



Drought Information Statement for Southeast Alabama, Southwest Georgia, and the Florida Panhandle & Big Bend

Valid February 19, 2026

Issued By: National Weather Service Tallahassee, FL

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- This product will be updated Thursday, February 26, 2026
- Please see all currently available products at https://drought.gov/drought-information-statements.
- Please visit https://www.weather.gov/TAE/DroughtInformationStatement for previous statements.
- Please visit https://www.drought.gov/drought-status-updates for regional drought status updates.

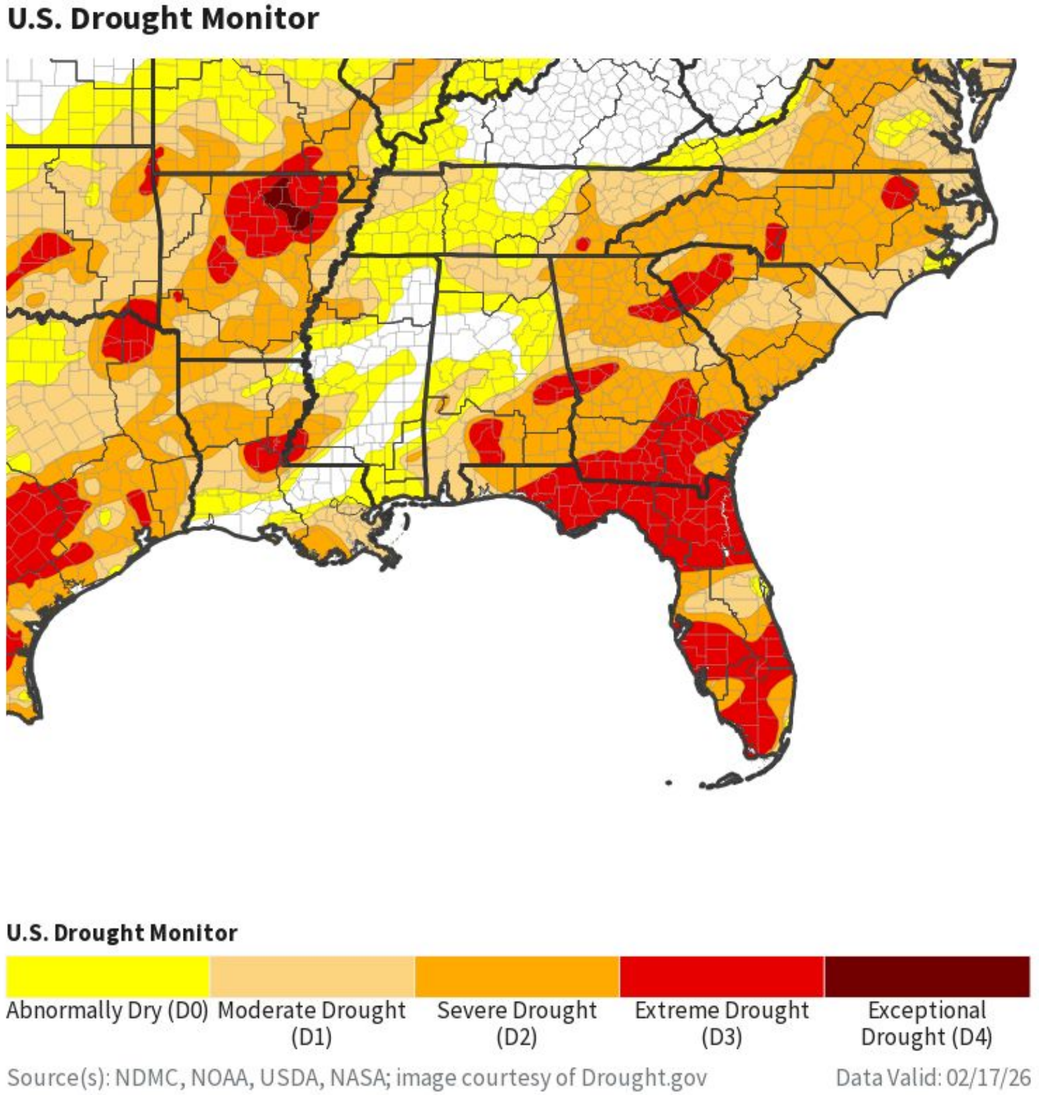
- **Extreme Drought Continues to Expand Despite Recent Rains.**
- Drought conditions are the worst experienced since 2012.
- Long term drought impacts related to hydrologic conditions are becoming dominant in this drought, with significant impacts to rivers and streams. Ponds are at exceptionally low levels or dry.
- Fire weather impacts are also increasing. Planting season is approaching, with potential impacts to the agricultural community with low water levels.

U.S. Drought Monitor

Link to the latest U.S. Drought Monitor for Southeast Alabama, Southwest Georgia, and the Florida Panhandle & Big Bend

- Extreme drought expanded slightly this week despite some modest rainfall. Groundwater remains low, accompanied by an increased fire weather threat. Further drought expansion is likely in the coming weeks.

- Drought intensity and Extent
  - **D3 (Extreme Drought)**:
    - In Florida: Most of North Florida east of Central Walton County.
    - In Georgia: Most of South Georgia south of a line from Seminole County to Ben Hill County.
  - **D2 (Severe Drought):** The remainder of the region.

