Drought Information Statement for North and Central Georgia

Valid April 16, 2026

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

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

- This product will be updated April 30, 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.

Georgia Drought Coverage Highest in Almost Twenty Years

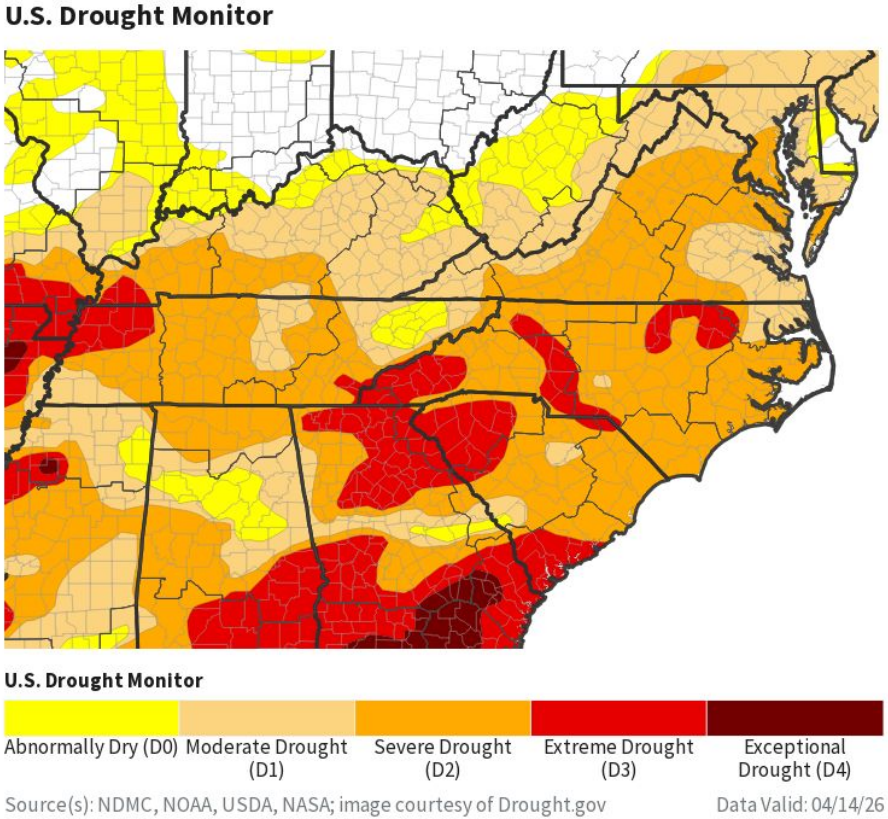
- **Peak Event Intensity:** Drought area and intensity have reached their highest levels since the Fall 2025 onset, and **D3 (Extreme Drought)** encompasses **two-thirds of Georgia**. The coverage of D2-D4 is the **highest since May 2007**.
- **Increased Water Demand:** Rising temperatures and "spring green-up" are accelerating hydrologic stress.

U.S. Drought Monitor

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

Drought intensity and Extent:

- **D4 (Exceptional Drought):** Emanuel, Montgomery, Telfair, Toombs, Wheeler, Wilcox
- **D3 (Extreme Drought):** Banks, Barrow, Bibb, Butts, Catoosa, Chattahoochee, Chattooga, Clarke, Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, Crawford, Crisp, Dawson, DeKalb, Dodge, Dooly, Douglas, Fannin, Fayette, Forsyth, Fulton, Gilmer, Gordon, Greene, Gwinnett, Hall, Harris, Henry, Jackson, Jasper, Johnson, Lamar, Laurens, Lumpkin, Macon, Madison, Marion, Meriwether, Monroe, Morgan, Murray, Muscogee, Newton, Oconee, Oglethorpe, Peach, Pickens, Pulaski, Rockdale, Schley, Stewart, Sumter, Talbot, Taliaferro, Taylor, Towns, Treutlen, Union, Upson, Walker, Walton, Webster, White, Whitfield, Wilkes
- **D2 (Severe Drought):** Bartow, Bleckley, Carroll, Cherokee, Dade, Floyd, Glascock, Hancock, Haralson, Heard, Houston, Jefferson, Jones, Paulding, Pike, Polk, Putnam, Spalding, Troup, Twiggs, Warren, Washington, 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.

