

Drought Response Committee Conference Call

Date: October 7, 2025

Time: 10:00 a.m.

A Drought Response Committee Conference Call was conducted at 10:00 a.m., October 9, 2025. Notice of the date, time, and call-in information was posted and provided on the scdrought.com website.

Introduction

- a. Ken Rentiers (SCDNR) opens the meeting and reads the agenda.
 - i. Ken (SCDNR) makes notice that this meeting is being recorded. He notes that there has been a change to Microsoft Teams for future meetings.
- b. Hope Mizzell (SCDNR) conducts the Drought Committee roll call.
 - i. There is not enough for a quorum in the Central Drought Management Area (DMA). All other DMAs have enough members present for a vote.
 - ii. She does a roll call of state agency members and any additional attendees.
- c. Hope (SCDNR) puts forth a motion to approve the minutes of the last meeting, which took place on September 24, 2025.
 - i. Joe Ghent, 1st
 - ii. Elbert Warren, 2nd
 - iii. Motion passes unanimously. Minutes have been approved.

d. Microsoft teams will be our new platform

II. PowerPoint Presentation

- a. Hope (SCDNR) begins with the presentation.
 - i. Shows the last meeting's decision-based map – most counties across the state of South Carolina went to incipient.
 - ii. Overall, most of the 30-day and 60-day total rainfall maps shows below normal and dry conditions. The 90-day totals still shows some of the wet conditions from the summer,
 - iii. The PDSI & CMI maps are picking up on pockets of dry conditions with a stronger signal in the CMI (Crop Moisture Index).
 - iv. The 30-day SPI map indicates improvement in some locations due to spotty rainfall evident on map. Most of the stations show either incipient, moderate, or severe drought conditions.

- v. As of last week, per the U.S. Drought Monitor, there has been expansion of drought conditions.
- vi. Hope (SCDNR) displays the Clemson Tempest Station Data – Some locations have received less than 0.5” of rain since last call.
- vii. The 30- and 60- day range DMA rainfall, which includes COOP and CoCoRaHS station data rainfall extremes, show a lack of rainfall with some counties much drier than others.

b. State Agency Reports

- i. Alexis Modzelesky (DES) begins her slides with streamflow percentiles. DMAs are showing very dry conditions with low levels across many sites in the state.
 - 1. Lake Levels – Most of the state just below target levels.
 - 2. Hartwell Reservoir is expected to skim just above level 1, but are expected to rebound to target level
 - 3. Groundwater – 3 wells are still looking dry (Greenville, Berkeley, and Charleston/Santee Basin).
 - 4. Hope asks about other wells in Greenville – Do any others support the low level in Greenville? Scott H. says the water levels show lag time and don’t show quick change. He will check on others in the area. Lag time is about 3-to-6-months at that site. Other sites are quicker, but there are no real time sites in that area. Greenville is drier than other sites, but others is just below normal.
- ii. Stephen Polk (SC Forestry Commission) – Sandhills looking more severe. NW – looking more moderate. Very little fires lately with nine fires and a total 58 acres burned – all fires human caused. Kershaw & Aiken were the largest fires.
- iii. Sam Quinney (SCDA): Reports on drier conditions with very minimal rainfall. Some drier conditions have helped with disease, with some desert crops (watermelon and fruits) benefitting.
- iv. Hope (SCDNR) presents the latest USDA FSA reports, as well as CMOR and CoCoRaHS Condition Monitoring Reports.

c. PowerPoint Presentation

- i. Hope (SCDNR) presents the short- and long-term forecasts
 - 1. Tropical weather outlook – TS Jerry is now in the tropical Atlantic waters and expected to stay away from CONUS and in the Atlantic.

2. 7 Day Precipitation Forecast - <0.5" in upstate and up to 2" in the far northern coast, if it verifies.
 3. Per NOAA's CPC 6-to10 day outlook, they are calling for near normal temps and just above normal precipitation for a slight sliver of our coast. The 3-month outlook is an extension of the current fall outlook.
 4. The drought outlook shows the latest addition of the US Drought Monitor's D1 areas in SC, which was updated on Sept 30th after the last call.
- ii. Frank (NWS CAE): Tropical Storm Jerry was just named in the tropical Atlantic. Forecast for it to turn north and into the Atlantic and stay offshore. With upcoming storm offshore the Carolinas this weekend, it will bring in northerly winds and cooler for extended period. This upcoming weekend may be the best chance for rain - Late Saturday into Monday. A lot depends on how the storm behaves and if it stays offshore.

III. Open Discussion and Vote

Hope Mizzell (SCDNR):

a. Northeast DMA

- i. Lindsay P. has seen no indications that things have improved recently. Conditions are dry.
- ii. Nathan W. agrees NE DMA stays in incipient. No reason to improve nor data to move into moderate.
- iii. Joe G. agrees that the northeast DMA stays in incipient.
- iv. Motion: All counties remain in incipient status.
 1. Lindsay Privette, 1st.
 2. Joe Ghent, 2nd
- v. Motion passes unanimously.

b. Central DMA

- i. Not enough members present for a quorum and to vote, but we may discuss.
- ii. Brad P. – Upstate counties are in the same conditions as light showers has helped ground moisture. Not ready to pull out of incipient. His wells in normal cycle. Nothing showing in, nor out, of incipient.

