

This is a draft document for board discussion

Drone Spotting Over SRS

Recommendation Manager: _____

Background:

The Savannah River Site (SRS), a 310 square mile (198,046 acres) Department of Energy site, is located in the sand-hills region of South Carolina. It encompasses parts of Aiken, Barnwell and Allendale counties and is bordered on the west by the Savannah River and Georgia. SRS is close to several cities, including Augusta, Georgia and Columbia, South Carolina. It is also within a few hours of Atlanta, Savannah, Charleston, Greenville and Charlotte.ⁱ

The Savannah River Site is home to over fifty-years of innovation, design, and storage of materials that spawned from the Cold War Era. Included at the site are canyons that down blend uranium and plutonium, over 10,000 bundles of used-nuclear fuel, and 150,000 gallons of transuranic waste stored in tank farms. Additionally, the site is home to labs and research center that contribute information used around the globe.

During the summer of 2016, eight drones were spotted flying over the Savannah River Site. According to releases from the Department of Energy (DOE), several reports of UAS (Unmanned Aerial System) flying over K-Area, H-Area, E-Area and MOX were made. At the time, airspace over the site was unrestricted, although the devices did pose a safety and security concern.

Recommendation:

Given the nature of sensitive material housed at the site and public concern over the reported spotting of UAS, the Savannah River Site Citizens Advisory Board recommends that the Department of Energy:

1. Continue investigating the drone sighting as allowed within its own agency regulations.
2. Continue to work with needed authorities to restrict the airspace over the SRS.
3. Provide updates to the SRS CAB about findings related to the UAS.