

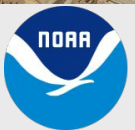


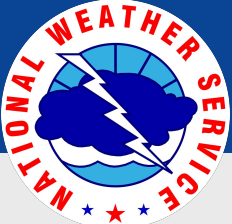
Drought Information Statement for Northern and Eastern Maine

Valid September 17, 2026
Issued By: WFO Caribou, ME

- Next update by Thursday, September 24th unless conditions warrant sooner
- Please see all currently available products at <https://drought.gov/drought-information-statements>.
- Please visit <https://www.weather.gov/car/DroughtInformationStatement> for previous statements.
- Please visit <https://www.drought.gov/drought-status-updates/car> for regional drought status updates.

- Groundwater continues to worsen introducing Extreme Drought for Hancock County
- Although light rainfall is occurring, the groundwater and streamflows continue to worsen across the region leading to the expansion of Drought classifications
- Much of Eastern & Northern Maine is seeing Below to Much Below Normal Groundwater & Streamflow conditions
- Drought persistence expected through the fall





U.S. Drought Monitor

September 17, 2026
12:30 PM EDT

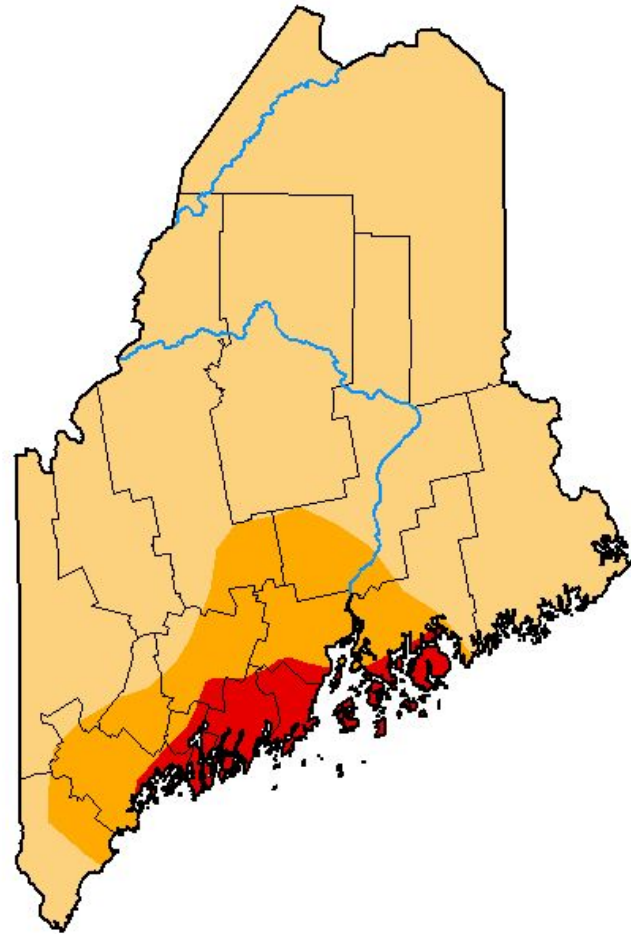
Link to the [latest U.S. Drought Monitor](#) for Maine

- **Drought Intensity and Extent:**
 - **D3 (Extreme Drought):** Coastal Hancock County mainly MDI to Castine.
 - **D2 (Severe Drought):** Southern Penobscot and Western Hancock counties
 - **D1 (Moderate Drought):** All of Aroostook, Washington, Piscataquis, Northern & Central Penobscot and Northern Hancock counties.

Percentage of Maine in Drought

- No Drought: 0.00%
- **D0: (Abnormally Dry):** 0.00%
- **D1 (Moderate Drought):** 80.71%
- **D2 (Severe Drought):** 14.38%
- **D3 (Extreme Drought):** 4.92%

U.S. Drought Monitor Maine



September 15, 2026
(Released Thursday, Sep. 17, 2026)
Valid 8 a.m. EDT

- Intensity:
- None
 - D0 Abnormally Dry
 - D1 Moderate Drought
 - D2 Severe Drought
 - D3 Extreme Drought
 - D4 Exceptional Drought

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. For more information on the Drought Monitor, go to <http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/About.aspx>

Author:
David Mocko
NASA/GSFC/SSAI

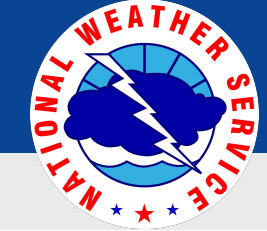


droughtmonitor.unl.edu



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

National Weather Service
Caribou, ME

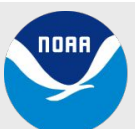
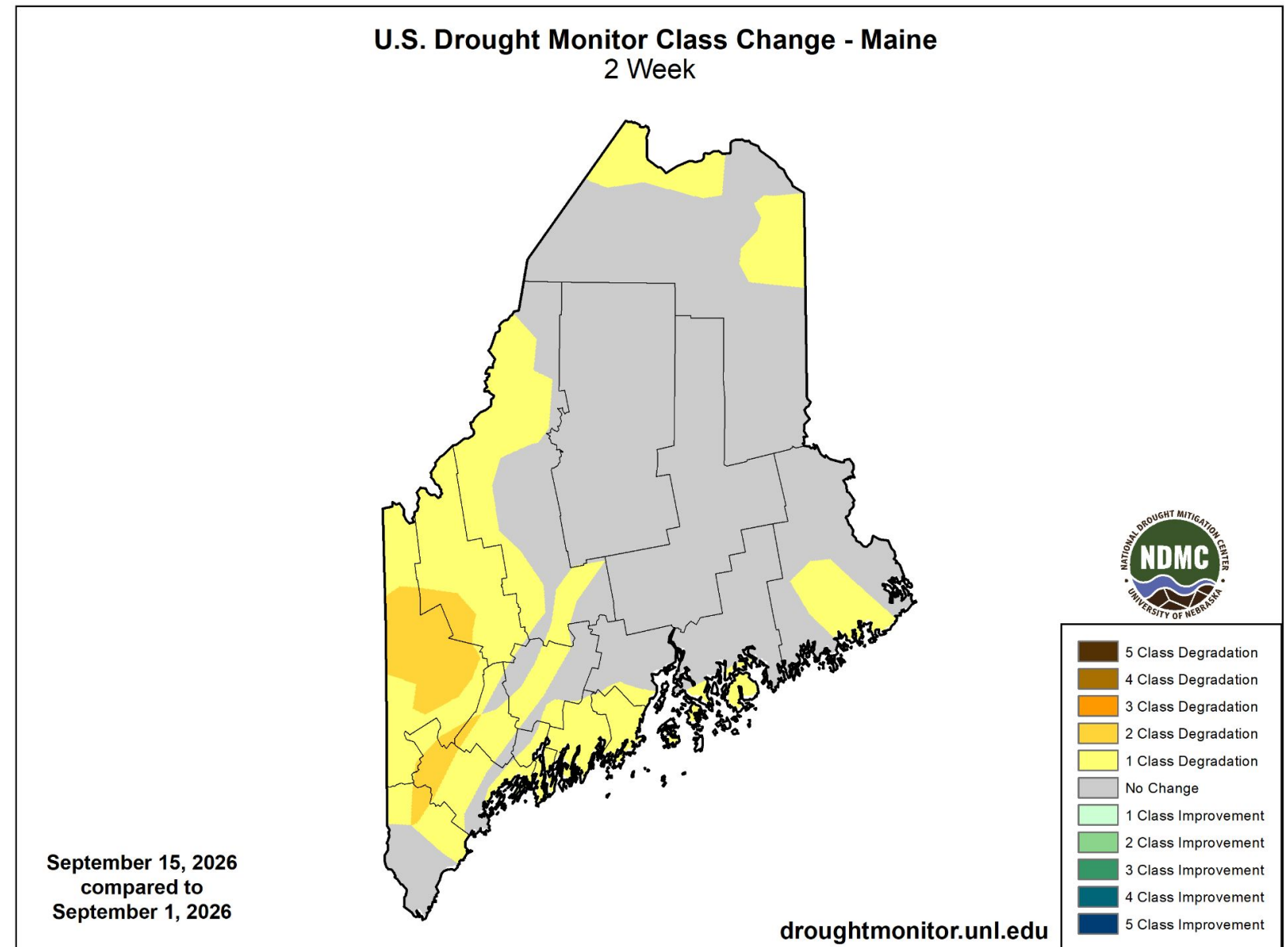


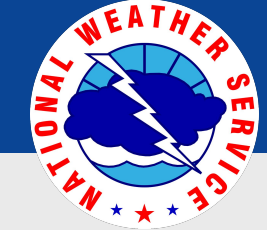
Recent Change in Drought Intensity

September 17, 2026
12:30 PM EDT

Link to the latest [2-week change map](#) for Northeast U.S.

- Two week drought monitor class change:
 - **Drought Worsened:** Portions of the St. John Valley, Northern Crown, and Eastern Aroostook County, as well as South-Central Washington County and coastal Hancock County.
 - **Drought Improved:** None.
 - **No Change:** Rest of the forecast area.



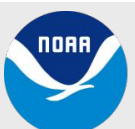
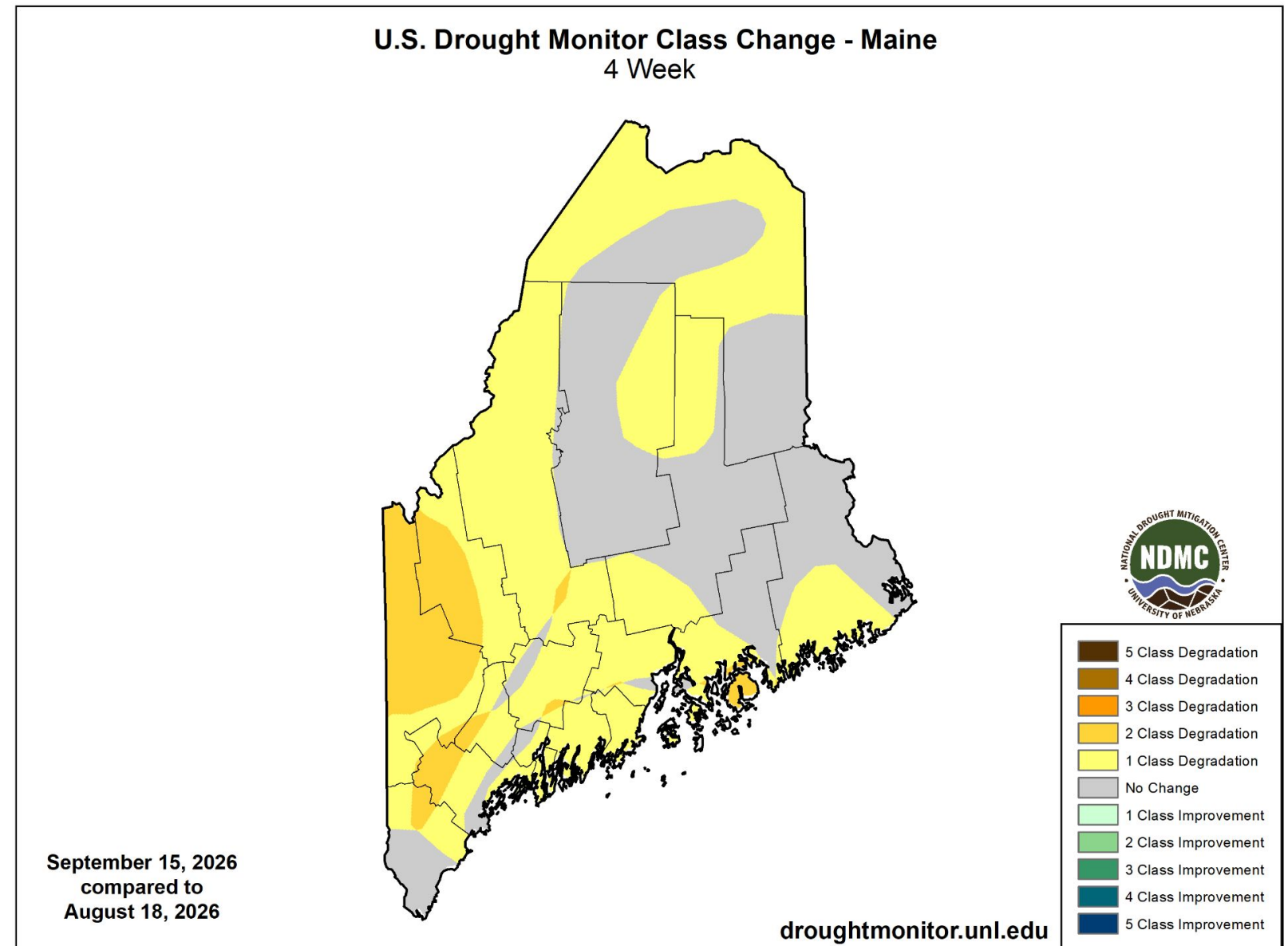


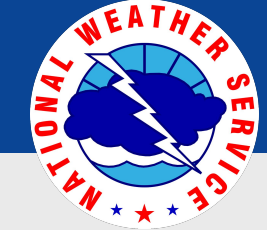
Recent Change in Drought Intensity

September 17, 2026
12:30 PM EDT

Link to the latest [1-month change map](#) for Northeast U.S.

- Four week drought monitor class change:
 - **Drought Worsened:** Large areas of Aroostook, Northeast Piscataquis, and Northern Penobscot counties, as well as parts of Southern Penobscot, Southwest Hancock, and Southern Washington counties.
 - **Drought Improved:** None.
 - **No Change:** Rest of the area.



