

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

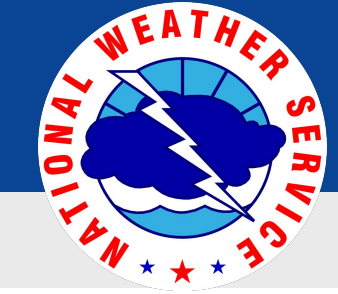
Valid April 9, 2026

Issued By: National Weather Service Tallahassee, FL

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

- This product will be updated April 16, 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 Again This Week as Drought Conditions Continue to Worsen Areawide.**
 - 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.
 - Fire weather impacts are expected to increase in the coming days.





U.S. Drought Monitor

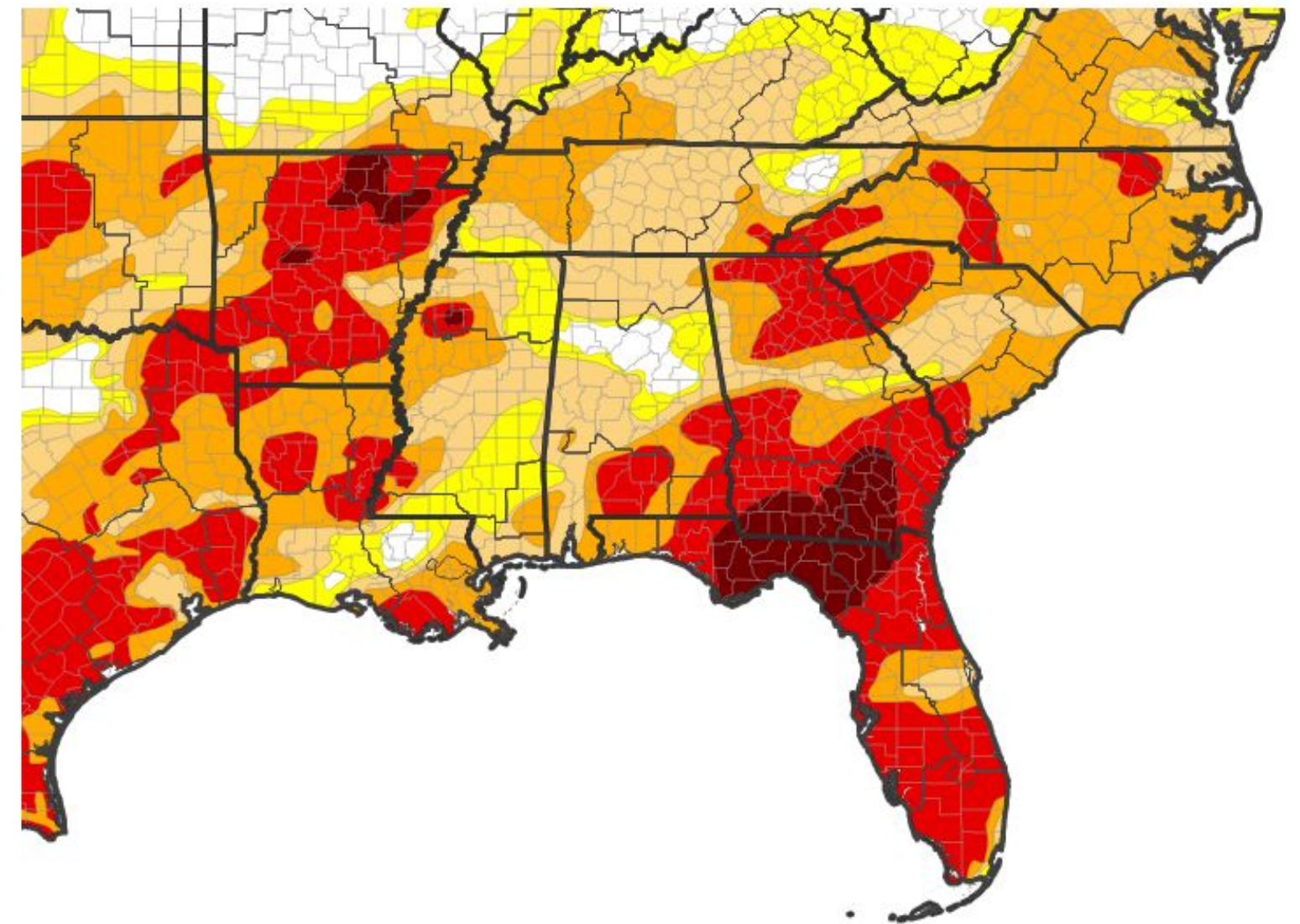
Link to the [latest U.S. Drought Monitor](#) for Southeast Alabama, Southwest Georgia, and the Florida Panhandle & Big Bend

- Even though there was rainfall over the last week, it was not enough to substantively improve conditions. Thus, drought conditions either worsened or remained unchanged this week. Note that rainfall after 8 am ET (7 am CT), April 7th is not included in this week's drought monitor.

Drought intensity and Extent:

- **D4 (Exceptional Drought):**
 - In Georgia: Generally south of a line from AL/GA/FL border to Ocilla.
 - In Florida: From the Apalachicola River and adjacent counties east to the Suwannee River.
- **D3 (Extreme Drought):**
 - In Florida: East of the adjacent Apalachicola River Counties into Walton County.
 - 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

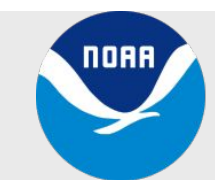


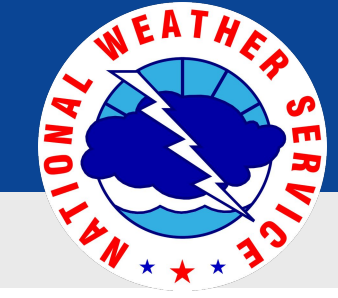
U.S. Drought Monitor



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

Data Valid: 04/07/26



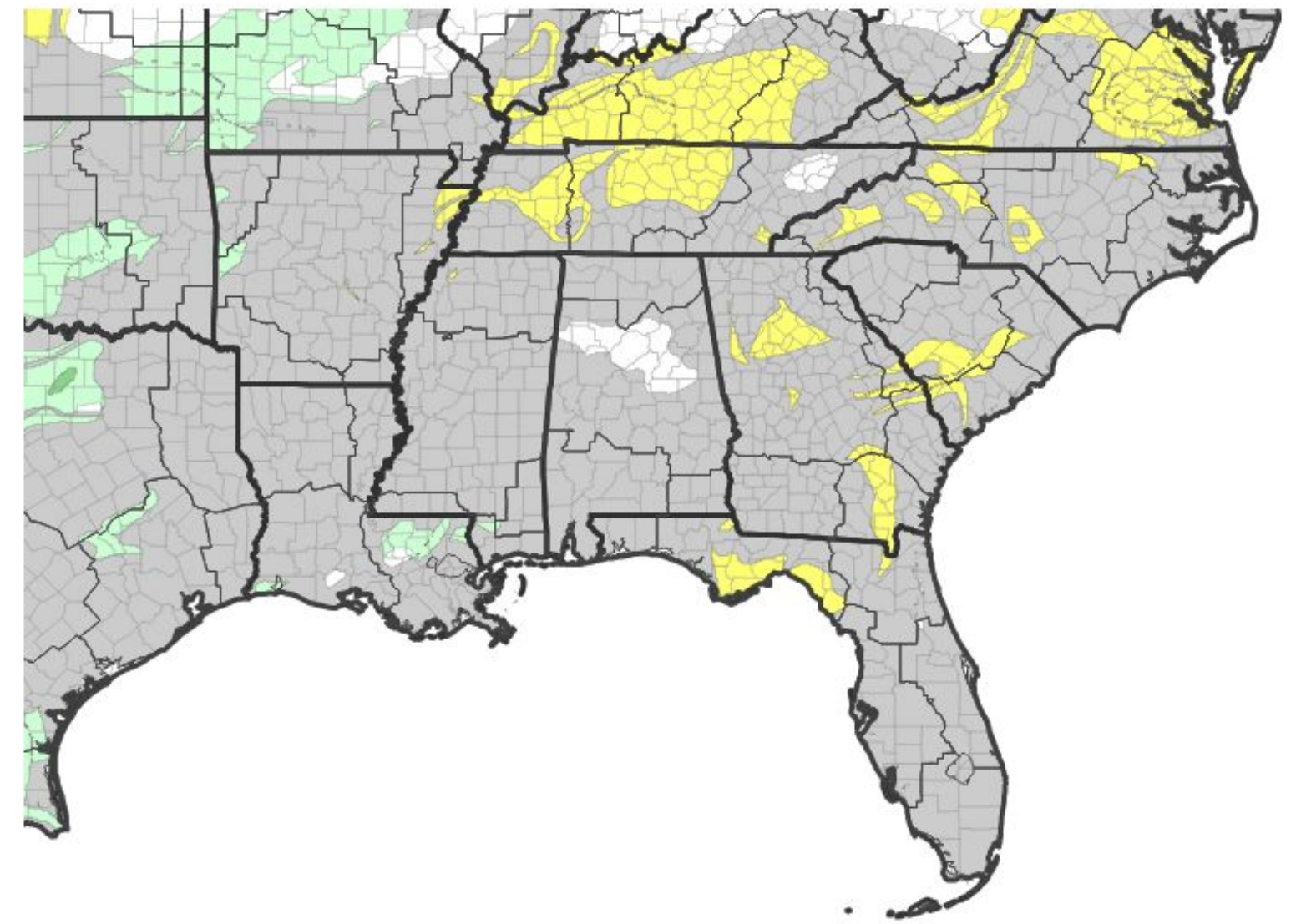


Recent Change in Drought Intensity

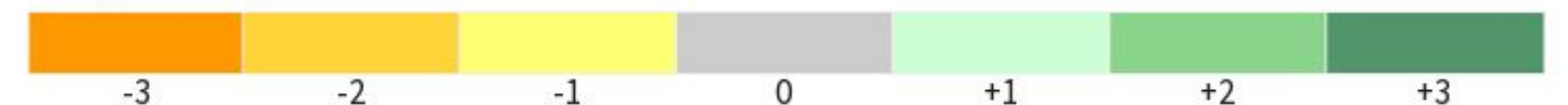
Link to the latest [4-week change map](#) for Southeast Alabama, Southwest Georgia, and the Florida Panhandle & Big Bend

- Rainfall was especially limited around Apalachee Bay in Florida, and largely sufficient to keep pace with normal conditions elsewhere. For that reason, drought degradation occurred near the Gulf Coast and drought intensity remained the same inland.
- One-Week Drought Monitor Class Change:
 - **1 Category Degradation:**
 - Along the Florida Gulf Coast from Gulf County, Florida to Dixie County, Florida.
 - **No Change**
 - All other areas in the region.

