

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

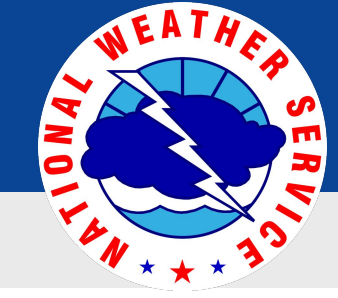
Valid April 2, 2026

Issued By: National Weather Service Tallahassee, FL

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

- This product will be updated April 9, 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 Continues to Expand as Drought Conditions Worsen Areawide.**
- **Extreme Drought Develops in Southeast Alabama.**
- This is the worst drought 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 potential exists for further worsening of drought conditions, despite recent rains. Surface and subsurface water levels are especially low for early April.



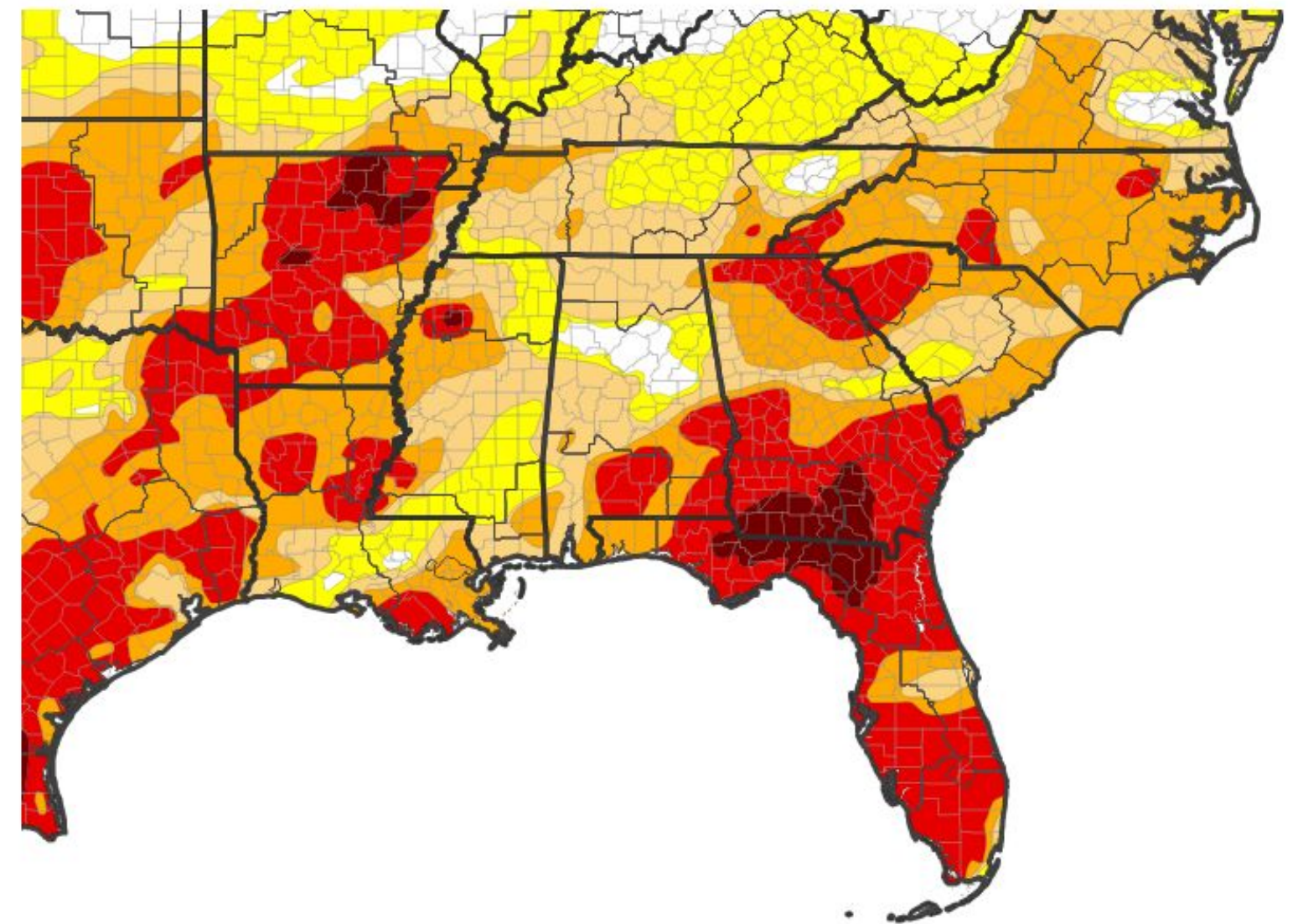


U.S. Drought Monitor

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

- Little rain was observed in the region through Tuesday. Rainfall after 8 am ET (7 am CT), March 31st is not included in this week's drought monitor.
- Drought intensity and Extent:
 - **D4 (Exceptional Drought):**
 - In Georgia: Generally south of a line from Ocilla to Donalsonville.
 - In Florida: Along I-10 from Cottondale (US-231 exit) east to the Suwannee River.
 - **D3 (Extreme Drought):**
 - In Florida: Most of North Florida east of Central Walton County and south of the D4 drought area.
 - In Georgia: The remainder of South Georgia.
 - In Alabama: Henry, Houston, Dale, and Eastern Geneva Counties.
 - **D2 (Severe Drought):** Far western areas.

U.S. Drought Monitor

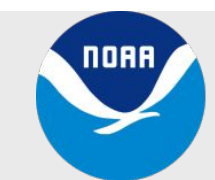


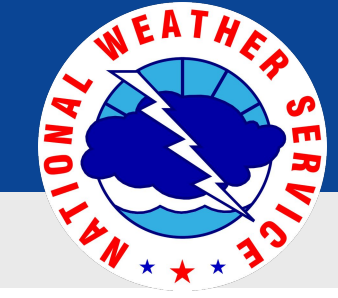
U.S. Drought Monitor



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

Data Valid: 03/31/26



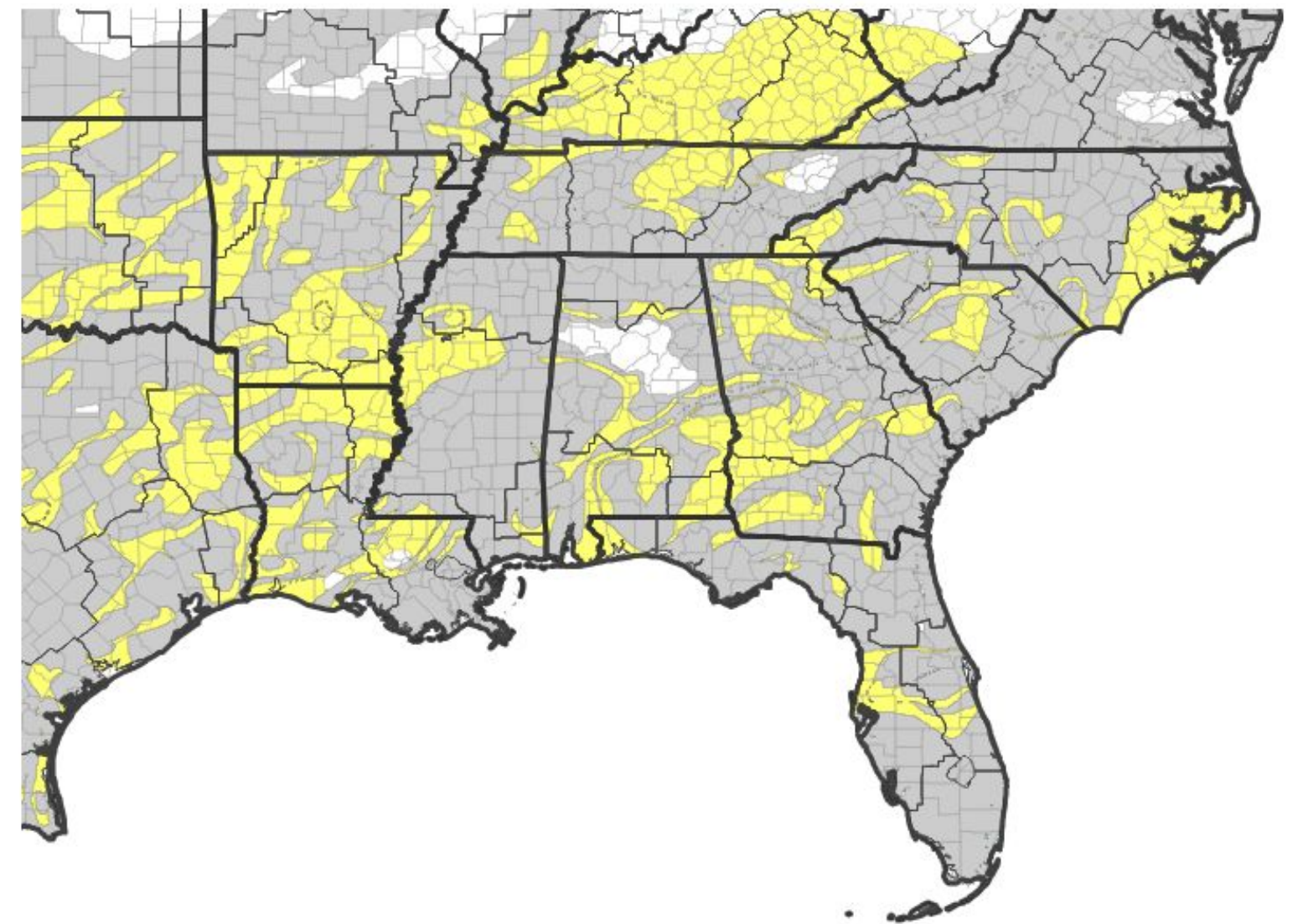


Recent Change in Drought Intensity

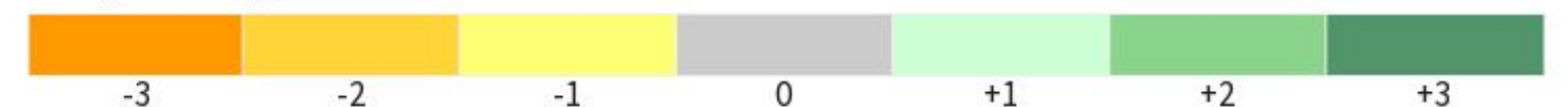
Link to the latest [4-week change map](#) for Southeast Alabama, Southwest Georgia, and the Florida Panhandle & Big Bend

- With little or no rainfall, drought severity increased across portions of the region this week.
- One-Week Drought Monitor Class Change:
 - **1 Category Degradation:**
 - Much of Southeast Alabama and portions of Southwest Georgia.
 - **No Change**
 - All other areas in the region.