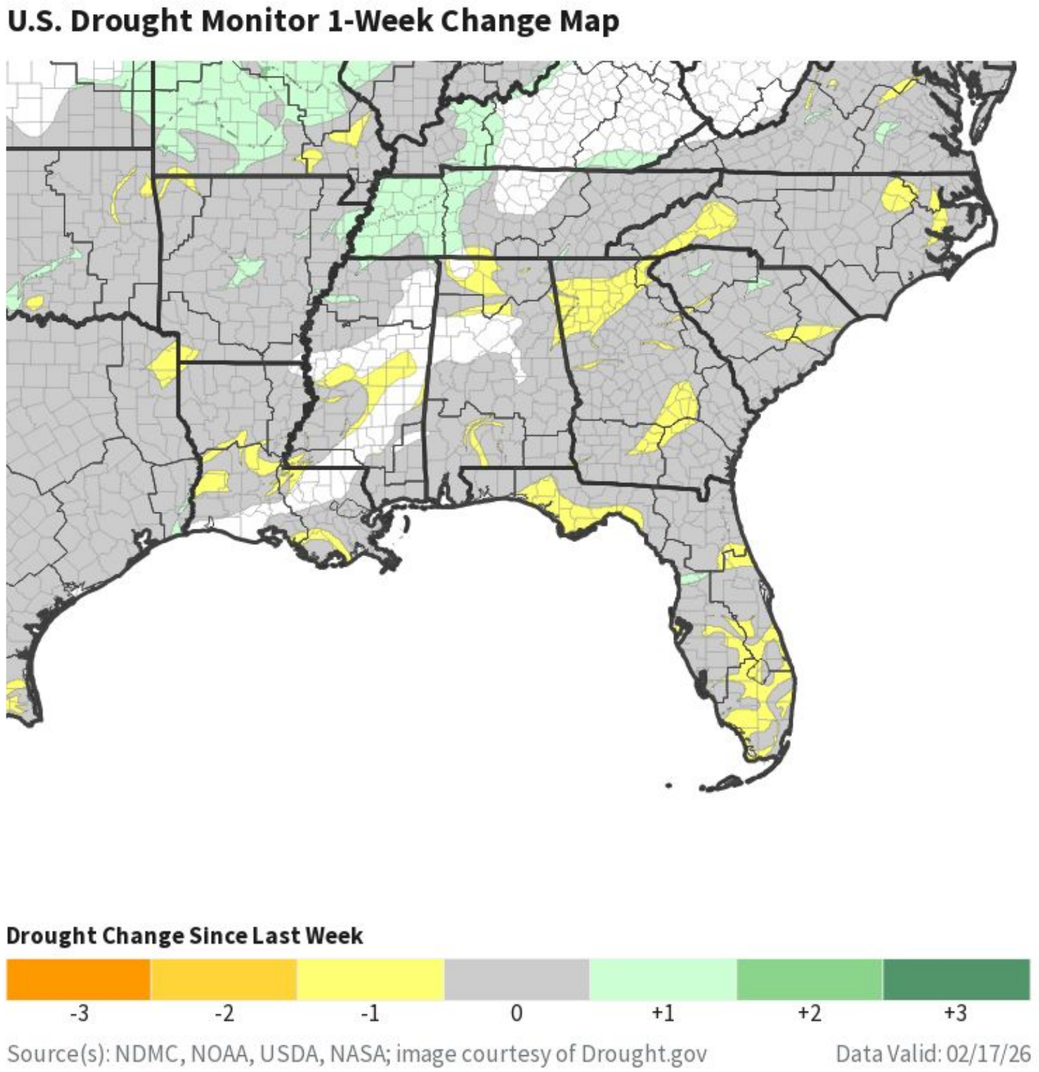


Recent Change in Drought Intensity

Link to the latest 4-week change map for Southeast Alabama, Southwest Georgia, and the Florida Panhandle & Big Bend

- Drought degradation was analyzed in portions of South Central Georgia as well as coastal parts of North Florida.
- There was no improvement this week.

- One-Week Drought Monitor Class Change:
  - **1 category degradation:**
    - **In Florida:** Coastal areas of the Florida Panhandle and Florida Big Bend.
    - **In Georgia:** South Central Georgia in Berrien, Tift, Irwin, and Ben Hill Counties.



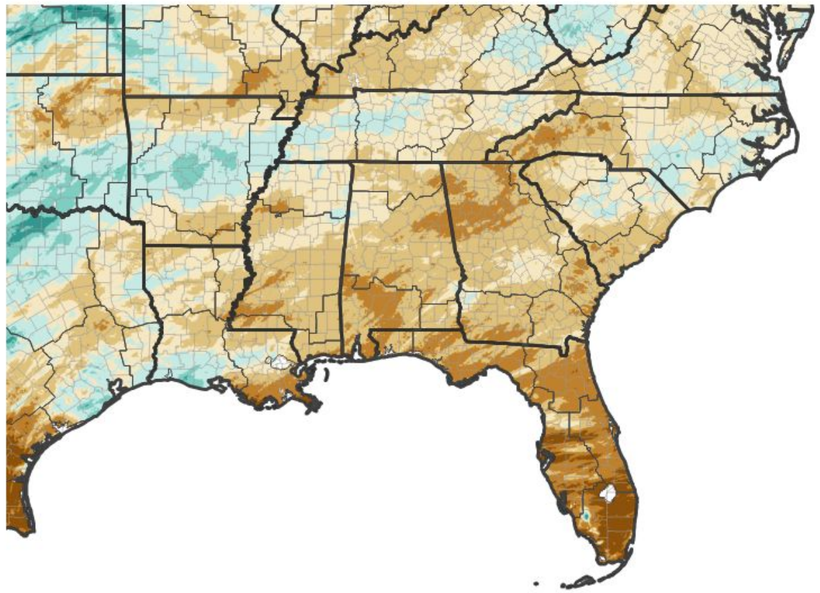
Precipitation

Note: Precipitation after 7 AM EST/6 AM CST Tuesday is incorporated in next week's Drought Monitor

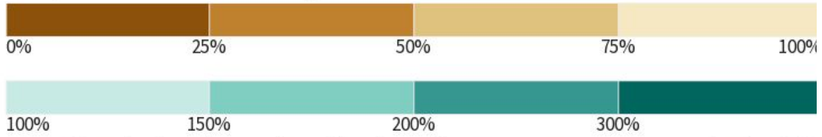
	Last 30 Days		Last 90 Days	
	Rainfall	Percent	Rainfall	Percent
DeFuniak Springs*	4.02”	74.9%	10.30”	67.7%
Panama City ECP	2.47”	50.4%	12.10”	88.7%
Dothan	3.74”	75.3%	8.46”	60.5%
Marianna	2.02”	45.2%	8.49”	65.4%
Apalachicola	2.07”	48.5%	6.76”	58.2%
Georgetown**	3.54”	72.5%	8.06”	56.0%
Dawson**	3.56”	72.7%	9.15”	64.7%
Arlington**	2.54”	51.5%	9.08”	65.2%
Albany	3.16”	75.3%	9.37”	77.3%
Cairo**	1.55”	33.8%	8.02”	63.4%
Tallahassee	1.73”	38.7%	7.91”	63.3%
Moultrie**	1.53”	33.7%	5.87”	49.0%
Monticello*	2.31“	51.2%	6.96”	67.5%
Ty Ty**	3.01”	67.6%	8.31”	67.4%
Alapaha**	1.83”	41.6%	6.08”	51.2%
Valdosta	1.89”	52.4%	5.60”	56.3%
Perry***	1.15”	29.3%	6.01”	56.3%
Mayo*	2.12”	54.0%	8.47”	78.2%

Rainfall totals through February 18, 2026. Non-NWS Data Courtesy:
*University of Florida - Florida Automated Weather Network
**University of Georgia Weather Network
***Suwannee River Water Management District
Climatology for non-NWS stations is estimated using PRISM data.

