



NATIONAL
WEATHER
SERVICE

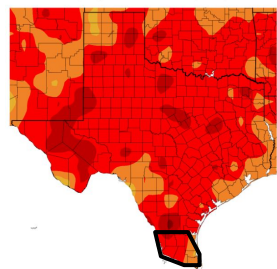
December 2025-February 2026 (Winter 2025/2026) Outlook: Perspective for the Lower Rio Grande Valley/Deep S. Texas Region

November 28, 2025

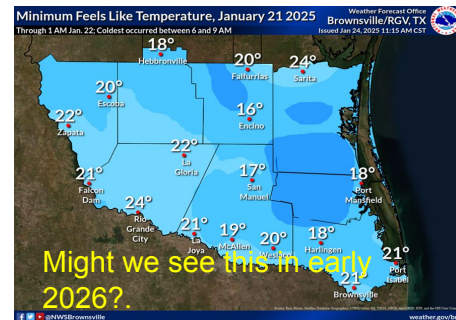
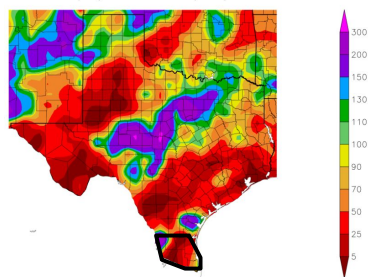
Andrei Evbuoma, Barry Goldsmith, & Rodney Chai
NWS Brownsville/Rio Grande Valley, Texas

Dry and warmer than normal conditions are favored during the Winter 2025/2026 Season; drought, wildfire potential, water supply, marine/coastal hazards, and cold fronts remain in focus

Departure from Normal Temperature (F)
11/1/2025 - 11/26/2025



Percent of Normal Precipitation (%)
11/1/2025 - 11/26/2025



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Building a Weather-Ready Nation // 1

November 2025: “Endless Summer” Continued for Most as November will finish out amongst the top ten warmest on record

Maximum 27-Day Mean Avg Temperature for Brownsville Area, TX (ThreadEx)

Click column heading to sort ascending, click again to sort descending.

Rank	Value	Ending Date	Missing Days
1	76.8	2024-11-27	0
2	76.2	1973-11-27	0
3	76.2	2025-11-27	0
4	75.3	2020-11-27	0
5	75.0	2015-11-27	0
6	74.8	1994-11-27	0
-	74.8	1909-11-27	0
8	74.0	2017-11-27	0
9	73.6	1927-11-27	0
10	73.3	1945-11-27	0

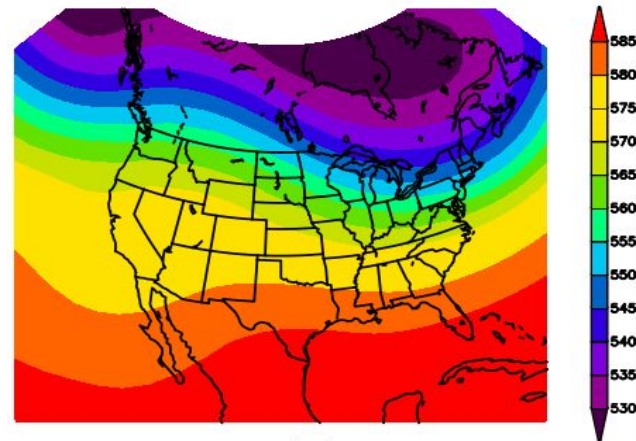
Period of record: 1878-01-01 to 2025-11-27

Maximum 27-Day Mean Avg Temperature for McAllen Area, TX (ThreadEx)

Click column heading to sort ascending, click again to sort descending.

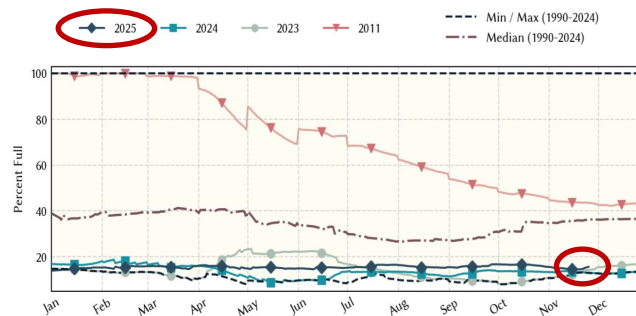
Rank	Value	Ending Date	Missing Days
1	77.5	2024-11-27	0
2	76.6	2025-11-27	0
3	76.5	1994-11-27	0
4	75.7	1973-11-27	0
5	75.2	2016-11-27	0
6	75.1	2020-11-27	0
7	74.1	1985-11-27	0
8	74.0	1945-11-27	0
9	73.7	2015-11-27	0
10	73.5	2017-11-27	0

Period of record: 1941-06-01 to 2025-11-27



500mb GEOPOTENTIAL HEIGHTS (dam) 24-DAY MEAN FOR:
Sat Nov 01 2025 – Mon Nov 24 2025
NCEP OPERATIONAL DATASET

Top Image: 500 mb pattern averaged out from November 1-24, 2025.



Bottom Image: Latest data from the Rio Grande Reservoirs (Texas Share) continue to indicate 2025 levels are at or below 30 year lows and near records. Month-over-month shares have increased slightly from 15.9% to 16.1%. **Credit:** Texas Water Development Board

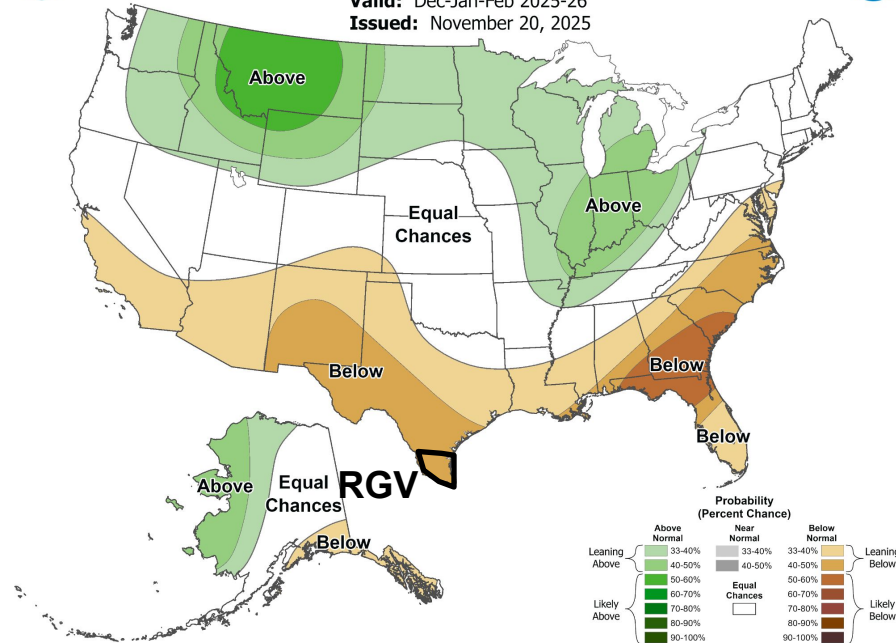
November 2025 will finish among the top ten warmest on record. As of the 27th, both Brownsville **ranked #3 all-time and McAllen ranked #2 for the month**. Based on 1991-2020 averages, Brownsville is **+5.3F above normal** with an average temperature of 76.2F. McAllen is **+6.1F above normal** with an average temperature of 76.6F. Harlingen (Valley Airport) is **+4.6F above normal** with an average temperature of 73.3F.

