

## **Drought Response Committee Conference Call**

**Date: April 9, 2026**

**Time: 10:00 a.m.**

A Drought Response Committee Conference Call was conducted at 10:00 a.m., April 9, 2026. Notice of the date, time, and call-in information was posted and provided on the [scdrought.com](http://scdrought.com) website.

### **I. Introduction**

- a. Tyler Brown (SCDNR) opens the meeting and reads the agenda.
  - i. Tyler (SCDNR) makes notice that this meeting is being recorded.
  - ii. Tyler (New Deputy Director of SCDNR LWC) introduces himself, education, job experience, and time with SCDNR.
- b. Dr. Hope Mizzell (SCDNR) conducts the Drought Committee roll call.
  - i. There is a quorum in all DMAs.
  - ii. She does a roll call of state agency members, media, and any additional attendees.
- c. Tyler Brown (SCDNR) puts forth a motion to approve the minutes of the last meeting, which took place on March 5, 2026.
  - i. Lynn McEwen, 1<sup>st</sup>
  - ii. Karolan Ohanesian, 2<sup>nd</sup>
  - iii. Motion passes unanimously. Minutes have been approved.

### **II. PowerPoint Presentation**

- a. Hope Mizzell (SCDNR) begins with the presentation.
  - i. Displays latest drought map from the latest meeting on March 5<sup>th</sup> – 11 counties in moderate and 35 counties in incipient drought.
  - ii. Precipitation rankings across the CONUS – Lowest in 131 years
  - iii. September 2025 – March 2026: Driest on record for many counties in the Upstate. State precipitation of 15.36” with a departure of -10.13”. Departure from normal shows there is a growing deficit at all stations across the state.
  - iv. Temperatures – Much above normal for all counties. Average state temperature is the 7<sup>th</sup> warmest of 131 years.
  - v. 30-day, 60-day, 90-day rainfall: 30 day – all counties below normal with greatest in the Lowcountry and Coastal Plain. 60- and 90- all below normal with only 25-50% of normal in Jasper County & lower tip of SC.

- vi. SPI – Shows growing coverage of severe and extreme drought conditions across the state from last meeting.
- vii. Drought Monitor graphics shows continuous D3 across the Upstate. Also, the Lowcountry southern corner (Jasper and Hampton) were included over March.
- viii. Viewed the four DMA 30- and 60-day rainfall totals for each county – the lowest and highest total rainfall. The data supports dry conditions, especially in the 60-day totals. The data includes locations that only received most of the rainfall this past weekend.

b. State Agency Reports

- i. SCDES (Scott Harder) – 14-day streamflow compares the significant drop in conditions over past month. Much below to low across the state. Regulatory methods show many gauges at extreme status.
- ii. Hydrographs
  1. Northeast DMA – All show flow is well below normal. Record low at two gages
  2. West DMA – Some improvement at Chattooga. All show very low flows and below 5<sup>th</sup> percentile.
  3. Central DMA – Daily flows well below 5<sup>th</sup> percentile.
  4. Southern DMA – Same situation with daily flows well below 5<sup>th</sup> percentile.
- iii. Lake Levels – Keowee-Toxaway in LIP stage 2. Significant deficits across central Savannah River Basin. Reservoir levels dropping in Catawba too. Hartwell Reservoir level at Level 2. Expected to remain at level 2, but evapotranspiration may impact that.
- iv. Groundwater - Several wells at below and well below normal levels, especially in West and Central DMAs.
- v. Without well above normal rainfall, we are not going to make up for the lack of rainfall over the winter.
- vi. Joe Koon (SCDES) – Not water shortages or quality issues across the state. Some upstate counties (Anderson, Cherokee) have had issues with some dry product wells.
- vii. Andy Johnson (SC Forestry) – KBDI have risen significantly. Southern portion of the state is the highest values. March fire amounts above average.

End of march burn ban due to weather and helped. April outlook looks above average. Fires have been increasingly more resistant – burning more aggressively and intensely. Good of daily values - KBDI very reactive to rainfall.

viii. Jordan Van Delden (SCEMD) – Wildfire response was the annual full-scale exercise. Not a common hazard, but exercised activation for supporting partners in an event.

ix. Sam Quinney (SC Agriculture) - Planting issues to get crop up and keep crops alive. Forages behind and many folks worried to cut hay. Extremely dry for the agriculture across the state. Feeder creeks and streams have dried up and not reached irrigation ponds and recharged them.

x. John Rivers (DRC) – Supports everything Sam Quinney said. Irrigation to plant and get plants up. Dry land is really impacting farmers, especially those without pivots.