30-Day Percent of Normal Precipitation



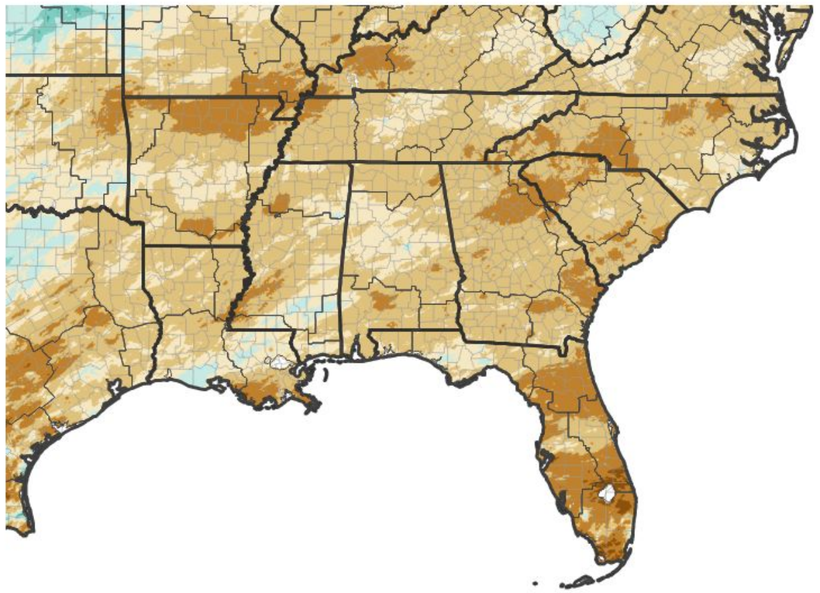
Precipitation Shown as a Percentage of Normal Conditions



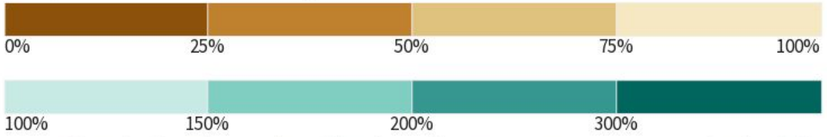
Source(s): National Weather Service Multi-Radar Multi-Sensor System; image courtesy of Drought.gov

Last Updated: 02/19/2

90-Day Percent of Normal Precipitation



Precipitation Shown as a Percentage of Normal Conditions



Source(s): National Weather Service Multi-Radar Multi-Sensor System; image courtesy of Drought.gov

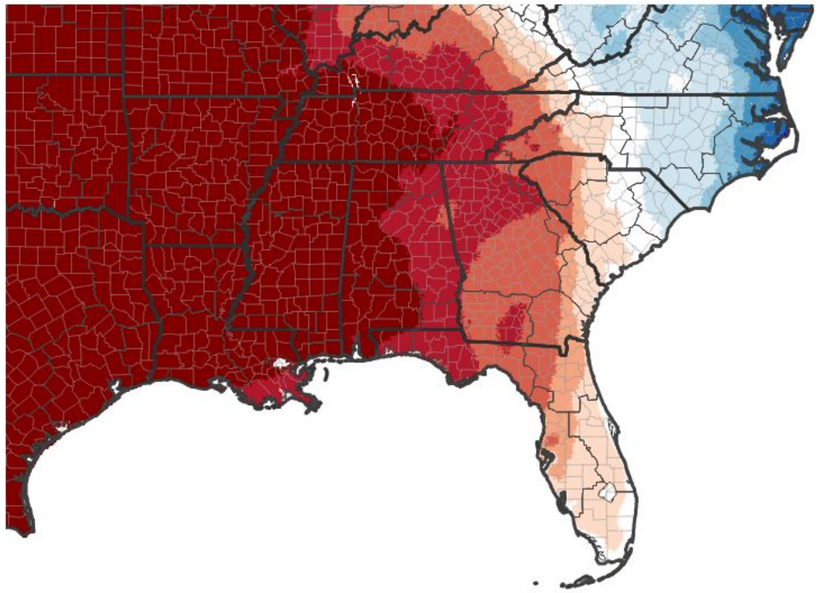
Last Updated: 02/19/26

Temperature

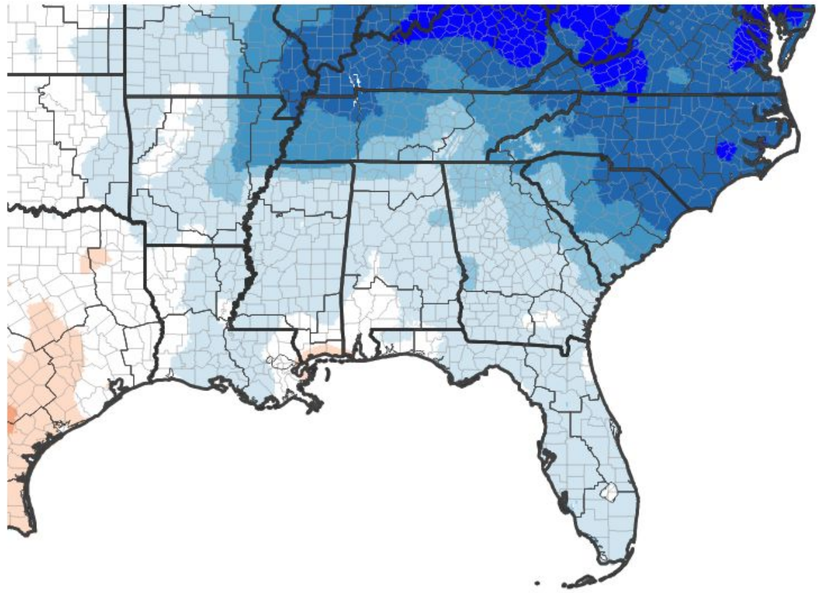
	Last 30 Days	
	Average High (Departure)	Average Low (Departure)
Tallahassee	66.0° (+0.3°)	37.0° (-4.9°)
Apalachicola	63.5° (-1.4°)	41.2° (-4.5°)
Albany	63.2° (-0.8°)	36.4° (-3.9°)
Valdosta	65.7° (+0.7°)	36.0° (-4.4°)
Marianna	65.3° (+0.3°)	38.3° (-3.8°)
Dothan	63.1° (-0.6°)	38.9° (-2.5°)

- A warming trend over the last week has brought much above normal temperatures to the region after the arctic blast.
- With warmer temperatures and the onset of growing season approaching, there will be increasing water demand. Should there be an absence of rain, this could rapidly worsen drought.

7-Day Temperature Anomaly



30-Day Temperature Anomaly



Departure from Normal Max Temperature (°F)

-8 -6 -4 -3 -1 0

0 1 3 4 6 8

Source(s): NOAA's National Centers for Environmental Information; image courtesy of Drought.gov

Data Valid: 02/15/26

Departure from Normal Max Temperature (°F)

-8 -6 -4 -3 -1 0

0 1 3 4 6 8

Source(s): NOAA's National Centers for Environmental Information; image courtesy of Drought.gov

Data Valid: 02/15/26

Summary of Impacts - Southeast Alabama

Links: See/submit Condition Monitoring Observer Reports (CMOR) and view the Drought Impacts Reporter

Hydrologic Impacts

- Streamflows remain exceptionally low for this time of year. While the recent rains last Sunday did result in streams rising above their exceptionally low levels, many are returning to or are nearing levels observed prior to the rainfall.
- Surface and groundwater levels are exceptionally low. Even with more rain occurring across Southeast Alabama than other areas in our region, the holding ponds and lakes didn't increase in water levels. Some holding ponds remain extremely low or are completely dry.

