Drought Information Statement for North and Central Georgia

Valid February 19, 2026

Issued By: National Weather Service Atlanta / Peachtree City, GA

Contact Information: sr-ffc.webmaster@noaa.gov

- This product will be updated March 5, 2026 or sooner if drought conditions change significantly.
- Please see all currently available products at https://drought.gov/drought-information-statements.
- Please visit https://www.weather.gov/ffc/DroughtInformationStatement for previous statements.
- Please visit https://www.drought.gov/drought-status-updates for regional drought status updates.

Extreme drought continues to expand despite recent rains.

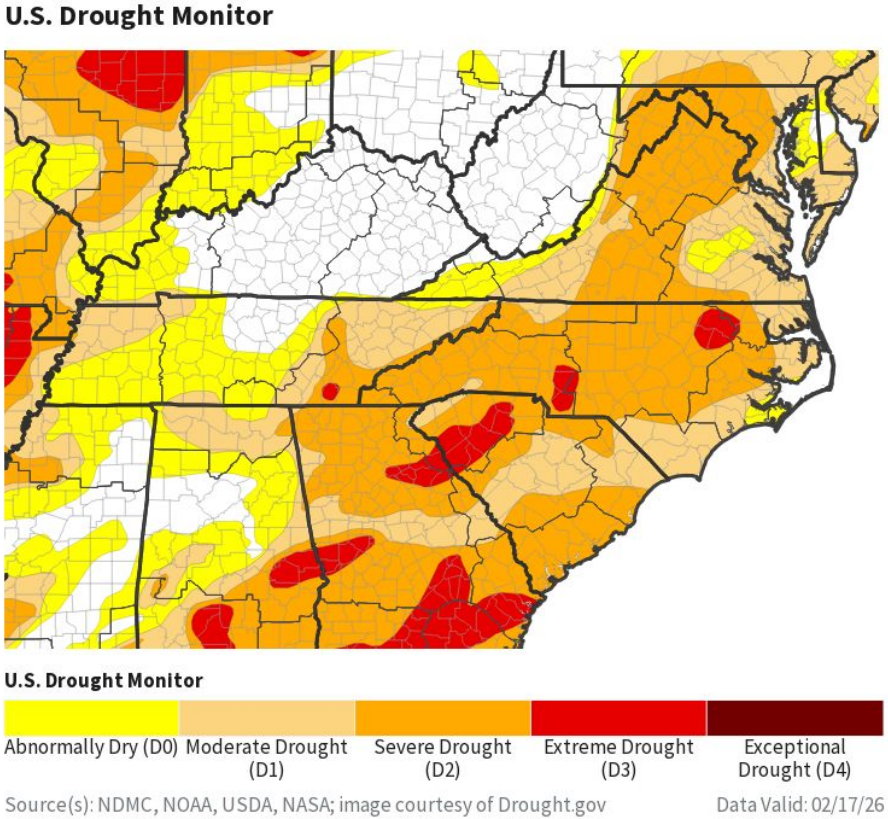
- Coverage of D2-D4 drought is at its highest in Georgia since 2011.
- Hydrologic and fire weather impacts are increasing across the state.
- Without an active weather pattern producing meaningful rainfall, expect the drought to persist through the Spring months.

U.S. Drought Monitor

Link to the latest U.S. Drought Monitor for North and Central Georgia

Drought intensity and Extent

- **D4 (Exceptional Drought)**: None.
- **D3 (Extreme Drought)**: Chattahoochee, Crawford, Dodge, Emanuel, Harris, Johnson, Lamar, Laurens, Madison, Marion, Meriwether, Monroe, Montgomery, Muscogee, Oconee, Oglethorpe, Talbot, Taylor, Telfair, Toombs, Treutlen, Upson, Walton, Wheeler, Wilcox, Wilkes
- **D2 (Severe Drought)**: Banks, Barrow, Bartow, Bibb, Bleckley, Butts, Carroll, Catoosa, Chattooga, Cherokee, Clarke, Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, Crisp, Dade, Dawson, DeKalb, Dooly, Douglas, Fannin, Fayette, Floyd, Forsyth, Gilmer, Glascock, Gordon, Greene, Gwinnett, Hall, Hancock, Haralson, Heard, Henry, Houston, Jackson, Jasper, Jefferson, Jones, Lumpkin, Macon, Morgan, Murray, Newton, North Fulton, Paulding, Peach, Pickens, Pike, Polk, Pulaski, Putnam, Rockdale, Schley, South Fulton, Spalding, Stewart, Sumter, Taliaferro, Towns, Troup, Twiggs, Union, Walker, Warren, Washington, Webster, White, Whitfield, Wilkinson
- **D1 (Moderate Drought)**: Baldwin
- **D0: (Abnormally Dry)**: None.



