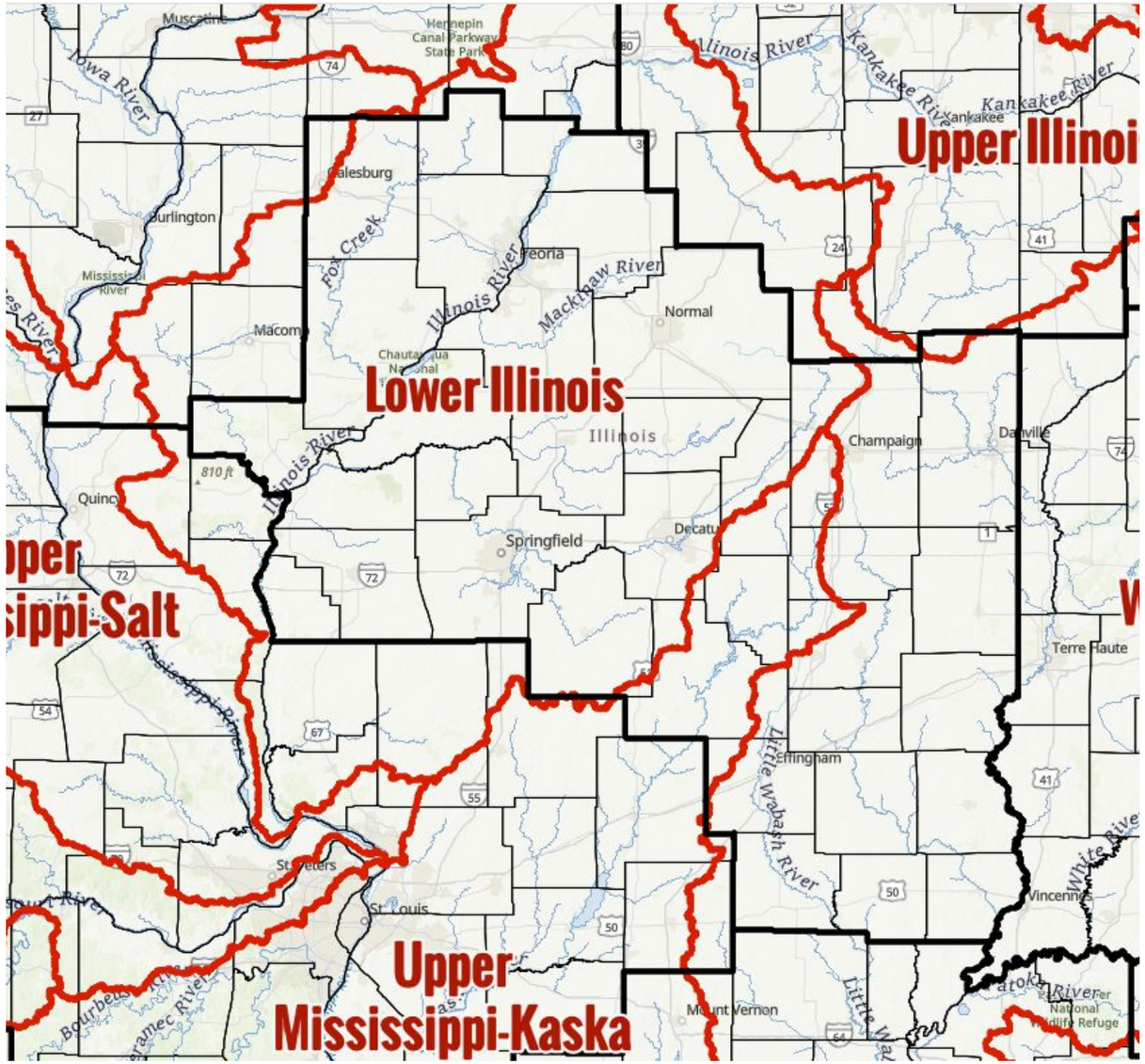
2026 Spring Flood and Water Resources Outlook

National Weather Service
Lincoln, IL

February 12th

Next Update: February 26, 2026



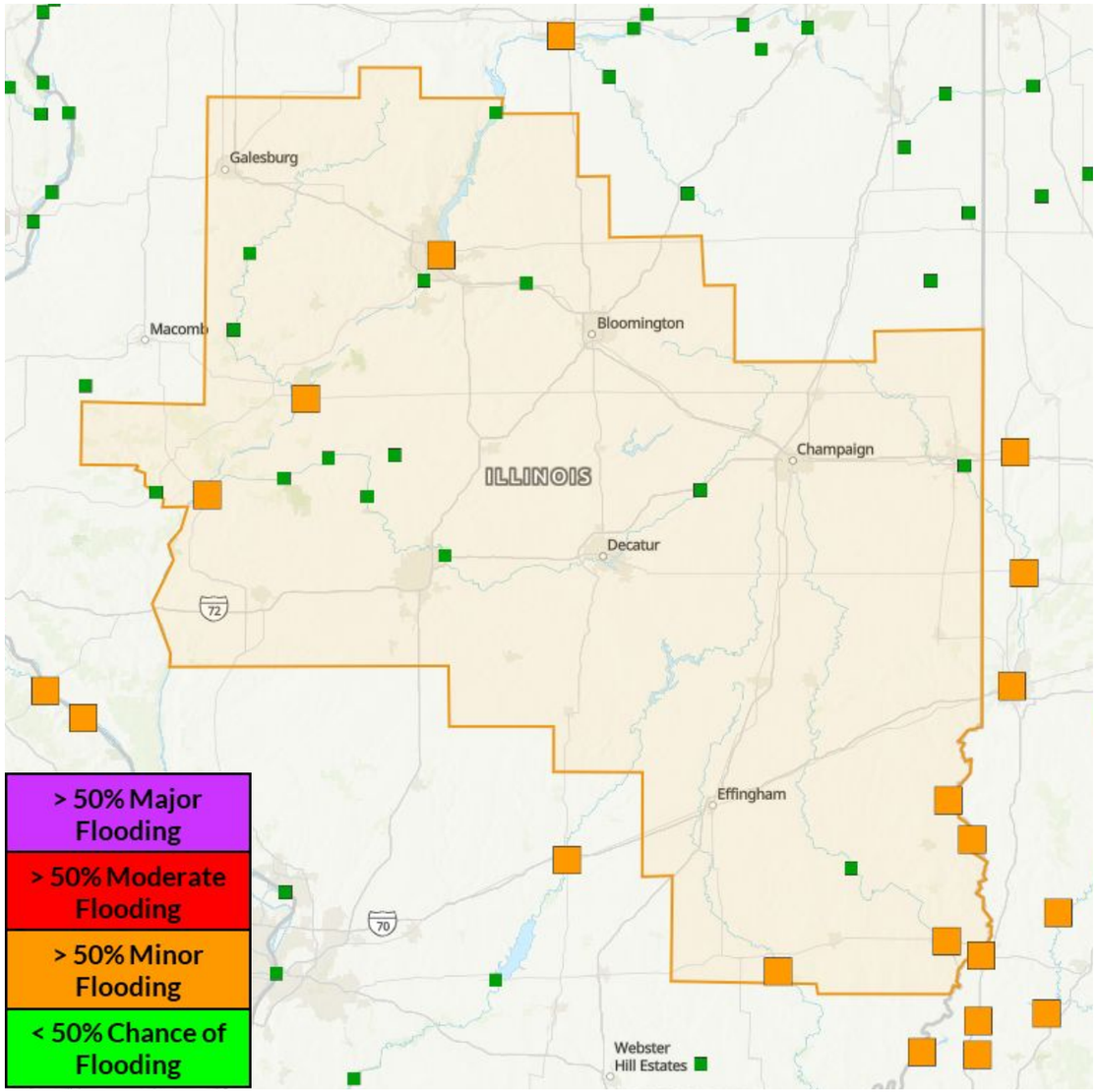
Spring Flood & Water Resources Outlook

February 12, 2026
2:30 PM

March 12th issuance

Key Messages

- Spring flood risk is **below normal**
  - Frost depth: near normal and thawing
  - Snowpack: non-existent - below normal
  - Deep layer soil moisture: deficit - below normal
  - Streamflows: near normal to below normal
  - CPC Outlooks: wetter than normal
- Greater than 50% likelihood for minor flooding along portions of the Illinois, Embarras, and Little Wabash river basins.
- **Springtime rains are likely to be the driver of flooding this spring.**
- Limited near-term potential for ice jam flooding as river ice breaks up and moves downstream.



