

Minutes for April 15, 2009
Drought Response Committee Meeting
Columbia, SC
SC Farmers Market

Ken Rentiers, SC Department of Natural Resources, Deputy Director

Deputy Director Ken Rentiers begins the meeting by welcoming everyone and having him or her introduce himself or herself.

Dr. Hope Mizzell, SC Department of Natural Resources, State Climatologist

Hope introduces Tim Kreger, from the SC Golf Association, who is working with NC State University and Clemson University to develop a BMP (Best Management Practices) program for golf courses in SC. Tim introduces Dr. Dara Park from Clemson University. Dr. Park presents to the committee a recently developed, on-line tool designed to help golf course superintendents manage their courses while becoming stewards of the environments. Most golf course superintendents understand the need to reduce water use and develop a drought management plan. The mission statement for this program is playability of the course while still being stewards to the environment. Another goal is to reduce the amount of irrigation water used by implementing a BMP as appropriate to the site. Golf courses superintendents log-in to the website and are asked a series of questions the help assess the gold course's current BMP.

Facility and Management general information is gathered to produce a "scorecard". The scorecard is created which includes characteristics of the site, water use and current BMP. From this information, a two-page technical report is generating that includes a score for comparison. Hopefully this tool will increase amount of reporting to DHEC and reduce pressure on freshwater resources.

Dr. Hope Mizzell, SC Department of Natural Resources, State Climatologist

Rainfall totals

7-day rainfall total was 200-300% of normal in the most needed area, the Savannah River Basin.

30-day rainfall total was 110-150% for most of the state.

60-day rainfall total was 90-100% of normal. These totals show up in the indicators.

Indicators:

Palmer Drought Index - All off the state is at no drought except a small amount of upstate.

Crop Moisture Index – No drought

US Drought Monitor – Upstate is moderate. Central SC, Midlands and Pee Dee are incipient.

Dr. Masaaki Kiuchi, SC Department of Natural Resources, Hydrology Section

All 17 streamflow gauges are at no drought.

Lake levels except for Savannah lakes are at normal or above normal.

The status of groundwater in the upstate varies from "being in recharge" phase to "continuing to decline" phase depending on the thickness of weathered bedrock (saprolite). If it rains too hard, it just runs off the bedrock and does not soak in to the ground which leads to recharge. This runoff effect helps surface water but does not help the groundwater as much. Groundwater in the coastal plain continues to recharge especially since the beginning of this year.

USGS data - North Fork Edisto at Orangeburg – 14 day – normal

Lynches at Effingham – same

Steven Creek in the Savannah River basin is in even better condition but its levels tend to vary rapidly.

Rocky Creek– above normal, its levels tend to vary rapidly.

Lake Marion – normal. Moultrie – Normal

Groundwater – Oconee 243 is a “rock well” that responded well to the precipitation, above where it was year ago but still at a low level.

Hampton has also had some recharge but it is still low because it is affected by pumping. This well never came back from the pre-drought levels the drought that ended in 2002.

Dr. Hope Mizzell, SC Department of Natural Resources, State Climatologist

Forecast

5-day forecast from the Hydrologic Prediction Center

1.4 inches of precipitation to the savannah, other areas will get .25 inches.

8-14 day includes below normal temps and precipitation.

The National Weather Service representative concurred with below normal precipitation and temps. April will have “equal chances” due to the neutral la Nina for the 90 day forecast.

IRI shows equal change for long-term summer forecasts. The Bermuda high makes it very difficult to forecast.

David Tompkins – SC Department of Agriculture

Soil conditions are good so the farmers are hoping for adequate and timely precipitation.

Darryl Jones – SC Forestry Commission

February was above normal for wildfires, March was below normal for wildfires and April has been 20% below normal.

David Baize – SC Department of Health and Environmental Control

No news from water suppliers.

Francis Tubolino – Emergency Management Division

Nothing to report.

Guest reports –

Stan Simpson – US Army Corps of Engineers

Stan shows a 2-year comparison of Hartwell and Thurmond, both have responded well to the rain.

Hartwell – still at 3600 cfs

Thurmond – also responded well to the precipitation.

Russell – holding a flat pool

The Corps is trying to look at MODOC and Stevens to assure that there is not a backwater effect and avoid a flood stage. They are trying to keep the pools even but it is difficult to keep them level.

System Conservation Storage - The Corps had some concerns and was looking at the drought plan but things are looking more positive.

Not releasing out of Hartwell at this point.

Across the board, Industry, EPD and DNR's, Habitat (NOAA) all determine how much water is being released from the lakes.

George Gallagher, Duke Energy– Catawba and Savannah lakes

Levels are below average system wide for April rainfall totals.

The forecast contract service that Duke uses, predicts that May will be drier than normal but April is equal chances. INSO is going neutral. US Drought indicates a positive change.

