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South Carolina news

SOUTH CAROLINA

GREENVILLE

Panel: Warning merited quicker response

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission says workers at the Oconee Nuclear Station should have responded more quickly to a radiation warning at the plant in April.

Commission spokesman Roger Hannah told The Greenville News on Wednesday that Duke Energy Corp. was not punished because the incident had a low safety significance.

The commission says workers for the North Carolina-based utility failed to respond for more than eight hours to a control room alarm that detects radiation levels.

Duke Energy spokeswoman Sandra Magee says workers were focused on a seal leak as Oconee's Unit 1 reactor was being shut down for routine maintenance and refueling and missed the alarm. Magee says radiation levels during April's incident were not hazardous to workers or the public.

GREENVILLE

Conservancy buys acreage for preserve

The Nature Conservancy has bought 560 acres in northern Pickens County for a nature preserve.

The conservancy bought the land from Upstate Forever, which had acquired it last year from Crescent Resources, the real estate arm of Duke Energy.

The land is just south of S.C. 11 between Holly Springs and Sunset.

The conservancy says the land includes five mountains and is home to a variety of fish and wildlife, including reptiles, amphibians and black bears. A botanical survey revealed 134 native wildflower species.

Mark Robinson with The Nature Conservancy of South Carolina says the group received a \$1.5 million grant from the S.C. Conservation Bank for the purchase,

along with other private contributions.

FLORENCE

Conference looked at biofuels in state

Making energy from plants in South Carolina was the topic of a statewide conference in Florence.