



# Drought Information Statement for Central North Carolina

Valid April 14, 2026

Issued By: NWS Raleigh

Contact Information:

- This Drought Information Statement will be updated by May 14, 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](mailto:barrett.smith@noaa.gov)
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- Extreme Drought (D3) continues to slowly expand in the Southern and Northeast Piedmont areas.
- Severe Drought (D2) now compasses nearly all of Central North Carolina.



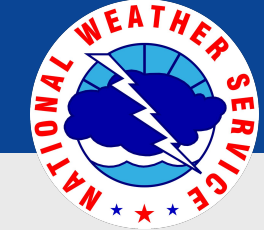


# Key Points

April 16, 2026  
2:32 PM EDT

- This is a long term drought, which dates back to August of 2025 for many areas.
  - For instance, Raleigh is currently experiencing ~15 inch precipitation deficit since August.
- The recent very dry period, above normal temperatures, and increasing demand on the water supply is causing more impacts to be felt.
  - The North Carolina State Climate Office reports that, statewide, 30% of winter wheat is in poor or very poor condition per USDA/NASS with some slow or stunted growth noted
  - Some communities are starting to enact water restrictions and reservoir operators are moving to low flow protocols.
- In the short term, a period of unsettled weather is possible across the southern tier of the U.S., which could bring some near to above normal rainfall by the end of April. The outlook for May and into the summer favors a slight lean to above normal rainfall but continued above normal temperatures.





# Current Drought Conditions

April 16, 2026  
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Graphic Courtesy of the North Carolina State Climate Office

## North Carolina Drought Update

Created By:

North Carolina  
Drought Management Advisory Council  
[www.ncdrought.org](http://www.ncdrought.org)

NORTH CAROLINA  
CLIMATE OFFICE  
[climate.ncsu.edu](http://climate.ncsu.edu)

NC STATE  
@NCSCO

For the assessment period ending **Apr. 14, 2026**  
From the US Drought Monitor, with input from the NC DMAC

### The Main Takeaway

With no precipitation falling in most areas last week, Severe (D2) and Extreme (D3) Drought have expanded again, now covering more than 95% of the state in total.

### This Week's Summary

So much for those April showers, as we've seen less than an inch of rain across the state so far this month. Combined with the recent onset of summer-like heat, evaporation and moisture loss has accelerated this week, with reservoirs seeing minimal inflows, soils reduced to dust as farmers begin planting, and fire danger staying high due to dead and dry vegetation.

### Next Week's Outlook

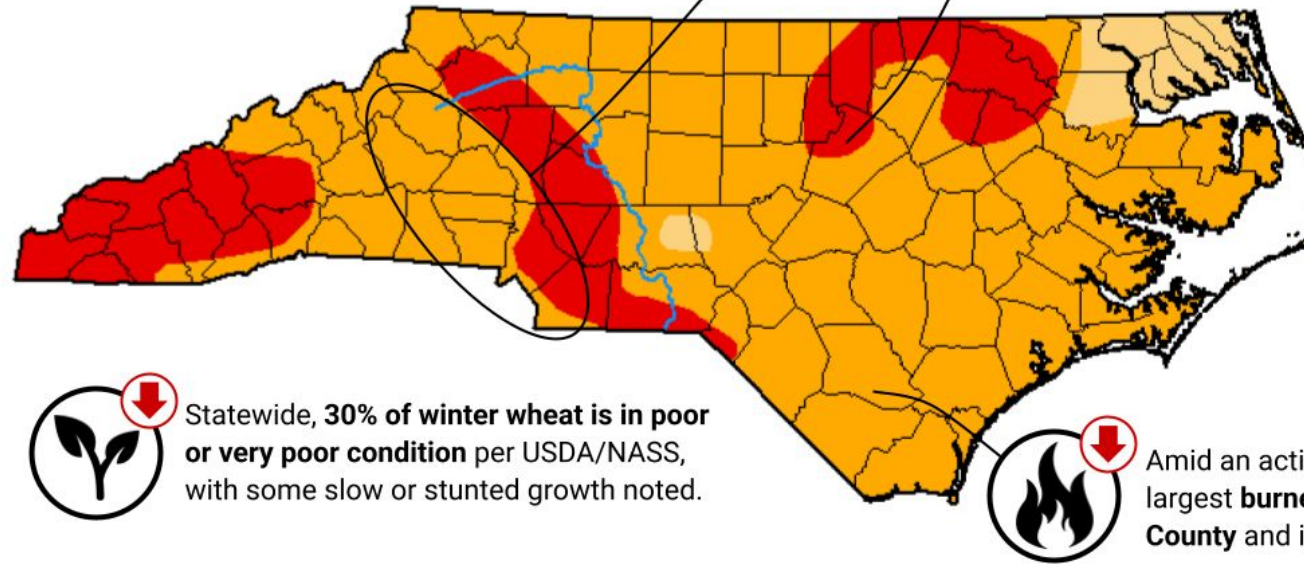
Hot weather will continue through Saturday before a cold frontal passage will usher in more seasonable temperatures, plus a few scattered showers on Sunday.

For your local drought status, visit [www.ncdrought.org](http://www.ncdrought.org)

The Catawba-Wataree basin is in Stage 1 of its Low Inflow Protocol, reducing downstream flow targets to help reservoirs like Lake Norman hold onto more water.



Raleigh has had just 0.10 inches of rain so far in April and 1.71 inches since March 1, on pace for its 3rd-driest spring on record.

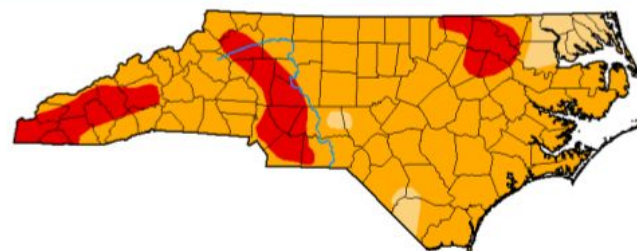


Statewide, **30% of winter wheat is in poor or very poor condition** per USDA/NASS, with some slow or stunted growth noted.



Amid an active week for wildfires, the largest **burned 748 acres in Bladen County** and is now 75% contained.

