Drought Information Statement for Southeast Georgia and Northeast Florida

Valid April 9, 2026

Issued By: National Weather Service Jacksonville, FL

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- This product will be updated Thursday, April 16, 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.

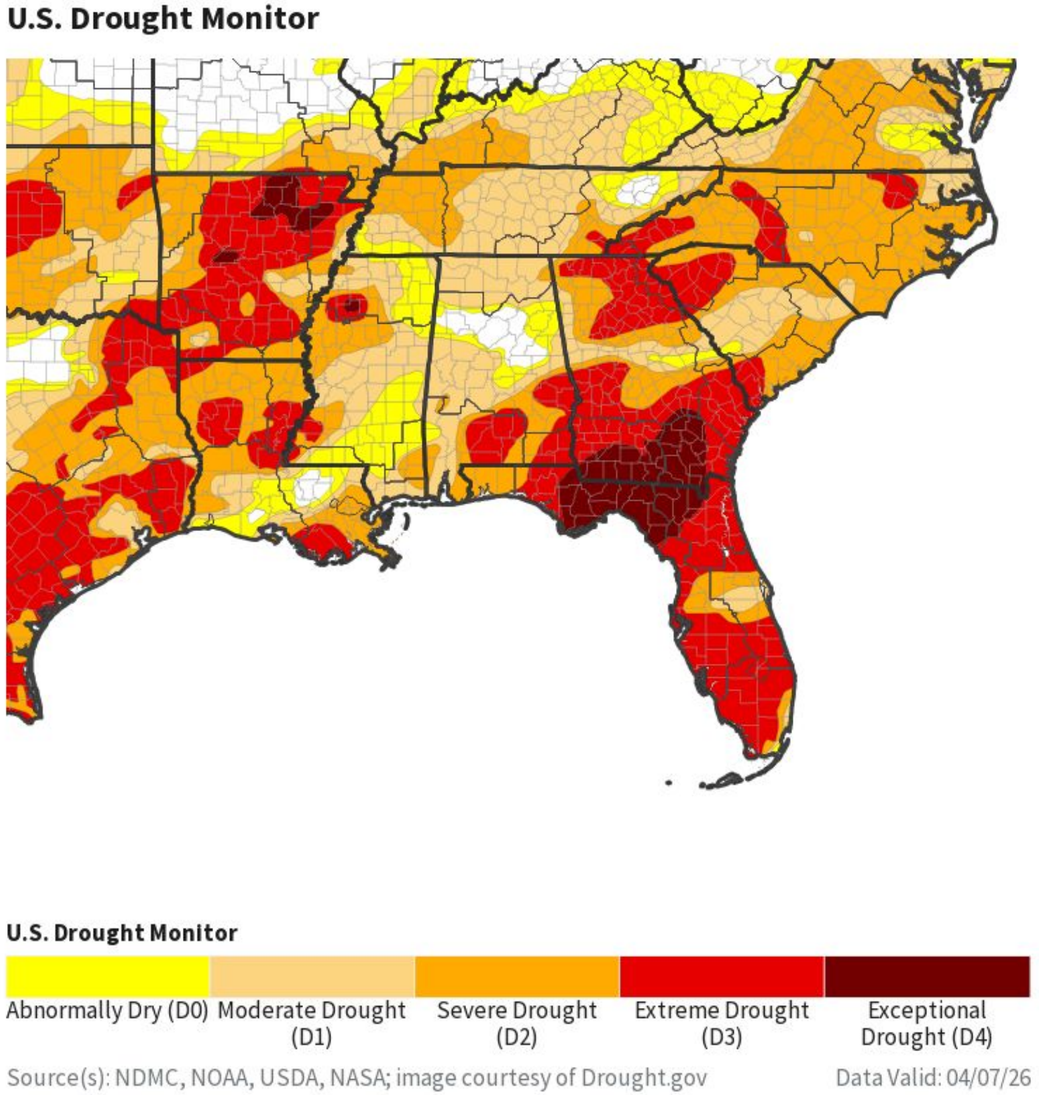
- **Exceptional Drought (D4) Expands Across Southeast Georgia and Northeast Florida. Extreme Drought (D3) Remains in Place Elsewhere.**
- Long term hydrologic drought impacts persist with significant impacts to rivers and streams. Lakes and ponds are at exceptionally low levels or dry.
- Drought conditions are increasing fire weather risk, especially across interior Northeast Florida.

U.S. Drought Monitor

Link to the latest U.S. Drought Monitor for Southeast Georgia and Northeast Florida

- Despite some recent rainfall, amounts were not sufficient to change drought severity. In fact, some locations saw drought conditions worsen as rainfall did not keep up with weekly normals.

- Drought intensity and Extent
  - **D4 (Exceptional Drought)**:
    - In Georgia: Between I-75 and US-301.
    - In Florida: Generally west of a line from Macclenny to Trenton.
  - **D3 (Extreme Drought)**: The remainder of the area east of the D4 area to the Atlantic.

