

Drought Response Committee Conference Call

Date: November 6th, 2024

Time: 10:00 a.m.

A Drought Response Committee Conference Call was conducted at 10:00 a.m., November 6, 2024. Notice of the date, time and call-in information was posted and provided on the scdrought.com website. Chairman Ken Rentiers, Deputy Director of SC Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) - Land, Water and Conservation Division presided at the meeting.

I. Introduction

- a. Ken Rentiers (SCDNR) opens the meeting. He announces that the meeting is being recorded.
- b. Ken (SCDNR) reads the Freedom of Information Statement.
- c. Hope (SCDNR) introduced Jordan Baker (SCNDR) for minutes and Melissa Griffin (SCNDR), who filled in for Elliot's normal duties.
 - i. Hope also introduced three new committee members, Lynn McEwen in the West DMA, Nathan Ward in the Northeast DMA, and Russell Cornette in the Southern DMA.
 - ii. Each new member greeted the committee.
- d. Hope (SCDNR) does a roll call and checks each DMA for a quorum.
 - i. If there is not a quorum, a vote would not be able to be cast.
 - ii. Every DMA has a quorum, but West DMA
 - iii. Later in the meeting, a member of the West DMA attended the meeting, and a quorum was met.
- e. Ken (SCDNR) states that we have a quorum.
- f. Motion to approve minutes**
 - i. Ken (SCDNR) offers a motion to approve the minutes from the last meeting.
 1. Darryl Jones, SC Forestry Commission, 1st
 2. Yvonne Kling, West DMA, Soil and Water Conservation District, 2nd
 - ii. Minutes from October 3rd, 2024, meeting are approved.
- g. Hope (SCNDR) shared a brief update and reminder about the license tags for DMA.
- h. Hope (SCDNR) introduces the agenda for today.
- i. Hope (SCDNR) shares the scdrought.com website.

II. PowerPoint Presentation

- a. Hope (SCDNR) shares the drought status as of the last meeting.
 - i. Status was labeled as normal with no drought (10/3).
- b. Hope (SCDNR) Discusses:

- i. The 60-day Percent of Normal (9/7-11/5)
 - 1. She notes that it includes rainfall from Hurricane Helene and that October was a dry month.
- ii. The 30-day Percent of Normal (10/7-11/5)
 - 1. She notes that October is statistically the driest month, and Columbia is in the running of record-breaking for no rain.
- iii. The 30-day Precipitation Clemson Tempest Station Data (10/3-11/4)
 - 1. She notes minimal rainfall, but rain is in the forecast. .
- iv. The 30-day SPI graph. (10/2-11/5)
 - 1. She notes that this map shows drought in the state.
- v. The CoCoRaHS data for the West DMA from the last meeting (10/3) until now
 - 1. She notes that there has not been much rain.
- vi. The CoCoRaHS data for the Central DMA from the last meeting (10/3) until now
 - 1. She notes that there has not been much rain.
- vii. The CoCoRaHS data for the Southern DMA from the last meeting (10/3) until now
 - 1. She notes that there has not been much rain.
- viii. The CoCoRaHS data for the Northeast DMA from the last meeting (10/3) until now
 - 1. She notes that there has not been much rain.
- c. Hope (SCDNR) mentions that they only have had rain in last couple of days.
- d. Hope (SCDNR) discusses the U.S. Drought Monitor, valid as of 11/6
 - i. Showing progress from May 2024 to October 2024
- e. Hope (SCNDR) Current Crop Moisture Index (CMI) (10/27-11/2)
 - i. She notes that they have had some issues with uploading their data, so this map is not the best reference.
- f. Hope (SCDNR) discusses the Current Palmer Drought Severity Index (PDSI).
 - i. The data is still slightly off and showing dryness.
- g. Alexis Modzelesky, SC Department of Environmental Services (SCDES), discusses the 14-day average Streamflow graph.
 - i. The map shows normal levels due to Hurricane Helene.
- h. Alexis Modzelesky (SCDES) discusses the Regulatory Standards Streamflow graph.
 - i. At this moment, it shows no drought levels.
- i. Alexis Modzelesky (SCDES) discusses the Streamflow table.
 - i. Giving more insight on the streamflow, the levels still appear to be normal.
- j. Alexis Modzelesky (SCDES) discusses the streamflow in each DMA.
 - i. The Northeast DMA.

