



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

Valid March 26, 2026

Issued By: National Weather Service Tallahassee, FL

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

- This product will be updated April 2, 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 Expands Across the Florida Big Bend and Far South Georgia. Extreme Drought Continues Elsewhere.**
 - 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.
 - As drought conditions have worsened, fire weather impacts have increased considerably with destructive fires in the last week. Expect dangerous fire weather conditions this weekend across the region.



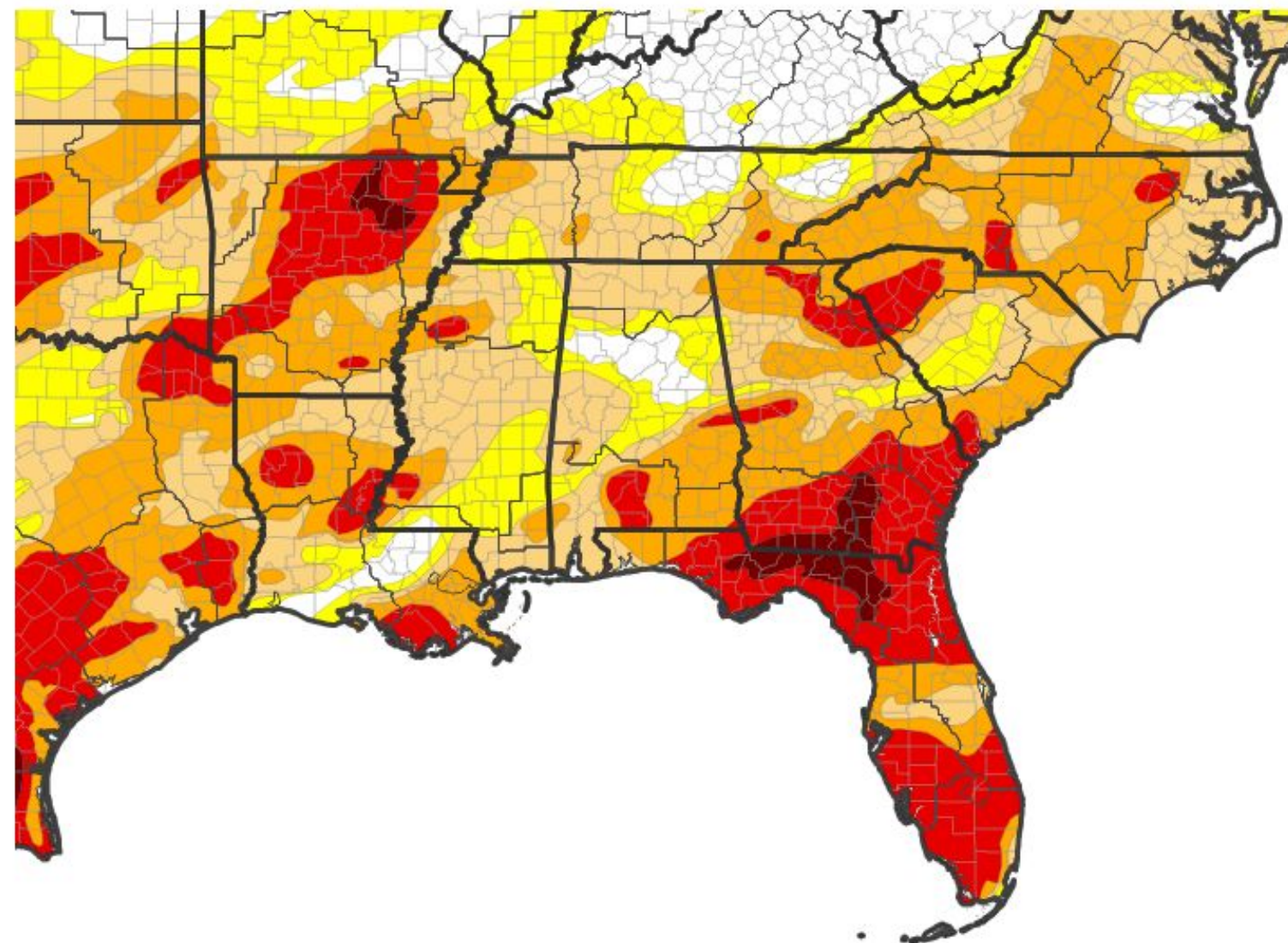


U.S. Drought Monitor

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

- No rain was observed in the region over the last week. Remember, the drought monitor accounts for any rainfall that occurs through 8 am ET (7 am CT), March 24th.
- Drought intensity and Extent:
 - **D4 (Exceptional Drought):**
 - In Georgia: Berrien, Lanier, Lowndes, Brooks, Thomas, Grady, and Decatur.
 - In Florida: Madison, Northern Jefferson, much of Leon, Gadsden, Northern Liberty, and Northern Calhoun.
 - **D3 (Extreme Drought):**
 - In Florida: Most of North Florida east of Central Walton County and south of the D4 drought area.
 - In Georgia: South Georgia south of a line from Early County to Turner County.
 - **D2 (Severe Drought):** The remainder of the region.

U.S. Drought Monitor

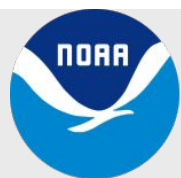


U.S. Drought Monitor



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

Data Valid: 03/24/26



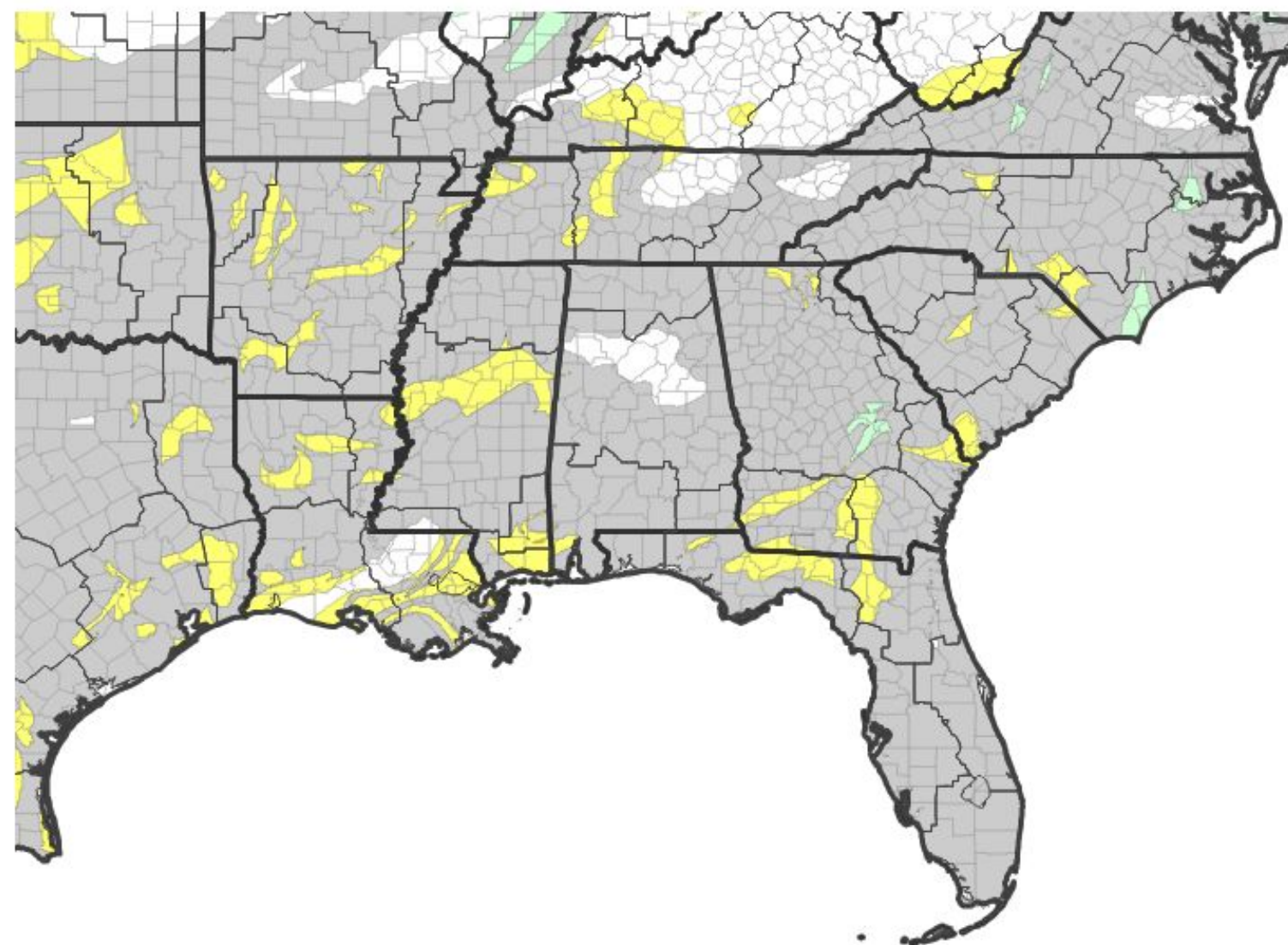


Recent Change in Drought Intensity

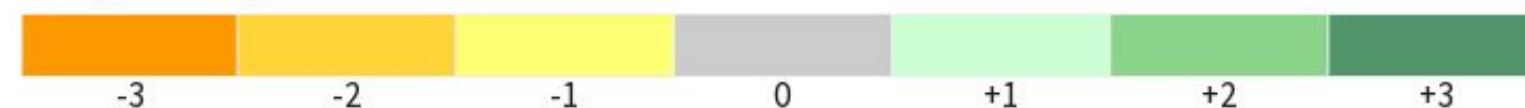
Link to the latest [4-week change map](#) for Southeast Alabama, Southwest Georgia, and the Florida Panhandle & Big Bend

- With no rainfall, drought severity increased across portions of the region this weekend.
- 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:**
 - Along the I-10 corridor in North Florida Big Bend and into Calhoun County, FL. Portions of South Georgia, east of Albany to Blakely line and Berrien and Lanier Counties.
 - **No Change**
 - All other areas in the region.