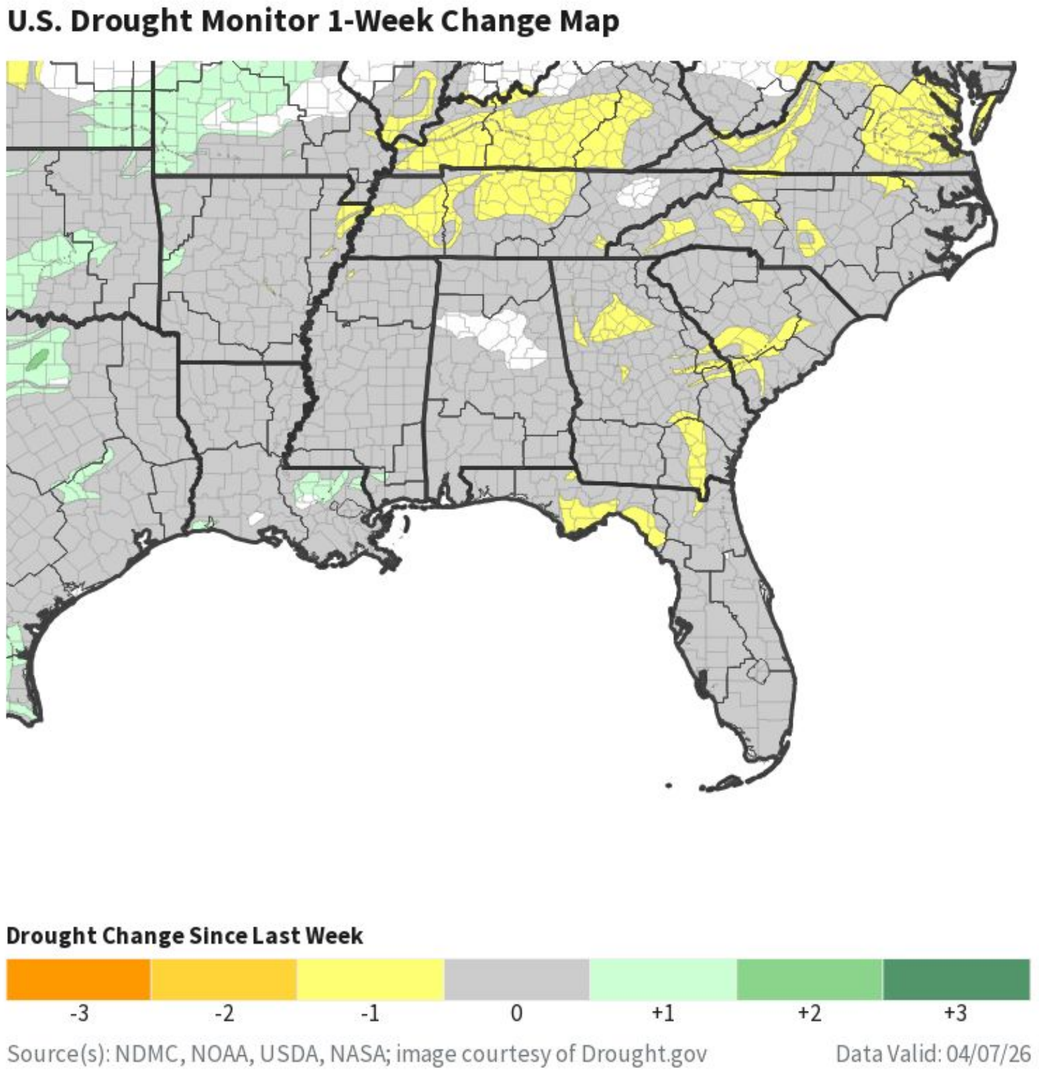


Recent Change in Drought Intensity

Link to the latest 4-week change map for Southeast Georgia and Northeast Florida

- While some rainfall occurred and briefly provided some moistening of soils, it was not sufficiently widespread to lead to any improvement. Moreover, some areas in Southeast Georgia saw little or no rainfall and drought severity increased in these places.

- One-Week Drought Monitor Class Change:
  - **1 Category Degradation:**
    - In Southeast Georgia mainly between Waycross and US-301.
  - **No change:** All other areas in the region.

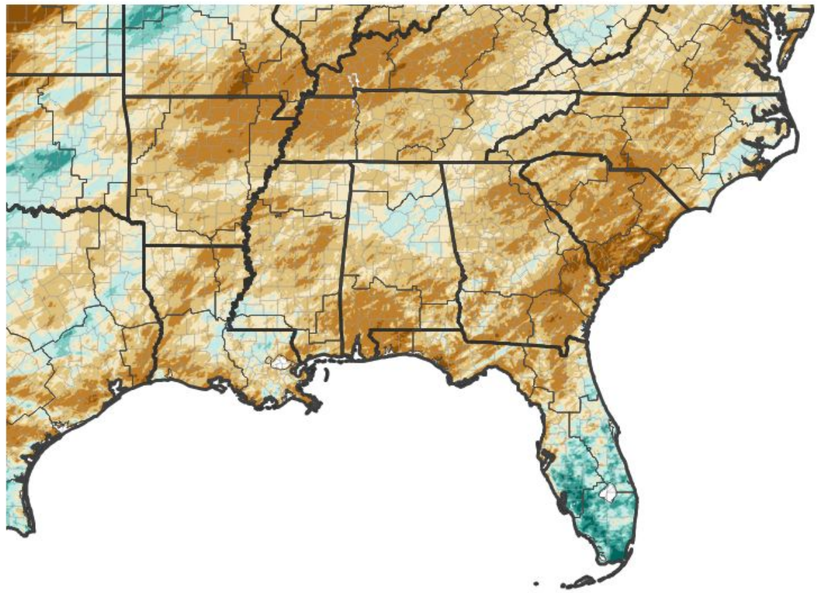


Precipitation

	Last 30 Days		Last 90 Days	
	Rainfall	Percent	Rainfall	Percent
Jasper	1.51”	36.8%	4.55”	36.3%
Live Oak	1.66”	40.0%	4.61”	36.0%
Ichetucknee St Pk.	1.59”	44.4%	3.83”	35.2%
Trenton	0.94”	26.6%	2.81”	26.3%
Baxley	1.08”	28.7%	4.95”	42.2%
Alma	2.31”	62.6%	4.68”	42.4%
Waycross	0.87”	22.7%	4.50”	38.2%
Olustee	1.66”	41.9%	4.85”	41.8%
Putnam Hall	2.71”	85.1%	5.68”	59.2%
Ocklawaha	1.72”	57.3%	4.53”	50.9%
Nahunta	0.70”	19.0%	3.51”	30.8%
Woodbine	1.43”	42.1%	5.50”	53.1%
Jacksonville	2.12”	68.3%	3.81”	40.8%

Data Updated through April 8, 2026
Data Courtesy:
NWS Observations
University of Florida - Florida Automated Weather Network
University of Georgia Weather Network
Suwannee River Water Management District

30-Day Percent of Normal Precipitation



Precipitation Shown as a Percentage of Normal Conditions

0% 25% 50% 75% 100%

100% 150% 200% 300%

Source(s): National Weather Service Multi-Radar Multi-Sensor System; Last Updated: 04/09/26
image courtesy of Drought.gov

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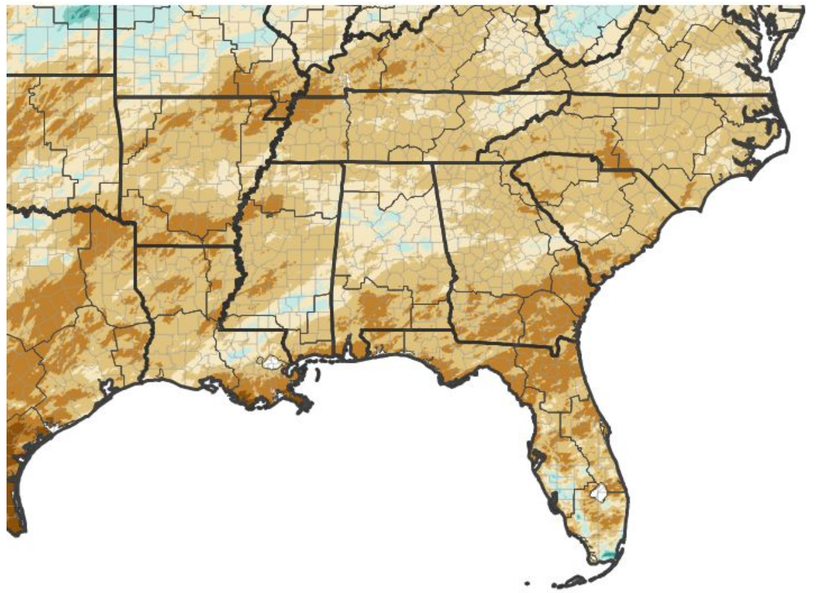

