



Drought Information Statement for Central North Carolina

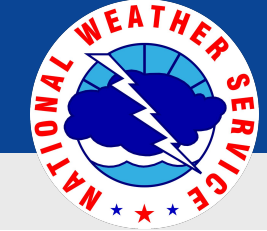
Valid May 12, 2026

Issued By: NWS Raleigh

Contact Information:

- This Drought Information Statement will be updated by June 9, 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
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- Extreme Drought (D3) continues across most of the Piedmont of North Carolina.
 - Severe Drought (D2) continues in the Sandhills and Coastal Plain

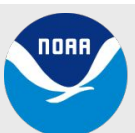


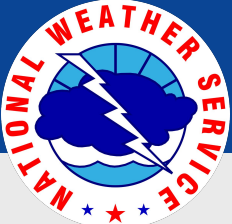


Key Points

May 12, 2026
2:24 PM EDT

- This is a long term drought, which dates back to August of 2025 for many areas.
 - For instance, Raleigh is currently experiencing a precipitation deficit of over 17 inches since August.
- Impacts:
 - Many municipalities have moved into active conservation stages to protect reservoir levels.
 - Groundwater levels in the Piedmont are at or near record lows
 - Winter wheat and some summer crops are struggling to take root due to critically low topsoil moisture. Shallow-rooted crops have seen reduced yields.
 - Many streams and rivers across central NC (including the Neuse and Haw River basins) are at all-time record lows for this time of year.
- In the short term, hot and mostly dry conditions are expected through the middle of next week. Unsettled weather may return late next week, but probability of any areas getting substantial, widespread rainfall is low.





Current Drought Conditions

May 12, 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

NORTH CAROLINA
CLIMATE OFFICE
climate.ncsu.edu

NC STATE
[@NCSCO](https://twitter.com/NCSCO)

For the assessment period ending **May 12, 2026**
From the US Drought Monitor, with input from the NC DMAC

The Main Takeaway

While most areas received some rain late last week, improvements were confined to the southern Piedmont, including the removal of Exceptional Drought (D4).

This Week's Summary

This week is a good example of the order of operations when it comes to drought recovery. The rainfall totals from last Wednesday and Thursday were solid, with an inch or more in our southern tier, and topsoil moisture levels showed modest gains. But deeper soil moisture, groundwater, and lake levels saw little to no changes, which tells us more rain is needed to spur on recovery.

Next Week's Outlook

We're set up for a sunny and summer-like week as our temperatures warm into the low 90s by Sunday with no significant rain expected until at least next Thursday.

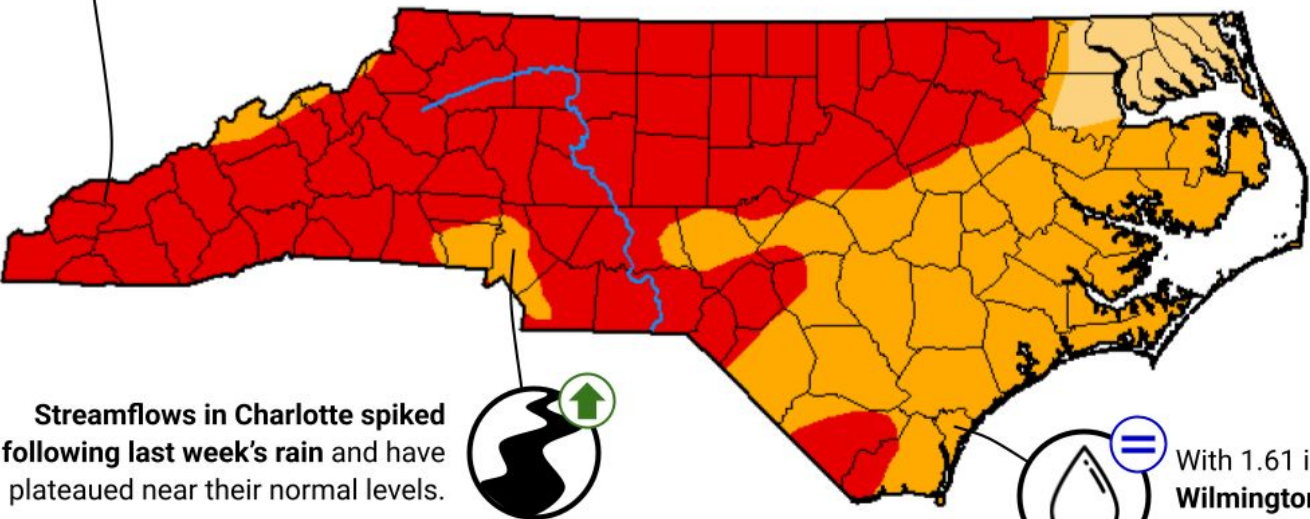
For your local drought status, visit www.ncdrought.org



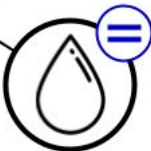
Fontana Lake rose by two feet after the latest rain event, but it still fell further behind its rising target as we approach the summer.



Extension reports from eastern NC note that the recent rain has helped crops emerge, but growth is slow and irrigation ponds are low.

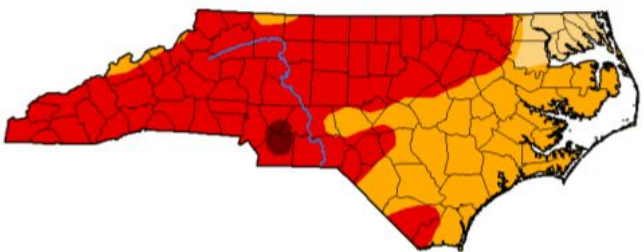


Streamflows in Charlotte spiked following last week's rain and have plateaued near their normal levels.



With 1.61 inches this month, Wilmington is keeping pace with its average rainfall so far in May.

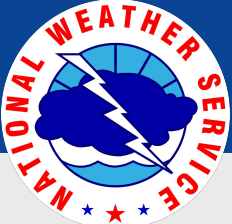
Last Week's Drought Status



Statewide Coverage by Category

Category	Current Coverage	Change Since Last Week
D0: Abnormally Dry	0.00%	0.00%
D1: Moderate Drought	4.45%	-0.01%
D2: Severe Drought	36.08%	+1.29%
D3: Extreme Drought	59.47%	-0.24%
D4: Exceptional Drought	0.00%	-1.04%

