

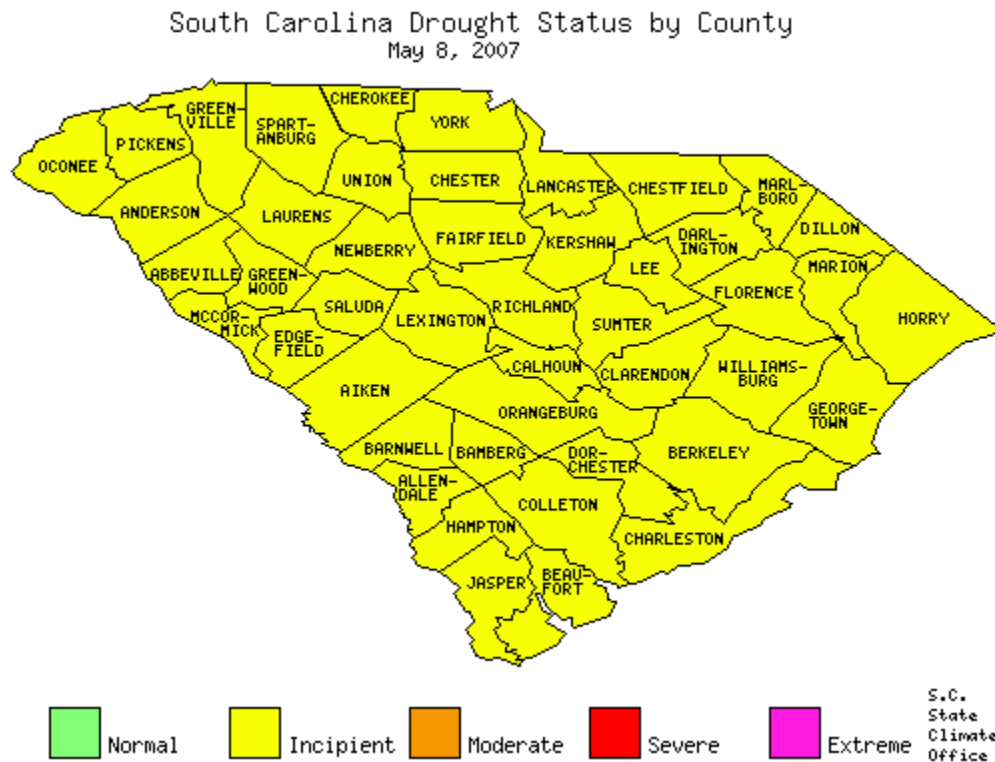
South Carolina Current Drought Status

State Climate Office (803) 734-9100

SPECIAL NEWS RELEASE

Statement Date: May 8, 2007:

INCIPIENT DROUGHT STATUS DECLARED FOR SOUTH CAROLINA



After receiving reports of dry conditions especially in regard to agriculture and forestry, state agency representatives from the Drought Response Committee voted on May 8 in Columbia to upgrade the entire state to "incipient."

Forestry and agriculture had reports of concern about conditions. According to David Tompkins with the S.C. Department of Agriculture, "I've talked to a lot of people around the state and no one sees adequate moisture. And I think it's important for the public to be aware that we have dry conditions and the potential for it to get worse is there. We've got to get a long period of normal rainfall to get back where we need to be." Darryl Jones with the S.C. Forestry Commission reported the state had an active month for fires in April that was still within the boundaries of normal but, "The rainfall deficit has contributed to more intense wildfire behavior and increased the difficulty of mop-up operations. The potential for significant wildfires will continue until significant rainfall occurs. Early reports indicate that the late frost, combined with low soil moisture may cause seedling survival problems, especially for pine plantations established in late winter. The continued lack of rainfall has placed stress on most forest stands, making them more susceptible to insect and disease problems."

State Hydrologist Bud Badr reported all lake levels are normal (except Lake Murray, which is slightly below normal) and streamflow is also at normal flows for this time of the year. Groundwater levels don't reflect drought conditions at this time. David Baize with S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control reported they have received no reports of any problems from water systems.

The incipient drought declaration is the first level of drought followed by moderate, severe, and extreme. "In the process of moving to incipient, the Department of Natural Resources will increase its monitoring and notify the members of the committee in two-week intervals about levels, flows, and rainfalls," said Steve DeKozlowski of the S.C. Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Land, Water and Conservation Division. "If there is a trend that appears to be negative, then we would call a meeting of the committee." Any further upgrades of drought would require a decision of the full committee from each drought management area (Savannah, Santee, Pee Dee and Southern or ACE). All water systems and industries are encouraged to closely monitor conditions and review their local drought plans.

Drought Status Table

Current Drought Status by County				
Normal	Incipient	Moderate	Severe	Extreme
County Status	County Status	County Status	County Status	County Status
ABBEVILLE Incipient	AIKEN Incipient	ALLENDALE Incipient	ANDERSON Incipient	BAMBERG Incipient
BARNWELL Incipient	BEAUFORT Incipient	BERKELEY Incipient	CALHOUN Incipient	CHARLESTON Incipient
CHEROKEE Incipient	CHESTER Incipient	CHESTERFIELD Incipient	CLARENDON Incipient	COLLETON Incipient
DARLINGTON Incipient	DILLON Incipient	DORCHESTER Incipient	EDGEFIELD Incipient	FAIRFIELD Incipient
FLORENCE Incipient	GEORGETOWN Incipient	GREENVILLE Incipient	GREENWOOD Incipient	HAMPTON Incipient
HORRY Incipient	JASPER Incipient	KERSHAW Incipient	LANCASTER Incipient	LAURENS Incipient
LEE Incipient	LEXINGTON Incipient	MARION Incipient	MARLBORO Incipient	MCCORMICK Incipient
NEWBERRY Incipient	OCONEE Incipient	ORANGEBURG Incipient	PICKENS Incipient	RICHLAND Incipient
SALUDA Incipient	SPARTANBURG Incipient	SUMTER Incipient	UNION Incipient	WILLIAMSBURG Incipient
YORK Incipient				