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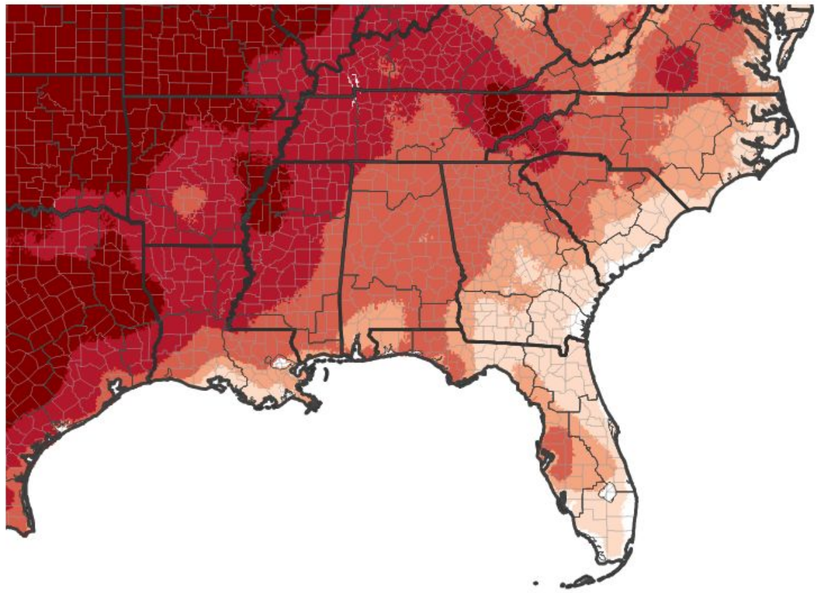
nage courtesy of Drought.gov

Temperature

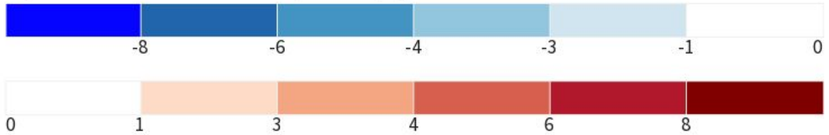
	Last 30 Days	
	Average High (Departure)	Average Low (Departure)
Jacksonville	77.9° (+2.1°)	54.1° (+2.0°)
Craig Field	76.4° (+1.8°)	55.4° (+1.7°)
Ocala	82.1° (+2.0°)	50.7° (-2.7°)
Gainesville	80.6° (+3.3°)	53.7° (+2.5°)

- Despite a recent cool stretch, temperatures have largely been above normal through much of the last 30 days.
- The warm temperatures have led to worsening drought conditions.

7-Day Temperature Anomaly



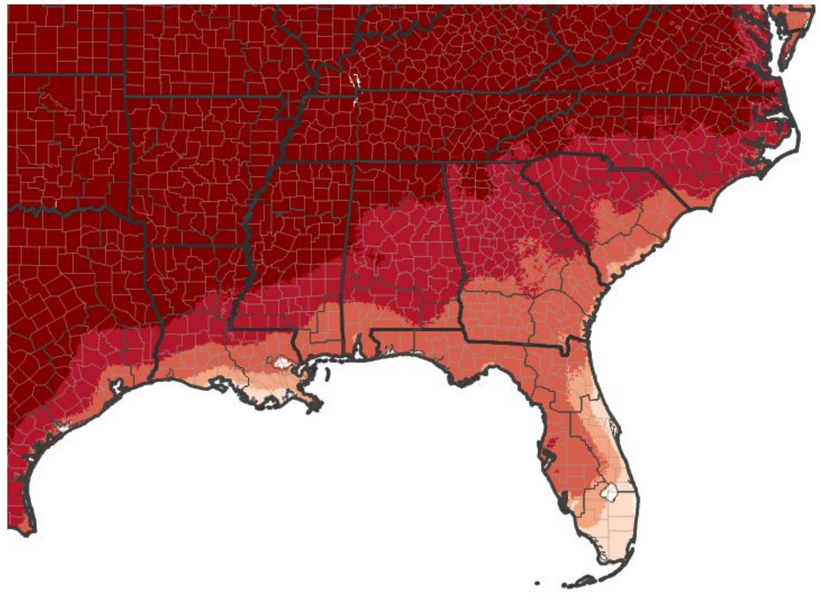
Departure from Normal Max Temperature (°F)



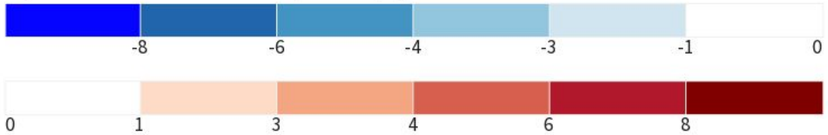
Source(s): NOAA's National Centers for Environmental Information; image courtesy of Drought.gov

Data Valid: 03/31/26

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: 03/31/26

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 Rivers that are no longer accessible to recreational boaters using canoes. In Gilchrist County, the Santa Fe River has sandbars visible above the waterline.
- With the low level of the Suwannee River, springs are discharging rapidly into the Middle Suwannee.

Agricultural Impacts

- Planting season is underway. Corn is going in where farmers are able to irrigate. Without irrigation, people are holding planting until wetter conditions materialize.
- Holding ponds are especially low or nearly dry across much of Southeast Georgia and interior Northeast Florida.

Fire Hazard Impacts

- The Keetch Byram Drought Index continues to rise with much of the region in the 450-700 range.
- Wildfire activity has increased. Some local burns have lost containment and spread into wooded areas. An 1100 acre wildfire recently occurred in Bacon, Ware, and Coffee Counties in SE Georgia.
- Burn bans are now in effect in Baker, Union, Bradford, and Alachua Counties.

