

Drought Information Statement for Southeast Georgia and Northeast Florida

Valid February 19, 2026

Issued By: National Weather Service Jacksonville, FL

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- This product will be updated Thursday, February 26, 2026
 - 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 Continues to Expand Across the Region**
 - 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 several counties issuing burn restrictions or bans.
 - Further drought worsening is expected over the next couple of weeks.

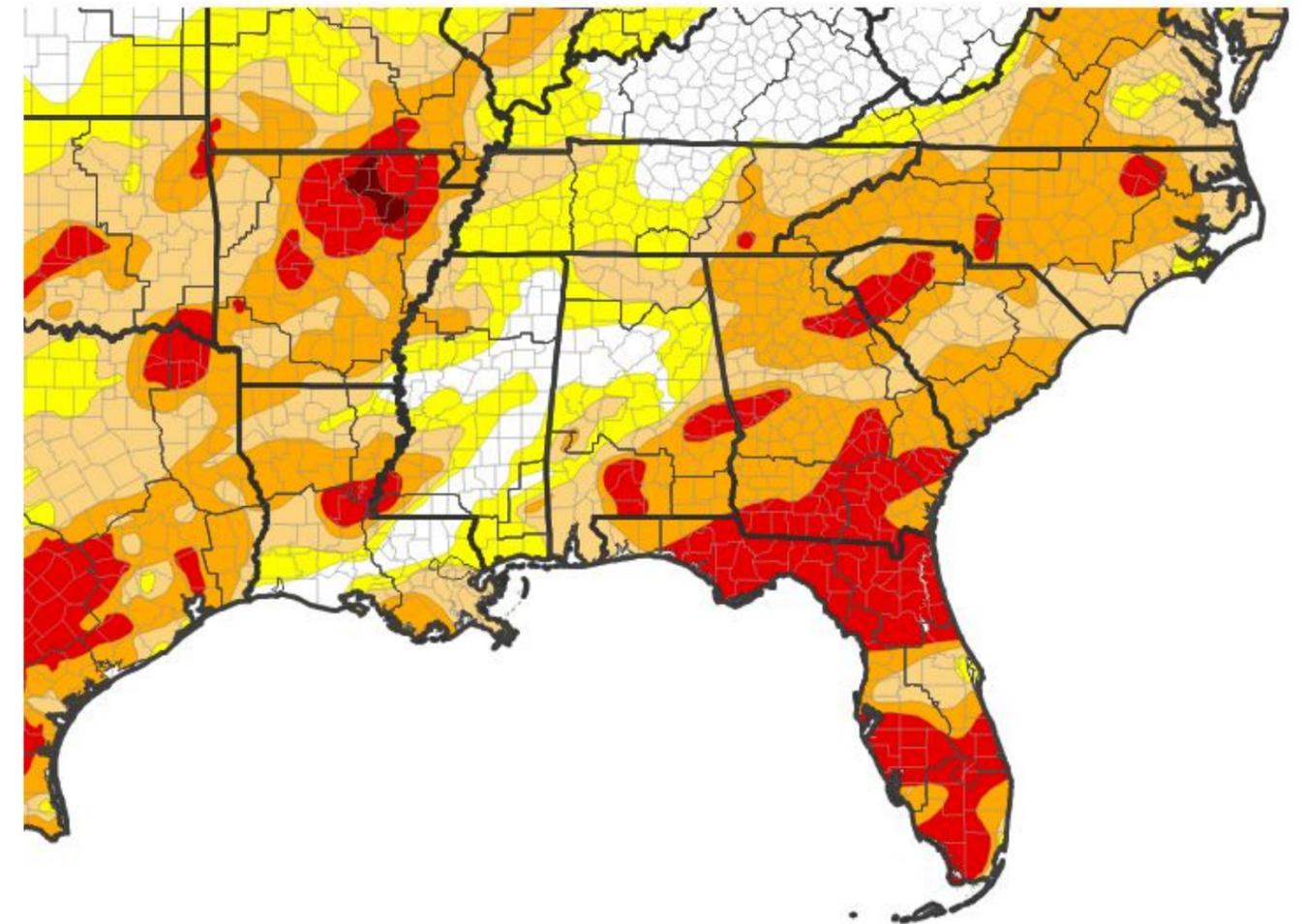


U.S. Drought Monitor

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

- The drought worsened slightly across the region with all of Northeast Florida now in Extreme Drought.
- Drought intensity and Extent
 - **D3 (Extreme Drought)**: Most of southeast Georgia outside of the coastal areas near Brunswick, GA. All of Northeast Florida.
 - **D2 (Severe Drought)**: Coastal southeast Georgia near Brunswick, GA.

U.S. Drought Monitor



U.S. Drought Monitor



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

Data Valid: 02/17/26



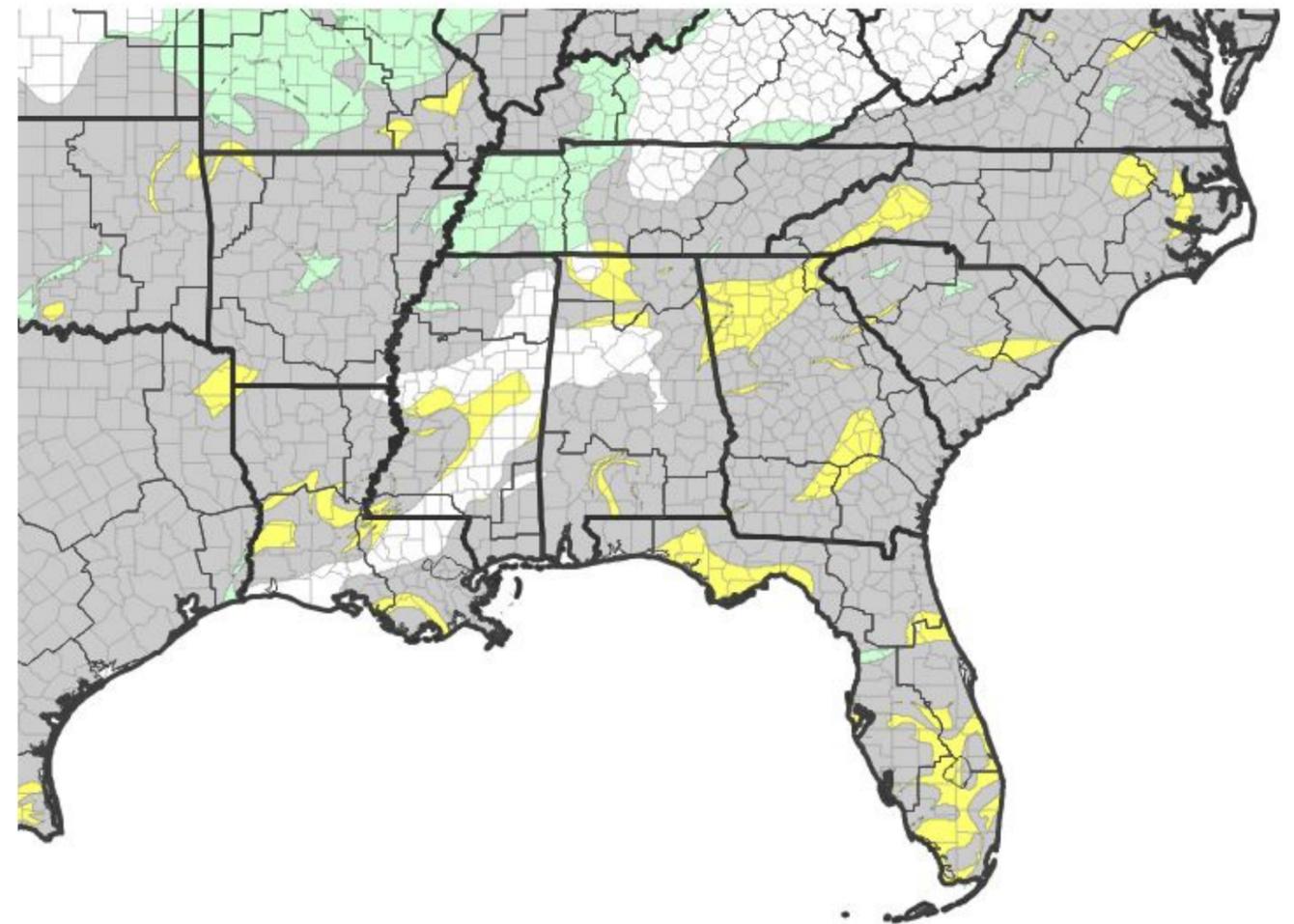


Recent Change in Drought Intensity

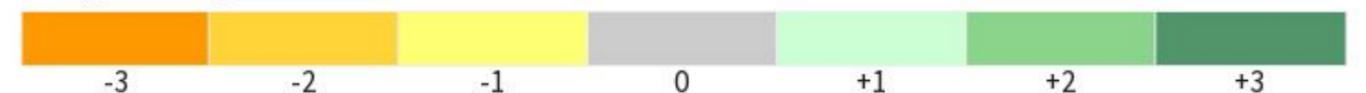
Link to the latest [4-week change map](#) for Southeast Georgia and Northeast Florida

- Drought conditions continue to expand and worsen across the region, with degradation noted across portions of interior Southeast Georgia and southern Flagler County.
- No improvements occurred this week.
- One-Week Drought Monitor Class Change:
 - **1 category degradation:** over far interior SE Georgia and portions of Flagler County in Florida.