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U.S. Department of Commerce

National Weather Service
Lincoln, IL

Spring Flood Outlook

February 12, 2026
2:30 PM CST

Key Ingredients	Antecedent Conditions	Impact to Spring Flooding
Winter Precipitation /Temperatures	Below Normal	Lesser Risk
River Levels	Below Normal	Lesser Risk
River Ice Conditions	Normal	Lesser Risk
Soil Moisture	Below Normal	Lesser Risk
Frost Depth	Normal	Normal Risk
Snow Conditions / Water Equivalent	Below Normal	Lesser Risk
Spring Weather Outlook	Above Normal	Greater Risk

Overall Risk of Spring Flooding:

Lesser Risk

Current hydrologic conditions are not expected to be a significant contributing factor for spring flooding.

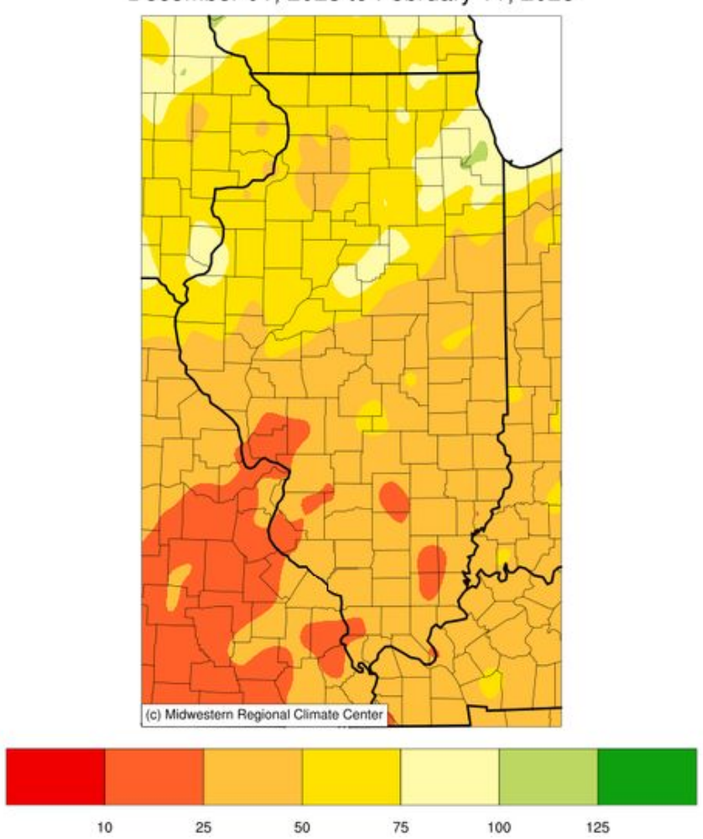
- Winter season precipitation was below normal
- Streamflows below normal to well below normal
- River ice is a near term concern with warmer temperatures driving melt
- Soil moisture remains in significant deficit
- Frost is normal, but continues to thaw
- No snowpack present across central and southeast Illinois
- Flooding will be largely driven by springtime rains…CPC projects above normal precipitation being slightly favored

Winter Precipitation and Temperature

February 12, 2026
2:30 PM CST

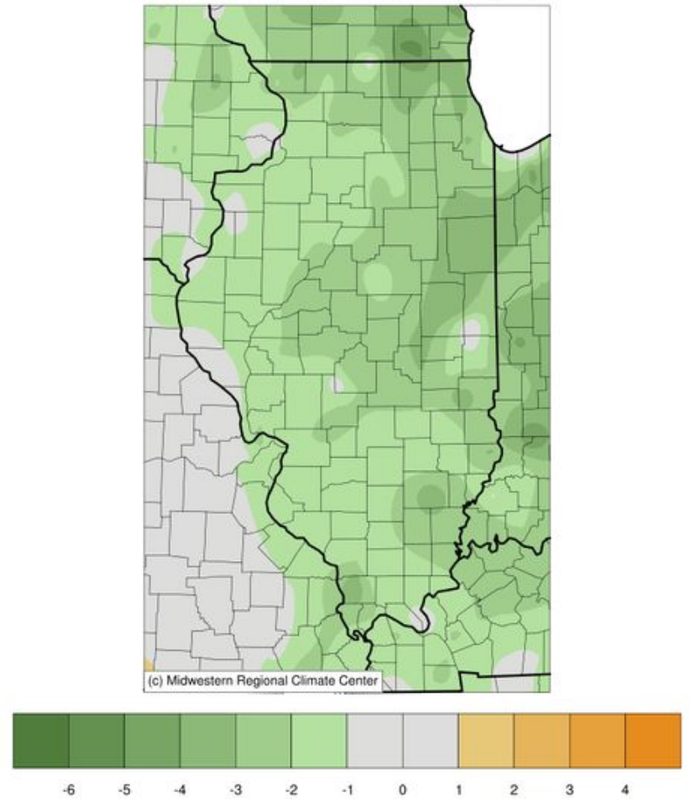
Maps show precipitation and temperature departure from normal so far this winter

December 01, 2025 to February 11, 2026



Average Temperature (°F): Departure from 1991-2020 Normals

December 01, 2025 to February 11, 2026



- Precipitation was roughly 25% - 75% of normal across central and southeast Illinois.
- Temperatures averaged 1 to 3 degrees below normal across central and southeast Illinois.

