



FACTS

ABOUT THE SAVANNAH RIVER SITE

USDA Forest Service-Savannah River (USFS-SR)

USFS-SR manages the natural resources of the Savannah River Site (SRS) under the terms of the Interagency Agreement DE-AI09-00SR22188 in support of the missions of the Department of Energy (DOE).

SRS occupies 198,344 acres in west central South Carolina. Only 15,924 acres are used for industrial missions, including the cooling ponds. About 14,005 acres are reserved for nonmanipulative, ecological research. The USFS-SR manages the remaining 168,415 acres for a variety of natural resources. Management is designed to demonstrate excellence in environmental stewardship, provide natural resource information to the DOE science base, and provide cost effective, flexible programs to support SRS missions. Objectives for this management are found in the Natural Resources Management Plan for the Savannah River Site, <http://www.srs.gov/general/pubs/nrmp/nrmp.pdf>

A primary program of USFS-SR is the restoration of habitats native to SRS that will also improve the habitat for Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive (TES) species. A success story of habitat management is the increasing population of the Red-cockaded woodpecker, a Federally endangered species endemic to pine forests of the Southeast. Despite the young age of the SRS pine forest, USFS-SR and partners have implemented strategies and technologies in the longleaf pine habitat resulting in a growth from four birds in 1985 to over 190 birds in 2007.

Approximately 90% of SRS is now forested. As USFS-SR manages the forested areas to restore ecosystems that originally occupied the site, the Site visitor will observe several silvicultural methods in use. These methods, including mechanical thinning and clear-cutting, is based on existing biological and physical conditions. Larger clear-cuts will be made, primarily near industrial areas, to remove all slash pine trees, allowing planting of native longleaf and loblolly pines. In recently harvested areas, sites will be prepared for planting with appropriate species. This preparation will include using herbicides, mechanical methods and/or prescribed fire. The results of such management include forests with lower susceptibility to insects, diseases, and damage from catastrophic events, such as ice storms.

Prescribed fire reduces hazardous natural fuel accumulations, resulting in improved biological diversity of fire-dependent plant species. To accomplish these conditions, USFS-SR uses prescribed fire on an average of 20,000 acres annually, primarily during the dormant winter months. USFS-SR communicates with SRS employees and the public bordering SRS to prepare for possible smoke from prescribed fire. Additionally, USFS-SR maintains year-round initial wildland fire suppression capabilities.

To learn more about SRS natural resource activities, visit <http://www.srs.gov/general/srfs/srfs.htm> or contact:

Tiajuana Cochnauer, tcochnauer@fs.fed.us
USFS-SR Assistant Manager, Information and External Relations
803-725-0006

WASHINGTON SAVANNAH RIVER COMPANY

The WSRC Team: Washington Savannah River Company LLC • Bechtel Savannah River, Inc. • BNG America Savannah River Corporation • BWXT Savannah River Company • CH2 Savannah River Company