

Drought Response Committee Conference Call

Date: April 30, 2026

Time: 10:00 a.m.

A Drought Response Committee Conference Call was conducted at 10:00 a.m., April 30, 2026. Notice of the date, time, and call-in information was posted and provided on the scdrought.com website.

I. Introduction

- a. Tyler Brown (SCDNR) opens the meeting and reads the agenda.
 - i. Tyler Brown makes notice that this meeting is being recorded.
- b. Hope Mizzell (SCDNR) conducts the Drought Committee roll call.
 - i. There is a quorum in all DMAs.
 - ii. She does a roll call of state agency members, media, and any additional attendees.
- c. Tyler Brown puts forth a motion to approve the minutes of the last meeting, which took place on April 9th.
 - i. Ken Tuck, 1st
 - ii. Jimmy Bagley, 2nd
 - iii. Motion passes unanimously. Minutes have been approved.

II. PowerPoint Presentation

- a. Hope Mizzell begins with the presentation.
 - i. Shows the recent 12 hours precipitation, as of 9AM. Ranging from 0.3-0.75” across the Midlands and Upstate, with lighter rain across the Lowcountry.
 - ii. Above normal temperatures over the past two months, as well as year to date. Many locations across the state in the top 10 warmest.
 - iii. Very dry April precipitation – many in the top ten driest (excluding April 30th rainfall). As of April 29th, Charleston is the second driest April.
 - iv. Precipitation anomaly maps - driest areas are in the Lowcountry and coastal plains. Many areas have gotten less than 25 % of normal rainfall for March and April. Similar areas in SC are driest in the January to April time (Lowcountry - 30% of normal). No locations across the state have received normal rainfall, many less than 50% this year to date.
 - v. Precipitation summary – Many locations across the state have a 6 to 10” rainfall deficit this calendar year and it continues to build.

- vi. Precipitation (September to April) – Below normal rainfall since September 2025. Drought has been building since early fall.
- vii. 30-day, 60-day, 90-day Rain – Below normal totals and percent of normal. Most of the state with less than 50% of normal in the 30 and 60-day time periods. Nowhere in the state has received normal rainfall over any time.
- viii. PDSI – Driest locations showing up across the Upstate.
- ix. CMI – No representation on the map showing what is happening on the ground.
- x. SPI – Majority locations are showing severe and extreme drought across the state at the 30, 60, 90-day time periods.
- xi. Drought Monitor – As of April 28th, D4 in the Lowcountry. D3 in/touched all counties.
- xii. Exceptional Drought (D4) is very rare – last time we had D4 in the state was Nov 2015 – Jan 2016.
- xiii. Tempest Map – no representation of any significant rainfall across the state.
- xiv. CoCoRaHS 30-day and 60-day: Consistent across the state. Northeast, Central, and Southern DMA shows far from average precipitation with the West DMA (Anderson County) with only one with any max 30 or 60 totals near normal

b. State Agency Reports

- i. SCDES (Alexis) – 14-day streamflow showing a lot of much below normal showing dryness. Catawba gage regulated – so it is showing incipient.
 - 1. Northeast DMA – Downward trends at all three gages. Even precipitation, all trends downward and dry
 - 2. West DMA – Same downward trend at all gages.
 - 3. Central DMA – Same dryness and downward trends. Broad River at Carlisle show some upticks, but not enough to bring out of dry conditions.
 - 4. Southern DMA – Similar downward trends.
 - 5. Lake Levels/Reservoirs – Better but those in west are several feet below normal. Keowee-Toxaway is in LIP stage 2, USACE Savannah River in drought stage 2, Catawba-Wateree in LIP stage 2 beginning May 1.

6. Hartwell Reservoir – USACE Hartwell projection showing May/June below level 2. Slight downward trend.
7. Groundwater – Dryness. Many show below normal and well below normal. Even those in normal are showing downward trend. (NE – Lancaster and Lee much below, West – dryness and downward, Central – Saluda just dipped below normal, York Co downward trend, southern- all downward trends, and Charleston is below 5-10 percentiles)
8. Hope Mizzell – Concerned because this is very abnormal for these low streamflow levels this early in the year.

ii. Rob Devlin (SCDES) – Hampton and Anderson private wells going dry. Other reports across the state.

iii. Darryl Jones (SC Forestry Commission) – KBDI based on readings from April 28th (does not reflect yesterday's rainfall). Much of the state is at moderate to severe drought – rainfall may change values slightly but not expected to be drastic. Values shows the dry fuels and no moisture available. There are fire control and ignition concerns. 1000-hour fuels – large logs, bigger fuel burning is making things difficult. April fire activity – 392 wildfires thus far as of April 28th. Statewide burn ban – Upstate and Piedmont no longer included. 2012 wildfires since January. Above avg all months except avg February. Some improvement is expected and hope will help with wildfire threat. USFS and federal agencies have brought in people to help with the fires and potential in SC.

iv. Jordan Van Delden (SCEMD) – No updates.