Despite a slight cooldown in the final days of November, both Brownsville and McAllen will likely maintain their top five position all-time.

Meanwhile, it has been dry across the region for yet another month, though some spots did receive near-average rainfall. Based on 1991-2020 averages, month-to-date, Brownsville is **-0.59 below normal** with a value of 1.05". However, McAllen/Miller recorded no rain, tied for driest on record, and is **-1.08 below normal**. Harlingen (Valley) was **-0.03" below normal** with a value of 1.64".



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Confidence: Medium-High (60-80%) for **warmer** and High (70-90%) for **drier** than normal conditions during the DJF period.

Key Takeaways: December 2025-February 2026 Outlook

- A **warmer than normal** outlook is anticipated through the **December-February** period for the Rio Grande Valley/Deep South Texas region. **Confidence is medium-high (60-80%)**. Meanwhile, a **drier than normal** pattern is expected to persist through the December-February period. Confidence is high (70-90%).
- Expect for **cool/cold fronts** and **dry air intrusions** to become more pronounced and frequent through February. These cool/cold fronts will help to drive blustery northerly winds, which coupled with lower relative humidity values, will increase the **potential for wildfires**. **D2 (Severe Drought)** and **D3 (Extreme Drought)** has already developed over areas along and west of IH-69C/US 281. Meanwhile, **D1 (Moderate Drought) to D2 (Severe Drought)** has already developed over areas along and east of IH-69C/US 281. These conditions are expected to increase/worsen for most areas through the winter season.
- Falcon Int'l Reservoir remained **near historic lows at the end of November**. **As we continue to progress through the dry season, confidence remains near-certain (~100%) on total storage remaining just above record lows through February**.
- Additionally, the **increase in cool/cold fronts** will result in an **increase in coastal (tidal/surf) and marine (dangerous boating) situations** as we progress into the new year!
- **Final Note:** Despite the favored warmer than average temperatures through winter 2025/2026, chances **(30 to 50 percent)** for a **significant cold snap or two** between Christmas and mid February have **increased!** The past three winters (2022/23, 2023/24, and 2024/25) had these. **Stay Tuned!**

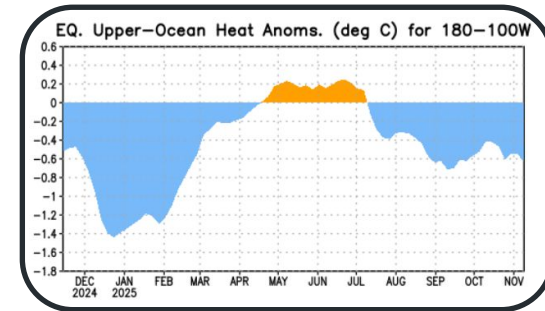
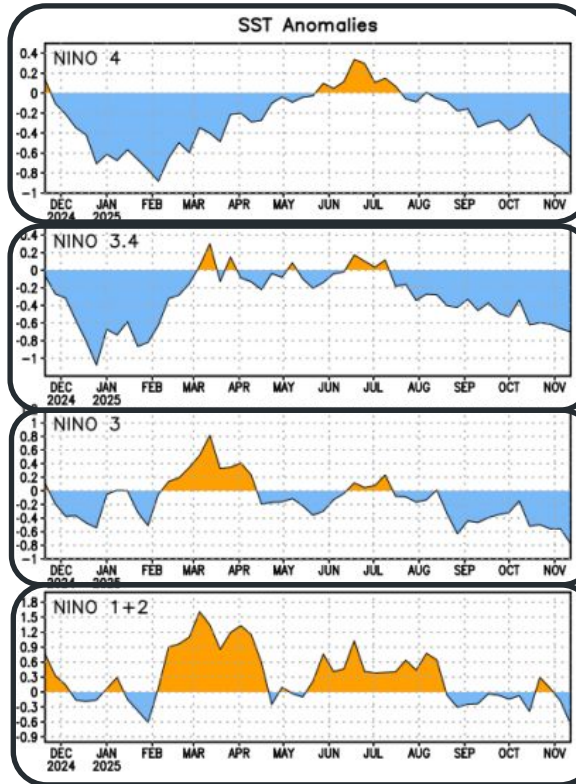


The “Why” of the Forecast: La Nina, soil moisture, long-term trends, and other key climate teleconnections to play a role

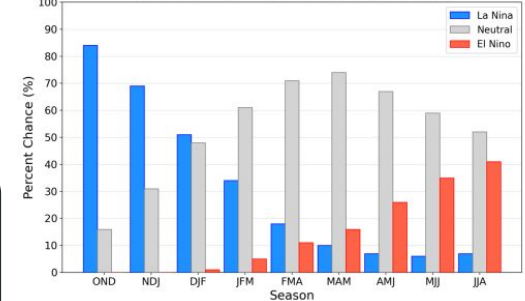
- With a La Nina in place and expected to persist through the Winter Season, a **warmer and drier than normal** pattern is favored to continue through at least February across Deep South Texas/RGV.
- Other seasonal/sub-seasonal **teleconnections/variables** such as the [Arctic Oscillation](#), [Pacific North American Oscillation](#), [circumpolar vortex \(PV\) strength](#), northern hemispheric snow cover trends, and **intraseasonal variability** could play a **vital role** leading to anomalous an weather event(s) such as a **major cold snap or ice storm** this upcoming winter season!
- As **drought conditions** expand and **cool snaps** become more frequent and **stronger**, **wildfire season** could emerge in December or January and potentially become more **robust late winter into spring 2026**.

*Above right: Oceanic Niño Index. Values between -0.5 and 0.5 (gray) indicated ENSO Neutral conditions persisting since April-June 2024.

Year	DJF	JFM	FMA	MAM	AMJ	MJJ	JJA	JAS	ASO	SON	OND	NDJ
2022	-1.0	-0.9	-1.0	-1.1	-1.0	-0.9	-0.8	-0.9	-1.0	-1.0	-0.9	-0.8
2023	-0.7	-0.4	-0.1	0.2	0.5	0.8	1.1	1.3	1.6	1.8	1.9	2.0
2024	1.8	1.5	1.1	0.7	0.4	0.2	0.0	-0.1	-0.2	-0.3	-0.4	-0.5
2025	-0.6	-0.4	-0.2	-0.1	-0.1	-0.1	-0.2	-0.3	-0.5			

