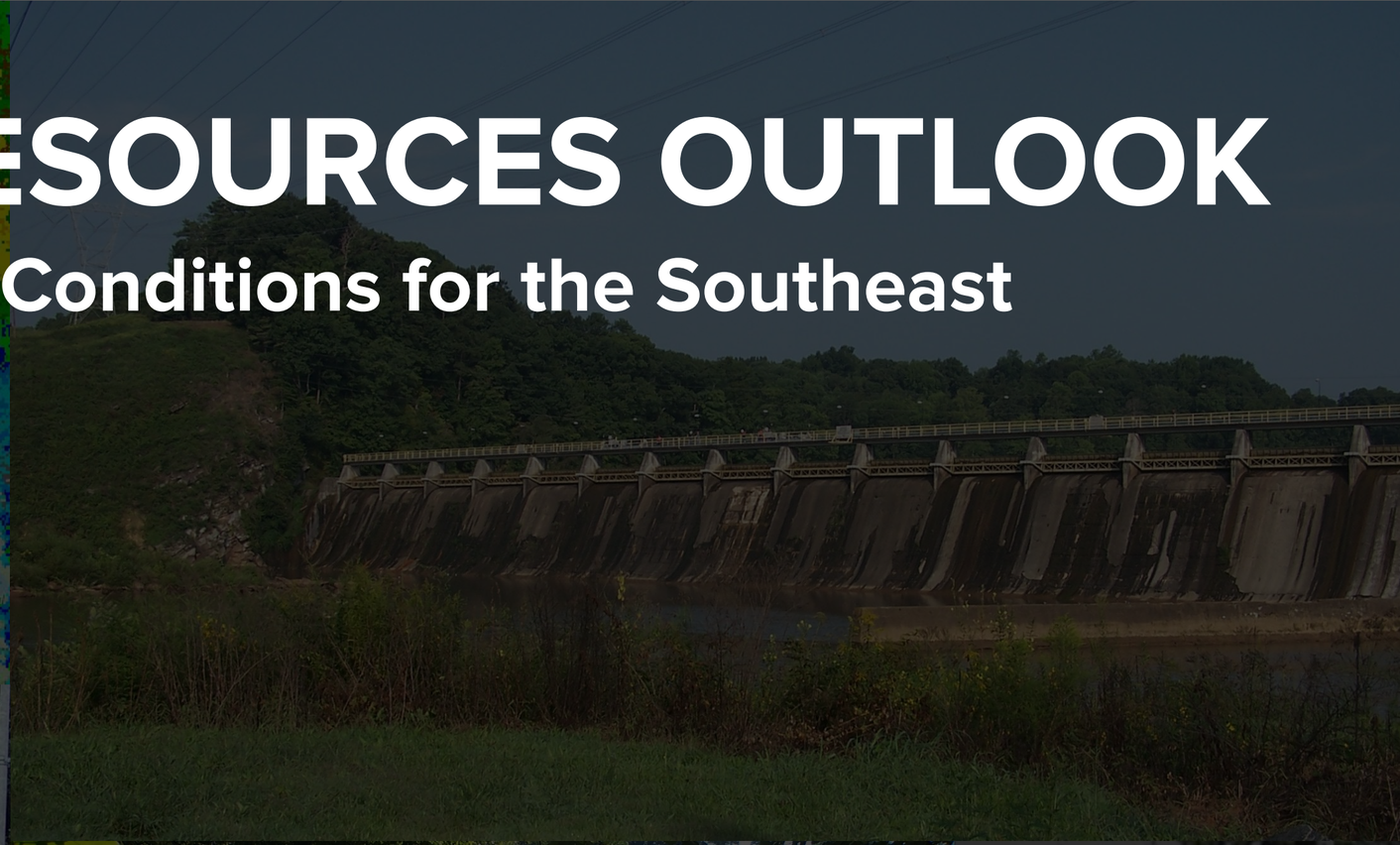
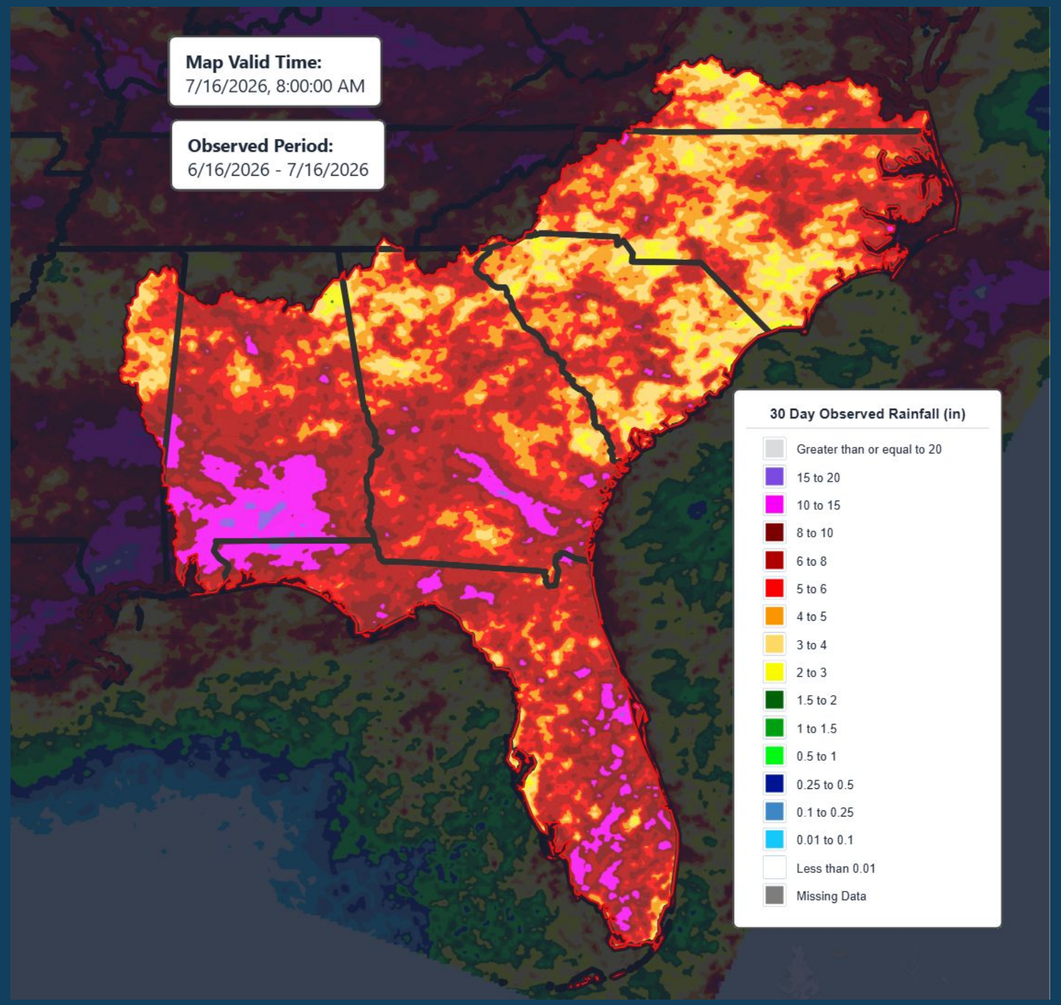
SERFC - WATER RESOURCES OUTLOOK

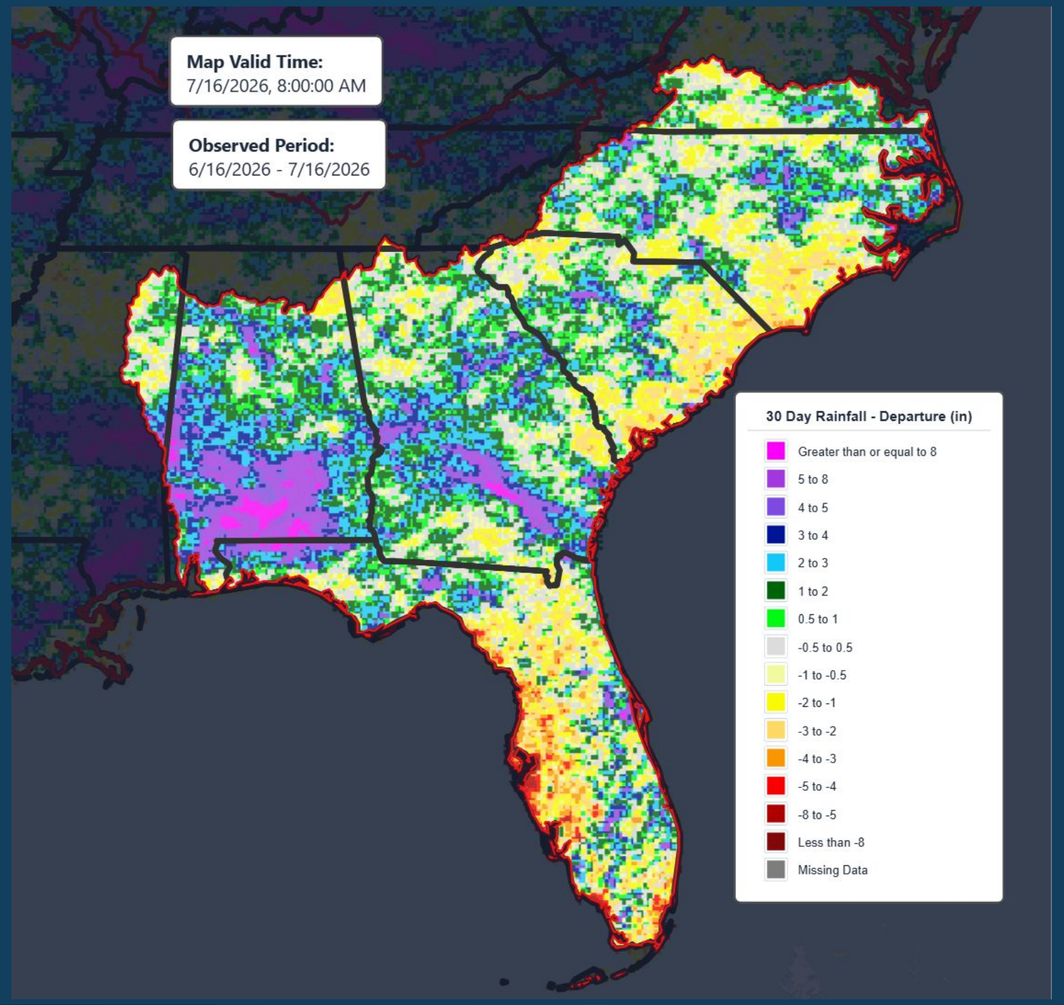
A Look at Recent and Forecast Conditions for the Southeast

