

Drought Information Statement for Southeast Georgia and Northeast Florida

Valid March 5, 2026

Issued By: National Weather Service Jacksonville, FL

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- This product will be updated Thursday, March 12, 2025
 - Please see all currently available products at <https://drought.gov/drought-information-statements>.
 - Please visit <https://www.weather.gov/JAX/DroughtInformationStatement> for previous statements.
 - Please visit <https://www.drought.gov/drought-status-updates> for regional drought status updates.
-
- **Extreme Drought (D3) is in place across the entire region**
 - **This is the first time since the drought monitor began that the Jacksonville service area is all in Extreme Drought (D3) or worse.**
 - Impacts are reflective of long term hydrologic drought, especially with respect to non-tidal streamflows and surface water levels.
 - Fire weather concerns continue to increase with many counties issuing burn restrictions or bans.

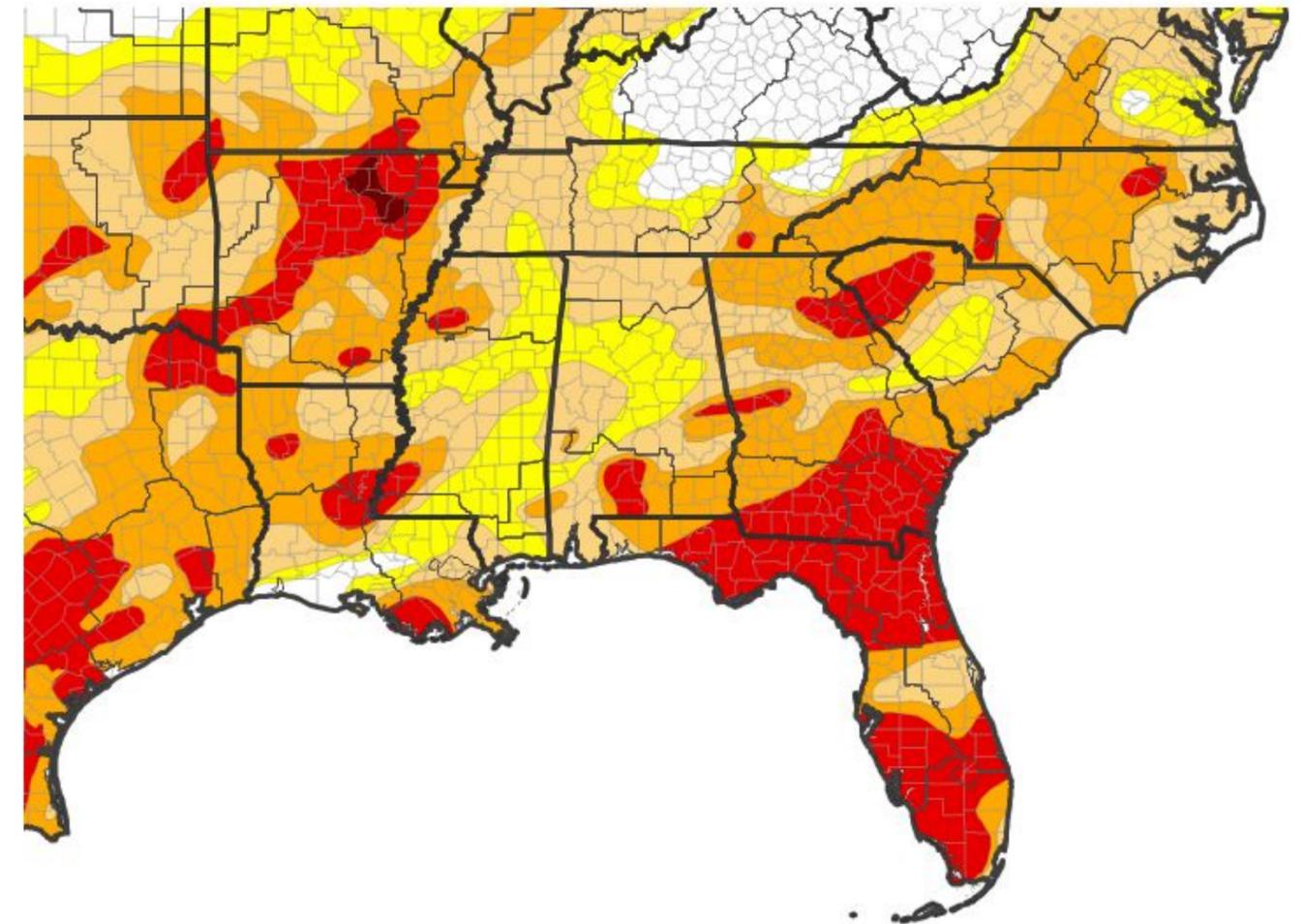


U.S. Drought Monitor

Link to the [latest U.S. Drought Monitor](#) for Southeast Georgia and Northeast Florida

- With limited rainfall and persistent dry conditions, Extreme Drought has expanded across all of Southeast Georgia. The entire Jacksonville forecast area is now in Extreme Drought (D3).
- Drought intensity and Extent
 - **D3 (Extreme Drought)**: All of Southeast Georgia and Northeast Florida.

U.S. Drought Monitor



U.S. Drought Monitor



Source(s): NDMC, NOAA, USDA, NASA; image courtesy of Drought.gov

Data Valid: 03/03/26



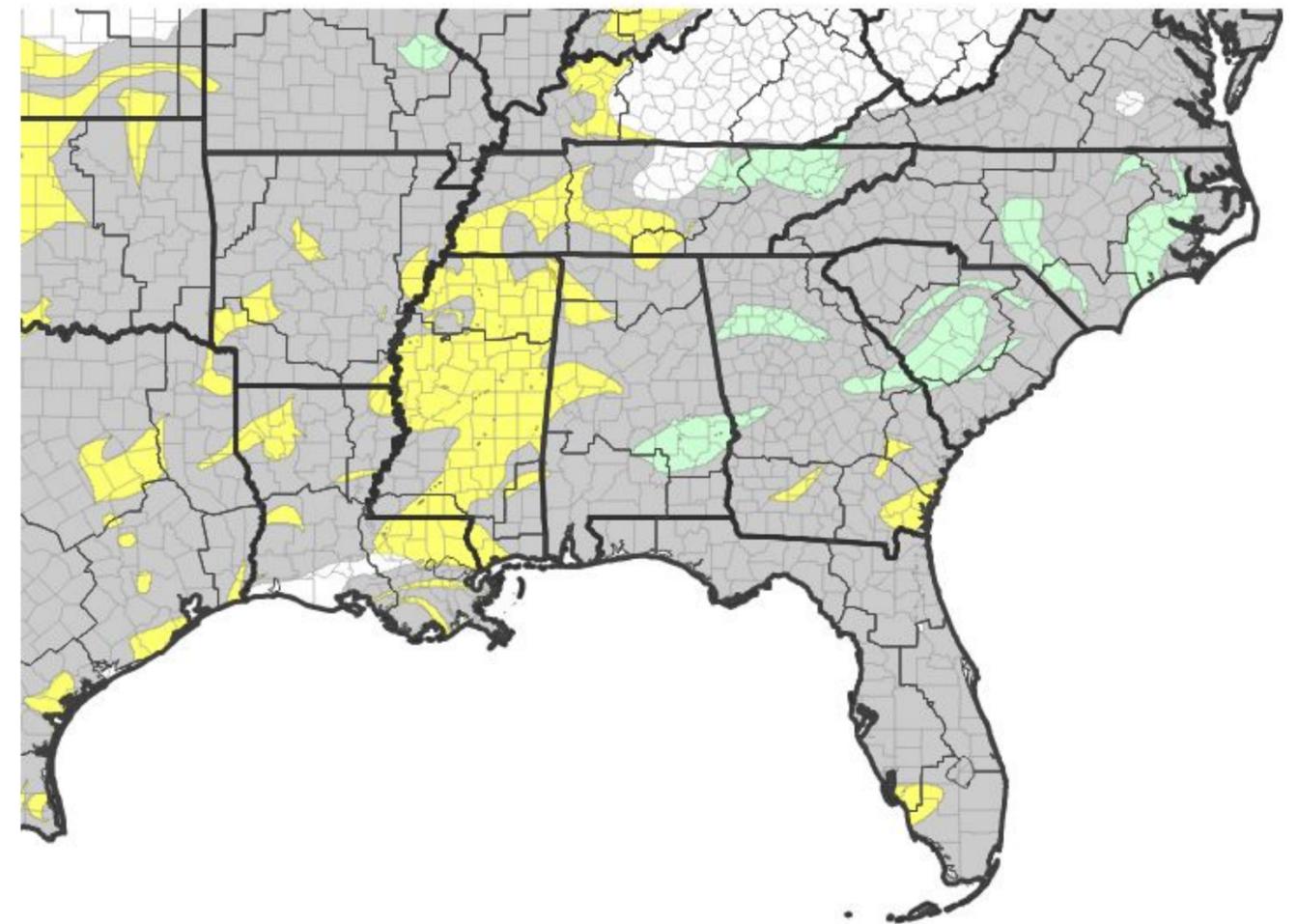


Recent Change in Drought Intensity

Link to the latest [4-week change map](#) for Southeast Georgia and Northeast Florida

- With limited rainfall and persistent dry conditions, Extreme Drought has expanded across all of Southeast Georgia. While the drought hasn't worsened in severity over much of the region, without significant rain, further increase in drought severity is possible in the coming weeks.
- One-Week Drought Monitor Class Change:
 - **No change:** Most of the region.
 - **1 category degradation:** Coastal SE Georgia.

