



Finish Development of Drought Response Strategies and Recommendations

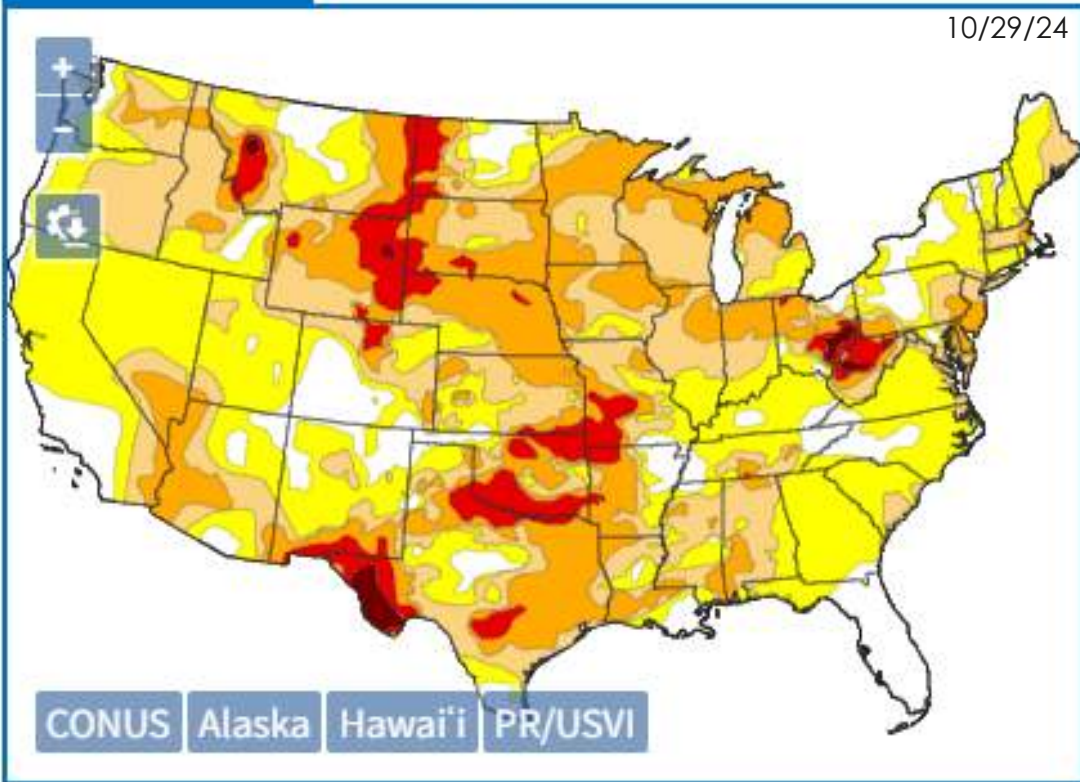
John Boyer

Agenda Item 5

U.S. Drought Monitor

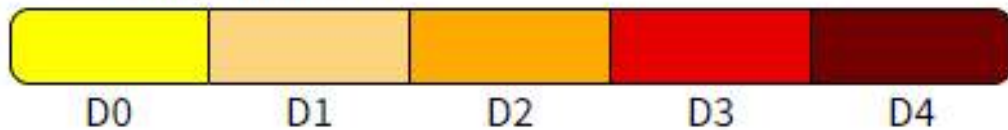
Current Week

Change Since Last Week



Legend

U.S. Drought Monitor



[National Current Conditions | Drought.gov](https://www.drought.gov)

45.27%

of the U.S. and 54.08% of the lower 48 states are in drought this week.

↑ 8.1% since last week

↑ 71.8% since last month

318.6 Million

acres of major crops in U.S. are experiencing drought conditions this week.

— 0.0% since last week

↑ 57.1% since last month

48

U.S. states are experiencing Moderate Drought (D1) or worse this week.

↑ 2 states since last week

↑ 3 states since last month

In a Record, All but Two U.S. States Are in Drought

Little rain has fallen since Hurricane Helene dropped huge amounts across the Southeast.

