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SERVICE**

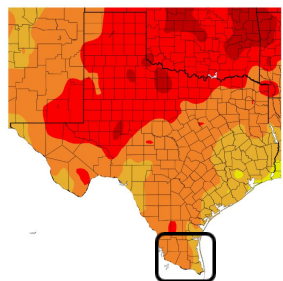
October-December 2026 Outlook: Perspective for the Lower Rio Grande Valley/Deep S. Texas Region

September 28, 2026

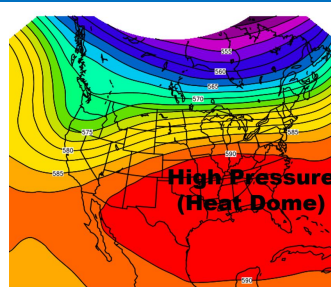
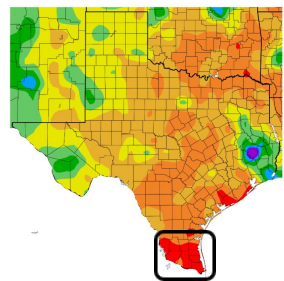
Andrei Evbuoma, Barry Goldsmith, & Rodney Chai
NWS Brownsville/Rio Grande Valley, Texas

After a brutally hot and dry September, October brings the pattern change to wetter and less hot, with above average rainfall to close out 2026; flash flooding, water supply, & hazardous marine/coastal conditions are in focus

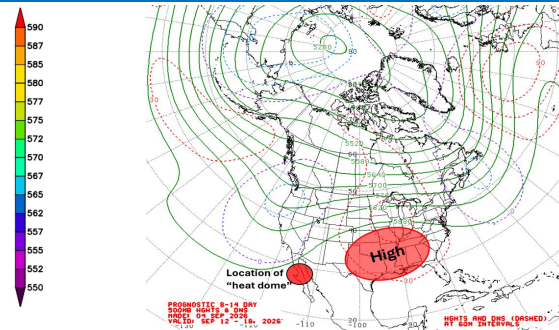
Departure from Normal Temperature (F)
9/1/2026 – 9/20/2026



Departure from Normal Precipitation (in)
9/1/2026 – 9/20/2026



500mb GEOPOTENTIAL HEIGHTS (dam) 21-DAY MEAN FOR:
Tue SEP 01 2026 – Mon SEP 21 2026
NCEP OPERATIONAL DATASET



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September 2026: Relentless Heat and Dryness Continued in September; will close out as the hottest on record

Maximum 23-Day Mean Avg Temperature for BROWNSVILLE S PADRE ISLAND INTL AP, TX

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

Rank	Value	Ending Date	Missing Days
1	90.1	2026-09-23	0
2	88.8	2023-09-23	0
3	86.1	2016-09-23	0
4	85.6	2025-09-23	0
5	85.5	2018-09-23	0
6	85.3	1970-09-23	0
7	85.1	2021-09-23	0
8	85.0	1900-09-23	0
9	84.9	2019-09-23	0
-	84.9	1980-09-23	0

Last value also occurred in one or more previous years.

Period of record: 1898-12-01 to 2026-09-23

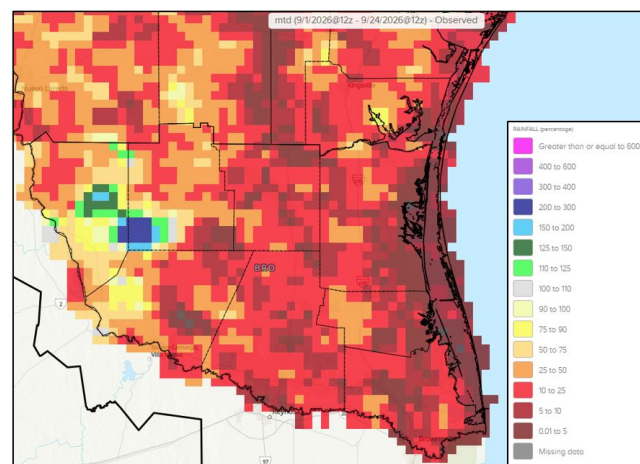
Maximum 23-Day Mean Avg Temperature for MCALLEN MILLER INTL AP, TX

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

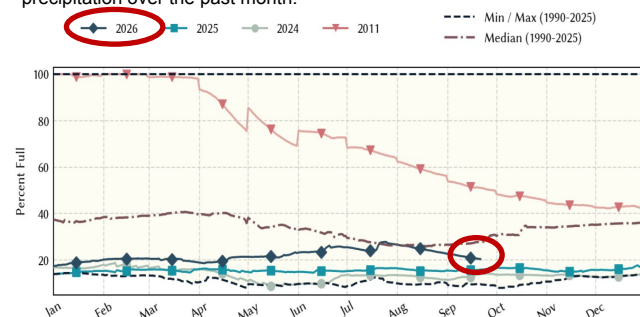
Rank	Value	Ending Date	Missing Days
1	92.3	2026-09-23	0
2	89.9	2016-09-23	0
3	89.6	2023-09-23	0
4	88.1	2025-09-23	0
5	87.6	2018-09-23	0
6	87.5	2011-09-23	0
7	86.9	2019-09-23	0
8	86.7	2017-09-23	0
9	86.6	2015-09-23	0
10	86.5	1987-09-23	0

Period of record: 1961-01-14 to 2026-09-23

- Very hot and dry weather conditions** continued across Deep South Texas and the Rio Grande Valley during the month of September. Similar to August, the **broad and anomalously strong heat dome** encompassed the southern two-thirds of the country during the month of September. The core of the heat dome, however, was focused over the Southern Plains and Gulf Coast States. This resulted in a continuation of dangerous heat across the RGV/Deep South Texas.
- Due to the persistence and intensity of this heat, September 2026 will finish as the hottest on record across Deep South Texas and the Rio Grande Valley for many sites. Our 3 climate sites, Brownsville, Harlingen and McAllen will all finish the month of September as the hottest on record. (see table above).
- The scorching hot temperatures **led to a continuation of very strong evaporation rates through the month**, which further led to the deteriorating of drought conditions across the region. As of late September, most of Deep South Texas was designated under **D2 (Severe) Drought to D4 (Exceptional) Drought** (see slide 8 for more information).
- Through September 23rd, Brownsville received only **0.50"** of rain. That's **4.14" below the average of 4.64"**. Harlingen received only **0.05"** of rain. That's **4.41" below the average of 4.46"**. Finally, McAllen, received only **0.17"** of rain, which is **3.70" below the average of 3.87"**.



