



# 2026 Fire Weather Forecast

February 20, 2026

## New York State Fire Weather Meeting Friday February 20, 2025

Presentation by:  
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and  
Steve DiRienzo



National Oceanic and  
Atmospheric Administration  
U.S. Department of Commerce

National Weather Service  
Albany, NY

The logo of the National Weather Service, featuring a globe with a lightning bolt and the text "NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE" around the perimeter.

# Outline

- Current drought conditions and outlook
- Recent rainfall departures from normal
- Current snowpack information
- Short to medium range forecast
- Long range to seasonal forecasts
- Conclusions
- Questions/Discussion



# Current Drought Monitor



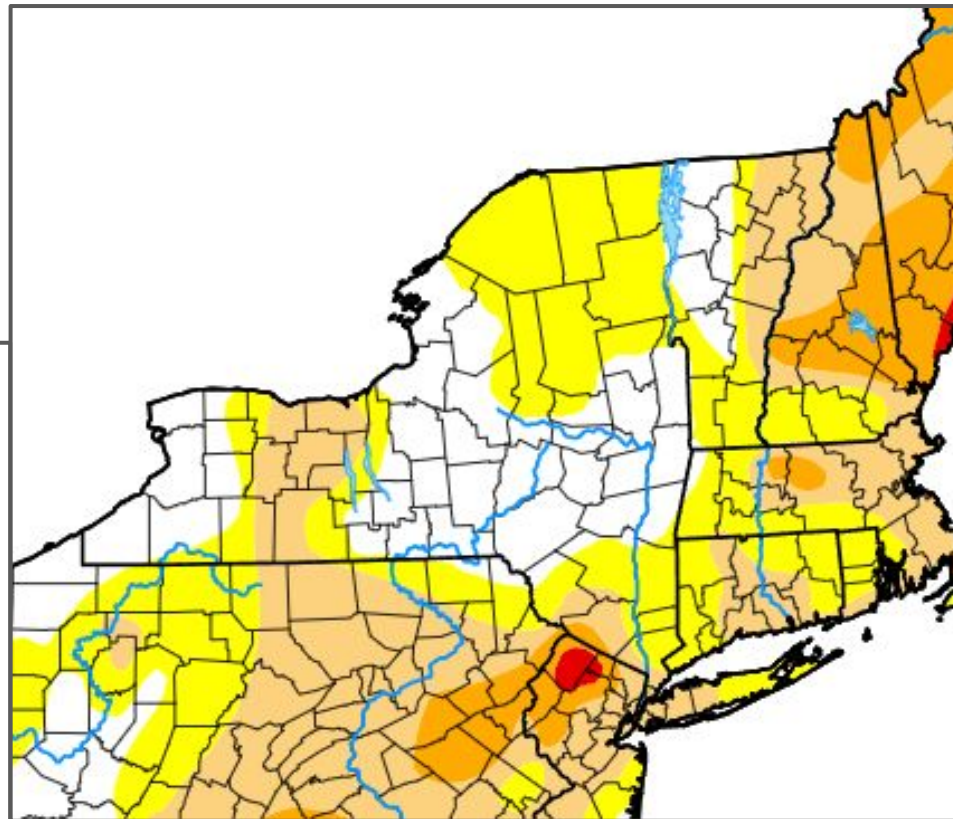
- There remain some abnormally dry areas across the state, with a moderate drought across portions of the NYC Metro and western Long Island

Map released: Thurs. February 19, 2026

Data valid: February 17, 2026 at 7 a.m. EST

## Intensity

- None
- D0 (Abnormally Dry)
- D1 (Moderate Drought)
- D2 (Severe Drought)
- D3 (Extreme Drought)
- D4 (Exceptional Drought)
- No Data



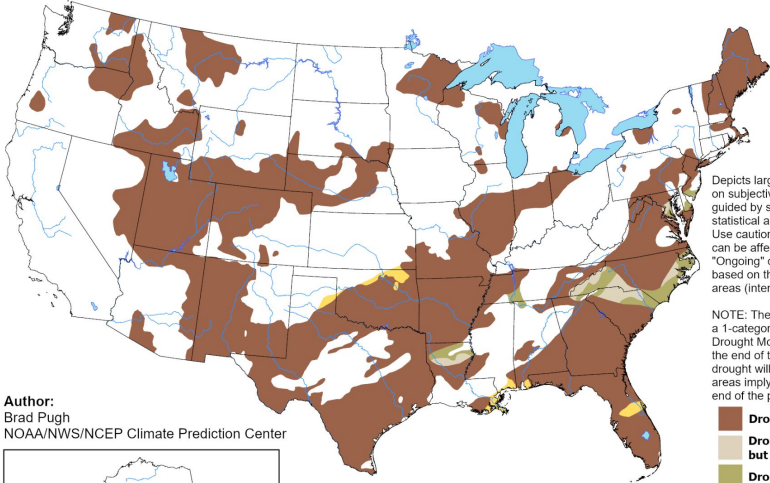


# Current Drought Outlook

February 20, 2026

## U.S. Monthly Drought Outlook Drought Tendency During the Valid Period

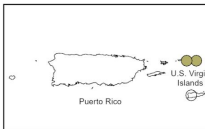
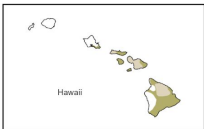
Valid for February 2026  
Released January 31, 2026



Depicts large-scale trends based on subjectively derived probabilities guided by short- and long-range statistical and dynamical forecasts. Use caution for applications that can be affected by short lived events. "Ongoing" drought areas are based on the U.S. Drought Monitor areas (intensities of D1 to D4).

NOTE: The tan areas imply at least a 1-category improvement in the Drought Monitor intensity levels by the end of the period, although drought will remain. The green areas imply drought removal by the end of the period (D0 or none).

Author:  
Brad Pugh  
NOAA/NWS/NCEP Climate Prediction Center



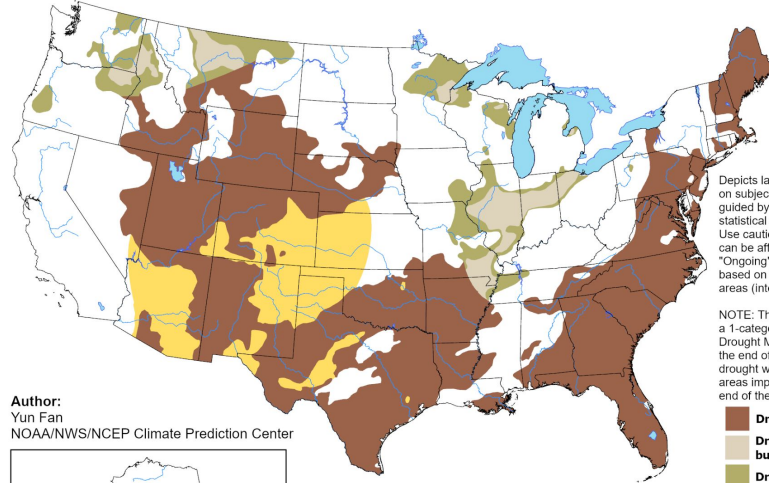
- Drought persists
- Drought remains, but improves
- Drought removal likely
- No drought



<https://go.usa.gov/3eZGd>

## U.S. Seasonal Drought Outlook Drought Tendency During the Valid Period

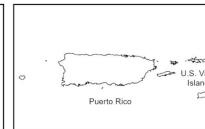
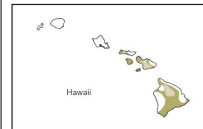
Valid for February 19 - May 31, 2026  
Released February 19, 2026



Depicts large-scale trends based on subjectively derived probabilities guided by short- and long-range statistical and dynamical forecasts. Use caution for applications that can be affected by short lived events. "Ongoing" drought areas are based on the U.S. Drought Monitor areas (intensities of D1 to D4).