Mitigation Actions

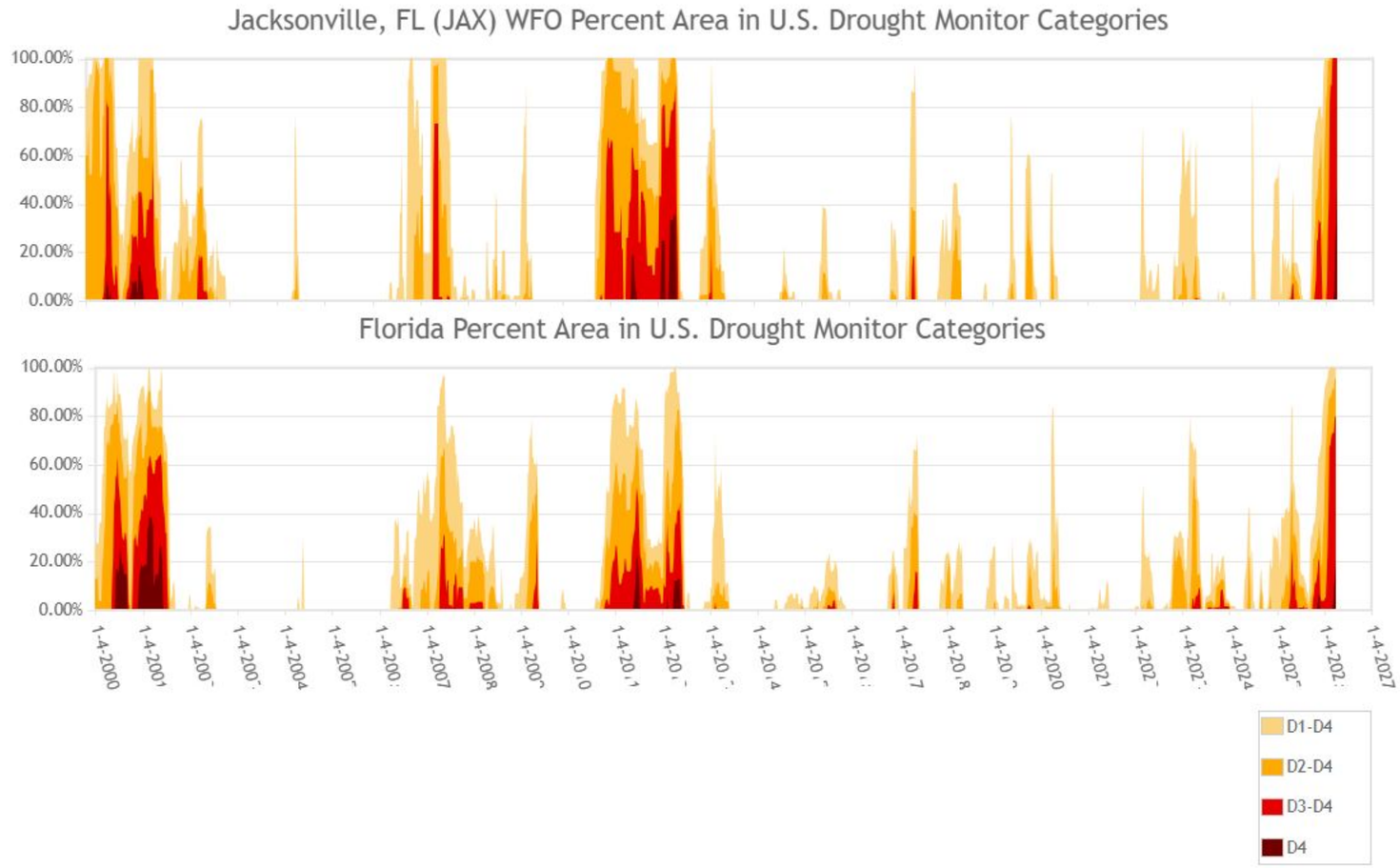
- Suwannee River Water Management District has issued a water shortage advisory for their watershed.
- St. Johns Water Management District is in a Phase 2 Severe Water Shortage. Watering restrictions are in effect.

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?

- 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.
- In Florida, this is the highest amount of D3 coverage since the drought monitor began in 2000.



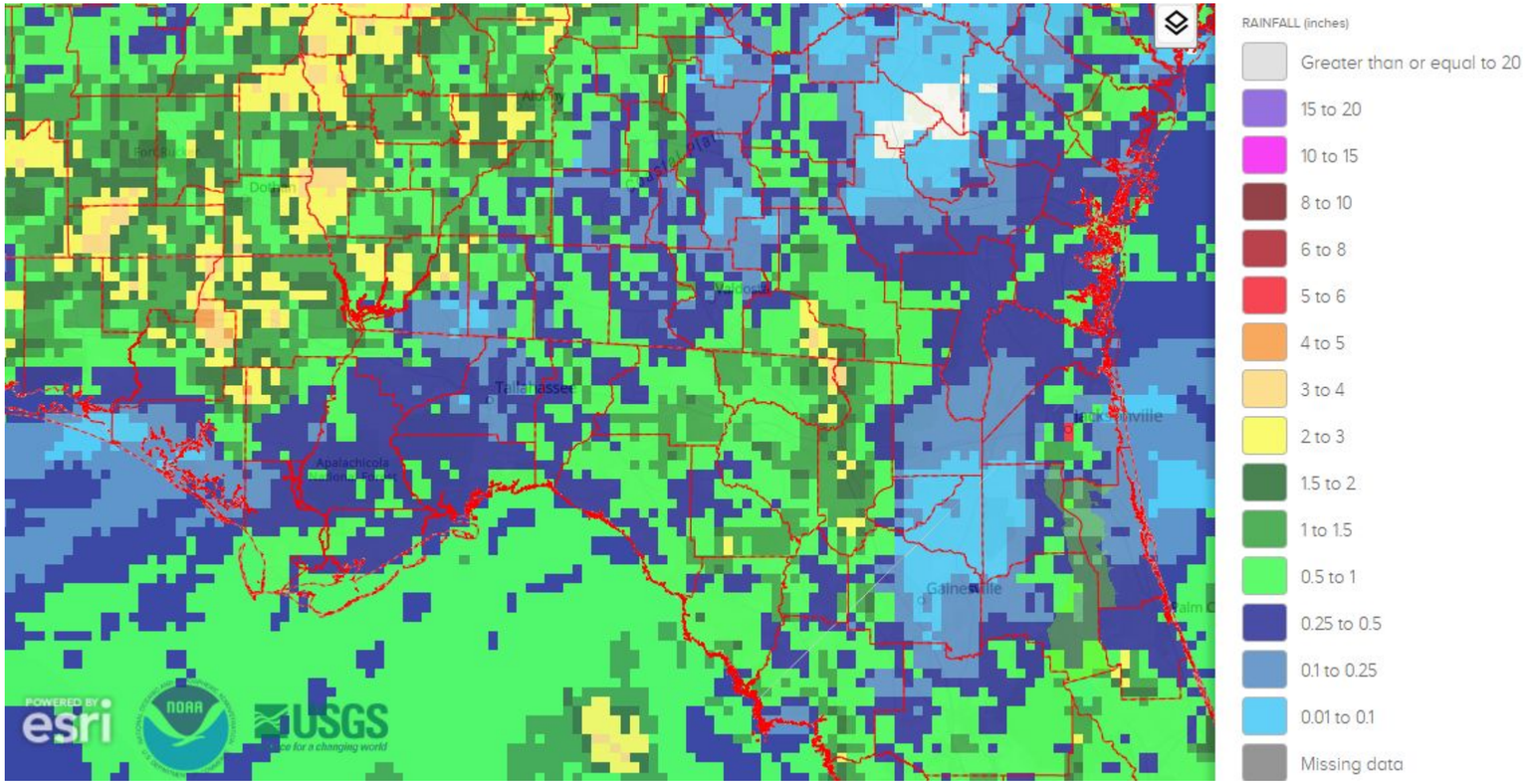
Courtesy of the US Drought Monitor Page.
Time series depiction of D1, D2, D3, and D4 drought across the Jacksonville forecast area by percentage (top) and the state of Florida (bottom).