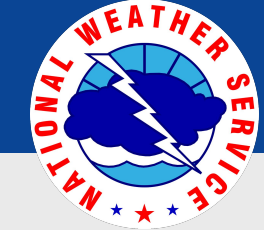
### Last Week's Drought Status



### Statewide Coverage by Category

Category	Current Coverage	Change Since Last Week
D0: Abnormally Dry	0.00%	0.00%
D1: Moderate Drought	4.96%	-1.25%
D2: Severe Drought	72.76%	-4.33%
D3: Extreme Drought	22.28%	+5.58%
D4: Exceptional Drought	0.00%	0.00%

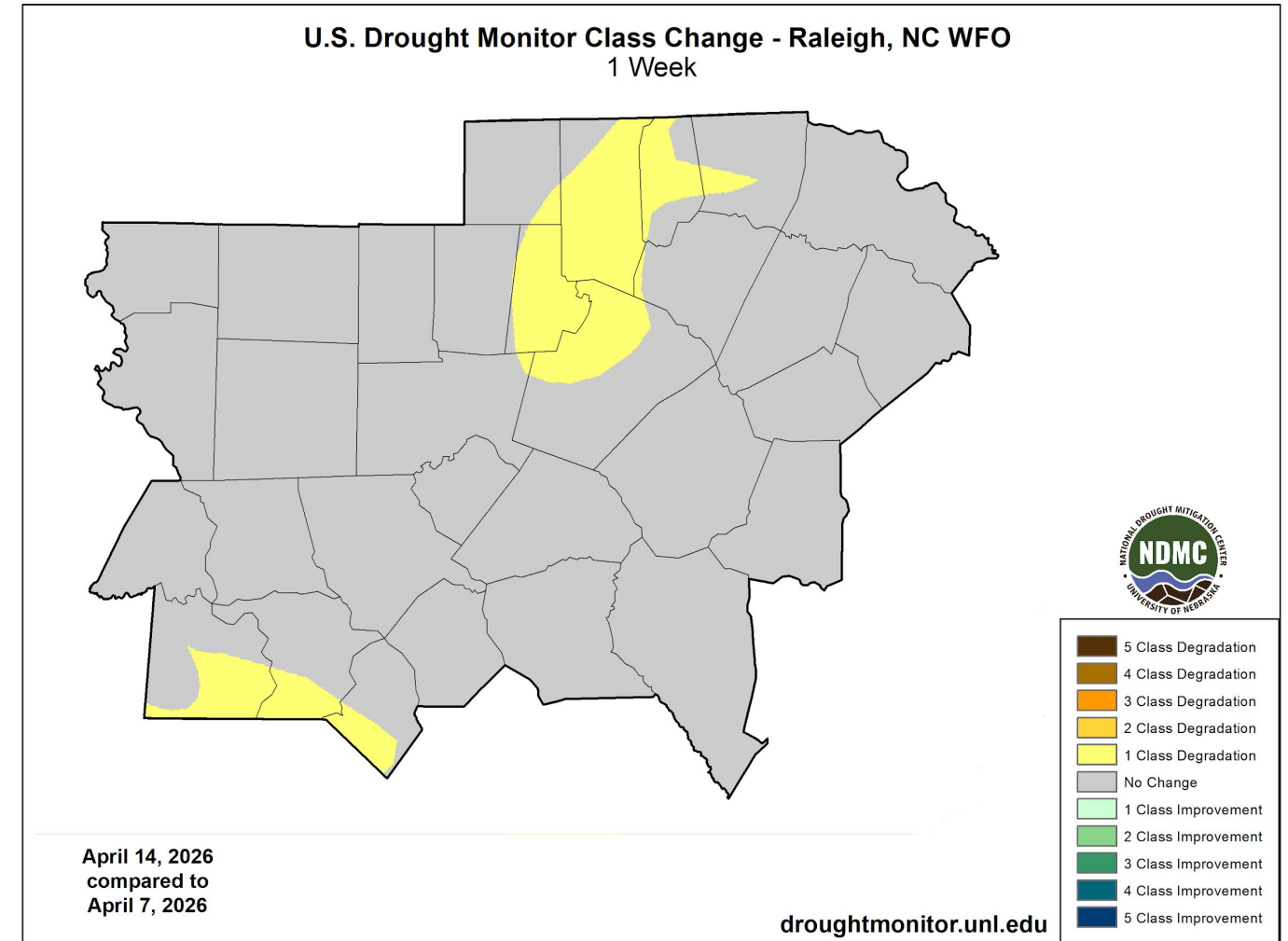
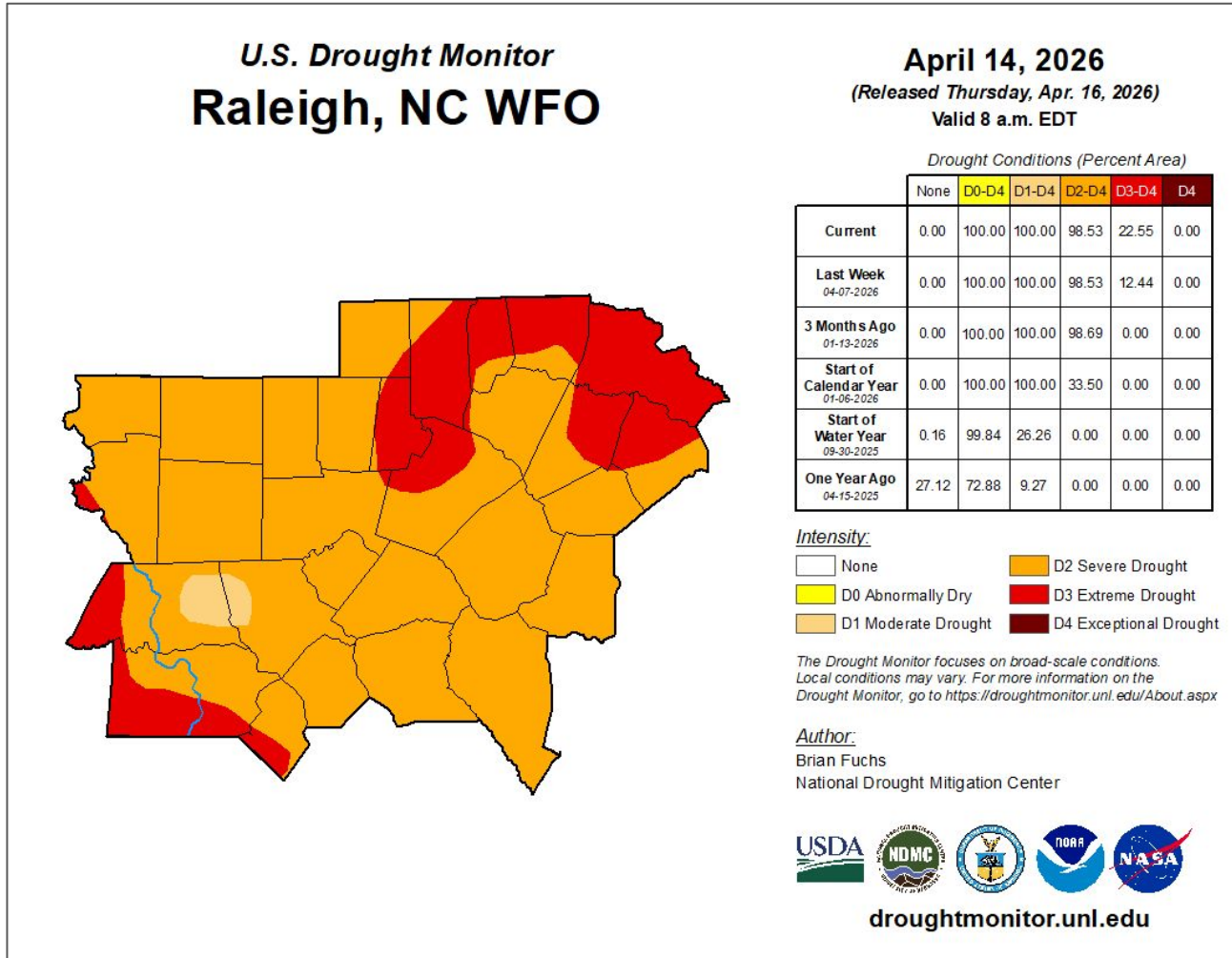




# Current Drought Conditions

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



## Main Takeaways

- Severe (D2) and Extreme (D3) Drought continue across nearly all of Central North Carolina.