Listen to this article · 4:48 min [Learn more](#) Share full article



By Austyn Gaffney and Mira Rojanasakul

Nov. 4, 2024

Almost the entire United States faced drought conditions during the last week of October.

Only Alaska and Kentucky did not have at least moderate drought conditions, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor, a record in the monitor's history.

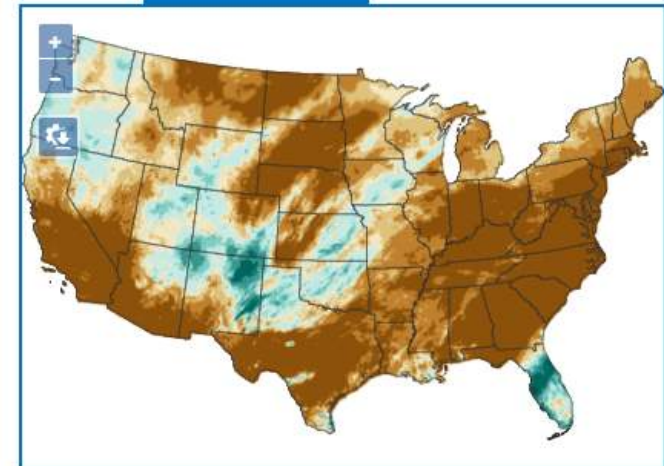
The past four months were consistently warmer than normal over a wide swath of the country, said Rich Tinker, a drought specialist with the National Weather Service. But in June, while roughly a quarter of the country was dry to some degree, he said, now 87 percent of the nation is.

Precipitation Conditions

7-Day

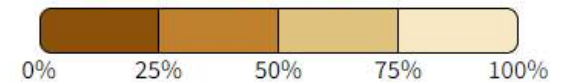
30-Day % Normal

60-Day % Normal



Legend

Percent of Normal Precipitation (%)