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Author:  
Yun Fan  
NOAA/NWS/NCEP Climate Prediction Center



- Drought persists
- Drought remains, but improves
- Drought removal likely
- No drought



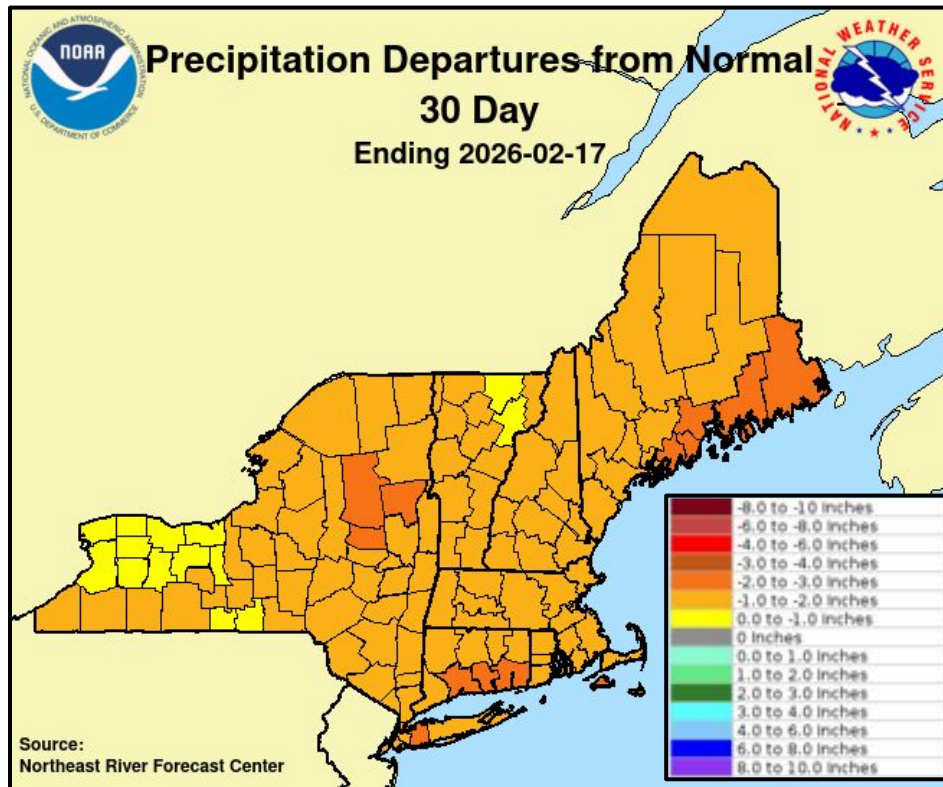
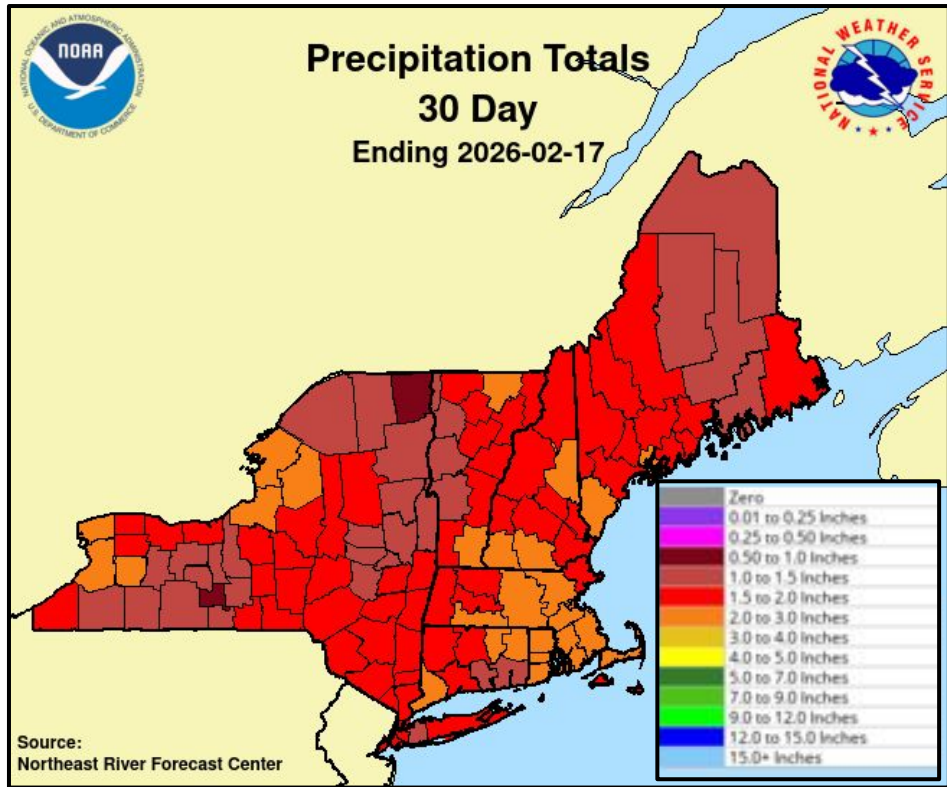