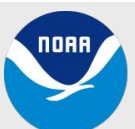
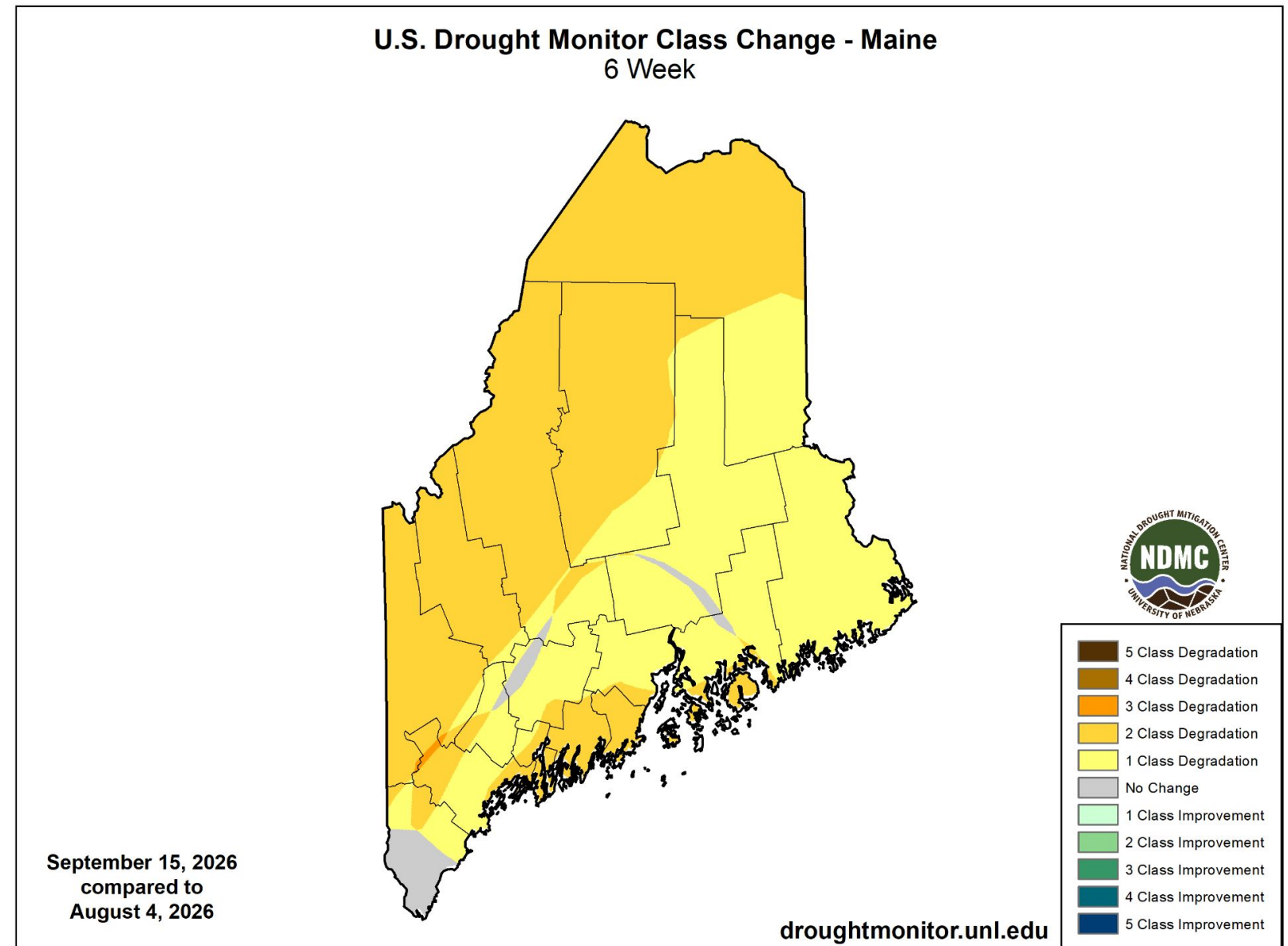


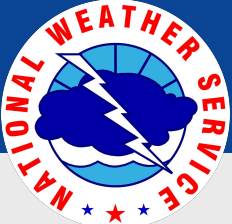
Recent Change in Drought Intensity

September 17, 2026
12:30 PM EDT

Link to the latest [6-week change map](#) for Northeast U.S.

- Four week drought monitor class change:
 - **Drought Worsened:** Nearly the entire forecast area.
 - **Drought Improved:** None.
 - **No Change:** Very tiny strip of southern Penobscot county into central Hancock county.



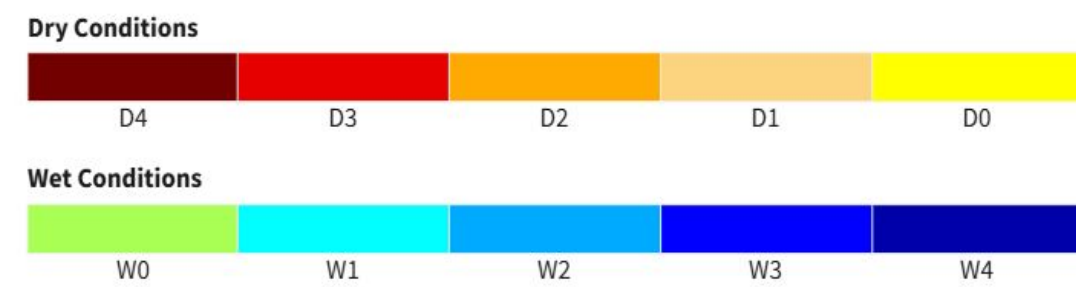
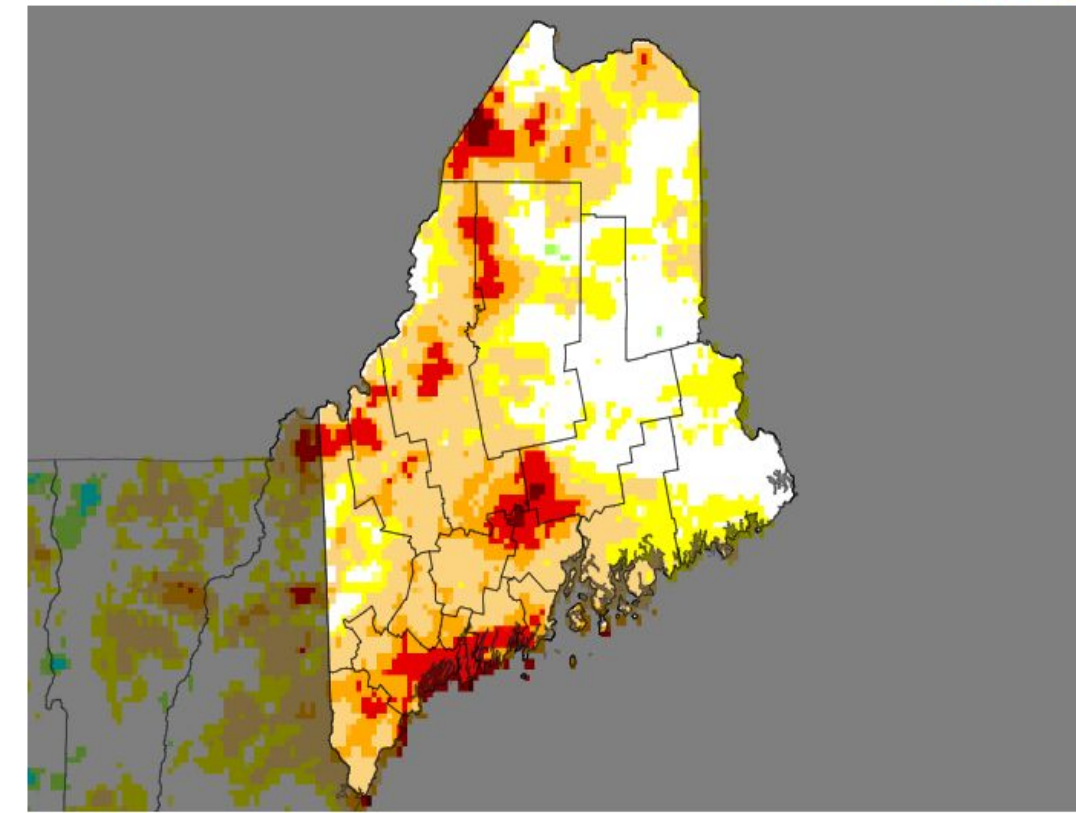


Short & Long Term Drought Index

Link to the Maine [Drought.gov](https://www.drought.gov) Maps: www.drought.gov/states/maine

- The Short-Term Multi-Indicator Drought Index (MIDI) estimates current short-term drought conditions by combining several indicators of drought into a single, map from changes in precipitation and moisture over the past 3 months.
- Continued worsening of groundwater & surface water conditions.
- The Long-Term Multi-Indicator Drought Index (MIDI) estimates current long-term drought conditions by combining several indicators of drought into a single map from changes in precipitation and moisture over the past 5 years.

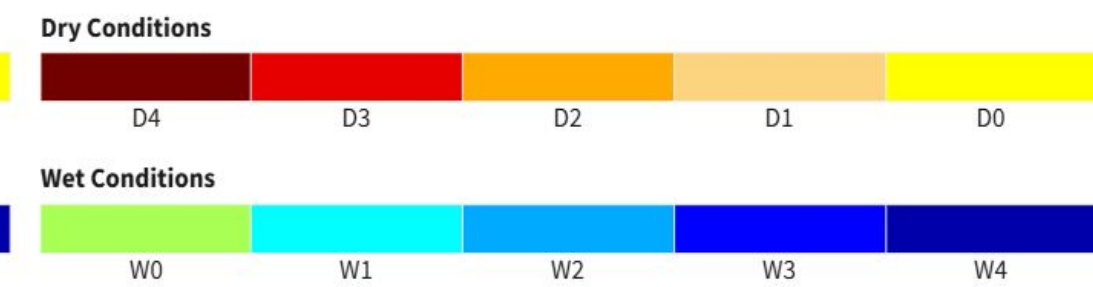
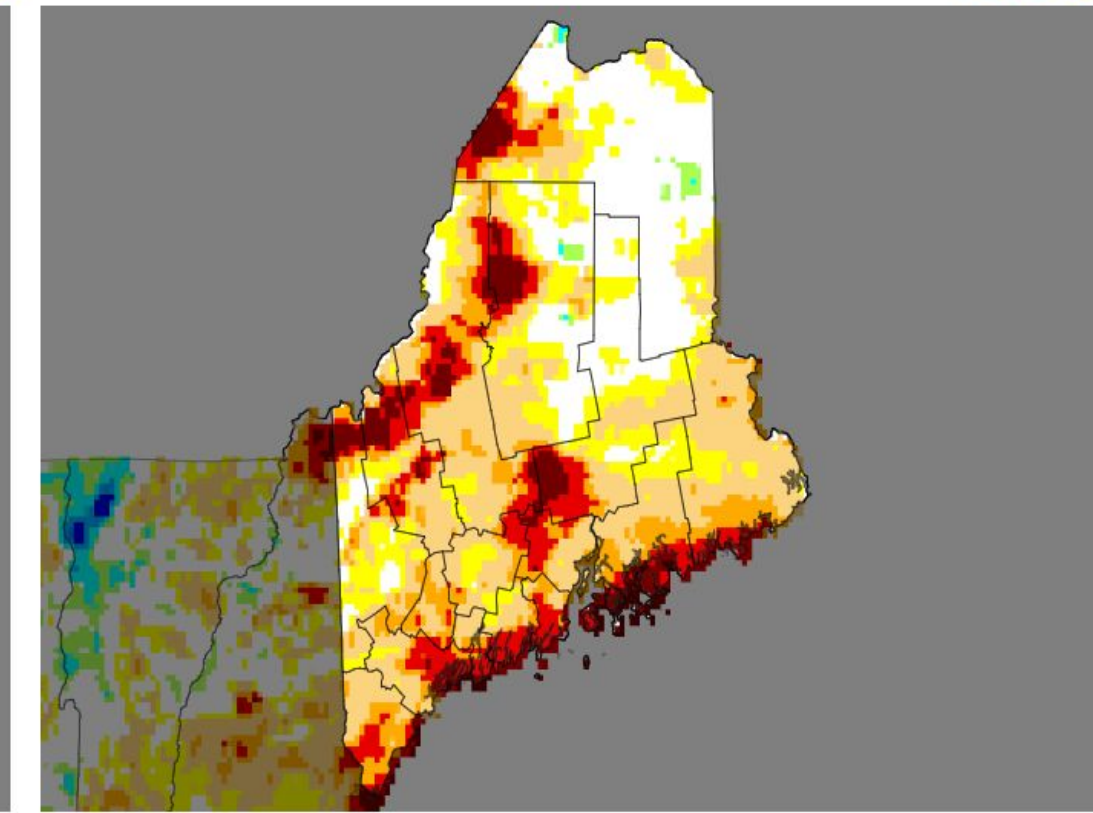
Short-Term Multi-Indicator Drought Index: Maine



Source(s): UC Merced, via Climate Engine
Data Valid: 09/12/26

Drought.gov

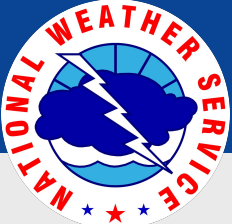
Long-Term Multi-Indicator Drought Index: Maine



Source(s): UC Merced, via Climate Engine
Data Valid: 09/12/26

Drought.gov

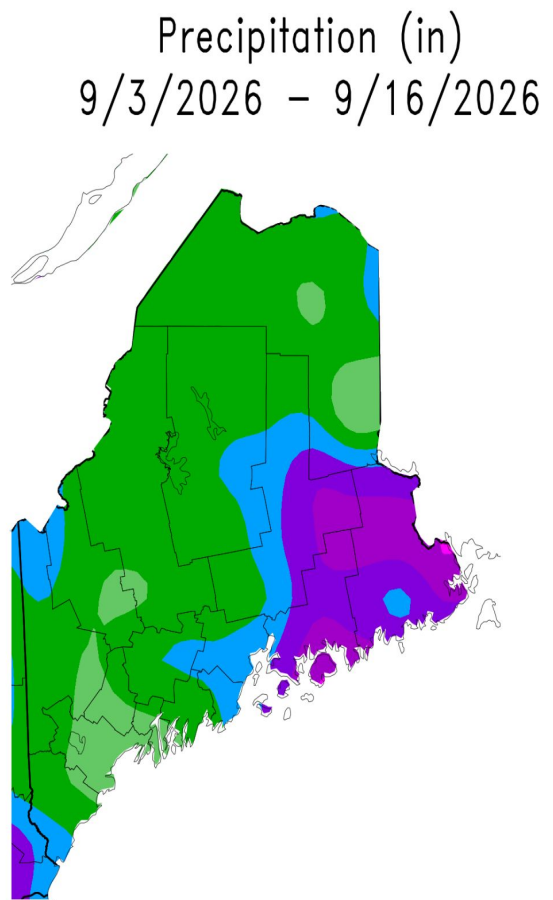




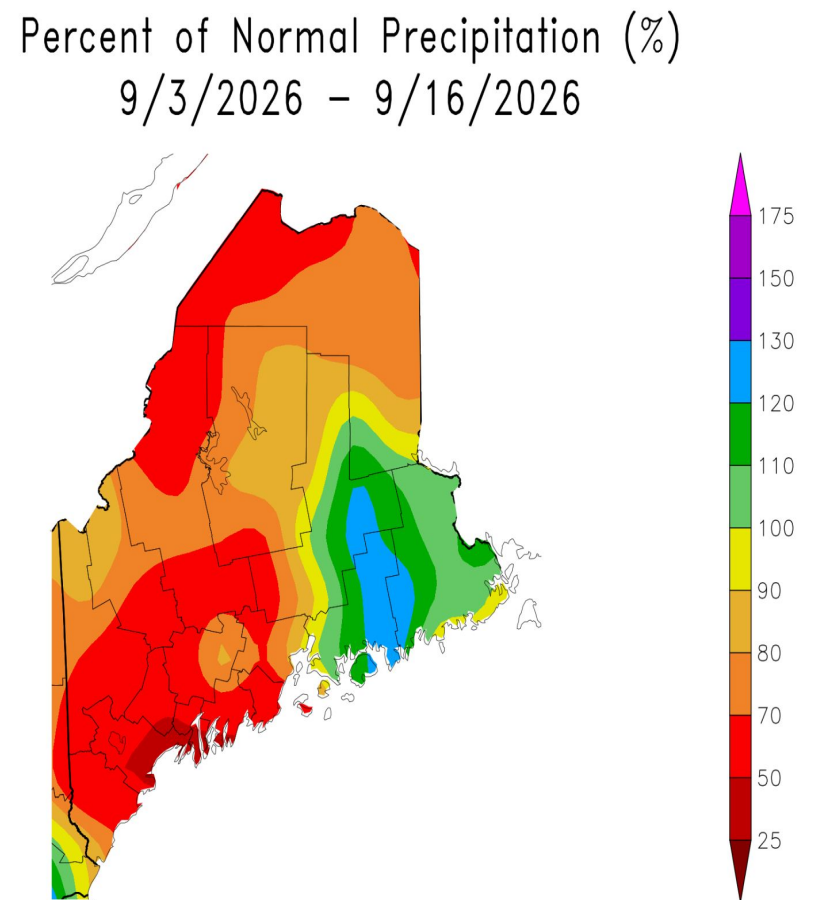
14 Day Precipitation

Link to [Northeast Regional Climate Center](#)

- Precipitation near normal to slightly above normal across portions of Downeast & eastern Penobscot Valley.
- Below to much below normal across the remainder of the area.



