



Nuclear Watch Tower

“there must be some kind of way out of here . . .”

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NUCLEAR WATCH SOUTH news | FALL 2015

SOURCE TO SEA ~ Savannah River Pilgrimage Marks 70 Years of Atomic Age

by *Joanne Steele*

THE SAVANNAH RIVER WATERSHED is host to five commercial nuclear reactors and two of the first new reactors being built in the U.S. since the partial melt down at Three Mile Island 37 years ago.

The river forms the border between Georgia and South Carolina. Its watershed also suffers contamination from the Savannah River Site, a 310-square-mile federal reservation hosting a vast amount of transuranic and highly radioactive liquids and sludge from the production of nuclear weapons.

Outdoor educator and avid kayaker friend, Bob Brooksher, had been gathering maps and books about the Savannah River for years envisioning a source-to-sea trip for himself and his dog RiverDog.

In August 2014, I asked him if he would work with me to make the trip in 2015 to draw attention to the 70th anniversary of the Atomic Age. My river guide son Jesse Steele would make the trip with us.

Collaborating with family, friends, and organizations, with Nuclear Watch South as our fiscal sponsor, the Source to Sea ~ Savannah River Pilgrimage 2015 happened.

The mission: To explore the Savannah River from the source to the sea connecting people and communities along its 400-mile length; to celebrate and document the river's beauty and diversity; and inspire action to address threats affecting its health.

Old friendships were strengthened and new friendships forged on our five-week journey down the Savannah River from the cliffs of Whiteside Mountain, NC to Tybee Island, GA. The beauty was breathtaking. The power of the water is spiritual and strong.



©2015 Bob Brooksher

Nuclear Watch South board member Joanne Steele and RiverDog in the shadow of Vogtle 1 & 2 cooling towers. Cooling the nuclear reactors at Plant Vogtle consumes more water each day than the cities of Atlanta, Augusta and Savannah combined.

Industrial waste, water withdrawals and harbor deepening make the Savannah River the third most toxic river in the U.S. by the time it reaches the city of Savannah. We met many dedicated people and organizations working hard to protect this threatened national treasure. It's going to take more creative and proactive citizens joining their efforts to heal the Savannah River.

A full-length documentary is forthcoming to promote awareness and appreciation for the health of the Savannah River Watershed and bring attention to our region. Donations are appreciated! To support the film project visit www.sourcestoseasavannah.com to donate and read our blog.

SOURCE TO SEA PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

- Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League
- Center for a Sustainable Coast
- Central Savannah River Peace Alliance
- Chattooga Conservancy
- Clean Coast
- Concerned Citizens of Shell Bluff
- Georgia Sierra Club
- Coastal and Savannah River Groups
- Georgia WAND
- Hilton Head for Peace
- Nuclear Watch South
- Savannah Riverkeeper
- South Carolina Sierra Club - Foothills Group
- Southern Alliance for Clean Energy

SOURCE TO SEA SPONSORS

- CHATTOOGA RIVER RESORT AND CAMPGROUND • THE CANOE GURU • EAGLE'S NEST OUTFITTERS
- GREEN INK SCREENPRINTING • NACOOCHEE VILLAGE TAVERN AND PIZZERIA
- NUCLEAR WATCH SOUTH • ORCHARD VALLEY SIGNS • SOUTHEASTERN EXPEDITIONS
- SOUTHERN RAFT SUPPLY • SAUTEE NACOOCHEE CENTER • WATERSHED DRYBAGS

VOGTLE 3 & 4 NOT NEEDED

Regulators Serve Georgia Power instead of Georgia Public

by Glenn Carroll

NUCLEAR WATCH SOUTH joined the fray at the Georgia Public Service Commission (PSC) for the 12th Vogtle Construction Monitoring Review (VCM) this summer.

The VCM is where we all get together every six months, give or take, to tally up the delays and expenses and problems with Vogtle 3 & 4 reactor construction; have some cross-examination of Georgia Power and PSC staff witnesses; hear informed and inspiring public witness testimony; and then, unfortunately, watch the PSC rubberstamp Georgia Power's multi-million dollar request with hardly a murmur.