Image Caption:

Left: [U.S. Drought Monitor valid 8am EST April 14th.](#)

Right: [U.S. Drought Monitor 4-week change map valid 8am EST April 14th.](#)



National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

U.S. Department of Commerce

National Weather Service  
Raleigh, NC

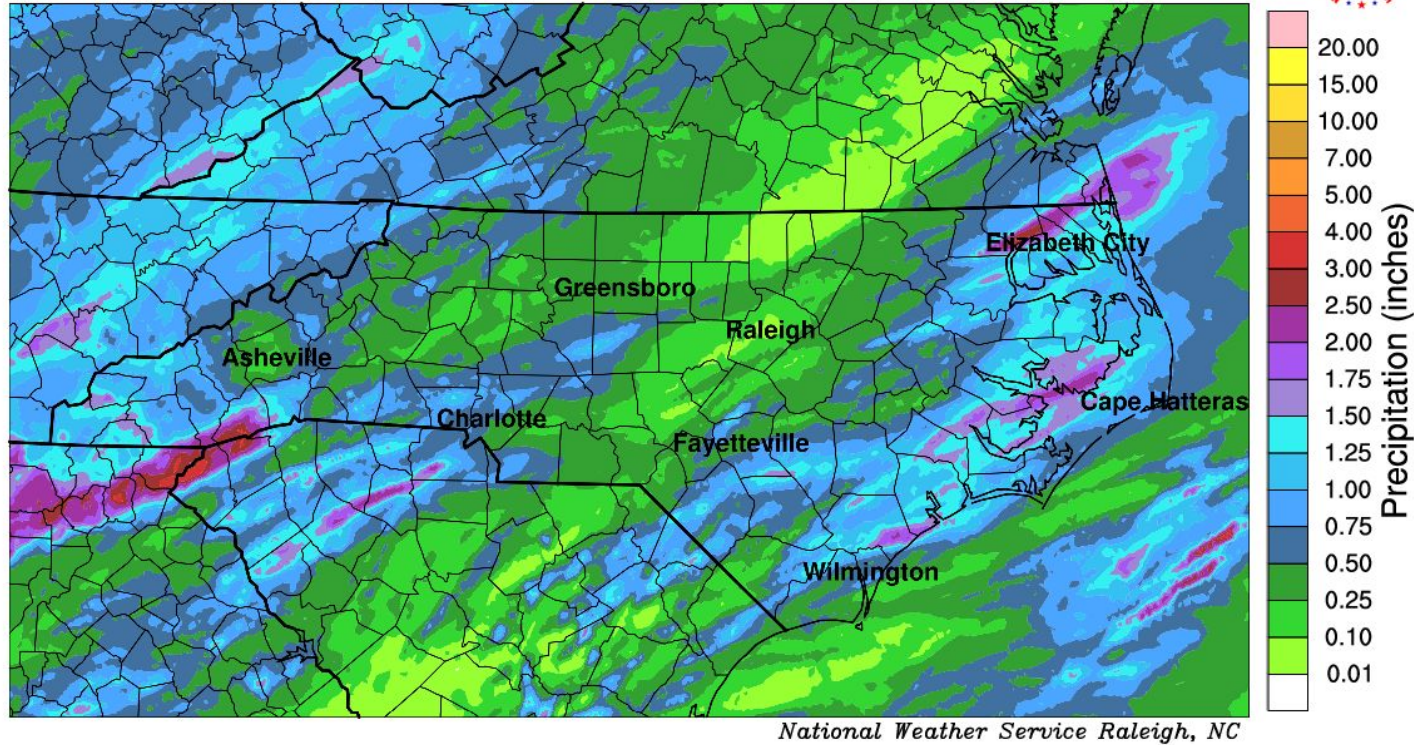


# Observed Precipitation

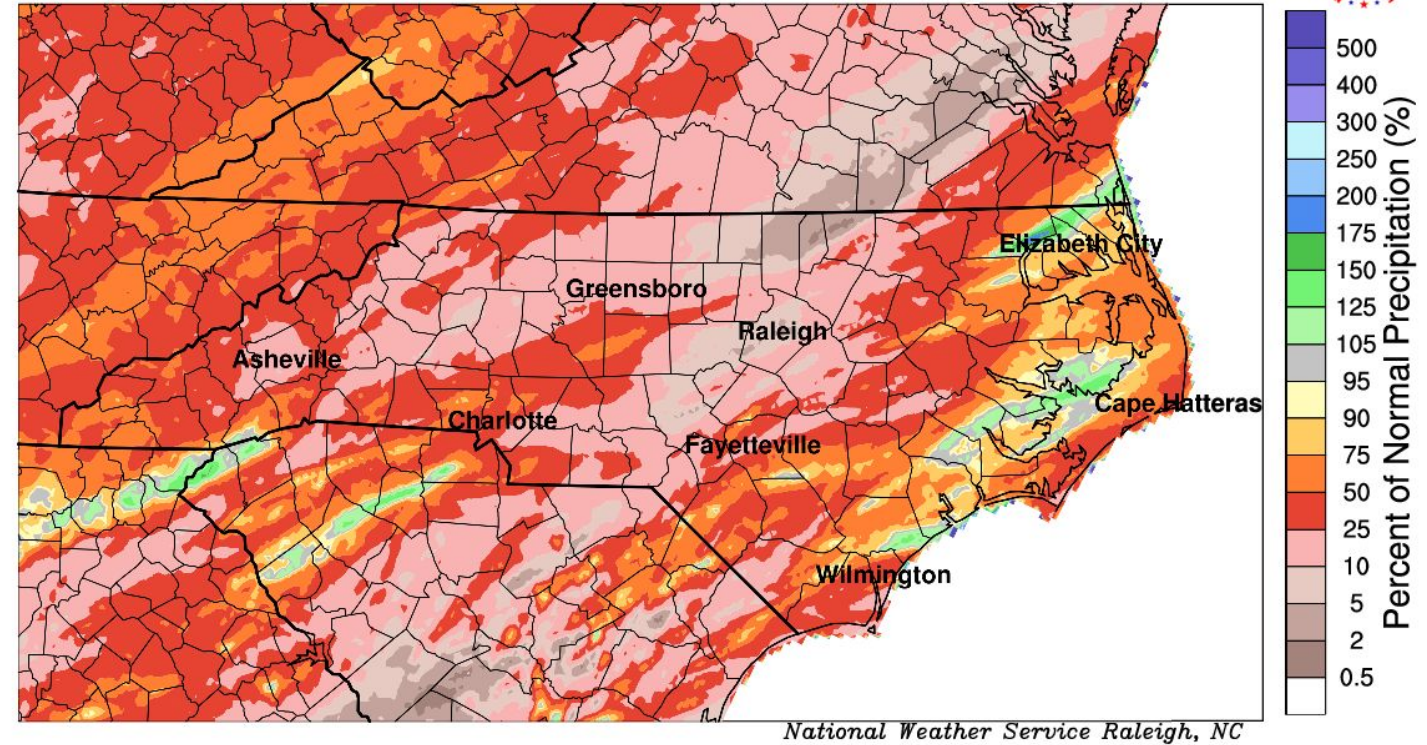
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Latest 7-Day Rainfall and Percent of Normal Rainfall

**NWPS 14-Day Observed Precipitation**  
Valid: 8 AM EDT Thursday April 16, 2026



**NWPS 14-Day Observed Percent of Normal Precipitation**  
Valid: 8 AM EDT Thursday April 16, 2026



## Main Takeaways

- There has only been one moderate rain event since the beginning of April, and the rainfall from that system was focused mainly in the coastal plain. Rainfall has been significantly below normal in the Piedmont.

