FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2009 THE GREENVILLE NEWS

Pickens, Oconee drought lifted

Rest of Upstate in incipient drought

By Anna Simon
CLEMSON BUREAU
asimon@greenvillenews.com

PICKENS — Pickens and Oconee counties have been removed from drought status, the state Department of Natural Resources said Thursday.

All drought indicators responded favorably to the recent eight days of heavy rain, said Hope Mizzell, state climatologist.

"In the past week Lake Jocassee rose 9 feet, Lake Hartwell rose 3 feet and groundwater levels returned to normal," Mizzell said.

Fire occurrence has been low in the areas now out of drought status, and fuel moisture has recovered significantly, said Darryl Jones of the state Forestry Commission.

Greenville, Anderson and Abbeville counties also received significant rainfall that improved conditions, but not enough to remove the drought declaration, Mizzell said.

More widespread rains are expected tonight and Saturday through the Upstate, with the possibility of a few lingering showers in the eastern part on Sunday, said Blair Holloway, meteorologist at the National Weather Service in Greer.

The remainder of the Upstate is part of a 20-county area in incipient drought, the lowest level of drought.