U.S. Drought Monitor 1-Week Change Map

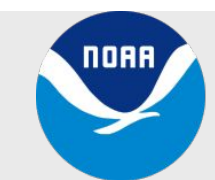


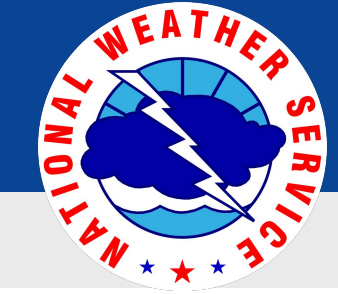
Drought Change Since Last Week



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

Data Valid: 04/07/26



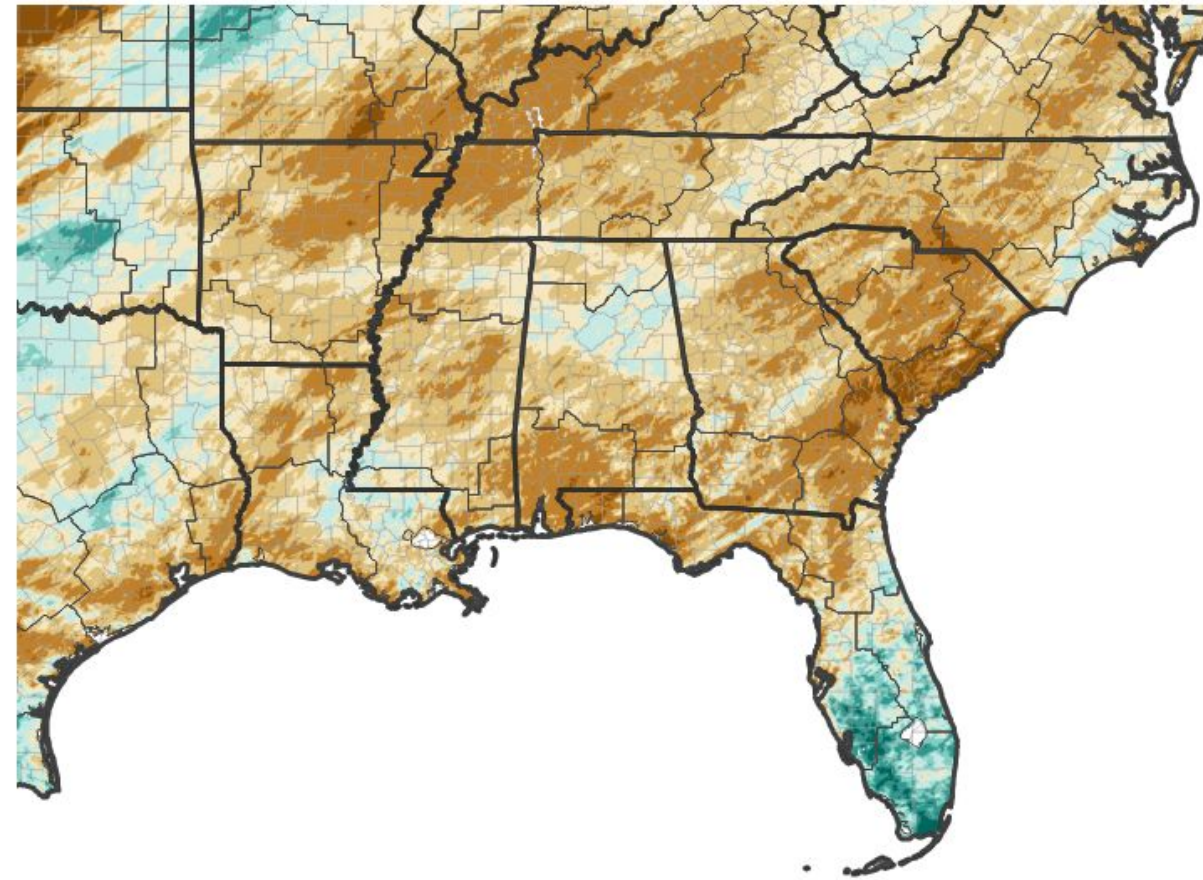


Precipitation

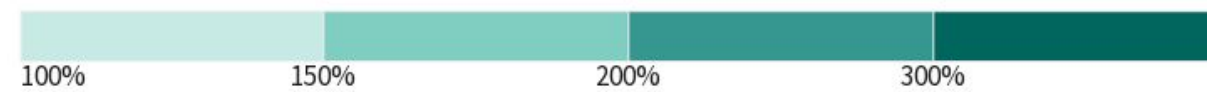
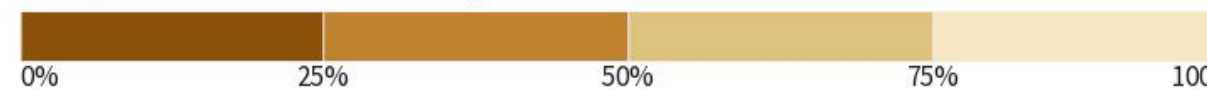
Note: Precipitation after 7 AM EST/6 AM CST Tuesday is incorporated in next week's Drought Monitor

	Last 30 Days		Last 90 Days	
	Rainfall	Percent	Rainfall	Percent
DeFuniak Springs*	2.93"	57.5%	10.73"	68.4%
Panama City ECP	0.77"	15.2%	4.80"	32.4%
Dothan	1.95"	42.1%	9.02"	62.8%
Marianna	1.68"	37.2%	6.78"	50.4%
Georgetown**	3.80"	82.7%	10.62"	74.7%
Dawson**	1.80"	39.5%	8.02"	56.4%
Arlington**	2.04"	44.0%	7.88"	54.7%
Albany	5.14"	126.5%	10.80"	86.8%
Cairo**	1.44"	31.5%	5.04"	36.5%
Tallahassee	1.80"	39.0%	4.99"	36.4%
Moultrie**	1.96"	42.4%	4.90"	35.3%
Monticello*	2.99"	67.2%	7.14"	52.7%
Ty Ty**	2.64"	60.7%	7.54"	56.7%
Alapaha**	1.07"	25.5%	4.15"	31.8%
Valdosta	2.13"	58.8%	5.95"	54.8%
Perry***	2.22"	52.2%	5.07"	40.7%

30-Day Percent of Normal Precipitation

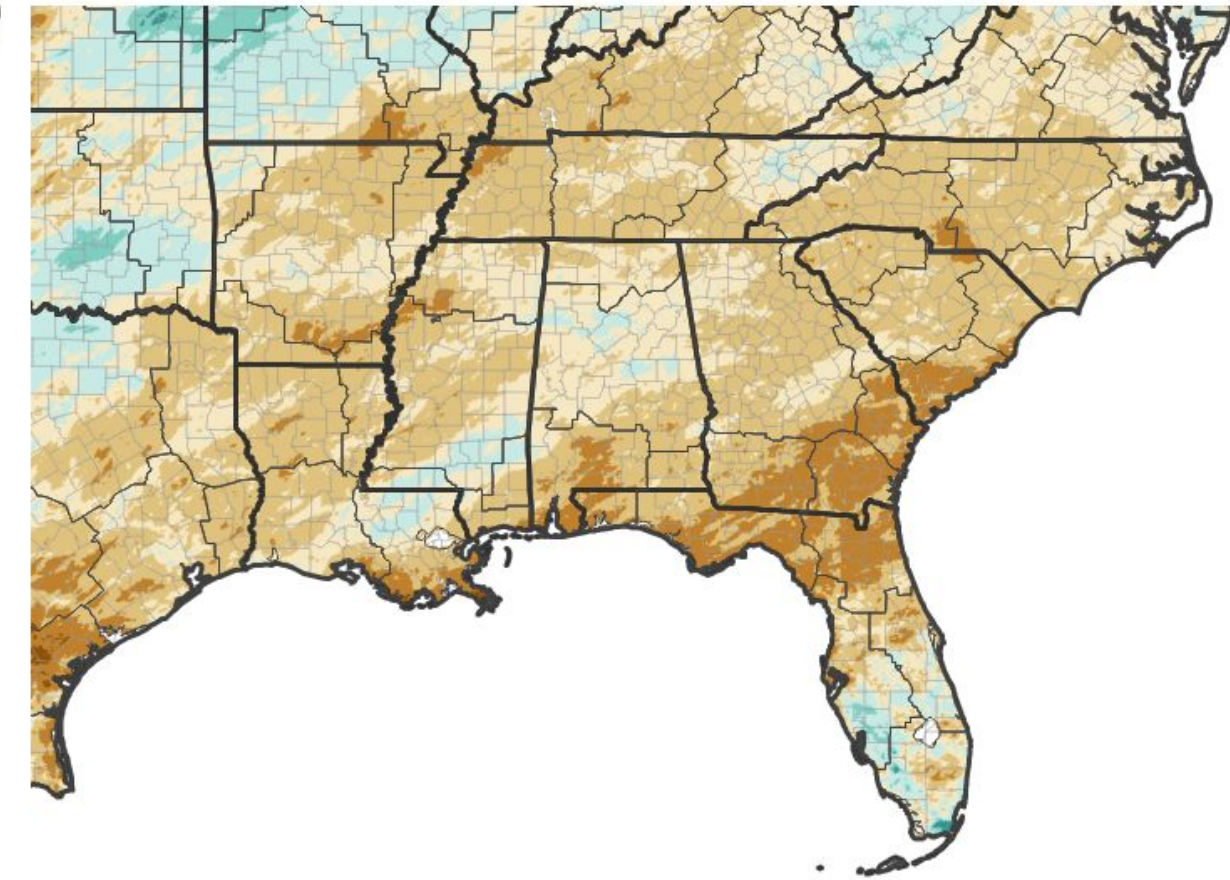


Precipitation Shown as a Percentage of Normal Conditions

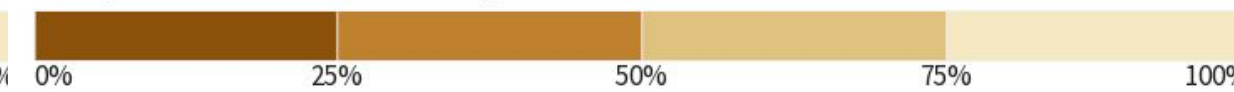


Source(s): National Weather Service Multi-Radar Multi-Sensor System; Last Updated: 04/09/26
image courtesy of Drought.gov

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: 04/09/26
image courtesy of Drought.gov

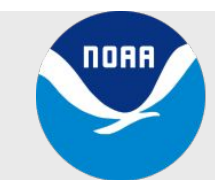
Rainfall totals through April 8, 2026. Non-NWS Data Courtesy:

*University of Florida - Florida Automated Weather Network

**University of Georgia Weather Network

***Suwannee River Water Management District

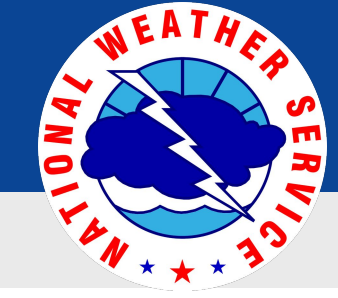
Climatology for non-NWS stations is estimated using PRISM data.