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: 02/17/26

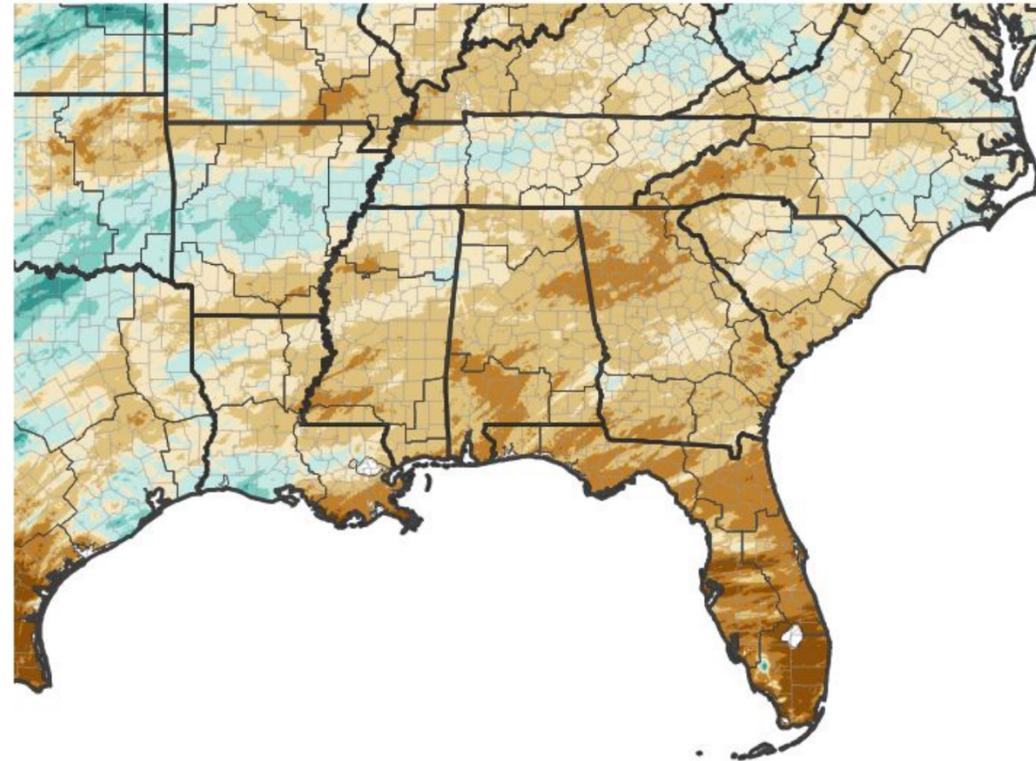




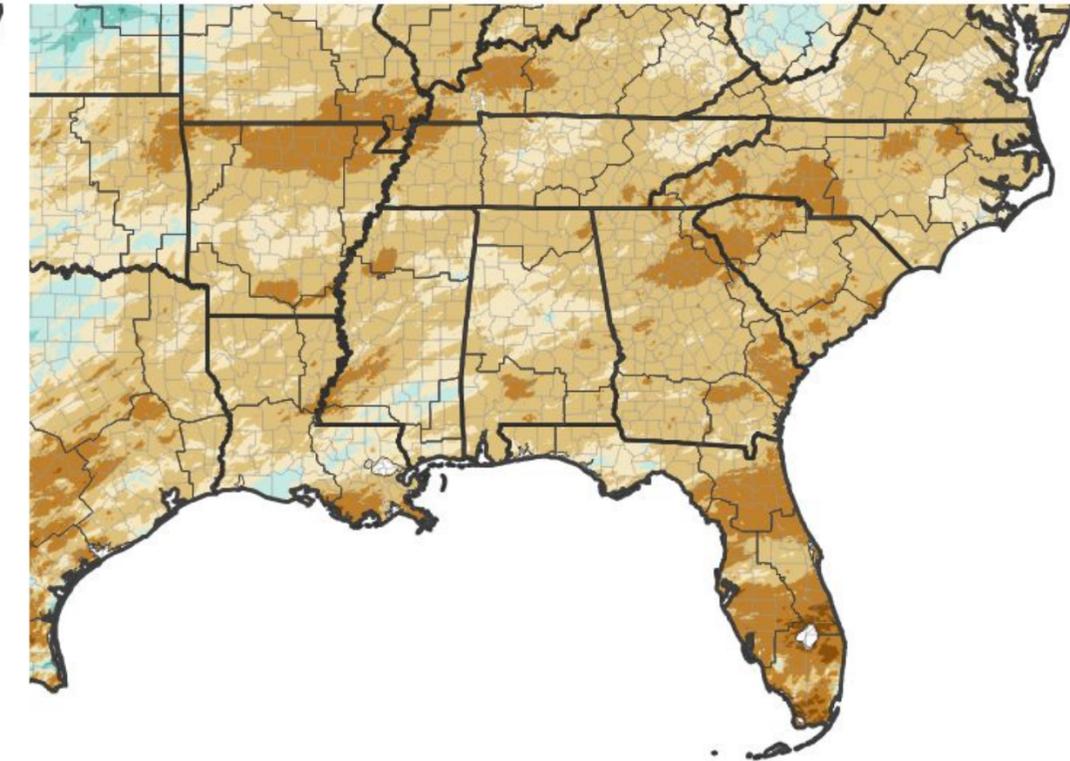
Precipitation

	Last 30 Days		Last 90 Days	
	Rainfall	Percent	Rainfall	Percent
Jasper	1.36"	32.8%	6.33"	57.9%
Live Oak	1.22"	28.5%	6.59"	60.2%
Ichetucknee St Pk.	0.64"	17.9%	4.54"	46.7%
Fanning Springs	1.13"	31.9%	4.77"	49.3%
Baxley	1.67"	41.8%	4.96"	45.4%
Alma	1.29"	35.8%	3.21"	33.1%
Waycross	1.79"	45.4%	6.26"	58.9%
Olustee	1.56"	42.1%	5.66"	56.9%
Ocala	1.30"	40.5%	3.49"	40.3%
Palatka	0.72"	24.0%	2.70"	32.4%
Ocklawaha	1.24"	42.9%	2.57"	31.9%
Nahunta	1.49"	39.0%	5.30"	51.8%
Woodbine	2.53"	72.8%	6.73"	70.8%
Jacksonville	0.71"	22.9%	4.95"	57.5%

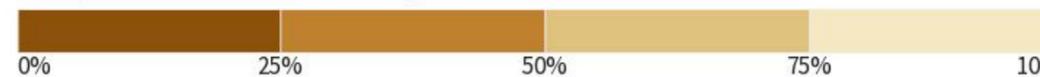
30-Day Percent of Normal Precipitation



90-Day Percent of Normal Precipitation

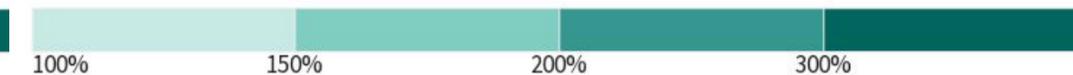
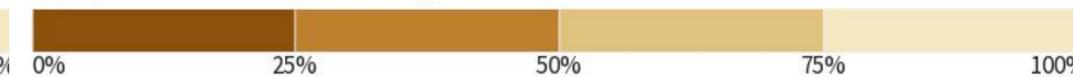


