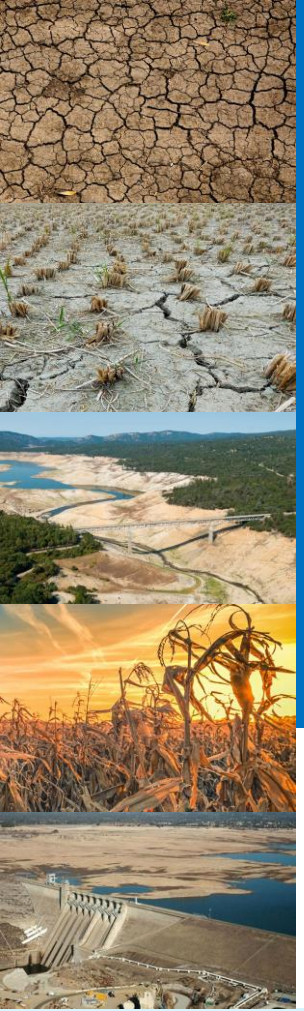


Drought Information Statement for the Western Carolinas and NE Georgia

Published March 13, 2026

Issued By: National Weather Service at Greenville-Spartanburg (GSP), SC

Contact Information: joshua.palmer@noaa.gov

- This product will be updated in **April 2026** or sooner if drought conditions deteriorate significantly.
- For all **currently available products**, visit: https://drought.gov/drought-information-statements.
- For **previous statements**, visit: https://www.weather.gov/GSP/DroughtInformationStatement.
- For **Southeast U.S. Drought Status Updates**, visit: https://www.drought.gov/drought-status-updates?dews_region=131
- Where available, **click on an image** to activate the embedded hyperlink taking you to the latest version.

- Insufficient winter recharge of deeper soils, streams, ponds, and reserviors due to well below-normal precipitation has resulted in widespread Severe (D2) and scattered Extreme (D3) drought conditions across all of the Western Carolinas and northeast Georgia.
- Above-normal rainfall is needed through May to account for spring greenup and planting, provide for increasing water supply demands, and improve drought conditions before this summer.

U.S. Drought Monitor

Link to the latest U.S. Drought Monitor for the NWS Greenville-Spartanburg, SC Service Area

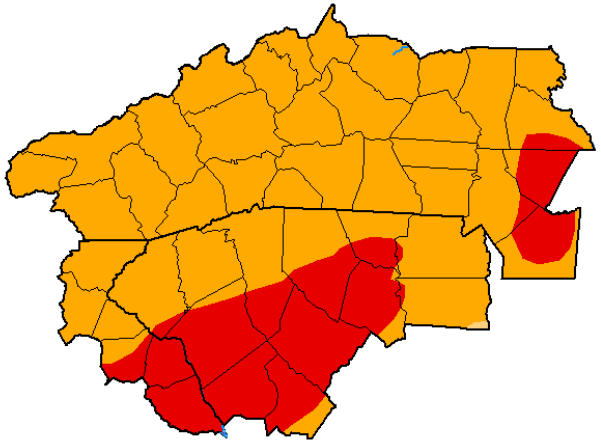
Extreme Drought conditions persist across the Piedmont region of the western Carolinas and northeast Georgia with widespread Severe Drought elsewhere

Drought Intensity and Extent

- **D3 (Extreme Drought)**: Generally along and south of I-85 in northeast Georgia and Upstate South Carolina as well as portions of the eastern Charlotte metro including Monroe and Concord.
- **D2 (Severe Drought)**: Across all of western North Carolina including the mountain, foothill, and Piedmont regions, as well as York and Chester counties and areas north of I-85 in Upstate South Carolina, including Greenville, Pickens, and Walhalla, and northeast Georgia, including Clayton and Toccoa.

U.S. Drought Monitor

Greenville-Spartanburg, SC WFO



March 10, 2026

(Released Thursday, Mar. 12, 2026)

Valid 8 a.m. EDT

Drought Conditions (Percent Area)

	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	0.00	100.00	100.00	99.90	24.40	0.00
Last Week 03-03-2026	0.00	100.00	100.00	99.90	24.40	0.00
3 Months Ago 12-09-2025	29.22	70.78	17.62	0.00	0.00	0.00
Start of Calendar Year 01-06-2026	0.00	100.00	100.00	51.10	0.00	0.00
Start of Water Year 09-30-2025	36.51	63.49	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
One Year Ago 03-11-2025	1.91	98.09	51.08	0.00	0.00	0.00

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 https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/About.aspx

Author:

Brad Pugh

CPC/NOAA

droughtmonitor.unl.edu

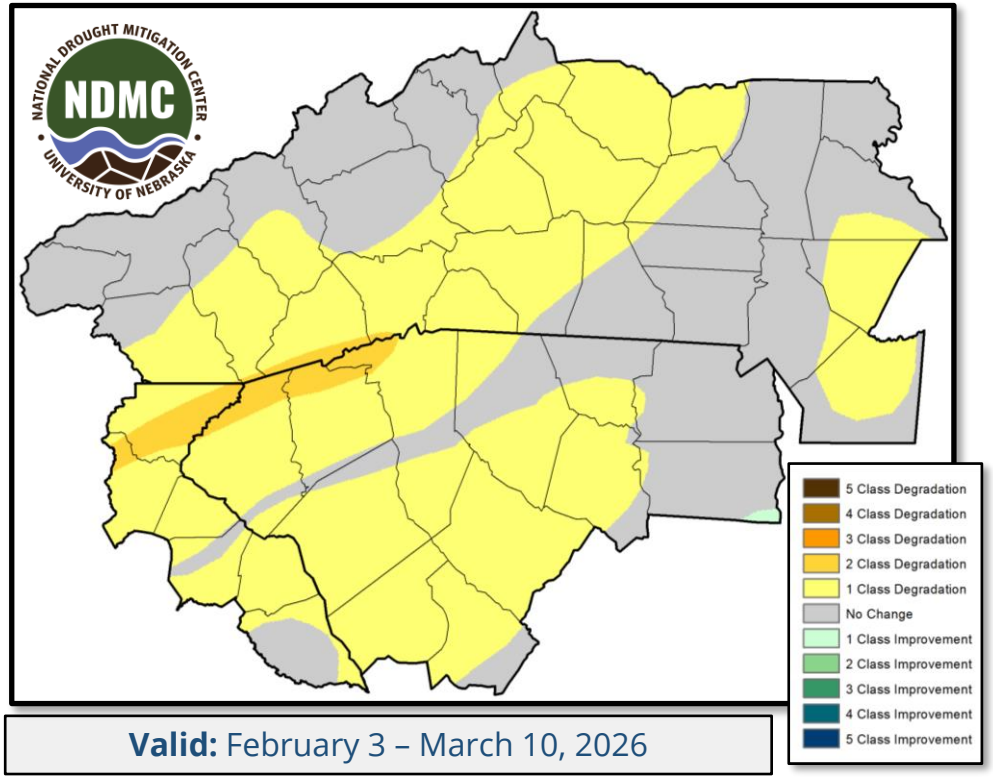
Recent Changes in Drought Intensity

Link to the latest one-week change map for the NWS Greenville-Spartanburg, SC service area

Between February 3 and March 10, 2026, continued below-normal rainfall exacerbated drought conditions across much of the NWS GSP service area.

- **Drought Degradation**: Widespread one category degradation (D1 to D2) occurred along and near the Blue Ridge Escarpment while a narrow strip of two-category degradation (D0 to D2) occurred from northwestern Habersham County northeast into portions of Rabun County, as well as the SC mountains. One category degradation (D2 to D3) also occurred in the upper Savannah River Valley north and east across much of the upper SC Piedmont, as well as eastern areas of the Charlotte metro.
- **No Change**: No change in drought classification occurred (D2) within most of the interior NC mountains, including in Robbinsville, Bryson City, Asheville, Marshall, Burnsville, Bakersville, and Newland. D2 conditions also persisted from York and Chester counties north into most of the Charlotte metro, the southern NC Piedmont, and the South Yadkin River valley.
- **Drought Improvement**: A small portion of extreme southeast Chester County improved one category (D2 to D1).