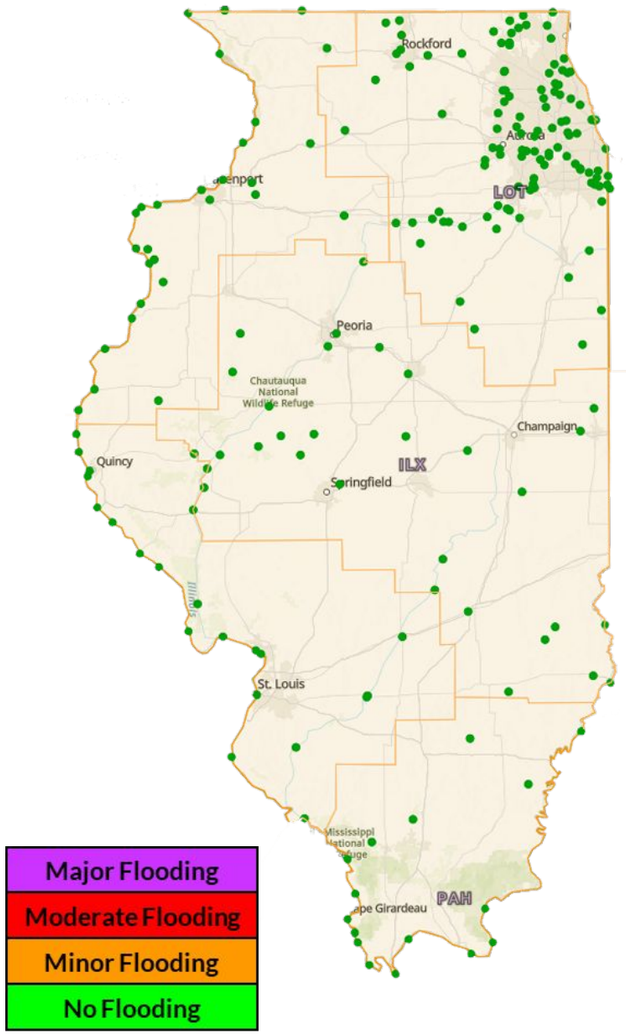
MRCC
Midwestern Regional Climate Center

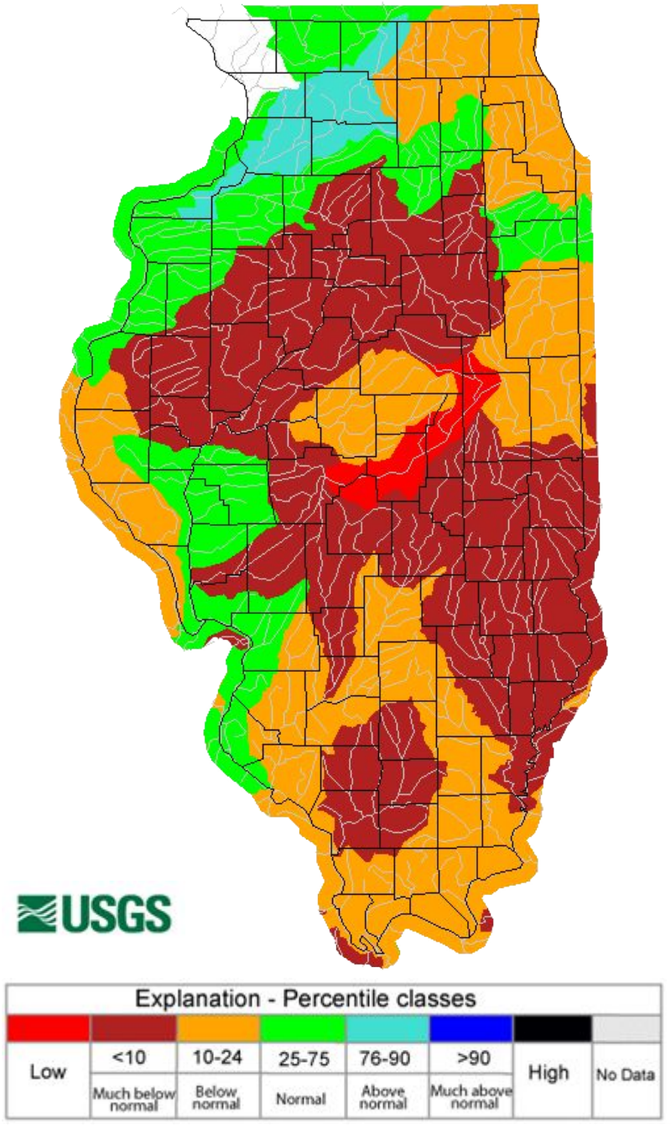
River Levels

February 12, 2026
2:30 PM CST

Map shows latest river observations and USGS 14-day average streamflows

- Latest river observations (left) show no flooding across the ILX Hydrologic Service Area (HSA).
- USGS 14-day streamflows (right) show overall flows in the below normal to much below normal categories across the ILX HSA.
- Due to the low streamflows, rivers will have increased capacity to route upstream flow within bank as well as handle localized rainfall runoff as we head into this spring.





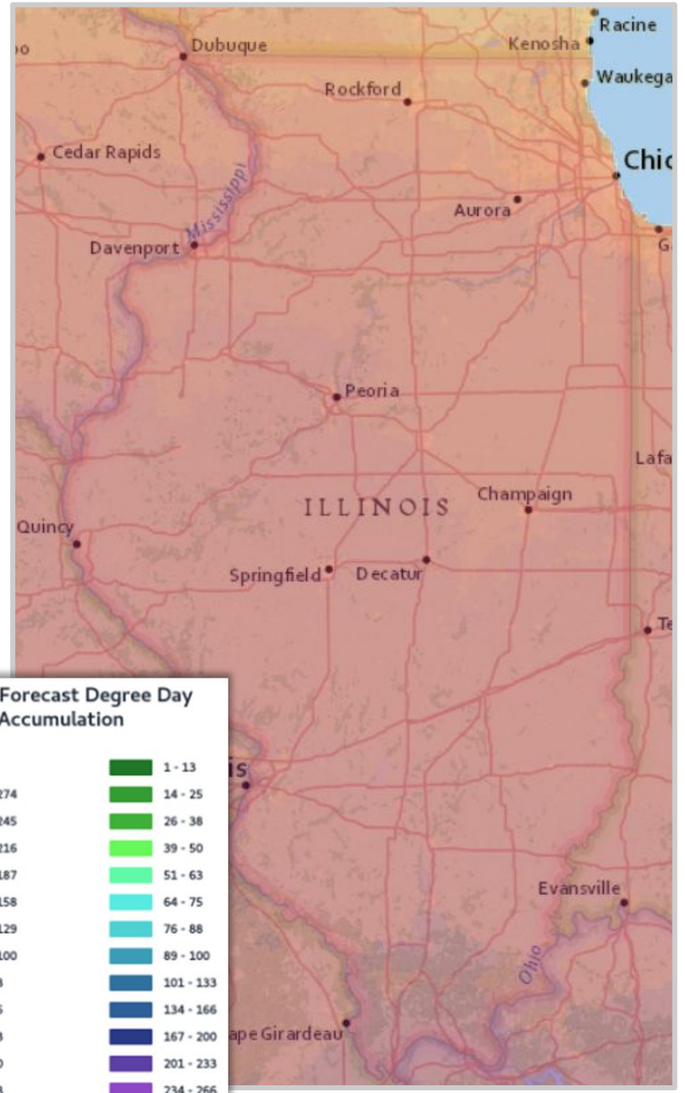
Source: NWPS / USGS 14-day Streamflow

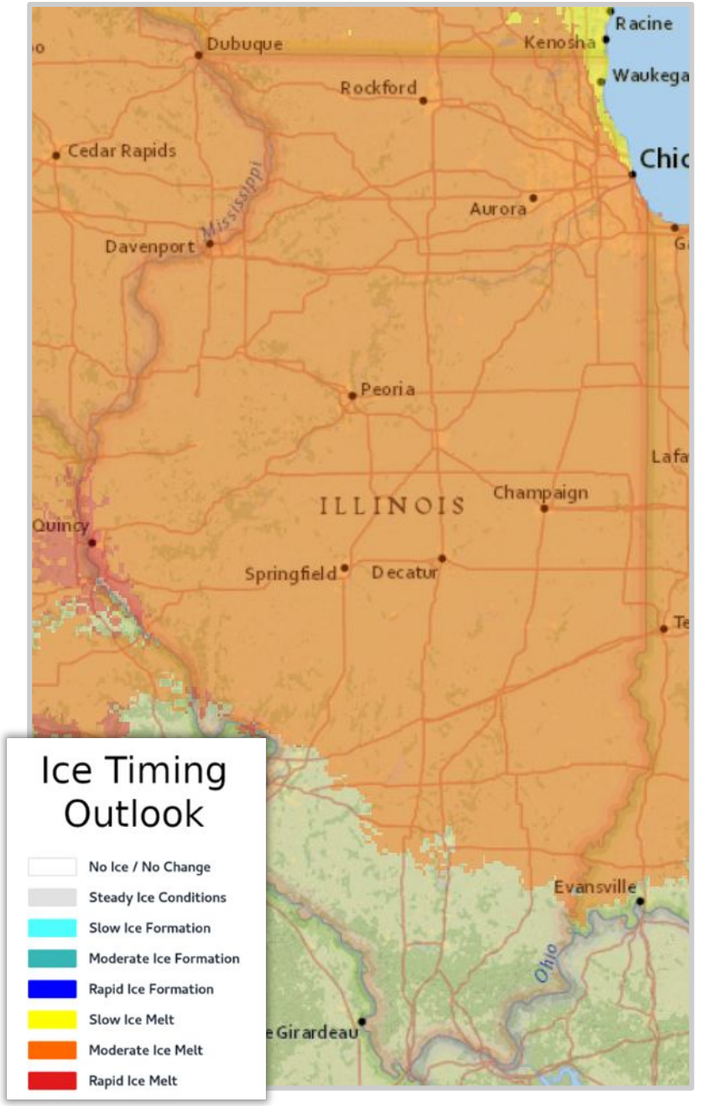
River Ice Conditions

February 12, 2026
2:30 PM CST

Map shows accumulated net degree days and day 4-6 ice timing

- Accumulated net degree days map (left) shows thawing over the next 10 days.
- Ice timing outlook map (right) shows moderate ice melting over days 4-6.
- With river ice melt there is the possibility of thermal breakup.
    - If river ice breaks up, it has the potential to cause jams as it moves downstream.
    - This can cause rapid, localized flooding in the area of the jam and areas upstream.
- Overall threat of widespread ice jam flooding is relatively low due to very low streamflows.





