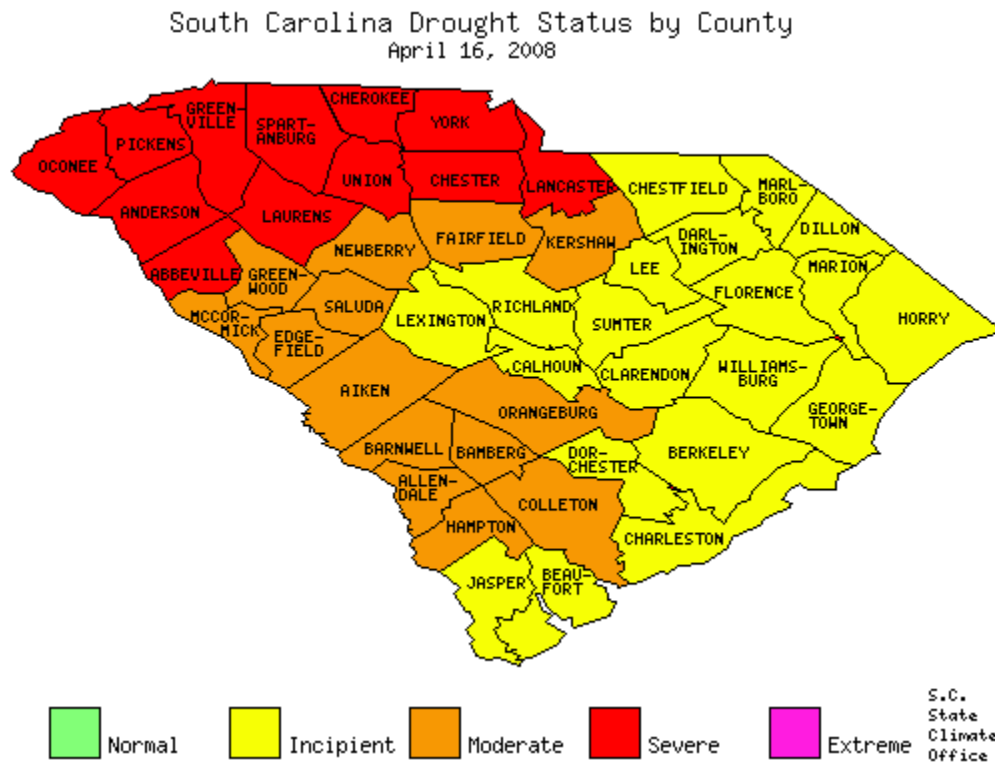


South Carolina Current Drought Status

State Climate Office 803-734-9100
NEWS RELEASE DNR News 803-734-3815
April 16, 2008

'SEVERE' DROUGHT STATUS MAINTAINED FOR 12 COUNTIES.



For previously issued drought statements [see the archived status reports.](#)

[Table of all counties and drought status.](#)

[Drought Response Committee Meeting Sign-In sheet.](#)

The S.C. Drought Response Committee met April 16, 2008, in Columbia and decided to maintain the drought status at "severe" for 12 South Carolina counties ranging from the Upstate to the upper central region of the state. Fourteen counties were downgraded to moderate while 20 were lowered to incipient. Since September 2007, the drought status was at "severe" for all South Carolina counties except Jasper and Beaufort. The committee is concerned that the public believes that recent rainfall over the past 60 days has completely alleviated the drought. These rain events, however, have not been enough to ameliorate the drought impacts on some streamflows, ground water, and reservoirs. The counties that remain in the severe category are Abbeville, Anderson, Chester, Cherokee, Greenville, Lancaster, Laurens, Oconee, Pickens, Spartanburg, Union, and York.

The counties downgraded to moderate drought include Aiken, Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell, Colleton, Edgefield, Fairfield, Greenwood, Hampton, Kershaw, McCormick, Newberry, Orangeburg, and Saluda. Twenty other counties throughout the state were lowered to incipient drought status.

Many streamflows throughout the state, such as the Edisto and Waccamaw, while not at normal levels have improved and are not in drought, while other rivers such as the Saluda are at the moderate drought level said Masaaki Kiuchi, SC Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Hydrology Section. Several reservoirs have shown remarkable improvement, notably Lakes Marion and Moultrie, but they still remain 0.7' below normal. Groundwater in the Upstate varies from recovered to very low with the Coastal Plain in recovery.

Darryl Jones, with the SC Forestry Commission, said they are mostly concerned with the ongoing dry conditions in the Upstate or mountain region since moisture content inside larger fuels (i.e., downed logs) remains very low. He considers the rest of the state under control for forest fire. Jones stated drought conditions over the last year resulted in 2,800 fires and 17,000 acres burned, which exceeded their 10 year average for wildfires. Jim Witkowski, International Paper and the Industry Representative from the Central Drought Management Area, said, "We do want to emphasize that drought is a long-term condition. Our actions were based on those effects and we shouldn't react to the short-term rainfall levels."

Steve de Kozlowski, Interim DNR Land, Water and Conservation Deputy Director, "The public sees the rainfall we've had over the last few weeks and wants to know why we are still in a drought. While many parts of the state have received above normal rainfall, many areas have not. Lakes such as Hartwell and Jocassee are still well below normal heading into the summer months. In addition, while we have observed some improvement in groundwater levels the recovery is slow." The committee will meet again in June to determine the drought status going into hotter summer months when rainfall is expected to decrease.

The S.C. Drought Response Committee commended water systems that have taken action to conserve water and encouraged all systems to continue the message of water conservation. 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 www.dnr.sc.gov. Please contact Hope Mizzell, SC State Climatologist, if you have additional questions, 803-734-9568 or cell: 803-466-0814.

Drought Status Table

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