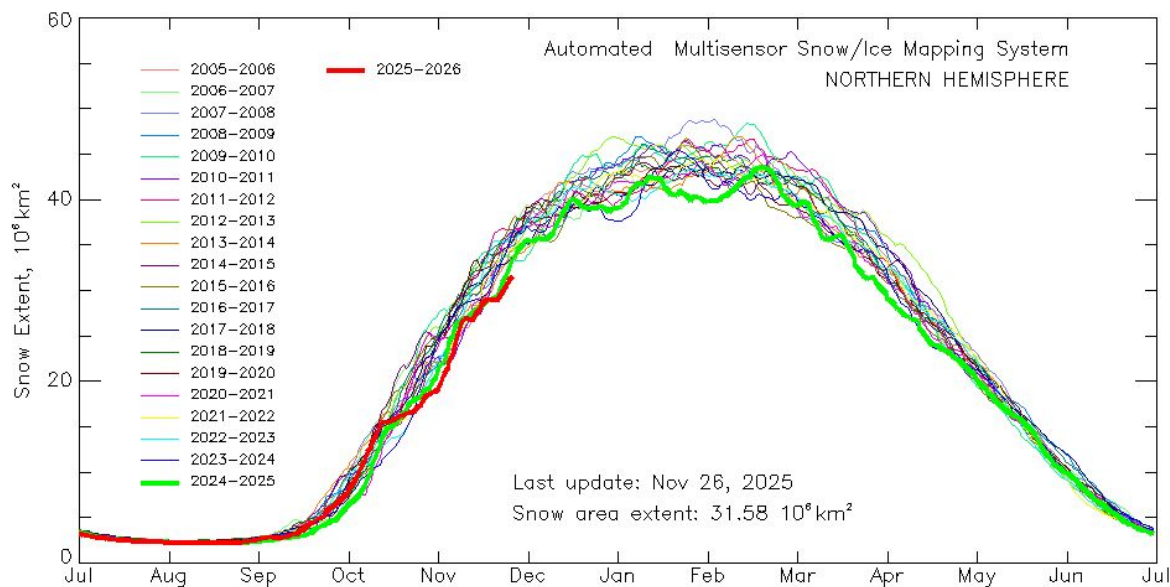


Official NOAA CPC ENSO Probabilities (issued November 2025)
based on -0.5/+0.5°C thresholds in ERSSTv5 Niño-3.4 index

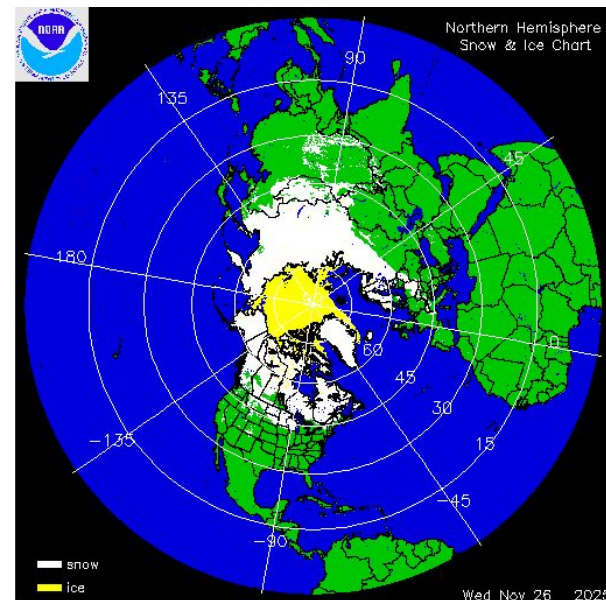


Northern Hemispheric Snow Cover Extent Maps and Charts

Daily snow extent and anomalies



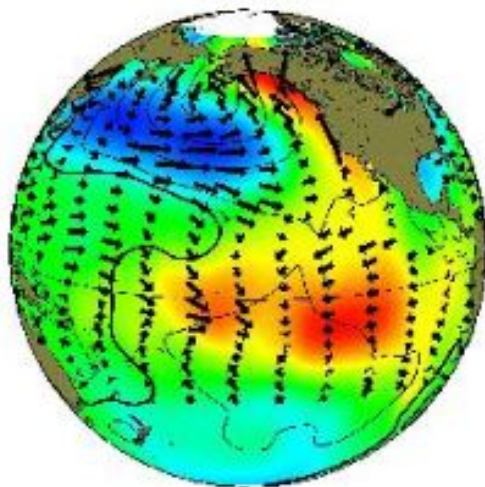
Latest Snow Map



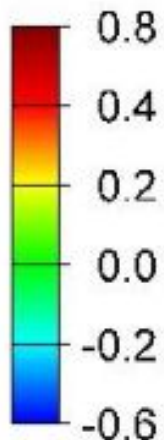
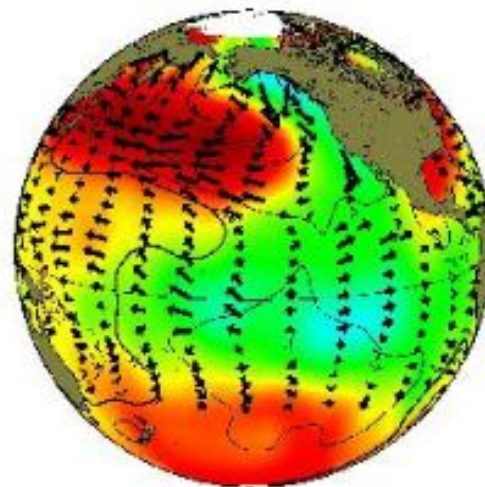
- The **location and extent of snow cover in the northern hemisphere** could serve as a key indicator of how **strong** the **cold fronts** from the north become through the upcoming Winter Season!
- Month-over-month, there has been an increase in snow cover over the northern hemisphere including Eurasia/Siberia, Alaska, Canada, and the north-central parts of the U.S.

Pacific Decadal Oscillation (PDO)

Positive Phase



Negative Phase

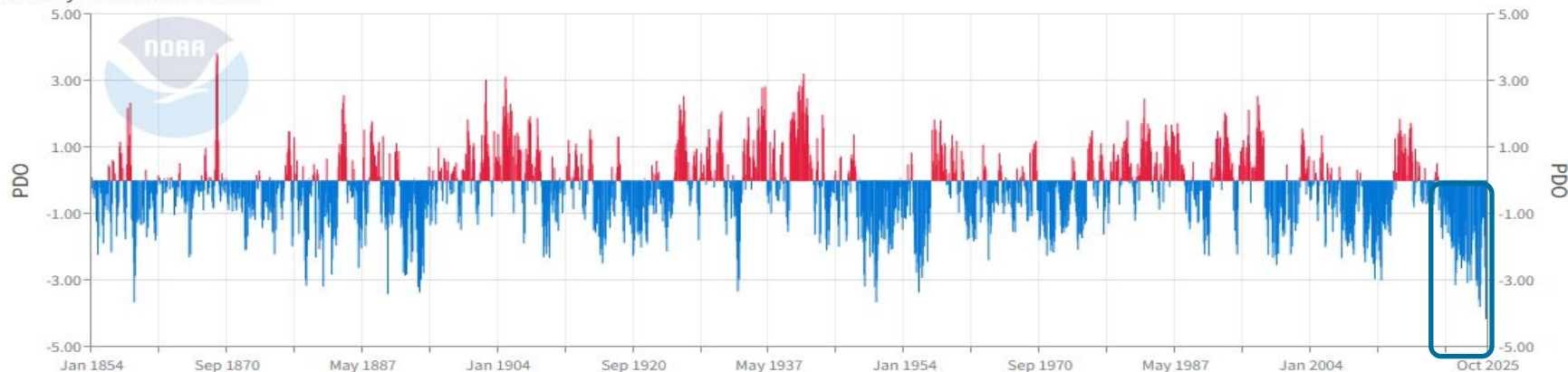


- The Pacific Decadal Oscillation (PDO) is often described as a long-lived El Niño-like pattern of Pacific climate variability.
- Above average sea level pressures over the North Pacific (warm SST anomalies in the interior and cool SST anomalies along the North American coast) → Negative PDO (right).