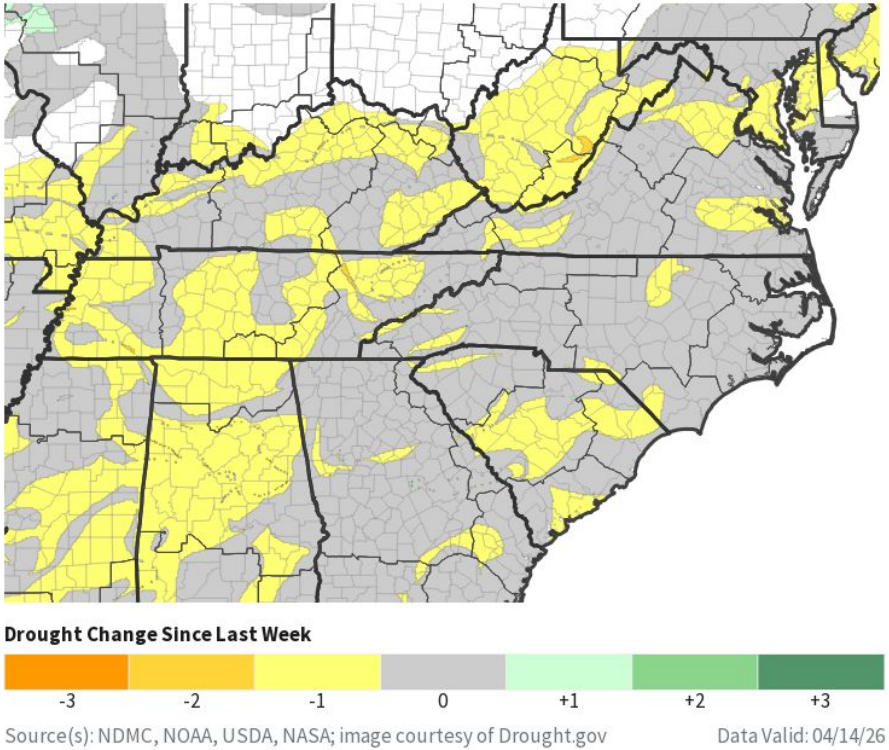
Four Week Drought Monitor Class Change

(image not shown)

- **Drought Worsened:** Banks, Barrow, Bartow, Bibb, Butts, Carroll, Catoosa, Chattahoochee, Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, Crawford, Crisp, Dade, Dawson, DeKalb, Dodge, Dooly, Douglas, Emanuel, Fannin, Fayette, Floyd, Forsyth, Fulton, Gilmer, Glascock, Gordon, Greene, Gwinnett, Hall, Haralson, Harris, Heard, Henry, Houston, Jasper, Jefferson, Jones, Lamar, Laurens, Lumpkin, Macon, Marion, Meriwether, Monroe, Montgomery, Morgan, Murray, Muscogee, Newton, Oconee, Oglethorpe, Paulding, Peach, Pickens, Pike, Polk, Rockdale, Schley, Stewart, Sumter, Talbot, Taylor, Telfair, Toombs, Towns, Troup, Twiggs, Union, Upson, Walker, Walton, Washington, Webster, Wheeler, White, Whitfield, Wilcox, Wilkes, Wilkinson
- **No Change:** Bleckley, Chattooga, Clarke, Jackson, Madison, Pulaski, Taliaferro, Treutlen
- **Drought Improved:** Baldwin, Butts, Emanuel, Hancock, Jasper, Johnson, Laurens, Putnam, Spalding, Warren, Washington