National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

U.S. Department of Commerce

National Weather Service
Tallahassee, FL

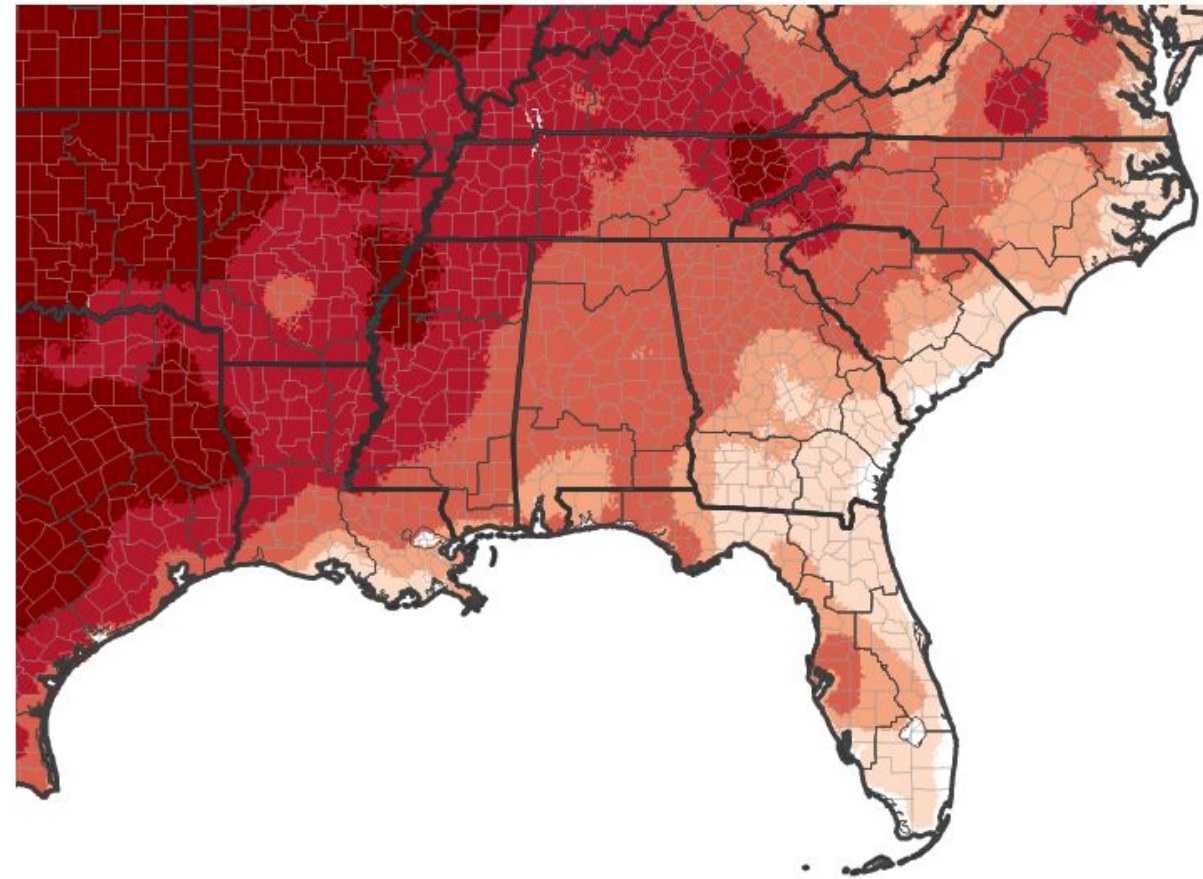


Temperature

	Last 30 Days	
	Average High (Departure)	Average Low (Departure)
Tallahassee	79.2° (+3.4°)	52.8° (+2.6°)
Albany	77.1° (+2.6°)	51.5° (+1.7°)
Valdosta	78.3° (+3.7°)	51.8° (+3.1°)
Marianna	78.3° (+2.9°)	52.3° (+1.5°)
Dothan	76.6° (+1.8°)	51.5° (+1.1°)

- Warm temperatures have returned, after a brief cool stretch.
- Overnight lows are also beginning to rebound over the last couple of days to above normal levels.
- Continued warmth is expected over the next couple of weeks, likely leading to worsening drought conditions.

7-Day Temperature Anomaly



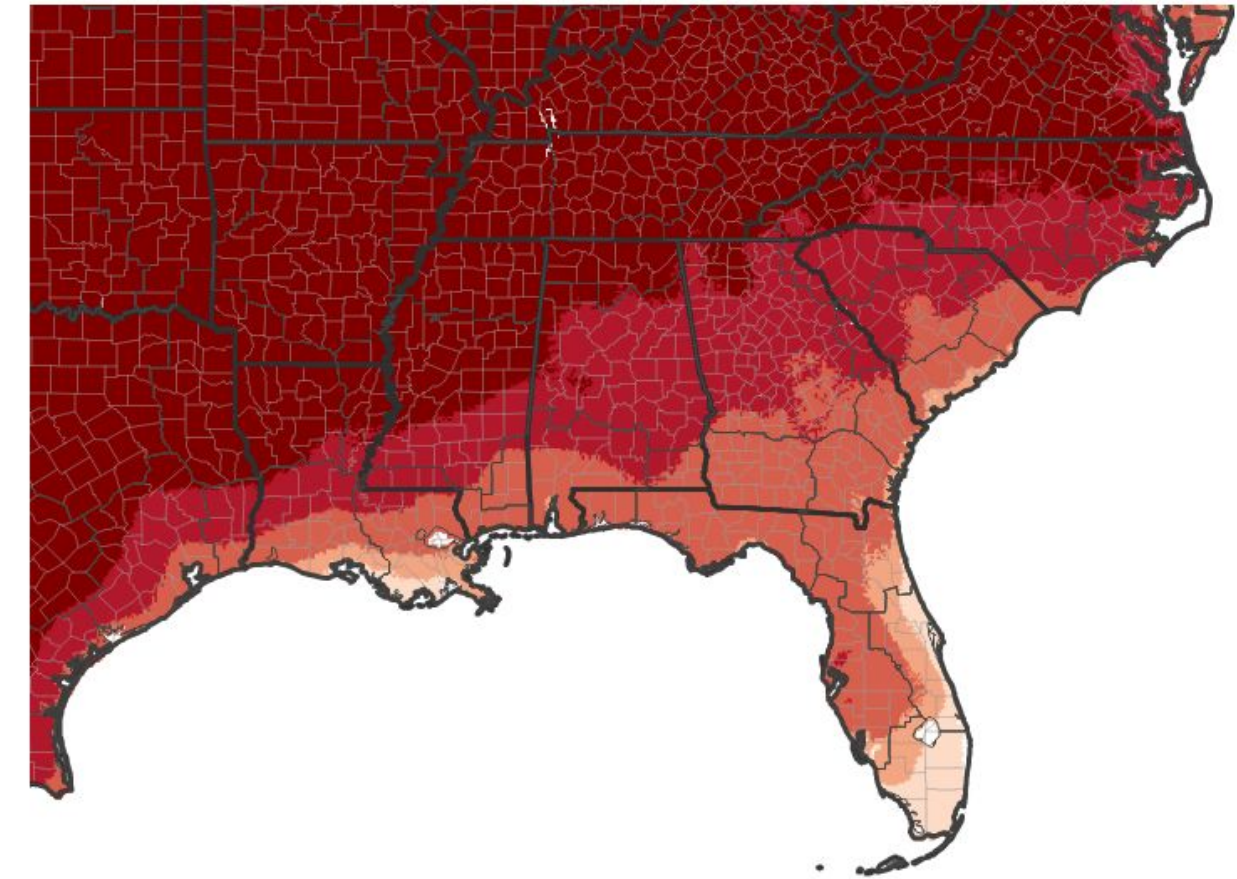
Departure from Normal Max Temperature (°F)



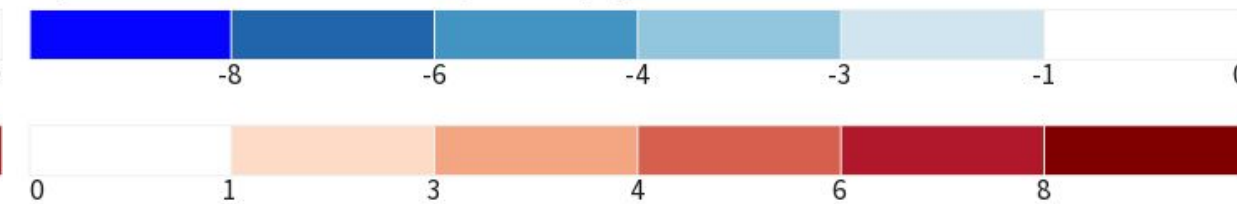
Source(s): NOAA's National Centers for Environmental Information; image courtesy of Drought.gov

Data Valid: 03/31/26

30-Day Temperature Anomaly

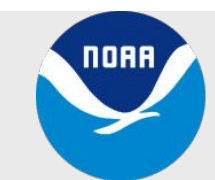


Departure from Normal Max Temperature (°F)



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

Data Valid: 03/31/26





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 have not been sufficient to recharge area rivers.
- Surface and groundwater levels are exceptionally low. Rainfall has also been insufficient to replenish holding ponds or lakes.

Agricultural Impacts

- Rainfall has been helpful, but nonetheless, irrigation is necessary to help farmers break the soil to get planting started.

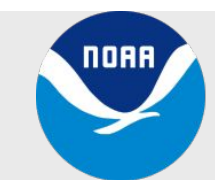
Fire Hazard Impacts

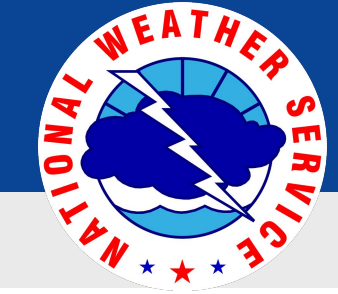
- Keetch-Byram Drought Index (KBDI) values range from 200-350 across the region. Even so, a number of wildfires have been reported across Southeast Alabama.
- Remember, KBDI responds quickly to any recent rains. KBDI is expected to continue increasing with little or no rain expected through the next week.