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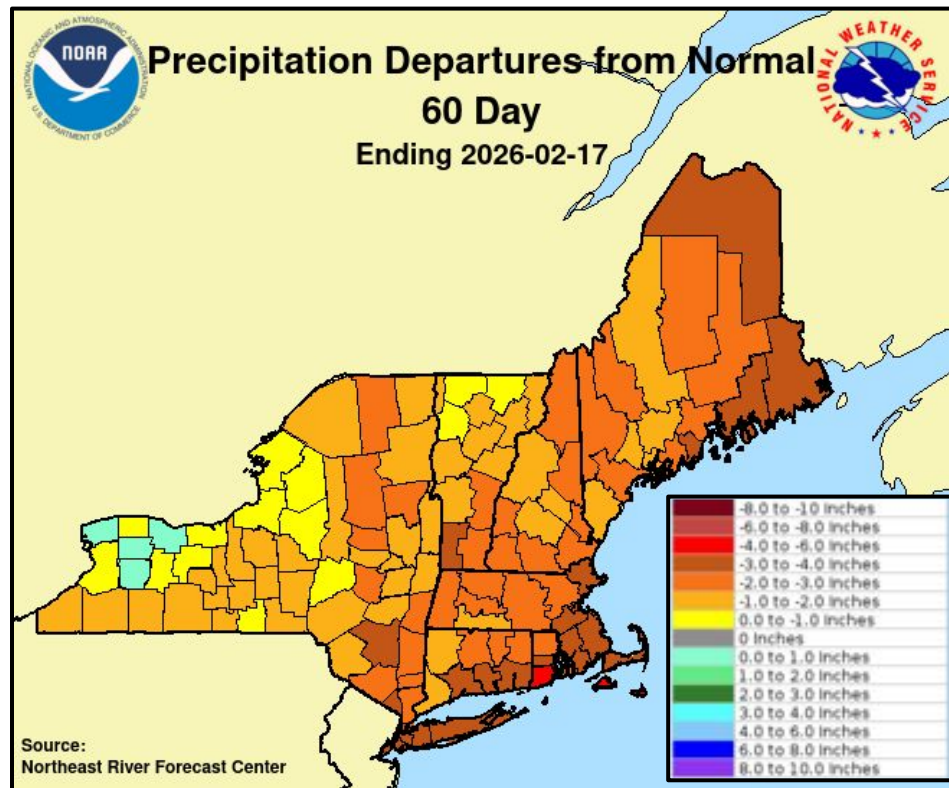
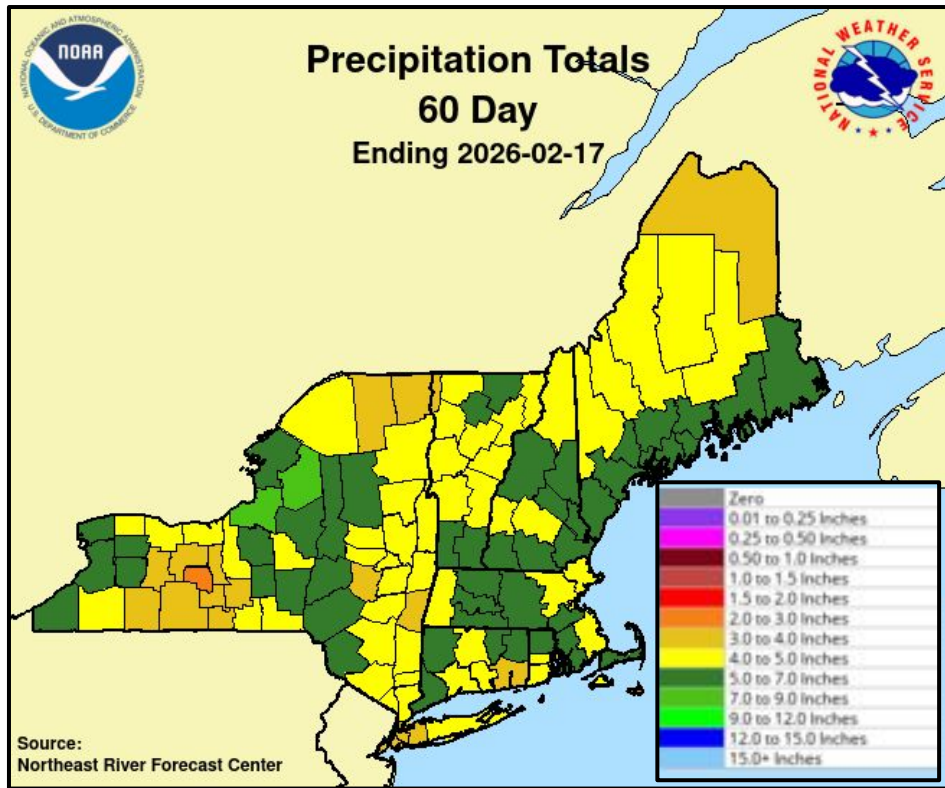
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
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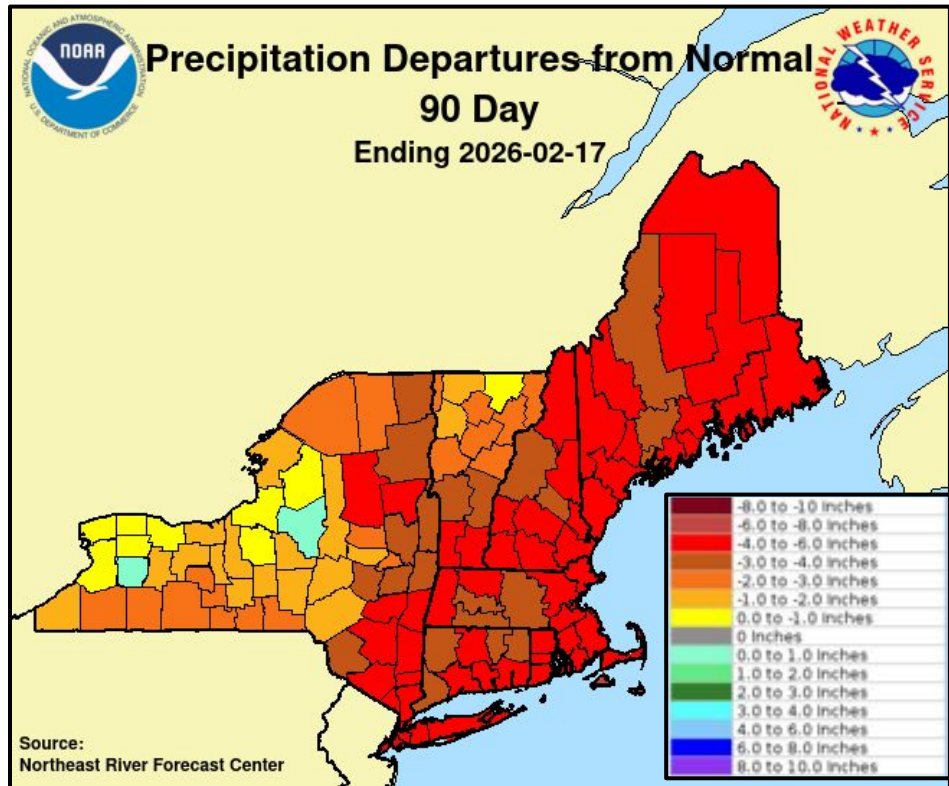
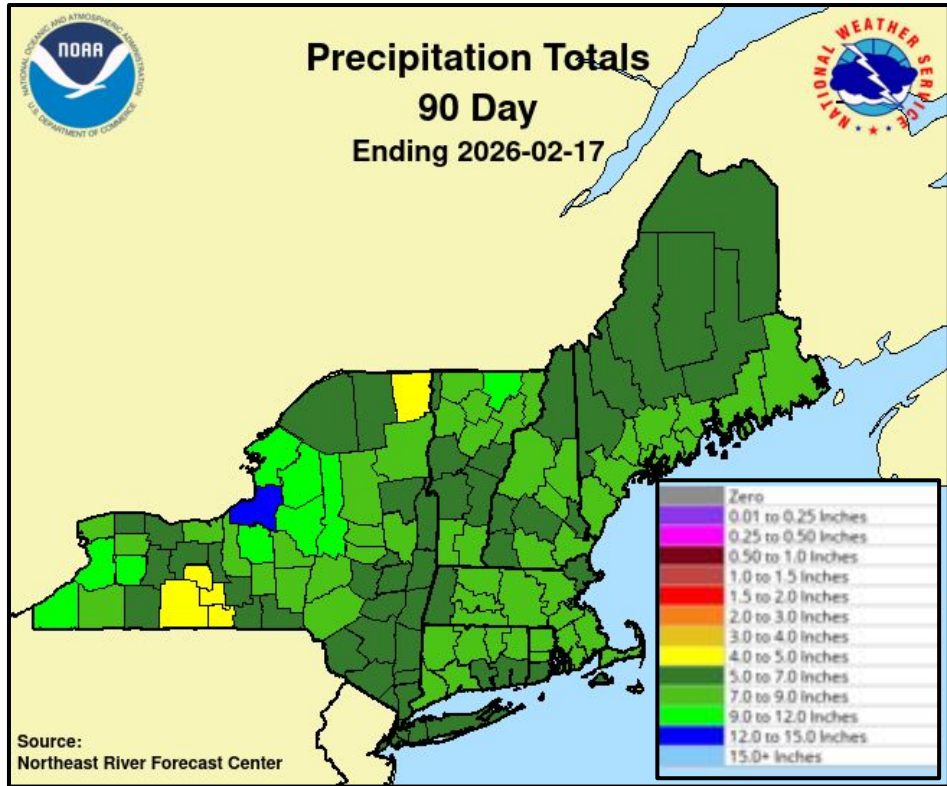
# 30 Day Precipitation vs Normal