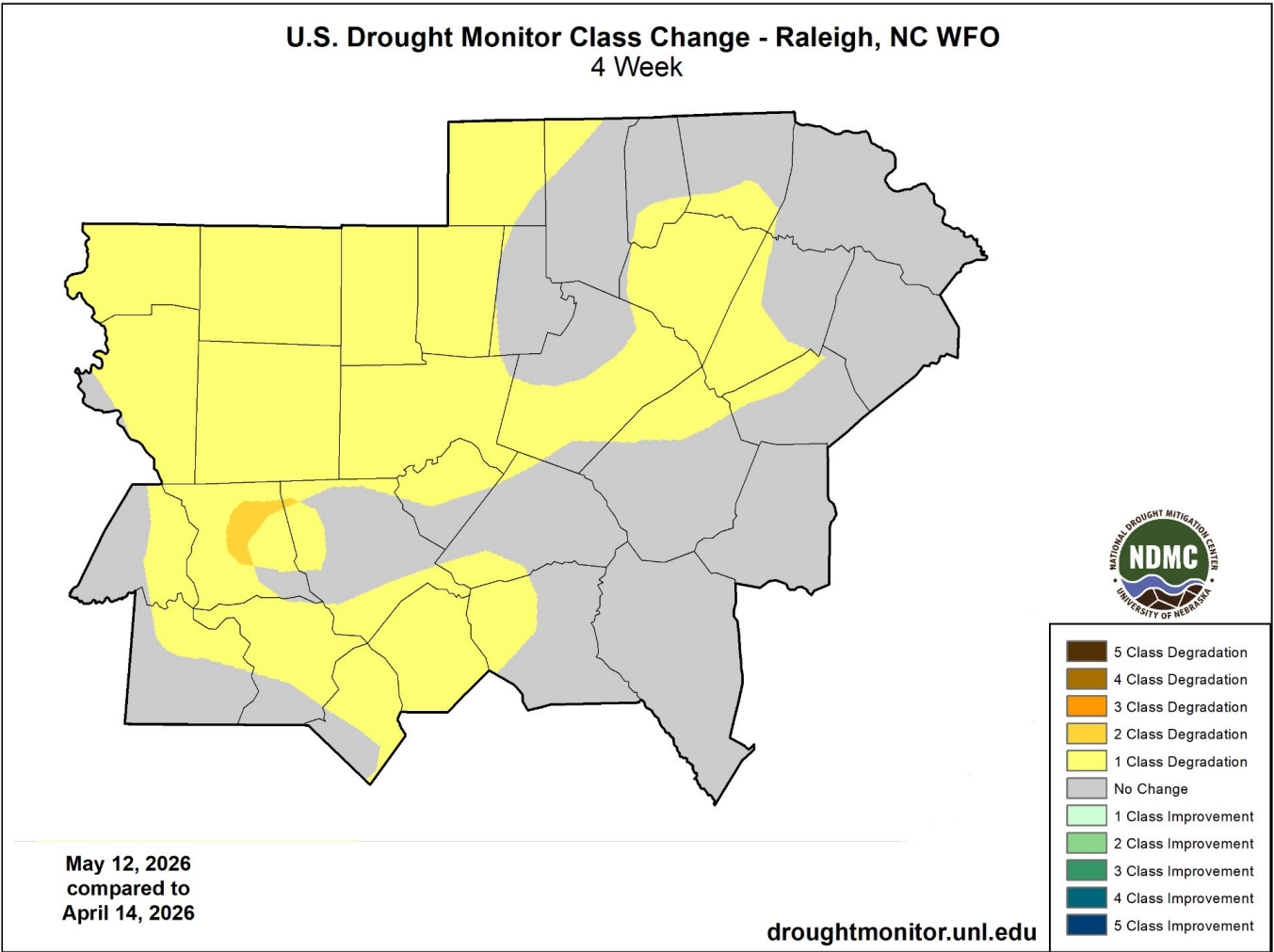
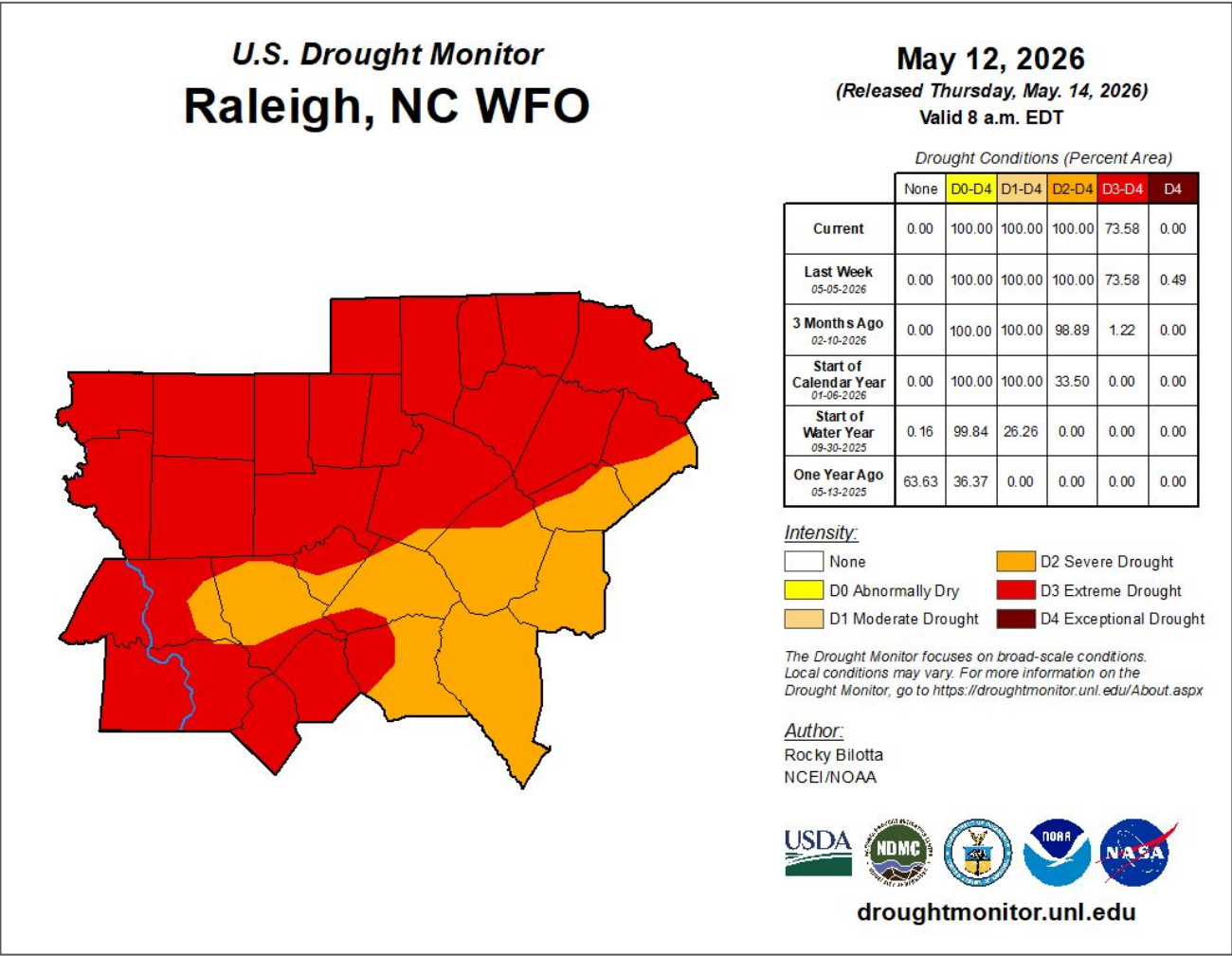




Current Drought Conditions

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



Main Takeaways

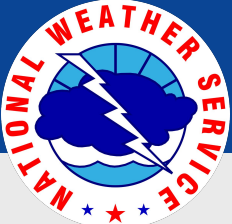
- Severe (D2) and Extreme (D3) Drought continue across nearly all of Central North Carolina.