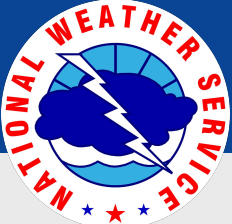
Generated 9/17/2026 using provisional data.



ACIS Web Services Generated 9/17/2026 using provisional data.

ACIS Web Services

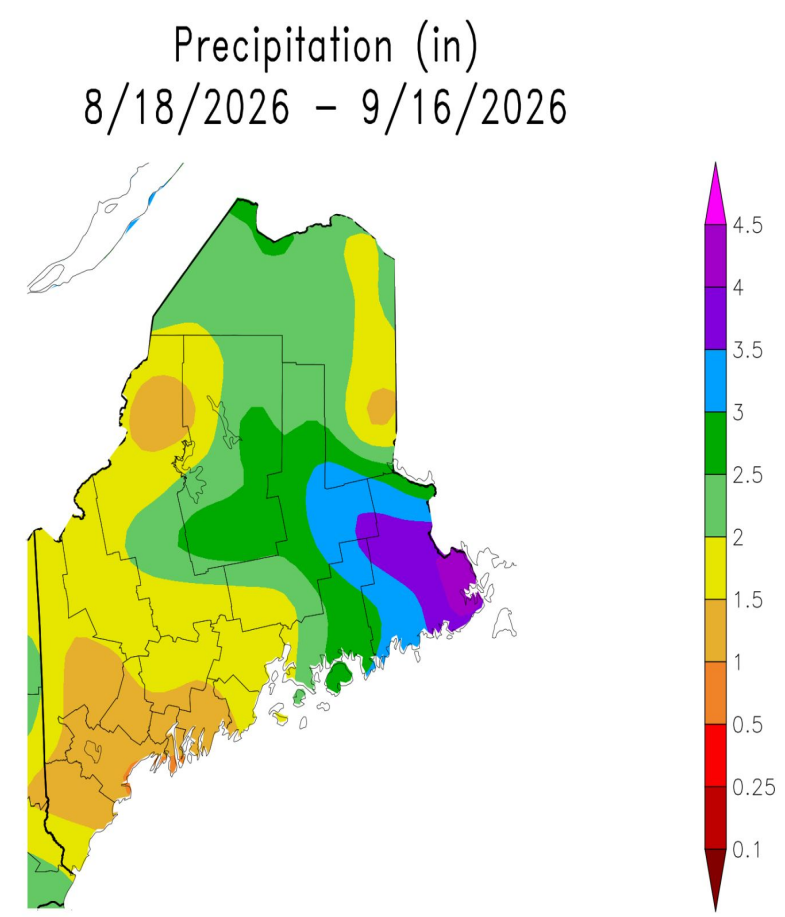




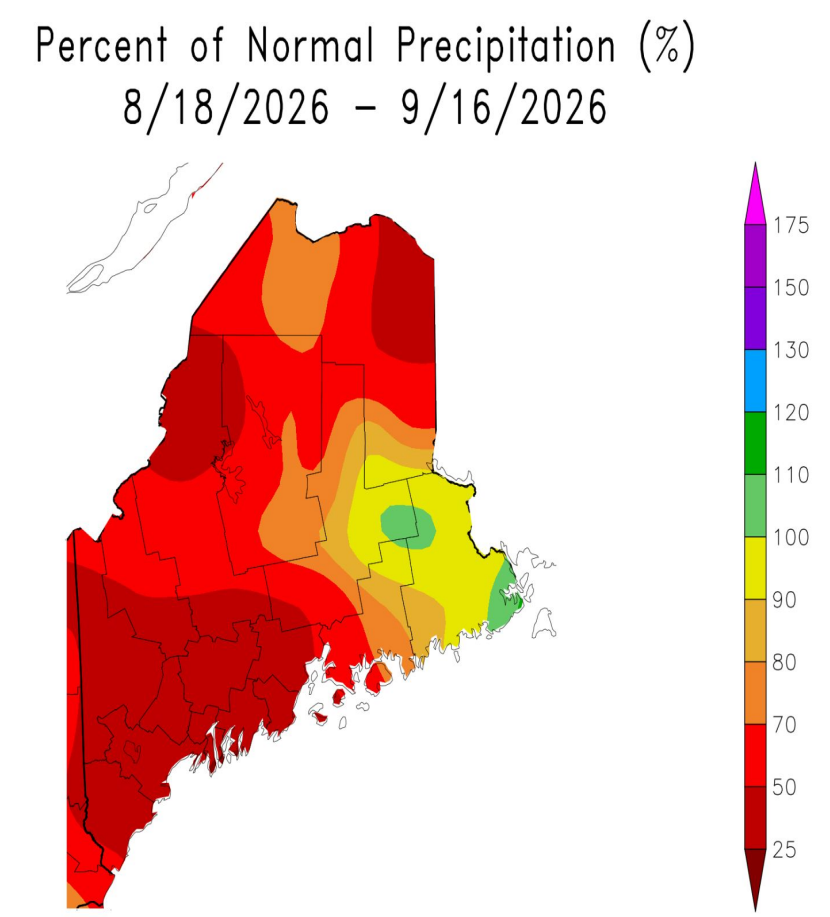
30 Day Precipitation

Link to [Northeast Regional Climate Center](#)

- Precipitation near normal across portions of eastern Downeast Maine & eastern Penobscot Valley.
- Much below normal across the remainder of the area.



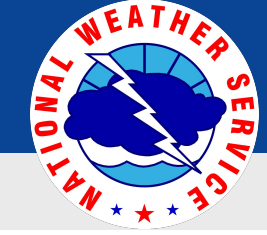
Generated 9/17/2026 using provisional data.



ACIS Web Services Generated 9/17/2026 using provisional data.

ACIS Web Services



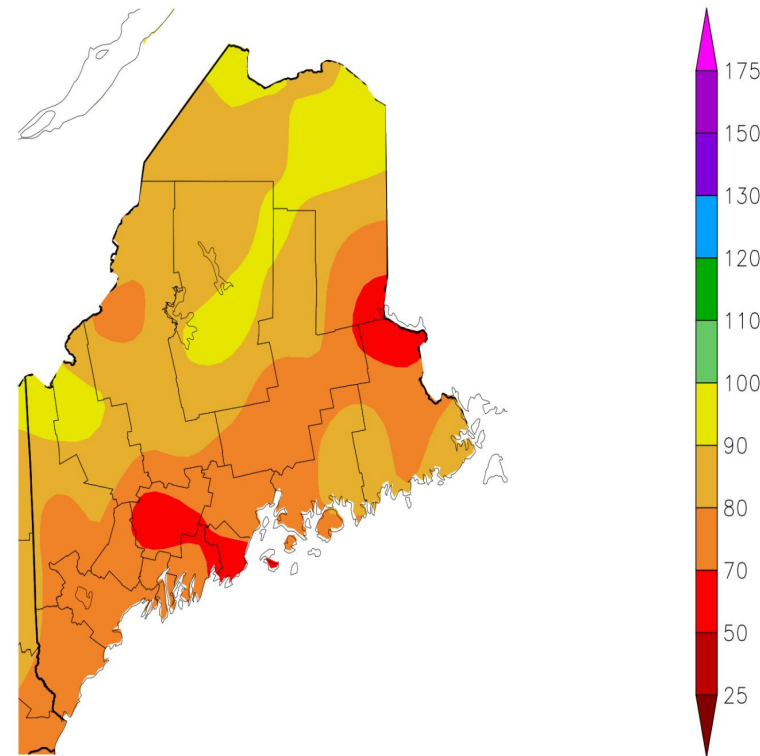


Precipitation Deficits

September 17, 2026
12:30 PM EDT

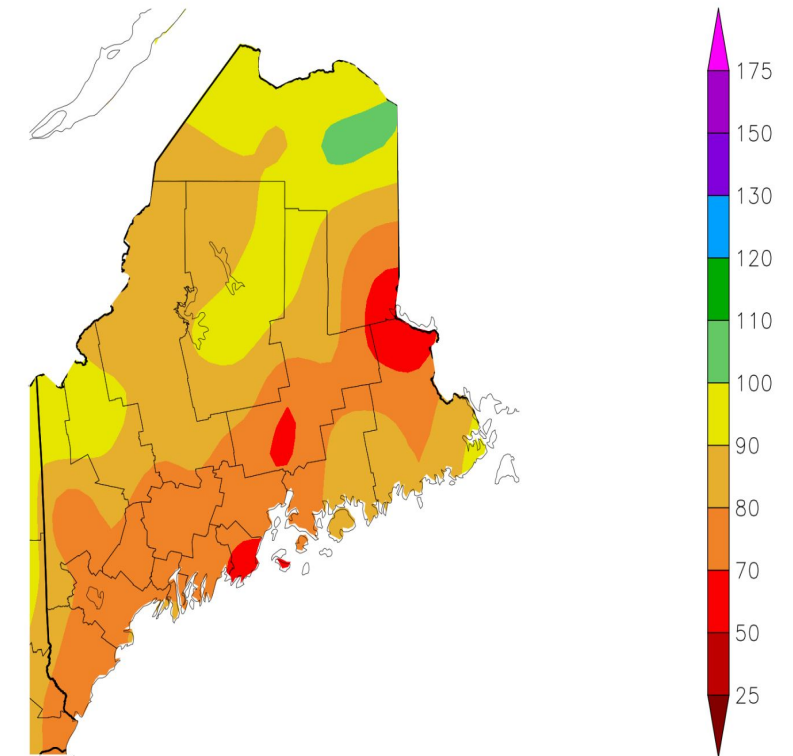
- 2026 precipitation deficits compounding the deficits from the 2025 Drought in much of the area.
- Northern Maine is running 90-105% of normal precipitation values for 2026. This explains why there is a *slower degradation* of the ongoing dry conditions for the north, compared to other regions.

Percent of Normal Precipitation (%)
10/1/2025 – 9/16/2026



Generated 9/17/2026 using provisional data.

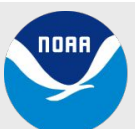
Percent of Normal Precipitation (%)
1/1/2026 – 9/16/2026

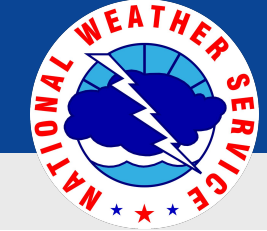


ACIS Web Services Generated 9/17/2026 using provisional data.

ACIS Web Services

Much of the area is seeing compounding drought impacts.

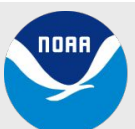




Precipitation Deficits

September 17, 2026
12:30 PM EDT

City	Precipitation Since Jan 1st	Departure from Normal since Jan 1st	Water Year to Date Oct 1, 2025 - Sept 16, 2026	Water Year to Date Departure Oct 1, 2025 - Sept 16, 2026
Caribou	29.43"	+1.28"	38.67"	-2.03"
Houlton	19.77"	-6.81"	28.13"	-11.15"
Millinocket	25.18"	-3.52"	35.02"	-7.58"
Bangor	18.86"	-8.84"	27.68"	-14.03"

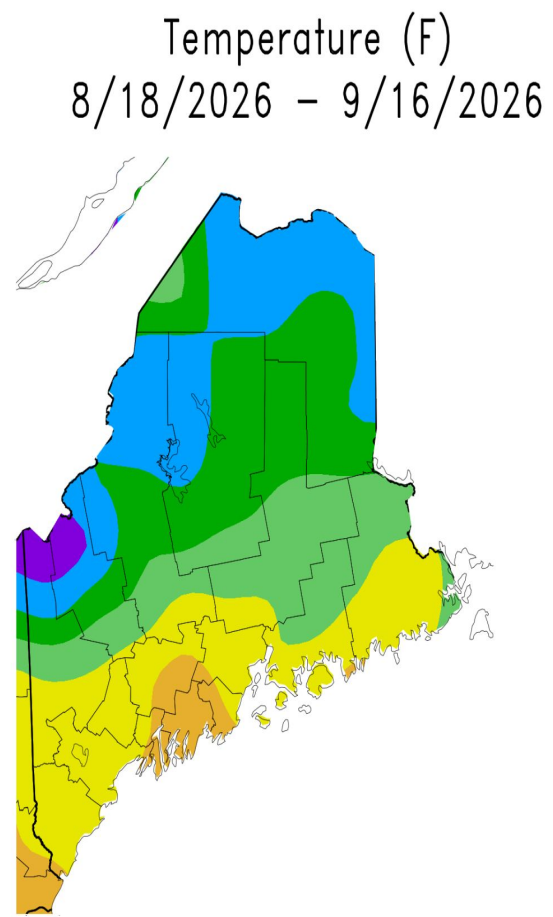




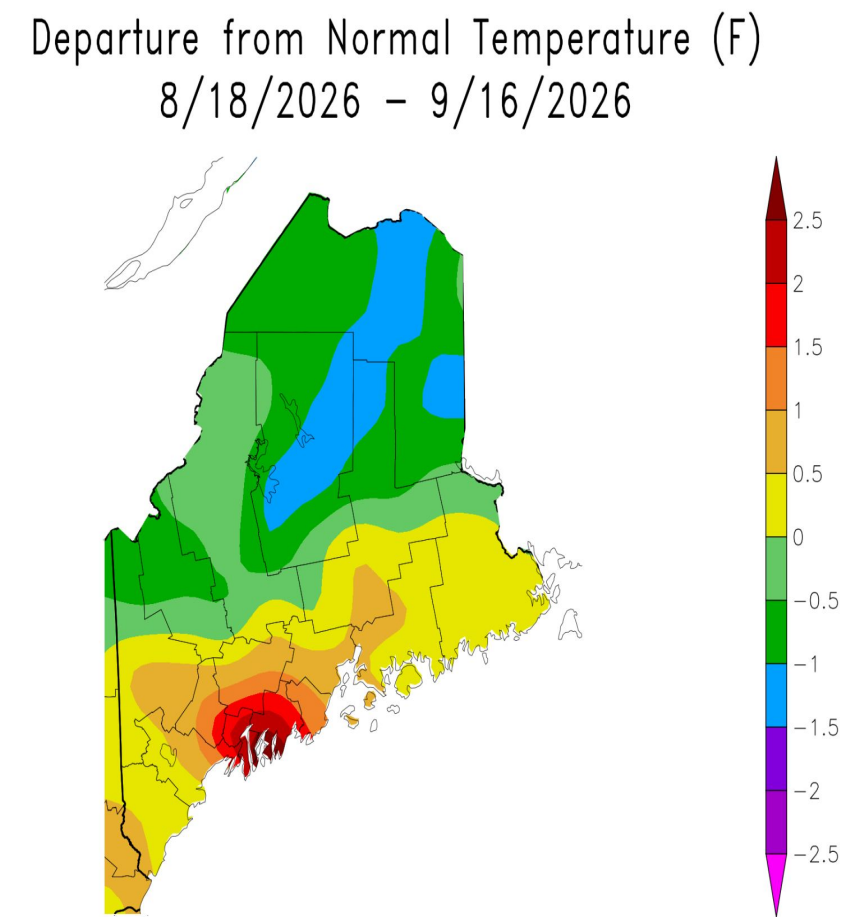
30 Day Temperatures

Link to [Northeast Regional Climate Center](#)

- 30 Day Temperatures have been running 0.5-1 degrees above normal across Bangor Region into Downeast Maine.
- 0.5-1.5 degrees below normal across the Central Highlands into Northern Maine.
- Cooling temperatures will lead to reduce evaporation demand combined with the end of the growing season approaching.