July 16th, 2026



Current Conditions



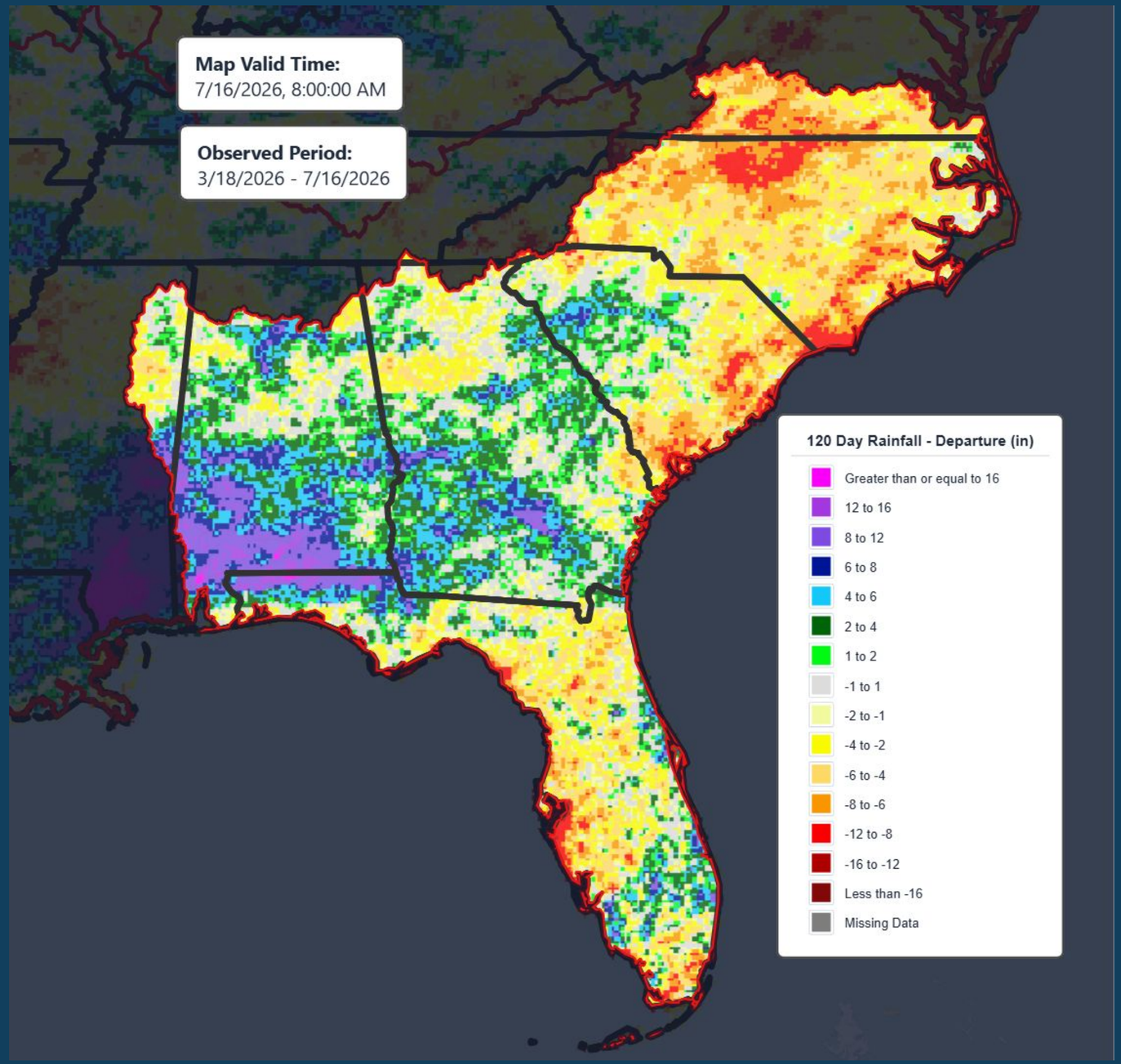


Recent Rainfall - 30 Days

In the past 30 days frontal systems have continually enhanced convection in the Southeast. Rainfall accumulations were the greatest in South Alabama, and parts of Georgia and Florida. In the Carolinas and above the fall line, observed rainfall was between 2 and 6 inches. Above normal departure rainfall mostly accumulated along the fall line. Although the Florida peninsula observed rainfall totals above 3 inches, with some locations even seeing 10-14 inches, the departures were mostly below normal for their rainy season.

120 Day Rainfall Departure from Normal

Rainfall departure over the last 120 days is mostly below normal for the Southeast. Only in Alabama and Georgia were rainfall accumulations above normal. The majority of this rainfall occurred during the month of June with the frontal system and remnants of tropical storm Arthur in the middle of the month. In North Carolina and the coastal area of South Carolina, deficits during the last 120 days have been as great as 8.5 inches.

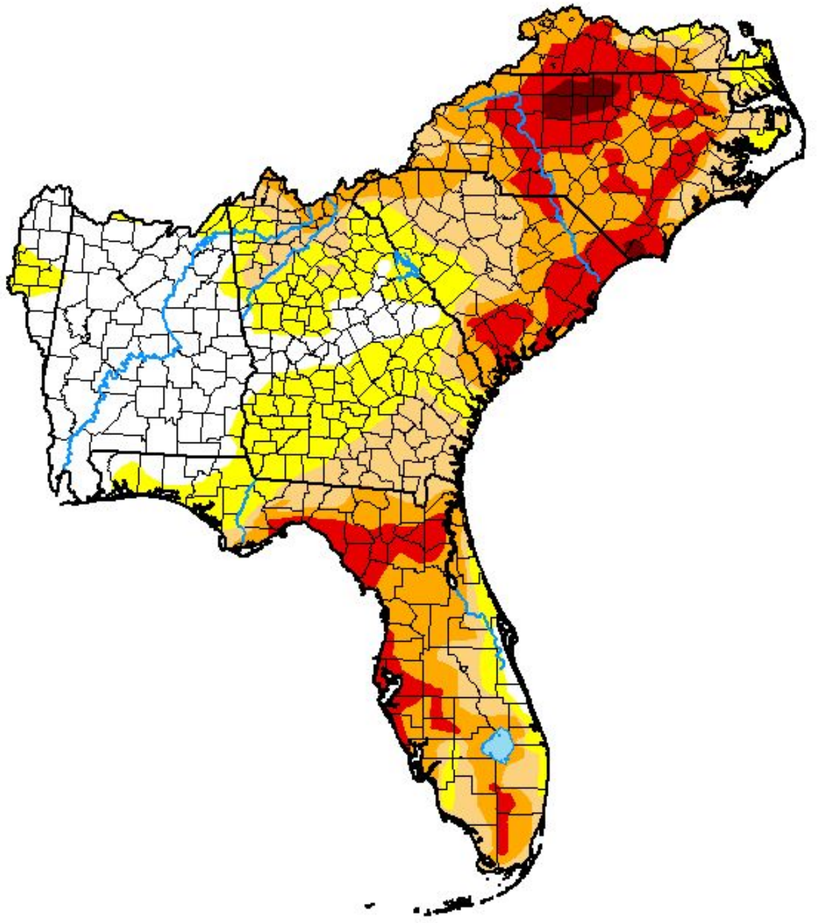


Drought Class Change and Conditions

Aside from Alabama and central Georgia, D0-D4 drought conditions persist in the rest of the Southeast. North Carolina continues to hold the only D4 conditions in the area, particularly concentrated around the area with 8-12 inch rainfall deficit in the 120-day departure from normal rainfall accumulations.

U.S. Drought Monitor

Southeast RFC



July 14, 2026

(Released Thursday, Jul. 16, 2026)

Valid 8 a.m. EDT

Drought Conditions (Percent Area)

	None	D0	D1	D2	D3	D4
Current	23.83	20.50	18.21	22.10	14.31	1.05
Last Week 07-07-2026	23.67	18.91	19.18	20.53	16.49	1.23
3 Months Ago 04-14-2026	0.00	3.71	11.82	40.35	34.22	9.90
Start of Calendar Year 01-06-2026	0.04	16.11	54.57	27.68	1.60	0.00
Start of Water Year 09-30-2025	13.86	47.89	31.22	6.77	0.26	0.00
One Year Ago 07-15-2025	86.93	9.73	1.30	1.87	0.18	0.00

Intensity:

- None
- D0 Abnormally Dry
- D1 Moderate Drought
- D2 Severe Drought
- D3 Extreme Drought
- D4 Exceptional Drought

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. For more information on the Drought Monitor, go to https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/About.aspx

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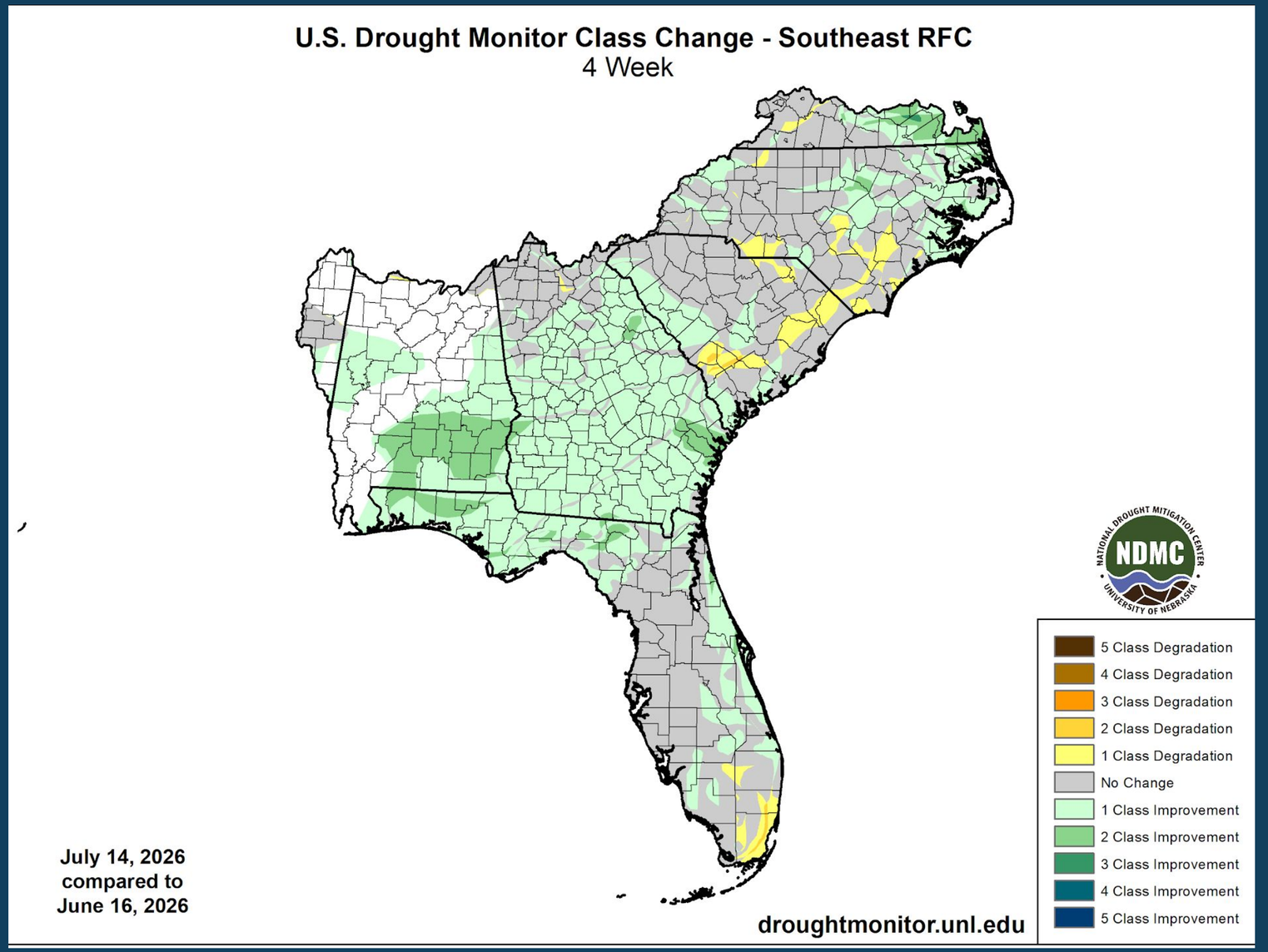
National Drought Mitigation Center

droughtmonitor.unl.edu

For the latest map, visit https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/CurrentMap.aspx

Drought Class Change and Conditions

In the last 4 weeks, the recent rainfall has mostly assisted in drought remaining the same or improving. Drought conditions have improved over Alabama, Georgia, eastern South Carolina. Locally heavy rainfall and widespread moderate amounts of rainfall have been beneficial over the month and there are only spotty widespread areas of drought degradation.