Mitigation Actions

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

Photo at right, courtesy of Coffee County, AL is the Pea River at Elba on Thursday, April 9th.





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. The Ochlockonee River is at a daily record low flow as of this drought product issuance.
- Surface and groundwater levels are exceptionally low. Even with the recent rain in Southwest Georgia, reports indicate that holding ponds have gone dry in numerous counties. Swampy areas and small creeks are also dry.

Agricultural Impacts

- Planting season has begun with corn where irrigation is available. Absent irrigation, some farmers are choosing not to plant crops until more soil moisture is available. Bedded fields ready for tobacco transplanting are being watered, but growers are still waiting for more moisture before starting the crop.
- Non-irrigated fields are choosing not to plant given rainfall uncertainty.

Fire Hazard Impacts

- Keetch-Byram Drought Index (KBDI) values range from 350-550 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

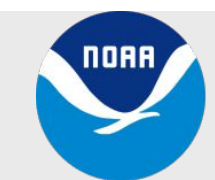
- Planting season is beginning, but concerns exist given exceptionally low sub-surface water levels that irrigation will further stress the water table as farmers draw water from wells.

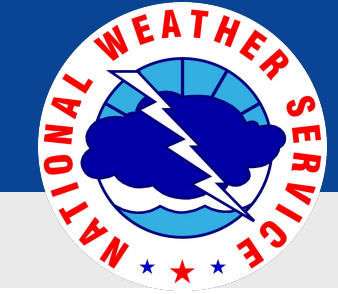
Fire Hazard Impacts

- Keetch-Byram Drought Index (KBDI) values range from 300-600 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.
- Burn bans are in place for Holmes, Bay, Gulf, and Calhoun Counties.

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. The Ochlockonee River is at a record low flow today.
- Surface and groundwater levels are exceptionally low. Numerous lakes and holding ponds are dry across the Big Bend.

Agricultural Impacts

- Planting season is underway, but concerns exist given exceptionally low sub-surface water levels that irrigation will further stress the water table.

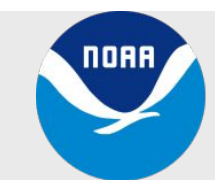
Fire Hazard Impacts

- Keetch-Byram Drought Index (KBDI) values range from 450-650, highest in Taylor, Dixie, and Lafayette Counties.
- Franklin, 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: Southeast Leon County, NWS Employee - Top photo of west lake in Southwood Lake Chain from February 22, 2026. Bottom photo, same lake in Southwood from April 9, 2026.





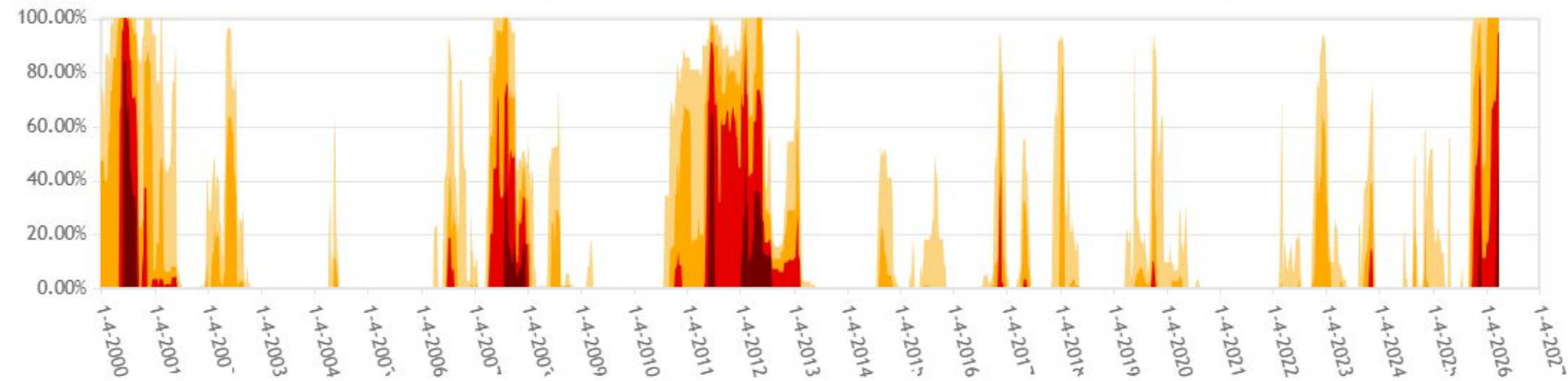
A Perspective on this Drought

Links: [Drought Monitor Time Series](#)

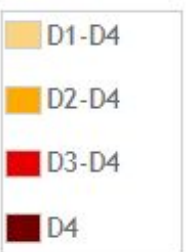
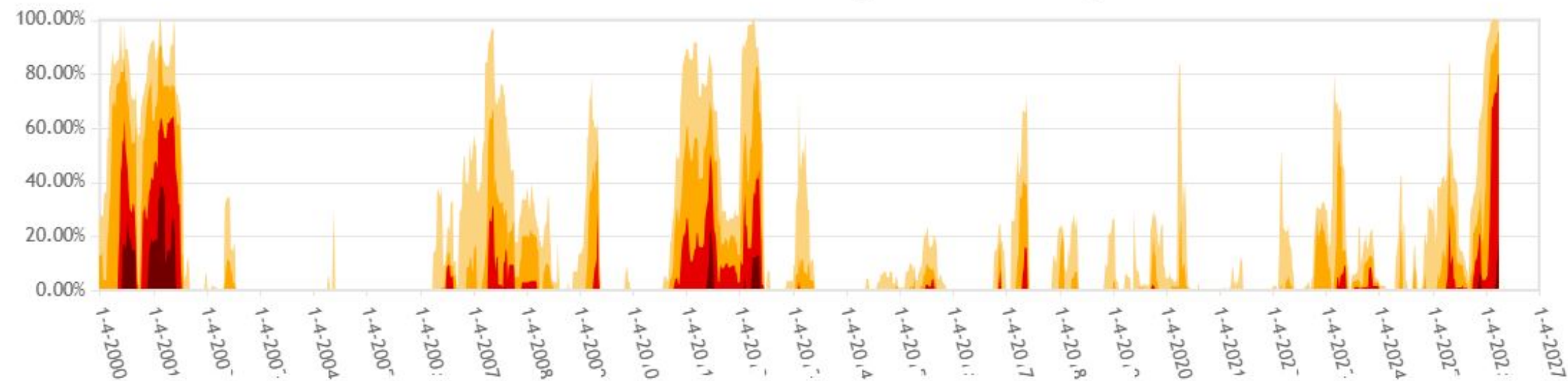
How does this drought compare to past long term droughts in the Tallahassee forecast area?

- 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 has increased considerably and is beginning to rival the spatial extent of the 2000 drought, if not the overall longevity.
- It is safe to say that this is the most impactful and substantial drought within the Tallahassee area since 2012.
- In Florida, this is the highest amount of D3 coverage since the drought monitor began in 2000.

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

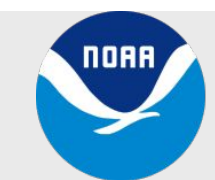


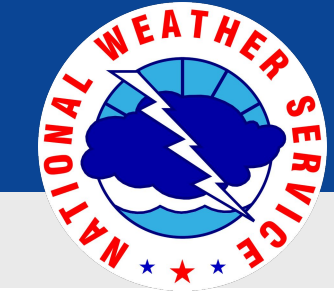
Florida Percent Area in U.S. Drought Monitor Categories



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.



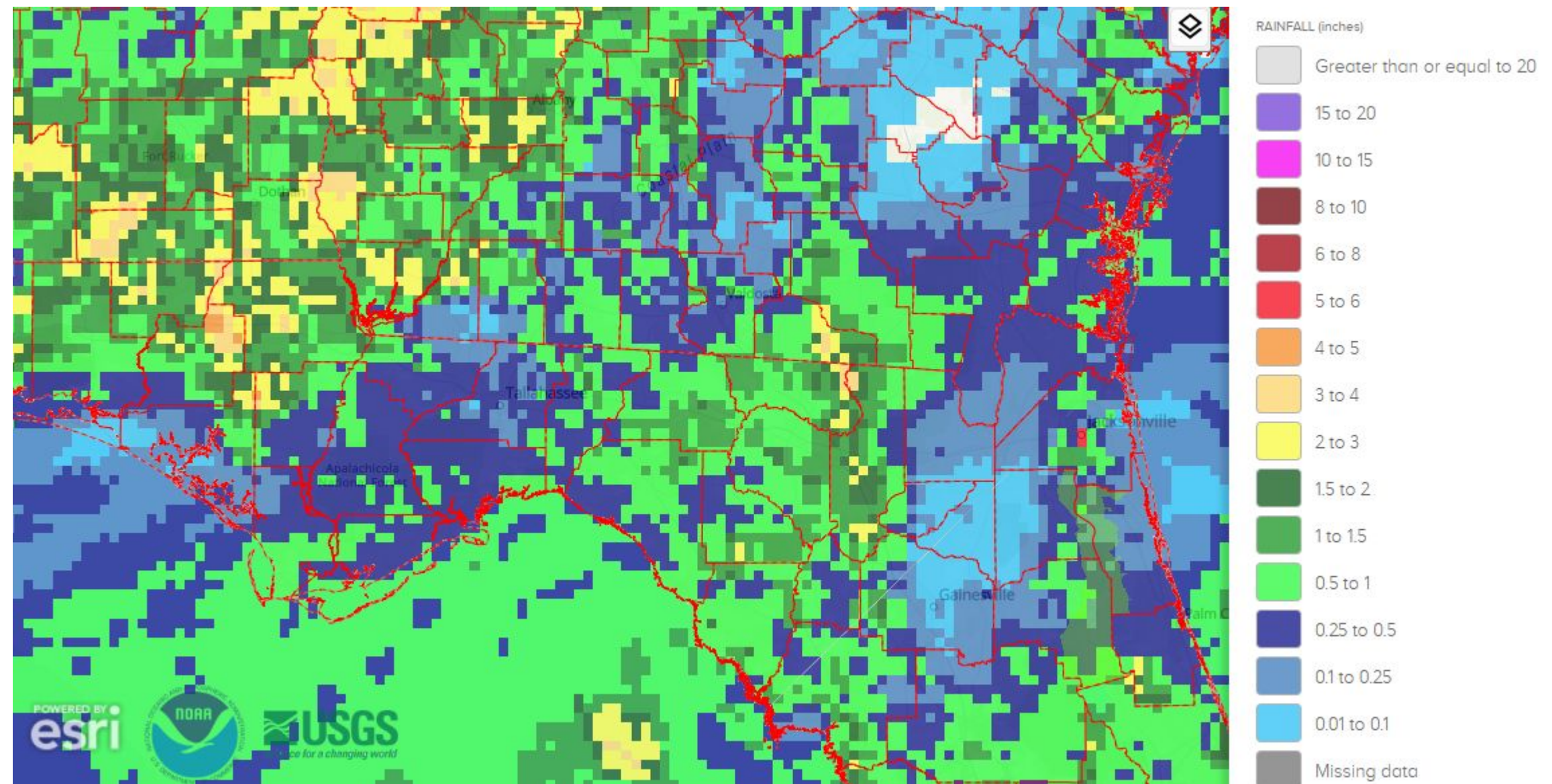


A Perspective on this Drought - Why it continues

It rained. Why are we still in drought?