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

U.S. Drought Monitor 1-Week Change Map

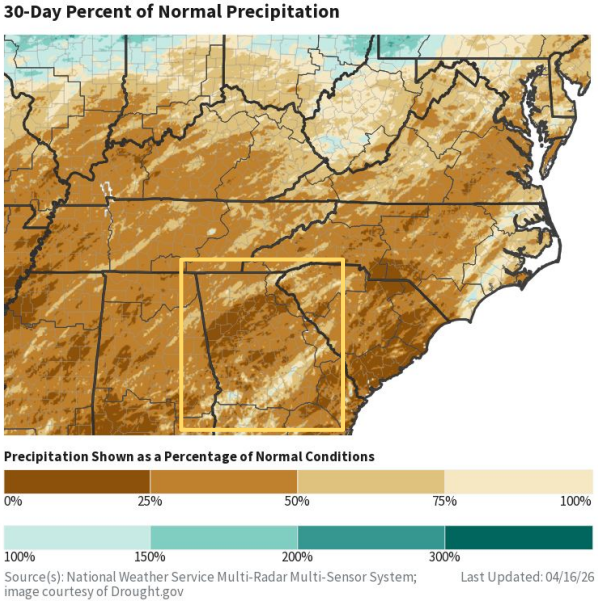


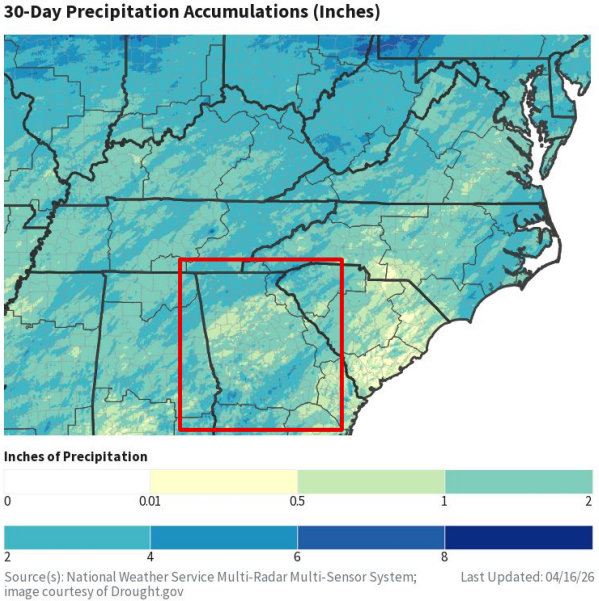
Precipitation - Past 30 Days

National Water Prediction Service link to the 30-day precipitation map for North and Central Georgia

Through Thursday, April 16, 2026, at 8AM:

	Last 30 Days		Last 60 Days	
	Rainfall (inches)	%Normal	Rainfall (inches)	%Normal
Rome (KRMG)	1.69	37%	7.25	74%
Athens (KAHN)	0.82	22%	6.94	82%
Peachtree-DeKalb (KPDK)	0.19	4%	8.60	95%
Fulton County (KFTY)	0.11	3%	7.25	84%
Atlanta (KATL)	0.13	3%	5.79	65%
Peachtree City (KFFC)	0.56	14%	6.19	67%
Macon (KMCN)	1.39	35%	6.56	78%
Columbus (KCSG)	0.85	20%	6.37	68%





Warm temperatures have kicked off the spring green up statewide, stressing the hydrologic conditions under a new demand for water. In the last 30-days well-below-normal rainfall has been the standard, with most areas seeing under 50 percent of normal rainfall. Notably, Atlanta-area climate sites, Columbus, Athens, and Peachtree City all received less than 25 percent of normal rainfall, in some cases amounting to under two-tenths of an inch.

Despite the overall dry map for the last 30 days, two areas did receive some higher totals: northeast Georgia mountains and far west central Georgia. In these areas, rainfall amounts were closer to 1.5 to 2.5 inches (40 to 80 percent of normal).

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

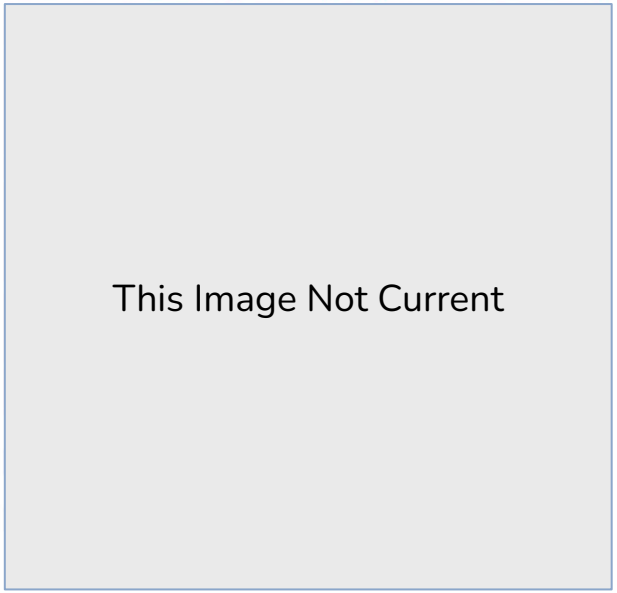
Temperatures - Past 30-, 7-Days

*Through April 12, 2026.**

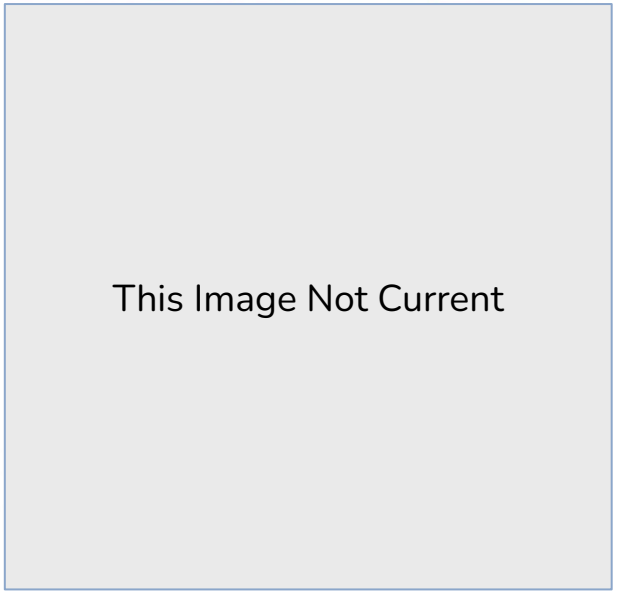
	Last 30 Days (ending Apr 12)	
	Average High (Departure)	Average Low (Departure)
Rome (KRMG)	74.9° (+4.6°)	46.3° (+1.1°)
Athens (KAHN)	74.2° (+3.9°)	47.8° (+1.4°)
Peachtree-DeKalb (KPDK)	76.3° (+7.4°)	49.9° (+3.5°)
Fulton County (KFTY)	75.2° (+5.1°)	47.3° (+1.1°)
Atlanta (KATL)	75.2° (+5.9°)	51.9° (+3.1°)
Peachtree City (KFFC)	74.9° (+4.0°)	46.4° (+1.6°)
Macon (KMCN)	76.3° (+2.7°)	47.2° (-0.6°)
Columbus (KCSG)	76.8° (+3.3°)	50.9° (+0.4°)