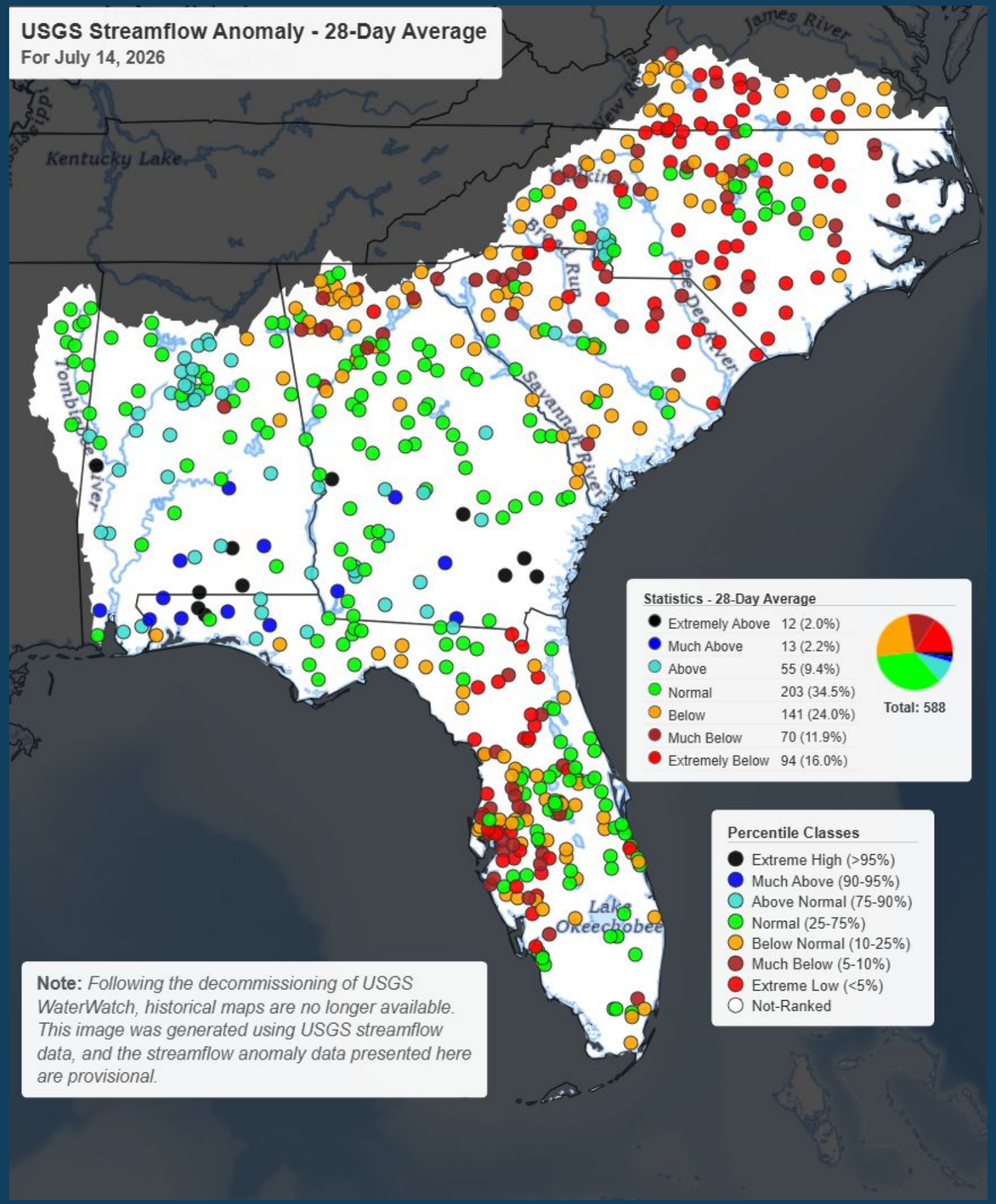


For the latest map, visit https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/CurrentMap.aspx

28-Day Streamflow Compared to Historical

The 28-day average streamflows from July 14 largely mirror the behavior seen in past 30 days of rainfall. While most streams have been able to maintain normal streamflows or above in Alabama, Mississippi, and Georgia (with the exception of northwest Georgia); the Carolinas and Florida are experiencing a much drier regime. Notably, even some regulated main stem rivers in the Carolinas are struggling to maintain normal streamflows.

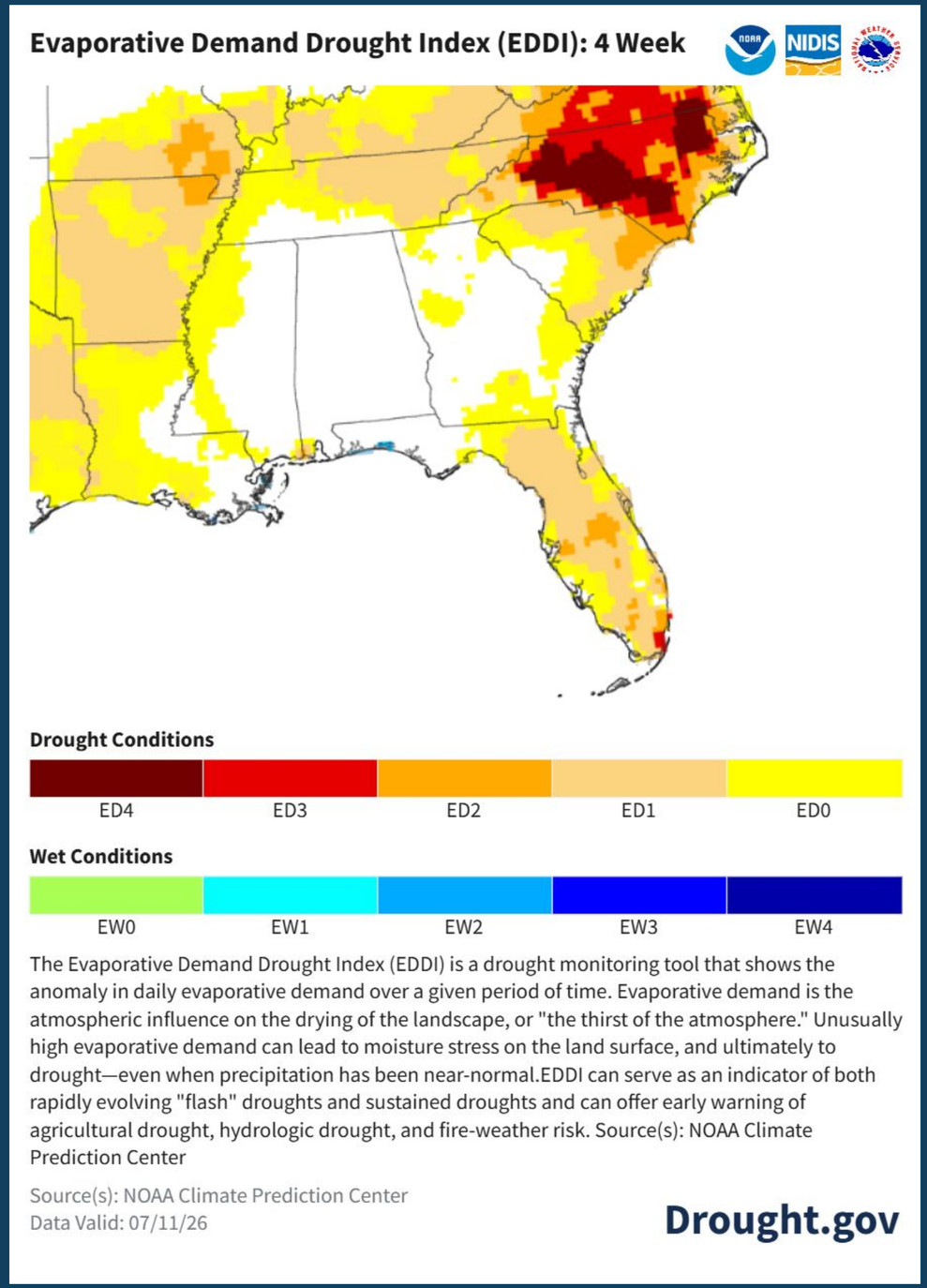
Note: *Following the decommissioning of USGS WaterWatch, historical maps are no longer available. This image was generated using USGS streamflow data, and the streamflow anomaly data presented here are provisional.*



