



United States Department of Agriculture

USDA

Forest Service - Savannah River

Forest Manager
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Forest Service

CAB Presentation
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USDA Forest Service – Savannah River



- We are USDA Forest Service-Savannah River. We are stewards of the land. Through collaboration, we develop and implement innovative, science-based forest management. We convene with key stakeholders across all lands to provide clean air, water, and healthy, sustainable forests.
- While supporting the Department of Energy-Savannah River Site Mission, we instill public confidence while being recognized as a national asset in environmental stewardship through innovative technology. We serve the public by providing ecological and economic benefits. We provide excellent customer service while focusing on integration of all activities.
- Our employees are our most valuable resource. We are committed to developing an inclusive and diverse workforce in a safe environment. We provide unique and rewarding opportunities for all our employees.
- We are USDA Forest Service-Savannah River.

USDA Forest Service – Savannah River

Established in 1952 via a contract with the DOE to help reforest and manage the natural resources on the land that would eventually become Savannah River Site

- Over 65% of this land had been cleared and extensively used for crop production.
- Initial contract involved the planting of 10 million trees across the site. Initial work completed in 1953.



Contract established the partnership that still exist today

- We support the DOE mission on SRS via a Natural Resource Management Plan that is jointly reviewed and agreed upon before implementation.
 - Plan covers all aspects of natural resources management on the site.
 - Provides the framework to support DOE missions and objectives within applicable laws, regulations, DOE orders and policies.
 - Funded by an interagency agreement between the USDA and DOE.



USDA Forest Service - Savannah River Program Areas

- Natural Resources
 - wildlife, botany, and timber management
- Fire Management
- Research
- Engineering and Environment and Services
- Operations
- Safety
- Public Affairs

Member of

- SE Gulf Atlantic Coast Sub Region
- Shared Stewardship Forestry Agreement with South Carolina



USDA Forest Service - Savannah River Outreach Programs



- Partnered with DOE and the National Wild Turkey Federation to host Veteran and Mobility Impaired
 - Wild Turkey Hunts
 - Fishing Tournaments
- Fire Prevention elementary school programs
 - Resumed pre-COVID-19 programs this current school year.
- Partnership with SREL for Let's Grow Pollinator Grant
 - Provides funding for school-based pollinator gardens and other program connecting people to their outdoors and public lands.
 - Since 2018, various programs reached over 20,000 CSRA residents
- Community parades and festivals and fairs
 - SC State Fair
 - Memorial Day Parade
 - Sassafras Festival
 - SEED STEM Event
 - JROTC STEM event
 - DOE Safety Expo
 - Career Expo's

USDA Forest Service - Savannah River Outreach Programs



- Environmental Education
 - Recent Spooky Forest event where kids learned about wildlife in the forest and how to better interact (or not) with them, how insects and bugs can support life in a forest, and how good fire can help a forest thrive.
- Future planned events include
 - Dove Hunting event at Crackerneck
 - First Responder fishing tournament
- Ongoing discussions
 - Future interpretive trails
 - Tours of natural resource management activities

USDA Forest Service Savannah River Staffing

- Approximately 35 vacant positions ranging from GS-03 to GS-12
 - Currently have 68 positions filled out of a 103 total
- Vacancies are affecting every program area
- Local actions taken to help meet our responsibility to the DOE
 - Cross functional area support and staffing
 - Prioritization of tasks
 - Continuing to use contracts when possible
- Steps taken to remedy vacancies
 - Agency shift to coordinated national hiring events
 - Working closely with USFS Regional Recruitment Team to prioritize hard to fill vacancies
 - Renewing outreach events locally, regionally, and nationally
(HBCU's, SAF, Wildlife, Fire, YCC, Job Corps, etc.)





How we support the mission of SRS

- Provide marketable timber to support the national treasury and local economy.
 - U.S Treasury receipts from Timber Sales averages around \$4 million dollars annually.
 - Harvested timber is sold to various timber and paper companies as well as power generating facilities (Ameresco).
- Manage 8 federally listed Threatened, Endangered, or Sensitive Species
 - Red-Cockaded Woodpecker population on site has risen from 4 birds in 1986 to 550 in latest FY-22 count.

