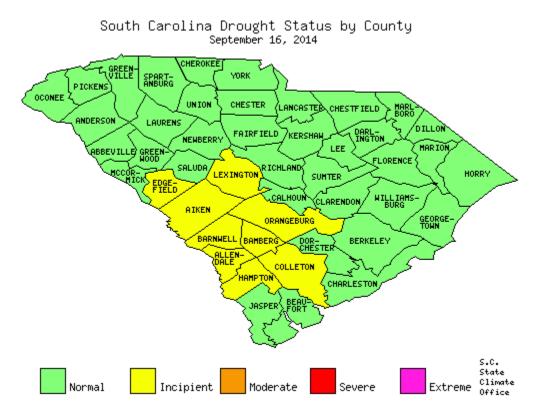
South Carolina Current Drought Status

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South Carolina Drought Committee upgrades drought status for 9 counties



The S.C. Drought Response Committee, meeting via conference call on Sept. 16, upgraded the drought status to the first level of drought for 9 counties, Edgefield, Aiken, Lexington, Barnwell, Allendale, Bamberg, Orangeburg, Hampton, and Colleton.

This was the first drought declaration issued since April 2013. According to the S.C. State Climatologist, Hope Mizzell, rainfall totals since June 1 have varied across the state from less than 9" to over 34". Aiken's June 1 to Sept. 15 rainfall total of 8.79" was the third driest for that site since 1925 while many coastal sites reported over 30" of rain since June 1. This made decisions for some coastal counties like Colleton difficult. The Committee votes by county and conditions for inland Colleton were much drier than along the coastal areas.

The persistent below normal rainfall and resulting hydrologic impacts in the 9 counties led the SC Drought Response Committee to issue the incipient drought declaration. The incipient drought declaration is followed by increasing levels of severity to moderate, severe and extreme status.

The Edisto and Salkehatchie River Basins have been the driest overall experiencing persistent low streamflow conditions over much of the past two to three months, reported Scott Harder, S.C. Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Hydrologist. This was the main driver for declaring an incipient drought for counties in these basins.

According to David Baize, Assistant Bureau Chief for the SC Department of Health and Environmental Control's Bureau of Water, there have been no reports of water supply problems statewide. Agricultural representatives on the call reported scattered agricultural impacts due to the drought, but it has been highly variable. Darryl Jones with the S.C. Forestry Commission reported, "Wildfire occurrence has been light this summer, but as the growing season ends and fuels begin to cure, fire activity is likely to increase. In areas where drought is developing, wildfires may be more difficult to control and spread faster as vegetation dries out."

Drought Response Committee Chairman Ken Rentiers stated, "The Committee will continue to monitor the situation closely and if conditions deteriorate. DNR will reconvene the committee as needed.

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