The “Why” of the Forecast: Pacific Decadal Oscillation (PDO) remains in Sharp Negative Phase

Pacific Decadal Oscillation (PDO)

January 1854-October 2025



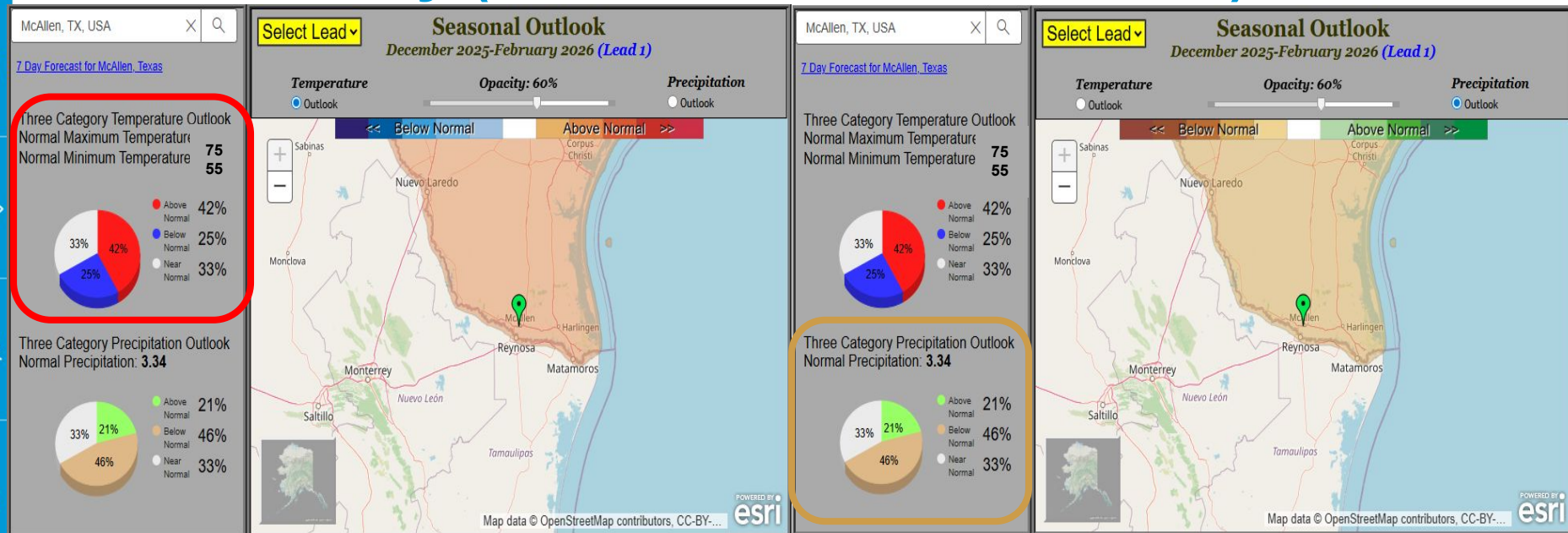
Source: <https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/pub/data/cmb/ersst/v5/index/ersst.v5.pdo.dat>

Powered by ZingChart

- The 2021-2025 **prolonged and strong negative PDO** has persisted, and will remain the case into 2026. This **continues to support confidence** for a **warmer than normal pattern to persist into 2026.**
- In addition to the sharply negative PDO in place, a La Nina will support a **drier than normal precipitation outcome.** **Confidence remains high** for a sharply negative PDO to continue.
- Correlations between at least one hard freeze each winter since 2020/2021 and the prolonged negative PDO, with more research needed.



The December 2025-February 2026 Outlook: Rio Grande Valley (McAllen as Anchor Point)



- Temperature:** **Warmer than normal temperatures** are expected. **Confidence: Medium-High (60-80%).** RGV averages: Afternoon – Mid 70s through early December; lower 70s mid December through January, mid-upper 70s in February. Wake-up: Mid 50s through mid December; lower 50s late December through January, mid-upper 50s in February.
- Precipitation:** **Drier than normal outcome** is expected. **Confidence: High (70-90%).** RGV averages: 2.5 to 3.5 inches (**most in December**).

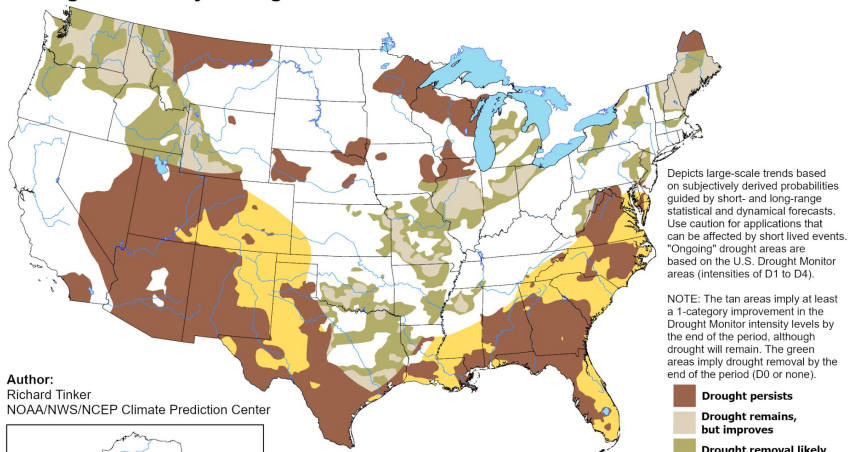
The December 2025-February 2026 “Droughtlook”

U.S. Seasonal Drought Outlook

Drought Tendency During the Valid Period

Valid for November 20, 2025 - February 28, 2026

Released November 20, 2025



Author:
Richard Tinker
NOAA/NWS/NCEP Climate Prediction Center



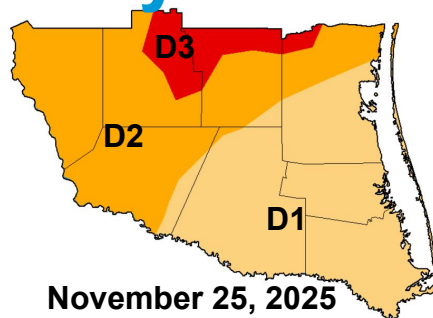
Depicts large-scale trends based on subjectively derived probabilities guided by short- and long-range statistical and dynamical forecasts. Use caution for applications that can be affected by short lived events. “Ongoing” drought areas are based on the U.S. Drought Monitor areas (intensities of D1 to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

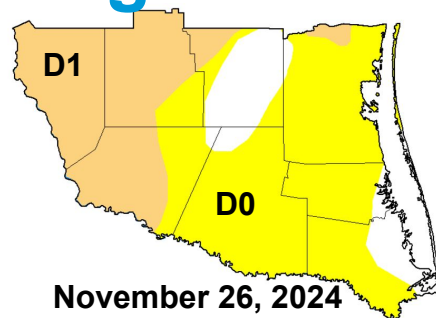
Drought persists
Drought remains, but improves
Drought removal likely
Drought development likely
No drought



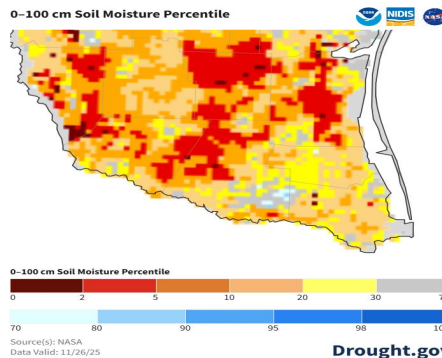
<https://go.usa.gov/3eZ73>



November 25, 2025



November 26, 2024



Drought Classification

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

- **Year-over-Year (YoY) drought/dryness** shows a stark contrast between 2024 which was relatively dry to 2025 which has been very dry across Deep South Texas and the Rio Grande Valley.
- Rainfall has been below average since September, as dry season kicks into full gear! **Since September 1**, Brownsville has recorded **8.80”** compared to 13.40” last year. **Since September 1**, Harlingen has recorded **5.54”** compared to 12.29” last year. Finally, **since September 1**, McAllen has recorded **0.68”** compared to 5.77” last year.
- The seasonal drought outlook suggests **drought conditions persisting** over the RGV/Deep South Texas through February.