U.S. Drought Monitor 1-Week Change Map

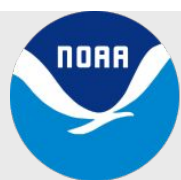


Drought Change Since Last Week



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

Data Valid: 03/24/26



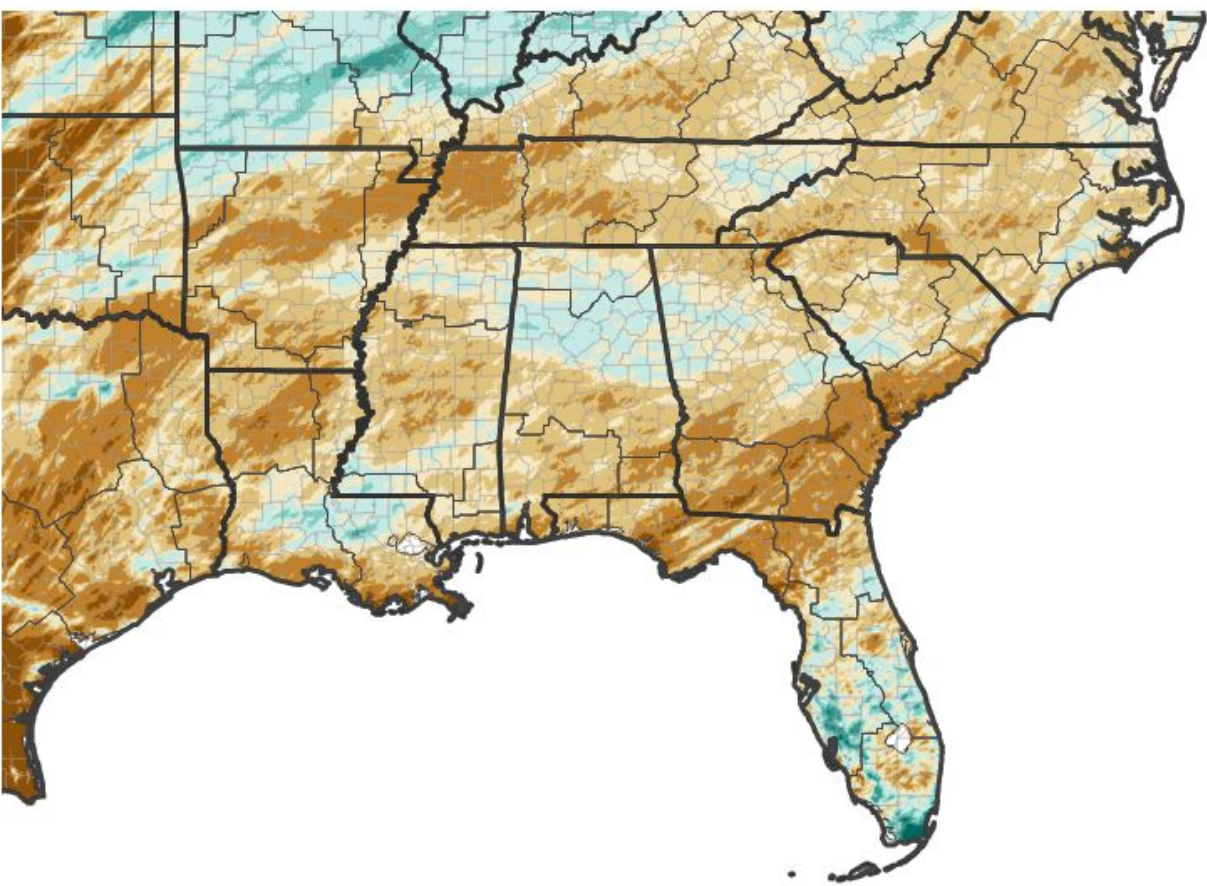


Precipitation

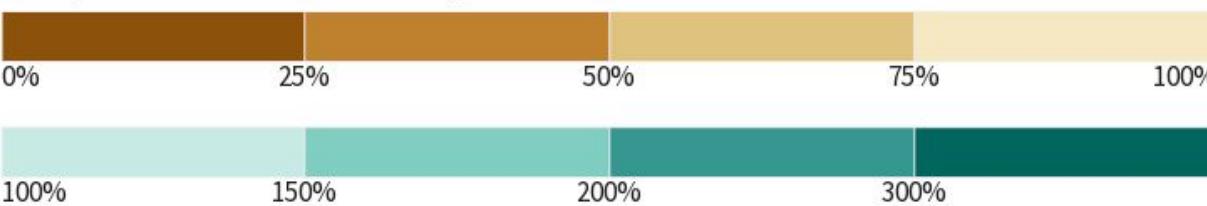
Note: Precipitation after 7 AM EST/6 AM CST Tuesday is incorporated in next week’s Drought Monitor

	Last 30 Days		Last 90 Days	
	Rainfall	Percent	Rainfall	Percent
DeFuniak Springs*	3.72"	71.8%	9.53"	60.7%
Panama City ECP	1.02"	20.0%	6.20"	42.6%
Dothan	2.40"	51.6%	7.94"	55.5%
Marianna	1.83"	37.7%	6.73"	49.8%
Apalachicola	1.70"	44.8%	4.07"	32.7%
Georgetown**	2.59"	55.0%	8.03"	56.2%
Dawson**	1.93"	40.8%	7.45"	51.8%
Arlington**	2.51"	51.5%	7.58"	52.3%
Albany	3.01"	71.0%	8.89"	70.9%
Cairo**	1.43"	29.4%	5.99"	43.2%
Tallahassee	1.97"	39.4%	6.55"	47.6%
Moultrie**	1.86"	38.0%	4.95"	36.7%
Monticello*	3.02"	64.6%	8.02"	58.9%
Ty Ty**	2.49"	53.4%	8.00"	59.6%
Alapaha**	1.03"	22.5%	4.49"	34.0%
Valdosta	2.78"	77.5%	6.35"	58.9%
Perry***	1.61"	35.7%	4.87"	38.9%

30-Day Percent of Normal Precipitation

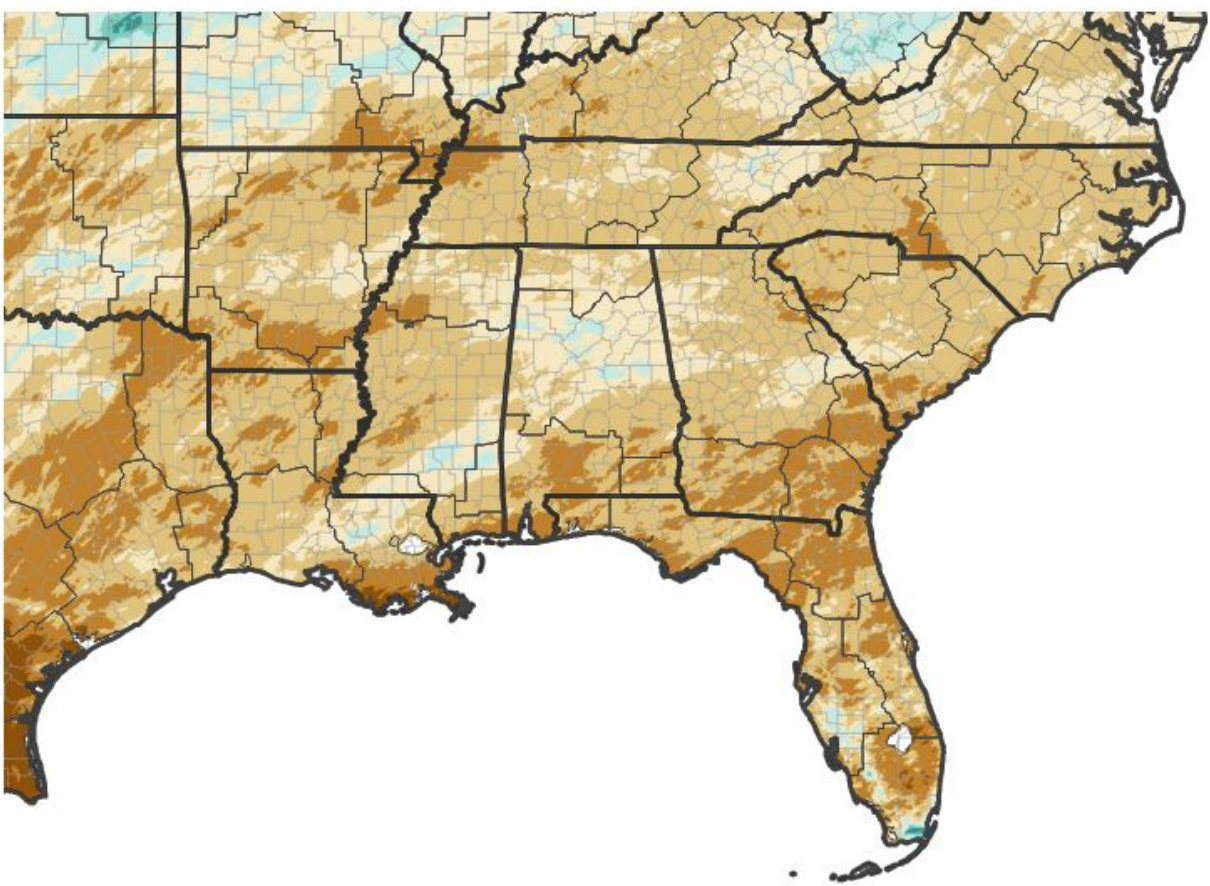


Precipitation Shown as a Percentage of Normal Conditions

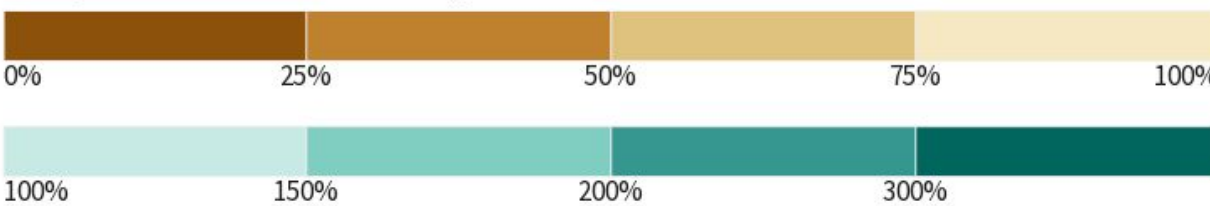


Source(s): National Weather Service Multi-Radar Multi-Sensor System; Last Updated: 03/26/26
image courtesy of Drought.gov

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: 03/26/26
image courtesy of Drought.gov

Rainfall totals through March 25, 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.