U.S. Drought Monitor 1-Week Change Map

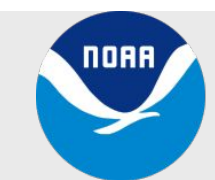


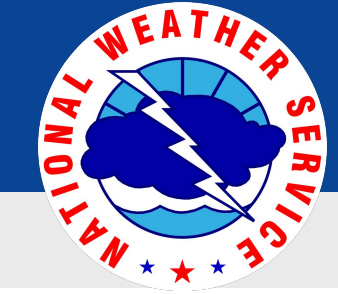
Drought Change Since Last Week



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

Data Valid: 03/31/26



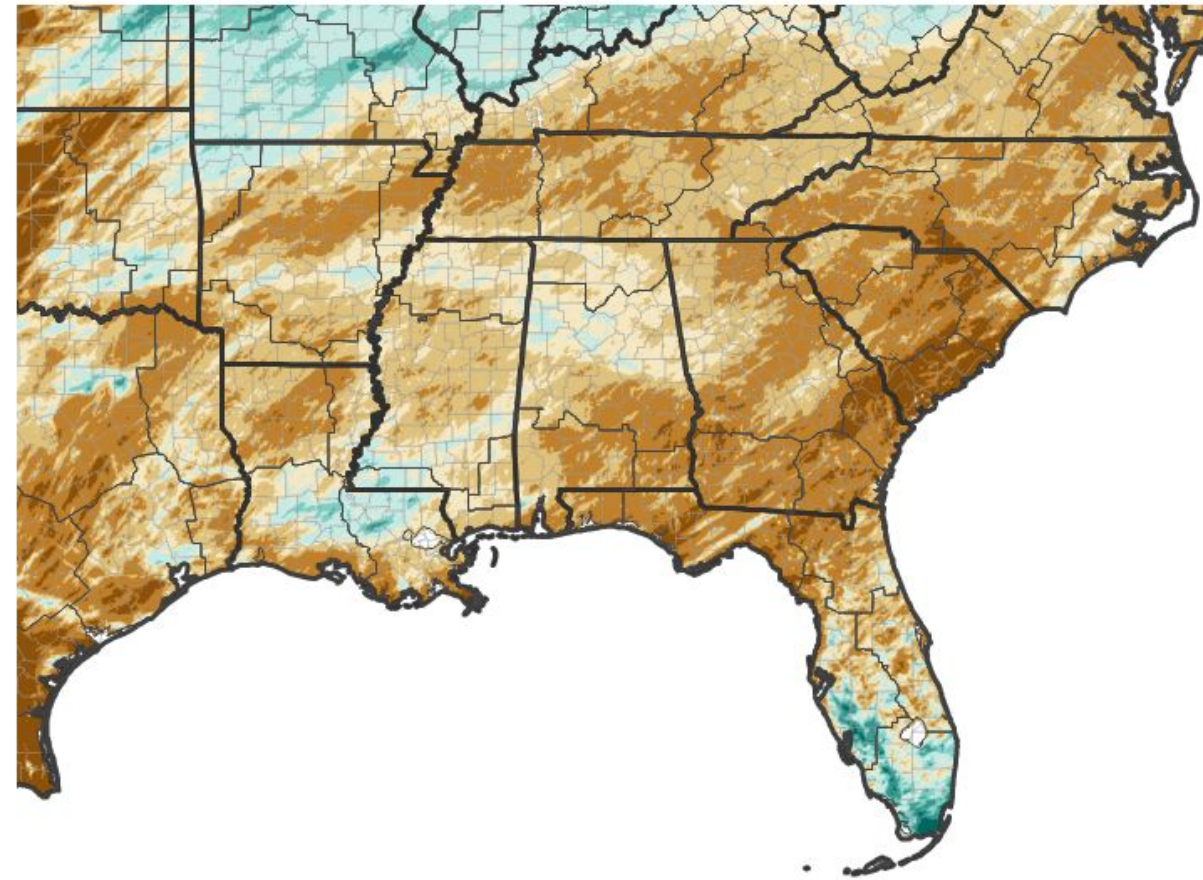


Precipitation

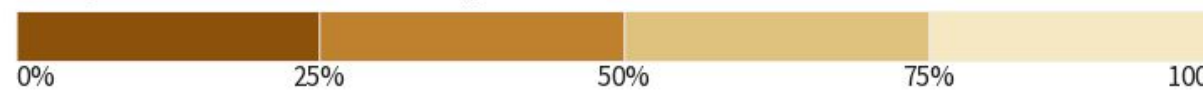
Note: Precipitation after 7 AM EST/6 AM CST Tuesday is incorporated in next week's Drought Monitor

	Last 30 Days		Last 90 Days	
	Rainfall	Percent	Rainfall	Percent
DeFuniak Springs*	1.98"	38.7%	9.50"	60.4%
Panama City ECP	0.87"	17.1%	6.19"	42.1%
Dothan	1.38"	30.2%	8.04"	56.1%
Marianna	1.07"	22.3%	6.88"	50.9%
Georgetown**	2.42"	52.2%	9.35"	65.7%
Dawson**	1.32"	28.4%	7.41"	51.8%
Arlington**	1.25"	26.1%	7.57"	52.2%
Albany	4.40"	105.0%	10.78"	86.0%
Cairo**	1.39"	28.9%	5.98"	42.8%
Tallahassee	1.62"	32.6%	6.55"	47.2%
Moultrie**	1.41"	28.4%	4.93"	35.0%
Monticello*	2.72"	58.5%	7.97"	58.0%
Ty Ty**	2.03"	46.5%	7.96"	59.1%
Alapaha**	0.99"	22.0%	4.49"	33.8%
Valdosta	2.17"	60.2%	6.32"	58.2%
Perry***	1.78"	39.0%	5.21"	40.9%

30-Day Percent of Normal Precipitation

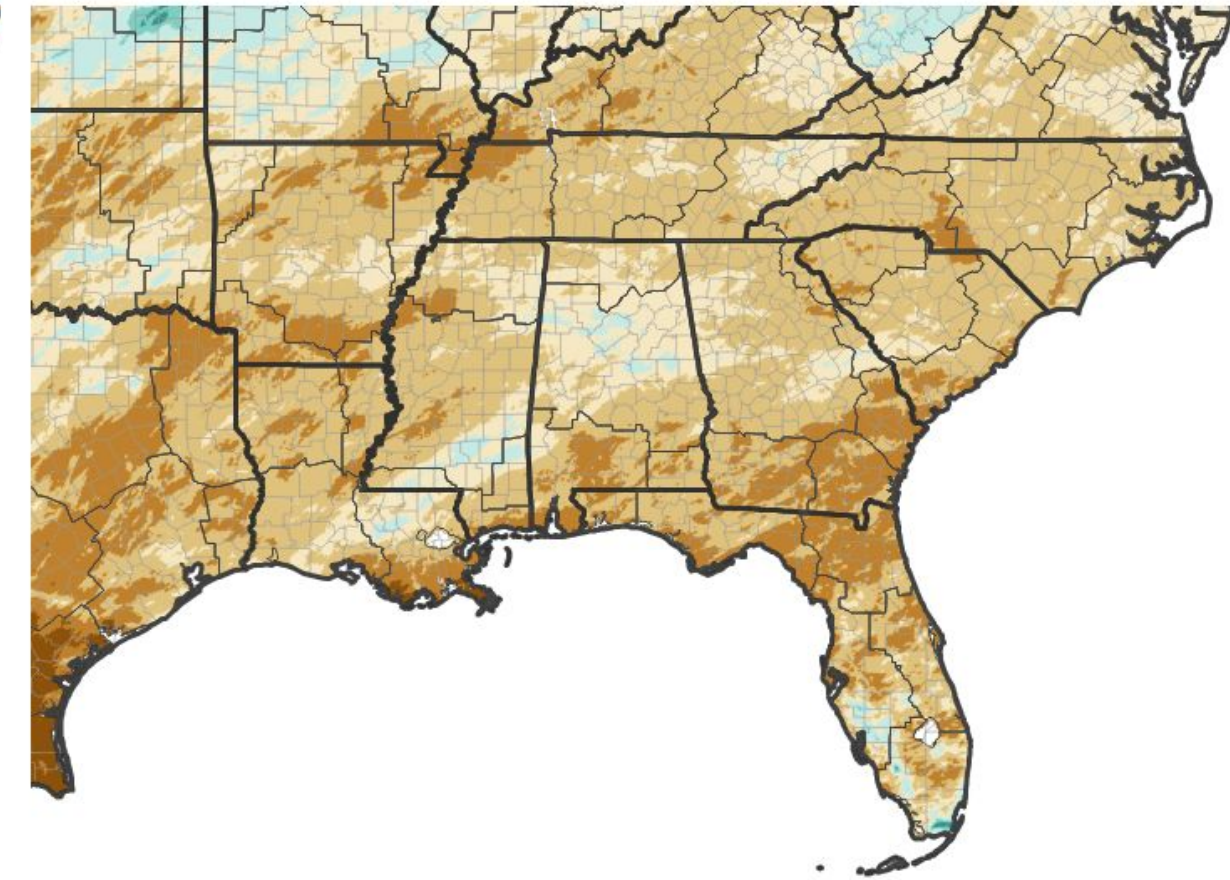


Precipitation Shown as a Percentage of Normal Conditions

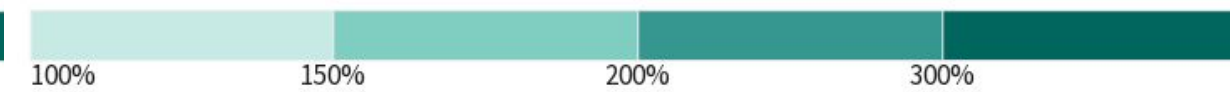
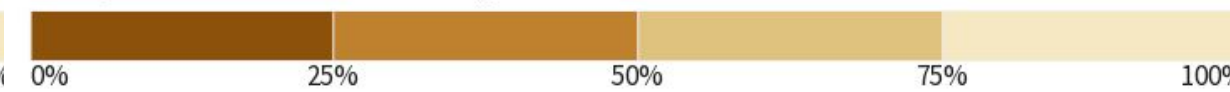


Source(s): National Weather Service Multi-Radar Multi-Sensor System; Last Updated: 04/02/26
image courtesy of Drought.gov

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: 04/02/26
image courtesy of Drought.gov

Rainfall totals through April 1, 2026. Non-NWS Data Courtesy:

*University of Florida - Florida Automated Weather Network

**University of Georgia Weather Network

***Suwannee River Water Management District

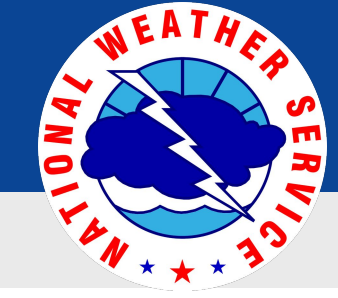
Climatology for non-NWS stations is estimated using PRISM data.



