

# South Carolina Drought Briefing – May 1, 2026



## South Carolina Drought Response Committee

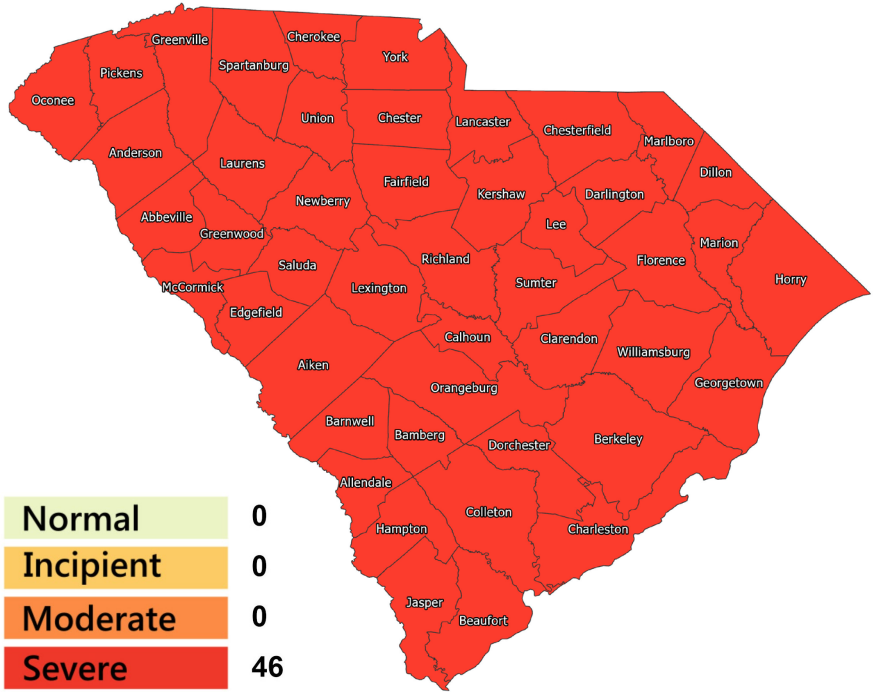
The South Carolina Drought Response Committee (DRC) met on **April 30, 2026**, to assess statewide drought conditions. The DRC voted to upgrade all counties from moderate to severe drought status.

**Next Drought Response Committee Meeting Thursday, May 21, 2026, at 9 A.M**

To join by computer: [teams.microsoft.com](https://teams.microsoft.com)  
Meeting ID: 277 526 275 467 023,  
Passcode: q7hZ9n4V

Or join by phone: +1 469-702-0883,  
Phone Conference ID: 656 299 27#

For additional information, please contact [drought@dnr.sc.gov](mailto:drought@dnr.sc.gov) or visit [scdrought.com](http://scdrought.com).



Normal	0
Incipient	0
Moderate	0
Severe	46
Extreme	0

Number of counties in each category.

## U.S Drought Monitor Update for South Carolina

### Assessment Period Ending April 28, 2026

This week's USDM Author, **Brad Rippey (United States Department of Agriculture)**, with input from local, state, and federal partners based in South Carolina.

#### Statewide Coverage By Category

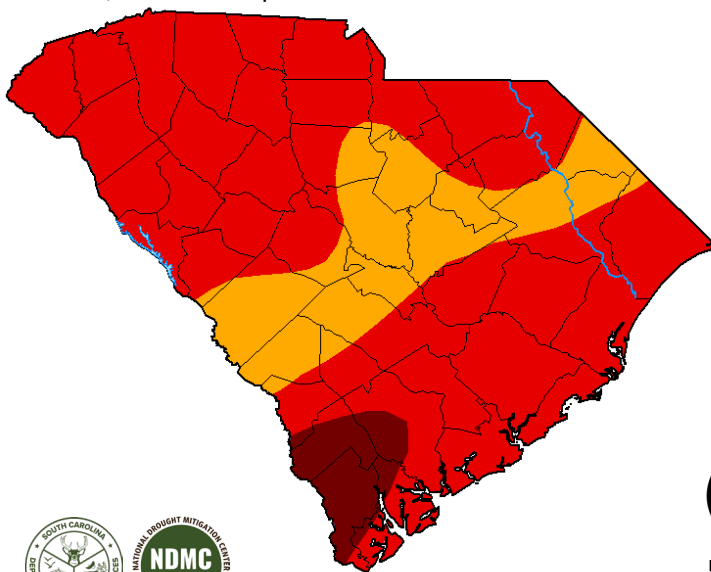
Category	Categorical Coverage This Week	Change Since Last Week
<b>D0: Abnormally Dry</b>	0.00%	0.00%
<b>D1: Moderate Drought</b>	0.00%	-0.68%
<b>D2: Severe Drought</b>	20.98%	-38.70%
<b>D3: Extreme Drought</b>	73.90%	+34.27%
<b>D4: Exceptional Drought</b>	5.12%	+5.12%