Precipitation Shown as a Percentage of Normal Conditions



Source(s): National Weather Service Multi-Radar Multi-Sensor System; Last Updated: 02/19/26
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: 02/19/26
image courtesy of Drought.gov

Data Updated through February 18, 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

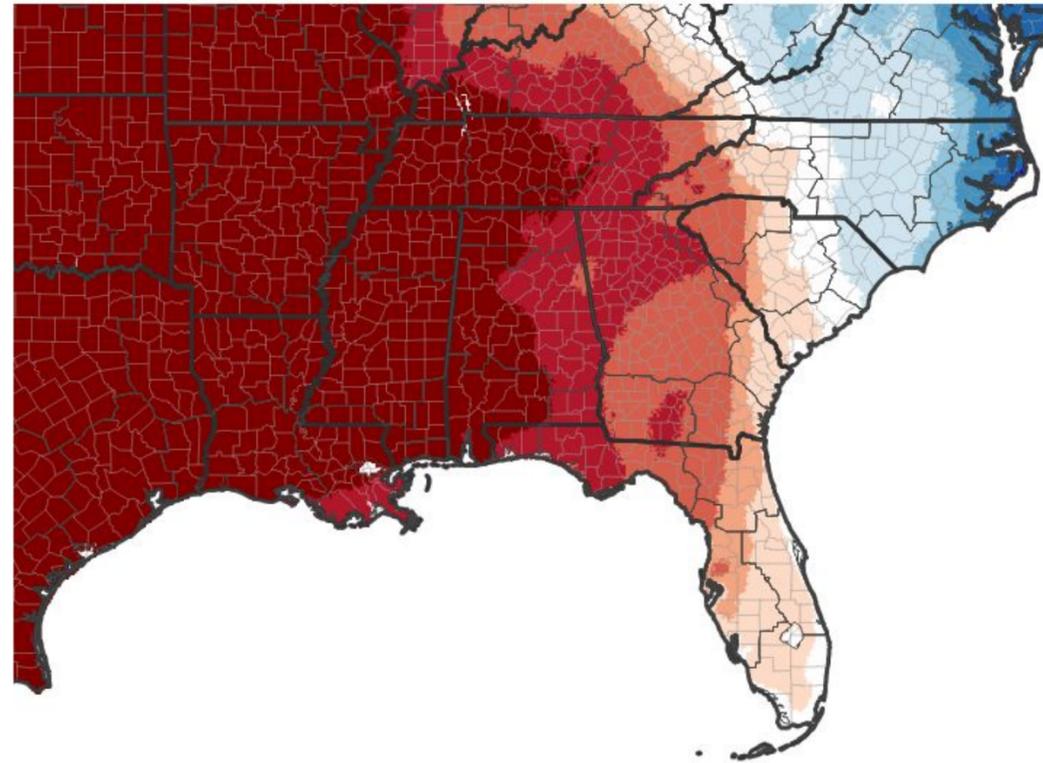


Temperature

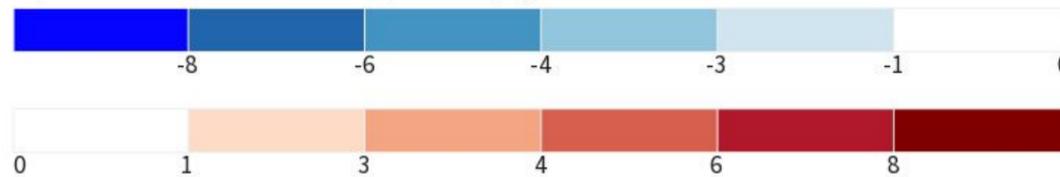
	Last 30 Days	
	Average High (Departure)	Average Low (Departure)
Jacksonville	67.5° (+0.3°)	37.5° (-7.0°)
Craig Field	65.8° (-0.9°)	40.6° (-5.7°)
Ocala	72.0° (-0.2°)	41.6° (-5.4°)
Gainesville	69.2° (+0.1°)	37.6° (-6.8°)
Alma	63.6° (-1.0°)	35.5° (-5.2°)

- A warming trend over the last week has brought much above normal temperatures to the region after the arctic blast.
- With warmer temperatures and the onset of growing season approaching, there will be increasing water demand. Should there be an absence of rain, this could rapidly worsen drought.

7-Day Temperature Anomaly



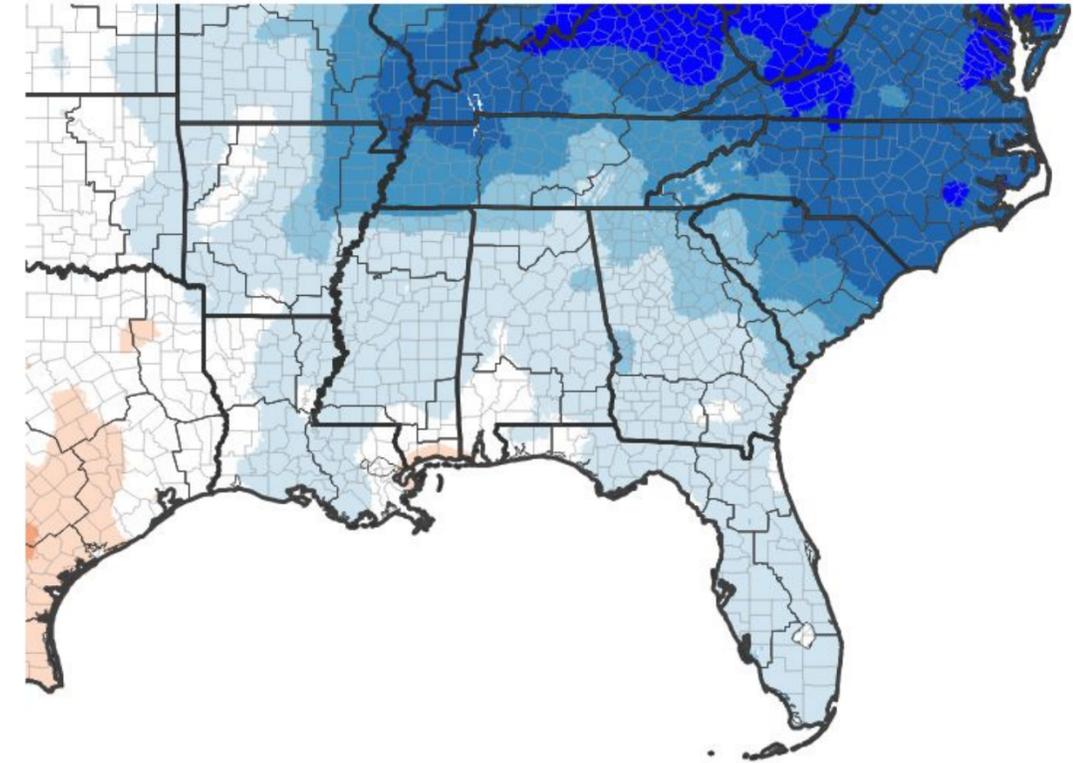
Departure from Normal Max Temperature (°F)



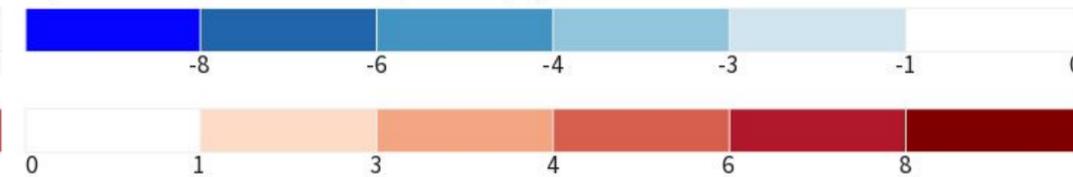
Source(s): NOAA's National Centers for Environmental Information; image courtesy of Drought.gov

Data Valid: 02/15/26

30-Day Temperature Anomaly



Departure from Normal Max Temperature (°F)



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

Data Valid: 02/15/26





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.
- Winter cover crops in Southeast Georgia are stressed.
- In Bacon County, the blueberry farmers are having to water the crop from holding ponds. Water levels in these ponds are below normal, but still at a sufficient level for now to support the crop.