U.S. Drought Monitor 1-Week Change Map



Drought Change Since Last Week



Source(s): NDMC, NOAA, USDA, NASA; image courtesy of Drought.gov

Data Valid: 03/03/26

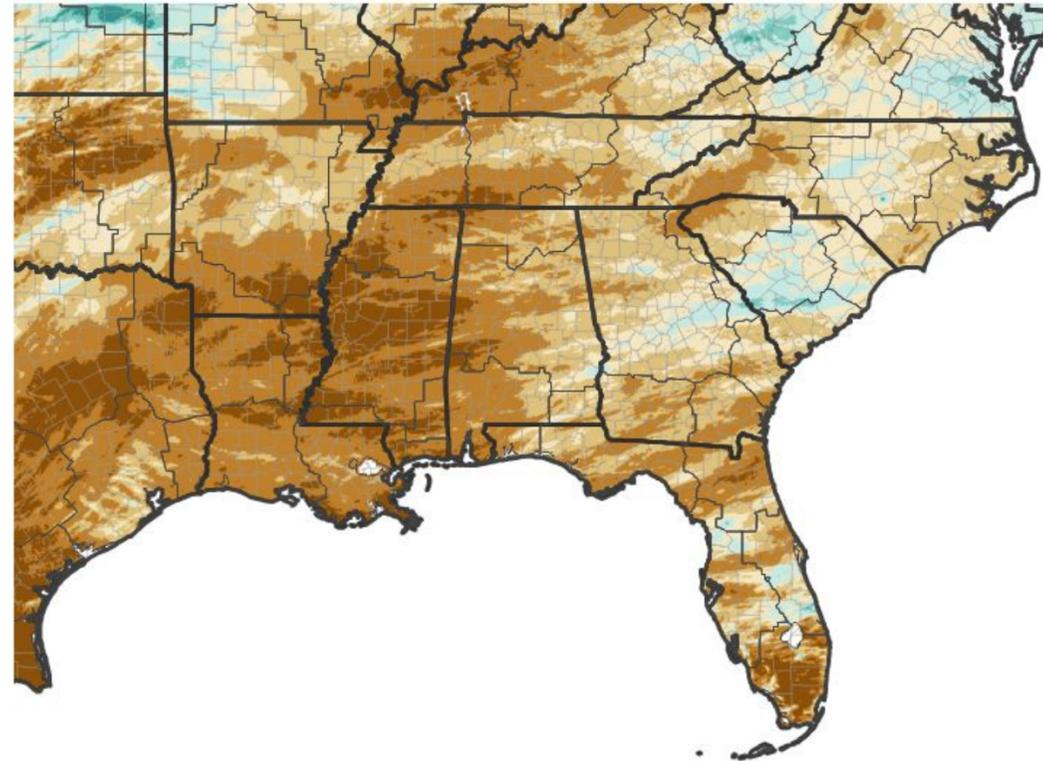




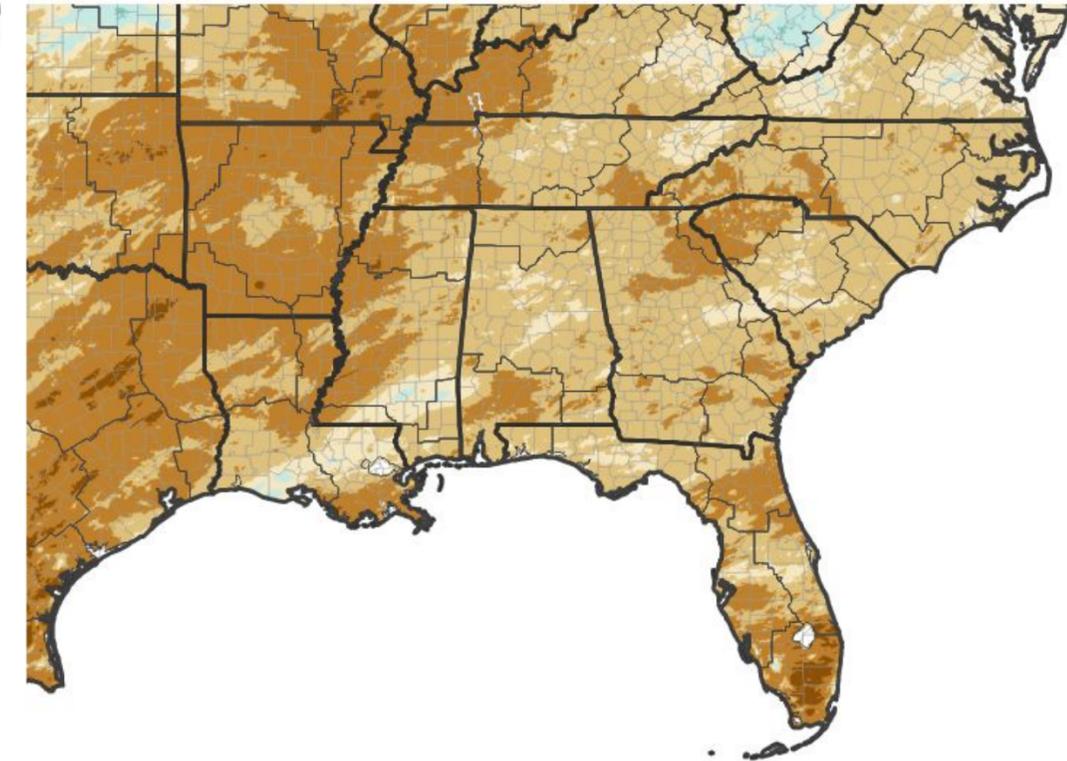
Precipitation

	Last 30 Days		Last 90 Days	
	Rainfall	Percent	Rainfall	Percent
Jasper	1.57"	38.4%	5.52"	47.3%
Live Oak	1.79"	43.0%	6.59"	56.1%
Ichetucknee St Pk.	1.50"	42.7%	5.23"	50.7%
Fanning Springs	1.53"	43.5%	5.20"	50.8%
Baxley	2.39"	58.7%	5.22"	45.4%
Alma	1.06"	28.8%	2.96"	28.7%
Waycross	2.29"	57.9%	6.02"	53.5%
Olustee	2.30"	64.5%	6.34"	59.6%
Ocala	3.32"	103.8%	5.60"	61.8%
Palatka	1.44"	47.8%	3.46"	40.0%
Ocklawaha	2.39"	83.7%	3.74"	44.5%
Nahunta	1.53"	40.3%	5.29"	48.7%
Woodbine	1.83"	53.4%	7.03"	70.5%
Jacksonville	0.70"	22.7%	4.81"	53.4%

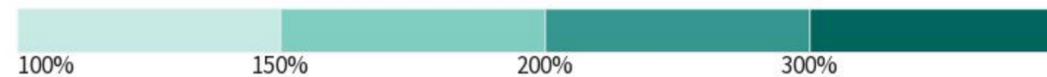
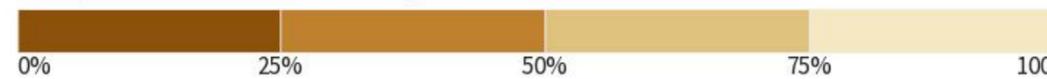
30-Day Percent of Normal Precipitation



90-Day Percent of Normal Precipitation

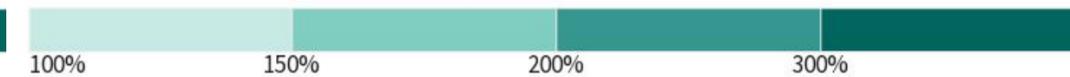
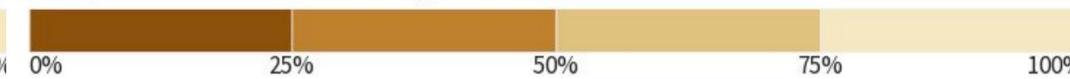


Precipitation Shown as a Percentage of Normal Conditions



Source(s): National Weather Service Multi-Radar Multi-Sensor System; Last Updated: 03/05/26
image courtesy of Drought.gov

Precipitation Shown as a Percentage of Normal Conditions



Source(s): National Weather Service Multi-Radar Multi-Sensor System; Last Updated: 03/05/26
image courtesy of Drought.gov