National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

U.S. Department of Commerce

National Weather Service
Tallahassee, FL

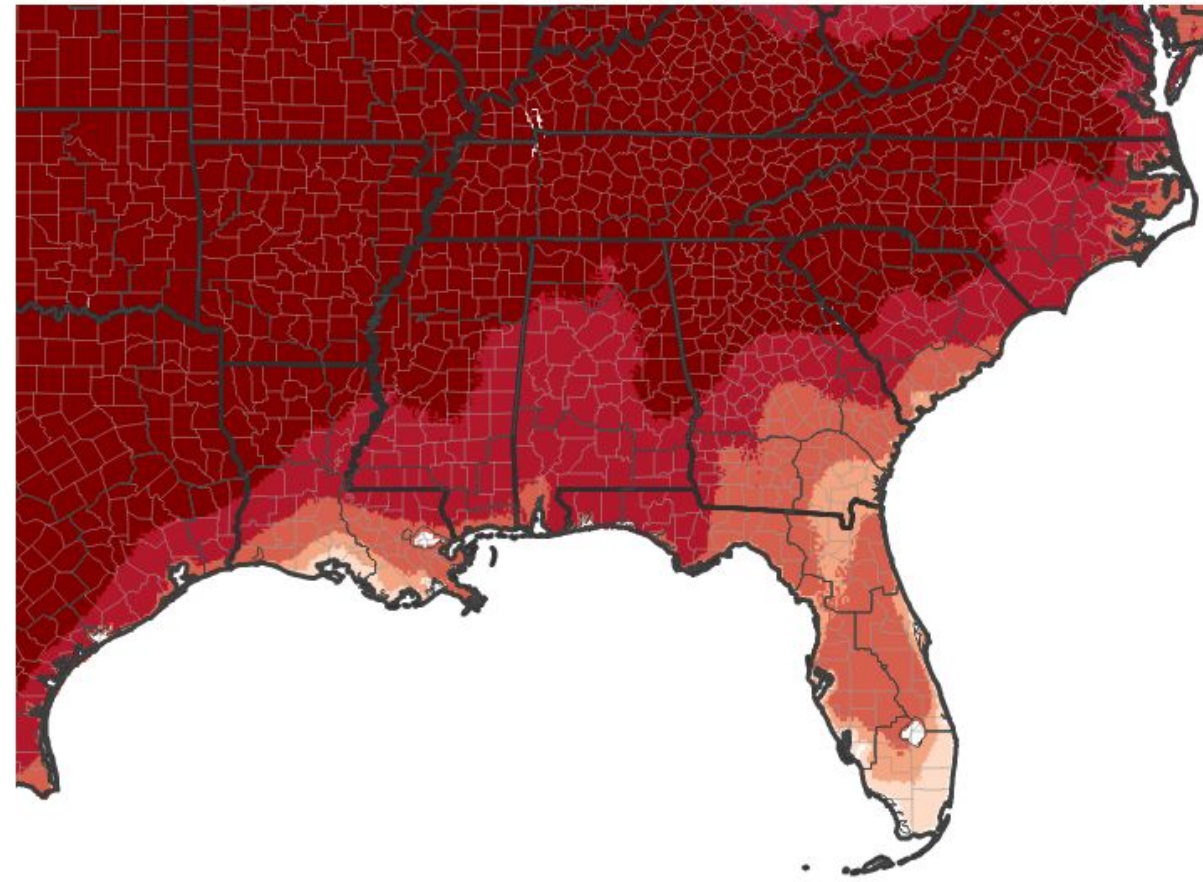


Temperature

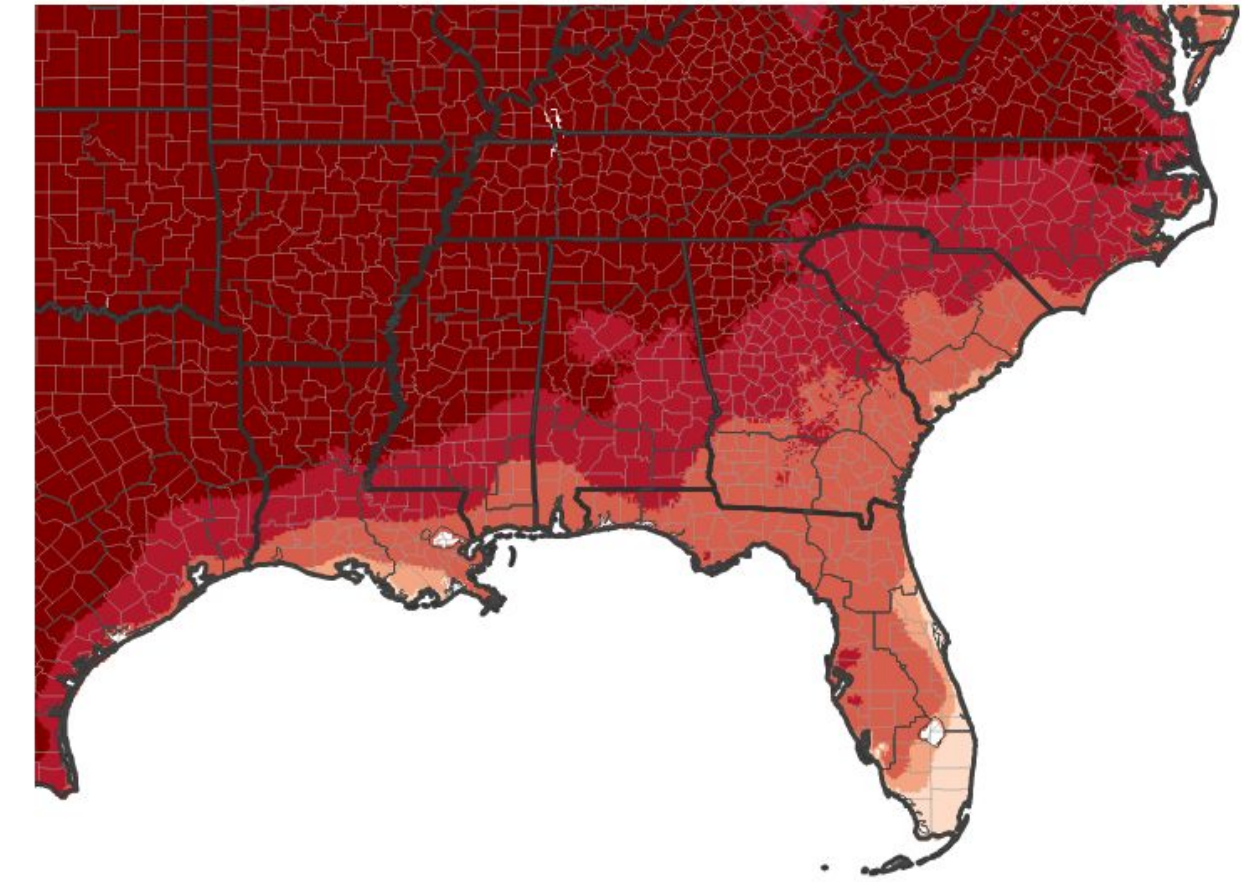
	Last 30 Days	
	Average High (Departure)	Average Low (Departure)
Tallahassee	79.6° (+5.0°)	52.5° (+3.5°)
Albany	78.1° (+5.1°)	51.5° (+3.0°)
Valdosta	79.3° (+6.1°)	52.0° (+4.5°)
Marianna	79.3° (+5.2°)	52.6° (+3.0°)
Dothan	77.5° (+4.2°)	52.7° (+3.5°)

- Warm temperatures have returned, with several days with highs in the 80s.
- Overnight lows have also been much above normal.
- Above normal temperatures and limited rainfall are leading to a worsening of drought conditions.

7-Day Temperature Anomaly



30-Day Temperature Anomaly



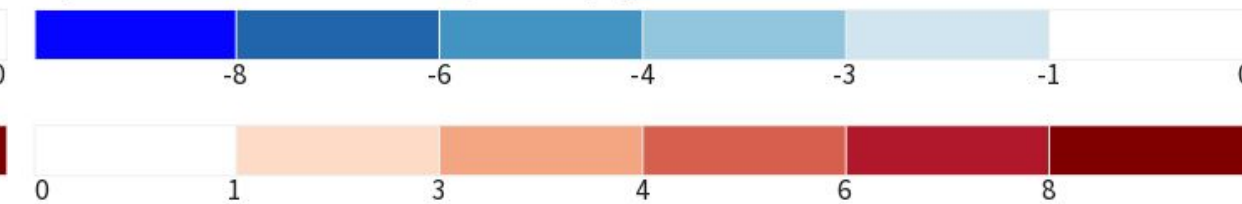
Departure from Normal Max Temperature (°F)



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

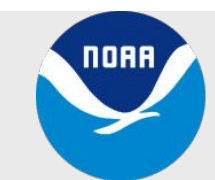
Data Valid: 03/29/26

Departure from Normal Max Temperature (°F)



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

Data Valid: 03/29/26





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. Recent rains after Tuesday are not accounted for in the drought monitor this week.
- Surface and groundwater levels are exceptionally low. Rainfall has been insufficient to replenish holding ponds or lakes.

