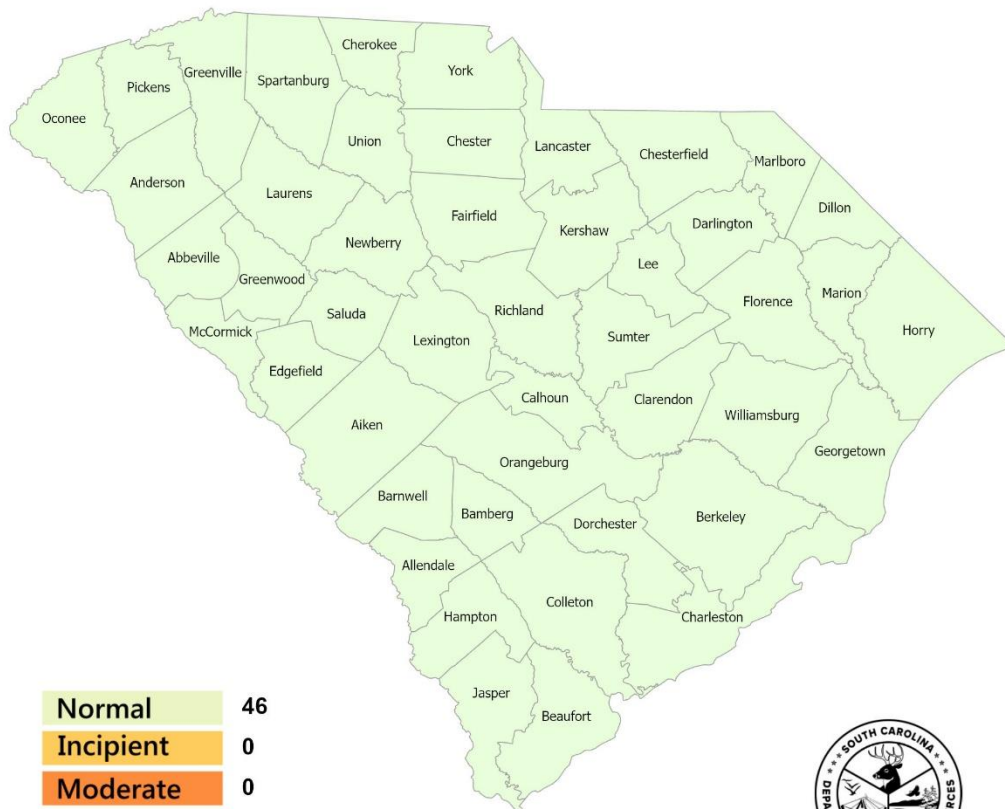


All of South Carolina declared drought free

Drought Status: 01-11-2024



| | |
|-----------|----|
| Normal | 46 |
| Incipient | 0 |
| Moderate | 0 |
| Severe | 0 |
| Extreme | 0 |

Number of counties in each category.



SC Department of Natural Resources
State Climate Office

Jan. 11, 2024

The S.C. Drought Response Committee declared Thursday that the entire state is now drought free.

Due to significant rainfall since mid-December, the committee removed the incipient drought status of 16 counties and the moderate drought status of seven counties.

The committee tries to avoid changing the drought status by two levels unless there is substantial support across all drought indicators, which is the case currently, said S.C. State Climatologist Hope Mizzell said. The time of year was also a factor, since water use and evaporation are low during the winter months. Most stations across the state reported 7 to 14 inches of rain since Dec. 1, with a few reporting 15 to 20 inches.

Elliot Wickham, water resources climatologist with the State Climatology Office, said that the Upstate had higher precipitation accumulation during the last 40 days than it did during the 91-day period of Sept. 1-Nov. 30, 2023, the period of climatological fall.

During that time, precipitation totals in the Upstate ranged from 4 to 6 inches. Contrastingly, precipitation totals in the Upstate since Dec. 1 have ranged from 8 to 14 inches, roughly twice the amount of precipitation in about half the amount of time.

The committee considered several factors when downgrading counties that were previously designated in late November as either incipient” or moderate drought, said committee member Ken Tuck, director of drinking water services with Spartanburg Water.

“Among those factors, precipitation, crop moisture index, streamflow, lake and reservoir levels, forest fire risk, and short and long-term forecast models provided overwhelming support of a return to normal conditions throughout the state,” Tuck said. “These decisions were not without appropriate discussion, particularly around agriculture and groundwater where full recovery from previous drought conditions may take a little more time. The Drought Response Committee continues to monitor a wide variety of drought indicators and seek observations from a diverse group of stakeholders to make well-informed decisions.”