Image Caption:

Left: [U.S. Drought Monitor valid 8am EST May 12, 2026.](#)

Right: [U.S. Drought Monitor 4-week change map valid 8am EST May 12, 2026.](#)

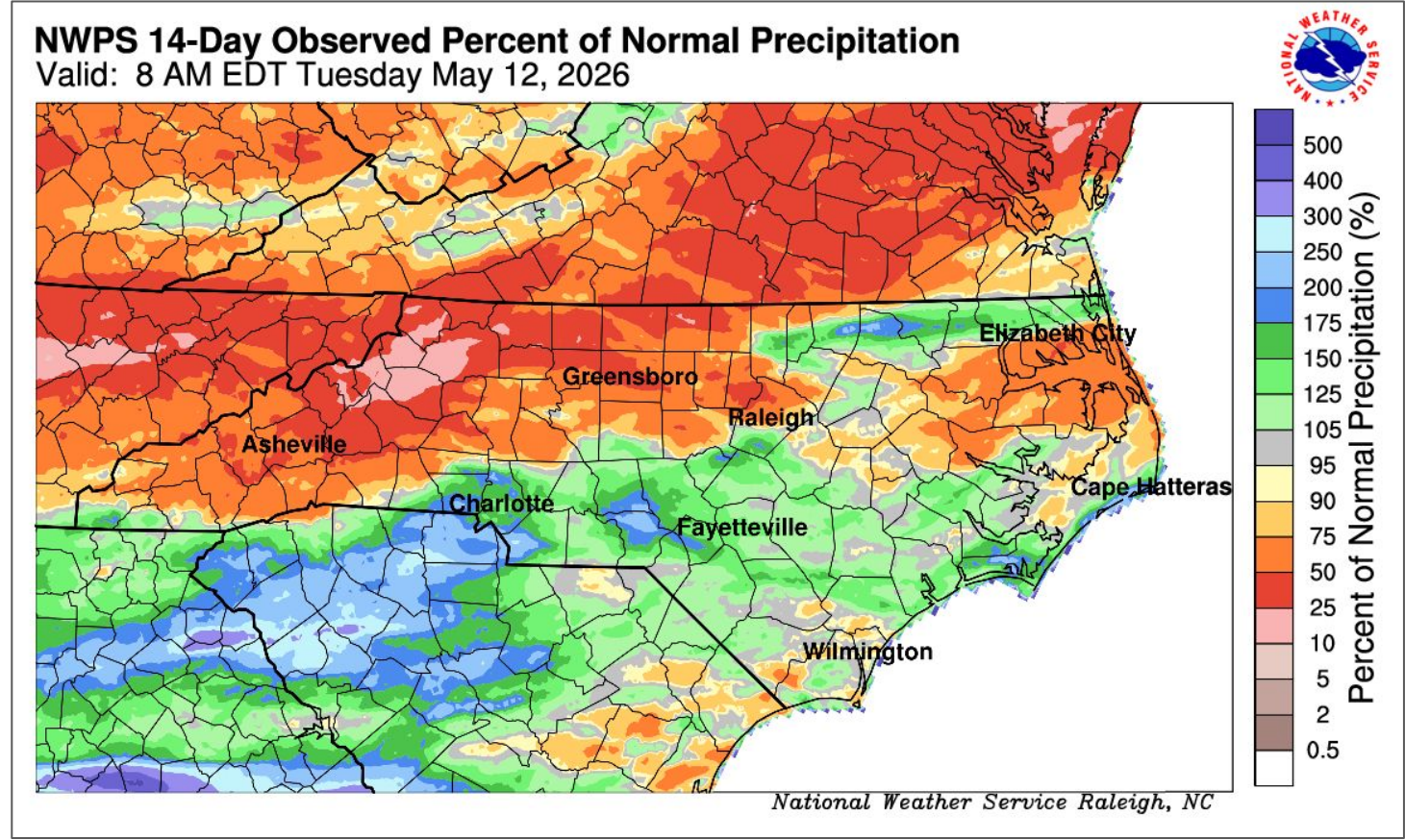
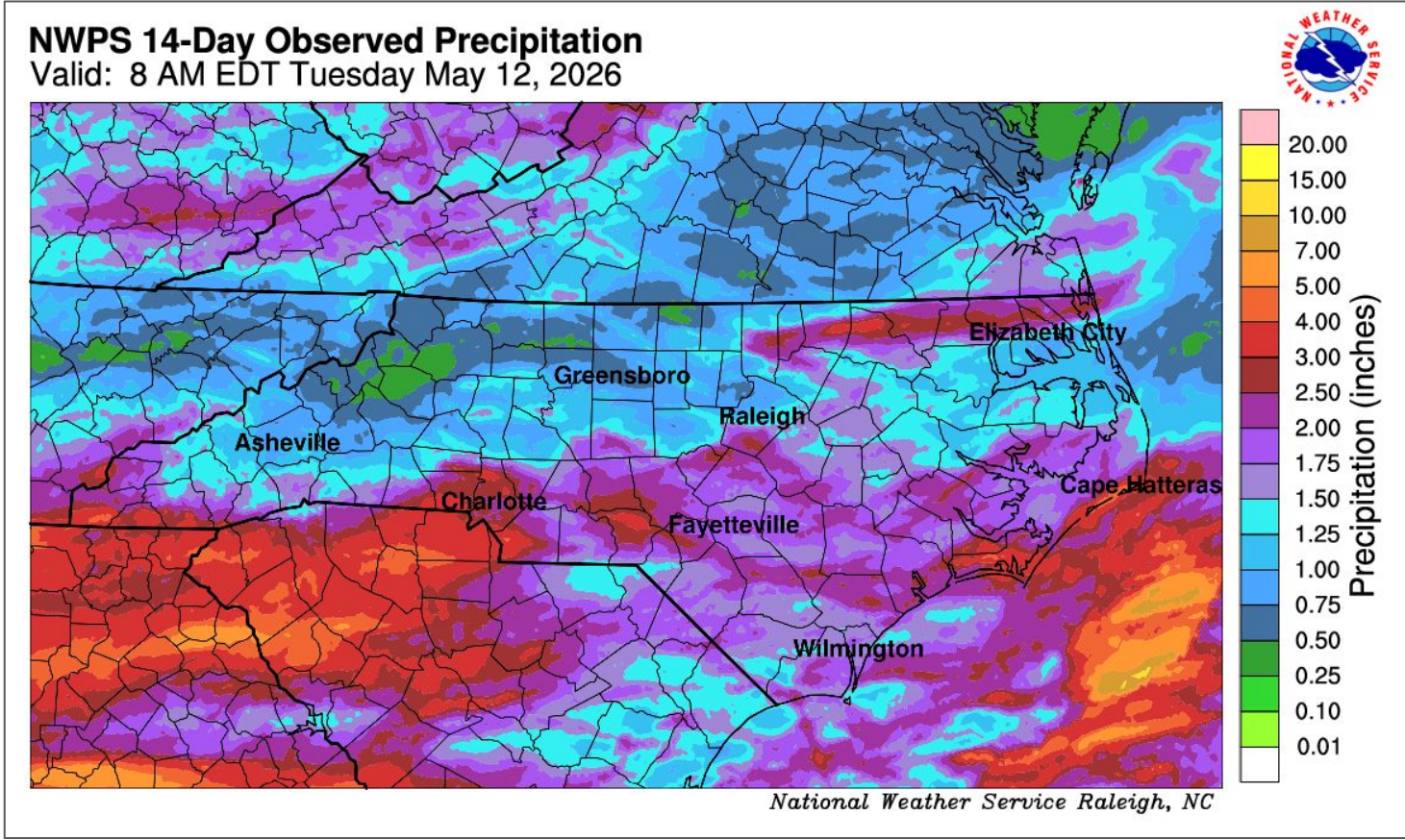