Agricultural Impacts

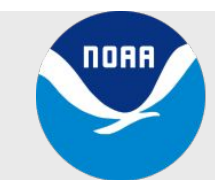
- It has been difficult for farmers to break the soil to get planting started. Some irrigation has occurred to further moisten the soil where available.

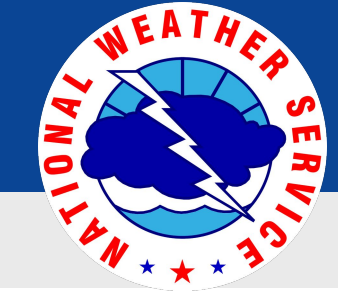
Fire Hazard Impacts

- 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.





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. Routed flows as part of the ACF system have kept portions of the Flint and Chattahoochee from being exceptionally low, but tributary creeks into the ACF system are exceptionally low.
- 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. One report indicated that swampy areas and small creeks are also dry, and drier than the individual has ever seen in their lifetime.

Agricultural Impacts

- Planting season has begun with corn being planted. Irrigation is needed to support surface soil moisture and existing plants. There are concerns given exceptionally low sub-surface water levels that irrigation will further stress the water table as farmers draw water from wells.
- A report from Lee County specified that, "It's so dry that when the chickens go through the yard, they're kicking up dust!"

Fire Hazard Impacts

- Keetch-Byram Drought Index (KBDI) values range from 300-500 across the region, highest close 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 or dry in some areas.

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 250-550 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.

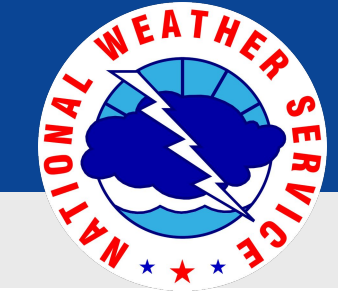
Mitigation Actions

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



Courtesy Calhoun County FL EMA: Mossy Pond fire from 2 weeks ago. 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.

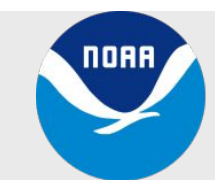
Fire Hazard Impacts

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

Mitigation Actions

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

Photos Credits: North Leon County, NWS Employee - Top photo of Lower Lake Dianne 3-4 feet lower than normal based on water mark on retaining wall. Bottom photo: Lake Monkey Business similarly low with the lake bed dry within 7-10 feet of the bank.





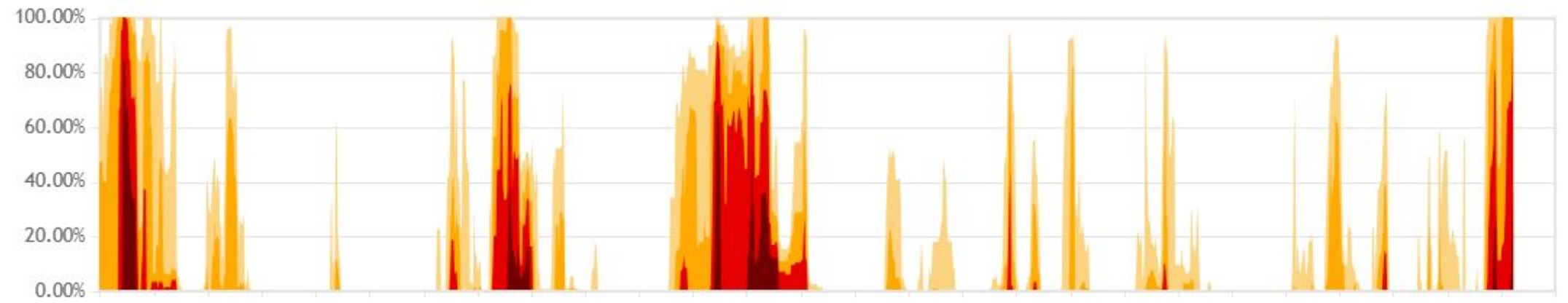
A Perspective on this Drought

Links: [Drought Monitor Time Series](#)

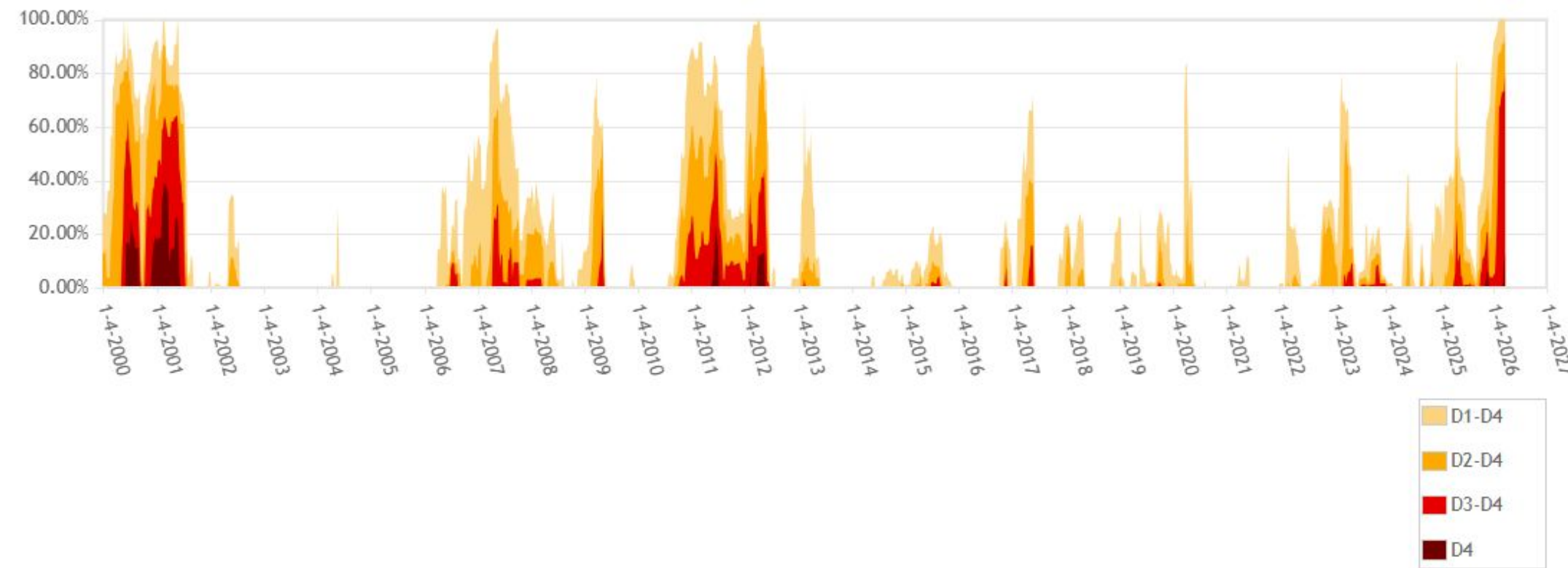
How does this drought compare to past long term droughts in the Tallahassee forecast area?

- 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.
- Drought severity is increasing, and is nearing the severity in spatial extent of D3 and 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 expansion of D4 drought in Florida and South Georgia is very similar to what was seen in the 2011/2012 drought.

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

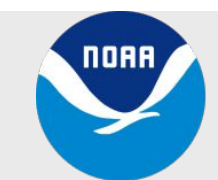


Florida Percent Area in U.S. Drought Monitor Categories



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.

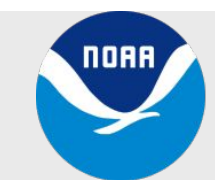
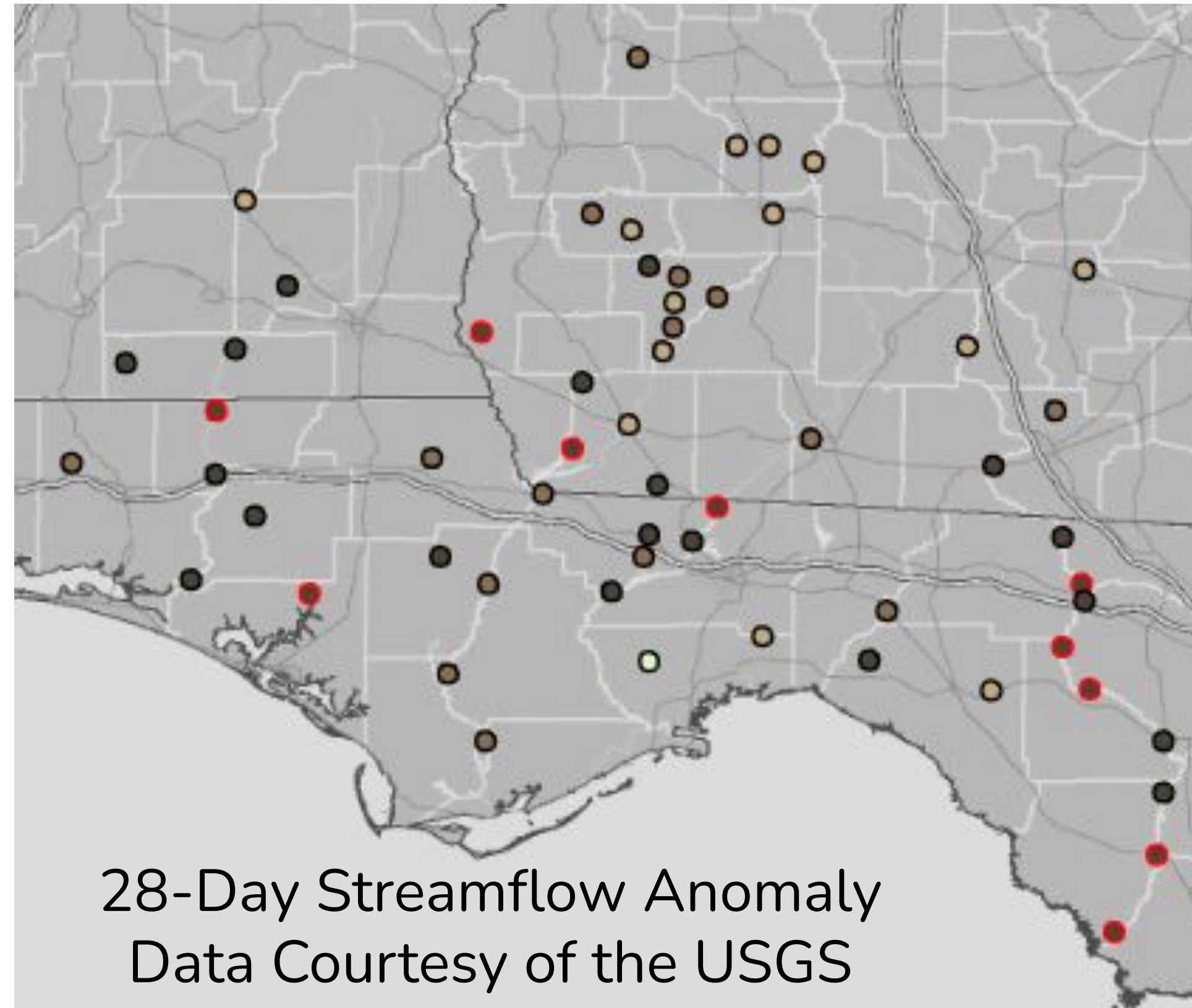




