



Drought Information Statement for Central North Carolina

Valid July 7, 2026

Issued By: NWS Raleigh

Contact Information:

- This Drought Information Statement will be updated by August 4, 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
-
- Exceptional Drought (D4) continue across much of the north-central Piedmont, with some improvements in the Triangle area.
- Extreme Drought (D3) has expanded in portions of the Coastal Plain.
- All of Central North Carolina is in at least Severe Drought (D2)



Key Points

- This is a long-term drought, which dates back to August of 2025 for many areas.
 - Despite a small recent recovery, Raleigh is still experiencing a precipitation deficit of near 20 inches since August.
 - The Chapel Hill Cooperative Observer Site has recorded just 12.14 inches of precipitation since January 1, 2026, over 11 inches below-normal and 3 inches below the record driest start to a year (2004).
 - Summer thunderstorms can result in significant localized rainfall and increasingly variable drought conditions across counties.
- Impacts:
 - Numerous municipalities have moved to voluntary and/or mandatory water conservation.
 - Streamflows continue to run extremely below normal in much of the Piedmont. Very recent rainfall has improved streamflows in portions of the upper Neuse and Cape Fear Basins
 - There are many reports of poor hay condition and stress on crops such as corn and soybeans.
 - Falls Lake water quality storage is below 25%. Jordan Lake water quality storage is below 60%.
- Recent rainfall around the Triangle will be beneficial to the drought conditions. However, many continue to see below normal rainfall and worsening drought conditions. A relatively unsettled weather pattern may bring some additional relief, likely in isolated areas.

Current Drought Conditions

Graphic Courtesy of the North Carolina State Climate Office

North Carolina Drought Update

For the assessment period ending **July 7, 2026**

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

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)

The Main Takeaway

A week of heat and hit-or-miss showers led to localized expansion of Extreme Drought (D3), while wetter areas in the northern Piedmont saw slight improvements.

This Week's Summary

Last week started with extreme heat that ramped up the stress to surface water and vegetation, while a few areas around the Triangle saw relief from the scattered but heavy rains that followed. The return of regular showers and storms has been a nice pattern change, but their spotty nature, plus the ongoing summer heat, means drought stress and impacts will likely continue.

Next Week's Outlook

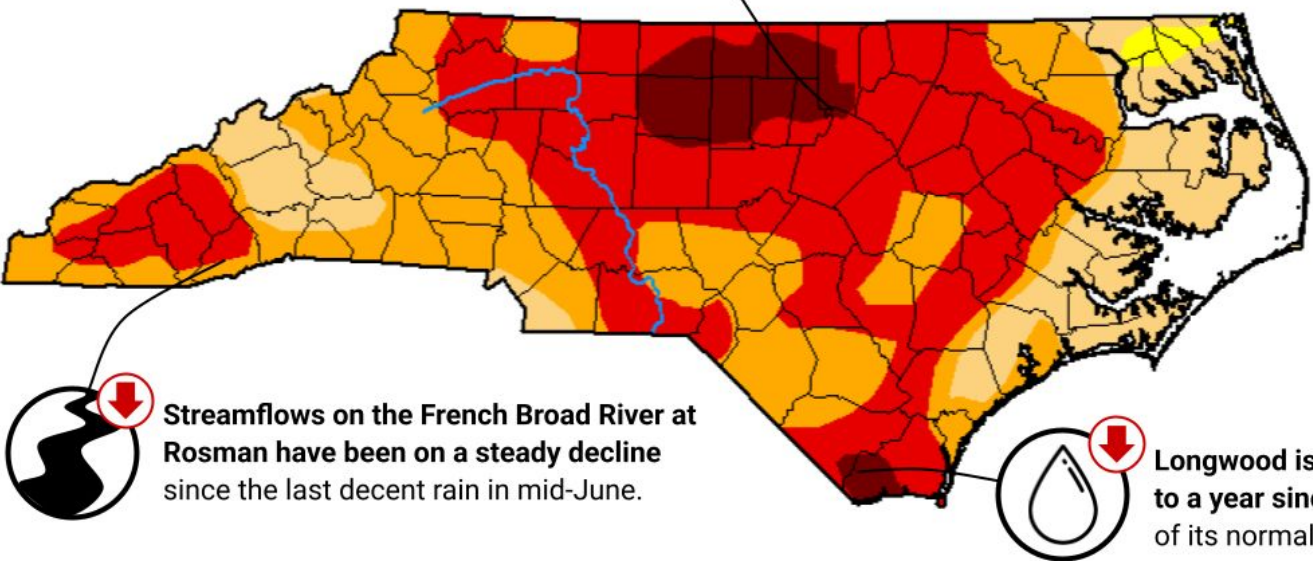
We will remain in a summer-like precipitation pattern, with daily chances for pop-up showers and storms, plus a slight cooldown into the upper 80s by Sunday.

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

Falls Lake saw initial **declines due to evaporation** before a **half-foot rise** following the recent rain events.



Tobacco farmers in eastern NC report **yellow leaves, slow growth, and low irrigation pond levels.**

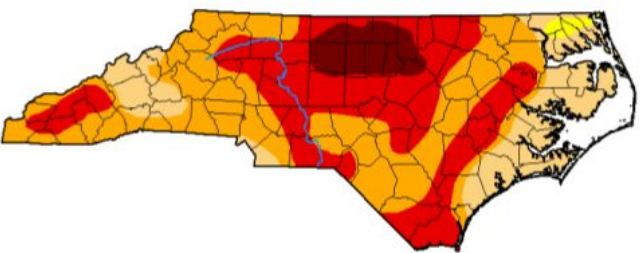


Streamflows on the French Broad River at Rosman have been on a **steady decline** since the last decent rain in mid-June.



Longwood is off to its **driest start to a year since 1973**, with only 44% of its normal precipitation so far.