Fire Hazard Impacts

- The Keetch Byram Drought Index continues to rise, with portions of Alachua and Marion County now above 600. The remainder of SE Georgia and NE Florida are in the 400-600 range.
- There has been an increase in wildfire activity reported in many counties.
- 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.
- If your county is not under a burn ban, exercise extreme caution with any outdoor burning.





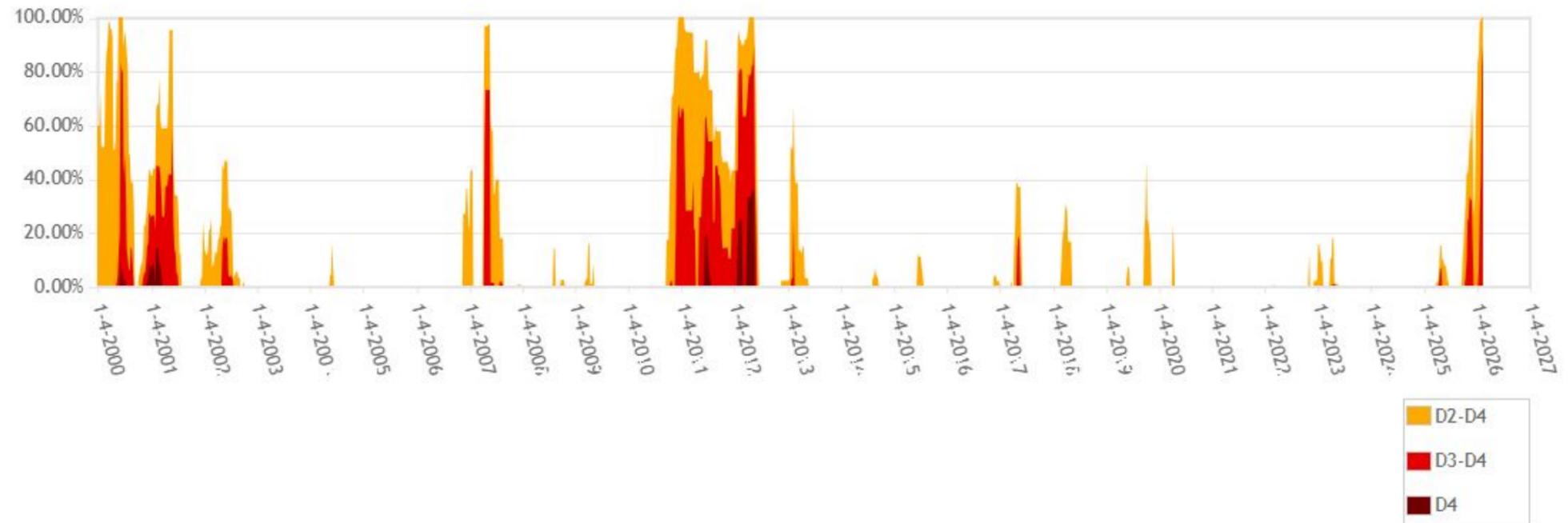
A Perspective on this Drought

Links: [Drought Monitor Time Series](#)

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

- 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 experienced in the 2011/2012 drought.
- This drought has also not matched the severity (duration of D3/D4) seen in previous droughts, especially the 2000 drought.
- Even so, it is safe to say that this is the most impactful and substantial drought within the Jacksonville area since 2012.
- It is possible that this current drought further worsens. Future drought monitor releases will continue to evaluate the severity of the drought relative to past high impact droughts as we move into the growing season.

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



Courtesy of the US Drought Monitor Page.

Time series depiction of D2, D3, and D4 drought across the Jacksonville forecast area by percentage. Droughts in 2000, 2007, 2012, and the current drought were very near or at 100% coverage of D2 or worse conditions.

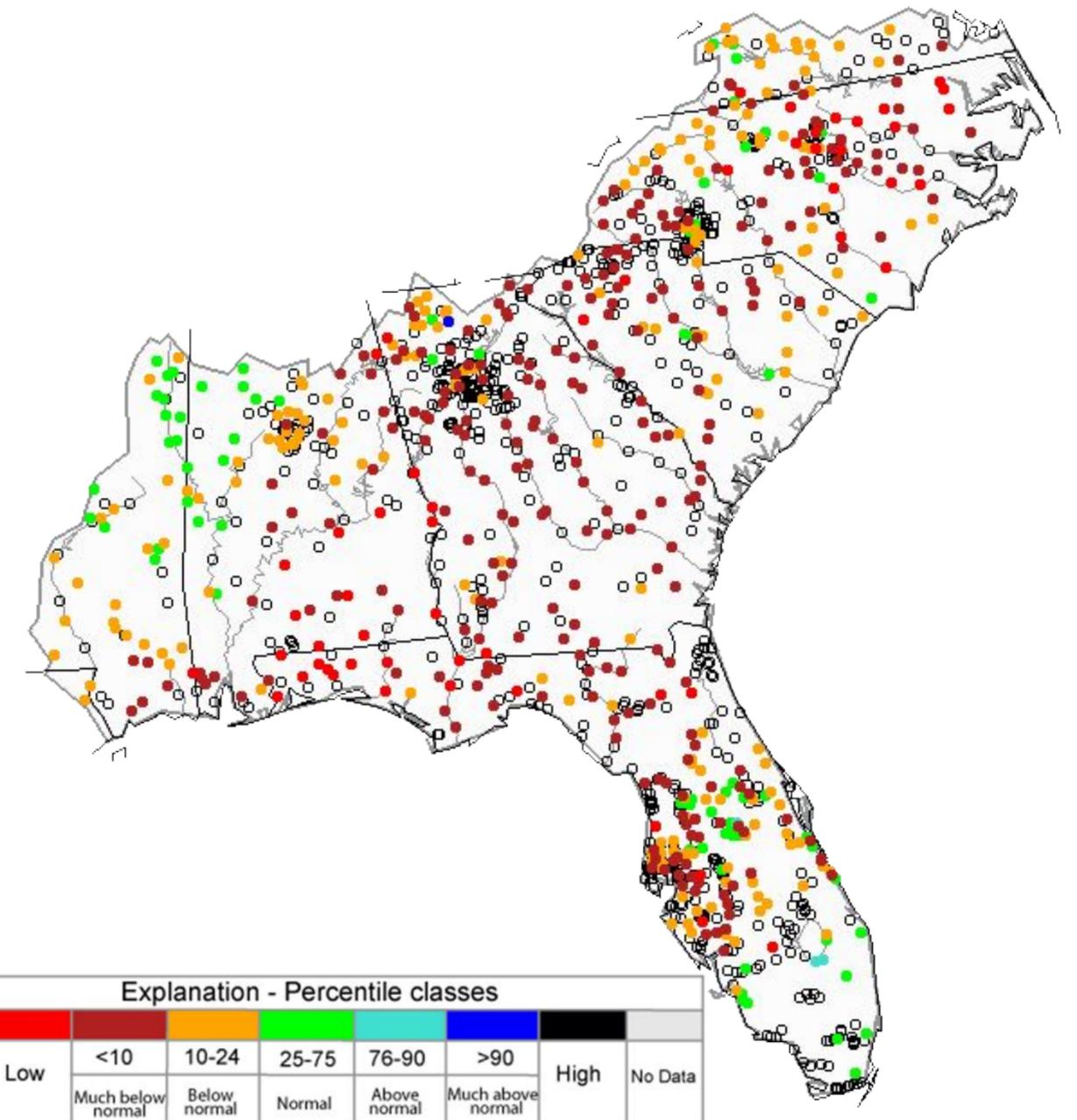




Hydrologic Conditions and Impacts

Wednesday, February 18, 2026

- Streamflows across all mainstem rivers have dropped below the 10th percentile for flow this time of year.
- The Upper Santa Fe River remains near record low flow.
- The non-tidal rivers are expected to continue decreasing with the lack of widespread heavy rainfall.
- 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.