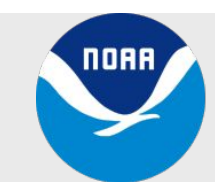
It rained over the last week, but I don't see any improvement in the drought conditions. In some areas it actually worsened. Why?

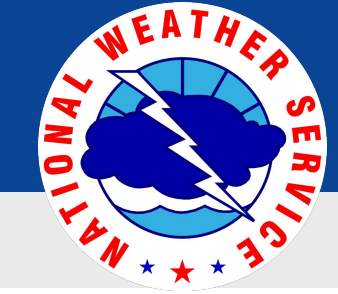
- Over the last week, rainfall was heaviest across Southeast Alabama and Southwest Georgia, where generally 1-3 inches of rain occurred.
- Several areas, however, saw less than one half inch of rainfall.
- The areas that saw the heaviest rain were generally localized, which limits the amount of runoff that gets into the rivers.
- Moreover, dry and windy conditions behind the frontal system resulted in significant evaporation of the water from the top layer of the soil.
- Since river levels did not improve, nor did groundwater levels, no improvements in the drought were made. Where rainfall was limited, drought severity increased.



Courtesy of the [National Water Prediction Service](#)
Weekly Rainfall from March 31, 2026 to April 7, 2026

Note that many areas over the last 3 months are at least 5 inches below normal with several locations more than 8 inches below normal rainfall. Thus, it will take a considerable amount of rain to substantively change the drought picture.

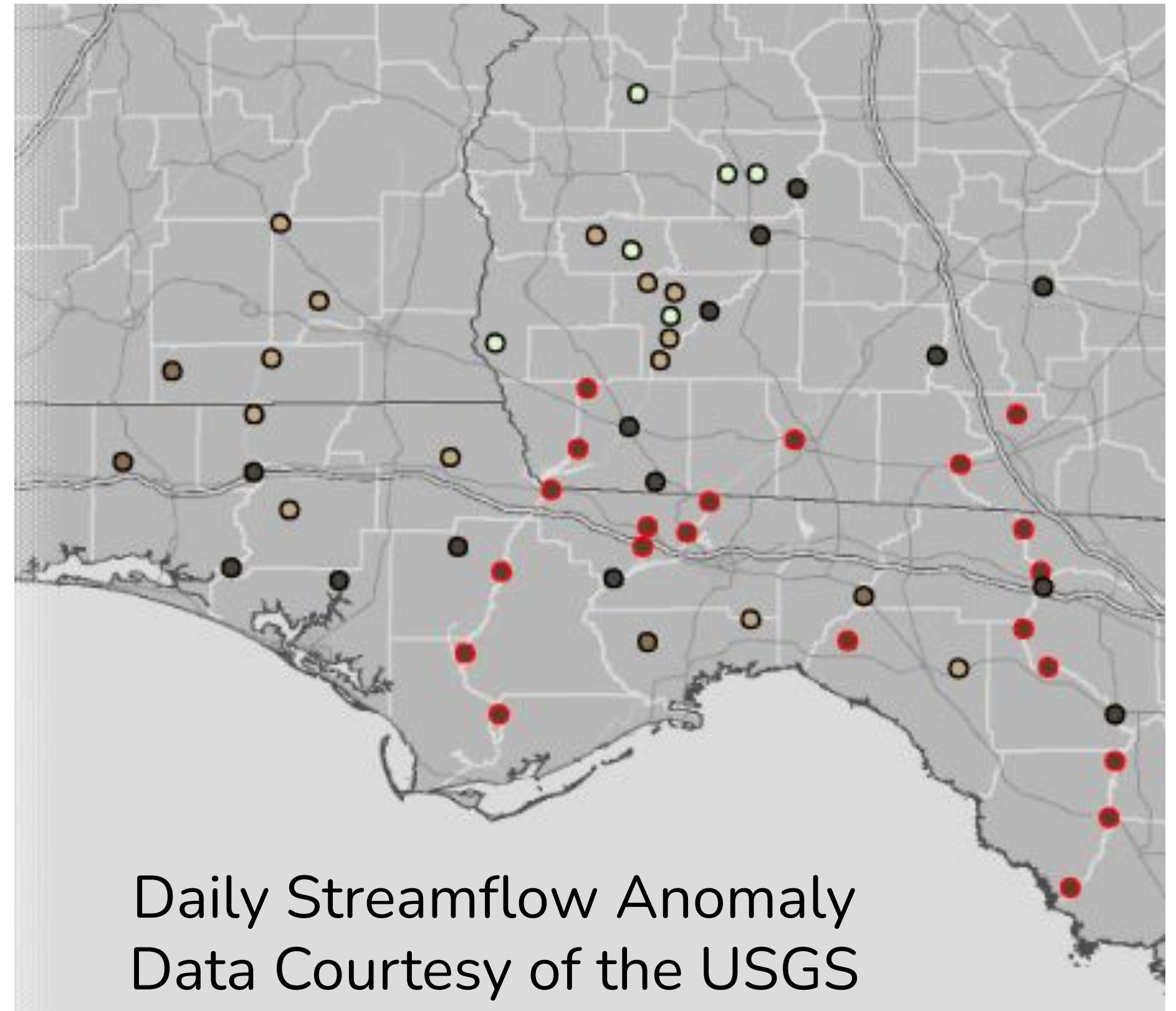


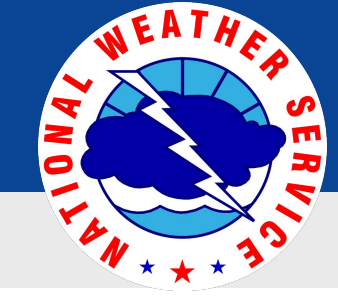


Hydrologic Conditions and Impacts

- Streamflow conditions are exceptionally low and well below normal for this time of year, with a few sites at daily record low flows.
- This is recharge season across the Southeast, and the lack of substantive rainfall will only worsen drought conditions.
- 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

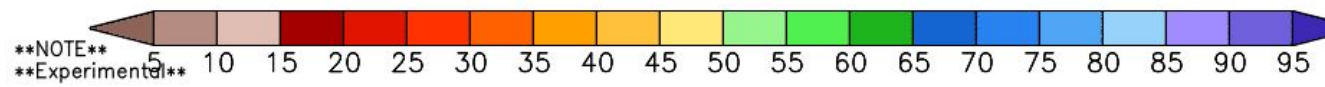
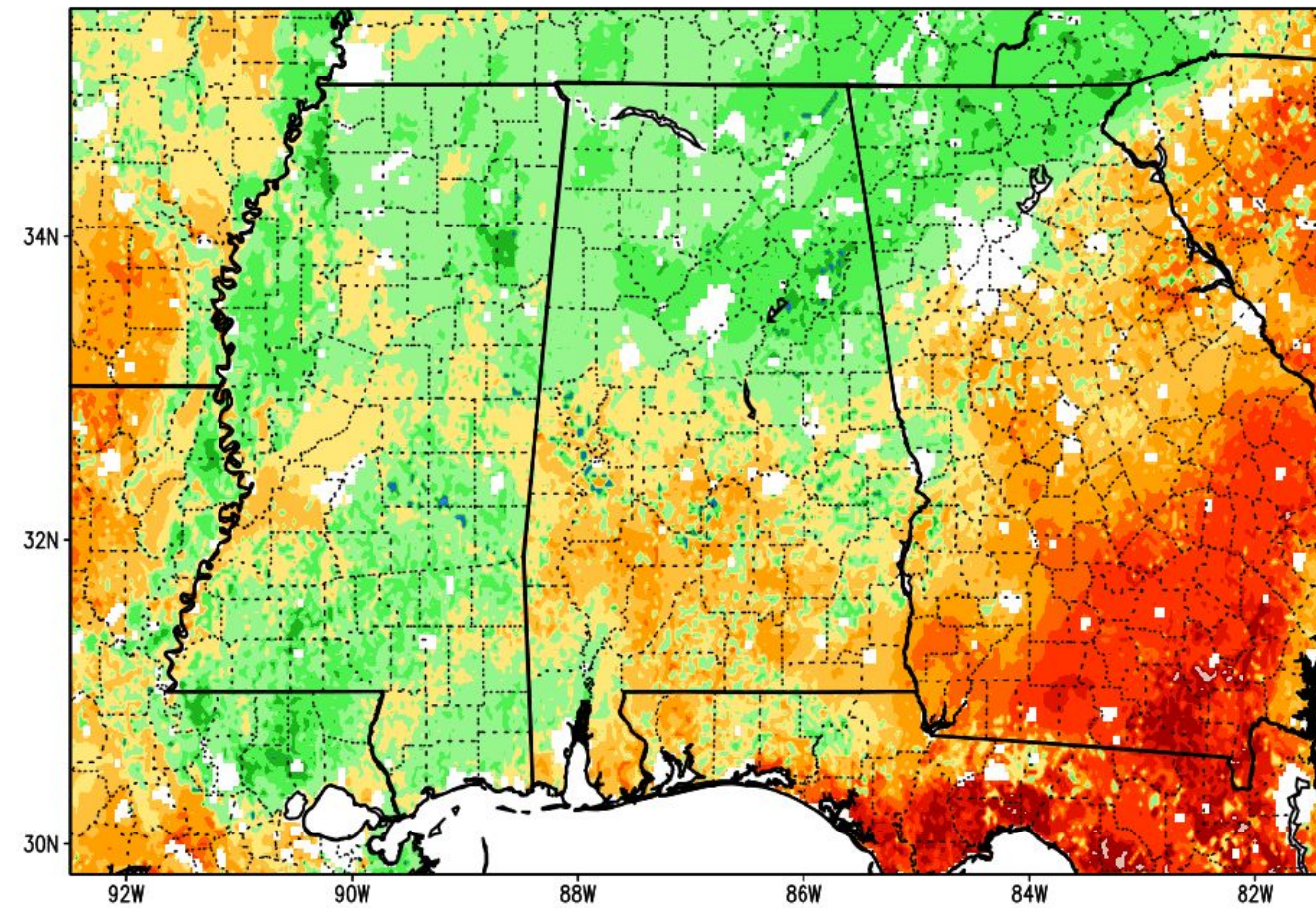




