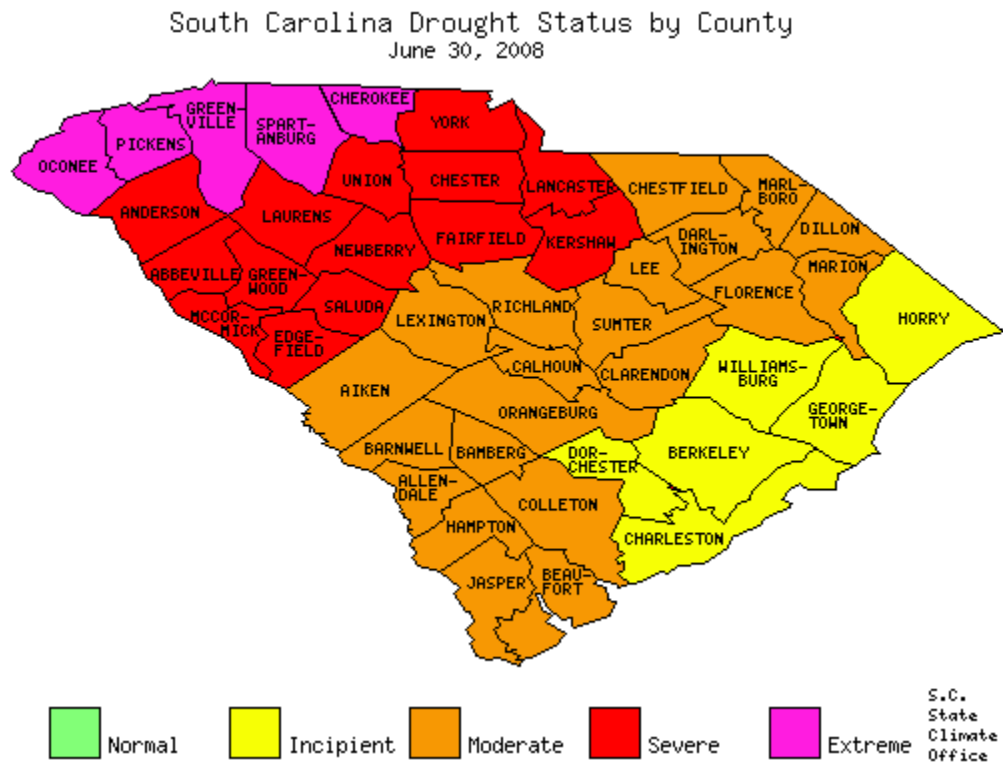


South Carolina Current Drought Status

State Climate Office 803-734-9100
NEWS RELEASE DNR News 803-734-3815
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'EXTREME' DROUGHT STATUS FOR 5 UPSTATE COUNTIES.



Discussion:

The South Carolina Department of Natural Resources convened the South Carolina Drought Response Committee on June 30, 2008 in Columbia and moved five counties to extreme drought. Fourteen counties were upgraded or maintained at severe and 21 were upgraded or maintained at moderate status. The committee recognizes that conditions around the state have deteriorated and drought is causing major adverse impacts to agriculture and forestry. Streamflow levels are also at extremely low levels throughout much of the state. The committee emphasizes that individually and collectively the citizens of South Carolina need to increase their water conservation efforts.

The counties moved into the extreme category are: Cherokee, Greenville, Oconee, Pickens, and Spartanburg.

The committee did not impose any mandatory water-use and withdrawal restrictions, but did encourage water systems in the extreme drought areas to reduce water use as much as possible.

The committee will continue to evaluate information and plans to meet again in about a month to review conditions and determine if additional actions to conserve water are needed.

South Carolina did not receive normal winter and spring rainfall, resulting in insufficient recharge of groundwater to sustain streamflows. Thirteen out of 17 streams monitored are in extreme drought conditions according to Masaaki Kiuchi, SC Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Hydrology Section. The drought continues to affect many lakes. The Santee lakes are over one foot lower than this time last year. The Savannah lakes are more than 10 feet below target level for this time of year and continue to decline.

The dry conditions have taken a toll on agriculture. David Tompkins with the S.C. Department of Agriculture added the entire state needs relief, but especially in the Upstate. "We need to get that topsoil saturated. One or two inches isn't getting it done," Tompkins said.

David Baize, with the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control, reported that most water systems report adequate storage at this time.

Darryl Jones, with the SC Forestry Commission, said, "Dry fuels have increased the intensity of fires, resulting in a higher number of acres burned. So far in June, the Forestry Commission responded to 488 wildfires across the state that have burned more than 3,428 acres, much higher than the average number of wildfires during this time of year. Normally, approximately 4% of the wildfires we respond to are caused by lightning, but this June that number rose to 21%. This increase can be attributed to the dry fuels resulting from the drought."

Mike Caston, with SJWD Water District in Spartanburg, represents the Central Drought Management Area and said, "Water supplies as far as reservoirs are adequate, but that could change very quickly. We have to start thinking long-term about sustainability."

Contact State Climatologist Hope Mizzell in Columbia at (803) 734-9568 or [email](#) 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](#).

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