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**Significant Wildland Fire Potential Outlook
February 2026**

RGV

Significant Wildland Fire Potential

- Above Normal
- Below Normal
- Normal
- State Boundary
- Geographic Area Boundary
- Predictive Services Area Boundary

Below normal significant wildland fire potential indicates a greater than usual likelihood that significant wildfires will occur. Significant wildland fires would be expected in typical fires and intervals during normal significant wildland fire potential conditions. Significant wildland fires are still possible but less likely than usual during forecasted below normal periods.

Map produced by
Predictive Services,
National Interagency Fire Center
Boise, Idaho
Issued November 3, 2025
Next issuance December 1, 2025

-

Wildfire Prevention Review

- Conditions remain stable for most locations at the end of November. However, if dryness persists, wildfire spread potential may increase through the early parts of 2026 in the Rio Grande Plains/Brush Country, and potential spread into the mid/upper RGV. Such a situation would worsen drought and cure recently-grown fine fuels such as rangeland and brush.
- Continue to practice fire weather safety and focus on **farm, ranch workers, and other persons who might drive hot vehicles** on parched brush on critical/near-critical days – especially on warm, breezy days during a dry spell.



Infographics for Wildfire Prevention

Fire Weather SAFETY TIPS

- Be careful to not drag trailer chains that could cause sparks.
- Do not park on dry grass.
- Avoid outdoor burning and check recently burned piles for flare-ups.
- Clear out dead vegetation from around your home.
- Be careful when welding in dry grass.



Consejos de Seguridad Contra Incendios

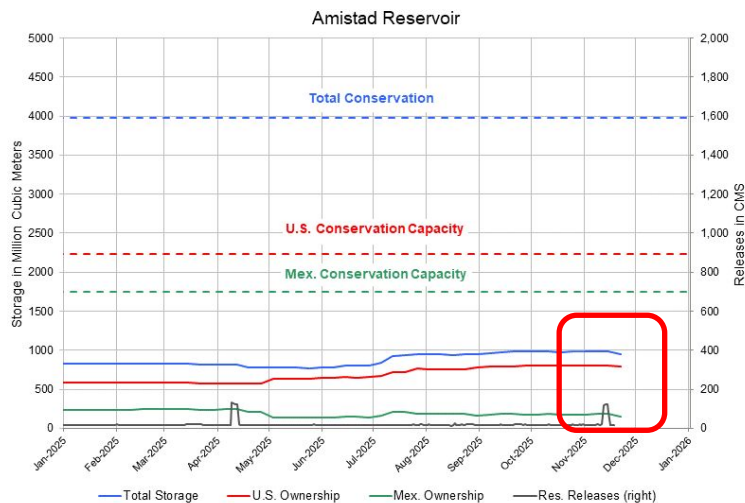
- Tenga cuidado de no arrastrar cadenas de remolque que podrían provocar chispas.
- No se estacione sobre césped seco.
- Evite las quemaduras al aire libre y revise las pilas recientemente quemadas para detectar brotes de fuego.
- Elimine la vegetación muerta alrededor de tu casa.
- Tenga cuidado soldar en hierba seca.



- ~50 in all (20 in Spanish)!
- Thanks to **Texas A&M Forest Service** for Many of These!



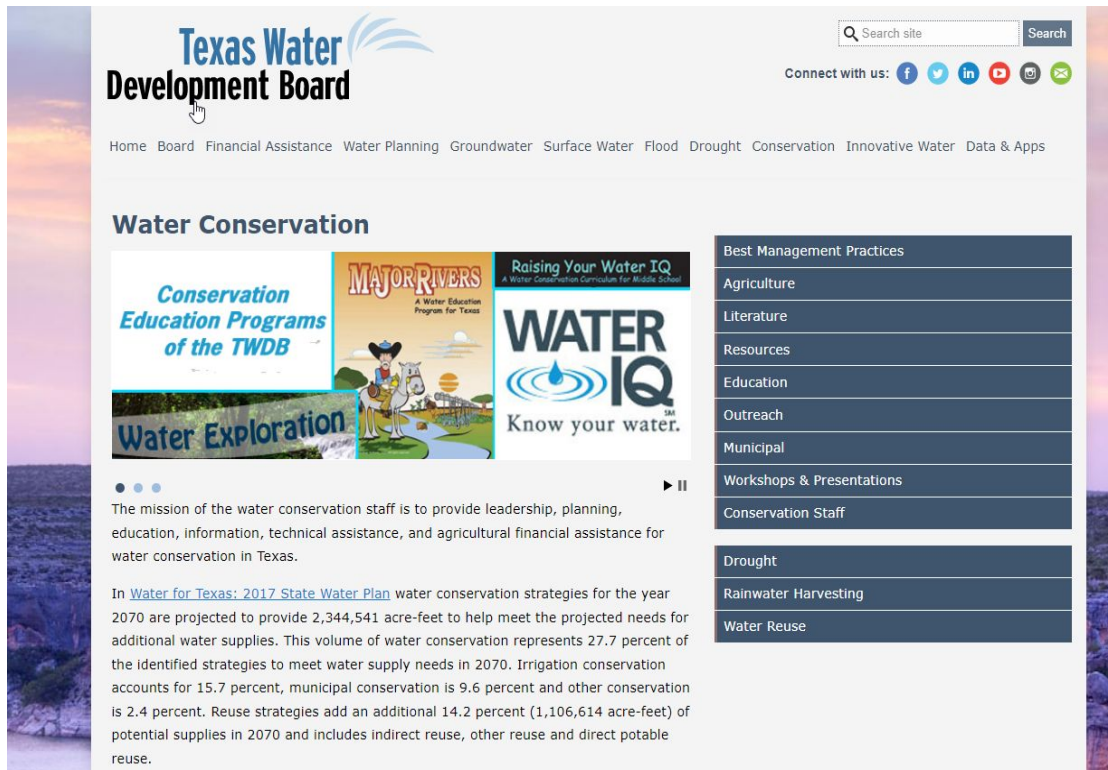
Amistad and Falcon Reservoirs have and will continue to remain just above record lows through the remainder of 2025 and into early 2026



- **Falcon remained nearly steady at 10.1%** as of November 26 (slightly lower than the **10.9% in late October**). Levels should change little or fall slowly through February.
- **Amistad also remained nearly steady and slightly above all-time record lows as of late November.** Levels were at **23.9% on November 26th** (slightly lower than the **24.5% from late October**). Levels should change little or fall slowly through February.