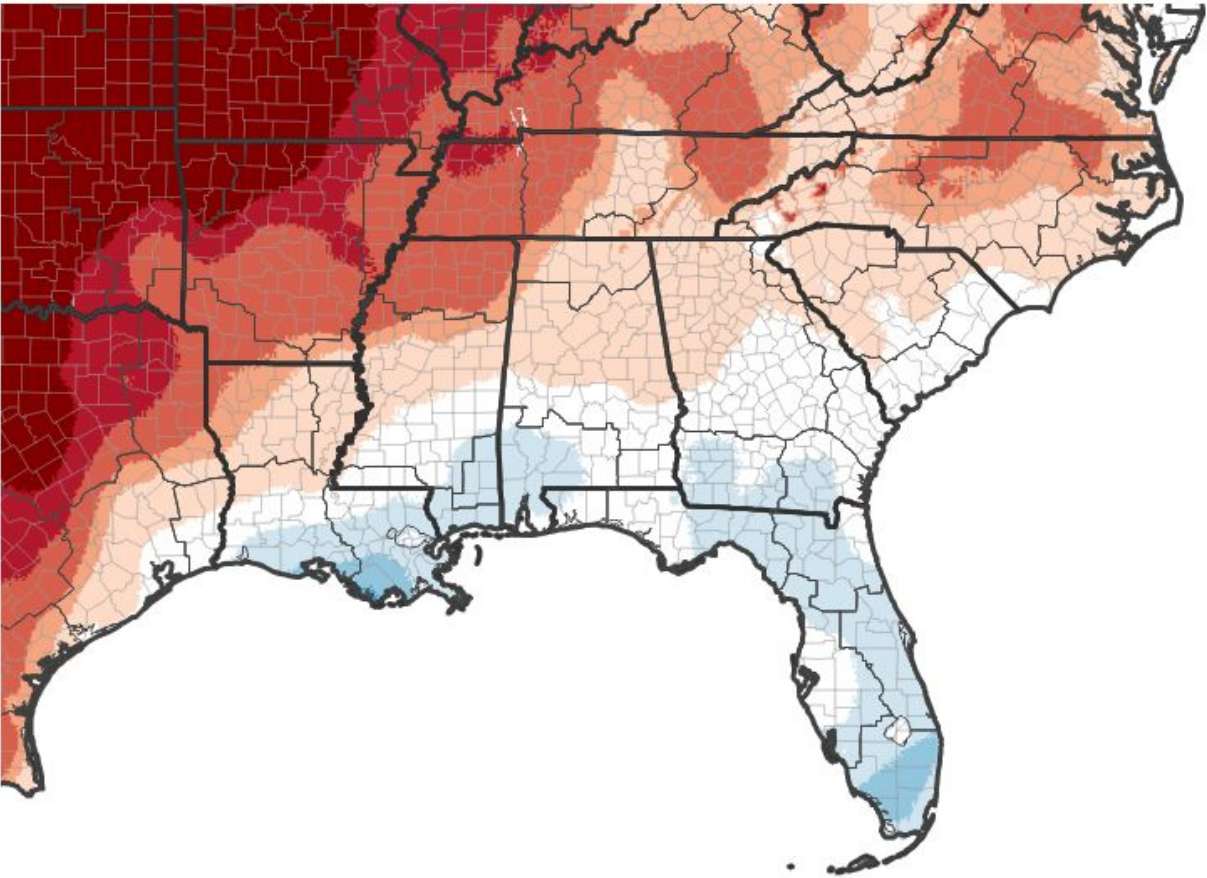


Temperature

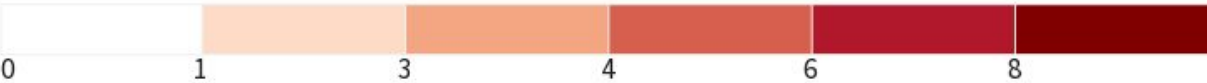
	Last 30 Days	
	Average High (Departure)	Average Low (Departure)
Tallahassee	77.9° (+4.6°)	49.6° (+1.9°)
Albany	76.4° (+4.8°)	49.0° (+1.9°)
Valdosta	77.7° (+5.7°)	50.3° (+3.7°)
Marianna	77.7° (+5.0°)	50.0° (+1.7°)
Dothan	76.0° (+4.2°)	50.5° (+2.6°)

- A recent cool stretch last week resulted in low temperatures that briefly reached freezing for a couple of days.
- With the cool snap and the warmer temperatures that followed, generally dry conditions led to a worsening of the drought.

7-Day Temperature Anomaly



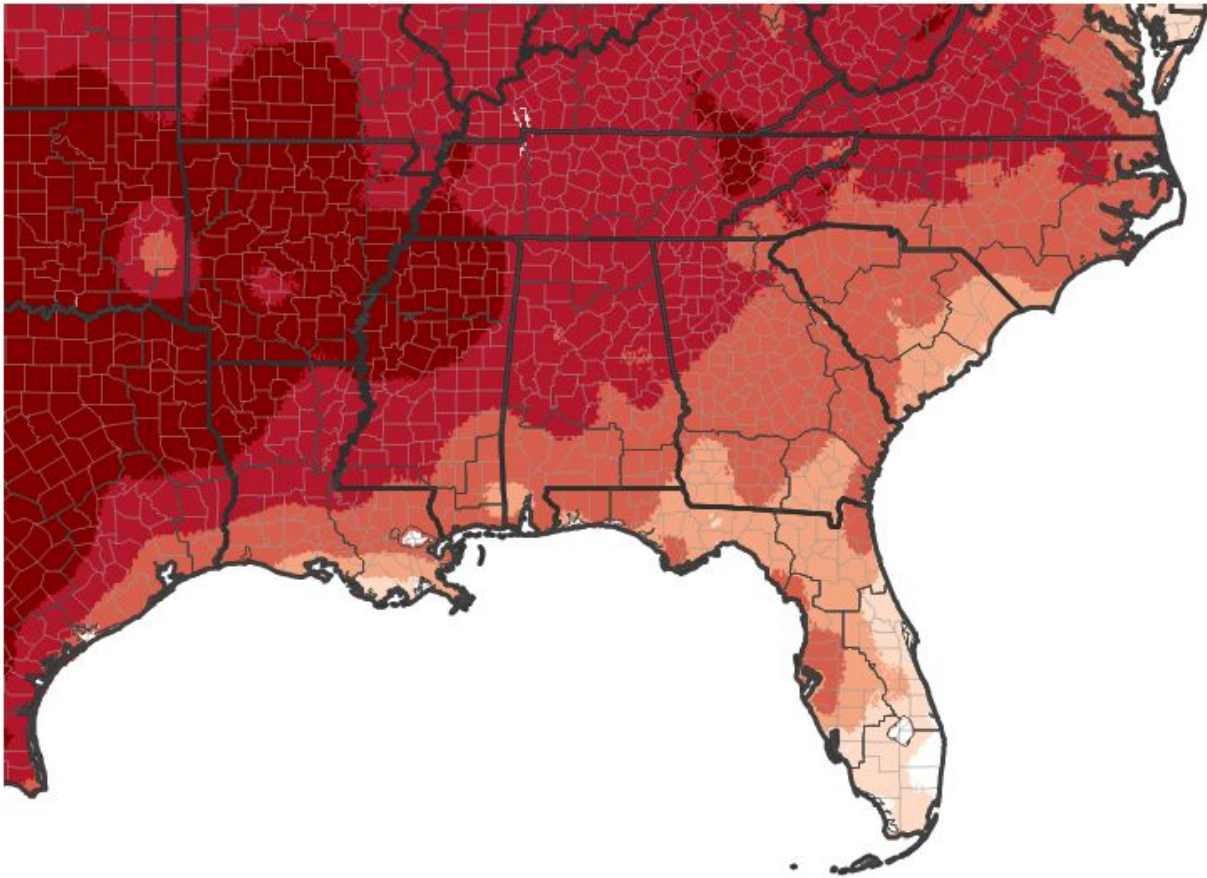
Departure from Normal Max Temperature (°F)



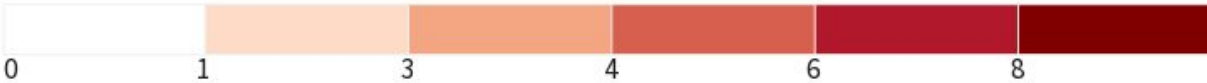
Source(s): NOAA's National Centers for Environmental Information; image courtesy of Drought.gov

Data Valid: 03/22/26

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: 03/22/26





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

- It has been difficult for farmers to break the soil to get planting started. Some irrigation has occurred to further moisten the soil where available.

Fire Hazard Impacts

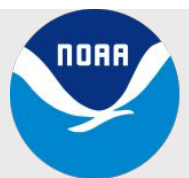
- Keetch-Byram Drought Index (KBDI) values range from 200-300 across the region.
- KBDI responds quickly to any recent rains. KBDI is expected to continue increasing with little or no rain expected through the next week. Wildfire activity continues at a similar rate compared to last week.

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)





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 have gone dry, particularly in counties along the Florida border.

Agricultural Impacts

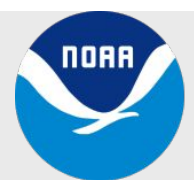
- Planting season has begun, though areas near the Florida border are struggling quite a bit. There are concerns given exceptionally low sub-surface water levels that irrigation will further stress the water table as farmers draw water from wells.
- Irrigation problems are being reported as farmers begin to plant corn with no water in irrigation ponds.

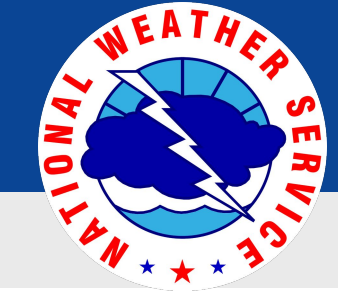
Fire Hazard Impacts

- Keetch-Byram Drought Index (KBDI) values range from 250-500 across the region, highest closes to I-75.
- 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 200-450 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 Calhoun County FL EMA: Mossy Pond fire from this past weekend. At least 15 residential structure destroyed by fire.





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

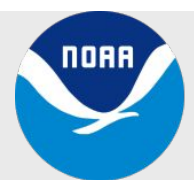
- Keetch-Byram Drought Index (KBDI) ranges from 450-650, highest in Taylor, Dixie, and Lafayette Counties.
- Calhoun, Liberty, and Lafayette Counties have a burn ban in effect.

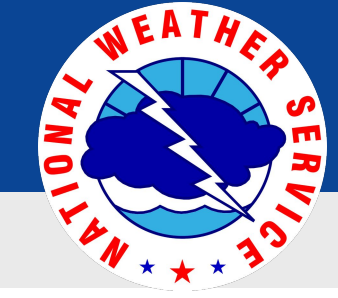
Mitigation Actions

- Suwannee River Water Management District has issued a [water shortage advisory](#) for their watershed.



Lake Killarney in Tallahassee. Photo taken from the lake-bed area well below the road surface. The area in the photo is normally covered with water up to the grass line a few feet below the road surface.



