



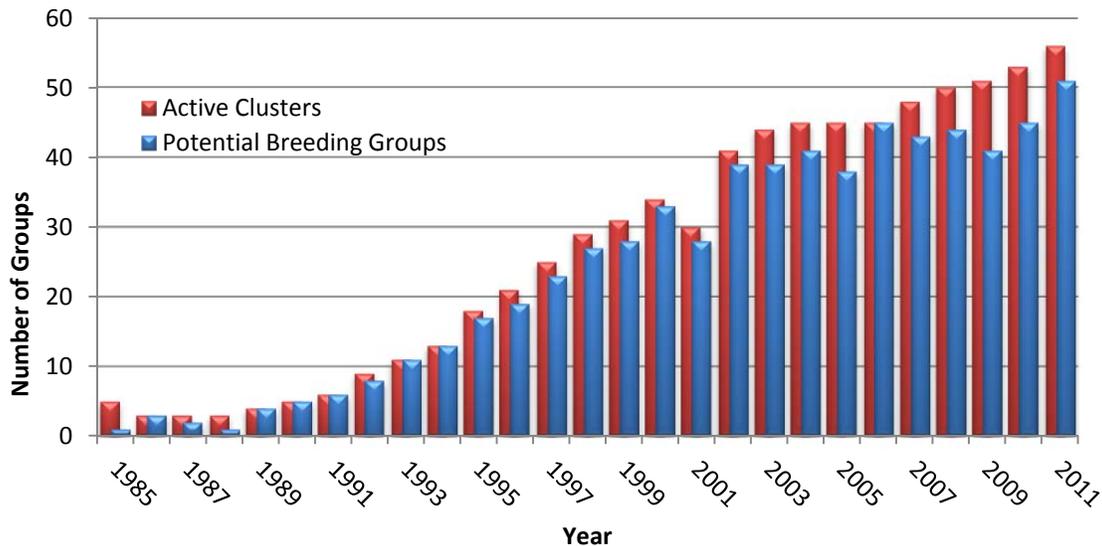
## USDA Forest Service-Savannah River Fiscal Year 2011 Savannah River Site Environmental Report

**In support of the environmental stewardship mission, the U.S. Forest Service – Savannah River** manages natural resources at the U.S. Department of Energy’s Savannah River Site. Operating under an Interagency Agreement with the SRS Operations Office, USFS-SR follows SRS Strategic Plan goals and objectives to implement the [United States Department of Energy Natural Resources Management Plan for the Savannah River Site](#).

The following initiatives and accomplishments reflect the various ways in which USFS-SR worked to implement the plan in fiscal year 2011.

### **Maintained and improved habitat to meet recovery population objectives for threatened, endangered and sensitive species**

USFS-SR continued to improve habitat conditions for the endangered [red-cockaded woodpecker](#) by removing brush and small hardwood vegetation over 754 acres of longleaf pine forest, as well as using prescribed fire to reduce hazardous forest fuel and aid in removal of mid-story vegetation - another means of habitat improvement. Successful habitat manipulation increased the number of active red-cockaded woodpecker clusters from two in 1984 to 56 in fiscal year 2011.



Number of red-cockaded woodpecker active groups at SRS

## **Managed natural resources and harvested forest products**

In fiscal year 2011, USFS-SR advertised 73.3 million cubic feet of forest products for sale. These products were sold to meet security needs, encourage habitat development for threatened, endangered and sensitive species, promote forest health and generate revenue. Management activities were implemented according to the SRS nuclear mission and ecological best management practices.

## **Evaluated the effects of management on the environment**

Teaming with a number of universities as well as USDA Forest Service Research Stations, USFS-SR added applied knowledge and understanding in support of the Interagency Agreement, including:

- Completing field surveys of big-eared bats, a state sensitive species, and their roost sites along the Savannah River swamp. Roost sites are common under bridges and in structures, but their primary habitat is remote swamps and wetlands, making accurate population estimates difficult to survey.
- Establishing a large number of savanna restoration sites, through integration of harvesting and prescribed fire management, in the primary recovery area for the red-cockaded woodpecker. The areas are small remnants of original longleaf pine, fire-dependent savanna communities and contain a unique suite of native plant species.
- Harvesting and analyzing experimental plots of southern pine and hardwoods, 10-12 years after planting, to determine potential productivity and nutrient uptake. Pine generally can produce 10 green tons of biomass per acre, per year, and in the future may enhance bioenergy supplies.

## **Excelled in environmental and occupational safety and health performance**

During fiscal year 2011, USFS-SR had no restricted workdays due to injury, no lost workdays due to injuries and two Occupational Safety and Health Administration 300 Log recordable injuries. Employees and contractors reported 320,261 hours worked and 330,864 vehicle-miles driven.

USFS-SR is an active participant in the DOE Integrated Safety Management System, which has resulted in a higher level of safety awareness and sound application of safety requirements. USFS-SR submitted the required annual ISMS declaration to DOE-SR on Oct. 28, 2011.

## **Continued environmental restoration**

The Savannah River Site's Soil and Groundwater Closure Projects phytoremediation pond, administered by USFS-SR, treated approximately 10.7 million gallons of tritiated water. This project employs a natural remedy (phytoremediation), using vegetative processes, to reduce risk to the environment. Additionally, throughout the year USFS-SR managed 3,368 acres of vegetation caps through mowing, pesticide and herbicide application, prescribed fire and seeding, while also managing vegetation at 4,800 well sites, allowing easier access for SRS water and well monitoring. USFS-SR completed the design and implementation of extensive maintenance to the A11 Outfall structures, including the installation of an additional sheet pile wall and improvements to the basin and riser.

## **Safely maintained infrastructure in an environmentally sound state of operational readiness**

USFS-SR maintained more than 1,200 miles of SRS secondary roads, including blading and calcium chloride application for dust reduction, and constructed nearly two miles of secondary roads in support of site activities. USFS-SR also maintained 27 miles of multipurpose trails, used primarily by SRS wellness programs, as well as 123 miles of boundary fence, 30 miles of exterior boundary (disking) and 12 miles of boundary along the Savannah River, including replacement of eight signs.

## **Reduced risk of catastrophic wildland fires through systematic and safe application of prescribed fire**

In fiscal year 2011, fire management burned 22,141 acres of hazardous fuel (growing season and site preparation combined) and suppressed six wildfires totaling two acres.

Smokey Bear went to 17 local elementary schools, visiting 1,454 children, and also participated in the New Ellenton Atomic City Festival, making 500 contacts.

## **Communicated SRS stewardship**

USFS-SR outreach efforts to educate stakeholders about natural resource management included participation in Take Our Children to Work Day, SRS Ultimate Turkey Hunt, SRS Safety Blitz and SRS CSRA College Night. Public communication included one news release and various newsletters touting monthly accomplishments, as well as a presence at community events, including the Atomic City and Sweet Potato festivals and New Ellenton Christmas parade. Internal and external planning and communications included participation in the SRS Citizens Advisory Board combined and committee meetings.



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<http://www.srs.gov/general/srenviro/srfs/srfs.htm>  
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