Evaporative Demand

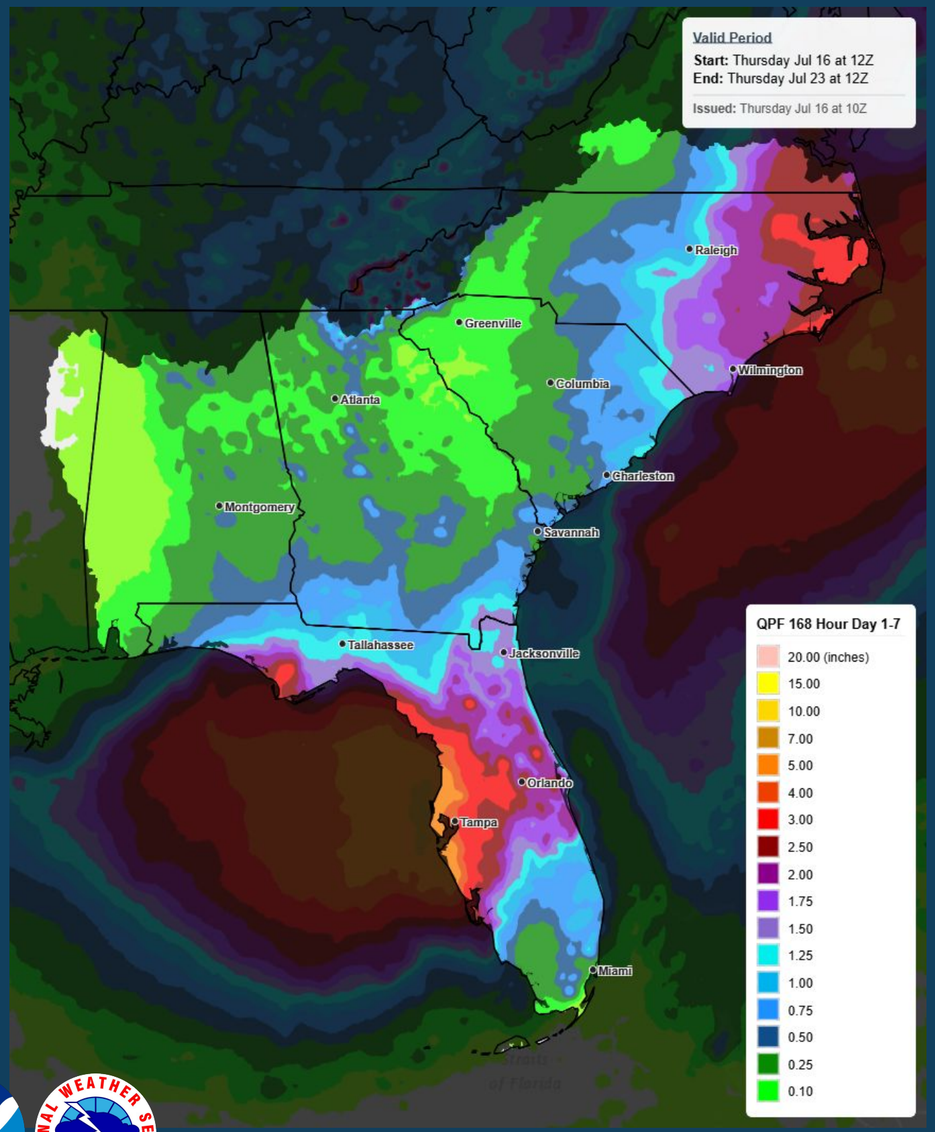
This index provides an estimate of the evaporative demand of the atmosphere. An anomalously large atmospheric evaporative demand can put additional stress on already dry hydrologic conditions.

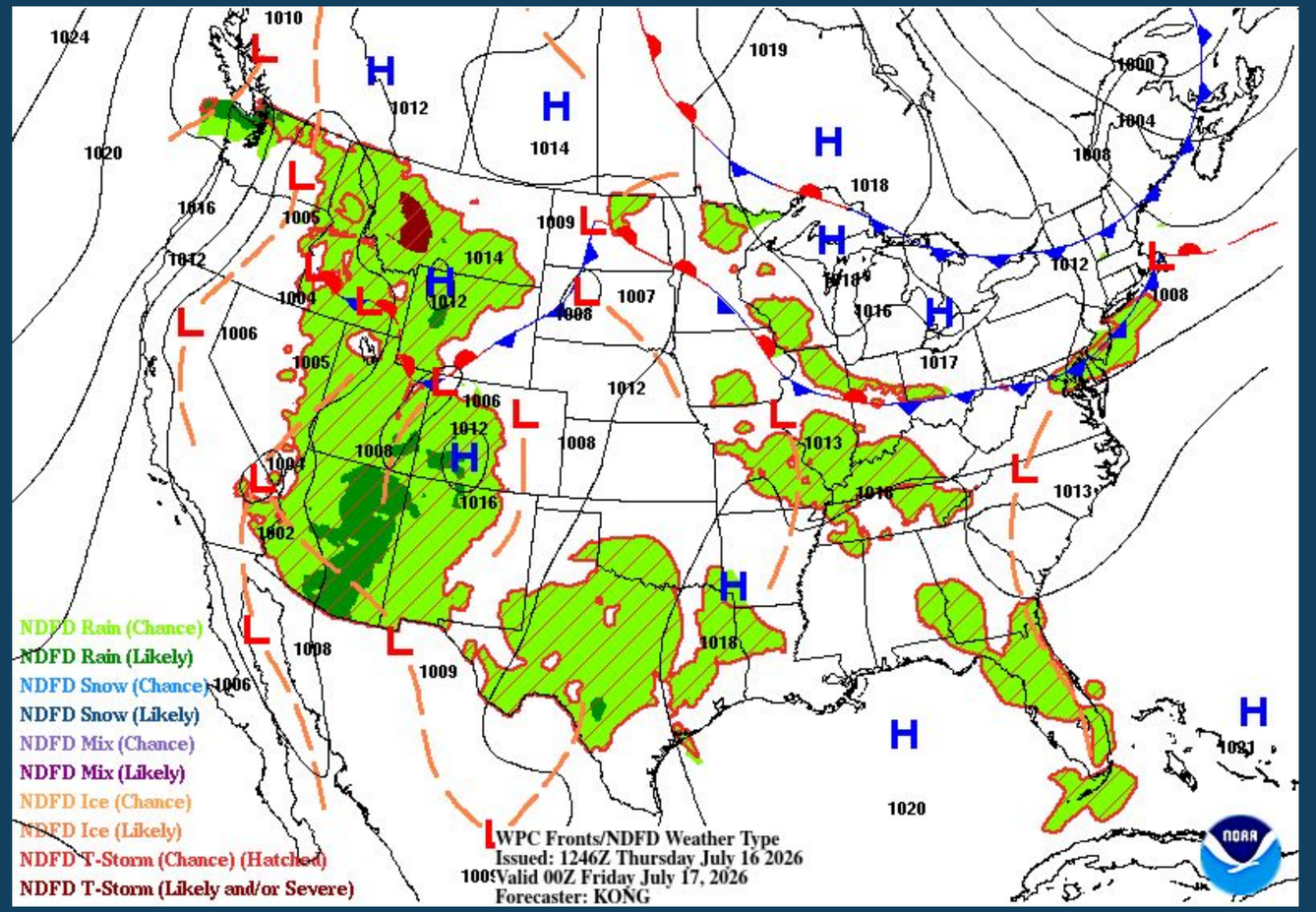
The majority of North Carolina are continues to have drought conditions and the evaporative demand continues to expand. Most of the state is in ED3 or ED4, which are the driest atmospheric conditions possible by the EDDI metric. These high demands signal the potential for continued hydrologic drought in North Carolina and Virginia. Much of Florida has ED0 conditions, while parts of southern Alabama and the Florida panhandle are now considered to have wet conditions.