*Note, the table values are for the 30-day period ending April 12. 2026, matching the latency for the 30-day and 7-day max temperature anomaly images (right).

30-Day Temperature Anomaly



7-Day Temperature Anomaly



Over the 30 day period ending April 16, average high temperatures were well above normal (+3 to +8 degrees) over north and central Georgia. The average low temperature trends for the 30 day period (shown in the above left table), were not quite as anomalous – a testament to the drier-than-normal continental air mass that has remained in place.

Note: The 30-day and 7-day temperature anomaly images are not available at this time.

Summary of Impacts

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

Hydrologic Impacts

- Streamflow continues to suffer under dry and warm conditions. As warming temperatures encourage the green up, higher demand on water sources and increased evapotranspiration will further stress water supplies and soil moisture.
- See slide 7 for additional details.

CMOR report photo from Jones County, 4/13/26

Agricultural Impacts

- Water sources (e.g., holding ponds) remain low or mostly dry in many areas. Reports continue to indicate poor pasture conditions, extreme degree of loss to yield potential, complete or near crop failure, an inability to plant forage crops, extreme impact to harvests or planting, animal stress, etc.
- Reports include details of planted seeds not being able to germinate until next rain, delayed field preparation, and dry, hardened group damaging farming equipment. The Crop Progress & Condition report indicates 60% or higher of the cropland acreage “very short” in both topsoil and subsoil.
- See slide 8 for additional details.

Fire Hazard Impacts

- Fire concerns have increased dramatically in the last few weeks. Partners have coordinated with NWS Atlanta and deployed meteorologists to loosen the criteria for Fire Danger Statements and Red Flag Warnings for more frequent issuances given the dry conditions. The prescribed burn season has begun, but officials have stopped burning. See slide 9 for more details.

Mitigation Actions

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

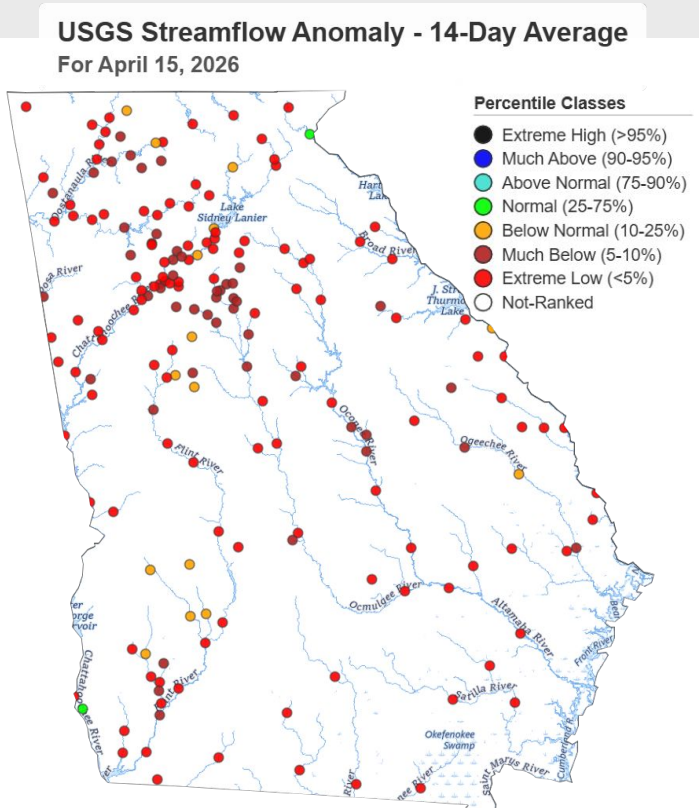
Hydrologic Conditions and Impacts

See the USGS 120-day streamflow map here.