Data Updated through March 5, 2026

Data Courtesy:

NWS Observations

University of Florida - Florida Automated Weather Network

University of Georgia Weather Network

Suwannee River Water Management District



National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

U.S. Department of Commerce

National Weather Service
Jacksonville, FL

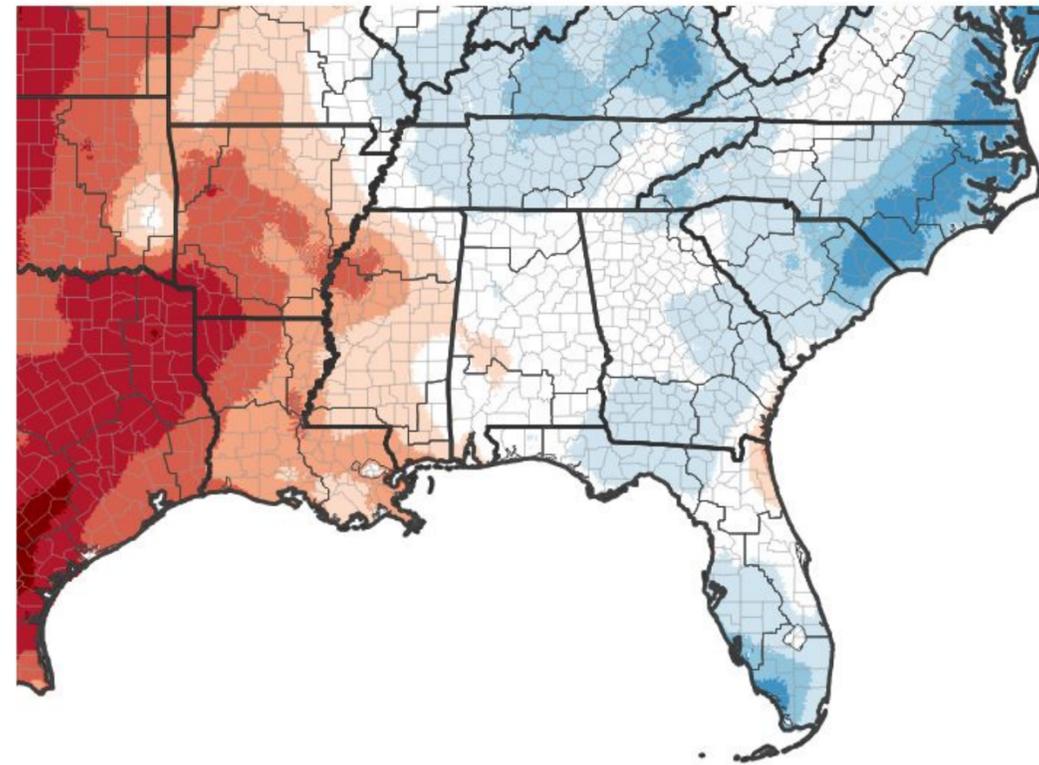


Temperature

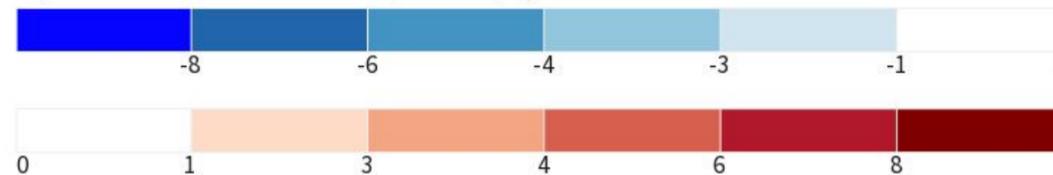
	Last 30 Days	
	Average High (Departure)	Average Low (Departure)
Jacksonville	72.8° (+3.2°)	44.9° (-1.8°)
Craig Field	70.8° (+1.9°)	46.5° (-1.8°)
Ocala	77.0° (+2.7°)	47.2° (-1.6°)
Gainesville	74.1° (+2.6°)	43.5° (-2.8°)
Alma	69.1° (+1.9°)	43.6° (+0.6°)

- Warmer temperatures over the last few days will continue well into next week.
- These much above normal temperatures will quickly kick off the growing season.

7-Day Temperature Anomaly

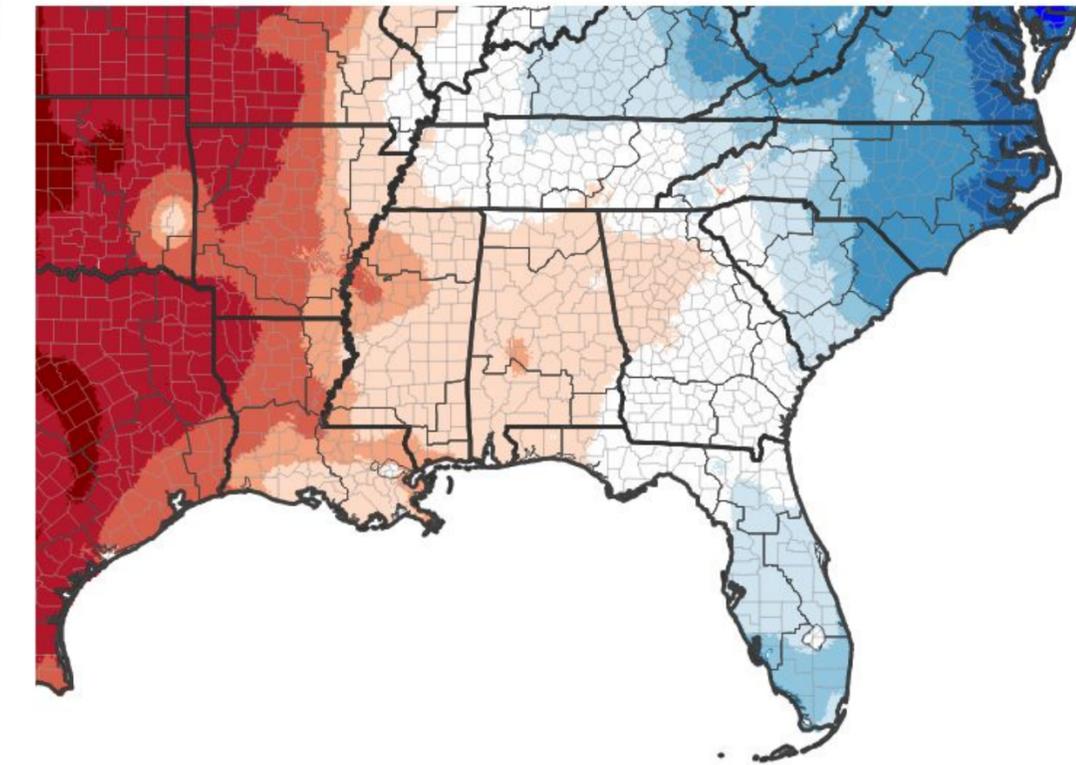


Departure from Normal Max Temperature (°F)

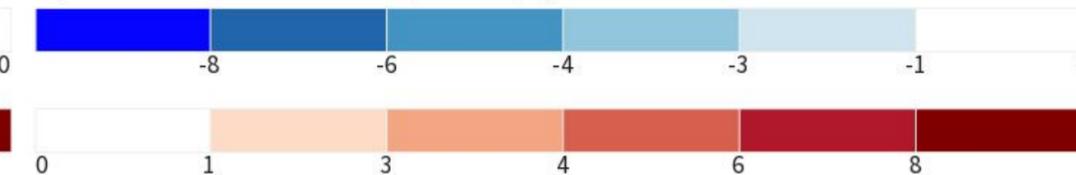


Source(s): NOAA's National Centers for Environmental Information; image courtesy of Drought.gov

30-Day Temperature Anomaly



Departure from Normal Max Temperature (°F)



Source(s): NOAA's National Centers for Environmental Information; image courtesy of Drought.gov





Summary of Impacts

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

The Governor of Florida has issued a [State of Emergency](#) due to drought in Florida.

Hydrologic Impacts

- Streamflows on all mainstem rivers in Southeast Georgia and Northeast Florida are especially low. In particular, stretches of the Santa Fe River are at record low flows.
- Reports of stretches of the Suwannee, Santa Fe, and Satilla River that are no longer accessible to recreational boaters using canoes. In Gilchrist County, the Santa Fe River has sandbars visible above the waterline.
- Springs along the Suwannee River are discharging rapidly into the Middle Suwannee with the low level of the Middle Suwannee.

Agricultural Impacts

- Grazing crops are considerably stressed in interior North Florida, particularly in Marion County.
- In Bacon County, the blueberry farmers have been irrigating and pulling from holding ponds. Water levels in these ponds are dropping as water demand increases. Similar low surface water levels persist across surrounding counties in Southeast Georgia.
- The recent freeze adversely impacted the early season blueberry crop, though protective actions preserved much of the crop.