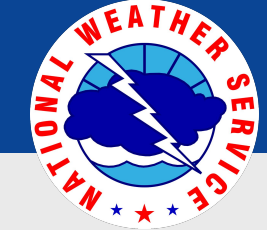
Generated 9/17/2026 using provisional data.



ACIS Web Services Generated 9/17/2026 using provisional data.

ACIS Web Services



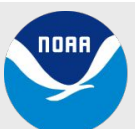
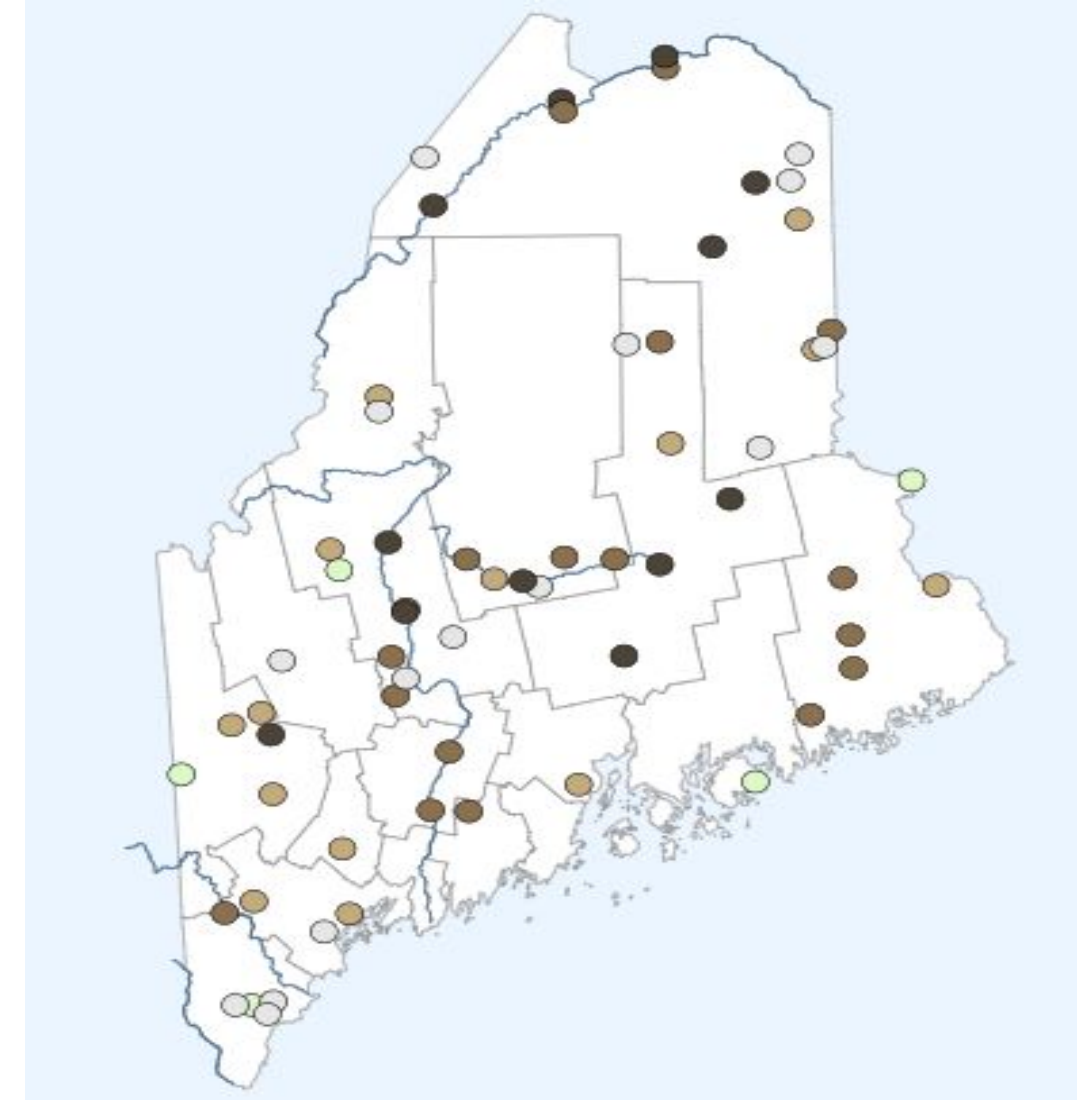


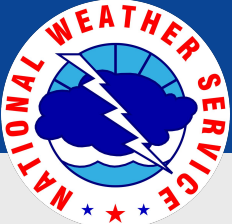
Hydrologic Conditions and Impacts

September 17, 2026
12:30 PM EDT

USGS Streamflow State of Maine Dashboard: <https://waterdata.usgs.gov/state/maine/>

- **Northern Basins:**
 - Below to Much Below Normal flows
 - 14 of 14 gages Below Normal to Much Below Normal
- **Bangor, Central Highlands & Moosehead Regions:**
 - Below to Much Below Normal flows
 - 15 of 15 gages Below Normal to Much Below Normal
- **Downeast Basins:**
 - Below to Much Below Normal flows
 - 8 of 9 gages Below Normal to Much Below Normal
- **Areawide Trends:**
 - Expect flows to remain below normal.

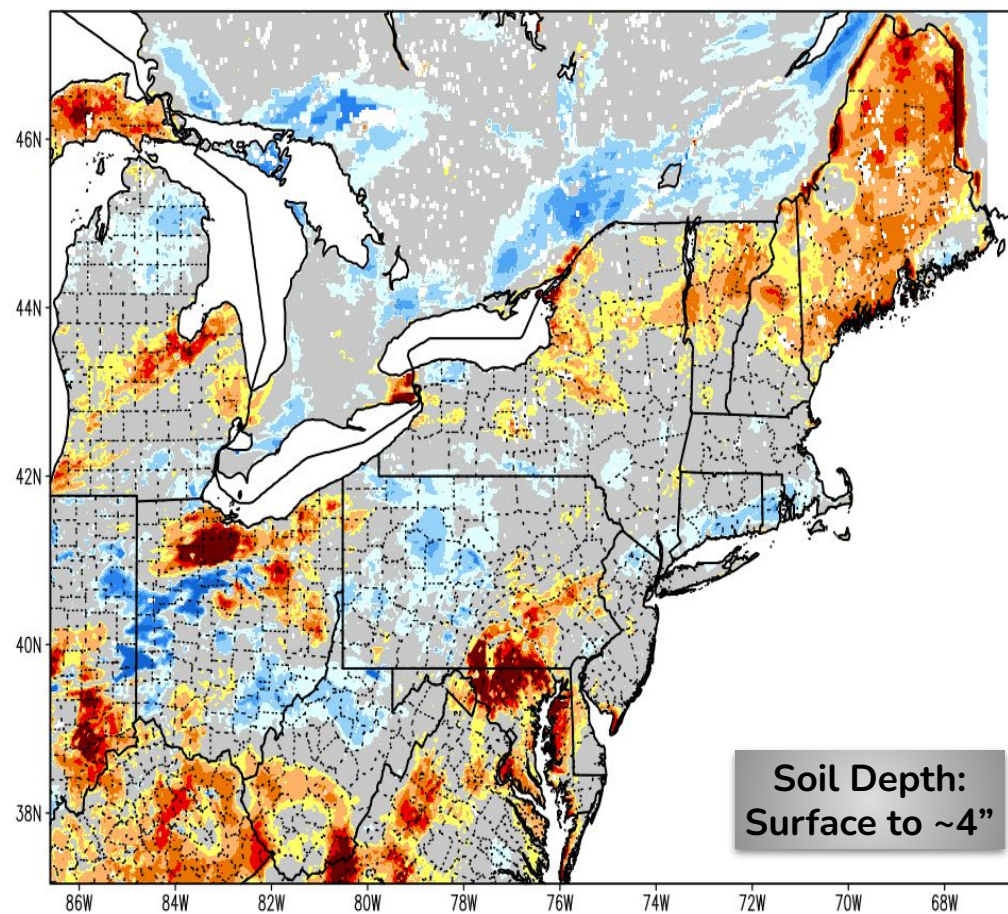




Groundwater Impacts

- Near surface soil moisture across much of Maine has continued to struggle and remains very dry. Minor areas of near normal in coastal Downeast Maine.
- Deeper soil moisture down to near 39" continues to struggle as surface plants soak up all the available water.

SPoRT-LIS 0-10 cm Soil Moisture percentile valid 17 Sep 2026



Soil Depth:
Surface to ~4"

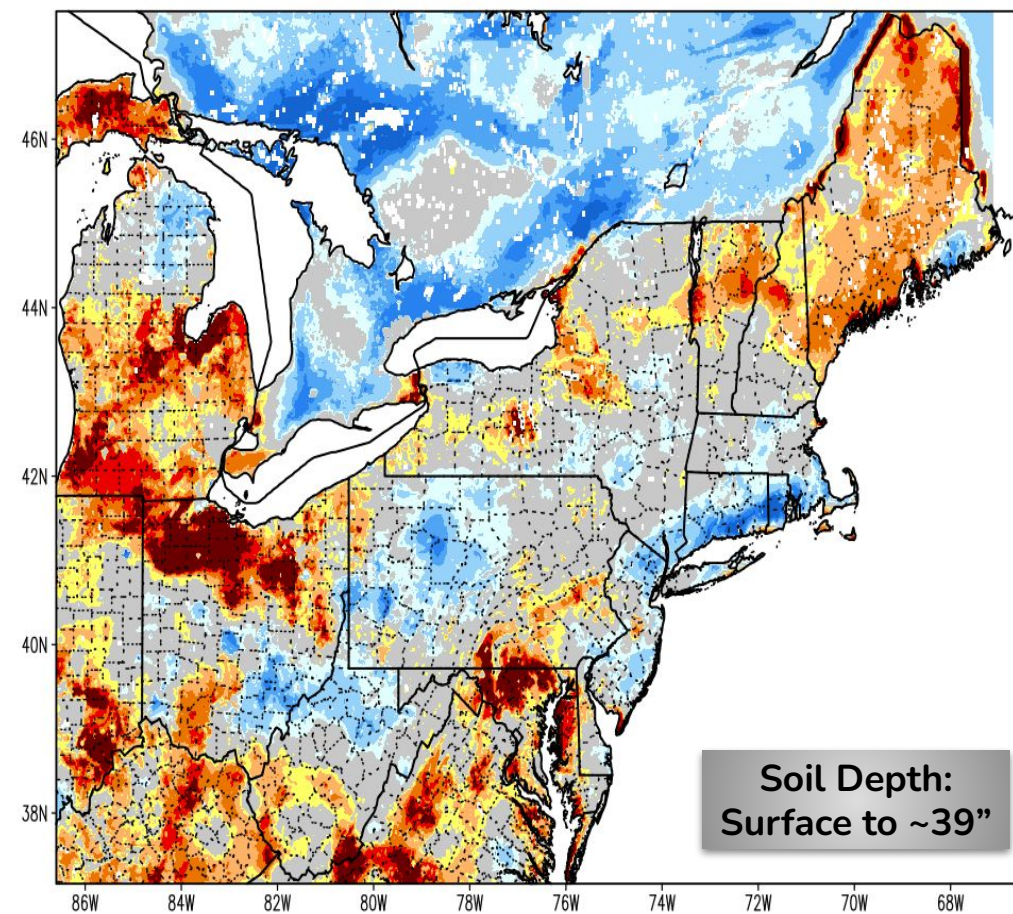
NOTE
Experimental



Below Normal

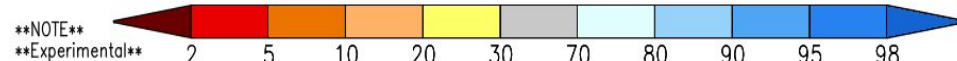
Above Normal

SPoRT-LIS 0-100 cm Soil Moisture percentile valid 17 Sep 2026



Soil Depth:
Surface to ~39"

NOTE
Experimental



Below Normal

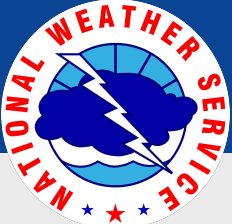
Above Normal

Image Captions:

National Water Model

[Soil Moisture Percentile 0-10cm Depth](#)

[Soil Moisture Percentile 0-100cm Depth](#)



Groundwater

September 17, 2026
12:30 PM EDT

- The 2025-26 Drought that did improve in the late spring only improved enough to lower drought conditions. Deeper moisture only improved slightly, but is being taxed heavily in the 2026 growing season combined with rainfall deficits in July and August 2026. This is leading to the well below normal groundwater conditions.