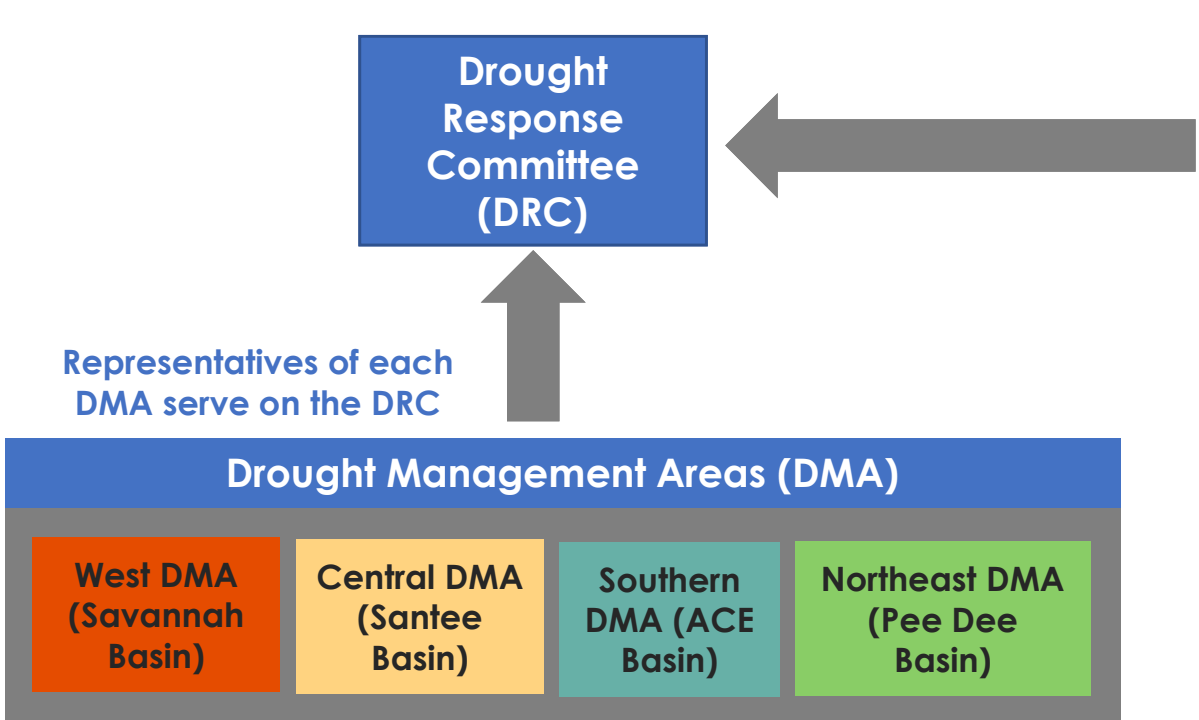


20

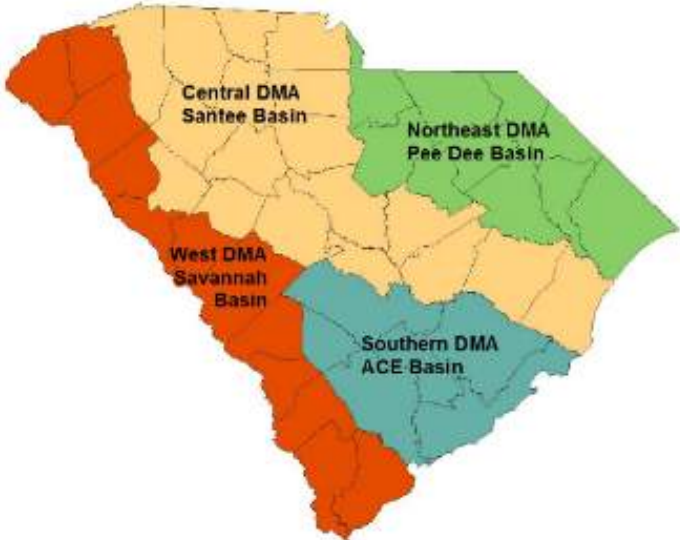
Planning Framework Outline for **Chapter 8. Drought Response**

1. Summarize **existing drought plans** and **drought advisory groups**
2. Summarize any **drought response initiatives** developed by the RBC
3. List **recommendations** on drought management or drought management strategies
4. Include a **communication plan** to inform stakeholders and the public on current drought conditions and activities regarding drought response