Top Image: Month to date percent of normal precipitation from September 1-24, 2026. Hot temperatures combined with dry conditions and very high evaporation rates have led to a continuation of very low percent of normal precipitation over the past month.



Bottom Image: Latest data from the **Rio Grande Reservoirs (Texas Share)** indicates that September 2026 levels continued to decline due to the persistently hot and dry conditions, but remains above 2025 levels. Month-over-month shares have decreased from 24.1% to 20.4%. **Credit:** Texas Water Development Board

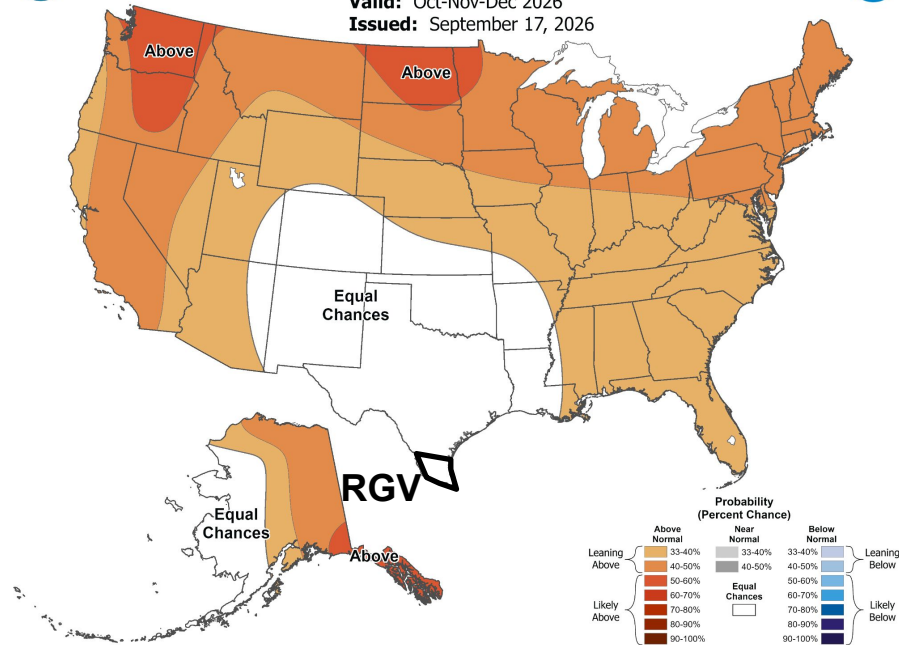


Seasonal Forecast, October-December 2026 USA



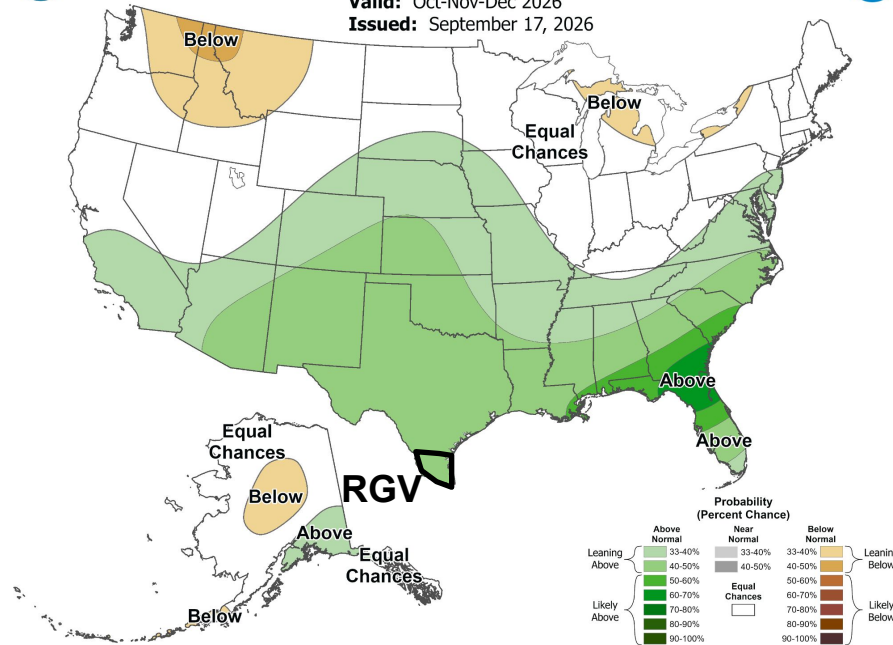
Seasonal Temperature Outlook

Valid: Oct-Nov-Dec 2026
Issued: September 17, 2026



Seasonal Precipitation Outlook

Valid: Oct-Nov-Dec 2026
Issued: September 17, 2026



Confidence: Equal Chances or “Toss-up” for hotter, cooler, or normal temperatures during the October-December (OND) 2026 period. **Medium chances (40-50%) for a wetter than normal precipitation pattern** during the October-December (OND) 2026 period.



Key Takeaways: October-December 2026 Outlook

- A **wetter than normal** outlook is favored for the **October-December** period for the RGV/Deep South Texas region. **Confidence: Medium (40-50%)**. The **increased rain occurrences** will result in **lower temperatures compared to previous months** and **will open the door for equal chances of a warmer, cooler, or normal temperature pattern** during the October-December period. **Note:** October and November are our top two fastest cooling months (where avg temps drop the fastest from the beginning to the end of the month). However, that said, **confidence** for a normal to **warmer than normal pattern** is slightly **greater** than a normal to **cooler than normal** pattern for Deep South Texas/RGV during the October-December period.
- **Drought conditions** have expanded/worsened across the RGV/Deep South Texas through the month of September, courtesy of the persistently hot, rain-free, and breezy conditions resulting in very high evaporation rates.
- As of September 25th, **D2 (Severe) Drought** to **D4 (Exceptional) Drought** was reported across Deep South Texas and the Rio Grande Valley (see slide 8 for more information). **Drought conditions are expected to improve** with the **weather pattern expected to become wetter in October**.
- Amistad and Falcon Int'l Reservoirs remained **just above historic seasonal lows at the end of September**. **Confidence remains high (~80%) on total storage remaining just above record lows through November**. Some **improvements are possible by the end of October** with the weather pattern poised to become **wetter**.
- Thanks to the increasing influences of a **very strong El Nino**, **a transition to wetter conditions can be expected in October**. **Heavy rainfall** from southwest US monsoons and the re-curvature of remnant Pacific tropical cyclones could bring **flooding, some potentially significant**.
- **Cool fronts** are expected to become more and more pronounced and frequent late October through December. These cool fronts could result in an **increase in coastal (tidal/surf) and marine (dangerous boating) situations** as we progress through the Autumn Season.

