10 Accomplishments of the USDA Forest Service-Savannah River (USFS-SR)

Fiscal Year 2017

Presenter:
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Purpose

To satisfy a Strategic & Legacy Management Committee 2018 Work Plan topic
Has over 70 employees who work in Engineering and Environmental Services; Fire Management and Fleet; Natural Resources; Operations; Public Affairs; Research; and Safety

Manages approximately 170,000 acres of natural resources on the Savannah River Site (SRS) under the terms of the Interagency Agreement DE-EM0003622 in support of the missions of the Department of Energy

Helps control nuisance animal populations and manages 65,000 acres for Red-cockaded Woodpecker habitat; annually completes over 20,000 acres of prescribed fire; maintains SRS secondary roads, boundary, and wellness trails

Through partnerships, conducts applied research; responsible for daily operation and maintenance of the Phytoremediation project; and hosts annual turkey hunt and fishing challenge for wounded veterans and mobility-impaired individuals

Fast Facts
Safety is involved in all aspects of work planning and project accomplishment. USFS-SR is an active participant in the DOE’s Integrated Safety Management System (ISMS).

In FY17, we

- Drove over 259,000 miles without a vehicle to vehicle accident, injury, or ticket.
- Worked over 174,000 hours with only one recordable injury.
In 1986, the site had a total population of **four** RCW. The current population stands at **556**. We presently manage **131** RCW clusters.

In FY17, we participated in the Southern Range Translocation Cooperative for RCW. Breeding data was shared, and we received six RCW to supplement our population. Additionally, we assisted Hitchcock Woods with RCW translocation.
Seven million cubic feet of timber is sold annually with an average of $5 million in revenue.
In FY17, we accomplished 27 prescribed burns on 7,158 acres helping us to meet our longleaf habitat improvement and hazardous fuels objectives.
• An average of 3,500 acres of forest are thinned annually.

• Ten acres of native flowering plants are annually sown in openings to enhance pollinator habitat where it was once lacking diversity.

• Since 1994, native grass plugs have been planted annually ranging from 20,000 to 130,000 plugs.
In FY17, we…

- supported the management of over 900 acres of closure sites.
- worked with Savannah River Nuclear Solutions (SRNS) on a new memorandum of understanding including eight Functional Service Agreements.
- worked with the Savannah River Ecology Lab (SREL) and DOE to revise compliance monitoring of employees while working in radiologically contaminated streams.
In FY17, coyote research studies have been published in *The Journal of Wildlife Management*. Studies and publications were done in collaboration with USDA Forest Service-Southern Research Station, University of Georgia-SREL, Auburn University, and/or the SC Department of Natural Resources. The findings follow:

- Despite conventional wisdom that coyote removal increases coyote reproduction and coyote population, our research indicates the reduction in average age reduces reproduction.
- Recruitment from coyote populations outside the area resulted in quick population recovery which eliminates the effectiveness of removal.
- Fawns are shown to be twice as likely to avoid predation if their home range has forest edge conditions.
Since 2005, over 9,000 feral hogs have been removed from the site with aid from nuisance wildlife control contractors.

We continue to closely work with the USDA Forest Service Southern Research Station and SREL to enable and assist feral hog research.
We worked with DOE and SRNL to complete a harvest plan to implement in FY18 to ensure the integrity of the roughness buffer above the National Lab. A diverse age class of trees was created to minimize catastrophic losses that could cost DOE $50 million.
In FY 17, we maintained over 1200 miles of secondary roads and 70 miles of wellness trails.
In FY17, we:

• Established a timber apprenticeship for Job Corps students
• Participated in various career fairs and made contact with over 2000 potential/future applicants
• Provided a three-day prescribed fire training for University of Georgia forestry students
• And then some…
Closing

We will continue to:

- uplift and empower employees.
- provide exceptional customer service.
- connect to communities.
- strengthen and empower partners.
- increase forest and rangeland management.

Questions?
The mission of the USDA Forest Service is to:

Sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation’s forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.