

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

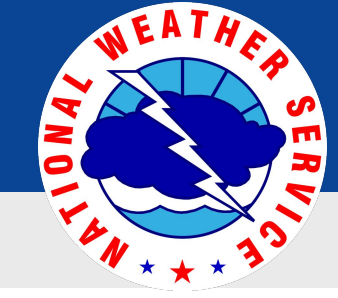
Valid March 19, 2026

Issued By: National Weather Service Tallahassee, FL

Contact Information: kelly.godsey@noaa.gov; cameron.young@noaa.gov

- This product will be updated March 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.
- **Exceptional Drought Now in Far South Georgia and the Upper Suwannee Valley. Severe to Extreme Drought Continues Across the Region.**
 - Drought conditions remain the worst experienced since 2012.
 - Long term hydrologic drought impacts persist with significant impacts to rivers and streams. Lakes and ponds are at exceptionally low levels or dry.
 - The much above average warmth and low humidity over the last couple of weeks have greatly enhanced drought conditions.



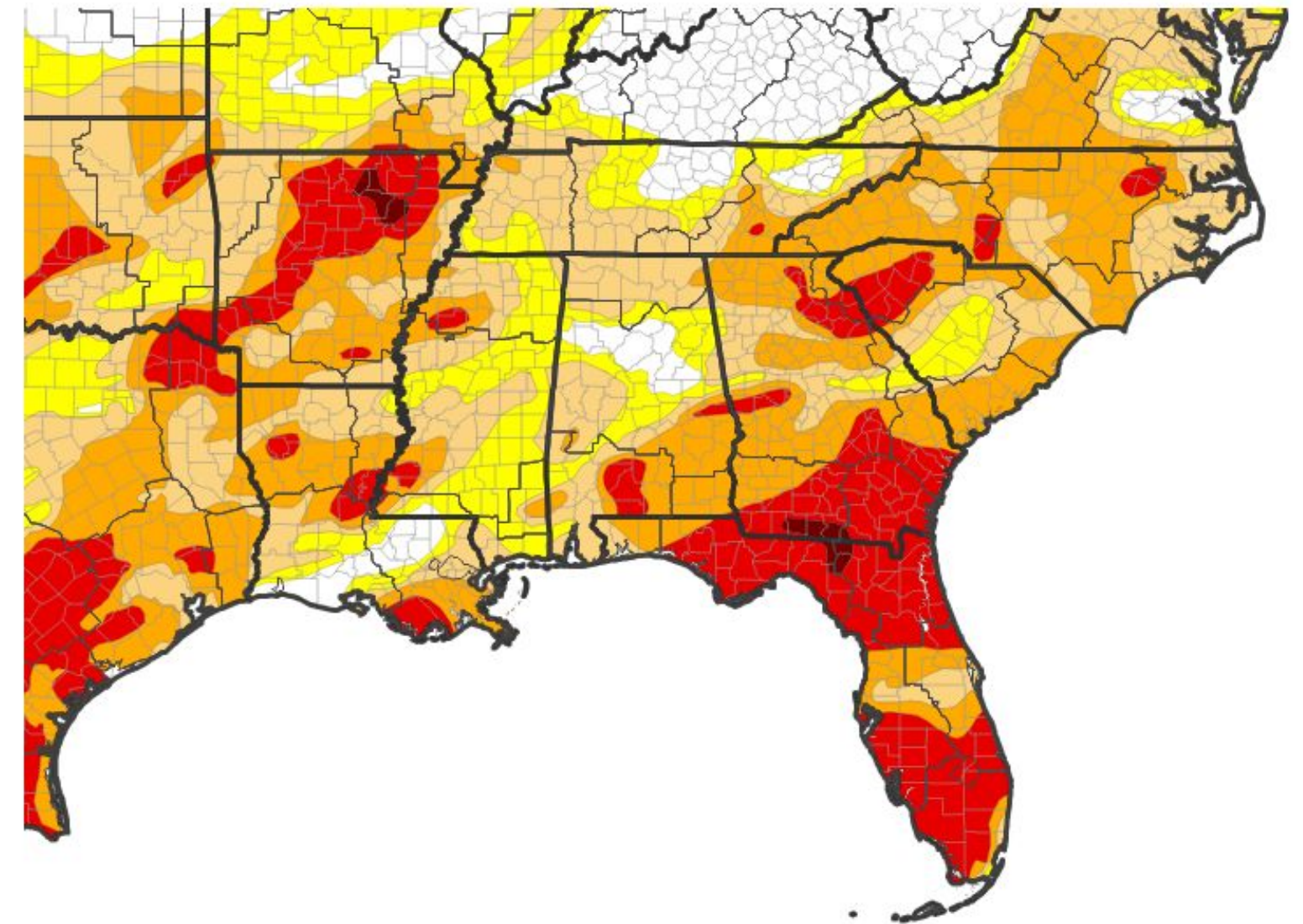


U.S. Drought Monitor

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

- Some rain occurred over the last week, but only localized areas met or exceeded weekly normals.
- All rainfall through 8 am ET (7 am CT) Tuesday, March 12th was included for this week's drought monitor.
- Drought intensity and Extent:
 - **D4 (Exceptional Drought):**
 - Eastern Grady County to Lowndes County in Georgia, eastern Madison County in Florida.
 - **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.

U.S. Drought Monitor

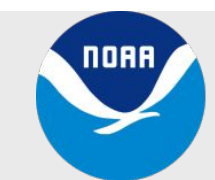


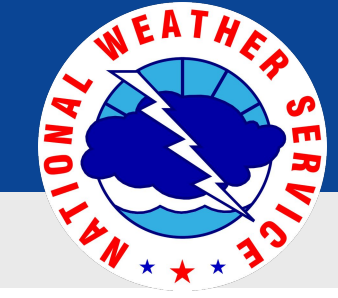
U.S. Drought Monitor



Source(s): NDMC, NOAA, USDA, NASA; image courtesy of Drought.gov

Data Valid: 03/17/26



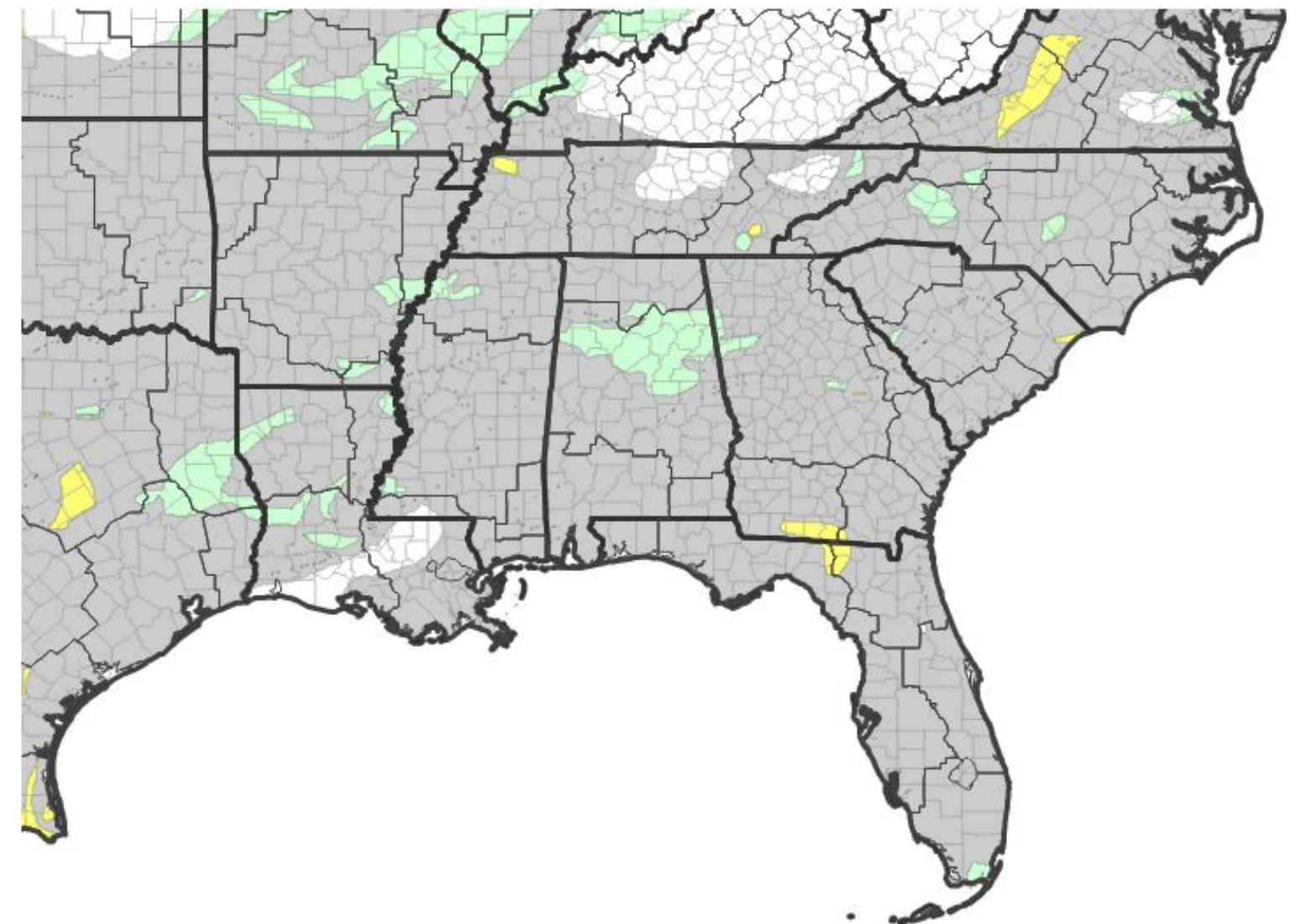


Recent Change in Drought Intensity

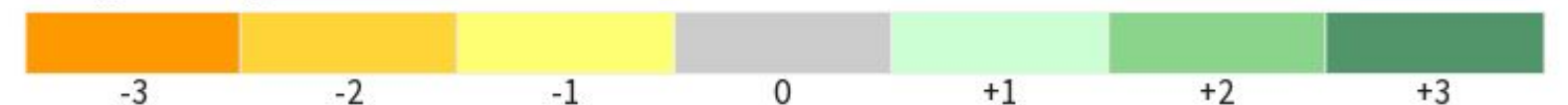
Link to the latest [4-week change map](#) for Southeast Alabama, Southwest Georgia, and the Florida Panhandle & Big Bend

- Rainfall amounts were not sufficient to exceed weekly normals and lead to any improvement in the drought.
- The area that consistently has been missing or underperforming on rain is near the Florida/Georgia border and upper Suwannee Valley.
- One-Week Drought Monitor Class Change:
 - **1 Category Degradation:**
 - Eastern Grady County to Lowndes County in Georgia, eastern Madison County in Florida.
 - **No Change**
 - All other areas in the region.

