NEWS from
The Savannah River Site

Media Contact: Bruce Cadotte
(803) 725-8562

For immediate release

REMEDIATION OF SRS SEEPAGE BASINS CONTINUES WITH A NEW TWIST

AIKEN, S.C., (Nov. 8) – SRS recently began one of its largest radioactive seepage basin cleanup projects using innovative technology—a double-headed auger, used to mix basin soil and grout into a stable, hard mass to prevent the spread of contamination.

The dual auger, operated by a company called In-situ Fixation, is being applied to the C-Reactor Seepage Basins, formerly used to receive purged water from the reactor's disassembly basin (where irradiated nuclear fuel and targets were stored and prepared for processing). SRS used it once before at the small K-Reactor Seepage Basin.

Used from 1957 to 1970 and from 1978 to 1986, the basins received small amounts of radioactive cesium, strontium, carbon and nickel, in addition to tritium (radioactive hydrogen) and some non-radioactive substances. Except for the tritium, which has dispersed, the grout locks the other radioactive isotopes in place because they have remained in the soil.

SRS has used various grouting techniques to stabilize the soils in several basins on site.

"This has proven to be a faster and more cost-effective method than shipping the soil elsewhere," said Tom Heenan, the Department of Energy-Savannah River's assistant manager for environment, science, and technology. "We are trying very hard to drive down the costs and shorten the schedules on the cleanup program."

(more)

In Fiscal Year 2001 alone, SRS's environmental restoration program put 32 innovative technologies to work in the field to achieve cost-effective cleanup. More and more of them rely on passive and natural technologies as the program proceeds. So far, 303 of 515 contaminated sites at SRS have been completed or are in remediation.

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