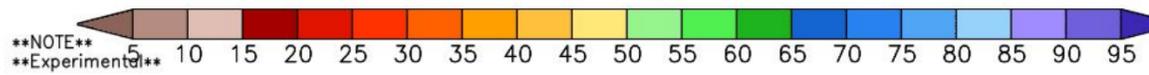
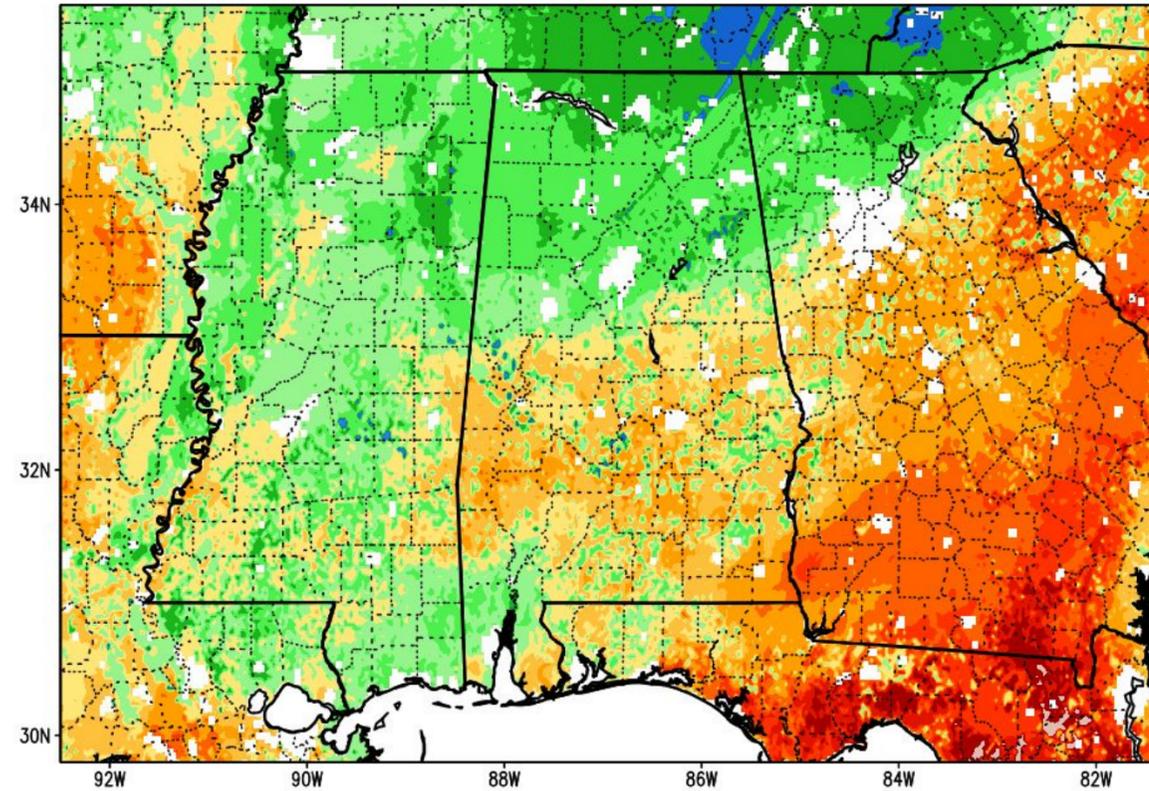




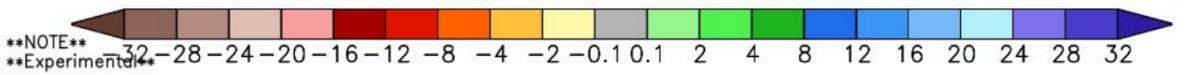
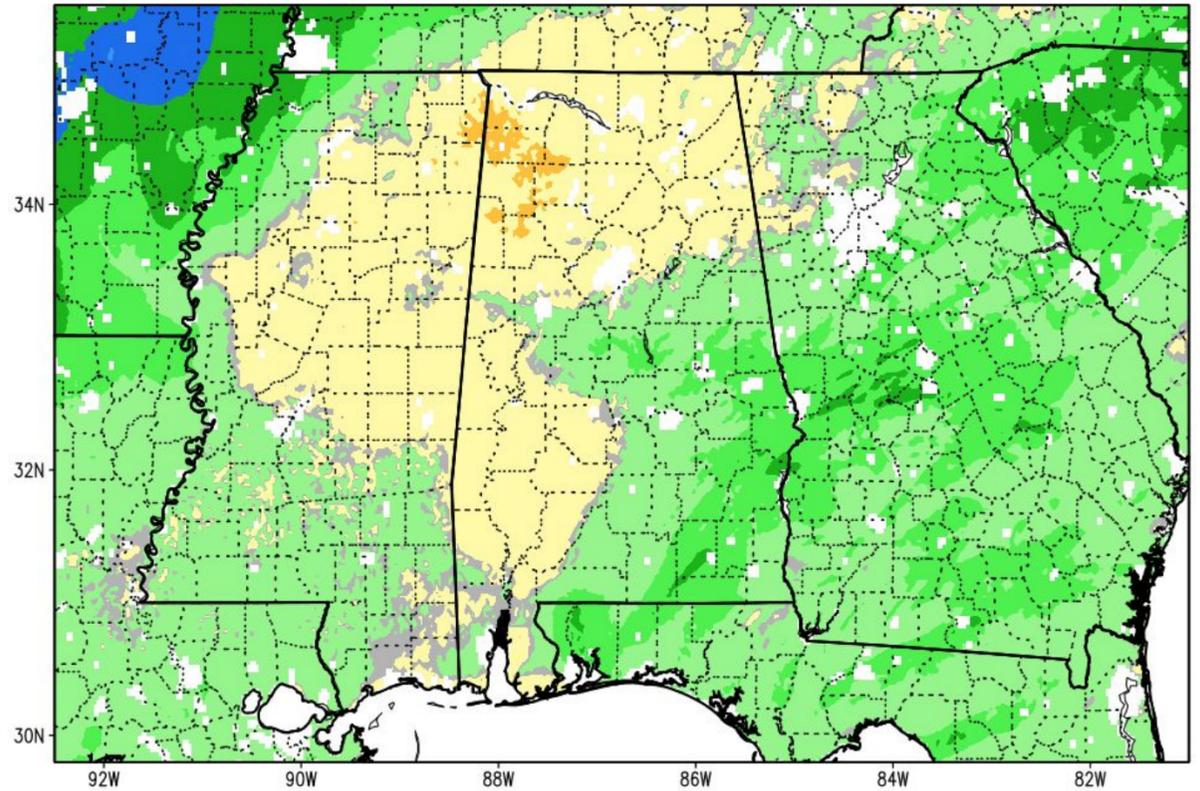
Agricultural Impacts

- Dry Soils are present across across interior southeast Georgia & northeast Florida.
- Planting season is still scheduled to kick off on time, 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 19 Feb 2026
Precipitation in previous hour (1,2,5,10,15,20,25 mm contours)



1-Week Difference in Column Relative Soil Moisture (%) valid 18z 19 Feb 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](#)



