

South Carolina Current Drought Status

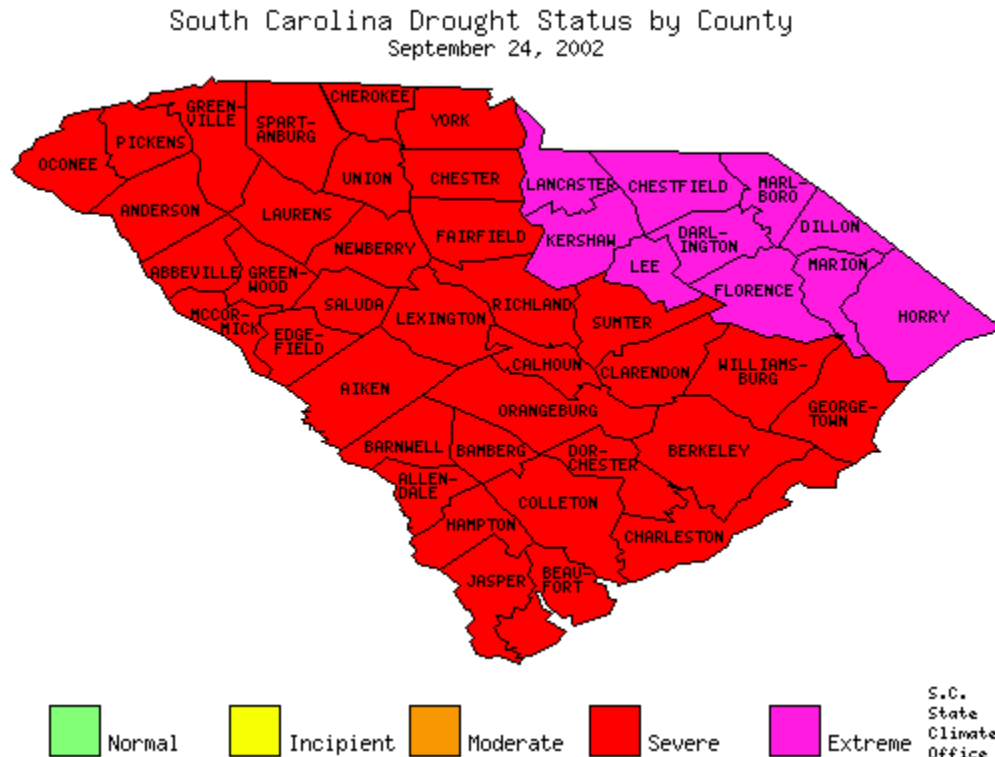
State Climate Office

NEWS RELEASE

DNR News 803-667-0696

September 24, 2002

MOST OF SOUTH CAROLINA DOWNGRADED TO 'SEVERE' DROUGHT STATUS



After receiving reports of above-average rainfall and improved agricultural, forestry and hydrologic conditions, the South Carolina Drought Response Committee voted Sept. 24 in Columbia to downgrade most of the state from the extreme category to severe.

The 10-county Northeast-Pee Dee Drought Management Area remains classified in the extreme drought status. Those 10 counties still in the extreme drought category are Chesterfield, Darlington, Dillon, Horry, Florence, Kershaw, Lancaster, Lee, Marion and Marlboro.

From most standpoints, we've had a major improvement, said Freddy Vang, director of the S.C. Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Land, Water and Conservation Division. We've had significant rainfall during the past five weeks with more in the forecast, there has been a major effort on the part of industry to reduce their water intakes and effluent releases, and there appears to be a general improvement in agricultural conditions. However, the state's hydrologic system is far from a complete recovery.

Many areas of the state received significant rainfall between Aug. 20 Sept. 23. Caesars Head received 19.16 inches, which was more than 12 inches above normal for that time period, and State Climatologist Milt Brown predicted that more may be on the way. Tropical storms Lili and Isidore, approaching simultaneously from the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean, may deliver more rainfall to the Southeast within the week.

The Northeast-Pee Dee Drought Management Area voted to remain in the extreme category, according to Mike Hancock, because, We think it would be irresponsible on our part to decrease the category when the headwaters in North Carolina are still in as bad a shape as they are. We wanted to show cooperation and appreciation to the folks in North Carolina who are working with us in this drought.

Jim Witkowski of International Paper, representing the Central Drought Management Area, said the group was unanimous in its decision to downgrade the area to the severe status, but the group also recommended that all water suppliers maintain their current water restrictions, and that the group meet again in 30 days if the approaching tropical weather systems do not deliver rain to South Carolina.

Witkowski said many industries around the state have put water conservation plans in place as a result of the drought. International Paper's Eastover mill has implemented water conservation measures, among them using processed waste water instead of fresh water, that are saving four million gallons of water a day compared to the same time period last year.

Most water suppliers reported at the Sept. 24 Drought Response Committee meeting that recent rainfall had improved conditions around the state. K.C. Price of SJWD, headquartered in the Upstate, said all the rain allowed his company to ease lawn-watering restrictions from once a week to every other day.

According to Ken Cabe of the S.C. Forestry Commission, recent rainfall has reduced wildfire danger considerably across the state. Anyone planning to burn should use reasonable caution, following all state and local outdoor burning regulations.

In its U.S. Seasonal Drought Outlook, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration predicts that major drought relief is possible for most South Carolina over the upcoming months.

Officials at the meeting emphasized that even though the state has received recent rainfall and the forecast is optimistic the state is still in a severe drought situation.

Contact Dr. Mizzell in Columbia at (803) 734-9568 or e-mail at 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: 09-24-2002

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

| County | Status |
|--------------|---------|
| Marlboro | Extreme |
| McCormick | Severe |
| Newberry | Severe |
| Oconee | Severe |
| Orangeburg | Severe |
| Pickens | Severe |
| Richland | Severe |
| Saluda | Severe |
| Spartanburg | Severe |
| Sumter | Severe |
| Union | Severe |
| Williamsburg | Severe |
| York | Severe |