Fire Hazard Impacts

- The Keetch Byram Drought Index continues to rise with of the region in the 450-650 range, especially in the areas along the I-10 corridor in Northeast Florida.
- Wildfire activity has increased along with local burns getting out of control and spreaded into wooded areas.
- Burn bans are now in effect in Columbia, Baker, Union, Bradford, Gilchrist, Alachua, Marion, Putnam, and Flagler Counties.

Mitigation Actions

- Suwannee River Water Management District has issued a [water shortage advisory](#) for their watershed.
- St. Johns Water Management District is in a Phase 2 Severe Water Shortage. [Watering restrictions are in effect](#)





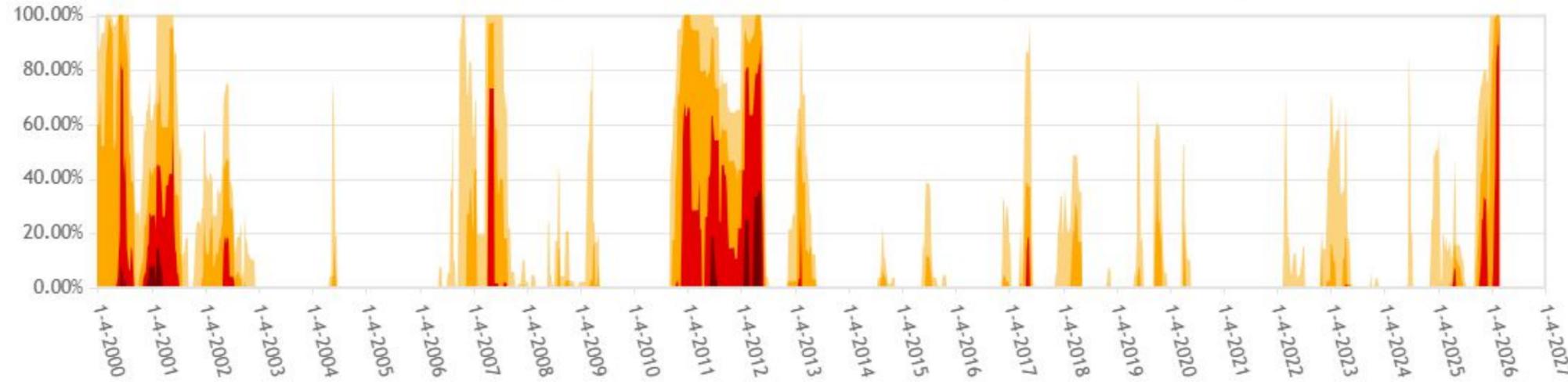
A Perspective on this Drought

Links: [Drought Monitor Time Series](#)

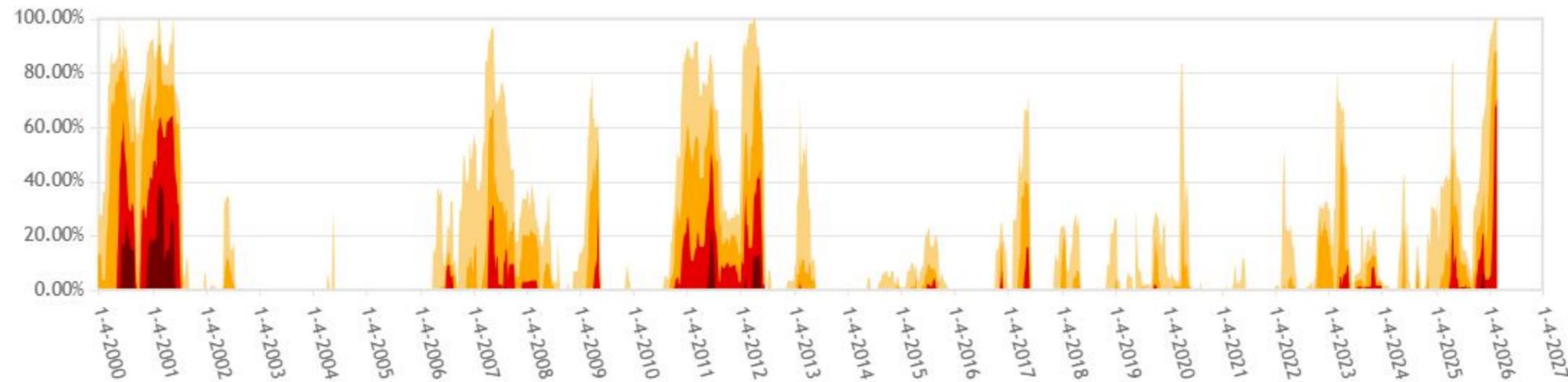
How does this drought compare to past long term droughts in the Jacksonville forecast area?

- This is the first time since the drought monitor began in late 1999 that the entire Jacksonville service area is in Extreme Drought (D3) or worse.
- This is also the first time since the drought monitor began in late 1999 that the entire State of Florida is D1 (Moderate drought) or worse.
- There have been four long duration extreme droughts since 2000 in our region, including this current drought.
- While conditions are significant, they have not matched the lengthy duration and severity of the 2011/2012 drought.
- This is the most impactful drought within the Jacksonville area since 2012.

Jacksonville, FL (JAX) WFO Percent Area in U.S. Drought Monitor Categories



Florida Percent Area in U.S. Drought Monitor Categories



Courtesy of the US Drought Monitor Page.

Time series depiction of D1, D2, D3, and D4 drought across the Jacksonville forecast area by percentage (top).

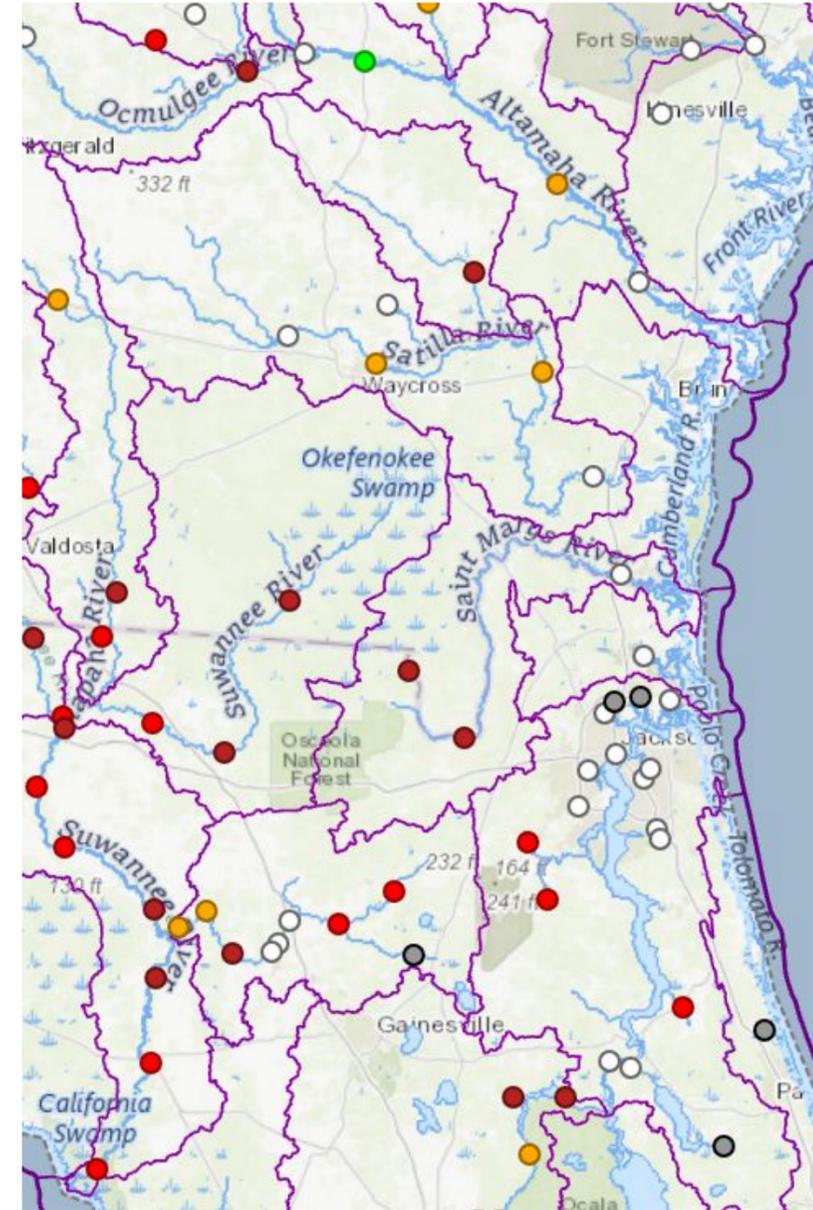
State of Florida Time Series of D1, D2, D3, and D4 drought by percentage (bottom). Records date back to 2000.