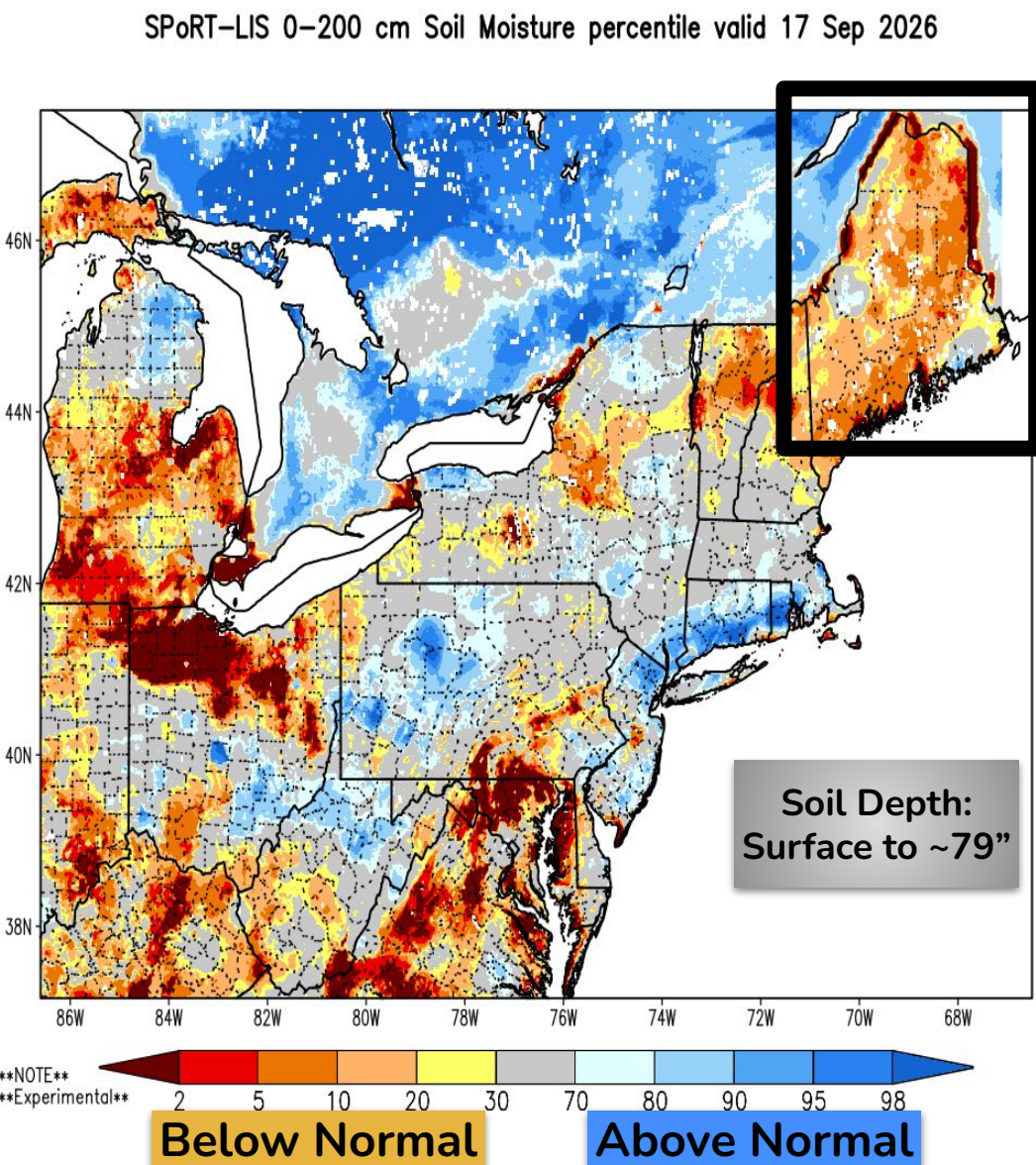
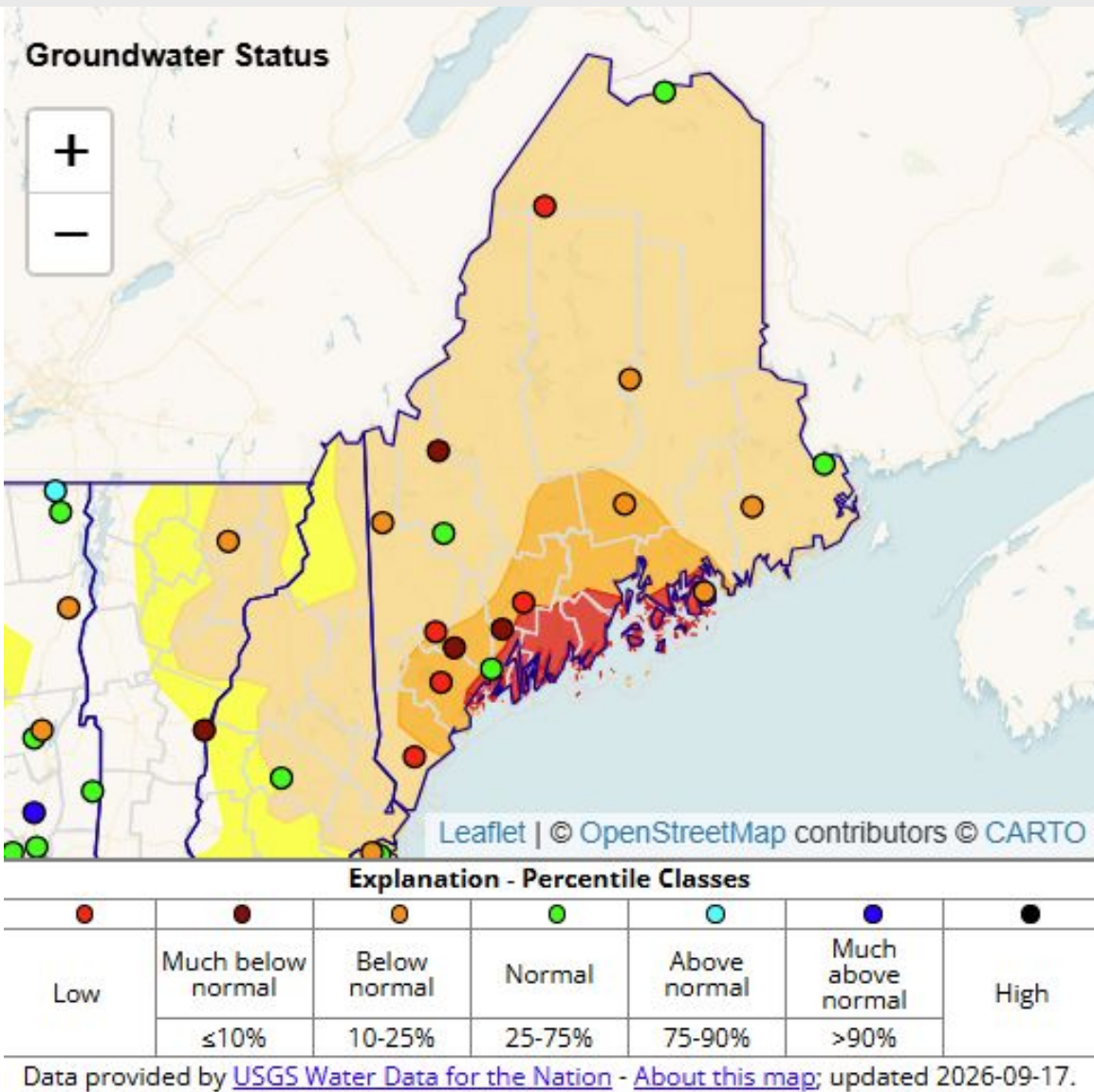
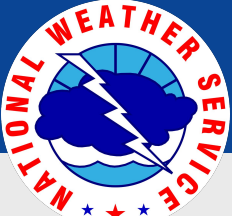


Image Captions:
[USGS Groundwater Gauge Status](#)
[Soil Moisture Percentile 0-200cm Depth](#)

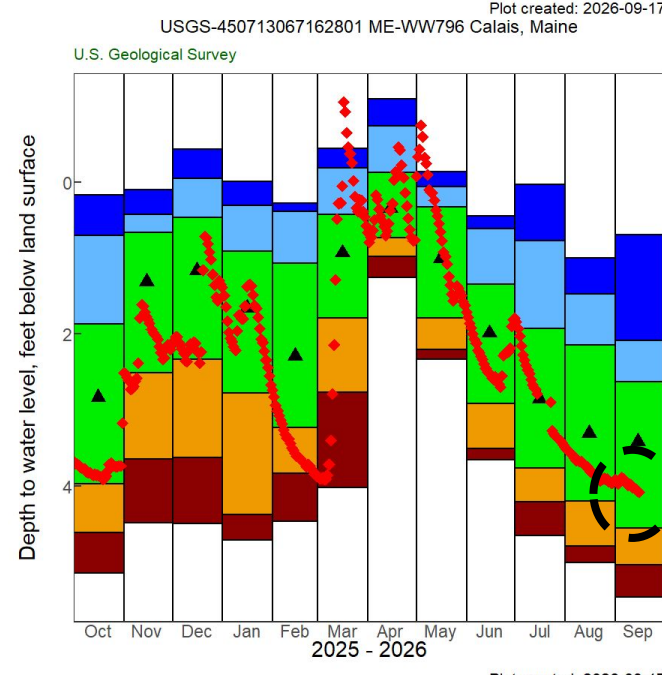
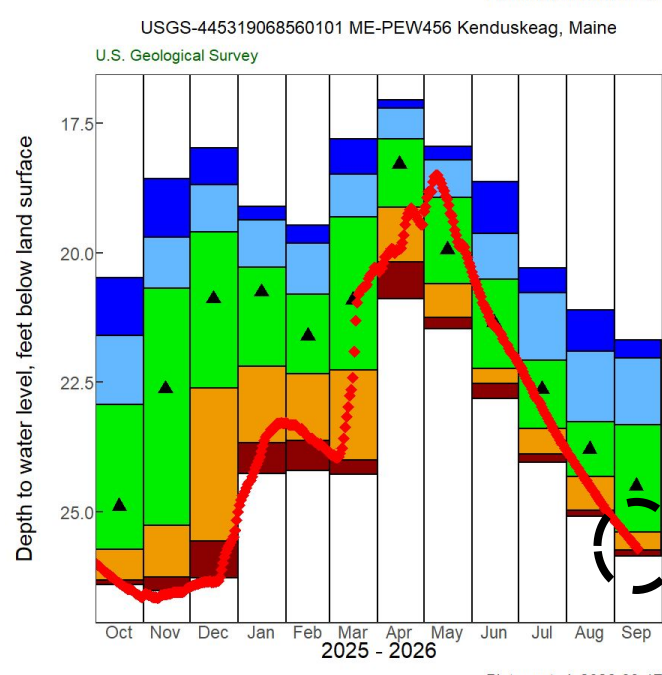
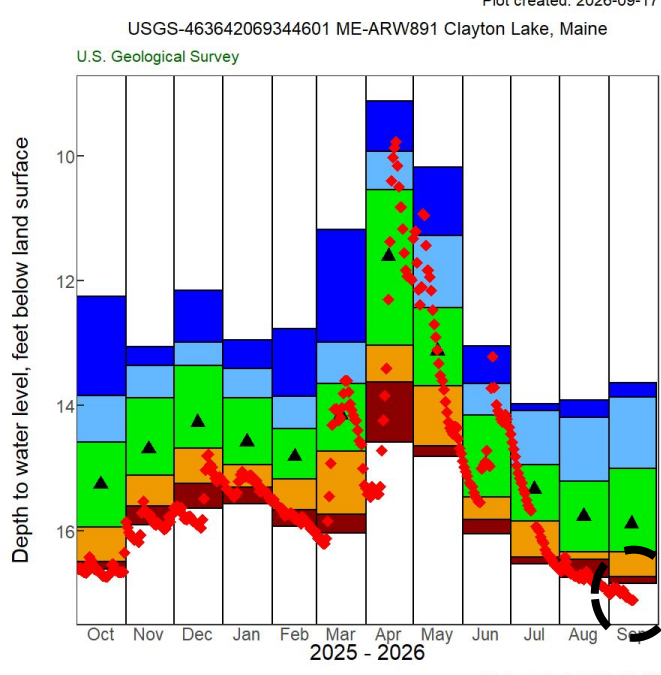
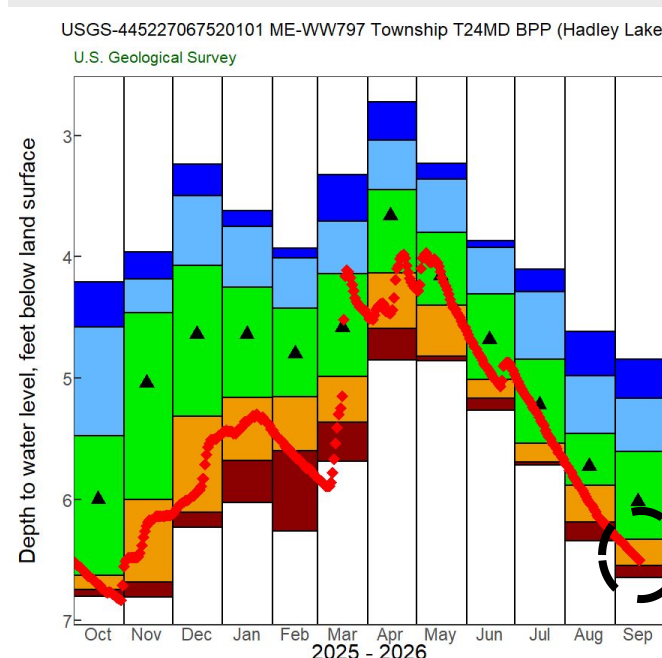
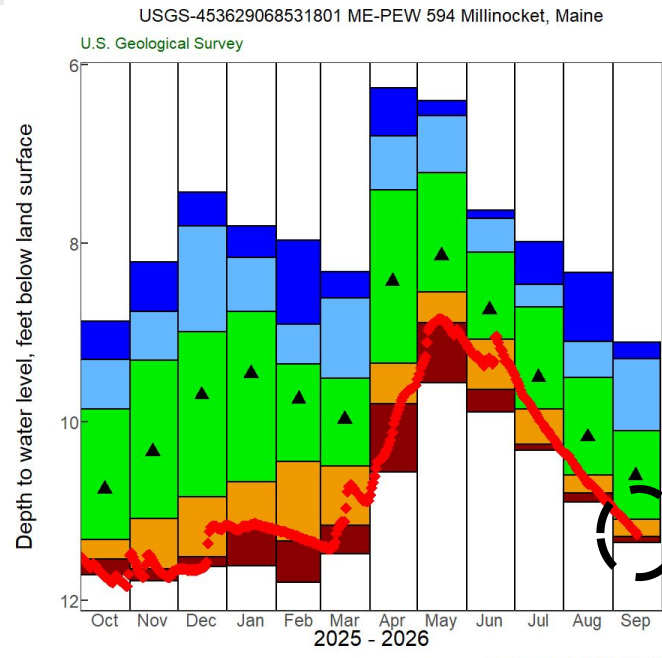
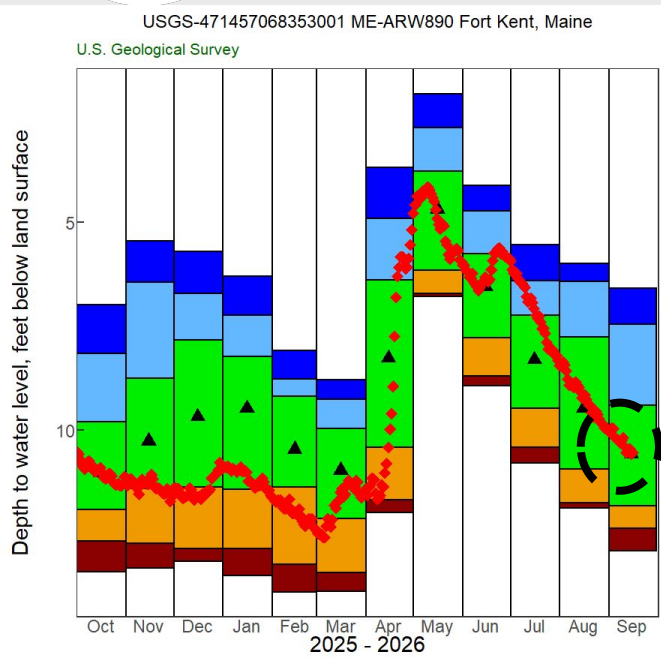




Groundwater Gage Plots

September 17, 2026
12:30 PM EDT

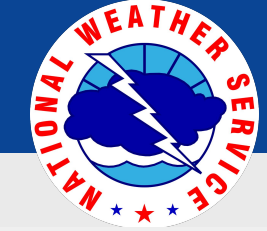
USGS Groundwater Levels in New England: https://newengland.water.usgs.gov/web_app/GWW/GWW.html



Groundwater gage data indicates high water system demand due to the growing season, compounded by a failure to fully recover from the 2025-26 drought. Consequently, multiple locations are currently reporting conditions at or near record lows.