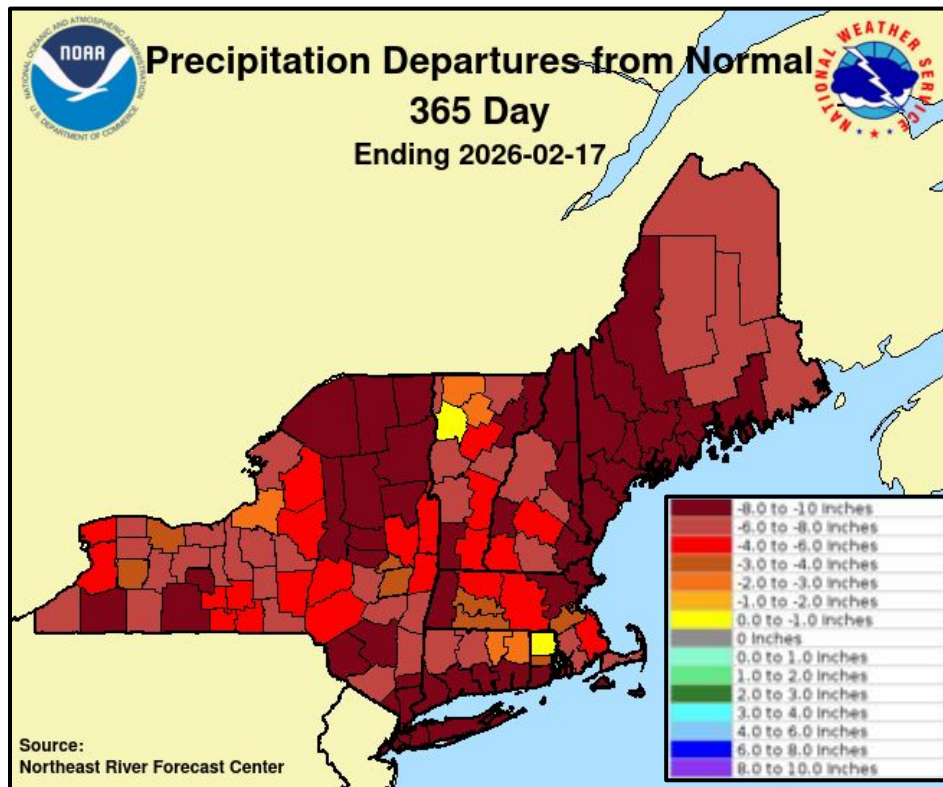
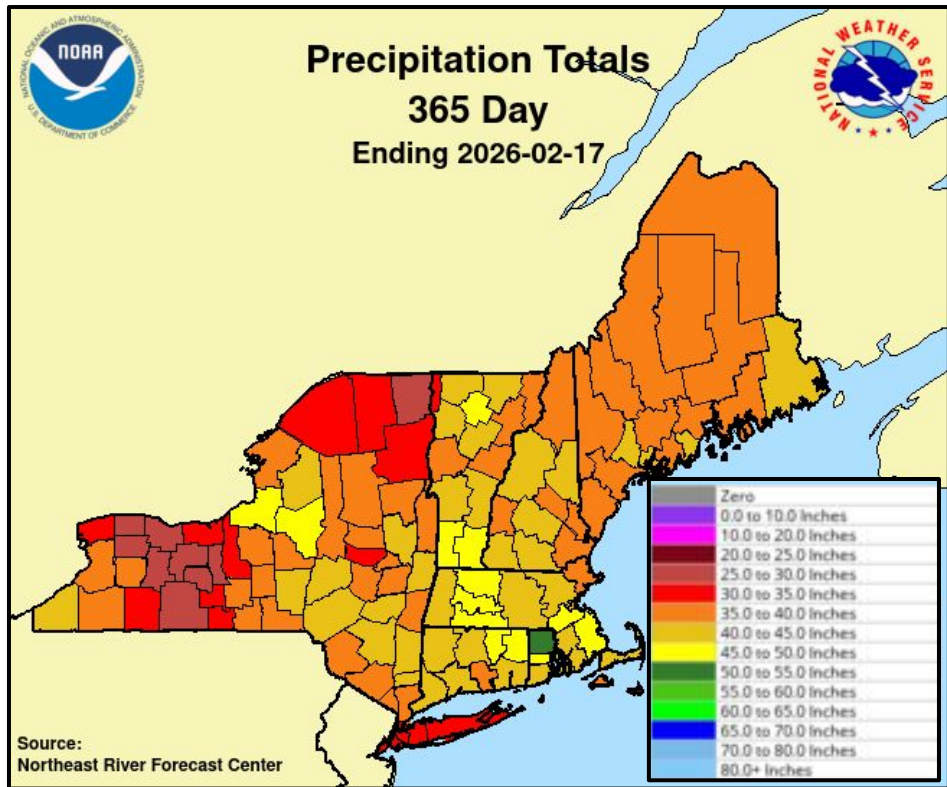
# 60 Day Precipitation vs Normal