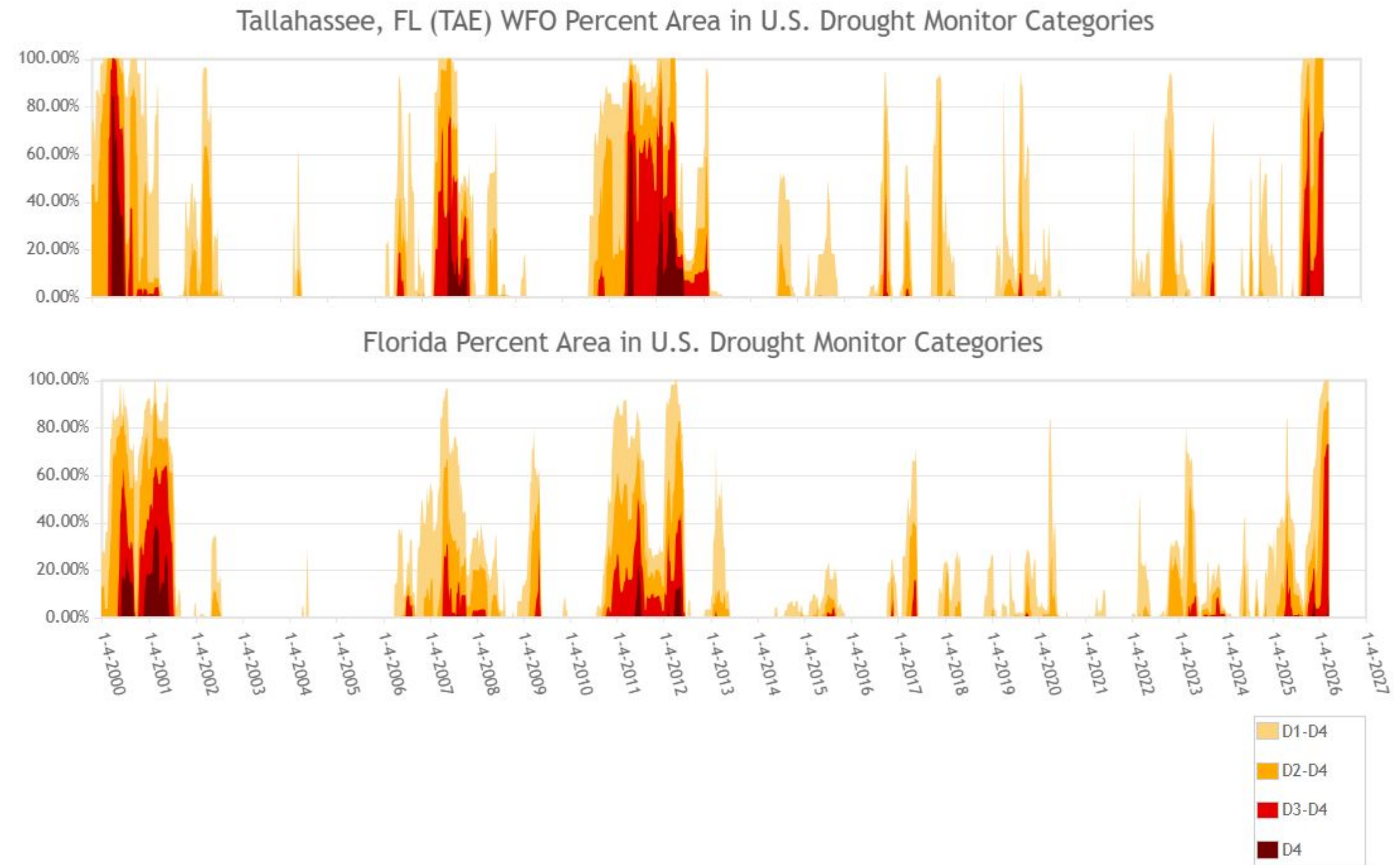


A Perspective on this Drought

Links: [Drought Monitor Time Series](#)

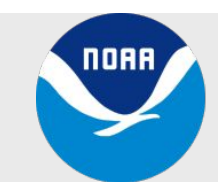
How does this drought compare to past long term droughts in the Tallahassee forecast area?

- 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.
- The reemergence of D4 drought in Florida and South Georgia is very similar to what was seen in the 2011/2012 drought.



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.