This time, however, Nuclear Watch South was armed with unassailable evidence that power from Vogtle 3 & 4 isn't needed — evidence in the form of Georgia Power's own data from 10 years of Georgia Power annual reports.

THE NUMBERS

The numbers plainly show that Georgia Power's forecast for 4.1% annual growth upon which the PSC based its decision to certify construction of Vogtle 3 & 4 has not materialized. Instead what has happened, as the *Georgia Power Sales Volume* chart illustrates, is a downturn in electricity sales and generally flat market for the previous 10 years. Additionally, the *Georgia Power Capacity Utilization* chart shows Georgia Power is using only a fraction of the capacity it already has.

THE PROFITS

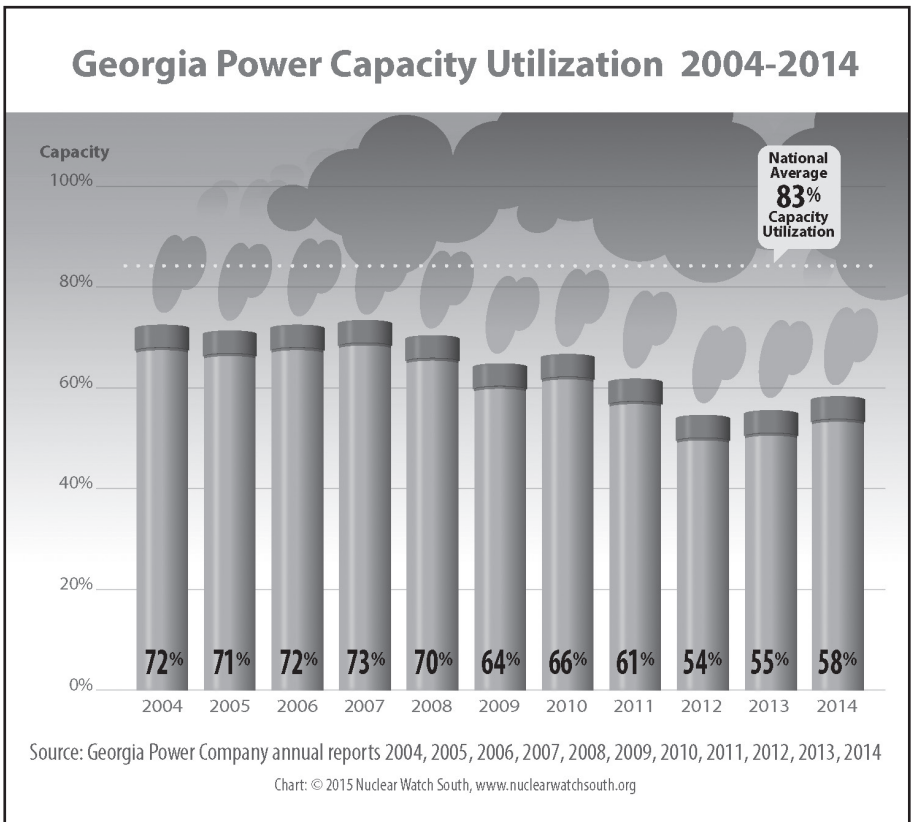
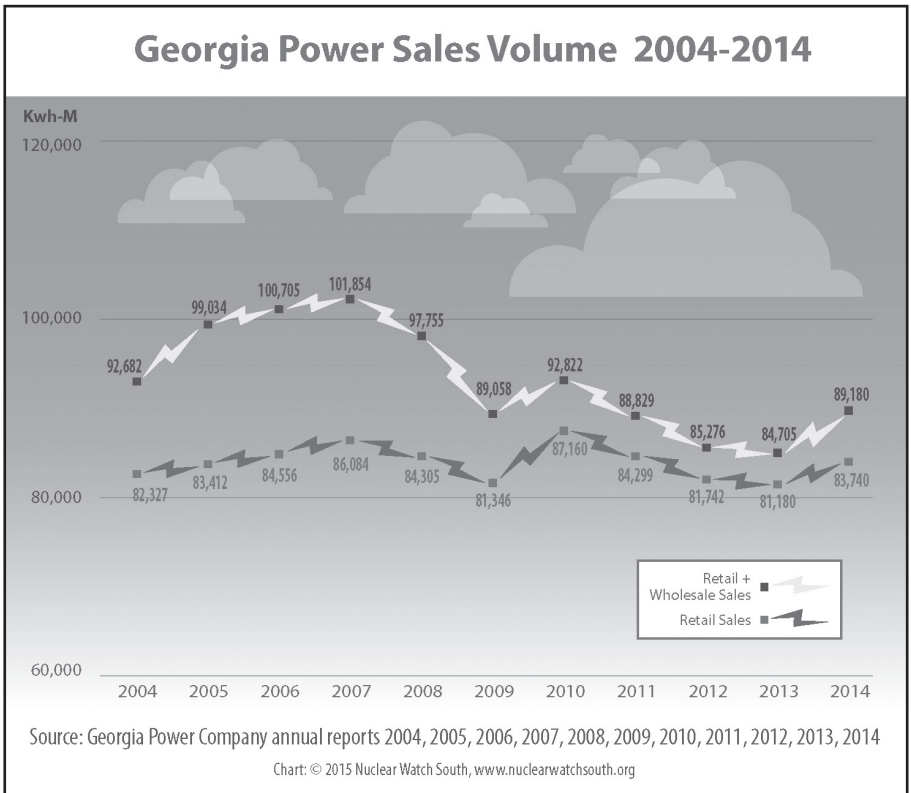
Georgia Power is collecting a 10% Construction Work In Progress (CWIP) tax on our Georgia Power bills and borrowing billions of tax dollars in interest-free federal loan guarantees to build the unneeded Vogtle 3 & 4 reactors.

