

Mackenzie McNabb

Savannah River Nuclear Solutions
(803) 952-8179, mackenzie.mcnabb@srs.gov

For Immediate Release

Children Worldwide Can Now Behold the Boundless Forests of Savannah River Site

“I Spy Math in Nature” offers online learning opportunity for budding students

AIKEN, S.C. – (May 7, 2024) – Through recently reintroduced virtual field trips, the Savannah River Site (SRS) is sharing its vast forests with a new age of local and international students.

Managed by EM contractor Savannah River Nuclear Solutions (SRNS), virtual field trips are a cooperative effort between SRNS Education Outreach and the University of South Carolina Aiken (USCA) Ruth Patrick Science Education Center (RPSEC).

SRNS Education Outreach hosts in-person student field trips as part of the [Science and Technology Enrichment Program \(STEP\)](#), which provides hands-on science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) opportunities through real-world investigations and responsible environmental stewardship. Age restrictions for on-site tours limit the team’s capacity to reach children below the third grade.



Kimberly Fickling, University of South Carolina Aiken Ruth Patrick Science Center (RPSEC) Director of Environmental Education, and Beth Eberhard, RPSEC Student Programs Specialist, teach viewers about a box turtle found in the forests of the Savannah River Site. SRNS Education Outreach uses virtual field trips to showcase the Site’s unique attributes and species to students locally and abroad.

News from Savannah River Nuclear Solutions

SAVANNAH RIVER SITE • AIKEN • SC 29808

“Age restrictions at SRS created a huge need for virtual opportunities so our younger audiences could experience the Savannah River Site,” said Taylor Rice, SRNS Education Outreach Specialist. “We are now impacting kindergarten through third grade from inside the classroom.”

Filmed in what became the first national environmental research park in 1972, SRNS virtual field trips correlate to academic math and science standards. Approximately 280-square-miles of forest are home to many rare, endangered species and serve as the perfect setting for age-appropriate learning material.

“Not only is this a free resource for educators and the National Science Teaching Association, but SRNS virtual field trips can also be used to support grade-specific standards and pacing guidelines,” said Kimberly Fickling, RPSEC Director of Environmental Education. “I love seeing our themes, scripts and film come together to create a timeless video that will be utilized by hundreds of educators across the world.”



Educators that apply for the Savannah River Nuclear Solutions virtual field trip experience receive a themed student worksheet, teacher key, vocabulary list and state standards for the focused material.

Students follow along to observe animals and changes in nature, identify shapes and solve nature math. Featured species include the white-tailed deer, bess beetle, box turtle, armadillo and loblolly and longleaf pines.

Three previous virtual field trips have been released at the middle and high school level. “Wet Wonders” studies macroinvertebrates through biotic testing. “Feathers in the Forest” includes an assessment hike that determines the best habitat for the previously endangered red-cockaded woodpecker. “A Trip Down Under” uncovers the mysteries of soil.

“I love that we can introduce nature to children in a fun, multi-sensory way that builds excitement in exploring the outdoors,” said Beth Eberhard, RPSEC Student Programs Specialist. “Even things that are a commonplace to us as adults — such as a beetle or a pine needle — can open the eyes of our next generation to the unique environment around them.”

Educators that apply for the virtual field trip receive a student worksheet, teacher key, vocabulary list and state standards for the focused material.

Click [here](#) to request the virtual field trip experience, or contact Taylor.Rice@srs.gov for more information.

Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, a Fluor and HII partnership company, is responsible for the management and operations of the Department of Energy’s Savannah River Site, located near Aiken, South Carolina.

SRNS-2024-1439