

South Carolina Current Drought Status

State Climate Office

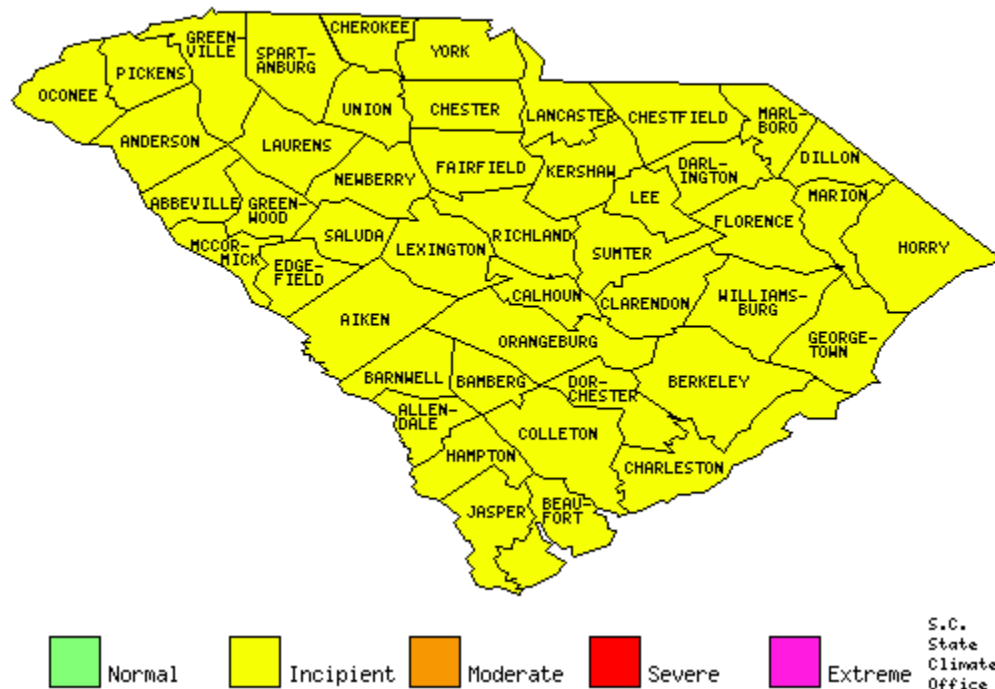
NEWS RELEASE

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April 20, 1999

South Carolina Department of Natural Resources Declares a Drought for South Carolina

South Carolina Drought Status by County
April 20, 1999



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

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

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

Under the authority of the S.C. Drought Response Act of 1985, the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources has issued an incipient drought declaration for the entire state. An incipient drought, the first of four levels of drought (incipient, moderate, severe and extreme) defined in the legislation, increases DNR's monitoring activities of drought - related variables such as temperature, precipitation, evaporation, runoff, streamflow, groundwater and reservoir levels, soil moisture and other drought data.

DNR's State Climatology Office has been analyzing the abnormally dry weather across South Carolina since early 1999. State Climatologist Dr. Michael Helfert says, "The drier than normal conditions in the Southeast are associated with the long decay time of the abnormally cool sea surface temperatures in the Equatorial Pacific."

The statewide average rainfall since January 1st has totaled 11.92 inches, which is 80% of normal. This number is not representative of all locations with many sites throughout the state receiving only 65% of normal rainfall since January 1st.

STATION	April 12-18 Weekly Total (inches)	JAN 1 Total	Deviation From Average
Greer	0.20	10.5	-5.8
Columbia	0.53	9.6	-5.9
Cheraw	1.24	10.7	-3.8
Chester	0.01	9.5	-5.8
Johnston	0.08	12.3	-4.3
Sumter	0.05	11.0	-3.2
Clemson	0.19	14.2	-4.4
Florence	0.61	13.2	+0.6
Myrtle Beach	0.00	11.3	-2.6
Blackville	0.77	11.2	-3.6
Allendale	0.09	9.8	-3.9
Charleston	0.95	10.3	-2.4
Beaufort	0.00	12.8	-4.6

Thus far, the most significant impact has been increased wildfire activity. The S.C. Forestry Commission issued a Red Flag Fire Alert for most of South Carolina on Saturday, April 17th. The Alert covers all counties except Aiken, Allendale, and Barnwell. Forestry Commission authorities say "low humidities and stiff winds are increasing wildfire danger." Any burning that is attempted should be done with extreme caution.

The concern for agriculture is increasing rapidly with more rain needed for germination and development. The South Carolina Agricultural Statistics Service reports that to date soil moisture ratings are 5% short, 39% very short, 56% adequate.

According to the National Weather Service, a break in the dry pattern is not expected through the 6 to 10 day forecast period. The long range forecast by the Climate Prediction Center is for drier than normal conditions through May. Some models suggest the drier than normal conditions may persist through July.

The state's larger streams, except in the north central and southern portions of the state, have near normal streamflows. Streamflows in these regions are much below normal. Flows of smaller local streams are low. Dr. Bud Badr, DNR hydrologist reports, "Lake levels statewide are lower than normal for this time of year, but they are above the first level of drought."

To assist in monitoring drought conditions, DNR has developed a South Carolina Drought Information Center home page that may be accessed on the Internet. Updated information on rainfall, temperature, soil moisture, river and stream flows, reservoir and groundwater levels, wildfire potential, various crop growth indices and other drought related information can be accessed via the Internet.

The department is working with other state agencies that are also monitoring drought impacts upon the state's natural resources. Should conditions worsen, DNR will publish appropriate notices in the affected areas.

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 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				