



Drought Information Statement for Central North Carolina

Valid February 26, 2026

Issued By: NWS Raleigh

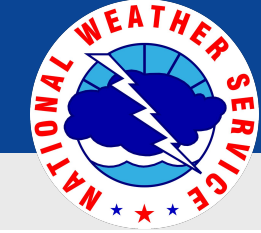
Contact Information:

- This Drought Information Statement will be updated by March 12, 2026.
- Please see all currently available products at <https://drought.gov/drought-information-statements>.
- Please visit <https://www.weather.gov/RAH/DroughtInformationStatement> for previous statements.
- Questions or comments can be sent to barrett.smith@noaa.gov

- Extreme Drought (D3) persists in the southern Piedmont and northern Coastal Plain areas of North Carolina.

- Severe Drought (D2) continues across the rest of central North Carolina.





Current Drought Conditions

February 26, 2026
9:14 AM EST

Graphic Courtesy of the North Carolina State Climate Office

North Carolina Drought Update

Created By:

North Carolina
Drought Management Advisory Council
www.ncdrought.org

NORTH CAROLINA
CLIMATE OFFICE
climate.ncsu.edu

NC STATE
@NCSCO

For the assessment period ending **Feb. 24, 2026**

From the US Drought Monitor, with input from the NC DMAC

The Main Takeaway

A dry week at the coastline has led to an expansion of Moderate (D1) and Severe (D2) Drought, putting 100% of NC in drought for the first time since February 2008.

This Week's Summary

Continuing the trend so far in February, most of the state saw a half-inch to an inch of rain last week, which is near-normal but not much more than that. Although we've started to see small improvements in lake and streamflow levels, we need more regular rain events to fully recharge our soils and groundwater, and top off reservoirs to help them hit their summer target levels.

Next Week's Outlook

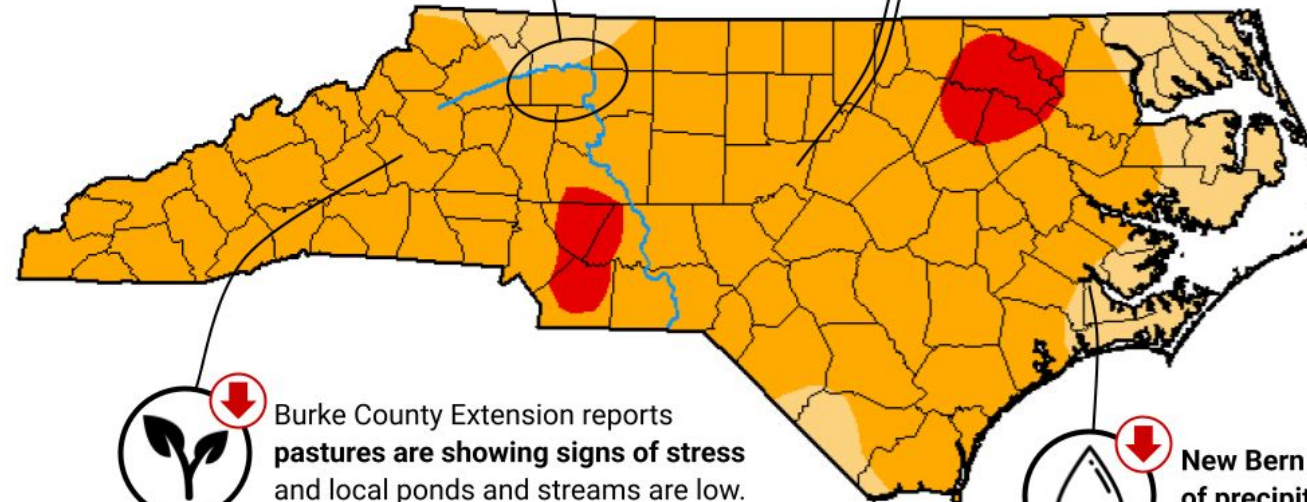
Two rounds of precipitation are possible this week, on Thursday and Tuesday, with likely totals of a half inch in the south up to an inch or more in the north and west.

For your local drought status, visit www.ncdrought.org

Over the past 7 days, **streamflows in the upper Yadkin River basin have bounced back** to near normal levels.



After recent rainfall, **Jordan Lake is nearly back to its target level**, while Falls Lake has been slower to recover and **remains 2.75 feet below its target**.

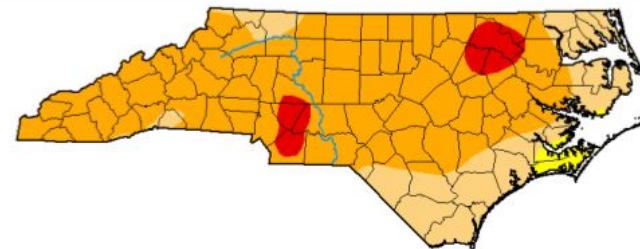


Burke County Extension reports **pastures are showing signs of stress** and local ponds and streams are low.



