

Drought Response Committee Conference Call

Date: June 11, 2026

Time: 10:00 a.m.

A Drought Response Committee Conference Call was conducted at 10:00 a.m., June 11, 2026. Notice of the date, time, and call-in information was posted and provided on the scdrought.com website.

I. Introduction

- a. Hope Mizzell (SCDNR) opens the meeting and reads the agenda.
 - i. Hope Mizzell 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. Hope Mizzell puts forth a motion to approve the minutes of the last meeting, which took place on May 21st.
 - i. Clint Elliott, 1st
 - ii. Athena Strickland, 2nd
 - iii. Motion passes unanimously. The minutes have been approved.

II. PowerPoint Presentation

- a. Hope Mizzell begins with the presentation.
 - i. Looking at the statewide averages (131 years on record), numerous time frames (7-time frames) Sept through April 2026, all were the driest.
 - ii. May 2026 – Rainfall was much above normal when looking averages across counties. 5.25” state average
 - iii. January – May rainfall – Nineth driest was in 2026. -6.54” departure from normal. Even with May rain, it has been a very dry year.
 - iv. May 2026 – Some locations received above average monthly rain and were able to make small cuts into their deficits.
 - v. Sept 2025 – May 2026: fifth driest in the 131 years of record with a 10.75” deficit.
 - vi. 30-day rainfall – much of the state received above normal %. 60-day – still much above normal % due to large amount we received from May. 90-day still shows small areas with above normal % (mainly in Upstate).
 - vii. Tempest – May 21st to June 10th rainfall totals from across the state

- viii. Palmer Index – Reflects dry conditions from the lack of rainfall over the long-time frame.
- ix. Crop Moisture – Shows the moisture is in the area in the short-term time frame.
- x. Soil Moisture – Showing soil moisture across May 20 to June 10th time frame. Before rain event, just after rain, and yesterday with dry conditions and warm temperatures.
- xi. 30 Day SPI – Shows many at normal precipitation over 30-day time frame in the upstate. Many along the coast with drier conditions along the coast & coastal plains. Same situation in the 60- and 90-day time frame.
- xii. US Drought Monitor – June 9th released this morning with minor changes since last week. Shows improvement from rainfall with D3 still along the coast.
- xiii. Rainfall Accumulations: Northeast, Central, West DMA – 30-day and 60-day reflects the May rainfall in relation to the average. Southern DMA – Different due to drier conditions, especially when looking at 60-day totals.

b. State Agency Reports

- i. SCDES (Scott) – The streamflow 14-day average shows notable improvement since last meeting in most places. Many normal – but Pee Dee and Waccamaw are considerably dry. Regulatory standard – Most stream gages show no drought in SC. At the 14-day and 28-day status, there is incipient and moderate across the state. There was a pretty good response from late May rainfall, but it will be temporary. Streamflows are receding.
 - 1. Northeast DMA – Sites saw notable streamflows in May but are receding. (14-day percentiles are picking up rainfall) Waccamaw showed very little response from the rain.
 - 2. West DMA – Good response and peak flows but are receding. Rocky River is showing recent rain. Common for Coosawhatchie to dry out at this time of the year.
 - 3. Central DMA – Good response and peak flows above normal but now falling below normal streamflow.
 - 4. Southern DMA – Edisto had strong response but beginning to recede.

5. Lake Level – Some improvement statewide. All reservoir levels are going up but there are still strong deficits in the Savannah Basin.
6. Duke Energy - LIP stage 2 at Keowee-Toxaway and Catawba-Wateree
7. Thurmond Reservoir – Forecast shows that despite the rise in the recent weeks but projected it will be on the decline.
8. Groundwater – Compared to last meeting some improvement in Piedmont & other areas, but still below normal across much.
 - a. Northeast DMA – Some response to rains, but water levels on the rise.
 - b. West DMA – Slight increase in levels in response to rain. Some areas are at normal levels. Jasper is still well below normal.
 - c. Central DMA – Slight response at York and Saluda.
 - d. South DMA – Little response to rain (10-25%) and on decline again.
 - e. 14-day percentage – Without above average rainfall events, many sites will recede and creep into incipient to severe status.

ii. Joe Koon (SCDES) – Thanks all water systems for using Ready Ops system. 33 water systems in voluntary conservation and 14 systems in mandatory conservation.

1. Is there a publicly available list of water systems in voluntary or mandatory status? Please reach out to Joe Koon directly.

iii. Darryl Jones (SC Forestry Commission) – KBDI map mostly reflects where most of the rainfall has been – worst near the coast (400-600) moderate and severe levels. The rain we've had has helped and the fuel moisture. Concern is if we get into high temps and don't continue getting rain every week. Fire – higher than normal (149 fires – 777 acres in May). In June so far, there have been 21 fires as of Monday. Above normal compared to 10 -year average. Short-term looking okay, but we need to continue receiving rain. Since Dec, all have had above average monthly fires except for in February.

iv. Jordan Van Delden (SCEMD) – June 1st started off hurricane season and staying ready.

v. SC Dept. of Agriculture (Sam Quinney) – Temperatures rising will begin impacting the crops (especially corn which will have reduced yields). Most of the acreage did get planted. Dryland is behind but got planted. Northeast and Southern DMA are in pretty bad shape – Coosawhatchie Area is very dry. Pigweed dying from drought. Some areas in the Upstate may be doing okay, but our state as a whole is struggling.

