	The U.S. Soil Conservation Service builds a Sand Creek flood-control dam to protect Lincoln Park and control contaminated water moving downstream.
1983	After years of violations, the State of Colorado sues Cotter for natural-resource damages and cleanup.
1984	EPA places the mill and affected Lincoln Park areas on the Superfund National Priorities List after releases affected residential soil and groundwater.
1988	A court-enforceable Consent Decree and Remedial Action Plan require cleanup, alternate water, groundwater controls, air-quality controls and measures to stop off-site migration.
1989–1993	Homes with uranium- and molybdenum-affected wells are connected to Cañon City municipal drinking water. City engineering archives document the connection project.
1991–2000	Government-directed health-risk studies, groundwater barriers, contaminated-soil removal and treatment continue. Thousands of cubic yards of contaminated material are removed.
2002	Colorado enacts HB 02-1408, strengthening controls on major radioactive-waste disposal. CDPHE also cites Cotter for 16 license violations and restricts operations/shipments pending correction.
2011–2014	Milling ends permanently. Colorado converts the license to decommissioning, and EPA/CDPHE require a new Superfund remedial investigation and feasibility study.
2023	When the cleanup company becomes insolvent, CDPHE and EPA intervene: violations are issued, bond funds pursued, contractors maintain site operations, air monitoring is restored/expanded, and EPA advances new health/ecological risk work.
2026	The site remains under active federal/state Superfund and radiation-control oversight, with continuing risk assessment, environmental investigation and long-term decommissioning.

FEDERAL VIOLATIONS → STATE LAWSUIT → SUPERFUND → MUNICIPAL WATER → DECADES OF CLEANUP → ACTIVE 2026 OVERSIGHT

Why this matters: The government record documents contamination serious enough to prompt litigation, Superfund designation, replacement drinking water, regulatory enforcement, engineered cleanup and continuing human-health investigation. These actions do not prove that Cotter caused any particular individual illness; they document sustained institutional recognition and response.

Primary sources: U.S. EPA Lincoln Park Superfund records; U.S. NRC Cotter Mill history; Colorado General Assembly 2002 Digest; EPA Records of Decision/Five-Year Reviews; City of Cañon City engineering archives; Fremont County records. Full URLs and detailed descriptions are in the accompanying Excel timeline.