U.S. Drought Monitor 5-Week Change in Class/Category

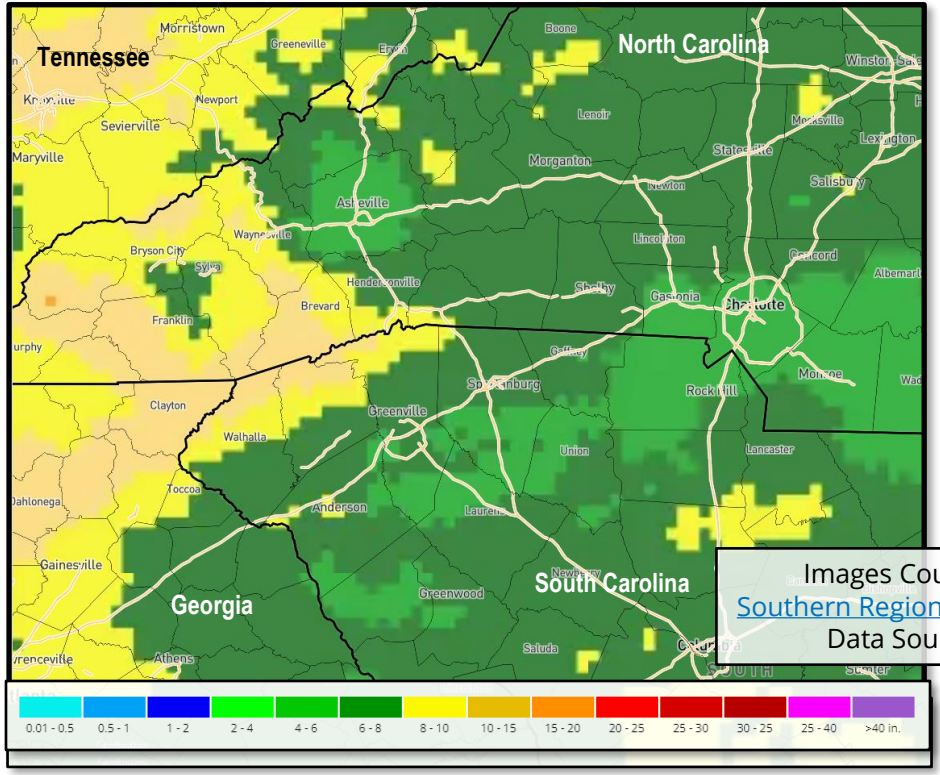


Valid: February 3 – March 10, 2026

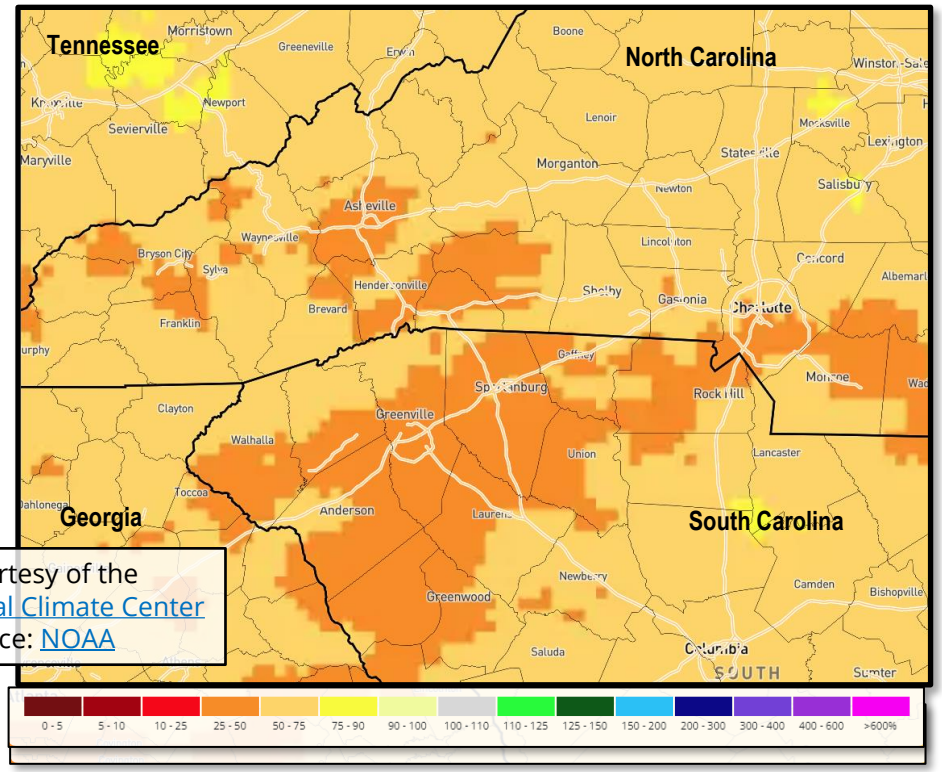
Precipitation

Data over the past 90 days from December 12, 2025 to March 11, 2026

90-Day Radar-Estimated Precipitation



90-Day Percent-of-Normal Precipitation



Images Courtesy of the
Southern Regional Climate Center
Data Source: NOAA

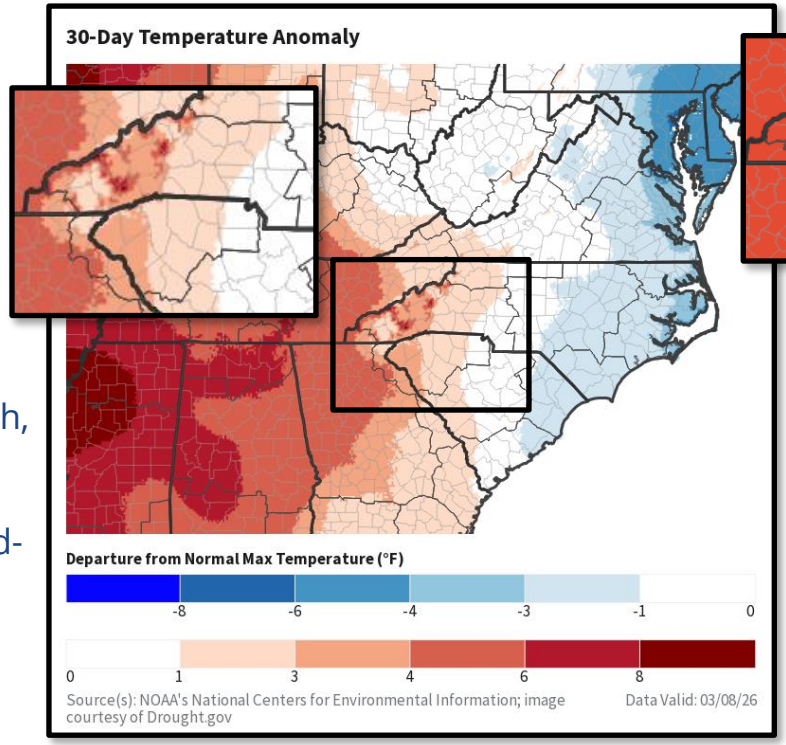
Temperature