\*Plus sign on "Change Since Last Week" indicates the expansion of the category area, and the minus sign indicates the reduction of the category area.



Precipitation      Soil Moisture      Streamflows      Reservoir Levels      Wildfire Risk

Condition Change:



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## Drought Executive Summary

### Water Resources

- Streamflows are at record low flows for this time of year.
- Groundwater is well below normal to low across the State.
- Reservoirs are declining, especially in the Savannah River Basin.
- The State did not receive winter rainfall that is critical for recharging our surface and groundwater.
- Reports of a few private wells going dry
- Less than 10 water systems are requesting voluntary conservation.

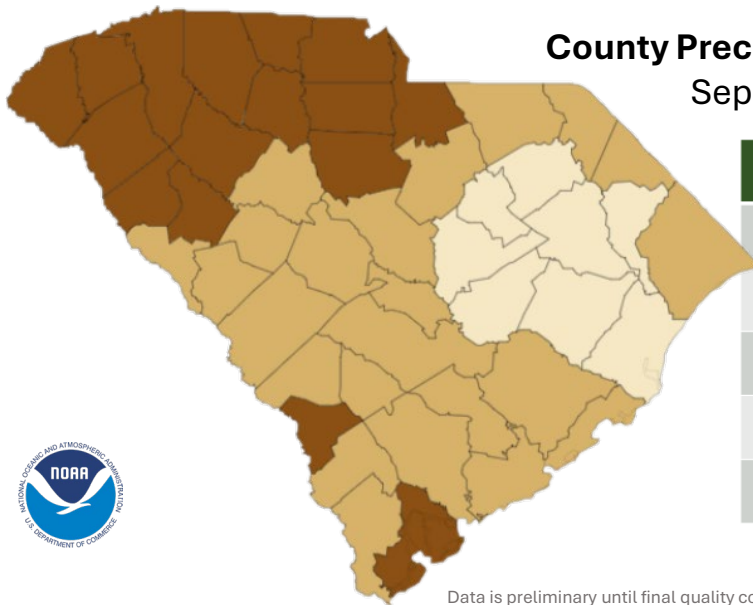
### Agriculture

- Worst planting conditions in 50 years. Many farmers are unable to plant key crops. Late planting is possible for some, but rain is urgently needed for germination.
- Surface water for irrigation is nearly depleted.
- Spring hay yields are poor so far, and Livestock producers are already concerned about hay supplies.
- Low spring hay yields can have a compounding effect on their cattle through next spring.
- Winter grains like wheat and oats will yield little.

Rainfall Needed for Recovery: While recent and upcoming rain may provide some relief, ending the drought will require nearly double the normal weekly rainfall for several months.

### County Precipitation Rank (131 years)

September 2025 – March 2026



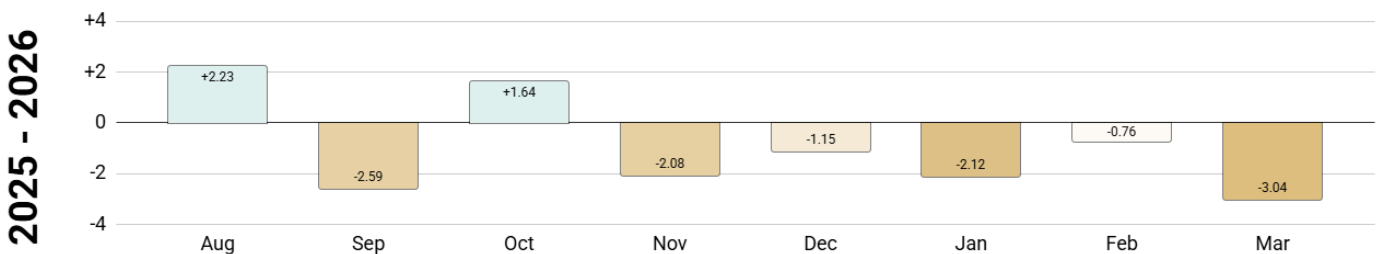
Period	Total Precipitation	Departure
Sep 2025 – Mar 2026	15.36"	-10.13"
Sep 1984 – Mar 1985	16.21"	-9.28"
Sep 1937 – Mar 1938	16.70"	-8.79"
Sep 1897 – Mar 1898	16.78"	-8.71"
Sep 2001 – Mar 2002	16.88"	-8.61"

Average: 25.49"

Data is preliminary until final quality control and review.