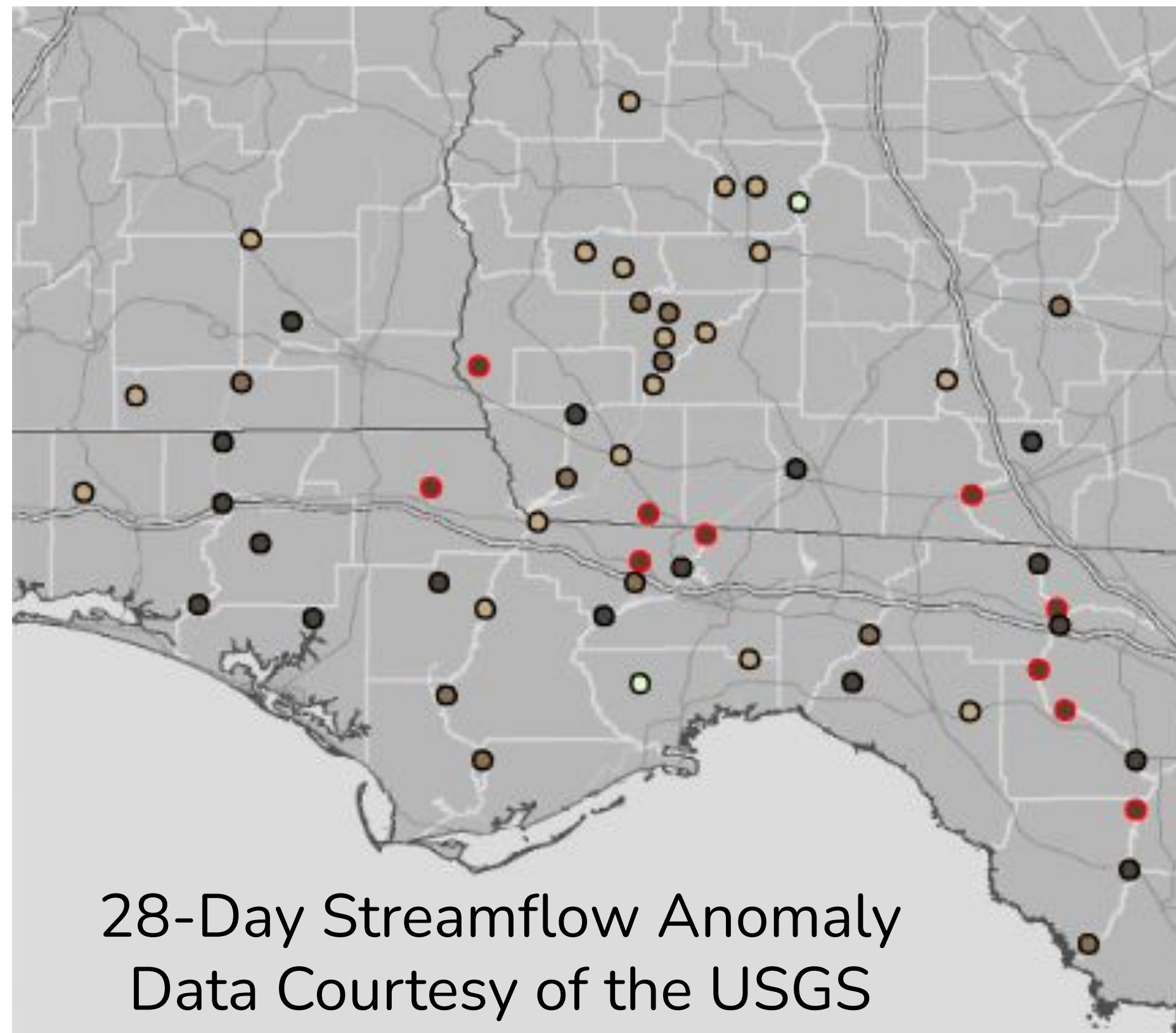




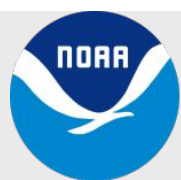
Hydrologic Conditions and Impacts

- 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



28-Day Streamflow Anomaly
Data Courtesy of the USGS

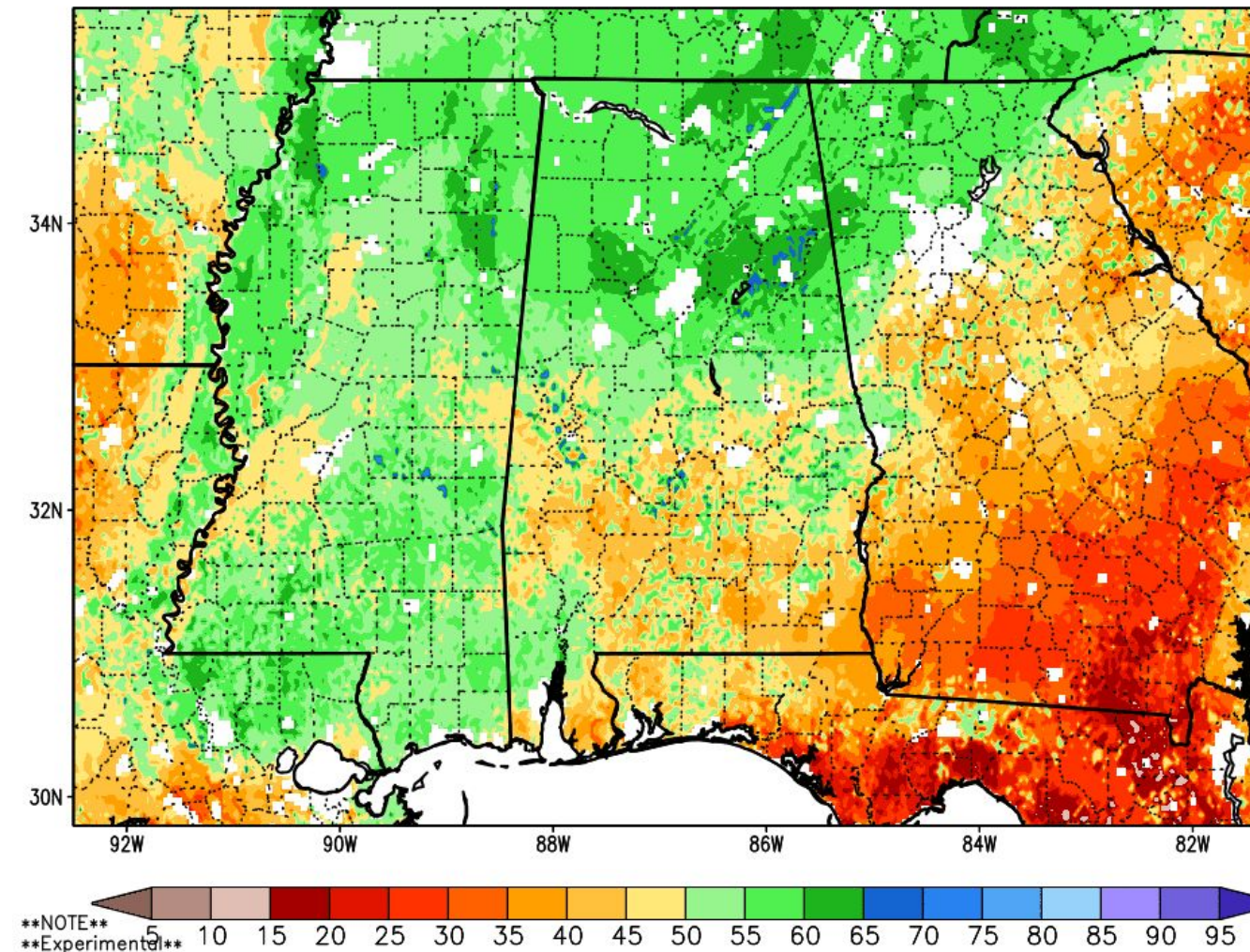




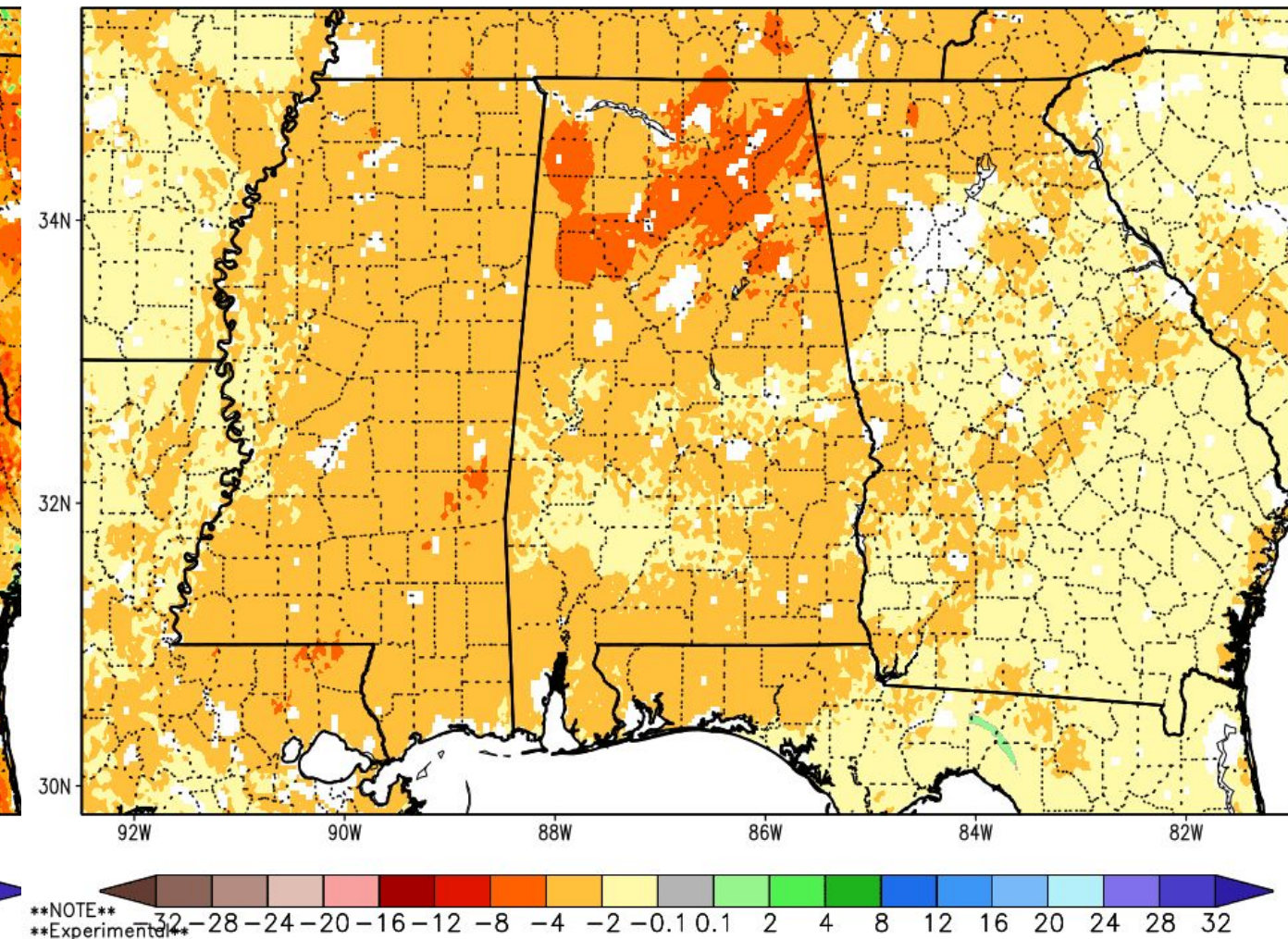
Agricultural Impacts

- Deep layer soil moisture remains drier than normal across the region, especially in our harder hit drought areas in South Georgia and North Florida.
- Planting season is underway, but we will need increased rainfall to keep up with the water demand.
- The lack of rain in the last week led to a considerable decrease in soil moisture, especially in Southeast Alabama and the Florida Panhandle.

Column—Integrated Relative Soil Moisture (available water; %) valid 12z 26 Mar 2026
Precipitation in previous hour (1,2,5,10,15,20,25 mm contours)

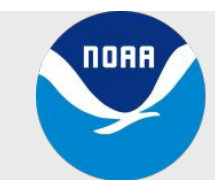


1-Week Difference in Column Relative Soil Moisture (%) valid 12z 26 Mar 2026



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](#)



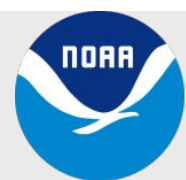
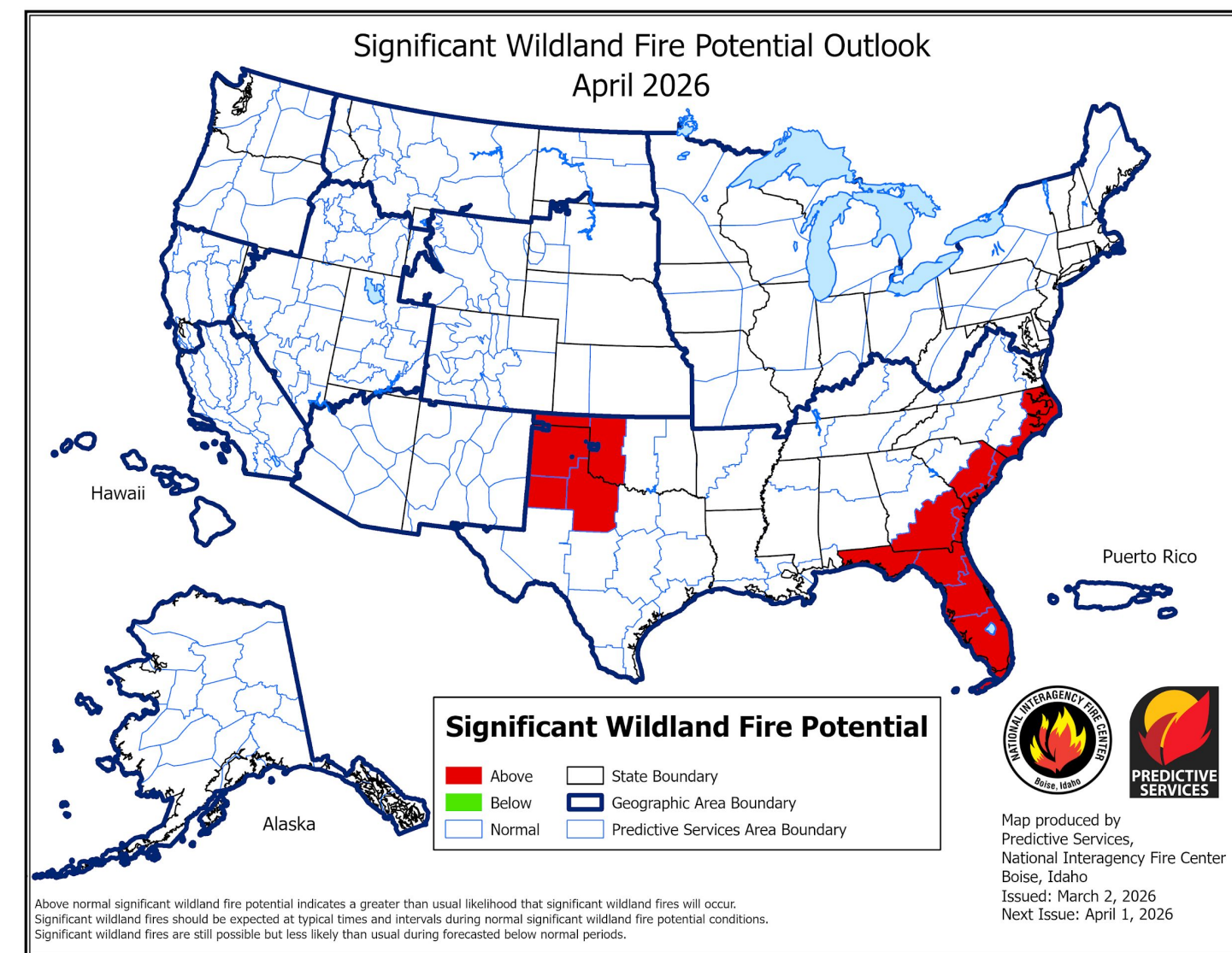
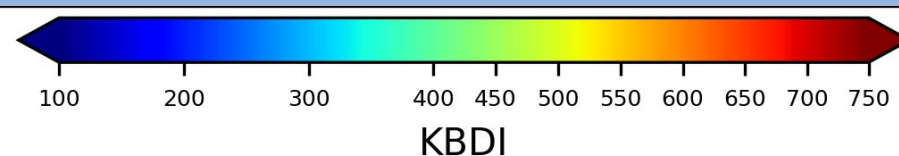
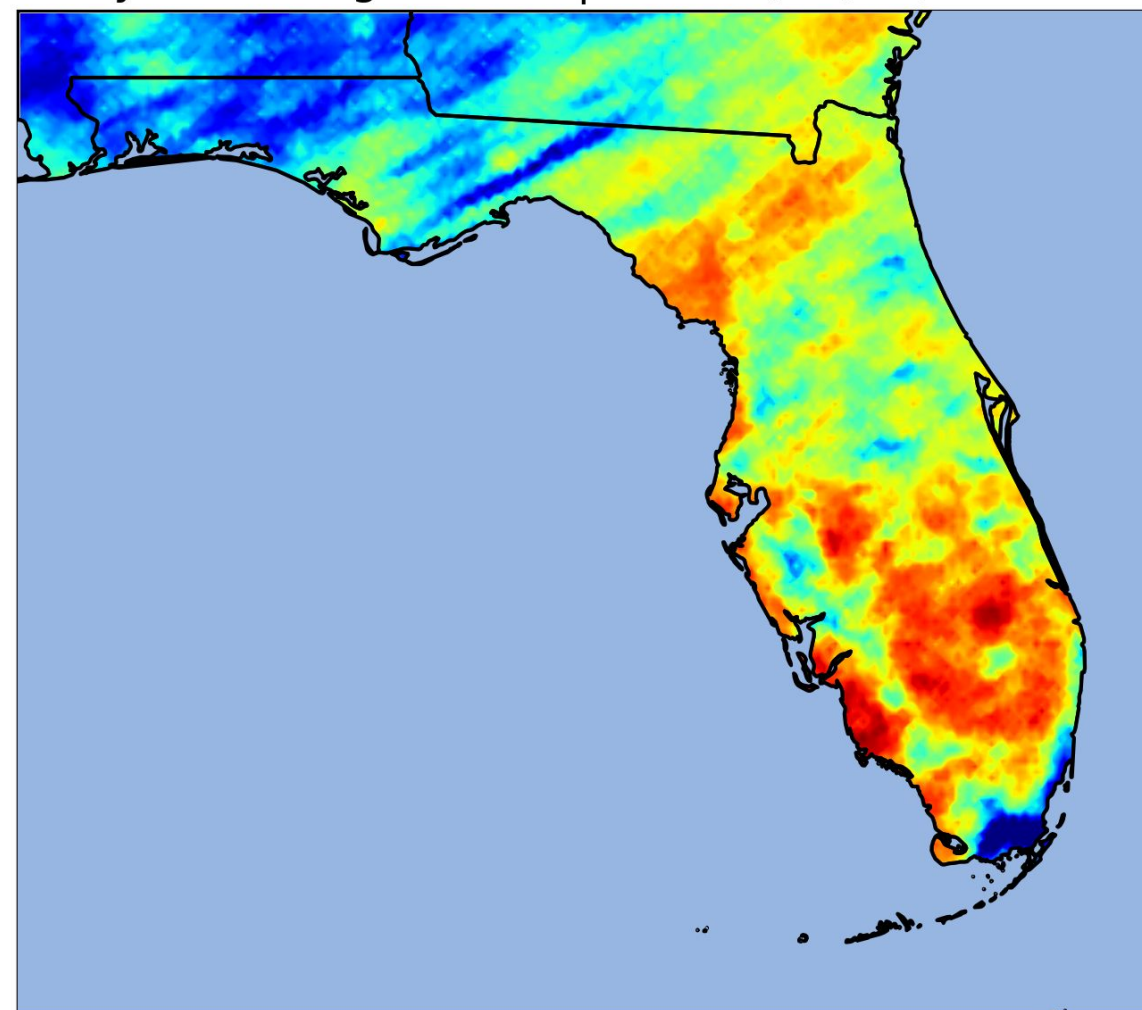