A Perspective on this Drought - Why it continues

It rained. Why are we still in drought?

It rained over the last week, but I don't see any improvement in the drought conditions. In some areas it actually worsened. Why?

- Over the last week, rainfall was heaviest across the I-75 corridor in North Florida, where generally 1-3 inches of rain occurred.
- Several areas, however, saw less than one half inch of rainfall.
- The areas that saw the heaviest rain were generally localized, which limits the amount of runoff that gets into the rivers.
- Moreover, dry and windy conditions behind the frontal system resulted in significant evaporation of the water from the top layer of the soil.
- Since river levels did not improve, nor did groundwater levels, no improvements in the drought were made. Where rainfall was limited, drought severity increased.

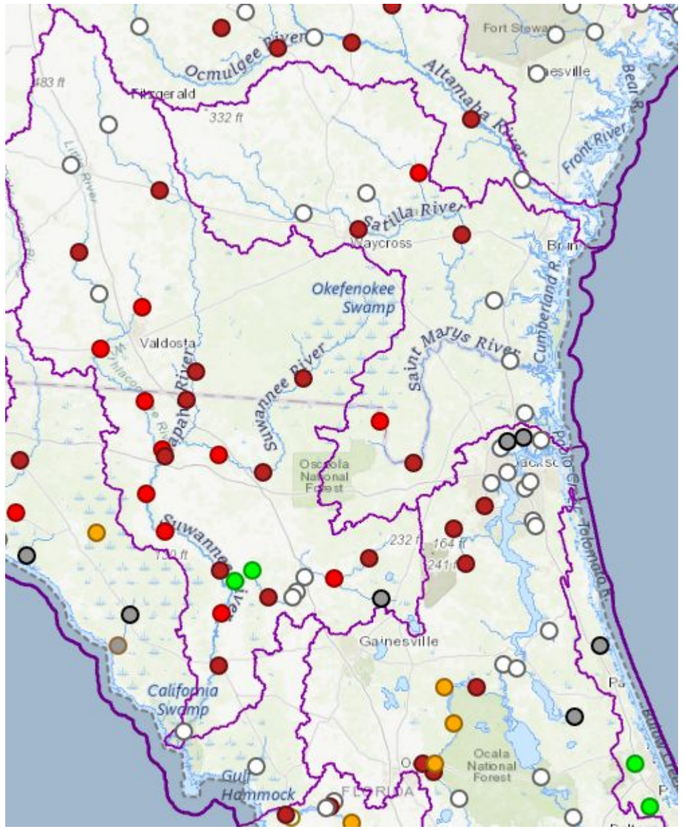


Courtesy of the National Water Prediction Service
Weekly Rainfall from March 31, 2026 to April 7, 2026

Note that many areas over the last 3 months are at least 5 inches below normal with several locations more than 8 inches below normal rainfall Thus, it will take a considerable amount of rain to substantively change the drought picture.

Hydrologic Conditions and Impacts

- Streamflows across all mainstem rivers are running well below normal to near record lows based on instantaneous flow readings on April 9, 2026.
- Much of the Suwannee River remains near record low flow. Most other rivers are much below normal for this time of year.
- 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.

