



Environmental Bulletin

Volume 14, Number 7
April 7, 2003

from the Savannah River Site

Public Invited to Comment

Hazardous Waste Permit Modification Requested

The United States Department of Energy (DOE) Savannah River Operations Office has requested from the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) modifications to the 1995 Savannah River Site (SRS) Hazardous and Mixed Waste Permit, Module IIIC and IIID for the F- and H-Area Hazardous Waste Management Facilities (HWMFs). This request will allow SRS to pursue alternate technologies to pump and treat for groundwater remediation.

The DOE Savannah River Operations Office has also requested from SCDHEC modifications to SRS's 1992 Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) Part B Permit Renewal Application for Volumes IV and V. These modifications include changes to the F- and H-Area HWMFs corrective action groundwater monitoring programs.

The revisions (Revision 18 of Volume IV and Revision 19 of Volume V) include proposing new corrective action effectiveness monitoring wells and eliminating a number of existing plume assessment wells to support the corrective action engineering designs contained therein.

A new access gate at the H-Area HWMF is also included in Revision 19 to Volume V to accommodate post closure maintenance activities. Addition of this gate constitutes a Class 1 modification that does not require SCDHEC approval prior to implementation.

This notice begins a 60-day comment period. More information, including the actual permit applications, is available for review and copying at the DOE Public Reading Room located in the University of South Carolina (USC)-

Aiken campus in Aiken, SC or by contacting personnel identified in this notice. SRS's compliance history during the life of the permit being modified is available from SCDHEC.

A public meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 29, 2003 at 3:00 PM at the Aiken County Public Library. Representatives from SRS will be available to answer questions on the modifications. For additional information, contact Jim Moore, Westinghouse Savannah River Company, Savannah River Site, 742-A, Aiken, SC 29808 or by calling 1-800-249-8155 or email: jim02.moore@srs.gov.

Written comments may be sent to SCDHEC. All comments will be considered in the final decision. Please send your comments to J. T. Litton, Director, Division of Waste Management, South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, 2600 Bull Street, Columbia, SC 29201-1708

Public Meeting

Tuesday, April 29, 2003

3:00 PM

Aiken County Public Library

314 Chesterfield Street S

Representatives from SRS will be available to answer questions on the modifications.

Current NEPA Actions Affecting SRS

- ***Disposition of Scrap Metals Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) (DOE/EIS-0327)***

This Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) will evaluate alternatives for disposition of scrap metals from DOE sites that may have been in radiological areas. The disposition options to be analyzed include continuation of the suspension on unrestricted release of metals for recycling, unrestricted release of scrap metals for recycling, and disposal. The Notice of Intent (NOI) for this PEIS was issued on July 12, 2001. A public scoping meeting was held on July 31, 2001, in North Augusta, SC. The draft PEIS is scheduled to be available during April 2003 and the final PEIS is projected for September 2003.

- ***Supplemental PEIS on Stockpile Stewardship and Management for a Modern Pit Facility (DOE/EIS-0236-S2)***

This PEIS will evaluate alternative sites (Los Alamos National Laboratory, Nevada Test Site, Pantex Plant, Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, and Savannah River Site) for a Modern Pit Facility, to provide the capability to manufacture plutonium pits for the United States nuclear weapons stockpile. This PEIS will be followed by a site-specific EIS to address the impacts of construction and operation of the Modern Pit Facility at the selected site. The NOI for this PEIS was issued on September 23, 2002. A local public scoping meeting was held on October 29, 2002, in North Augusta, SC. The draft PEIS is scheduled to be available in May 2003, the final PEIS projected for March 2004, and the Record of Decision scheduled for April 2004.

- ***Supplement Analysis (SA), Changes Needed to the Surplus Plutonium Disposition Program (DOE/EIS-0283-SA1)***

The SA evaluates the impacts of making Plutonium (Pu) feed for the Mixed Oxide Fuel Fabrication Facility from approximately 6.5 metric tons of Pu materials originally intended for Immobilization. The SA explains how these

impacts have been addressed in the Storage and Disposition PEIS (DOE/EIS-0229) and the Surplus Plutonium Disposition EIS (DOE/EIS-0283). The SA and amended Record of Decision (ROD) are in the concurrence process at DOE-HQ.