Streamflow 7 day duration hydrograph shows improvement. Catawba Wateree LIP is used to manage the river in case of drought. Last week, after looking at the running 6-month total Duke almost had to move to Stage I. Wateree had bumped up just barely to 65%, which is where Duke would implement a Stage one. More rain is needed to prevent this happening in the near future. *Groundwater* – Oconee had been in a pattern of recharge/falling/recharge and thankfully it has come back since last year.

Jocasee was down but Duke has been able to fill it. The Corp has more water in storage, which allows Duke to accumulate more water. Storage at Keowee Toxaway is about half way to full. Operations summary – LIP governs in the Catawba Wateree and Broad. Above average rainfall is needed for Keowee Toxaway. Lake James and Norman support Wyllie and Wateree.

Duke recommendations – Catawba Wateree incipient based on LIP

Broad – incipient based on streamflow

Keowee Toxaway – moderate based on streamflow and lake levels.

Howard Hill – NASS – Crop Report now being issued as of this week. Please check it out.

Review and Recommendations – Hope reviews the indicators and shows DNR's recommendations. Upstate could go to moderate which would mean it would be downgraded by two levels of drought. All moderate counties could go to incipient and incipient counties could go to no drought.

Dennis Chastain mentions that although the committee is usually very hesitant to downgrade any county by two drought levels, due to the fewer meetings due to budget cuts and the positive indicators, this would be a good situation to implemented jumping a drought level.

Next meeting?? – It should be determined by the indicators, at least in the next few months. The SCO will be sure to contact everyone in a timely manner.

Motions:

State Drought Response Committee Members -David Tompkins, Hope Mizzell, Steve de Kozlowski, David Baize, Ken Rentiers, Darryl Jones, Francis Tubolino

- North East Drought Management Area – Spokesperson Michael E. Hancock
Lancaster and Kershaw downgraded to incipient. Chesterfield, Darlington, Florence, Lee, Marlboro, Dillon, Marion and Horry to be downgraded to no drought.

Central Drought Management Area – Spokesperson Mike Caston

- Cherokee, Greenwood, Greenville, Laurens, Spartanburg and Union downgraded to moderate. Chester, Fairfield, Newberry, Saluda and York downgraded to incipient. Calhoun, Clarendon, Georgetown, Lexington, Richland, Sumter and Williamsburg downgraded to no drought.

Southern – Spokesperson Andy Fairy

Bamberg, Berkeley, Charleston, Colleton, Dorchester and Orangeburg downgraded to no drought.

- West – Spokesperson Dennis Chastain
Abbeville, Anderson, Oconee and Pickens downgraded to Moderate. Edgefield, McCormick downgraded to incipient and Aiken, Allendale, Barnwell, Beaufort, Hampton and Jasper downgraded to no drought.

Adopted this 15th day of April 2009, in Columbia, South Carolina.

Public Notice:

The South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, pursuant to Section 49-23-10, et seq., Code of Laws of South Carolina, 1976, and Regulation 121-11.9B(3), has downgraded the following counties: Abbeville, Anderson, Cherokee, Greenwood, Greenville, Laurens, Oconee, Pickens, Spartanburg and Union to moderate. Chester, Edgefield, Fairfield, Kershaw, Lancaster, McCormick, Newberry, Saluda and York to incipient. All 27 remaining counties are not in drought. For further information, please contact the SCDNR State Climatology Office, Drought Information Center, (803) 734-9553.

Attendees:

John Baker – International Paper
Bobby Brock – Drought Response Committee
Dara Park – Clemson University
John Westcott – Drought Response Committee
Francis Tubolino – SCEMD
Jennifer Barrington – ARJWS
Scott Motsinger – City of Rock Hill
Andy Fairey – Drought Response Committee
Doug Young – Chickasaw Point POA
Warren Harris – Drought Response Committee
Steve de Kozlowski – SCDNR
David Baize – SCDHEC
Elbert Warren - Drought Response Committee
Gregory Lamberty – National Weather Service
Bruce Cherry - National Weather Service
Mike Hancock – Drought Response Committee
George Gallaher – Duke Power
Tim Kreger – Carolinas GCSA

Theron DeWitt – Drought Response Committee
Buddy Rivers - Drought Response Committee
Charles Sexton – BJWSA
Darryl Jones – SC Forestry Commission
Howard Hill – USDA/NASS
Carol Roberts – SCDHEC
David Logeman – Governor’s Office
Dennis Chastain - Drought Response Committee
Joey Holleman – The State
Brenda Nettles - Drought Response Committee
Nick Needham – WSPA-TV
Sara Harris – WACH-TV
Russell Ott – SC Farm Bureau
Pickens Williams Drought Response Committee
Mitch Turner – SJWD
Mike Caston - Drought Response Committee
Vernon Osteen - Drought Response Committee