



Environmental Bulletin

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from the Savannah River Site

Revised FONSI signed

Natural Resources Management continues at SRS

A revised Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was signed by the Department of Energy (DOE) on April 28, 2000. DOE prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) (DOE/EA-0826) in 1993 to analyze the potential environmental impacts of continued management of natural resources at SRS. Recently, the site's red-cockaded woodpecker (RCW) Management Plan was revised by the U. S. Forest Service Savannah River Natural Resource Management and Research Institute and approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The details of the proposed new plan and revised FONSI were presented in the July 14, 1998 (Vol. 9, No. 11) and March 30, 2000 (Vol. 11, No. 5) issues of the *SRS Environmental Bulletin*, respectively.

Based on the information and analyses in the EA, DOE has determined that impacts of revised RCW management plan are bounded by those described by the existing EA and do not constitute a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment within the meaning of the National Environmental Policy Act. Therefore, DOE has issued the revised FONSI.

If you wish to request a copy of the revised FONSI, or the original EA and FONSI, please contact: Andrew R. Grainger, NEPA Compliance Officer, U. S. Department of Energy, Savannah River Operations Office, Building 742-A, Room 185, Aiken, SC 29808 e-mail: nepa@srs.gov; telephone: 1-800-881-7292.

Please Join Us

The Savannah River Site (SRS) Citizens Advisory Board's Waste Management Committee is hosting a public workshop on the status of the SRS Consolidated Incineration Facility (CIF).

Agenda items include discussions and an opportunity for you to provide comments on CIF operations.

Please join us on June 5, 2000 from 1 - 4 p.m. at the Savannah River Site, Building 703-41A, Rainbow Rooms.

For further information, please contact:

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Consolidated Incineration Facility *Public Workshop*

June 5, 2000
1 - 4 p.m.

Savannah River Site
Aiken, SC
Building 703-41A
Rainbow Rooms

Meeting held in Savannah, GA

SRS CAB makes five recommendations in May

Recommendation No. 122 – Total Maximum Daily Loads

The Savannah River Site Citizens Advisory CAB (SRS CAB) recommended that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) formally request an extension of no less than 6-10 months to a court imposed date regarding total maximum daily loads (TMDL) for mercury in the Savannah River Basin. The CAB recommended that EPA take this time to collect analytical data from the Savannah River to formulate a more site specific TMDL using this data instead of fish advisory data to evaluate whether the middle/lower Savannah River Basin needs to be placed on the impaired waters body list. The SRS CAB also asked DOE to identify which SRS outfalls can currently meet the proposed TMDL limit without further treatment; those that will require further treatment; potential treatment technologies available; and costs to comply with the proposed TMDL.

Recommendation No. 123 – Whole Effluent Toxicity Testing Impacts on SRS Wastewater Outfalls

Concerned that the Whole Effluent Toxicity (WET) Test method used for controlling toxic pollutants in wastewater discharges may be unreliable and inaccurate, the SRS CAB requested information regarding an Alternate Species Investigation Plan and Toxicity Identification Evaluations. The CAB is interested in making cost comparisons and evaluating whether a proposed alternate species would be better suited for the WET test method.

Recommendation No. 112 Amended – Selection of HLW Salt Processing Alternative

The SRS CAB amended a previous recommendation to request that DOE develop a decision tree that outlines how DOE would address a schedule slippage in selecting an alternative

salt processing technology. The goal would be to ensure that any schedule slippage would not affect HLW tank space needs, regulatory commitments or other SRS activities. The SRS CAB wants DOE to focus on selecting an alternative technology as quickly as possible; the CAB feels, however, it is also imperative that potential impacts from delays be addressed as real possibilities and contingencies identified to avoid construction of new HLW tanks or delays in closing existing tanks.

Recommendation No. 124 – DWPF Canister Storage

The CAB recommended that DOE reevaluate the scope of a project for an alternative method for storage of glass waste canisters for the Defense Waste Processing Facility. The CAB recommends that before DOE decides on which approach (a second glass waste storage building or dry above ground storage), they reassess the project scope based on general and specific CAB comments. Many of the general comments focus on an escrow account and the ability of a vendor to revert disposal responsibility back to DOE.