Observed Precipitation

May 12, 2026
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Latest 14-Day Rainfall and Percent of Normal Rainfall

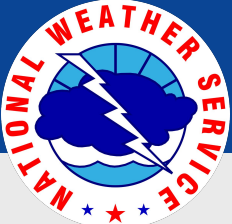


Main Takeaways

- Modest rain fell across southern portions of Central North Carolina on May 7th when some areas received up the 2 inches of rain and the southern Piedmont. However, most other areas saw below normal rainfall.

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 May 12, 2026

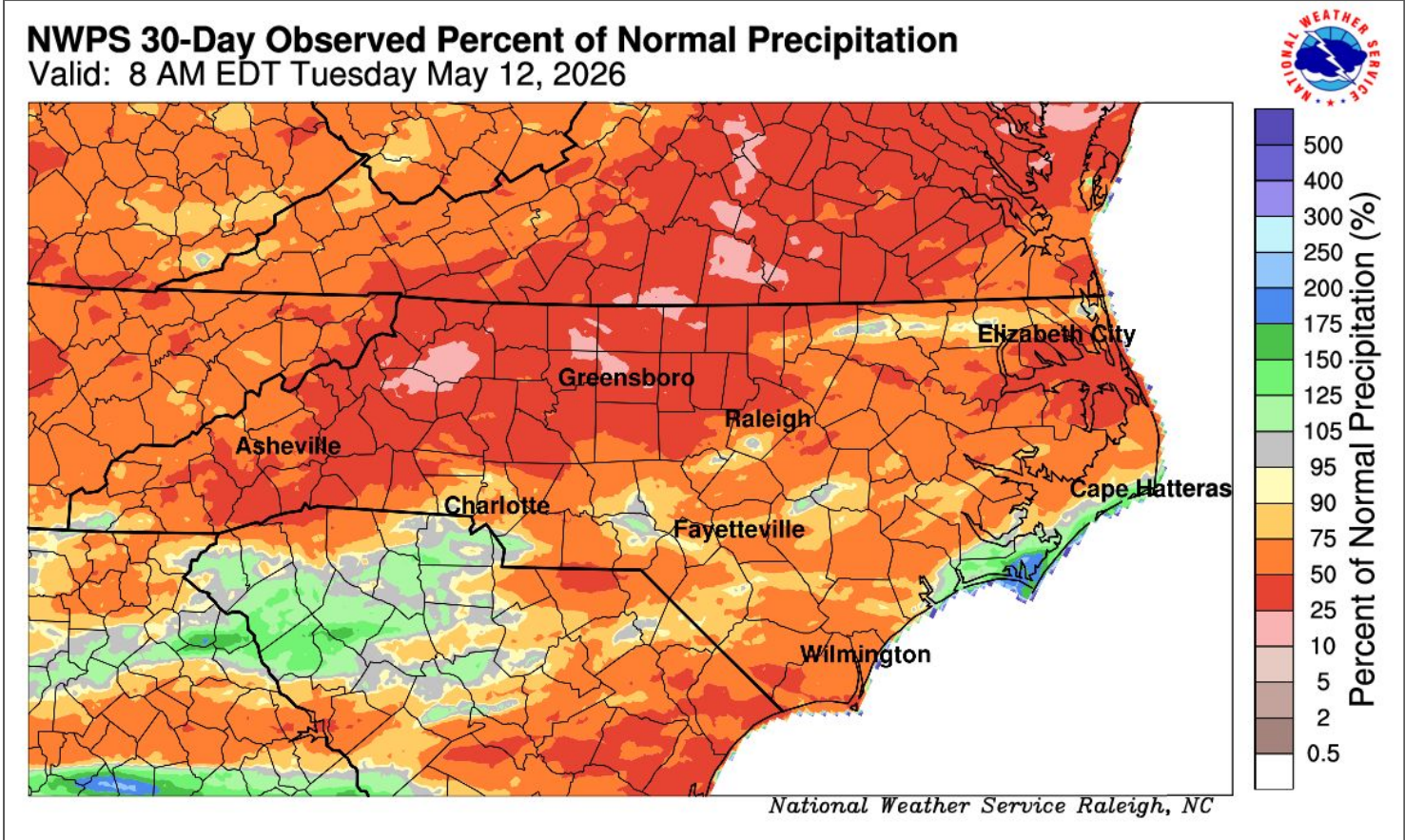
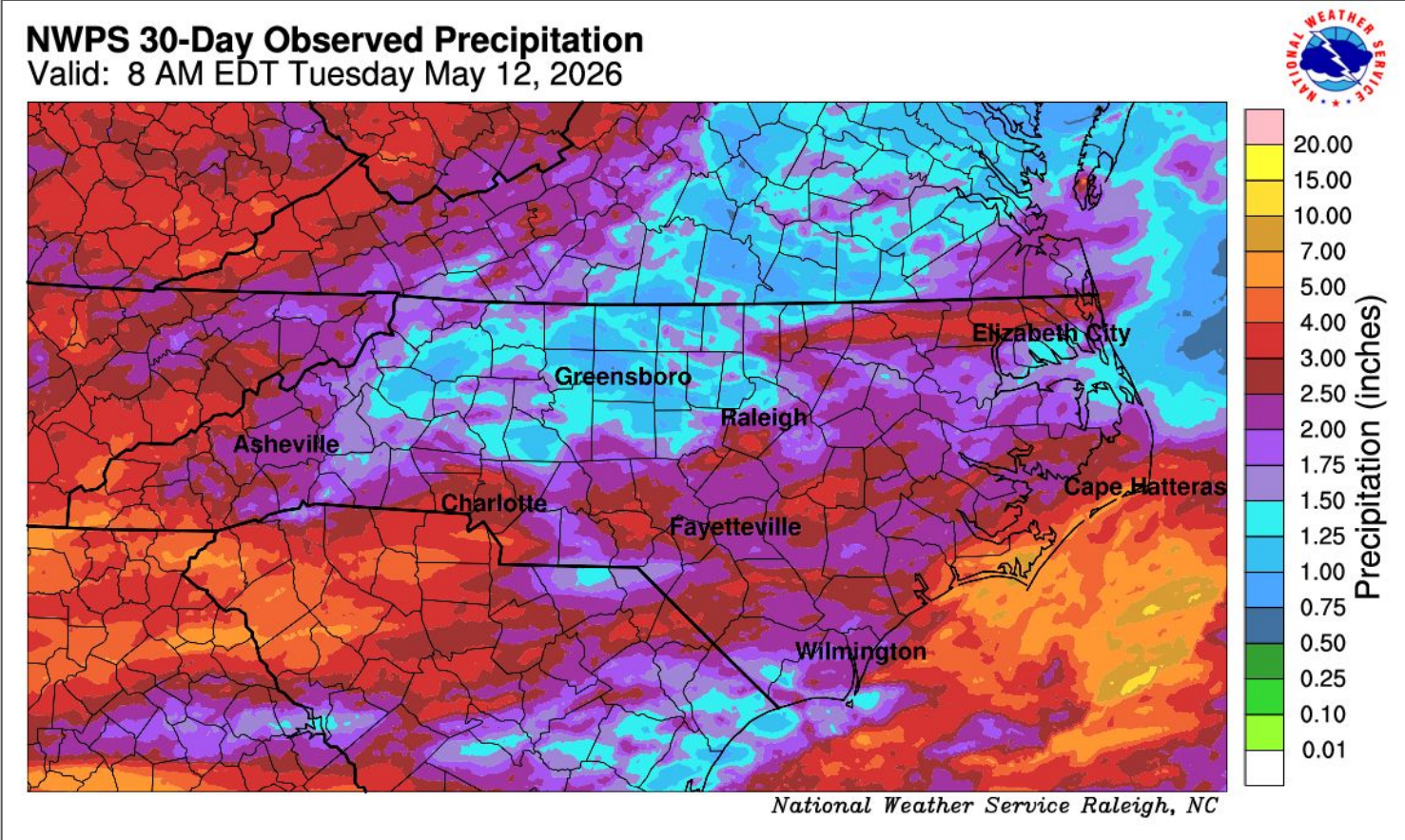