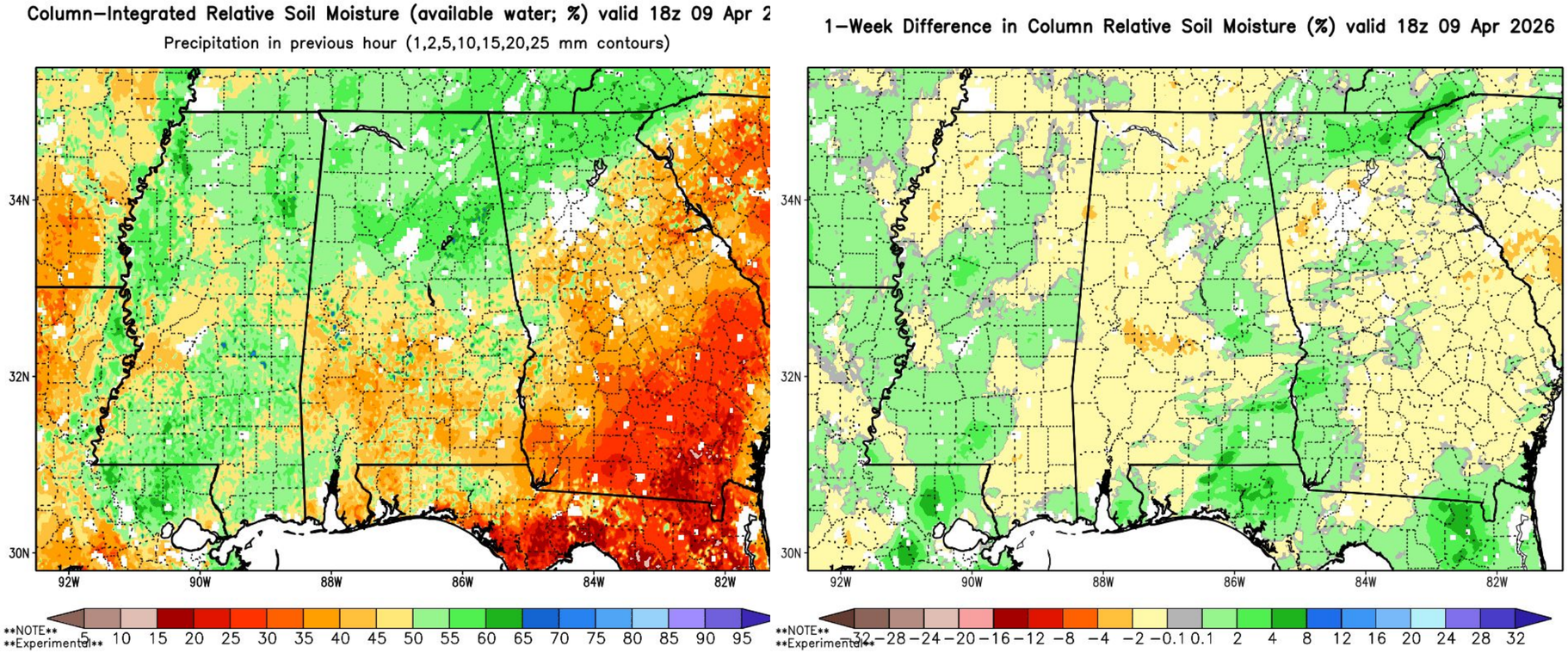


Current Streamflow Anomalies from USGS - April 9, 2026

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

Agricultural Impacts

- Drier than normal soils are present across interior southeast Georgia & northeast Florida.
- Planting season is underway, but we will need increased rainfall to keep up with the increasing water demand.
- During our recharge season, missing a week or more of rainfall leads to faster soil drying.



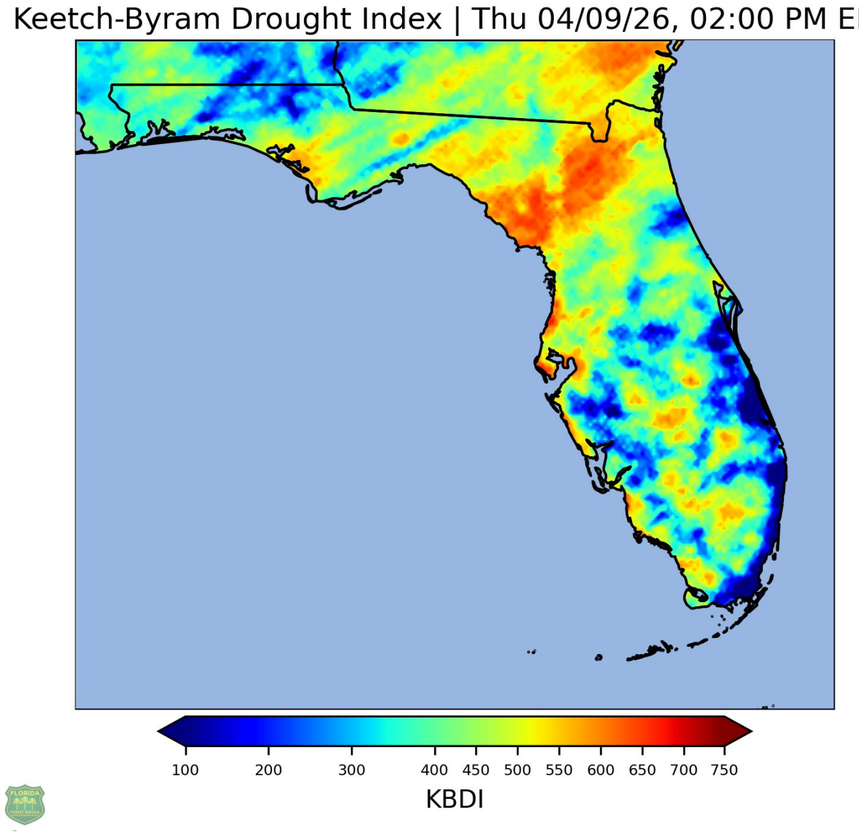
0-200 cm Relative Soil Moisture & 1-week Change in 0-200 cm Relative Soil Moisture
Data courtesy of NASA SPoRT

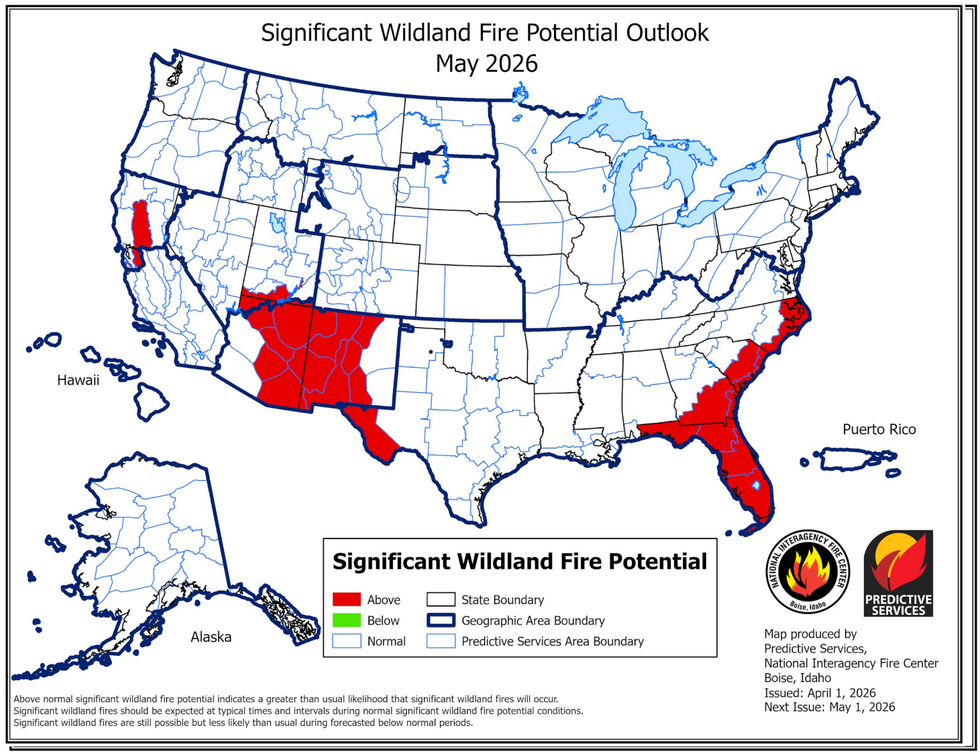
2026 Crop Reports
Florida | Georgia

Fire Hazard Impacts

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

- Keetch-Byram Drought Index values are at or above 500 for portions of interior NE Florida and coastal SE Georgia.
- Burn bans are in effect for Baker, Union, Bradford, and Alachua Counties.
- Fire danger remains high.
- The Significant Wildland Fire Potential Outlook for May calls for above normal wildfire activity across the area.