Recent Change in Drought Intensity

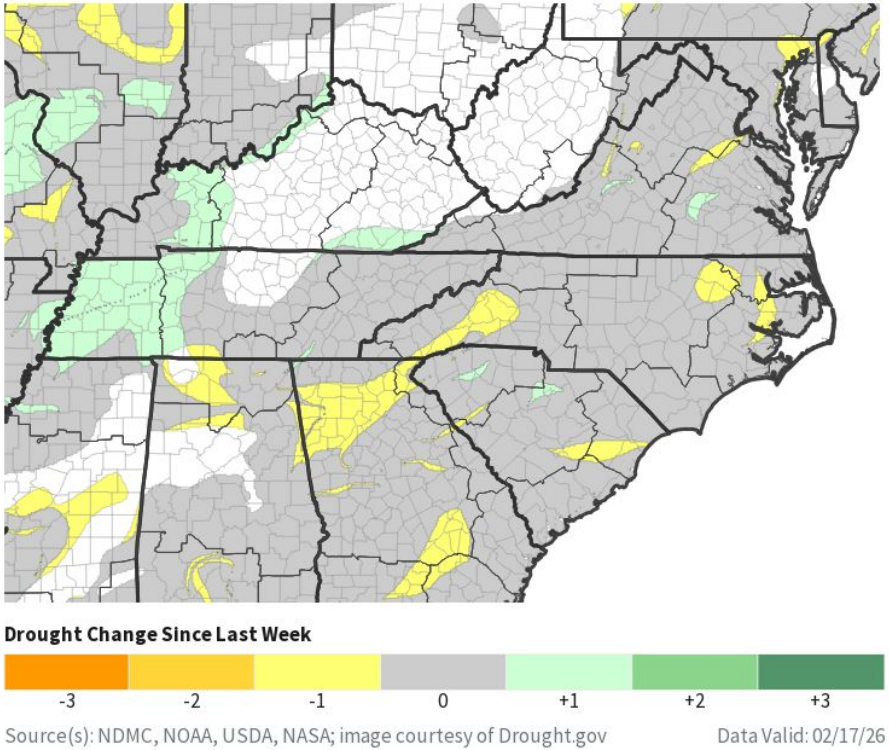
Link to the latest 2-week and 4-week change map for Georgia.

Four Week Drought Monitor Class Change

- **Drought Worsened:** Banks, Barrow, Bartow, Butts, Carroll, Catoosa, Chattahoochee, Chattooga, Cherokee, Clarke, Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, Crawford, Dade, Dawson, DeKalb, Dodge, Douglas, Emanuel, Fannin, Fayette, Floyd, Forsyth, Gilmer, Glascock, Gordon, Greene, Gwinnett, Hall, Hancock, Haralson, Harris, Heard, Henry, Jackson, Jasper, Johnson, Lamar, Laurens, Lumpkin, Madison, Marion, Meriwether, Monroe, Montgomery, Morgan, Murray, Muscogee, Newton, North Fulton, Oconee, Oglethorpe, Paulding, Pickens, Pike, Polk, Putnam, Rockdale, South Fulton, Spalding, Talbot, Taylor, Telfair, Toombs, Towns, Treutlen, Troup, Union, Upson, Walker, Walton, Warren, Wheeler, White, Whitfield, Wilcox, Wilkes
- **No Change:** Baldwin, Bibb, Bleckley, Crisp, Dooly, Houston, Jefferson, Jones, Macon, Peach, Pulaski, Schley, Stewart, Sumter, Taliaferro, Twiggs, Washington, Webster, Wilkinson
- **Drought Improved:** None.

The 4-week change map is available here. The 1-week change map is shown right.

