

The Savannah River Site Environmental Bulletin

September 10, 2014

Volume 26, Number 9

Notice of Availability

Explanation of Significant Differences Issued for the Revision 1 Record of Decision Remedial Alternative Selection for the L-Area Southern Groundwater Operable Unit

The Explanation of Significant Differences (ESD) for the Revision 1 Record of Decision Remedial Alternative Selection for the L-Area Southern Groundwater (LASG) Operable Unit (OU) is being issued by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), the lead agency for the Savannah River Site (SRS), with concurrence by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency – Region 4 (EPA), and South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC). The purpose of this ESD is to revise the Waste Disposal and Transport section of the Record of Decision Remedial Alternative Selection for the L-Area Southern Groundwater Operable Unit issued in March 2007 to document a Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) “contained-in” determination for the groundwater.

The ESD was completed to meet the terms of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), a law governing the investigation and cleanup of waste units. The DOE has worked with the EPA and the SCDHEC to ensure the remedial approach is consistent with all applicable environmental requirements.

L-Area is one of five reactor areas at the SRS. L-Reactor operated intermittently between 1954 and 1988. L Lake was constructed in 1985 as a cooling pond for the reactor and covers 1,034 acres and contains about seven billion gallons of water. Multiple surface waste units as well as the groundwater were impacted from the historical operations of the reactor. Due to the presence of tritium, tetrachloroethylene (PCE) and trichloroethylene (TCE) contamination in groundwater commingled from multiple source units, the groundwater was administratively separated from the surface units and identified as the LASG OU in the SRS Federal Facility Agreement.

The LASG OU encompasses all of the groundwater from the L-Area groundwater divide south to L Lake and covers about 1,250 acres. Two of the source units that contributed to groundwater contamination, L-Area Oil and Chemical Basin and L-Area Hot Shop, were known to have used PCE and TCE in degreasing activities and have been closed.

This ESD does not alter the selected groundwater remedy of Monitored Natural Attenuation with Institutional Controls. However, based on site-specific values within the LASG OU, this ESD documents the “contained-in” determination that groundwater located within the LASG OU containing at or below 0.054 mg/L of TCE and 0.056 mg/L of PCE no longer contains RCRA listed hazardous wastes and will not be subject to RCRA requirements. There are no other RCRA hazardous constituents present within the LASG OU that are associated with any other RCRA listed waste and the groundwater is not considered a RCRA characteristic hazardous waste. The selected remedy remains protective of human health and the environment.

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Copies of the ESD are available in the Administrative Record. The Administrative Record is available in the information repositories listed below:

- DOE Public Reading Room at the Gregg-Graniteville Library at the University of South Carolina (USC)-Aiken campus in Aiken, SC; and
- Thomas Cooper Library Government Documents Department at USC in Columbia, SC.

Hard copies of the ESD are available at the following locations:

- Reese Library at Augusta State University in Augusta, GA; and
- Asa H. Gordon Library at Savannah State University in Savannah, GA.

An electronic copy of the ESD can be found at the following website:

- <http://www.srs.gov/general/programs/soil/rod/rod.html>

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The SRS Environmental Bulletin

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