Source: NWC NDD & ITO

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Soil Moisture and Frost Depth

February 12, 2026
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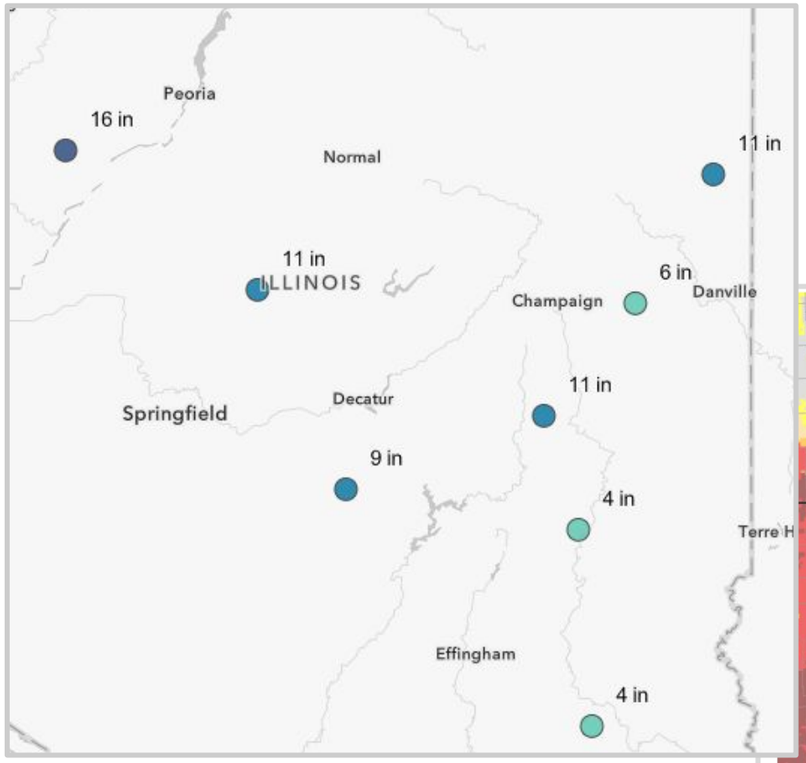
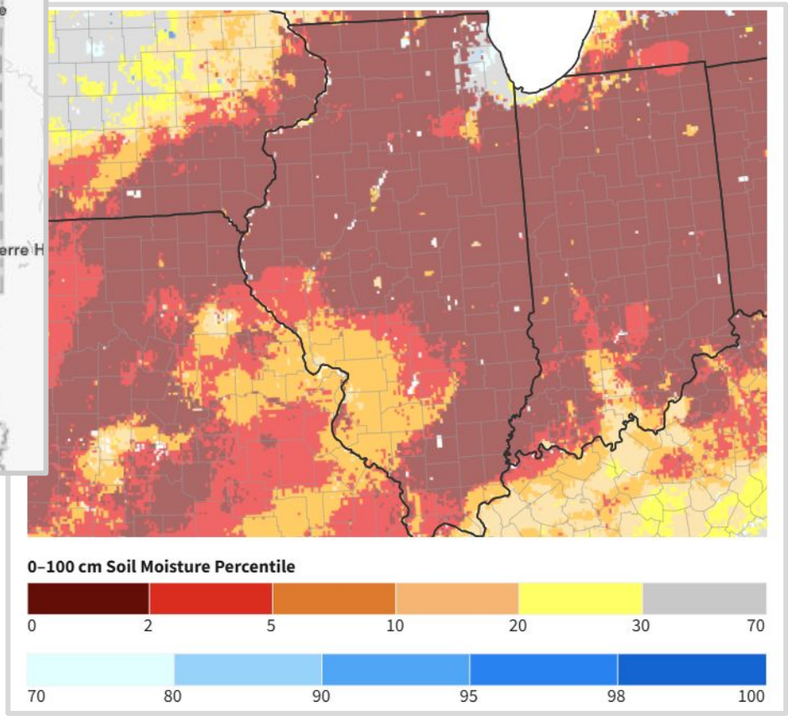
Maps show soil moisture percentiles and frost depth

- Frost Depth across central and southeast Illinois generally ranged from 4”-10” (near normal).
  - Frozen ground will continue to thaw well into next week.
- Soil Moisture percentiles show a significant deficit in moisture.
  - Once thawed, the dry soils will have appreciable capacity for water infiltration and storage as we head into spring
- Frost depth and soil moisture conditions will not be a contributing factor toward spring flooding.

Frost Depth



0-100 cm Soil Moisture Percentile



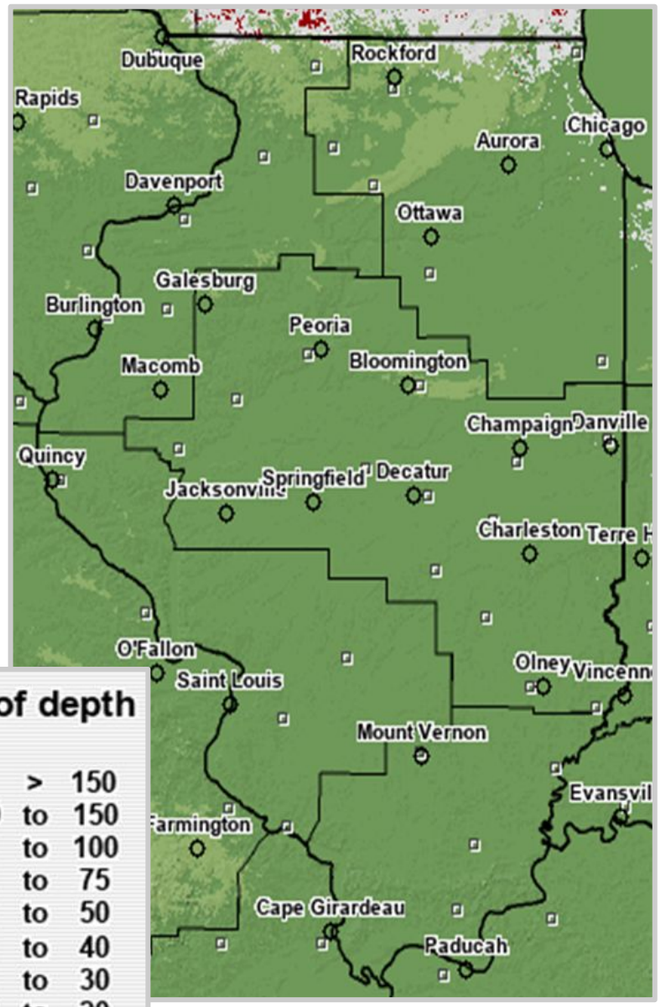
Source: Frost Depth / Soil Moisture

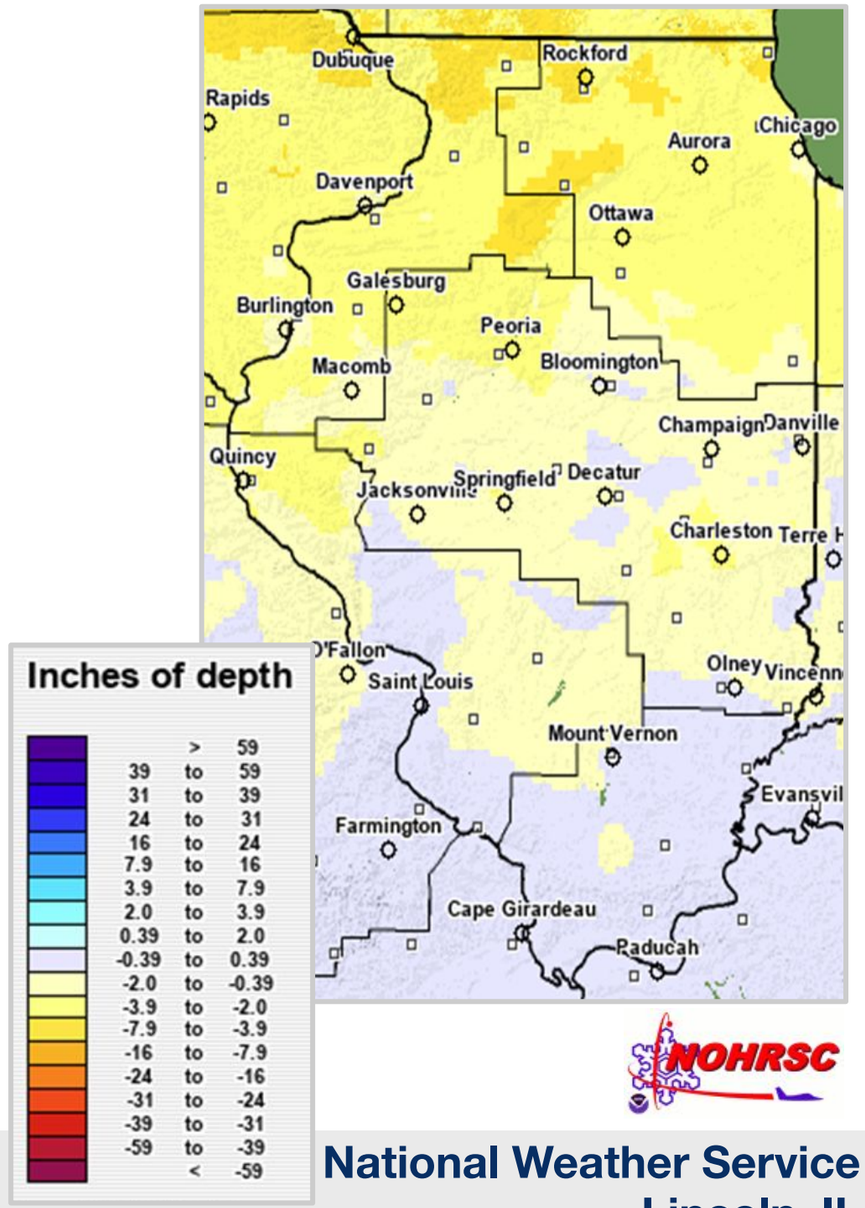
Snow Conditions

February 12, 2026
2:30 PM CST

Maps show snow depth and a comparison to normal

- No snowpack remaining across central and southeast IL (left)
- This is near normal to below normal for this time of year (right)
    - Yellow shades represent below normal snowpack
- This has a reduced impact on spring flooding as there is no stored water content in the snow (Snow Water Equivalent - SWE)





