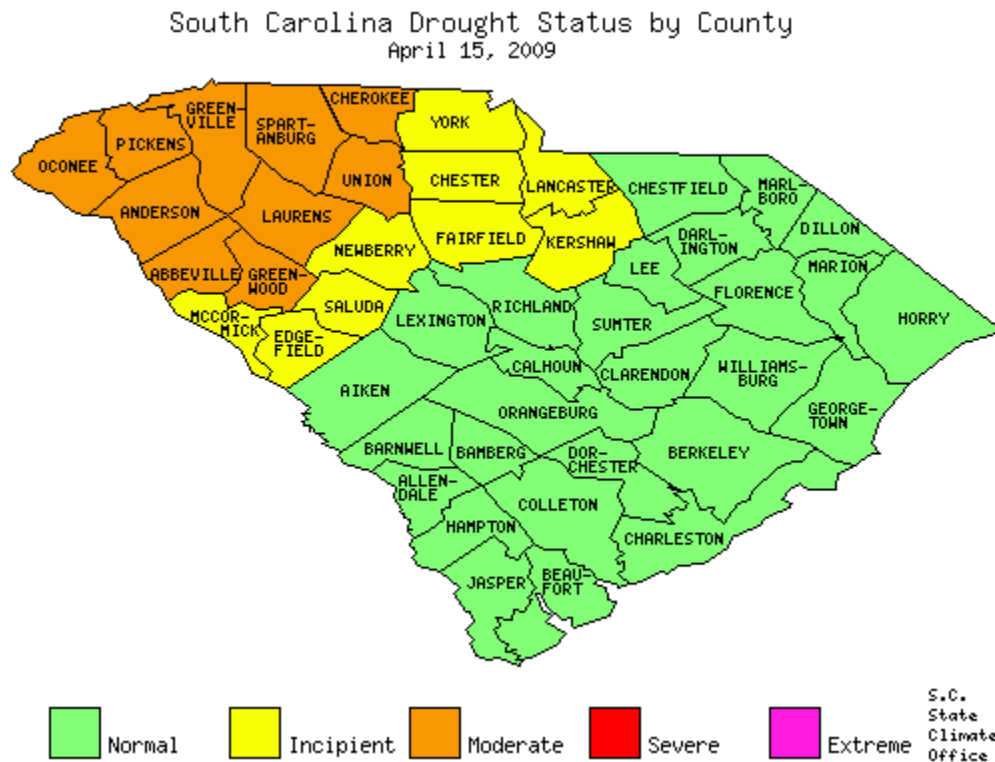


South Carolina Current Drought Status

State Climate Office 803-734-9100
SPECIAL NEWS RELEASE 09-04 DNR News 803-734-3815
April 15, 2009

27 OF STATE'S COUNTIES NOW WITH NO DROUGHT STATUS



Discussion:

[Minutes from the April 15, 2009 S.C. Drought Response Committee meeting \(.pdf\).](#)

The S.C. Department of Natural Resources convened the S.C. Drought Response Committee on April 15 in Columbia. All areas of the state received much-needed rainfall over the past several weeks, prompting the Drought Response Committee to reduce the drought severity level statewide. These recent much above normal rain events can be deceptive, giving the impression the drought is over; however, groundwater levels have not recharged completely in those counties where the drought was maintained.

The counties downgraded to the moderate category are Oconee, Pickens, Greenville, Spartanburg, Anderson, Abbeville, Laurens, Greenwood, Union and Cherokee. The nine counties downgraded to incipient drought are Chester, Edgefield, Fairfield, Kershaw, Lancaster, McCormick, Newberry, Saluda and York.

The drought declaration was removed completely from counties in the southern Midlands, along the coast and in the Pee Dee region. For more information about drought and to see a drought status by county map, visit the Office of State Climatology [drought Web site](#).

According to DNR hydrologist Masaaki Kiuchi all 17 statewide stream flow gauges show no drought, "Lake levels around South Carolina are normal except in the Savannah River Basin which is still well below normal although recent precipitation has improved lake levels."

Darryl Jones with the S.C. Forestry Commission says fire season began as a busy one, but he is cautiously optimistic, "We received rain frequently enough in March and April to lower the number of wildfires around the state. If we continue to receive regular rainfall, we should make it through the rest of the traditional wildfire season with a moderate number of fires."

West Drought Management Area committee member Dennis Chastain of Pickens urged the public to look at the broader picture given the recent precipitation around the state, "Certainly we are much better going into spring and summer than we had anticipated, but the public needs to look below the surface and realize we are still in a ten-year drought cycle. We need a substantial improvement in rainfall to recharge groundwater to anything like normal."

Northeast Drought Management Area committee member Mike Hancock from Lugoff-Elgin Water Authority stated, "While most of the drought indices we consider show improvement, we encourage continued voluntary water conservation measures."

"The SC Department of Natural Resources will closely monitor the drought status and if rainfall is reduced the committee will promptly reconvene," said Ken Rentiers, Deputy Director, Land, Water and Conservation Division.

Contact South Carolina State Climatologist Dr. Hope 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: 04-15-2009

County	Status
Abbeville	Moderate
Aiken	Normal
Allendale	Normal
Anderson	Moderate
Bamberg	Normal
Barnwell	Normal
Beaufort	Normal
Berkeley	Normal
Calhoun	Normal
Charleston	Normal
Cherokee	Moderate
Chester	Incipient
Chesterfield	Normal
Clarendon	Normal
Colleton	Normal
Darlington	Normal
Dillon	Normal
Dorchester	Normal
Edgefield	Incipient
Fairfield	Incipient
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

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