Main Takeaways

- In the last 14-days, streamflow has continued to range from Below Normal to Extremely Low in all major river basins. The lack of rain has caused continued decreases in streamflows, groundwater and reservoir levels.
- Lake and Reservoir levels continue to show the impacts of a long, persistent dry period, with most reservoirs below seasonal normals. The available elevation curves for USACE projects in the NWS Peachtree City area show:

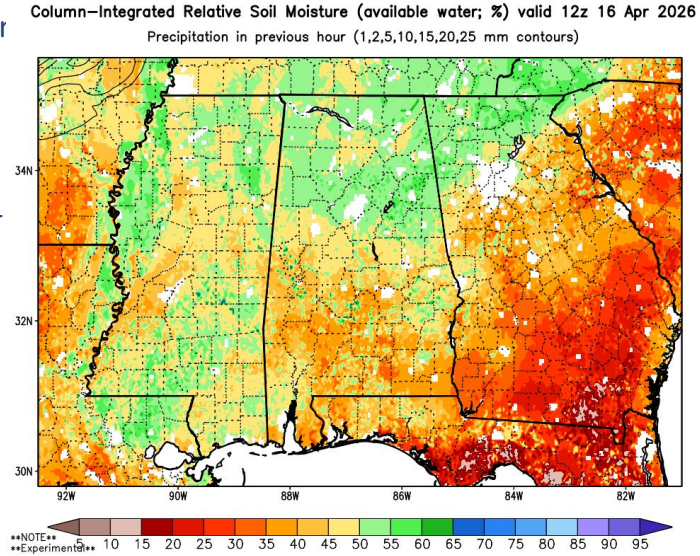
	USACE Lakes	
	Current Action Zone	Forecast Action Zone
Carters	Top of Conservation	Zone 2
Lanier	Zone 3	Zone 3
Allatoona	Zone 3	Zone 3
West Point	Top of Conservation	Zone 2



Disclaimer: Following the decommissioning of USGS WaterWatch, historical maps are no longer available. The above image were generated using USGS streamflow data, and the streamflow anomaly data presented here are provisional.

Agricultural Impacts

- Soil moistures remain dry over much of central and south Georgia (image right).
- Far north Georgia has the highest 0-200 cm relative soil moisture in the state, despite increased drying in the last two weeks (image far right).
- Recent warm temperatures have kicked off the spring green-up period.
- Planting season typically starts this month, but reports indicate delayed planting and field preparation.



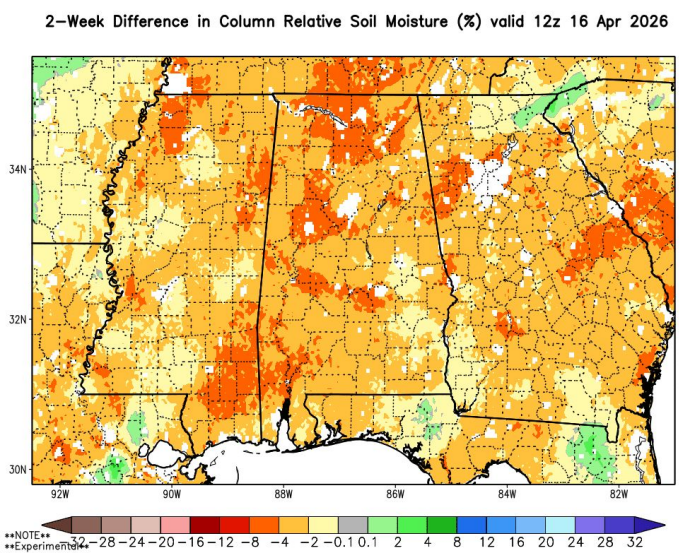


Image Captions:
Left: 0-200cm Relative Soil Moisture from NASA SPoRT valid April 16, 2026.
Right: 0-200 cm Relative Soil Moisture 2-week Change from NASA SPoRT valid April 16, 2026.

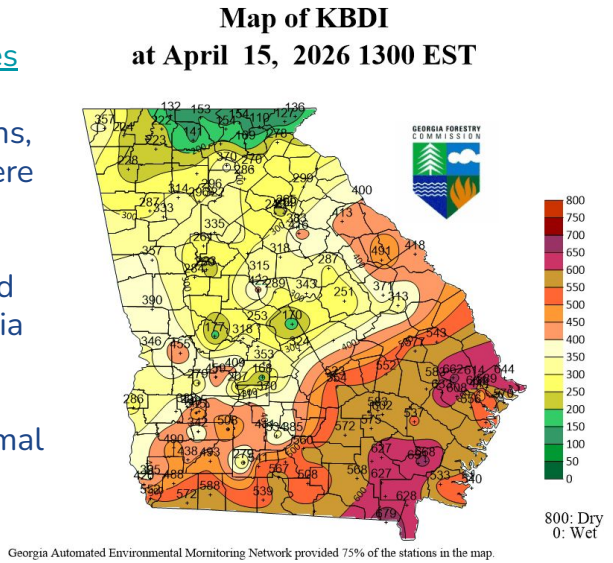
Fire Hazard Impacts

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

- Keetch Byram Drought Index values over north and central Georgia are generally 200-400 in most locations, except over northeast Georgia where values are generally 125-200.

