

# SRS Heritage

*SRS Heritage Foundation Newsletter*



APRIL 2008

## THE US FOREST SERVICE AT SRS

Contributed Article by Bill Bebbington

When the Atomic Energy Commission acquired land for the Savannah River Project in 1951, the site was almost entirely old farmland. In 1952, the AEC signed an Interagency Agreement with the USDA Forest Service (Forest Service) to manage over 90% of the area that was not needed for process facilities. A small group of Forest Service employees under the direction of John Hatcher, Forest Manager, began their first work, assessing the timber that was already growing on the land. The value, then, of the miscellaneous standing timber on the 198 thousand-acre site was appraised at \$2.3 million.

The Forest Service began what was then the largest mechanized tree-planting program in the US. At its peak, over 400 thousand seedlings were planted per day. To date, a total of 138 million trees, mostly pines, have been planted. In addition, soil stabilization and erosion control have increased the forested area of the Savannah River Site (SRS) to approximately 168 thousand acres managed for a variety of natural resources. The value of the standing timber at SRS now is estimated to be greater than \$500 million.

Today, the unit of approximately 75 full-time employees known as USDA Forest Service-Savannah River (USFS-SR) manages the natural resources of SRS, including habitat restoration. A credit to their natural resource management expertise is the recovery efforts for the Red-cockaded woodpecker population, a Federally endangered species. Another indicator of the habitat contributions is the international *Wings Across the Americas* award recently presented to the USFS-SR for its work in bat conservation at SRS.

(see photos on Page 5, 6 & 7)

### *The President's Corner*

The first Newsletter of the SRS Heritage Foundation was a simple 2-page publication in August 2005. The Newsletter has grown in size and frequency since then, keeping pace with our increased membership and activities. This issue includes our first contributed articles on Site history. We hope our readers enjoy the articles by Bill Bebbington and Bill Reinig on little-known aspects of the Savannah River Site.

We plan to continue more such articles in the future. We appreciate your comments on the Newsletter and would like to hear from you if you are interested in contributing.

Bill Mottel

WHAT'S INSIDE:

A Walk in Time	3
AAUW	4
Publication Co.	4
Reunions	4
Photos	5-7
Flies	7
Artifact	8

**SRS HERITAGE FOUNDATION SPONSORS THANK YOU**

The SRS Heritage Foundation is a relatively new organization but, thanks to our strong base of supporters, we are growing steadily. We are particularly pleased that several organizations have such faith in our future that they have made substantial financial contributions to get our programs started. Among these supporters are:

Sponsors

- DWashington Group International
- DSoutheastern Environmental Management Association (SEMA)
- DFluor Daniel Government Group

Corporate Members

- DEnergy Solutions
- DSecurity Federal Bank
- DWashington Group Int'l
- DNuclear Fuel Services

Small Business Member

- DNew South Associates

Thank you to the individual members for supporting the Foundation

**FOUNDATION BOARD ELECTS OFFICERS FOR 2008**

The Board of Directors of the SRS Heritage Foundation elected a full slate of officers at the Board meeting on February 15<sup>th</sup>. The elected officers for 2008 are:

- Chairman Bill Mottel
- Vice Chairman/Chairman Elect Mal McKibben
- Secretary Ann Loadholt
- Treasurer Chris Verenes

Pres Rahe submitted his resignation to the Board March 20<sup>th</sup>. He plans to retire from URS Washington Division and seek opportunities elsewhere. Leo Sain will replace Pres on the Board.

**VIDEO PRODUCTION CONTINUES**



Mark Albertin has completed 30 interviews for the video that describes the vanished communities displaced by the Savannah River Project. Completion of these videos is historically important since first-hand reminiscences of these events are a vanishing resource. Work now is shifting to completion of the narration and insertion of music and still photographs in preparation for the first rough cut.

**BEQUEST ESTABLISHES ENDOWMENT FUND**

A bequest from the estate of the late Dr. Todd Crawford has been used to establish an endowment fund for the SRS Heritage Foundation. The fund will be invested in long-term securities and proceeds will be used to support operating expenses of the SRS Heritage Center. Todd continues to support the work of the Foundation.



**MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL REMINDER**

If there is no renewal notice in your Newsletter this month. It means you are a paid-up member in good standing of the SRS Heritage Foundation. On the other hand... if there's a renewal notice in your newsletter, it means you have neglected to renew your membership for 2008. Please consider yourself reminded. We need your support.

## A WALK IN TIME...THE ELLENTON HERITAGE TRAIL

The Ellenton Heritage Trail Project began as a gleam in the eye but the continued efforts of the Ellenton Heritage Trail Committee, led by Jim Iwert, are converting this gleam into a reality in the not too distant future. The goal of the Committee is to prepare a proposal to the Department of Energy for an area identified as “Ellenton & Environs” with an initial area to be used for guided walking tours of the site of the former town of Ellenton. The proposed Heritage Trail, which will be approximately 1-1/4 miles long, stretching from S.C. Highway #125 to the railroad and including much of the town center. The initial Phase I is being proposed for one scheduled tour a month beginning at the Ellenton historical marker pulloff adjacent to S.C. Highway #125. The tour will then proceed through Barricade #7 down Main Street. Visitors to Ellenton will learn about the history behind the decision to permanently relocate the residents of Ellenton, as well as Dunbarton, Meyers Mill, Hawthorne, Leigh, and Robbins, for a cause they did not quite understand. They will learn about a place that was “Almost Like Heaven” for approximately 6,000 residents and what life was like for them prior to the Atomic Energy Commission’s decision to take ownership of approximately 300 square miles of South Carolina farm and timber land in the early 1950s to build a nuclear complex. During the tour, visitors will learn where specific buildings were located and where various activities took place. For former residents, this will be a walk back in time down memory lane. For new visitors, it will be a walk in time that cannot be fully comprehended unless it was lived.

Future enhancements to the Ellenton Heritage Trail Project are also being planned as the Committee takes a close look at what it will take to draw interest to the site. Protection to the environment and the cultural resources will be top priority during all phases of trail development. As visitation and audiences increase, the envisioned final phase would be extended to a larger area and include interactive displays and partnerships with other historical and tourism entities.

The committee includes former residents of the displaced community, the USDA Forest Service-Savannah River, the Savannah River Archaeological Research Program, as well as other enthused participants, some retired—some still working—all with a connection to the Savannah River Site. Committee members include Jim Iwert (Chairman), Gayle Bumgarner, Clarence Bush, Tiajuana Cochnauer, Chris Goodman, Betty Greene, Linda Perry, Dennis Ryan, Buddy Wingard, and Joanne Zobel.



Seated: Tiajuana Cochnauer, Geri Flemming (Facilitator), Betty Greene  
Standing: Clarence Bush, Dennis Ryan, Gayle Bumgarner, Linda Perry, Joanne Zobel, Chris Goodman, Buddy Wingard  
Not Pictured: Jim Iwert (Chairman)

Margaret Rountree identifies the location of the Dunbarton Baptist Church during a field trip to the Site →



## AAUW CONTRIBUTES BOOKS TO FOUNDATION LIBRARY

The American Association of University Women (AAUW) contributed 49 books to the Heritage Foundation library. The books were collected for the annual AAUW book sale but were singled out by alert AAUW volunteers as having potential benefit to the Foundation. Among the books are ; Atomic Energy for Military Purposes by Henry D. Smythe (1946), The Effects of Atomic Weapons by Samuel Glasstone (1950), Atomic Physics Today by Otto R. Frisch (1961); Frisch was a co-discoverer of uranium fission, and other books on physics, civil defense, reactor design, history and related subjects. The books will be catalogued in the SRS Cold War Artifact Collection and will be available for research use in the SRS Heritage Center. Thanks to the AAUW for their help in starting our library.