U.S. Drought Monitor 1-Week Change Map

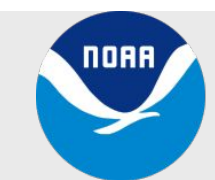


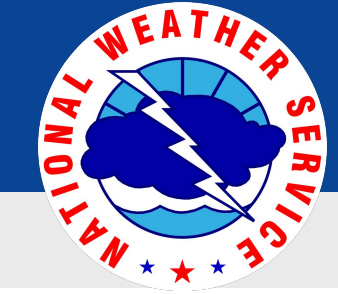
Drought Change Since Last Week



Source(s): NDMC, NOAA, USDA, NASA; image courtesy of Drought.gov

Data Valid: 03/17/26



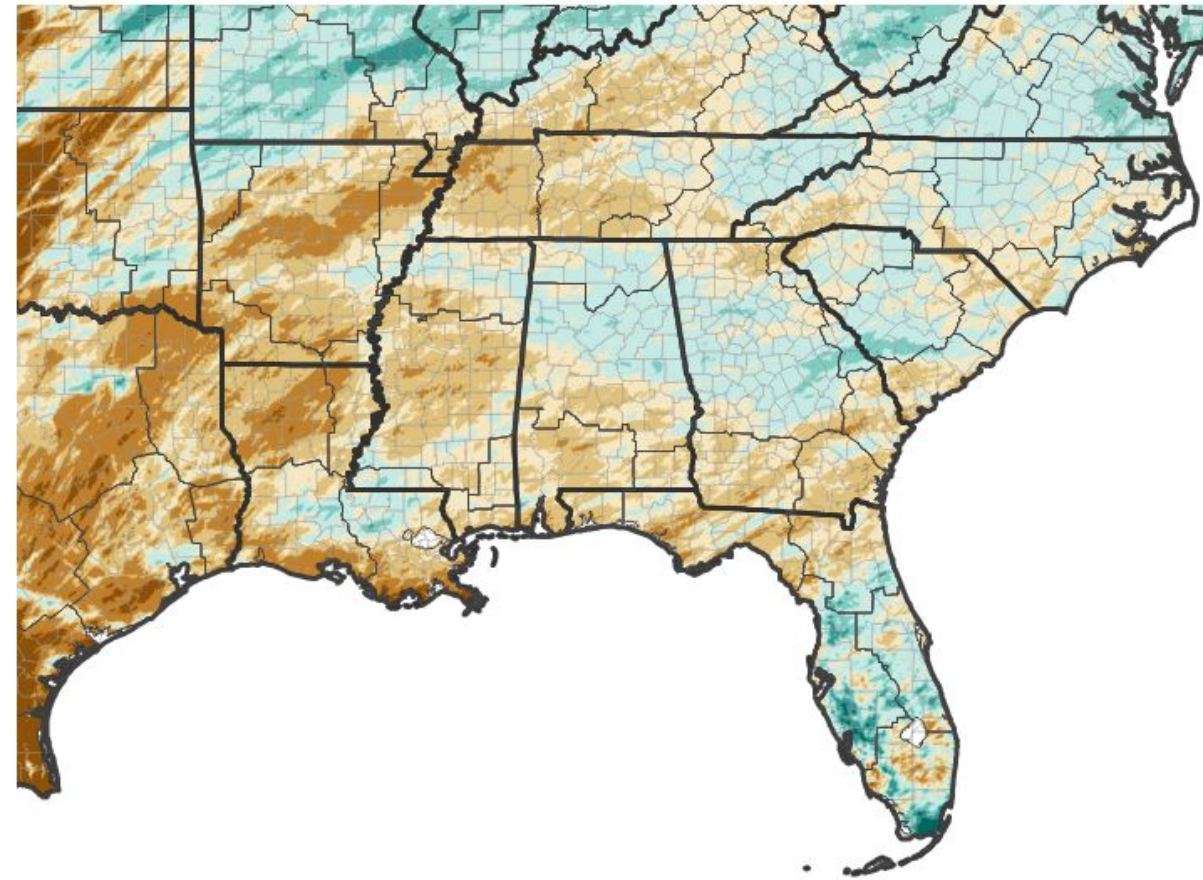


Precipitation

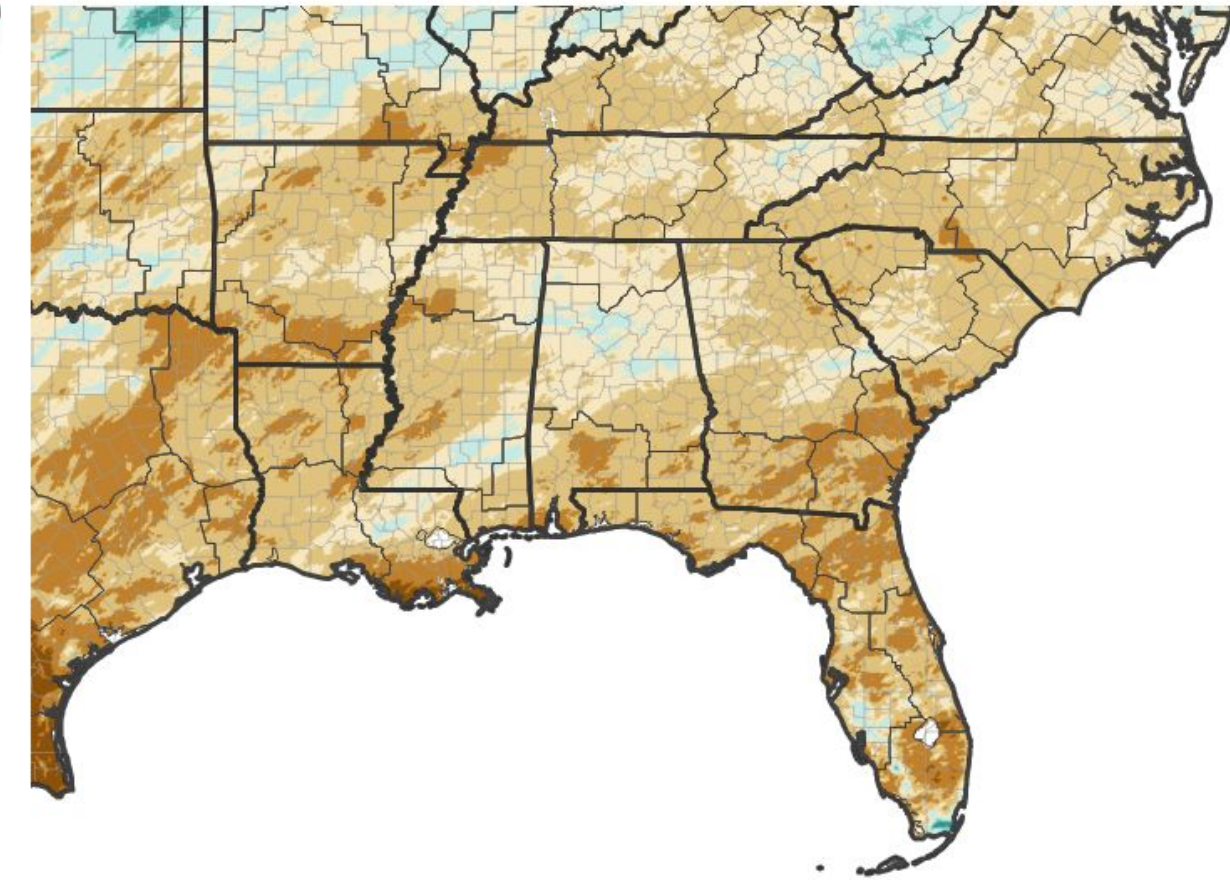
Note: Precipitation after 7 AM EST/6 AM CST Tuesday is incorporated in next week's Drought Monitor

	Last 30 Days		Last 90 Days	
	Rainfall	Percent	Rainfall	Percent
DeFuniak Springs*	3.85"	73.0%	9.62"	61.4%
Panama City ECP	1.02"	20.1%	6.20"	43.1%
Dothan	3.28"	68.7%	7.94"	55.4%
Marianna	2.80"	57.8%	6.73"	50.0%
Apalachicola	1.92"	42.0%	5.47"	44.1%
Georgetown**	3.32"	69.1%	8.03"	55.6%
Dawson**	2.63"	54.5%	7.45"	51.6%
Arlington**	3.14"	63.6%	7.58"	52.3%
Albany	3.98"	93.7%	8.89"	70.9%
Cairo**	2.16"	44.9%	5.99"	43.9%
Tallahassee	2.18"	44.5%	6.55"	48.4%
Moultrie**	1.86"	38.0%	4.95"	36.7%
Monticello*	3.48"	75.3%	7.97"	59.5%
Ty Ty**	2.79"	60.3%	8.00"	60.4%
Alapaha**	1.40"	30.8%	4.49"	34.6%
Valdosta	3.10"	86.6%	6.35"	59.6%
Perry***	1.82"	42.8%	4.44"	36.6%

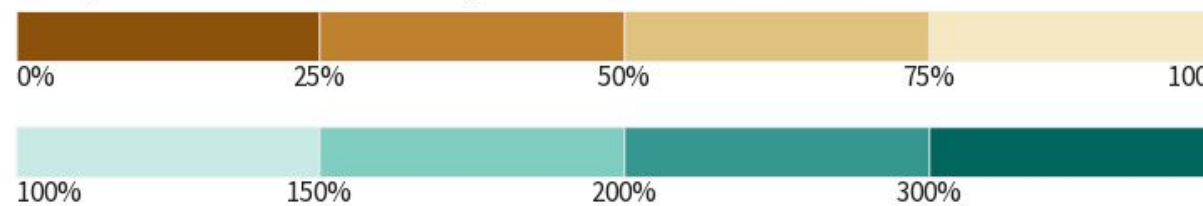
30-Day Percent of Normal Precipitation



90-Day Percent of Normal Precipitation

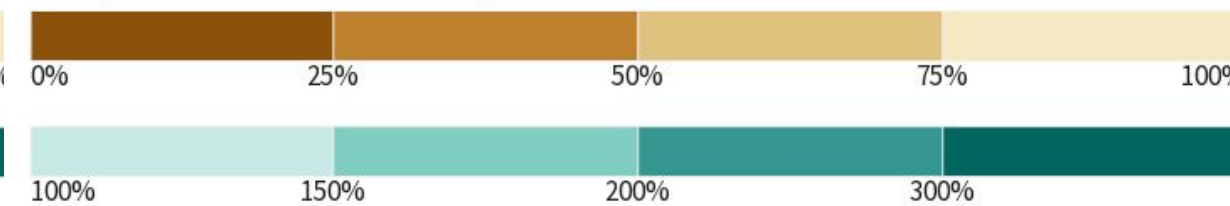


Precipitation Shown as a Percentage of Normal Conditions



Source(s): National Weather Service Multi-Radar Multi-Sensor System; Last Updated: 03/19/26 image courtesy of Drought.gov