U.S. Drought Monitor 1-Week Change Map

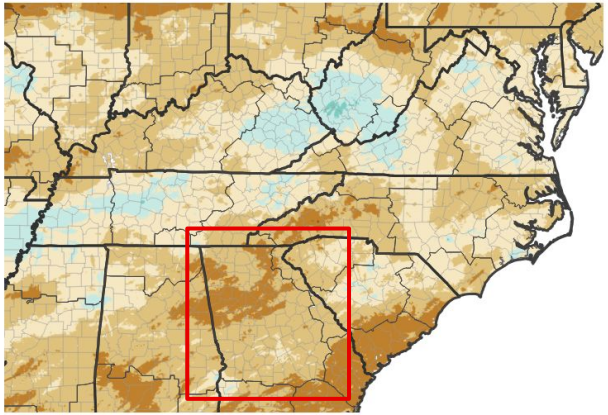


Precipitation - Past 30 Days

Through Thursday, February 19, 2026, at 7AM:

	Last 30 Days		Last 60 Days	
	Rainfall	% Normal	Rainfall	% Normal
Rome (KRMG)	2.18	44%	6.56	67%
Athens (KAHN)	2.40	54%	3.19	36%
Peachtree-DeKalb (KPDK)	1.89	41%	3.43	38%
Fulton County (KFTY)	1.74	40%	3.40	40%
Atlanta (KATL)	2.13	46%	4.16	45%
Peachtree City (KFFC)	2.06	45%	4.35	49%
Macon (KMCN)	2.20	50%	3.66	42%
Columbus (KCSG)	2.40	54%	3.96	45%

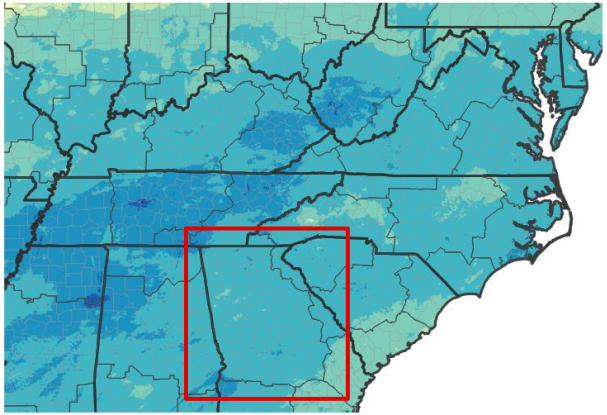
30-Day Percent of Normal Precipitation



Source(s): National Weather Service Multi-Radar Multi-Sensor System; image courtesy of Drought.gov

Last Updated: 02/20/26

30-Day Precipitation Accumulations (Inches)



Source(s): National Weather Service Multi-Radar Multi-Sensor System; image courtesy of Drought.gov

Last Updated: 02/20/26

Over the last 30 days, rainfall over Georgia has generally ranged from 2.0 to 4.0 inches (30 to 95 percent of normal), with outliers on each side of this range. Pockets of higher amounts were observed near Ellijay and in the greater Macon area, with totals closer to 4.5 inches (70 to 80 percent of normal). The lowest amounts – generally between 1.75 and 2 inches (40 to 50 percent of normal) – were observed in the metro Atlanta area and near Vidalia in east central Georgia.

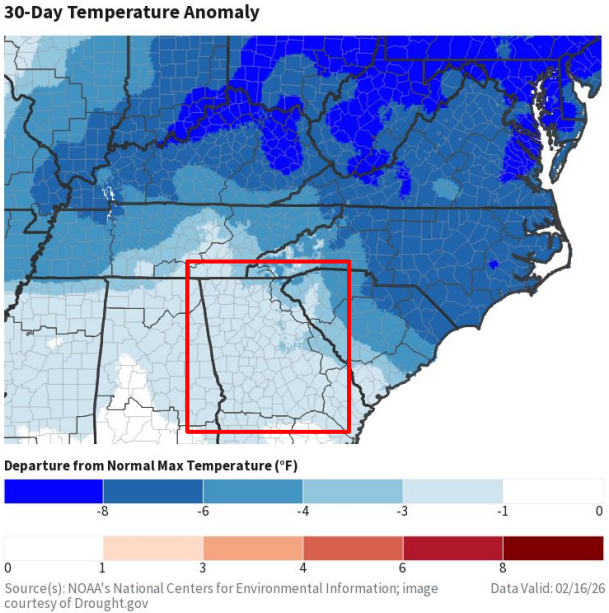
The Additional Rainfall Information product (MISATL) is available online at weather.gov/ffc.