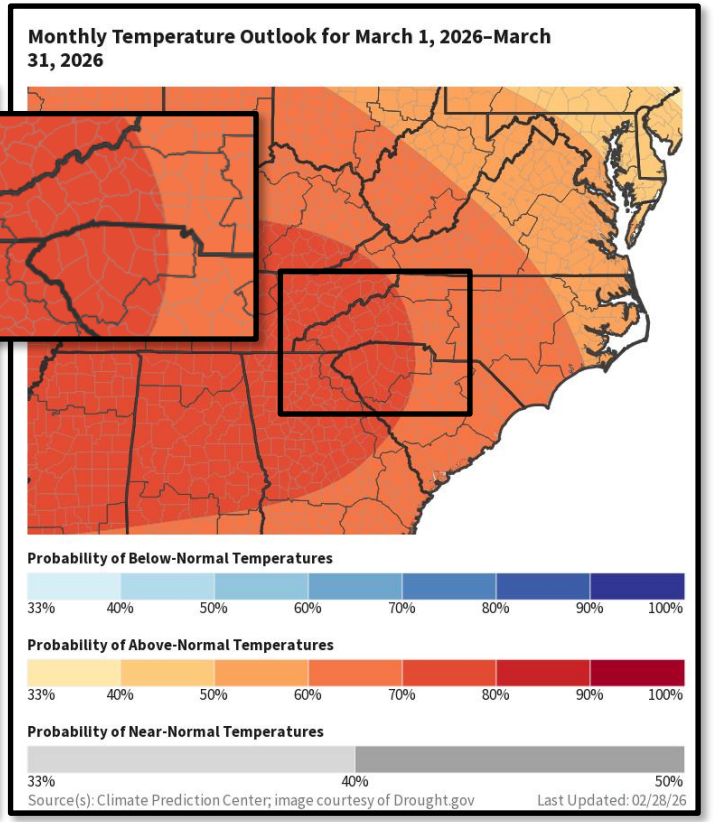
30-Day Temperature Anomaly and the Monthly Temperature Outlook for **March 2026**

- **Past 30-Days:** Following a below-normal January and first half of February, temperatures have warmed significantly.

- **March 2026 Outlook:** Through March 11, above-normal temperatures have dominated March, with several high temperature records broken. However, mid-March will be notably cooler with several days of below-normal highs likely.