Water Conservation is Key Until Further Notice!

- [“Stage 2/3” Restrictions](#) continued through mid Autumn 2025 in some areas, and are likely to continue **until further notice** based on inflows from Amistad and Falcon.
- Learn more at the [Texas Water Development Board’s Conservation Page](#).



The screenshot displays the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) website. At the top, the TWDB logo is on the left, and a search bar and social media links are on the right. Below the header is a navigation menu with links: Home, Board, Financial Assistance, Water Planning, Groundwater, Surface Water, Flood, Drought, Conservation, Innovative Water, and Data & Apps. The main content area is titled "Water Conservation" and features a carousel of educational materials. The first slide is "Conservation Education Programs of the TWDB" with a "Water Exploration" sub-header. The second slide is "MAJOR RIVERS A Water Education Program for Texas". The third slide is "Raising Your Water IQ A Water Conservation Curriculum for Middle School" with the "WATER IQ Know your water." logo. To the right of the carousel is a sidebar with two sections: "Best Management Practices" (listing Agriculture, Literature, Resources, Education, Outreach, Municipal, Workshops & Presentations, and Conservation Staff) and "Drought" (listing Rainwater Harvesting and Water Reuse). Below the carousel, a paragraph states the mission of the water conservation staff and provides a link to the "Water for Texas: 2017 State Water Plan".

Texas Water Development Board

Home Board Financial Assistance Water Planning Groundwater Surface Water Flood Drought Conservation Innovative Water Data & Apps

Water Conservation

Conservation Education Programs of the TWDB

Water Exploration

MAJOR RIVERS
A Water Education Program for Texas

Raising Your Water IQ
A Water Conservation Curriculum for Middle School

WATER IQ
Know your water.

The mission of the water conservation staff is to provide leadership, planning, education, information, technical assistance, and agricultural financial assistance for water conservation in Texas.

In [Water for Texas: 2017 State Water Plan](#) water conservation strategies for the year 2070 are projected to provide 2,344,541 acre-feet to help meet the projected needs for additional water supplies. This volume of water conservation represents 27.7 percent of the identified strategies to meet water supply needs in 2070. Irrigation conservation accounts for 15.7 percent, municipal conservation is 9.6 percent and other conservation is 2.4 percent. Reuse strategies add an additional 14.2 percent (1,106,614 acre-feet) of potential supplies in 2070 and includes indirect reuse, other reuse and direct potable reuse.

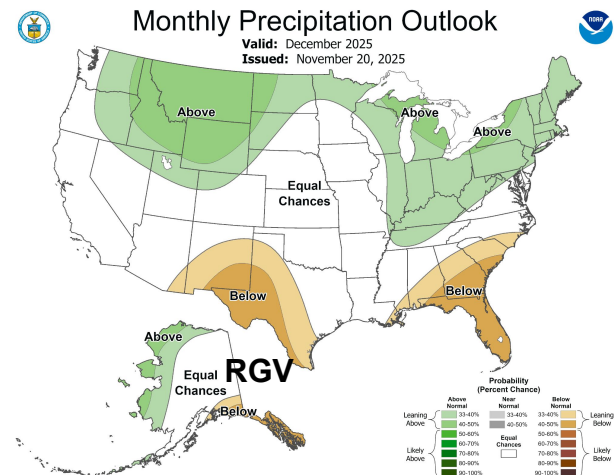
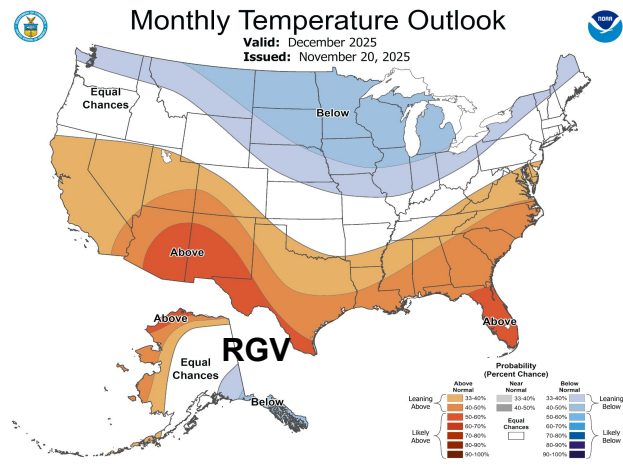
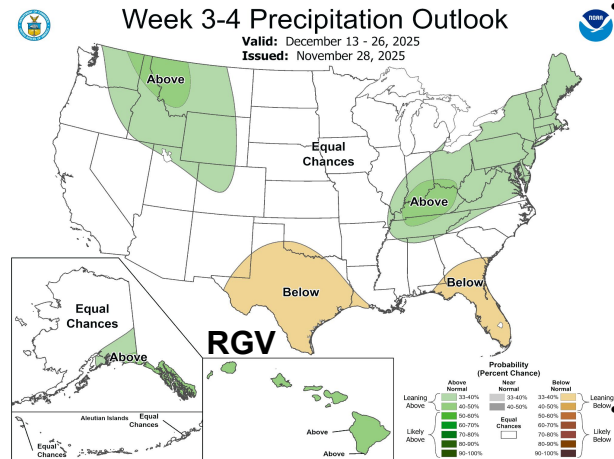
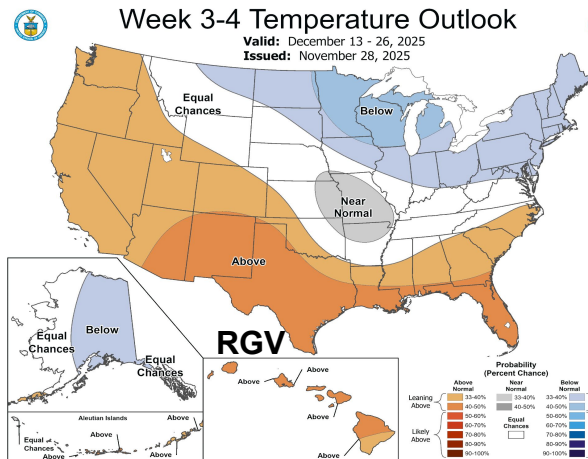
Best Management Practices

- Agriculture
- Literature
- Resources
- Education
- Outreach
- Municipal
- Workshops & Presentations
- Conservation Staff

Drought

- Rainwater Harvesting
- Water Reuse

December 2025: Medium-High (60-80%) Confidence on Temperature and Precipitation Trends



A highly amplified and active steering pattern will feature a **mild West U.S.** vs **Cold Central and East U.S.** to develop into the first few days of December. A relatively strong cold front will bring noticeably cooler temperatures to the RGV/Deep South Texas this weekend through early next week. In fact, some of the coldest air of the season (the coldest since last February) is set to arrive during this time frame - before warming returns soon after.