# 90 Day Precipitation vs Normal



# 365 Day Precipitation vs Normal

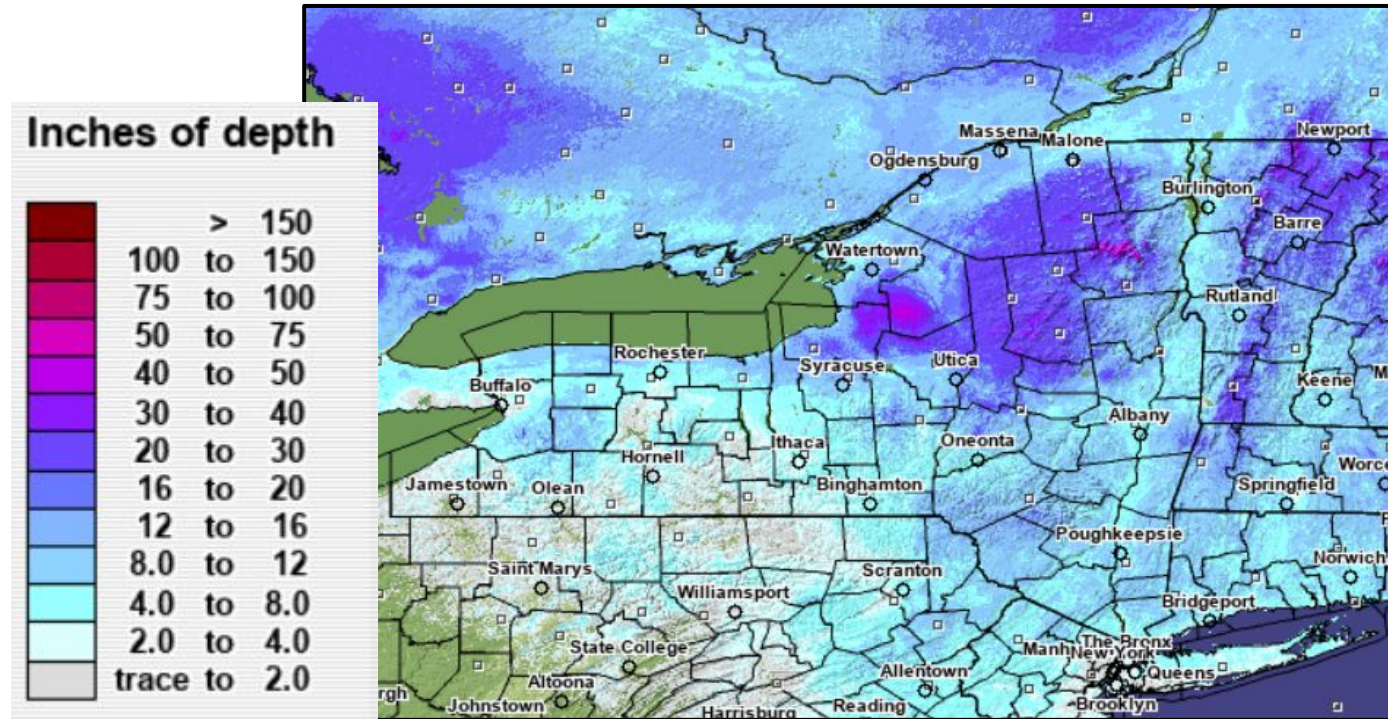


# Current Snow Cover



- Almost the entire state has snow on the ground at this time, with several inches of snow pack even for most valley areas.
- Portions of Western NY and the Southern Tier, however, have little snow cover on the ground

## Current Snow Depth

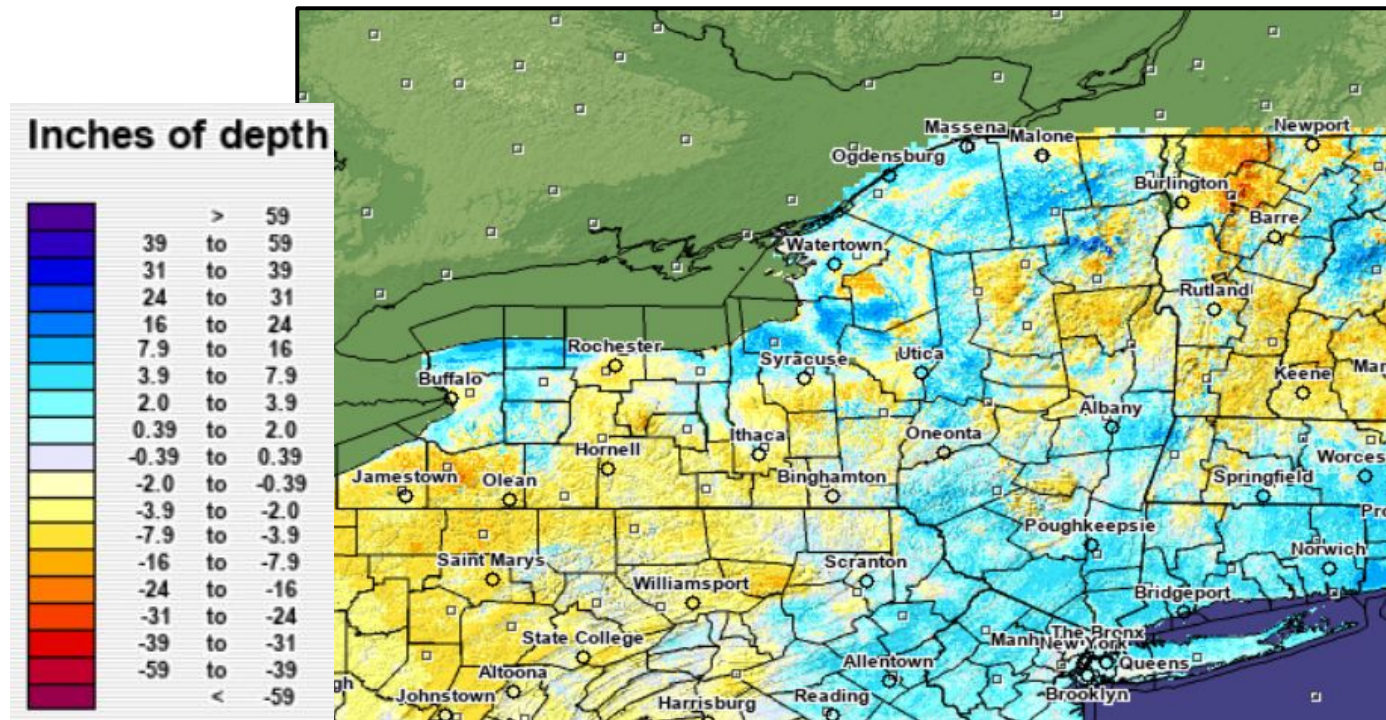


# Current Snow Cover



- Compared to normal, much of the Hudson Valley, NYC, and Long Island has above normal snowpack, as does the Lake Ontario Shore and St. Lawrence Valley.
- Portions of the Southern Tier, Western NY, southern ADKs, and northern Catskills have below-normal snow depth at this time

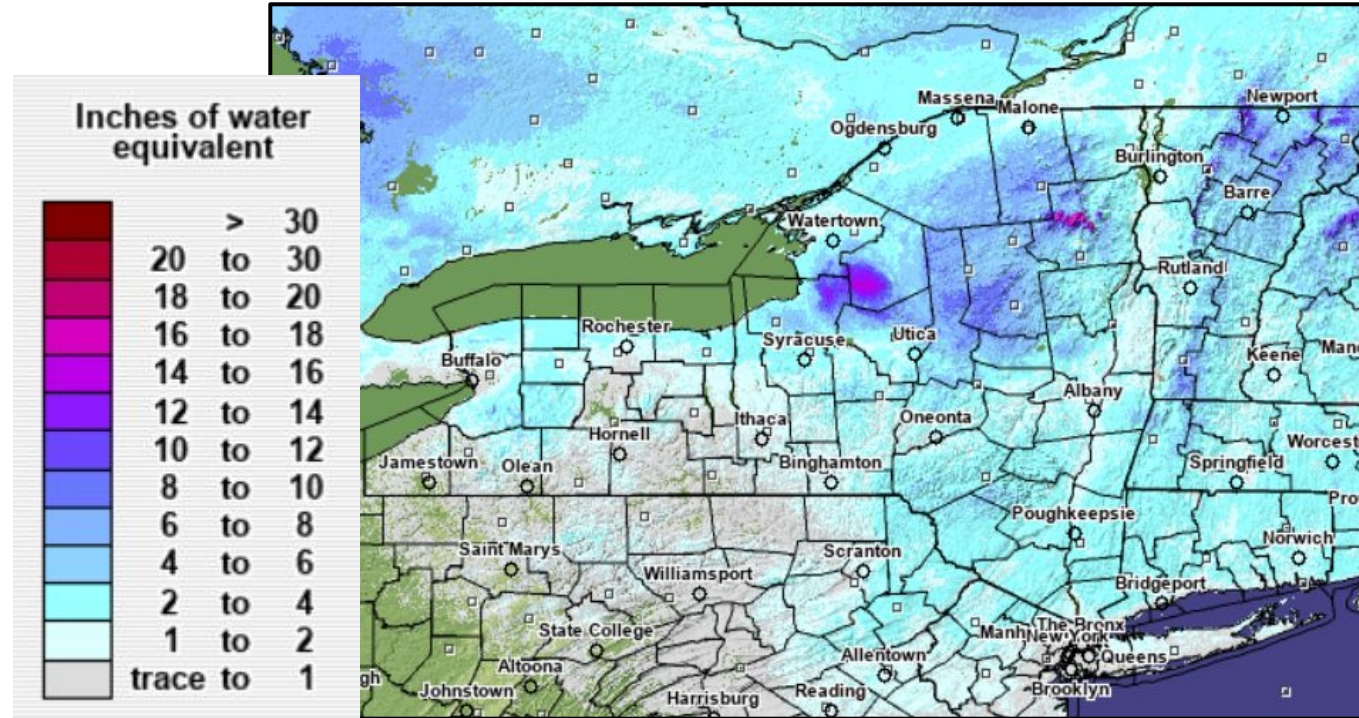
## Snow Depth Departure from Normal





- Most of the valley areas have 1–3” of liquid equivalent in the snowpack, with significantly more than this in the mountains.
- The Southern Tier and Western NY have the least amount of liquid in the current snowpack