Meteorology

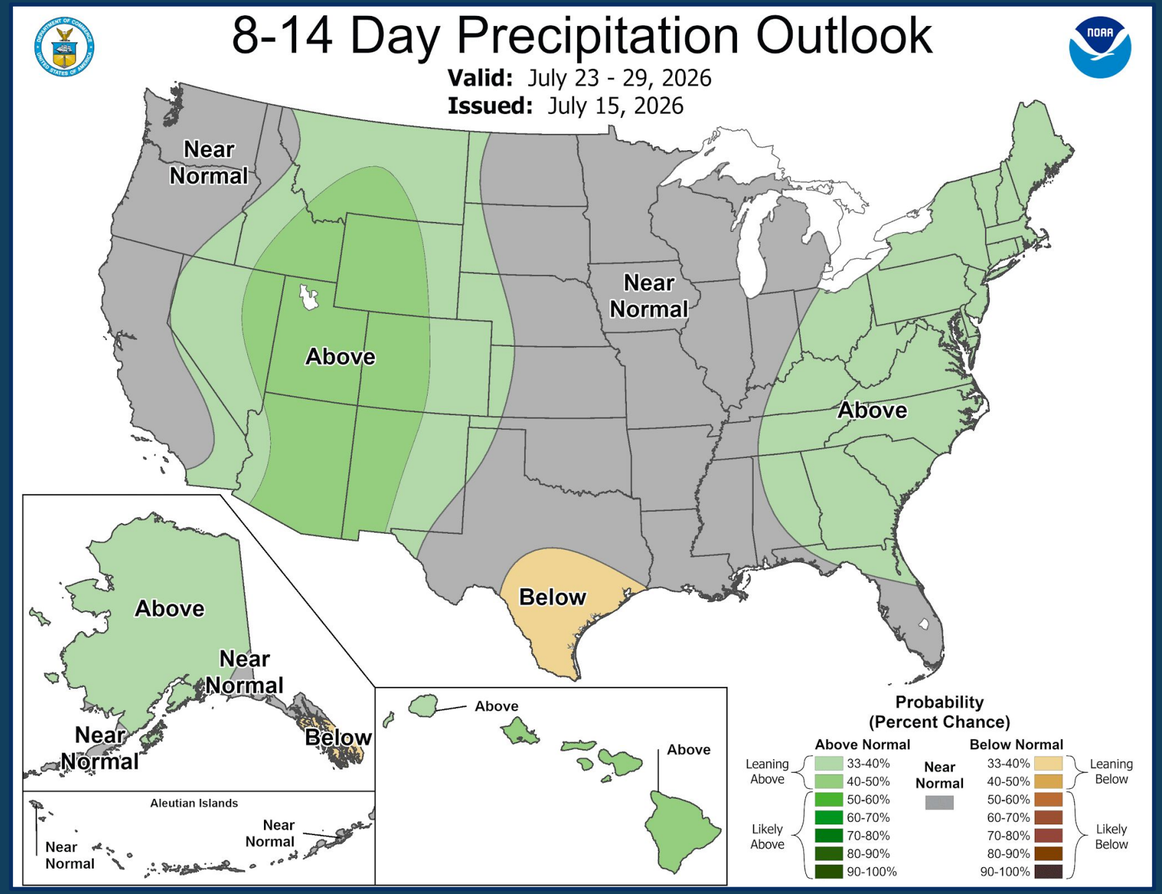
Near Term

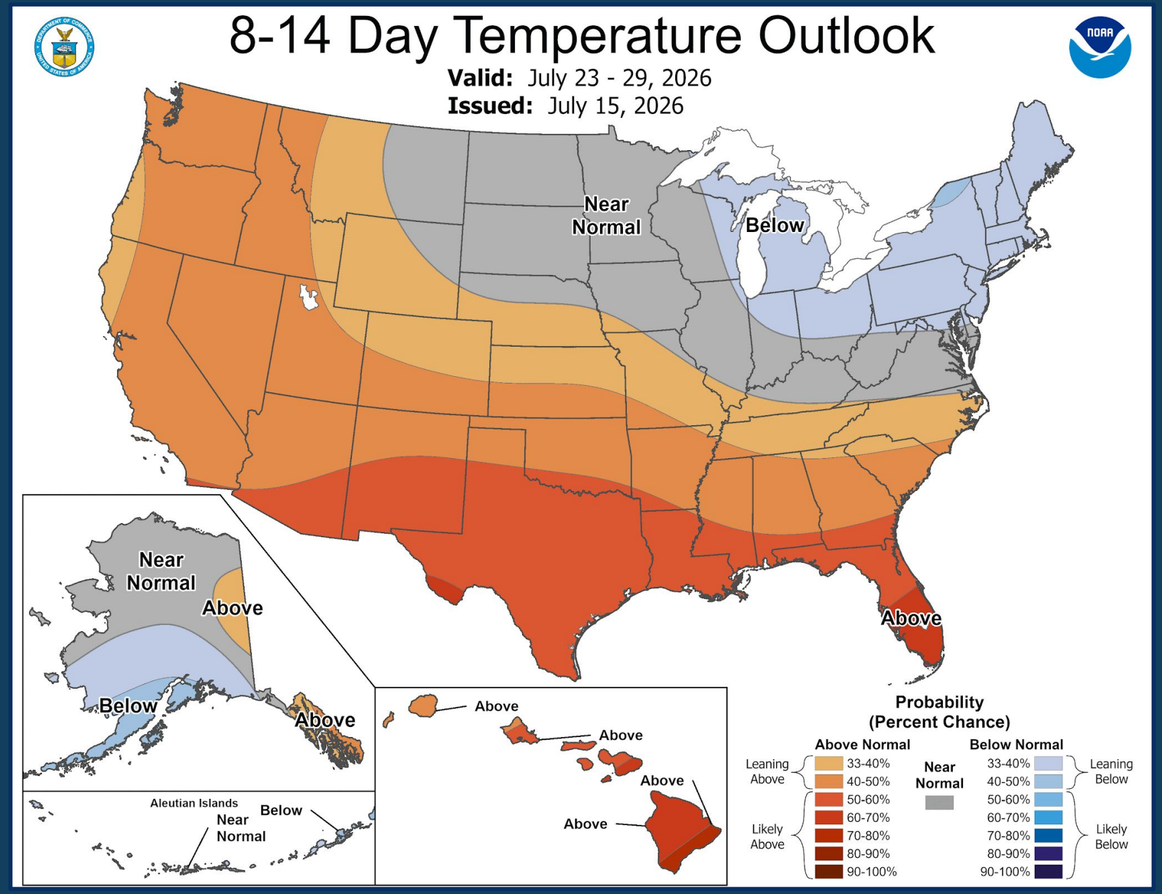




For most of the next seven days, our weather is dominated by large scale ridging aloft and high pressure at the surface, with only an occasional weak disturbance. Overall, this leads to a persistent pattern characterised by warm temperatures and chances of isolated to scattered showers and storms. However, that partially depends on how a feature off the coast evolves over the next several days. Its evolution would ultimately impact rain chances heading beyond the weekend. The National Hurricane Center currently has a 20% chance of development over the next seven days for the region stretching from the Big Bend of FL and up coastal GA and SC.

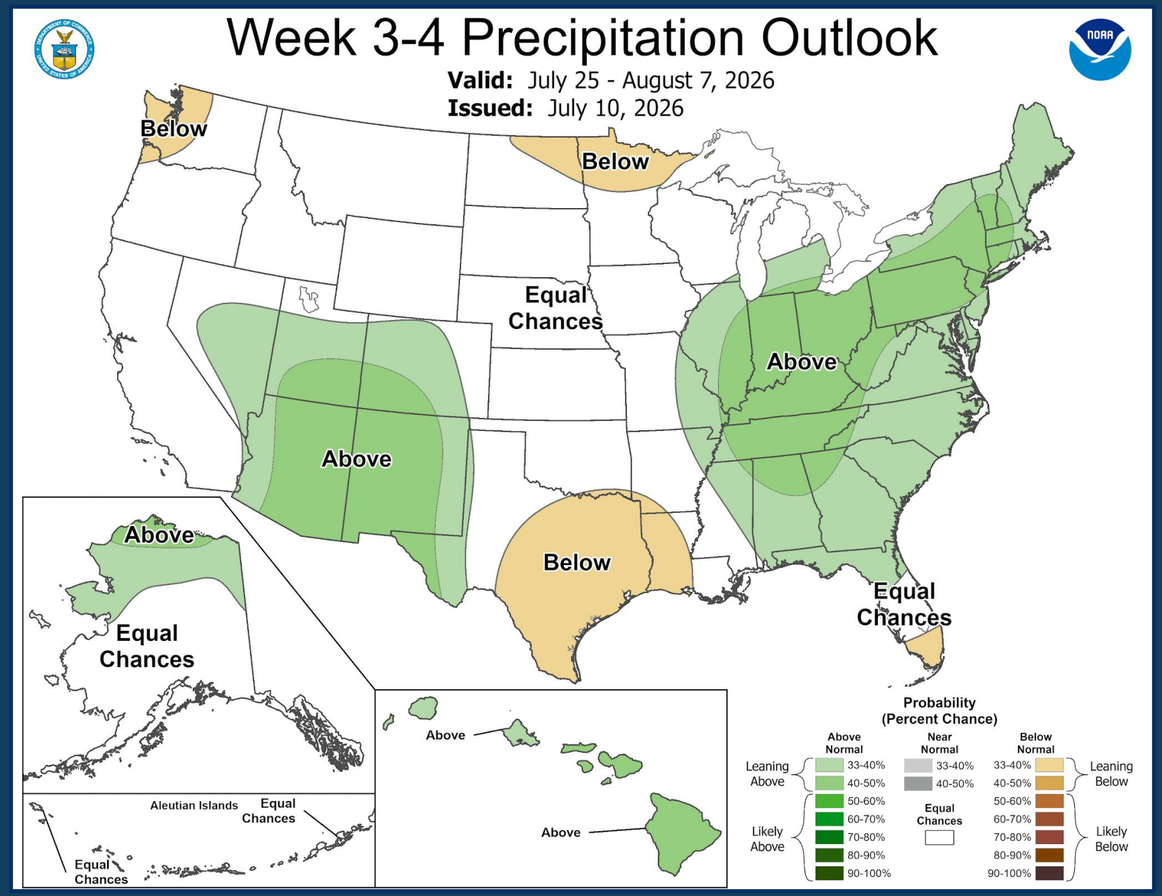
Medium Range

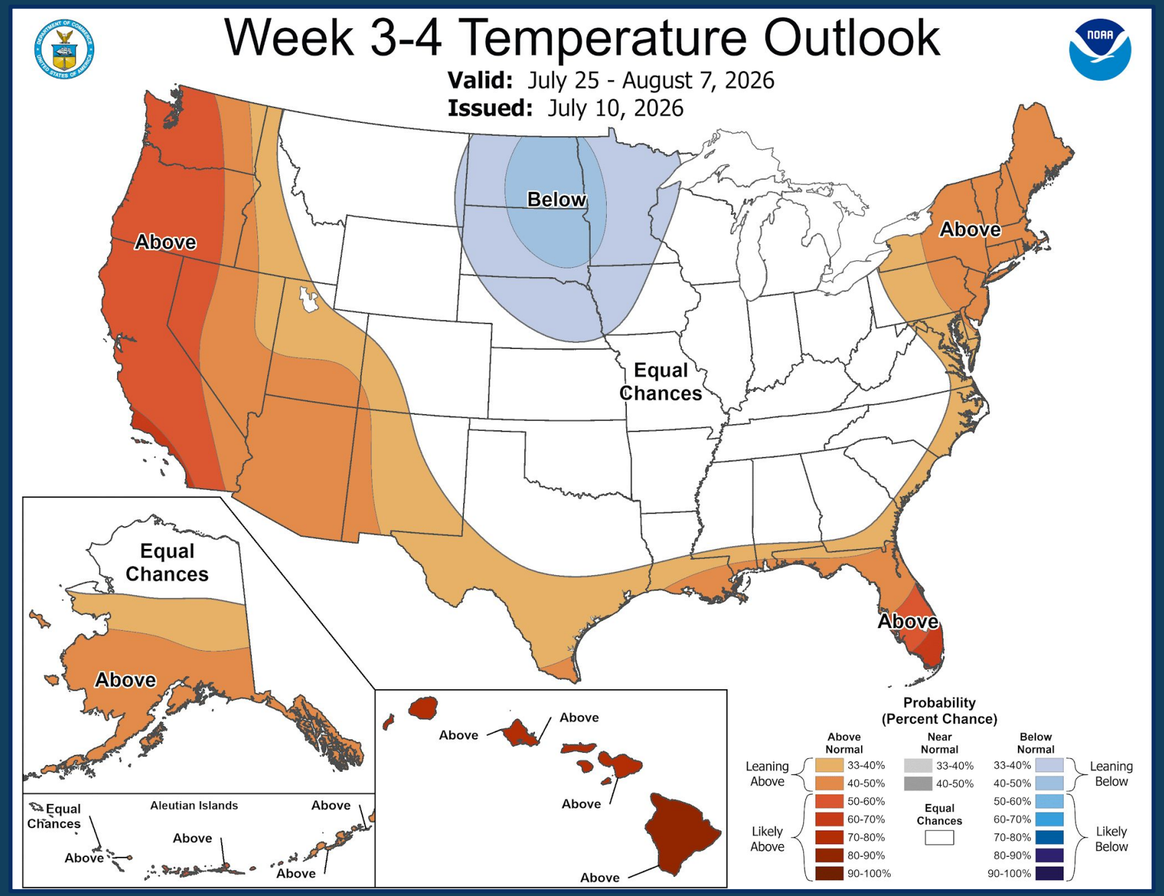




The Climate Prediction Center's (CPC) 8-14 Day precipitation outlook is showing slight chances for above normal precipitation for most of the Southeast, outside of western AL and the peninsula of FL, citing enhanced southerly flow at the surface. As for temperatures, anomalous ridging, combined with the southerly surface flow, are leading to chances for above normal temperatures for the entire region, with confidence increasing the further south you go.