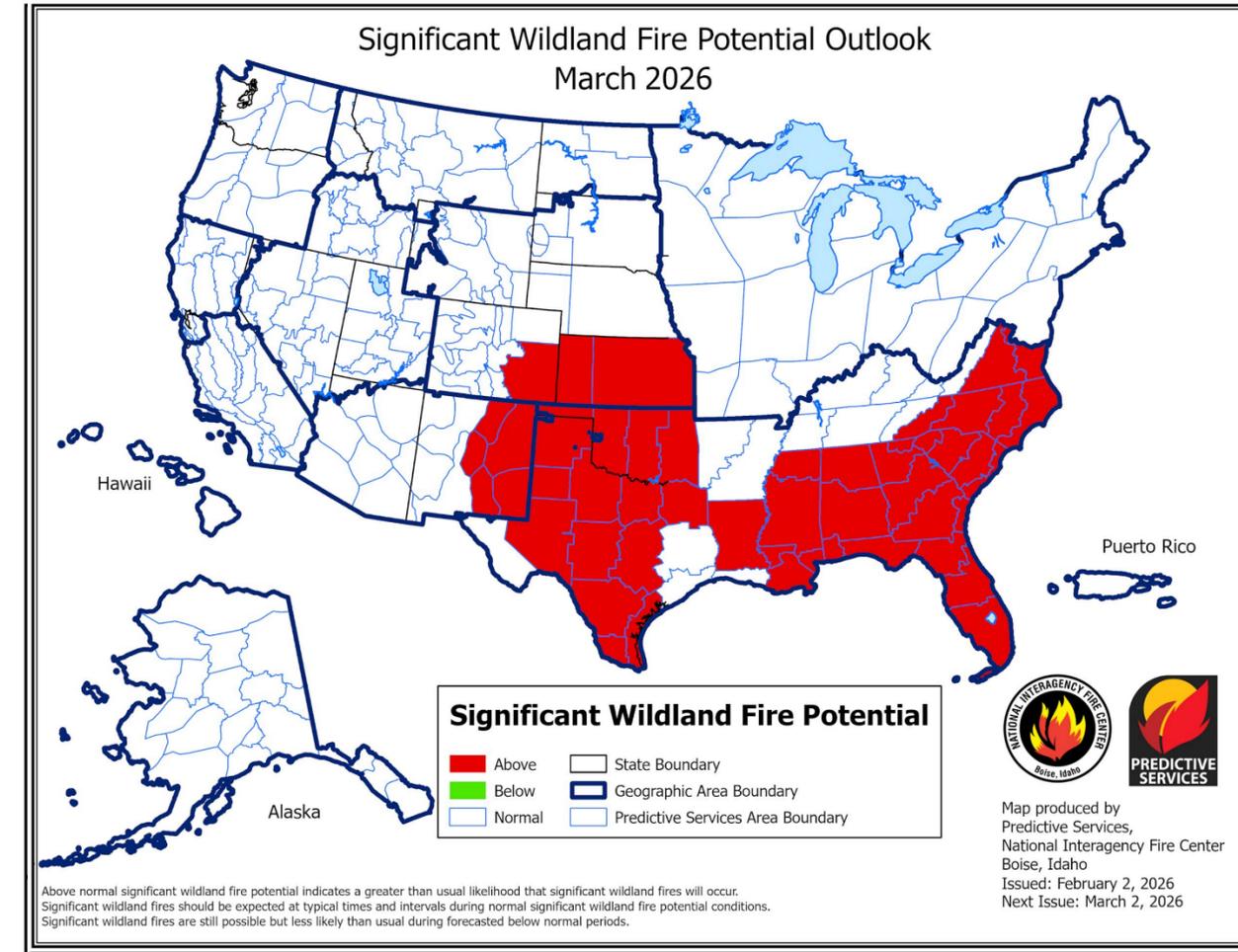
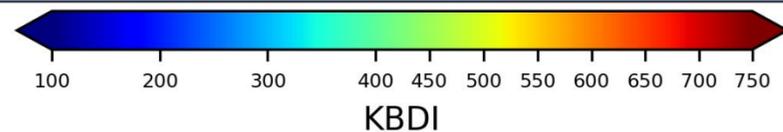
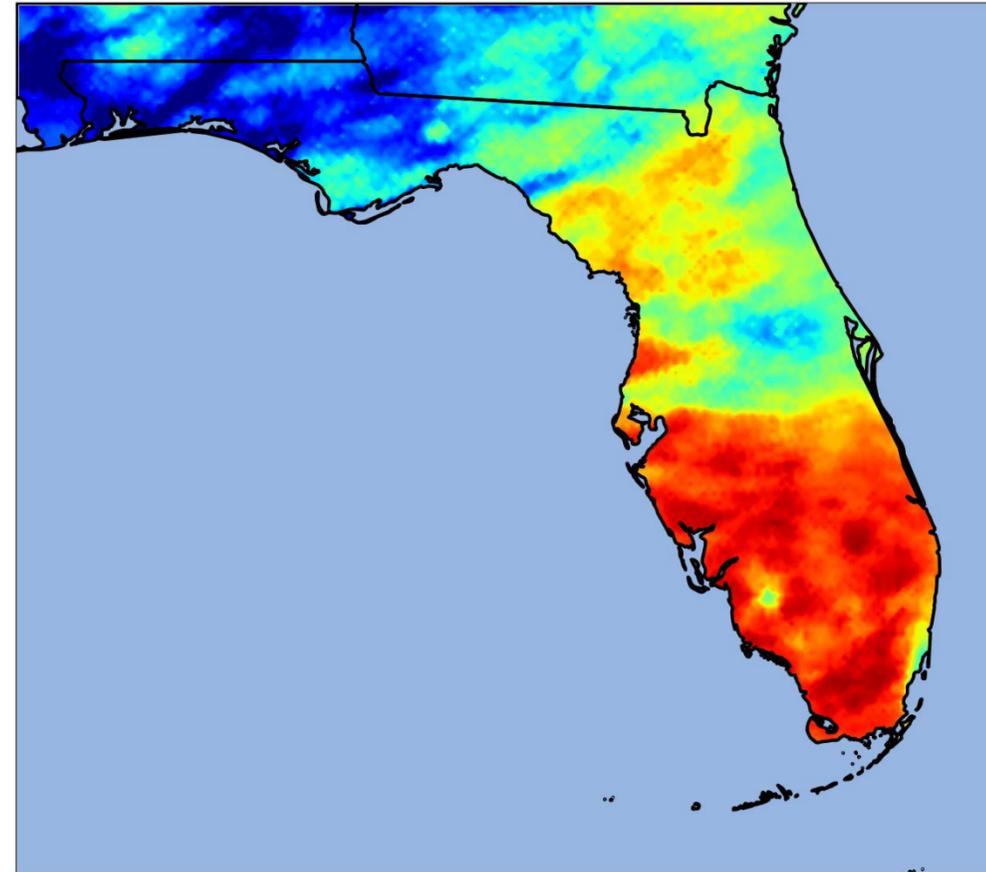


Fire Hazard Impacts

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

- Keetch-Byram Drought Index values at or above 500 for portions of interior NE Florida mainly south of Interstate 10.
- Burn bans are in effect for Columbia, Baker, Union, Bradford, Gilchrist, Alachua, Marion, Putnam, and Flagler Counties.
- Fire danger is rapidly increasing.
- The Significant Wildland Fire Potential Outlook for March calls for above normal wildfire activity across the area.

