



**ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**  
**Kevin Bronson**  
OFFICE OF THE CITY ADMINISTRATOR  
WESTMINSTER, SOUTH CAROLINA

November 3, 2023

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **Drought Conditions are becoming noticeable**

The SC Drought Response Committee issued a Drought Status Report on October 17, 2023, providing official data to a situation of which locals are keenly aware. A weakening flow of the Chauga River is a primary driver of an emerging situation in which the city's water source is experiencing restriction. The City can continue to serve the community at its regular level and will monitor the situation closely. If conditions worsen, the City will follow the procedures outlined in the Drought Management and Response Plan (including possibly requesting voluntary reduction of water consumption to the public). The DNR Drought Response Committee's Report is attached.

### **Emergency Back-up Generators Grant Award**

The City of Westminster has been awarded \$257,634.00 for four new permanent back-ups at strategic city facilities through the Federal Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) and FEMA. The City will match \$28,626 (10% of the total project cost) for a project total of \$286,260. These generators will support our most important City centers and provide necessary redundancy to ensure services to the public and safety to city employees and assets.

### **SC Energy Office Grant Award Notice**

This week, the City was awarded \$9,941.75 to replace streetlights along Main Windsor Streets by the South Carolina Energy Office. The City will be replacing about 30 high-pressure sodium lights with brighter and more energy efficient LEDs. These will cast more light and save the city about \$6,400 (estimated) annually, enhancing safety and fiscal responsibility. The project will begin in the downtown area and stretch down HWY 123 towards Ingles.

### **Small trees delivered to City Hall Campus**

In September the City was awarded the Palmetto Pride Tree Grant, providing 13 trees for City Hall Campus for free. On Friday, October 27, City Staff traveled to Columbia to pick up 4 Crepe Myrtles, 8 Maple Trees, and 1 White Dogwood. They were planted on Monday.

### **Building Permits and building inspections**

This week Oconee County notified staff it will no longer provide building permitting and inspection services. Historically, Oconee County has provided this service to the city without charge as it collected the permit fees to cover the expense. However, due to increased demand for permitting and inspection services across the County, these services are being discontinued to the city. Staff will explore options and long-term solutions to present to City Council.

### **Special Events Committee**

The Special Events Committee met Wednesday, November 1, 2023. The agenda is attached.

### **USDA-RD Water System Projects**

Two contractors are being utilized to install the water system improvements funded by the USDA-RD. Both contractors are on schedule.

*Arrowood General Contracting* is responsible for a grouping of projects entitled Division 1.

- The project areas for Division 1 are: Dawn Drive; Dixon Rd; Phillip Lear; and Dr. Johns Rd.
- Dawn Drive is complete, with Service connections on Dawn Drive almost complete. Approximately 4 are left to do as of Friday afternoon.
- Connections will begin next on the Greenfield Road. Once those are complete, the last valve will be cut-in to connect the new 6" line to the existing 4" that travels further out Greenfield Road.
- The contractor has completed laying the new 8" line from Jenkins Bridge Road to Singleton Road and connected both sides. The next step is to fill the line with water and pressure test. After a successful pressure test, the line will be flushed, and then bacteriological samples will be taken. After one test per day over two consecutive days that are returned with negative results, an application will be filed with DHEC for the line to be put to use. This process usually takes at least one week. After DHEC approval, service connections to the main line will begin and residents may begin tying on to these services.
- Staff are beginning now to arrange face-to-face meetings with property owners to choose the best locations for the meters.

*Payne, McGinn and Cummins* is responsible for a grouping of projects entitled Division 2.

- The project areas in Division 2 are: two sections of Highway 76; Welcome Church Rd to Berry Farm Rd; and Berry Farm Rd to Cleveland Pike Rd.
- By Friday afternoon, the contractor will have all the lines installed on the two sections of US 76 (EXCEPT for the Chauga bridge crossing).
- The tie in to the existing main on US 76 for the Welcome Church Road branch was completed this week. The road bore to cross the US 76 has also been completed and installation of pipe has begun on Welcome Church Road.