Agricultural Impacts

- Winter cover crops showed a little improvement with the recent rains but are still considerably stressed given the limited soil moisture.
- To support agricultural activities, some farms are pumping water into select holding ponds on their property to ensure at least some accessible water for herds/flocks.
- Planting season is still on schedule to begin in the coming month, but concerns exist given exceptionally low sub-surface water levels that irrigation will further stress the water table as farmers draw water from wells.

Fire Hazard Impacts

- Keetch-Byram Drought Index (KBDI) values range from 150-200 across the region.
- KBDI responds quickly to any recent rains. Recent rainfall less than a couple inches does not immediately mitigate the fire threat. Reports from the area indicate that brush fire occurrence remains steady or even increasing in the wake of the rainfall.
- Continue to exercise caution with outdoor burning, and check with local officials if burning is allowed.

Mitigation Actions

- None at this time.

Summary of Impacts - Southwest Georgia

Links: See/submit Condition Monitoring Observer Reports (CMOR) and view the Drought Impacts Reporter

Hydrologic Impacts

- Streamflows remain exceptionally low for this time of year. While the recent rains last Sunday did result in streams rising above their exceptionally low levels, many are returning to or are nearing levels observed prior to the rainfall.
- Surface and groundwater levels are exceptionally low. Even with the recent rain in Southwest Georgia, reports indicate that holding ponds remain dry or are little more than “mud puddles”

Agricultural Impacts

- Winter cover crops are significantly stressed even with recent rains.
- To support agricultural activities, some farms are pumping water into select holding ponds on their property to ensure at least some accessible water for herds/flocks.
- Planting season is still on schedule to begin in the coming month, but concerns exist given exceptionally low sub-surface water levels that irrigation will further stress the water table as farmers draw water from wells.

Fire Hazard Impacts

- Keetch-Byram Drought Index (KBDI) values range from 200-450 across the region.
- KBDI responds quickly to any recent rains. Recent rainfall less than a couple inches does not immediately mitigate the fire threat. Reports from the area indicate that brush fire occurrence remains steady or even increasing in the wake of the rainfall.
- Some counties have burn restrictions in place, especially along and east of I-75, which includes Lowndes County.

Mitigation Actions

- None at this time.

Summary of Impacts - Florida Panhandle

Links: See/submit Condition Monitoring Observer Reports (CMOR) and view the Drought Impacts Reporter

The Governor of Florida has issued a State of Emergency due to drought

Hydrologic Impacts

- Streamflows remain exceptionally low for this time of year even with recent rainfall.
- Surface and groundwater levels are exceptionally low. Even with the recent rain, reports indicate that holding ponds and lakes remain very low.

Agricultural Impacts

- Winter cover crops are significantly stressed even with recent rains.
- Planting season is still on schedule to begin in the coming month, but concerns exist given exceptionally low sub-surface water levels that irrigation will further stress the water table as farmers draw water from wells.

Fire Hazard Impacts

- Keetch-Byram Drought Index (KBDI) values range from 150-250 across the region.
- KBDI responds quickly to any recent rains. Recent rainfall less than a couple inches does not immediately mitigate the fire threat. Reports from the area indicate that brush fire occurrence remains steady or even increasing in the wake of the rainfall.
- Washington County has a burn ban in effect.

A brushfire that was contained in Washington County, FL. Photo courtesy of Washington County EMA

Mitigation Actions

- Northwest Florida Water Management District has issued a water shortage warning for their watershed.

Summary of Impacts - Florida Big Bend

Links: See/submit Condition Monitoring Observer Reports (CMOR) and view the Drought Impacts Reporter

The Governor of Florida has issued a State of Emergency due to drought

Hydrologic Impacts

- Streamflows remain exceptionally low for this time of year even with recent rainfall.
- Surface and groundwater levels are exceptionally low. Numerous lakes and holding ponds are dry across the Big Bend.

Agricultural Impacts

- Winter cover crops are significantly stressed even with recent rains.
- Planting season is still on schedule to begin in the coming month, but concerns exist given exceptionally low sub-surface water levels that irrigation will further stress the water table.

Fire Hazard Impacts

- Keetch-Byram Drought Index (KBDI) ranges from 250-550.
- KBDI responds quickly to any recent rains. Recent rainfall less than a couple inches does not immediately mitigate the fire threat. Reports from the area indicate that brush fire occurrence remains steady or even increasing in the wake of the rainfall.
- Lafayette County has a burn ban in effect.

Mitigation Actions

- Suwannee River Water Management District has issued a water shortage advisory for their watershed.

Central Park Lake in Southwood - Tallahassee, FL. A chain of lakes, with two of the three nearly or completely dry. Photo courtesy of NWS Tallahassee

Mitigation Actions

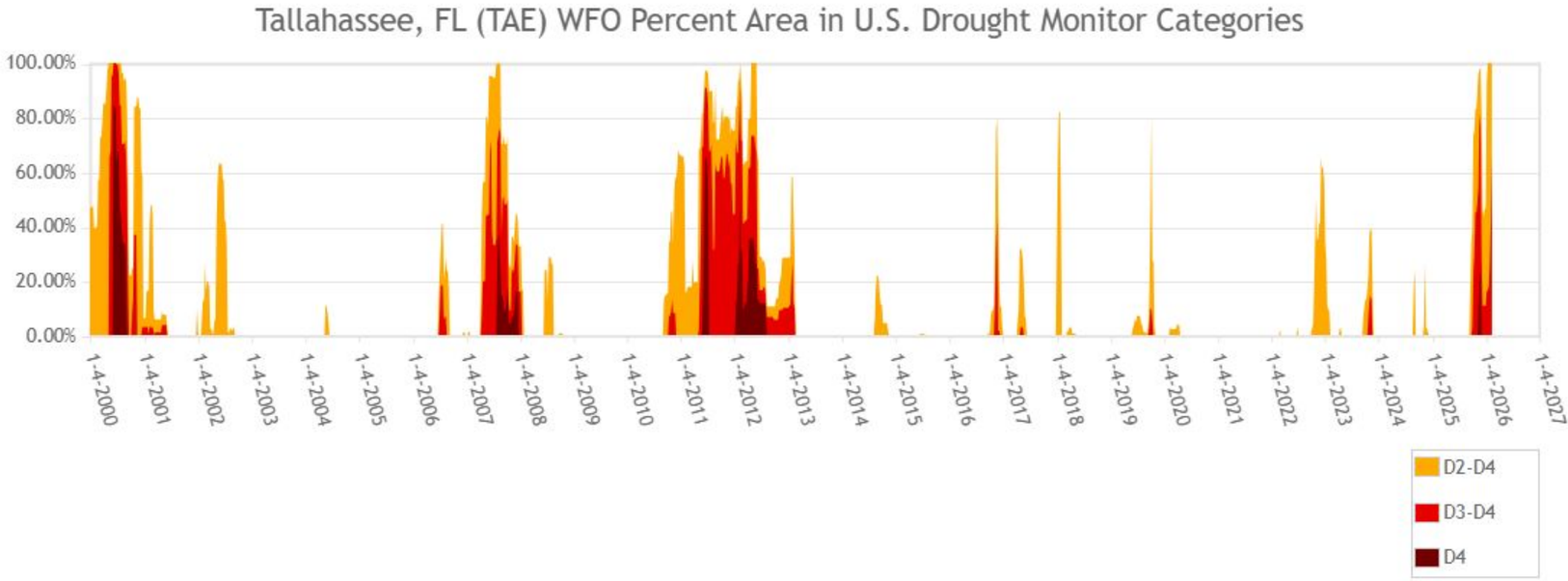
- Northwest Florida Water Management District has issued a water shortage warning for their watershed.