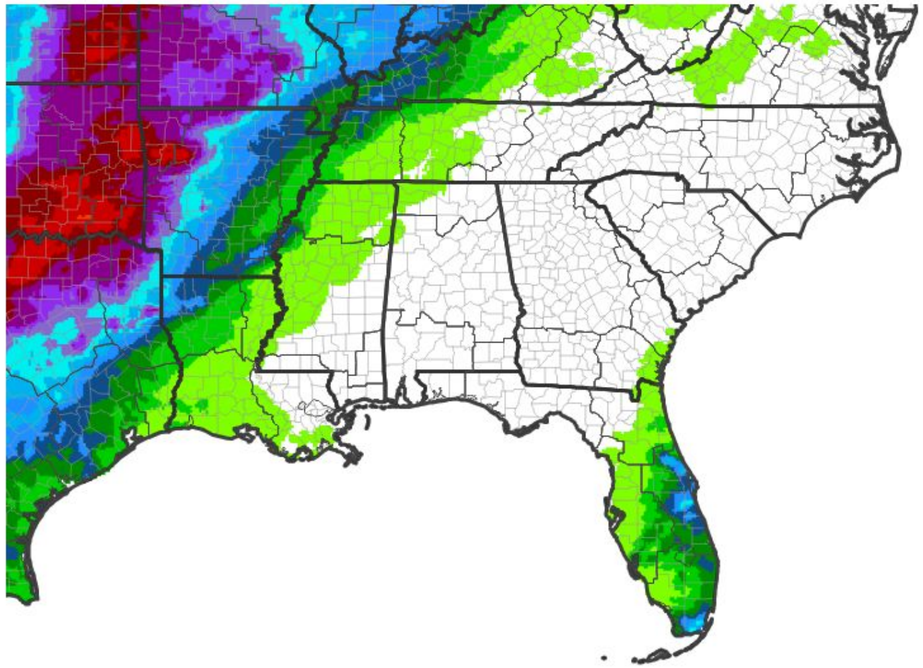




Seven Day Precipitation Forecast

- Easterly flow into the weekend could lead to some localized showers along the Atlantic Coast, but amounts are expected to be light.
- Thereafter, a dry pattern is expected to emerge well into next week.
- 8-14 day outlook (4/16 - 4/22): below normal precipitation.

7-Day Quantitative Precipitation Forecast for April 9, 2026–April 16, 2026



Predicted Inches of Precipitation

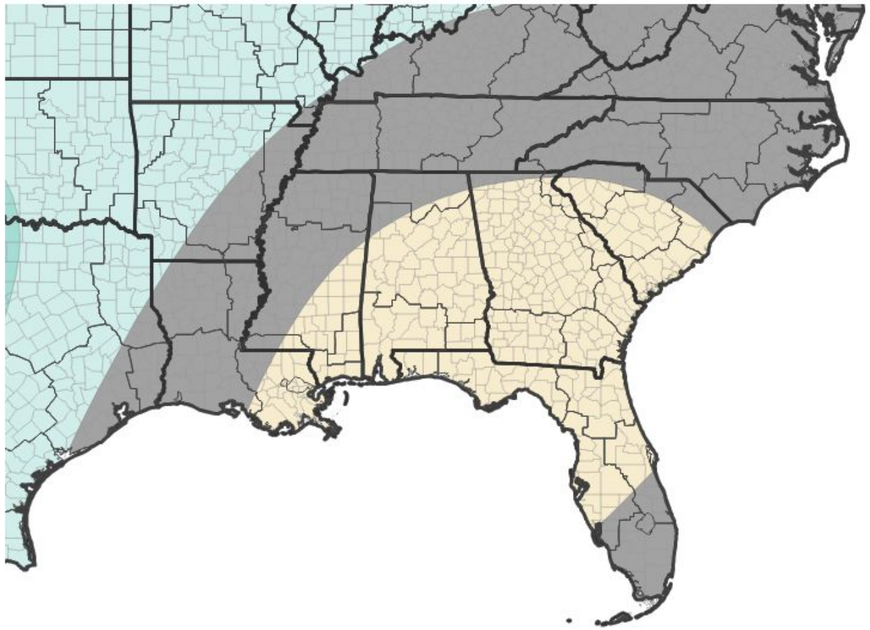
0 0.01 0.1 0.25 0.5 0.75 1 1.25 1.5 1.75

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: 04/09/26

8–14 Day Precipitation Outlook for April 16, 2026–April 22, 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

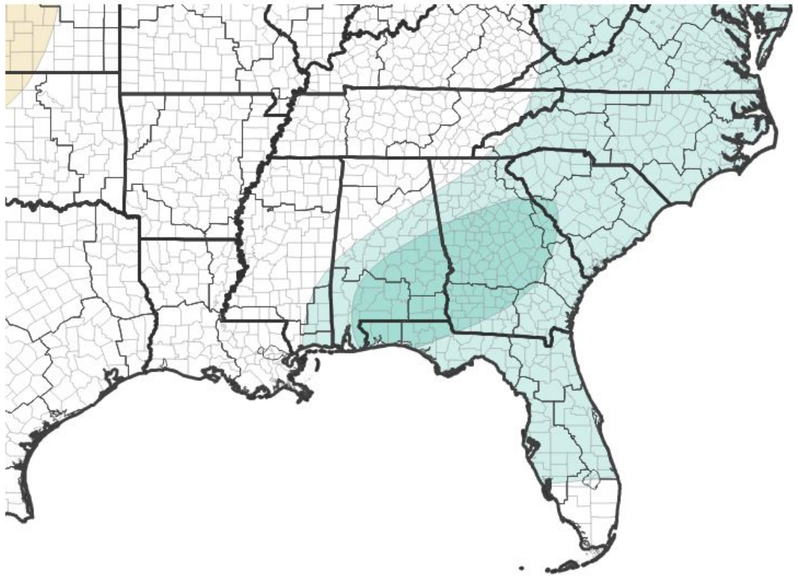
Last Updated: 04/08/26

Long-Range Outlooks

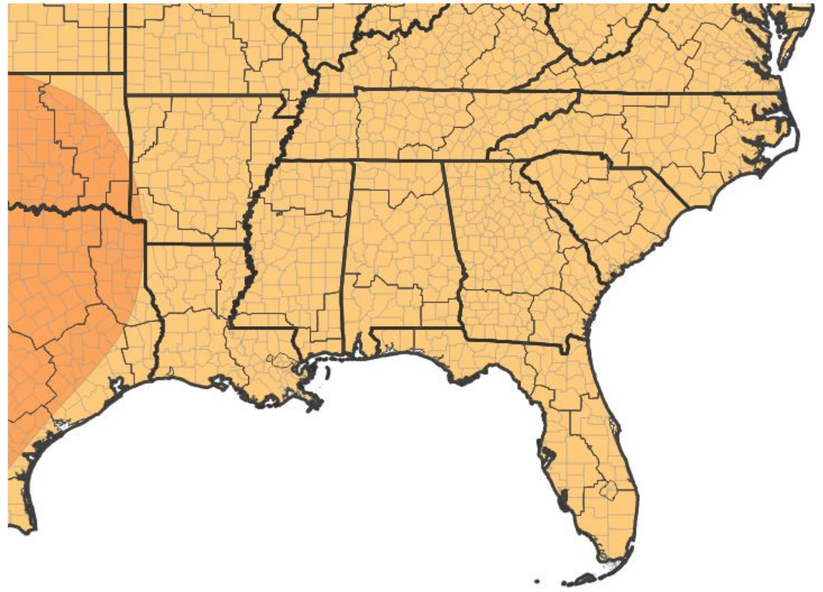
The latest monthly and seasonal outlooks can be found on the CPC homepage.