### **Westminster Planning Commission**

The Planning Commission met Monday, October 30, 2023, at 6:00 pm. The Commission approved a recommendation for the City Council to consider various Zoning Ordinance amendments. Those amendments have been circulated in previous Administrators Reports. The Planning Commission recommendation will be on the November 14, 2023 City Council Meeting agenda.

### **OJRSA**

Nothing to report.

### **PMPA**

Nothing to report.

## **PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDARS**

November 5, 2023 Daylight Savings Time ends

November 6, 2023 at 4:00 pm OJRSA Board Meeting at OJRSA

November 7, 2023 Elections Day

November 10, 2023 City Office closed to observe Veterans Day

**November 14, 2023 at 6:00 pm City Council Meeting at the Westminster Fire Department**

November 15, 2023 at 8:30 am Operations & Planning Committee at OJRSA

November 16, 2023 at 10:00 am PMPA Board Meeting at PMPA

November 20, 2023 at 6:00 pm Westminster Planning Commission at City Hall

November 23 & 24, 2023 City Offices closed to observe Thanksgiving

November 28, 2023 at 9:00 am OJRSA Finance & Administration Committee at OJRSA

## **Special Events Calendar**

**November 11, 2023 at 4:00 pm – Veterans Day Parade**

Main Street, Westminster

**December 1, 2023 at 2:00 pm – Arbor Day Celebration**

**December 1, 2023 - Christmas Tree Lighting**

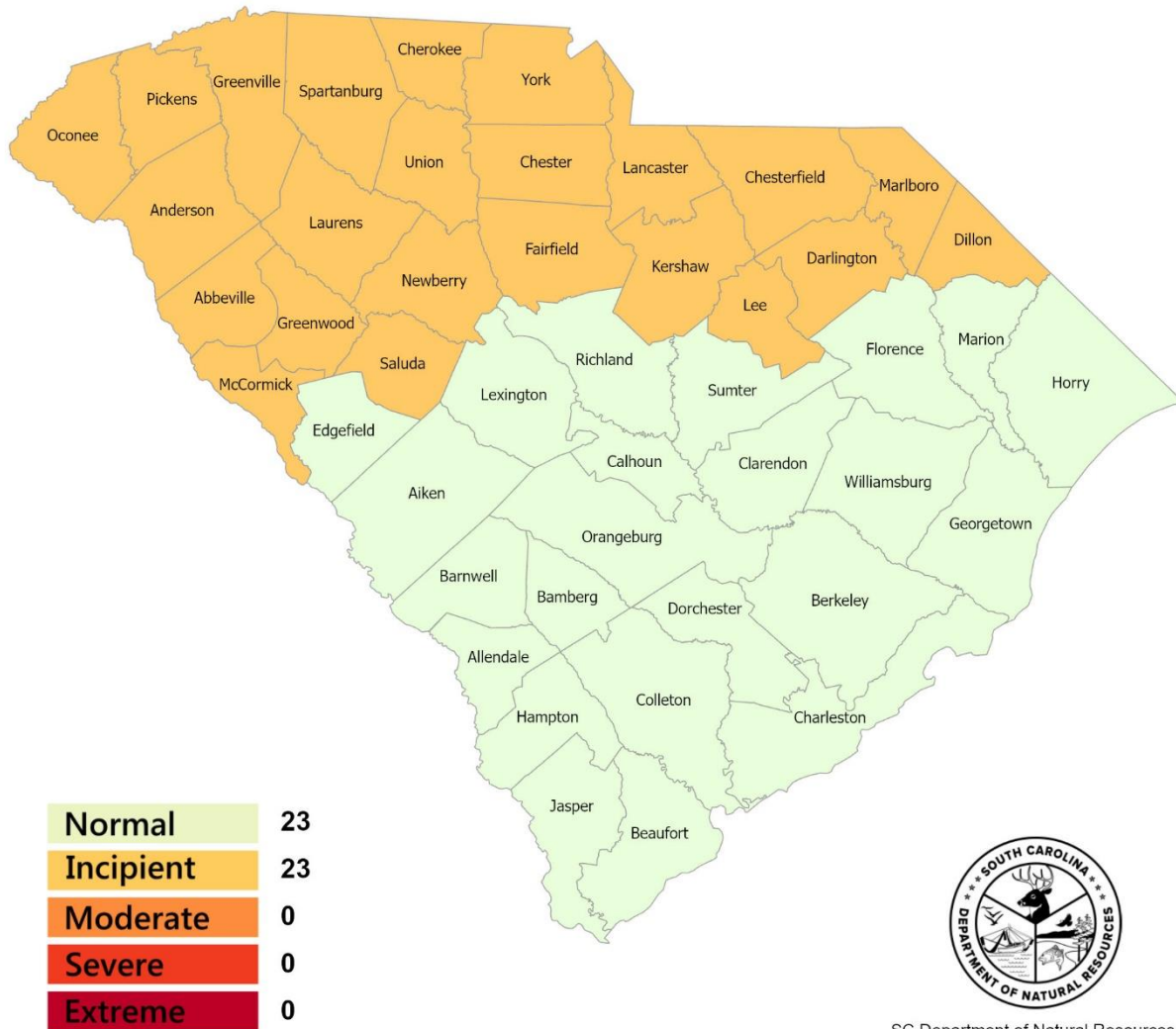
**December 2, 2023 at 11:00 am – Westminster Christmas Parade**