Hydrologic Conditions and Impacts

- 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

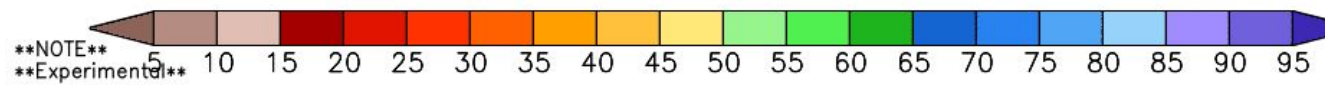
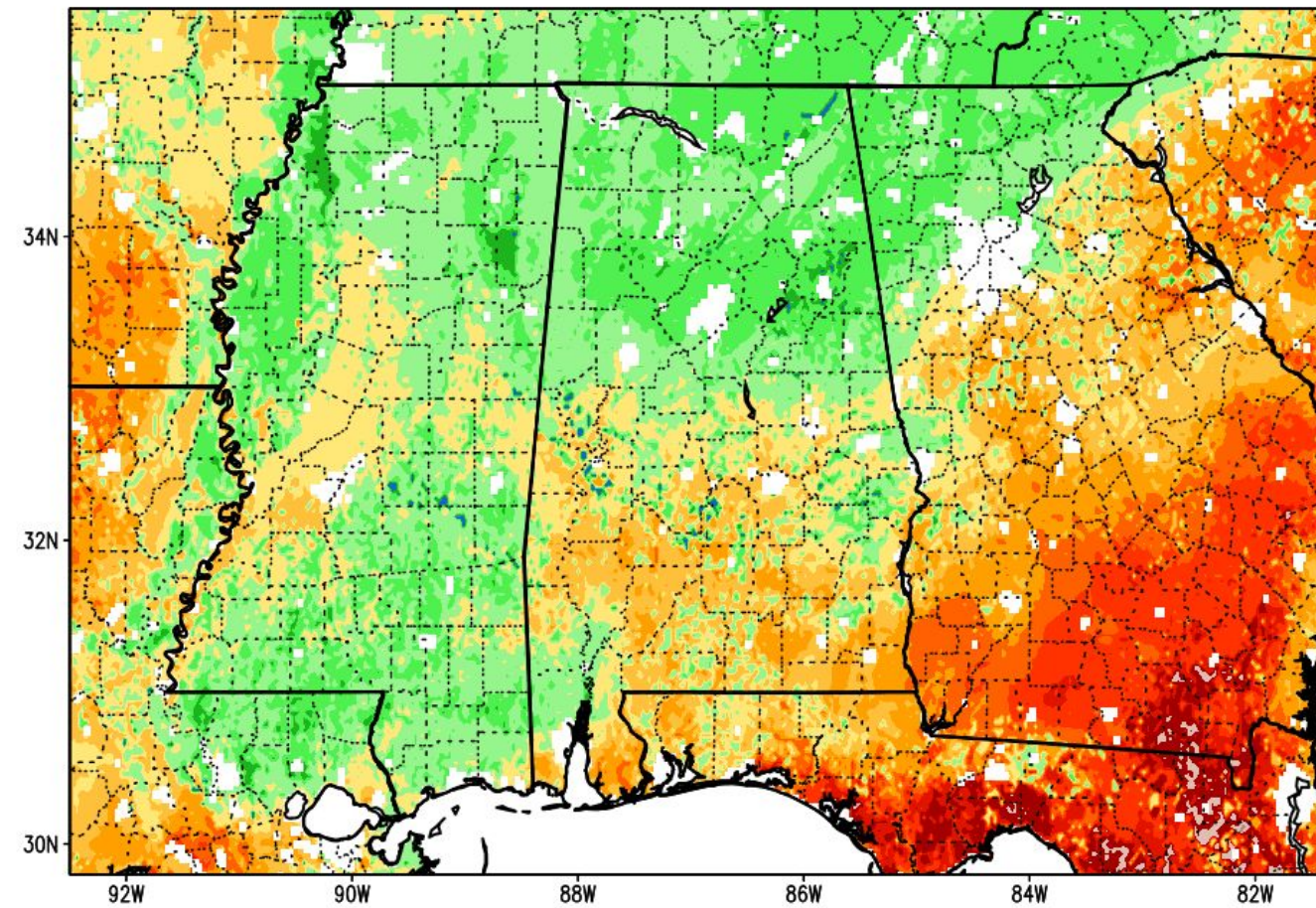




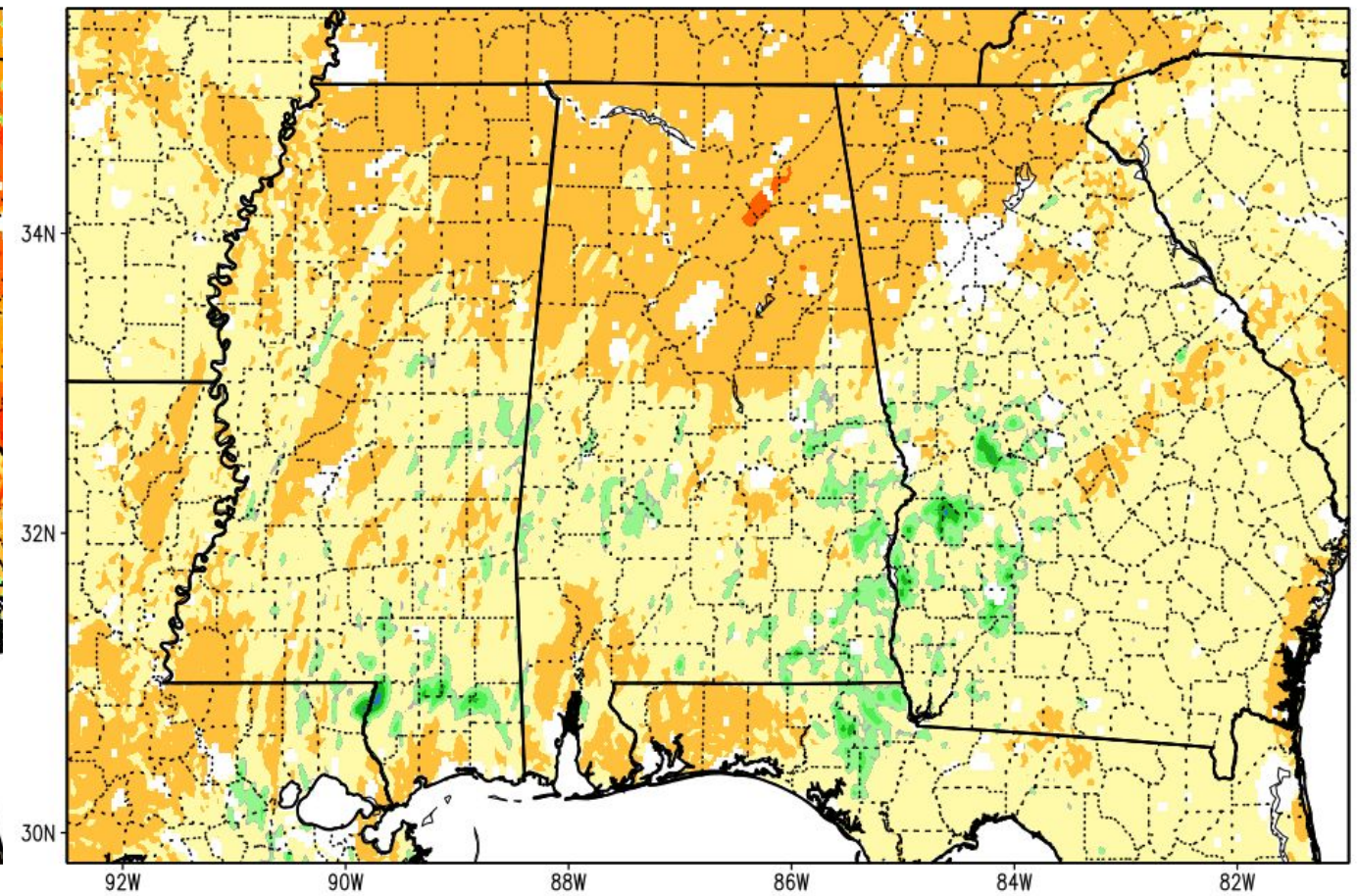
Agricultural Impacts

- Deep layer soil moisture remains 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 South Georgia and the Florida Big Bend.