Image Captions:

Left - Precipitation Amount for NC

Right - Percent of Normal Precipitation for NC

Data Courtesy NWS National Water Prediction Service

Data over the past 14 days ending April 16, 2026





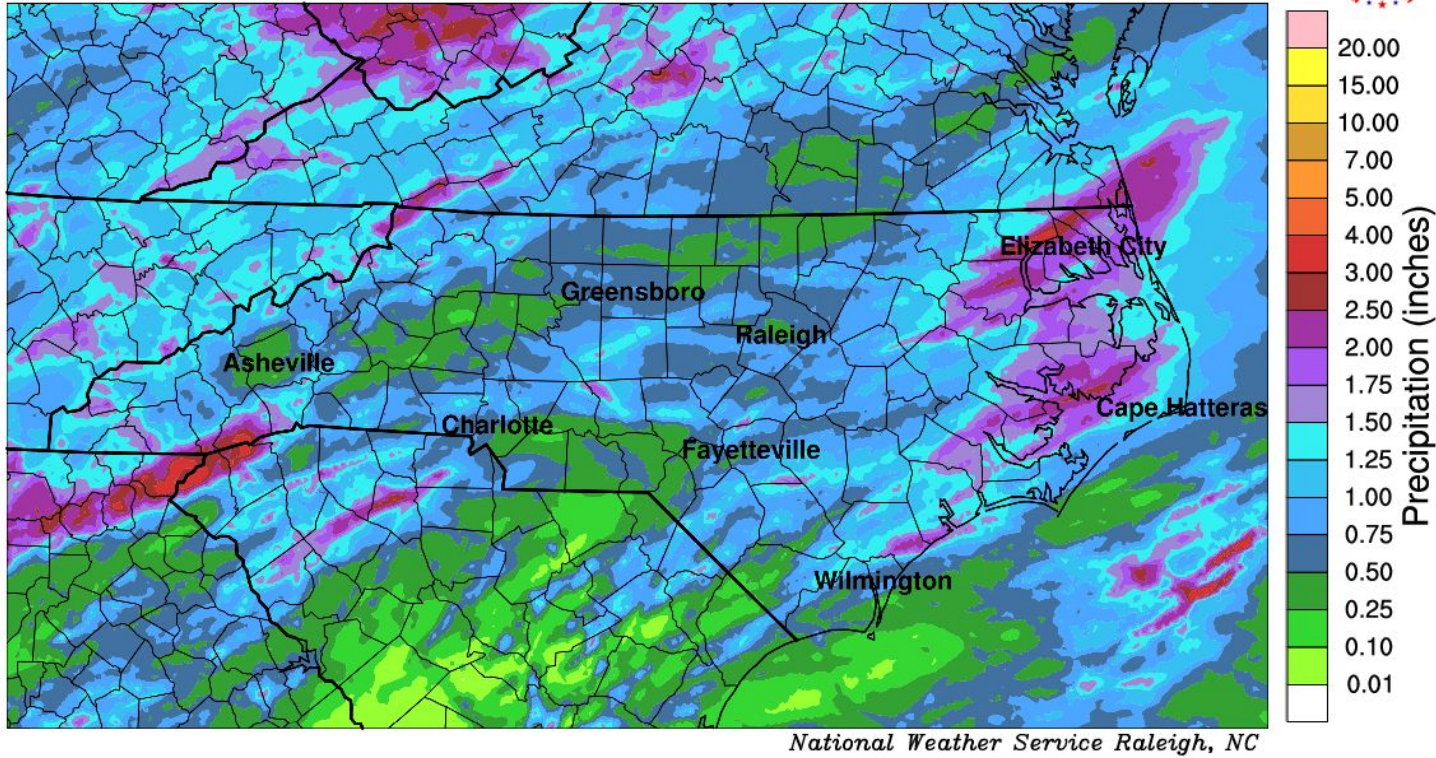
# Observed Precipitation

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Latest 30-Day Precipitation and Percent of Normal Precipitation

