



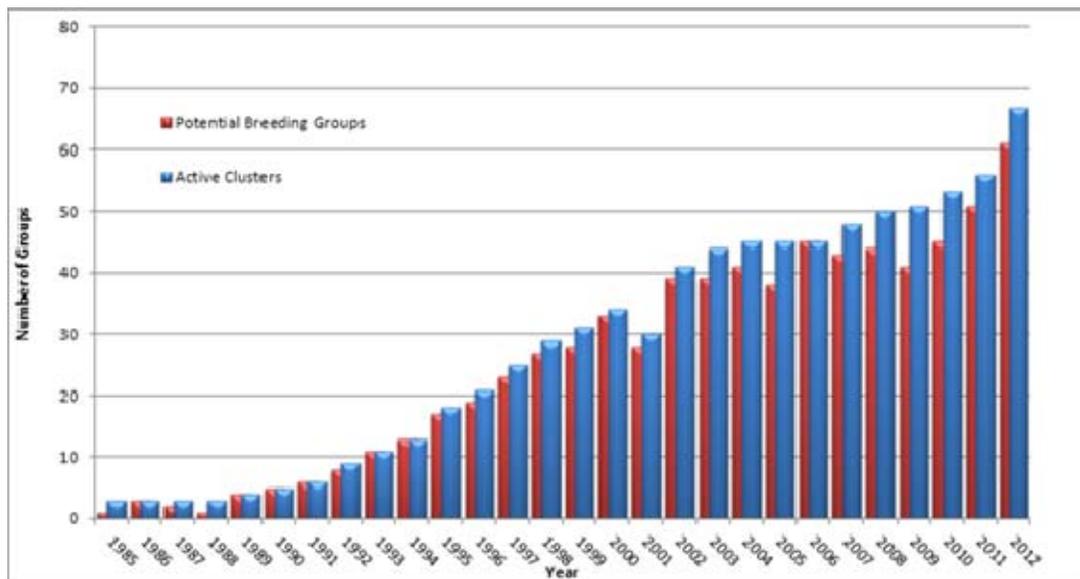
USDA Forest Service-Savannah River Fiscal Year 2012 Savannah River Site Environmental Report

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 2012.

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 341 acres of longleaf pine forest. Prescribed fire was used extensively to reduce hazardous fuels and to improve habitat on a large scale. Successful habitat restoration increased the number of active red-cockaded woodpecker clusters from three in 1985 to 67 in fiscal year 2012.



Number of red-cockaded woodpecker active clusters at SRS

Managed natural resources and harvested forest products

During fiscal year 2012, the USFS-SR sold 83.1 million cubic feet of forest products through active forest management . The sale of these forest products was conducted to meet security needs, encourage habitat development for TES species, promote forest health, and generate revenue. Management activities are implemented in support of the Site's nuclear mission and in compliance with best management practices.

Evaluated the effects of management on the environment

Through partnerships and collaborations 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 a precision spatial analysis of red-cockaded woodpecker foraging habitat using LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) technology. The approach was highlighted by US Fish and Wildlife Service as a novel method to quantify habitat for compliance over very large land areas.
- Continued monitoring of large spatial scale savanna restoration treatments in response to overstory harvesting and prescribed burning to demonstrate benefits to restoring the native plant communities. Initial results show the native plants respond positively to treatment.
- Completed an assessment of the hazardous wildfire fuel loading across the entire SRS in relation to a range of weather conditions. The results demonstrated the level of wildland fire behavior reduction from recent prescribed fire treatments.
- Monitored water quality, productivity and soil quality impacts from harvesting and intensive management as part of a national research grant by the DOE Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy on sustainability of intensive biofuel production systems.
- Completed field studies on the impact of coyotes on the SRS deer population that demonstrates that fawn mortality is strongly related to coyote predation. However, coyote control had minimal effect on fawn survival due to difficulty of achieving effective control.

Excelled in environmental and occupational safety and health performance

During fiscal year 2012, USFS-SR had no restricted workdays due to injury, no lost workdays due to injuries and three Occupational Safety and Health Administration 300 Log recordable injuries. Employees and contractors reported 321,066 hours worked and 358,768 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 Jan. 28, 2013.

Continued environmental restoration

The Savannah River Site's Soil and Groundwater Closure Projects, administered by USFS-SR, treated approximately 8.5 million gallons of tritiated water. Pond levels were extremely low due to a dry winter. This project employs a natural remedy (phytoremediation), using vegetative processes, to reduce risk to the environment. Additionally, throughout the year USFS-SR managed 4,288 acres

of vegetation caps through mowing, pesticide and herbicide application, prescribed fire and seeding. Vegetation was managed at 4,415 well sites, allowing easier access for SRS water and well monitoring.

Safely maintained infrastructure in an environmentally sound state of operational readiness

USFS-SR maintained more than 1,097 miles of SRS secondary roads, including blading and calcium chloride application for dust abatement, constructed 4.6 miles of secondary roads, and constructed a .5 acre parking lot at MOX in support of site activities. USFS-SR also maintained 22 miles of multipurpose trails, used primarily by SRS wellness programs, as well as 55 miles of boundary fence, 30 miles of exterior boundary (disking) and 12 miles of boundary along the Savannah River, including replacement of six signs.

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

In fiscal year 2012, fire management burned 24,645 acres of hazardous fuel and suppressed 11 wildfires totaling 22 acres.

Smokey Bear went to 18 local elementary schools, visiting 1,430 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, and SRS Safety Blitz. Public communication included various newsletters touting monthly accomplishments, as well as a presence at community events, including the Atomic City festival 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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