Hydrologic Conditions and Impacts

- Streamflows across all mainstem rivers are running well below normal to near record lows based on instantaneous flow readings on March 5, 2026
- The Upper Santa Fe River remains near record low flow.
- Recreational access to various rivers is becoming challenging or impossible for paddle boats and canoes.
- Suwannee River Water Management District has issued a [Water Shortage Advisory](#) for their watershed.
- St. Johns Water Management District is in a Phase 2 Severe Water Shortage. [Watering restrictions ensure the efficient use of water for irrigation.](#)



Current Streamflow Anomalies from USGS - Feb 26, 2026

Explanation - Percentile classes

	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Low	<10 Much below normal	10-24 Below normal	25-75 Normal	76-90 Above normal	>90 Much above normal	High	No Data

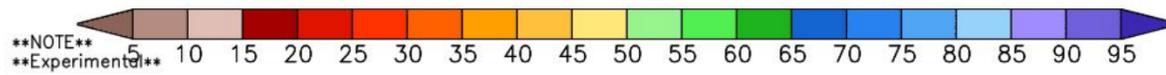
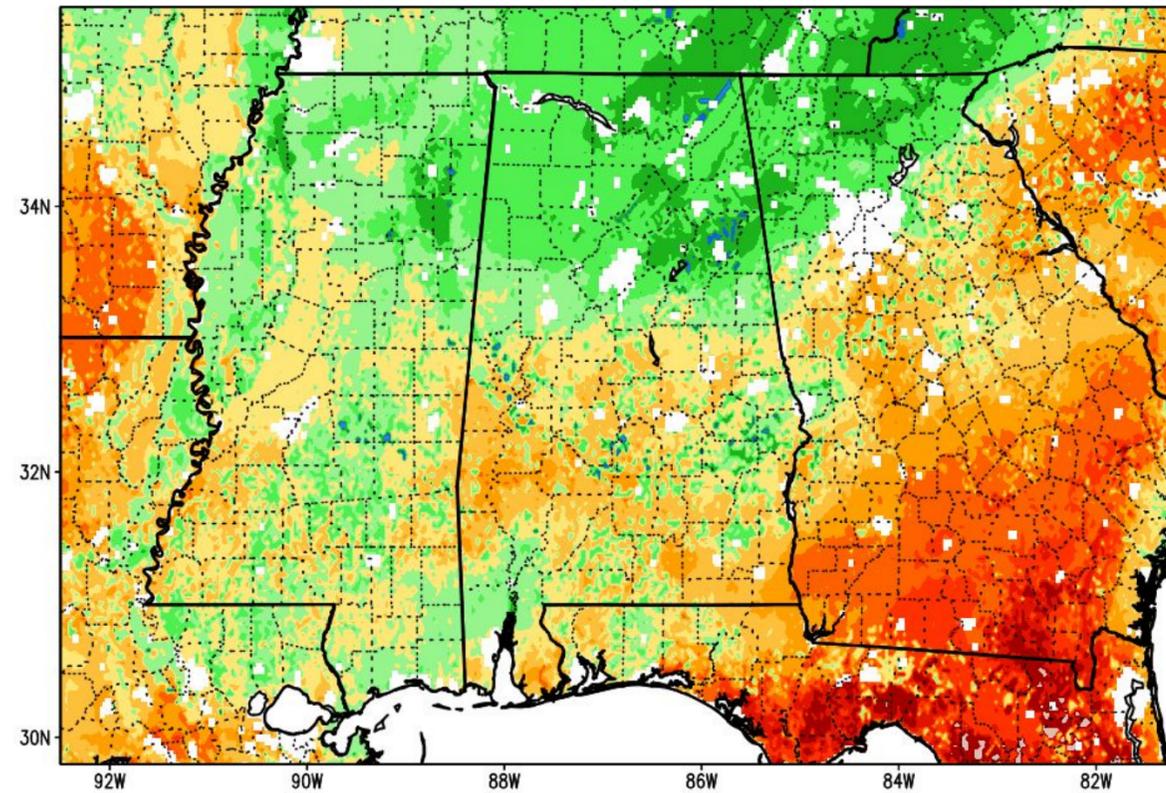




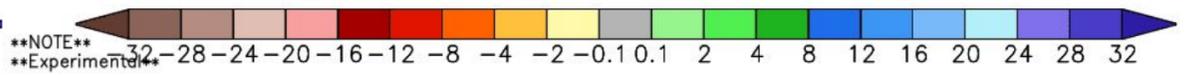
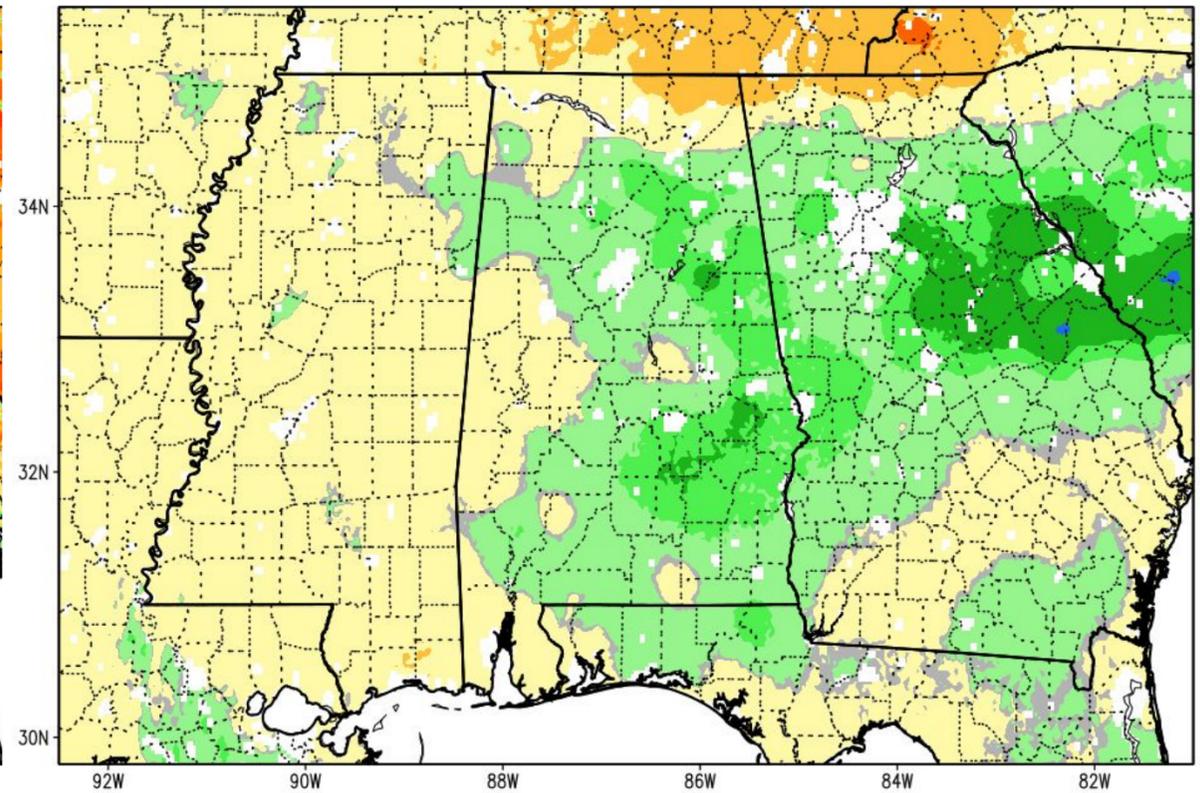
Agricultural Impacts

- Dry Soils are present across interior southeast Georgia & northeast Florida.
- Planting season is beginning, but we will need increased rainfall to keep up with the increasing water demand.
- Recent rain did bring minimal improvement in the top 6 inches of the soil based on agricultural reports.