vi. Duke Energy – Andrew provided statement – K-W and C-W remain in LIP drought stage 2. Rainfall did help their triggers but appears they will remain in stage 2 for June.

vii. Santee Cooper – Not in drought contingency plan. Approximately one foot away.

c. Short- and Long-term Forecast

- i. Seven-Day Tropical Outlook – One area of monitor (potential moisture from Pacific)
- ii. Weekly QPF – Mostly dry with extremely warm temperatures, but most rain returns late in this weekend and next week.
- iii. 6-10 Day Outlook – Favoring above normal temps and slightly above normal rainfall (June 16-20th).
- iv. Drought Outlook – Drought persists but improve.
- v. NWS GSP (Joshua Palmer) – Warm temperatures are main concern this weekend. Rainfall in late May does not look like it will return. The models are showing below normal rainfall throughout the rest of the month. Uncertainty who will see the rainfall. Monthly averages rise on the coast and lower on the coast. We will need quite a bit to make up for the monthly rain. Sea breeze influences the coastal area rainfall which has the highest summer monthly normals compared to Midlands and Upstate.

III. Open Discussion and Vote

Hope Mizzell (SCDNR)

a. Northeast DMA

- i. Caleb M. – We need to stay in the severe – we have not gotten enough rain to justify moving out.

- ii. Athena S. – River flows are in concerning and seeing residuals from lack of rain. Crops saw improvement, but now they are now on the decline. Stay in the severe.
- iii. Clint E. – Agrees, especially in Georgetown. With heat and not nearly as much rain, these conditions are severe.
- iv. Joe G. – Agrees with other DMA members – stay in severe across entire severe.
- v. Motion: All counties stay in severe drought across the entire Northeast DMA.
 - 1. Clint Elliott, 1st.
 - 2. Athena Strickland, 2nd
- vi. Motion passes unanimously.

b. Central DMA

- i. Jimmy B. – Little rain, Catawba-Wateree basin in drought stage 2, and streamflows have not shown significant improvement. Some helped the crops, but not many changes. (York, Chester, Fairfield Counties)
- ii. Ken T. – It's a large DMA, some did get decent rainfall, but others did not. Some counties (in Upstate – Spartanburg, Greenville, Cherokee) need to stay in severe. Others may not need to – Greenwood and Laurens received much more rain.
- iii. John I. – Laurens County received a lot of rain as well and can take a step back (moderate), but coastal counties need to stay severe.
- iv. Greg S. – The Midlands (Newberry, Richland, Lexington) can go back to moderate.
- v. Peggy S. – Agrees with Jimmy Bagley about York and Chester. Fairfield received very little rain.
- vi. John R. – Very dry, stay in severe in Sumter County. No longer benefiting from rain received.
- ii. Motion: Move Greenwood, Laurens, Union, Saluda, Newberry, Richland, and Lexington to moderate status. All other counties remain in severe drought.
 - 1. Alan S., 1st
 - 2. Peggy S., 2nd
- iii. Motion passes unanimously.

c. Southern DMA

- i. Eric O. – We did receive rain in about half of Orangeburg, but rainfall no longer beneficial. Stay at severe status.
- ii. Russ C. – Recommends that we stay at severe. We did receive some rain, but we need more until we change.
- iii. Jason T. – No significant impacts on the water systems, but soil and ground conditions are very poor. Landrum agrees that we stay in severe until sustained improvement.
- iii. Motion: All counties remain in severe drought status.
 - 1. Marion R., 1st
 - 2. Russ C., 2nd
- iv. Motion passes unanimously.

d. West DMA

- i. Scott W. – We had a good rebound and improvement. Some of the Upstate should move back into moderate. Concerning that with the rain we receive, it does not mean that the drought is over nor is severe drought still needed. Anderson to moderate.
- ii. Mark W. - Abbeville and McCormick improved with the heavy rainfall. Still concerned about lake levels. Support McCormick back to moderate.
- iii. Sam Q. – Worried about the soil and heavy rainfall. Not effective rainfall when it's heavy and mostly runoff.
- iv. Lynn M. – Did get good bit of rain but have not gotten anything since.
- v. Yvonne K. – On the wetter side of Aiken County but other side got much less. Majority of Aiken is very dry.
- vi. Brian C. – Beaufort, Jasper should stay at severe drought since a majority did not receive the rainfall.
- vii. Yvonne K. – Very different rainfall depending on which portion of Aiken you are in. Very large county so there was a large range. Keep Aiken in severe if we are meeting in early July.
- viii. David E. – Leave southern counties and northern 2 counties (Pickens and Oconee) at severe. Move those in the middle to moderate.
- ix. Continued talk between the West DMA members, Sam Q, and Hope M. about Anderson, Abbeville, McCormick, Edgefield, Barnwell, and Aiken Counties. Concerns about weather conditions and producers struggling.
- x. Motion: Anderson, Abbeville, Edgefield, and McCormick move to moderate. All other counties remain in severe drought.
 - 1. Scott W., 1st
 - 2. Mark W., 2nd

xi. Motion passes unanimously.

IV. Closing Remarks

- a. The next meeting date will be July 8th at 10AM.
- b. Hope (SCDNR) puts forth a motion to adjourn:
 - 1. Scott W., 1st
 - 2. Jason T., 2nd
- c. Meeting is adjourned at 11:36AM