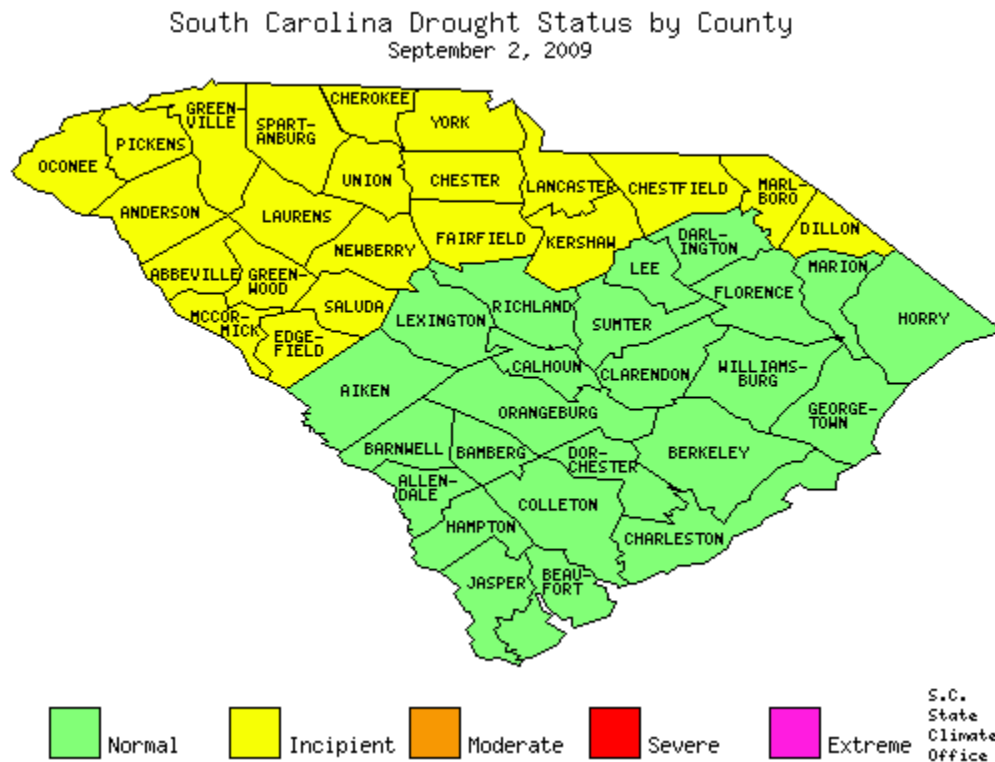


South Carolina Current Drought Status

State Climate Office 803-734-9100
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September 2, 2009

INCIPIENT DROUGHT STATUS DECLARED FOR 22 SC COUNTIES



Discussion:

A return to a pattern of much below normal rainfall over the past two months led the S. C. Department of Natural Resources to issue an incipient drought declaration for 22 counties. The state agency members of the Drought Response Committee voted electronically on Wednesday Sept. 2, 2009, to upgrade to the first level of drought. The incipient drought declaration is the first level of drought followed by moderate, severe and extreme. During incipient drought, the S.C. Department of Natural Resources (DNR) activates the Drought Information Center and increases monitoring and notification of the drought status.

"We were optimistic in early June that maybe we would finally get an extended break from the drought, but only two months have passed since we removed the drought declaration and here we go again," said Hope Mizzell, S.C. State Climatologist. According to William Schmitz, NOAA-Southeast Regional Climate Center, "Greenville-Spartanburg recorded their fourth driest July and August on record since 1893, receiving only 2.99 inches. Mizzell says the short-term forecast is not encouraging with little relief expected over the next week. She also reminds everyone that October and November are usually the driest months climatologically.

"Not everywhere in South Carolina is dry," said Wes Tyler, Service Climatologist for the S.C. State Climatology Office. "Enhanced precipitation along coastal counties, attributed to sea breeze convection, resulted in much above normal rainfall totals during July and August. Charleston Airport reported 140% of normal rainfall (18.30 inches) since July 1 while the Piedmont and higher elevations had limited convective activity resulting in rainfalls of 40% of normal or less. Without the rainfall contributions of tropical weather events, South Carolina's summer rainfall coverage is dependent on the scattered nature of afternoon thunderstorms. "

"We have certainly not reached the dire conditions experienced during the past few years, but everyone needs to be aware of the situation and industries and water systems should review their drought plans," encouraged Ken Rentiers, Chairman of the S.C. Drought Response Committee and Deputy Director for the DNR Land, Water and Conservation Division.

David Tompkins with the S.C. Department of Agriculture remains cautious, "Most of the major crop production areas in South Carolina received timely rainfall that provided for good crop production. Certain areas, particularly in the Piedmont, did not. In these Piedmont areas, crops were stressed and grazing lands suffered due to dry conditions." Dry conditions in July and August were particularly hard in the Piedmont, but Tompkins hopes for adequate rainfall this fall so pastures will be in good condition going into the winter months. He also noted some ponds need to be replenished in these areas.

David Baize with the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control reports no water systems with any supply problems at this time.

DNR will convene the full drought response committee in the next few weeks if conditions continue to deteriorate.

South Carolina's natural resources are essential for economic development and contribute nearly \$30 billion and 230,000 jobs to the state's economy overall. Find out why "Life's Better Outdoors" at: www.dnr.sc.gov/economic/index.html.

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: 09-02-2009

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

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