Last Week's Drought Status

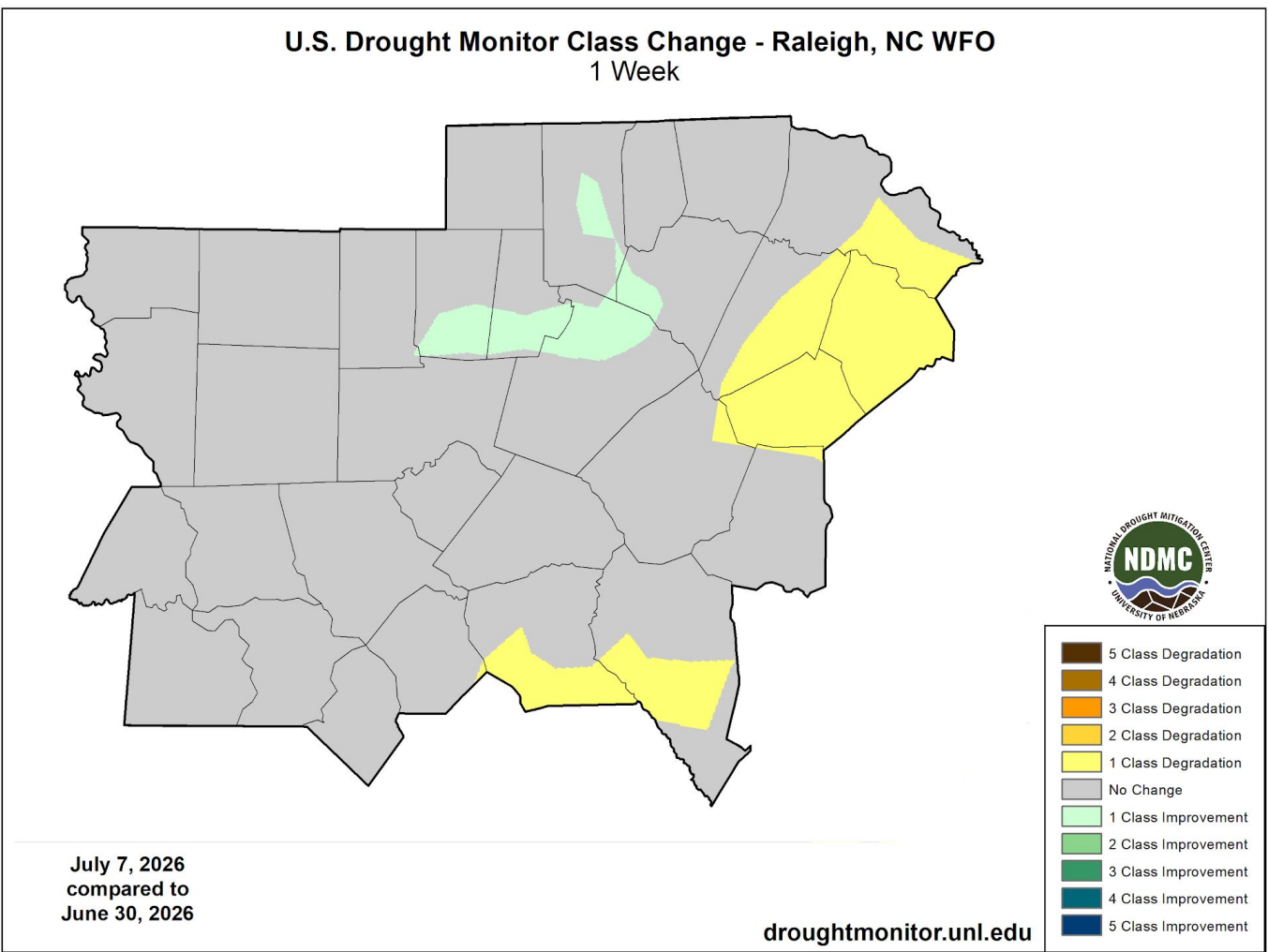
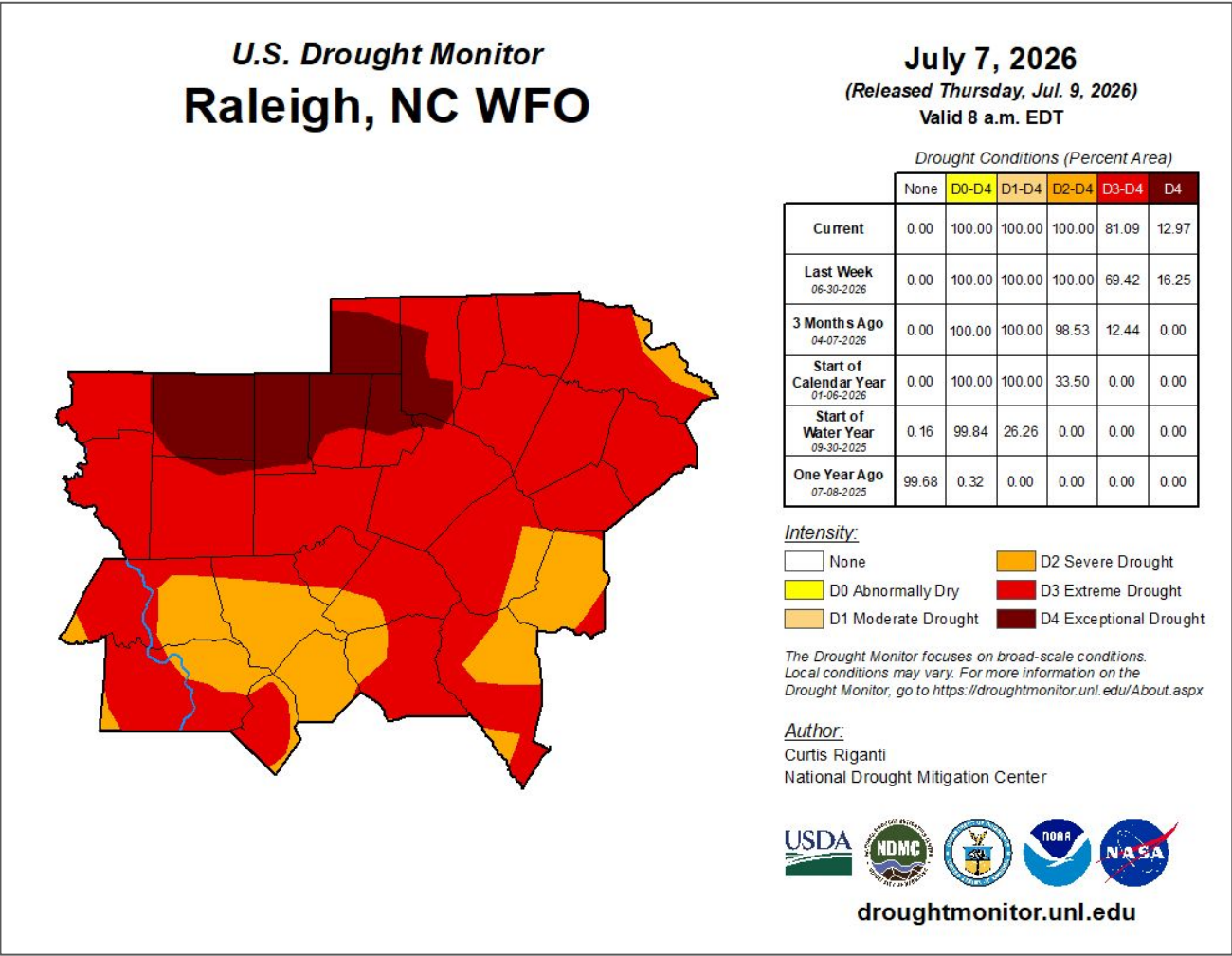


Statewide Coverage by Category

Category	Current Coverage	Change Since Last Week
D0: Abnormally Dry	0.91%	+0.02%
D1: Moderate Drought	16.78%	-1.42%
D2: Severe Drought	32.52%	-6.26%
D3: Extreme Drought	43.60%	+8.20%
D4: Exceptional Drought	6.19%	-0.43%

Current Drought Conditions

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



Main Takeaways

- All of Central North Carolina is in at least Severe Drought (D2). Many areas are in Extreme Drought (D3) and the worst hit Exceptional Drought (D4) areas are across the north-central Piedmont.