Column-Integrated Relative Soil Moisture (available water; %) valid 18z 05 Mar 2026
Precipitation in previous hour (1,2,5,10,15,20,25 mm contours)



1-Week Difference in Column Relative Soil Moisture (%) valid 18z 05 Mar 2026



0-200 cm Relative Soil Moisture & 1-week Change in 0-200 cm Relative Soil Moisture
Data courtesy of NASA SPoRT

2026 Crop Reports
[Florida](#) | [Georgia](#)



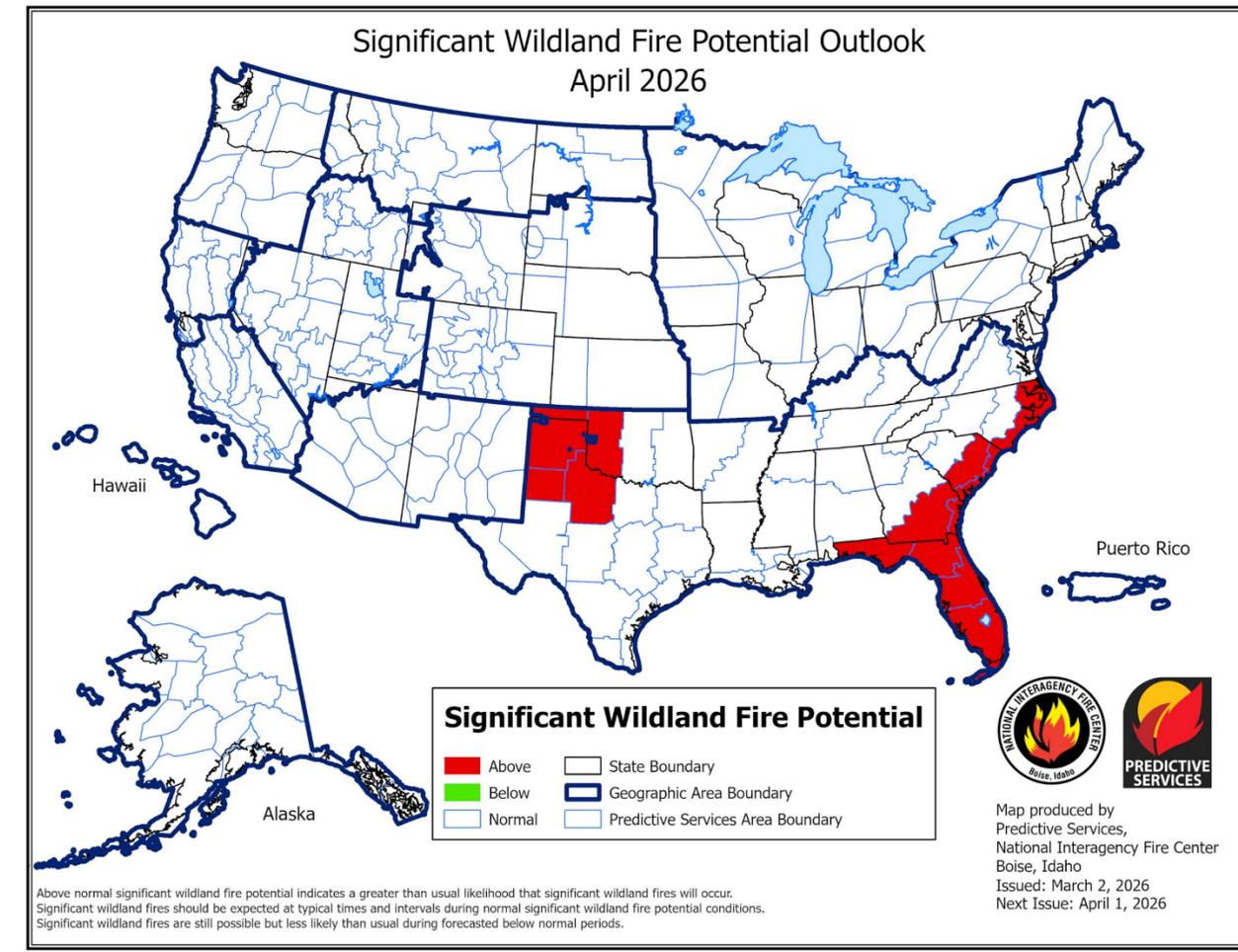
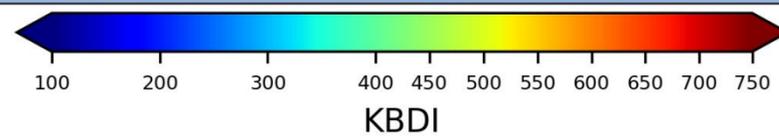
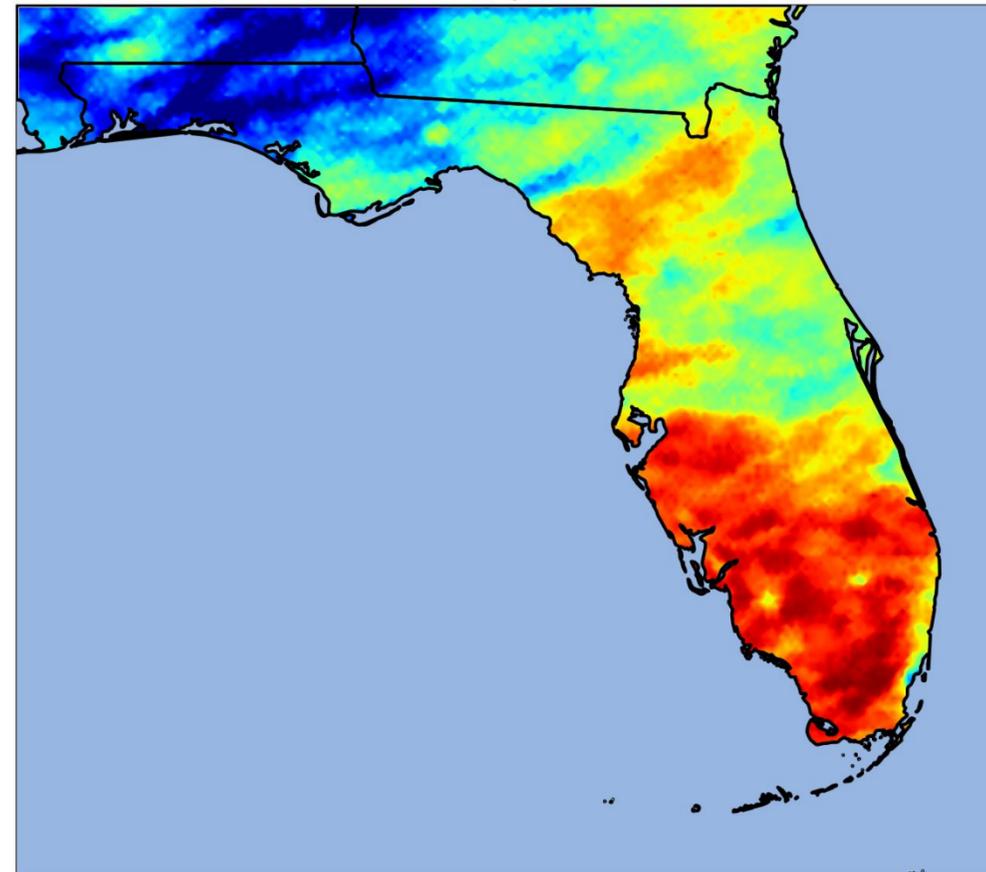


Fire Hazard Impacts

Link to [Wildfire Potential Outlooks from the National Interagency Coordination Center](#).

- Keetch-Byram Drought Index values at or above 600 for portions of interior NE Florida, from Baker County to Gilchrist County.
- Burn bans are in effect for Columbia, Baker, Union, Bradford, Gilchrist, Alachua, Marion, Putnam, and Flagler Counties.
- Fire danger remains high.
- The Significant Wildland Fire Potential Outlook for March and April calls for above normal wildfire activity across the area.

Keetch-Byram Drought Index | Thu 03/05/26, 01:00 PM EST



Above normal significant wildland fire potential indicates a greater than usual likelihood that significant wildland fires will occur.
Significant wildland fires should be expected at typical times and intervals during normal significant wildland fire potential conditions.
Significant wildland fires are still possible but less likely than usual during forecasted below normal periods.

