

**USDA Forest Service- Savannah River (USFS-SR)  
Fiscal Year 2002**

Operating under an interagency agreement with DOE-SR, the USDA Forest Service-Savannah River (USFS-SR) manages the natural resources at SRS. In support of the SRS stewardship mission, USFS-SR follows these management principles to implement the SRS Natural Resource Management Plan:

- Accomplish operations while excelling in safety and health performance.
- Apply sustainable forest management to SRS natural resources.
- Accomplish planning through an interdisciplinary team process.
- Cooperate with state, Federal and SRS organizations in natural resource planning and to protect its cultural resources.
- Apply research and operational findings in the management of natural resources.
- Use monitoring and evaluation for adaptive management.
- Address public participation in the natural resource planning process.

The following are fiscal year 2002 accomplishments.

- USFS-SR enhances productivity, forest health, and diversity of tree stand conditions by conducting ecosystem restoration and vegetation management using silvicultural practices. This management provides a variety of forest products while allowing for visual aesthetics.

Examples of ecosystem restoration include the following:

Establishing founder populations for savanna restoration by planting 15,000 plants of 15 species, and restoring 15 Carolina bays

Selling 45,747 hundred cubic of timber and 140 acres of pinestraw

Reforestation 337 acres

Improving timber stands and snag habitat (dead standing trees for wildlife) on 508 acres; and collecting 15 pounds of acorns for tree improvement

- USFS-SR ensures biological diversity, controls animal populations to reduce safety hazards and property damage, provides quality recreational opportunities, restores degraded ecosystems, surveys and monitors habitats and plant and animal populations (including Federally threatened or endangered species), and provides biological evaluations to assist in determining probable effects of proposed land-use changes within SRS.

Examples include the following:

Conducting threatened and endangered plant surveys on 90 acres, and managing for the endangered smooth purple coneflower by removing midstory and sprouts.

Maintains and improves Red-cockaded woodpecker habitat by inserting 18 cavity inserts, removing 125 acres of midstory vegetation, and identifying and treating 10 woodpecker recruitment clusters  
Help SREL re-establish 80 gopher tortoises onto SRS; and

Create-ing wildlife openings by mowing 150 acres

- Manages and maintains a multipurpose trails system following USFS standards.

USFS-SR completed 27 miles of trail maintenance and 2.67 miles of trail construction

- Restores degraded watersheds, maintains healthy ecosystems, conducts technology transfer, and provides technical assistance. USFS-SR controls non-point source pollution, and provides direct and indirect assistance to site Environmental Restoration Programs.

USFS-SR stabilized 162 acres of critical erosion in fiscal year 2002.

- USFS-SR manages the SRS secondary road and bridge system (except for bridge structural inspections), including inventory, planning, constructing, reconstructing, and maintaining all secondary roads.

Examples of this program include:

Constructing 1.3 miles, and reconstructing 2.7 miles of road for access to monitoring wells, and maintaining 45 well roads

Reconstructing 14.55 miles, and constructing 1.3 miles of road for timber harvesting

- Manages the SRS exterior boundary. The program includes maintaining and protecting monuments, fencing, associated infrastructure, surveying and support to DOE-SR on trespass and easement issues.

USFS-SR completed two site boundary repairs projects, 20 miles of boundary fence maintenance, and completed signage of the Savannah River/public road and stream crossings for no trespass and no fishing

- Provides engineering services for planning and construction projects to support the Forest Service, and environmental related projects requested by DOE-SR management.
- Provides cartography, geometronics, and other engineering support for natural resource related projects to on-site organizations on an as-requested basis.

USFS-SR provided six analyses of watersheds to the site's environmental GIS group

- Assists in waste site closure related work, including engineering designs, construction and contract administration requested by DOE-SR. Provides long-term post-closure maintenance and monitoring services as requested by DOE-SR.
- USFS-SR conducts an information/external relations and program that supports DOE-SR and SRS programs while monitoring the public's

sensitivity of natural resource concerns and promotes community, state and regulator relationships.