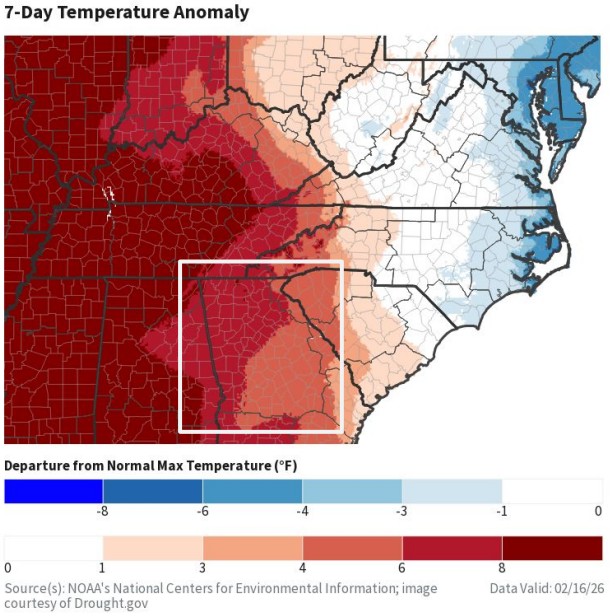
Temperatures - Past 30-, 7-Days

*Through February 16, 2026.**

	Last 30 Days	
	Average High (Departure)	Average Low (Departure)
Rome (KRMG)	55.5° (+0.5°)	32.5° (-0.2°)
Athens (KAHN)	52.4° (-3.6°)	30.4° (-4.3°)
Peachtree-DeKalb (KPDK)	53.2° (-1.0°)	30.7° (-3.0°)
Fulton County (KFTY)	53.2° (-2.5°)	30.5° (-3.5°)
Atlanta (KATL)	53.6° (-1.9°)	33.6° (-2.9°)
Peachtree City (KFFC)	53.5° (-3.0°)	29.9° (-3.0°)
Macon (KMCN)	57.6° (-2.4°)	30.9° (-5.2°)
Columbus (KCSG)	58.3° (-1.6°)	35.3° (-3.2°)

*Note, the table values are for the period January 17-February 16, 2026, matching the latency for the 30-day and 7-day max temperature anomaly images (right).





Over the 30 day period ending February 16 (middle image), average high temperatures over north and central Georgia were generally 1 to 3 degrees below normal. The table (left) also includes the average low temperature trends for the 30 day period, which were largely 2 to 5 degrees below normal for most climate locations.

For the 7 days ending February 16 (right image), a recent warm pattern drove average high temperatures back above climatological normals by 4 to 8 degrees. Daily high temperatures in the mid to upper 70s were a big change over the previous month.

Summary of Impacts

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

Hydrologic Impacts

- River levels remain exceptionally low for this time of year. Most river basins are experiencing Below Normal to Much Below Normal streamflows compared to climatology for this time of year. See slide 7 for additional details.

Agricultural Impacts

- Farmers have reported supplemental feeding is needed, cover crops have been planted for grazing. Water sources (e.g., holding ponds) remain low or mostly dry in many areas. Planting season is still on schedule to begin in April, but concerns exist given the low water levels for irrigation.
- The Crop Progress & Condition report is available through November 2025.

Fire Hazard Impacts

- Wildfire risk continues to be high enough that leaf and yard waste burning has been discouraged since late 2025. Some counties have noted an uptick in fire-related emergency calls.
- The prescribed burn season has begun, and officials are collaborating with NWS to identify safe burning periods.
- See slide 9 for more details.

Mitigation Actions

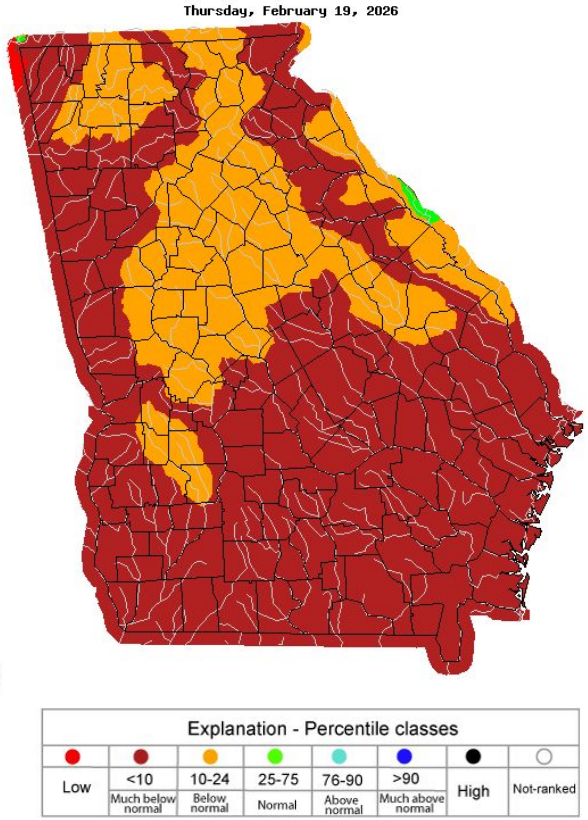
- Please refer to your municipality and/or water provider for mitigation information.

