

News from the Savannah River Site

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Mobility Impaired Hunters and Wounded Warriors Aim for Success during Annual Deer Hunt at SRS

SRNS managed hunt provides an opportunity of a lifetime for military

AIKEN, S.C. (November 12, 2018) – The opportunity to participate in a deer hunt at the Savannah River Site (SRS) annually lures hunters to the 310-square mile Department of Energy (DOE) complex; however, none appreciate the privilege more than the 40 physically disabled hunters and Wounded Warriors invited for a special two-day deer hunt each fall.

“This is a special event created to honor our wounded veterans and give them, as well as other hunters with physical disabilities, an opportunity to once again enjoy the thrill of the hunt and the warm satisfaction of comradery gained through shared experience,” said Joe Solesby, Savannah River Nuclear Solutions (SRNS) employee and program manager for the site’s deer hunts. “I’m proud of the volunteers who make all of this possible by donating a lot of time and hard work for these hunters who have travelled from as far away as Florida and Virginia this year.”

This is the 19th consecutive year this event has been held at SRS.

According to Solesby, it’s not just deer that may be seen through the gunsights of the hunters. “It’s not unusual for feral hogs to be harvested as well. And, some of them are quite large,” he added. “Not too many hunters can say they’ve taken down a wild hog.”

The day of the hunt, the mood swings from laughter and excitement during a hardy breakfast to serious concentration as the hunters and their volunteer escorts quietly watch and listen for the telltale signs of nearby animals. Hours later during a grilled steak lunch, also provided by volunteers, stories



SRNS employee and escort Allan Mulligan (right) describes the schedule for the day to Wounded Warrior Jimmy Price of Gilbert, S.C., at the University of Georgia Conference Center at the Savannah River Site.

are shared about the five hogs and six deer harvested that morning along with the tales of the huge buck that barely got away.

“This event is a way of showing our appreciation to these ladies and gentlemen for the sacrifices they have made for this country, for their families and for all U.S. citizens,” said Johnny Jones, volunteer hunter escort and the SRNS Integrated Maintenance Team Manager. “Over the past eight or nine years I’ve talked with and had to opportunity to get to know many men and women during the hunt. You listen to them speaking from the heart about their life experiences and see the joy on their faces. That’s the reward for me.”

The mobility-impaired hunters are typically from throughout the southeast, while many of the wounded veterans are from a local veteran’s hospital.

SRNS manages the mobility impaired and Wounded Warrior hunts and provides sponsorship in conjunction with DOE, the USDA Forest Service-Savannah River and the Wheelin’ Sportsman National Wild Turkey Federation.

Conducting deer hunts annually helps reduce the size of the deer population as a safety measure towards protecting the drivers traveling daily throughout SRS. Over the past 20 years, SRS has averaged approximately 100 animal-vehicle collisions per year.

In addition, DOE, SRNS and the USDA Forest Service strive to ensure a productive and controlled environment for all hunters at SRS, working as a team to develop the best strategy to responsibly manage wildlife while ensuring participant safety.

Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, a Fluor-led company with Newport News Nuclear and Honeywell, is responsible for the management and operations of the Department of Energy’s Savannah River Site, including the Savannah River National Laboratory, located near Aiken, South Carolina.

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