## Liquid In the Snowpack





# 7 Day Forecast

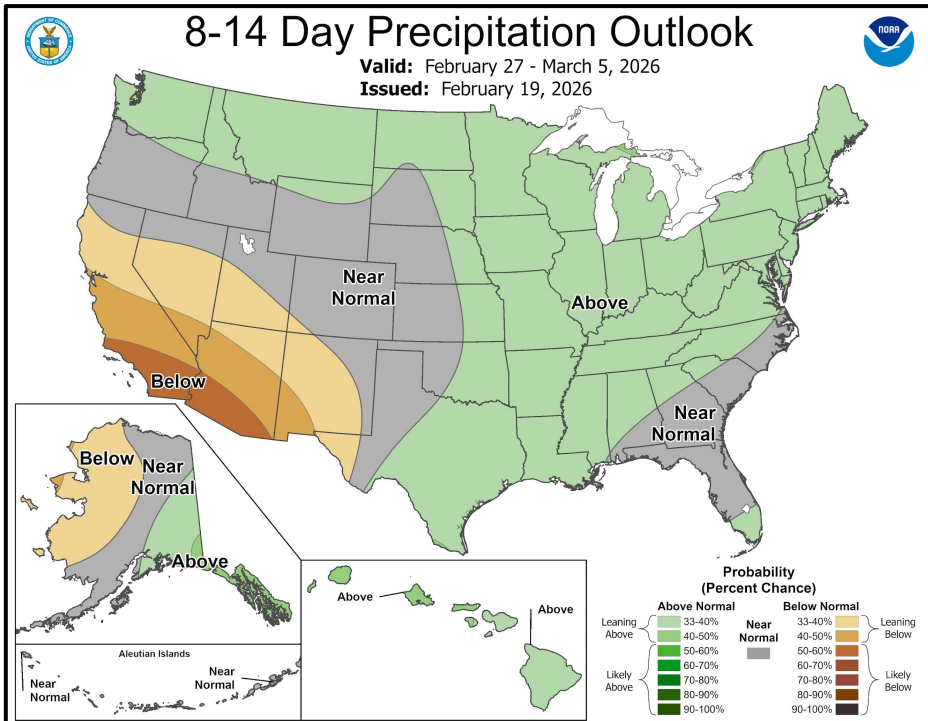
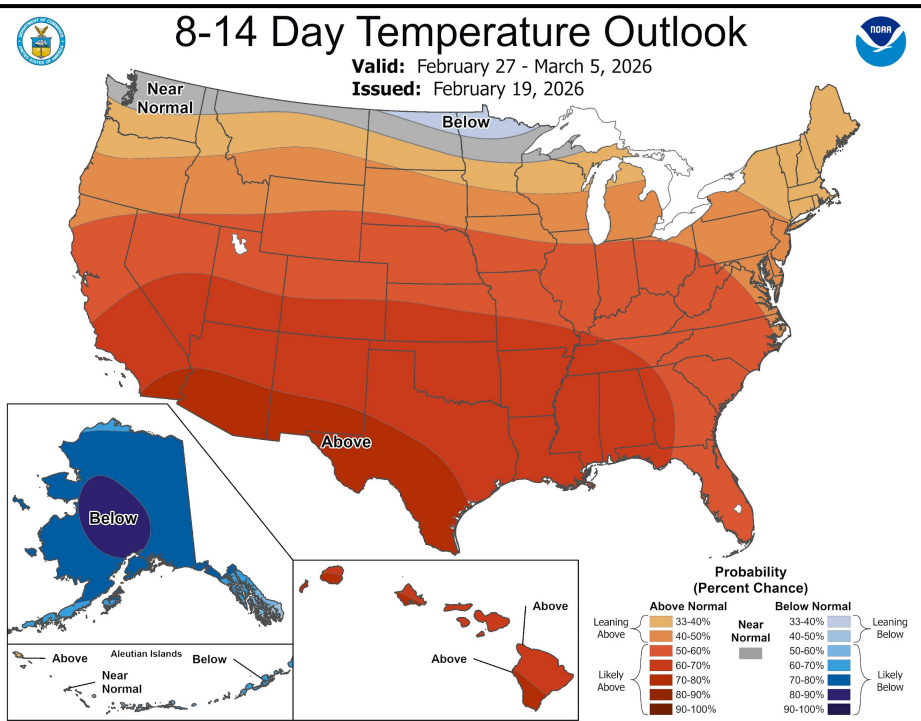
- Rain (southern and southwestern portions of the state) and snow (northern portions of the state) expected today. Most areas see ½” or more of liquid.
- Monitoring a potential coastal storm Sunday-Monday that could bring additional snow, especially to southern areas of the state.
- A clipper system could bring additional light precipitation to the state by the middle of next week.
- Overall, our pattern looks to remain active through the next 7-10 days.