New Bern has had only **1.11 inches of precipitation this month**, on pace for its 7th-driest February on record.

Last Week's Drought Status



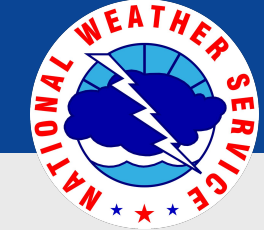
Statewide Coverage by Category

Category	Current Coverage	Change Since Last Week
D0: Abnormally Dry	0.00%	-1.88%
D1: Moderate Drought	13.29%	-9.04%
D2: Severe Drought	81.50%	+10.92%
D3: Extreme Drought	5.21%	0.00%
D4: Exceptional Drought	0.00%	0.00%



National Oceanic and
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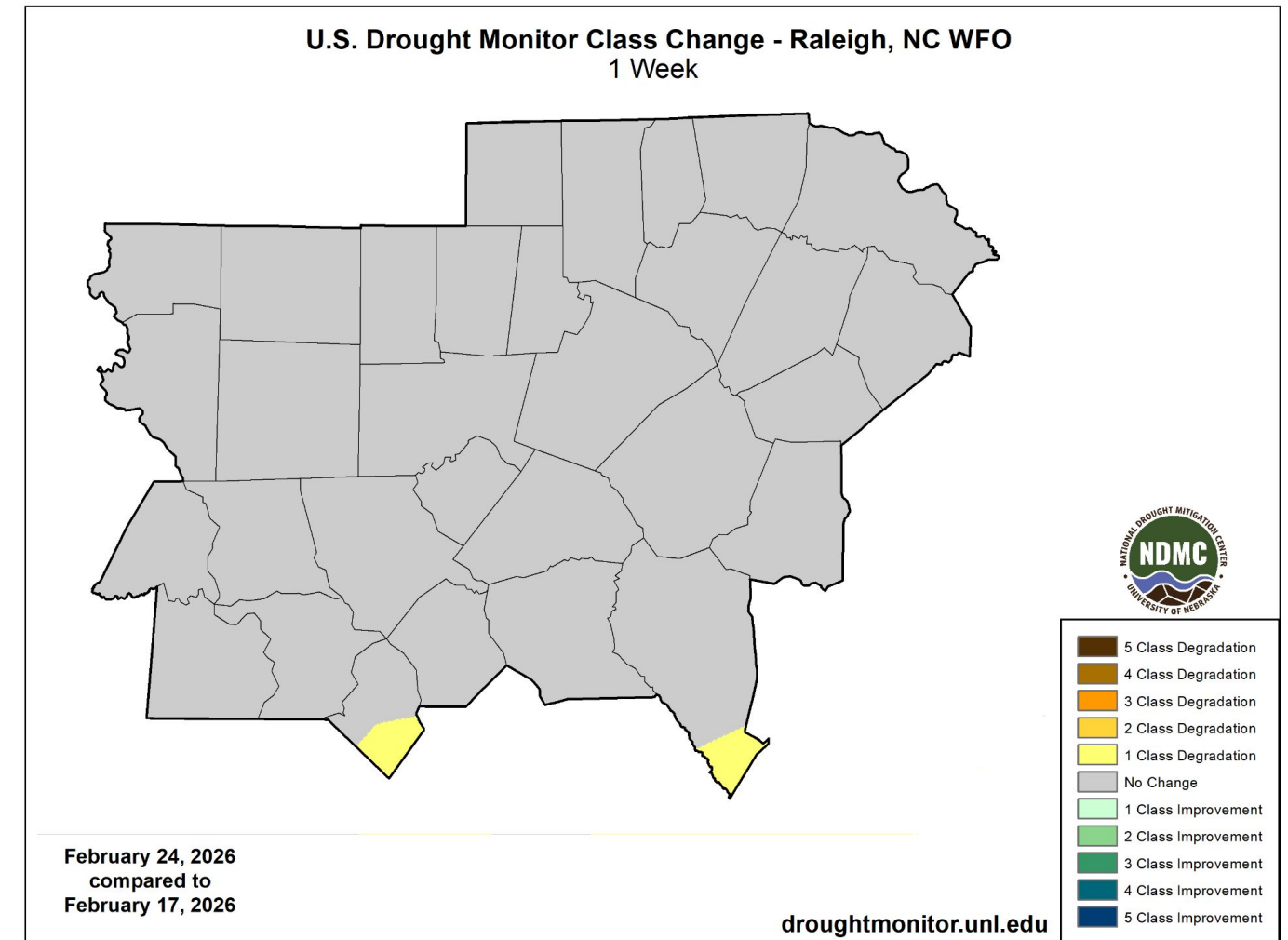
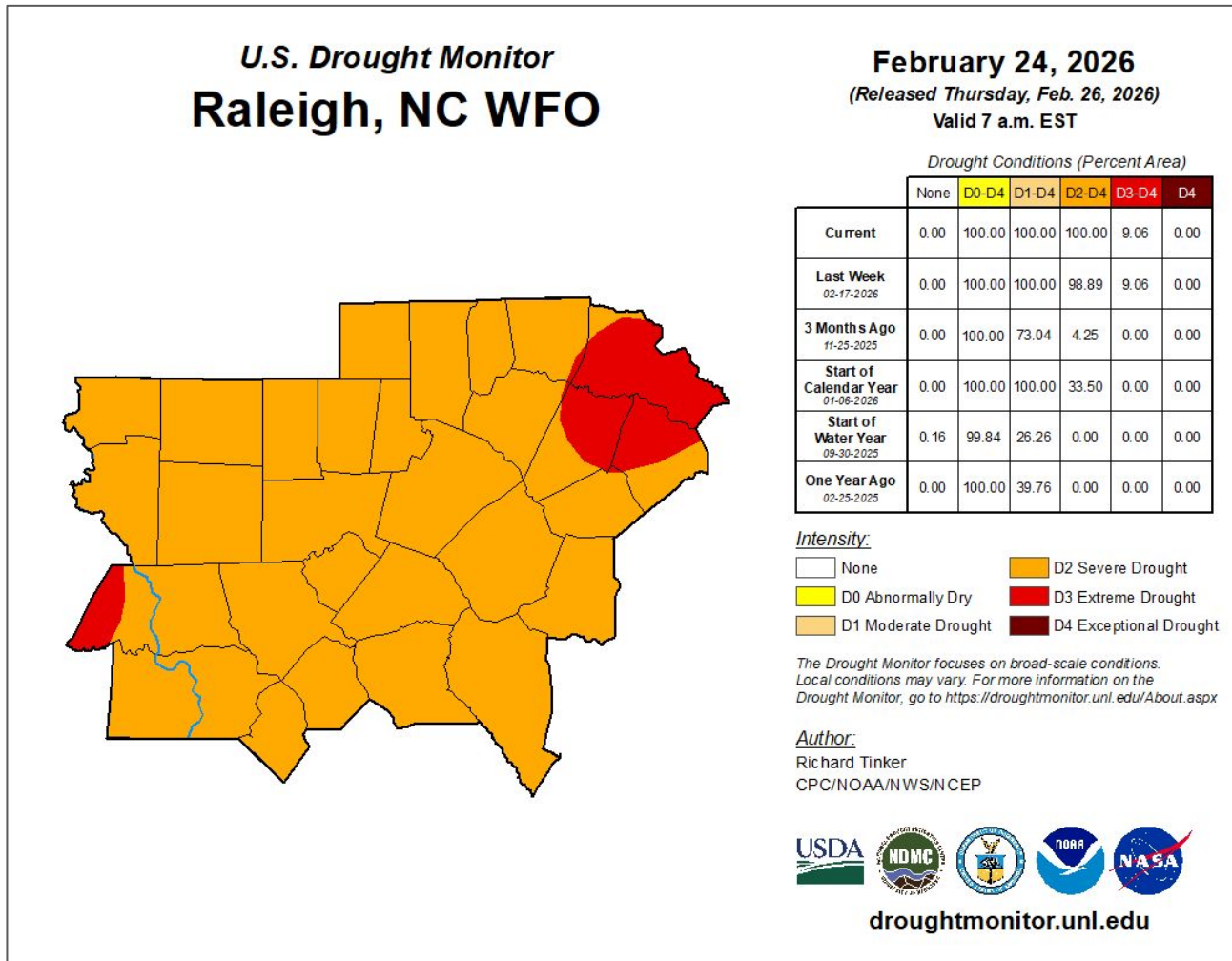
National Weather Service
Raleigh, NC