Image Caption:

Left: [U.S. Drought Monitor valid 8am EST July 7, 2026.](#)

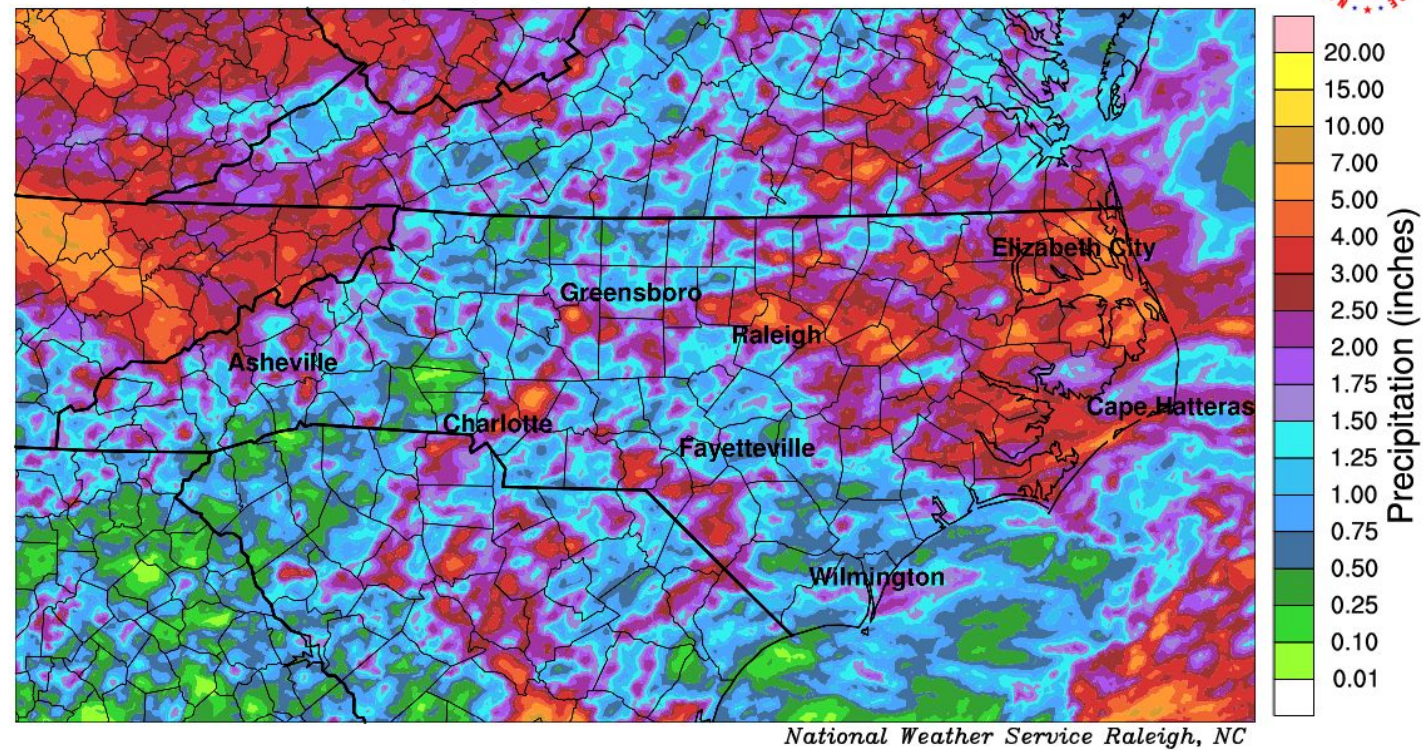
Right: [U.S. Drought Monitor 4-week change map valid 8am EST July 7, 2026.](#)

Observed Precipitation

Latest 14-Day Rainfall and Percent of Normal Rainfall

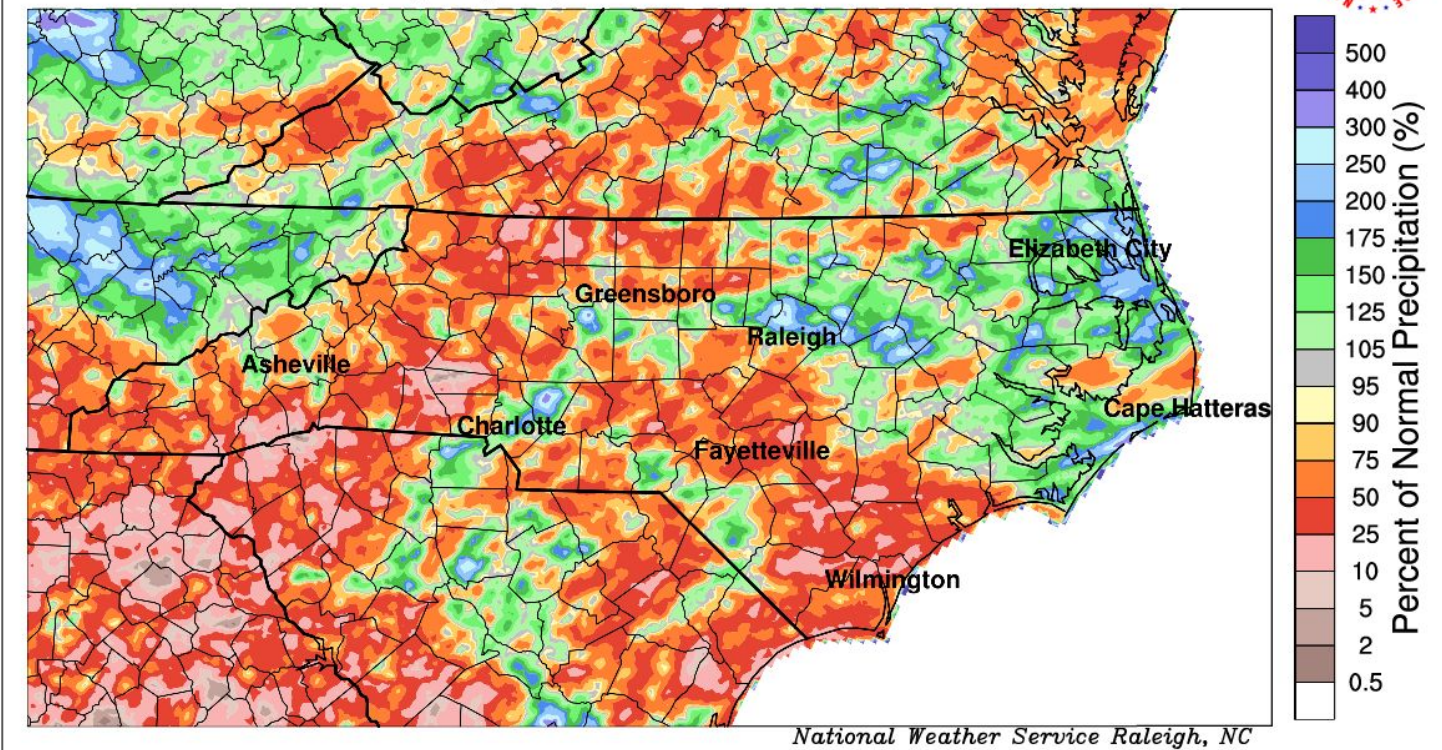
NWPS 14-Day Observed Precipitation

Valid: 8 AM EDT Tuesday July 07, 2026



NWPS 14-Day Observed Percent of Normal Precipitation

Valid: 8 AM EDT Tuesday July 07, 2026



Main Takeaways

- Rainfall has been below normal across central NC. However, an unsettled pattern over the past few days has brought some beneficial rainfall to primarily the Neuse and Tar River Basins.