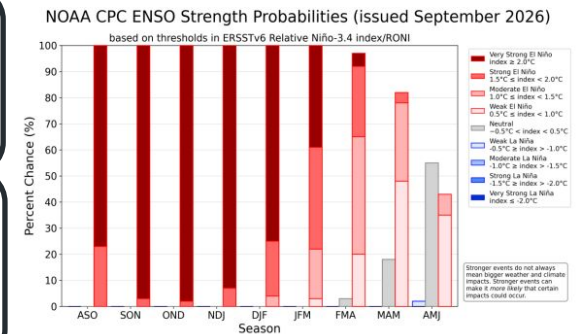
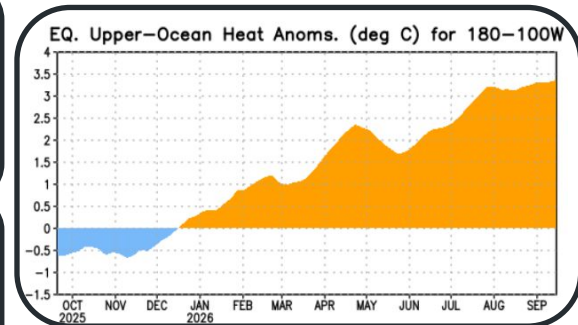
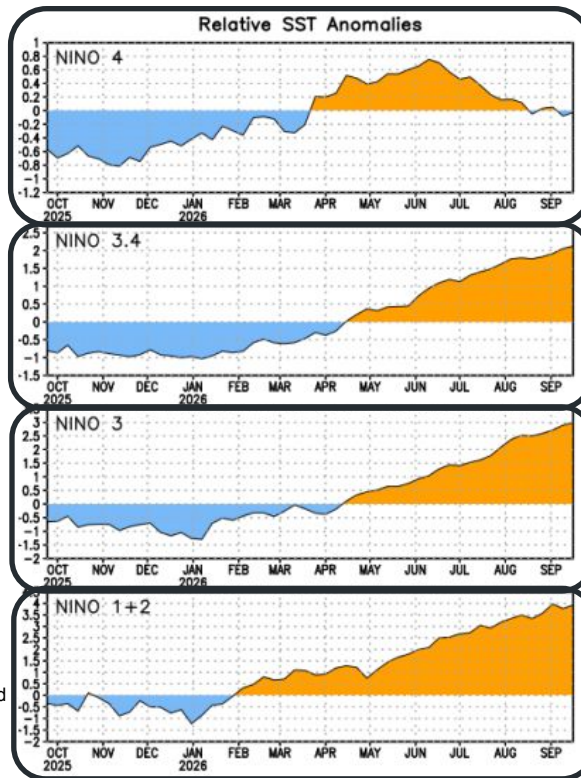


The “Why” of the Forecast: Very strong El Niño, sea surface temps, soil moisture, long-term trends, and other key climate teleconnections to play a role

- A **Very Strong El Niño** (Nino 3.4 region temp of 2.1°) is currently in place and is expected to persist through the **upcoming Fall Season**.
- The Atmospheric conditions appear to be catching up to the El Niño Oceanic conditions. **Confidence on a major weather pattern shift towards wetter and cooler conditions to start October is growing**, according to many medium range models and ensembles.
- Longer range climate models continue to suggest a **wetter than normal pattern** persisting through **December 2026**.

*Above right: Oceanic Niño Index. A weak to moderate La Nina has persisted through the second half of 2025 into early 2026. Values between -0.5 and -1.0 (blue) indicates a weak La Nina, and -1.0 and -1.5 a moderate La Nina. February-May 2026 ENSO Neutral conditions developed. Values between -0.5 and 0.5 (gray) indicates ENSO Neutral conditions. Just recently, El Niño conditions have quickly emerged and strengthened. Values between +0.5 and +1.0 (red) indicates a weak El Niño, +1.0 and +1.5 a moderate El Niño and above +1.5 a strong El Niño.

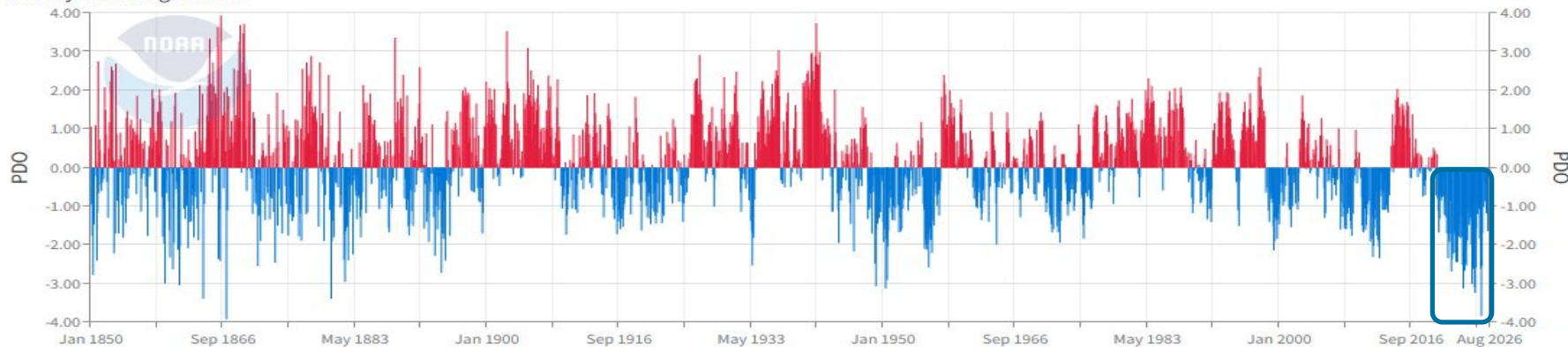
Year	DJF	JFM	FMA	MAM	AMJ	MJJ	JJA	JAS	ASO	SON	OND	NDJ
2023	-0.8	-0.6	-0.4	-0.2	0.1	0.4	0.6	0.9	1.1	1.4	1.5	1.5
2024	1.2	0.9	0.5	0.1	-0.3	-0.5	-0.5	-0.6	-0.8	-0.8	-0.9	-1.1
2025	-1.1	-0.9	-0.7	-0.5	-0.5	0.0	-0.5	-0.6	-0.8	-0.9	-0.9	-1.0
2026	-0.9	-0.8	-0.4	0.0	0.5	1.0	1.4					



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

Pacific Decadal Oscillation (PDO)