Main Street, Westminster

**February 3, 2024 (*new date*) at time TBD – TreesUpstate Tree Planting Event at Yousef Mefleh Memorial Fields**

# SC Drought Response Committee reports mild drought throughout northern counties

Drought Status: 10-17-2023



SC Department of Natural Resources  
State Climate Office

Oct. 17, 2023

Much of the northern part of South Carolina is experiencing mild drought conditions, while the rest of the state is receiving adequate rainfall, the state committee tasked with monitoring those conditions reported Tuesday.

The S.C. Drought Response Committee upgraded the drought status of 23 counties (see map) to incipient, the lowest-level of drought conditions.

As designated by state law, incipient is the first level of drought followed by moderate, severe and extreme. Low streamflow conditions, forest fire concerns and below normal topsoil and subsoil moisture were the primary driving factors of the drought declaration. The state was last under a drought designation in February 2023, said State Climatologist Hope Mizell, whose office is within the S.C. Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR).

The state made it through spring and summer with adequate rainfall and received too much rain in some areas from Tropical System Idelia in late August, but the rainfall diminished significantly during September and October. Thirty-day rainfall totals in the counties upgraded to incipient drought generally ranged from 1.5 to 2.5 inches.

Some of the lowest reported 30-day rainfall totals by the Community Collaborative Rain, Hail and Snow Network, a network of volunteer weather observers, are included in the table below.

<b>30-Day CoCoRaHS Rainfall Total Ending Oct. 16, 2023</b>					
Station	County	Total (in)	Station	County	Total (in)
Blair 6.3 ESE	Fairfield	1.29	Hodges 5.5 NE	Greenwood	1.98
Lockhart 5.4 N	Cherokee	1.43	Rock Hill 5.8 WNW	York	1.68
Lyman 4.1 WNW	Spartanburg	1.43	Williamston 5.4 W	Anderson	1.71
Greenville 5.4 WNW	Greenville	1.44	Hartsville 3.6 WSW	Darlington	1.77
Lancaster 0.4 WSW	Lancaster	1.47	Union 2.3 NNE	Union	1.85
Clemson 0.8 NE	Pickens	1.56	Iva 6.4 WWS	Abbeville	1.94
Seneca 8.9 N	Oconee	1.66			

The U.S. Drought Monitor was one of the drought indicators supporting the upgrade. Elliot Wickham, water resources climatologist for the State Climate Office, explained that the current U.S. Drought Monitor map has all Upstate and Piedmont counties in either abnormally dry or moderate drought, even after the recent rain.