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- Partner with SRNS to operate national award-winning Phytoremediation facility on site.
 - 62-acre irrigation system helps remove Tritium from groundwater protecting drinking water supply for 2 million SC and GA residents for over 20 years.
 - Has saved approximately \$168 million dollars when compared to other treatment methods. (\$600,000 a year versus \$9 million) and achieved significantly better Tritium reduction results.
(80% versus 25%)



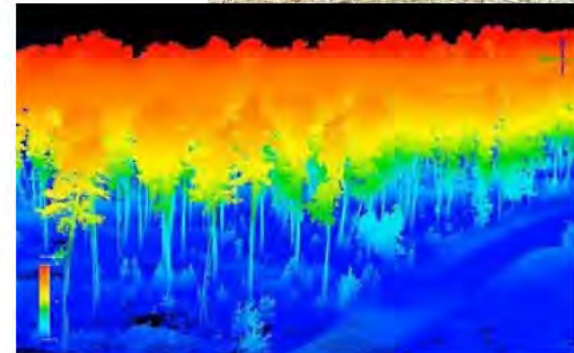
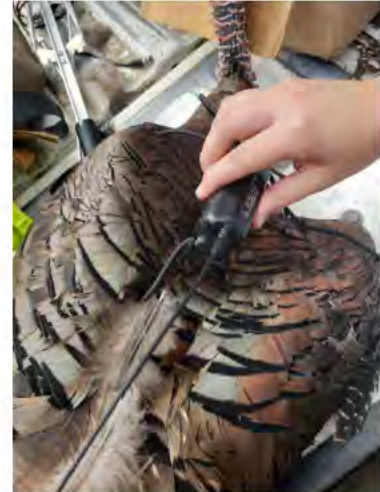
USDA Forest Service – Savannah River



- Help control nuisance animal populations on the site.
 - USDA Forest Service Savannah River provides the Savannah River Site and its on-site cooperators with a 24 hour, 7 days a week response service to remove wildlife that are impacting work operations or creating some other form of hazard on site.
 - Since program began over three-years ago, we have responded to over 800 calls from site employees.
 - In addition to responding to calls about animals impacting work areas, USFS personnel and contractors have removed approximately 12,000 feral hogs from the site since 2005.

USDA Forest Service – Savannah River

- Partner with over 15 universities across the nation and other federal entities to conduct award winning research programs on site that support the site's designation as a National Environmental Research Park.
- Recent research studies include:
 - Use of Non-Merchantable Timber as a biofuel fuel source
 - LIDAR vegetation analysis
 - Improve sustainability and reforestation efficiency on SRS
 - Reproductive ecology of wild turkeys
 - Coyote abundance patterns across South Carolina



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- Wildfire Suppression

- Agreement with SCFC, NPS, USFWS and Francis Marion and Sumter NF to assist with fire preparedness, training, and protection within the geographic fire danger area.
- Locally, USFS firefighters responded to 9 wildfires this past FY totaling 25 acres.
 - (7 fires on-site and 2 mutual aid fires)
- Provided direct support for the national wildfire firefighting effort.
- Provided fire module training (on-site) for UGA, USFS Crews, Nature Conservancy, and students from National Prescribed Fire Training Center.



USDA Forest Service – Savannah River



- Targeted use of Prescribed Fire
 - Involves two seasons of work (Dormant and Growing seasons)
 - Majority of burns are completed during the dormant season (November through March)
 - Completed 42 prescribed fires this past FY totaling close to 20,000 acres.
 - Hazardous Fuel reduction
 - Habitat improvement
 - Site prep (future seedlings)
 - Research

Prescribed Fire (con't)

- Each fire is planned and approved by Forest Manager in advance
 - (Also approved by DOE).
- Only initiated when observed conditions match state air quality standards.
- Smoke levels are monitored during and after burn in Smoke Sensitive Areas adjacent to the burn to measure smoke impacts and conditions are relayed to Burn Officials.
- Notifications made: *(Mandatory – roughly 350 notifications over the past year)*
 - SCFC
 - SC DHEC
 - County Dispatch Offices where burn is occurring based on location on site. (Aiken or Barnwell)
 - Self-Identified smoke sensitive individuals that are adjacent to planned burn area.
 - SRS Operations Center as well as DOE/USFS Representatives
 - USFS – SR Social media (Over 2000 RX-Twitter impressions/views over the same period)





Prescribed Fire (Future Actions)

- Initiate pre-season messaging informing the public of planned actions and provide means to allow additions to One Call notification system.
- Work with nearby media outlets to raise awareness of planned prescribed fire actions and benefits.
- Continue working with adjacent homeowners to ensure mutual understanding of forest work (RX Fire and Timber operations) being done and minimize impacts when possible.
 - Continuation of success achieved with Three Runs HOA
- Procure and work with the community to install additional Air Quality Monitors (AQM's) to allow the public and fire managers real-time air quality readings from possible RX fire smoke.
 - Several are already online for real-time public viewing. (**Purple Air Website**)



USDA Forest Service – Savannah River

USDA Forest Service – Savannah River was awarded two 2022 Southern region Regional Forester Awards

Improving and maintaining desired ecological conditions and restoring health and resiliency across landscapes and watersheds

- Innovative Alternatives for Harvesting Non-merchantable Stems to Improve Sustainability and Reforestation Efficiency

Restoring and maintaining surface water quality on and from forested landscape

- Phytoremediation Project Team





Questions?
