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SREL provides unique learning experience

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The University of Georgia's Savannah River Ecology Laboratory's (SREL) Outreach Program has conducted environmental education in the Central Savannah River Area since 1991.

Currently, SREL's outreach program reaches over 50,000 individuals a year, including adults and children in 13 counties in Georgia and five counties in South Carolina, including Aiken County.

Five educators teach various ecological topics from snake safety to the role pollinators play in producing food, while focusing on the vast biodiversity found on the U.S. Department of Energy's Savannah River Site (SRS).

SREL provides experiential learning from trekking through the outdoors to observe different habitats to a show and tell experience that utilizes reptiles, amphibians, birds, mammals and plants.

Historically focused on the K-12 audience, the outreach program is expanding to reach a larger segment of the college and working adult populations. SREL faculty and graduate students have conducted recent presen-

tations at Citizens for Nuclear Technology Awareness and Café Scientifique.

P.J. Perea, the program's manager, said participating in National Nuclear Science Week is fitting for the lab's outreach program.

"SREL's role is to monitor the health of the ecosystem and to assess the impact of the site's activities on the surrounding environment," Perea said. "We will continue to inform and educate the public about the unique resources found at the Savannah River Site and continue to be a leader in radioecology research." Perea added that programming will expand to include insects and aquatic animals and other species unique to SRS.

SREL will be involved in numerous educational activities during National Science Week. Activities featuring SREL including:

- Seminars on radioecology: the fate, effects and transport of radioactive elements
Ruth Patrick Science Center
- The SREL and USDA Forest Service gallery opening ceremony
SRS Heritage Museum on Oct. 20, 3-4 p.m.
- Live animal exhibit – Atoms in the Alley in downtown Aiken, Oct. 20, 5-8 p.m.



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