Image Captions:

Left - Precipitation Amount for NC

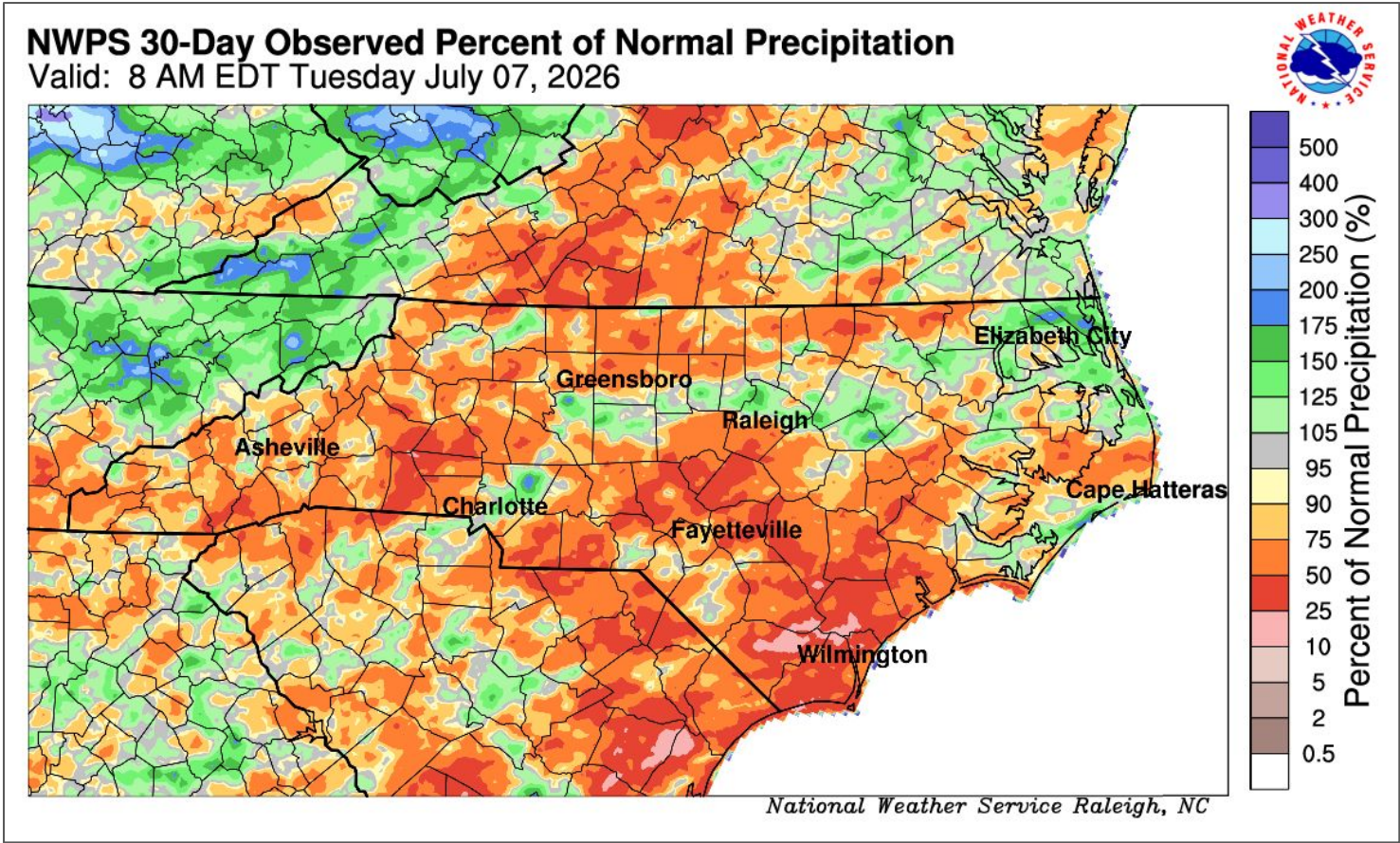
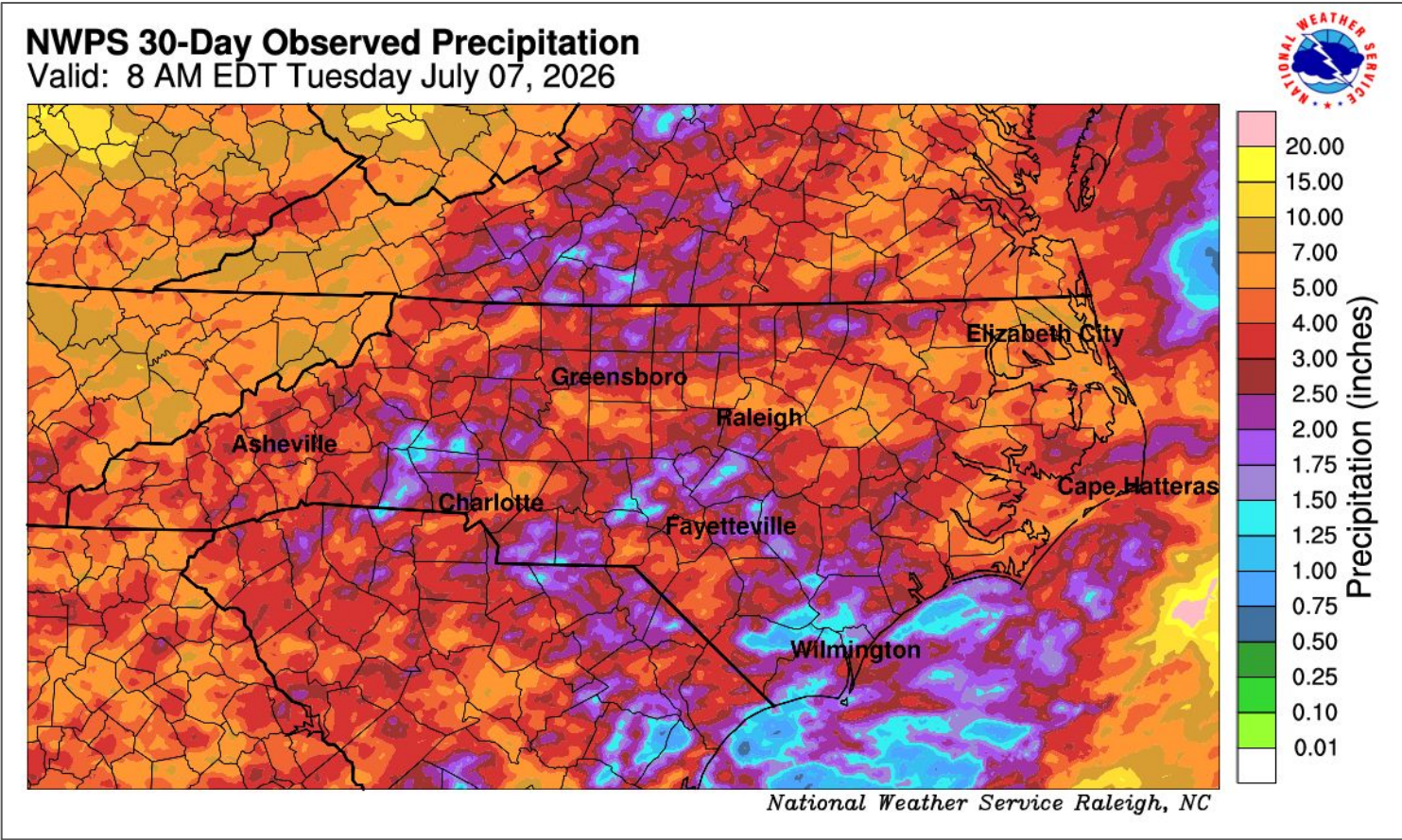
Right - Percent of Normal Precipitation for NC

Data Courtesy NWS National Water Prediction Service

Data over the past 14 days ending July 7, 2026

Observed Precipitation

Latest 30-Day Precipitation and Percent of Normal Precipitation



Main Takeaways

- Over the past 30 days rainfall has been significantly below normal, with improvement over the past week around the Triangle area.
- For additional statistics, refer to the [Local Rainfall Summary](#)