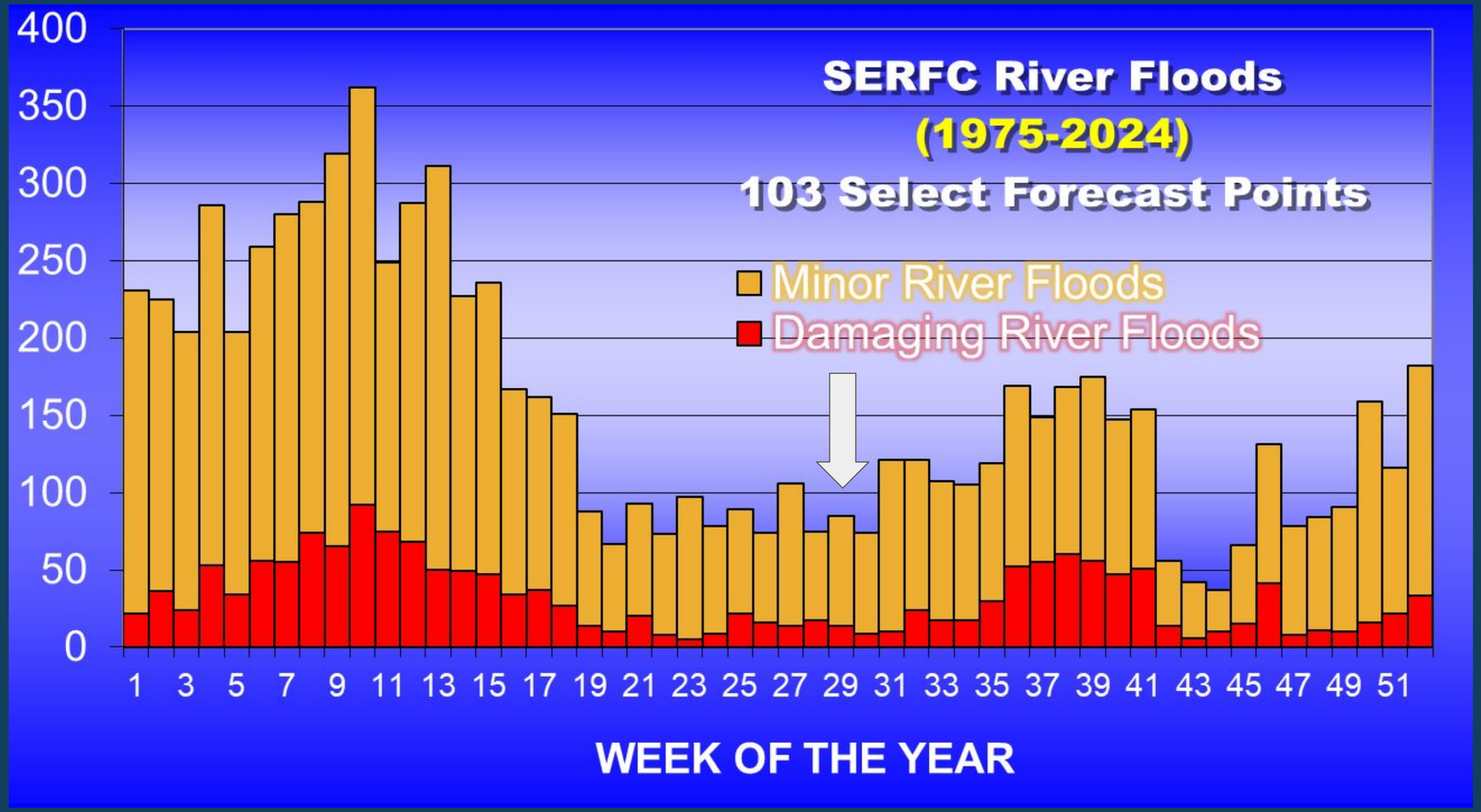
Medium Range





The CPC has all but the peninsula of FL with chances of above normal precipitation in the week 3-4 period. Meanwhile, temperatures are showing equal chances of above normal, normal, and below normal temperatures for most of the region except for very close to the coast and the peninsula of FL. This is largely due to model guidance suggesting the presence of a trough centered over the Upper Midwest.

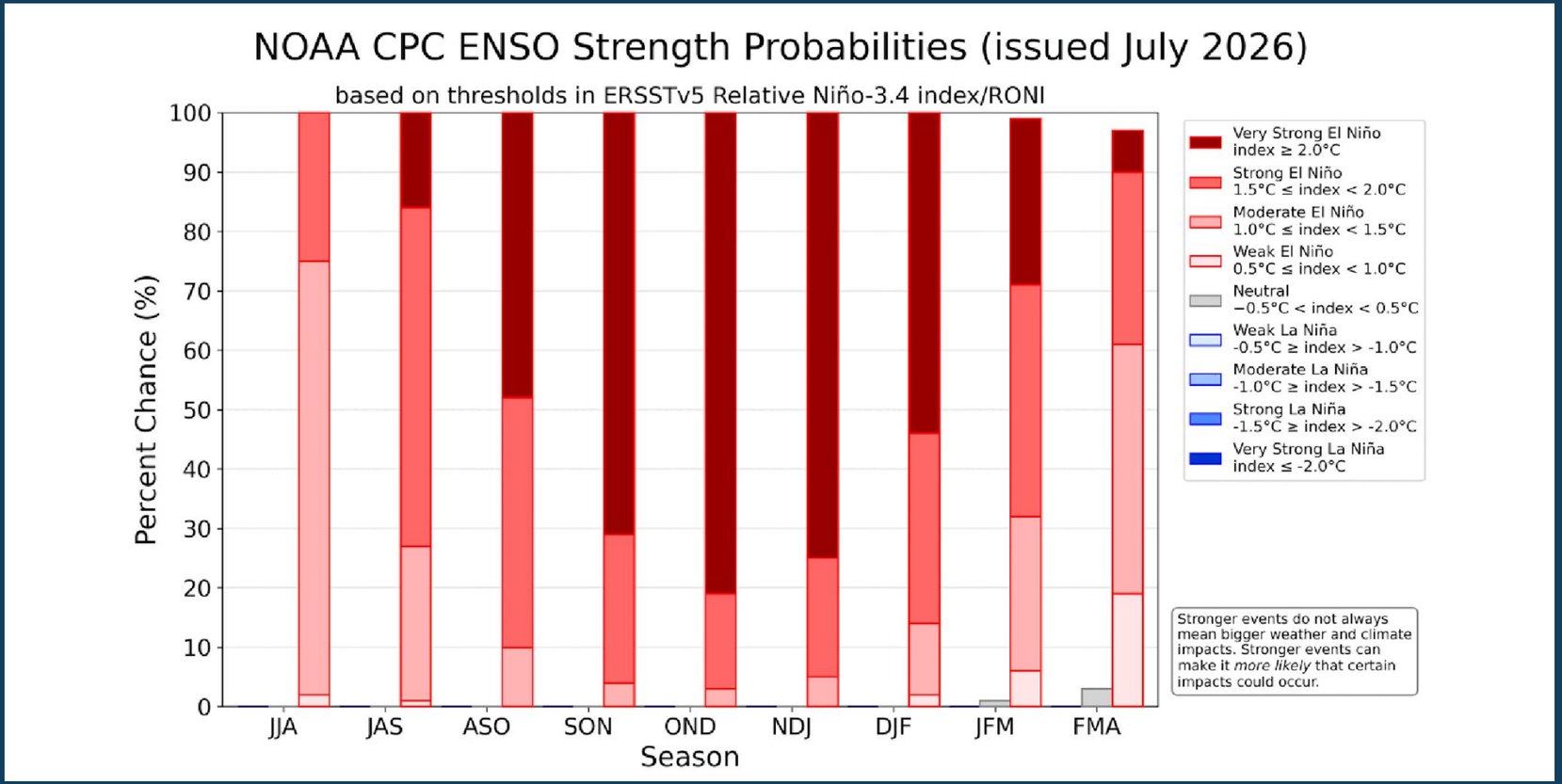
Long Term Outlook



Long Term Outlook

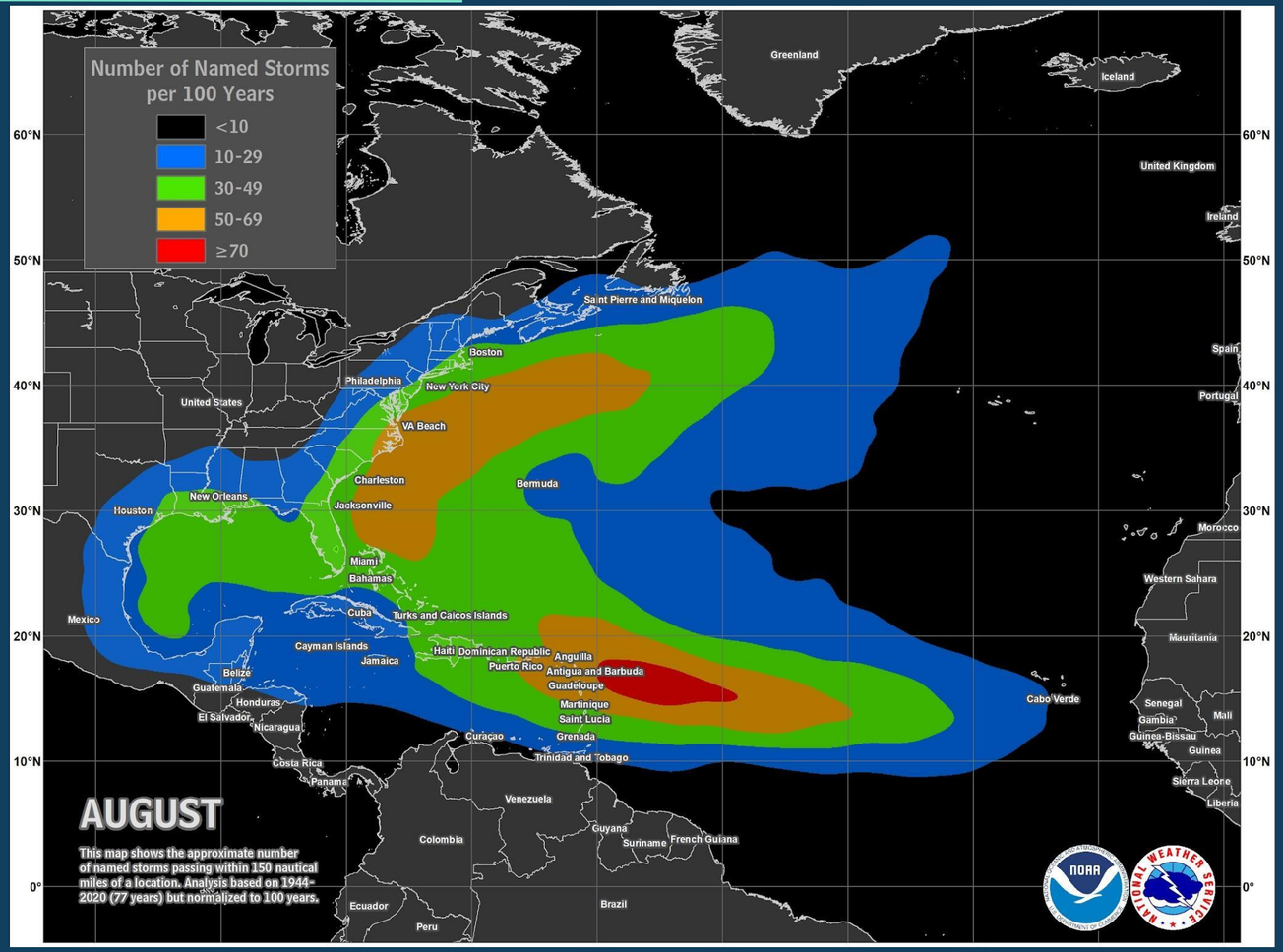
We are currently in week 29 of the year. A tropical system and/or intense frontal convection are not atypical so a few river floods are in the climatology for this week. These events typically increase in the coming weeks. Prior to week 35, these types of floods typically occur in a concentrated area resulting in only a few minor or damaging floods. During the peak of tropical season the flooding is often more widespread.

ENSO Outlook



El Niño conditions are present and likely to continue and strengthen through winter 2026-27. In Nov-Jan the chance of a very strong event (SST anomaly ≥ +2 ◦C) has increased from 63% last month to 75% this month. Looking forward to the Spring 2027, there is a greater than 97% chance that El Niño will persist until April.