Georgia Power's motivation is simple. It receives a guaranteed profit of more than 10% from the PSC. Georgia Power has collected more than \$1 billion of CWIP so far. 10% of \$1 billion is \$100 million in pure profit to Georgia Power.

REPEAL THE CWIP TAX

We are gathering thousands of signatures to repeal the CWIP tax. As folks learn about the nuclear scam unfolding in Georgia, most are eager to add their names. We are impressed with how knowledgeable, and angry, the general public already is about Georgia Power's heavy-handed tactics for using public money to enrich themselves and shield their shareholders from risk.

SIGN THE PETITION AT STOPCWIP.COM



Georgia Power annual report data compiled by Steven C. Prenovitz
Charts courtesy of Weber Graphics

STOP TRIDENT

NEWS FROM KINGS BAY, GEORGIA

by Stephen Wing

FOR 34 YEARS, ACTIVISTS have gathered at Crooked River State Park on the south Georgia coast to greet the New Year with food, talk, camaraderie, and leafletting at the gates of nearby Kings Bay Naval Base during the afternoon change of shifts. This past December, Nuclear Watch South joined the “Alternative New Year.”

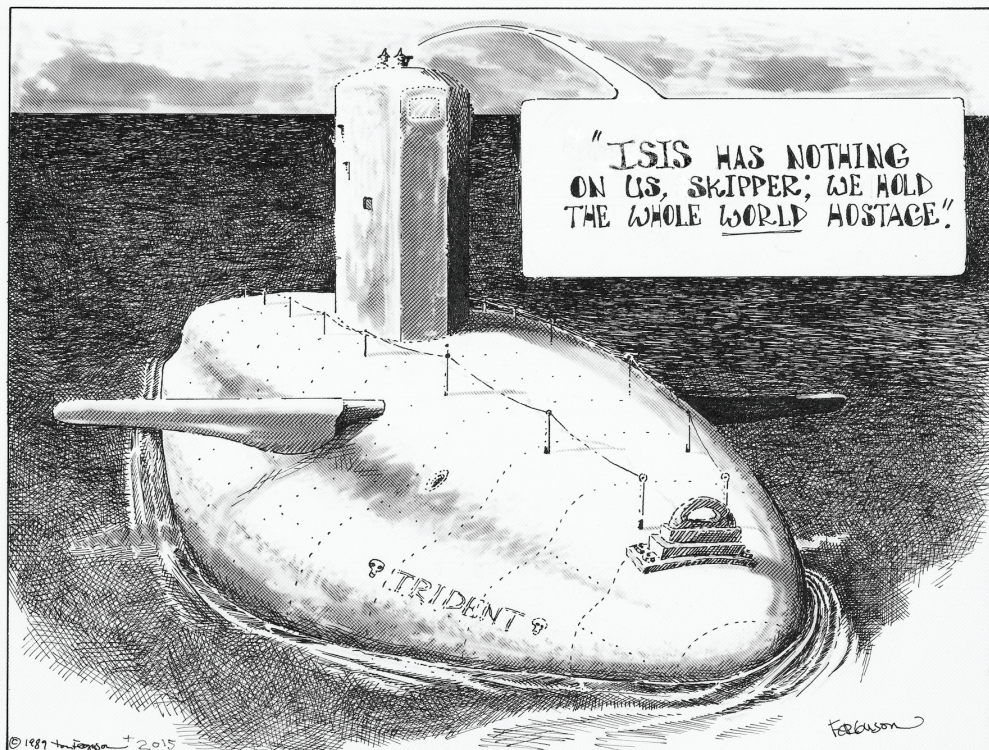
Located in St. Mary’s, Kings Bay was constructed in a coastal waterway that must routinely be dredged to allow passage of the massive Trident submarines based there. Each submarine carries enough multiple-warhead nuclear missiles to destroy 400 cities. The Trident gives the U.S. first-strike nuclear capability.

The U.S. nuclear arsenal is a relic of another era yet remains the centerpiece of strategic thinking and planning at the Pentagon – which explains why President Obama is now proposing a trillion-dollar nuclear-weapons upgrade.

In a sobering but hopeful presentation, Bruce Gagnon of the Global Network Against Weapons & Nuclear Power in Space brought us up to date.