Column-Integrated Relative Soil Moisture (available water; %) valid 12z 02 Apr 2026
Precipitation in previous hour (1,2,5,10,15,20,25 mm contours)



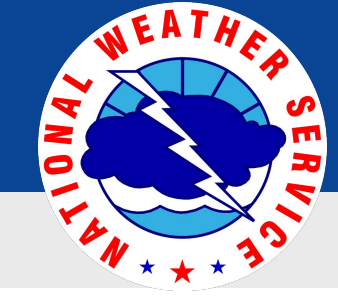
1-Week Difference in Column Relative Soil Moisture (%) valid 12z 02 Apr 2026



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](#)



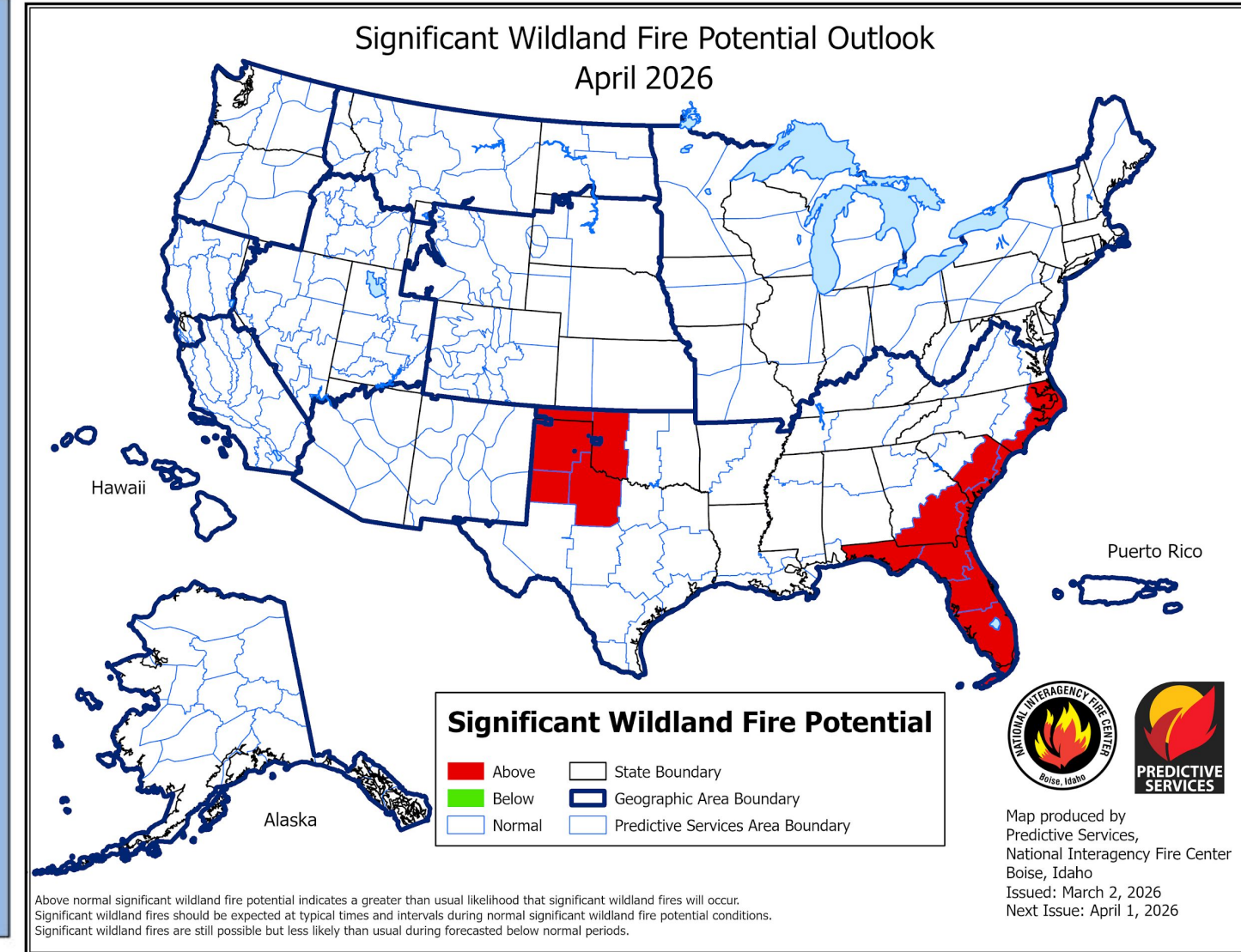
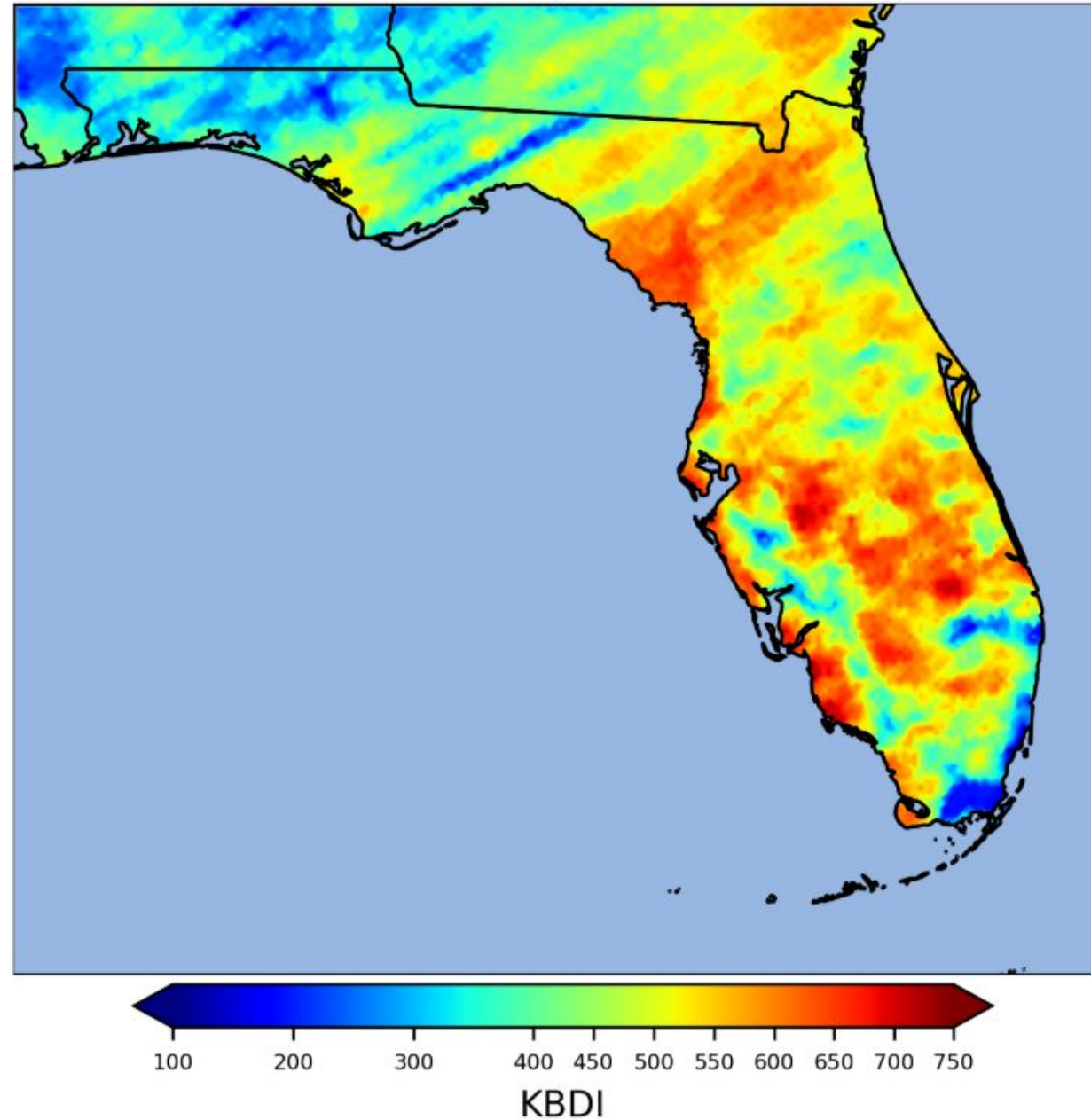


Fire Hazard Impacts

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

- Keetch-Byram Drought Indices remain relatively 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 04/01/26, 02:00 PM EDT