Precipitation Shown as a Percentage of Normal Conditions



Source(s): National Weather Service Multi-Radar Multi-Sensor System; Last Updated: 03/19/26 image courtesy of Drought.gov

Rainfall totals through March 18, 2026. Non-NWS Data Courtesy:

*University of Florida - Florida Automated Weather Network

**University of Georgia Weather Network

***Suwannee River Water Management District

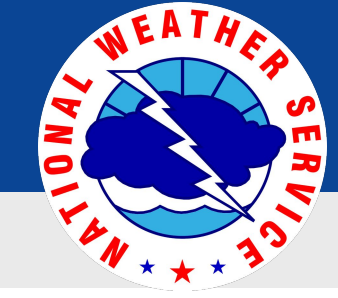
Climatology for non-NWS stations is estimated using PRISM data.



National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

U.S. Department of Commerce

National Weather Service
Tallahassee, FL

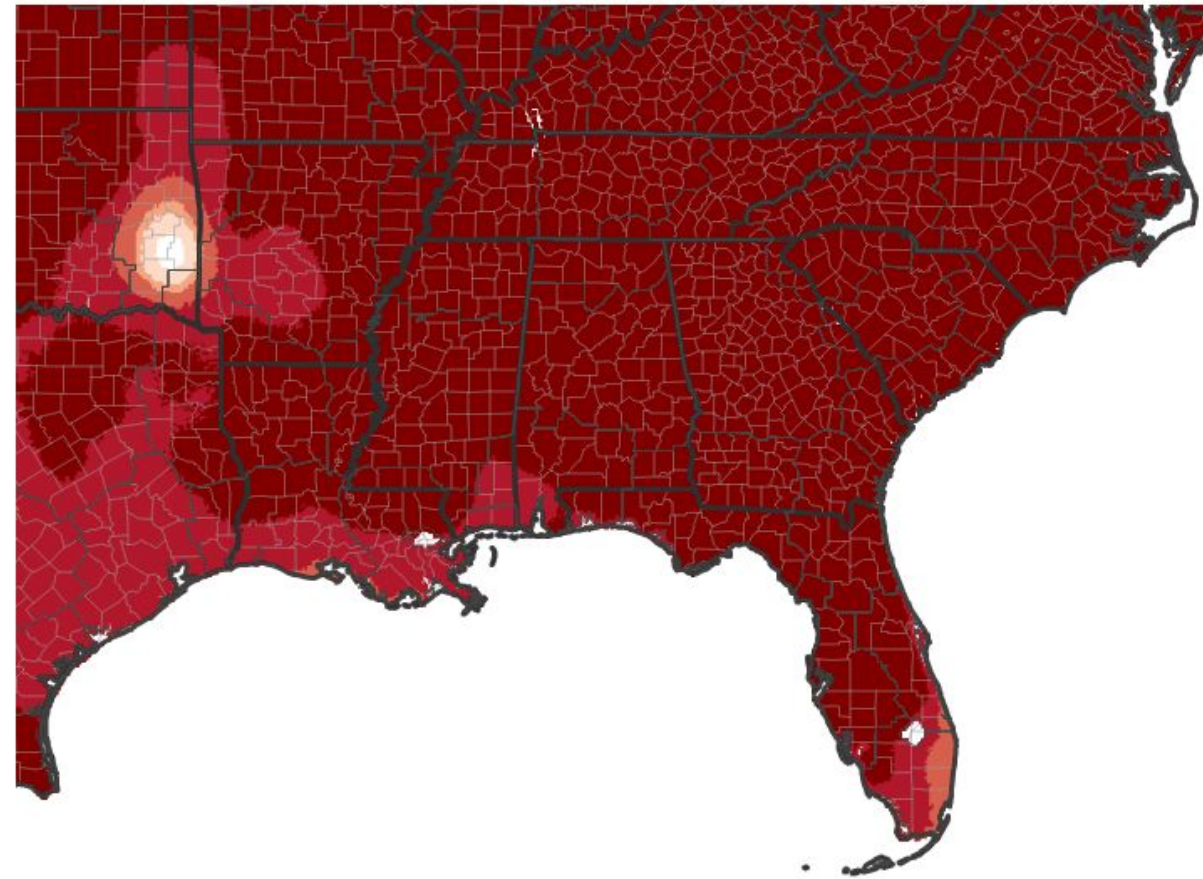


Temperature

	Last 30 Days	
	Average High (Departure)	Average Low (Departure)
Tallahassee	76.0° (+4.4°)	50.2° (+3.8°)
Apalachicola	70.0° (+1.0°)	52.1° (+1.8°)
Albany	74.5° (+4.7°)	48.9° (+3.3°)
Valdosta	76.0° (+5.5°)	50.3° (+5.1°)
Marianna	75.5° (+4.5°)	50.0° (+3.0°)
Dothan	73.9° (+3.9°)	50.4° (+3.8°)

- Much above normal temperatures have persisted through the last week and a half as the growing season is now in full swing.
- These warmer temperatures are helping to lead to more rapid drying, even with rain occurring over the last week.
- The recent cold snap and late season frost/freeze moved the needle on temperatures very little.

7-Day Temperature Anomaly



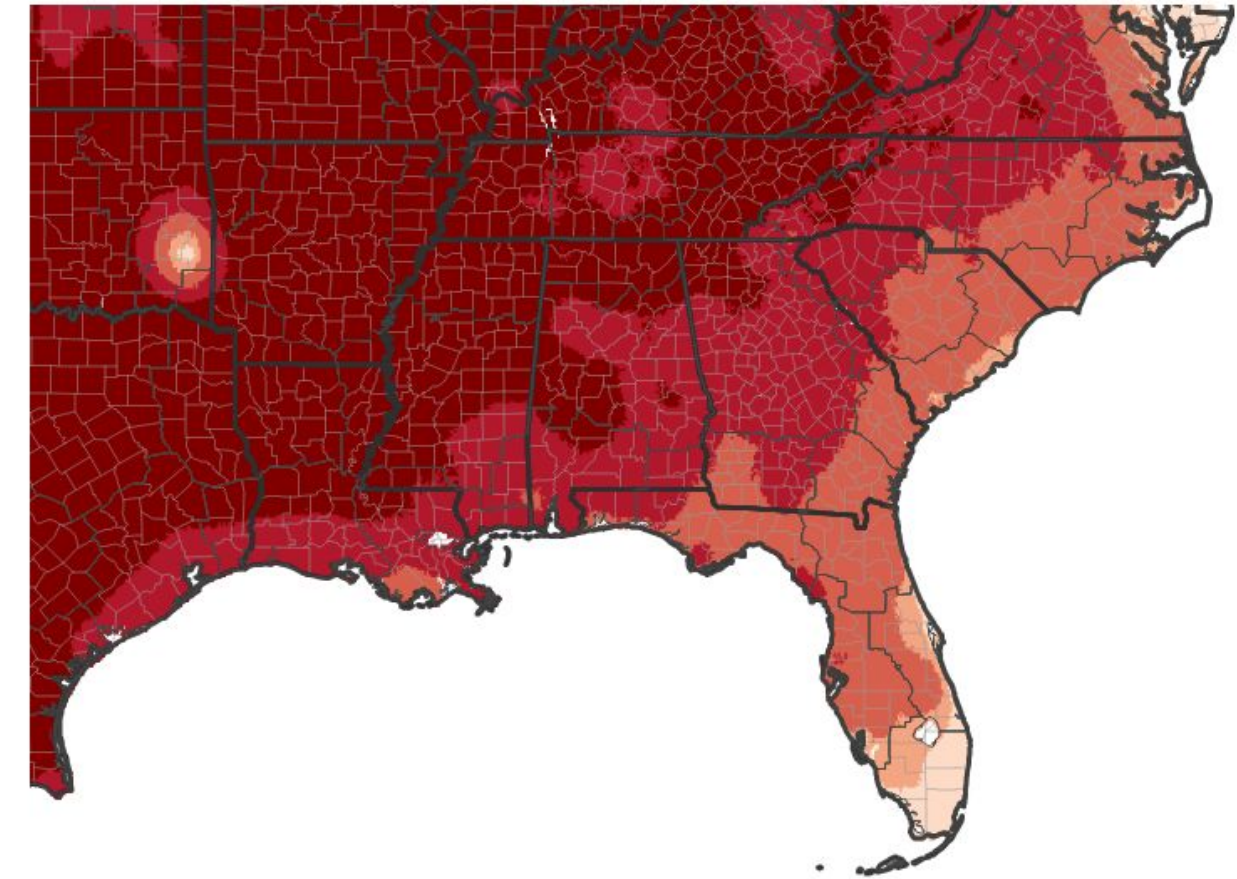
Departure from Normal Max Temperature (°F)



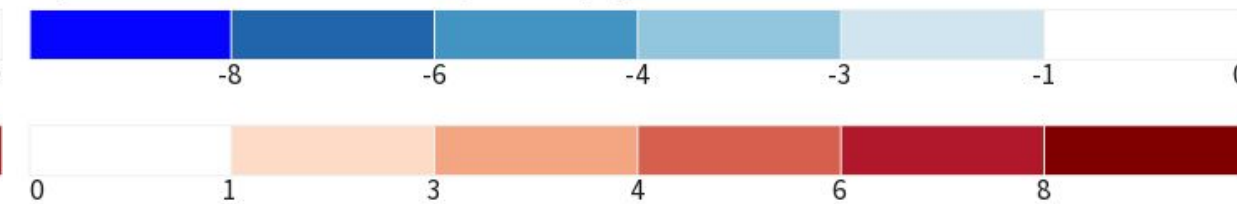
Source(s): NOAA's National Centers for Environmental Information; image courtesy of Drought.gov

Data Valid: 03/14/26

30-Day Temperature Anomaly

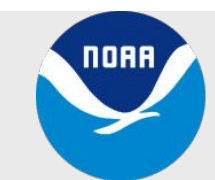


Departure from Normal Max Temperature (°F)



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

Data Valid: 03/14/26





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. The rain earlier this week is already gone from many of the streams.
- Surface and groundwater levels are exceptionally low. Rainfall has been insufficient to replenish holding ponds or lakes.

