

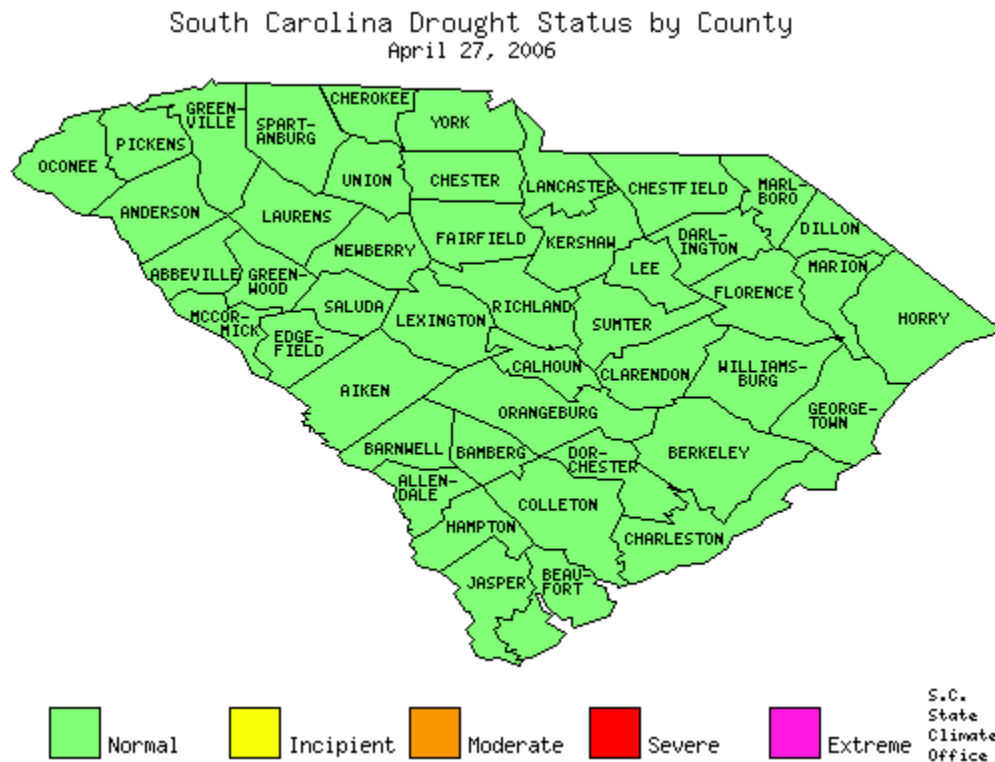
South Carolina Current Drought Status

State Climate Office (803) 734-9100

SPECIAL NEWS RELEASE

Statement Date: April 27, 2006:

Drought Response Committee delays drought declaration



State agency representatives on the State Drought Response Committee decided April 27 to delay making any drought declaration, but to increase the monitoring of drought indices and to reconsider the possibility of drought declaration in two weeks if no significant rains have begun.

The S.C. Department of Natural Resources (DNR) convened state agency members of the S.C. Drought Response Committee Thursday, April 27, in Columbia to evaluate the overall statewide conditions. Much of the state has received beneficial rainfall over the past five days with Kingstree reporting 3.09", Charleston 1.32", Walterboro 1.43", Greenville-Spartanburg 1.66", and Anderson 1.43". There are a few locations, however, that just missed the rain reporting less than 0.50" such as reports from the Columbia Airport, Darlington, and Aiken.

"We are certainly not yet experiencing the dire conditions experienced during the record drought of 1998-2002, but everyone needs to be aware of the potential for drought at least in some areas of the state," said Hope Mizzell, S.C. State Climatologist with the DNR.

DNR hydrologist Masaaki Kiuchi reported that 14 of 17 stream gauging stations are low for April, but that all major lakes are close to normal levels. Rob Devlin, with the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control, said that no public or industrial water systems are reporting any supply problems at this time. S.C. Forestry Commission fire expert, Darryl Jones, says the recent dry weather has forestry officials paying close attention. The number of forest fires and acres burned this year are close to the ten-year average, but a prolonged rainfall deficit could lead to an increase in the occurrence of wildfires, as well as other forest health concerns. Trees under stress from a lack of rainfall or water table fluctuation can become more susceptible to damage from bark beetles, defoliators, and saltwater influx into the soil.

Should a drought declaration need to be made later, an incipient drought declaration is the first level of drought followed by moderate, severe, and extreme. During incipient drought, the DNR activates the Drought Information Center, 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 Normal	AIKEN Normal	ALLENDALE Normal	ANDERSON Normal	BAMBERG Normal
BARNWELL Normal	BEAUFORT Normal	BERKELEY Normal	CALHOUN Normal	CHARLESTON Normal
CHEROKEE Normal	CHESTER Normal	CHESTERFIELD Normal	CLARENDON Normal	COLLETON Normal
DARLINGTON Normal	DILLON Normal	DORCHESTER Normal	EDGEFIELD Normal	FAIRFIELD Normal
FLORENCE Normal	GEORGETOWN Normal	GREENVILLE Normal	GREENWOOD Normal	HAMPTON Normal
HORRY Normal	JASPER Normal	KERSHAW Normal	LANCASTER Normal	LAURENS Normal
LEE Normal	LEXINGTON Normal	MARION Normal	MARLBORO Normal	MCCORMICK Normal
NEWBERRY Normal	OCONEE Normal	ORANGEBURG Normal	PICKENS Normal	RICHLAND Normal
SALUDA Normal	SPARTANBURG Normal	SUMTER Normal	UNION Normal	WILLIAMSBURG Normal
YORK Normal				