A few locations are “normal” but still being significantly taxed on demand.

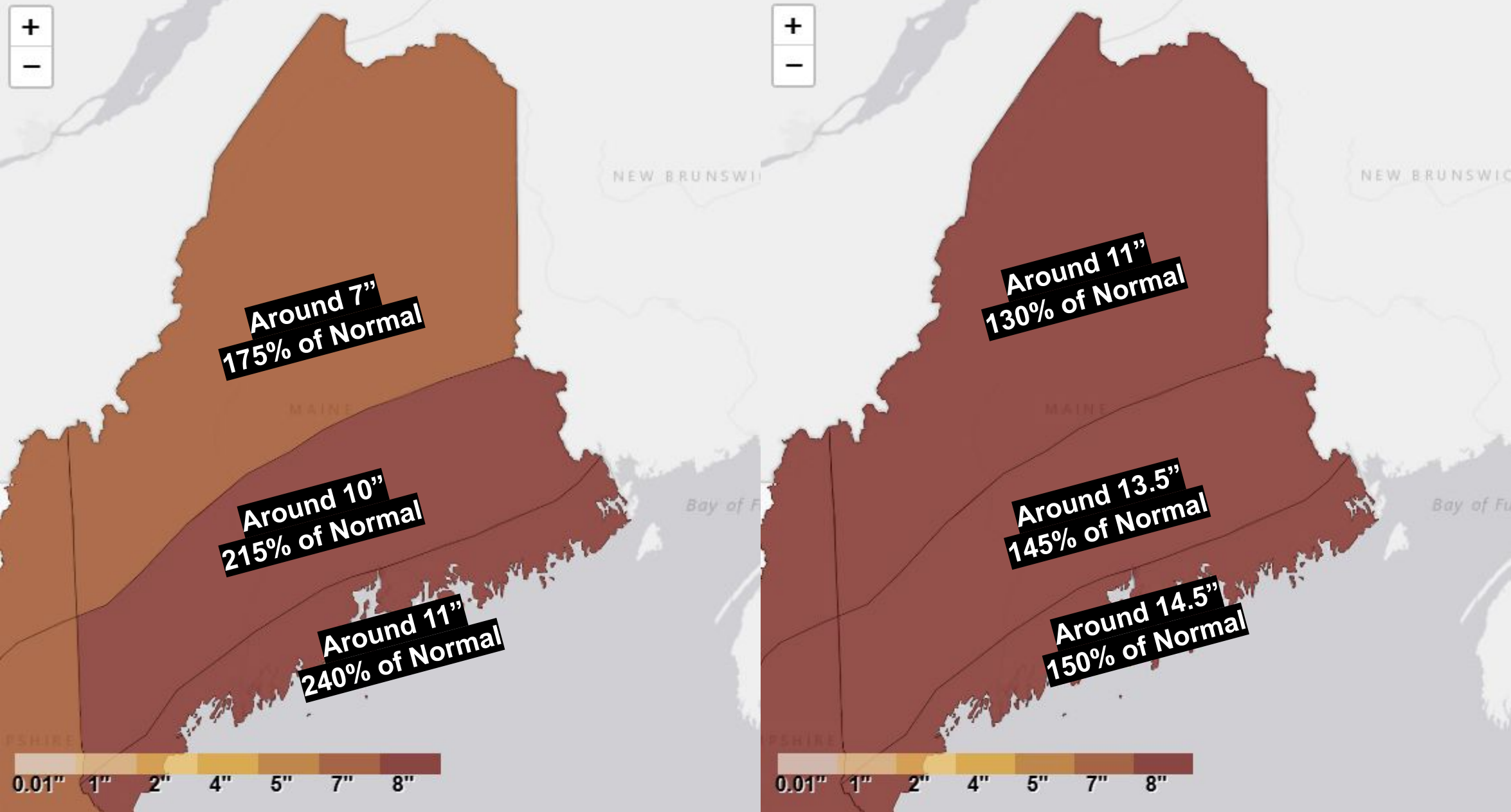




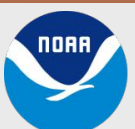
Rainfall Needed to “End the Drought”

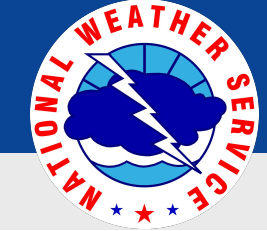
September 17, 2026
12:30 PM EDT

Precip Needed to End Drought Conditions in 1 Month Precip Needed to End Drought Conditions in 2 Months



- Steady, light-rain events with high absorption rates are ideal.
- These values have decreased slightly due to the upcoming end of the growing season. However, significantly above normal precip is needed to end the drought.





Summary of Impacts

September 17, 2026

12:30 PM EDT

Links: See/submit [Condition Monitoring Observer Reports \(CMOR\)](#) and view the [Drought Impacts Reporter](#)

Hydrologic Impacts

- Regional streamflows, lake levels, seasonal wetlands, and storage reservoirs are experiencing widespread drops due to a combination of seasonal midsummer drawdown, diminished surface runoff, and heightened water demand.
- Lakes/ponds running below normal exposing rocks posing threats to recreational activities.

Aquifer Deficits

- Groundwater recharge continues to lag across the region, maintaining significant, lingering storage deficits. Multiple monitoring wells across Eastern/Northern Maine are currently reading Below Normal to Much Below Normal compared to historical climatological baselines. Low water tables are compounded by multi-year precipitation deficits and depleted baseline levels carried over from previous dry seasons.

Dry Drinking Water Wells

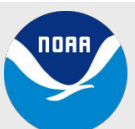
- A few new dry well reports; will monitor as conditions worsen.
- Maine EMA Dry Well Survey: <https://maine-dry-well-survey-maine.hub.arcgis.com/>

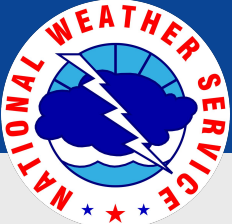
Agricultural Impacts

- Reduced soil moisture has forced farmers to expand irrigation. Apple orchards and blueberry fields have reportedly shown visible moisture stress, field corn exhibits stunted growth, and perennial gardens are wilting. Significant water stress has led to issues with “second cut” hay. Severe dryness is triggering premature leaf drop in some maples and wild apple trees. Pasture growth has stalled in many areas, forcing dairy producers to begin supplemental hay feeding ahead of schedule. Agricultural and rural communities are actively mitigating water shortages by hauling water for livestock, curtailing non-essential outdoor and indoor water use, and managing low or dry domestic and agricultural wells.

Mitigation Actions

- Please refer to your municipality and/or water provider for mitigation information.



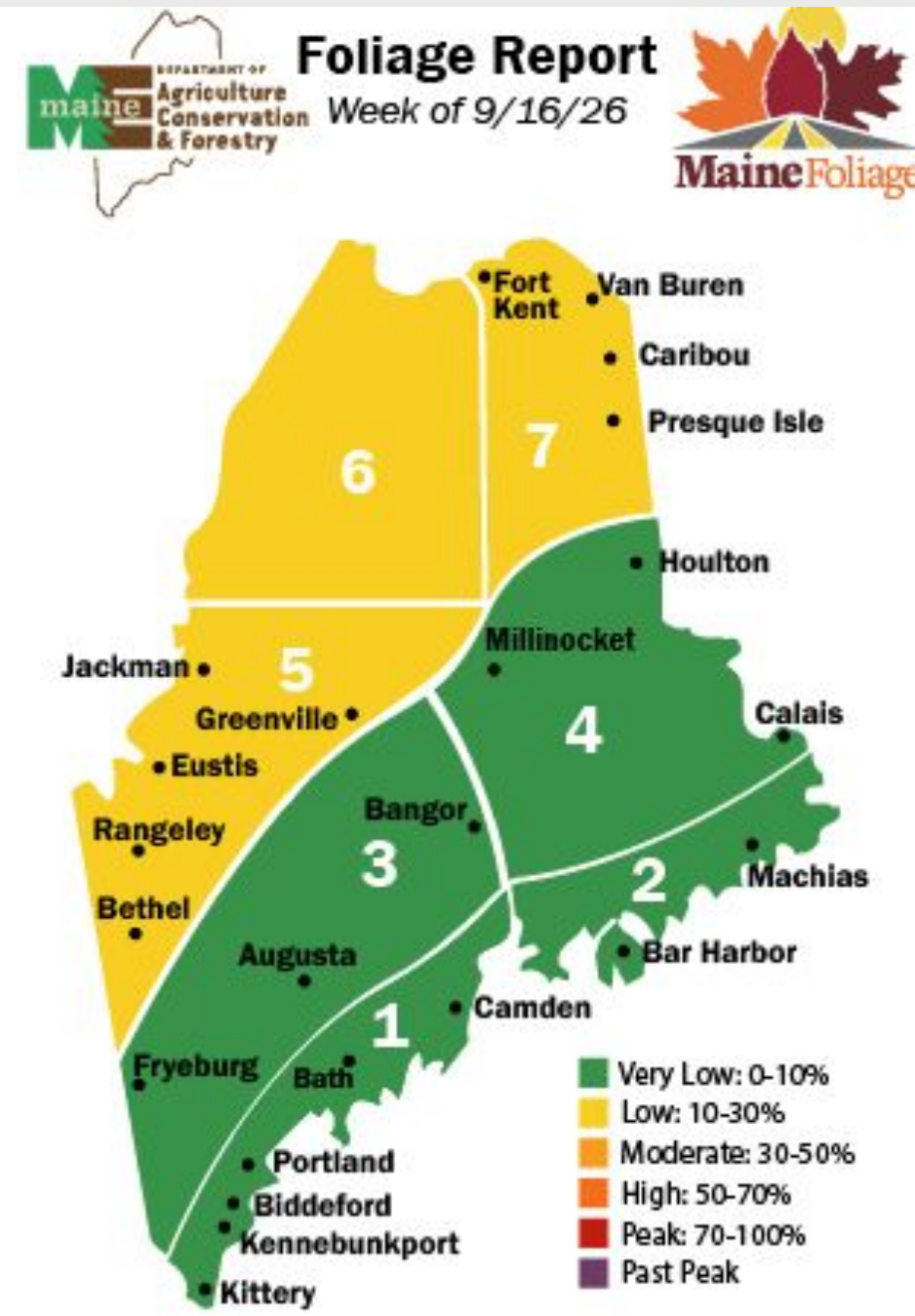


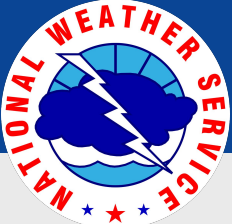
Fall Foliage Impacts

Maine Fall Foliage Report: www.maine.gov/dacf/mfs/projects/fall_foliage/report/index.shtml



While drought stress can lead to early leaf drop, browner leaves, and patchy color, sunny days paired with crisp, cool nights can still produce vibrant fall foliage across New England.

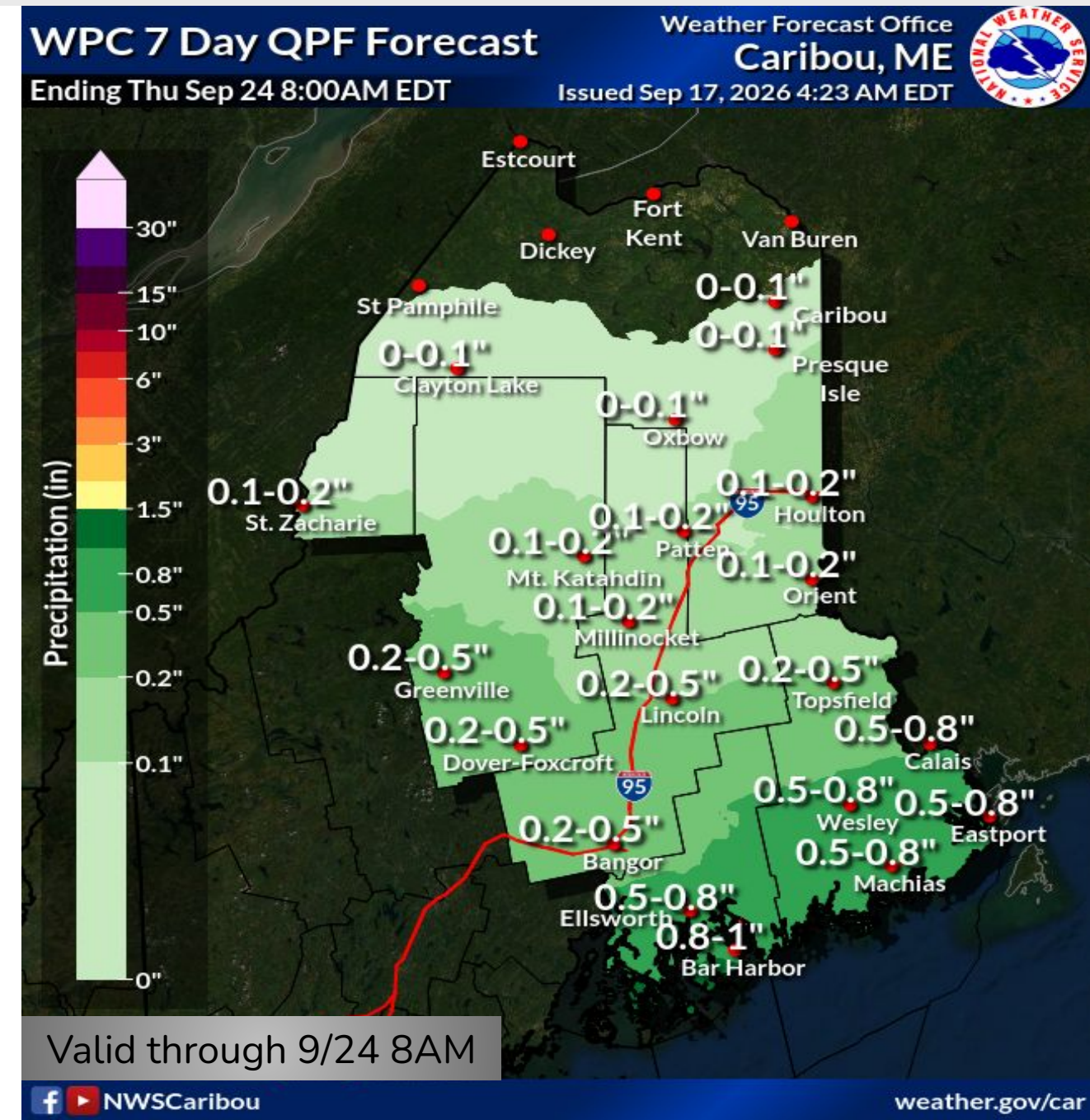


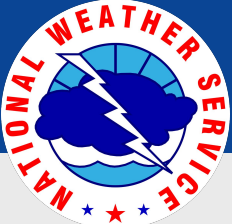


Seven Day Precipitation Forecast

September 17, 2026
12:30 PM EDT

- No significant rainfall expected over the next 7 days but some light precipitation is expected over Downeast Maine.