Agricultural Impacts

- Cover crops and fields have improved slightly from a month ago given the periodic rains. As planting season approaches, more rain and water will be needed to maintain soil moisture.

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.

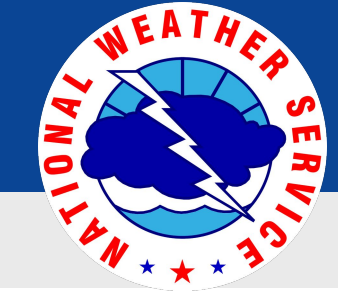
Mitigation Actions

- Continue to exercise caution with outdoor burning, and check with local officials if burning is allowed.



Photos courtesy of Coffee County EMA. Coldwater Creek in New Brockton/Enterprise and is currently 4 feet below normal (top) Pastures are beginning to green up near Elba (bottom).





Summary of Impacts - Southwest Georgia

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

Hydrologic Impacts

- Streamflows remain very low for this time of year. While the recent rains resulted in streams rising above their exceptionally low levels, especially with upstream routed water in the Middle Flint, smaller creeks and streams 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

- Planting season is beginning, but concerns exist given exceptionally low sub-surface water levels that irrigation will further stress the water table as farmers draw water from wells.
- Irrigation problems are being reported as farmers begin to plant corn with no water in irrigation ponds.

Fire Hazard Impacts

- Keetch-Byram Drought Index (KBDI) values range from 200-450 across the region, highest closes to I-75.
- KBDI responds quickly to any recent rains. Recent rainfall less than a couple inches does not immediately mitigate the fire threat.
- Some counties have burn restrictions in place. Exercise caution and check with local authorities if you have plans to burn.

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

- Planting season is beginning, 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 150-4000 across the region, highest in Bay, Gulf, and Calhoun Counties.
- KBDI responds quickly to any recent rains. Recent rainfall less than a couple inches does not immediately mitigate the fire threat.

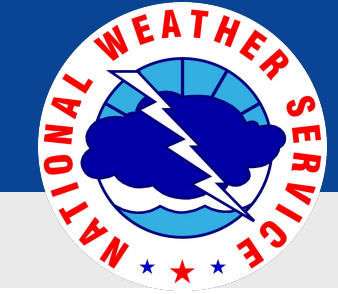
Mitigation Actions

- Northwest Florida Water Management District has issued a [water shortage warning](#) for their watershed.



Courtesy Washington County EMA: Blue Lake in Chipley. Water is normally under the decking very near the mulching just to the right of the tree.





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

- Planting season is beginning, 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 400-650, highest in Taylor, Dixie, and Lafayette Counties.
- 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





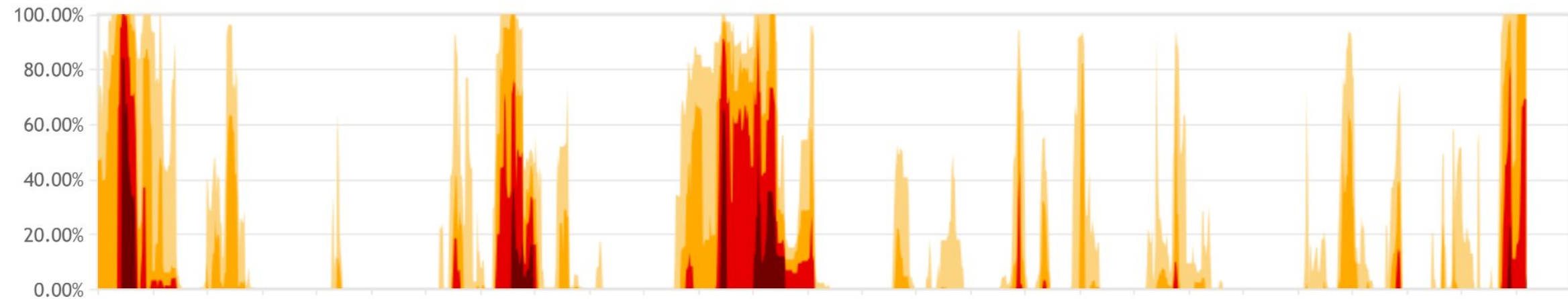
A Perspective on this Drought

Links: [Drought Monitor Time Series](#)

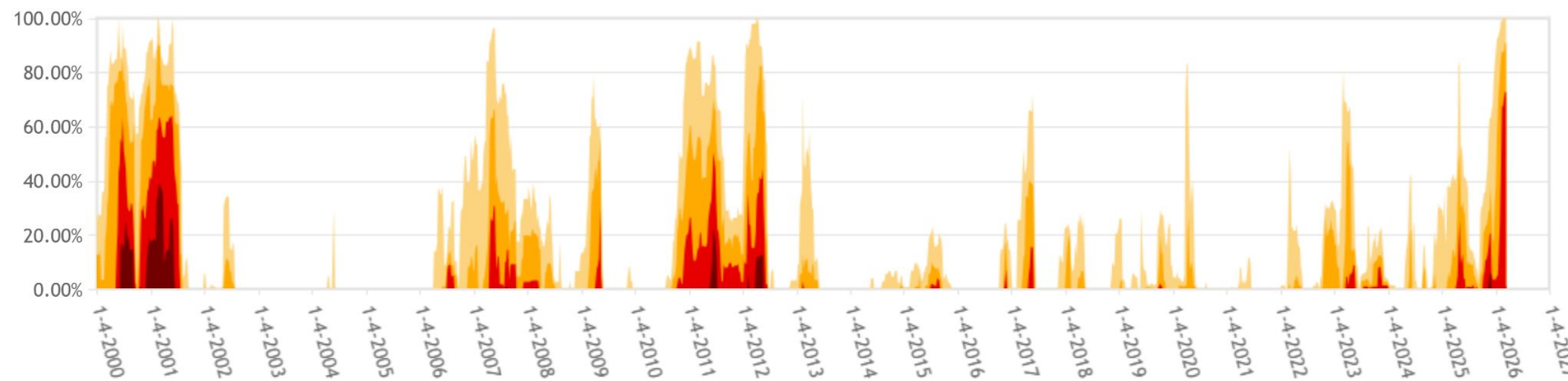
How does this drought compare to past long term droughts in the Tallahassee forecast area?

- There have been four long duration extreme droughts since 2000 in our region, including this current drought.
- While conditions are significant, they have not yet 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.

Tallahassee, FL (TAE) WFO Percent Area in U.S. Drought Monitor Categories



Florida Percent Area in U.S. Drought Monitor Categories

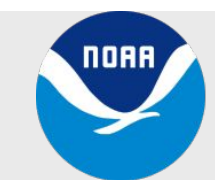


From the U.S. Drought Monitor website, <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/DmData/TimeSeries.aspx>, 3-19-2026



Courtesy of the US Drought Monitor Page.

Time series depiction of D1, D2, D3, and D4 drought across the Tallahassee forecast area by percentage (top) and across Florida (bottom). Records date back to 2000.

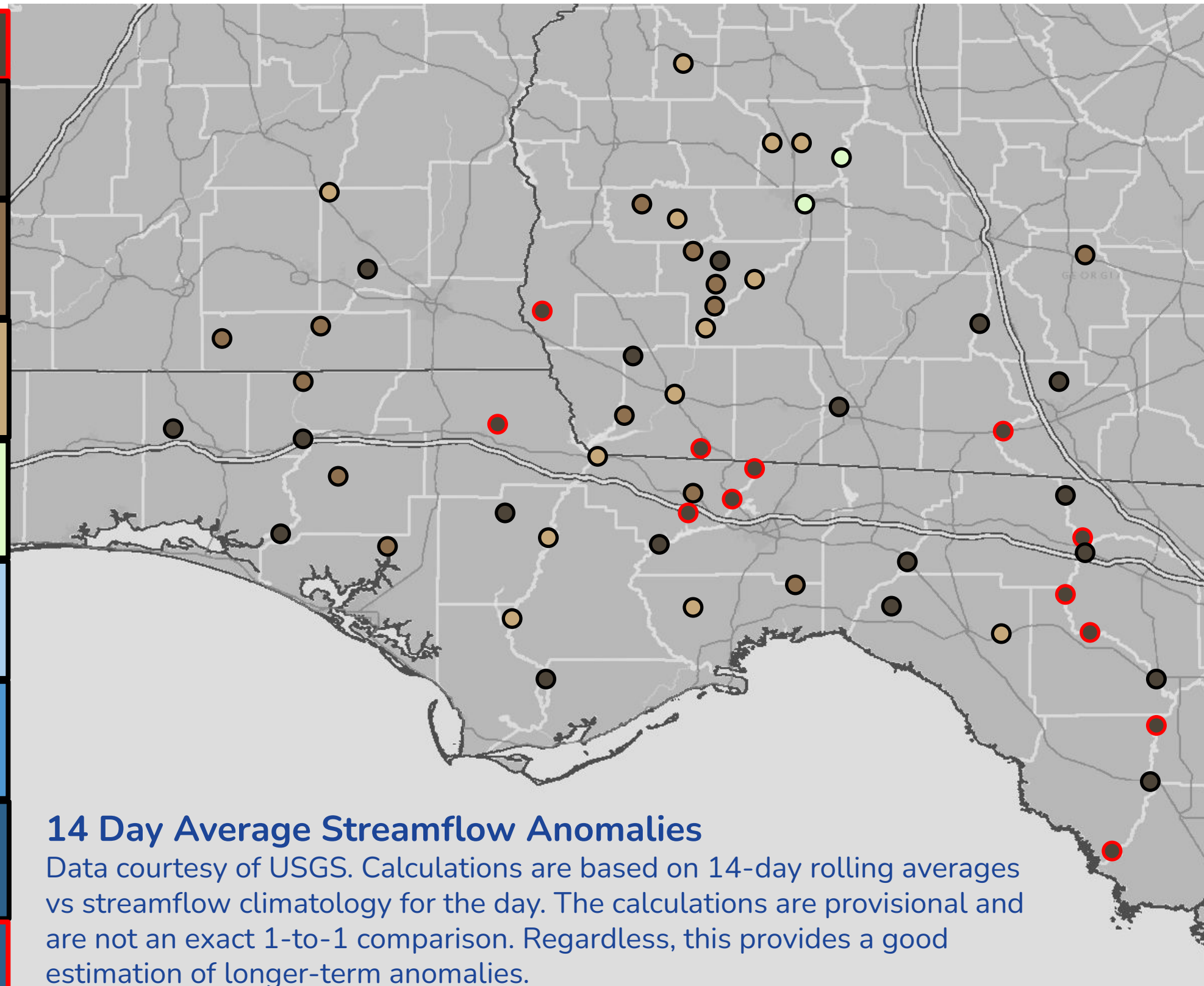




Hydrologic Conditions and Impacts

- 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 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](#).