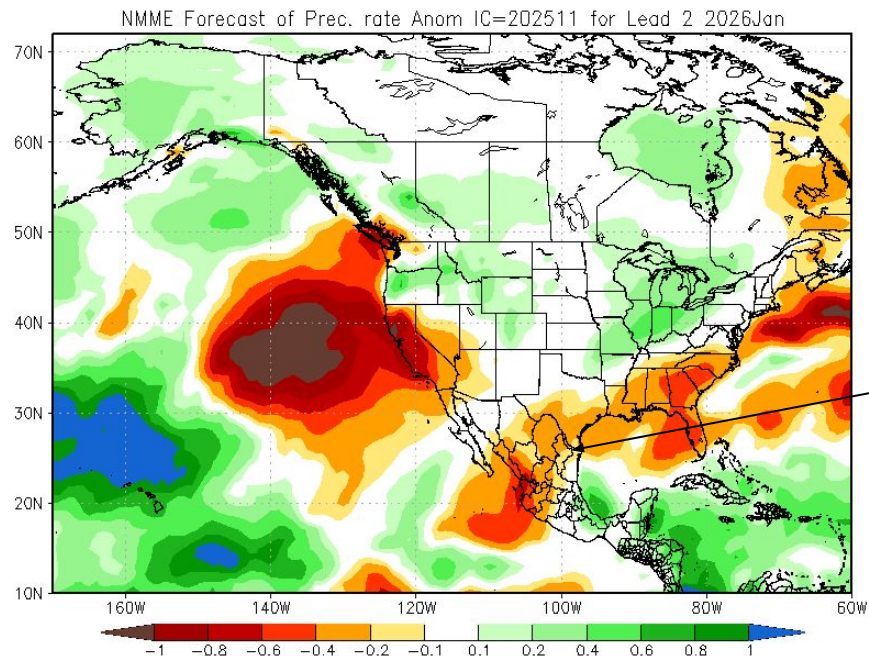
Longer range models suggest the pattern becoming **less amplified** after the first week of December resulting in **moderating temperatures** across Deep South Texas. This pattern could persist through mid-December. Meanwhile, **cold and snowpack** will be **building** across the northern U.S. and Canada.

Overall, the pattern is very La Nina like (**cold and wintry north U.S.** vs **mild and drier south U.S.**). Trends suggest for temperatures to run **normal to warmer than normal** through December. While there could be some **slight rain chances** here or there, the pattern overall will be **drier than normal** through December.



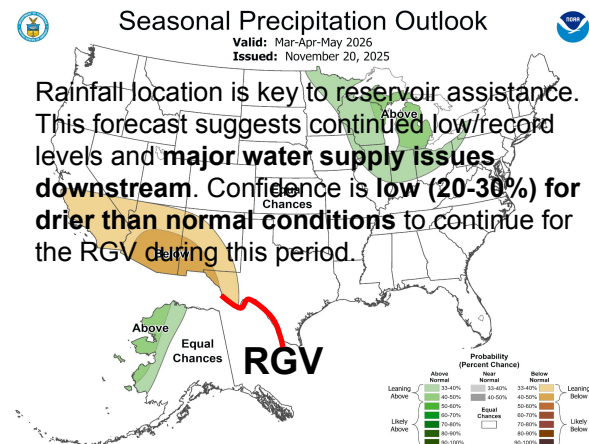
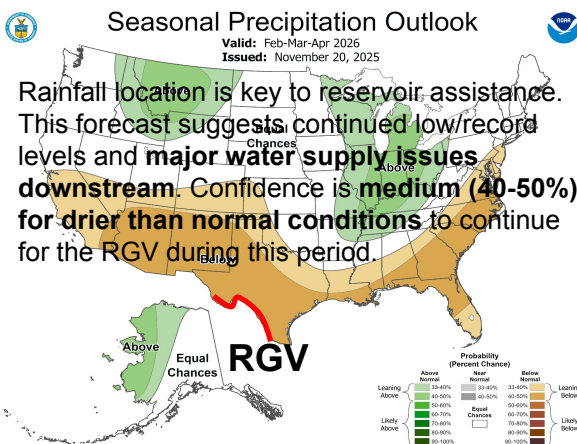
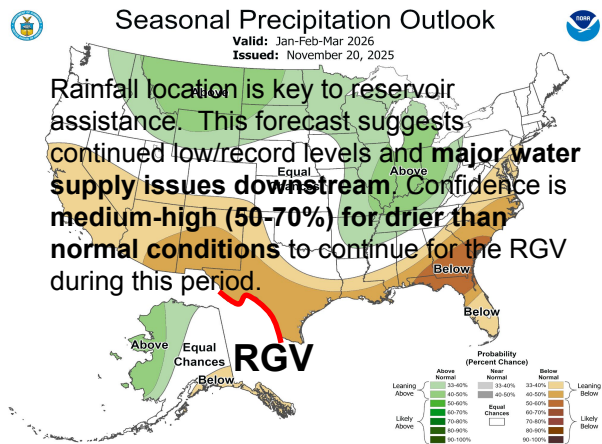
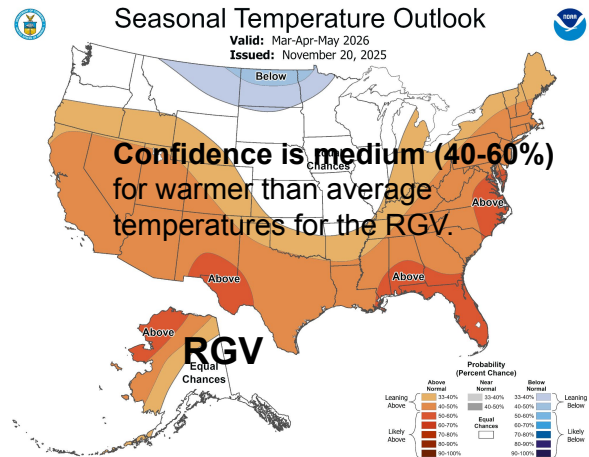
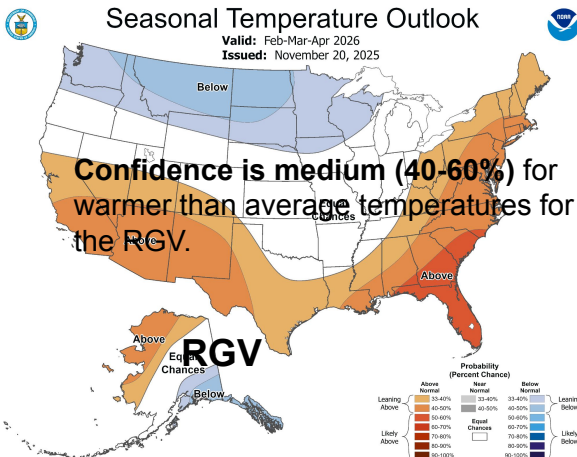
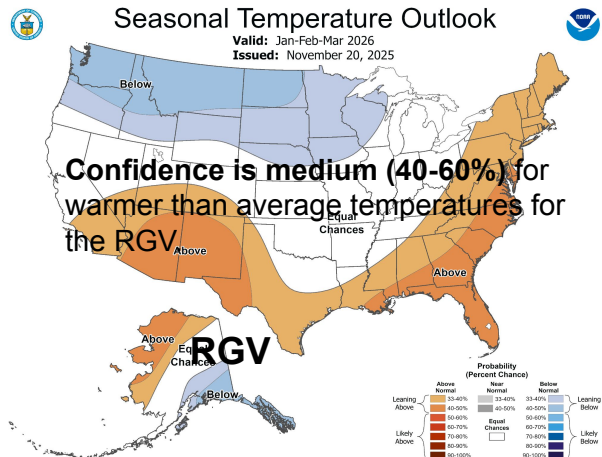
Early Look: January 2026

Potential rainfall rate anomaly, January 2026



- This model's forecast for January favors a **dry pattern** (note the brown/golden brown colors nearby) to persist. Confidence remains high given that we're entering the heart of the dry season here!
- **Cold fronts** moving into Texas will continue! Most will likely be dry, but there could be one or two that could reach the Valley/Deep South Texas Ranchlands and could set off an occasional **shower and thunderstorm**. Will be monitoring the potential for a couple of **major cold snaps (Arctic Express Events)** to take place anytime from around Christmas through mid-February. If followed by light precipitation, this **may be in the form of freezing rain (icing) or sleet**.

