



Environmental Bulletin

Volume 20 Number 13
June 3, 2009

from the Savannah River Site

Action Memorandum Issued for the R-Area Reactor Area Cask Car Railroad Tracks as Abandoned at the Savannah River Site River Site

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) has selected the preferred alternative for the non-time critical removal action at the R-Area Reactor Area Cask Car (RRCC) Railroad Tracks as Abandoned located at the Savannah River Site's (SRS's) R-Area. A 30-day public comment period was held for the Removal Site Evaluation Report/Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis from April 14, 2009 to May 14, 2009. No public comments were received during the public comment period.

The RRCC Railroad Tracks as Abandoned were used during the operation of R-Area Reactor from 1953 to 1964 for the transportation of railroad cars that contained casks of radiological materials. When the railroad cars were exposed to rain, radiological materials [Cesium-137 (Cs-137)] and daughter products [+D] washed from the outside of the casks onto the ground surface. Soils and gravels are contaminated with Cs-137 at levels that are considered principal threat source material, posing an unacceptable potential cancer risk to industrial workers. Contaminated soils occur in two areas beginning at the tracks at the cask car loading area outside of the R-Area Reactor Disassembly Basin and extending about 300 feet towards the R-Area perimeter fence.

DOE has determined that the preferred removal action is Alternative #2, Excavation and Removal. Contaminated soil and gravel that exceed concentrations greater than 10 pCi/g of Cs-137 + D will be removed to a depth of 2 - 3 feet. This alternative provides overall protection to human health and the environment. Removing the contaminated soil and gravel prevents exposure to the future industrial worker and prevents the spread of contamination by rain and wind. The contaminated waste generated by this action will be characterized prior to transfer and sent to the appropriate Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) Off-site Rule approved facilities. Radiologically contaminated material will be sent to the E-Area Low Level Waste Facility, a CERCLA Off-Site Rule approved facility. Prior to the transfer of these wastes to an offsite SRS facility for disposal, DOE will obtain an acceptability determination from the appropriate Regional Off-Site Rule Coordinator. This action is consistent with the overall remedial strategy at R Area.

The selection of the preferred alternative is documented in the Action Memorandum (ARF # 016092; DOE Letter, ACP-09-176). DOE has worked with the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control and the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency to ensure that the removal action is consistent with all applicable environmental requirements.

Copies of the Action Memorandum (ARF # 016092; DOE Letter, ACP-09-176) are available in the Administrative Record. The Administrative Record is available in the information repositories listed below:

DOE Public Reading Room at the Gregg-Graniteville Library at the University of South Carolina (USC)-Aiken campus in Aiken, SC; and Thomas Cooper Library Government Documents Department at USC in Columbia, SC.

Hard copies of the Action Memorandum (ARF # 016092; DOE Letter, ACP-09-176) are available at the following locations:

Reese Library at Augusta State University in Augusta, GA; and
Asa H. Gordon Library at Savannah State University in Savannah, GA.

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