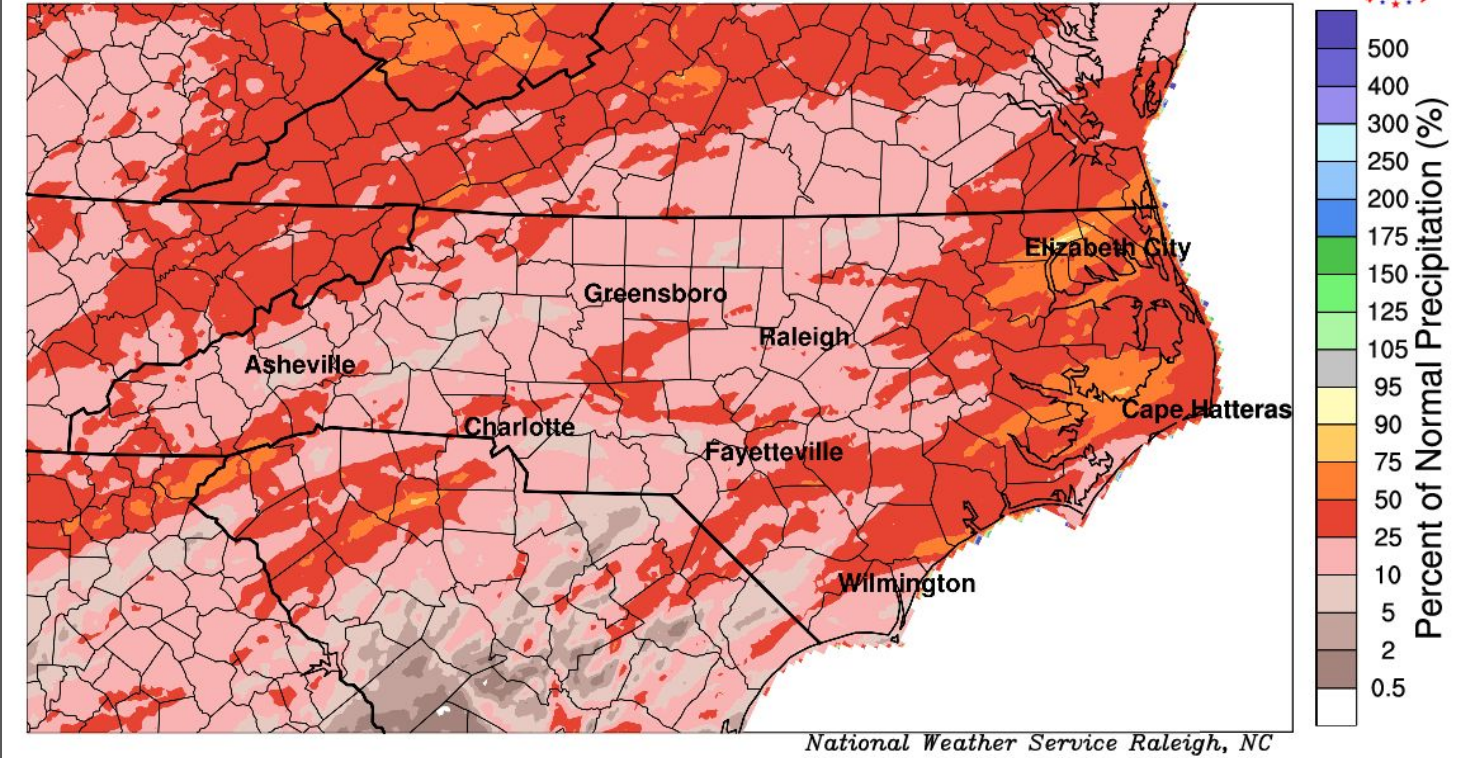
## NWPS 30-Day Observed Precipitation

Valid: 8 AM EDT Thursday April 16, 2026



## NWPS 30-Day Observed Percent of Normal Precipitation

Valid: 8 AM EDT Thursday April 16, 2026



### Main Takeaways

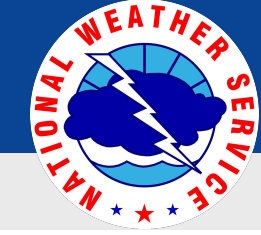
- There have only been two rain events since early March, and total those events only produced 1-2 inches of rain, with most areas receiving just around an inch of rain. Rainfall has been significantly below normal.
- Additional statistics → [Local Rainfall Summary](#)

Past 90 Days Stats	Observed Precipitation	Departure From Normal	Percent of Normal
Raleigh-Durham	6.04	-4.29	58%
Greensboro	6.27	-3.82	62%
Fayetteville	5.69	-3.40	63%

Image Captions:

Left - 30 Day Observed Precipitation for NC; Right - Percent of Normal Precipitation for NC  
Data Courtesy NWS National Water Prediction Service. Data over the past 30 days ending April 16th





# Hydrologic Conditions and Impacts

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- Streamflows have been extremely below normal across all of Central North Carolina since the middle of March.

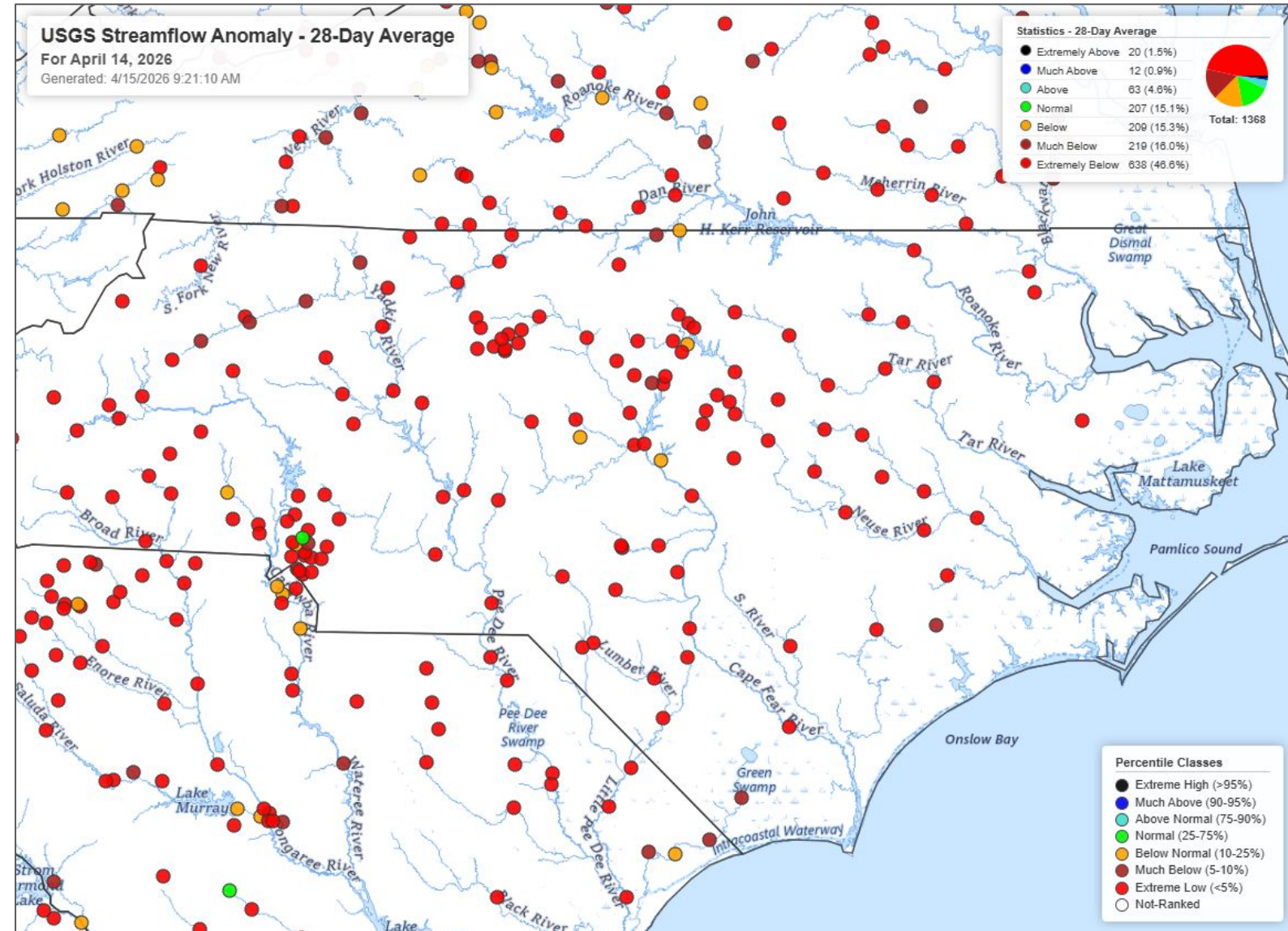


Image Caption: USGS 28 Day Average Streamflow Anomaly valid April 14th, 2026





# Precipitation Forecast

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Latest 7-Day Precipitation Forecast

- Next 7 days:
  - After near-record heat and dry conditions this week, a cold front will move through the area on Sunday. However, rainfall is expected to be limited with the front and many areas will remain dry.
  - Well below normal rainfall is expected.