xi. Phil Fragapane (Duke Energy) – K-T Basin LIP Stage 2 since February and likely to remain for more time. C-W Basin able to maintain storage since cooler winter helped. Lake levels have been dropping and may move into stage 1 at next meeting on April 16<sup>th</sup>.

c. PowerPoint Presentation

- i. Weekly QPF – No precipitation in the 7-day outlook (April 7 – 14th)
- ii. 6–10 Day Outlook – Above normal temperatures and above normal precipitation
- iii. Seasonal outlook – AMJ – forecast higher likelihood on temps, low confidence in below normal precipitation
- iv. Drought Outlook – Drought persists with some drought development across the state.
- v. Josh Palmer (NWS GSP) – We need about 4” in April AND May just to be normal in Greenville/Spartanburg. Outlooks for April, even if we get near normal rainfall, we are still going to be below. Forecasts have been dry and looks like it may continue until we see a significant pattern change. Trend – Continued dry conditions and issues with convective development with how dry soils are.
- vi. Ken Tuck (DRC) – Asks about meteorological outlook into the fall for water supply. Hope/Frank/Josh – Little confidence in any rainfall

forecast over a few days into the outlook. El Nino and tropics activity would be main impact. Too far into the future to know what will happen.

### III. Open Discussion and Vote

Hope Mizzell (SCDNR): Quorum in all DMAs

- a. Northeast DMA – Currently in incipient.
  - i. Joe G. - Dry conditions continually getting worse. He would be in favor of upgrading to moderate.
  - ii. Karolan O. – Support moving to moderate based on indicators (streamflow, groundwater, lack of rain)
  - iii. Athena S. – Supports others in DMA. Little rain is very spotty and nothing helpful.
  - iv. Nathan W. and Sam Q. – Supports moving up to moderate.
  - v. Motion: Move the entire DMA to moderate drought status.
    1. Joe Ghent, 1<sup>st</sup>.
    2. Karolan Ohanesian, 2<sup>nd</sup>
  - vi. Motion passes unanimously.

#### b. Central DMA

- i. John R. – Sumter, Clarendon, and Lee very dry and in favor going up one in that area.
- ii. Ken T. – Upstate did receive some beneficial rain lately. Major water supply are at full pool. Supports stay at moderate and move others up to moderate. Does not support moving upstate to severe yet – drought plans are not moving to moderate yet. The threat has not impacted water supply like agriculture.
- iii. Fred C. – Chester and York to moderate. Phil (Duke) supports.
- iv. Landrum W. – Knows farmers in Central DMA that have had to stop farming.
- v. Sam Q. - Even with some rainfall, we are still behind and we should move all counties to moderate. Drought is severe in areas that are in D3 of the USDM. Concerned about agricultural conditions in the area.
- vii. Brad P. – All should be in moderate status. Not enough yet to move into severe status.
- viii. Motion: Move the entire DMA to moderate drought status.
  1. Ken Tuck, 1<sup>st</sup>
  2. Brad Powers, 2<sup>nd</sup>
- ix. Motion passes unanimously.

c. Southern DMA

- i. Landrum W. – Need to move entire area up to moderate. Impact on agriculture and impacting planting.
- ii. Jason T. – Agrees with Landrum. All indicators are in favor of moderate drought across the entire DMA.
- iii. Russell C., Casey M. & Eric O. – Agree with motion to move into moderate.
- iii. Motion: Move the entire DMA to moderate drought status.
  1. Eric Odom, 1st
  2. Casey Moorner, 2nd
- vi. Motion passes unanimously.

d. West DMA

- i. Scott W. – Open to hearing if any oppose moving the entire DMA to moderate drought
- ii. Brian C. and Mark W. agree to move DMA to moderate.
- iii. Lynn M. – Have gotten some rain but not nearly enough. Supports moving to moderate.
- iv. Sam Q. – Allendale and Barnwell Co. have been very dry and impacting farmers in those counties.
- iii. Motion: Move the entire DMA to moderate drought status.
  1. Scott Willet, 1st
  2. Lynn McEwen, 2nd
- iv. Motion passes unanimously.

**IV. Closing Remarks**

- a. Hope (SCDNR) discusses that the proposed next meeting date is May 14, 2026.
- b. SCRWA training for water systems on Thursday, April 16<sup>th</sup>
- c. Tyler (SCDNR) puts forth a motion to adjourn:
  1. Alan Stuart, 1<sup>st</sup>
  2. Jason Thompson, 2<sup>nd</sup>
- d. Meeting is adjourned at 12:05PM