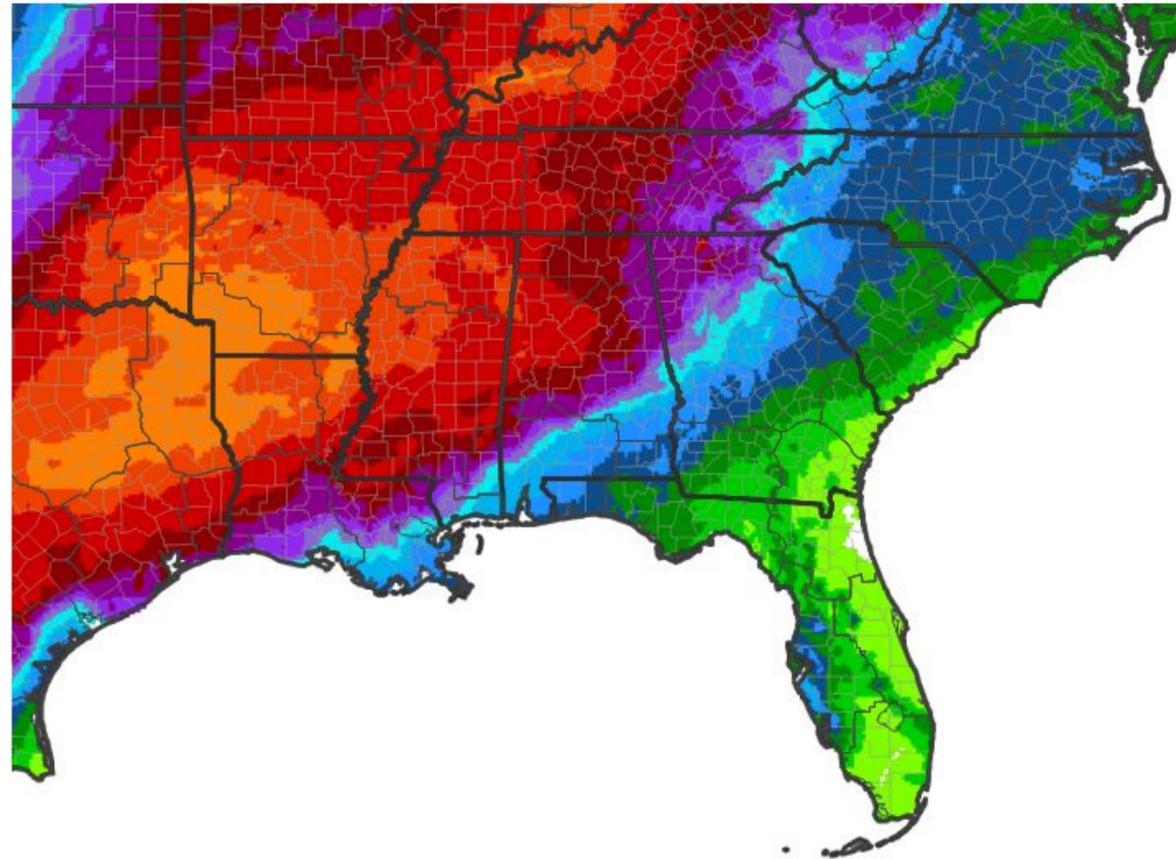




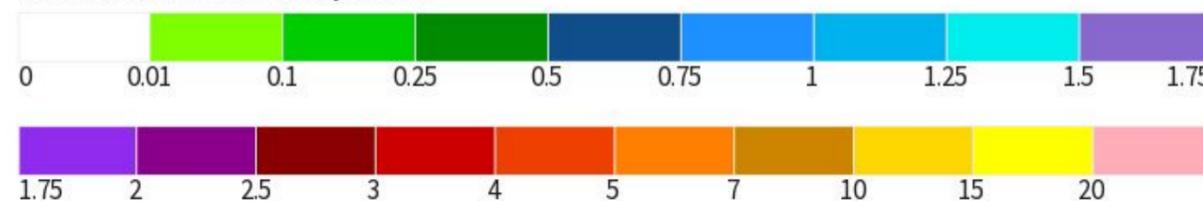
Seven Day Precipitation Forecast

- Isolated showers and thunderstorms are possible over the next few days during the afternoon hours. Overall rainfall amounts are expected to be light.
- A frontal system will near the region by Wednesday, with increasing rain chances possible late in the week.
- [8-14 day outlook](#) (3/12 - 3/18): slightly above normal precipitation.