Hydrologic Conditions and Impacts

Main Takeaways

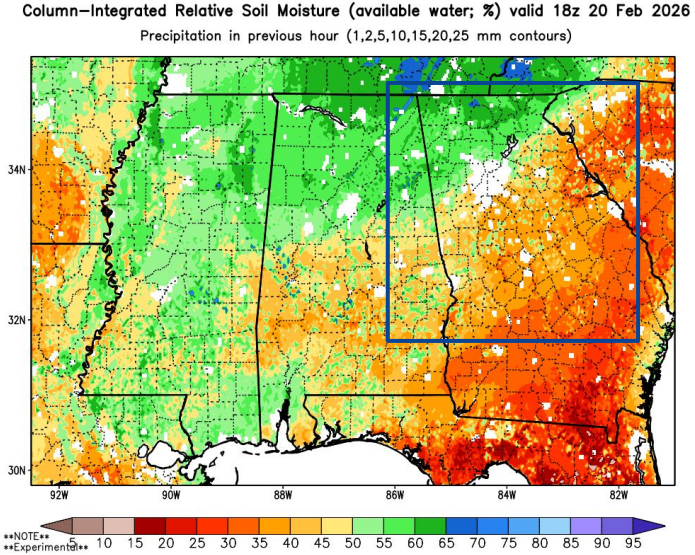
- Warm and generally dry conditions have continued to produce anomalously low flows across the majority of Georgia river basins in the last 30 days. Despite the rainfall in the last week, streamflows show little improvement. Most basins have *Much Below Normal* to *Below Normal* streamflows.
- Lake and Reservoir levels reflect a combination of the winter drawdown period and the persistent dry conditions. The available elevation curves for USACE projects in the NWS Peachtree City area show:

	USACE Lakes	
	Current Action Zone	Forecast Action Zone
Carters	Zone 1	Zone 1
Lanier	Zone 3	Zone 3
Allatoona	Zone 3	Zone 3
West Point	Top of Conservation	Top of Conservation



Agricultural Impacts

- Soil moistures remain quite dry over much of north and central Georgia (image right).
- Far north Georgia has the highest 0-200 cm relative soil moisture in the state, but portions of northwest Georgia has shown additional drying in the last two weeks (image far right).
- Planting season typical starts in April, but increased rainfall will be needed to balance the increasing water demand into the growing season.



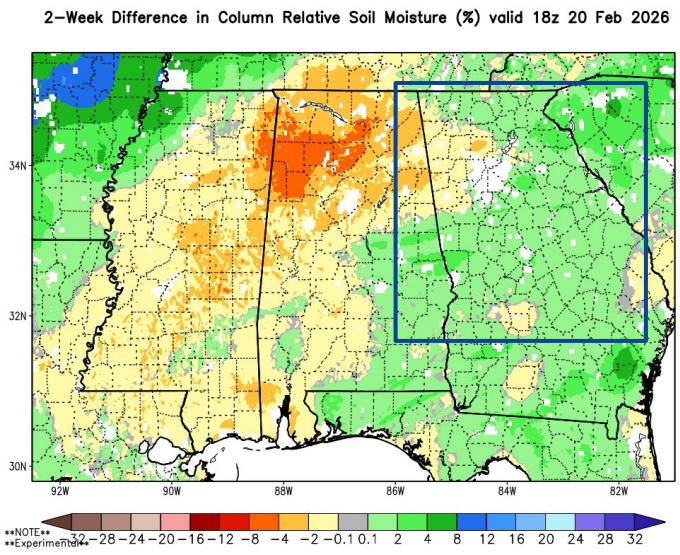


Image Captions:
Left: 0-200cm Relative Soil Moisture from NASA SPoRT valid February 20, 2026.
Right: 0-200 cm Relative Soil Moisture 2-week Change from NASA SPoRT valid February 20, 2026.