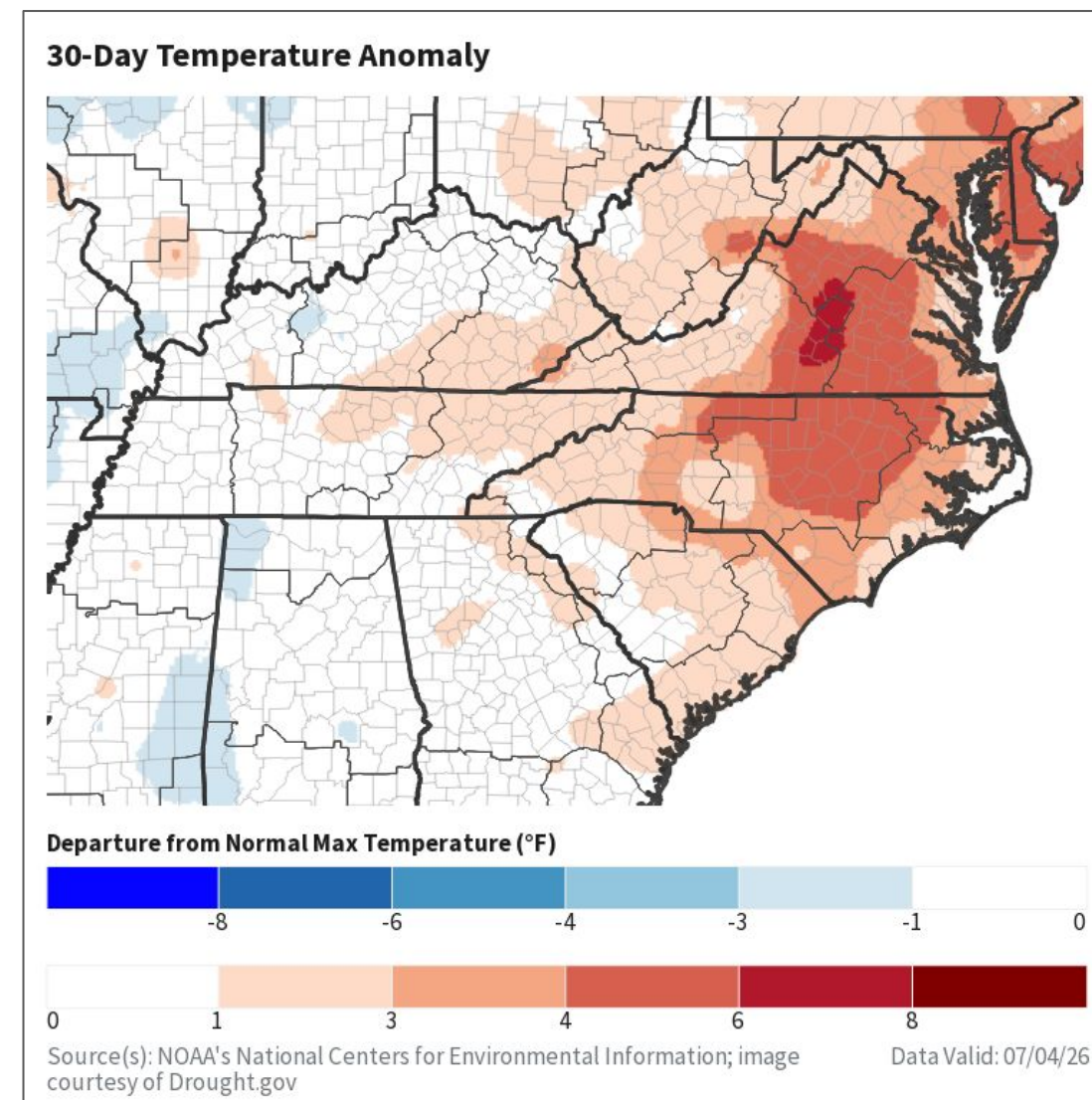
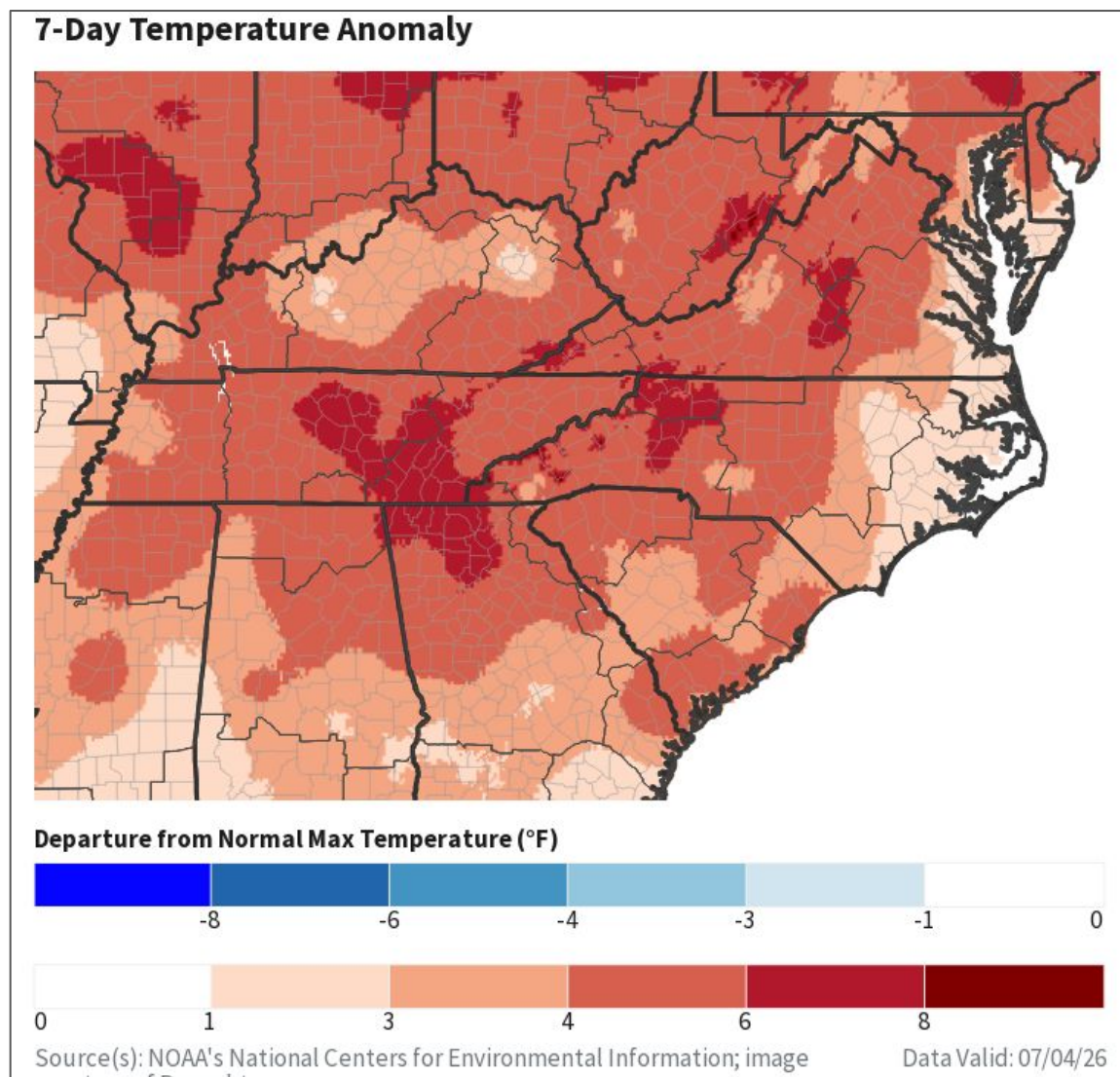
Past 90 Days Stats	Observed Precipitation	Departure From Normal	Percent of Normal
Raleigh-Durham	10.13	-0.70	94%
Greensboro	5.67	-5.52	51%
Fayetteville	6.36	-5.06	56%

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 July 7, 2026

Observed Temperature

Latest 30-Day Average Max Temperature and Departure from Normal



Main Takeaways

- Temperatures have been near to above normal over the past 30 days, with particularly hot conditions in the past week.