Fire Hazard Impacts

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 calls for above normal wildfire activity across most of the region.

Keetch-Byram Drought Index | Wed 03/25/26, 02:00 PM EDT

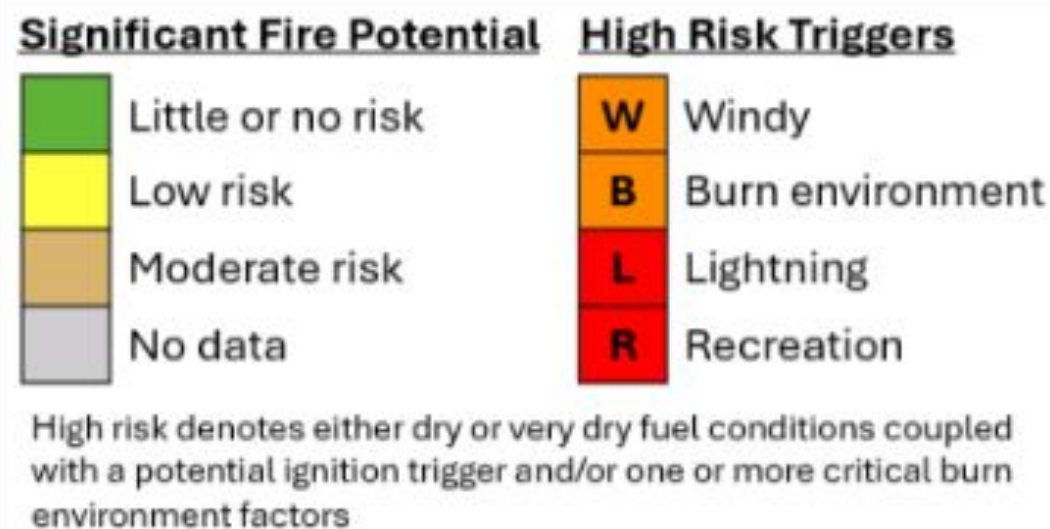




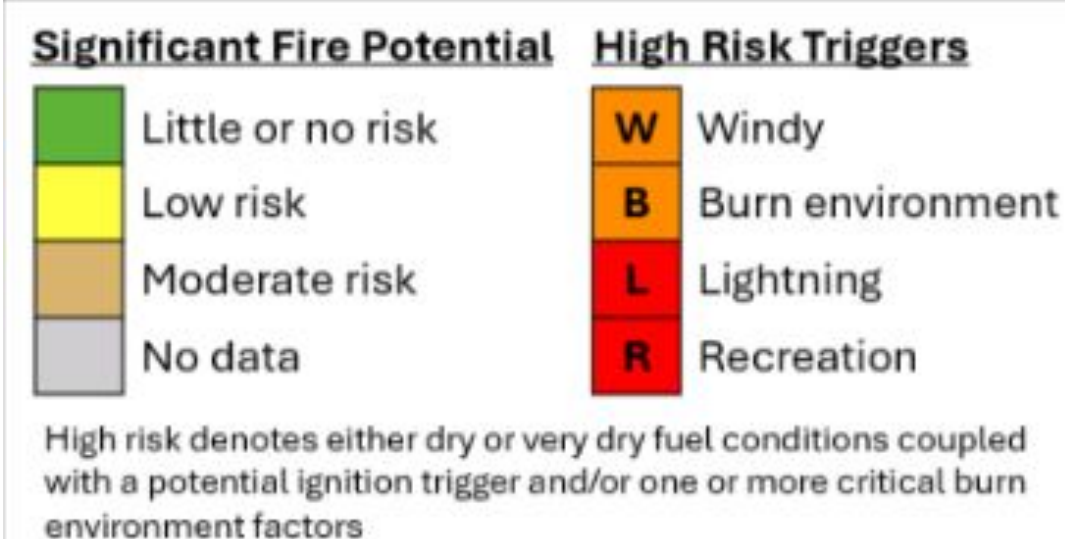
Fire Hazard Concerns - Saturday/Sunday March 28-29

- This weekend, weather conditions will be especially favorable for the development of wildfires.
- These conditions will also make spot burning dangerous.
- Consider delaying any burns at your residence or other areas until weather conditions are less hostile in coming days.

Saturday Fire Potential



Sunday Fire Potential



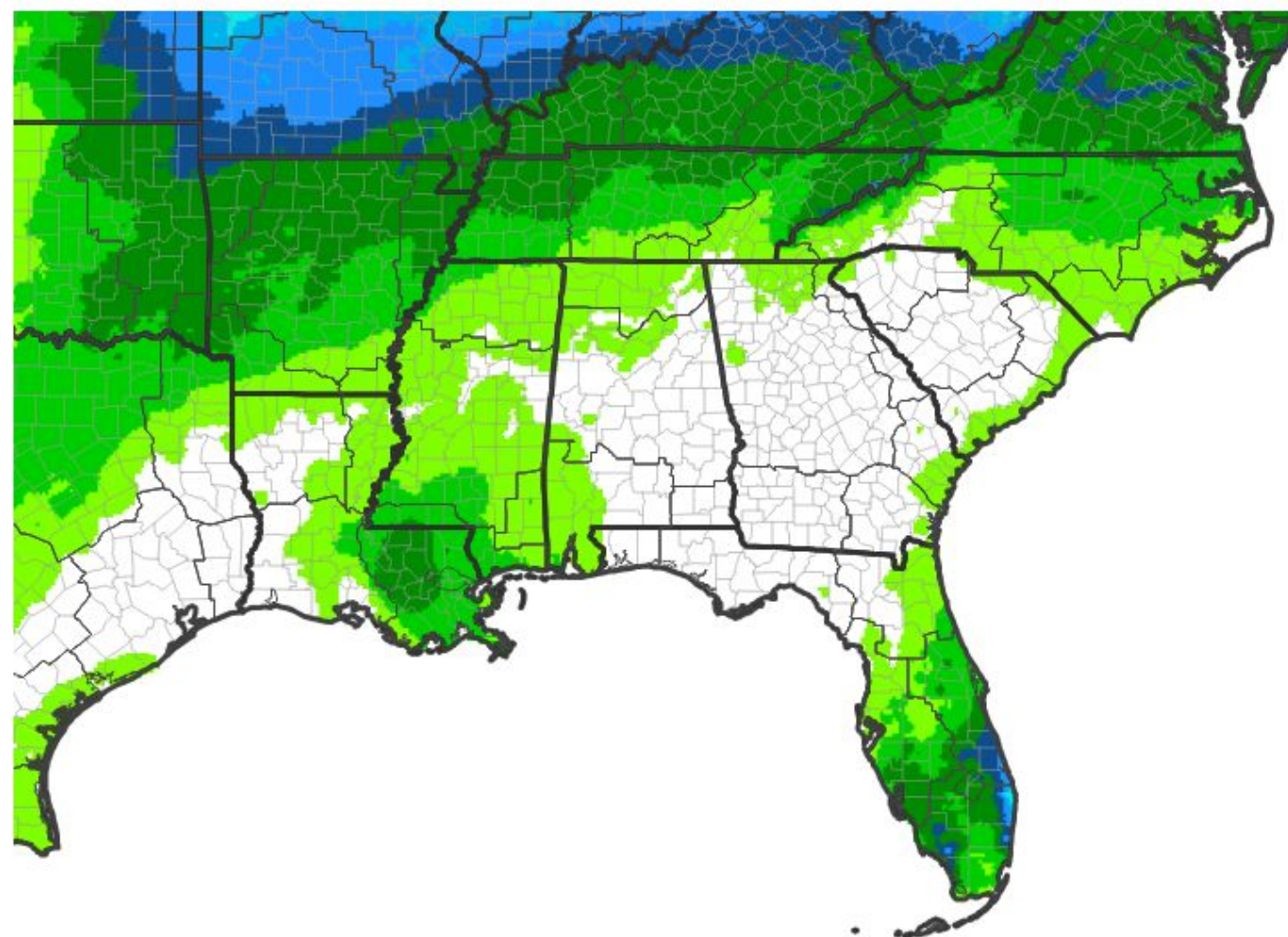
Check the latest fire weather forecast for your area [here](#).
Be alert should any red flag warnings be issued for the weekend.