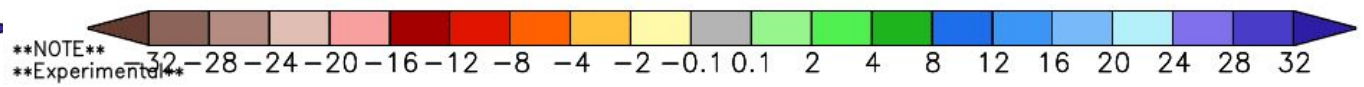
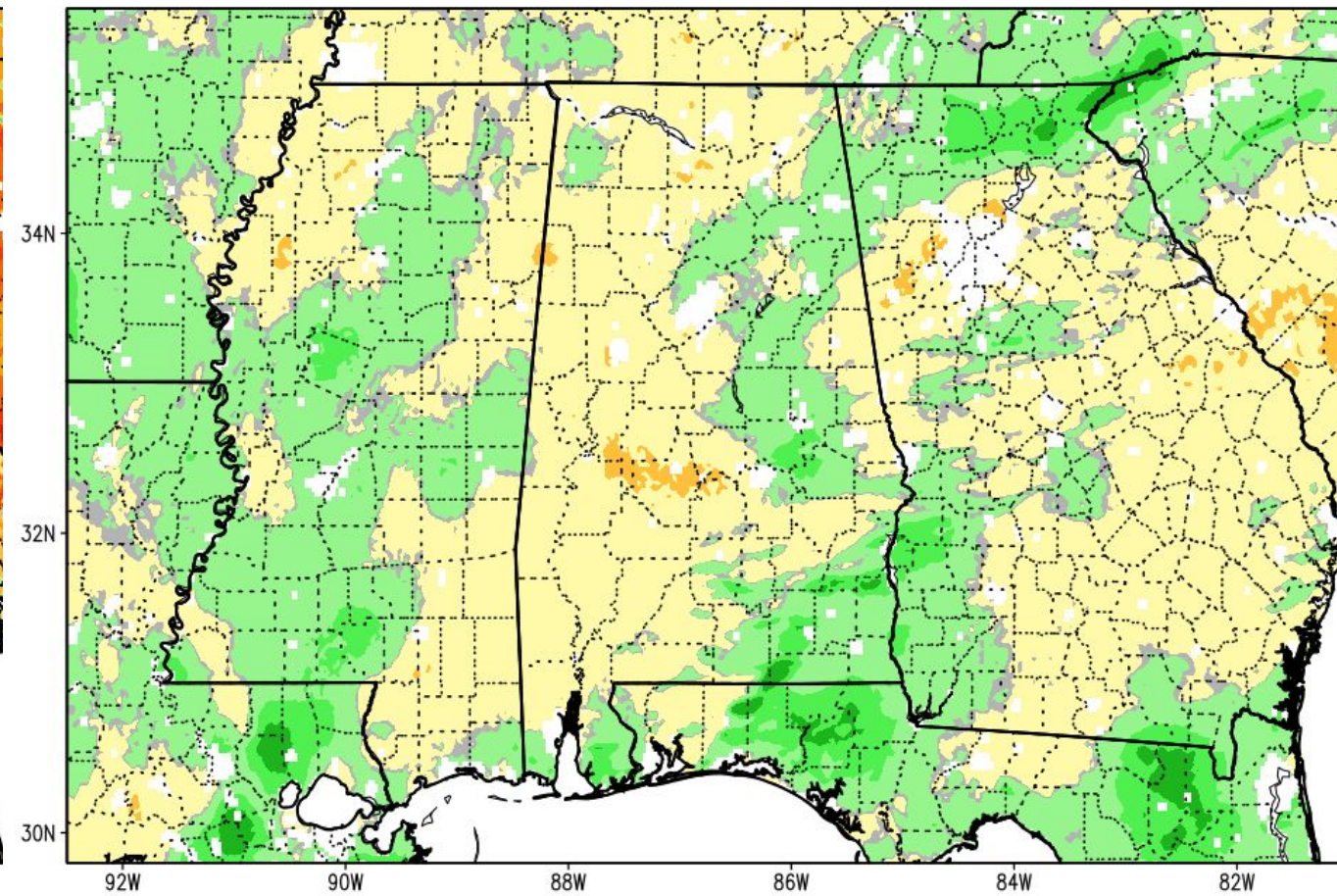
Agricultural Impacts

- 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.
- Some increase in soil moisture occurred from recent rains, but this was limited to only the top layer of the soil.

Column-Integrated Relative Soil Moisture (available water; %) valid 12z 09 Apr 2
Precipitation in previous hour (1,2,5,10,15,20,25 mm contours)



1-Week Difference in Column Relative Soil Moisture (%) valid 12z 09 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](#)



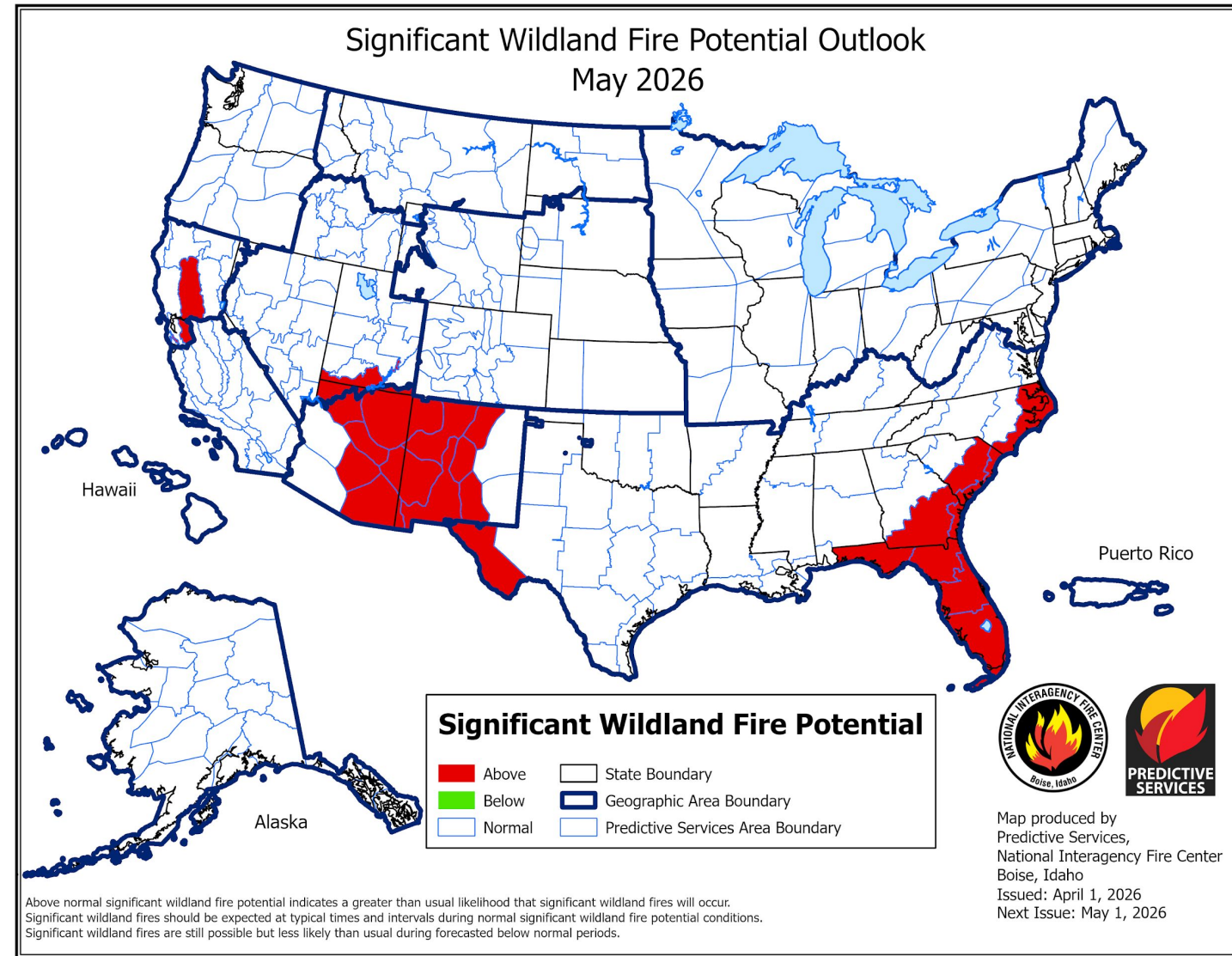
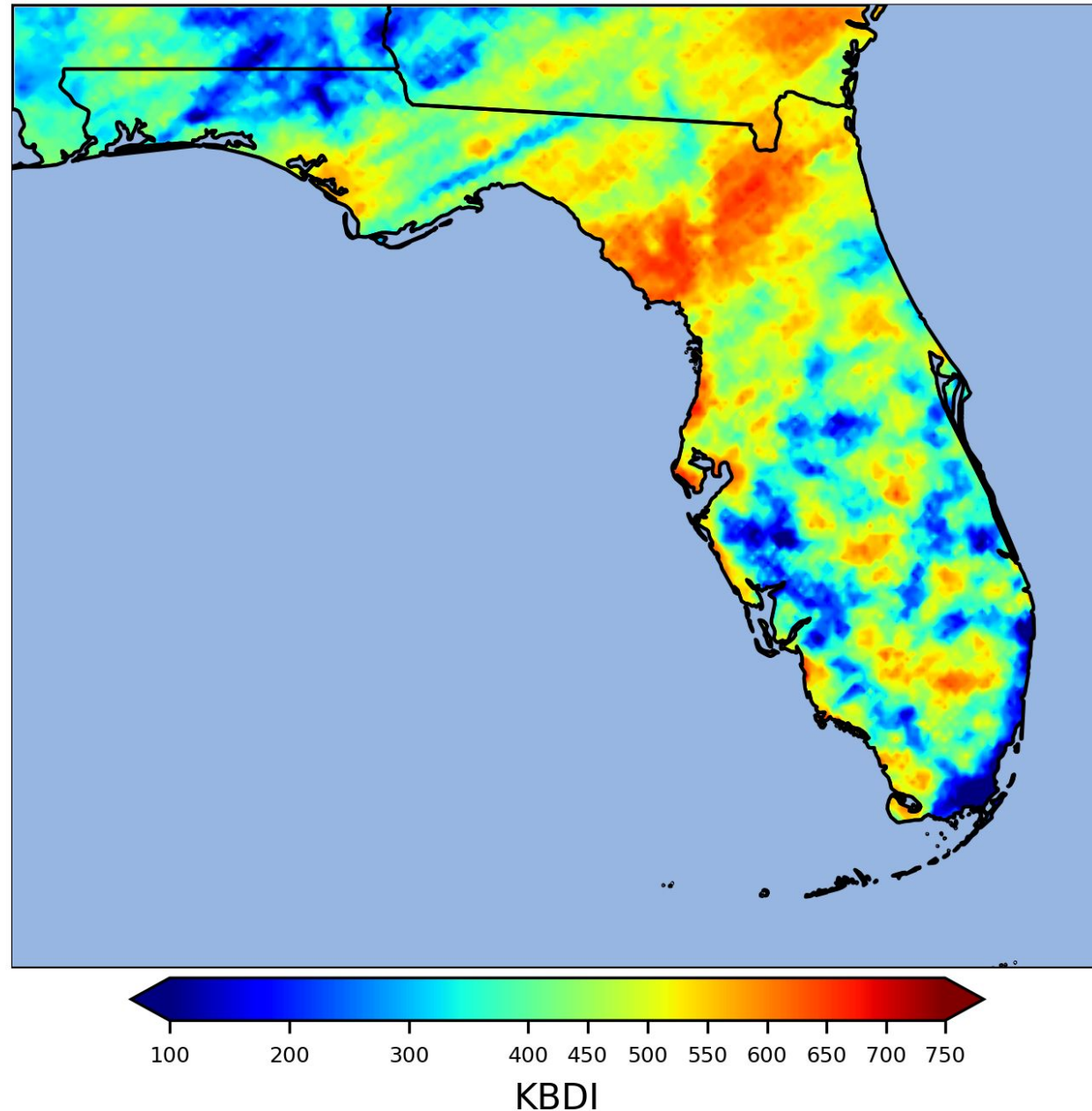