Observed Precipitation

May 12, 2026
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Latest 30-Day Precipitation and Percent of Normal Precipitation



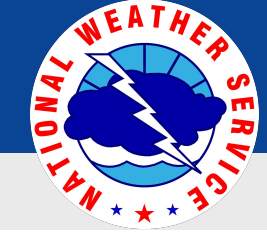
Main Takeaways

- Over the past 30 days rainfall has been significantly below normal and is a major contributor to the current drought conditions.
- Additional statistics → [Local Rainfall Summary](#)

Past 90 Days Stats	Observed Precipitation	Departure From Normal	Percent of Normal
Raleigh-Durham	5.84	-4.83	55%
Greensboro	5.57	-5.08	52%
Fayetteville	5.37	-3.62	60%

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 May 12, 2026





Hydrologic Conditions and Impacts

May 12, 2026
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- Many streams and rivers across central NC (including the Neuse and Haw River basins) are flowing at all-time record lows for this time of year.

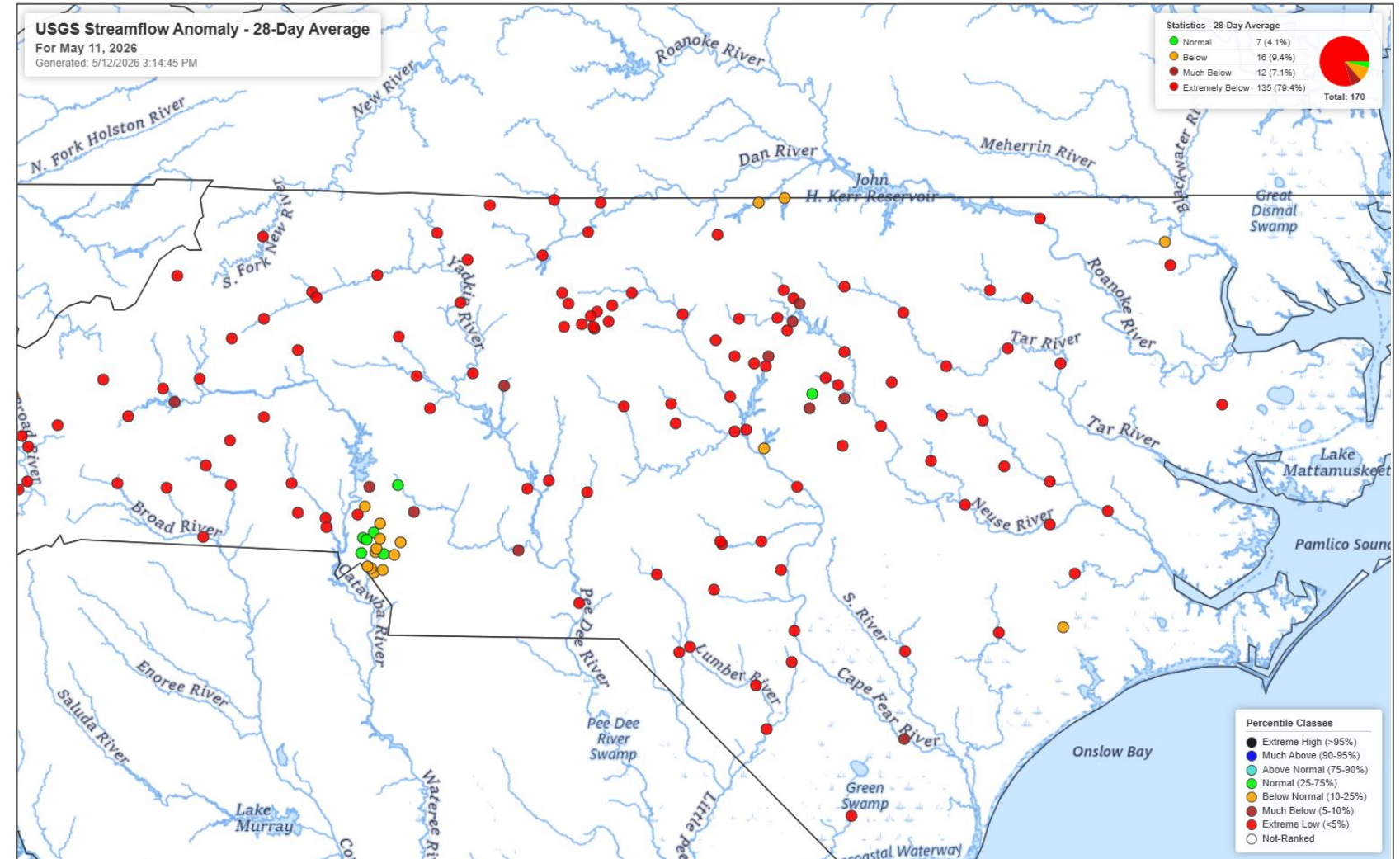
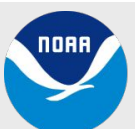


Image Caption: USGS 28 Day Average Streamflow Anomaly valid May 12, 2026





Precipitation Forecast

Latest 7-Day Precipitation Forecast

May 12, 2026
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- Next 7 days:
 - A hot and humid summer-like pattern will develop through the middle of next week. Some afternoon showers and storms are possible, but the chance of any widespread rainfall is very low.
 - Well below normal rainfall is expected.