Valid: February 7 – March 7, 2026



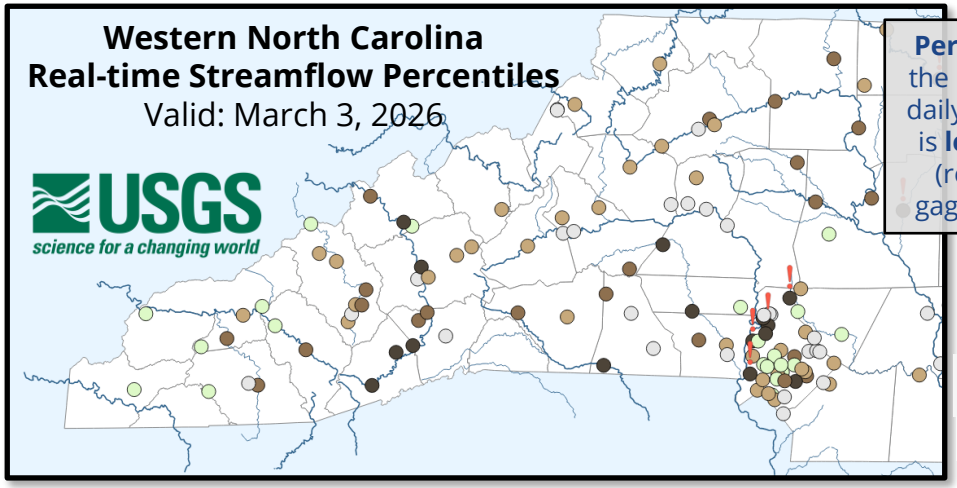


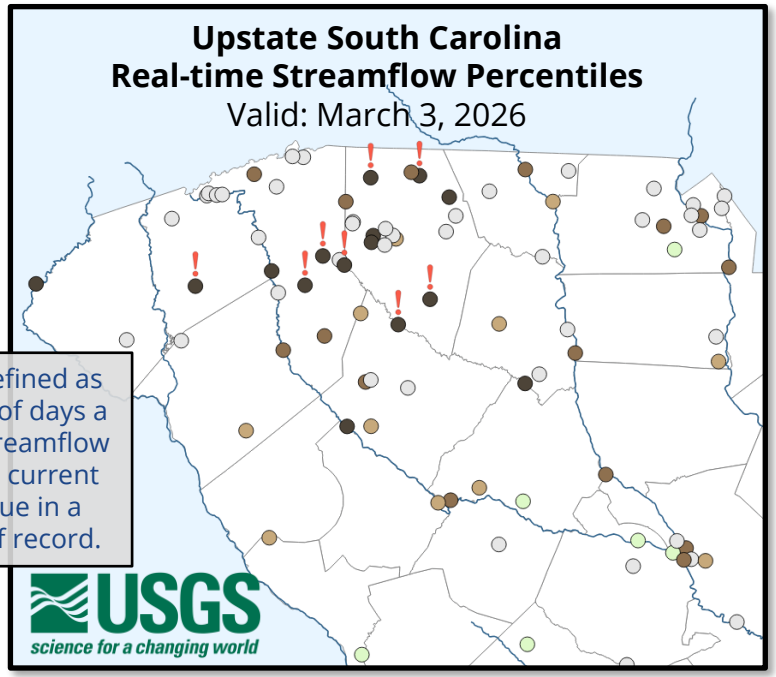
Hydrologic Conditions

USGS State Water Condition Links: Georgia | North Carolina | South Carolina

Limited winter recharge has seriously reduced area streamflows

- Most of the percentiles shown reflect recent real-time streamflow departures from daily averages only a couple of days after rainfall occurs (baseflow conditions). These percentiles indicate very dry lower soils, limited interflow, and below-normal groundwater levels. Much-below to extremely-below normal flows are occurring in most primary watersheds including the Broad (NC/SC), Broad (GA), French Broad, Little Tennessee, Pigeon, Saluda, Tuckasegee, and Upper Savannah.





Percentiles: Defined as the percentage of days a daily average streamflow is **less** than the current (real-time) value in a gage's period of record.

Legend

0-5	5-10	10-25	25-75	75-90	90-95	95-100
Extremely below	Much below	Below normal	Normal	Above normal	Much above	Extremely above

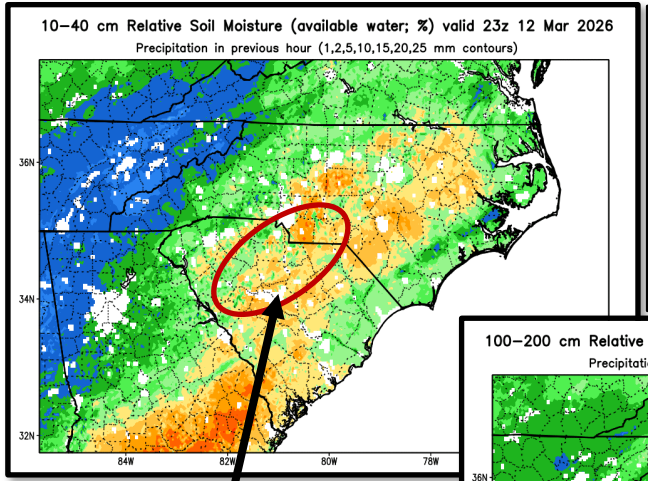
O Monitoring location with Discharge, cubic feet per second
! Extreme conditions

No estimate available
Location has less than 20 years of daily data

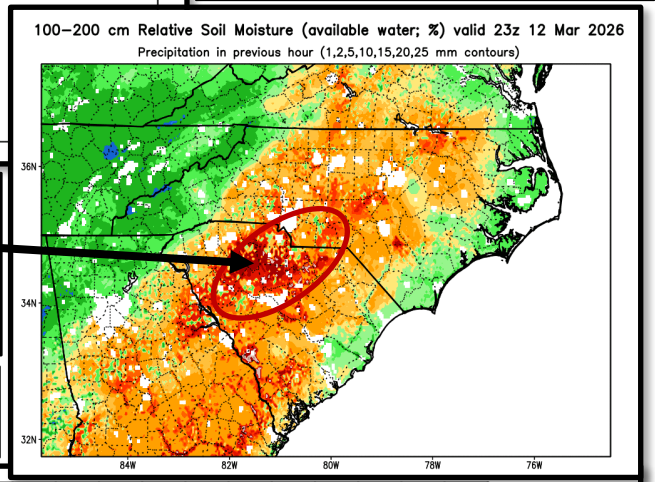
Agricultural Impacts

Fall and Winter Precipitation Deficits Have Led to Pasture Stress and Low Irrigation Ponds Heading Into Growing Season

- **Soil Conditions:** Uppermost soils are benefitting from occasional rounds of light to moderate rainfall, which should assist initial spring plantings & greenup, but long-term precipitation deficits prevented the recharge needed for sufficient available soil moisture at lower depths.
- **Pastures:** Numerous reports received of prolonged above-normal hay feeding since early winter in the NC and SC Piedmont due to poor pasture conditions and resultant impacts to winter grazing. Recent reports in the northern SC Piedmont, including Chester County, indicate poor hay yields from interseeded pastures.
- **Crops:** Several reports of stunted winter/small grains and overall fair-to-poor crop conditions received from Oconee & Anderson counties, north & east to Chester County, and into the NC Piedmont.
- **Additional Impacts:** Several reports received of low irrigation ponds due to long-term dryness.

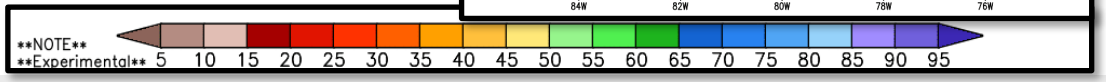


Relative Soil Moisture (RSM): Provides a measure of how much moisture is present for vegetation to extract from the soil. A value of 0% means no moisture can be extracted, whereas 100% means soil saturation.



The worst soil moisture conditions can be expected where the lowest RSM percentages at both upper and lower depths overlap.