Image Captions:

Left: 7-Day Departure from Normal Temperature for NC
Right: 30-Day Departure from Normal Temperature for NC
Data Courtesy NOAA's National Centers for Environmental Information
Data over the past 30 days ending July 4, 2026

Precipitation Forecast

Latest 7-Day Precipitation Forecast

Next 7 days

- Continued hot and unsettled into early next week. An approaching cold front will enhance shower and storm coverage over the weekend.
- Rainfall amounts of 0.5-1.0" are most likely with showers and storms, while locally higher amounts are possible.
- Beneficial above-normal rainfall will likely be very localized.

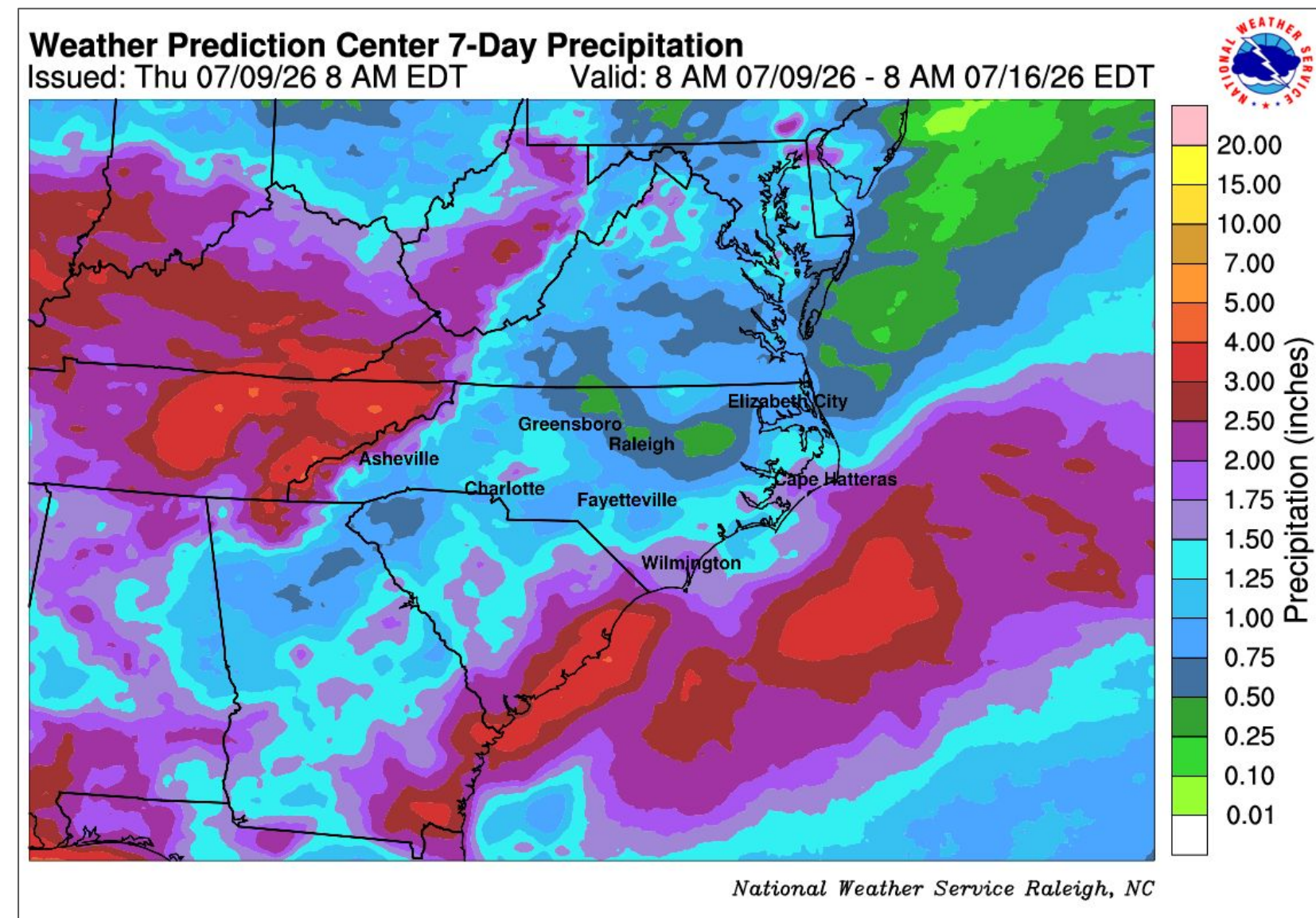


Image Caption:

Weather Prediction Center [7-day precipitation forecast](#) valid July 9 - 16, 2026

8-14 Day Outlook

Temperature and Precipitation Outlook

Main Takeaways

- The overall pattern favors warm and unsettled weather for the end of July.
- Above-normal temperatures are slightly favored (33-40% chance) in Days 8-14 across central North Carolina.
- Above-normal rainfall (40-50%) is favored.

Possible Impact

- While summertime storms can produce widely varying rainfall amounts, this pattern should favor drought improvements in some areas.