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

- The Wildfire Potential Outlook indicates **Moderate** (level 3 of 4) to **High Risk** (level 4 of 4) for Georgia this weekend and into next week.



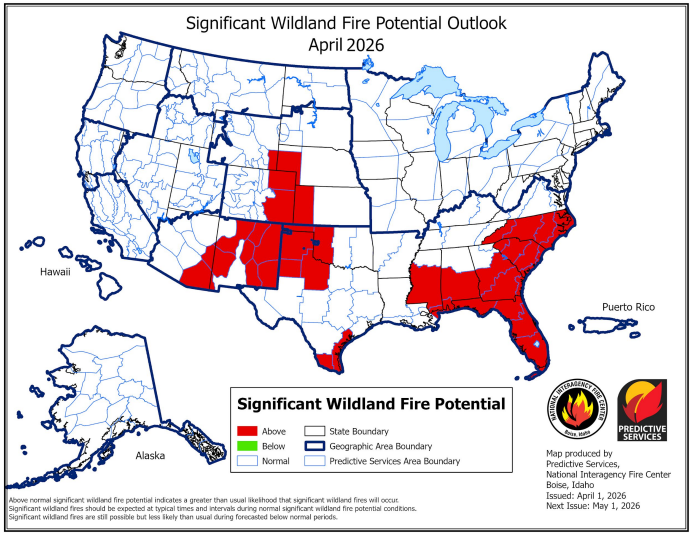
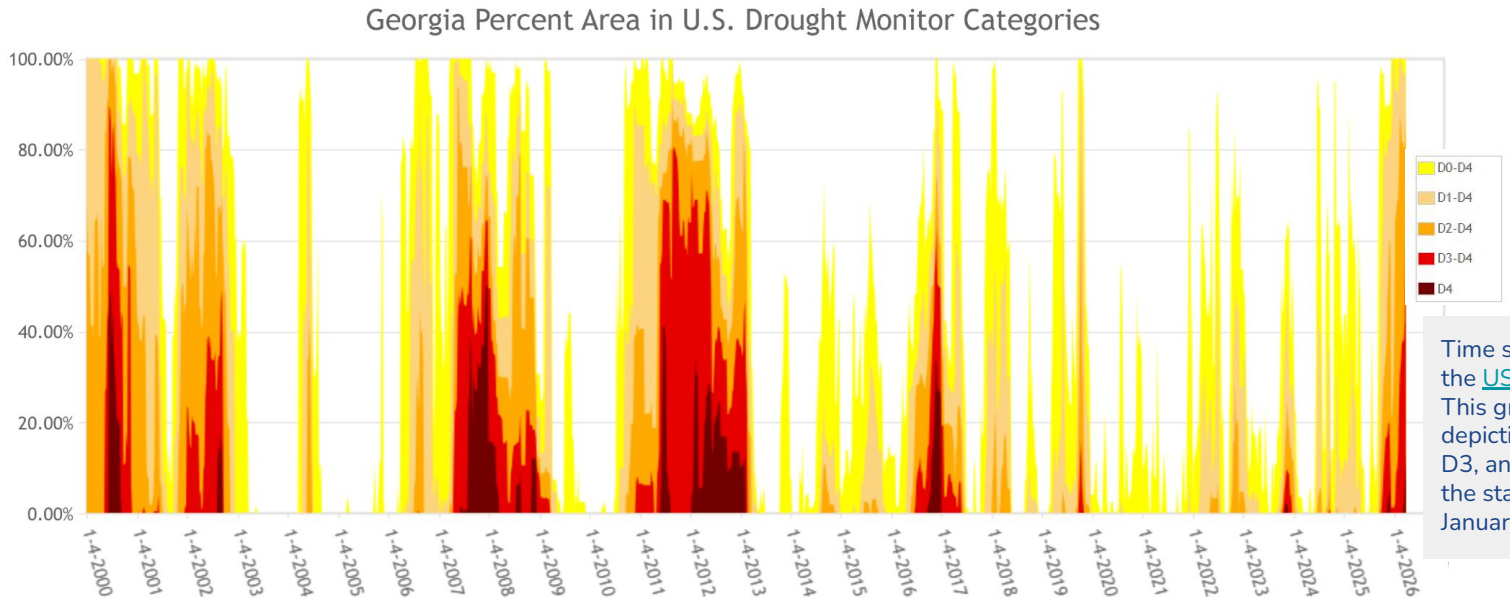


Image Captions:
Above: Significant Wildland Fire Potential Monthly Outlook for April 2026.
Left: Keetch Byram Drought Index for April 15, 2026.

