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**Wildlife  
Services**

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## **Expanding Research Capabilities Through New Construction**

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### **National Wildlife Research Center Builds New Research Facilities**

Wildlife Services' (WS) National Wildlife Research Center (NWRC) is the only Federal research facility devoted exclusively to resolving conflicts between people and wildlife through the development of effective, selective, and acceptable methods, tools, and techniques.

APHIS WS is committed to building research facilities that will permit NWRC to continue its role as a Federal and a world leader in research to reduce wildlife damage and protect American agriculture.

### **Applying Science and Expertise to Wildlife Challenges**

**Invasive Species Research Building**—In 2005, final design and construction will begin on a new APHIS WS Invasive Species Research Building located at NWRC's headquarters site on the Foothills Research Campus of Colorado State University in Fort Collins, CO. This 25,000 square-foot indoor animal research building is expected to be completed in FY 2006/2007. This facility will provide a secure location for researchers to study invasive species that threaten our nation's natural resources. Many invasive species also carry parasites and diseases that can impact U.S. agriculture and native wildlife. The design of this new building will ensure that neither the species themselves nor any parasites or diseases they may carry can escape.

This new facility will provide a unique opportunity for NWRC researchers to study the behavior of invasive species and test new wildlife damage management methods in a controlled setting. Examples of invasive species that will be studied include Monk parakeets from South America, Roof rats from Southeast Asia, and nutria from South America.

The need for this research is especially important as international trade and travel continue to increase, introducing more invasive species into the United States. Each year, scientists discover new invasive species that have already become established in the United States. Their impacts can be far reaching. For example, invasive tree frogs, introduced into Hawaii along with shipments of nursery plants, carry parasites that can devastate a variety of plants, including orchids, which are especially prominent in Hawaii. The brown treesnake, accidentally introduced into Guam in the late 1940s or early 1950s, has already exterminated most of the island's native forest birds and fruit bats. With the simulated tropical climate capability of this new facility, NWRC scientists will be better able to concentrate their research efforts on invasive reptiles and amphibians, like the brown treesnake and tree frog, as well as other invasive birds and mammals.

**Wildlife Disease Research Building**—The Wildlife Disease Research Building, scheduled for completion in FY 2008/2009, will be the last major building to be completed in the original NWRC Master Plan. The building will be a bio-safety level 3 (BSL-3) bio-containment disease research facility with approximately 15,000-20,000 square feet of research space.

Many serious, emerging disease issues involve wildlife as hosts or potential hosts of diseases affecting domestic animal and/or human health. The bio-terrorism threat from some of these disease agents increases the need and urgency to address these issues. NWRC is currently involved in wildlife disease issues related to wildlife rabies, bovine tuberculosis (TB), West Nile virus, chronic wasting disease, and pseudorabies. It is critical for APHIS to expand that involvement and improve capabilities to deal with emerging and invasive diseases of concern.

The Wildlife Disease Research Building will allow APHIS WS to support the initial surveillance, rapid response, vaccine assessment, and

other research needs for emerging wildlife disease issues. Legislation mandates that USDA provide assistance upon request to state governments, private individuals, and other Federal agencies to control and prevent damage and disease caused or carried by wildlife. This future building will greatly enhance the ability of APHIS to provide this assistance. It will also provide important "surge" space for disease epidemic emergencies in the United States. In such emergencies, the NWRC facilities will be available for conducting BSL-3 laboratory work to address national concerns.

The Wildlife Disease Research Building will provide researchers with the capability to conduct both animal experimental infection studies and laboratory testing of disease agents that present a biosafety hazard to humans, domestic animals, or wildlife. It will also provide for bio-security of disease agents to prevent their accidental or intentional release or escape from the facility. Studies will evaluate wildlife species as reservoirs and vectors of disease, identify routes of transmission, and develop methods to reduce transmission among wildlife, livestock, and humans.

Following the completion of the Wildlife Disease Research Building, NWRC will have greatly expanded its capabilities to conduct disease research on avian influenza, plague, rabies, bovine tuberculosis, chronic wasting disease, West Nile virus, and pseudorabies.

**Animal Research Building Support Wing**—In 2004 APHIS/NWRC completed construction of an 8,500 square foot south wing addition to the existing Animal Research Building (ARB). This new wing is occupied by the NWRC Animal Care Staff and is utilized for the care and support of the animals located in the 28 acre Outdoor Animal Research Facility. The new support wing contains food-storage, food-preparation and food staging areas. A portion of the ARB was also renovated to create Biosafety Level 3 (BSL-3) laboratory space and animal holding/testing space for ongoing wildlife disease research being conducted at NWRC.