A Perspective on this Drought

Links: [Drought Monitor Time Series]

How does this drought compare to past long term droughts in the Tallahassee forecast area?

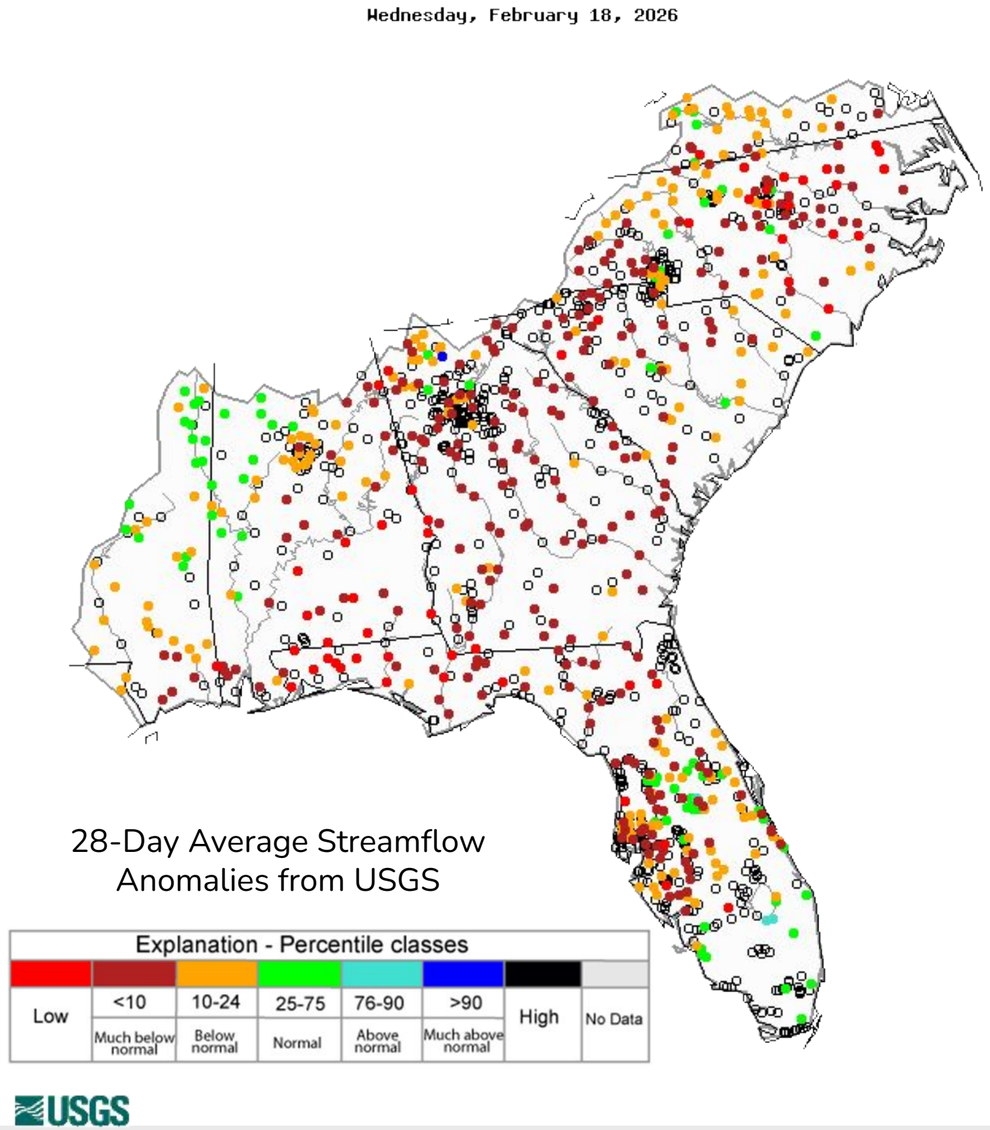
- There have been four long duration extreme droughts since 2000 in our region, including this current drought.
- While conditions are significant, they have not matched the lengthy duration experienced in the 2011/2012 drought.
- This drought has also not matched the severity (duration of D3/D4) seen in previous droughts, especially the 2000 drought.
- Even so, it is safe to say that this is the most impactful and substantial drought within the Tallahassee area since 2012.
- It is possible that this current drought further worsens. Future drought monitor releases will continue to evaluate the severity of the drought relative to past high impact droughts as we move into the growing season.



Courtesy of the US Drought Monitor Page.
Time series depiction of D2, D3, and D4 drought across the Tallahassee forecast area by percentage. Droughts in 2000, 2007, 2012, and the current drought each achieved 100% coverage of D2 or worse conditions.

