

News from the Savannah River Site

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Savannah River Site Checks Off DOE Priority With Disposal Unit Construction

AIKEN, S.C. (July 13, 2023) – [The U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Environmental Management \(EM\)](#) has authorized the newest mega-size disposal unit to begin operating at the [Savannah River Site](#) (SRS), checking off another [priority for the cleanup program](#) for 2023.

The authorization marks the last step before the Saltstone Disposal Unit (SDU) 8 begins to receive decontaminated material for disposal. The unit was completed three years ahead of schedule.

EM's liquid waste contractor at [SRS](#), Savannah River Mission Completion (SRMC), manages the construction and operation of the SDUs. Subcontractors Quality Plus Services, US FUSION & Specialty Construction and DN Tanks completed the site preparation, interior and exterior liner systems, and unit construction, respectively.

The [SDUs](#) are the end of the salt waste processing path. The [Salt Waste Processing Facility](#) (SWPF) produces decontaminated material that is sent to the [Saltstone Production Facility](#), where it is mixed with dry materials to make a cement-like grout. The grout is pumped into the SDUs, where it solidifies into a monolithic, non-hazardous form.

SDU 8 is the third mega-size unit built at SRS and can hold up to 33 million gallons of saltstone. These larger SDUs are designed to support the increased material production from SWPF. The new SDUs result in more than \$500 million in cost savings over the life of the SRS liquid waste program because they require less infrastructure and materials than the previously planned 80 smaller SDUs.

Achieving significant construction milestones, such as SDU 8, is an EM priority part of the 10-year [Strategic Vision](#), according to Jim Folk, DOE-Savannah River assistant manager for waste disposition.

"DOE-Savannah River is proud to play a critical role in EM's commitment to tackling one of the largest environmental cleanup efforts in the world," Folk said. "The mega-size Saltstone Disposal Units are key in our ability to safely dispose of legacy liquid waste and underscore DOE's commitment to complete the SRS Liquid Waste Program."

Construction and testing of the next unit, SDU 9, is slated for completion in fall 2024. SRMC is also in various stages of constructing the final SDUs needed at SRS — 10, 11, and 12.



Saltstone Disposal Unit 8 project team members stand in front of the newest mega-size disposal unit completed at the Savannah River Site.

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The SDU 8 construction project was another job well done by the team, according to SRMC President and Program Manager Dave Olson.

“A construction project of such scale involves the skills and expertise of hundreds of hands and minds,” Olson said. “I am proud of the SRMC team and everyone’s commitment to furthering our mission through this important project.”

Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, a Fluor-led company with Newport News Nuclear and Honeywell, is responsible for the management and operations of the Department of Energy's Savannah River Site located near Aiken, South Carolina.