Current Drought Conditions

February 26, 2026
9:14 AM EST

Latest U.S. Drought Monitor Map and One-Week Change



Main Takeaways

- Extreme Drought (D3) has developed in the northern Piedmont and continues in the southern Piedmont, including Stanly County.
- Severe Drought (D2) continues across the remainder of central North Carolina over the past few weeks.

Image Caption:

Left: [U.S. Drought Monitor valid 8am February 24th.](#)

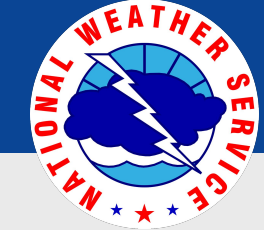
Right: [U.S. Drought Monitor 1-week change map valid 8am February 24th.](#)



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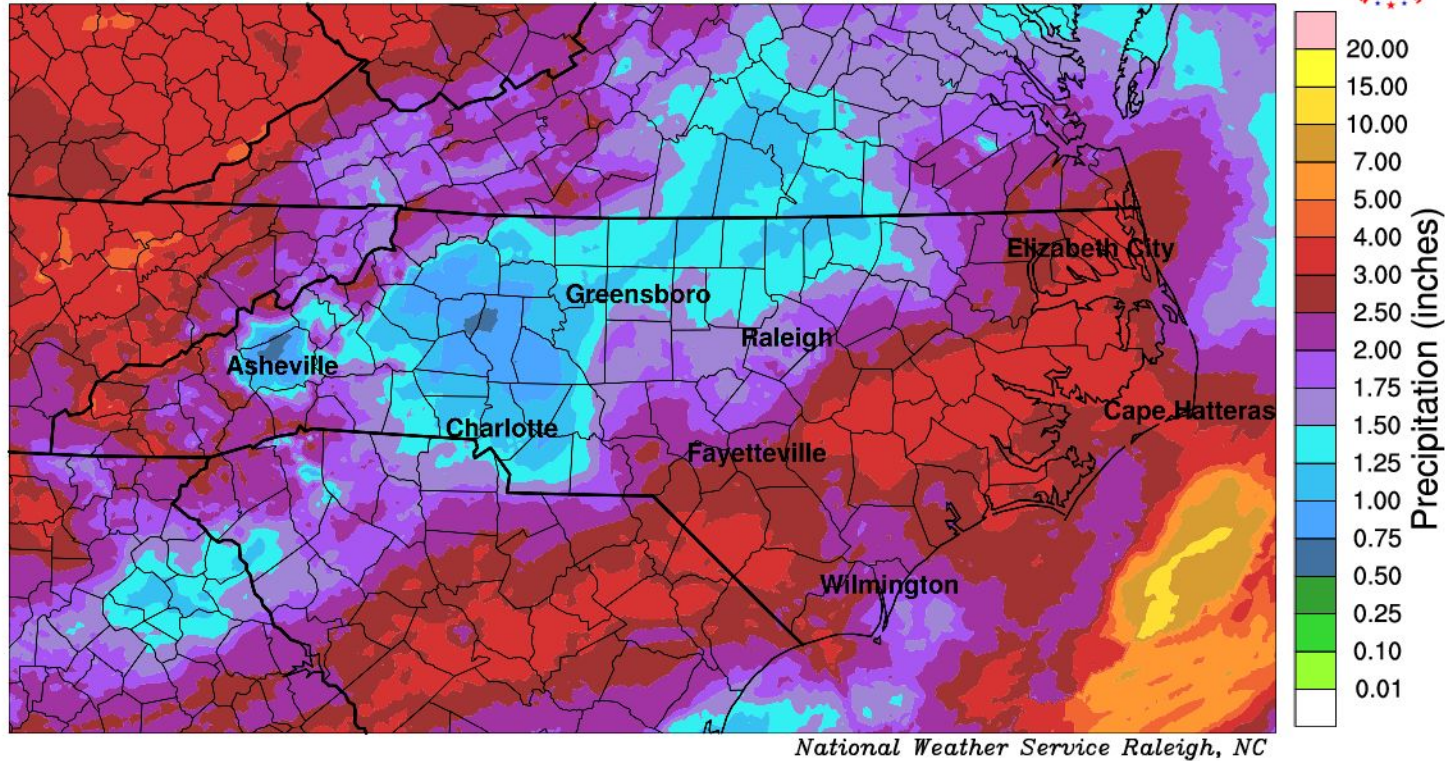