v. Sam Quinney (SC Dept. of Agriculture) – Agriculture behind on hay cut, corn planting, very little germ on dryland corn. Rain has been helpful, but farmers are still struggling, livestock forages behind. Impacts occurring statewide.

vi. Duke Energy (Andrew Shull) – Keowee-Toxaway remains in LIP stage 2 and Catawba-Wateree LIP stage 1 as of April 16th due to declining reservoir levels. Catawba-Wateree Stage 2 begins tomorrow (May 1). There will be water use restrictions for C-W basins at Stage 2 LIP.

vii. Santee Cooper – Nothing yet. Keeping a close eye.

viii. FSA – Brandon Lambert (Issues for hay farmers. Running out of hay – not able to buy from area states. Selling livestock. Planters having to stop. Fall

planted not able to harvest.) Glenn Thomas (We are having some livestock selling due to the lack of grazing and hay inventory.)

c. Short- and Long-term Forecast

- i. Weekly QPF – Showing from 0.5” to 1.5” across the state with the highest possible for the coastal plain and low country.
- ii. 6–10 Day Outlook – Showing chance for near normal to below normal temps and above normal precipitation
- iii. Seasonal outlook – MJJ showing higher likelihood for above normal temps with norm to near normal rainfall. Low confidence.
- iv. Drought Outlook – Last updated April 16th – no update since our last meeting.
- v. NWS Frank Alsheimer (CAE) – Threat for rain on Saturday (1-2”) south I-20 and 0.5-1” to the north. Another potential for rain on Wednesday or Thursday. No rain will solve dry conditions but hope to help with deficits. Rain should give us rain every few days over the next week. MJJ – potential for rapid change to El Nino conditions but don’t have a great influence on our summer temps or rain.
- vi. SERFC (Haley) – Many streamflows at much below or all-time lows.
- vii. Hope – Pattern of consistent rainfall (1-2” weekly) will be needed to help with this drought.

III. Open Discussion and Vote

Hope Mizzell (SCDNR): Quorum in all DMAs

a. Northeast DMA

- i. Joe G. – Data and conversation shown support to move up DMA to severe.
- ii. Alan W. – Agrees with Joe. Move up one level to severe. Very little rainfall and very concerned with what the conditions on the ground show.
- iii. Athena S. – Agrees to go to severe but concerned if we need to move meetings at different pace like this week.
 1. Hope and Tyler – Yes, we can change upcoming meeting dates if needed, especially if weather event supports change.
- iv. Nathan W. – Data backs up going to severe. Extremely dry all over. Kershaw has not seen large drop in groundwater levels and checking wells regularly.
- v. Motion: Move all northeast DMA counties to severe drought status.

1. Joe Ghent, 1st.
 2. Alan Watkins, 2nd
- vi. Motion passes unanimously.

b. Central DMA

- i. Jimmy B. – All indicators show C-W moving to LIP Stage 2. (Indicators move at different rate this time of year). C-W basin is moving to severe.
 - ii. Peggy S. – Very dry and recommends the whole DMA to severe.
 - iii. Alan S. – Supports at least upper counties in C-W basin to severe.
 - iv. Ken T. – Supports moving DMA (at least upstate counties) to severe. Some restrictions on smaller water systems. Seeing the impacts.
 - v. John I. – Severe based on impacts that the agriculture is experiencing move to severe.
- iv. Motion: Move all central counties from moderate to severe drought status.
1. John I., 1st
 2. Peggy S., 2nd
- v. Motion passes unanimously.

c. Southern DMA

- i. Marion R. – Driest he's seen and 0.1" total rainfall all April. He supports all southern counties going to severe.
 - ii. Jason T. – Dry, and potentially worst. We should consider the scale and pace we move counties into a higher drought status. Agriculture and forestry support severe, but near full pool at primary reservoirs.
 - iii. Landrum W. – Impacts on agriculture. Data supports moving to severe.
 - iv. Eric O. – Orangeburg and Bamberg Counties going into severe.
 - v. Casey M. – Supports Jason and from utilities standpoint, it is moderate in Berkeley County.
- vi. Motion: Move all southern DMA counties from moderate to severe drought status.
1. Marion R., 1st
 2. Landrum W., 2nd
- vii. Motion passes unanimously.

d. West DMA

- i. Lynn M. – Concerned that if we move into severe drought status, do all water suppliers have a drought management plan and ordinances? Can you

let us know when water systems are in water conservation status?

Concerned that the governor's office is not informing the public.