Lowest ◀ Much Below Below Average Near Average Above Average Much Above ▶ Highest

### Statewide Monthly Precipitation Departures from 1900 -2000 Average



Data from the [National Centers for Environmental Information](https://www.noaa.gov/)

2025 - 2026

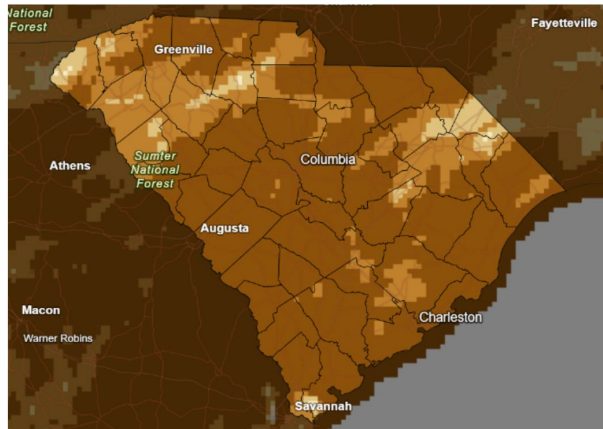


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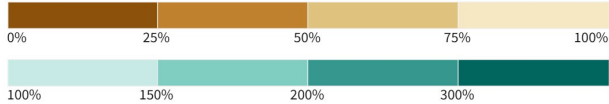


## Rainfall and Temperature Statistics

### 30-Day Percent of Normal Precipitation



Precipitation Shown as a Percentage of Normal Conditions



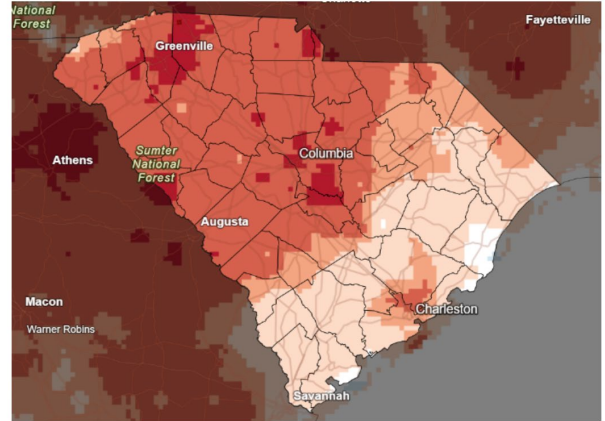
Source(s): UC Merced  
Data Valid: 04/26/26

Drought.gov

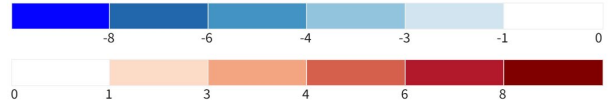
### Key Points

- Rainfall totals since April 24 have ranged between 2.00 inches in the Upstate to less than 0.25 inches elsewhere across the state.
- Despite recent rain, April 2026 could be one of the driest Aprils on record (since 2026).

### 7-Day Departure from Normal Maximum Temperature (°F)



Departure from Normal Max Temperature (°F)



Source(s): UC Merced  
Data Valid: 04/26/26

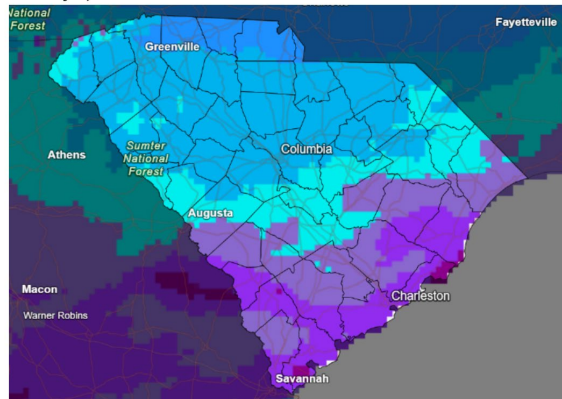
Drought.gov

### Key Points

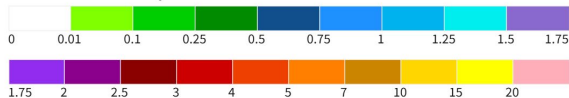
- Maximum temperatures were in the upper 80s to lower 90s.
- High temperatures were five to ten degrees above normal, with warmer-than-normal temperatures in the Midlands and Upstate.