Drought: Historical Context

Link to Drought Monitor Time Series



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.

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

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

Maximum drought category so far:
D4 (Exceptional)
April 14, 2026 (22.4%)

Current D2-D4 coverage in Georgia:
89.7% of GA
TODAY

Largest D2-D4 coverage in Georgia*:
89.7% of GA
TODAY
**for this drought period*

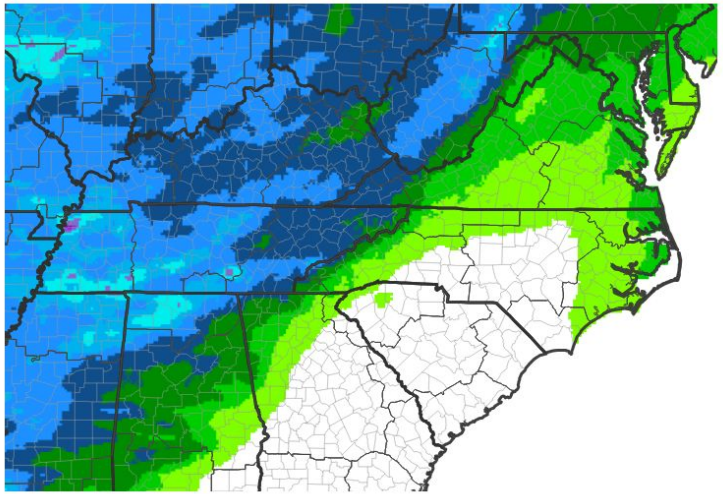
Last time there was at least 89.7% of GA in D2-D4:
May 29, 2007
94.0% of GA

Precipitation Outlook

The 7-day outlook (through April 23):

- South and east of I-85, no rainfall is currently forecast.
- North and west of I-85, rainfall of 0.01 to 0.5 inches is currently forecast, with a sliver of far northwest Georgia in the 0.5-1.0 inch area.
- The 8-14 day outlook (April 22-28) shows a shift in weather pattern could bring higher-than-normal rain chances.
- In general it takes three consecutive months of above normal rainfall to end a drought.

7-Day Quantitative Precipitation Forecast for April 16, 2026–April 23, 2026



Predicted Inches of Precipitation

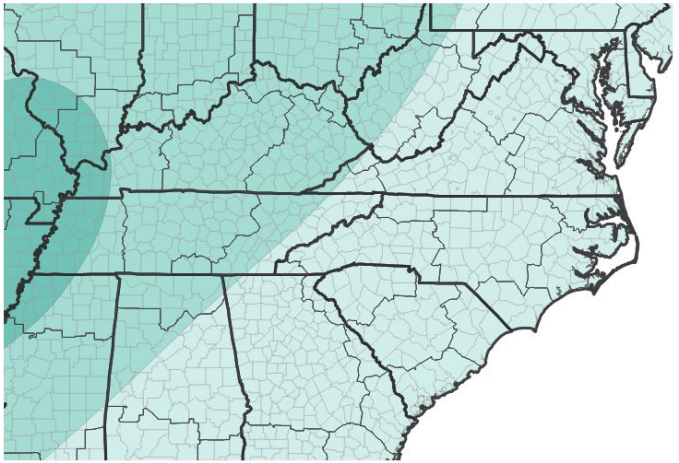
0 0.01 0.1 0.25 0.5 0.75 1 1.25 1.5 1.75

1.75 2 2.5 3 4 5 7 10 15 20

Source(s): National Weather Service Weather Prediction Center; image courtesy of Drought.gov

Last Updated: 04/16/26

8–14 Day Precipitation Outlook for April 22, 2026–April 28, 2026



Probability of Below-Normal Precipitation

33% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Probability of Above-Normal Precipitation

33% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Near-Normal Conditions

Source(s): Climate Prediction Center; image courtesy of Drought.gov

Last Updated: 04/14/26

Long-Range Outlooks

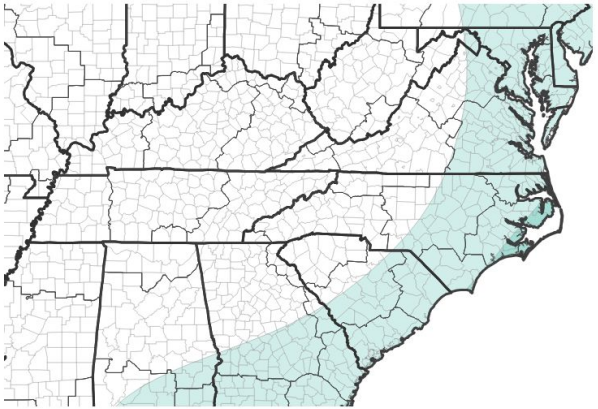
The latest monthly and seasonal outlooks can be found on the CPC homepage

For May through July:

- Above normal chances of precipitation are expected across portions of central Georgia (image right).
- Above normal temperatures are expected over Georgia (far right).