Observed Precipitation

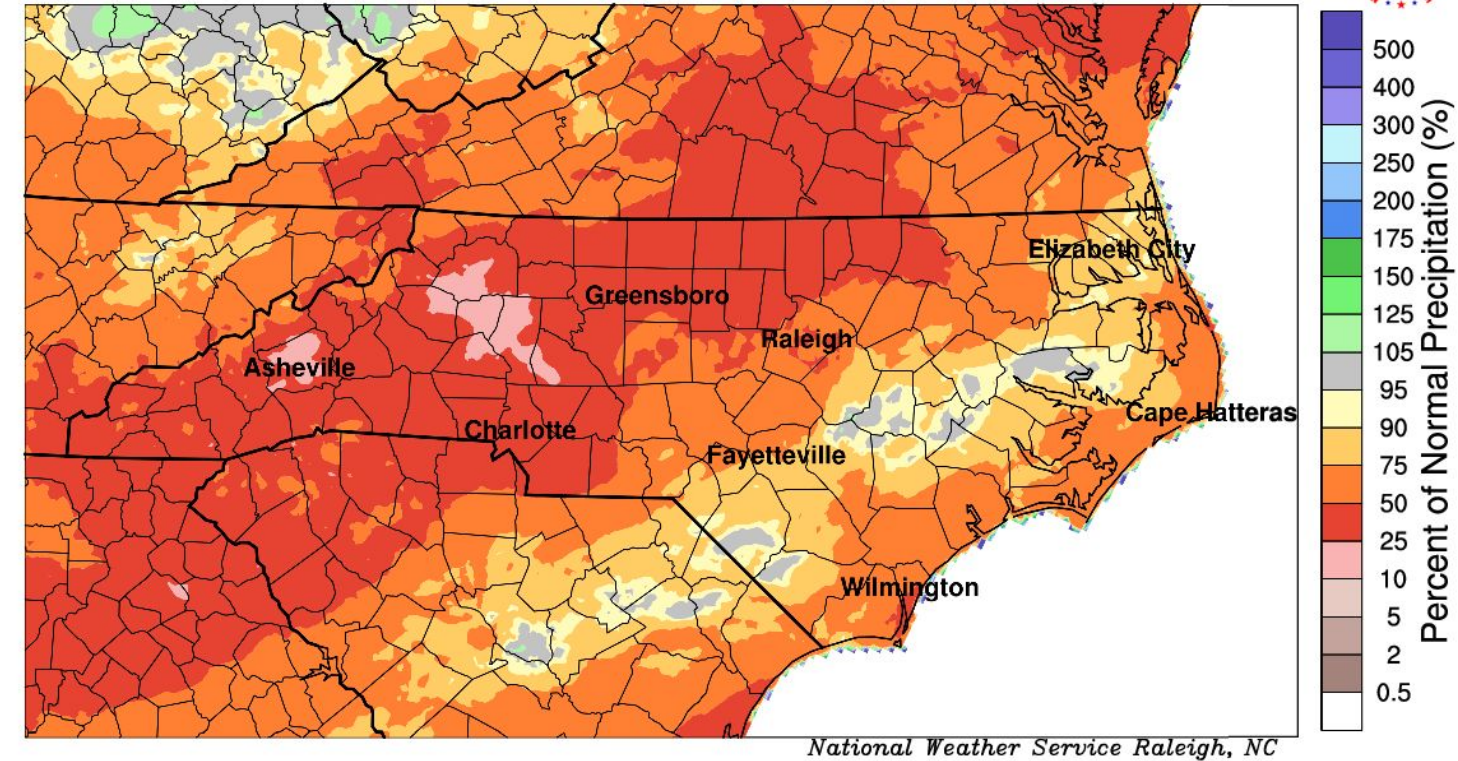
February 26, 2026
9:14 AM EST

Latest 30-Day Precipitation and Percent of Normal Precipitation

NWPS 30-Day Observed Precipitation
Valid: 7 AM EST Thursday February 12, 2026



NWPS 30-Day Observed Percent of Normal Precipitation
Valid: 7 AM EST Thursday February 12, 2026



Main Takeaways

- Despite a few storm systems since early January, precipitation overall has been below normal and significantly below normal across western NC.
- Additional statistics → [Local Rainfall Summary](#)

Past 90 Days Stats	Observed Precipitation	Departure From Normal	Percent of Normal
Raleigh-Durham	5.37	-4.22	56%
Greensboro	6.87	-2.49	73%
Fayetteville	5.79	-3.11	65%

Image Captions:
Left - 30 Day Observed Precipitation for NC; Right - Percent of Normal Precipitation for NC
Data Courtesy NWS National Water Prediction Service.





Precipitation Forecast

February 26, 2026
9:14 AM EST

Latest 7-Day Precipitation Forecast

- **Next 7 days:**
 - A frontal system currently moving through the region will result in 1-2" of rain in some positions of the Piedmont and northern Coastal Plain.
 - Another storm system expected to move through the Mid-Atlantic Region early next week may bring some additional lighter rain amounts
 - This will be much needed rainfall and will continue to stabilize or perhaps even improve deficits across northern portion of NC.

