

South Carolina Current Drought Status

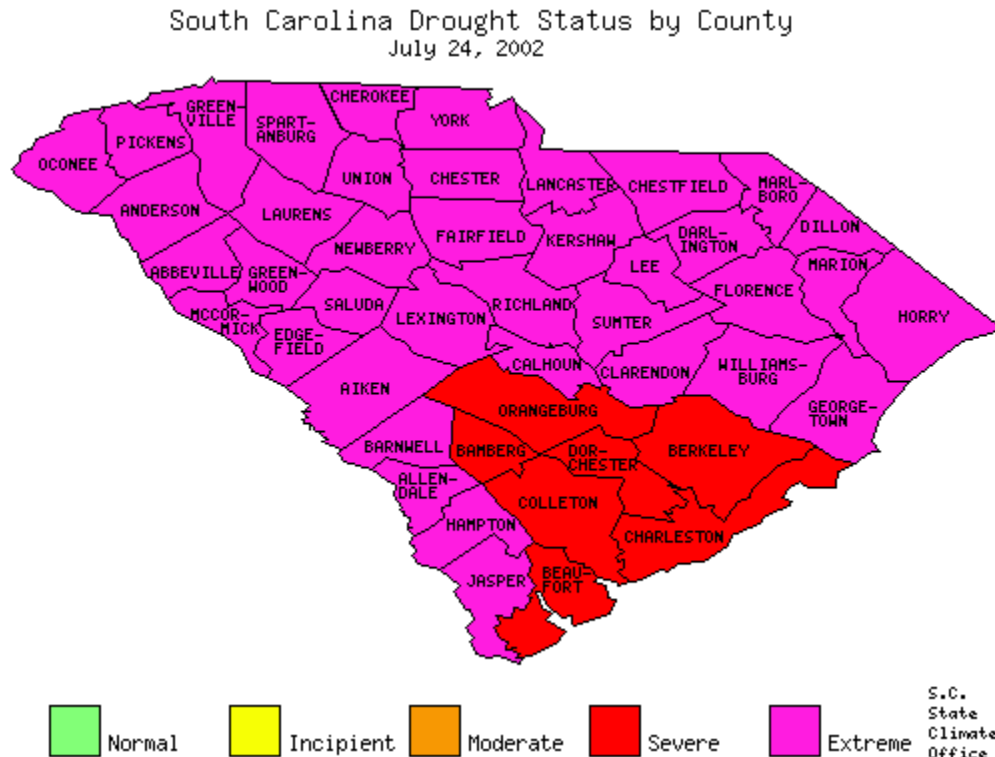
State Climate Office

NEWS RELEASE

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DROUGHT UPGRADED TO EXTREME FOR 39 SOUTH CAROLINA COUNTIES



The S.C. Department of Natural Resources has upgraded South Carolina's drought status from severe to extreme for 39 counties. Members of the state and four regional S.C. Drought Response Committees met and voted today (Wednesday, July 24) in Columbia.

The entire state had been under a "severe" drought declaration since June 19. The counties which remain under a third level or "severe" drought status are Bamberg, Berkeley, Beaufort, Charleston, Colleton, Dorchester and Orangeburg.

"Each affected region will now seek to reduce the consumptive use of surface water," Governor Jim Hodges said following the meeting. "To reach that goal, each community will follow its own drought plans, based on their local conditions. I'm asking folks who live in the areas of extreme drought to use a little less water."

The drought committee recommended no statewide or regional mandatory water restrictions. However, local officials may call for mandatory or voluntary restrictions as part of their local response.

Alfred Vang, DNR Deputy Director of the Land, Water and Conservation Division, said, "I can't overemphasize one point and that is that 100 days from now we need to make sure that the public's water supply is protected, and the only way that I can see to protect that water supply in the near term is to conserve water - not just our conservation but what's behind the dams upstream in North Carolina."

The Western Drought Management Committee, which includes 12 counties (Abbeville, Aiken, Allendale, Anderson, Barnwell, Beaufort, Edgefield, Hampton, Jasper, McCormick, Oconee and Pickens) in the Savannah River drainage, voted to upgrade the area's drought status from severe to extreme for all its counties except Beaufort, which has been helped by recent rains. They asked all users area-wide to voluntarily conserve water. The committee felt that their situation was not quite as dire as some other parts of the state, but they need to help water users downstream and set the right example in water conservation. The western region includes the headwaters of the Savannah River system.

The Northeastern Drought Management Committee, which includes 10 counties (Chesterfield, Darlington, Dillon, Florence, Horry, Kershaw, Lancaster, Lee, Marion and Marlboro) in the Pee Dee River drainage, voted unanimously to upgrade the entire region from severe to extreme. They asked all water users to voluntarily reduce their consumptive surface water use by 20 percent. They also asked for a regional water supply study.

The Central Drought Management Committee, which includes 18 counties (Calhoun, Cherokee, Chester, Clarendon, Fairfield, Georgetown, Greenville, Greenwood, Laurens, Lexington, Newberry, Richland, Saluda, Sumter, Spartanburg, Union, Williamsburg and York) in the Santee River drainage, voted to escalate the region's drought status from severe to extreme. They requested that conservation measures be implemented for all water users along the system, recommending a 10 to 15 percent reduction in consumptive use.

The Southern Drought Management Committee, which covers six counties (Bamberg, Berkeley, Charleston, Colleton, Dorchester and Orangeburg) in the Ashepoo-Combahee-Ashepoo (ACE) Basin remained at the severe drought level.

The full committee asked that all rural fire departments monitor water levels at their dry hydrants.

The full committee also requested that the state examine ways to procure adequate supplies of feed hay and grain to avert a crisis in the South Carolina cattle industry this coming fall and winter.

Contact Dr. Mizzell in Columbia at (803) 734-9568 or e-mail at mizzellh@dnr.sc.gov for more information.

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