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The Savannah River Site
Environmental Bulletin

September 16, 2026 Volume 38, Number 6

Early Action Statement of Basis/Proposed Plan for the A-Area Ash Pile (788-A), A-Area Coal Pile Runoff Basin (788-3A), F-Area Ash Landfill (288-F), H-Area Ash Basin (288-H), K-Area Ash Basin (188-K), and L-Area Ash Basin (188-L) Operable Units Available for Public Comment

The United States Department of Energy (DOE) will release an Early Action Statement of Basis/Proposed Plan (SB/PP) for the A-Area Ash Pile (788-A), A-Area Coal Pile Runoff Basin (788-3A), F-Area Ash Landfill (288-F), H-Area Ash Basin (288-H), K-Area Ash Basin (188-K), and L-Area Ash Basin (188-L) Operable Units (OUs) on September 16, 2026, describing the preferred remedial approach for these units at the Savannah River Site (SRS). The South Carolina Department of Environmental Services (SCDES) will also release a draft Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) permit modification for the proposed remedial action for these units. These documents will be available for public review and copying at the locations listed below. The forty-five (45) day public comment period is scheduled for September 16, 2026, to October 31, 2026.

The Early Action SB/PP was completed to meet the terms of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act, a law governing the investigation and cleanup of waste units. DOE has worked with the United States Environmental Protection Agency-Region 4 (EPA) and the SCDES to ensure the remedial approach is consistent with all applicable environmental requirements. DOE, EPA, and SCDES have reviewed the risks associated with this OU and have evaluated the cleanup alternatives presented in this plan.

The A-Area Ash Pile (788-A), A-Area Coal Pile Runoff Basin (788-3A), F-Area Ash Landfill (288-F), H-Area Ash Basin (288-H), K-Area Ash Basin (188-K), and L-Area Ash Basin (188-L) OUs are located in various areas of the SRS. A remedial action is needed at these remaining coal ash and coal fines OUs. Arsenic, naturally occurring radionuclides, and contaminants with the potential to migrate to groundwater and exceed action levels within 1,000 years are present in ash/soils at levels that may pose a threat to human health and the environment.

The proposed remedy for the OUs consists of Land Use Controls (LUCs) with Beneficial Use and will be implemented in two phases. Phase 1 would implement LUCs for each of the remaining coal ash and coal fine OUs. LUCs include posting and maintenance of warning signs and the establishment of administrative and worker access controls to effectively reduce exposure of contaminated media to human receptors. This phase does not support unrestricted land use, and five-year remedy reviews would be required. Due to contaminant migration concerns at the H-Area Ash Basin (288-H) and L-Area Ash Basin (188-L) OUs, groundwater monitoring wells would be installed/identified and monitored every five years to coincide with the remedy reviews. Groundwater beneath the F-Area Ash Landfill (288-F) would continue to be monitored semi-annually per the existing permit. The 288-F Ash Landfill will remain a permitted operating landfill until Phase 2 of the proposed remedy is initiated. Groundwater will be addressed as part of the respective area groundwater OU characterization and cleanup decisions. Any cleanup of groundwater contamination will take place under those separate closure agreements. The monitoring of groundwater at these units is to verify that contaminants associated with the ash units do not migrate to groundwater above regulatory limits.

For additional information, contact: Barbara Smoak, Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, Savannah River Site, Building 703-43A, Aiken, SC 29808 / (803) 952-8060 / barbara.smoak@srs.gov

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Phase 2 of the remedy includes excavation of the ash and its beneficial use. Beneficial use will involve the excavation of contaminated ash/soil for later incorporation into a use option. Following completion of the excavation activities, the ash units will be restored (i.e., contoured for proper drainage and revegetated as necessary). LUCs will remain in place until beneficial use can occur. Phase 2 is effective in eliminating human exposure to contaminants and preventing direct radiation exposure by physically removing the source. Proven unencapsulated beneficial use alternatives for coal ash/fines include use as a fill material, or as an additive or replacement for cement in concrete mixes. Once implemented this phase of the proposed remedy supports unrestricted land use and would not require five-year remedy reviews.

Comments on the Early Action SB/PP and the draft RCRA permit are requested by October 31, 2026. Upon completion of the public comment period, a Responsiveness Summary that addresses public comments will be prepared. The Responsiveness Summary will be made available with the Early Action Record of Decision and the final RCRA permit modification and will be sent to each person who submits comments.

To aid in the review of the Early Action SB/PP, an Early Action SB/PP Fact Sheet for the OUs was prepared.

Copies of the Early Action SB/PP and the Fact Sheet are available in the Administrative Record. The Administrative Record is available in the information repositories listed below:

US Department of Energy Public Reading Room
Gregg-Graniteville Library
University of South Carolina - Aiken
471 University Parkway
Aiken, South Carolina 29801
(803) 641-3456

Thomas Cooper Library
Government Information and Maps Department
University of South Carolina
1322 Greene Street
Columbia, South Carolina 29208
(803) 777-4841

Hard copies of the Early Action SB/PP and Fact Sheet are available at the following locations:

Reese Library, Government Information Department
Augusta University
2500 Walton Way
Augusta, Georgia 30904
(706) 737-1744

Asa H. Gordon Library
Savannah State University
2200 Tompkins Road
Savannah, Georgia 31404
(912) 358-4324

The Early Action SB/PP and Fact Sheet are available electronically at the following address:
https://public.srs.gov/missions-and-programs/environmental-stewardship/public-involvement-2/

Copies of the draft RCRA permit modification are available for review at SCDES during regular business hours, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except legal holidays, at the following location:

SCDES
Bureau of Land and Waste Management
2600 Bull Street
Columbia, SC 29201
Phone: (803) 898-3432

If there is interest in discussing the recommended remedial approach, a public hearing may be requested. Comments on the Early Action SB/PP should be sent to Barbara Smoak. Comments on the draft RCRA permit modification or requests for a public hearing should be sent to Kent Krieg. For additional information or to request a public meeting contact:

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Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, LLC
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