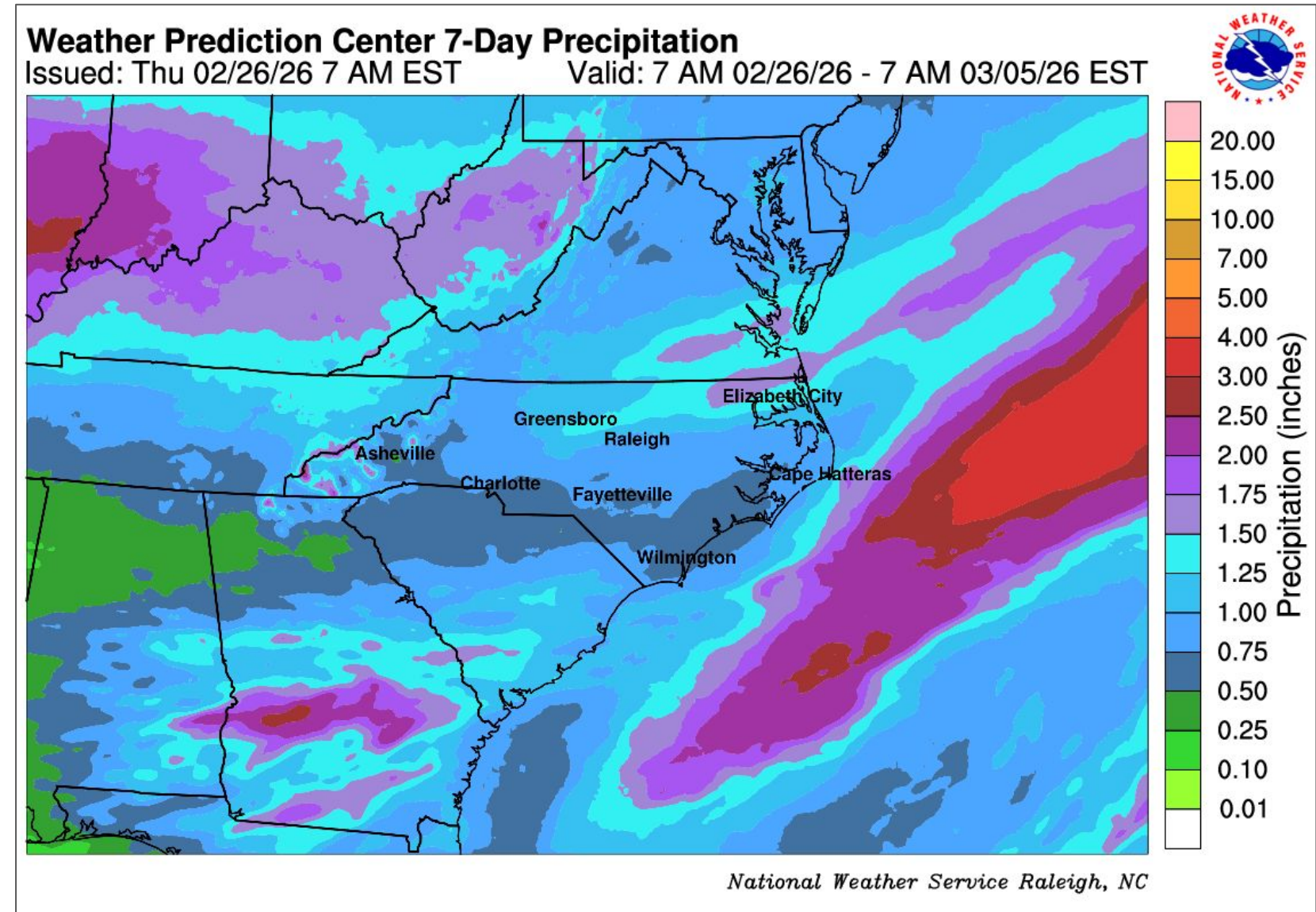
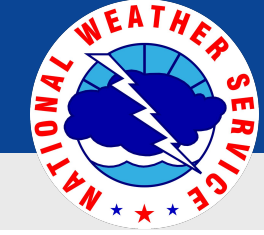


Image Caption: Weather Prediction Center [7-day precipitation forecast](#) valid February 26th to March 5th,





Weeks 3-4 Outlook

February 26, 2026
9:14 AM EST

Temperature and Precipitation Outlook

Main Takeaways

- There is a lean toward above normal temperatures for the middle of March.
- Below normal precipitation is slightly favored.

Possible Impact

Longer range models suggest a warm pattern across the central and eastern US, with a general storm track through the Midwest. This pattern may result in additional rainfall deficits and continued or worsening of drought conditions in some areas.