January 1850-August 2026



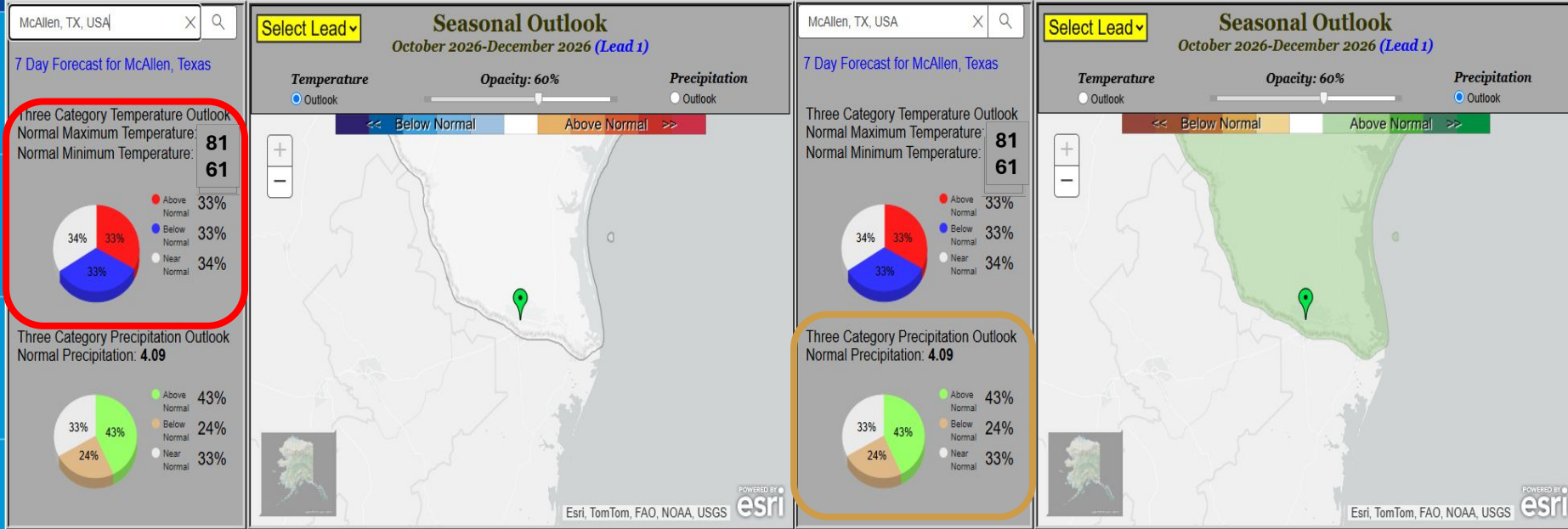
Source: <https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/pub/data/cmb/ersst/v5/v6/index/ersst.v6.pdo.dat>

Powered by ZingChart

- The 2020-2026 **prolonged and strong negative PDO has persisted**, and will remain the case through 2026. This **continues to support confidence** for a **warmer than normal pattern to persist early Fall 2026.**
- The sharply negative PDO also supports a **drier than normal precipitation theme** during the October-December (OND) period. However, a **very strong El Nino** is an offsetting factor to the negative PDO and could **flip** things towards a **wetter pattern** October and November. Because of the uncertainty in these two offsetting each other, confidence **slightly favors** a normal to **warmer than normal pattern** vs a **cooler than normal pattern**. Also, there **could be periods of wet and dry** during the October-December period, though the wet events that come could be big.
- **Confidence remains high** for a sharply negative PDO to continue.



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

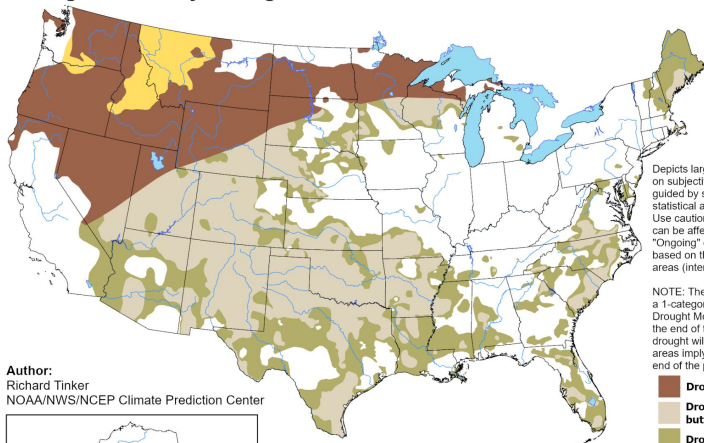


- Temperature:** Equal chances for warmer, cooler, or normal. Normal to **warmer than normal** is **slightly more favored** than **cooler than normal** locally though. **Confidence: Low-Medium (30-40%).** RGV averages: Afternoon – Mid 80s to lower 90s through October; mid 70s to lower 80s through November; low-mid 70s through December. Wake-up: Mid 60s to lower 70s late September through October; Upper 50s to lower 60s through November; low-mid 50s through December.
- Precipitation:** **Wetter than normal pattern favored.** **Confidence: Medium (40-60%).** RGV averages: 4-7 inches (**most in October**).

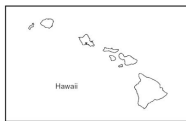
The October-December 2026 “Droughtlook”

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

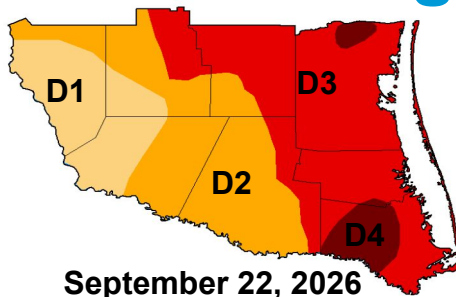
Valid for September 17 - December 31, 2026
Released September 17, 2026



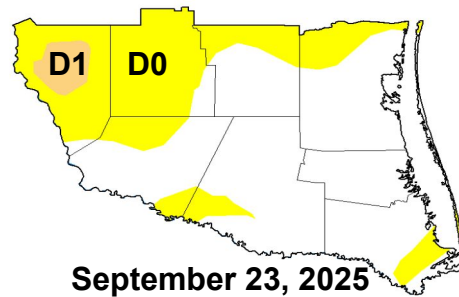
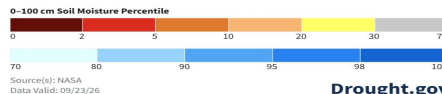
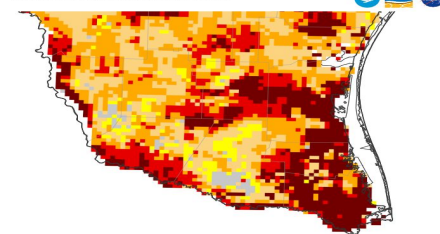
Author:
Richard Tinker
NOAA/NWS/NCEP Climate Prediction Center