South Carolina Drought Response Committee

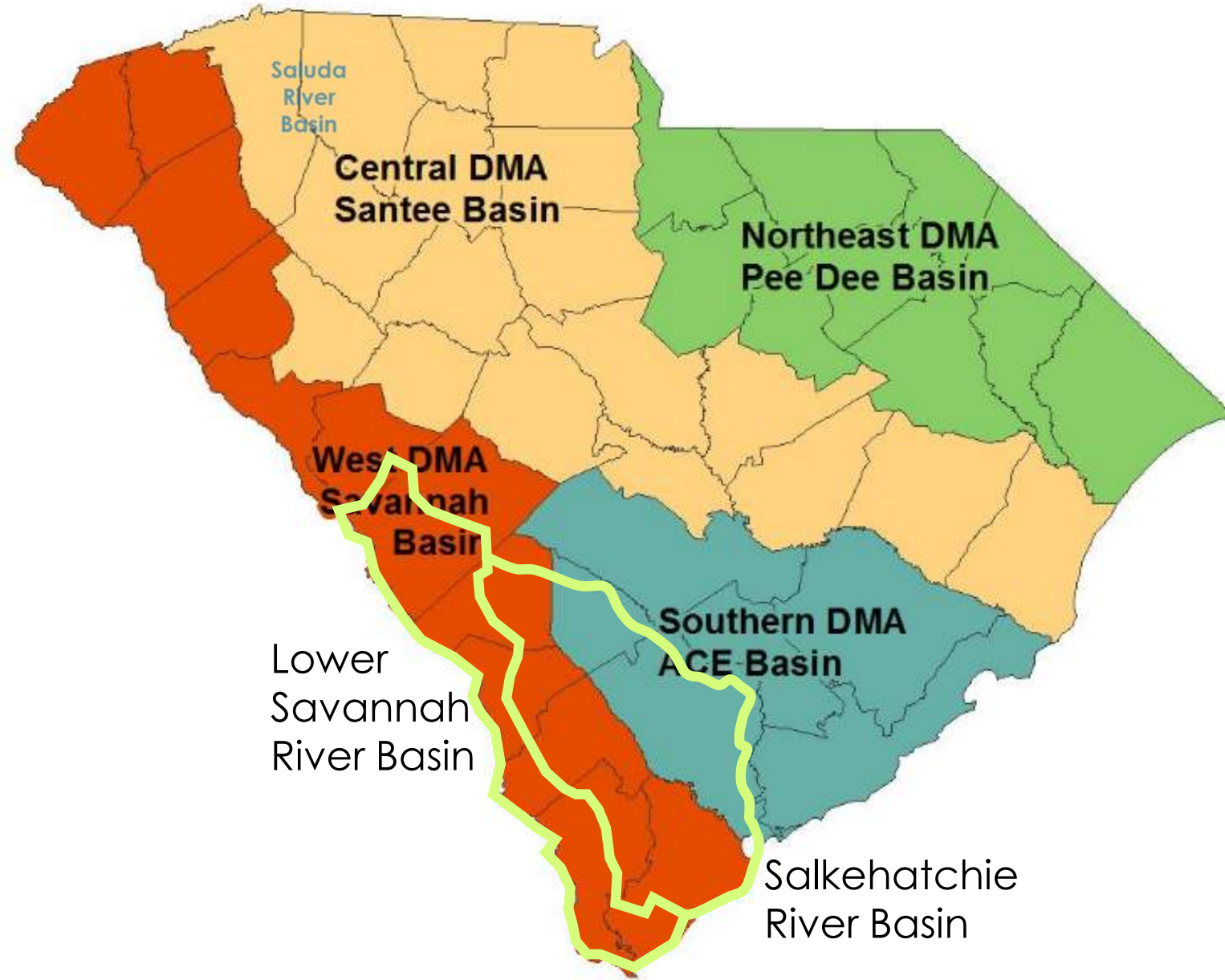


State Agency Members	
Committee Member	Agency
Mr. Ken Rentiers	SCDNR, LWC Division
Mr. David Thachik	SC Emergency Management Division
Mr. Joe Koon	SCDHEC
Mr. Darryl Jones	SC Forestry Commission
Mr. Chad Truesdale	SC Department of Agriculture



The DRC carefully and closely monitors, conserves, and manages the State’s water resources in the best interest of all South Carolinians.

Drought Management Areas



Group	Committee Member	County
Agriculture	Reg Williams	Edgefield
Commission of Public Works	Cheryl Daniels	McCormick
Counties	Mark Warner	McCormick
Domestic User	Eric Carrier	Aiken
Industry	David Evans	Pickens
Municipalities	Vacant	
Power Generation Facilities	Preston Pierce	Oconee
Private Water Supplier	J. Scott Willett	Anderson
Public Service District	Chris Rasco	Anderson
Regional Council of Governments	Rick Green	Edgefield
Soil & Water Conservation Dist.	Yvonne Kling	Aiken
Special Purpose District	Brian Chemsak	Beaufort

West DMA

Group	Committee Member	County
Agriculture	James Traywick	Orangeburg
Commission of Public Works	Jason Thompson	Charleston
Counties	Vacant	
Domestic User	Christopher Sandifer - Appointment Pending	Bamberg
Industry	Vacant	
Municipalities	Eric Odom	Orangeburg
Power Generation Facilities	Matthew McCants	Berkeley
Private Water Supplier	Vacant	
Public Service District	Vacant	
Regional Council of Gov.	Ronald E. Mitchum	Charleston
Soil & Water Conservation Dist.	Marion L. Rizer	Colleton
Special Purpose District	Vacant	

Southern DMA

Drought Response – Communication Plan

1. How does the RBC want to **Communicate** to the rest of the RBC, the public, and stakeholders?

The Upper Savannah RBC discussed and agreed on recommending an approach which would eliminate the Drought Management Areas (DMAs), replacing them with the RBCs, or a subset of members representing each RBC. It was acknowledged that this would require a change to the SC Drought Response Act and supporting regulations.