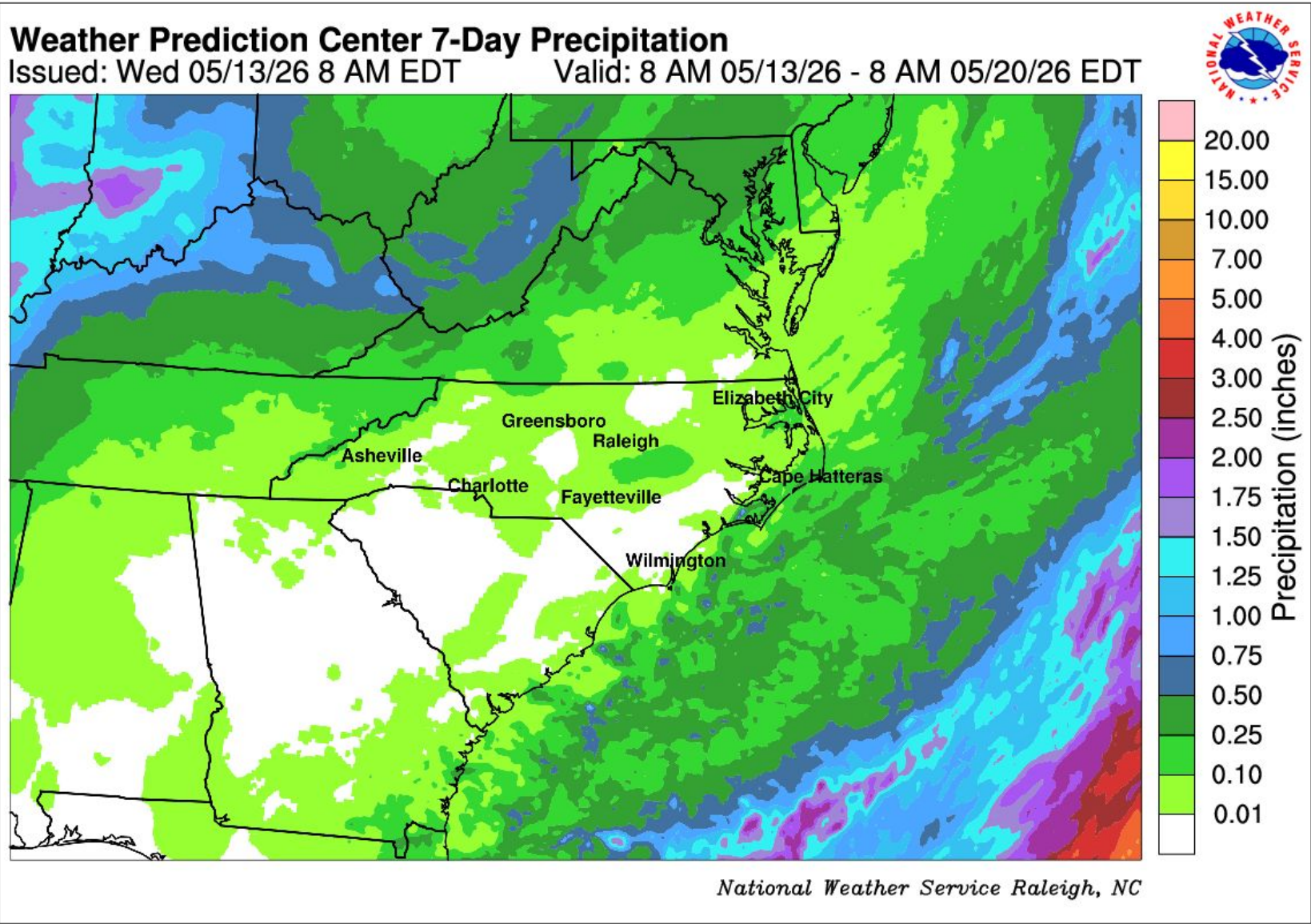


Image Caption:

Weather Prediction Center [7-day precipitation forecast](#) valid May 13 - 20, 2026





8-14 Day Outlook

May 12, 2026
2:24 PM EDT

Temperature and Precipitation Outlook

Main Takeaways

- Generally above normal temperatures are favored (50-60% chance) 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.