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



0-100 cm Soil Moisture Percentile



Drought Classification



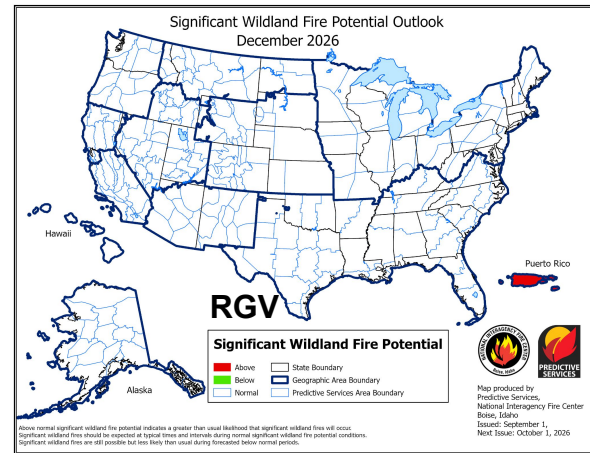
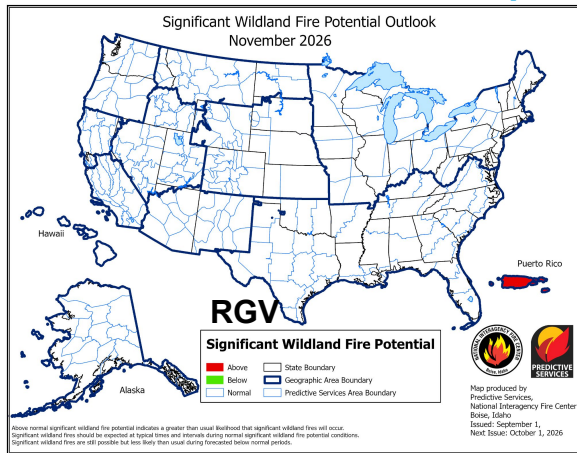
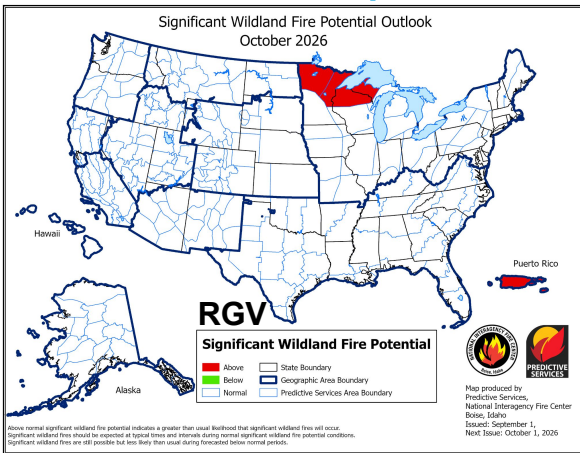
- Hot and rain-free conditions** continued over Deep South Texas and the Rio Grande Valley **through September**. The intense heat led to a continuation of very strong evaporation rates that further exacerbated the dryness. At the end of September, **more than 80% of Deep South Texas** was under at least **D2 (Severe) Drought**, with about **50% of the area under a D3 (Extreme) Drought**, and **6% under a D4 (Exceptional Drought)**. In contrast, last year had much less drought/dryness with mainly D0 (Abnormal Dryness) and an isolated spot of D1 (Moderate) Drought found over the northwestern Ranchlands.
- The NOAA seasonal drought outlook is calling for **drought conditions to improve** during the **October-December period** as the **pattern becomes wetter** amid the **very strong El Nino**. Confidence in the pattern turning wetter in October is medium (40-60%).



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Wildfire concerns squelched over the next few months as the pattern turns wetter



- Several wildfires, some large, occurred between late July and mid September as flash drought and periodic stronger wind gusts dominated.
- Wildfire spread concerns will be limited, and perhaps squelched completely, during the October-December period, due to a more active and wetter weather pattern across Deep South Texas and the Rio Grande Valley.

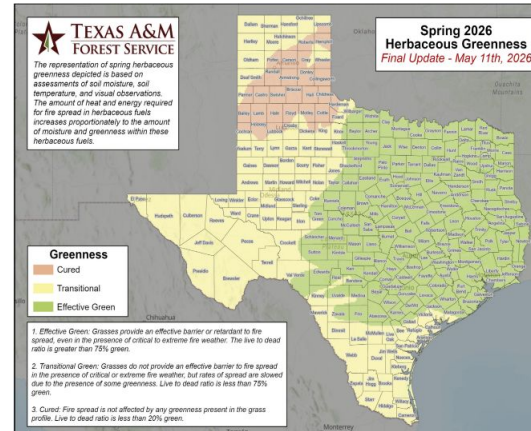
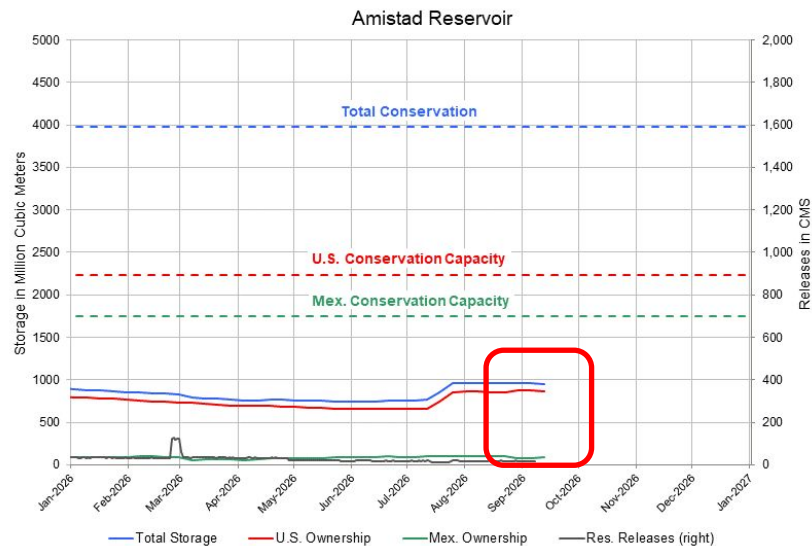
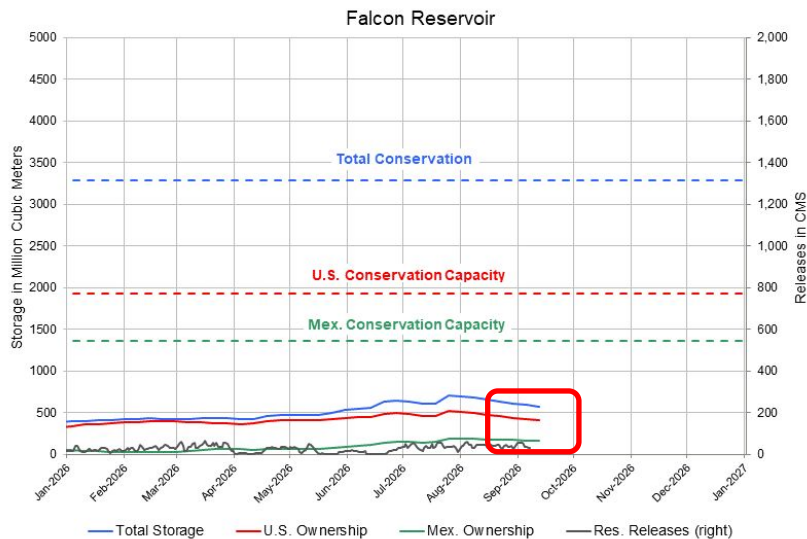