Long Range Outlooks (October)

The latest monthly and seasonal outlooks can be found on the [CPC homepage](#)

Main Takeaways for September:

- Moderate signal for above normal temperatures in the state.
- No significant signal for above/below normal precipitation in the state.

Pattern Outlook

- El Niño is continuing to strengthen but uncertainty remains on the subseasonal pattern influences in October. This is concerning given our ongoing dry conditions.

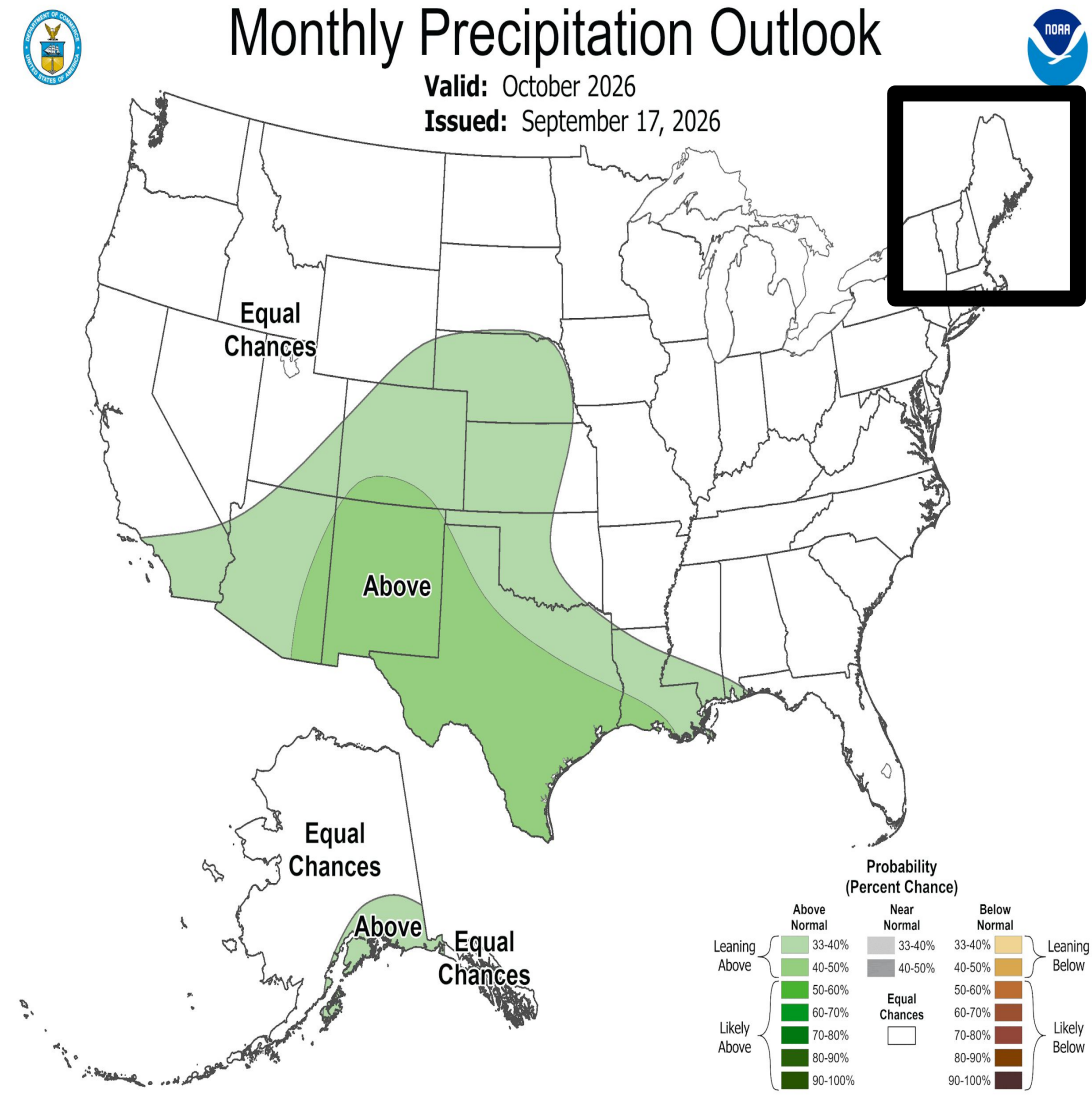
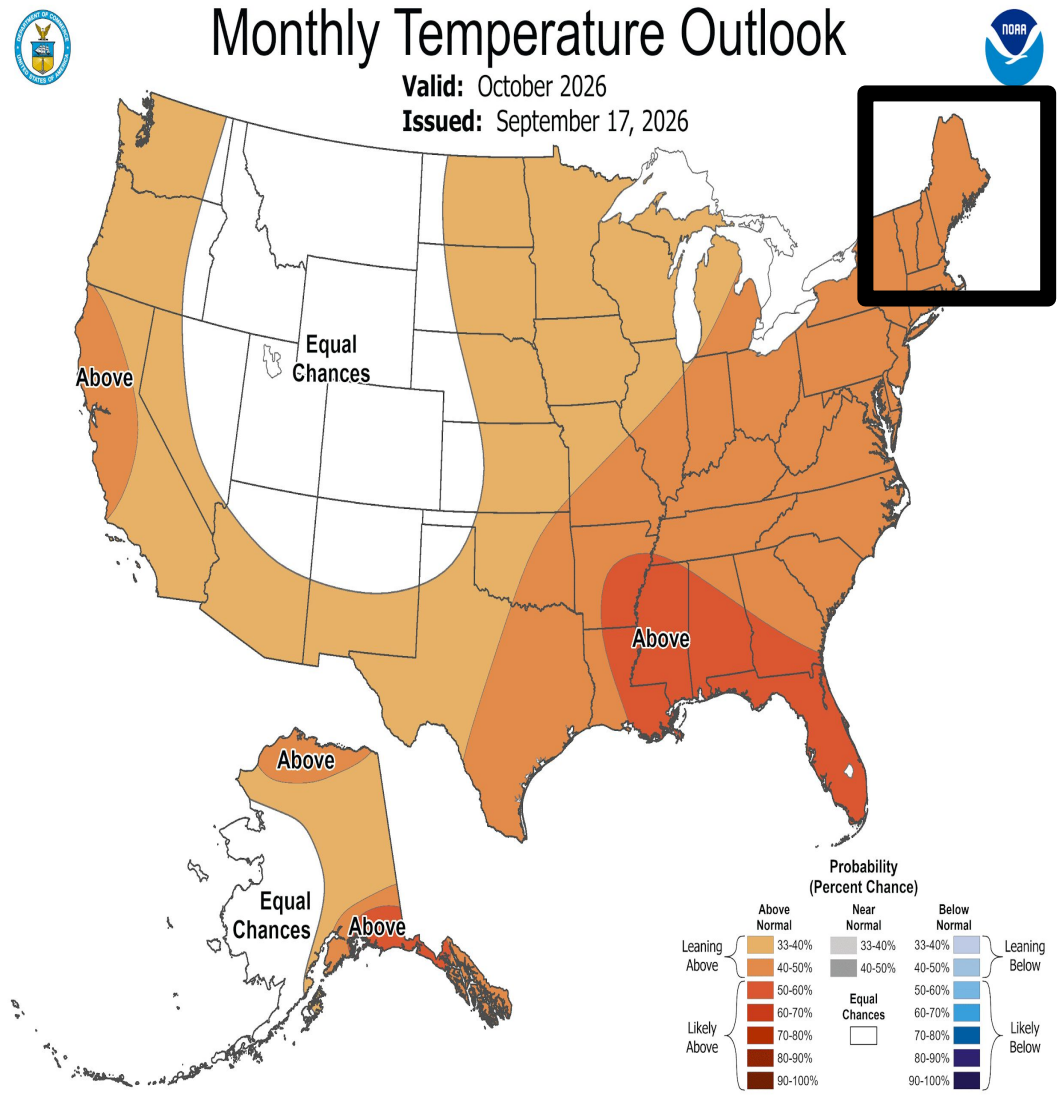
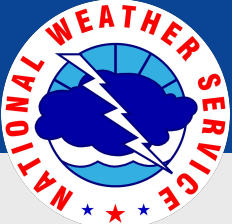


Image Captions:
Left - [Climate Prediction Center 1 Month Temperature Outlook.](#)
Right - [Climate Prediction Center 1 Month Precipitation Outlook.](#)



Long Range Outlooks (Oct-Dec)

The latest monthly and seasonal outlooks can be found on the [CPC homepage](#)

Main Takeaways for Oct-Dec:

- Moderate signal for above normal temperatures in the state.
- No significant signal for above/below normal precipitation in the state.

Pattern Outlook

- El Niño is continuing to strengthen but uncertainty remains on the subseasonal pattern influences this fall into early winter. This is concerning signals given our ongoing dry conditions.

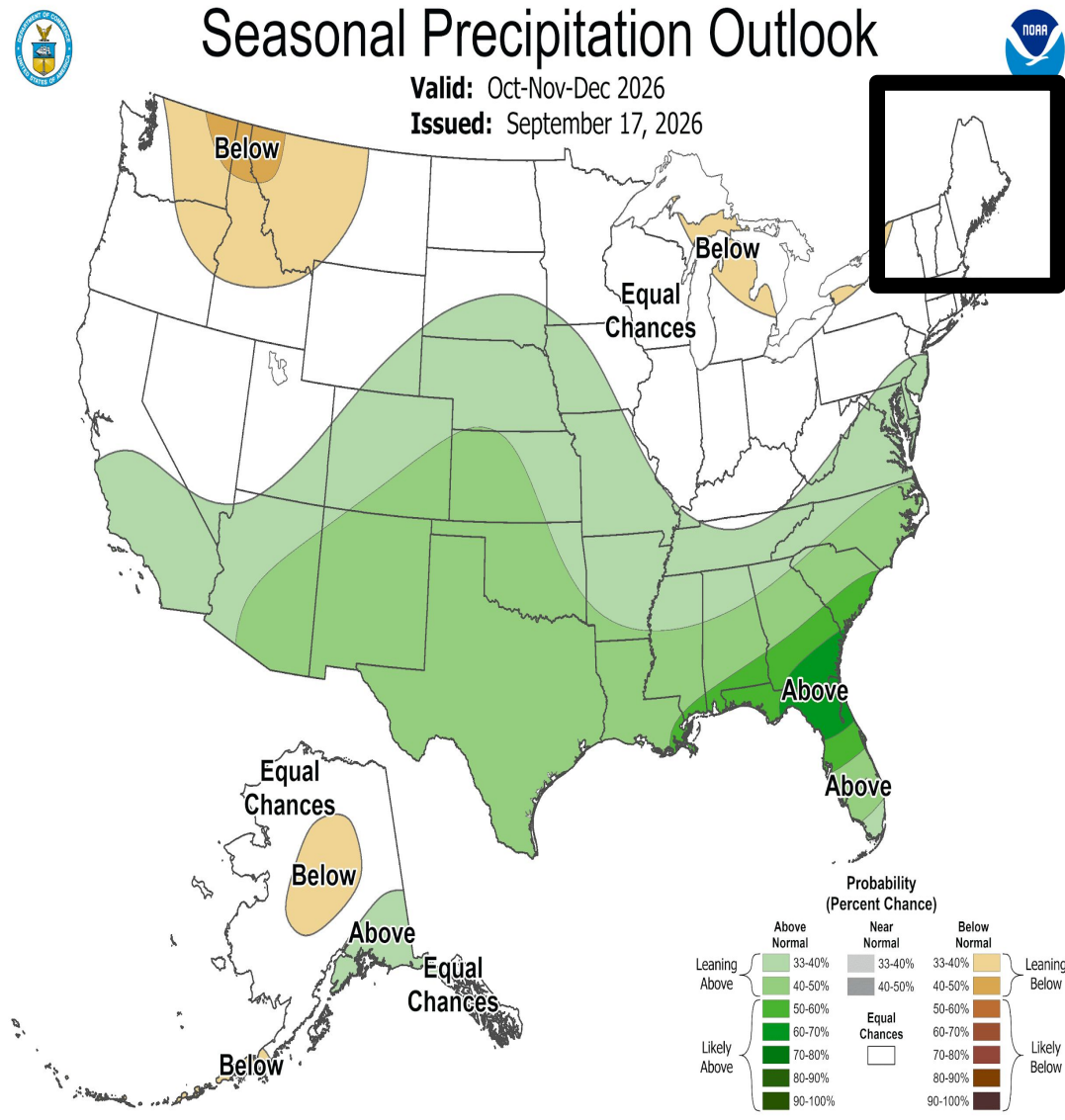
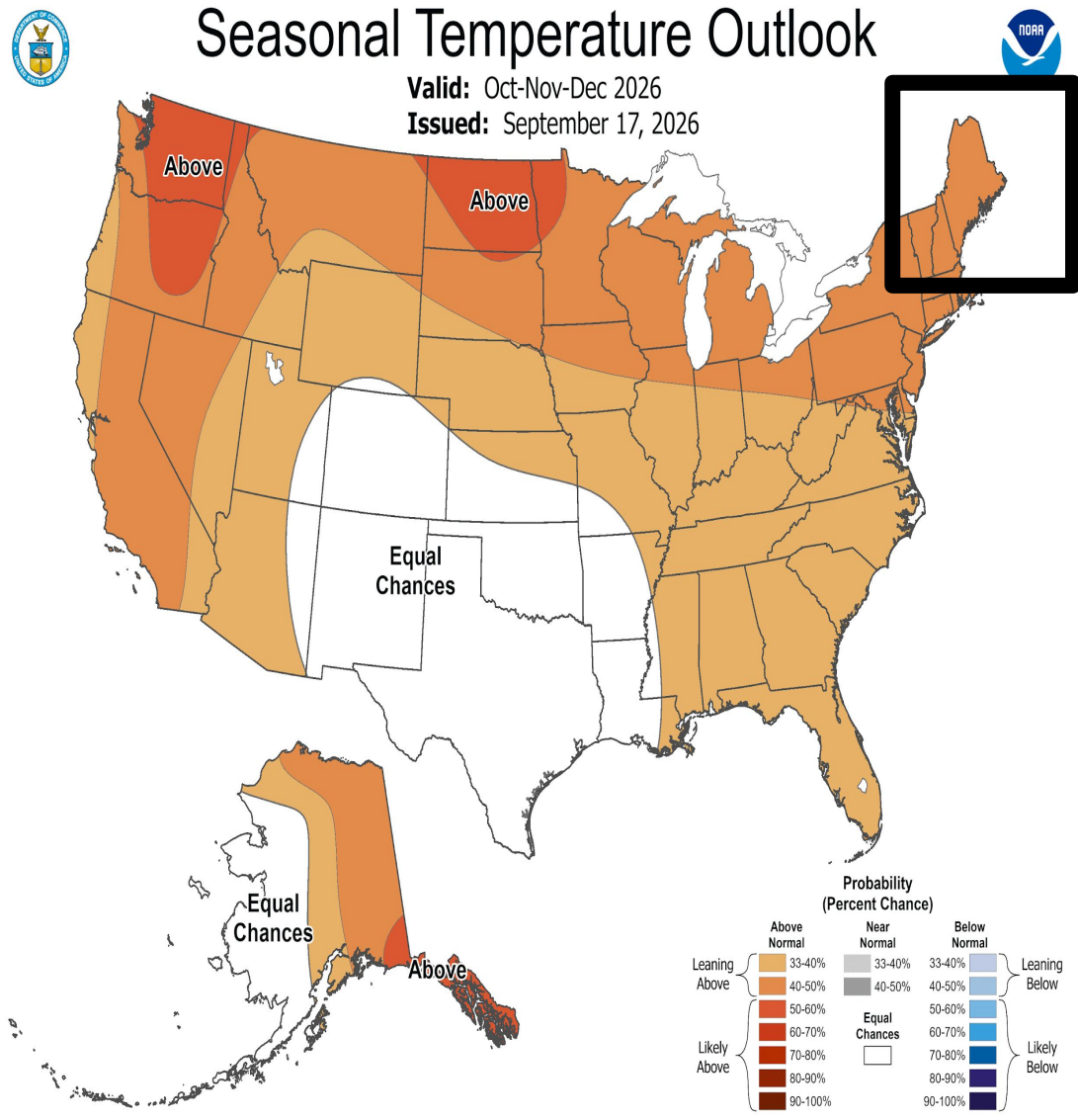
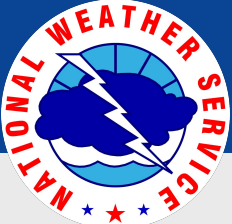