Hydrologic Conditions and Impacts

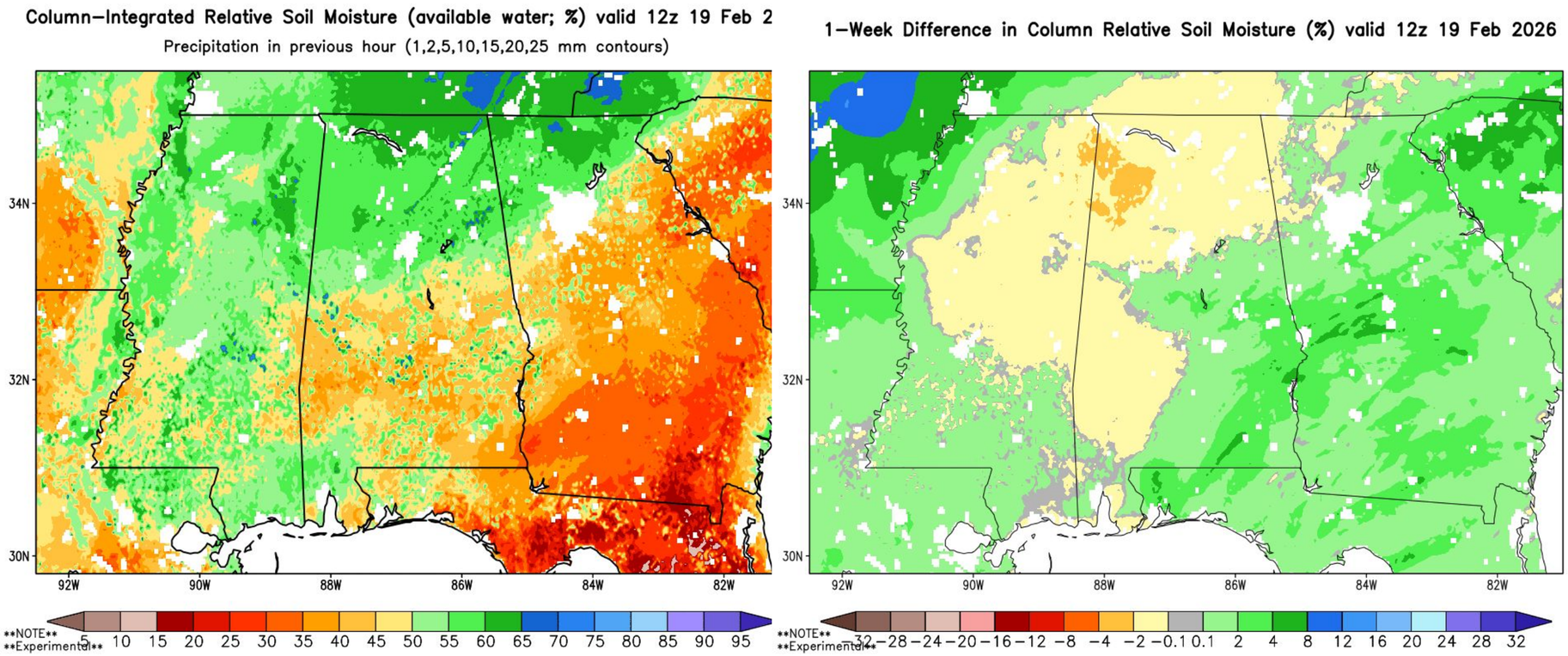
- Streamflow conditions are exceptionally low and well below normal for this time of year with a few sites nearing record low flows.
- Additional drought continuation/degradation this week was heavily driven by the exceptionally low streamflows. This is recharge season across the southeast, and the lack of rainfall will only worsen drought conditions in the weeks ahead.
- Some rainfall continues to help soil conditions, but the rain we've seen over the last three months has not been sufficient to refill water levels in lakes and holding ponds.
- Recreational activities on area waterways are being impacted, with some smaller rivers and creeks not navigable to canoes and paddle boats.
- In response to declining streamflows and groundwater, Northwest Florida Water Management District has issued a Water Shortage Warning, and Suwannee River Water Management District has issued a Water Shortage Advisory.



28-Day Average Streamflow Anomalies from USGS

Agricultural Impacts

- Deep layer soil moisture remains dry across the region, especially in our harder hit drought areas in South Georgia and North Florida.
- Planting season is still scheduled to kick off on time, but we will need increased rainfall to keep up with the increasing water demand.
- Recent rain did bring minimal improvement in the top 6 inches of the soil based on agricultural reports.



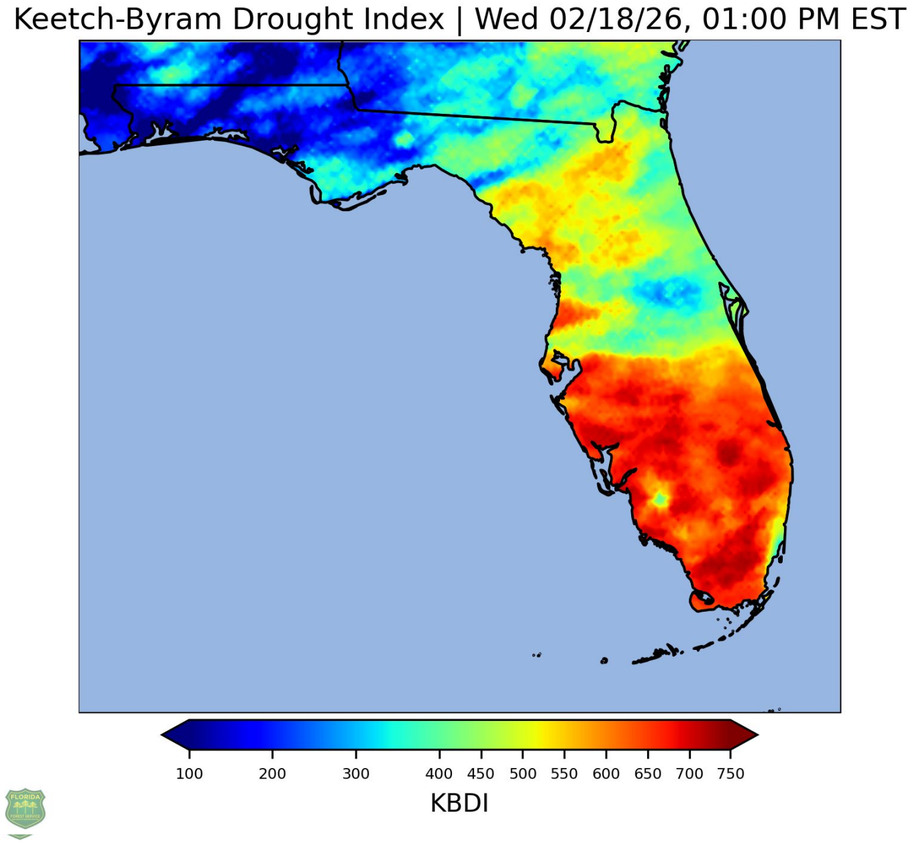
0-200 cm Relative Soil Moisture & 1-week Change in 0-200 cm Relative Soil Moisture
Data courtesy of NASA SPoRT

2026 Crop Reports
Alabama | Florida | Georgia

Fire Hazard Impacts

Link to [Wildfire Potential Outlooks from the National Interagency Coordination Center.]

- Keetch-Byram Drought Indices remain low in the western half of the region, however they remain elevated in the eastern part of the region.
- Brush fires are on the increase with more counties issuing burn bans or restrictions.
- The Significant Wildland Fire Potential Outlook for March calls for above normal wildfire activity across much of the area.

