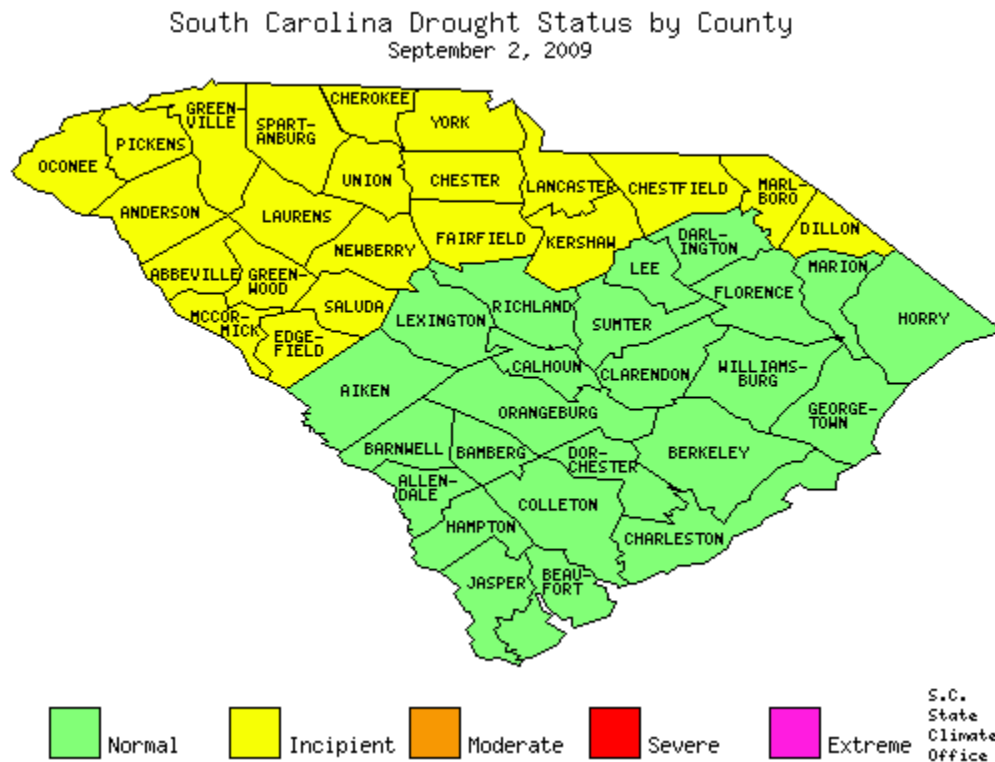


South Carolina Current Drought Status

State Climate Office 803-734-9100
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INCIPIENT DROUGHT STATUS DECLARED FOR 22 SC COUNTIES



Discussion:

A return to a pattern of much below normal rainfall over the past two months led the S. C. Department of Natural Resources to issue an incipient drought declaration for 22 counties. The state agency members of the Drought Response Committee voted electronically on Wednesday Sept. 2, 2009, to upgrade to the first level of drought. The incipient drought declaration is the first level of drought followed by moderate, severe and extreme. During incipient drought, the S.C. Department of Natural Resources (DNR) activates the Drought Information Center and increases monitoring and notification of the drought status.

"We were optimistic in early June that maybe we would finally get an extended break from the drought, but only two months have passed since we removed the drought declaration and here we go again," said Hope Mizzell, S.C. State Climatologist. According to William Schmitz, NOAA-Southeast Regional Climate Center, "Greenville-Spartanburg recorded their fourth driest July and August on record since 1893, receiving only 2.99 inches. Mizzell says the short-term forecast is not encouraging with little relief expected over the next week. She also reminds everyone that October and November are usually the driest months climatologically.

"Not everywhere in South Carolina is dry," said Wes Tyler, Service Climatologist for the S.C. State Climatology Office. "Enhanced precipitation along coastal counties, attributed to sea breeze convection, resulted in much above normal rainfall totals during July and August. Charleston Airport reported 140% of normal rainfall (18.30 inches) since July 1 while the Piedmont and higher elevations had limited convective activity resulting in rainfalls of 40% of normal or less. Without the rainfall contributions of tropical weather events, South Carolina's summer rainfall coverage is dependent on the scattered nature of afternoon thunderstorms. "

"We have certainly not reached the dire conditions experienced during the past few years, but everyone needs to be aware of the situation and industries and water systems should review their drought plans," encouraged Ken Rentiers, Chairman of the S.C. Drought Response Committee and Deputy Director for the DNR Land, Water and Conservation Division.

David Tompkins with the S.C. Department of Agriculture remains cautious, "Most of the major crop production areas in South Carolina received timely rainfall that provided for good crop production. Certain areas, particularly in the Piedmont, did not. In these Piedmont areas, crops were stressed and grazing lands suffered due to dry conditions." Dry conditions in July and August were particularly hard in the Piedmont, but Tompkins hopes for adequate rainfall this fall so pastures will be in good condition going into the winter months. He also noted some ponds need to be replenished in these areas.

David Baize with the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control reports no water systems with any supply problems at this time.

DNR will convene the full drought response committee in the next few weeks if conditions continue to deteriorate.

South Carolina's natural resources are essential for economic development and contribute nearly \$30 billion and 230,000 jobs to the state's economy overall. Find out why "Life's Better Outdoors" at: www.dnr.sc.gov/economic/index.html.

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