Minimum
Extremely Below Normal <5th Percentile
Much Below Normal 5-10th Percentile
Below Normal 10-25th Percentile
Normal 25-75th Percentile
Above Normal 75-90th Percentile
Much Above Normal 90-95th Percentile
Extremely Above Normal 75-90th Percentile
Maximum

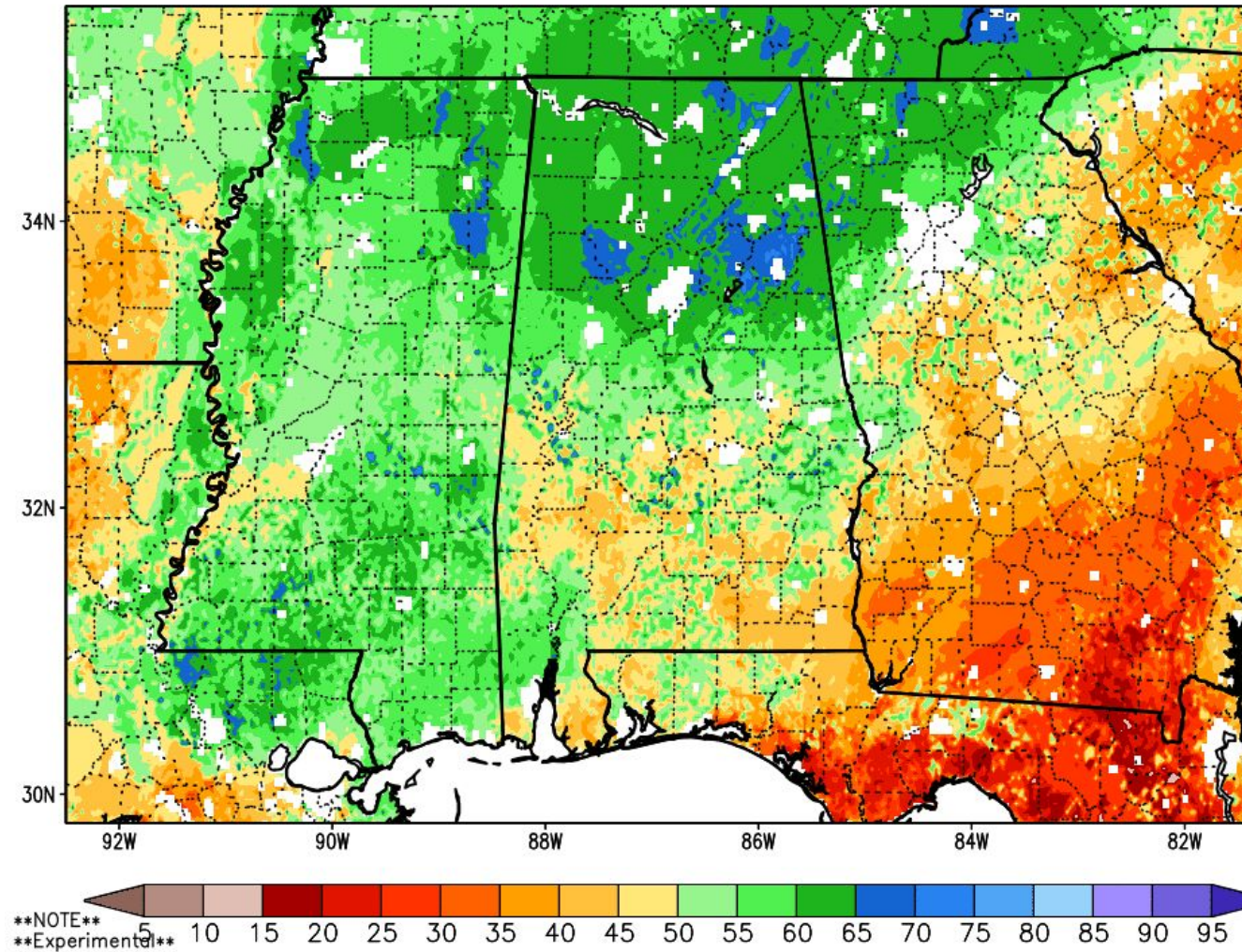




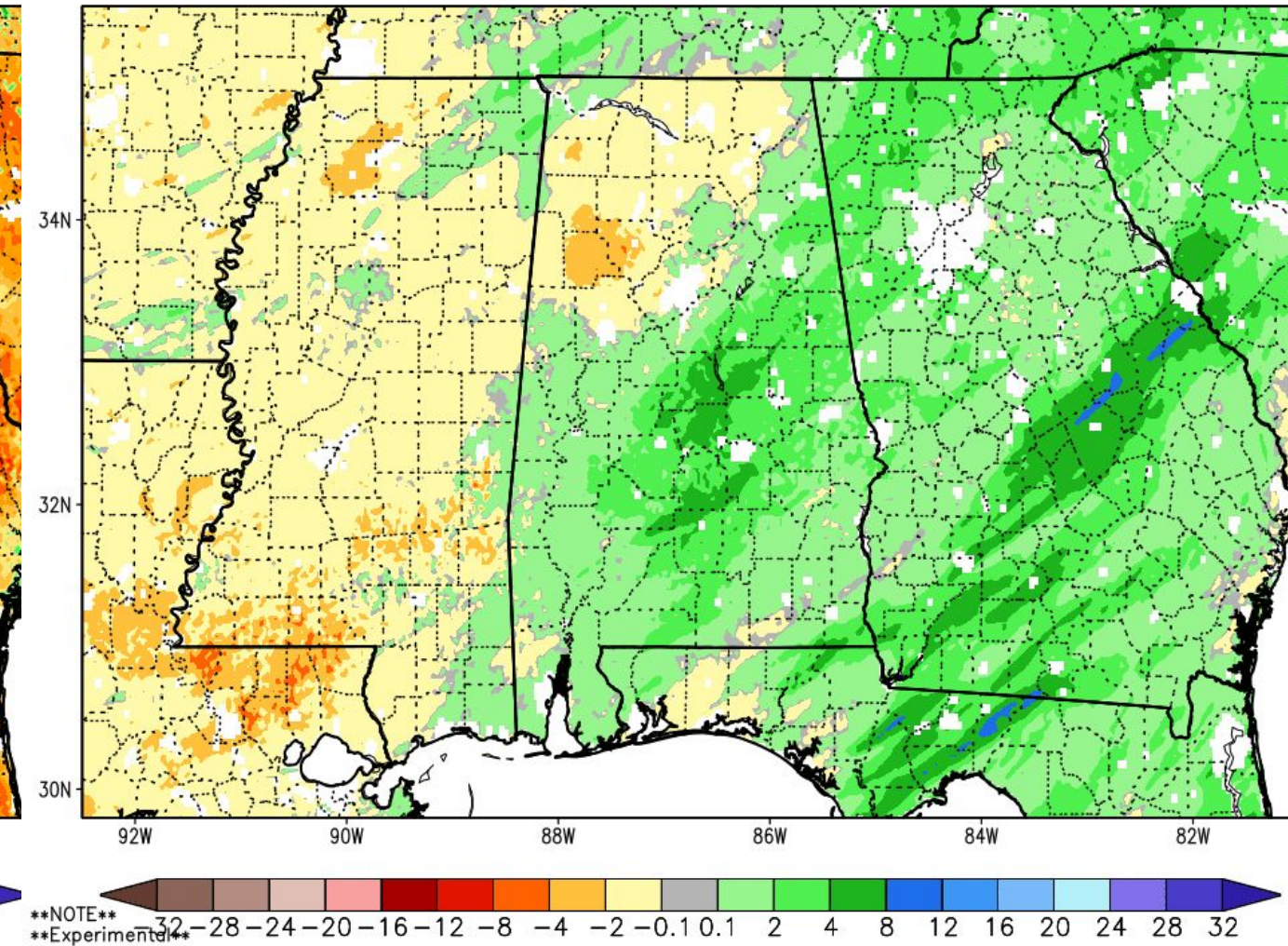
Agricultural Impacts

- 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 starting, but we will need increased rainfall to keep up with the water demand.
- 1 to 2 inches of rainfall a week, while helpful for the top layer of soil, is not enough to overcome the persistent drought conditions across the region.