Source: NOHRSC

NOHRSC

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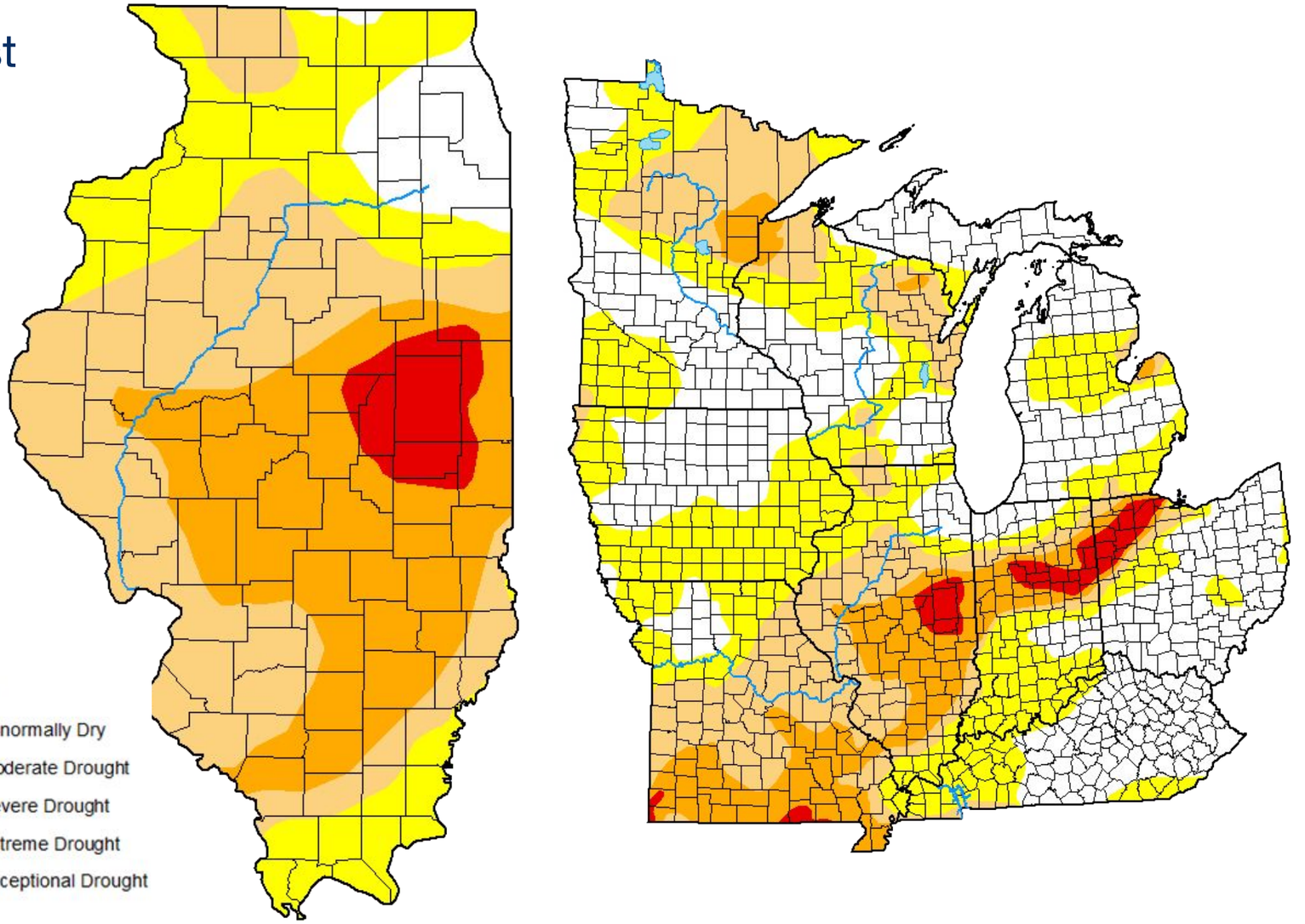
Latest Drought Conditions

February 12, 2026
2:30 PM CST

Maps show the February 12th issuance of the Drought Monitor

- Drought conditions persist across most of Illinois and have slightly worsened throughout this winter
  - Over 93% of Illinois in some form of drought
  - 37% - Moderate Drought
  - 29% - Severe Drought
  - 5% - Extreme Drought
- This reflects a reduced the threat of spring flooding



