

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**

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The S.C. Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has been closely monitoring the below normal rainfall, low river flow conditions, and deteriorating soil moisture that have prevailed across the state for the past 30-40 days. The statewide average rainfall since May 1 has totaled 2.85 inches, which is 4.86 inches below normal (see below table of South Carolina Precipitation Percent of Normal).

On the basis of these recent low precipitation totals statewide and under the authority of the S.C. Drought Response Act of 1985, the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources has issued an incipient drought declaration for the entire state. At the incipient drought level, one of four levels defined in the legislation, the DNR increases its monitoring activities of drought-related variables such as precipitation, temperature, runoff, streamflow, evaporation, groundwater levels, soil moisture, reservoir levels, and other data. The DNR is also required to notify the affected areas and to serve as the primary agency to coordinate the State's response.

South Carolina soil moisture conditions have been slowly deteriorating since late April when the state received abundant rainfall from a passing low pressure system. This event ended the early spring incipient drought. Unfortunately, very little rain has been received since this event and the outlook is discouraging with minimal rainfall forecasted through the weekend. Increased temperatures are also becoming a factor with warmer days accelerating soil moisture loss and plant stress. Evaporation rates are averaging 0.30+ inches per day.

The National Agricultural Statistics Service reports that 79 percent of the state has short to very short soil moisture. Only 21 percent of the state has adequate moisture. Precipitation over these next few weeks will be a key determining factor as to whether many crops will have normal yields this year. Corn is particularly endangered.

The Forestry Commission records show that wildfire occurrence for June is already far above average. Firefighters say that wildfires will become increasingly difficult to control as soil moisture continues to drop. Wildfire can be especially devastating to timber resources when the weather is hot and dry. Forest managers say trees that are not killed outright by the fire become extremely susceptible to insect and disease attacks.

The below normal rainfall has resulted in lower stream flow. The present streamflows in these affected streams are at one-third or less of their historical June flows. Extremely low flows are being reported in the west central portions of the state. Low flows impact fish and wildlife, water withdrawals, and water quality. DNR is monitoring river and streamflows, and reservoir and groundwater levels on a daily basis. This information is available to the public as a 24-hour service via [Internet](#).

A Department survey of water suppliers across the state indicates that most reserves are adequate to meet the increased demand. A few water suppliers are encouraging voluntary water reductions to mitigate problems due to heightened demand. Supply is, thus far, not an immediate problem.

According to Dr. Michael Helfert, State Climatologist, "Unregulated streams may experience water shortages in the near future unless rainfall increases." The Drought Response Committee encourages local water suppliers to review drought response ordinances and plans for their area. The Department's Drought Information Center has been activated in Columbia, and the public is asked to contact the Center at (803)737- 0800 if they need additional information, or if other problems arise.

Station	Rainfall (inches)	Deviation Normal	Station	Rainfall (inches)	Deviation Normal
Anderson	2.29	-2.55	Fort Mill	2.35	-2.2
Branchville	4.87	-0.91	Gaffney	2.35	-2.98
Beaufort	5.07	-0.38	Georgetown	0.21	-5.49
Blackville	4.08	-1.24	Greenville-Spartanburg	3.08	-2.47
Cades	3.98	-0.64	Johnston	2.37	-2.49
Calhoun Falls	2.76	-2.02	Sumter	3.28	-1.75
Myrtle Beach	3.8	-0.82	Union	1.79	-2.93
Camden	2.29	-2.16	Walhalla	1.46	-4.86
Charleston	4.03	-1.57	Walterboro	3.24	-2.71
Clinton	1.53	-3.17			
Columbia	0.79	-4.05			
Conway	4.17	-1.63			
Florence	1.58	-3.03			