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Cleanup Success at the Savannah River Site in 2020

Aiken, S.C., February 4, 2021 – Savannah River Nuclear Solutions (SRNS) completed six major environmental cleanup projects at the Savannah River Site (SRS) in 2020.

Stuart MacVean, president and CEO of SRNS, noted that an SRS team also received DOE's prestigious Project Management Excellence Award in July, adding to the site's 2020 achievements.

"The presentation of this award combined with the safe and successful completion of multiple cleanup projects this year reflects the priority and importance we place on environmental remediation at SRS," MacVean said. "In addition, all this was accomplished while overcoming the issues and obstacles presented by the pandemic."

The DOE award was presented to SRS for consolidating more than 400,000 cubic yards of coal ash, fully capped under geosynthetic material and a thick earthen cover consisting of fill dirt and grass-covered topsoil. Workers completed the project in 2019 more than a year ahead of schedule, with a cost savings of \$9 million.

The major SRNS environmental cleanup projects completed in 2020 include:

- Demolition of a large radiologically contaminated building formerly used to assemble mechanical systems found within nuclear reactors built during the Cold War and later used to repair and refurbish reactor heat exchangers.



Before and after: A former waste basin near the center of the 300-square-mile Savannah River Site is shown at left prior to cleanup. Workers completed cleanup of the site, transforming it into an open field of grass, at right.

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- Construction of an underground wall made of recycled iron filings that treats Cold War-era chemicals in groundwater flowing through the structure. The wall is three basketball courts in length and, on average, about four inches thick, extending 135 feet below the earth's surface at its deepest point.
- Conclusion of a cleanup campaign that removed more than 5,000 pounds of chemical solvents from soil, resulting in an annual cost savings of \$264,000.
- Remediation of a 12-acre coal storage yard by mixing 1,000 tons of naturally occurring limestone from South Carolina with acidic soils to neutralize the mixed materials.
- Demolition of radioactively contaminated structures, known as "Treblers," formerly used to measure the flow of hazardous wastewater and obtain sample data within an inactive sewer process line.
- Remediation of a multi-acre pond-like basin from the Cold War by placing a protective cover consisting of 1,400 tons of stone and 7,000 cubic yards of dirt and capping it with grass sod to safely secure remaining contaminated soil.



Workers mixed more than a million pounds of iron filings with a food-grade, starch-like material, shown here. The material was injected into 22 wells at the Savannah River Site to create a long and continuous iron wall that acts as a giant metal filter of contaminated groundwater.

"We have a talented and resourceful workforce at SRNS who prove time and again they have what it takes to get the job done safely and efficiently, often ahead of schedule and under budget," MacVean said. "I'm looking forward to our cleanup accomplishments in 2021."

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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