- 1. Showing some potential for drought
- ii. The West DMA.
 - 1. Showing some potential for drought.
- iii. The Central DMA.
 - 1. Showing some potential for drought
- iv. The Southern DMA
 - 1. Showing some potential for drought
- k. Alexis Modzelesky (SCDES) discusses the Lake and Reservoir Levels across the state as of November 5th
 - i. The map shows the different levels throughout the state; parts of the upstate are low.
- l. Alexis Modzelesky (SCDES) discusses groundwater levels across the state.
 - i. Across the state, levels are mostly normal.
- m. Alexis Modzelesky (SCDES) discusses the groundwater levels in each DMA
 - i. Northeast DMA:
 - 1. Levels are normal.
 - ii. Central DMA:
 - 1. Levels are normal.
 - iii. West DMA:
 - 1. Levels are normal.
 - iv. Southern DMA:
 - 1. Levels are normal, but in Charleston, levels are low.

III. State Agency Reports

- a. Darryl Jones, SC Forestry Commission (SCFC), discusses the KBDI Station Values
 - i. The levels for Andrew Pickens Station are low due to it being damaged by Hurricane Helene.
 - ii. Some stations show incipient and moderate drought levels.
 - iii. Orangeburg, Congaree, Witherbee, Wambaw, Ace Basin, and Santee NWR are in severe drought levels.
 - iv. There have been several wildfires, more than usual for the month of October.
 - v. They are hopeful that the coming rain will bring some relief.

IV. Short- and Long- Term Forecasts

- a. Frank (SCDNR) provides a quick update on our forecast:
 - i. The Weather Prediction Center shows a good amount of rain is on the radar and expected to be heavy for the next few days.
 - ii. After the rainfall in the next few days, it is predicted that temperatures will be much cooler due to a cold front.

- iii. Hurricane Rafael will not be a threat to our state. There is another storm in the Atlantic, but no real update on it yet.
- iv. In Weeks 3-4 Precipitation Outlook, rainfall will be below normal.
- b. Hope (SCDNR) discusses:
 - i. The 7-day precipitation forecast.
 - 1. Showing a prediction of higher levels due to rain coming.
 - ii. The 6–10-day temperature outlook.
 - 1. Above normal temperatures and dry.
 - iii. The CPC 3-month outlook.
 - 1. Normal temperatures and below normal precipitation.
 - iv. The Drought Outlook provided by NOAA.
 - 1. Drought development likely.

V. **Open Discussion and Vote**

- a. Hope (SCDNR) opens the floor for an open discussion.
 - i. Hope asked for updates from SCEMD and SCDES
 - 1. Dave (SCEMD) mentioned that the NWS is forecasting up to 8 inches of rain in some areas.
 - 2. Joe (SCDES) has no issues with the water supply currently.
 - ii. Hope asked other partners if they had any updates.
 - 1. Michael (SC Farm Bureau) rain is needed, it has been very dry since the Hurricane.
 - 2. Katherine (SCDA) crops are hurting due to how dry October has been; they have also had a few equipment fires and are seeing potential hay supply shortages due to farmers having to use their supplies earlier than needed.
 - 3. Kayla (FSA) did receive some rain reports from districts, but they haven't had a lot of rain since Hurricane Helene. Farmers are hurting due to lack of rainfall, and crops are also struggling. They are also struggling to plant crops as well.
- b. Hope (SCDNR) discusses the potential to move into incipient drought and asks areas to discuss:
 - i. West DMA:
 - 1. Scott (Private Water Supplier) mentions that his opinion hasn't changed too much due to the rain coming, it would greatly benefit the area since the area has been dry since Hurricane Helene. Not sure the Committee should upgrade to incipient, but is open to further discussion.
 - 2. Brian (Special Purpose District) agrees with Scott.
 - 3. Yvonne (Soil and Water Conservation District) does agree with them that the rain that is coming will help the area but would like

to move into incipient since Aiken specifically has been greatly affected by the lack of rain.

4. Lynn (Municipalities) agrees with Yvonne; the farmers in their area are experiencing the same struggle.
5. Since a few people are leaning in opposite directions, Hope ask if they should meet before December after the rain.
6. Cheryl (Commission of Public Works) believes voting may be too soon.
7. David (Industry) supports moving into incipient.
8. Rick (Regional Council of Gov.) agrees that levels are low and should move into incipient.
9. Hope to ask for others' input and if Brian and Scott agree with the rest of the West DMA's opinion.
10. Scott's concern is will the going in and out of drought cause more harm than good. Water demand and use are down this time of year so what will we gain with the declaration?
11. Hope understands his concerns; water supply needs should be considered.
12. Brian agrees that if we are focusing on the current status, then we should move into incipient.
13. Motion:
 - a. Ken (SCDNR): everyone makes great arguments. Officially calls for a motion
 - b. Motion: Move all West DMA counties into incipient drought status.
 - c. Yvonne, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, 1st.
 - d. Cheryl, Commission of Public Works, 2nd.
 - e. Members of the West DMA unanimously agreed on the motion.