Image Captions:
Left - [Climate Prediction Center 3 Month Temperature Outlook.](#)
Right - [Climate Prediction Center 3 Month Precipitation Outlook.](#)



El Niño / Southern Oscillation (ENSO)

September 17, 2026
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El Niño is strengthening, with a **greater than 90% chance** of a very strong event during the Northern Hemisphere fall and winter 2026-27. The CPC Official ENSO outlook indicates there is a **75% chance of a historic event** that would exceed the strength of previous El Niño events dating back to 1950.

Historical Winter Impacts in Maine

Strong to Very Strong events historically deliver above-normal winter temperatures and precipitation:

Storm Type & Precipitation

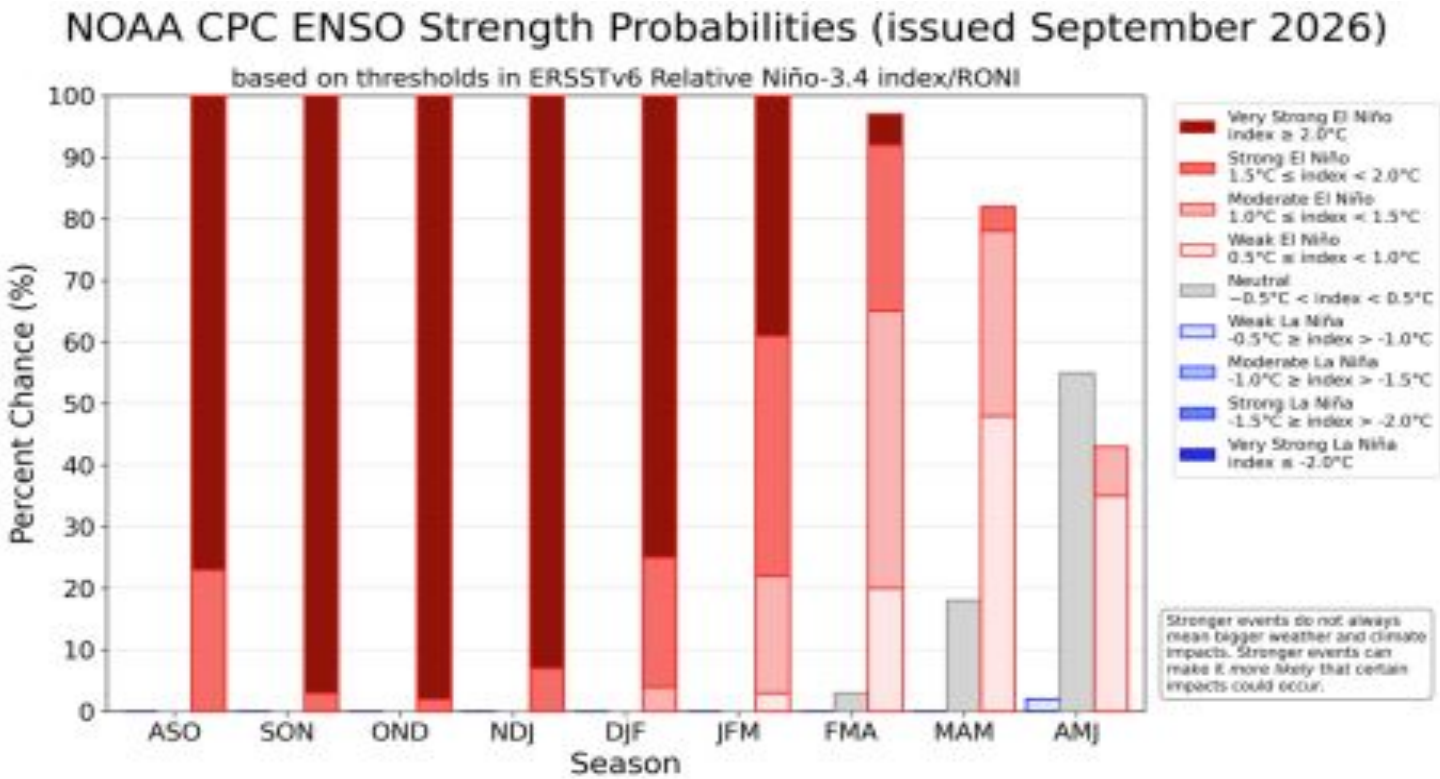
- Higher proportion of winter storms produce rain/sleet/freezing rain rather than long-lasting dry snow, particularly in coastal and southern areas.

Repeated Snowpack Melt

- Periods of mild temperatures between weather systems often cause existing snowpack to melt repeatedly throughout the season.

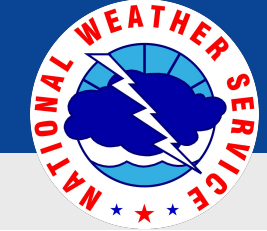
Runoff & Hydrologic Recharge

- Frequent runoff events favor robust surface water replenishment (lakes, reservoirs, streamflows), while shallow ground frost aids deep groundwater recharge. Northern Maine deep frost prevents recharge.



Net Drought Outlook: Even with expectations of a deficient seasonal snowpack, the net hydrologic impact is often favorable for reducing drought.

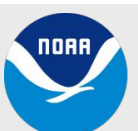


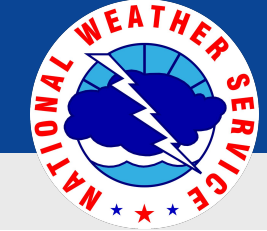


Main Takeaways

September 17, 2026
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- **Bottom Line:** drought continues to worsen across Eastern and Northern Maine with no significant improvements expected. Short term rainfall likely to help near surface groundwater, although short lived.
 - *Full aquifer recovery is unlikely until Winter 2026 / Spring 2027.*
- Groundwater trends continue to show significant worsening.
- Outlook: Long-term prognosis remains concerning, but a strong El Niño Winter is hopeful.
 - Will need to monitor trends for fire danger, drinking water supplies and surface water conditions.
- Repeating light wetting rains will be vital to improve soil moisture, otherwise evaporative losses will dominate.
- Growing season ending soon will reduce the demand on the water system.
- Stakeholders should prepare for worsening drought conditions this fall.
- **Note: Groundwater & streamflow levels are at climatological minimums in September.**



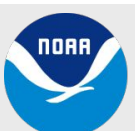
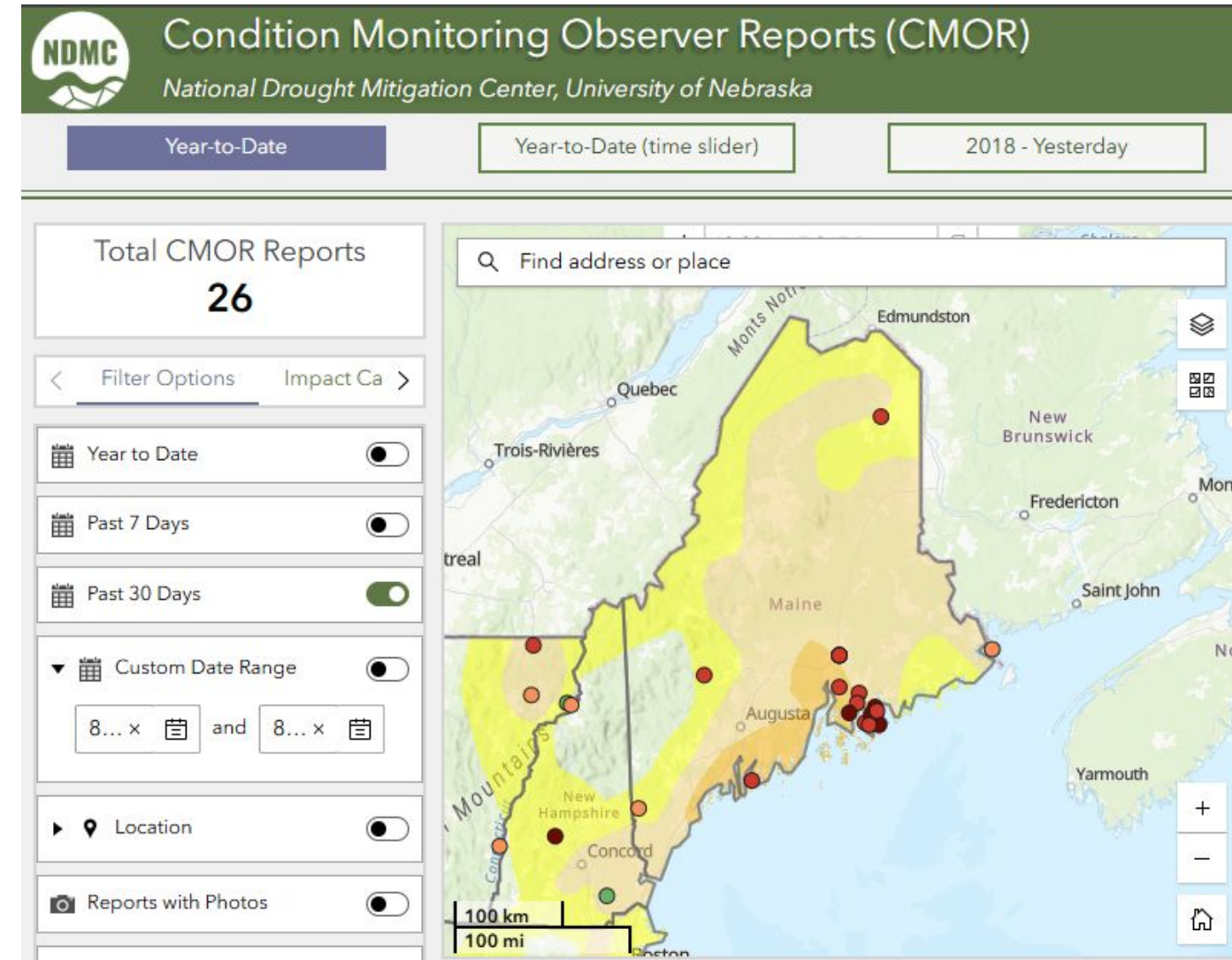


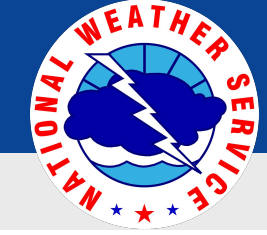
Condition Monitoring Observer Reports (CMOR)

September 17, 2026
12:30 PM EDT

<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/016ac3b48c5049909106a23e6556311b>

- Condition Monitoring Observer Reports on Drought (CMOR-Drought) is a tool provided by the National Drought Mitigation Center (NDMC) in partnership with the National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS).
- Submit reports here:
<https://droughtimpacts.unl.edu/Tools/ConditionMonitoringObservations.aspx>
- The tool allows citizen scientists to submit observation reports relating to drought, which are presented in a map that can be used to view and access submitted information and attachments. These reports are vital for determining the drought conditions.





Useful Links

- <https://drought.gov/drought-information-statements>
- <https://www.weather.gov/car/DroughtInformationStatement>
- <https://www.drought.gov/drought-status-updates/car>
- <https://www.weather.gov/car/EMhome>
- <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/>

Contact Information

Web

→ www.weather.gov/car

Phone (public)

→ (207) 492-0182

Questions? Email

→ nws.caribou@noaa.gov

→ james.sinko@noaa.gov *(Hydrology Program Manager)*