1. Hope M. - Water suppliers are not required to move to severe – it is based on their individual triggers for their water supply. Water systems need to let SCDNR and SCDES when they move to mandatory or voluntary restrictions/conservation. SCDNR SCO is working with the governor's office and keeping them updated.
- ii. Yvonne K. – Job as committee to educate and communicate with the public. Utilize social media platforms.
 1. Governor's office document can be shared with the DRC to be shared online, etc. It is a public document.
- iii. Yvonne K. – No forage, no hay, cattle to sale. Dry conditions have a big impact.
- iv. Mark W. – Indicators show that McCormick needs to move to severe. Low Lake Thurmond levels have impact tourism as well.
- v. David E. – Streamflow and groundwater impacts and concern with the levels, despite rainfall. Supports moving entire west DMA to severe.
- vi. Scott W. – Numbers show we are heading towards severe and agrees it's dry, severe drought. Concern – Structure with four levels and people get emotionally invested and continue to march. There is a long way between severe and extreme.
- v. Motion: Move the entire west DMA from moderate to severe drought status.
 1. Scott Willett, 1st
 2. Yvonne Kling, 2nd
- iv. Motion passes unanimously.

IV. Closing Remarks

- a. Hope (SCDNR) introduces upcoming meeting “USDM 101” presented by the National Drought Mitigation Center. Open to the public on May 7th.
- b. The next meeting dates will be May 21st at 9AM and June 11th at 10AM.
- c. Tyler (SCDNR) puts forth a motion to adjourn:
 1. Yvonne Kling, 1st
 2. Peggy Swearingen, 2nd
- d. Meeting is adjourned at 11:53am.

Committee Members	Group	Attendance 04/30/2026
West DMA		
Reg Williams	Agriculture	
Cheryl Daniels	Commission of Public Works	X
Mark Warner	Counties	X
-	Domestic User	VACANT
David Evans	Industry	X
Lynn McEwen	Municipalities	X
Preston Pierce	Power Generation Facilities	X
J. Scott Willett	Private Water Supplier	X
Chris Rasco	Public Service District	
Rick Green	Regional Council of Gov.	
Yvonne Kling	Soil and Water Conservation Dist.	X
Brian Chemsak	Special Purpose District	X
Central DMA		
John Irwin	Agriculture	X
Ken Tuck	Commission of Public Works	X
Peggy Swearingen	Counties	X
Christy Jones	Domestic User	X
Ed Holder	Industry	
James G. Bagley	Municipalities	X
Alan Stuart	Power Generation Facilities	X
Brad C. Powers	Private Water Supplier	X
-	Public Service District	VACANT
Gregory Sprouse	Regional Council of Gov.	X
John T. Rivers	Soil and Water Conservation Dist.	X
Fred Castles	Special Purpose District	
Northeast DMA		
Caleb Miller	Agriculture	X
-	Commission of Public Works	VACANT
Karolan Ohanesian	Domestic User	
Athena Strickland	Industry	X

Clint Elliott	Municipality	
-	Power Generation Facilities	VACANT
-	Private Water Supplier	VACANT
Alan Watkins	Counties	X
Elbert Warren	Public Service District	X
Lindsay Privette	Regional Council of Gov.	X
Joe Ghent	Soil and Water Conservation Dist.	X
Nathan Ward	Special Purpose District	X
Southern DMA		
Landrum Weathers	Agriculture	X
Jason Thompson	Commission of Public Works	X
-	Counties	VACANT
Chris Wallace	Domestic User	
-	Industry	VACANT
Eric Odom	Municipalities	X
Casey Moorner	Power Generation Facilities	X
-	Private Water Supplier	VACANT
Russell Cornette	Public Service District	
Ronald E. Mitchum	Regional Council of Gov.	
Marion L. Rizer	Soil and Water Conservation Dist.	X
-	Special Purpose District	VACANT
State Agency Members		
Tyler Bown	SCDNR, LWC Division	X
Jordan Van Delden	SC Emergency Management Divis.	X
Rob Devlin	SC Dept. of Environ. Services	X
Darryl Jones	SC Forestry Commission	X
Sam Quinney	SC Department of Agriculture	X
Other Participants		
Hope Mizzell	SCDNR, LWC Division	X
Melissa Griffin	SCDNR, LWC Division	X
Jennifer Simmons	SCDNR, LWC Division	X
Alexis Modzelesky	SCDES	X

Frank Alsheimer	NWS Columbia	X
Nick Rubin	SCRWA	X
Haley	NWS SERFC	X
Daniel Bends	SCDES	X
Leigh Ann Moore	SCDES	X
Kevin Ryan	SCDNR	X
Frank Strait	SCDNR	X
Olivia Sisson	The State	X
Hannah Rainey	SCDNR	X
Lydia Larson	Post & Courier	X
Guy Boyle	Spartanburg Water	X
Andrew Shull	Duke Energy	X
Shannon Whitehead	Mt. Pleasant Water	X
KC Price	LCWSC	X
Congaree Riverkeeper		X
Rebecca Morris	SCDES	X
Bobbi Janowski	FSA	X
Phi Fragapane	Duke Energy	X
Robert Clark	SCDNR	X
Macy Blackburn	FSA	X
Hope Morton	FSA	X
Ryan Trusty	FSA	X
Richard Geddings	FSA	X
Taley Smoak	FSA	X
Brandon Lambert	FSA	X
Glenn Thomas	FSA	X