

# South Carolina Current Drought Status

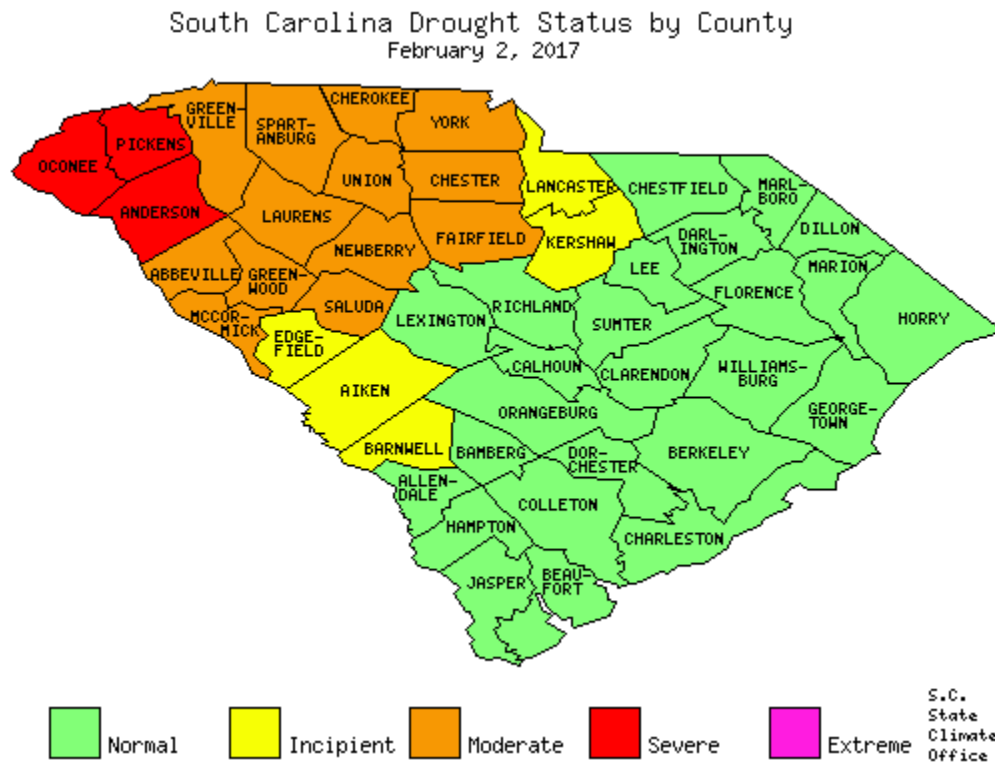
State Climate Office

NEWS RELEASE

DNR News 803-667-0696

February 2, 2017

## 15 counties see improvement in drought statuses



Due to adequate winter rainfall for portions of South Carolina, the S.C. Drought Response Committee has updated the drought statuses of 15 counties

All counties in the northeast region maintained their current statuses of normal (no drought) or incipient. Richland and Lexington counties, located in the central region of the state, were downgraded to normal status, while the rest of the counties in that region maintained their current statuses of moderate or normal. All of the counties in the southern region were downgraded from incipient to normal. McCormick and Abbeville counties, located in the Central Savannah region, maintained moderate status, Edgefield, Aiken and Barnwell counties were downgraded to incipient, and Allendale and below were downgraded to normal status.

“We voted to downgrade the drought for many counties due to increased rainfall over the last 30 to 60 days,” Colleton County Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioner Emeritus Marion Rizer said. “Ironically, we are not able to get into the fields to fertilize small grains and to make preparations for spring planting because soil moisture conditions are too wet in some areas.”

But due to potential fire hazards and lack of moisture, Oconee, Pickens and Anderson counties have remained in severe drought status. According to S.C. Forestry Commission Forest Protection Chief Darryl Jones, the wildfire activity in November was 94 percent higher than the five-year average. The Pinnacle Mountain Fire burned 10,623 acres in Pickens and Greenville counties before it was controlled, and fire costs exceeded \$5 million. Recovery work, including firebreaks rehabilitation and clearing of trails, is ongoing.

“As we enter our traditional wildfire season, fine fuels are very dry and wildfire occurrence has been increasing,” Jones stated. “When frontal passages bring low relative humidity and higher winds, we do expect to have periods of high wildfire activity, and we expect it to continue until green-up begins in late April or early May.”

Hydrologic conditions have slightly improved in much of the Upstate over the past two months, but streamflow and lake levels remain well below normal in many areas, with the driest conditions occurring in the upper Saluda and Savannah basins.

The committee will meet again within the next eight weeks unless weather conditions require members to gather sooner.

Contact Dr. Mizzell in Columbia at (803) 734-9568 or e-mail at [mizzellh@dnr.sc.gov](mailto:mizzellh@dnr.sc.gov) for more information.

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: 02-02-2017**

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

<b>County</b>	<b>Status</b>
Marlboro	Normal
McCormick	Moderate
Newberry	Moderate
Oconee	Severe
Orangeburg	Normal
Pickens	Severe
Richland	Normal
Saluda	Moderate
Spartanburg	Moderate
Sumter	Normal
Union	Moderate
Williamsburg	Normal
York	Moderate