He began with the story of his conversion to the cause of peace. During the Vietnam War, he was in the Air Force at Travis Air Force Base, CA, which was an airlift base for the war. Antiwar protesters frequently picketed the base and handed out leaflets, just as the Alternative New Year attendees had done that afternoon. None of those Vietnam-era protesters ever knew that Bruce and his co-workers actually read their leaflets and talked about the protests inside the base. Bruce, for one, gave it deep thought and years later joined the crowd protesting outside the gates of the entire military-industrial complex.

The Global Network began as a project of the Florida Coalition for Peace & Justice, where Bruce served as coordinator for 15 years. Eventually Bruce decided to leave Florida and concentrate on the movement for peace in space moving to Bath, Maine, five blocks from the Bath Iron Works, where a new generation of naval destroyers called “Aegis” is being built. With the local peace community, he helps to educate the plant workers and protest the christenings of new ships, while coordinating the efforts of the Global Network. For relaxation he



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organizes peace walks, which he finds therapeutic.

Bruce told an illuminating story of the shift in “missile defense” spending after Obama won the White House with massive financial backing from the Crown family of Chicago. Bush’s first-strike technology was “Boeing-centric.” Obama paid his backers off handsomely by switching to the destroyers made by General Dynamics at Bath Iron Works, owned by the Crowns.

Both Russia and China have stated that they will not engage in negotiations to reduce nuclear arms while the U.S. is actively building its first-strike “missile defense” capability.

Another rapidly advancing field of U.S. military dominance is cyber-warfare. Each of the four service branches has its own cyber command, with an inter-service central command over them all. All share a cyber-warfare training center at Hurlburt Field in the Florida panhandle.

“Everything the Pentagon does today is coordinated by space technology,” Bruce explained, from planes and ships to the troops on the ground busting down doors. “Those guys in their Humvees have got computer screens where they’re looking at high-resolution three-dimensional maps that were created by NASA missions years ago, and they’re hooked up to satellites.”

