

# South Carolina Current Drought Status

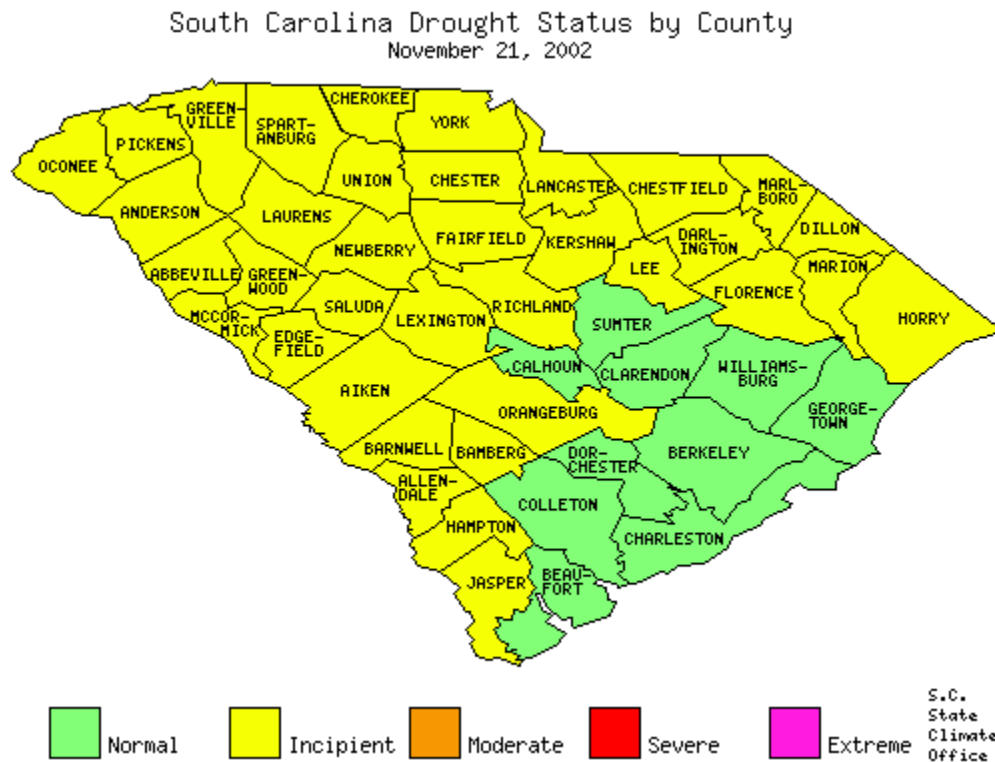
State Climate Office

NEWS RELEASE

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## DROUGHT CONDITIONS DOWNGRADED STATEWIDE



The South Carolina Drought Response Committee met Thursday, November 21, in Columbia and downgraded the drought status in every county of the state.

"Much needed rainfall over the last two to three months alleviated the severe and Incipient drought conditions throughout the state," according to Freddy Vang, Deputy Director for the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources' Land, Water and Conservation Division. "Abundant precipitation has eliminated drought conditions altogether in ten counties located in the southern region and most of the Coastal Plain."

Counties where the drought is over include Calhoun, Sumter, Clarendon, Williamsburg, Georgetown, Dorchester, Colleton, Beaufort, Charleston and Berkeley. All other counties, previously classified as either severe or extreme, were downgraded to incipient.

Counties now under an incipient drought classification include Oconee, Pickens, Greenville, Cherokee, York, Lancaster, Chesterfield, Marlboro, Dillon, Marion, Horry, Florence, Lee, Darlington, Kershaw, Fairfield, Richland, Lexington, Anderson, Bamberg, Newberry, Saluda,

Greenwood, Union, Laurens, Chester, Spartanburg, Abbeville, McCormick, Edgefield, Aiken, Barnwell, Orangeburg, Allendale, Hampton and Jasper.

Vang added that even though the drought situation has improved, the consequences of drought continue. "The drought had a ripple effect throughout the state's economy," Vang said. "Our job now is to take lessons learned and apply that knowledge to minimize the negative effect of droughts in the future."

Hope Mizzell, SC Drought Response Program Coordinator, reported that the state has received much above normal rainfall since late August with many locations receiving 16 to 30 inches in less than three months. Mizzell emphasized that this is 5 to 15 inches above normal. "Some locations received the normal rainfall for a five-month period in just two and half months," Mizzell said.

Acting State Climatologist, Milt Brown, gave an optimistic forecast for above average rainfall and said that according to national models, the wet weather pattern is expected to continue throughout the winter and into early spring due to the influence of the El Nino event, on the global weather pattern.

Masaaki Kiuchi, DNR hydrologist stated that recent persistent, soaking rains brought stream-flows across the state back to normal for this time of the year, and in some cases, to higher than normal levels. Lakes and ponds are filling up much earlier than normal, except for the Savannah lakes. Groundwater levels are also recovering and in some areas reached the highest levels in two years.

Industry officials reported that increased streamflow levels will allow industry to slowly begin releasing effluent and lower wastewater holding pond levels that increased over the state's four-year drought period, but that normal rainfall throughout the winter is needed.

The prolonged drought period, especially over the past year, has severely impacted agriculture throughout the state, said Dale E. Linvill with the Agriculture Weather Office at Clemson University. "While it appears we're turning the corner, problems with shallow well water supplies and farm ponds continue." Linvill said. "Our hope is that the above average precipitation expected through the winter and into early spring will continue to supply much needed water for agricultural purposes."

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: 11-21-2002**

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

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