ii. Central DMA

1. John (Agriculture) believes the Central DMA should move into incipient status.
2. Peggy (Counties) agrees the area is very dry due to the lack of rain.
3. Motion:
 - a. Officially called by Ken (SCDNR)
 - b. Motion: Move all Central DMA counties into incipient drought status.
 - c. John, Agriculture, 1st
 - d. Peggy, Counties, 2nd

- e. Members of the Central DMA unanimously agreed on the motion.

iii. Southern DMA

1. Jason (Commission of Public Works), while they have had some rain, believes that they should move into incipient status.
2. Landrum (Agriculture) agrees with Jason; some areas did not receive as much rain from Helene and there has been very little rain since Helene.
3. Eric (Municipalities) agrees with both Jason and Landrum.
4. Motion:
 - a. Officially called by Ken (SCDNR)
 - b. Motion: Move all Southern DMA counties into incipient drought status.
 - c. Jason, Commission of Public Works, 1st
 - d. Eric, Municipalities, 2nd
 - e. Members of the Southern DMA unanimously agreed on the motion.

iv. Northeastern DMA

1. Clint (Municipalities) has seen small amounts of rain but not as much as they need and believe they should go into incipient.
2. Karolan (Domestic User) agrees with Clint.
3. Joe (Soil and Water Conservation District) also agrees with Karolan and Clint.
4. Alan (Counties) agrees that if they do not get the rain they are expected to, it would be good to plan ahead.
5. Athena (Industry) agrees and supports everyone else's opinion.
6. Motion:
 - a. Officially called by Ken (SCDNR)
 - b. Motion: Move all Northeastern DMA counties into incipient drought status.
 - c. Clint, Municipalities, 1st
 - d. Karolan, Domestic User, 2nd
 - e. Members of the Northeastern DMA unanimously agreed on the motion.

7.

c. Future Drought Response Committee Meetings

- i. Hope appreciates everyone's opinions and conversation in today's meeting. The whole state is now in incipient drought status.
- ii. The next proposed date would be December 4th, but that is subject to change.

- iii. Hope asks all to mark their calendars and attend the in-person Tabletop exercise on March 5th at SC Emergency Operations Center.
- iv. Ken thanked everyone for their participation and input at today's meeting.
- v. Motion to Adjourn:
 - 1. Officially Called by Ken Rentiers (SCDNR)
 - 2. Alan Watkins, Counties, 1st
 - 3. Jason Thompson, Commission of Public Works, 2nd
- vi. Meeting has been adjourned.

Committee Members	Group	Attendance 11/06/2024
West DMA		
Reg Williams	Agriculture	
Cheryl Daniels	Commission of Public Works	X
Mark Warner	Counties	
Eric Carrier	Domestic User	
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
Central DMA		
John Irwin	Agriculture	X
Ken Tuck	Commission of Public Works	
Peggy Swearingen	Counties	X
Christy Jones	Domestic User	X
Ed Holder	Industry	

James G. Bagley	Municipalities	
Alan Stuart	Power Generation Facilities	
Brad C. Powers	Private Water Supplier	
	Public Service District	VACANT
Gregory Sprouse	Regional Council of Gov.	X
John T. Rivers	Soil and Water Conservation Dist.	X
Fred Castles	Special Purpose District	X
Northeast DMA		
Caleb Miller	Agriculture	
	Commission of Public Works	VACANT
Karolan Ohanesian	Domestic User	X
Athena Strickland	Industry	X
Clint Elliott	Municipality	X
	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
Southern DMA		
Landrum Weathers	Agriculture	X

Jason Thompson	Commission of Public Works	X
Larry Harper	Counties	Appointment Pend.
Chris Wallace	Domestic User	
Chris Muckenfuss	Industry	Appointment Pend.
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
Dave Thachik	SC Emergency Management Divis.	X
Joe Koon	SC Dept. of Environ. Services	X
Darryl Jones	SC Forestry Commission	X
Katherine Helms	SC Department of Agriculture	X
Other Participants		
Hope Mizzell	SCDNR, LWC Division	X
Shannon Bobertz	SCDNR, Chief of Staff	X
Brice Schuler	USDA	X
Michael Wright	SC Farm Bureau	X
Kayla Stroman	FSA	X
Alexis Modzelesky	SC Dept. of Environ. Services	X
Melissa Griffin	SCDNR, LWC Division	X
Jordan Baker	SCDNR, LWC Division	X
Frank Strait	SCDNR, LWC Division	X
The Seneca Journal	Media	X

