



## Southeast U.S. River Flood Climatology

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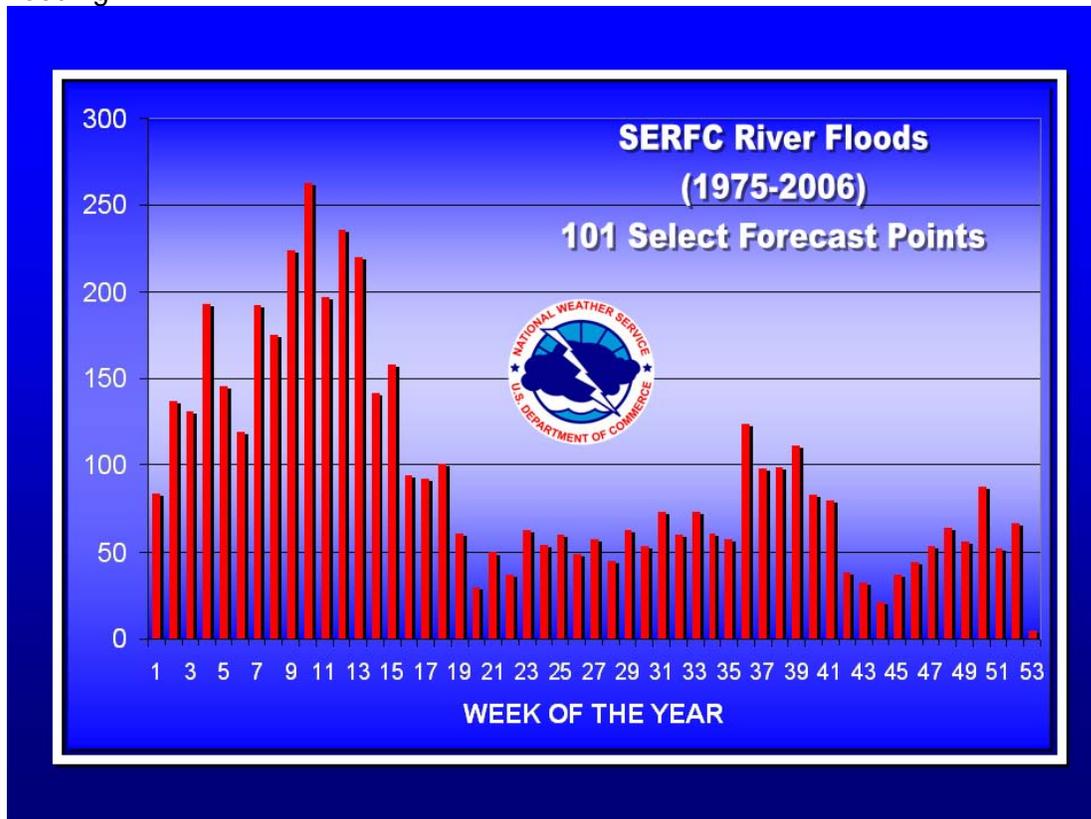
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### Key Point: River Flood Climatology Provides Insight into Primary Runoff Period

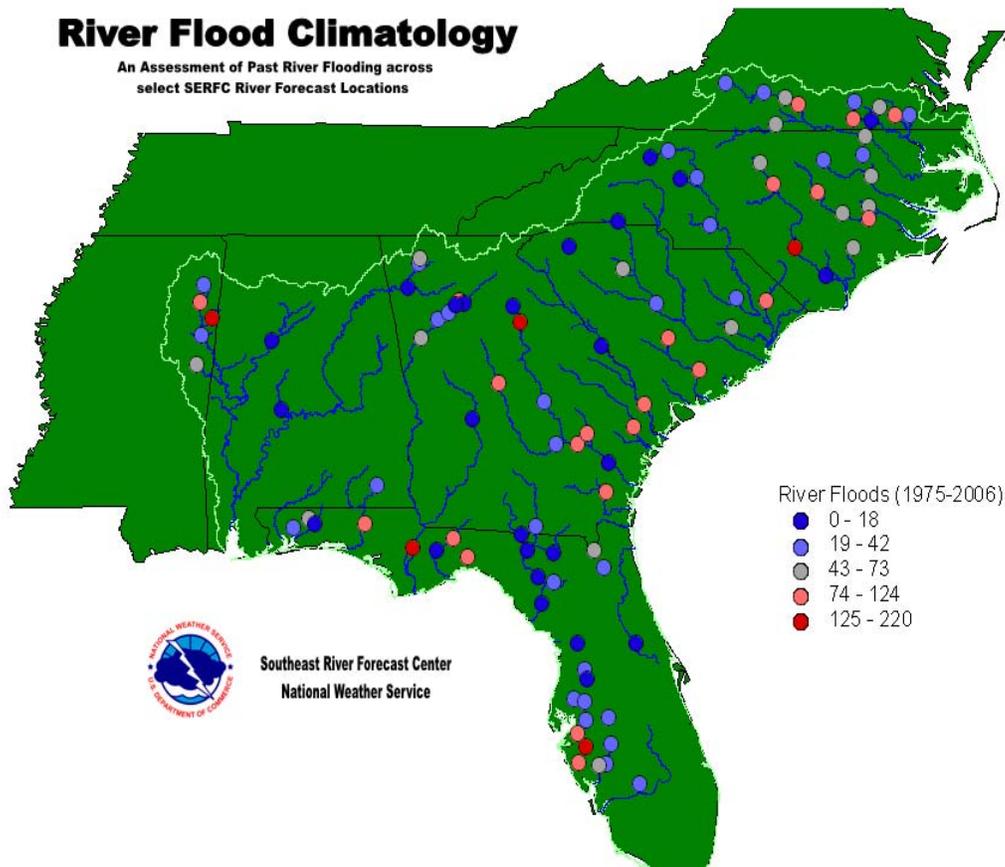
After analysis of over 100 river forecast points across the southeastern United States, it was found that most river flooding occurs in a distinct period, starting from mid to late January through the month of March, with a steady drop off from April into May. Central Florida is the exception to this overall trend as flooding generally occurs between mid June and early October.

The overall southeastern flood period falls in line with the time that late winter to early spring higher-intensity rains overlap with the time vegetation is dormant. This combination results in the most efficient period for runoff, thereby producing higher volume stream flow and enhanced flood potential. For Central Florida, the flood period falls in line with the summer convective rains through the tropical season.

A secondary peak is noticed from early September through mid October. This period is indicative of the tropical storm season, when rains can lead to excessive runoff and flooding.



In summary, due to enhanced rainfall and minimal losses due to evapotranspiration, the period from mid January into early April is the time most conducive for flooding across most of the Southeast U.S. The only exception to this is Central and Southern Florida where most river flooding occurs between mid June and early October. There is a secondary period associated with the summer and fall tropical season. However, this period typically does not produce the consistent flooding that the winter period does.



The above graph depicts the forecast locations and associated rivers in the Southeast River Forecast Center's Hydrologic Service Area used in the flood climatology study. The coloring on the dots shows the number of river floods corresponding to the legend from 1975 through 2006 period.

Note: This is the first part of an on-going study of Southeast U.S. floods. Additional River Flood and Rainfall Climatology facts and figures will be placed on the SERFC web site in the coming weeks.