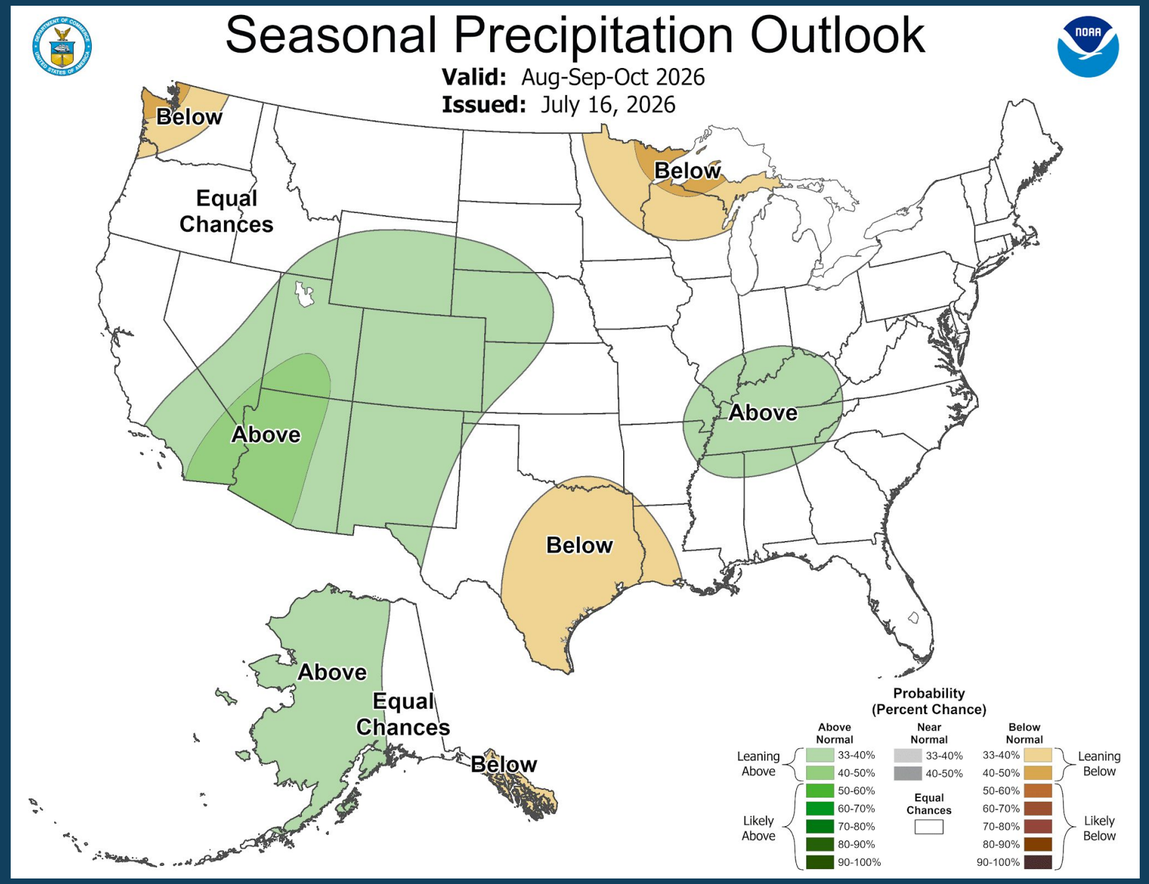
Tropical Climatology



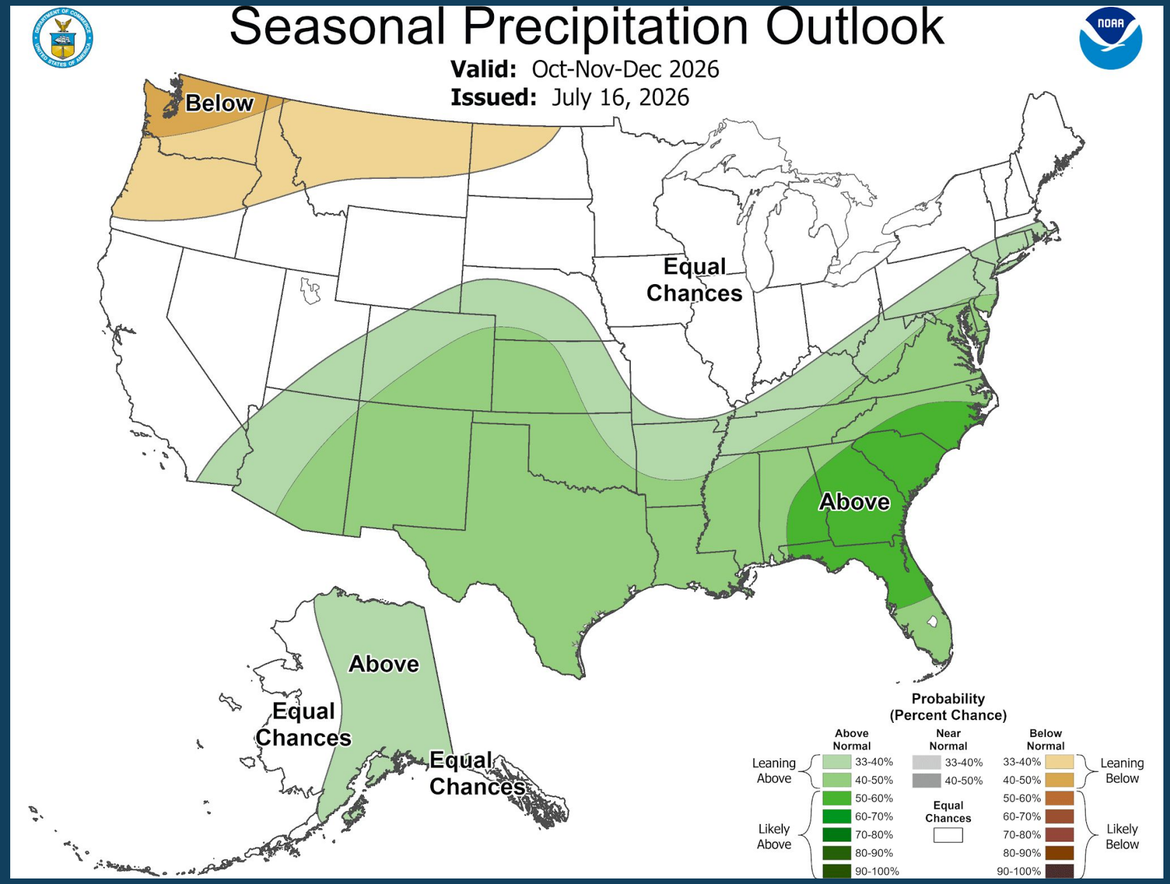
The development region during the month of August tends to favor the far western Atlantic and the Atlantic coast of North America. During El Niño seasons, the Gulf and eastern shoreboard are the most likely development regions as the wind pattern suppresses development in the main development region and Caribbean. This means any systems that form will likely already be close to land.