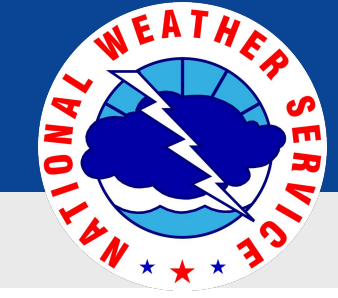
Fire Hazard Impacts

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

Keetch-Byram Drought Index | Wed 04/08/26, 02:00 PM EDT

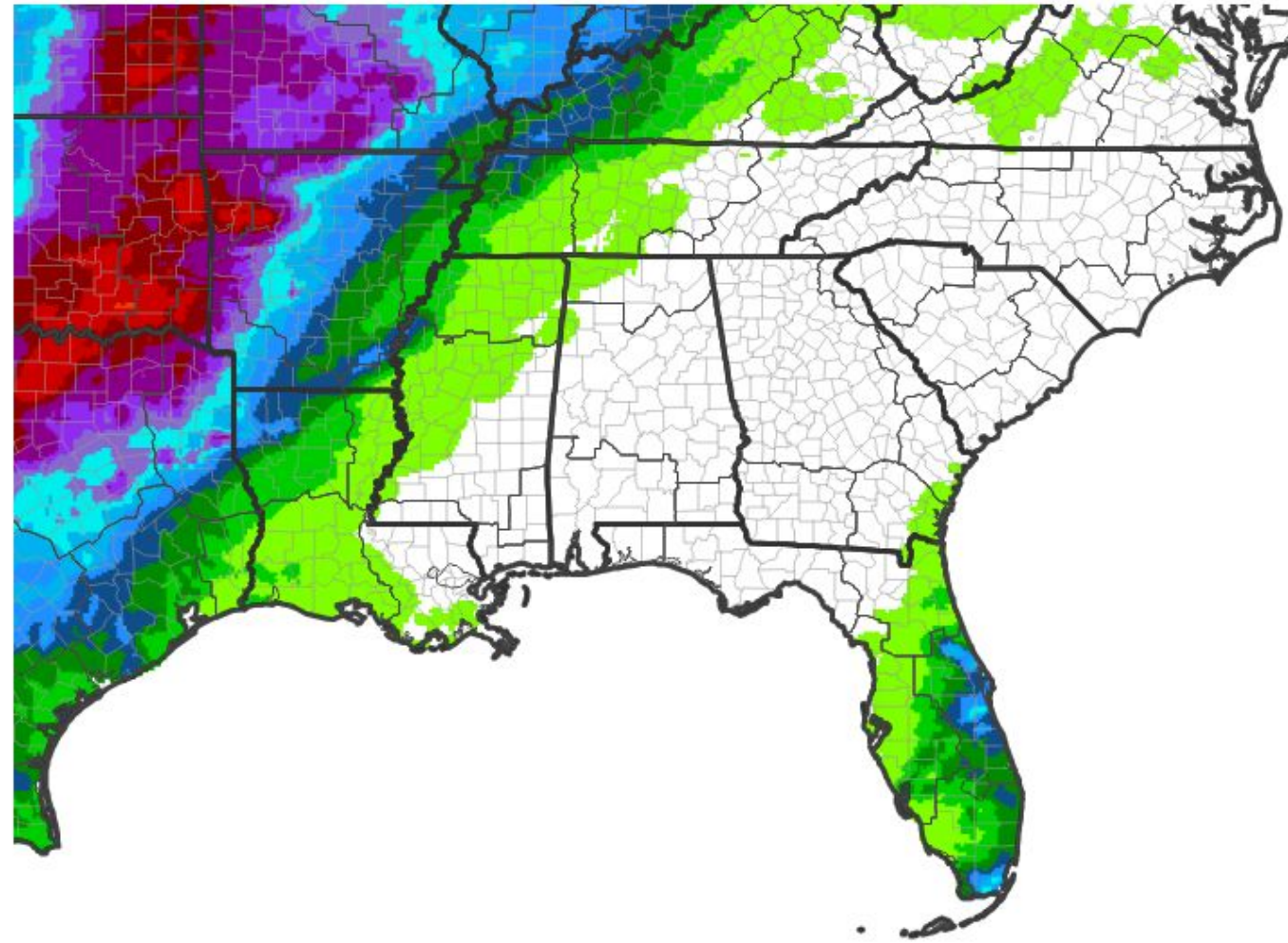




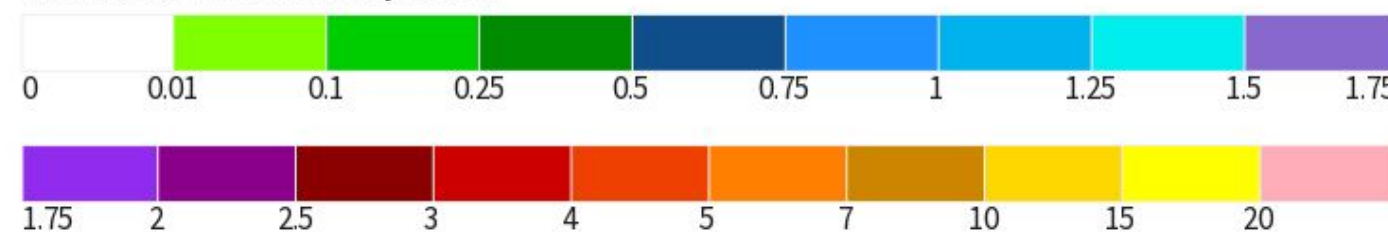
Precipitation Outlook

- High pressure will prevent any rainfall across the region through at least April 16th.
- Some extended guidance suggests little or no rain even as far as April 22nd.
- [8-14 day outlook \(4/16 - 4/22\)](#): Below normal rainfall.