- iii. Sam Quinney notes that it is relatively dry in Fairfield County. Hay fields and pastures are very dry at soil level.
- iv. Hope (SCDNR) states that the indicators support incipient.
- v. Motion: Not enough members present to vote, but group supports incipient.

c. Southern DMA

- i. Jason T. notes that there has been a little precipitation, but not enough to change from incipient.
- ii. Eric O. agrees that there has not been rain for improvement and no need to change. Russell C. agrees to stay in incipient status.
- iii. Landrum W. states that the winter planting needs substantial rain to begin. It's going to impact agriculture if we don't get the rain. The lack of moisture is having an impact on planting and grazing with a big impact on farmers.
- iv. Sam Quinney notes that the only crops that benefit from lack of rain would be watermelons or peppers. Moisture needed to establish that first.
- v. Motion: All counties remain in incipient status.
 - 1. Jason Thompson, 1st
 - 2. Eric Odom, 2nd
- vi. Motion passes unanimously.

d. West DMA

- i. Scott W. – There has not been enough change in past two weeks to change anything from last call and to keep things as is.
- ii. Reg W. notes that things are dry for planting winter and logging conditions. He suggests that we move Edgefield County to incipient. Scott W. agrees to include Edgefield with others to the south.
- iii. Hope (SCDNR) questions those in the Lowcountry about conditions there and thoughts.
- iv. Brian C. states that he'd be comfortable moving Beaufort back to normal due to amount of rainfall the county has received these past few weeks.
- v. Yvonne K. agrees, but to keep Jasper County, and others in southern portion, in incipient due to lack of rain.

- vi. Lynn M. notes that if we haven't received rain in the next few weeks, we may need to move into moderate in Barnwell County.
- vii. Motion: Move Beaufort County to normal declaration and Edgefield County moves to incipient. All others in the West DMA remain in current status.
 - 1. Yvonne Kling, 1st
 - 2. Scott Willett, 2nd
- viii. Motion passes unanimously.

IV. Closing Remarks

- a. Hope (SCDNR) goes through specialty DRC license plates and how the numbers work. Ken will be #1 and then the rest is order of service. If members are interested, reach out to the drought email and Jennifer will work with them.
- b. Hope (SCDNR) initiates the discussion about next meeting date. Proposes the next meeting will be held on October 28th.
- c. Ken (SCDNR) puts forth a motion to adjourn:
 - i. Jason Thompson, 1st
 - ii. Brad Powers, 2nd
- d. Meeting is adjourned at 11:13 a.m. on October 7, 2025.

Committee Members	Group	Attendance 10/07/2025
West DMA		
Reg Williams	Agriculture	X
Cheryl Daniels	Commission of Public Works	X
Mark Warner	Counties	
	Domestic User	VACANT
David Evans	Industry	X
Lynn McEwen	Municipalities	X
Preston Pierce	Power Generation Facilities	
J. Scott Willett	Private Water Supplier	X
Chris Rasco	Public Service District	
Rick Green	Regional Council of Gov.	X
Yvonne Kling	Soil and Water Conservation Dist.	X

Brian Chemsak	Special Purpose District	X
John Irwin	Agriculture	X
Ken Tuck	Commission of Public Works	
Peggy Swearingen	Counties	
Christy Jones	Domestic User	X
Ed Holder	Industry	X
James G. Bagley	Municipalities	
Alan Stuart	Power Generation Facilities	
Brad C. Powers	Private Water Supplier	X
	Public Service District	VACANT
Gregory Sprouse	Regional Council of Gov.	
John T. Rivers	Soil and Water Conservation Dist.	
Fred Castles	Special Purpose District	
Northeast DMA		
Caleb Miller	Agriculture	
	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
Landrum Weathers	Agriculture	X
Jason Thompson	Commission of Public Works	X
	Counties	VACANT
Chris Wallace	Domestic User	
	Industry	VACANT

Eric Odom	Municipalities	X
Matt McCants	Power Generation Facilities	X
	Private Water Supplier	VACANT
Russell Cornette	Public Service District	X
Ronald E. Mitchum	Regional Council of Gov.	
Marion L. Rizer	Soil and Water Conservation Dist.	
	Special Purpose District	VACANT
State Agency Members		
Ken Rentiers	SCDNR, LWC Division	X
Jordan Van Delden	SC Emergency Management Divis.	X
Joe Koon	SC Dept. of Environ. Services	X
Stephen Polk (sub)	SC Forestry Commission	X
Sam Quinney	SC Department of Agriculture	X
Hope Mizzell	SCDNR, LWC Division	X
Melissa Griffin	SCDNR, LWC Division	X
Jennifer Simmons	SCDNR, LWC Division	X
Frank Alsheimer	NWS CAE	X
Alexis Modzelesky	SC Dept. of Environ. Services	X
Alex Floyd	SCDES	X
Scott Harder	SCDES	X
Kevin Ryan	SCDNR	X
Leigh Monre	SCDES	X
Peter Balzani	SCDES	X