Image: Transitional Green was last seen across Texas as of May 11, 2026. This is due to the persistently hot and dry conditions since late June.

Amistad and Falcon Reservoirs (combined) will continue to remain just above record lows through the second half of 2026



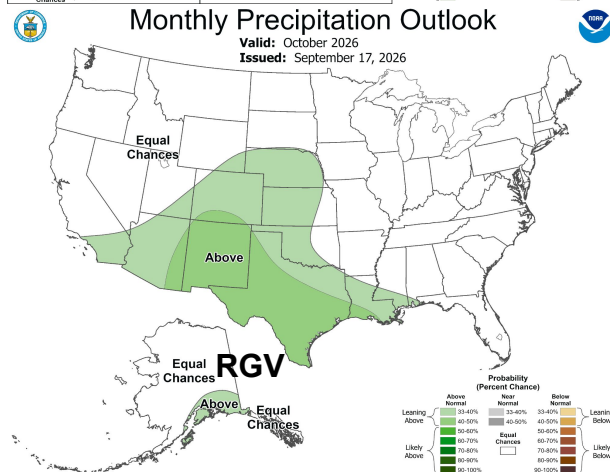
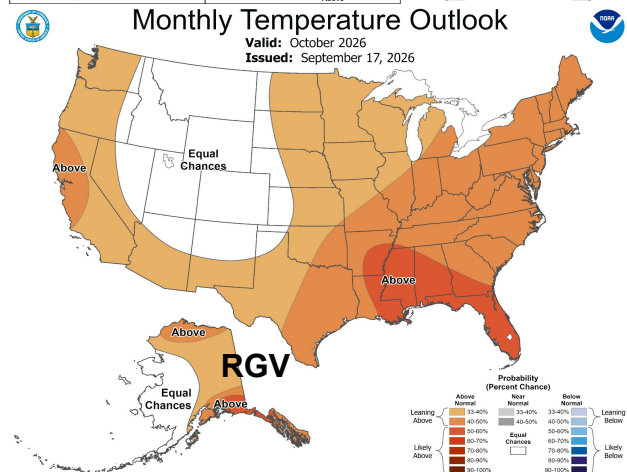
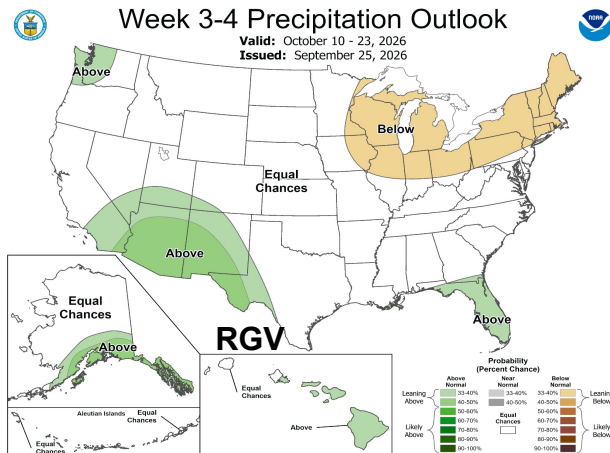
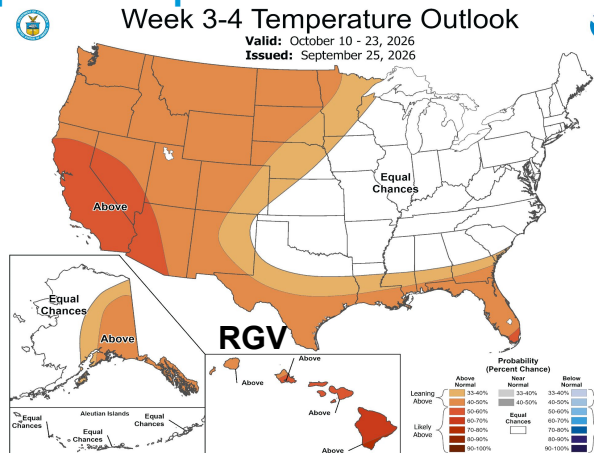
- **Falcon fell to 16.3% as of September 27th** (lower than the **19.0% from late August**). Levels could change little or even rise if heavy rainfall occurs in the lower and middle Rio Grande Basin through October and November.
- **Amistad fell slightly, but still remains above the all-time record lows as of late September**. Levels were at **23.8% on September 27th** (slightly lower than the **24.2% from late August**). Levels could change little or even rise if the showers and thunderstorms are realized through October and November.

Water Conservation is Key Until Further Notice!

- [“Stage 2/3” Restrictions](#) will continue through Fall 2026 (at least) 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 three featured programs: "Conservation Education Programs of the TWDB", "MAJOR RIVERS A Water Education Program for Texas", and "Raising Your Water IQ A Water Conservation Curriculum for Middle School". Below these, there is a section titled "Water Exploration" with a video player. To the right of the featured programs is a sidebar with a list of resources: Best Management Practices, Agriculture, Literature, Resources, Education, Outreach, Municipal, Workshops & Presentations, and Conservation Staff. Below this sidebar is a section titled "Drought" with links for Rainwater Harvesting and Water Reuse. The main content area also includes a paragraph about the mission of the water conservation staff and a link to the "Water for Texas: 2017 State Water Plan".

