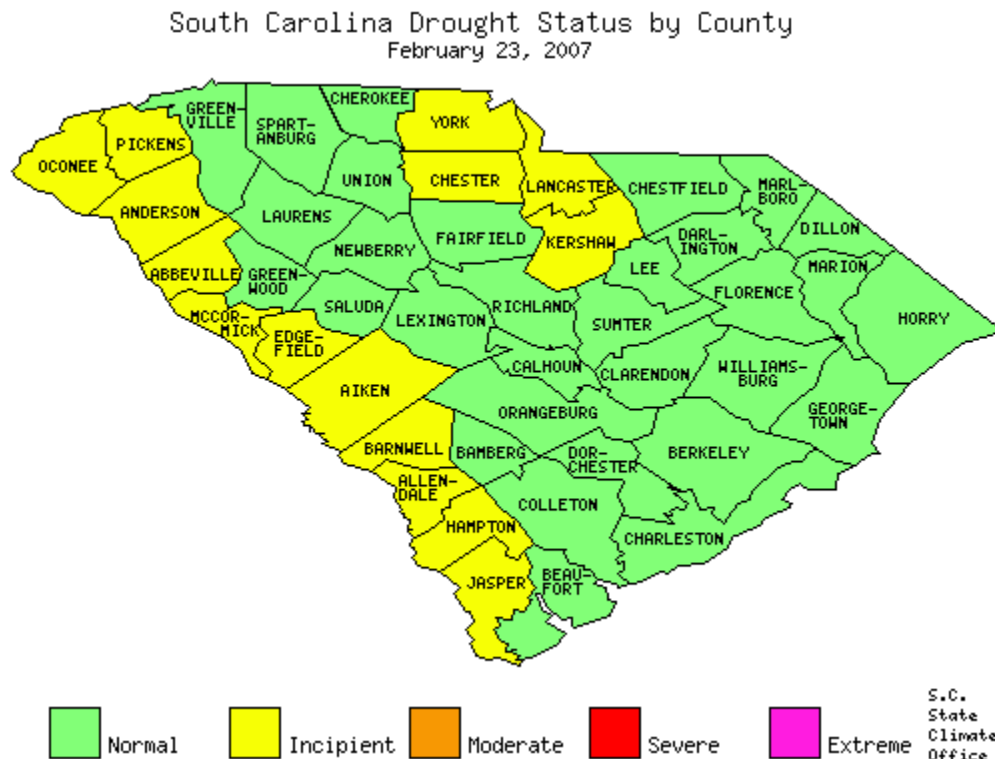


South Carolina Current Drought Status

State Climate Office (803) 734-9100
SPECIAL NEWS RELEASE
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DROUGHT RESPONSE COMMITTEE DOWNGRADES TO "INCIPIENT" STATUS



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

After receiving reports of improved hydrologic conditions, the South Carolina Drought Response Committee voted Feb. 23 in Columbia to downgrade the Savannah Basin from the "moderate" category to "incipient." The Committee declared a moderate drought on September 20, 2006, and maintained the declaration during the November 8, 2006, conference call.

Lake levels in Hartwell, Russell, and Thurmond have returned to near normal according to the U.S Army Corps of Engineers, but without normal rainfall may be at Stage 1 in 14 days. According to Duke Energy lake management manager George Galleher, "We had above average rainfall in November and December, but January saw below average rainfall and as of Feb. 17 we are below average. Duke Energy continues to think of the Keowee-Toxaway Area as being in a drought."

Reports from forestry and agriculture were cautiously optimistic. According to David Tompkins with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, "Soil moisture is in good shape going into the spring, however, we are dependent on adequate rainfall during the growing season." Darryl Jones with the SC Forestry Commission reported the state is experiencing an average number of fires, but, "We're just beginning the fire season with another month and half or so ahead of us. We're busy, but not abnormally so."

"In the process of moving from moderate to incipient, the DNR will increase its monitoring and notify the members of the committee in two week intervals about levels, flows, and rainfalls," said Alfred Vang, director of the S.C. Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Land, Water and Conservation Division. ♦ If there is a trend that appears to be negative, then we would call a meeting of the committee."

"We want to maintain our vigilance in monitoring this situation," said State Hydrologist Bud Badr. "Especially as we are beginning to move into the normally drier or reduced rainfall period of the year in South Carolina."

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