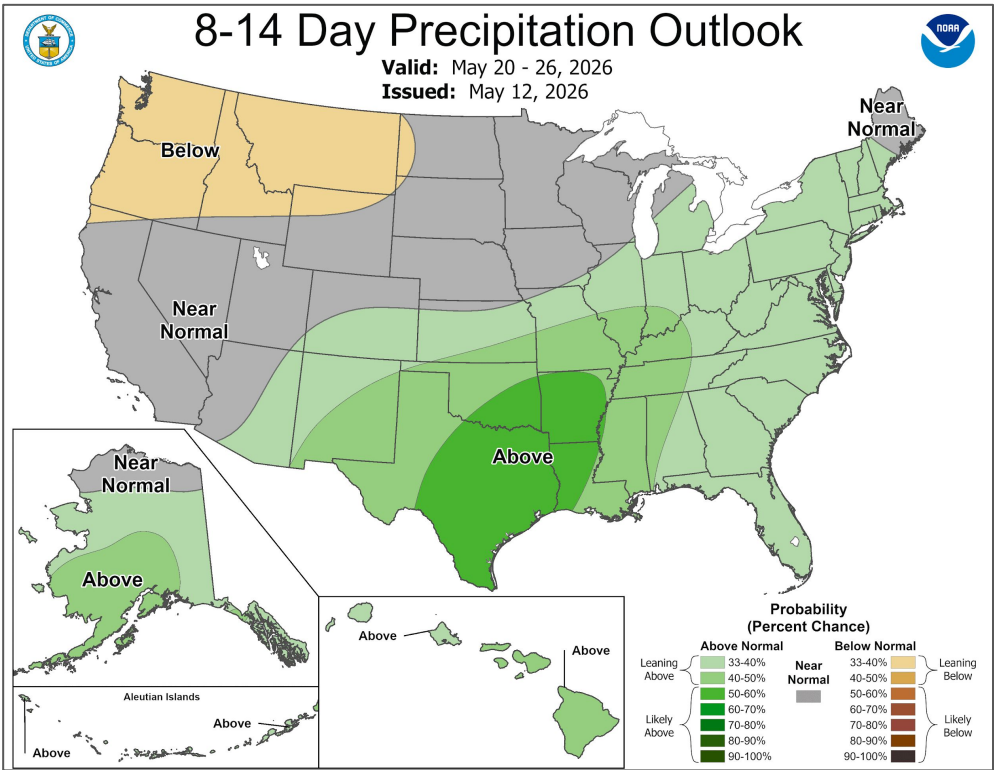
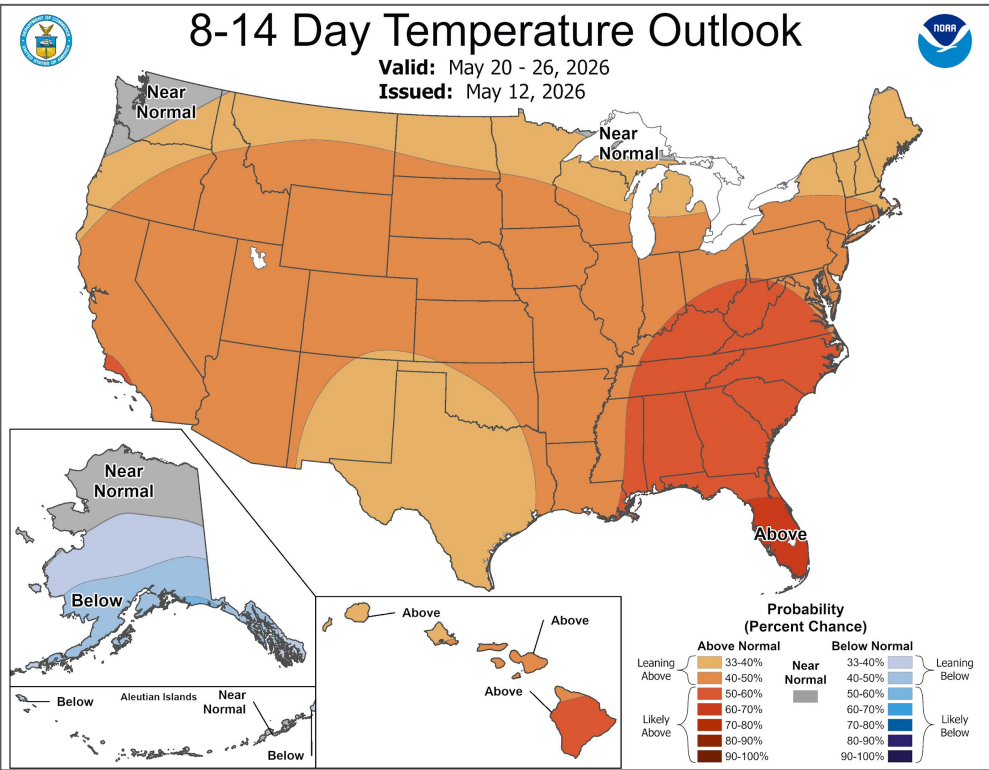


Image Captions:

Left - [Climate Prediction Center 8-14 Day Temperature Outlook.](#)

Right - [Climate Prediction Center 8-14 Day Precipitation Outlook.](#)

Valid May 20 - 26, 2026





Weeks 3-4 Outlook

May 12, 2026
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Temperature and Precipitation Outlook

Main Takeaways

- There are increased chances (40-50%) 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 late May and early June. But heat may continue to make it more difficult to see any significant drought improvements.

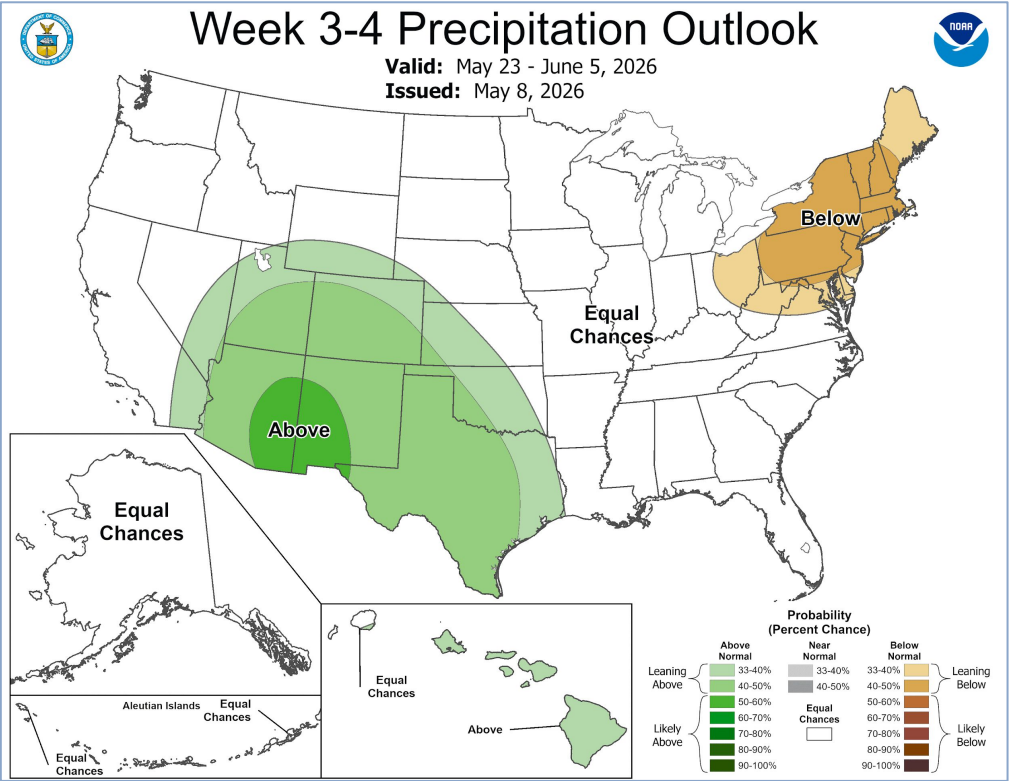
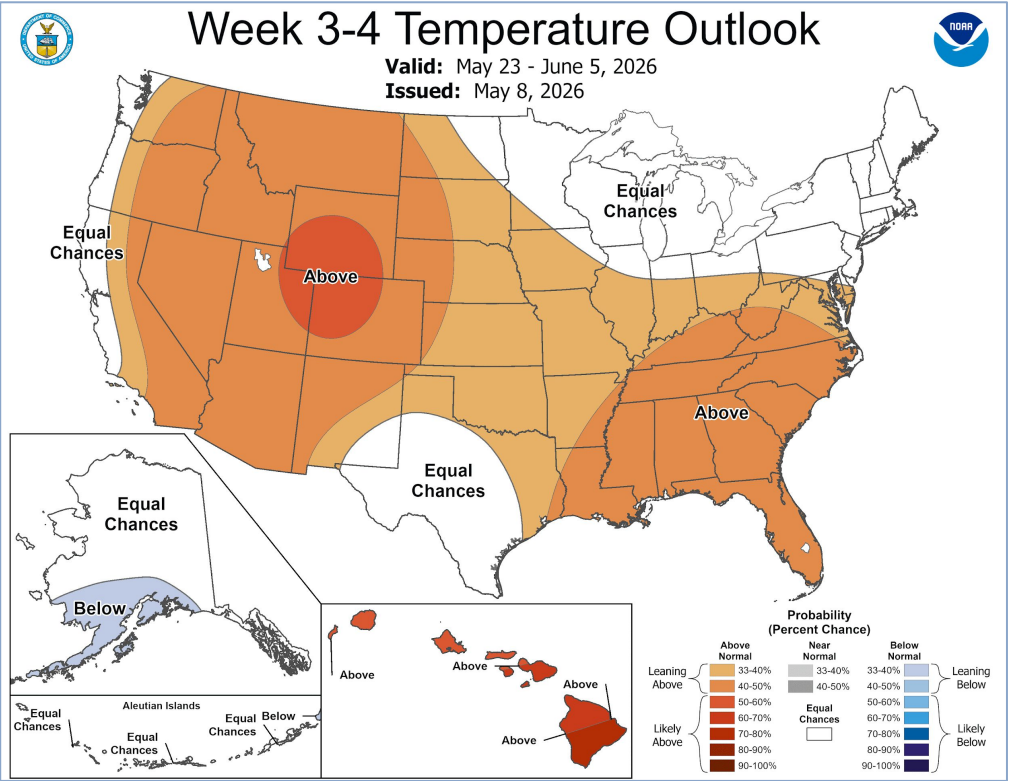