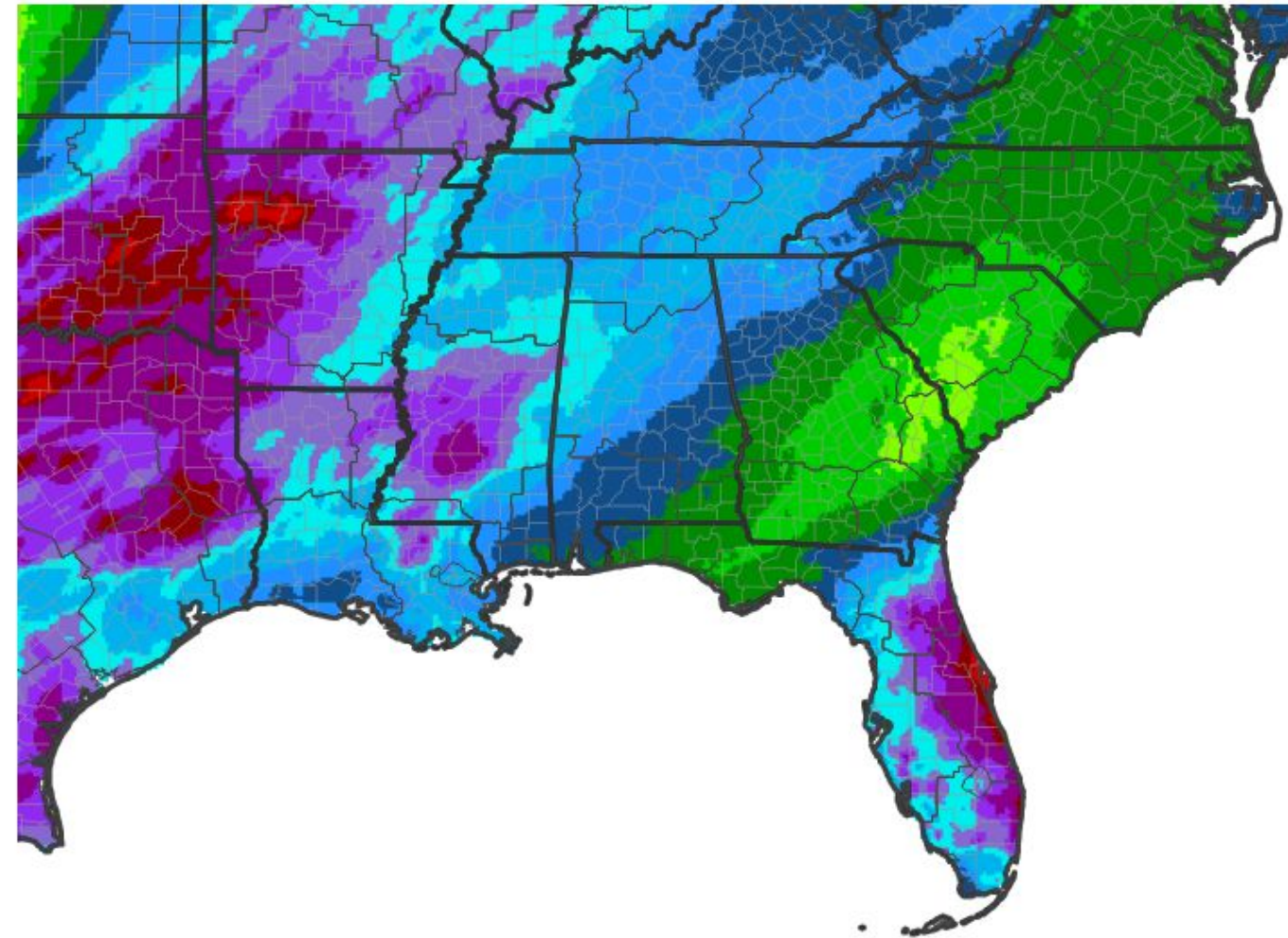




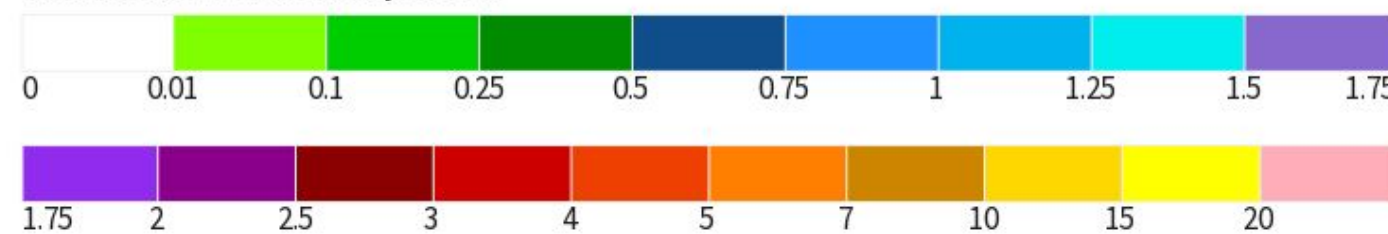
Precipitation Outlook

- A weak frontal system will bring potential for showers this weekend.
- Another frontal system on April 8th increases rain chances.
- In between these systems, increased easterly flow could lead to more shower activity in the Suwannee Basin.
- [8-14 day outlook \(4/9 - 4/15\)](#): near to slightly below normal precipitation.

