

South Carolina Current Drought Status

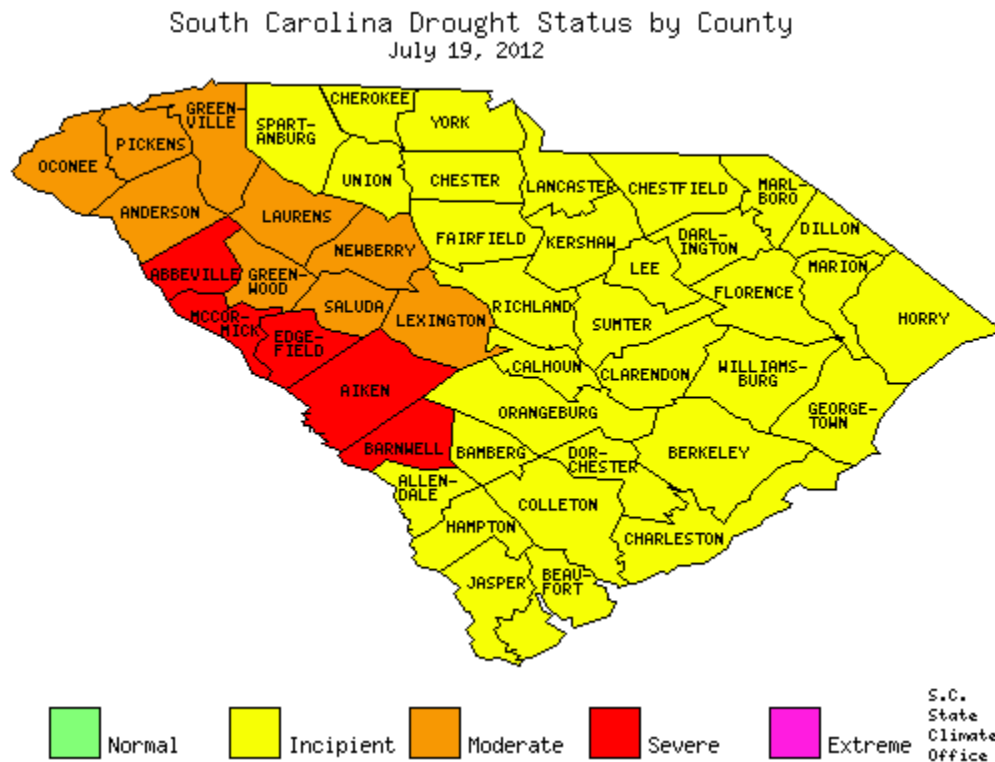
State Climate Office

NEWS RELEASE #12-155

DNR News 803-667-0696

July 19, 2012

Drought status maintained for all counties except Barnwell



Discussion:

The S.C. Drought Response Committee meeting via conference call on July 19, 2012 voted to maintain the drought status for all counties except Barnwell County which was upgraded to a Severe drought designation. Abbeville, McCormick, Edgefield and Aiken in the Savannah River Basin remain at severe. Oconee, Pickens, Anderson, Saluda, Greenwood, Greenville, Newberry, Laurens, and Lexington counties remain at moderate. All other counties in the state remain at the incipient level of drought.

While the rainfall pattern has once again improved over the last 10 days, Committee members felt it was too soon to downgrade declarations or move counties out of drought. Based on data from the Community Collaborative Rain, Hail and Snow Network (CoCoRaHS), summer rainfall totals since June 1 vary from 3.64" at Loris to 15.23" at Cleveland. Hope Mizzell, SC State Climatologist, commented that many locations have received close to normal rainfall which is an improvement over previous summers, but it's difficult to overcome drought during the summer months due to increased evaporation.

Scott Harder, S.C. Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Hydrologist, summarized that recent rainfall has improved streamflow levels, but without additional rain flows will quickly start to decline. Most lakes around the state are close to normal elevation except for those in the Savannah River Basin which are much below target (Jocassee -22.2 ft, Keowee -3.50 ft, Hartwell -9.72 ft, Thurmond -10.31 ft).

Stan Simpson, Savannah District Water Management, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, explained that recent rains have helped slow lake level decline in the Savannah Basin, but even with normal rainfall, lake pools will continue declining due to lower inflows, increased evaporation and increased water use demand typical of this time of year.

Barnwell was the only county upgraded. Brenda Nettles, Commissioner, Barnwell County Soil and Water Conservation District shared with the Committee information she collected about drought conditions in the county. Lack of precipitation during the past fall and winter contributed to the low surface and subsurface moisture conditions combined with limited rainfall and above normal temperatures during spring and early summer has produced the severe drought. No rainfall and extreme heat from mid-June through mid-July has also negatively impacted crops and pastures.

Drought Response Committee Chairman Ken Rentiers stated, "There was not overwhelming support for changing the declaration in any county except Barnwell especially given the uncertainty in rainfall patterns this time of year. The Committee will continue to monitor the situation closely and reconvene in four to six weeks or sooner as needed."

DNR protects and manages South Carolina's natural resources by making wise and balanced decisions for the benefit of the state's natural resources and its people. Find out more about DNR at [the DNR Web site](#).

Drought Status: 07-19-2012

County	Status
Abbeville	Severe
Aiken	Severe
Allendale	Incipient
Anderson	Moderate
Bamberg	Incipient
Barnwell	Severe
Beaufort	Incipient
Berkeley	Incipient
Calhoun	Incipient
Charleston	Incipient
Cherokee	Incipient
Chester	Incipient
Chesterfield	Incipient
Clarendon	Incipient
Colleton	Incipient
Darlington	Incipient
Dillon	Incipient
Dorchester	Incipient
Edgefield	Severe
Fairfield	Incipient
Florence	Incipient
Georgetown	Incipient
Greenville	Moderate
Greenwood	Moderate
Hampton	Incipient
Horry	Incipient
Jasper	Incipient
Kershaw	Incipient
Lancaster	Incipient
Laurens	Moderate
Lee	Incipient
Lexington	Moderate
Marion	Incipient

County	Status
Marlboro	Incipient
McCormick	Severe
Newberry	Moderate
Oconee	Moderate
Orangeburg	Incipient
Pickens	Moderate
Richland	Incipient
Saluda	Moderate
Spartanburg	Incipient
Sumter	Incipient
Union	Incipient
Williamsburg	Incipient
York	Incipient