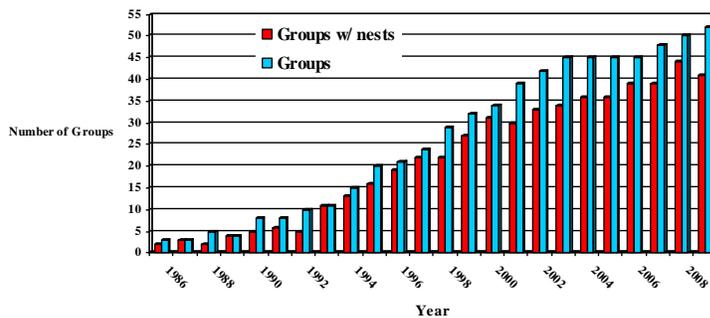


USDA Forest Service-Savannah River (USFS-SR) Fiscal Year 2009 Environmental Report

In support of the environmental stewardship mission, USFS-SR manages the natural resources at the United States Department of Energy’s (DOE) Savannah River Site (SRS). Operating under an interagency agreement with DOE-Savannah River Operations Office (DOE-SROO), USFS-SR follows SRS Strategic Plan goals and objectives to implement the SRS Natural Resources Management Plan.

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 (RCW) by removing 183 acres of brush and small hardwood vegetation in the longleaf pine forest. Additionally, the use of prescribed fire not only reduced hazardous forest fuel, but it also helped remove midstory vegetation in the longleaf pine forest. Successful habitat manipulation increased the number of active groups from two in 1986 to 45 in 2003, and to 52 in fiscal year 2009.



Number of red-cockaded woodpecker groups at SRS

Teaming with a number of universities, as well as the USDA Forest Service Research Stations, USFS-SR has added applied knowledge and understanding that supports our interagency agreement scope of work. The following examples are projects that have provided significant results:

- Provided downwind smoke monitoring data to the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control as it regulates SRS prescribed fire management under pending 2.5 micron particulate matter non-attainment conditions.
- Results from short rotation woody crops projects helped estimate yield and costs of feedstocks to support biomass power plant operations at SRS.
- Results from a study of vegetation control as part of Carolina Bay restoration at SRS supported the efficacy of treating wood shrubs and trees to enhance a category of wetland plants called facultative wetland species,.
- Results from several studies of overstory pine density on SRS savanna communities demonstrated the critical importance of pine density control on savanna plant diversity and the interaction with fire frequency.
- Results from the deer-fawn mortality study clearly demonstrated the major impacts of coyote predation on population levels at the SRS.

Reduced risk of catastrophic wildland fires at SRS through systematic and safe application of prescribed fire

USFS-SR improved safety and security through reduction of hazardous forest fuels across the SRS landscape by applying prescribed fire to 27,263 acres within the SRS boundary.

Excelled in safety and health performance

USFS-SR continued an excellent safety record. During 2009, the USFS-SR had zero lost-work-days due to injuries and three “Occupational Safety and Health Administration 300 Log” recordable injuries during 186498 hours worked and 366735 vehicle miles driven.

Continued Environmental Restoration

The Savannah River Site’s Soil and Groundwater Closure Projects phytoremediation pond, administered by USFS-SR, removed approximately 8.8 million gallons of tritiated water through evapotranspiration. This project employs a natural remedy, phytoremediation, using natural vegetative processes to reduce risk to the environment. Additionally, USFS-SR provided management of the vegetation throughout the year for 400 acres of caps, including mowing four times per year, pesticide and herbicide application, use of prescribed fire, and seeding. To allow access for SRS well monitoring, we also managed the vegetation at 1,200 well sites.

Maintained infrastructure systems in a safe and environmentally sound state of operational readiness

USFS-SR suppressed 11 SRS wildland fire incidents ranging in size from 0.25 acres to 79 acres. USFS-SR has provided additional protection from wildland fire to SRS and those communities bordering the SRS by responding to five mutual aid fires that potentially threatened SRS, ranging from one acre to 220 acres.

USFS-SR maintained the SRS secondary roads, including blading and application of calcium chloride to reduce dust, and constructed 5.85 miles of roads for timber harvesting. USFS-SR also maintained 32 miles of multipurpose trails, used primarily by SRS wellness programs. USFS-SR maintained 55 miles of SRS boundary fence, 30 miles of exterior boundary (discing), and 20 miles of river boundary. USFS-SR also posted no-trespass signs along the Lower Three Runs corridor to the Savannah River, as well as around the expanded Advanced Tactical Training Area Range boundary.

Communicated SRS stewardship

Outreach efforts to educate stakeholders about managing SRS natural resources reached over 600 individuals in fiscal year 2009, through *Take Our Children to Work Day* and the SRS Safety Conference. Public communication included news releases (one), elementary school visits and parades by *Smokey Bear* (15), and newsletters of monthly accomplishments. Internal and external planning and communications included participation in SRS Citizens Advisory Board Combined and Committee meetings. USFS-SR also provided support to the SRS Heritage Foundation and the Ellenton Heritage Trail committees interpreting the stewardship of the former private lands.



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