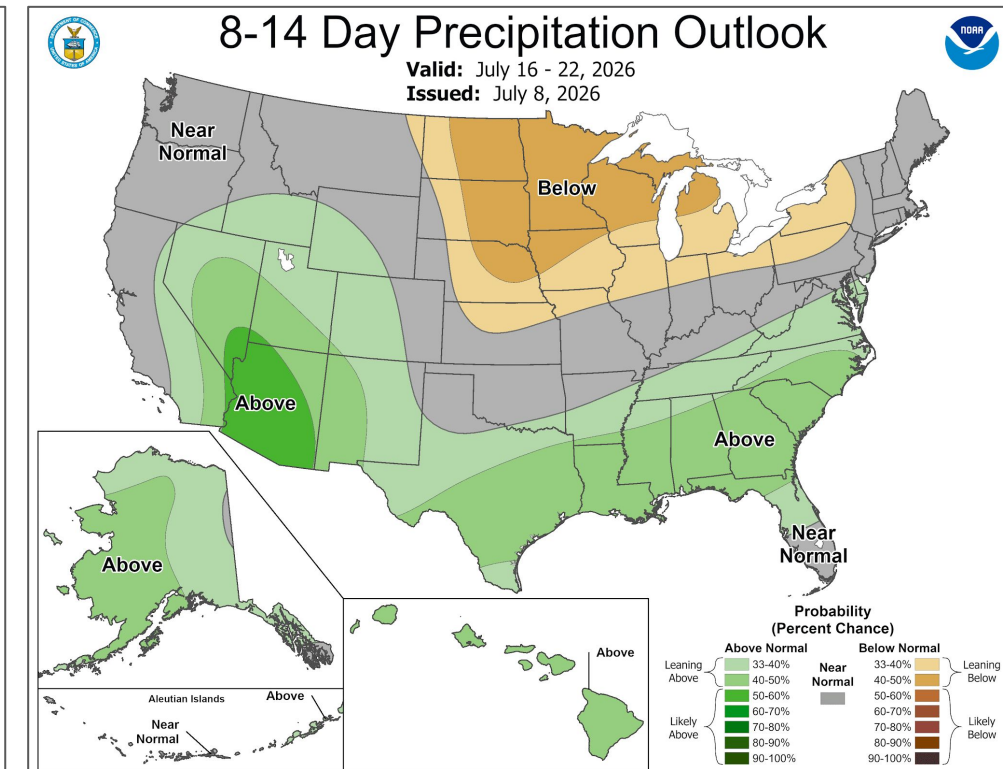
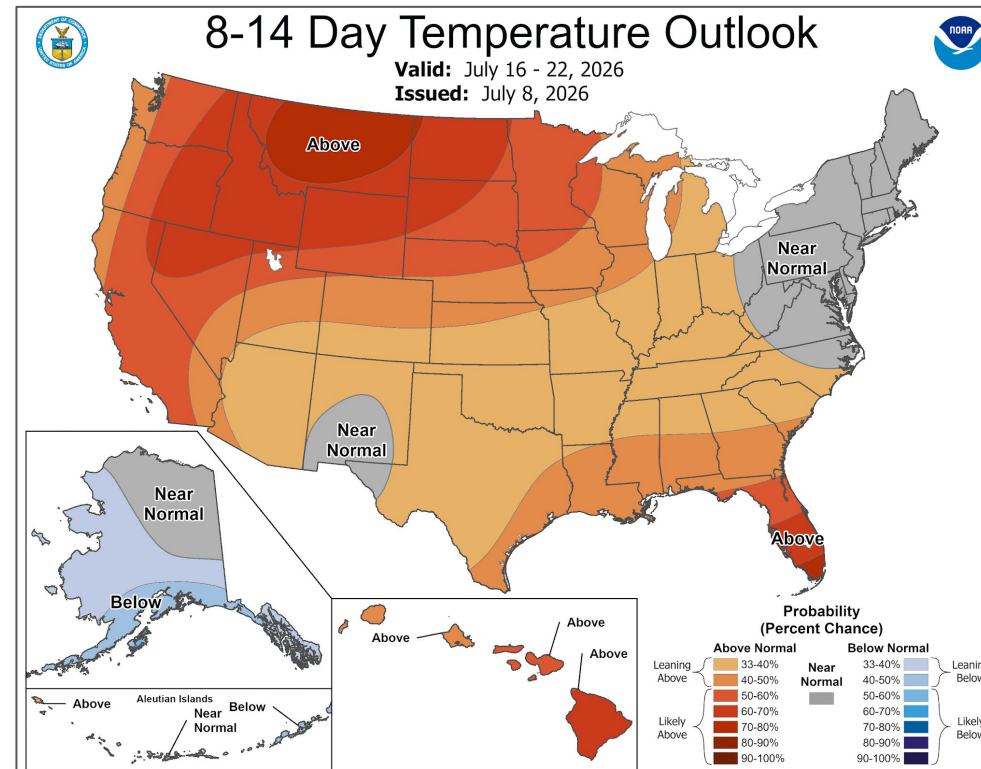


Image Captions:

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

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

Valid June 16-22, 2026

Weeks 3-4 Outlook

Temperature and Precipitation Outlook

Main Takeaways

- There are increased chances (33-50%) of above-normal temperatures in Weeks 3-4 across central North Carolina.
- There is a slight lean (33-40%) to above-normal precipitation in Weeks 3-4; however, these probabilities still suggest 60-70% chances of near or below-normal precipitation.

Possible Impact

- While the overall pattern does not favor high probabilities of above-normal rainfall, a continued favorable pattern should keep drought from worsening.

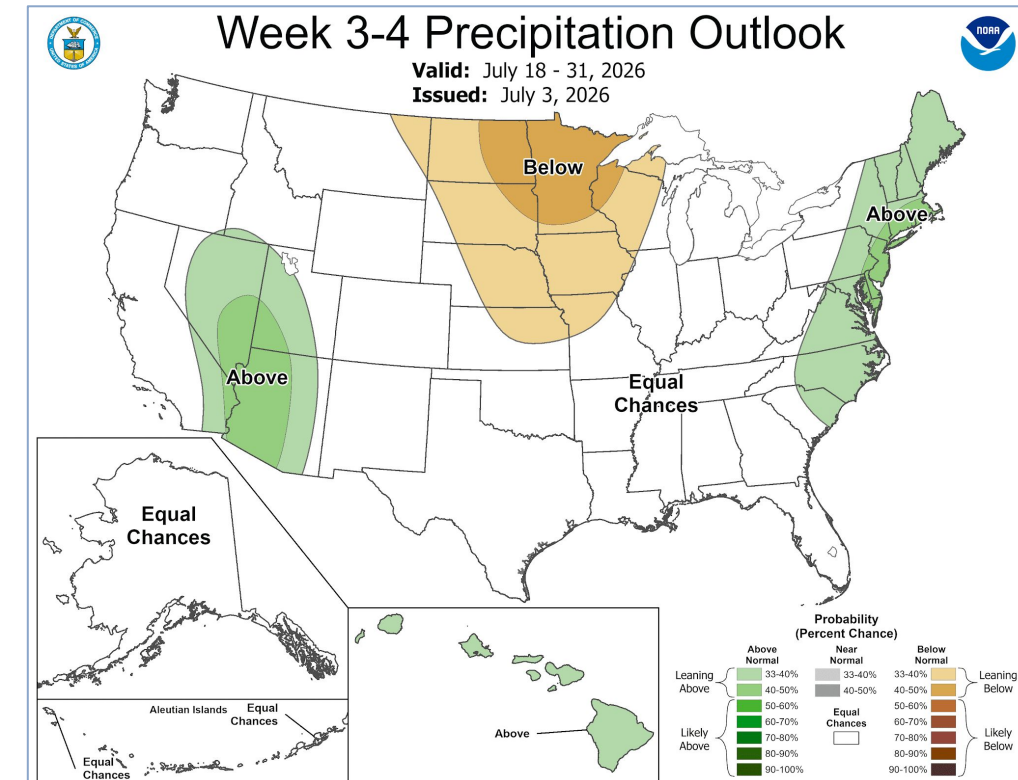
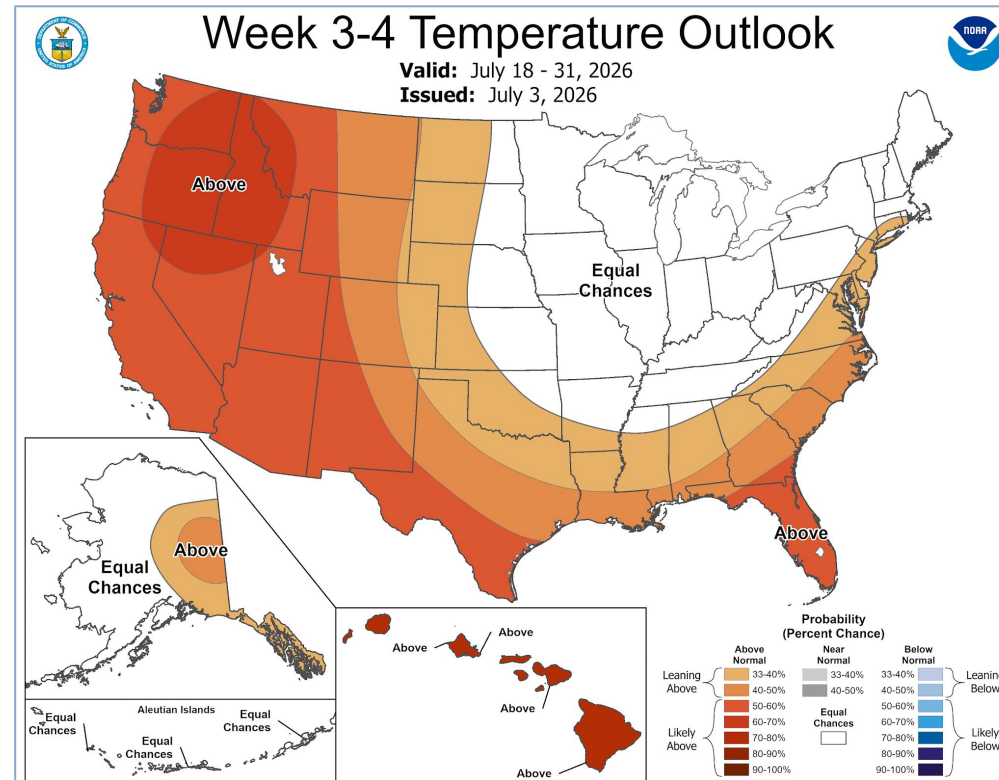