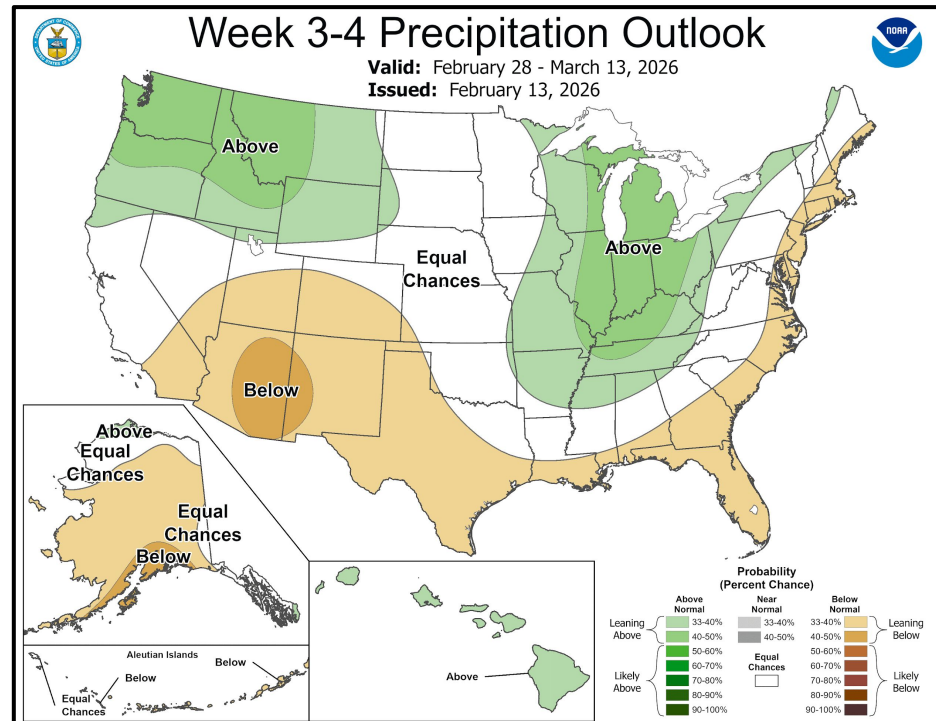
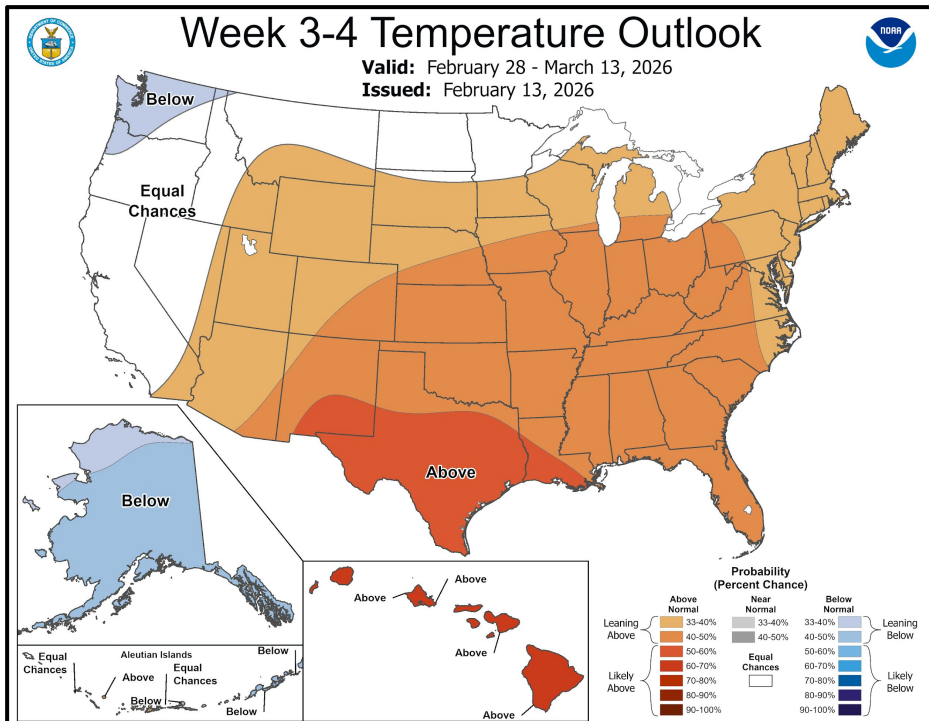
# 8 – 14 Day Forecast

February 20, 2026





# 3 – 4 Week Outlook



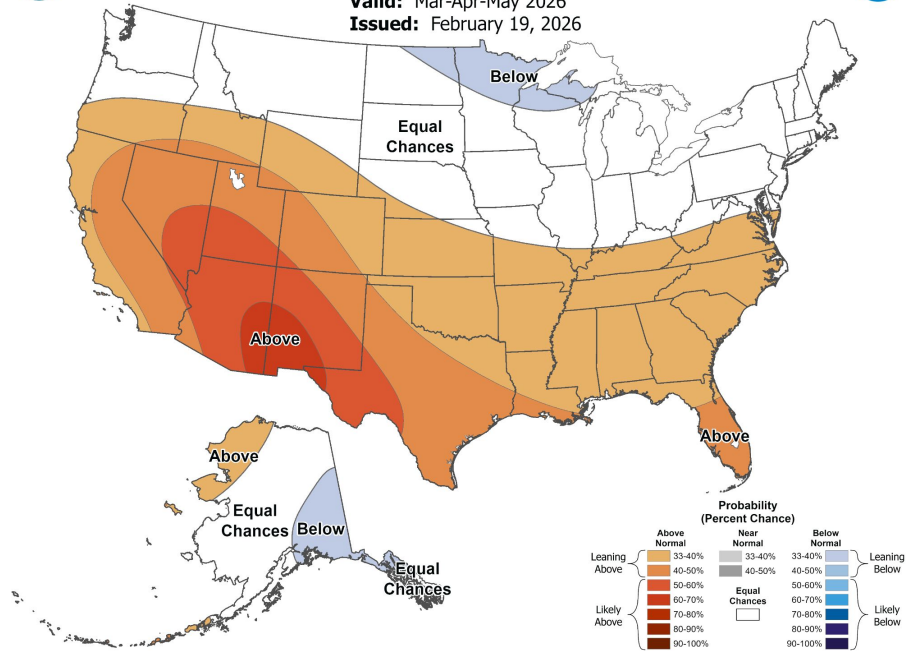


# Spring Outlook



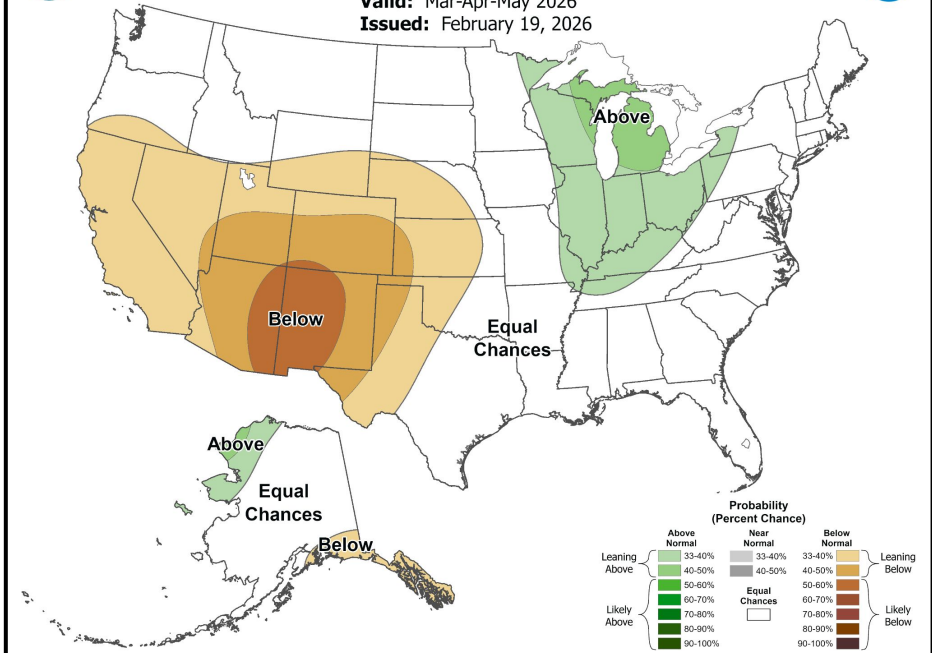
## Seasonal Temperature Outlook

Valid: Mar-Apr-May 2026  
 Issued: February 19, 2026



## Seasonal Precipitation Outlook

Valid: Mar-Apr-May 2026  
 Issued: February 19, 2026

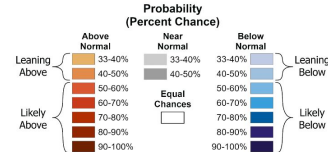
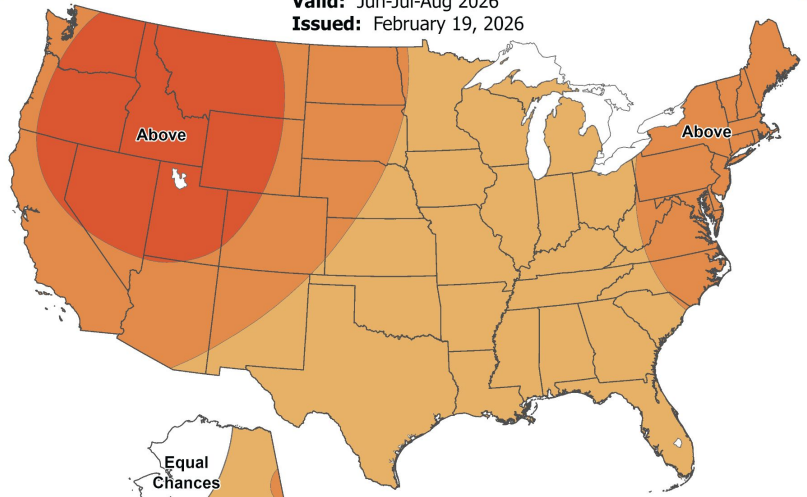