Column-Integrated Relative Soil Moisture (available water; %) valid 05z 19 Mar 2026
Precipitation in previous hour (1,2,5,10,15,20,25 mm contours)

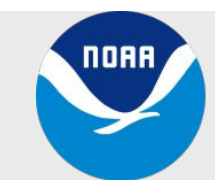


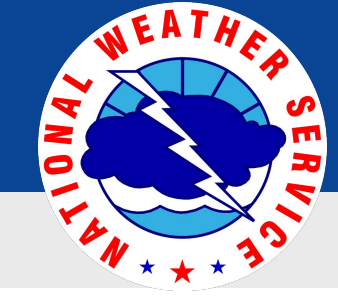
1-Week Difference in Column Relative Soil Moisture (%) valid 05z 19 Mar 2026



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](#)



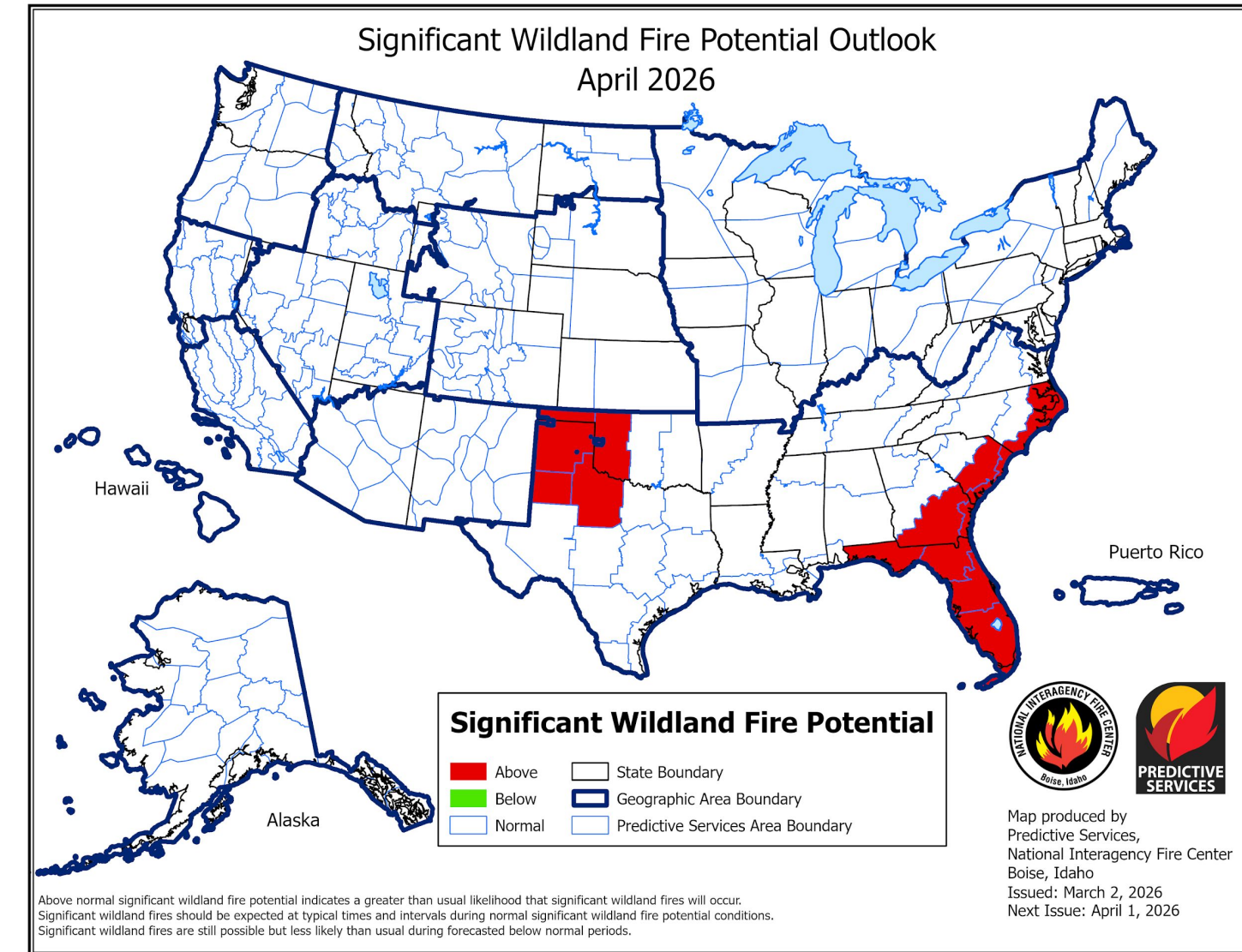
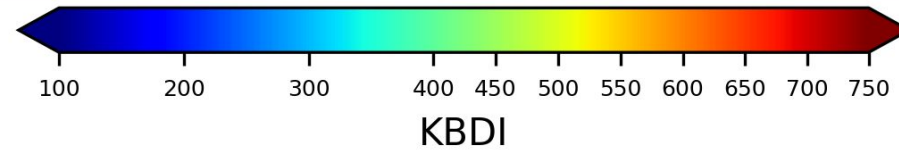
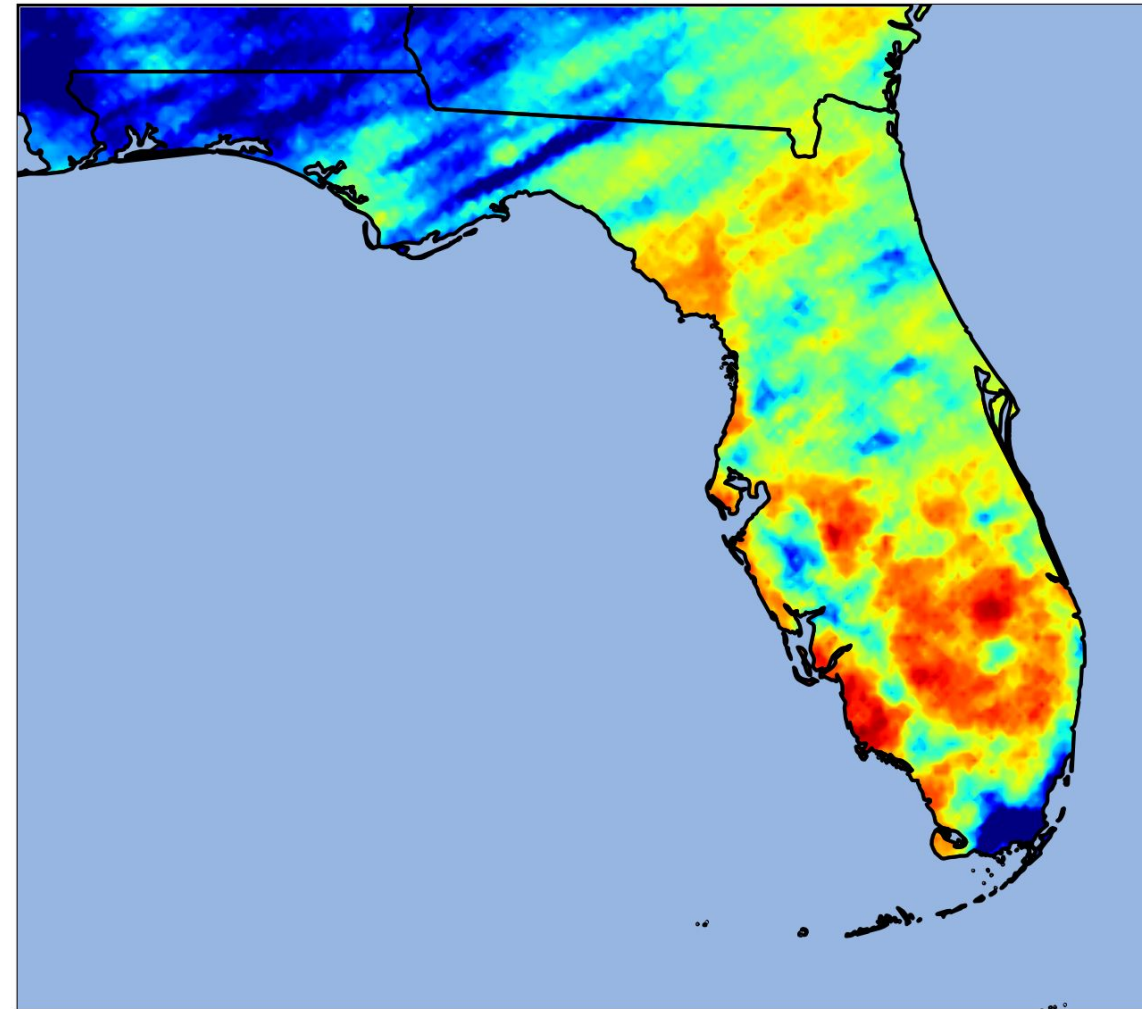


Fire Hazard Impacts

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.
- Please exercise caution and check with local authorities before burning.
- The Significant Wildland Fire Potential Outlook for April call for above normal wildfire activity across most of the region.