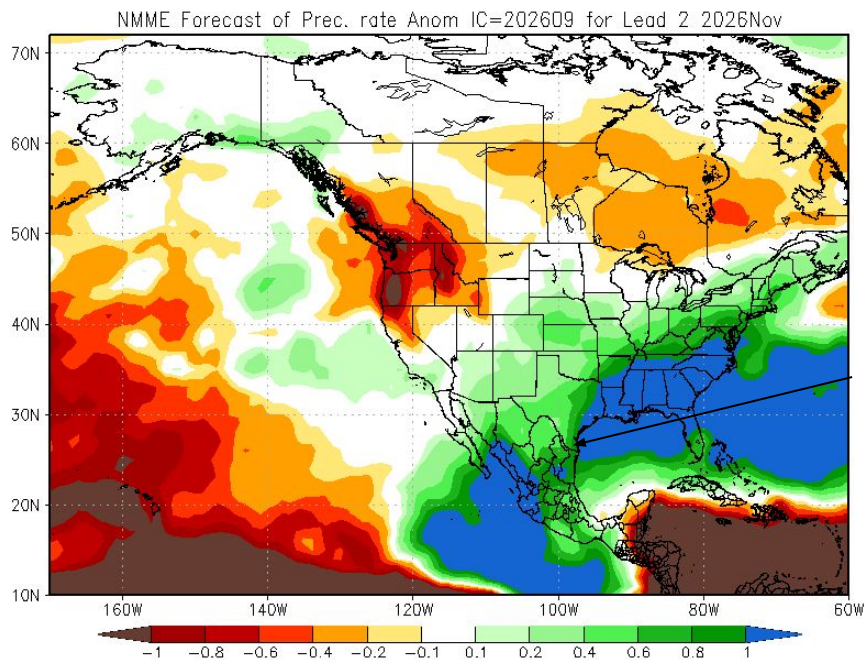
October 2026: Warmer than normal temperatures expected to continue, normal to wetter than normal pattern expected



- A slight lean towards a **warmer than normal October** is anticipated across the RGV/Deep South Texas.
- Meanwhile, a slight lean towards a normal to **wetter than normal precipitation pattern** is anticipated across Deep South Texas and the Rio Grande Valley in October.
- Medium range computer models are signalling at the potential for a pattern flip towards a **wet/active weather pattern to start October**.

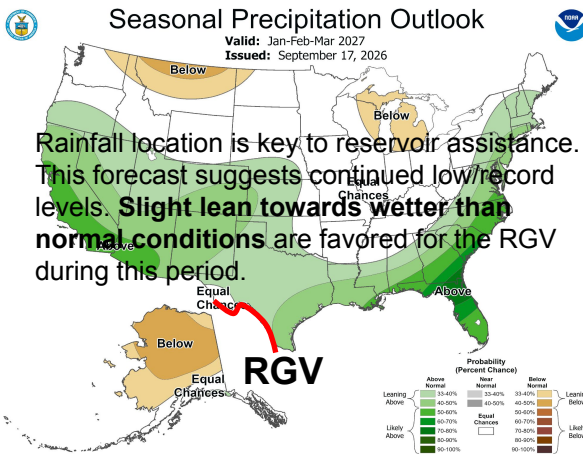
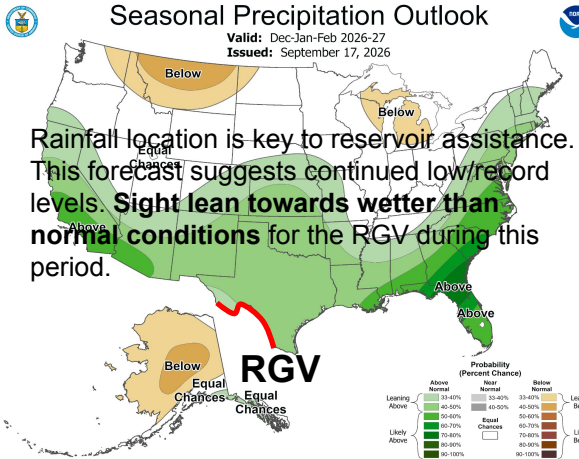
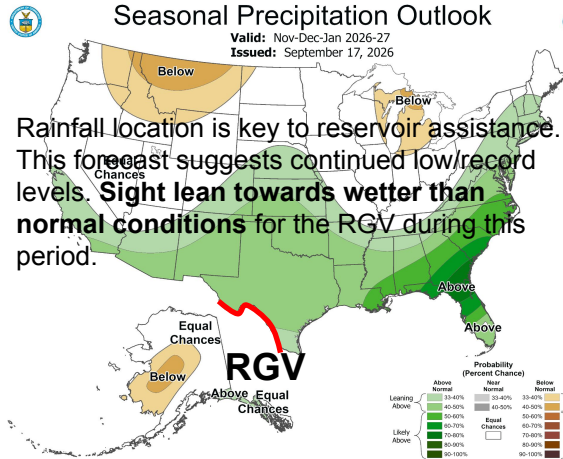
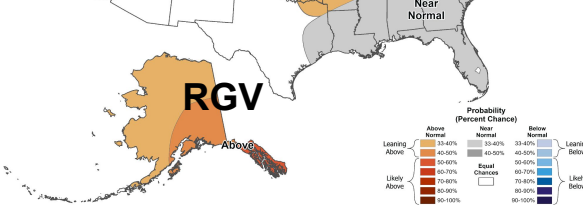
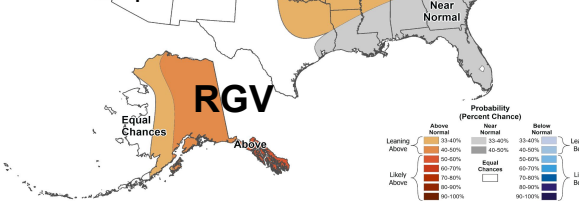
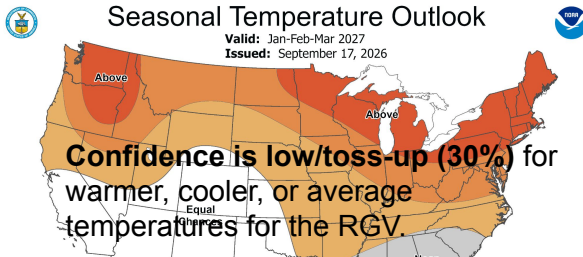
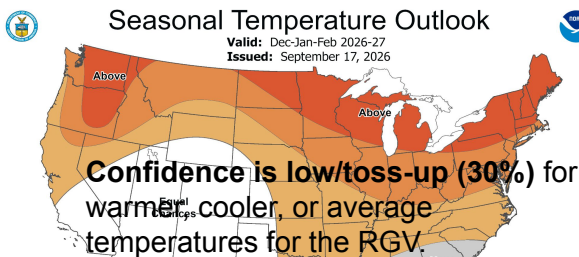
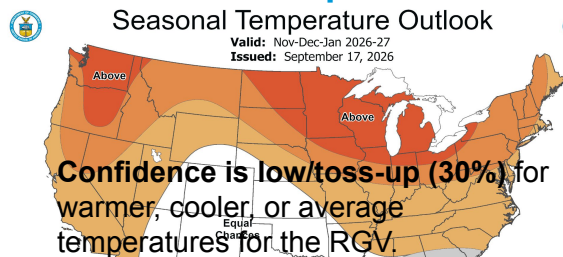
Early Look: November 2026

Potential rainfall rate anomaly, November 2026



- This climate model forecast for November supports a continuation of a wet and potentially stormy pattern.

