

South Carolina Current Drought Status

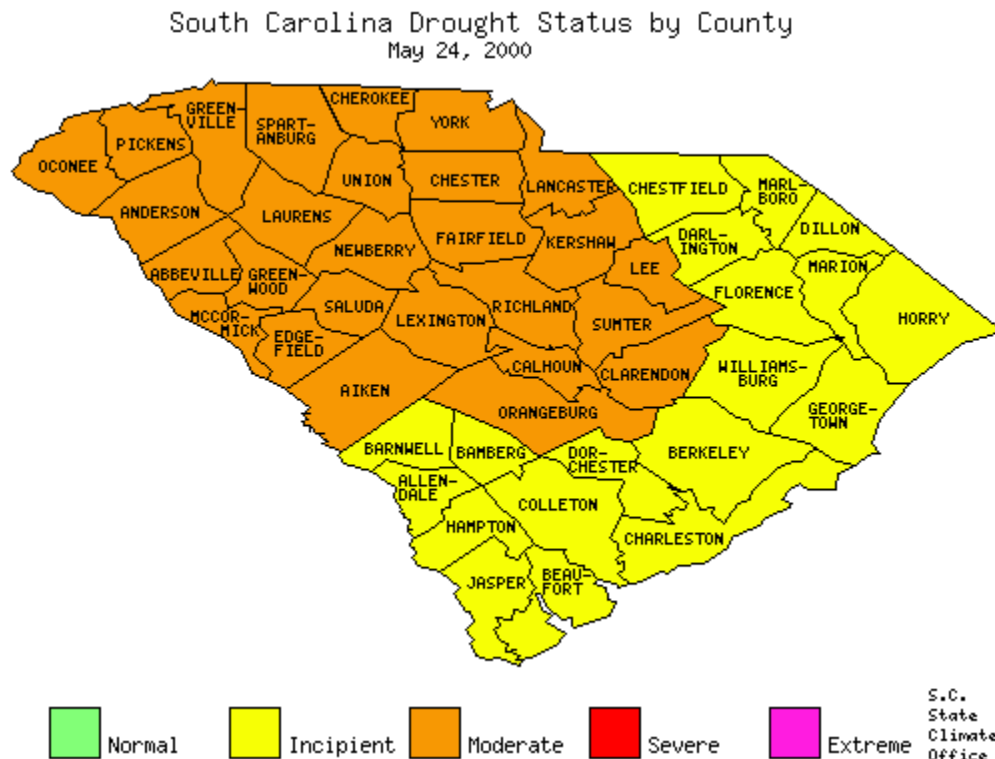
State Climate Office

NEWS RELEASE

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May 24, 2000

DROUGHT STATUS OFFICIALLY UPGRADED FOR ALL 46 SOUTH CAROLINA COUNTIES



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

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

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

The S.C. Department of Natural Resources has upgraded the drought status for all 46 counties with 27 now ranked "moderate," the second level, and the others "incipient," the first level of drought.

An incipient drought declaration issued last year on October 21, was upgraded to "moderate" for Abbeville, Aiken, Anderson, Calhoun, Cherokee, Chester, Clarendon, Edgefield, Fairfield,

Greenville, Greenwood, Kershaw, Lancaster, Laurens, Lee, Lexington, McCormick, Newberry, Oconee, Orangeburg, Pickens, Richland, Saluda, Spartanburg, Sumter, Union and York. A moderate drought declaration, the second of four drought levels specified in the Drought Response Act of 1985, means that drought conditions have continued to deteriorate and are expected to persist.

An "incipient drought," the first drought level, was declared for the remaining counties: Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell, Beaufort, Berkeley, Charleston, Chesterfield, Colleton, Darlington, Dillon, Dorchester, Florence, Georgetown, Hampton, Horry, Jasper, Marion, Marlboro and Williamsburg.

According to the South Carolina Agricultural Statistics Service, fields across the state are in dire need of rain. Dry soils have stalled many planting operations. Fields that have been planted are showing little growth due to the dry soils. Corn is wilting in several areas. Soil moisture ratings across the state have declined to 29% very short, 62% short and 9% adequate.

Dale Linvill, agricultural meteorologist with Clemson University, explained that the maximum amount of available soil moisture (top 2 ft.) for South Carolina ranges from 1 1/2 to 3 inches. At present the moisture available for plants is less than 10% of these values.

South Carolina Forestry Commission spokesman Ken Cabe reported that as of May 24 wildfire occurrences are still fairly low, but control difficulties are increasing due to hot, dry conditions. Very intense burning observed on recent fires is causing significant damage to the affected forest. If the drought continues, lack of moisture alone is expected to take a toll on forest growth and vigor.

David Baize, Water Monitoring division director with the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control (DNR) reported that his agency has issued letters to all water system owners and dischargers requesting their attention to the drought conditions. The discharge of wastewater into low flowing streams should be regulated to avoid adverse impacts to the receiving streams, aquatic life and other stream uses.

Rod Cherry, hydrologist with the S.C. Department of Natural Resources (DNR), expressed his concern that water withdrawers who depend on wells or unregulated streams may experience water shortages and deteriorating water quality in the near future as water storage continues to decrease in the weeks ahead.

Both DNR and DHEC stress to the public and water suppliers that while water restrictions are not popular, early and effective use of voluntary restrictions may be necessary to protect water integrity and quality.

The Drought Response Committee encourages local water suppliers to implement drought response ordinances and plans for their area. Water suppliers are requested to send copies of any notice of voluntary or mandatory reductions to the Drought Information Center. The DNR will continue to monitor the situation and provide updates as needed. The public should contact the center at (803) 737-0800 for more information.

The DNR will continue to monitor the situation and provide updates as needed. Integrated drought information is available on the DNR's State Climatology Office Internet Web Site.

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