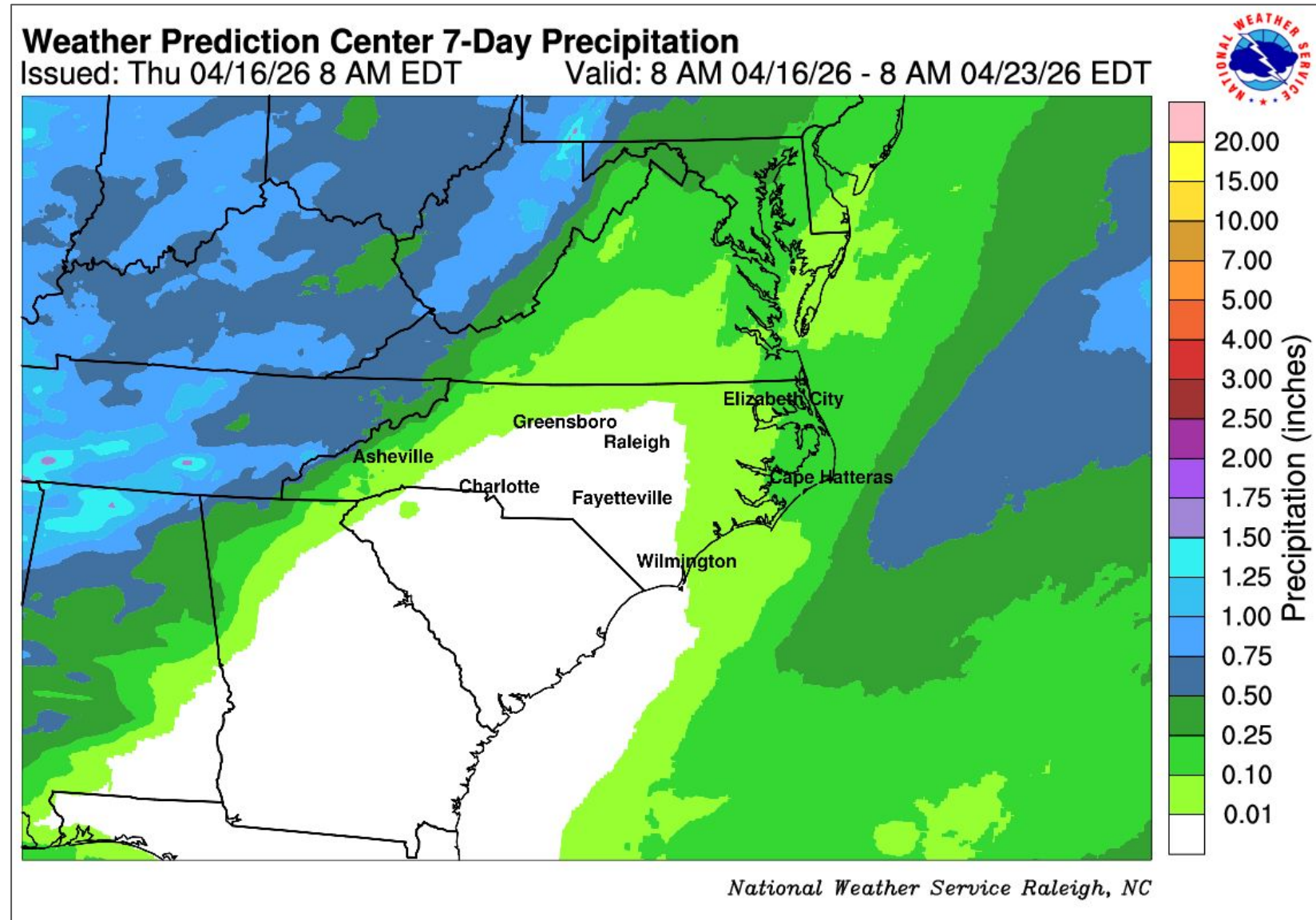


Image Caption:  
Weather Prediction Center [7-day precipitation forecast](#) valid April 16 to April 23, 2026





# 8-14 Day Outlook

April 16, 2026  
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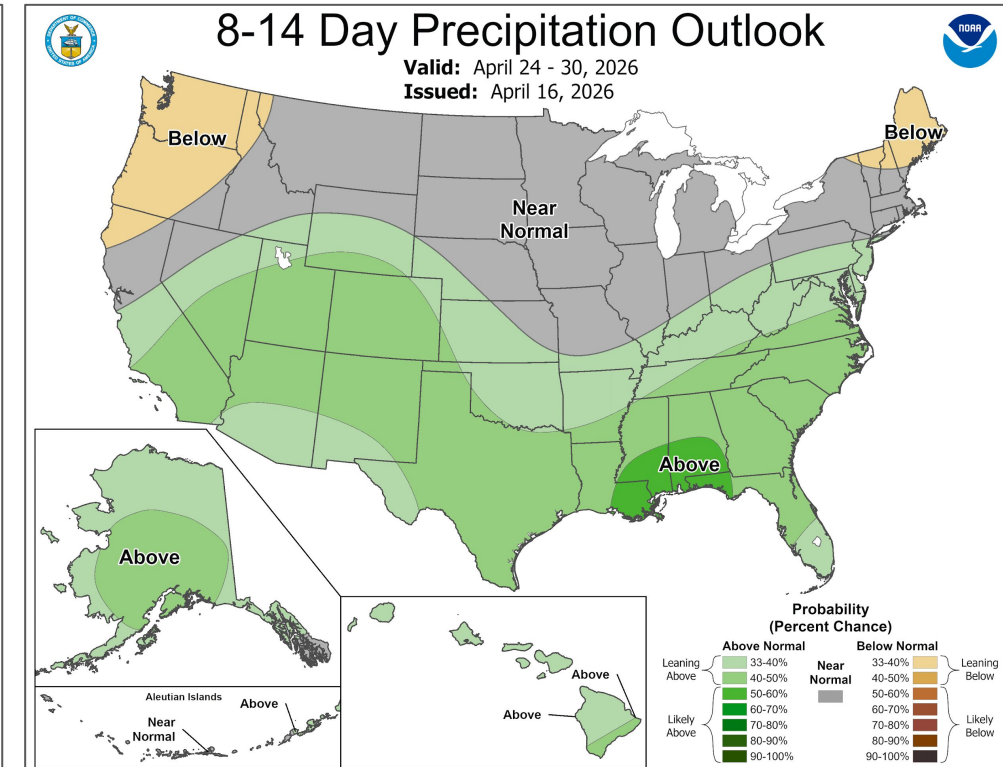
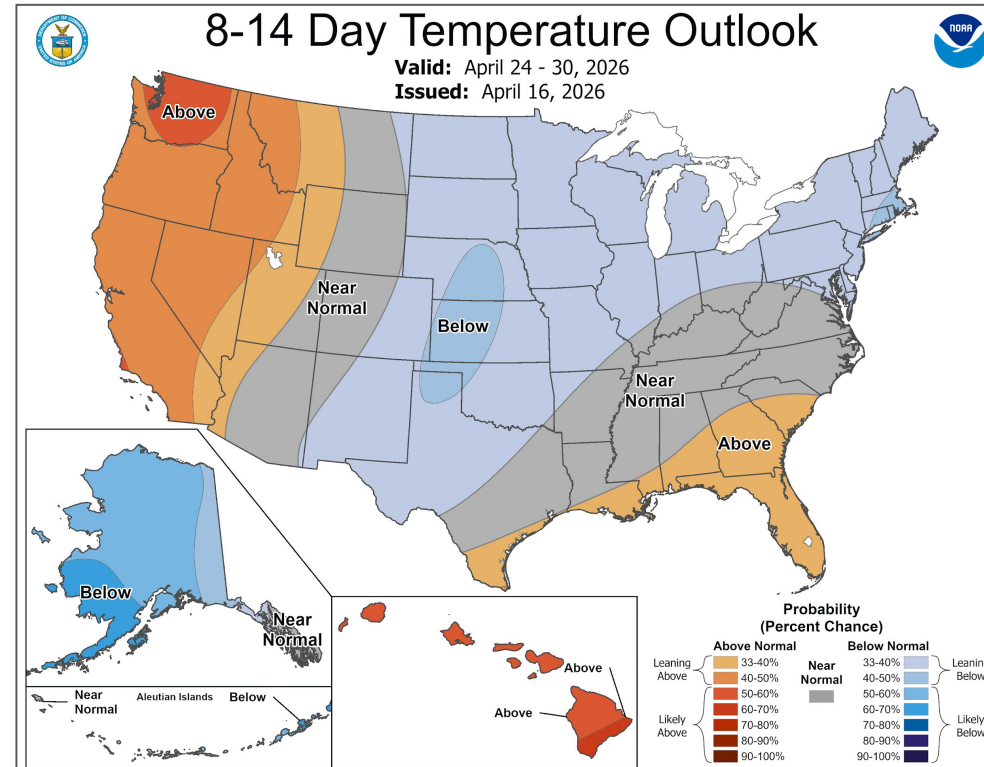
## Temperature and Precipitation Outlook