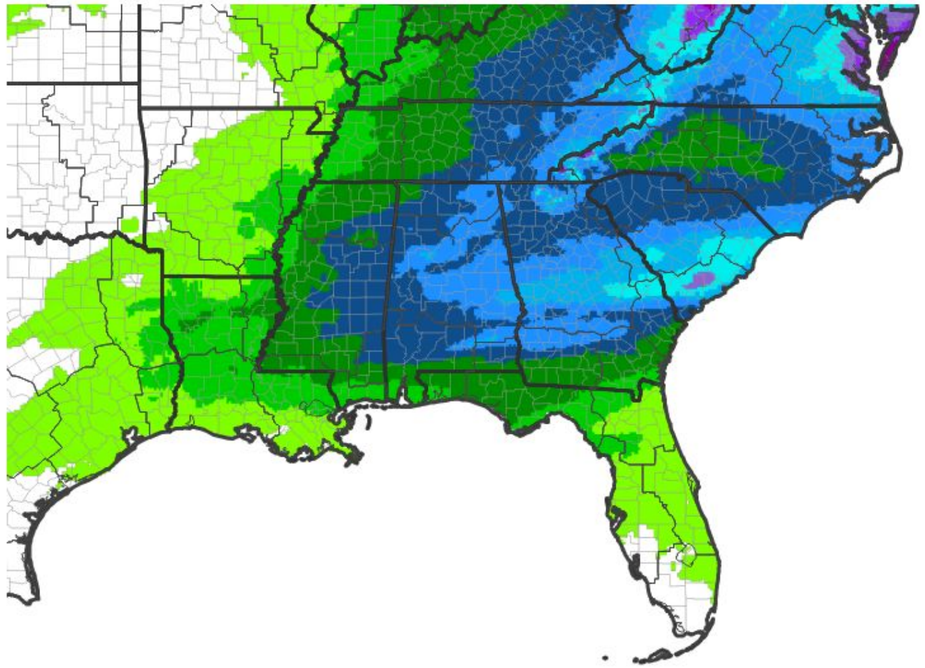


Precipitation Outlook

- A frontal system will approach the region Saturday. Some rainfall is expected, with heavier amounts near an inch generally along and north of a line from Dothan to Fitzgerald.
- With lighter amounts expected in Florida, further drought worsening is anticipated next week.

- 8-14 day outlook (2/26 - 3/4): Near normal precipitation expected.

7-Day Quantitative Precipitation Forecast for February 19, 2026–February 26, 2026



Predicted Inches of Precipitation

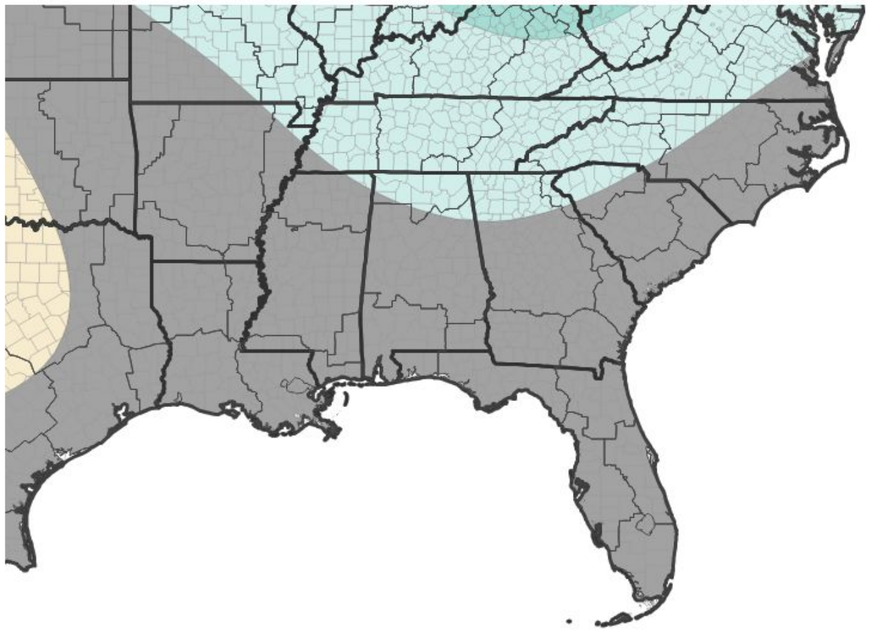
0 0.01 0.1 0.25 0.5 0.75 1 1.25 1.5 1.75

1.75 2 2.5 3 4 5 7 10 15 20

Source(s): National Weather Service Weather Prediction Center; image courtesy of Drought.gov

Last Updated: 02/19/26

8–14 Day Precipitation Outlook for February 26, 2026–March 4, 2026



Probability of Below-Normal Precipitation

33% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Probability of Above-Normal Precipitation

33% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Near-Normal Conditions

Source(s): Climate Prediction Center; image courtesy of Drought.gov

Last Updated: 02/18/26

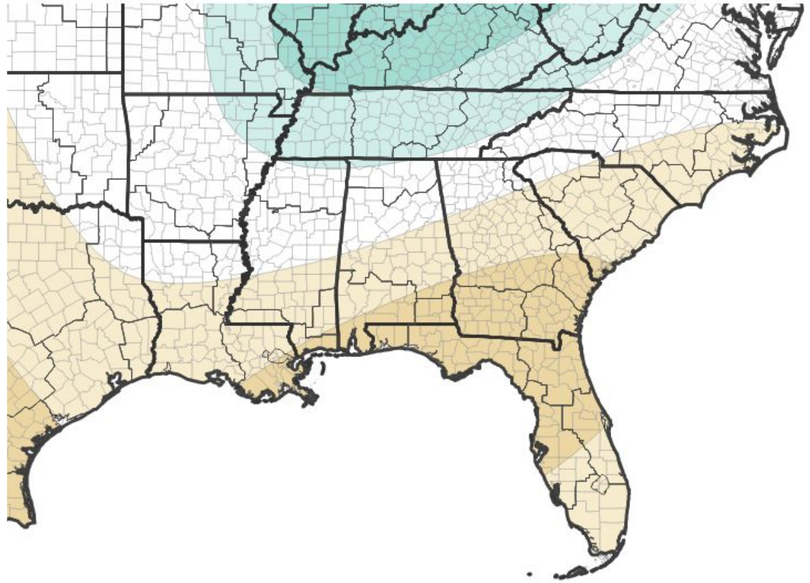
Long-Range Outlooks

The latest monthly and seasonal outlooks can be found on the CPC homepage

- The next 3 months are predicted to favor much above normal temperatures and below normal precipitation.
- While this outlook is very consistent with the climatological presentation of a La Niña pattern, it doesn't mean that extreme cold events won't occur.