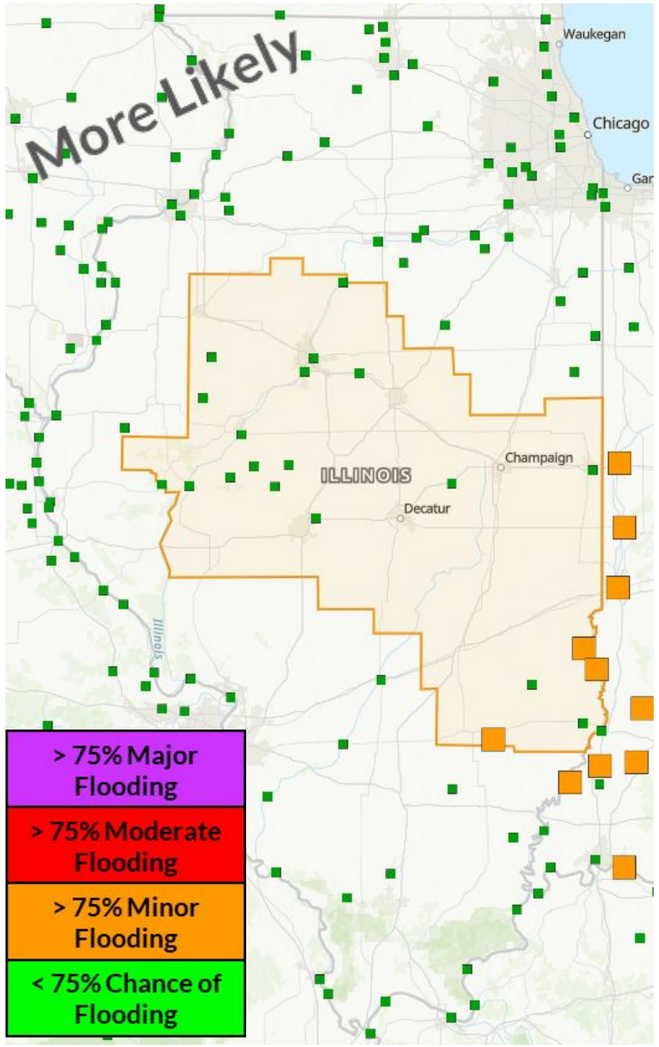
Source: Drought Monitor

Long Range Flood Outlook

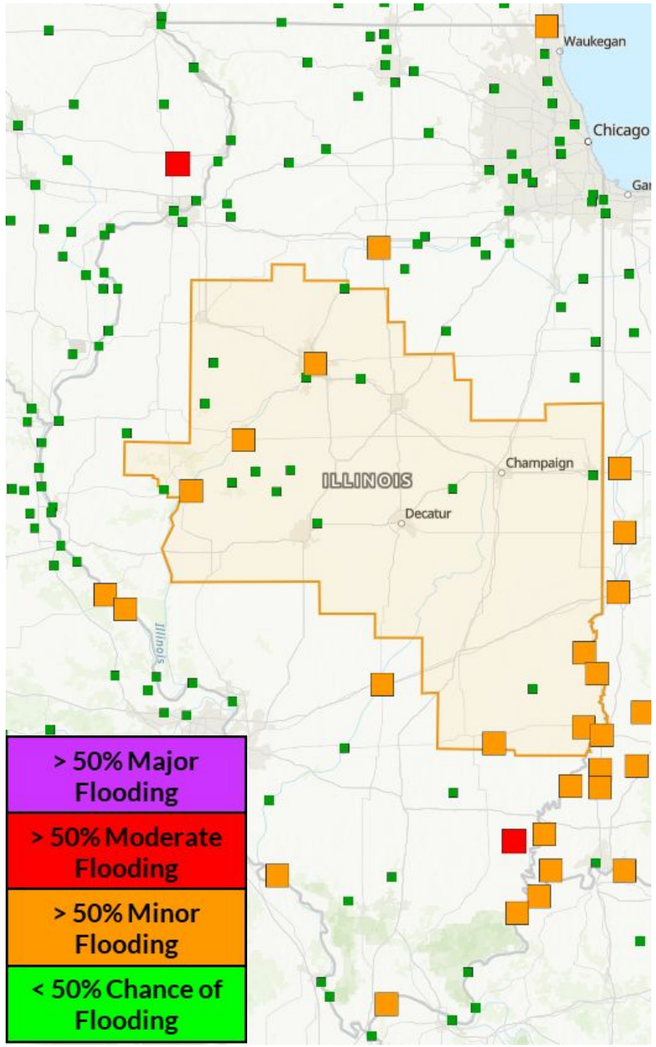
February 12, 2026
2:30 PM CST

Probability of exceeding minor/moderate/major flood stage

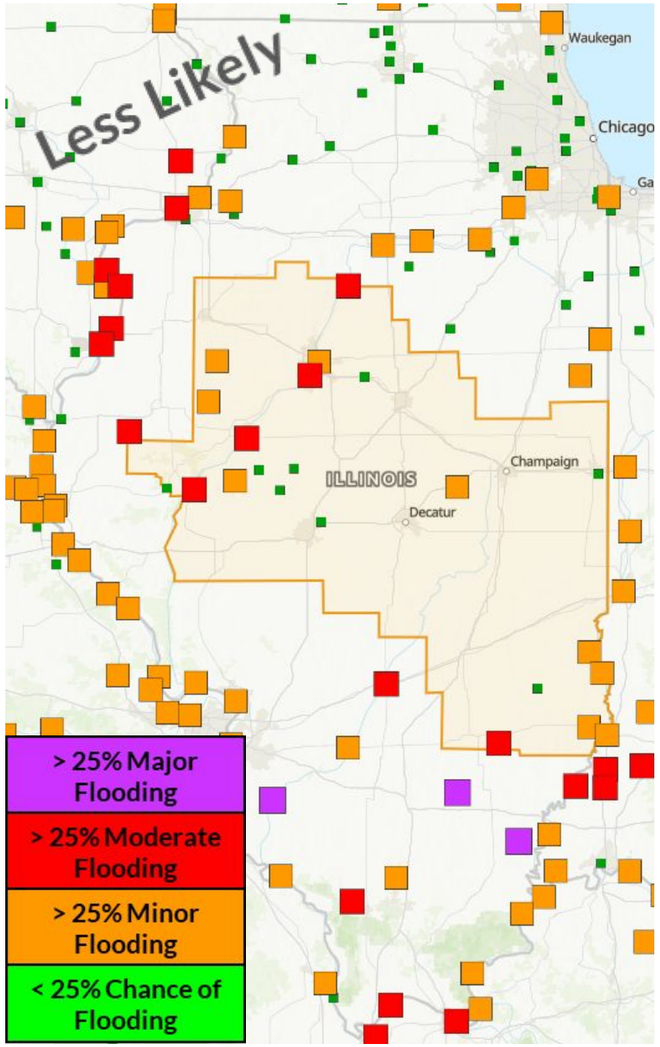
> 75% Chance of Exceedance



> 50% Chance of Exceedance



> 25% Chance of Exceedance



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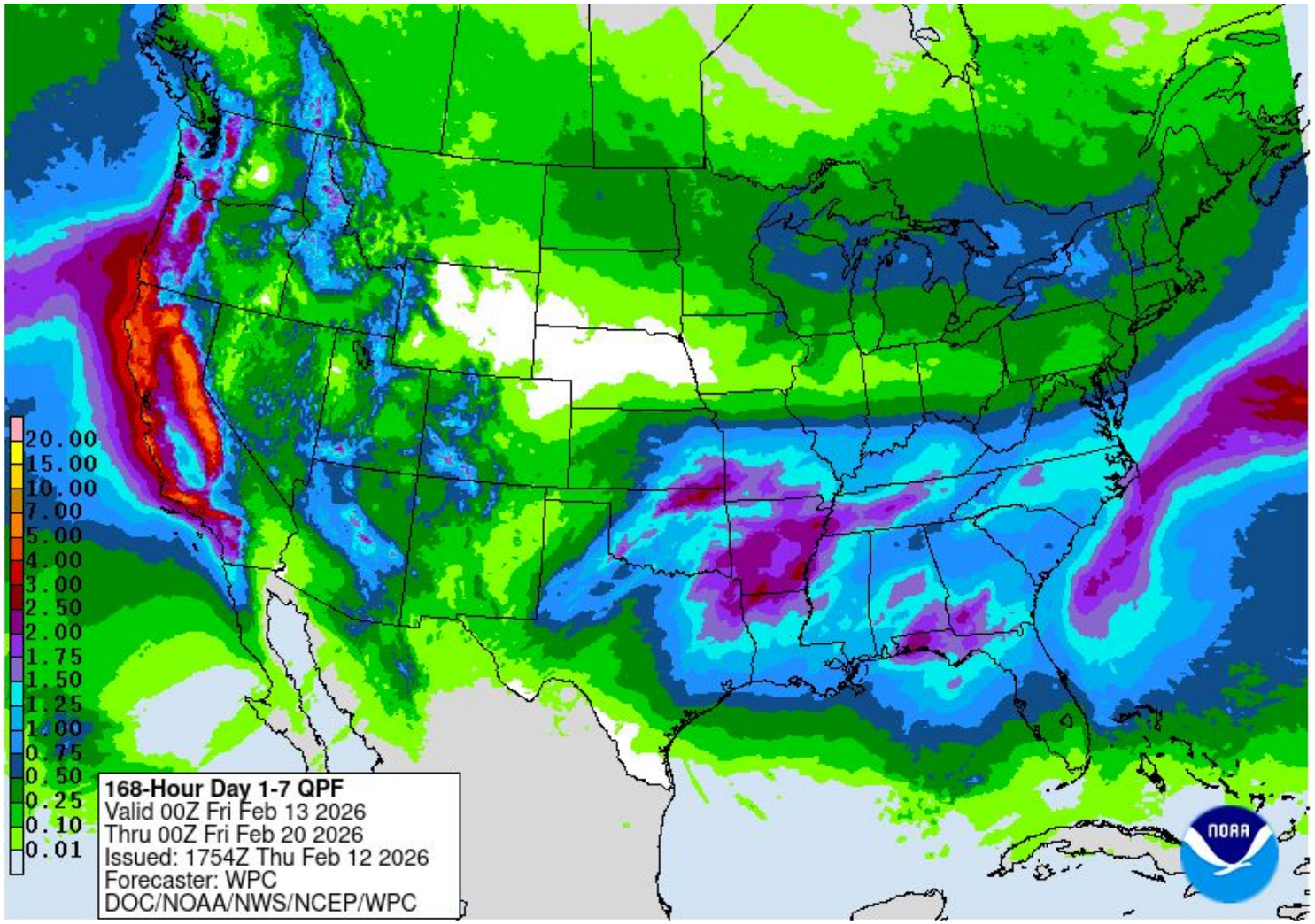
7 Day Weather Forecast