Some examples include:

Publishing 22 news releases, the USFS-SR Fact Sheet, and monthly Highlights reports

Participating at seven Citizens Advisory Board meetings, with SRS Deer Hunt Stakeholder Meeting, and with the SRS Partnership Council

Presentations at SRS Safety Conference, conservation education activities in the CSRA, including the CSRA Earth Day, and cooperating with the National Wild Turkey Federation event

- Provides hands-on instruction for students and teachers through the Science, Mathematics, and Engineering Education Program for third through twelfth grade students and teachers in the Central Savannah River Area. Provides college level education for minority students, such as those from Historically Black Colleges and Universities and other institutions through the Savannah River Environmental Sciences Field Station with South Carolina State University and other supporters.

Some examples include:

USFS-SR provided conservation education support, with two field trips and 2 programs; and

Forty-nine students participated in 8 summer course with the Field Station, and two National Science Foundation grants were received

- Maintains a comprehensive wildland fire program which maintains an on-site, year-round initial attack capability with dedicated firefighting forces and equipment to protect natural resources and site improvements from wildland fire and smoke either from SRS or that threatens SRS.

USFS-SR reduced hazardous fuel on 4500 acres, suppressed 21 wildfires on SRS, and suppressed three wildfires originating off-site

- Supports DOE-SR missions, National Environmental Research Park, regulatory direction, and natural resource management needs through a cooperative research program with the Southern Research Station, other Federal agencies, universities, state agencies, forest and related industries, and SRS organizations.

This program promoted SRS's designation as a National Environmental Research Park with a presentation to the Northeastern Forest Experimental Station., and 40 presentations at scientific and technical meetings on SRS research.

USFS-SR concluded 38 research publications in fiscal year 2002.

Ongoing research Projects include studies in:

Smoke dispersion and fire management

Control of invasive exotics

Fire intensity and pine mortality

Harvesting effects on coarse woody debris-animal and plant richness and abundance

Soft fruit and hard mast as key resources

Longleaf density and mid-story control effects on savanna plants and animals

Bat foraging and habitat use

Growth impacts from pinestraw raking sales

Economic analysis of forest products harvesting

Effects of burning and hunting on wild turkeys

Short rotation woody crops operation to support tritium and TCE irrigation projects

- Provides scientific and technical support expertise for the Environmental Restoration program as requested, including support for research and development, treatability studies, monitoring and interim actions related to phytoremediation, vegetative covers, constructed wetlands, and monitoring natural attenuation.

Examples include:

Continuing operations and maintenance at the A/M TCE Treatability Study, MWMF SW Plume, the D-Area TCE Drip Irrigation Operation, and the D-Area 488 Ash Basin Vegetative cover project, and

We constructed the MWMF SW Plume stormwater reroute system.

- Conducts a safety and environmental compliance and coordination program within the framework of Forest Service directives and DOE Orders.

Examples of this program include:

We provided 5 facility inspections and 34 project inspections

Removed 368 feral hogs and 21 beavers from the site and 50 downed trees from roads, and

Conducted deer spotlight surveys to develop appropriate harvest strategy for deer hunts.

- USFS-SR has a rural community outreach program that provides technical and limited financial assistance to rural communities for natural resource based projects, such as training in wildland fire suppression and safety for volunteer fire departments, in coordination with DOE-SR,.

USFS-SR completed two grants at Warrenville Elementary School and the Agricultural Learning Center.

- Maintains a natural resources planning program. The program is conducted in accordance with DOE-SR guidance regarding current land use plans and general management of DOE missions.

USFS-SR is in the final stages of completing the Draft SRS Natural Resources Management Plan

- Conducts training for Forest Service employees to comply with safety, health, security, environmental, radiological or operational requirements of

SRS or outside regulatory agencies to lawfully carry out the duties of the Forest Service at SRS.

Examples of this program include 21 fire training courses and 84 fire training assignments.

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