	February		March		April	
Average	Temp	Rain	Temp	Rain	Temp	Rain
Tallahassee	55.6°	4.25”	61.4°	5.24”	67.3°	3.53”
Apalachicola	56.8°	4.17”	61.7°	4.34”	67.3°	2.91”
Albany	54.0°	4.01”	60.3°	4.38”	67.0°	3.67”
Valdosta	54.6°	3.31”	60.1°	3.73”	66.2°	3.66”
Marianna	55.4°	4.49”	61.5°	5.01”	67.6°	3.72”
Dothan	54.6°	4.82”	60.8°	4.72”	67.2°	4.79”

Seasonal (3-Month) Precipitation Outlook for February 1, 2026–April 30, 2026



Probability of Below-Normal Precipitation

33% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Probability of Above-Normal Precipitation

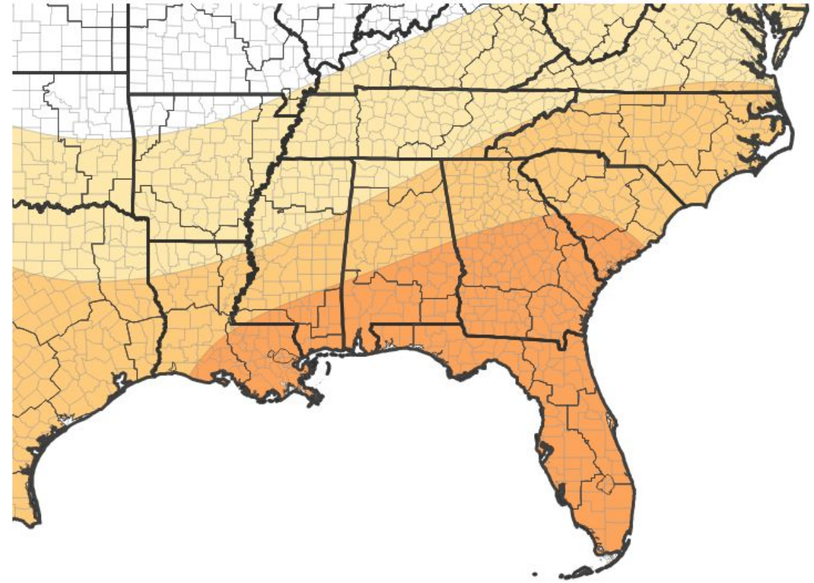
33% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Probability of Near-Normal Precipitation

33% 40% 50%

Source(s): Climate Prediction Center; image courtesy of Drought.gov Last Updated: 01/15/26

Seasonal (3-Month) Temperature Outlook for February 1, 2026–April 30, 2026



Probability of Below-Normal Temperatures

33% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Probability of Above-Normal Temperatures

33% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Probability of Near-Normal Temperatures

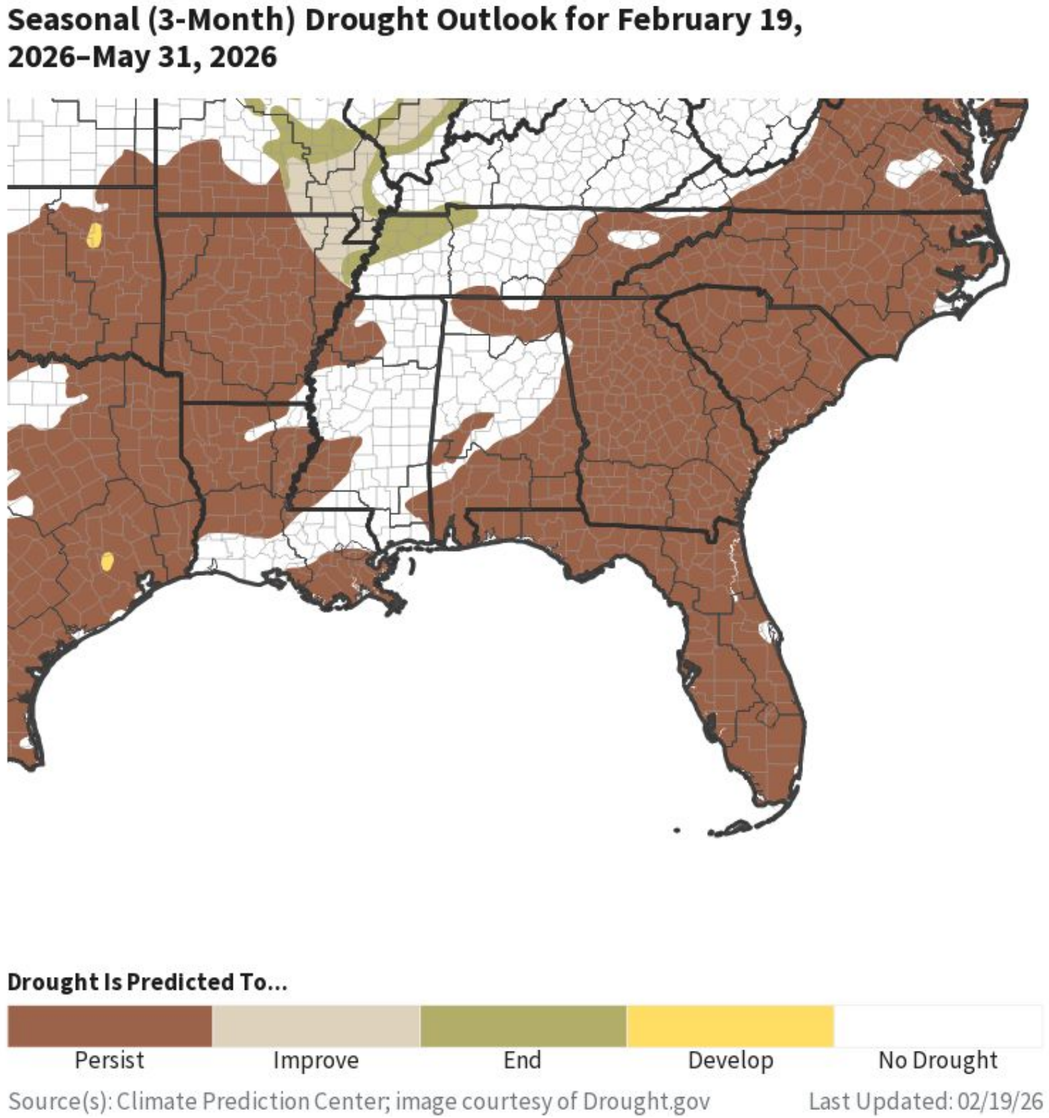
33% 40% 50%

Source(s): Climate Prediction Center; image courtesy of Drought.gov Last Updated: 01/15/26

Drought Outlook

The latest monthly and seasonal outlooks can be found on the CPC homepage

- Given the prediction for below normal precipitation in the months ahead, drought is expected to persist across the region over the next three months.
- Should rainfall over the next three months be much below normal, drought conditions could even worsen with time, especially heading further into March when planting begins and water demand increases.



Links to the latest:
Climate Prediction Center Monthly Drought Outlook
Climate Prediction Center Seasonal Drought Outlook