	May		June		July	
Average	Temp	Rain	Temp	Rain	Temp	Rain
Rome	69.5°	3.78"	76.9°	3.80"	80.2°	3.74"
Athens Area	70.5°	3.28"	77.7°	4.88"	81.0°	4.20"
Atlanta Area	71.2°	3.56"	77.9°	4.54"	80.9°	4.75"
Peachtree City	70.4°	3.12"	77.5°	4.45"	80.8°	4.84"
Macon Area	72.9°	2.65"	79.5°	4.44"	82.5°	4.79"
Columbus Area	74.1°	3.24"	80.4°	4.03"	83.2°	4.35"

Seasonal (3-Month) Precipitation Outlook for May 1, 2026–July 31, 2026



Probability of Below-Normal Precipitation

33% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Probability of Above-Normal Precipitation

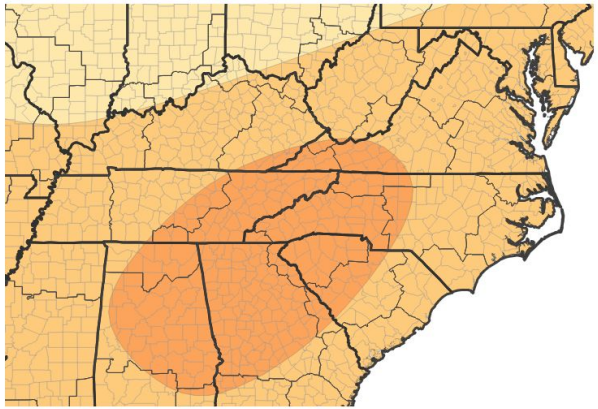
33% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Probability of Near-Normal Precipitation

33% 40% 50%

Source(s): Climate Prediction Center; image courtesy of Drought.gov Last Updated: 04/16/26

Seasonal (3-Month) Temperature Outlook for May 1, 2026–July 31, 2026



Probability of Below-Normal Temperatures

33% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Probability of Above-Normal Temperatures

33% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Probability of Near-Normal Temperatures

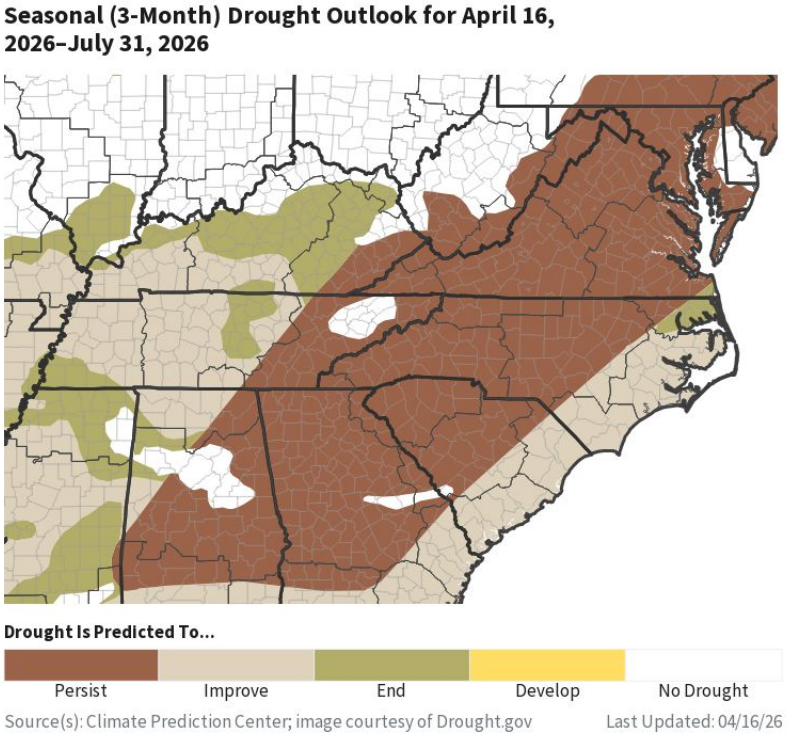
33% 40% 50%

Source(s): Climate Prediction Center; image courtesy of Drought.gov Last Updated: 04/16/26

Drought Outlook

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

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



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