“We are beginning to see an increase in wildfire activity due to drying conditions caused by the lack of rainfall,” said Stephen Patterson, training and safety manager for the S.C. Forestry Commission,. “As of Oct. 16, we have already seen 70 percent of the number of wildfires that we would expect to see for the entire month. Where drought conditions are in place, fires are easier to ignite and usually take more resources to suppress. With the current dry conditions, especially in the Upstate, and no significant rainfall in sight, we want to urge those who are going to be doing any type of outdoor burning to be responsible and take the necessary precautions.”

The hydrologic conditions show that the lack of beneficial rain for the past couple of months in the Upstate and northern Pee Dee counties has resulted in a gradual decline in streamflows, reservoir levels and groundwater levels, according to Priyanka More, hydrologist with SCDNR. For instance, the streamflow in the North Pacolet River at Fingerville in Spartanburg County has only 8 percent of its normal flow for this time of year. Black Creek near McBee in Chesterfield County is experiencing only 3 percent of its normal flow. Low streamflow and lake levels have resulted in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Savannah District activating its drought management plan to conserve water in their reservoirs by reducing the outflows. The Keowee-Toxaway River Basin has also activated its low inflow protocol.

The dry conditions have negatively impacted agriculture as well. Representatives for many of the counties designated in drought noted that pastures were dry, causing some producers to feed hay to their livestock. While producers were thankful for the rain last week, it was not enough to improve pasture conditions. In the upper Pee Dee Region, the dry conditions have caused the soil to harden, making it difficult for peanuts to break through the ground. Crop impacts have not been limited to peanuts, as the dry conditions have also negatively affected cotton and soybean production in some areas.

The Drought Response Committee will continue to monitor conditions and expects to reconvene in late November.

**Media Contacts:**

Hope Mizzell, SCDNR State Climatology Office, [mizzellh@dnr.sc.gov](mailto:mizzellh@dnr.sc.gov)

Priyank More, SCDNR Hydrology, [morep@dnr.sc.gov](mailto:morep@dnr.sc.gov)

Joe Koon, SCDHEC, [koonjm@dhec.sc.gov](mailto:koonjm@dhec.sc.gov)

Darryl Jones, S.C. Forestry Commission, [djones@forestry.state.sc.us](mailto:djones@forestry.state.sc.us)

Sam Quinney, S.C. Department of Agriculture, [squinney@scda.sc.gov](mailto:squinney@scda.sc.gov)

<b>Committee Members</b>	<b>Group</b>	<b>Attendance 10/17/2023</b>
<b>West DMA</b>		
Reg Williams	Agriculture	
David Evans	Industry	
Preston Pierce	Power Generation Facilities	
J. Scott Willett	Private Water Supplier	<b>X</b>
Chris Rasco	Public Service District	<b>X</b>
Yvonne Kling	Soil and Water Conservation Dist.	<b>X</b>
Brian Chemsak	Special Purpose District	<b>X</b>
<b>Central DMA</b>		
John Irwin	Agriculture	
Ken Tuck	Commission of Public Works	<b>X</b>
Peggy Swearingen	Counties	<b>X</b>
Christy Jones	Domestic User	<b>X</b>
Ed Holder	Industry	<b>X</b>
James G. Bagley	Municipalities	<b>X</b>
Alan Stuart	Power Generation Facilities	<b>X</b>
Brad C. Powers	Private Water Supplier	<b>X</b>
Gregory Sprouse	Regional Council of Gov.	
John T. Rivers	Soil and Water Conservation Dist.	
Fred Castles	Special Purpose District	<b>X</b>
<b>Northeast DMA</b>		
Caleb Miller	Agriculture	
Karolan Ohanesian	Domestic User	<b>X</b>
Athena Strickland	Industry	<b>X</b>
Clint Elliott	Municipality	<b>X</b>