February 12, 2026
2:30 PM CST

February 12-19, 2026



Find a detailed forecast for any location at weather.gov/forecastpoints

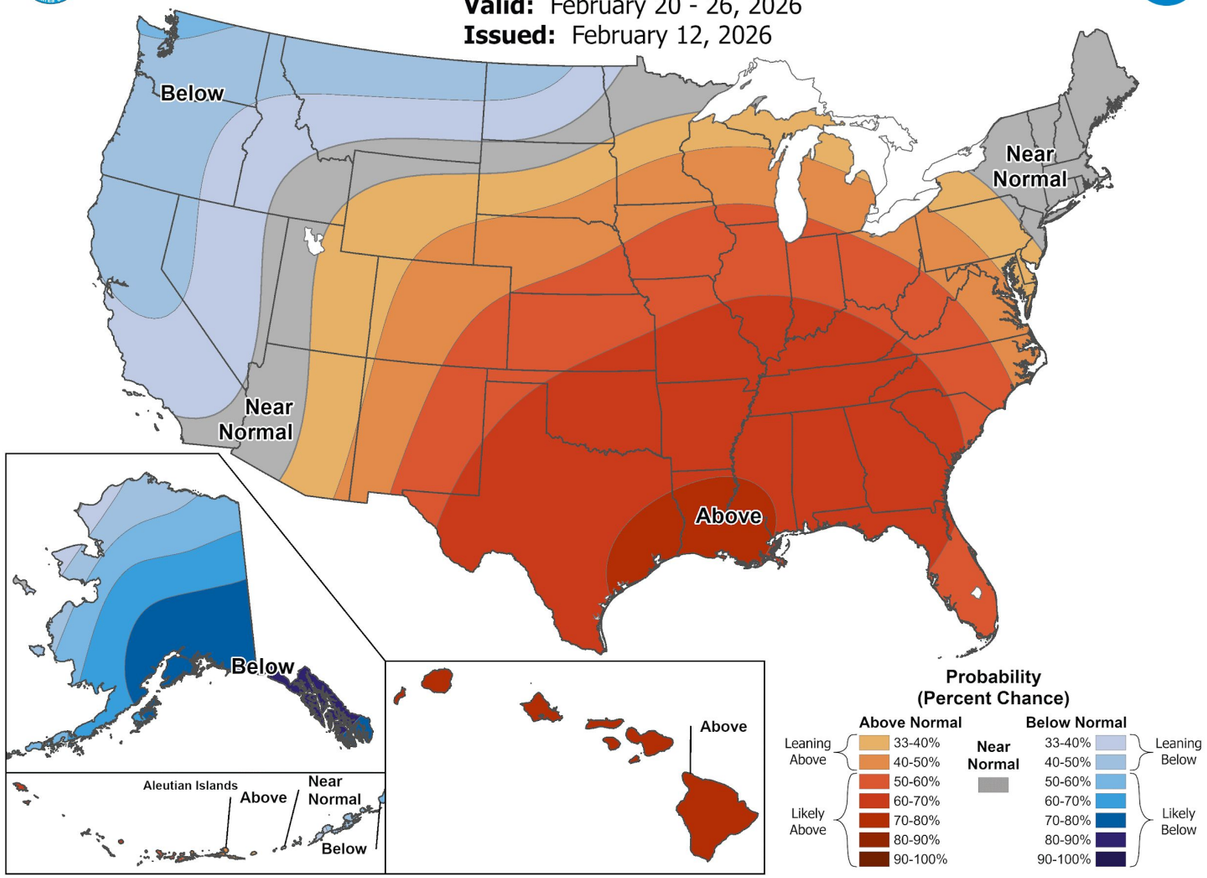
8 to 14 Day Outlook

February 20-26

February 12, 2026
2:30 PM CST

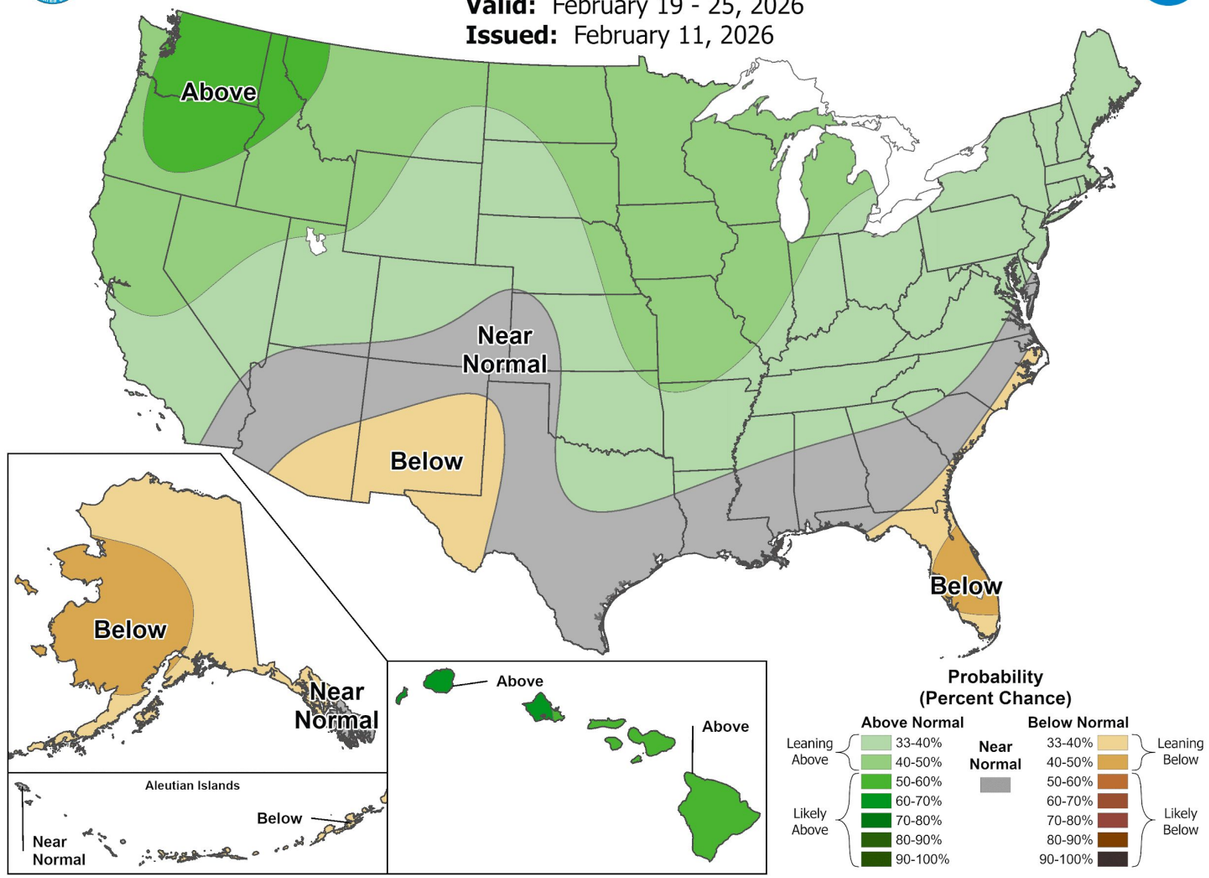
8-14 Day Temperature Outlook

Valid: February 20 - 26, 2026
Issued: February 12, 2026



8-14 Day Precipitation Outlook

Valid: February 19 - 25, 2026
Issued: February 11, 2026



Spring Weather Outlook

February 12, 2026
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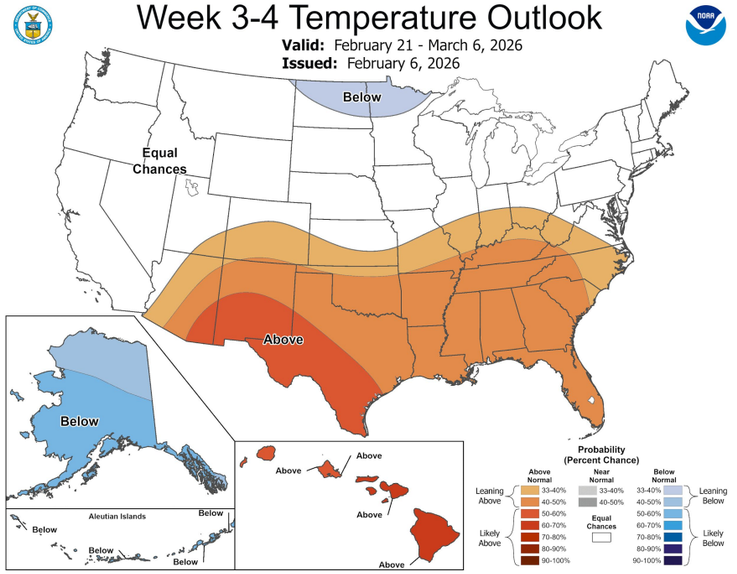
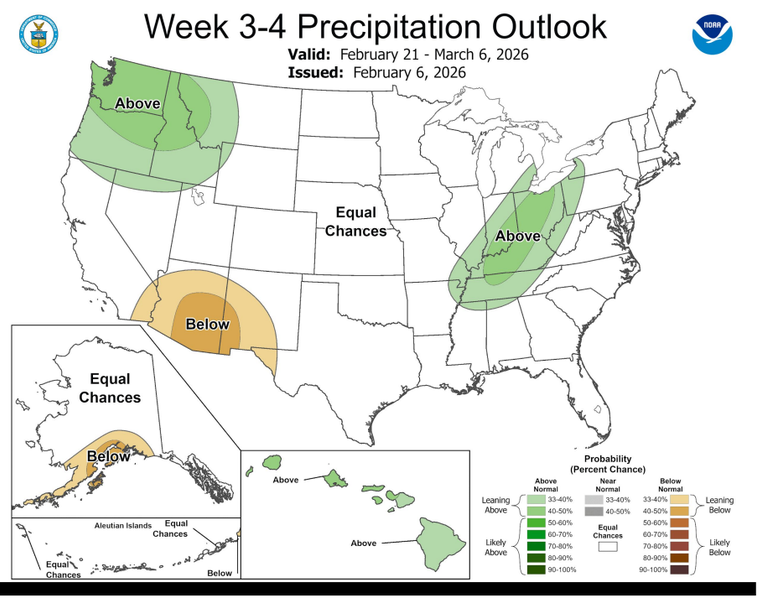
These are general outlooks that depict broad trends for the weeks and months ahead