7-Day Quantitative Precipitation Forecast for April 2, 2026–April 9, 2026



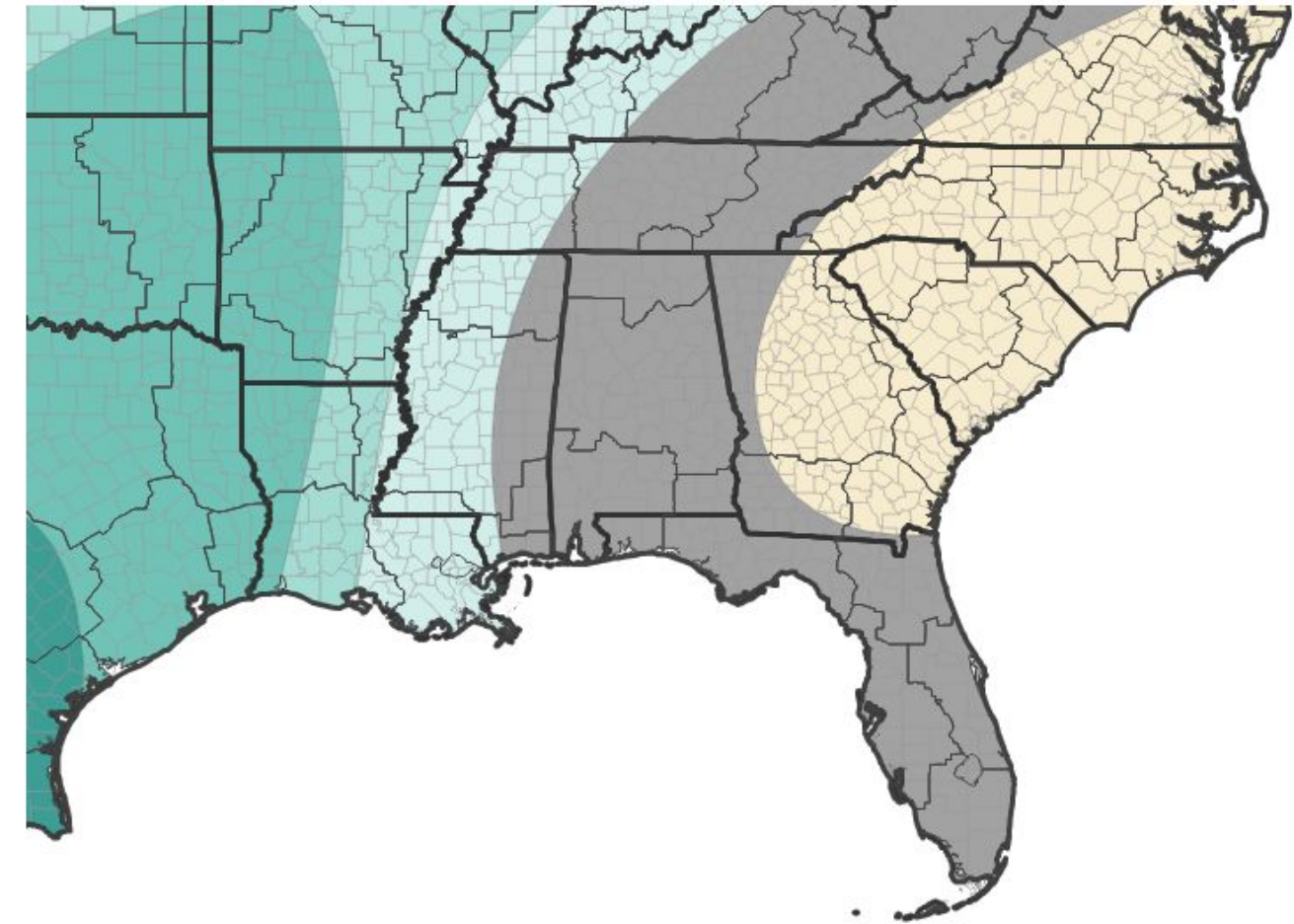
Predicted Inches of Precipitation



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

Last Updated: 04/02/26

8-14 Day Precipitation Outlook for April 9, 2026–April 15, 2026



Probability of Below-Normal Precipitation



Probability of Above-Normal Precipitation

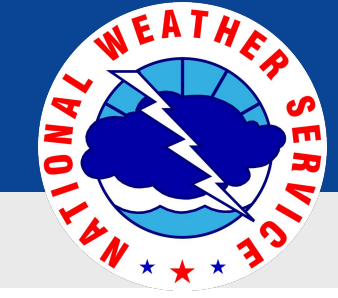


■ Near-Normal Conditions

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

Last Updated: 04/01/26



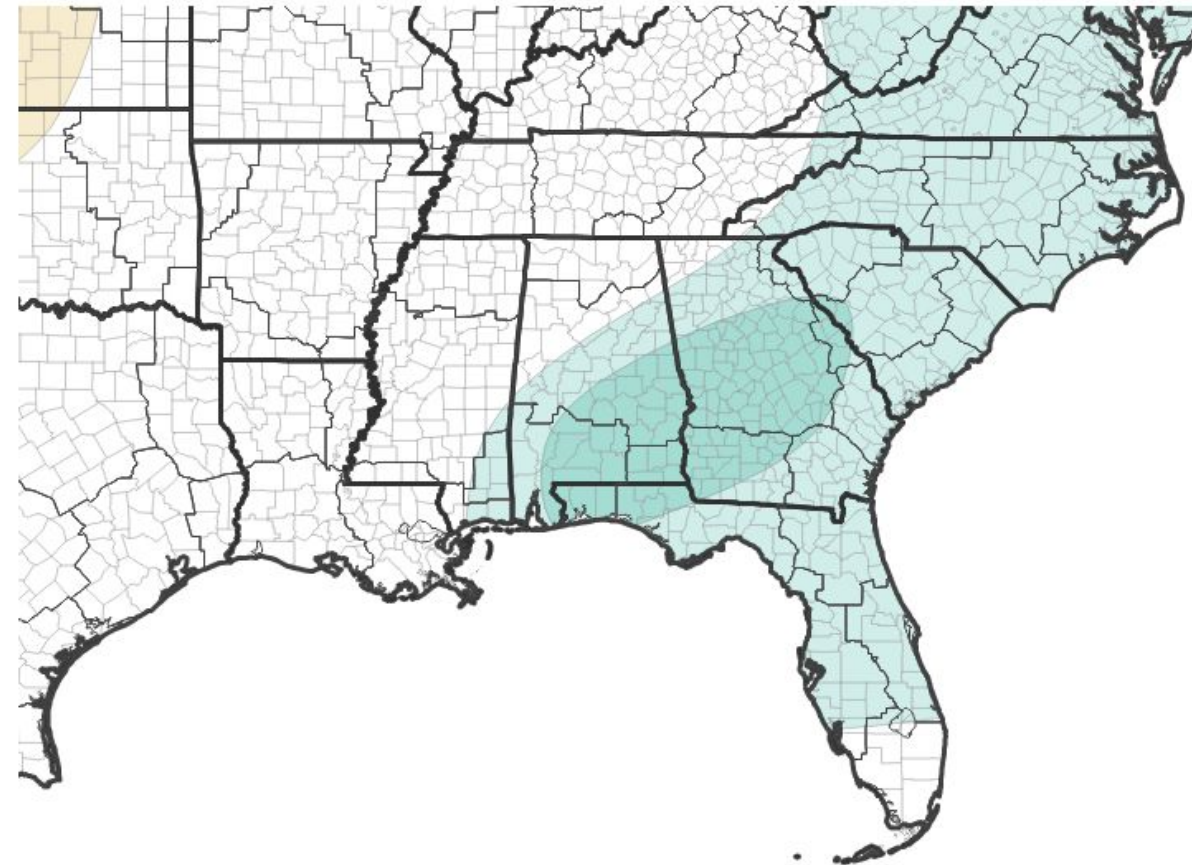


Long-Range Outlooks

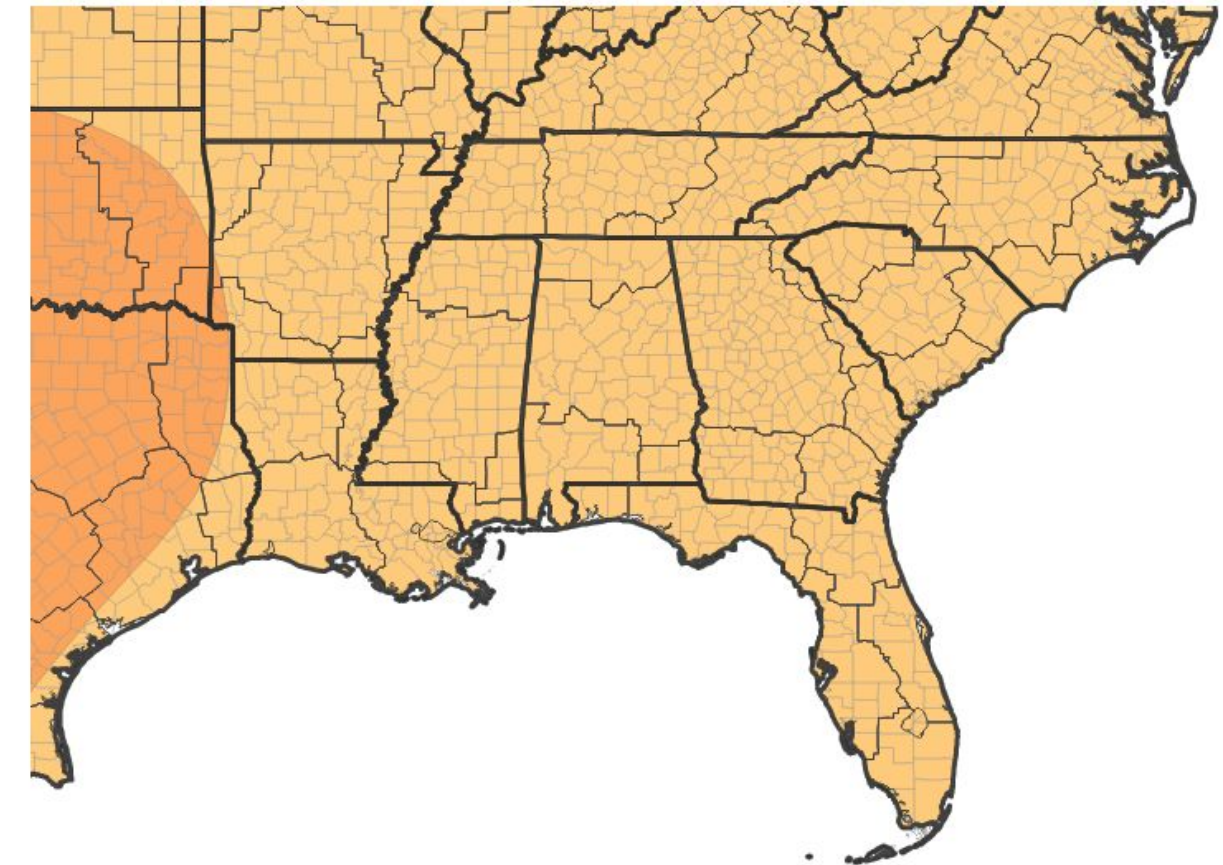
The latest monthly and seasonal outlooks can be found on the [CPC homepage](#).

- 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



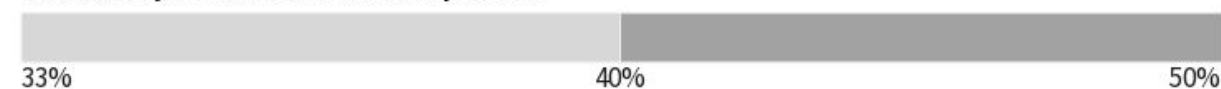
Probability of Below-Normal Precipitation



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

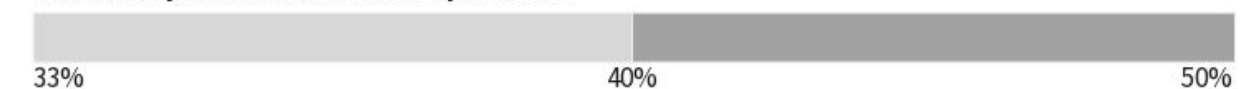
Probability of Below-Normal Temperatures



Probability of Above-Normal Temperatures



Probability of Near-Normal Temperatures



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

Last Updated: 03/19/26

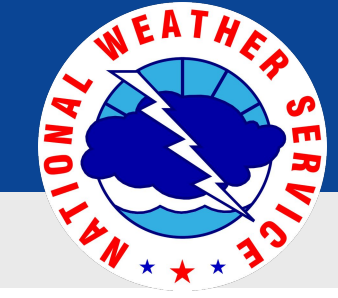
Average	April		May		June	
	Temp	Rain	Temp	Rain	Temp	Rain
Tallahassee	67.3°	3.53"	75.2°	3.36"	82.5°	7.76"
Apalachicola	67.3°	2.91"	74.8°	1.87"	80.7°	5.86"
Albany	67.0°	3.67"	75.3°	2.41"	83.1°	5.06"
Valdosta	66.2°	3.66"	73.4°	2.84"	79.0°	7.08"
Marianna	67.6°	3.72"	75.9°	3.15"	82.7°	5.07"
Dothan	67.2°	4.79"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



National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

U.S. Department of Commerce

National Weather Service
Tallahassee, FL

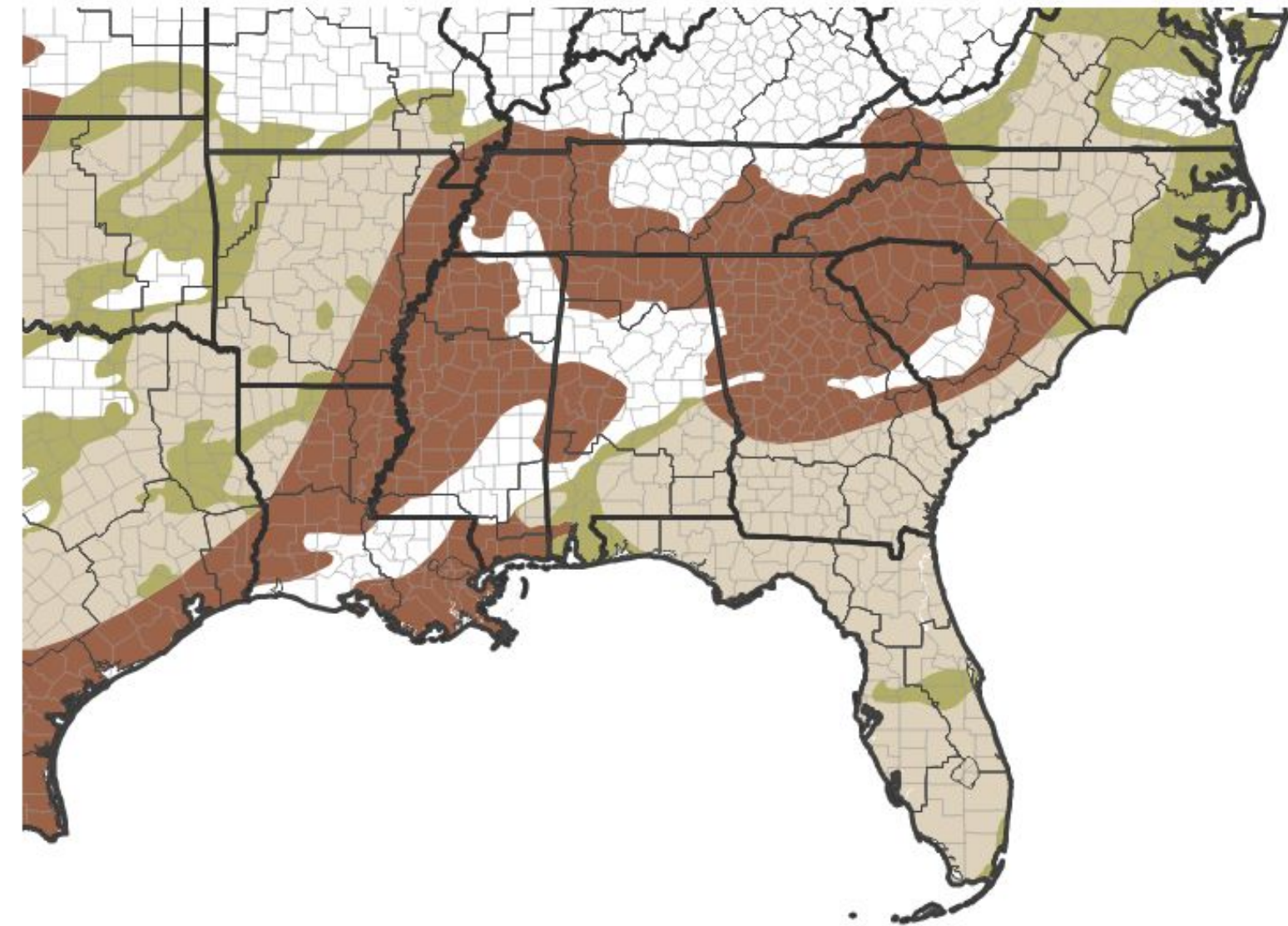


Drought Outlook

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.

Seasonal (3-Month) Drought Outlook for March 31, 2026–June 30, 2026



Drought Is Predicted To...



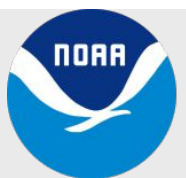
Source(s): Climate Prediction Center; image courtesy of Drought.gov

Last Updated: 03/31/26

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

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