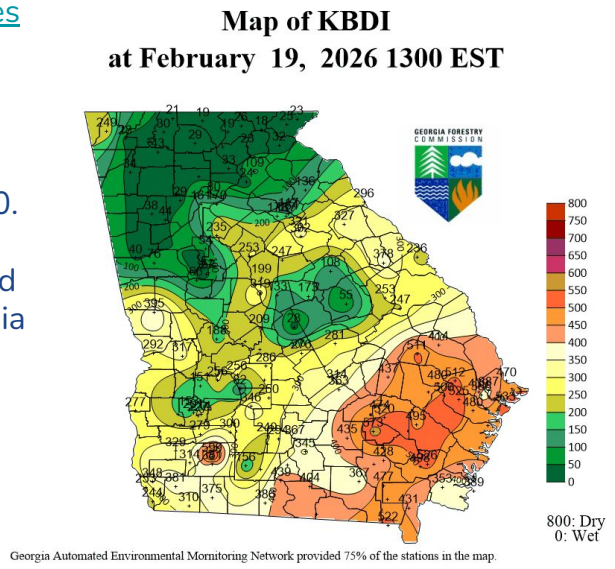
Fire Hazard Impacts

Link to Wildfire Potential Outlooks from the National Interagency Coordination Center.

- Keetch Byram Drought Index values over central and south Georgia continue to be in the 250 to 550 range, with values over north Georgia generally under 100. Far north Georgia has values of 0 to 40.

- At this time, above normal wildland fire potential is expected for Georgia for March, as indicated in the Significant Wildland Fire Potential Outlook (far right). This above normal potential is expected to continue through Spring.

- The Wildfire Potential Outlook indicates Little or No Risk (level 1 of 3) for Georgia through the much of the next week, with the potential for Moderate Risk (level 2 of 3) for central Georgia Wednesday and Thursday.



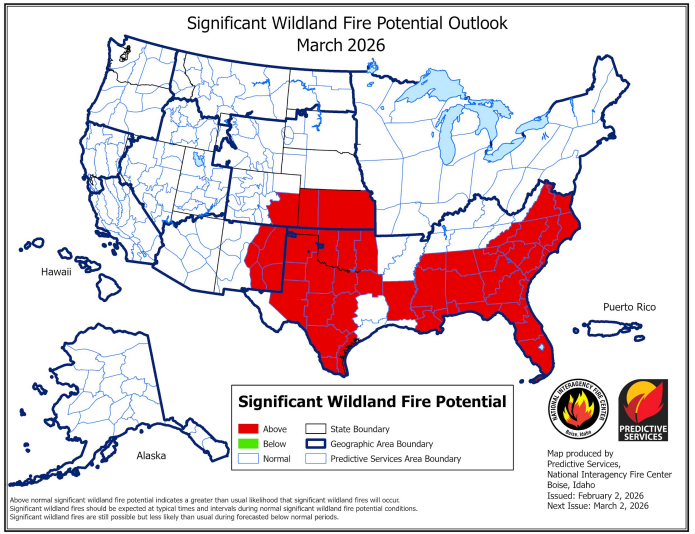
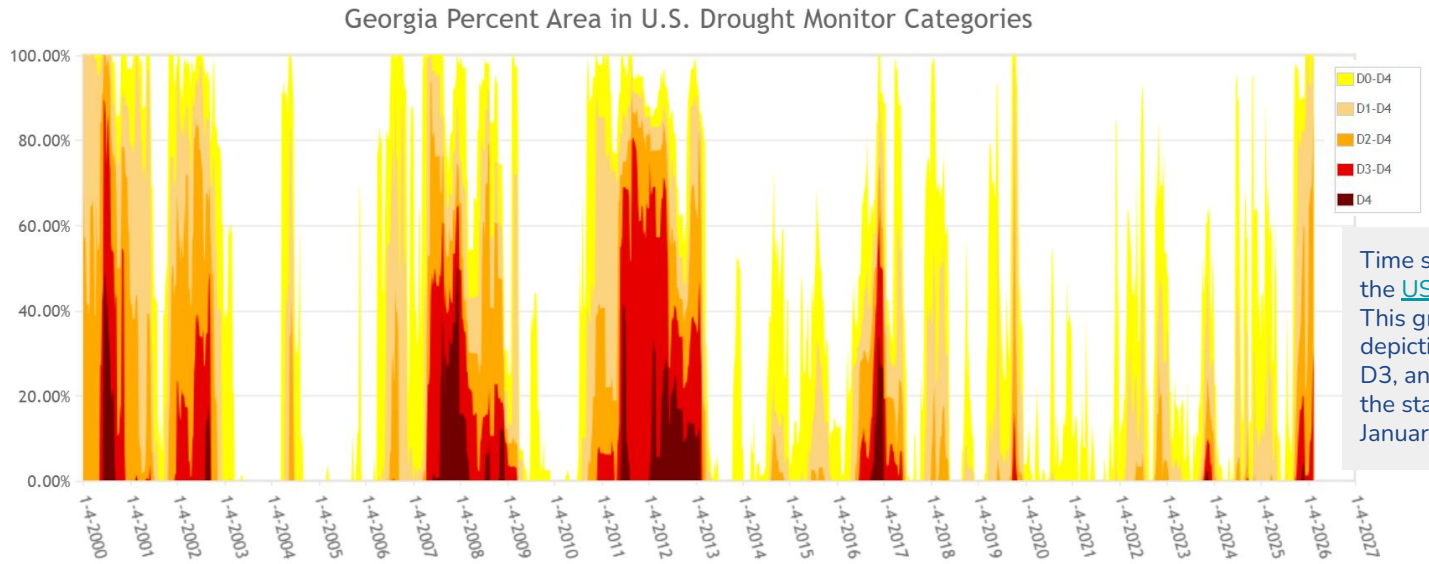


