



Department of Energy
National Nuclear Security Administration
Savannah River Site
P.O. Box A
Aiken, South Carolina 29802



DOE/EA-2243

**REVISED FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
FOR CONTINUED FERAL SWINE DAMAGE MANAGEMENT
AT THE SAVANNAH RIVER SITE**

RESPONSIBLE AGENCY: U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) - Savannah River Field Office (SRFO)

ACTION: Revised Finding of No Significant Impact

SUMMARY:

DOE adopted an environmental assessment (EA) prepared by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) (DOE/EA-2243) in 2024 to analyze the potential environmental impacts of the U.S. Forest Service – Savannah River (USFS-SR) employing USDA-APHIS Wildlife Service (WS) to conduct a pilot program to conduct periodic feral swine removal via aerial shooting in selected remote areas of Savannah River Site (SRS) located near Aiken, South Carolina. A major objective of this pilot effort was to “... reduce these remote populations in an ethical and cost-effective manner ...”. Based on DOE’s independent analysis of the EA, DOE determined the Proposed Action was not a major Federal action significantly affecting the human environment within the meaning of National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). DOE would assess the effectiveness of WS’ removal efforts under this pilot project at SRS and determine whether recurring action is needed in the future.

The pilot project USFS-SR conducted during January and February 2024 yielded a sizeable number of feral swine removed. No safety incidents occurred and no adverse environmental impacts (i.e., no release, no loss or damage to non-target species) were encountered.

DOE prepared the *Supplement Analysis for Continued Feral Swine Damage Management at Savannah River Site* (DOE/EA-2243-SA-1) and concluded that USFS-SR continuing feral swine removal by means of WS’ aerial shooting in other areas across SRS would have impacts no greater than those described in the 2024 EA. Therefore, the preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS) is not required, and DOE is issuing a revised FONSI.

Purpose and Need:

SRS is home of a large feral swine population (approximately 5,000), inflicting significant damage to vehicles, property, native ecosystems, and historic and cultural resources. Further, feral swine can and do migrate off SRS, causing damage to adjacent properties and facilities. The USFS-SR actively traps feral swine (approximately 1,000 – 2,000/year) to reduce the population impacts on SRS. However, segments of the population reside in inaccessible areas, essentially replenishing the feral swine population to these trapped areas and reducing the duration of trapping efficacy.

Feral swine is a species that is difficult to control, becoming resistant to ground control techniques (“trap-wise”). Varying control methods reduces the likelihood of developing “trap-wise” population.

Feral swine is not only a problem on SRS and in South Carolina, but across much of the nation. The USDA APHIS has established a national Feral Swine Damage Management (FSDM) program to work with Federal, state, and local agencies, tribes, and private individuals to address special localized feral swine damage. APHIS WS’ utilizes an integrated approach, employing lethal and non-lethal methods to control feral swine on a requester’s property. One lethal method APHIS-WS employs is a dedicated aviation program operated by highly trained and skilled personnel to shoot swine from helicopters over public or private land to improve swine population reduction.

Proposed Action:

The USFS-SR proposes to enter into a continued agreement with APHIS WS to conduct periodic feral swine removal events via aerial shooting across SRS. Subsequent aerial shooting operations could occur during all reasonable seasons. The time frame would be dependent upon visibility, availability, and need. Visibility would be commonly best during leaf-off conditions but could occur at other times if conditions are suitable. Targeted areas would be reviewed and approved via the site’s internal land use planning process prior to aerial operations being conducted, with site-specific restrictions/conditions being imposed, as appropriate.

Environmental Impacts:

The SA analyzed the potential impacts of USFS-SR continuing periodic feral swine removal across SRS in areas not previously evaluated in the Final FSDM EA and FONSI using APHIS-WS’ aerial shooting program and new information since the publication of the Final FSDM EA. This included potential changes to impacts to land use, human health (and safety), biological resources, water resources, floodplains and wetlands, air quality and climate, waste generation, cultural resources, socioeconomic resources, and cumulative impacts. In all cases, DOE/NNSA identified no or negligible differences in potential impacts previously analyzed in the Final FSDM EA. Further, potential environmental impacts would be reduced by the beneficial effect of reducing feral swine damage to property and the environmental on and off SRS.

DETERMINATION:

Based on the information and analysis in the SA, DOE/NNSA has determined that there is no significant impact from proceeding with the Proposed Action. The basis for this determination is that there are no adverse direct, indirect, or cumulative environmental effects that would likely result from the Proposed Action based on the analysis of relevant issues of environmental concern in the SA.

DOE/NNSA therefore approves this revised FONSI for USFS-SR continuing periodic feral swine removal across SRS using the APHIS-WS' aerial shooting program pursuant to the NEPA of 1969, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.), the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1500), and the DOE NEPA Implementing Procedures (10 CFR 1021). No EIS is required or this proposal.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For further information on this revised FONSI and the SA, contact Ms. Tracy Williams, NEPA Document Manager/NEPA Compliance Officer, U.S. Department of Energy, National Nuclear Security Administration, Savannah River Field Office (NNSA-SRFO), P.O. Box A, Aiken, SC 29802, or via email at NEPA-SRS-NNSA@srs.gov.

For further information on the DOE NEPA process contact the Office of NEPA Policy and Compliance (GC-54), U.S. Department of Energy, 100 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington DC 20585: telephone (202) 586-4600 or (800) 472-2756.

Issued this 3rd day of December 2024, in Aiken, South Carolina.

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