

# South Carolina Drought News Release

**South Carolina Department of Natural Resources  
Land, Water and Conservation Division  
South Carolina Drought Response Program  
Department of Natural Resources News (803) 734-4133**

SPECIAL NEWS RELEASE July 29, 1998 Drought Status Report

Scattered rainfall has not been sufficient to fully alleviate the moderate drought conditions statewide as declared by the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources. South Carolina has not received enough steady rainfall to solve the soil moisture problems for agriculture. According to the South Carolina Agricultural Statistics Service, the soil moisture ratings ended last week at 26% very short, 42% short, and 32% adequate. The increased showers, cloud cover, and high humidity have combined to reduce wildfire danger across the state. The South Carolina Forestry Commission has lifted the red flag alert statewide; however, people are encouraged to use caution as there are still a few very dry areas.

The Palmer Drought Severity Index (PDSI), a tool used for measuring the disruptive effects of prolonged dryness or wetness on water-sensitive economies, indicates that the west central, north central, and mountain regions are in the moderate drought category. The northwest and central regions remain in a mild drought classification. The northeast and southern regions continued in the PDSI category of near normal. Even though the PDSI values indicate varying levels of drought severity, the water levels in lakes and reservoirs are average. Most river stages are approximately within 65% of the July average. The Black River at Kingstree is 26% of average for July.

This year, as it has been during past major Southern droughts and heatwaves, the Bermuda High has been south of its usual summertime position. This year, the Bermuda High has been displaced to the south since late May and has interfered with or blocked the east-flowing moist winds from Africa to the Americas. Although the high has moved north several times during the past two months, it continually returned to the southerly position. This super high pressure cell has cut off almost all normal summertime convective (Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Ocean sources) precipitation for all of the Southern, Southwestern, and Southeastern United States.

Most 1998 summer precipitation has come from a few squall lines and thunderstorms from the continental interior. For the Southeast, this has resulted in an anomalous regional summer 1998 rainfall pattern. This is an unusual and unreliable summer rain source. South Carolina has fortunately received some very beneficial rainfall over the past two weeks. Recent rainfall episodes have brought precipitation totals for some locations closer to normal. The South Carolina drought situation has improved, although the question of how much agricultural damage has occurred still remains.

Statewide rainfall last week averaged 1.1 inches. Statewide temperatures last week averaged four degrees above normal. The six to ten day forecast for South Carolina calls for normal temperatures and precipitation.