Soil moisture data courtesy of NASA Short-term Prediction Research and Transition (SPoRT) Center



Fire Hazard Impacts

Brief Rain Events Temporarily Suppress Wildfire Risk, but Cooler and Drier Conditions Will Increase Risk Through Mid-March

State-Issued Burn Bans

Northeast Georgia	Western North Carolina	Upstate South Carolina
None	None	None

Largest Active Wildfires

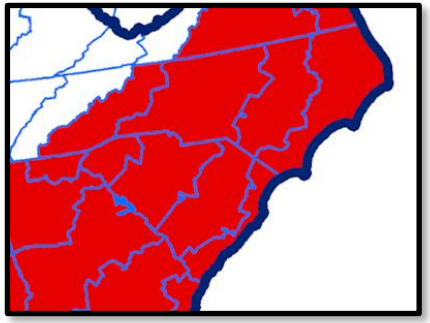
Region	County	Name	Acreage	Contained
NE Georgia	No Active Wildfires			
Western NC	All Active Wildfires are 100% Contained			
Upstate SC	No Active Wildfires			

State Resources and Active Fire Maps

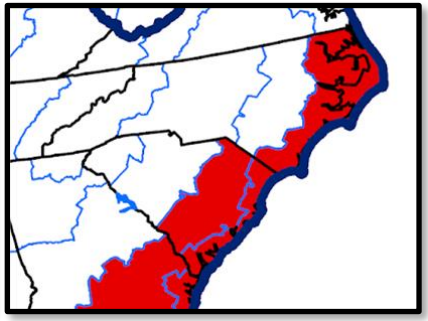
State	Department Homepage	Active Fire Maps
Georgia	GA Forestry Commission	Wildfires
North Carolina	North Carolina Forest Service	All Incidents
South Carolina	SC Forestry Commission	Wildfires | Prescribed Burns

Significant Wildland Fire Potential (SWFP) Outlooks (Full Report)

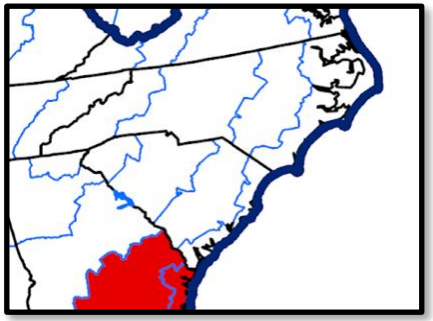
March 2026



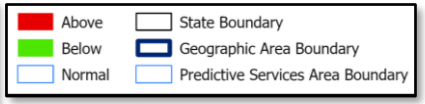
April 2026



May 2026



Legend and Source



Significant wildland fires should be expected at typical times and intervals during normal SWFP conditions.

Significant wildland fires are still possible but less likely than usual during forecasted below-normal periods.

Summary of Impacts

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

Stream Impacts

- Streamflows in most watersheds across the region are running well-below normal, with baseflow failing to recharge during the winter months. These flows will begin to impact aquatic and recreational interests heading into spring.

Reservoir Impacts

- Significant winter dryness prevented reservoirs from replenishing storage before spring. Above-normal rainfall is needed to produce inflows sufficient enough to increase storage before water demands reach summer peaks.
- Duke Energy Systems:
  Catawba-Wateree: Low-Inflow Protocol (LIP) **Stage 0** (source) | *Keowee-Toxaway:* LIP **Stage 2** (source)
- USACE Savannah System: Drought Trigger **Level 2** (source) | Lake Hartwell Projections

Agricultural Impacts

- Scattered to widespread pasture and small grain impacts have been observed resulting in above-normal hay feeding and fair-to-poor crop conditions. Irrigation ponds are below normal levels for this time of year.

Fire Hazard Impacts

- Recent record highs and below-normal rainfall is being followed by windy, cooler, and continued dry conditions which will increase available fine fuels (dormant grasses and leaf litter) and wildfire risk. Helene-related tree damage may cause access issues, contributing to fire size and extent. The SC Forestry Commission is encouraging residents to take extra precautions and notify them before burning per state law.

