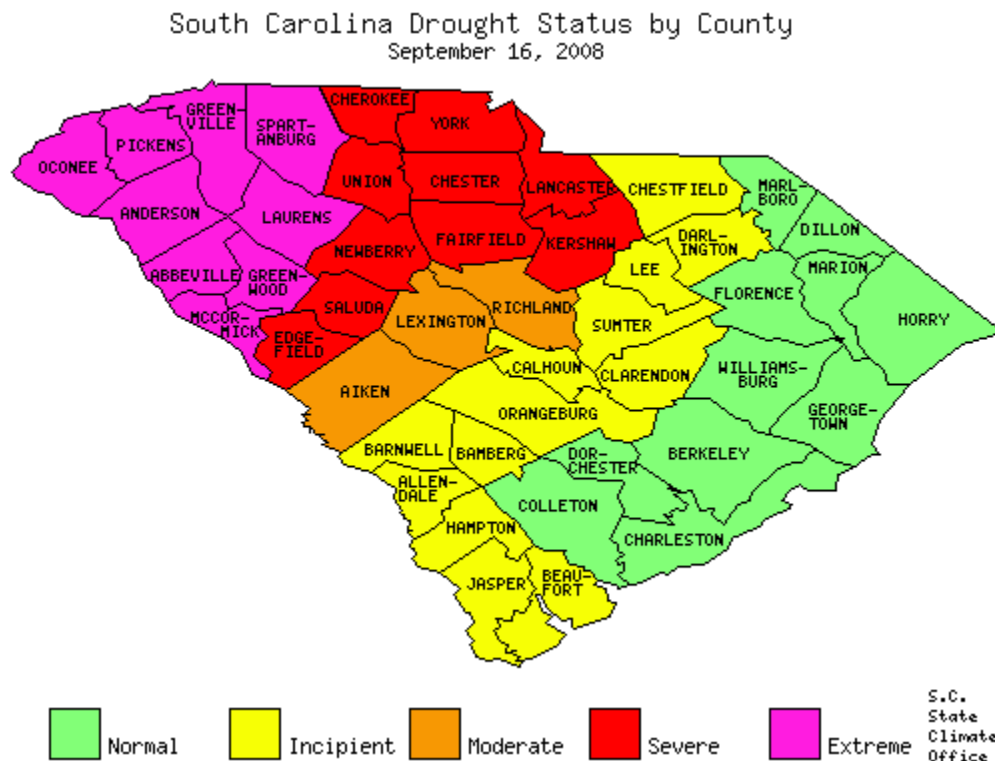


South Carolina Current Drought Status

State Climate Office 803-734-9100
SPECIAL NEWS RELEASE #08-15 DNR News 803-734-3815
September 16, 2008

Governor, DNR urge voluntary water conservation

Extreme Drought Continues for 9 Western South Carolina Counties.



Discussion:

The S.C. Department of Natural Resources convened the S.C. Drought Response Committee on September 16, 2008 in Greenville and nine Upstate counties remain in extreme drought. Ten counties were downgraded or maintained at severe and three remain at moderate status. Thirteen counties were downgraded to incipient status. Recent rains prompted the Drought Response Committee to remove the drought declaration for ten counties: Marion, Dillon, Marlboro, Florence, Horry, Williamsburg, Berkeley, Dorchester and Colleton. The drought declaration was removed for Georgetown and Charleston during the August meeting.

The counties remaining in the extreme category are: Oconee, Pickens, Greenville, Spartanburg, Anderson, Abbeville, Laurens, Greenwood and McCormick counties. For more information about drought and to see a drought status by county map, visit the Office of State Climatology Drought Website at: www.dnr.sc.gov/climate/sco/Drought/drought_current_info.php.

David Tompkins with the S.C. Department of Agriculture reported, "The impact of the drought on agriculture continues for parts of the state with significant concern over hay availability for our cattle industry."

The S.C. Forestry Commission cited a 9.55% increase in wildfires for July/August and a 66.4% increase in the number of acres burned compared to the five-year average. The Commission expects to have an active fall fire season.

Stan Simpson, US Army Corps of Engineers, provided a review of the Corps' operation of the Savannah River lakes in response to the drought explaining that Lakes Hartwell and Thurmond is expected to reach new record lows over the next 10 weeks.

Andy Wachob, DNR Hydrologist, reported all lakes around the state are below their target level except Lake Murray. He noted Jocassee, Hartwell and Thurmond lakes were the hardest hit by drought. He also spoke about the steady decline in most Upstate groundwater wells with a well in Spartanburg at a record low and a well in Oconee County near record low.

According to Mizzell, "We are entering the driest months climatologically, October-November, and without rainfall from tropical systems, rainfall amounts during these months can be very low."

Steve de Kozlowski, S.C. Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Land, Water, and Conservation Division Interim Deputy Director, stated, "Upstate water systems can ensure they maintain adequate supplies through rigorous conservation efforts."

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 www.dnr.sc.gov. For more drought information contact State Climatologist Hope Mizzell in Columbia at (803) 734-9568 or e-mail MizzellH@dnr.sc.gov.

Drought Status: 09-16-2008

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

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