Keetch-Byram Drought Index | Wed 03/18/26, 02:00 PM EDT

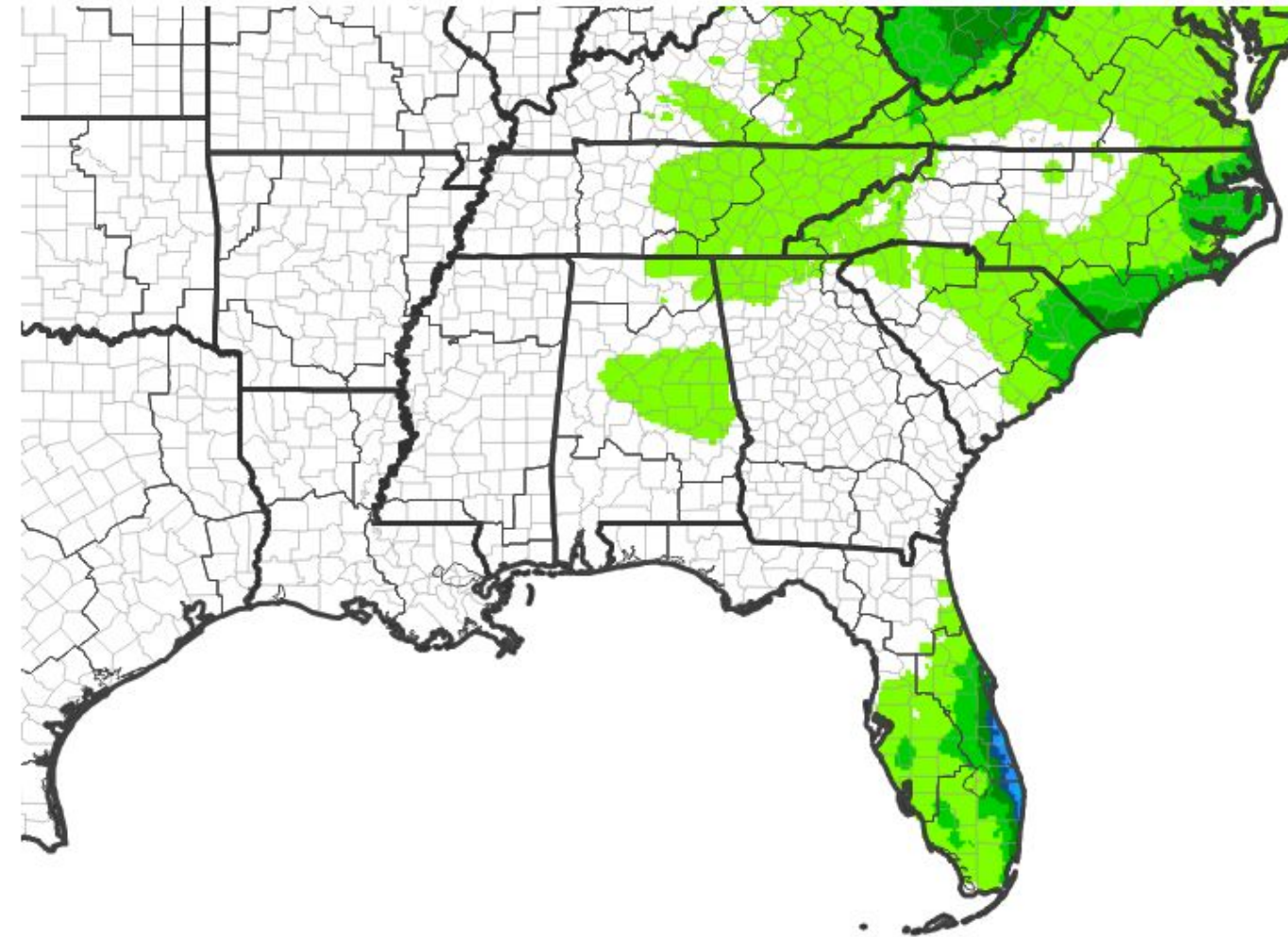




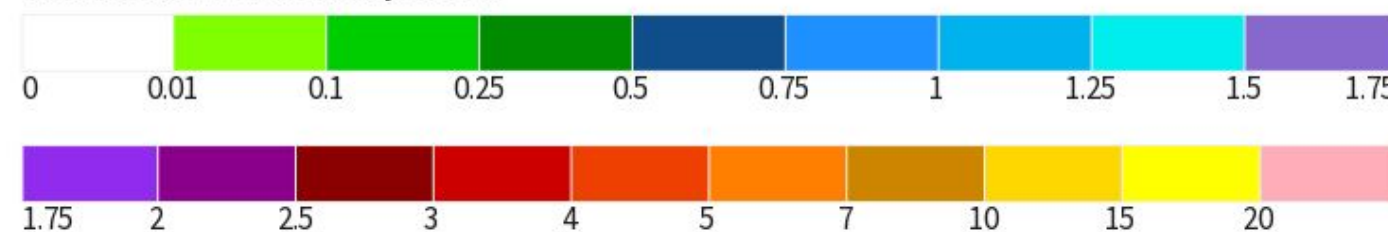
Precipitation Outlook

- The next frontal passage on Monday will be a dry front with no rain expected.
- Beyond that front, the next system looks to arrive next weekend, but prospects for beneficial rain are low.
- Dry air and breezy winds behind fronts may exacerbate drought and fire concerns.
- [8-14 day outlook \(3/26 - 4/1\)](#): leaning below normal precipitation.

