

Officials say park reservations down

COLUMBIA (AP) — South Carolina officials say the drought and erosion have caused more problems for the state's park system than high gasoline prices and the economic downturn.

Parks director Phil Gaines told The State newspaper that the system has done well in previous economic slumps.

The Parks, Recreation and Tourism Department says cabin reservations dropped 6 percent between June and November. Campsite rentals were down about 3 percent.

The parks with the biggest drops were hurt by drought and coastal storms. Rentals were down 20 percent at Lake

Hartwell State Recreation Area, where water levels are down sharply.

Cabin rentals were down 29 percent at Hunting Island State Park, where four cabins were destroyed by beach erosion.

Gaines says much of the agency's budget comes from the rentals.