- ***Supplement Analysis (SA), Disposition of Certain Nuclear Materials (DOE/EIS-0220-SA4)***

The SA evaluates the impacts of disposing of certain materials, including cobalt-60 and thulium-170, as waste, and provides the basis for determining if this existing EIS should be supplemented, a new EIS should be prepared, or no further NEPA documentation is required. The SA compares the materials and the proposed disposal of the materials, to the materials and disposal technologies evaluated in the SRS Waste Management EIS (DOE/EIS-0217) and the Interim Management of Nuclear Materials EIS (DOE/EIS-0220). The determination and related SA will be made available to the public for information. An amended ROD will be prepared as appropriate. The SA is scheduled to be available during April 2003.

- ***Natural Resources Management Activities at SRS (DOE/EA-0826)***

DOE prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) in 1993 to analyze the potential environmental impacts of continued management of SRS natural resources. Based on the analyses in the EA, DOE determined the proposed action was not a major Federal action significantly affecting the human environment within the meaning of NEPA, and issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). In 2000, DOE issued a revised FONSI that determined implementation of a revised red-cockaded woodpecker Management Plan would have impacts no greater than those described in the 1993 EA. DOE now proposes a second revised FONSI which will address minor differences between the 1991 and the next version of the SRS Natural Resources Management Plan (NRMP). The NEPA review is on hold until the next version of the NRMP is finalized.

SRS CAB Supports Designation for National Environmental Research Park

The SRS Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) expressed its support for maintaining SRS as a designated National Environmental Research Park (NERP). During the March 25 CAB meeting in Augusta, GA, members of the CAB voted to support a resolution by which DOE is asked to continue to conduct and sponsor activities for ecological research and wildlife preservation as well as to maintain the existing boundaries of SRS under Federal government control in perpetuity.

NERPs are locations where ecological studies can be conducted without fear of uncontrolled access to a study site and where studies can be conducted on the interaction of industrial facilities and the environment. NERPs also serve as locations containing habitats where native species thrive and endangered, threatened, and sensitive plants and animals are protected. A NERP designation allows scientists from other government agencies, universities, and private foundations to use the site as a protected outdoor laboratory without interference with the site's missions.

SRS was first designated a NERP in 1972. It is a land area of 310 square miles, but only 10 percent of the land

has been used for production facilities. The balance of the site has been used for a security and safety buffer, wildlife enhancement, timber management and environmental research. Since the 1972 NERP designation, over 2500 scientific papers based on work done at SRS have been published. Additionally, over 25 NERP technical reports describing and cataloging the site's plants, animals, ecological communities and habitats were written as well as over 200 doctoral dissertations and master's theses.

The SRS CAB has expressed a concern that with the reduction of production missions, there may be pressure to dispose of DOE land. While they support the accelerated clean-up initiatives, it is unclear who will assume long-term stewardship responsibilities once DOE Environmental Management clean-up activities are completed. Through this resolution, stakeholder support was expressed for DOE to take steps to maintain the current boundaries of SRS so that the ability to effectively and safely support current, planned and potential nuclear-related industrial activities is maintained and the ability to provide ongoing effective environmental research is not compromised.

Planning Summaries Posted on DOE NEPA Web

The Office of National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Policy and Compliance is posting Program and Field Office annual NEPA planning summaries on the DOE NEPA Web to assist in making them available to the public. The annual planning summaries are posted as they are received and are available through two locations within the NEPA Web site (tis.eh.doe.gov/nepa): in the pull-down menu of topics on the front page and the DOE NEPA Document Status & Schedules module (tis.eh.doe.gov/nepa/planningsummaries.html).

In addition to alerting the public to ongoing and future NEPA documents, the primary purpose of the annual planning summaries is to ensure that senior DOE managers are involved

early in the NEPA process and can allocate monetary and staff resources appropriately. Knowing the schedules of all the EISs also helps the NEPA Office in its planning, that is, making staff resources available to review and assist in the preparation and approval of the EISs. Additionally, identifying all EAs and EISs being prepared or planned throughout the Department helps the NEPA Office identify trends and crosscutting issues.

Based on a preliminary review of the 23 annual NEPA planning summaries received to date, approximately 32 new EAs and 9 new EISs are scheduled in the next 12 to 24 months. In addition, there are 38 EAs and 25 EISs that are ongoing.

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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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