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



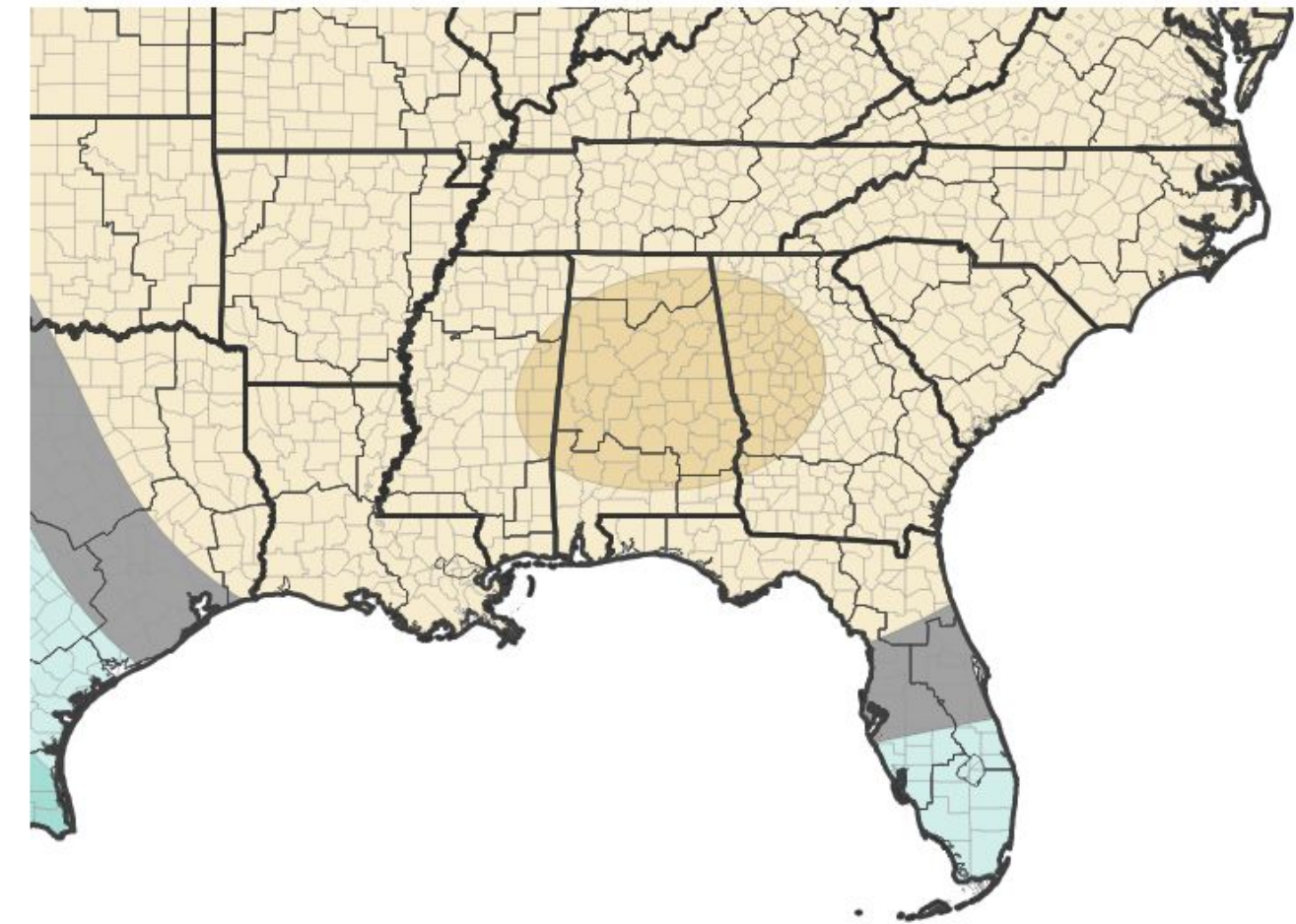
Predicted Inches of Precipitation



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

Last Updated: 03/19/26

8–14 Day Precipitation Outlook for March 26, 2026–April 1, 2026



Probability of Below-Normal Precipitation



Probability of Above-Normal Precipitation

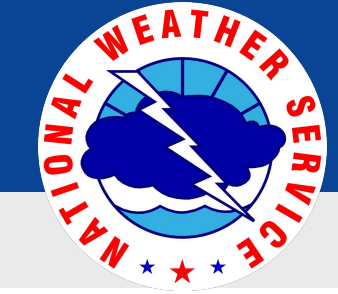


■ Near-Normal Conditions

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

Last Updated: 03/18/26



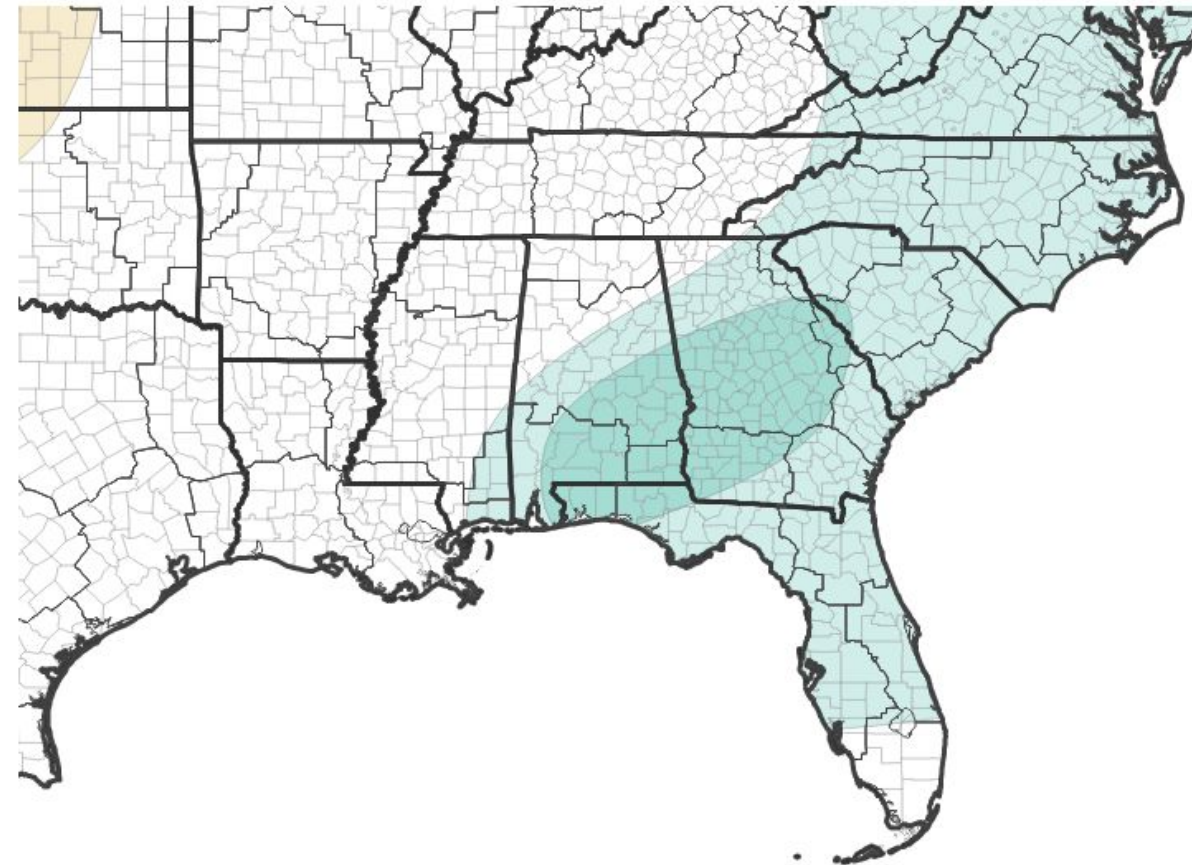


Long-Range Outlooks

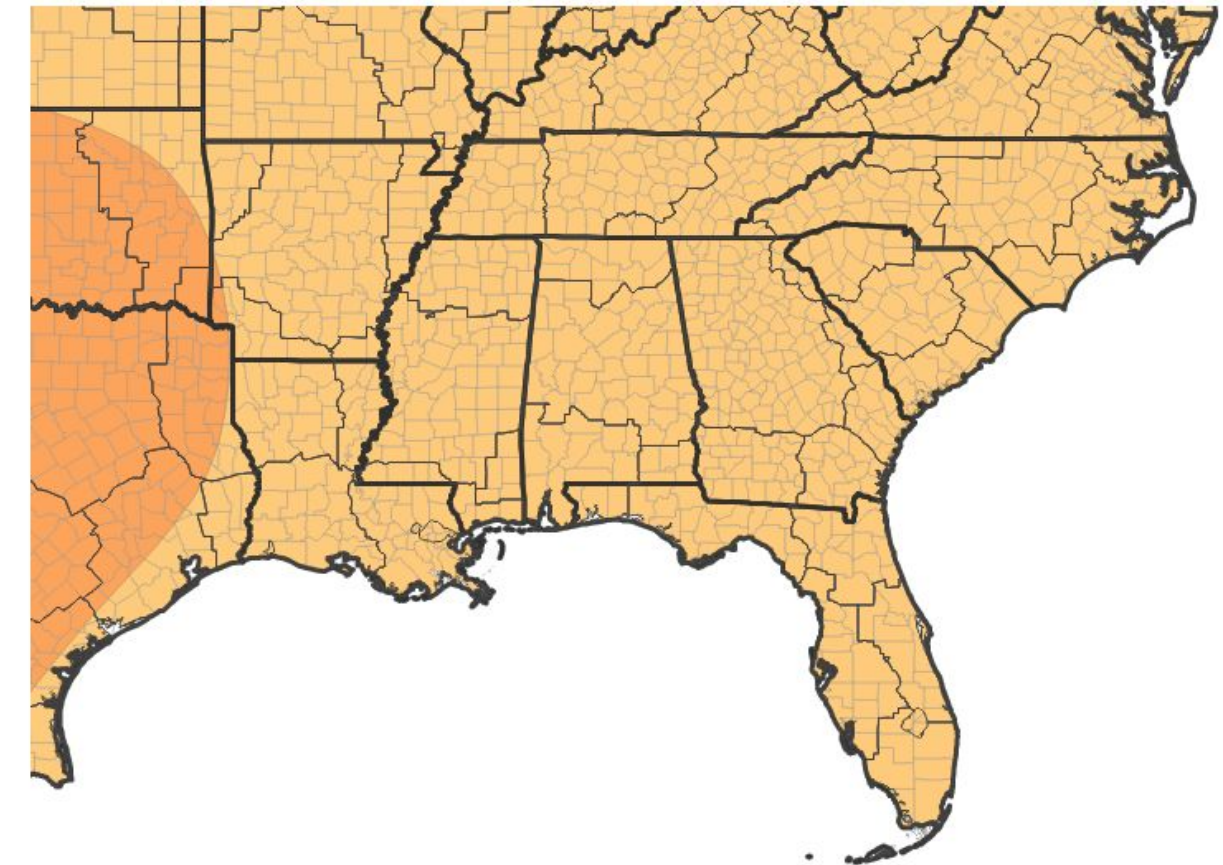
The latest monthly and seasonal outlooks can be found on the [CPC homepage](#)

- The next 3 months are predicted to favor above normal temperatures and above normal precipitation.
- This is typical of a weakening La Niña pattern transitioning to El Niño. The latter half of May into June may become more favorable for widespread beneficial rainfall returning to the area.

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



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



Average	April		May		June	
	Temp	Rain	Temp	Rain	Temp	Rain
Tallahassee	67.3°	3.53"	75.2°	3.36"	82.5°	7.76"
Apalachicola	67.3°	2.91"	74.8°	1.87"	80.7°	5.86"
Albany	67.0°	3.67"	75.3°	2.41"	83.1°	5.06"
Valdosta	66.2°	3.66"	73.4°	2.84"	79.0°	7.08"
Marianna	67.6°	3.72"	75.9°	3.15"	82.7°	5.07"
Dothan	67.2°	4.79"	75.6°	2.92"	81.1°	5.08"

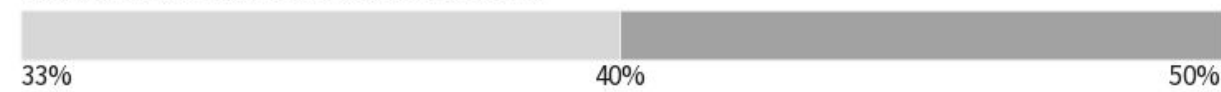
Probability of Below-Normal Precipitation



Probability of Above-Normal Precipitation



Probability of Near-Normal Precipitation



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

Last Updated: 03/19/26

Probability of Below-Normal Temperatures



Probability of Above-Normal Temperatures



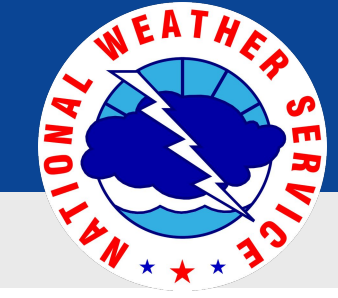
Probability of Near-Normal Temperatures



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

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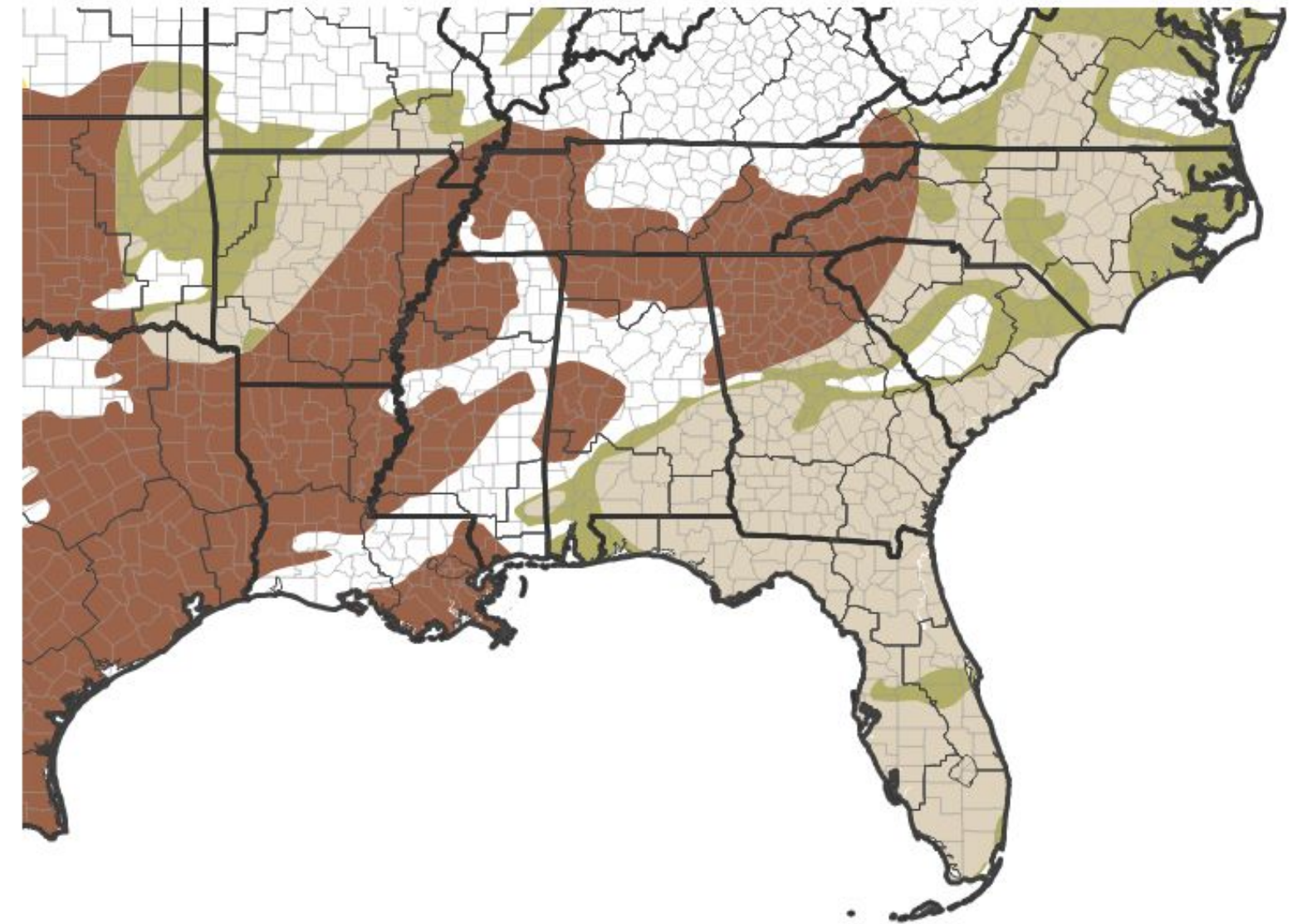


Drought Outlook

The latest monthly and seasonal outlooks can be found on the [CPC homepage](#)

- Given the prediction that favors above normal precipitation in the months ahead, drought is expected to persist but potentially improve across the region over the next three months.
- However, before then, conditions may worsen as April still favors below normal rainfall across our area. It may not be until mid to late May or June that we see things begin to turn around for the better.

Seasonal (3-Month) Drought Outlook for March 19, 2026–June 30, 2026



Drought Is Predicted To...



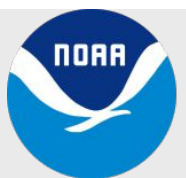
Source(s): Climate Prediction Center; image courtesy of Drought.gov

Last Updated: 03/19/26

Links to the latest:

[Climate Prediction Center Monthly Drought Outlook](#)

[Climate Prediction Center Seasonal Drought Outlook](#)



National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

U.S. Department of Commerce

National Weather Service
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