Image Captions:
Above: Significant Wildland Fire Potential Monthly Outlook for March 2026.
Left: Keetch Byram Drought Index for February 19, 2026.

Drought: Historical Context

Link to Drought Monitor Time Series

For the Drought Event beginning in September 2025, *for the entire state of Georgia:*



Time series is courtesy of the US Drought Monitor. This graph shows the depiction of the D0, D1, D2, D3, and D4 drought across the state of Georgia since January 2000.

First D2 (Severe) Drought in Georgia:
Sep 23, 2025

Maximum drought category so far:
D4 (Exceptional)
Nov 18, 2025

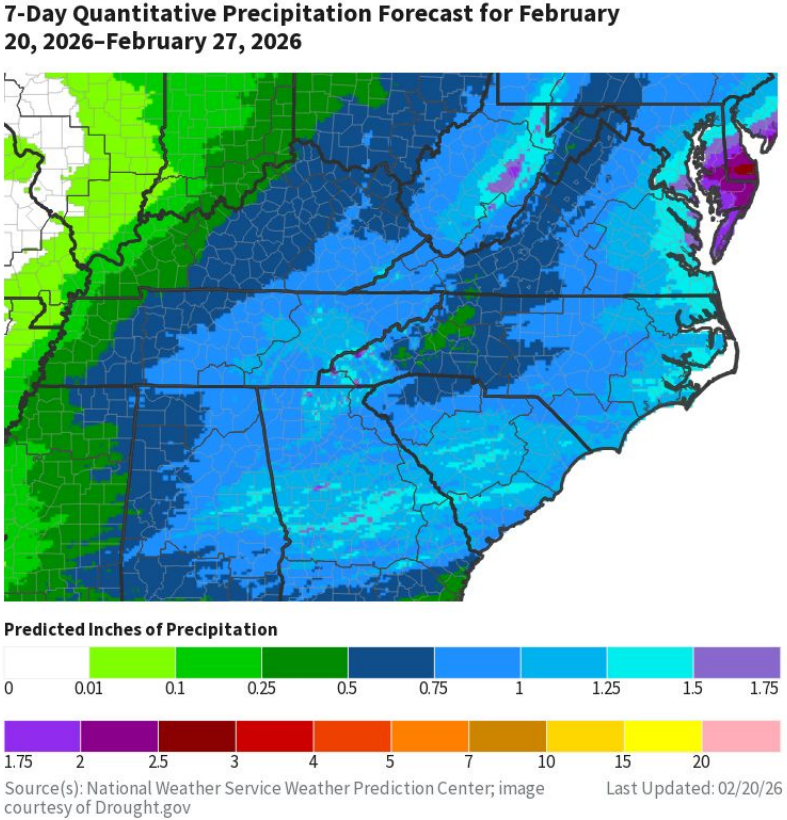
Largest D2-D4 coverage in Georgia:
87.4% of GA
Feb 17, 2026

Last time there was at least 87% of GA in D2-D4:
Oct 4, 2011
87.6% of GA

Seven Day Precipitation Forecast

The 7-day outlook (through Friday February 27):

- Over the next seven days, rainfall amounts of generally 0.75 to 2 inches are forecast.
- The majority of this rainfall will occur Saturday and Sunday, with dry conditions forecast through Thursday next week.