Bruce considers the North Korea assassination movie/Sony e-mail hacking fiasco a way to frighten the public and get Congress to put more money into cyber

warfare. One reason we have a new war every year or so, he says, is because the Pentagon is continually developing new technology and wants to test it.

Meanwhile, despite its bloated budget the Pentagon is in deep financial trouble. All of the Navy’s aircraft carrier, submarine and destroyer programs are so far over budget it cannot build everything unless we choose to wipe out all of our social programs, or, maybe hopefully, convert the war economy.

This, Bruce says, is the Achilles’ heel of the military-industrial complex. “People don’t want to lose their social security, and believe me, the military industrial complex is going for it.”

The peace movement’s job at this critical juncture is to build community support for the conversion to a peace economy. As we work to eliminate jobs from the “defense” sector of the economy, we know we can double those jobs to address climate change and build solar and wind power. Conversion is the unifying theme to bring all movements together – labor, peace, justice, environment – a win-win for all. He suggested that we all focus on defending our piece of social progress and “take those dollars out of this endless war train.”

Many thanks to the folks who organize a presence at Kings Bay every year to nurture the hallowed tradition ~ “speak truth to power.”

See y’all on New Year’s Eve 2015 for the 35th annual Alternative New Year!

“Lack of Progress Report”

MOX

MOX REMAINS ON THE federal budgetary chopping block with one lone South Carolina senator keeping it on life support. A new “Red Team” report from the Department of Energy confirms that MOX would have to be funded at more than twice the current level for 20 years to complete its mission and the money is simply not in the Department of Energy’s (DOE) budget.

MOX, as you may recall, is the longstanding boondoggle at Savannah River Site (SRS) to turn excess weapons-grade plutonium into an experimental plutonium-based reactor fuel. The MOX factory at SRS is 15 years behind schedule and 750% over budget. The construction contractor is CB&I, formerly Stone & Webster, the exact same construction company delivering Summer and Vogtle late and over-budget (or never).

Plutonium is the main ingredient in a nuclear weapon, and yet its radiation levels are not high enough to deter a would-be thief. Several avenues to secure plutonium with a high-radiation barrier have been proposed, and MOX was the plutonium disposition option selected. Nuclear Watch South, however, advocates safeguarding plutonium in the high-level radioactive legacy waste inventory still being wrangled at SRS. The Red Team is producing a separate study about this “plutonium immobilization” option.



NIX MOX ALREADY! Taxpayers have spent almost \$5 billion on this half-finished fancy concrete compound for plutonium processing. President Obama and Congress have been trying to pull the plug on this dead-end boondoggle but SC Senator/presidential hopeful Lindsay Graham is using all of his political muscle to keep billions of our tax dollars flowing towards his pet pork project.

If the MOX factory were ever to be finished, there are no utilities that are willing to load the volatile fuel in their reactors. Without the reactor irradiation services, the plutonium in MOX fuel remains a security risk, which is another reason the MOX option should be dead in the water.

Tom Clements, director of SRS Watch, has campaigned against MOX plutonium fuel for nearly two decades. He says, “There is simply no indication that the DOE budget can sustain a doubling of MOX funding or that Congress is willing to appropriate such a significant increase for the mismanaged program.” At the current level of funding, which is considerable at almost \$350 million per year, Clements calls the project “unsustainable” and “on an unofficial shut-down track that will simply result in more

money being wasted before the project is officially terminated.”

The Red Team report concludes it would be best for Congress to decide the fate of MOX now rather than drag the decision out with more waste of money. The Red Team report stopped short, however, of calling for accountability for the failure of MOX. SRS Watch is demanding investigations to determine which officials at DOE and/or contractors CB&I and AREVA are responsible for the MOX project’s transformation into a mega-boondoggle.

The dead-end MOX program has been going on over 20 years. Nuclear Watch South’s 15-year legal intervention ended in May with the NRC turning a blind eye to the cybersecurity gaps we exposed. Read more at www.nonukesyall.org.

— Glenn Carroll

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Nuclear Watch Tower
 Nuclear Watch South ~ P. O. Box 8574 ~ Atlanta, GA 31106
 404-378-4263 ~ nonukesyall.org