Recommendation No. 125 – WIPP RCRA Permit Modification-Miscertification Rate

As noted in previous recommendations, the SRS CAB remains concerned that the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) Permit for the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) requires too many visual and intrusive examinations to assay containers, which are unnecessary and pose a danger to SRS workers. The SRS CAB supports requested modifications to reduce the miscertification rate from 11 percent to one percent and recommended DOE request an additional modification to have the rate reduced to its originally proposed one percent rate.

The Environmental Bulletin - Electronically?

Currently, the *SRS Environmental Bulletin* is distributed through the U.S. mail by paper copy to approximately 2600 people. In an effort to ensure information gets to the public in a more timely manner and to save labor, duplication and mailing costs, SRS proposes to distribute the *Bulletin* through electronic mail. The *Bulletin* would be sent in a PDF file in Adobe Acrobat to those people wishing to receive the document electronically. You must have Adobe Acrobat Reader to open the file, but it is free and can be accessed on the Internet. You can download Adobe Acrobat Reader via Netscape by typing <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep.html> and following the installation steps

If you do agree to receive the document electronically, please write your e:mail address on the form on the back of this *Bulletin* and mail it to the address listed OR send your e:mail address to nepa@srs.gov. Many addresses are currently on file and will be used unless a paper copy is specifically requested. We will continue mailing a paper copy if we do not have a record of your e:mail address.

Current NEPA actions affecting SRS

- **Construction and Operation of the Highly Enriched Uranium Blend-Down Facilities at the Savannah River Site (DOE/EA-1322),**

The EA evaluates the potential environmental consequences associated with construction and operation of a low enriched uranium (LEU) loading station and modifications to existing facilities at SRS. The proposed action would support delivery of LEU (converted from off-specification highly enriched uranium) to the Tennessee Valley Authority. The public comment period ended on May 24, 2000. A FONSI is expected to be issued in June 2000.

- **Offsite Transportation of Certain Low-Level and Mixed Radioactive Waste from SRS for Treatment and Disposal at Commercial Facilities (DOE/EA-1308),**

The EA will analyze the potential environmental consequences associated with shipping low-level and mixed low-level waste to treatment facilities in Idaho, Tennessee, Texas and Washington and subsequently to Nevada and Utah for disposal. This draft EA is expected in June 2000.

- **Revised FONSI for the Natural Resource Management Activities at SRS EA (DOE/EA-0826),** In 1993, DOE prepared an EA and issued a FONSI for the continued management of natural resources at SRS. In a revision to the SRS Natural Resources Plan, DOE was to continue protection and recovery activities for federally listed, threatened and endangered animals. The red-cockaded woodpecker (RCW) was one of the endangered species. The impacts in the revised plan are no greater than described in the 1993 EA, therefore an EIS is not required and a revised FONSI is sufficient. The revised FONSI was distributed in May 2000.

- **Evaluate an Alternate Approach for the Defense Waste Processing Facility (DWPF) Glass Waste Canister Storage Facility at SRS (DOE/EA-1327),**

The EA evaluates potential environmental consequences associated with building and operating an onsite above-ground concrete pad for casks containing DWPF canisters. The storage casks would be made using SRS's inventory of depleted uranium trioxide powder. The extended public comment period on the draft EA ended on May 29, 2000. If the project scope is revised, DOE would revise the EA accordingly.

- **SRS High Level Waste (HLW) Tank Closure (DOE/EIS-0303),**

The proposed action is to close the SRS HLW Tanks in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, DOE Orders and SCDHEC permit requirements. The draft EIS is expected in July, 2000.

- **SRS Spent Nuclear Fuel Management (DOE/EIS-0279),**

This EIS evaluates management strategies using existing, modified and new facilities or processes for spent nuclear fuel assigned to SRS. Foreign and domestic receipts of SNF and fuel stored at SRS totaling 68 metric tons through 2014 were addressed. The final EIS was released on April 14 with melt and dilute listed as the preferred alternative. The ROD is expected in June 2000.

- **SRS Salt Disposition Alternative SEIS (DOE/EIS-0082-S2),**

The proposed action is to construct and operate a process to replace In-Tank Precipitation as part of the SRS High Level Waste Management System. This SEIS is being restarted. A new schedule is under development, with a draft expected in November 2000.

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The SRS

Environmental Bulletin

For more information on this or other environmental and compliance activities at SRS, please contact:

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Access the Environmental Notice web site:
[http://www.SRS.GOV/general/srenviro/
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