Late Autumn 2026 through Winter 2026: More seasonal average temperatures favored due to a potentially wetter than normal pattern



Comparing similar transitions to strong/very strong El Nino episodes mostly within the last 30 years; October-December Periods

NOAA/NCEI Climate Division Composite Temperature Anomalies (F)
Oct to Dec 2023,2015,1987,1997,2006
Versus 1991-2020 Longterm Average

NOAA/NCEI Climate Division Composite Precipitation Anomalies (in)
Oct to Dec 2023,2015,2006,2009
Versus 1991-2020 Longterm Average

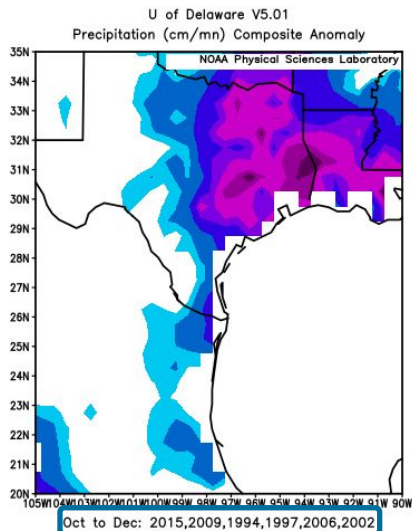
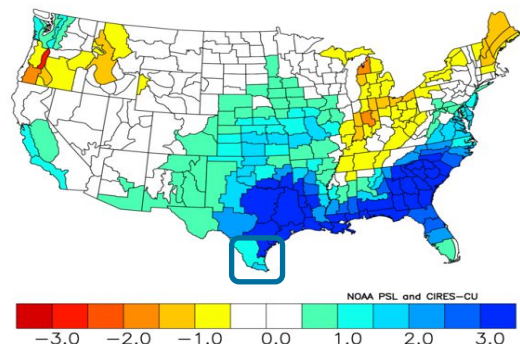
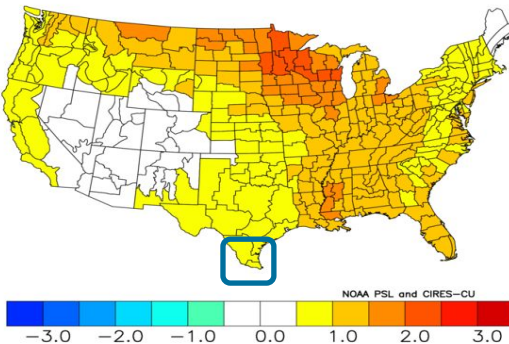
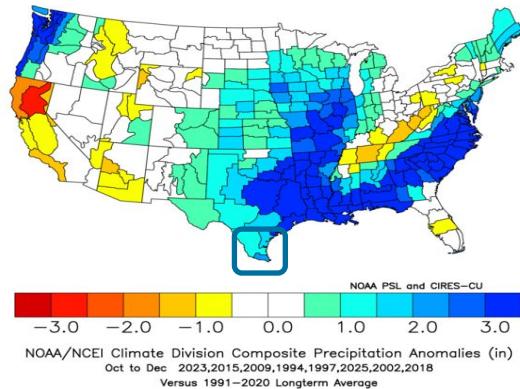
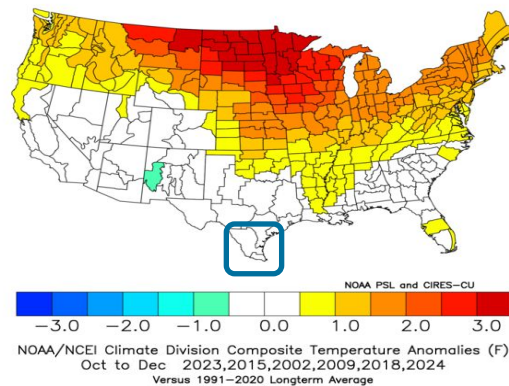


Image Above: Composite departure from average rainfall for years of similar El Nino episodes in the **October to December window**. **Note:** Map is not perfectly aligned with the shoreline in Texas/northeast Mexico.



- **Top:** Composite temperature (left) and precipitation (right) anomalies for similar El Nino episodes leading into October-December, since 1950.
- **Bottom Left:** Same, but took out the 1987, 1997, and 2006 seasons, and added 2002, 2009, 2018 and 2024 seasons.
- **Bottom Right:** Same, but took out the 2006 season, and added the 1994, 1997, 2025, 2002, and 2018 seasons.



Bottom Lines

- A **wetter than normal pattern** is expected during the October-December timeframe, courtesy of a **strong El Nino**. The **wet/stormier weather pattern** will lend credence to **equal chances for warmer, cooler, or near normal temperatures** during the October-December period.
- Drought conditions have deepened and expanded across the region. Anywhere from **D1 (Moderate) Drought to D4 (Exceptional) Drought** was reported across the region as of late September. **The worst of the Drought (i.e. D3-D4) was located mainly east of IH-69C**. Drought conditions are expected to undergo improvements with the **weather pattern expected to turn wetter** October-December.
- 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 between 30 and 35% until further notice**. Water conservation, smart irrigation, and rainwater harvesting are **critical actions to continue as we move through the Fall Season**. Note that **moisture or remnants from an eastern Pacific tropical event could provide some help in October/November**.
- With October expected to become wetter, **significant flooding** from **heavy rains**, courtesy of a potential atmospheric river of tropical moisture flowing from both the eastern tropical Pacific Ocean and the southern Gulf, is a reasonable worst-case scenario to be prepared for.
- **Cool/cold fronts** are expected to become more and more pronounced and frequent late October through December. These cool fronts could result in an **increase in coastal (tidal/surf) and marine (dangerous boating) situations** as we progress through the Autumn Season.
- In addition, the fronts from late November and December could bring **chilly air (40s, wind chills 30 to 35°F)** and non-flooding light to moderate rainfall, which would be very helpful to soil moisture deficits.