

South Carolina Current Drought Status

State Climate Office

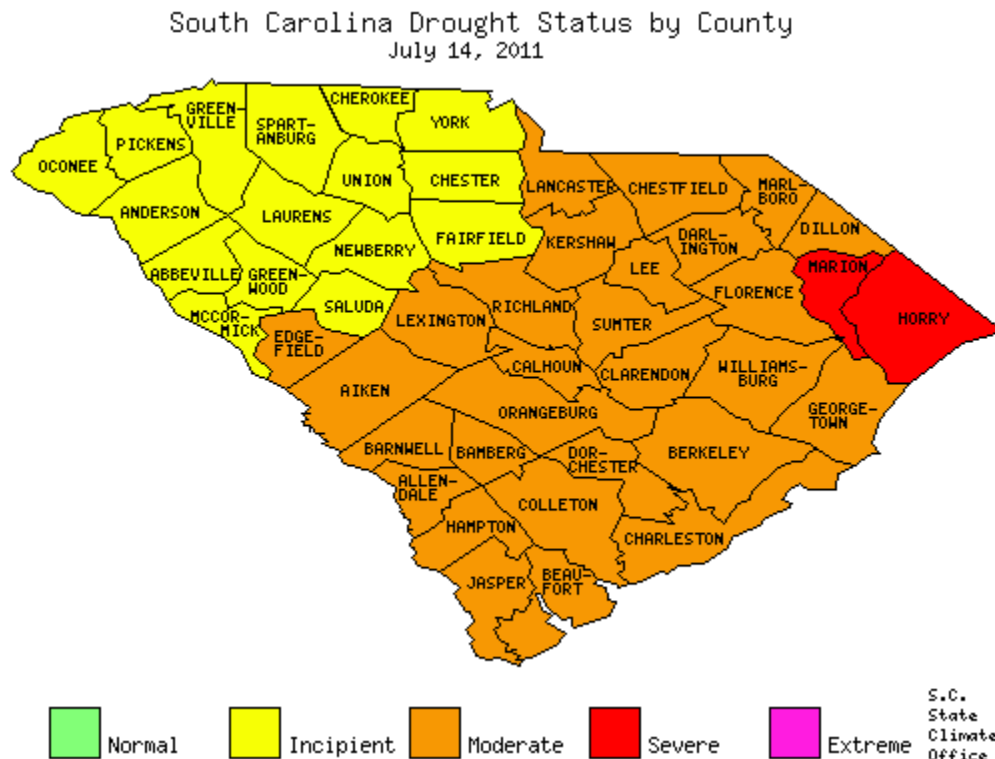
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Drought Response Committee upgrades 4 counties to moderate, and 2 counties to severe drought status



Discussion:

Members of the S.C. Drought Response Committee, meeting via tele-conference on July 14, upgraded Lancaster, Kershaw, Lexington and Richland counties to moderate drought status. Horry and Marion counties were upgraded to severe drought status. The committee's decision to maintain or upgrade was driven by continuing concern over agricultural impacts, low stream flows and increased forest fire activity. Sporadic and localized rainfall has not mitigated the ongoing drought status throughout the state.

Aiken, Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell, Beaufort, Berkeley, Calhoun, Charleston, Chesterfield, Clarendon, Colleton, Darlington, Dillon, Dorchester, Edgefield, Florence, Georgetown, Hampton, Jasper, Lee, Marlboro, Orangeburg, Sumter, and Williamsburg counties maintained moderate drought status. The remaining counties maintain incipient status. The moderate drought declaration is followed by increasing levels of severity to severe and extreme status.

David Tompkins with the S.C. Department of Agriculture reported, "The heat really stretches things. We're looking at total corn crop failures in some counties as well as stress on other crops. The lack of rainfall is taking a toll on pastures and grazing lands. Livestock owners that are worried about where feed supplies will come from if we stay hot and dry."

Darryl Jones with the S.C. Forestry Commission reported, "June was particularly active for fire occurrence with the state reaching 188% of the 10 year average and it looks like July is shaping up to do the same. The continued high heat this summer has also raised safety concerns for our fire fighters with extreme operating conditions and higher occurrence of fatigue and heat related injuries."

Pickens County resident and committee member Dennis Chastain reported, "Throughout the state the extraordinary heat is driving the levels of drought. We're just not getting the kind of recharge in some basins with the episodic rainfall that we've been getting. We've had some rainfall, but much of it has runoff and there has been a tremendous amount of evaporation. We're subject to a rapid change in the drought status over a short period of time and things could deteriorate quickly."

Barnwell County Administrator Pickens Williams, Jr. noted, "Some counties are on the edge of upgrading drought status and we'll need to closely monitor indicators for concern that drought conditions may worsen."

Scott Willett, Anderson County Regional Joint Water System, reported that, "During this time of year we're being sustained by scattered thunderstorms, which leaves areas within some counties worse off than others."

Mike Hancock with the Lugoff-Elgin Water Authority also stressed, "The committee members want the public to understand the dangerous fire potential posed by the lack of rainfall. Another result of the drought is the effect it's having on our state's agriculture. The foods, jobs and livelihoods supported by our agriculture industry are vulnerable to the ongoing drought status."

The purpose of the declaration is to increase awareness that drought conditions are intensifying. Water systems are asked to review their Drought Response Plans and Ordinances and implement as needed. The drought committee encourages the public to be cautious with any outdoor burning activity. The best way to fight wildfires is to prevent them!

The committee will reconvene in approximately three weeks or sooner if needed to reevaluate the drought conditions.

Contact South Carolina State Climatologist Dr. Hope Mizzell in Columbia at (803) 734-9568, or (803) 530-5793, 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 Status	County Status	County Status	County Status	County Status
ABBEVILLE Incipient	AIKEN Moderate	ALLENDALE Moderate	ANDERSON Incipient	BAMBERG Moderate
BARNWELL Moderate	BEAUFORT Moderate	BERKELEY Moderate	CALHOUN Moderate	CHARLESTON Moderate
CHEROKEE Incipient	CHESTER Incipient	CHESTERFIELD Moderate	CLARENDON Moderate	COLLETON Moderate
DARLINGTON Moderate	DILLON Moderate	DORCHESTER Moderate	EDGEFIELD Moderate	FAIRFIELD Incipient
FLORENCE Moderate	GEORGETOWN Moderate	GREENVILLE Incipient	GREENWOOD Incipient	HAMPTON Moderate
HORRY Severe	JASPER Moderate	KERSHAW Moderate	LANCASTER Moderate	LAURENS Incipient
LEE Moderate	LEXINGTON Moderate	MARION Severe	MARLBORO Moderate	MCCORMICK Incipient
NEWBERRY Incipient	OCONEE Incipient	ORANGEBURG Moderate	PICKENS Incipient	RICHLAND Moderate
SALUDA Incipient	SPARTANBURG Incipient	SUMTER Moderate	UNION Incipient	WILLIAMSBURG Moderate
YORK Incipient				