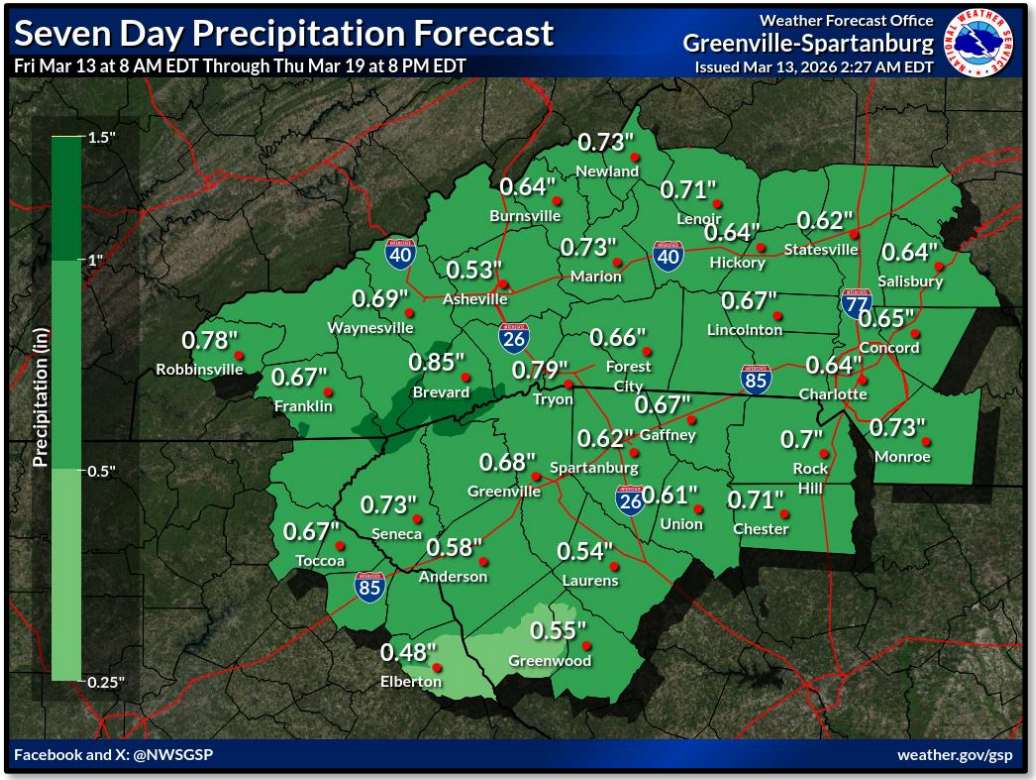
Mitigation Actions

- Monroe, NC: **Stage 1** Conservation (source) | Statesville, NC: **Stage 2** Restrictions (source)

Seven-Day Precipitation Forecast

Below-Normal Rainfall is Likely Through Mid-March with Below-Normal Rainfall Possible Through Late March

- **Forecast Summary:** A weak storm system is expected to bring light rain to the region Sunday Night through Monday (3/15-16), then dry conditions prevail through the rest of next week.
- **Beyond 7-Days:** The pattern heading into the second half of March is expected to result in below-normal rainfall for the entire NWS GSP service area. The likelihood for any appreciable rainfall is low at least until late March, which would result in increasing soil moisture, streamflow, and water storage deficits as spring greenup increases water intake for vegetation.



Average Rainfall for March		
Asheville	Charlotte	Greenville-Spartanburg
3.80”	3.95”	4.48”

For the Latest NWS Precipitation Guidance, Visit: Weather Prediction Center or NWS GSP Probabilistic Precipitation Page

Long-Range Precipitation Outlooks

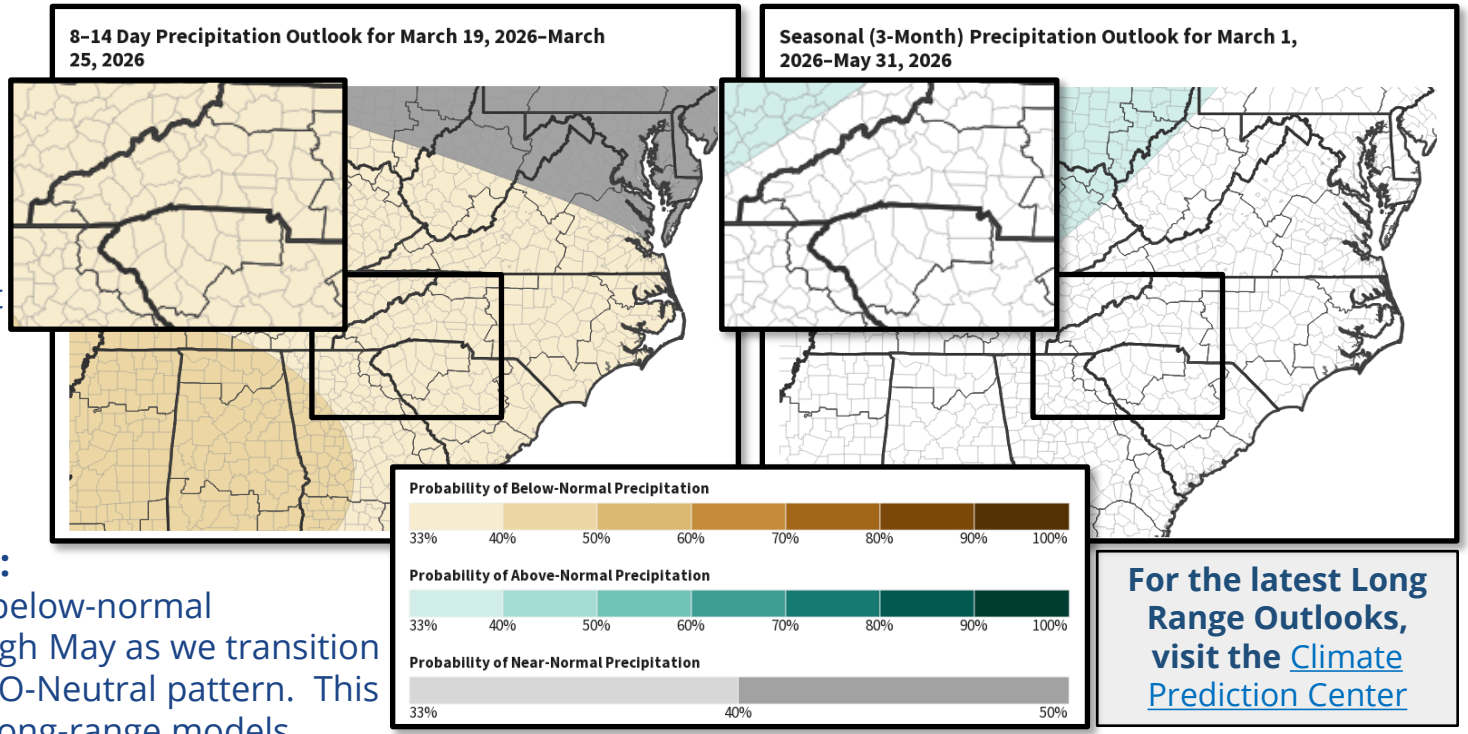
There is increasing confidence in below-normal precipitation through March 25th.