Bea Pyser, President of AAUW Aiken Chapter (center) with AAUW volunteers Fern and Joe Brooks



## PUBLICATION COMMITTEE

The Publications Committee meets monthly to plan the Newsletter and other Foundation publications, including the membership acknowledgment you receive when you renew your membership. Current plans are aiming toward a second SRS Heritage Day to be held this fall in conjunction with the New Ellenton Atomic City Festival. ....Stay tuned for further announcements.



l to r. Paula Joseph, Gayle Bumgarner, Mike French, Jeff Allender and Karen Bonavita...photo by Walt Joseph

## DUNBARTON AND ELLENTON REUNIONS SCHEDULED

Former residents and descendents can renew old friendships and reminisce about days gone by at the annual Dunbarton and Ellenton reunions. To provide a good headcount for the caterer, please contact the individuals listed below if you are interested in attending a reunion:

- Dunbarton Reunion...May 14, 2008, 11:am  
Barnwell State Park  
**Catered luncheon at 1:pm, donation, bring a dessert**  
**Contact Tonya Browder, 803-634-0134**
- Ellenton Reunion...June 8, 2008, 11:am  
Silver Bluff High School, Commons Area  
Catered luncheon at 1:pm, donation, bring a dessert  
Contact Betty Greene, 803-471-3666