Keetch-Byram Drought Index | Thu 02/19/26, 01:00 PM EST

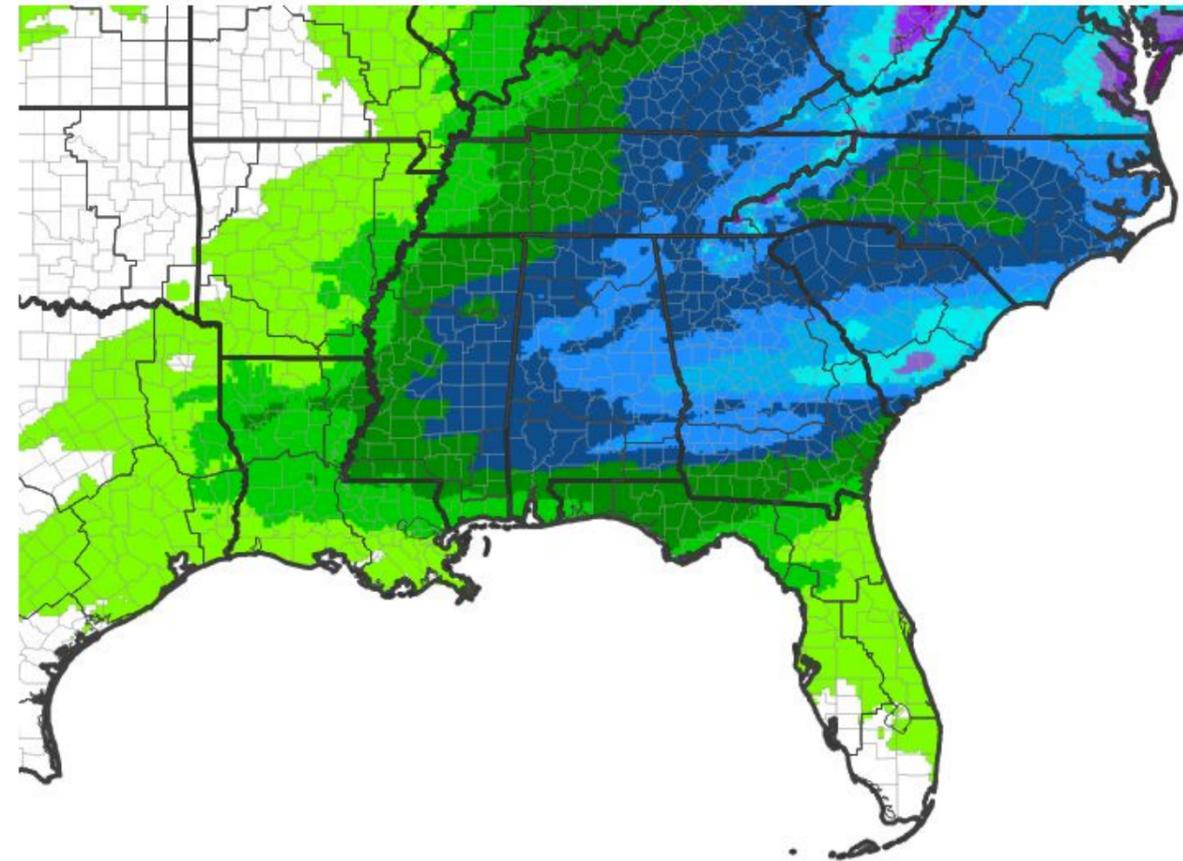




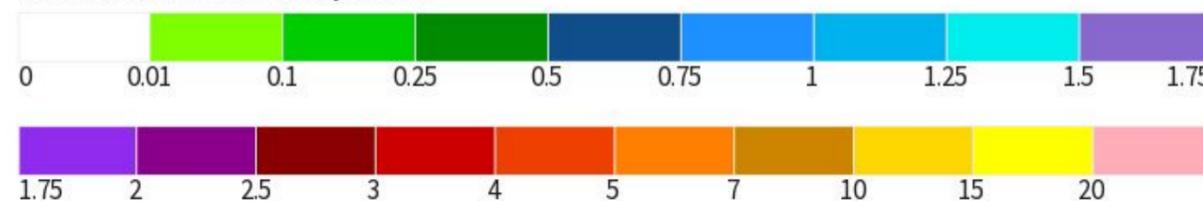
Seven Day Precipitation Forecast

- A frontal system will approach the region Saturday. Some rainfall is expected, with heavier amounts near an inch in parts of interior SE Georgia.
- With lighter amounts expected in Florida, further drought worsening is anticipated next week.
- [8-14 day outlook](#) (2/26 - 3/4): Near normal precipitation expected.

7-Day Quantitative Precipitation Forecast for February 19, 2026–February 26, 2026

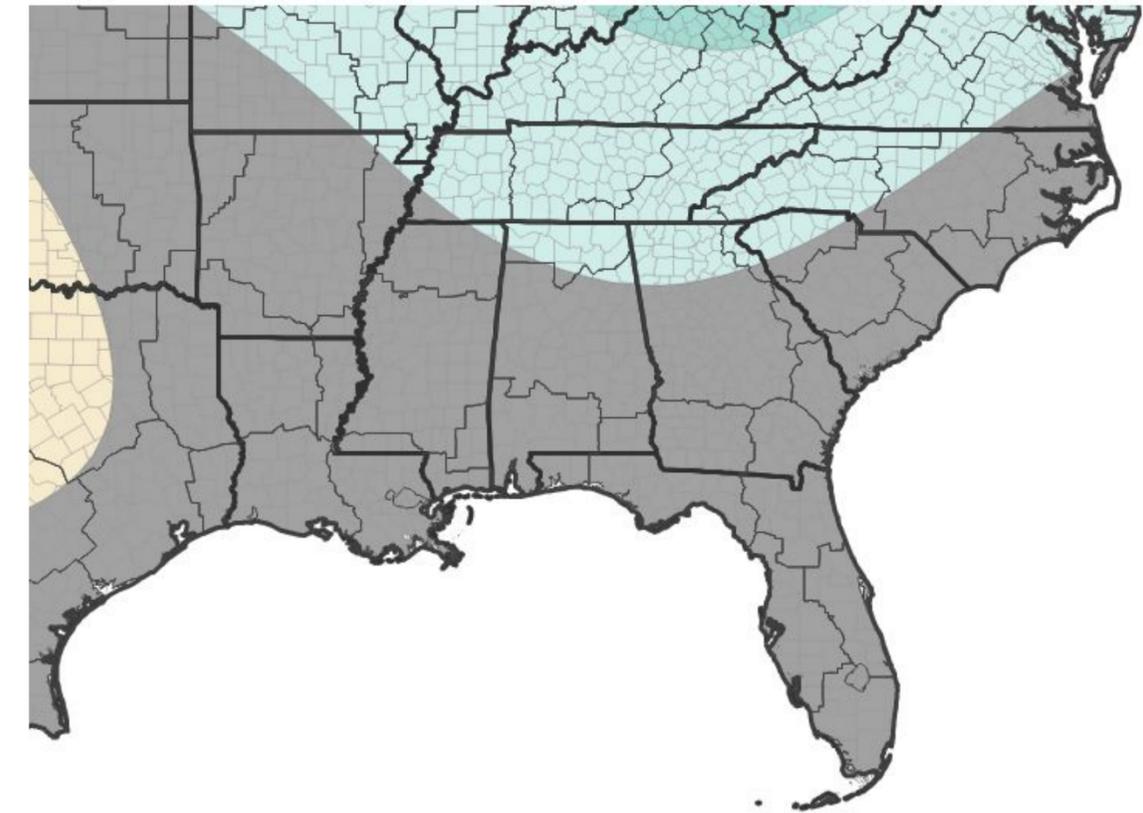


Predicted Inches of Precipitation



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

8-14 Day Precipitation Outlook for February 26, 2026–March 4, 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: 02/18/26



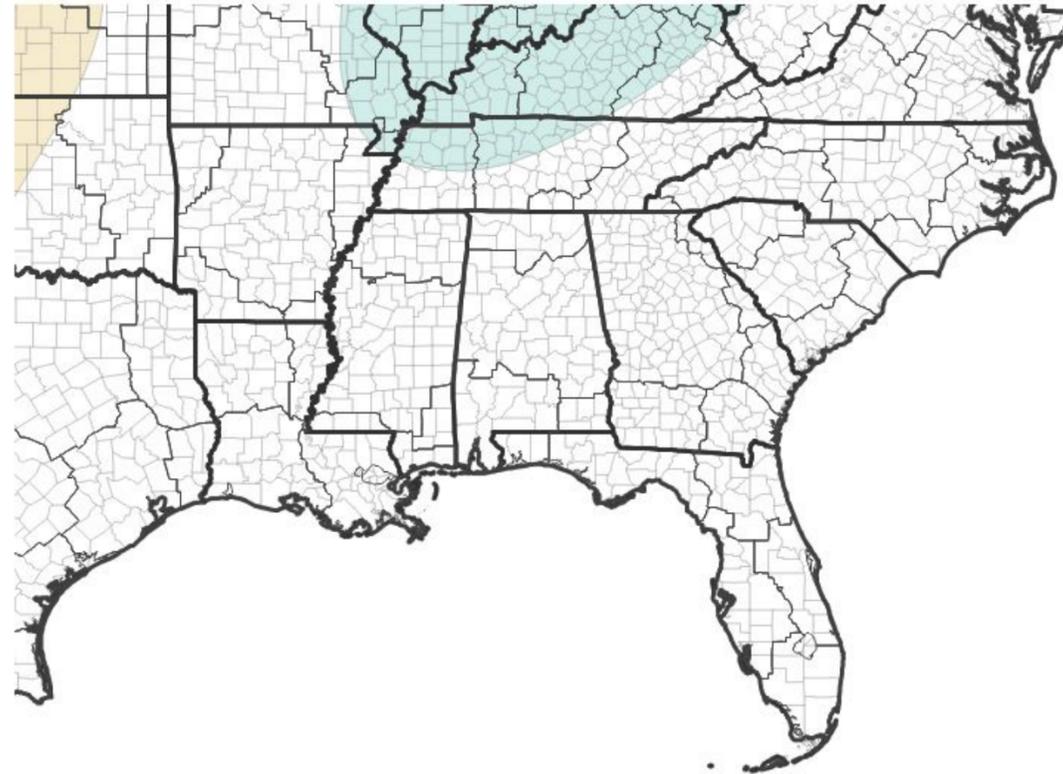


Long-Range Outlooks

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

- Next 3 months favor above normal temperatures & below normal precipitation.
- Lower rain amounts tied to current La Niña.
- In the winter months, rainfall is often below normal as storm systems tend to track farther north of the region.

