



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF  
**ENERGY**

***Presentation to the SRS CAB  
Strategic & Legacy Management Committee***

***Savannah River Site  
National Environmental Research Park***

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**EM** *Environmental Management*  
safety ♦ performance ♦ cleanup ♦ closure

# Acronyms

- **AEC**            **Atomic Energy Commission**
- **AMCP**        **Assistant Manager Closure Project**
- **DOE**         **Department of Energy**
- **EQMD**       **Environmental Quality Management Division**
- **FY**            **Federal fiscal year**
- **NERP**        **National Environmental Research Park**
- **SRS**          **Savannah River Site**
- **USFS-SR**   **U.S. Forest Service –Savannah River**



# NERP Origins

## ➤ **Background**

- Large, isolated sites were needed to support Cold War nuclear materials and weapons production
- Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) wanted to track radioactive fallout and inadvertent releases from its facilities
- 1970 multiple-agency report to the President - “Protecting the World Environment in the Light of Population Increase”
- Report encouraged Federal agencies to accelerate efforts to set aside locations for ecological research and wildlife preservation
- Acting on this, the AEC decided to open selected sites to outside researchers
- SRS designated by AEC as its first National Environmental Research Park (NERP)
- Diverse habitats, controlled access, existing monitoring /environmental studies, and facility operations



# *NERP Locations and Ecoregions*

## ➤ Definition

- A DOE land holding; and
- Outdoor laboratory open to environmental research

## ➤ Locations

1. Savannah River (1972) - Southeastern plains
2. Los Alamos (1973) - Juniper-pinyon & grassland
3. Idaho (1975) - Sagebrush steppe
4. Oak Ridge (1980) - Eastern deciduous forest
5. Hanford (1983) - Sagebrush-steppe
6. Fermilab (1989) - Tall grass prairie
7. Nevada (1992) - Desert shrub



# *NERP Objectives*

- The NERP Charter (2003) guidance:
  1. Develop methods to assess and monitor the environmental impact of human activities
  2. Develop methods to estimate or predict the environmental response to proposed and ongoing activities
  3. Demonstrate the impact of various activities and evaluate methods to minimize these environmental impacts
  4. Train people in ecological and environmental sciences
  5. Help educate the public on environmental issues



# *NERP Activities at SRS*

- SRS planning documents continue to recognize and support the SRS NERP.
  - DOE's Natural Resources Management Plan (2005)
  - DOE's SRS Strategic Plan (2009)
- SREL provides key support to the SRS NERP.
  - Park Point-of-Contact for SRS NERP (DOE Web Site)
  - Manage and monitor 30 DOE Research Set-Aside Areas
  - Environmental research, data sets, and publications
  - Logistical support for off-site research
- Other Site organizations also provide environmental research, data sets, and logistical support.



# *Recent Events*

- June 9, 2009 – Dr. Whit Gibbons (SREL, emeritus professor) spoke about the SRS NERP at a hearing, “Environmental Research at the Department of Energy,” of the Subcommittee on Energy and Environment of the House Committee on Science and Technology.
- The House of Representatives approved a NERP bill (H.R. 2729).
  - Secretary of Energy to designate SRS as one of six protected outdoor research reserves.
  - Site to enter into a cooperative agreement with a regional university, college, or consortium to ensure independence of NERP activities.
  - Site to support environmental research and monitoring activities.
  - Site to support an ecological outreach program.
  - Office of Science to coordinate NERP efforts across the DOE-Complex.
- H.R.2729 would also appropriate \$5 million/site/year, for five years beginning in FY2010 to implement these activities.



# *What's Next?*

- For now - all existing SRS NERP activities continue
  - Some public concern on whether or not H.R. 2729 could prohibit or complicate future missions
  - Monitor ongoing NERP legislation
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- For more information:
  - <http://nerp.esd.ornl.gov/index.html>
  - <http://www.srel.edu/NERP/description.html>
  - <http://www.srel.edu> (link to “Savannah River NERP”)

