

South Carolina Current Drought Status

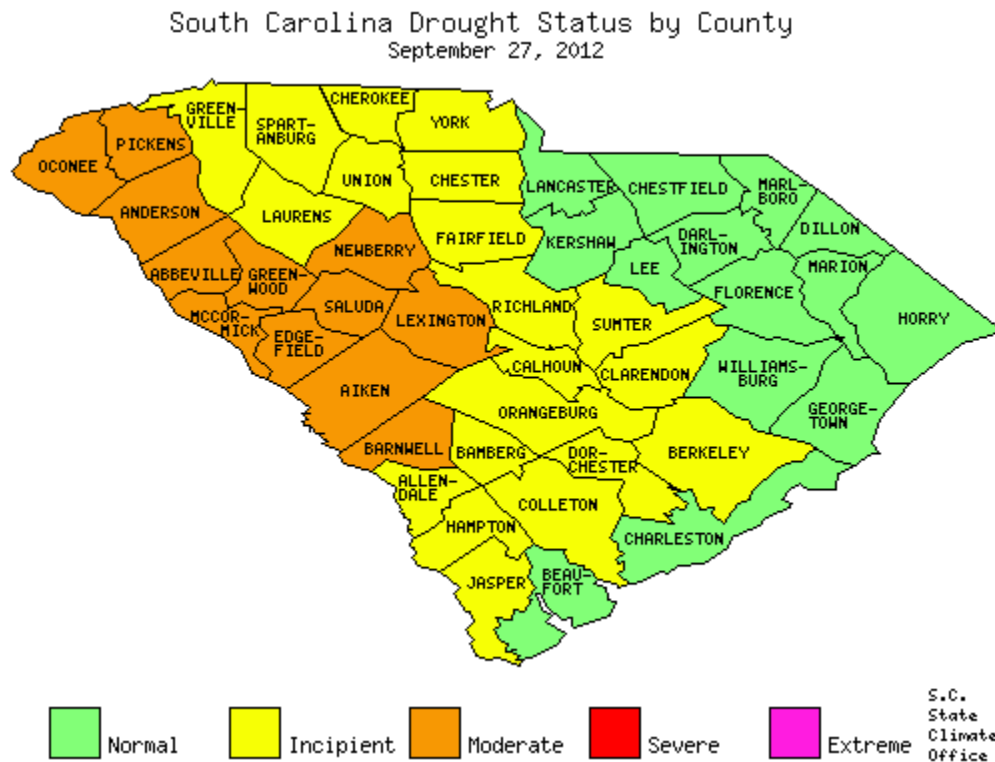
State Climate Office

NEWS RELEASE

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September 27, 2012

SC Drought Committee lowers status for 21 counties



Discussion:

For the first time since Feb. 2011, portions of South Carolina are drought free based on the SC Drought Response Committee's official declaration issued Sept. 27, 2012. The committee met via conference call and downgraded 14 counties to no drought. Elsewhere in the state the committee downgraded Greenville and Laurens to incipient and Abbeville, McCormick, Edgefield, Aiken and Barnwell to moderate. Oconee, Pickens, Anderson, Greenwood, Lexington, Newberry, Saluda were maintained at moderate. Spartanburg, Cherokee, Union, York, Chester, Fairfield, Richland, Sumter, Calhoun, Clarendon, Orangeburg, Berkeley, Orangeburg, Dorchester, Bamberg, Colleton, Allendale, Hampton, and Jasper were maintained at incipient.

According to Hope Mizzell, SC State Climatologist, there was consensus among all the drought indicators that the drought status improved for many counties. Based on data from the Community Collaborative Rain, Hail and Snow Network (CoCoRaHS), 60-day rainfall totals in some of the counties removed from drought exceeded 16 inches, which is over 150% of

normal for the period (Huger 5.5 SE: 20.8", Kingstree 7.9 NW: 17.19", Bluffton 2.3 NNE: 17.78", Mt. Pleasant 4.1 NE: 16.67").

The committee decided to maintain the drought status for 25 counties since there was not overwhelming support from the indicators that conditions in those counties have significantly improved. The committee's decision also took into consideration information provided by the National Weather Service and State Climatology Office that we are entering the time of year (Oct. - Nov.) which is climatologically the driest.

Marion Rizer, Colleton County Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioner, stated, "The summer rainfall for my area was enough to produce the best corn crop I've ever harvested since I started farming in 1975. If the drought meeting had been held a few weeks ago I would have voted to remove the drought for my area, but several weeks have passed with no rain and all that water is gone."

George Galleher, Duke Energy Hydro Fleet Operations engineer, reported that, "Dry conditions in the Catawba-Wateree, Broad River Basin and Keowee-Toxaway are likely to persist throughout the fall and into the winter. Without significant rainfall the Keowee-Toxaway Lake levels (particularly Lake Jocassee) are not expected to increase during the fall of 2012."

According to Darryl Jones, SC Forestry Commission, there was near a record low for fires around the state in the last two months, "We only had 18 fires during August and September is also low." The concern now is drying conditions, "Everything is currently green, but fall is typically drier and so we do expect to have increased fire activity in the months ahead."

Drought Response Committee Chairman Ken Rentiers stated, "The Committee will continue to monitor the situation closely and reconvene in early December or sooner as needed."

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