Winter 2025/2026 into Early Spring 2026: Classic La Nina Pattern; Warmer and drier than normal trends favored

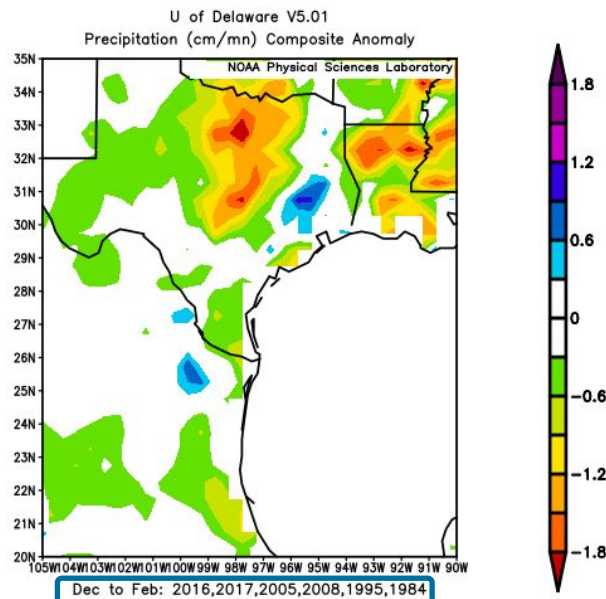


Comparing Similar ENSO Neutral to La Nina (Weak) Episodes mostly within the last 30 years; December-February Periods

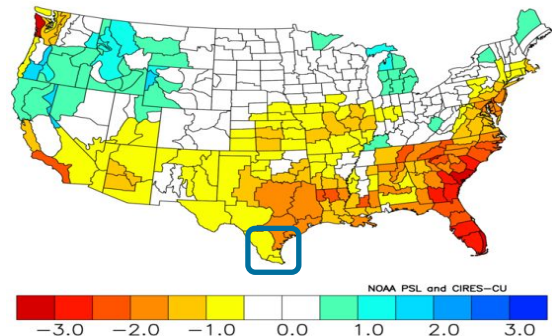
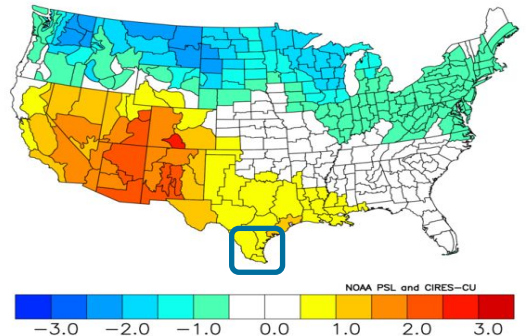
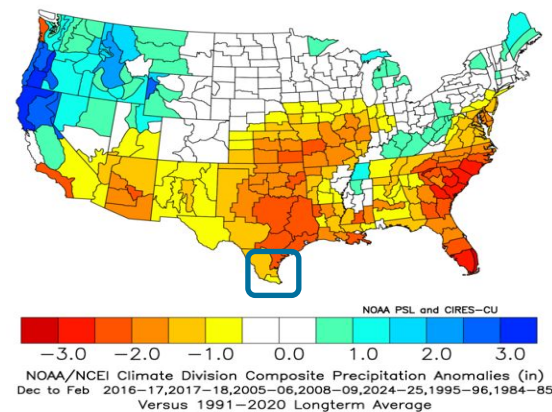
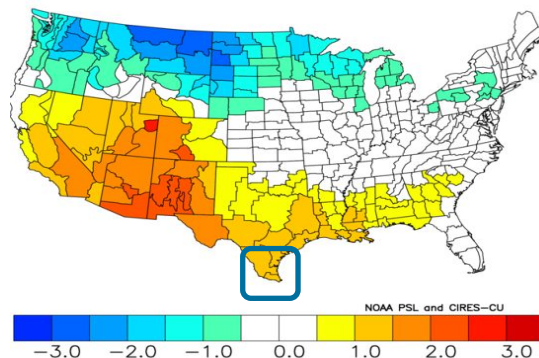


NOAA/NCEI Climate Division Composite Temperature Anomalies (F)
Dec to Feb 2016-17, 2017-18, 2005-06, 2008-09, 2024-25, 1995-96
Versus 1991-2020 Longterm Average

NOAA/NCEI Climate Division Composite Precipitation Anomalies (in)
Dec to Feb 2016-17, 2017-18, 2005-06, 2008-09, 2024-25, 1995-96
Versus 1991-2020 Longterm Average



Composite departure from average rainfall for years of similar Neutral to La Nina transition episodes in the December to February window.



- **Top:** Composite temperature (left) and precipitation (right) anomalies for similar Neutral to La Nina transition episodes leading into December-February, since 1950.
- **Bottom Left:** Same, except added the 1985-1986 season.
- **Bottom Right:** Same, except added the 1984-1985 season.



Bottom Lines

- **Warmer than normal temperatures** are expected to persist through Winter 2025/2026 (December 2025-February 2026). Calendar Year 2025 is likely to finish among **the top ten warmest on record** for most locations.
- Sufficient inflows from Mexican and International reservoirs serving the Lower Rio Grande watershed remain unlikely. The **combined share of water in Amistad and Falcon will likely to continue at or below Stage 2/3 triggers (25% or less) until further notice**. Water conservation, smart irrigation, and rainwater harvesting are **critical actions to continue as we move through the dry season (winter into mid spring 2026)**.
- **Drought conditions** are expected to continue and could worsen across parts, if not all of the RGV/Deep South Texas as time progresses. **D2 (Severe Drought)** and **D3 (Extreme Drought)** has already developed over areas along and west of IH-69C/US 281. Meanwhile, **D1 (Moderate Drought)** to **D2 (Severe Drought)** has already developed over areas along and east of IH-69C/US 281.
- **Fire weather** concerns could begin increasing as early as December or January with a prolonged **dry pattern** in place and as **cool/cold fronts** become more frequent and stronger. Again, this is especially true for the Rio Grande Plains and Brush Country, already in D2/D3 Drought. **Fire weather concerns could become more robust late winter through Spring 2026!**
- **Additional strong cold fronts** are expected in the weeks and months ahead, **with the potential for day-to-day “feel-like” temperatures dropping more than 40 degrees**. January and February will be prime periods! Additionally, with **cool/cold fronts** becoming stronger and more frequent over the next few months, **dangerous marine/coastal hazards will also begin to increase**. Additionally, there will be the **potential** for a **couple of freezes/hard freezes between late December and mid-February**, despite the warmer than average seasonal forecast. **Light freezing (ice) or frozen (sleet) precipitation could occur with one or more of the freezes.**