Seasonal Average Rainfall and Forecasted Deviations

August-September-October

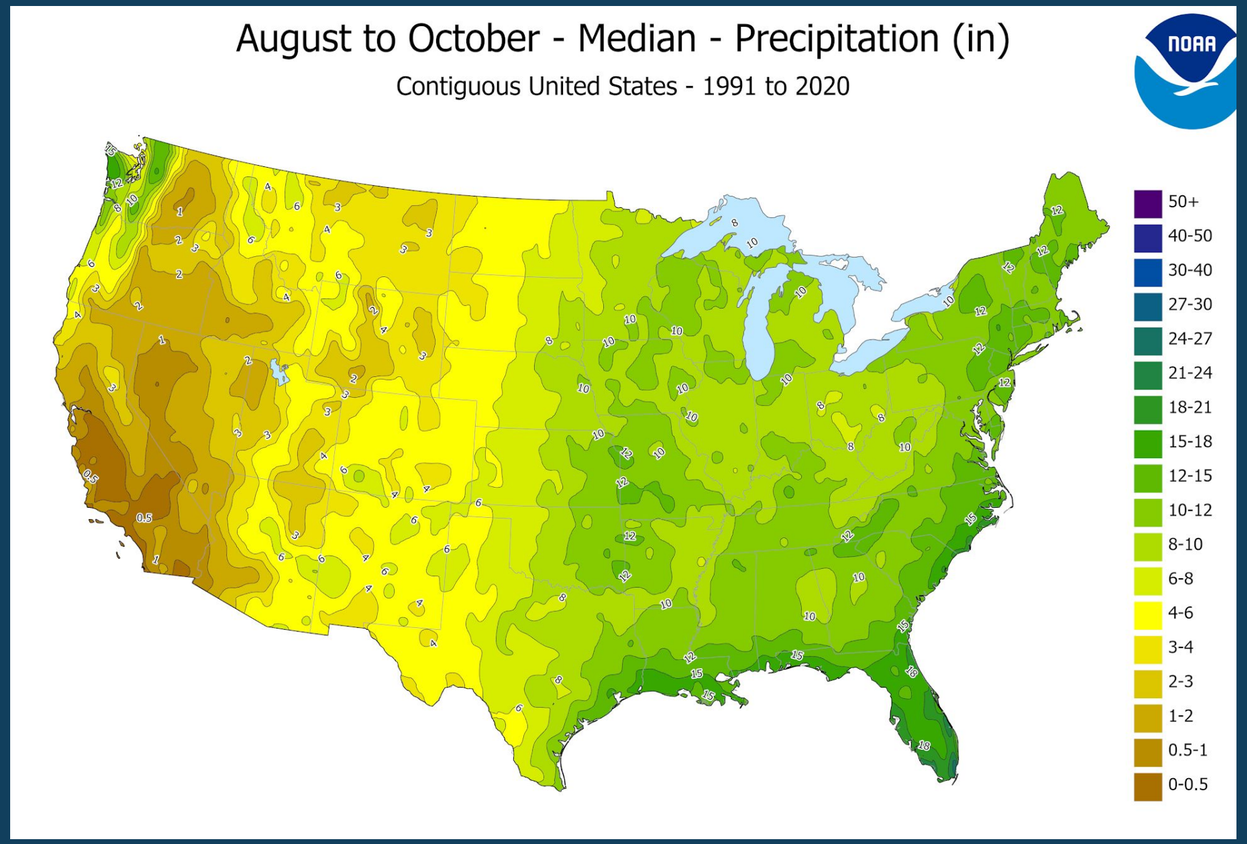


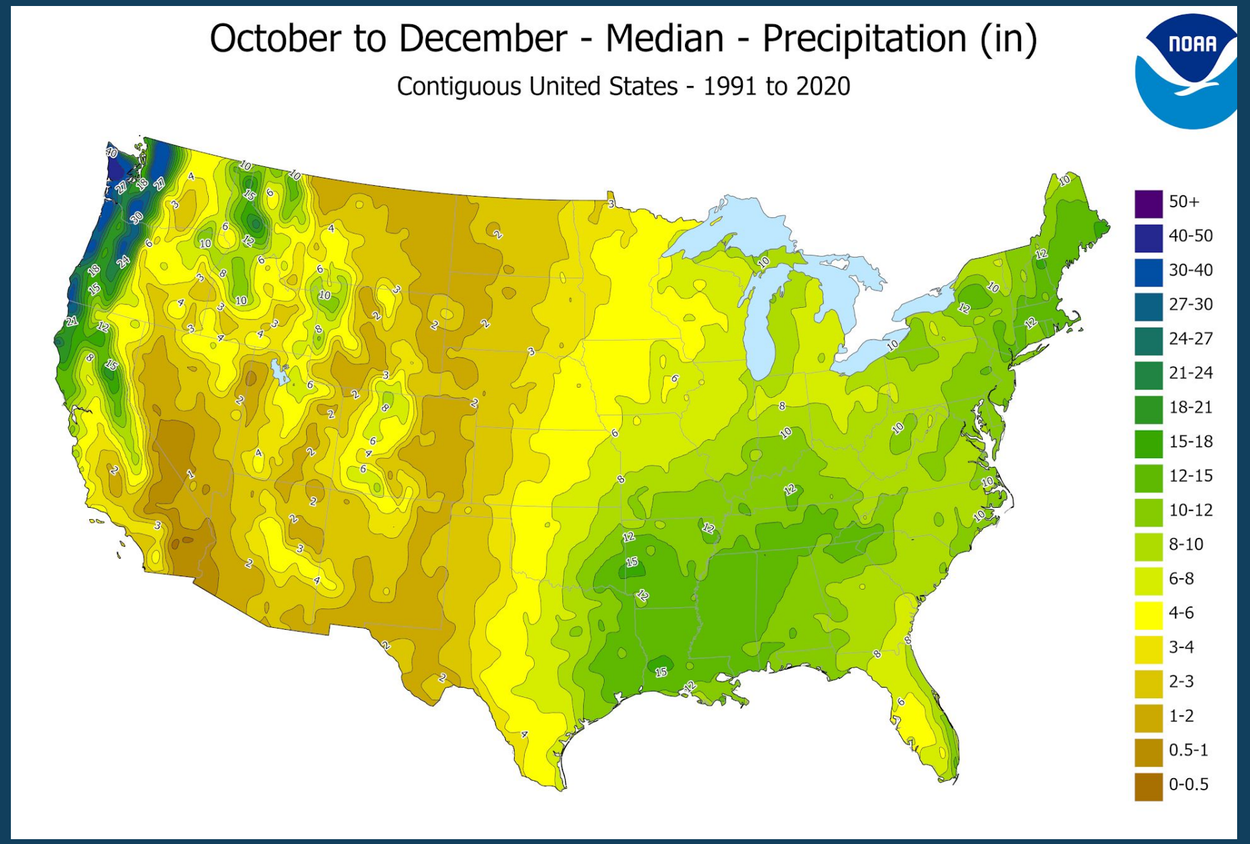
October-November-December



The EPD (Extended Prediction Division formerly CPC) outlook has the Southeast labeled as “Equal Chances” for the August-September-October outlook. This means that climate signals are weak or not in agreeance and there is equal chance for above, below, or near-normal total precipitation amounts for the season. The October-November-December outlook is predictive of a likely above normal rainfall season. This corresponds to El Niño beginning to impact the atmospheric pattern in the Southeast during the fall season.

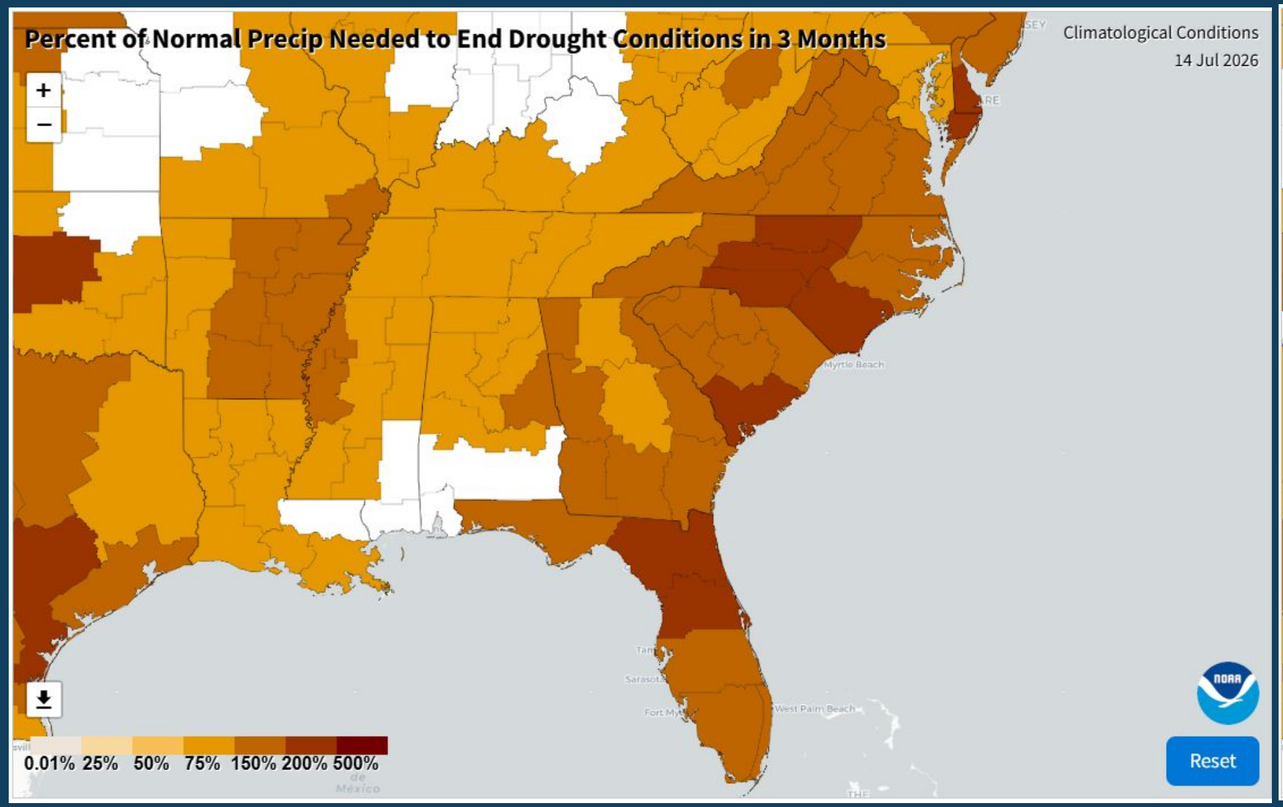
Seasonal Rainfall Averages

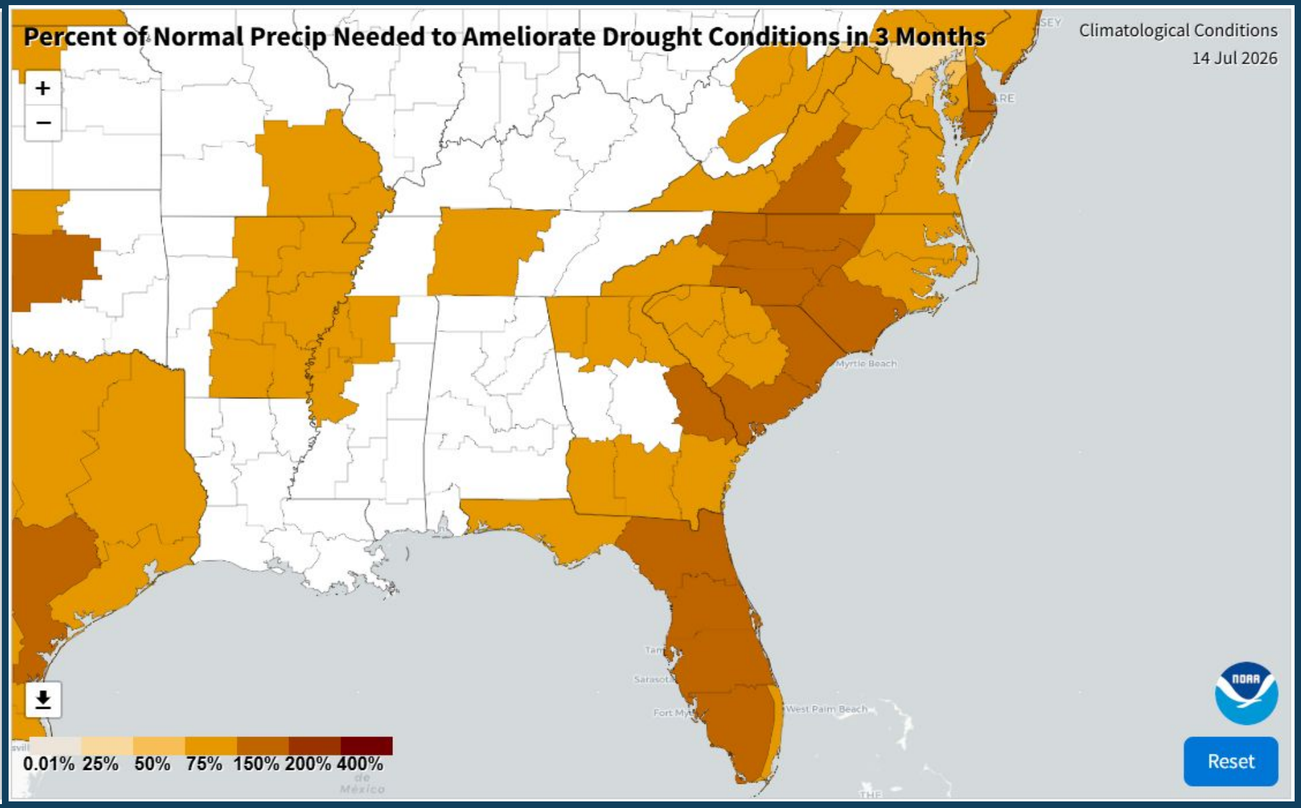




Above are the normal rainfall amounts across the CONUS for time periods that correlate with the CPC outlooks on the previous slide.

Conditions for Drought Recovery in 3 Months





Looking ahead towards drought recovery, the Southeast would need to see between 100 - 220% of climatological normal precipitation amounts to end drought according to the Palmer Hydrological Drought Index (PHDI). Near-normal precip totals over the next 3 months would be helpful for drought amelioration*, especially for Georgia and inland South Carolina. However, North Carolina and Florida remain the most drought impacted states and need upwards of 150-180% of normal rainfall to see improvement. For more information, see https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/access/monitoring/drought-recovery/current

* Amelioration refers to drought improvement, defined as PHDI values greater than -2.0.

Synopsis

- In the last 4 weeks, drought conditions have continued to improve over a large portion of Alabama, and the Florida panhandle. Improvements also occurred in South Carolina and Georgia, but South Carolina, Florida and North Carolina still see persistent drought over a wide region.
- Over the month of July, near to above normal rainfall chances exist in the short-term. The immediate seasonal outlook suggest equal chances for above, near, or below normal precipitation through summer, so it remains to be seen how any future drought will evolve.
- Looking ahead, the fall and winter seasons in the Southeast are likely to be influenced by El Niño, which typically equates to above normal rainfall.

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