

South Carolina Current Drought Status

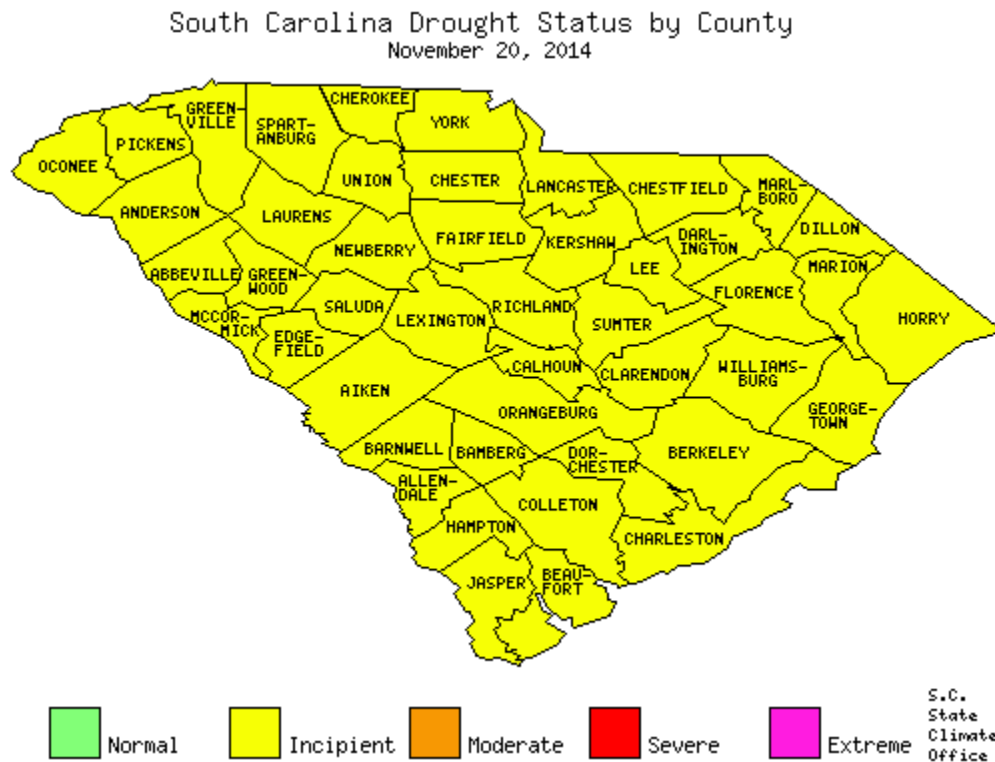
State Climate Office

NEWS RELEASE #14-187

DNR News 803-667-0696

November 20, 2014

All South Carolina Counties are now in incipient drought



The S.C. Drought Response Committee, meeting via conference call on Nov. 20, upgraded the drought status to the first level of drought for the entire state. Previously only nine counties were considered in incipient drought. The committee recognized the forecast for heavy rain next week, but decided to upgrade the incipient status statewide because they couldn't ignore the incipient drought designation by several indicators.

According to Hope Mizzell, South Carolina State Climatologist, "There was a lot of discussion about whether to upgrade certain counties especially in the Upstate since there was not overwhelming support by all indicators. However, the committee decided to err on the side of caution and upgrade the declaration. The incipient drought declaration is followed by increasing levels of severity to moderate, severe and extreme status."

Statewide rainfall totals over the past 60-days range from 1.44" at Bluffton to 7.96" at Central. Some of the driest 60-day rainfall totals are provided below (Sept. 22, 2014 to Nov. 20, 2014) which range from 20% of normal to 65% of normal.

STATION NAME	RAINFALL (Inches)	STATION NAME	RAINFALL (Inches)
Bluffton	1.44	Allendale	3.4
Aiken	1.58	Johns Island	3.61
Bennettsville	2.12	Blythewood	3.61
Columbia	2.12	Yemassee	3.63
Sumter	2.13	Summerton	3.64
Beaufort	2.37	Tega Cay 1.6 ESE	3.67
York 6.2 ENE	2.39	Georgetown	3.73
Florence	2.61	York 6.3 E	3.76
North Charleston	2.75	Orangeburg	3.76
Dillon	2.90	Charleston	3.79
Rock Hill	2.95	Wando	3.82
Hartsville	3.02	North Augusta	3.82
Barnwell	3.11	Laurens	3.82
Saluda	3.19	Lyman	4.15
Spartanburg	3.20	Anderson	4.17
Tega Cay 1.1 N	3.24	Abbeville	4.32

According to Scott Harder, S.C. Department of Natural Resources Hydrologist, "Even though only three of the streamflow gages we typically monitor are officially in drought, most streamflow values statewide are running less than 30% of normal flow for this time of year. Some lake levels, especially in the Savannah River Basin, are below target such as Lake Jocassee at 9.7 feet below full pool, Hartwell at -3.14 and Thurmond at -3.78."

"The various parameters that we observe to come to a decision on the drought status have been giving us mixed signals lately. So we rely on local observers, folks on the ground, when those parameters don't give us a clear indication. It's a judgment call, but we turn to those experts who relay what they see as trends," said Dennis Chastain of Pickens County.

Mike Caston, Startex-Jackson-Wellford-Duncan Water District Executive Director, "While streamflows and reservoir levels are not an issue in Spartanburg County at this time, the broad range of indicators across the state and in Spartanburg County reflect drier conditions have been developing and upgrading to incipient drought is prudent."

According to Agriculture Commissioner Hugh Weathers, "While the dry weather this fall has contributed to a good and productive harvest season, the lack of timely rainfall during the 2014 growing season was a challenge in some parts of the state. Irrigation boosted yields for many producers, which is an important reminder that we stay vigilant in planning and managing the use of our water resources."

Drought Response Committee Chairman Ken Rentiers stated, "The Committee will continue to monitor the situation closely and since many counties are only on the cusp of drought, hopefully with a few precipitation events we can remove the drought declaration for many counties."

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 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				