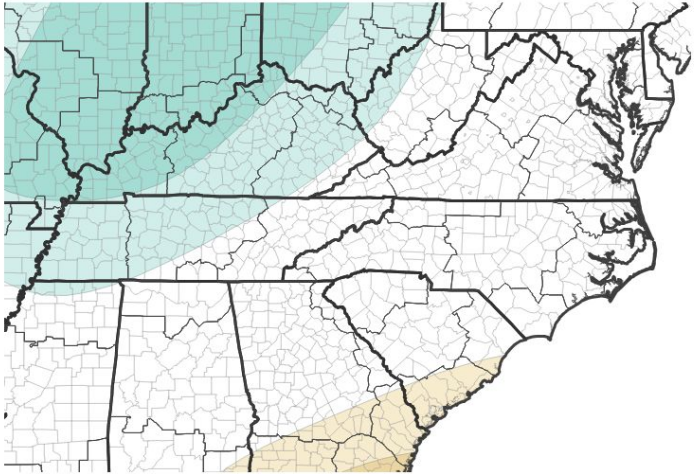
Long-Range Outlooks

The latest monthly and seasonal outlooks can be found on the CPC homepage

For March:

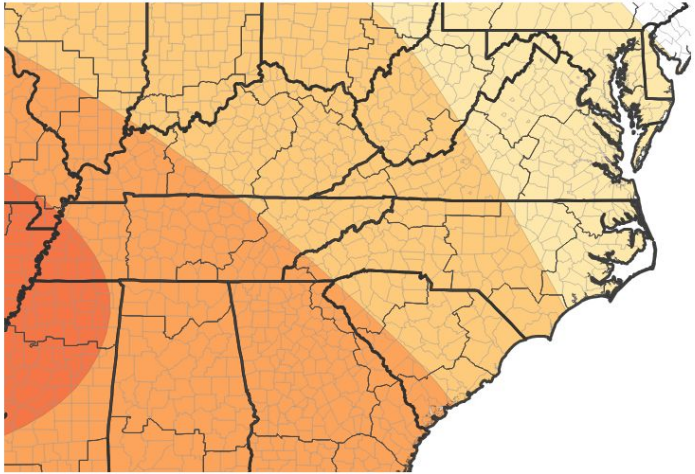
- Equal chances of above or below normal precipitation is expected over most of north and central Georgia (right).
- Above normal temperatures are expected over Georgia (far right).

Monthly Precipitation Outlook for March 1, 2026–March 31, 2026



Source(s): Climate Prediction Center; image courtesy of Drought.gov Last Updated: 02/19/26

Monthly Temperature Outlook for March 1, 2026–March 31, 2026



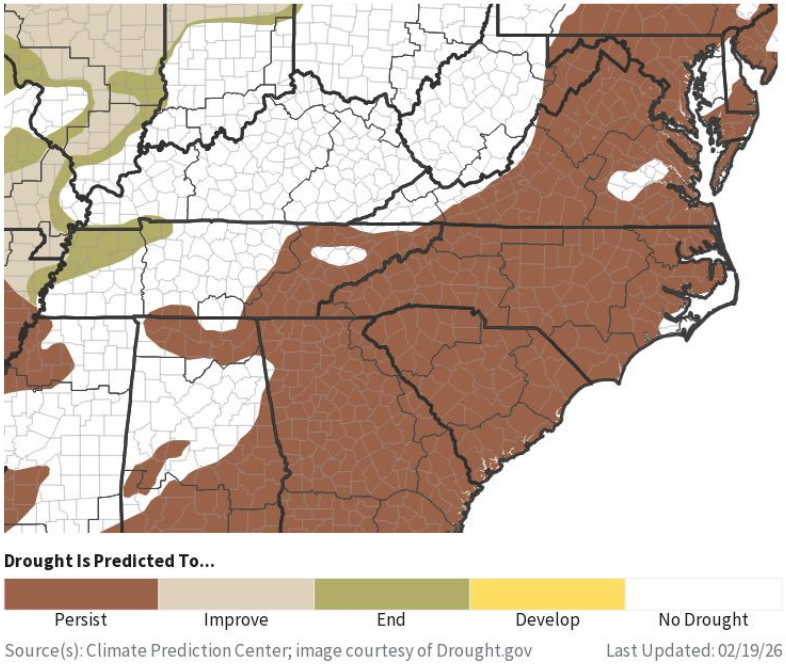
Source(s): Climate Prediction Center; image courtesy of Drought.gov Last Updated: 02/19/26

Drought Outlook

The latest monthly and seasonal outlooks can be found on the CPC homepage

- Drought is expected to persist across most of Georgia into early Spring.
- Drought Information Statements will be updated every two weeks while D2 Severe Drought (or worse) continues in north and central Georgia.

Seasonal (3-Month) Drought Outlook for February 19, 2026–May 31, 2026



Links to the latest:
Climate Prediction Center Monthly Drought Outlook
Climate Prediction Center Seasonal Drought Outlook