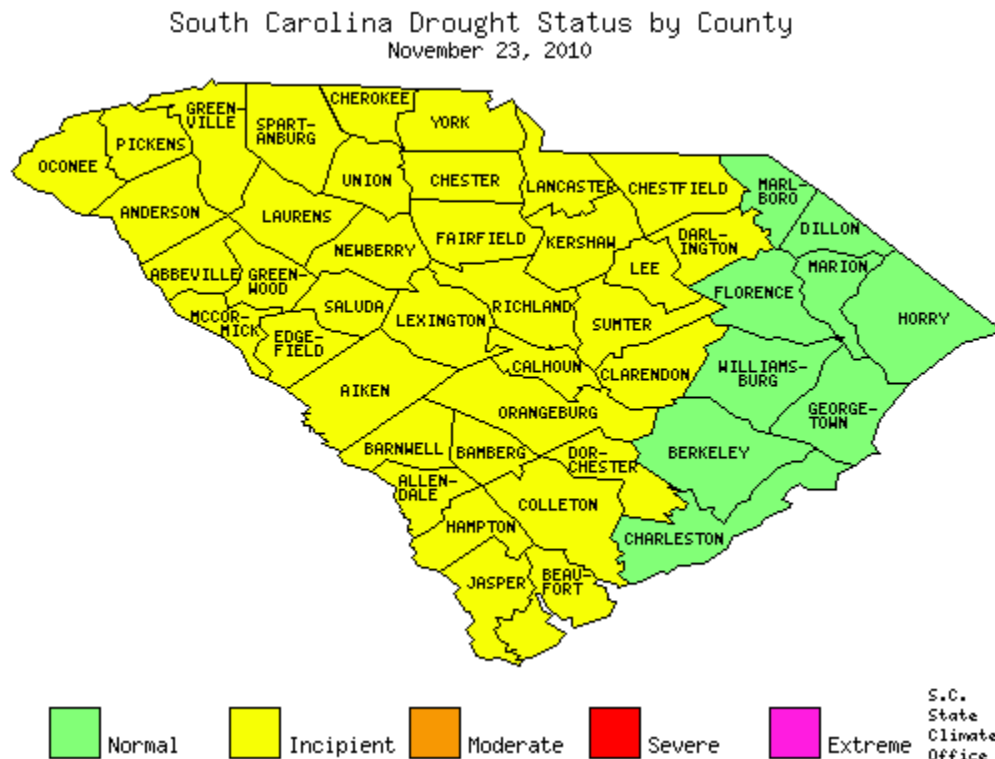


South Carolina Current Drought Status

State Climate Office 803-734-9100
SPECIAL NEWS RELEASE 10-15 DNR News 803-667-0696
November 23, 2010

Drought Response Committee maintains status, long term forecast indicates potential ongoing drought



Discussion:

The Drought Response Committee voted on Nov. 23 to maintain the first level of drought for 37 counties. Marlboro, Dillon, Marion, Florence, Horry, Williamsburg, Georgetown, Berkeley, and Charleston counties continue with no drought status. The incipient drought declaration is followed by increasing levels of severity to moderate, severe and extreme status. The committee was concerned over the strong likelihood of drought conditions worsening through the normal winter recharge season, although some temporary relief can be expected as water usage is typically lower in the winter months.

Hope Mizzell, S.C. State Climatologist stated, "Most of South Carolina has experienced below normal rainfall since early September. The building deficit coupled with a forecast for a dry winter prompted S.C. Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to convene the committee to ensure that members and the public were prepared for potential worsening conditions." During

incipient drought, DNR activates the Drought Information Center and increases monitoring and notification of the drought status.

Scott Willett with the Anderson Regional Joint Water System said the current lower water usage will begin to rise as spring approaches, "Right now outdoor water use is traditionally low, but once lawns are being watered and gardens planted we'll see usage begin to spike."

Northeast Drought Management Area committee member Mike Hancock from Lugoff- Elgin Water Authority stated, "We are dealing with a La Nina condition. Historically, La Nina means we can receive significantly lower rainfall. If conditions continue to follow the historical pattern then we will experience substantially lower rainfall through spring 2011."

Darryl Jones, S.C. Forestry Commission, reported that continuing dry conditions will result in an increase in wildfire activity across the state, "While fire occurrence has been close to normal so far this fall, we are concerned that dry conditions might continue through the winter. If it remains dry, we will probably see an extended wildfire season that lasts until spring. During the drought, wildfires start easier, burn more intensely and are harder to control because more fuel is available. With a drought and our ongoing resource shortages, we are concerned that we will see higher losses from wildfires." Please contact Darryl Jones for questions about wildfire activity at (803) 896-8800.

Stan Simpson with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers says they have already reacted to the initial drought stage by lowering outflow from the Savannah River Basin lakes, "We tripped our first level of drought in August of this year and dropped to 4200 CFS (cubic feet per second) of daily outflow, to 4000 in mid-October. We expect that number to drop further still to 3800 in mid-January."

The information conveyed by the indicators was mixed and did not prompt immediate change, but committee members emphasized that if the below normal forecast for rainfall is verified, they will reconvene in mid-January. The committee also decided that with lower water demands during winter, action being taken at the local level is sufficient at this time.

Find out more about the [State Climatology Office](#).

Contact South Carolina State Climatologist Dr. Hope Mizzell in Columbia at (803) 734-9568, or (803) 530-5793, or e-mail at mizzellh@dnr.sc.gov for more information.

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](#)".

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 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 Normal	CALHOUN Incipient	CHARLESTON Normal
CHEROKEE Incipient	CHESTER Incipient	CHESTERFIELD Incipient	CLARENDON Incipient	COLLETON Incipient
DARLINGTON Incipient	DILLON Normal	DORCHESTER Incipient	EDGEFIELD Incipient	FAIRFIELD Incipient
FLORENCE Normal	GEORGETOWN Normal	GREENVILLE Incipient	GREENWOOD Incipient	HAMPTON Incipient
HORRY Normal	JASPER Incipient	KERSHAW Incipient	LANCASTER Incipient	LAURENS Incipient
LEE Incipient	LEXINGTON Incipient	MARION Normal	MARLBORO Normal	MCCORMICK Incipient
NEWBERRY Incipient	OCONEE Incipient	ORANGEBURG Incipient	PICKENS Incipient	RICHLAND Incipient
SALUDA Incipient	SPARTANBURG Incipient	SUMTER Incipient	UNION Incipient	WILLIAMSBURG Normal
YORK Incipient				