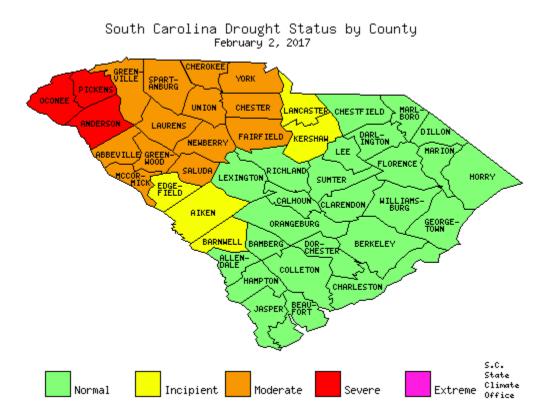
## South Carolina Current Drought Status

State Climate Office NEWS RELEASE

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## 15 counties see improvement in drought statuses



Due to adequate winter rainfall for portions of South Carolina, the S.C. Drought Response Committee has updated the drought statuses of 15 counties

All counties in the northeast region maintained their current statuses of normal (no drought) or incipient. Richland and Lexington counties, located in the central region of the state, were downgraded to normal status, while the rest of the counties in that region maintained their current statuses of moderate or normal. All of the counties in the southern region were downgraded from incipient to normal. McCormick and Abbeville counties, located in the Central Savannah region, maintained moderate status, Edgefield, Aiken and Barnwell counties were downgraded to incipient, and Allendale and below were downgraded to normal status.

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