Weeks 3-4 Outlook (Feb 21- Mar 6)

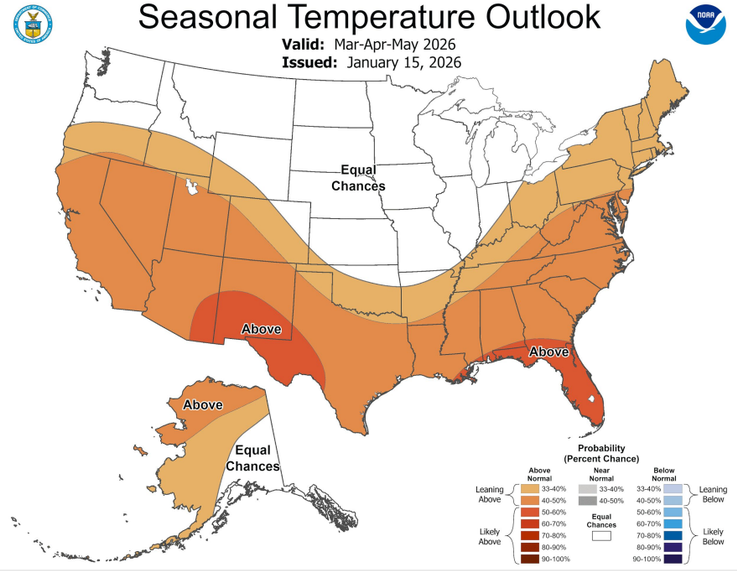
- No dominant temperature trends across northern half of Illinois…with above normal temps slightly favored across southern half of the state.
- Above normal precipitation slightly favored across far southeast Illinois…with no dominant trends elsewhere in the state.

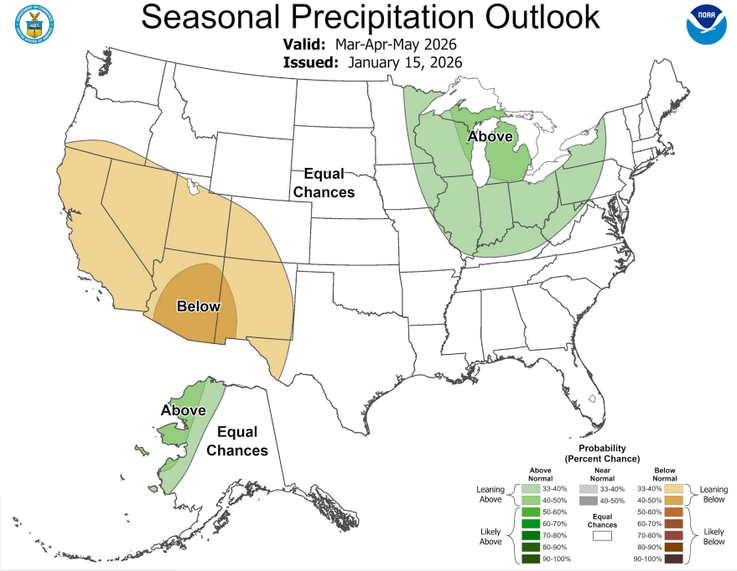




Seasonal Outlook (Mar/Apr/May)

- No dominant temperature trends across Illinois.
- Above normal precipitation slightly favored across Illinois.





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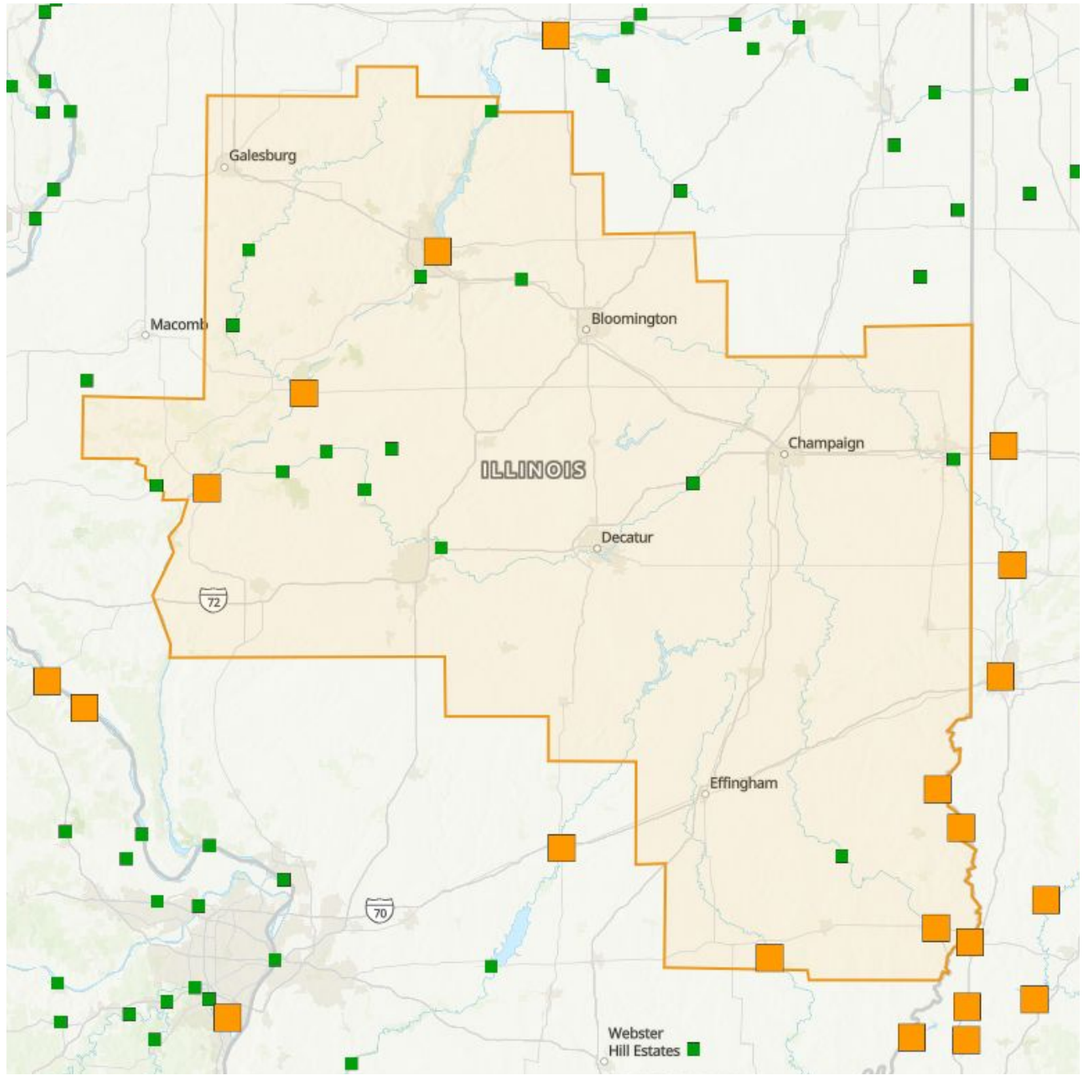
Summary



Key Messages

- Spring flood risk is **below normal**
- Greater than 50% likelihood for minor flooding along portions of the Illinois, Embarras, and Little Wabash river basins
- **Springtime rains are likely to be the driver of flooding this spring.**
- Limited near-term potential for ice jam flooding as river ice breaks up and moves downstream.

Next Scheduled Update

- Thursday, February 26th

Additional Resources

NWS Lincoln, IL Website	Forecast Points (Hourly Details)
North Central River Forecast Center	Flood Safety Information
River Observations & Forecasts for central and southeast Illinois	USGS National Water Dashboard
	NWS Lincoln on Facebook
NCRFC Spring Hydrologic Outlook - StoryMap	NWS Lincoln on Twitter

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