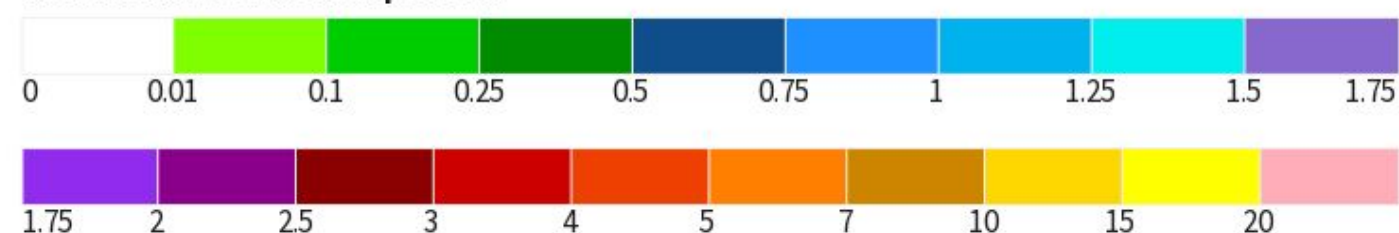
Precipitation Outlook

- No rain is expected over the next week as high pressure builds over the region in the wake of a dry cold frontal passage on Friday evening.
- Dry conditions and strong winds on Saturday and Sunday will bring significant fire weather concerns.
- [8-14 day outlook](#) (4/1 - 4/7): near normal precipitation. Some signals point to rain chances returning after 4/5.

7-Day Quantitative Precipitation Forecast for March 26, 2026–April 2, 2026



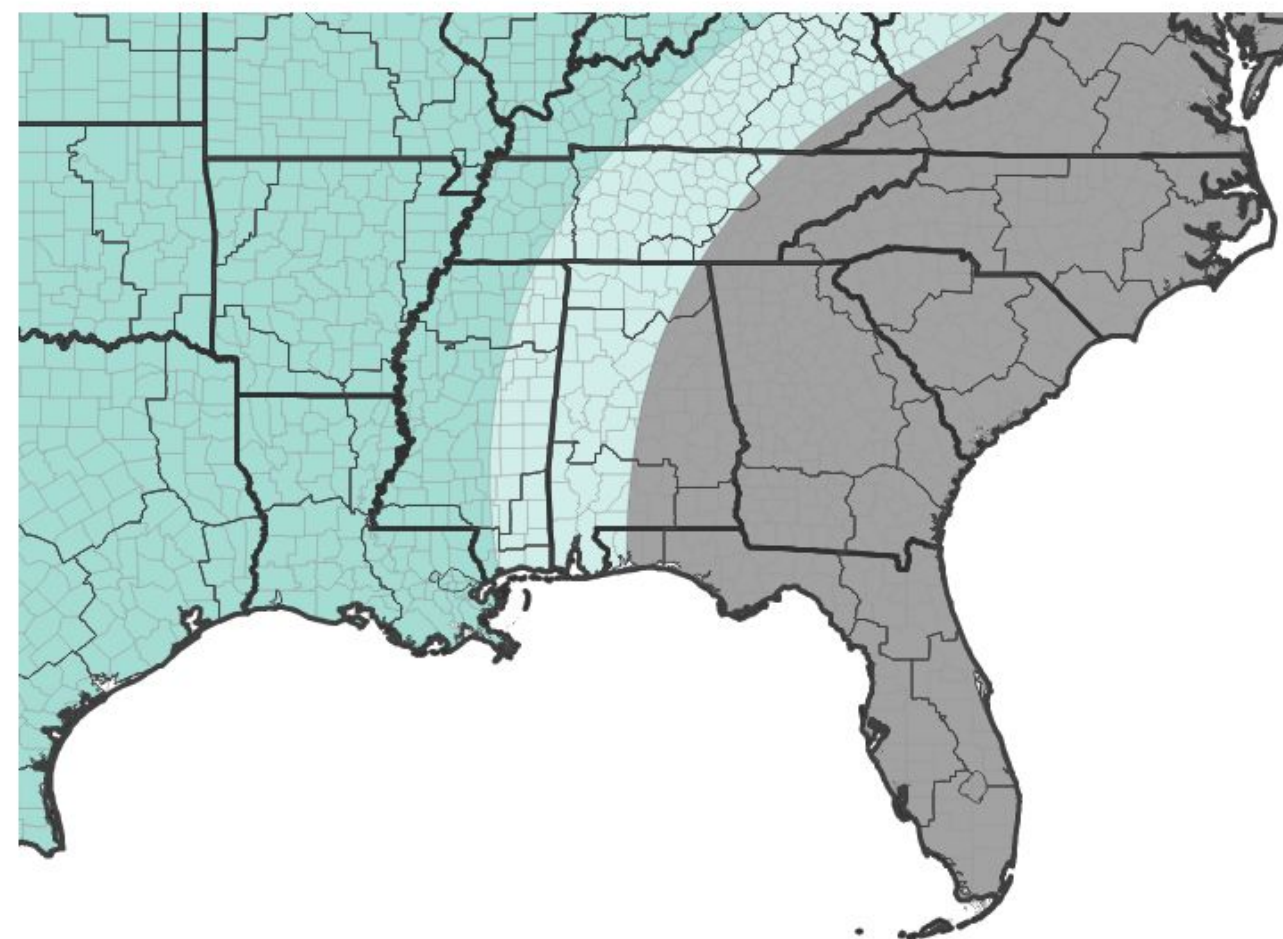
Predicted Inches of Precipitation



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

Last Updated: 03/26/26

8–14 Day Precipitation Outlook for April 1, 2026–April 7, 2026



Probability of Below-Normal Precipitation



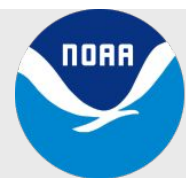
Probability of Above-Normal Precipitation



■ Near-Normal Conditions

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

Last Updated: 03/24/26



National Oceanic and
Atmospheric Administration

U.S. Department of Commerce

National Weather Service
Tallahassee, FL

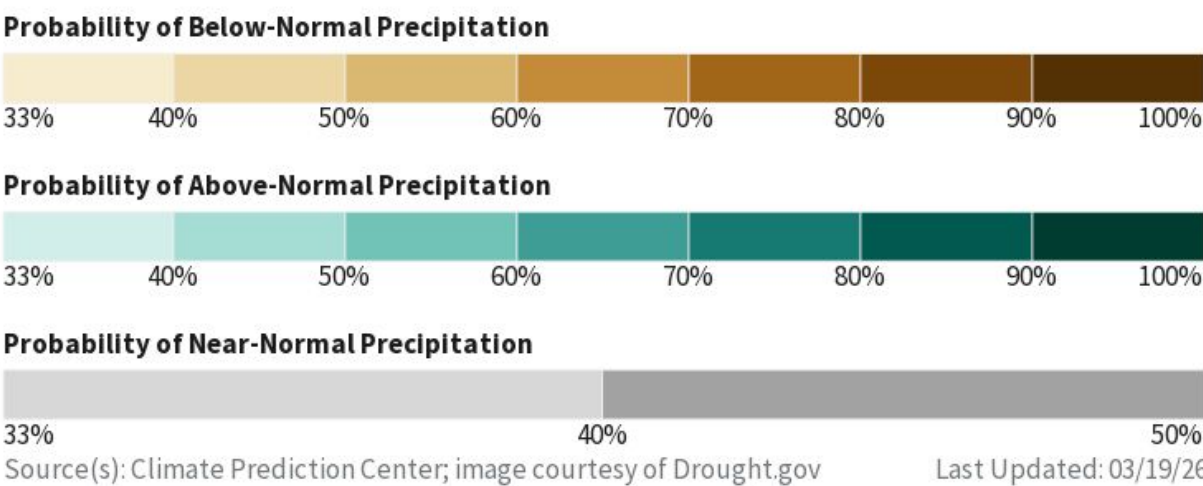
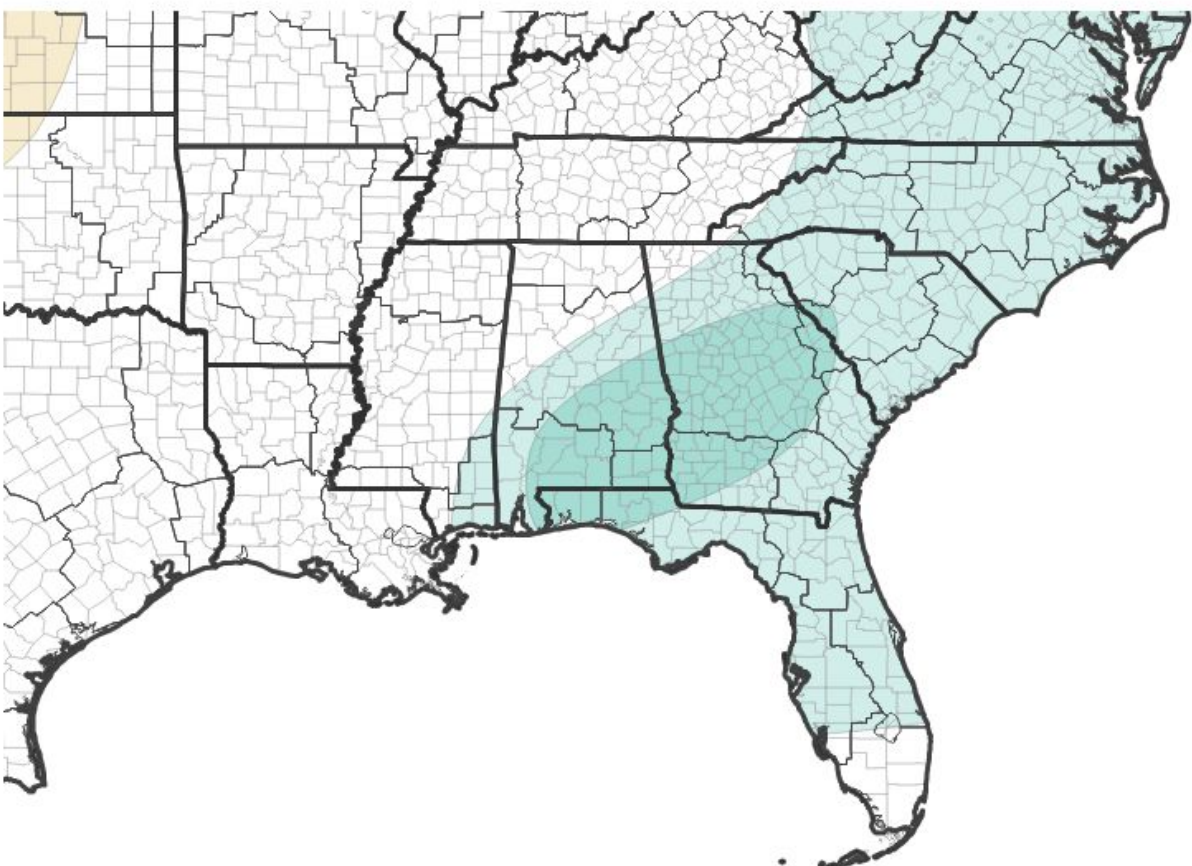