Priyanka More, S.C. Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) hydrologist, provided an update of the hydrologic conditions showing improved lake levels and streamflow conditions. Some streams across the state went from much below normal flows in late November to high flows by Jan. 10. The table below shows the lake level improvement since Nov. 29.

Although the streamflows and lake levels have improved in the past few weeks, a few groundwater wells continued to remain below normal conditions. In general, groundwater is a slow indicator and would have a lagged response to the recent rain. Also, it will take bit longer for some of the wells to recover from the dryness experienced during early fall months.

The S.C. Drought Response Committee will continue to monitor conditions and meet as needed.

| Lake Level Improvement | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| | Nov. 29, 2023 | Jan. 10, 2024 |
| Savannah River Basin | | |
| Jocassee | -8.80 ft | -3.00 ft |
| Keowee | -2.00 ft | -1.60 ft |
| Hartwell | -4.86 ft | +0.19 ft |
| Thurmond | -4.56 ft | -2.30 ft |
| Catawba Wateree Basin | | |
| Wylie | -1.40 ft | +2.30 |
| Wateree | +0.10 ft | +6.00 |
| Santee River Basin | | |
| Blalock | +0.11 ft | +2.13 |
| Greenwood | -0.14 ft | +2.15 |
| Murray | -2.19 ft | +0.59 |
| Marion | -0.42 ft | +3.12 |

Media Contacts:

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Darryl Jones, S.C. Forestry Commission, djones@forestry.state.sc.us

Sam Quinney, S.C. Department of Agriculture, squinney@scda.sc.gov

| Committee Members | Group | Attendance 1/11/2024 |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| West DMA | | |
| Reg Williams | Agriculture | |
| Cheryl Daniels | Commission of Public Works | X |
| Mark Warner | Counties | X |
| David Evans | Industry | X |
| Preston Pierce | Power Generation Facilities | X |
| J. Scott Willett | Private Water Supplier | X |
| Chris Rasco | Public Service District | X |
| Rick Green | Regional Council of Gov. | X |
| 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 | |
| Christy Jones | Domestic User | X |
| Ed Holder | Industry | X |
| James G. Bagley | Municipalities | X |
| Alan Stuart | Power Generation Facilities | X |
| Brad C. Powers | Private Water Supplier | X |
| Gregory Sprouse | Regional Council of Gov. | X |
| John T. Rivers | Soil and Water Conservation Dist. | |
| Fred Castles | Special Purpose District | X |
| Northeast DMA | | |
| Caleb Miller | Agriculture | |

| | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| Karolan Ohanesian | Domestic User | |
| Athena Strickland | Industry | X |
| Clint Elliott | Municipality | X |
| Charles Allen | Power Generation Facilities | X |
| Robert L. Brock | Private Water Supplier | X |
| Elbert Warren | Public Service District | X |
| Lindsay Privette | Regional Council of Gov. | |
| Joe Ghent | Soil and Water Conservation Dist. | |
| Southern DMA | | |
| James Traywick | Agriculture | |
| Jason Thompson | Commission of Public Works | X |
| Eric Odom | Municipalities | X |
| Matt McCants | Power Generation Facilities | X |
| Ronald E. Mitchum | Regional Council of Gov. | |
| Marion L. Rizer | Soil and Water Conservation Dist. | |
| State Agency Members | | |
| Hope Mizzell | SCDNR, LWC Division | X |
| Dave Thachik | SC Emergency Management Divis. | X |
| Joe Koon | SCDHEC | X |
| Dough Mills | SC Forestry Commission | X |
| Sam Quinney | SC Department of Agriculture | |
| Appointment Pending Members | | |
| Christopher Sandifer | Southern DMA – Domestic User | |
| Eric Carrier | West DMA – Domestic User | X |
| Alan Watkins | Northeast DMA – County | |

| | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|----------|
| Larry Harper | Southern DMA – County | |
| Other Participants | | |
| Elliot Wickham | SCDNR | X |
| Scott Harder | SCDNR | X |
| Priyanka More | SCDNR | X |
| Stephen Fastenau | SCDNR | X |
| Kayla Stroman | FSA | X |
| Christel Youmans | FSA | X |
| Glenn Thomas | FSA | X |