8-14 Day Outlook:

An upper-level trough is expected to generally persist near the East Coast, keeping our area within a dry, high-pressure pattern. The jet stream/primary storm-track is also expected to shift north, preventing significant moisture return into our area.

Three-Month Outlook:

Confidence in above- or below-normal precipitation is low through May as we transition from a La Niña to an ENSO-Neutral pattern. This increases uncertainty in long-range models. Heading into summer, there is an increasing signal for above-normal precipitation.



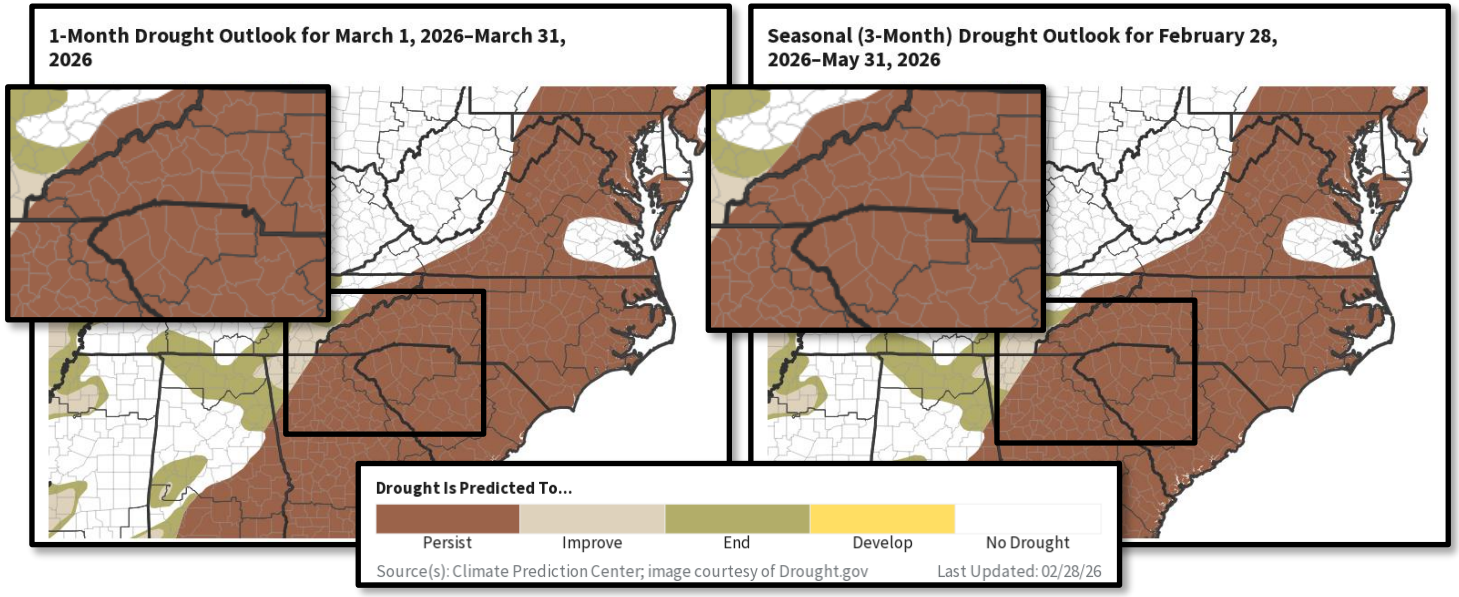
For the latest Long Range Outlooks, visit the Climate Prediction Center

A **white or blank map** indicates **equal chances** of above- or below-normal precipitation. In other words, there is not a strong signal for either occurrence.

Drought Outlook

Below-Normal Precipitation Expected to Worsen Drought Conditions Through March

- **March 2026:** Given the overall pattern through late March, supporting below-normal precipitation, it is likely drought conditions will worsen. Expanding Extreme (D3) drought conditions are possible across many areas currently in Severe (D2) drought. Streamflows and reservoirs will not improve appreciably.



- **March-May 2026:** Given low confidence in long-range guidance due to weakening La Niña conditions, drought conditions are expected to persist through the spring. However, heavy rainfall from typical springtime thunderstorm activity is likely to provide at least some localized relief, though more widespread rainfall is needed.

For the latest Drought Outlooks, visit the Climate Prediction Center: Monthly Drought Outlook | Seasonal Drought Outlook