

“We voted to downgrade the drought for many counties due to increased rainfall over the last 30 to 60 days,” Colleton County Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioner Emeritus Marion Rizer said. “Ironically, we are not able to get into the fields to fertilize small grains and to make preparations for spring planting because soil moisture conditions are too wet in some areas.”

But due to potential fire hazards and lack of moisture, Oconee, Pickens and Anderson counties have remained in severe drought status. According to S.C. Forestry Commission Forest Protection Chief Darryl Jones, the wildfire activity in November was 94 percent higher than the five-year average. The Pinnacle Mountain Fire burned 10,623 acres in Pickens and Greenville counties before it was controlled, and fire costs exceeded \$5 million. Recovery work, including firebreaks rehabilitation and clearing of trails, is ongoing.

“As we enter our traditional wildfire season, fine fuels are very dry and wildfire occurrence has been increasing,” Jones stated. “When frontal passages bring low relative humidity and higher winds, we do expect to have periods of high wildfire activity, and we expect it to continue until green-up begins in late April or early May.”

Hydrologic conditions have slightly improved in much of the Upstate over the past two months, but streamflow and lake levels remain well below normal in many areas, with the driest conditions occurring in the upper Saluda and Savannah basins.

The committee will meet again within the next eight weeks unless weather conditions require members to gather sooner.

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