Long-Range Outlooks

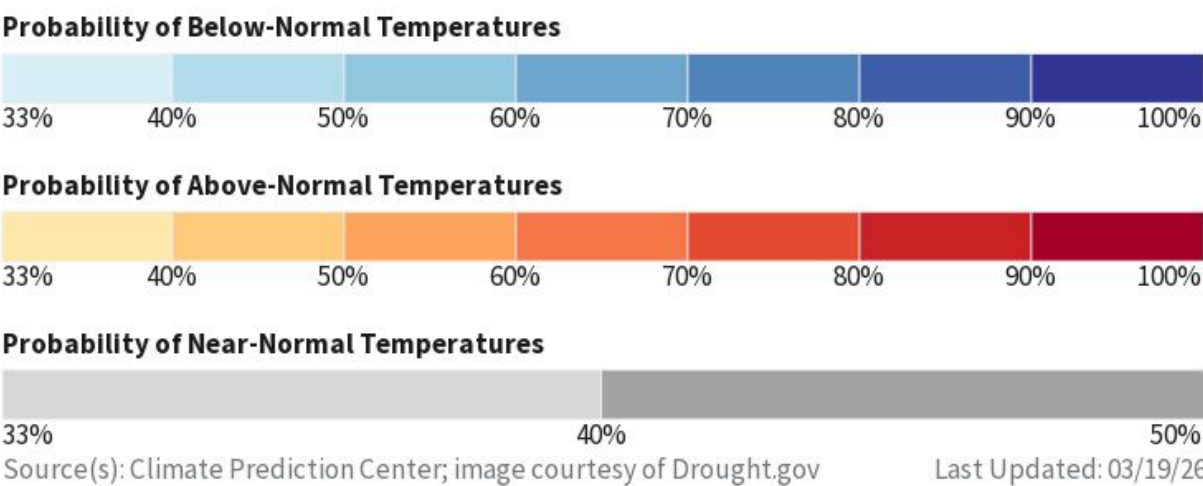
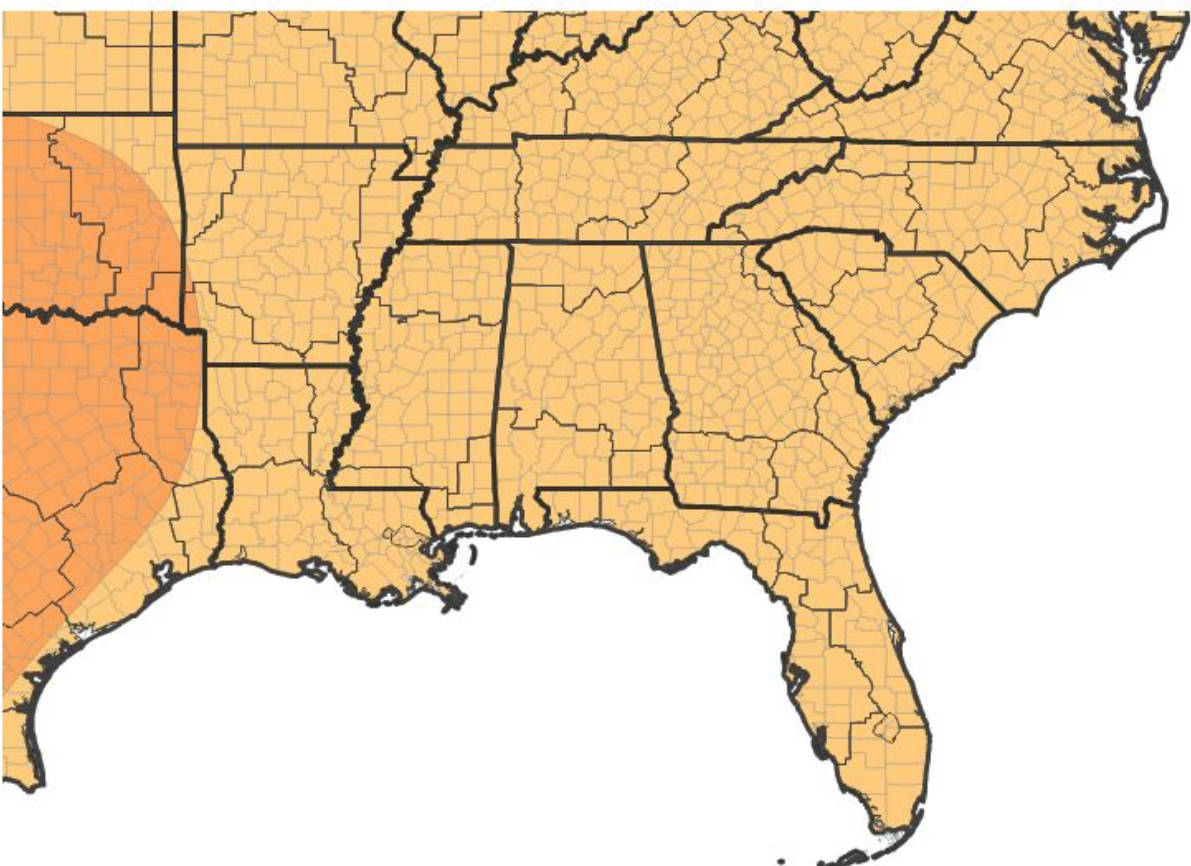
The latest monthly and seasonal outlooks can be found on the [CPC homepage](#).

- 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"





Drought Outlook

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

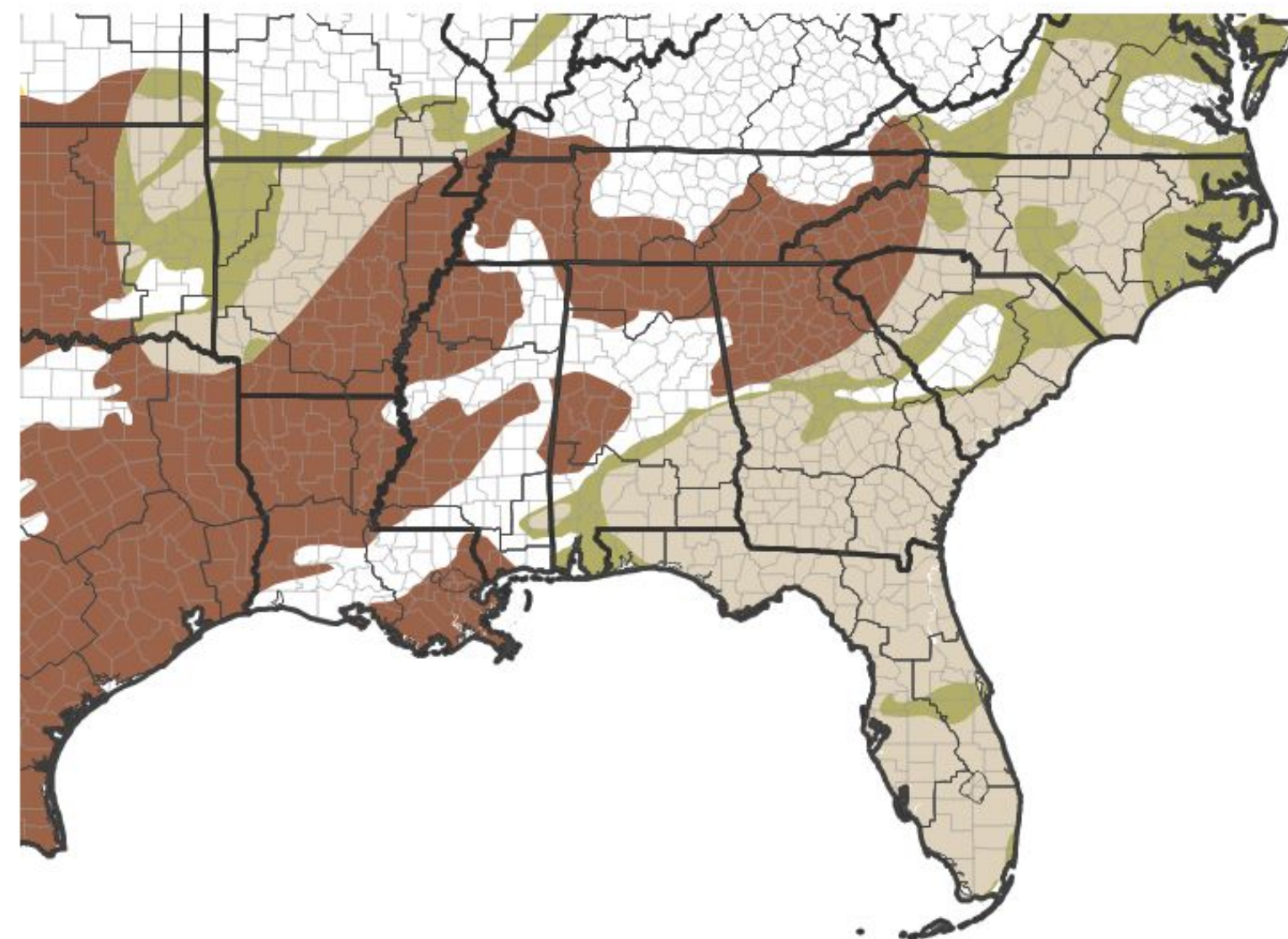
- Given the prediction that favors above normal precipitation in the months ahead, drought is expected to persist, but the severity may improve across the region over the next three months.
- Keep in mind, this is a 3-month outlook. Conditions may worsen, as April still favors below normal rainfall across our area.
- Should the sea breeze season become active on schedule, mid to late May through June could feature above normal rainfall, which will help improve drought conditions.
- If the start of the summer sea breeze season is delayed, drought conditions could reach a severity seen in the 2000 and 2012 droughts.

Links to the latest:

[Climate Prediction Center Monthly Drought Outlook](#)

[Climate Prediction Center Seasonal Drought Outlook](#)

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

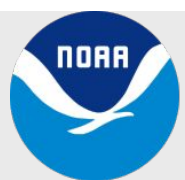


Drought Is Predicted To...



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

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**National Oceanic and
Atmospheric Administration**

U.S. Department of Commerce

**National Weather Service
Tallahassee, FL**