Charles Allen	Power Generation Facilities	X
Robert L. Brock	Private Water Supplier	X
Elbert Warren	Public Service District	
Lindsay Privette	Regional Council of Gov.	X
Joe Ghent	Soil and Water Conservation Dist.	X
<b>Southern DMA</b>		
James Traywick	Agriculture	
Jason Thompson	Commission of Public Works	X
Eric Odom	Municipalities	X
Matt McCants	Power Generation Facilities	X
Ronald E. Mitchum	Regional Council of Gov.	
Marion L. Rizer	Soil and Water Conservation Dist.	
<b>State Agency Members</b>		
Ken Rentiers	SCDNR, LWC Division	X
Dave Thachik	SC Emergency Management Divis.	
Joe Koon	SCDHEC	X
Stephen Patterson	SC Forestry Commission	X
Sam Quinney	SC Department of Agriculture	X
<b>Appointment Pending Members</b>		
Christopher Sandifer	Southern DMA	Domestic User
<b>Other Participants</b>		
Hope Mizzell	SCDNR	X
Elliot Wickham	SCDNR	X
Scott Harder	SCDNR	X
Priyanka More	SCDNR	X
Stephen Fastenau	SCDNR	X
Cheryl Daniels	McCormick CPW	X
Mark Warner	McCormick County Government	X



Leigh Ann Monroe	SCDHEC	<b>X</b>
Brandon Lambert	FSA	<b>X</b>
Brice Shuler	FSA	<b>X</b>
Kayla Stroman	FSA	<b>X</b>
Glenn Thomas	FSA	<b>X</b>
Hope Morton	FSA	<b>X</b>
Beth Blackwell	FSA	<b>X</b>
Josh Palmer	NWS – Greer	<b>X</b>
Frank Alsheimer	NWS - Columbia	<b>X</b>
Leonard Vaughan	NWS - Columbia	<b>X</b>
Denise Bisnett	Santee Cooper	<b>X</b>

**Special Events Committee- Regular Meeting**  
**City of Westminster**  
**November 1, 2023 at 2:00pm**  
**Police Training Center- Behind City Hall**

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Approval of Minutes from September 20, 2023**
- III. Budget Update**
- IV. Routine Business**
  - a. Consideration of Veterans Day Parade Event Application
- V. Old Business**
  - a. Reflections from Bigfoot
  - b. Reflections from Boo on Main
- VI. New Business**
  - a. Veterans Festival
    - i. Planning meeting with Matt and Kevin to finalize plans and get application in.  
*Staff Recommends Approval*
- VII. Christmas**
  - i. Parade form opens up today; will begin pushing on FB ASAP
  - ii. Decorating will be the week before Thanksgiving, November 20-22, and extending the week after if necessary.
  - iii. Christmas Tree Lighting:
    1. As of last meeting: Juanita McMillan singing coordination. Pleasant Hill Baptist Church, Fair-Oak and Westminster Elementaries, West-Oak High School (a Capella) choirs. Saxophone? Church brings in Christmas Story. Snipes volunteered sound system.
    2. Police are willing to serve Hot Chocolate and help manage crowd control.
    3. Additional Logistics of "big switch"
    4. Review Placement of Christmas Lights... Do we need more?
    5. Volunteer Meeting scheduled for Monday, November 13 at 6:00pm at Depot.
  - iv. Christmas Parade:
    1. Saturday Dec. 2, 11:00AM
    2. Expect long route.
    3. Forms will be posted on social media.
    4. World Series Team as Marshal
    5. Recommend that business owners consider opening. Staff wanted to get through Boo on Main and reapproach business owners to open or partner with City for event.
- VIII. 2024 Events Ideas- Will begin in January meeting, if committee agrees.**
  - i. Juneteenth Celebration
  - ii. City 5k in Spring
- IX. Member Discussion**
- X. Schedule Next Meeting**
- XI. Adjourn**