## 7-Day Rainfall Forecast

### 7-Day Quantitative Precipitation Forecast for April 30–May 7, 2026



Predicted Inches of Precipitation



Source(s): National Weather Service Weather Prediction Center  
Last Updated: 04/30/26

Drought.gov

## Rainfall Forecast Confidence

	Potential	Amount	Coverage
Very High			
High	✓		✓
Medium		✓	
Low			
Very Low			

Even if the current forecast verifies, rainfall totals will not be enough to end the current drought conditions.

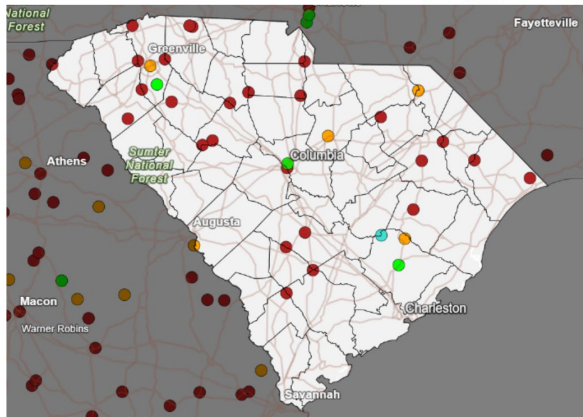
This information is based on forecast and outlook guidance from the National Weather Service. For more information, visit: [weather.gov](https://www.weather.gov)

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## Recent Streamflow and Soil Moisture Conditions

1-Day Average Streamflow Conditions



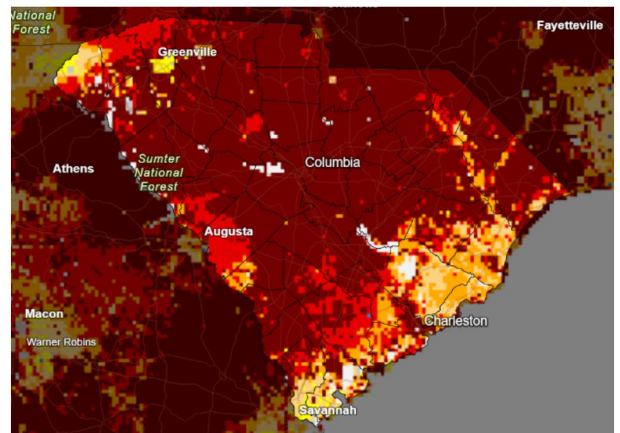
Streamflow Conditions



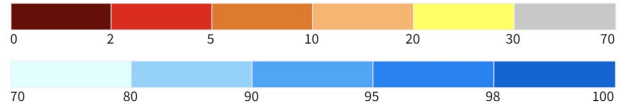
Source(s): U.S. Geological Survey  
Data Valid: 04/29/26

[Drought.gov](https://drought.gov)

NASA SPoRT-LIS 0–100 cm Soil Moisture Percentile



0–100 cm Soil Moisture Percentile



Source(s): NASA  
Data Valid: 04/30/26

[Drought.gov](https://drought.gov)

## Recent Drought Impact Reports/Photos

### USDA Farm Service Agency Reports

Cherokee, Greenville, Pickens, and Spartanburg Counties: We did receive rainfall in some areas of the counties. Grass continues to deteriorate with the drought conditions. Corn planting has stopped until rain is received. Soybean planting has slowed as well. Winter wheat is in poor condition as some producers continue to cut acreage for hay as the wheat is drying out and the heads of formed, but here is no dough in much of the head. Hay is going to be very short unless rain begins to fall soon. Livestock producers continue to feed hay due to the lack of grazing.

### Condition Monitoring Photos



Irrigated vs Non-irrigated crop,  
Saluda County, April 23, 2026



Exposed intake pipe  
Anderson County, April 27, 2026