### Main Takeaways

- There is a 40-50% chance of above normal temperatures in Days 8-14 across central North Carolina.
- There are slightly increased chances (33-40%) of above normal precipitation in Days 8-14.

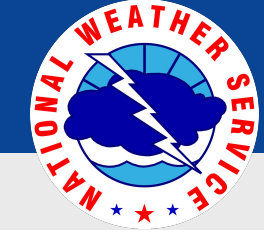
### Possible Impact

- Potential for slight improvement in drought conditions from wetter conditions, but heat may mitigate those improvements somewhat.



**Image Captions:**  
 Left - [Climate Prediction Center 8-14 Day Temperature Outlook.](#)  
 Right - [Climate Prediction Center 8-14 Day Precipitation Outlook.](#)  
 Valid April 24 -30, 2026





# Weeks 3-4 Outlook

April 16, 2026  
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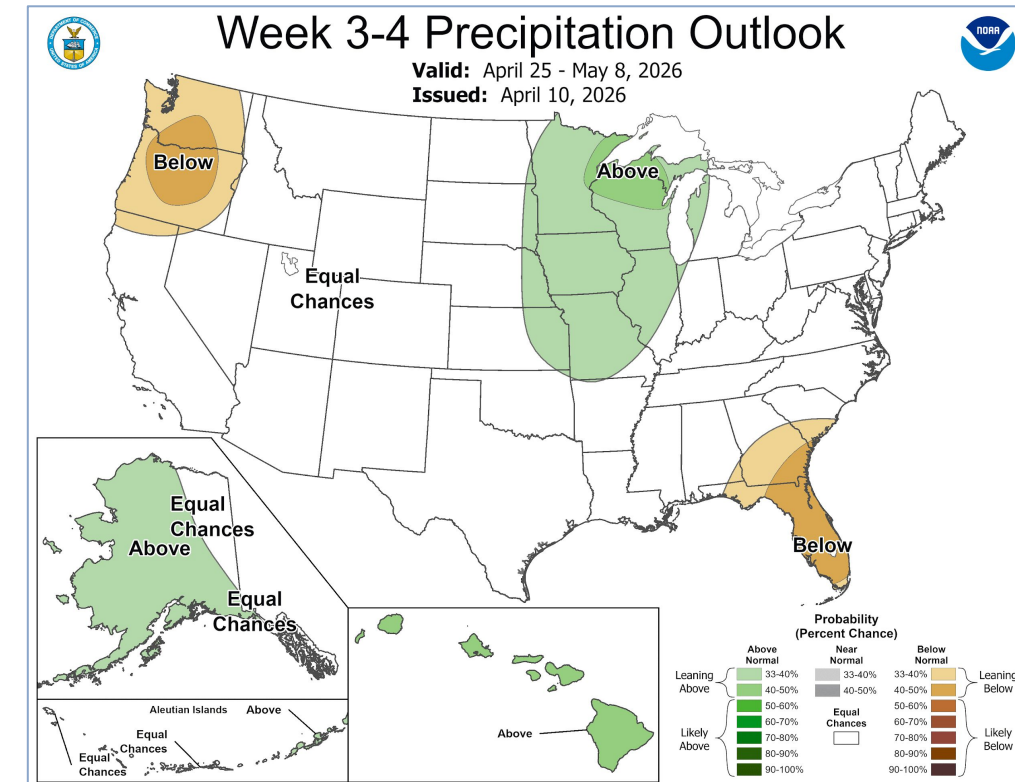
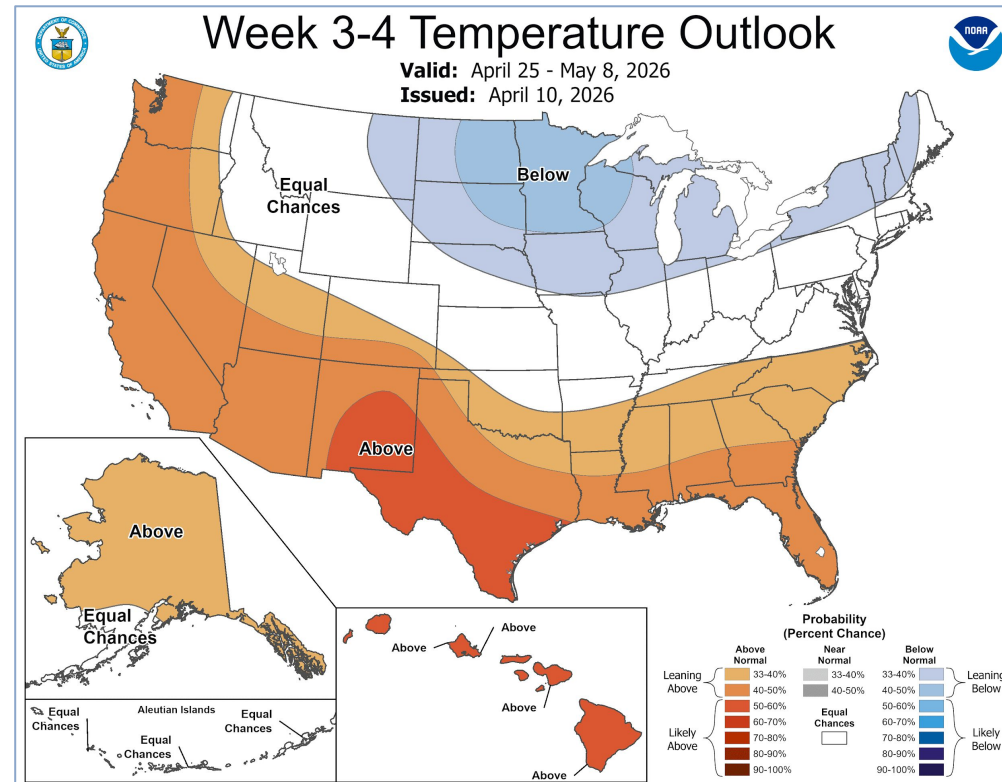
## Temperature and Precipitation Outlook

### Main Takeaways

- There are slightly increased chances (33-40%) of above normal temperatures in Weeks 3-4 across central North Carolina.
- There are equal chances of above or below normal precipitation in Weeks 3-4.

