

NIH NEWS

**National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases
National Institutes of Health****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, May 5, 2009**Media Contact: Ken Pekoc
(406) 375-9690
kpekoc@niaid.nih.gov**NIH APPROVES MASTER PLAN FOR ROCKY MOUNTAIN LABORATORIES**

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) has approved a 20-year Master Plan to guide the development of its scientific research campus at Rocky Mountain Laboratories in Hamilton. The approval comes after three years of planning, consideration of public input and the completion of an Environmental Impact Statement.

The Master Plan option approved is the low-growth proposal that NIH preferred in its draft document. That option calls for RML employment to reach about 427 people by 2025; RML presently employs about 395 people, including government employees and contractors.

Other options considered were no growth and maximum capacity.

“Now we begin applying the plan to new activities on the RML campus,” said Ron Wilson, director of the Division of Facilities Planning for the NIH. He will work with NIH and RML personnel to plan initial activities, but says likely high priorities include campus landscaping, expansion of a security fence and improvements to roads and parking.

Wilson said the Master Plan already has helped prioritize one upcoming RML project, renovation of a building that for many years housed the campus boiler plant. That building will become a new biosafety level-2 laboratory, with support and office space, in RML’s central building complex known as The Quad.

Formal approval of the Master Plan was announced in a Record of Decision (ROD) published Tuesday in the Federal Register. Copies of the ROD are available in the RML Visitor’s Center and on the Internet at <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2009/E9-10290.htm>.

Along with some growth in personnel, the Master Plan addresses the potential for land acquisition to the north of RML’s existing boundary and for limited construction of new administrative and research spaces.

All future construction and renovation projects must first meet NIH's requirements for programmatic need and must secure federal funding.

The ROD states that the Master Plan option chosen "is intended to be a strategic tool for the efficient allocation of campus resources, the orderly accommodation of future growth and the creation of an environment which is both functionally and aesthetically conducive to accomplishing the RML mission," which is scientific research. "New development would be responsive to the context of adjacent neighborhoods or developments."

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), which oversees NIH, requires that all NIH facilities have a Master Plan. RML is a component of the NIH's National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), with headquarters in Bethesda, MD.

Wilson is planning to travel to Hamilton from Bethesda in June to discuss the Master Plan with local government leaders, interested parties and RML employees.

All public inquiries about the ROD should be directed to Valerie Nottingham by e-mail at nihnepa@mail.nih.gov, or by writing to Valerie Nottingham, Division of Environmental Protection, NIH, Building 13, Room 2S11, 9000 Rockville Pike, Bethesda, MD 20892. Individuals also may send facsimiles to 301-480-8056.

NIAID conducts and supports research—at NIH, throughout the United States, and worldwide—to study the causes of infectious and immune-mediated diseases, and to develop better means of preventing, diagnosing and treating these illnesses. News releases, fact sheets and other NIAID-related materials are available on the NIAID Web site at <http://www.niaid.nih.gov>.

The NIH—The Nation's Medical Research Agency—includes 27 Institutes and Centers and is a component of HHS. It is the primary federal agency for conducting and supporting basic, clinical and translational medical research, and it investigates the causes, treatments and cures for both common and rare diseases. For more information about NIH and its programs, visit <http://www.nih.gov>.

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