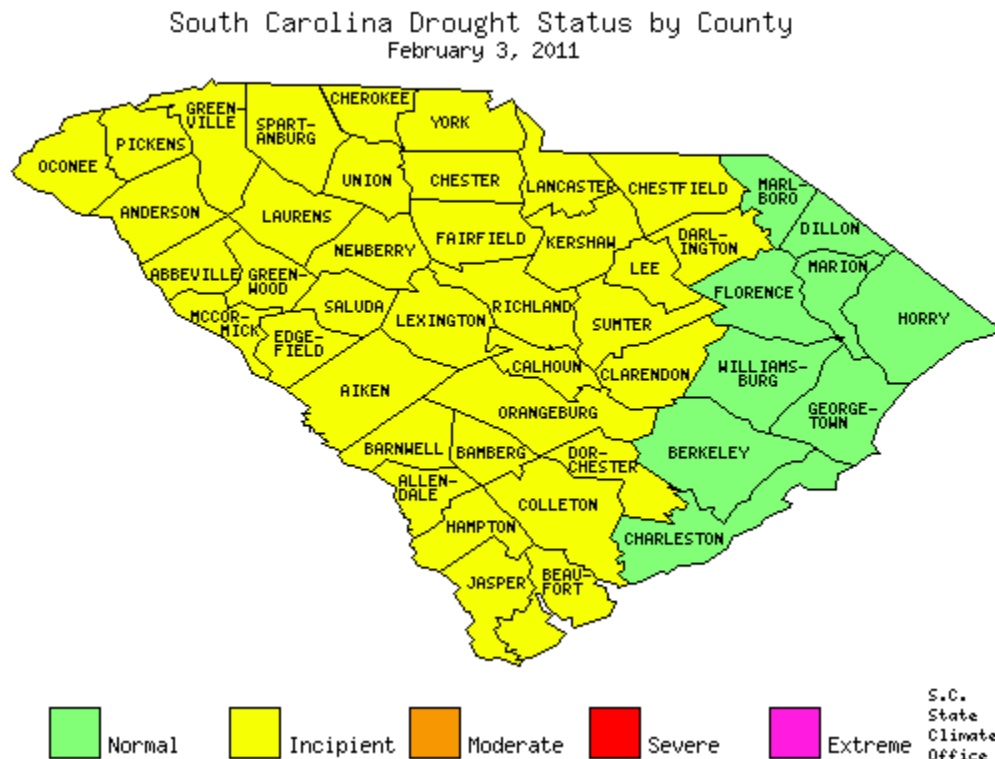


South Carolina Current Drought Status

State Climate Office 803-734-9100
SPECIAL NEWS RELEASE 11-03 DNR News 803-667-0696
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Drought Response Committee maintains status, long term forecast indicates potential ongoing drought



Discussion:

With anticipation of heavy rain on the way, the Drought Response Committee voted on Feb. 3 to maintain the first level of drought for 37 counties. The information conveyed by the long term indicators shows the potential for ongoing drought despite recent rain activity.

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.

Hope Mizzell, S.C State Climatologist stated, "Some people may question why we are talking about drought since it appears winter has been very cold with normal rainfall. In reality, while we have had clouds, snow and rain, the actual amount of precipitation received has been much lower than average for the majority of the state. Most sites in the Pee Dee region have received

less than 3.5" since December 1 which is only 40 percent of what they normally receive. Places like Walhalla recorded closer to normal rainfall, but are still reporting a deficit."

Rainfall Totals and Percent of Normal Summary: Dec. 1, 2010 to Feb. 2, 2011

Station	Rainfall Totals	Percent of Normal
Cheraw	2.98"	38%
Winnsboro	3.28"	39%
Florence	3.14"	40%
Johnston	3.57"	40%
Sumter	3.57"	42%
Columbia	3.55"	43%
Laurens	4.25"	46%
Gaffney	4.47"	50%
Orangeburg	4.19"	50%
Greenwood	4.82"	53%
McColl	3.59"	54%
Spartanburg	5.36"	56%
Ware Shoals	4.85"	56%
Chester	4.74"	56%
Saluda	5.19"	58%
Charleston AFB	4.74"	63%
Anderson	7.33"	73%
Pickens	8.27"	77%
Newberry	8.19"	91%

Ken Rentiers, Deputy Director, Land, Water, and Conservation Division emphasized, "Winter is our recharge season. During winter when demand and evaporation are low we depend on the rains to recharge our surface and groundwater."

Darryl Jones, S.C. Forestry Commission, reported that dry winter conditions resulted in increased wildfire activity across the state, "In January, the Forestry Commission responded to 247 wildfires across the state that burned more than 1,000 acres. That's a lot more fires than we normally see in January and indicates that our wildfire season is starting a little early this year. We encourage the public to be extremely careful if they choose to conduct outdoor burning and to make sure they follow all of the applicable state laws. This includes notifying the Forestry Commission before you burn, having adequate firebreaks and equipment in place to keep the fire under control and staying with the fire until it is completely safe." Please contact Darryl Jones for questions about wildfire activity at (803) 896-8800.

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

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				