

South Carolina Current Drought Status

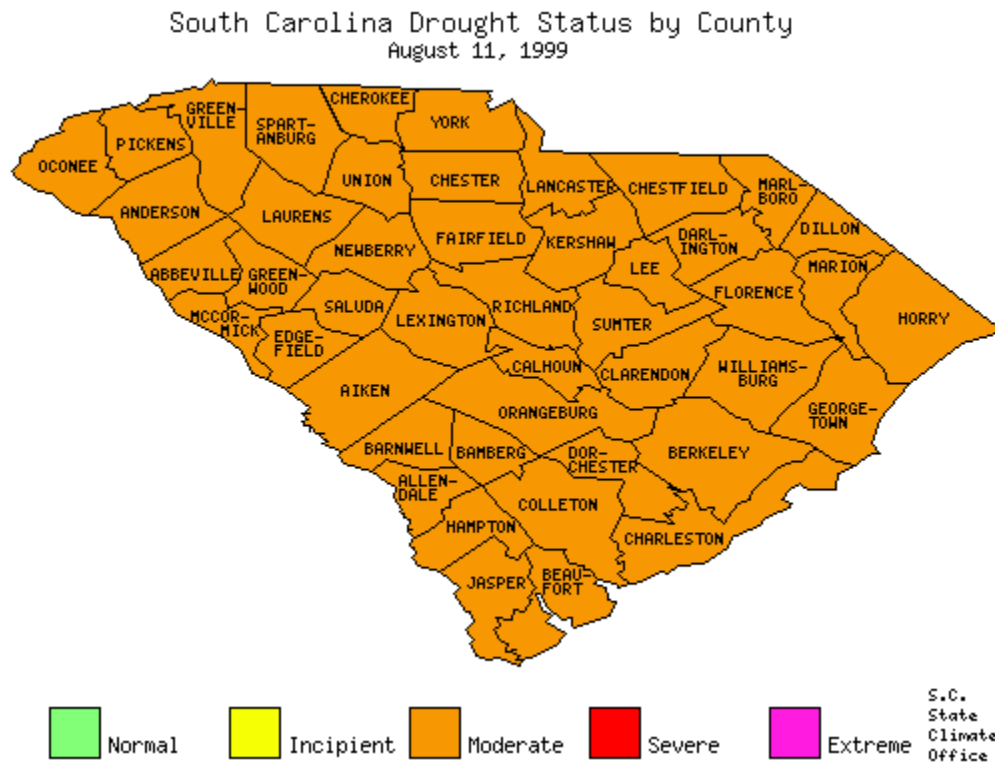
State Climate Office

NEWS RELEASE

DNR News 803-667-0696

August 11, 1999

Moderate Drought Declared For All South Carolina Counties



For previously issued drought statements [see the archived status reports](#).

[Table of all counties and drought status.](#)

[Drought Response Committee Meeting Sign-In sheet.](#)

The S.C. Department of Natural Resources issued a moderate drought declaration for all South Carolina counties after meeting with the S.C. Drought Response Committee today in Columbia.

The S.C. Drought Response Committee is comprised of representatives from state and federal agencies.

A moderate drought declaration, the second of four drought levels specified in the Drought Response Act of 1985, means drought conditions have continued to deteriorate and are expected to persist. As a result, the Land, Water and Conservation Division of the S.C. Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is reviewing drought-related variables such as temperature, precipitation, runoff, streamflow, ground-water levels, reservoir levels, soil moisture and public water supplies on a daily basis.

The Crop Moisture Index, which measures short-term soil moisture needed for crop growth, indicates that excessively dry conditions exist across the state and are severely affecting growers and grazing livestock throughout the state. Freddy Vang, deputy director of DNR's Land, Water and Conservation Division, told the committee that his department is working with members of the agricultural community both here and in Washington, D.C., to determine what measures can be taken to alleviate these "difficult times for the farmers in our state."

"We are keenly aware of the severity of the situation with regard to the agricultural community," Vang said. "If there is any action that we can take to assist those whose livelihood depends on agricultural and forestry interests, then we are prepared to act immediately."

South Carolina has been experiencing drought conditions for the past 14 months. According to Hope Miizzell with the DNR State Climatology Office, drought deficits range from 8 to 26 inches below normal since June 1998. Since July 1, the state has received 30 to 50 percent of normal rainfall.

According to the National Weather Service forecast, no rainfall is expected within the next six to 10 days. State Climatologist Mike Helfert says the best hope for any drought relief would be rainfall. "We need a statewide rainfall to last three to five days," Helfert said. "And not just one week, but two weeks. The only way to get that is through some major tropical system, the kindest of which would be a decaying hurricane or an unnamed tropical storm." However, Helfert says there is no sign of any such system either in the Atlantic or from the northeast Gulf of Mexico.

A survey of water suppliers across the state conducted by the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) indicates that water supplies are currently sufficient. The DNR reports that below-normal rainfall in the winter and spring of this year has resulted in record-low streamflows and low groundwater storage. Water withdrawers who depend on wells or unregulated streams may experience water shortages and deteriorating water quality in the near future as water storage continues to decrease in the weeks ahead.

The Drought Response Committee encourages local water suppliers to review drought response ordinances and plans for their area. The DNR's Drought Information Center has been activated in Columbia. The public should contact the center at (803) 737- 0800 for more information or if other problems arise. The public is also strongly encouraged to monitor water resources closely and help by conducting voluntary water conservation as a contingency for even drier conditions in the near future.

The S.C. Forestry Commission reports that fire occurrence is increasing slightly, but fire danger has not reached critical levels.

The DNR will continue to monitor the situation and provide updates as needed. Integrated drought information is available on the DNR's State Climatology Office Internet Web Site.

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: 08-11-1999

County	Status
Abbeville	Moderate
Aiken	Moderate
Allendale	Moderate
Anderson	Moderate
Bamberg	Moderate
Barnwell	Moderate
Beaufort	Moderate
Berkeley	Moderate
Calhoun	Moderate
Charleston	Moderate
Cherokee	Moderate
Chester	Moderate
Chesterfield	Moderate
Clarendon	Moderate
Colleton	Moderate
Darlington	Moderate
Dillon	Moderate
Dorchester	Moderate
Edgefield	Moderate
Fairfield	Moderate
Florence	Moderate
Georgetown	Moderate
Greenville	Moderate
Greenwood	Moderate
Hampton	Moderate

County	Status
Horry	Moderate
Jasper	Moderate
Kershaw	Moderate
Lancaster	Moderate
Laurens	Moderate
Lee	Moderate
Lexington	Moderate
Marion	Moderate
Marlboro	Moderate
McCormick	Moderate
Newberry	Moderate
Oconee	Moderate
Orangeburg	Moderate
Pickens	Moderate
Richland	Moderate
Saluda	Moderate
Spartanburg	Moderate
Sumter	Moderate
Union	Moderate
Williamsburg	Moderate
York	Moderate