Image Captions:

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

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

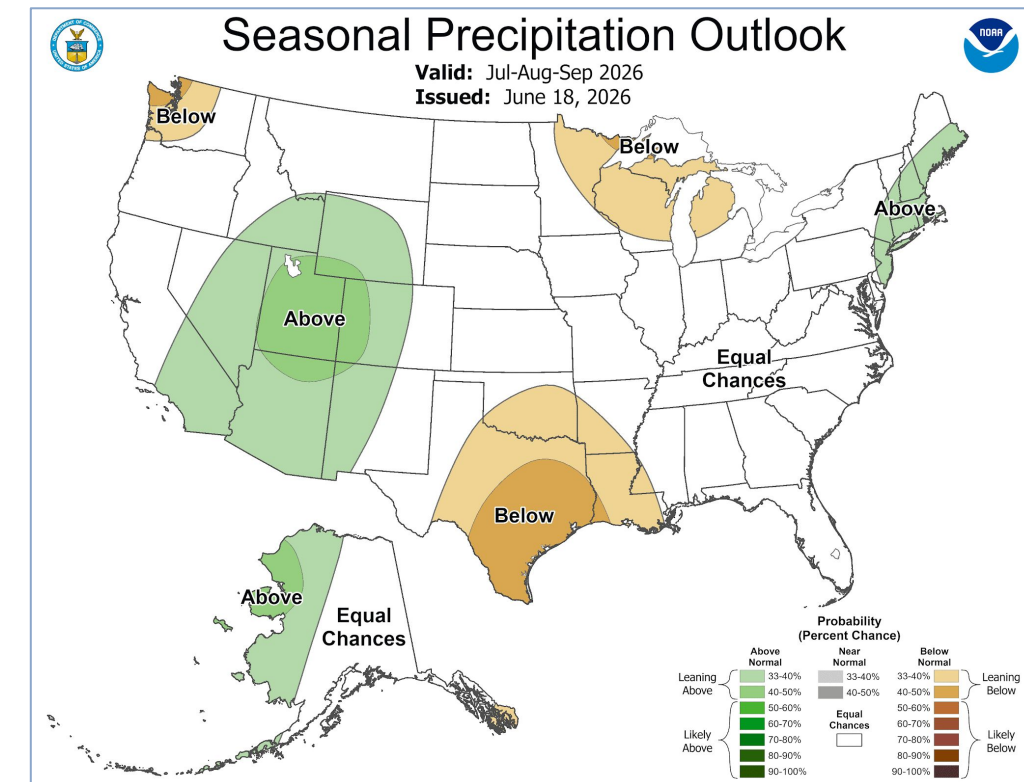
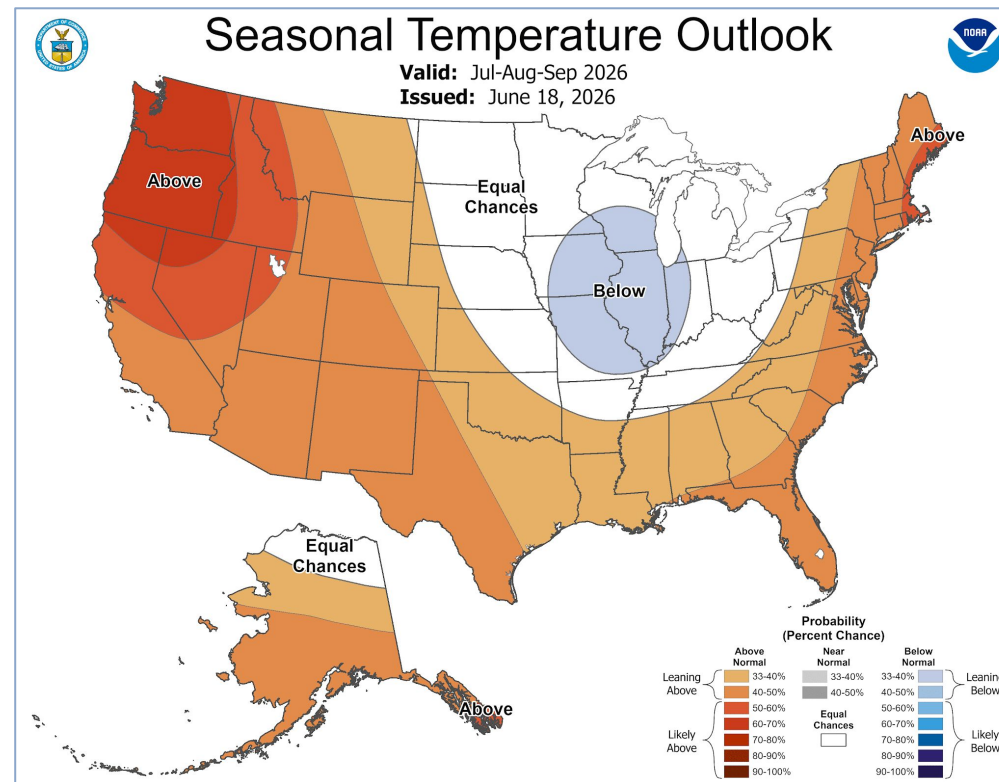
Valid July 18 - 31, 2026

Seasonal Outlooks

Temperature and Precipitation Outlook

Main Takeaways

- There is a greater than 40% probability that ongoing El Niño will strengthen into a strong event by July-August-September. Influence of the El Niño is likely to increase through the Fall.
- There is a 33-50% chance of above-normal temperatures in July-August-September across central North Carolina.
- There are equal chances of above or below-normal precipitation in July-August-September.



Possible Impact

- There is no clear signal for drought improvement through the summer months.

Image Captions:

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

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

Valid July-September, 2026

ENSO Forecast

Courtesy of the Climate Prediction Center (www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov)

ENSO Alert System Status: **El Niño Advisory**

Main Takeaway: El Niño conditions are present and expected to strengthen into the Northern Hemisphere winter 2026-27.

