

Revised Finding of No Significant Impact  
for  
Safeguards and Security Upgrades for Storage of Plutonium Materials  
at the Savannah River Site

**Agency:** U.S. Department of Energy

**Action:** Revised Finding of No Significant Impact

**Summary:** The Department of Energy (DOE) prepared an environmental assessment (EA) (DOE/EA-1538) in 2005 to evaluate the potential environmental impacts associated with the implementation of proposed and alternative actions to enhance the safe and secure storage of plutonium-bearing materials at the Savannah River Site (SRS) to meet the enhanced terrorist threat that has existed since the events of September 11, 2001. Based on the analyses in the EA, DOE determined that the proposed action was not a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment within the meaning of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 and issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

In the 2005 EA and FONSI, DOE stated that the Surface Danger Zone (SDZ) associated with the Advanced Tactical Training Area (ATTA) would not have to be expanded to safely accommodate the firing of weapons associated with enhanced security measures. Subsequently, upon receiving additional information, further review of the ATTA configuration and the characteristics of the new weapons and ammunition have resulted in DOE determining that expansion of the SDZ would be prudent. Expansion of the SDZ is largely an administrative action, requiring coordination with Site users to assure no one is within the SDZ while training with certain weapons is taking place. Gates to prevent access would be installed and closed when training activities are taking place. Access would be administratively controlled through use of the SRS Remote Worker protocol. Through planning and scheduling, DOE will ensure that expansion of the SDZ and controlled access to the SDZ will not unnecessarily interfere with land and natural resource management activities that must take place within the SDZ. On this basis, the proposed expansion of the SDZ is not a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment within the meaning of the NEPA, and DOE is issuing this Revised FONSI.

**Public Availability:** Copies of the EA and FONSI or further information on the DOE NEPA process is available from:

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**Background:** In response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, DOE has reassessed its threat criteria relative to the protection of special nuclear materials. The reassessment resulted in a number of changes to the criteria and to the postulated capabilities of those who might perpetrate acts of violence against DOE assets. In order to provide an adequate response to the revised postulated threat, safeguards and security improvements, adequate to respond to the enhanced terrorist threat, are required.

**Purpose and Need for Agency Action:** The purpose of the proposed and alternative actions is to enhance physical safety and security for plutonium-bearing materials stored at SRS. DOE needs to provide the safeguards and security improvements necessary to respond to the enhanced terrorist threat, including the use of weapons and ammunition that have not been used in the past at the SRS. The guard force must be trained in the effective use of this equipment, and training will require live firing on the ATTA range.

**Proposed Action:** DOE proposes to expand the SDZ near ATTA in order to ensure the safety of Site personnel when training activities require firing weapons that could result in danger to personnel in the line of fire. While the ATTA range has earthen berms designed to capture fired ammunition, the characteristics of some weapons and ammunition are such that rounds unintentionally fired over the berms could cause serious harm to individuals at significant distances from the range.

DOE would install locking gates on all roads leading into the expanded SDZ. Normally the gates would remain unlocked to allow access for travel through the area and for natural resource management activities including red-cockaded woodpecker management, controlled burns, timber management, ecological characterization and research, cultural resource characterization, research, and management, and other SRS mission-related activities.

Expansion of the SDZ is largely an administrative action, requiring coordination with Site users to assure no one is within the SDZ while training with certain weapons is taking place. Access would be administratively controlled through use of the SRS Remote Worker protocol. Through planning and scheduling, DOE would ensure that expansion of the SDZ and controlled access to the SDZ will not unnecessarily interfere with land and natural resource management activities that must take place within and near the SDZ.

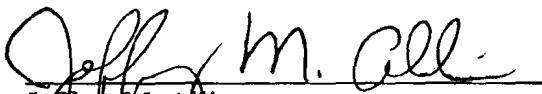
**Environmental Impacts:** Gates would be installed on existing roadways, and their installation and use would cause negligible environmental impact. Traffic and the associated disturbance in and around the area would not increase, and could decrease somewhat, as a result of this action.

In the 2005 EA and FONSI, DOE stated that the SDZ associated with ATTA would not have to be expanded to safely accommodate the firing of weapons associated with enhanced security measures. This was important because if access to and near the area for management activities was restricted, the lack of required management activities could have significant effects on certain resources. For example, the inability to access the area to monitor red-cockaded woodpecker habitat, or conduct actions such as controlled burns and other forest management activities required to maintain habitat for this endangered species, could result in loss of adequate habitat and a reduction in the population.

Access control using the SRS Remote Worker protocol and locking gates to physically restrict access to the expanded SDZ during times when training on certain weapons is being conducted will ensure the safety of Site personnel while allowing access to the expanded SDZ for management activities. Because management activities will continue despite the expansion of the SDZ, DOE does not anticipate adverse environmental impacts as a result of this action.

**Determination:** Based on the information and analysis in DOE/EA-1538, and use of the SRS Remote Worker protocol and locking gates to allow access for natural and cultural resource management and research activities, expansion of the SDZ at the ATTA range at SRS does not constitute a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment within the meaning of NEPA. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement is not required, and DOE is issuing this revised FONSI.

Signed at Aiken, South Carolina this 11<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2008.

  
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Manager