Discussion at our September RBC meeting suggested that:

- If RBCs continue as planning bodies, it may make sense to adopt the same RBC's recommendation.
- There was also support for simply making sure each RBC had representation on the DRC.

Drought Response Recommendations

1. The RBC recommends that water utilities review their drought management plan and response ordinance every 5 years and review and update every 10 years or more frequently if conditions change. Once updated, the plans should be submitted to the SCO for review. Changing conditions that could merit an update might include:

- Change in the source(s) of water
- Significant increase in water demand (such as the addition of a new, large wholesale customer)
- Significant change in the proportion of water used by one sector compared to another (e.g., residential versus commercial use)
- Addition (or loss) of another user relying on the same source of water
- New water supply agreement with a neighboring utility

This Recommendation was adopted by the LSS RBC

This recommendation was adopted by the Upper Savannah, Saluda, Broad, & Pee Dee RBCs

This recommendation was not considered by the Edisto RBC



Drought Response Recommendations

1. The RBC recommends that a state funding be made available to water utilities to support the review and update of drought management plans. Water utilities with limited financial and technical capability may benefit from technical assistance to identify appropriate drought triggers and response strategies.

This Recommendation was proposed by the LSS RBC and is subject to final review and approval.

Example Drought Response Recommendations

3. The RBC recommends that water utilities coordinate, to the extent practical, their drought response messaging. Consistent and coordinated drought response messaging can be important, especially when there are drought conditions impacting the entire basin and possibly neighboring basins. Consistent and coordinated messaging can help to avoid confusion and provide efficiency. However, the Lower Savannah-Salkehatchie RBC recognizes that coordinated and consistent messaging may not be possible when drought conditions are appreciably different across the basin, when utilities are in different stages of drought response, or when utilities' response strategies are different.

This LSS RBC decided not to adopt this recommendation.

This recommendation was adopted by the Upper Savannah, Saluda, Broad, & Pee Dee RBCs

This recommendation was not considered by the Edisto RBC

Example Drought Response Recommendations

4. The RBC encourages water utilities in the basin to consider drought surcharges on water use during severe and/or extreme drought phases. Drought surcharges, when used, are typically only implemented if voluntary reductions are not successful in achieving the desired reduction in water use. In some cases, water utilities have already built into their response ordinance the ability to implement drought surcharges during the severe and/or extreme drought phases.

This LSS RBC adopted this recommendation.

This recommendation was adopted by the Upper Savannah, Saluda, and Broad RBCs

This recommendation included as part of a broader recommendation by the Pee Dee RBC that “value added collaboration be conducted among members and stakeholders to investigate ways to mitigate drought-related risks.

This recommendation was not considered by the Edisto RBC

Example Drought Response Recommendations

5. When droughts occur, the RBC encourages water users and those with water interests to submit their drought impact observations through the **Condition Monitoring Observer Reports (CMOR)**. The CMOR system, maintained by the National Drought Mitigation Center (NDMC), provides supporting evidence in the form of on-the-ground information to help the authors of the U.S. Drought Monitor better understand local conditions. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) uses the Drought Monitor to trigger disaster declarations and determine eligibility for low-interest loans and some assistance programs. The SCO also reviews and uses the CMOR system in a variety of ways. CMORs can be submitted by clicking the “Submit a Report” button at the NDMC’s Drought Impacts Toolkit website.

Link to CMOR Site: [Condition Monitoring Observer Reports \(CMOR\) \(arcgis.com\)](https://arcgis.com)

This LSS RBC adopted the Saluda RBC version of this recommendation

This recommendation was adopted by the Upper Savannah, Saluda*, Broad, & Pee Dee RBCs

This recommendation was not considered by the Edisto RBC

**The Saluda RBC also developed recommendations about encouraging the State Climate Office to conduct outreach on use of the CMOR tool, encouraging the NRCS to promote its use, and encouraging use by the Adopt-a-Stream program.*