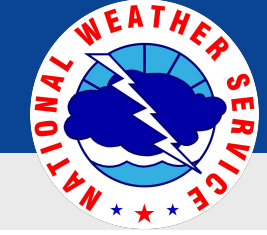
### Possible Impact

There is no clear signal for wet or dry conditions heading into early May. However the main storm track should generally be through the Midwest, bringing weather systems into the region and some chances for rain.



**Image Captions:**  
Left - [Climate Prediction Center Weeks 3-4 Temperature Outlook.](#)  
Right - [Climate Prediction Center Weeks 3-4 Precipitation Outlook.](#)  
Valid April 25-May 6, 2026





# Seasonal Outlooks

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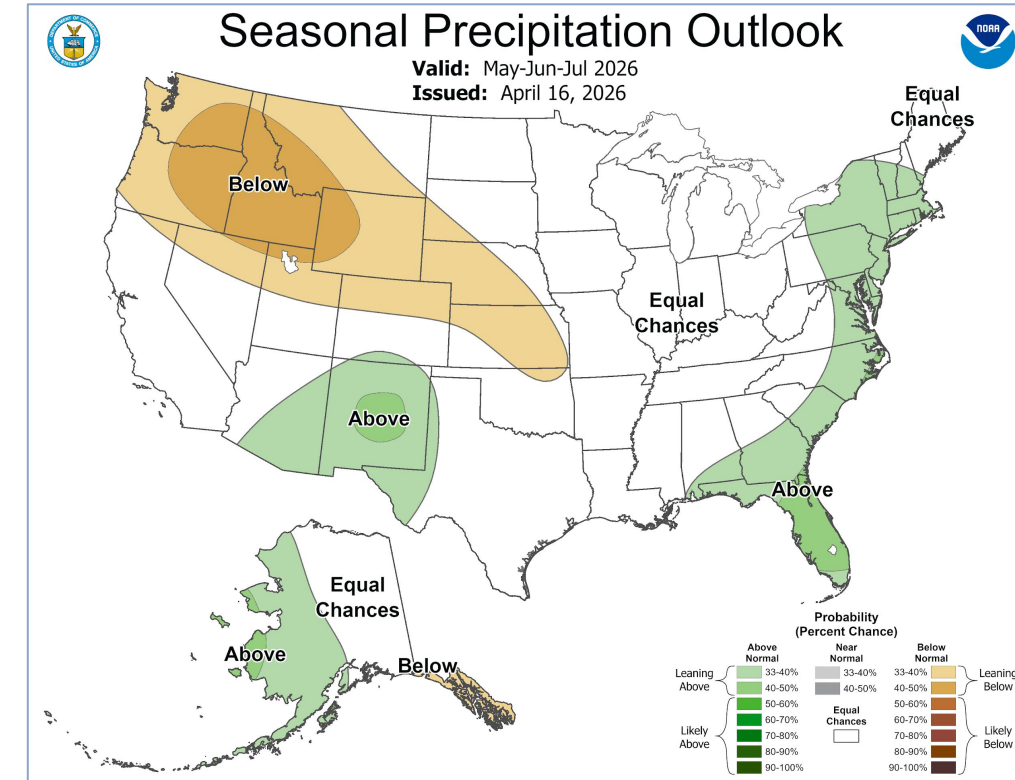
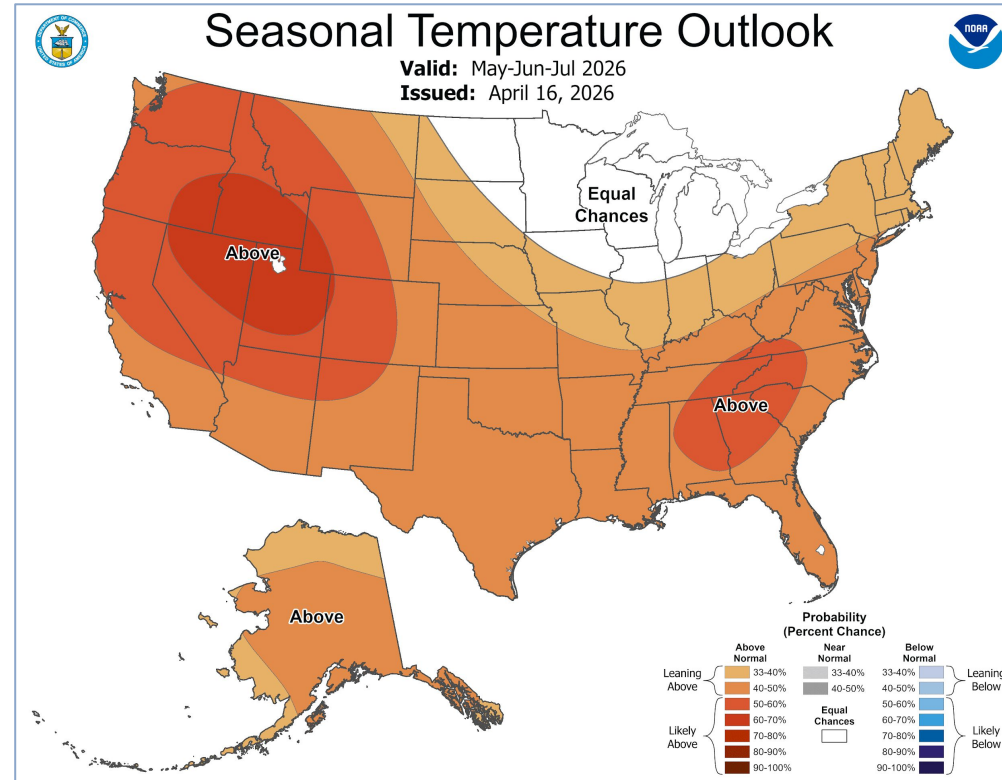
## Temperature and Precipitation Outlook

### Main Takeaways

- There is a 40-50% chance of above normal temperatures in May-June-July across central North Carolina.
- There are slightly increased chances (33-40%) of above normal precipitation in May-June-July.

### Possible Impact

Some improvement in drought conditions will be possible later this spring into early summer with wetter conditions. But heat may mitigate those improvements somewhat.



**Image Captions:**  
Left - [Climate Prediction Center Weeks 3-4 Temperature Outlook.](#)  
Right - [Climate Prediction Center Weeks 3-4 Precipitation Outlook.](#)  
Valid May-July, 2026