Image Captions:

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

Valid May 23 - June 6, 2026





Seasonal Outlooks

Temperature and Precipitation Outlook

May 12, 2026
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Main Takeaways

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

Possible Impact

Some improvement in drought conditions will be possible based on this outlook, but drought is likely to persist.

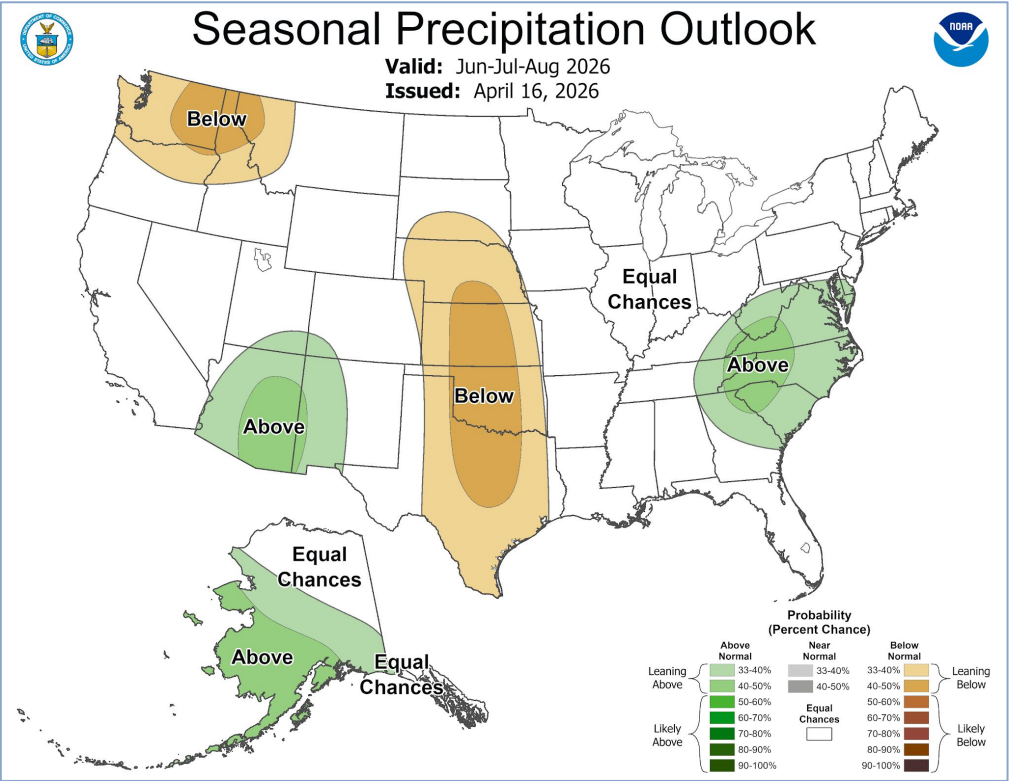
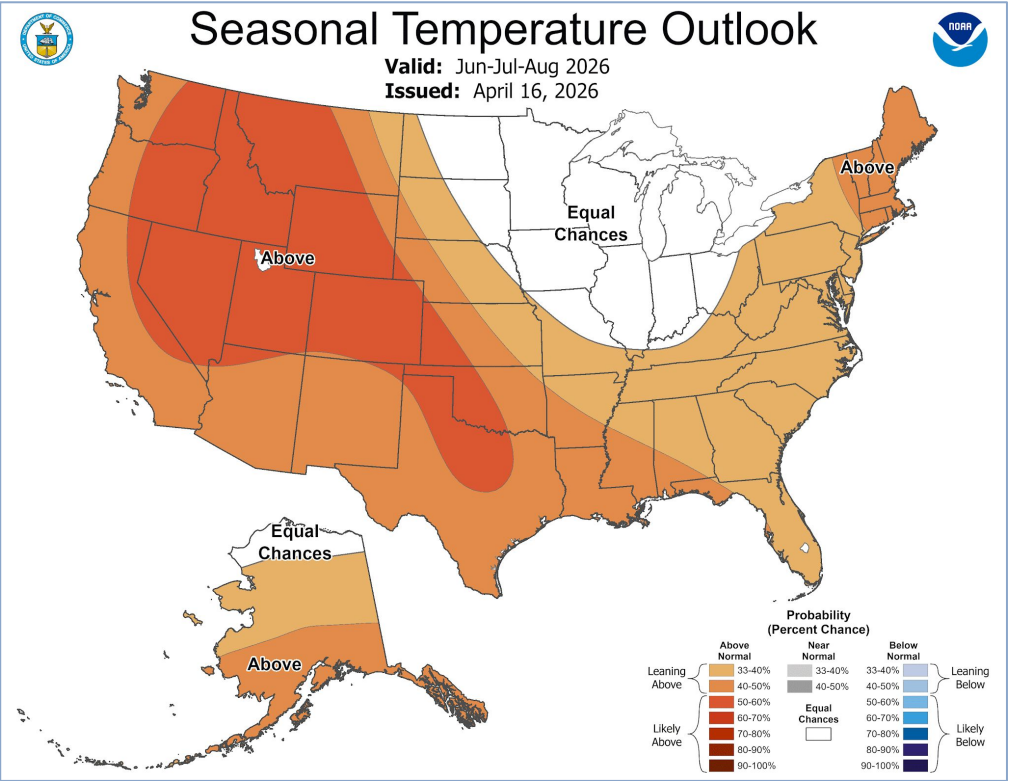


Image Captions:

Left - [Climate Prediction Center Seasonal Temperature Outlook.](#)

Right - [Climate Prediction Center Seasonal Precipitation Outlook.](#)

Valid May-July, 2026