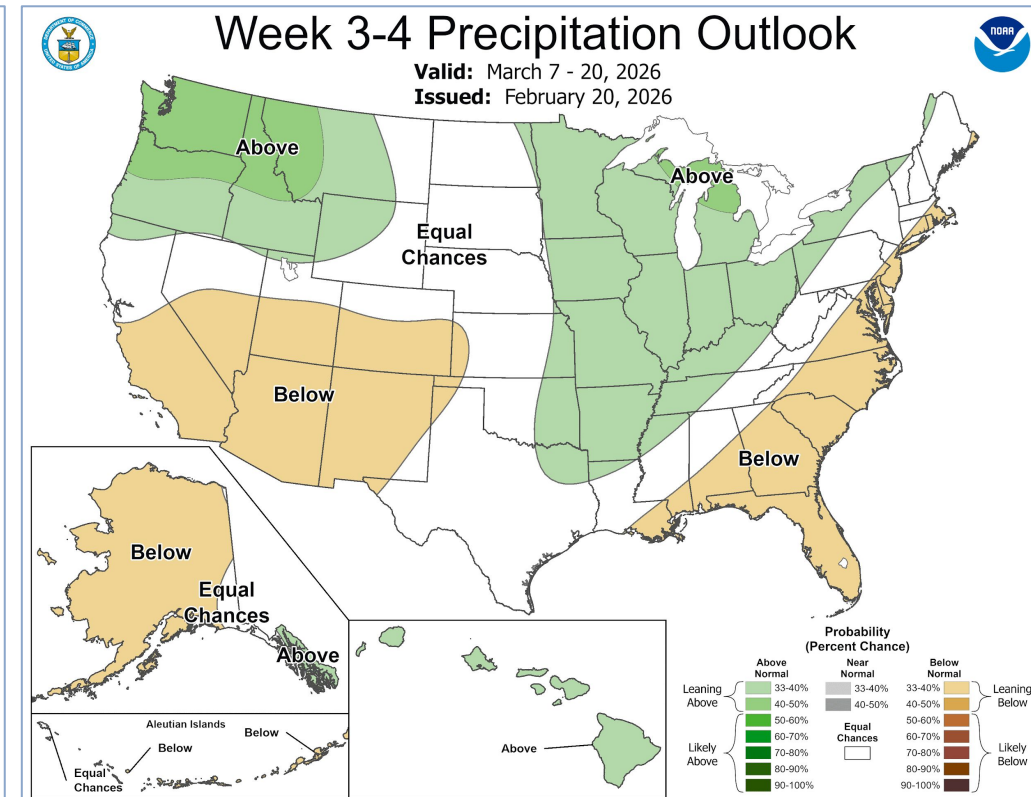
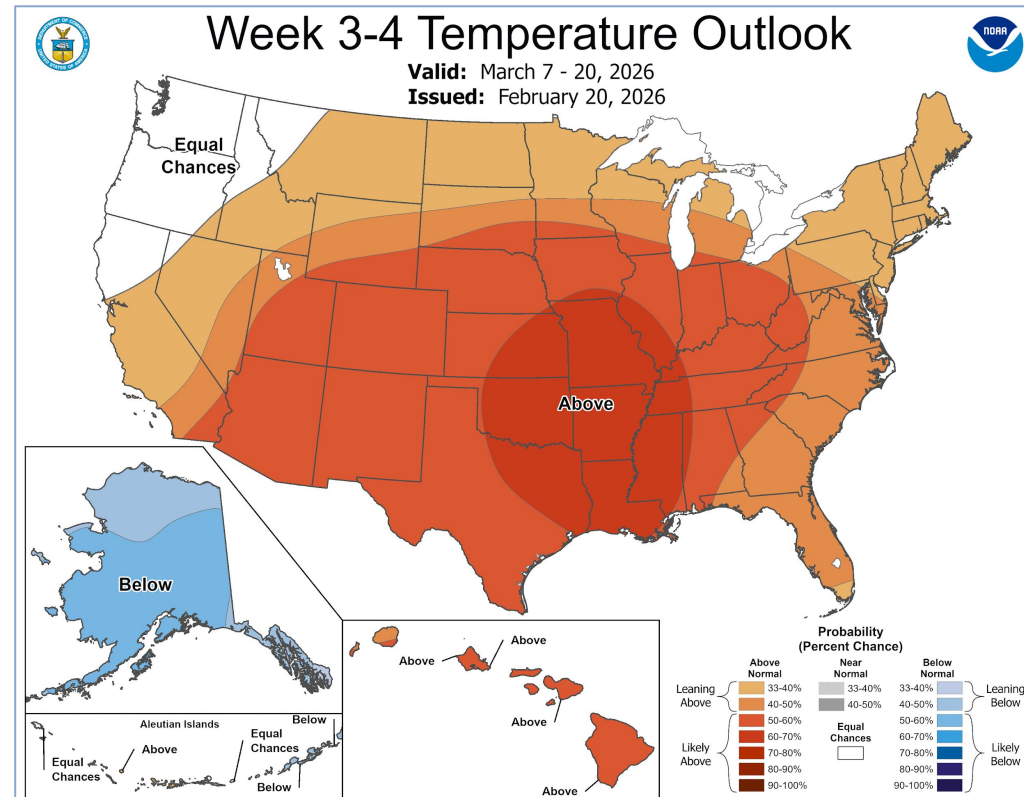


Image Captions:

Left - [Climate Prediction Center Weeks 3-4 Temperature Outlook.](#)

Right - [Climate Prediction Center Weeks 3-4 Precipitation Outlook.](#)

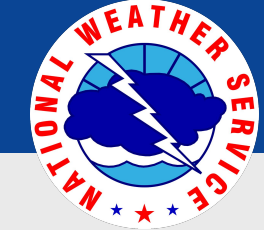
Valid March 7 - March 20, 2026



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Raleigh, NC



Seasonal (3-Month) Outlooks

February 26, 2026
9:14 AM EST

Seasonal Temperature/Precipitation and Drought Outlooks

Main Takeaways

- There is a slight lean toward above normal temperatures across the southeast U.S. heading into spring.
- There are equal chances of above or below normal precipitation.
- Drought is expected to persist across central NC into spring.