7-Day Quantitative Precipitation Forecast for March 5, 2026–March 12, 2026



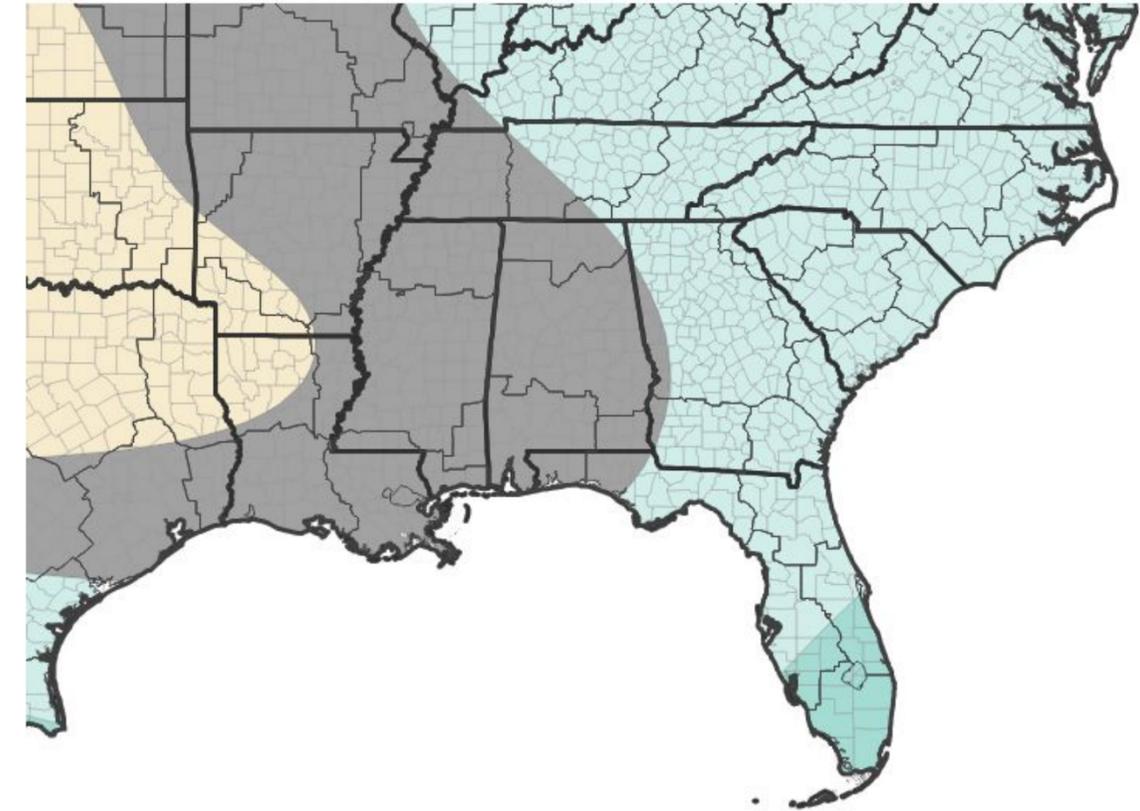
Predicted Inches of Precipitation



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

Last Updated: 03/05/26

8–14 Day Precipitation Outlook for March 12, 2026–March 18, 2026



Probability of Below-Normal Precipitation



Probability of Above-Normal Precipitation



Near-Normal Conditions

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

Last Updated: 03/04/26



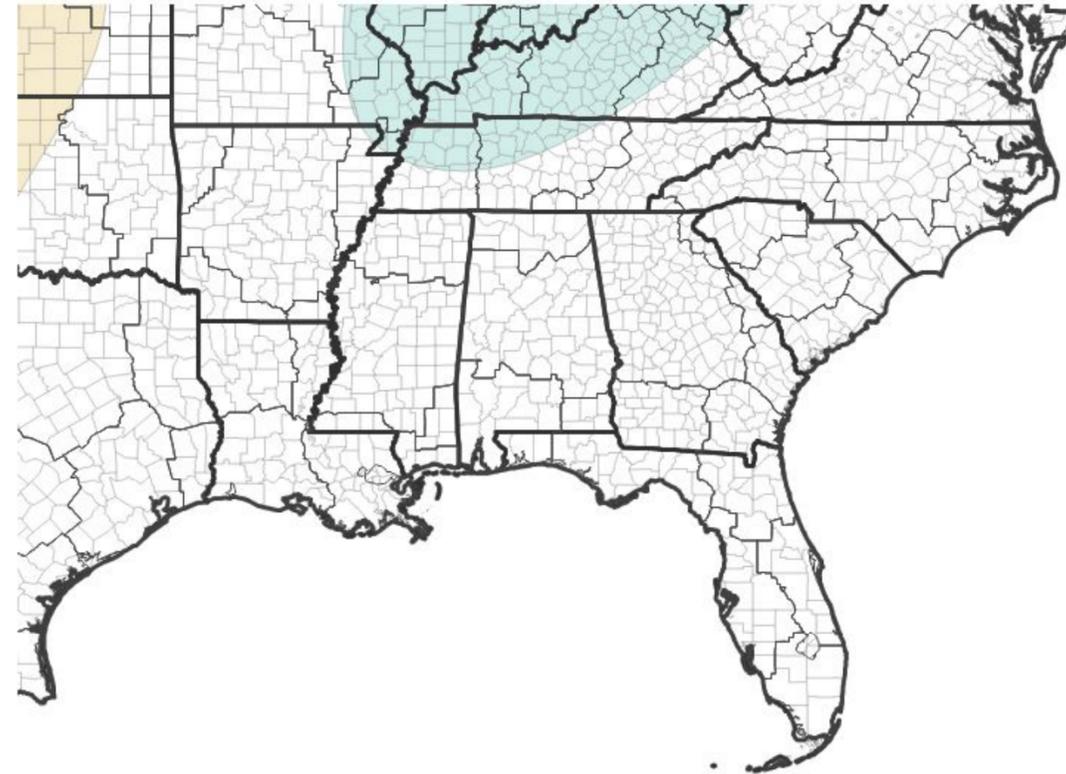


Long-Range Outlooks

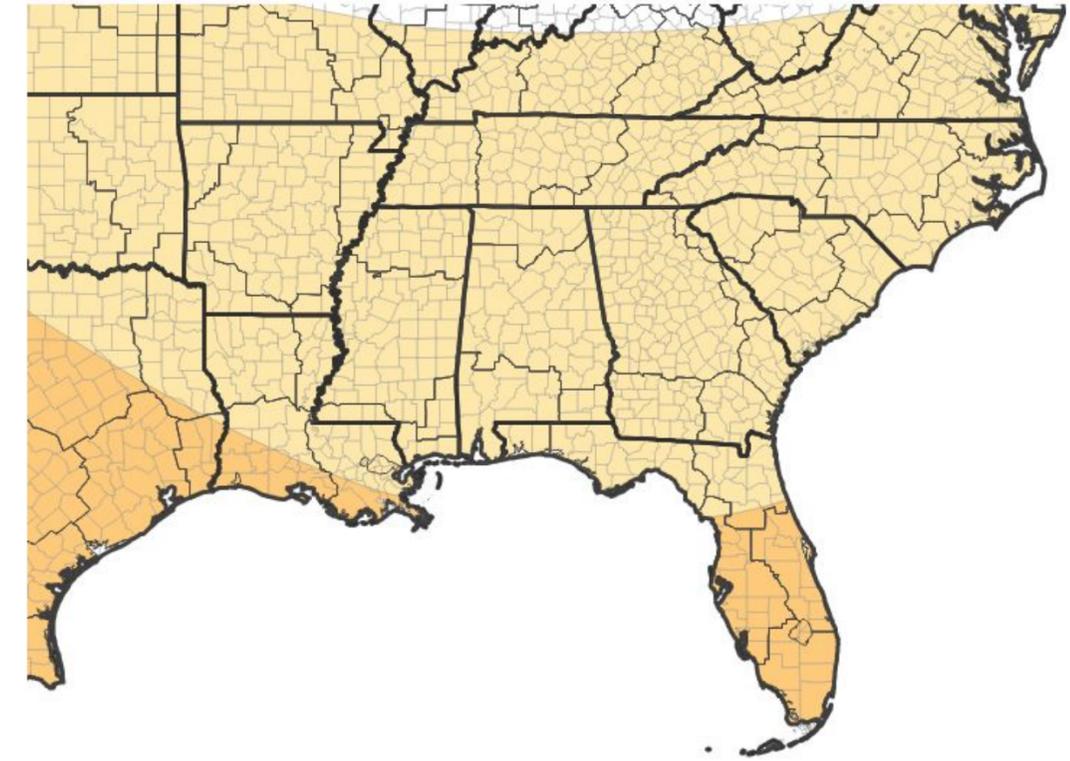
The latest monthly and seasonal outlooks can be found on the [CPC homepage](#)

- Next 3 months favor near normal precipitation and leaning toward above normal temperatures.
- While March tends to be a wetter month, the presence of a diminishing La Niña keeps the local weather pattern less active.
- Drier conditions occur in April and early May before sea breeze season begins.

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



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



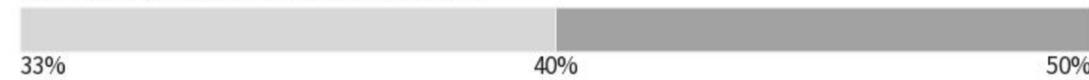
Probability of Below-Normal Precipitation



Probability of Above-Normal Precipitation



Probability of Near-Normal Precipitation



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

Last Updated: 02/19/26

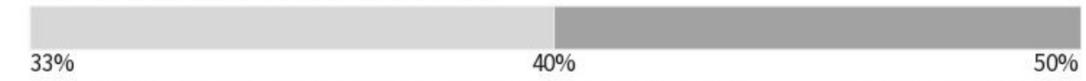
Probability of Below-Normal Temperatures



Probability of Above-Normal Temperatures



Probability of Near-Normal Temperatures



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

Last Updated: 02/19/26

Average	Mar		Apr		May	
	Temp	Rain	Temp	Rain	Temp	Rain
Jacksonville	62.4°	3.29"	68.1°	2.93"	74.9°	3.42"
Craig Field	62.6°	3.03"	68.3°	2.41"	74.4°	3.04"
Ocala	65.3°	3.68"	70.7°	2.22"	76.4°	3.53"
Gainesville	62.7°	3.49"	68.5°	2.74"	75.0°	3.08"
Alma	60.2°	4.17"	66.5°	2.85"	74.2°	2.78"



National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

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National Weather Service
Jacksonville, FL

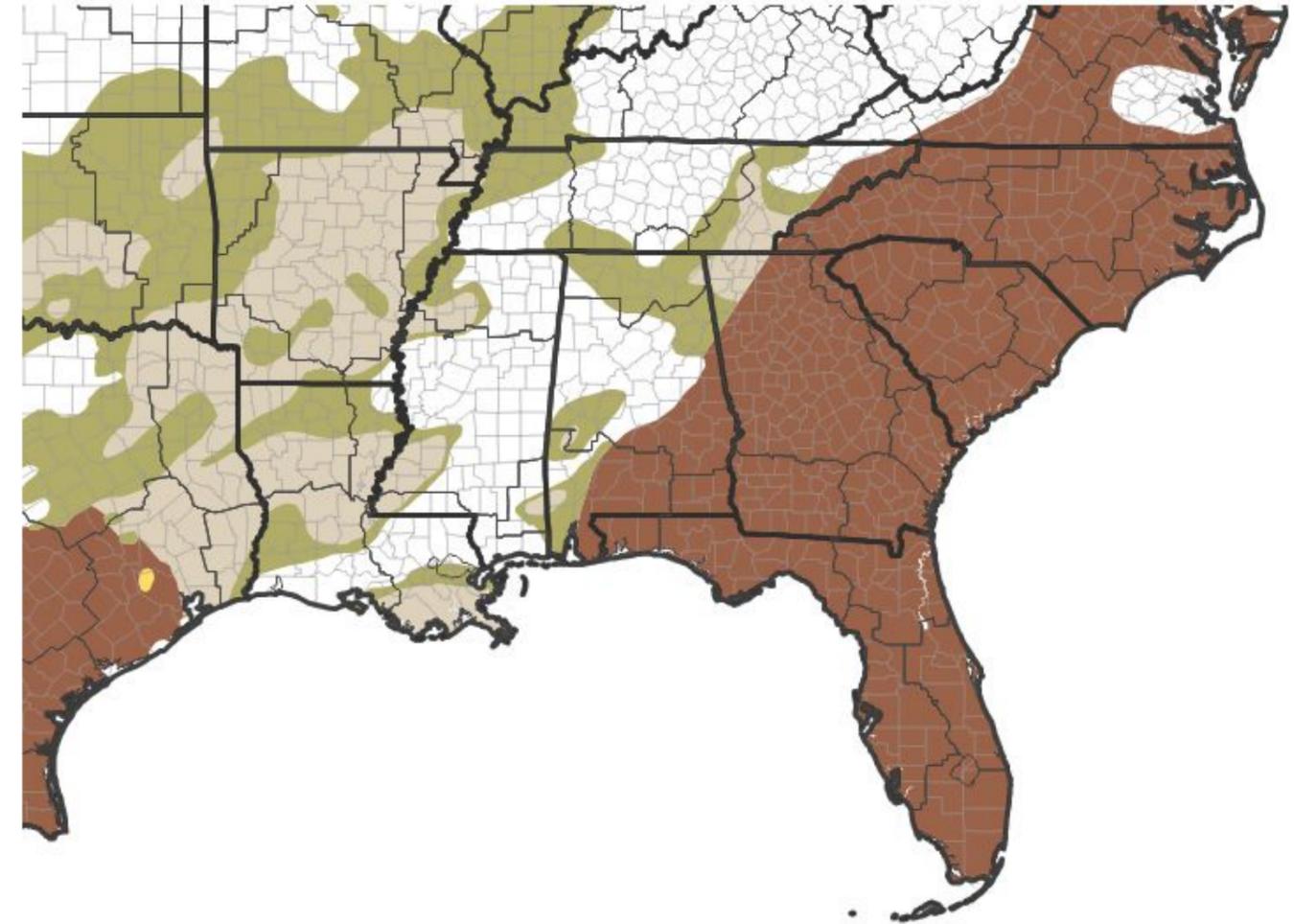


Drought Outlook

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

- Drought is expected to persist through the Spring.
- With below normal precipitation this winter, persistent drought conditions are expected and will likely further worsen across the region, especially if March ends up having below normal precipitation as well.
- With the combined impacts of spring green-up and long-term drought, there are concerns for an active local wildfire season this spring.

Seasonal (3-Month) Drought Outlook for February 28, 2026–May 31, 2026



Drought Is Predicted To...



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

Last Updated: 02/28/26

Links to the latest:

[Climate Prediction Center Monthly Drought Outlook](#)

[Climate Prediction Center Seasonal Drought Outlook](#)



National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

U.S. Department of Commerce

National Weather Service
Jacksonville, FL