

Motorist navigate heavy water on Woodruff Road in Greenville as rain fell through out the day on Sunday. PATRICK COLLARD/STAFF

DROUGHT GOES OUT WITH A VENGEANCE

Cloudy, with possible rain showers forecast for the week

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If there was any question going into this past rainy weekend, the doubts should be washed away.

The Upstate is out of its drought.

And it's weekends like this, forecasters say, that will help our region stay that way for a while.

By the time the steady rain of the weekend is expected to end today, some parts of the Upstate will have seen as much as 2 inches of rain, National Weather Service meteorologist Scott Krentz said.

The week ahead could offer rain but for the most part is expected to stay cloudy all the way into next weekend, with high temperatures around 70 degrees, Krentz said.

The rains from the weekend and any that might follow through spring offer a buffer for when weather patterns turn drier, typically in the fall, Krentz said.

"It's a nice turnaround," he said. "Any little surplus we can get helps before we get to the drier season."

The Upstate enjoyed a weather pattern that brought rain but not damaging storms, thanks to a "wedge" of cold air that kept the warmer, more-unstable, moist air to the south at bay, Krentz said.

The rain fell steadily but didn't threaten floods except in isolated, flood-prone locations, he said. The Reedy River was still about five feet below flood stage, he said.

Last week, a state Department of Natural Resources' drought panel declared the entire state free of drought for the first time in three years.

Lake levels are near normal. Groundwater is recharged. Soils are moist for farming.

Up until this point, the state has only been drought-free for 10 months in a span since 2006.

Most stations where the state measures rainfall reported double the amount of rainfall in the past two months, and in some places more than triple, State Climatologist Hope Mizzell said.

Going into this past weekend, the Upstate had seen rainfall in the closing weeks of April slightly over normal.