



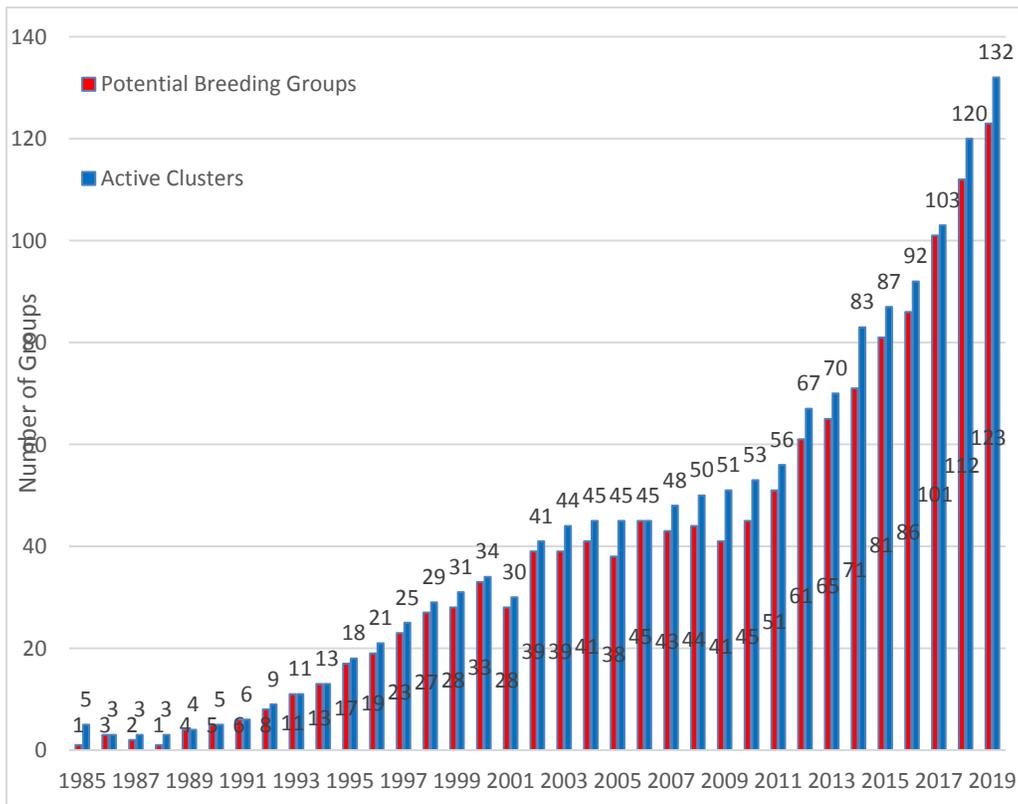
USDA Forest Service-Savannah River Fiscal Year 2018 Savannah River Site Environmental Report

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

The following initiatives and accomplishments reflect the various ways in which USFS-SR worked to implement the plan in fiscal year 2018.

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 thinning over 250 acres of forest through timber sales, removing brush and small hardwood vegetation from over 50 acres in woodpecker habitat. This is a reduction in brush removal acres relative to previous years and is a result of the effective use of timber sales to treat a considerable portion of understory. Prescribed fire also was used extensively to reduce hazardous fuels and to improve habitat on a larger scale. Successful habitat restoration increased the number of active red-cockaded woodpecker clusters from three in 1985 to 120 in fiscal year 2018.



Additionally, nine golden eagles were observed scavenging at SRS. This reclusive species was previously thought to come down only to the Appalachian Mountains during its winter migration. Two new wetland locations of the endangered pond berry also was found on SRS.

Managed natural resources and harvested forest products

The USFS-SR sold 76 million cubic feet of forest products through active forest management. Forest 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 and continue to be implemented in support of the Site's nuclear mission and in compliance with best management practices.

Evaluated the effects of management on the environment

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

- Effects of harvesting trees on pollinator species and abundance on former agriculture lands and areas not previously farmed were determined. Harvesting approximately doubled the number of species and their abundance.
- Cooperators closed out a baseline assessment of SRS streams that details impacts of pre-SRS land use on current stream conditions which can identify restoration and mitigation opportunities for the future.
- Red-cockaded woodpecker foraging habitat was analyzed relative to the bird behavior and population reproduction rates and relative to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service guidelines. The results will be used to revise management.
- Site productivity models were developed and mapped for the entire forest landscape at SRS to provide standards for estimating potential harvests for major forest species.

Excelled in environmental and occupational safety and health performance

The USFS-SR had two Occupational Safety and Health Administration 300 Log recordable injuries. Employees and contractors reported 220,000 total hours worked. USFS-SR employees had 265,000 vehicle-miles driven with only 1 citation written.

The USFS-SR continued its partnership with other site tenants to ensure effective implementation of environmental safety and health by actively participating in the DOE Integrated Safety Management System (ISMS). The Integrated Safety Management Integration Council (ISMIC) Charter was signed further reaffirming the USFS-SR commitment to occupational safety and environmental stewardship.

Continued environmental restoration

The Mixed Waste Management Facility Phytoremediation Project, one of SRS's Area Closure Projects which is operated and maintained by USFS-SR, treated approximately 15 million gallons of tritiated water. This project employs a natural remedy (phytoremediation), using vegetative processes to reduce risk to the environment.

Additionally, USFS-SR managed 4,476 acres of vegetation caps and 7,743 monitoring well sites through mowing; pesticide and herbicide application; prescribed fire; and seeding. This allows SRS personnel to continue the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) mandated water and groundwater monitoring.

Safely maintained infrastructure in an environmentally sound state of operational readiness

USFS-SR completed maintenance on 1,000 miles of SRS secondary roads and 70 miles of exterior boundary fence. Normal maintenance activities performed include; blading and calcium chloride application for dust abatement for roads and fence repair and trespass warning sign replacements for the exterior boundary.

USFS-SR constructed 0.80 miles of secondary roads and replaced two culverts in support of site activities and maintained 55 miles of multipurpose trails used primarily by SRS wellness programs. Thirty miles of Site boundary along the Savannah River was inspected and maintained, including replacement of trespass warning signs.

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

USFS-SR, fire management burned 22 prescribed burns for 11,027 acres of hazardous fuel reduction and suppressed two wildfires totaling 0.4 acres.

Smokey Bear went to 24 local elementary schools and programs visiting 8,535 children and adults. Forest Service staff met new contacts for the following events: the annual Atomic City Festival in New Ellenton, Augusta Hispanic Festival and Sassafras festival.

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 Ultimate Fishing Challenge, and SRS Safety Blitz. Public communication included various reports showcasing monthly accomplishments, as well as a presence at community events, including the City of Aiken's Earth Day Celebration, Atomic City festival and the New Ellenton Christmas parade. Internal and external planning and communications included participation in the SRS Citizens Advisory Board combined and committee meetings.

USDA Forest Service–Savannah River

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Savannah River