# Summer Outlook



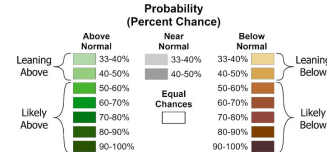
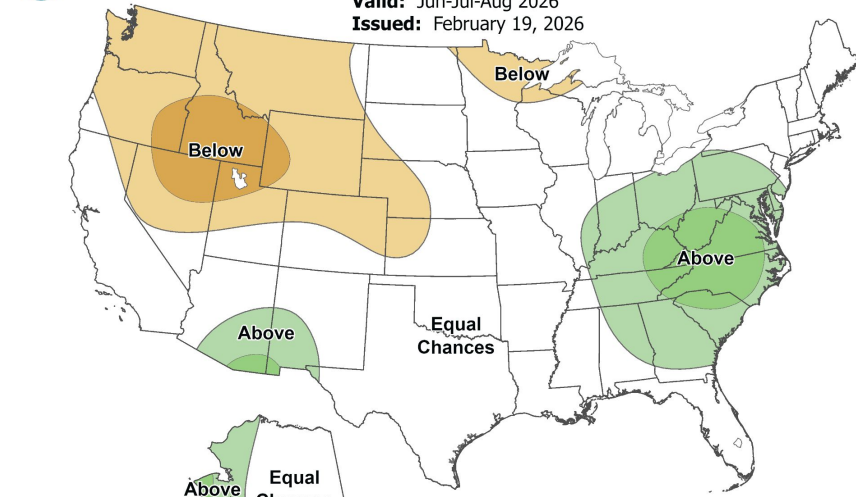
## Seasonal Temperature Outlook

Valid: Jun-Jul-Aug 2026  
 Issued: February 19, 2026

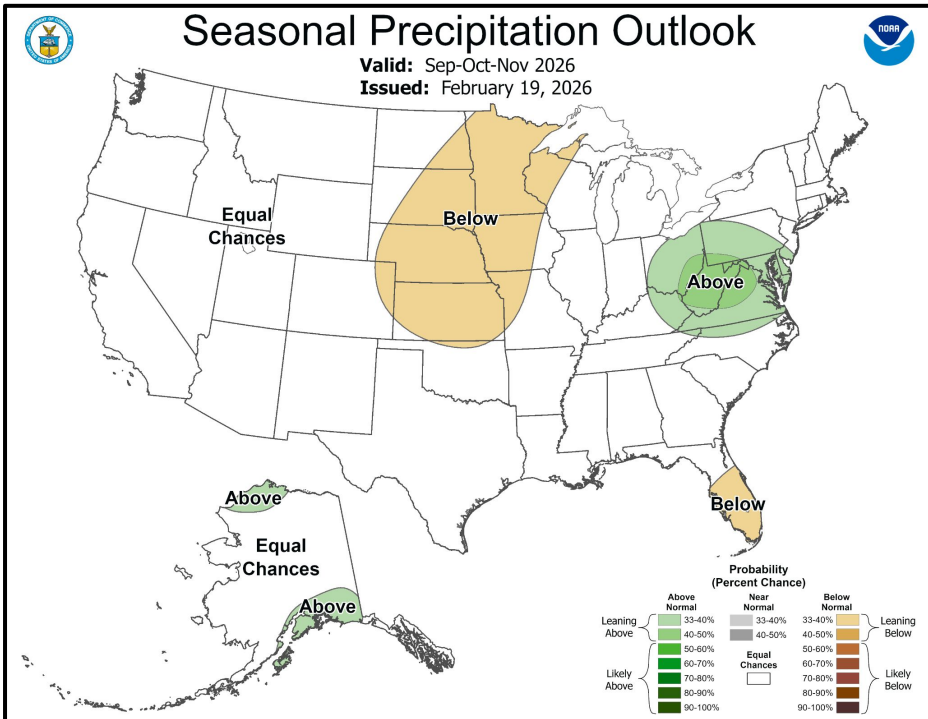
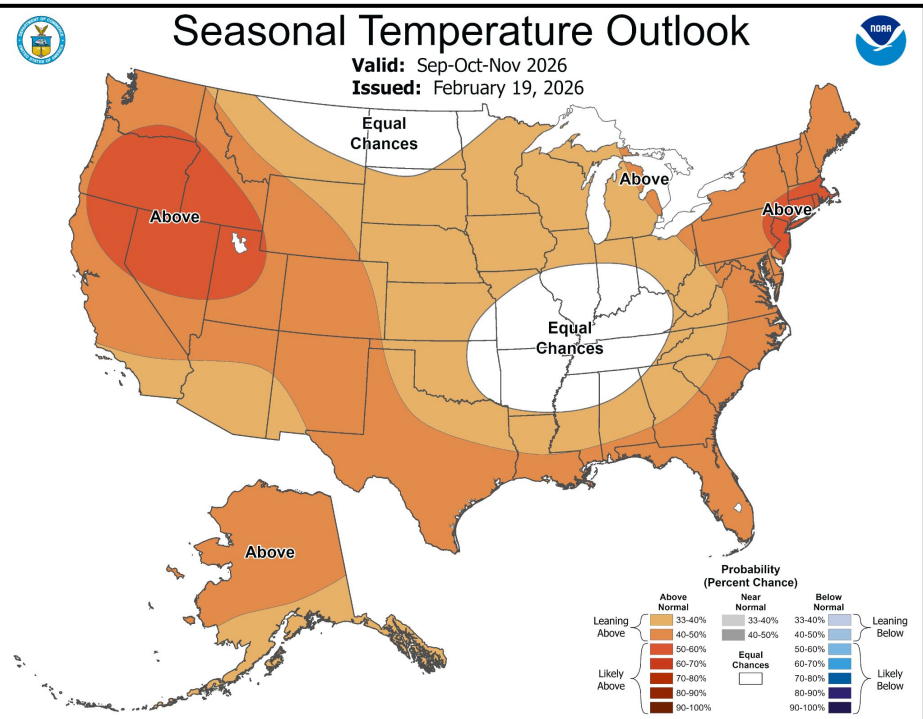


## Seasonal Precipitation Outlook

Valid: Jun-Jul-Aug 2026  
 Issued: February 19, 2026



# Fall Outlook



# Conclusions



- Most of the state has snow on the ground, with more rain/snow expected today.
- The weather pattern looks active through the next couple weeks, with several additional precipitation chances.
- Despite drier than normal conditions over the past several months, especially for southern portions of the state, the active pattern and current snowpack should prevent an early start to the fire weather season
- No strong signals for an unusually active spring fire weather season.
- If summer and fall end up with above normal temperatures and near normal precipitation, we may have fire weather considerations again this fall.



# Questions