Seasonal (3-Month) Precipitation Outlook for February 1, 2026–April 30, 2026



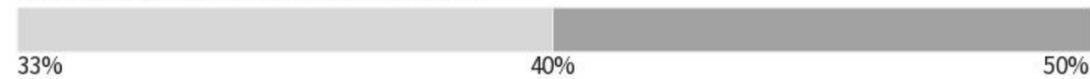
Probability of Below-Normal Precipitation



Probability of Above-Normal Precipitation



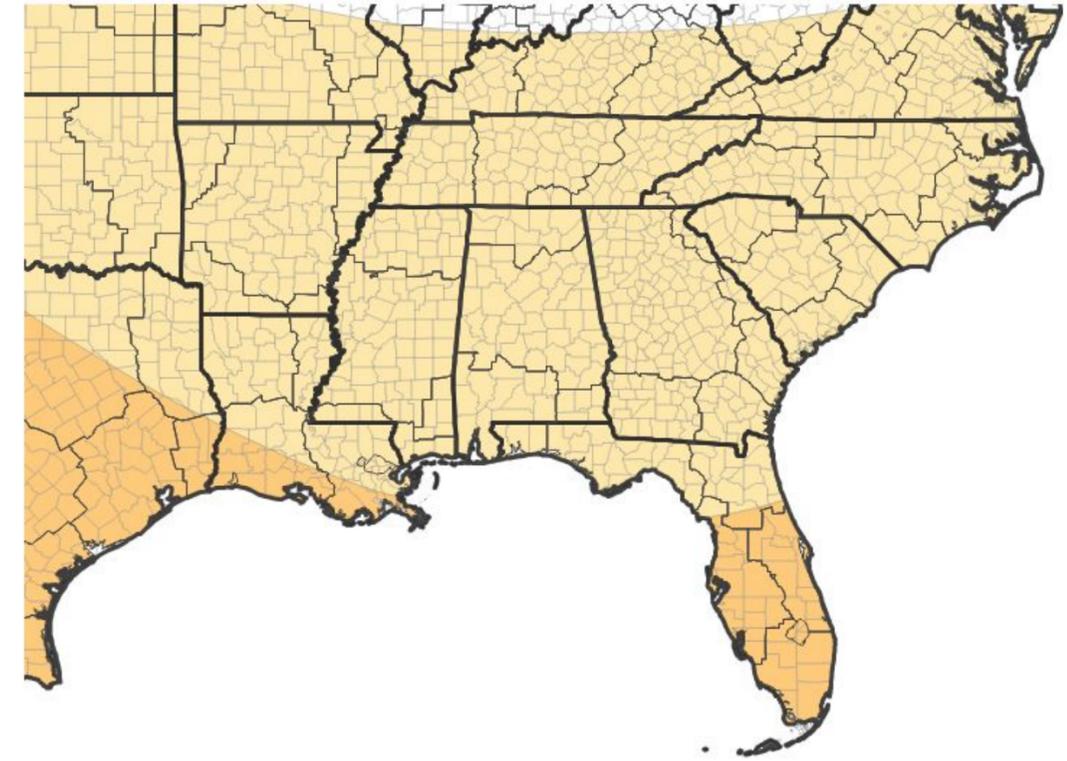
Probability of Near-Normal Precipitation



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

Last Updated: 02/19/26

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



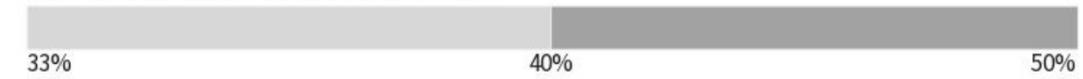
Probability of Below-Normal Temperatures



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	Feb		Mar		Apr	
	Temp	Rain	Temp	Rain	Temp	Rain
Jacksonville	57.5°	2.86"	62.4°	3.29"	68.1°	2.93"
Craig Field	58.0°	2.42"	62.6°	3.03"	68.3°	2.41"
Ocala	61.0°	2.94"	65.3°	3.68"	70.7°	2.22"
Gainesville	58.4°	2.67"	62.7°	3.49"	68.5°	2.74"
Alma	54.4°	3.37"	60.2°	4.17"	66.5°	2.85"



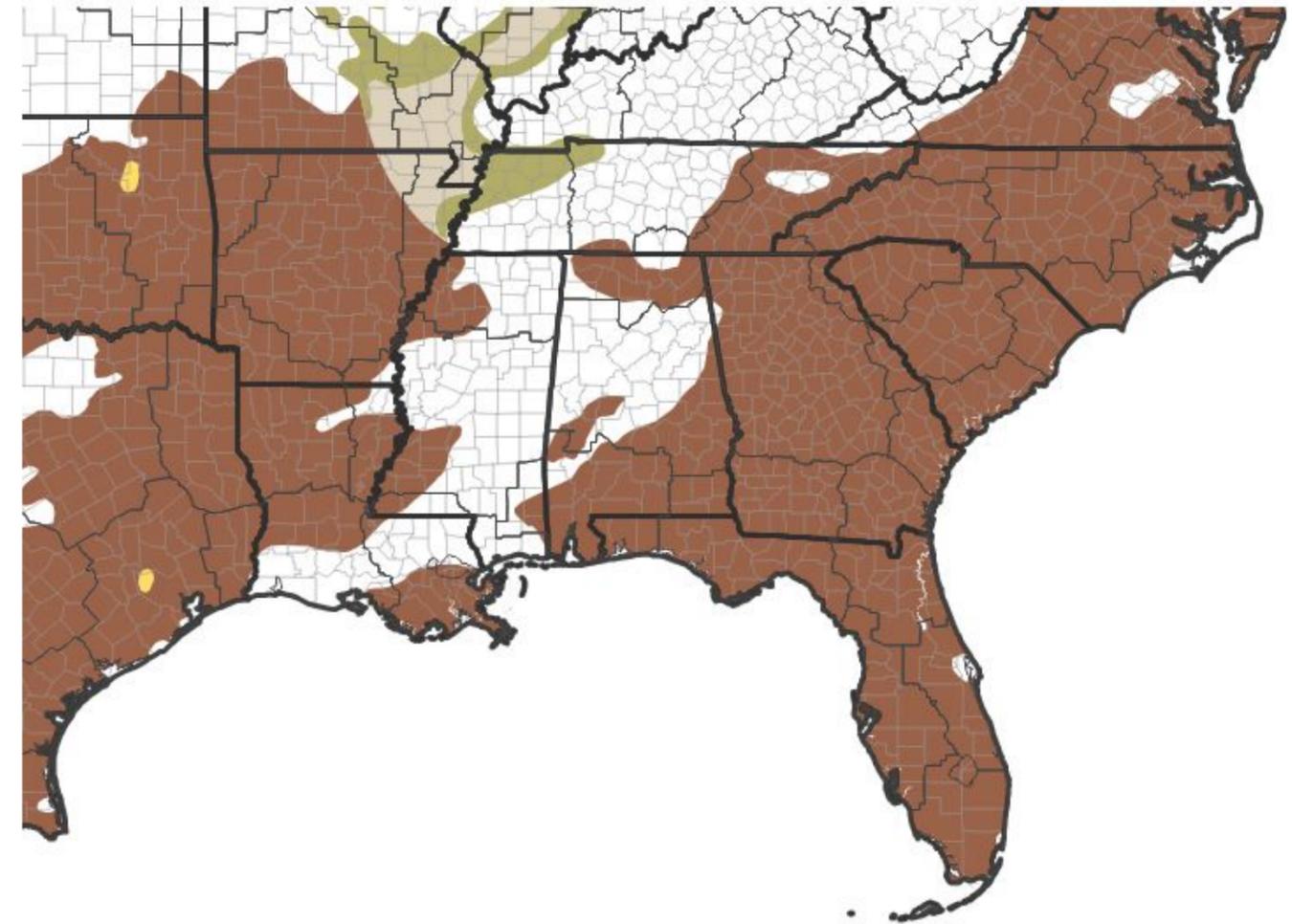


Drought Outlook

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

- Drought is expected to persist through the winter and into the Spring.
- With below normal precipitation so far this winter, persistent drought conditions are expected & will likely further worsen across the region.
- 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 19, 2026–May 31, 2026



Drought Is Predicted To...



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

Last Updated: 02/19/26

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