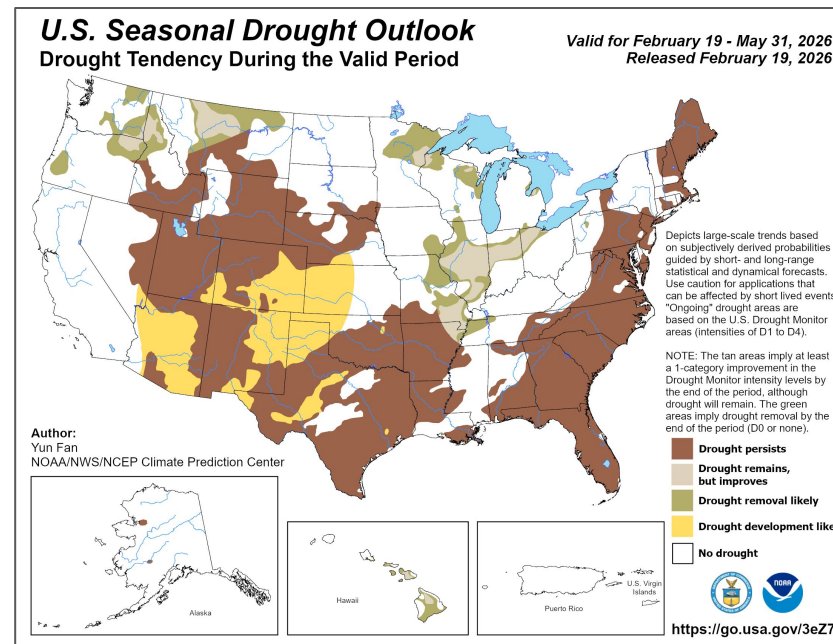
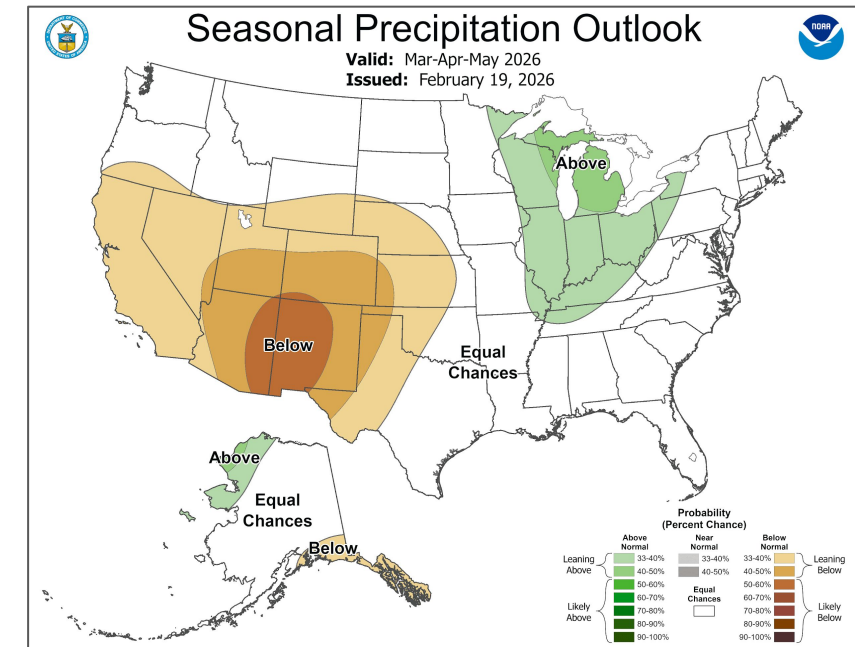
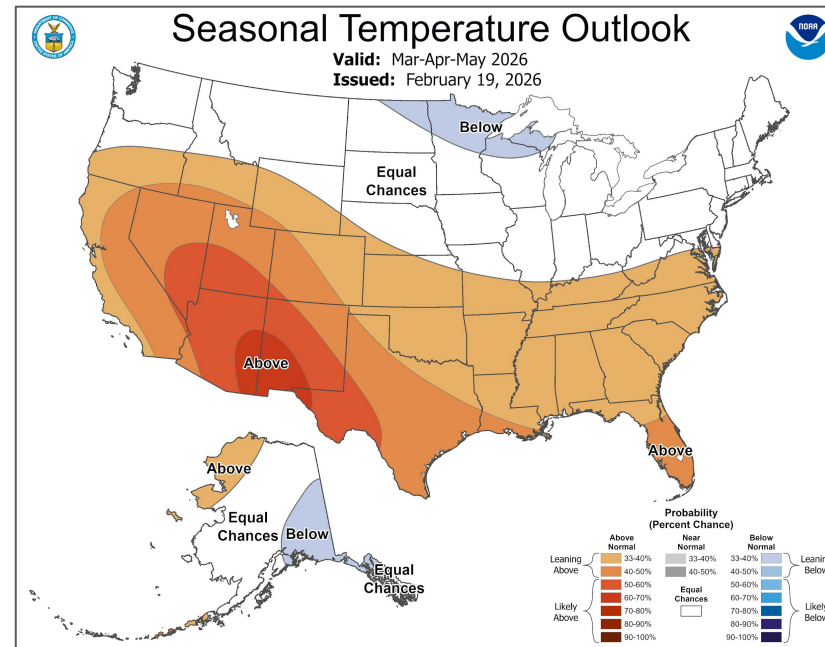


Image Captions:
[National Weather Service Climate Prediction Center Seasonal Temperature Outlook.](#)
[National Weather Service Climate Prediction Center Seasonal Precipitation Outlook.](#)
 Valid March to May, 2026.

