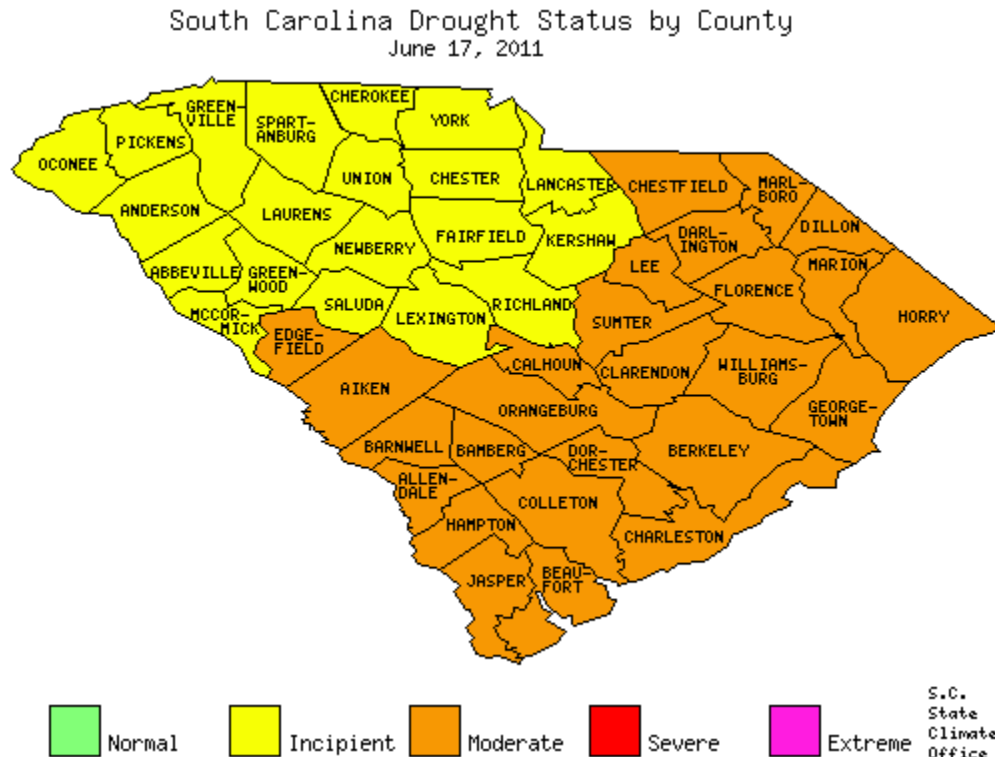


South Carolina Current Drought Status

State Climate Office 803-734-9100
SPECIAL NEWS RELEASE #11-8 DNR News 803-667-0696
June 17, 2011

Drought Response Committee upgrades 26 counties to moderate drought status



Discussion:

Members of the S.C. Drought Response Committee, meeting via tele-conference on June 17, upgraded Aiken, Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell, Beaufort, Berkeley, Calhoun, Charleston, Chesterfield, Clarendon, Colleton, Darlington, Dillon, Dorchester, Edgefield, Florence, Georgetown, Hampton, Horry, Jasper, Lee, Marion, Marlboro, Orangeburg, Sumter, and Williamsburg counties to moderate drought status. The remaining counties maintain incipient status. The moderate drought declaration is followed by increasing levels of severity to severe and extreme status.

Hope Mizzell, S.C. State Climatologist stated, "The decision to upgrade was primarily driven by the dry weather impact on agriculture and increased wildlife activity. Rainfall amounts and coverage have been well below normal since May 1 for the areas upgraded combined with above normal temperature (see table below). For areas maintained at the incipient level rainfall

totals have been closer to normal. A few locations have even received much above normal rainfall since May 1, but they are isolated (such as Ft. Mill 13.73" or 248% of normal)."

Rainfall Totals and Percent of Normal Summary: May 1, 2011 to June 16, 2011

Station	Rainfall Totals	Percent of Normal
Charleston	1.63"	24%
Florence	1.59"	29%
Barnwell	2.63"	42%
Marion	2.75"	44%
Walterboro	3.10"	46%
Chesterfield	3.37"	62%

David Tompkins with the S.C. Department of Agriculture reported, "Agriculture in virtually every area of South Carolina is in need of rainfall. The lack of rain, coupled with high temperatures, is impacting crop production. Also being affected are pastures and hay production. Adequate rainfall is essential to agricultural production. Irrigation systems supplement natural rainfall, but do not make up for severe deficits. The next few weeks are critical to farmers and we are hopeful that rainfall will be adequate."

Darryl Jones with the S.C. Forestry Commission reported, "We already hit our five year average in the first two weeks for the month of June as far as wildfires. It's also been very hot and that has taken a toll on our firefighters, causing a lot of fatigue and raising safety concerns. A lot of the fires are requiring we keep personnel on scene for an extended period because it's burning in the ground and threatens to escape, so it is taking a lot of effort to fully mop them up. We're also getting reports of survival problems with seedlings planted this past winter and we would expect that to increase if the dry conditions continue."

The good news is that most water systems are reporting adequate storage at this time according to S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control.

The purpose of the moderate declaration is to increase awareness that drought conditions are intensifying. Water systems are asked to review their Drought Response Plans and Ordinances and implement as needed. The committee also hopes that the drought status increase will bring attention to the increased wildfire activity and will encourage the public to be cautious with any outdoor burning activity. The best way to fight wildfires is to prevent them! The committee will reconvene in a month or sooner if needed to reevaluate the drought conditions.

Contact South Carolina State Climatologist Dr. Hope Mizzell in Columbia at (803) 734-9568, or (803) 530-5793, 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: 06-17-2011

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

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