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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Cleanup Plan for 25-Mile Stream Corridor at SRS Approved by Regulators

AIKEN, S.C., January 28, 2022 – Savannah River Nuclear Solutions (SRNS) has reached an important agreement with South Carolina and federal environmental regulators on the final cleanup of a 25-mile long stream corridor at the Savannah River Site (SRS) radiologically contaminated as a result of operations during the Cold War.

The corridor consists of Par Pond, nine miles of canals adjacent to the pond and a stream named Lower Three Runs. The stream begins near the center of the Site, just above Par Pond and winds its way southward across SRS.

The Record of Decision (ROD) agreement specifies what protective and cleanup actions are required along with assurances of long-term monitoring to ensure the corridor remains within environmentally safe standards. This ROD acknowledges the successful completion of a comprehensive SRNS cleanup strategy following the decommissioning and closure of both P and R Area. Operations involving P and R Reactor facilities had contributed to the contamination of the Lower Three Runs stream corridor.

“This is the first Record of Decision that we’ve ever agreed upon with the regulators and the public that outlines the final closure for a large parcel of stream systems,” SRNS Director, Environmental Cleanup and Area Closure Projects Chris Bergren said. “We’ve accomplished much of the cleanup related to this part of the Site over the years, and now we have determined the remaining actions necessary to achieve final cleanup.”

SRNS Engineer and Project Technical Lead Jim Kubar explained that much of the remaining work involves ensuring additional fencing and signage are in place to warn site workers and the public that potential hazards may be present. “Though it is illegal for the public to cross the fencing onto SRS, our first priority is always their safety,” said Kubar. “This will be especially true when we work to remove the few areas of elevated contamination in the canal system, beginning in 2023.”



A Savannah River Nuclear Solutions subcontractor technician takes radiological readings of soil near Lower Three Runs, part of a major project to complete the cleanup of a contaminated 25-mile-long stream corridor at the Savannah River Site.

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Kupar said that surveying 25 miles of waterways, especially Lower Three Runs, was often challenging and sometimes potentially hazardous within the forest. “We used aerial detection equipment along with taking on-site readings every 1,000 meters along Lower Three Runs, often involving difficult terrain. Tripping hazards, feral hogs, snakes, spiders and bees could appear at any time. Though the survey is complete and active controls are now in place, we continue to conduct inspections along the stream corridor,” he said.

“Everything – from characterization of potential contamination through final negotiation with our regulators – was important, to successfully achieve, as a team, this Record of Decision. It’s a big deal. We want to be sure that the public is confident that we’ve fully taken care of the Cold War legacy issue,” Bergren said.

“The cleanup of surface water and groundwater at SRS is one of our most important missions,” Thomas Johnson, Jr., DOE-Savannah River Deputy Site Manager, said. “The list of significant environmental remediation achievements at SRS, over just the last 10 years alone, is long and impressive. It serves as a testament to the effectiveness of our relationship with regulators and our mutual commitment to continuous improvement and 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 located near Aiken, South Carolina.

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