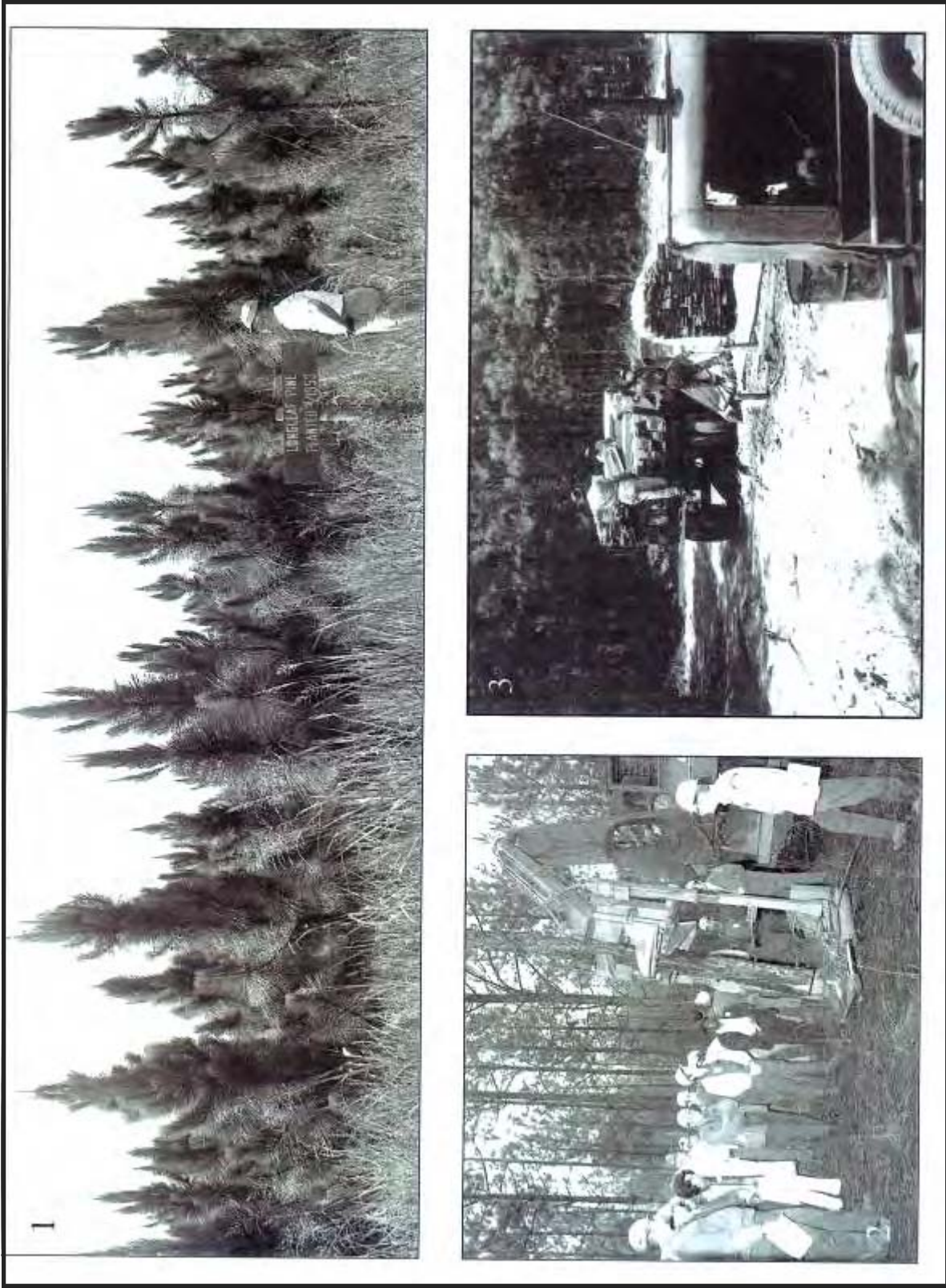


Picking cotton in the 1950s



Results of reforestation of SRS

**NEWS FLASH.....The date of New Ellenton's Atomic City Festival is on October 10 and 11— the SRS Heritage Foundation will be taking oral histories and accepting memorabilia.  
More information to come!**



1. Savannah River Project Forester John Hatcher amid long leaf pines planted in 1953 surveying "pine plantation". 2. USFS employee explains the mechanics of tree-cutting and loading as part of a public out-reach program, 1978. Timer and heavy water were the site's only income-producing products. 3. Revenues collected from the sale of pulpwood harvested on the site are turned over to the U. S. Treasury. Photos courtesy of SRS Archives.





Unidentified workers were instructed on hole digging, while others were taught how to plant from the three-seated tractor equipped with buckets to facilitate planting. Courtesy of SRS Archives.

### **We Didn't Catch Many Flies**

In June 1951, I was sent to SRP to head a DuPont team whose mission was to measure the natural radiation at the site, and to plan the environmental monitoring program. Construction was only beginning when the team (the first Operations group at SRP) started its work using sheds as laboratories.

We had a tight schedule because atmospheric weapons testing was about to begin in Nevada, and we needed to complete base-line measurements before the radioactive fallout reached the site. To detect the arrival of the fallout we planned to place sheets of stick flypaper around the site to collect the radioactive particles.

Instead of the flypaper that we ordered, we received a large box of flyswatters. Since the weapons test were about to begin, we rushed to Augusta, GA., and going from store to store, we bought out the city's supply of flypaper. We had the sheets in place just in time to detect the arrival of the first man-made radioactivity at the Savannah River Plant.

The person who ordered the flyswatters instead of our requested flypaper later told us that he made the change because he thought the swatters would be better for killing pesky flies. He was right. We didn't catch many flies.

-Bill Reinig

(Courtesy of Savannah River Site at Fifty)

## Featured Artifact: Hanford Connector Model



By Caroline Bradford,  
Curator of Cold War  
Artifacts



This photo shows a mockup canyon cell used for training. The red circles indicate Hanford connectors from the banks of them along the walls. Negative DPSPF 7224-15 courtesy of SRS Archives.

This 3/5 scale model represents a Hanford Connector, also known as a "jumper." This piece of technology was designed at Hanford and also used at SRS. It is fitting, since the Savannah River canyon buildings were also based on the Hanford Cell Building, comparable in function to the hot canyon process areas of SRS.

Jumpers were used both in F and in H canyons, and are still used today in H canyon and, in modified form, in DWPF.

- They are designed to connect service piping to separations process cells. Hanford connectors provide a means to connect pipes to equipment securely and accurately using a remote crane, not human hands. Since the canyons were built, no human has ever set foot inside the process cells where product is separated from waste chemicals. These connectors are designed to be rugged so they don't break often, but also to be self-centering and self-leveling, so that liquids used in the separations work could flow through joined pipes without a leak.

To:

PRESORTED STANDARD  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
AIKEN, SC 29801  
PERMIT NO. 59

J. W. Joseph  
340 Cherbourg Place  
Aiken, SC 29801