- Next 3 months favor above normal precipitation and above normal temperatures.
- The transition from La Niña to El Niño will favor a drier than normal April with perhaps more opportunities for beneficial rains coming in May and June.

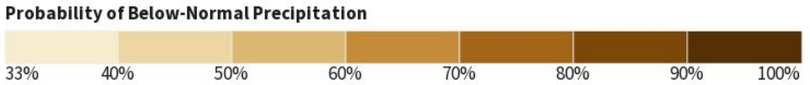
Seasonal (3-Month) Precipitation Outlook for April 1, 2026–June 30, 2026



Seasonal (3-Month) Temperature Outlook for April 1, 2026–June 30, 2026



	April		May		June	
Average	Temp	Rain	Temp	Rain	Temp	Rain
Jacksonville	68.1°	2.93”	74.9°	3.42”	80.3°	7.60”
Craig Field	68.3°	2.41”	74.4°	3.04”	79.9°	6.28”
Ocala	70.7°	2.22”	76.4°	3.53”	80.7°	7.41”
Gainesville	68.5°	2.74”	75.0°	3.08”	79.9°	7.56”
Alma	66.5°	2.85”	74.2°	2.78”	80.0°	5.34”



Source(s): Climate Prediction Center; image courtesy of Drought.gov Last Updated: 03/19/26

Source(s): Climate Prediction Center; image courtesy of Drought.gov Last Updated: 03/19/26

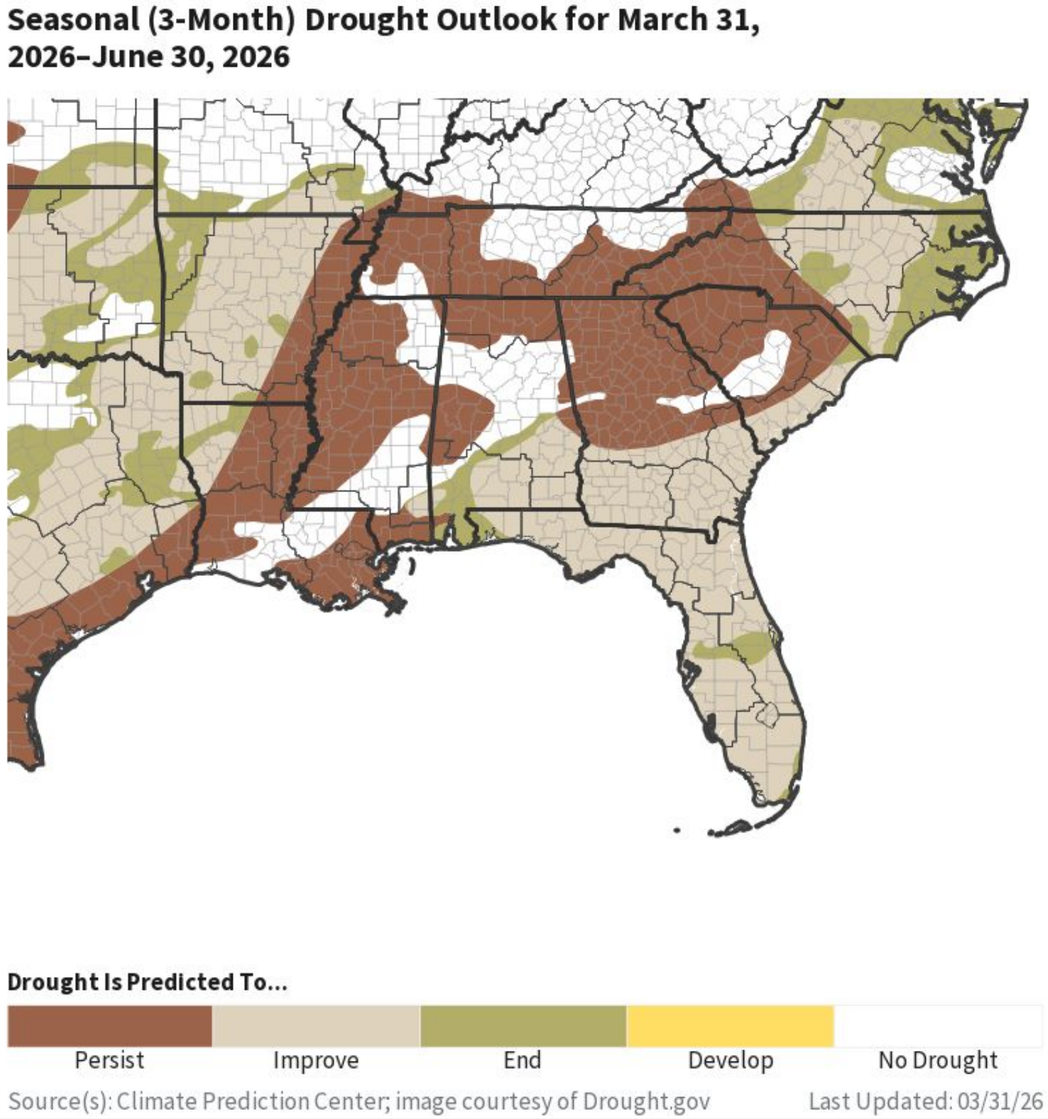
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce

National Weather Service
Jacksonville, FL

Drought Outlook

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

- Given the prediction that favors above normal precipitation in the months ahead, drought is expected to persist, but the severity may improve across the region over the next three months.
- Keep in mind, this is a 3-month outlook. Conditions may worsen, as April still favors below normal rainfall across our area.
- Should the sea breeze season become active on schedule, mid to late May through June could feature above normal rainfall, which will help improve drought conditions.
- If the start of the summer sea breeze season is delayed, drought conditions could reach a severity seen in the 2000 and 2012 droughts.



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