7-Day Quantitative Precipitation Forecast for April 9, 2026–April 16, 2026



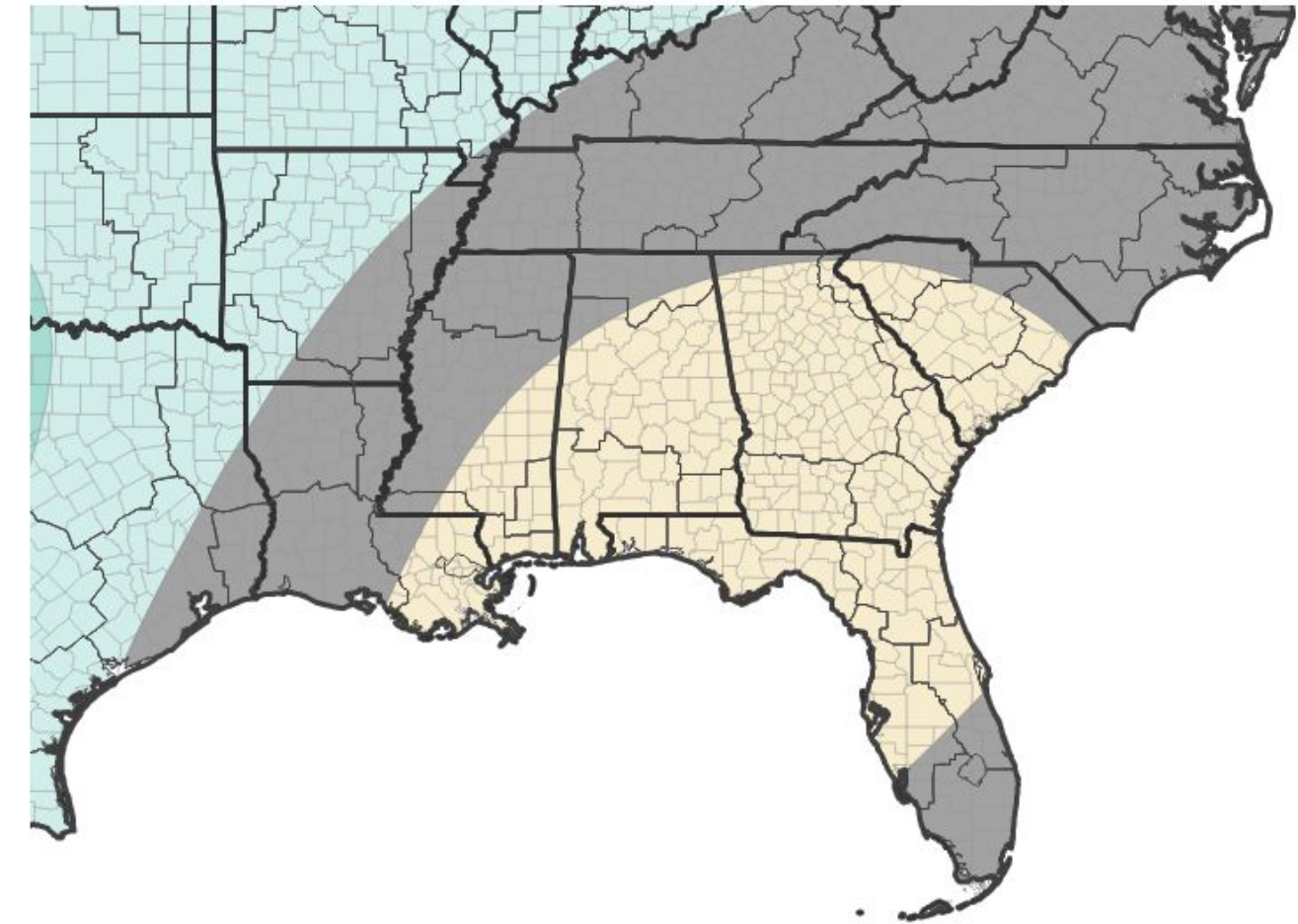
Predicted Inches of Precipitation



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

Last Updated: 04/09/26

8-14 Day Precipitation Outlook for April 16, 2026–April 22, 2026



Probability of Below-Normal Precipitation



Probability of Above-Normal Precipitation

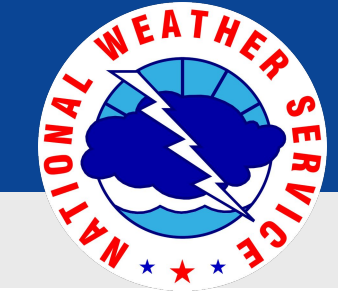


■ Near-Normal Conditions

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

Last Updated: 04/08/26



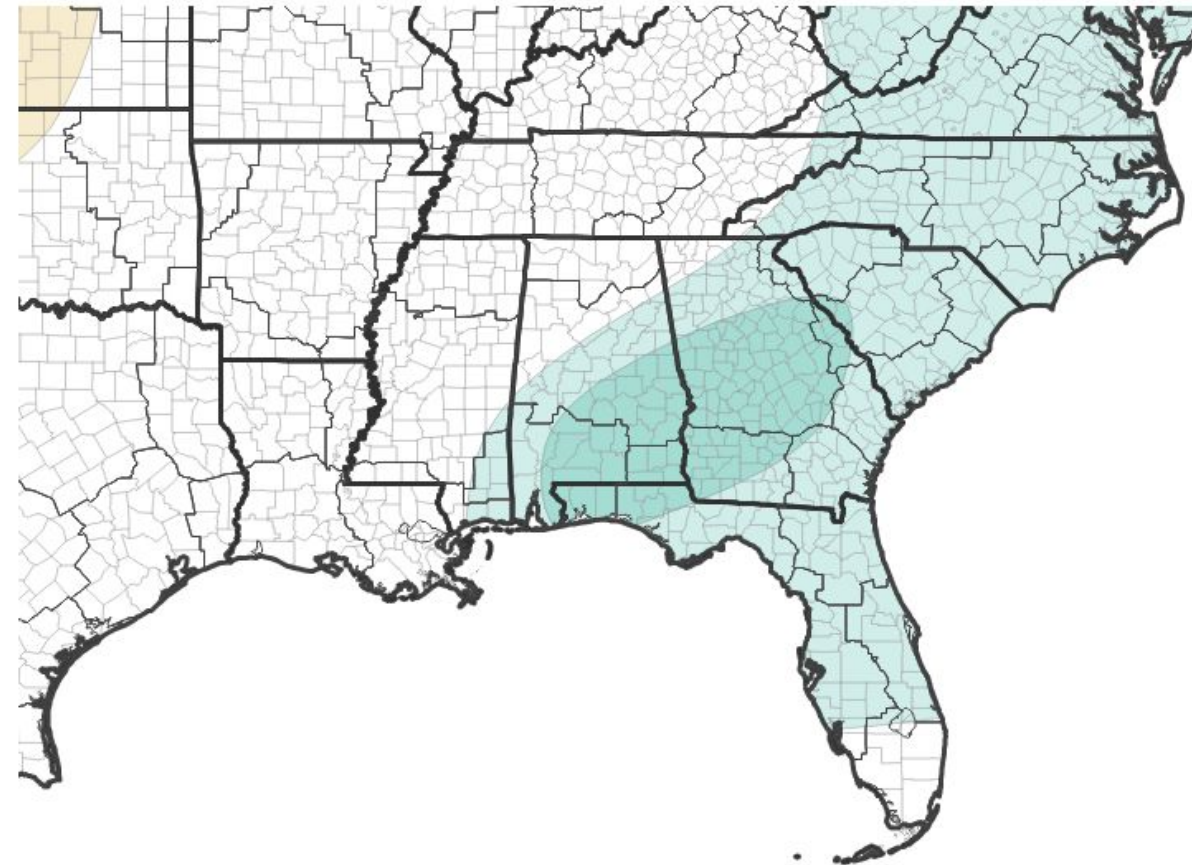


Long-Range Outlooks

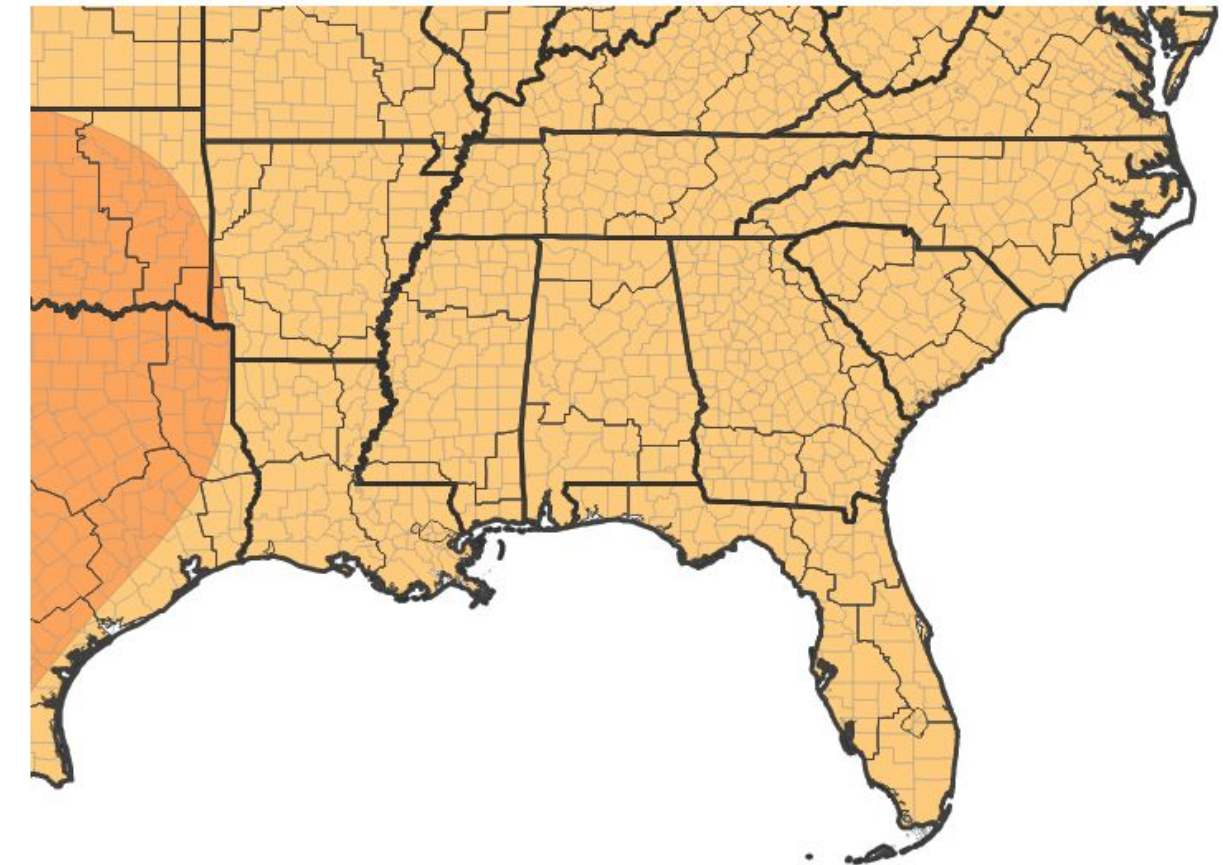
The latest monthly and seasonal outlooks can be found on the [CPC homepage](#).

- 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



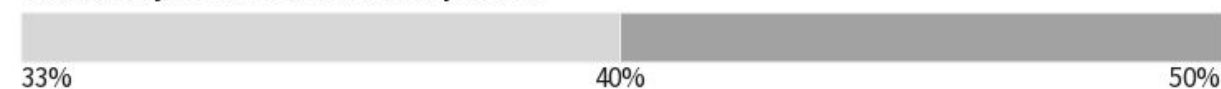
Probability of Below-Normal Precipitation



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

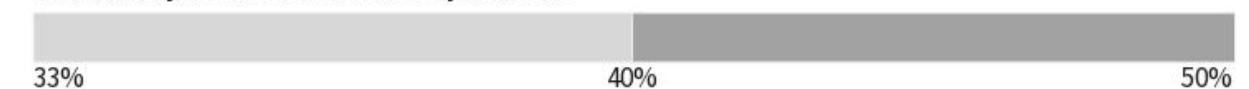
Probability of Below-Normal Temperatures



Probability of Above-Normal Temperatures



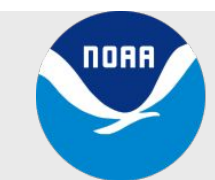
Probability of Near-Normal Temperatures

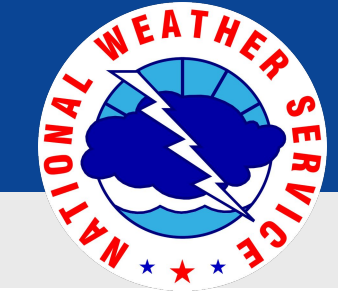


Source(s): Climate Prediction Center; image courtesy of Drought.gov

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"



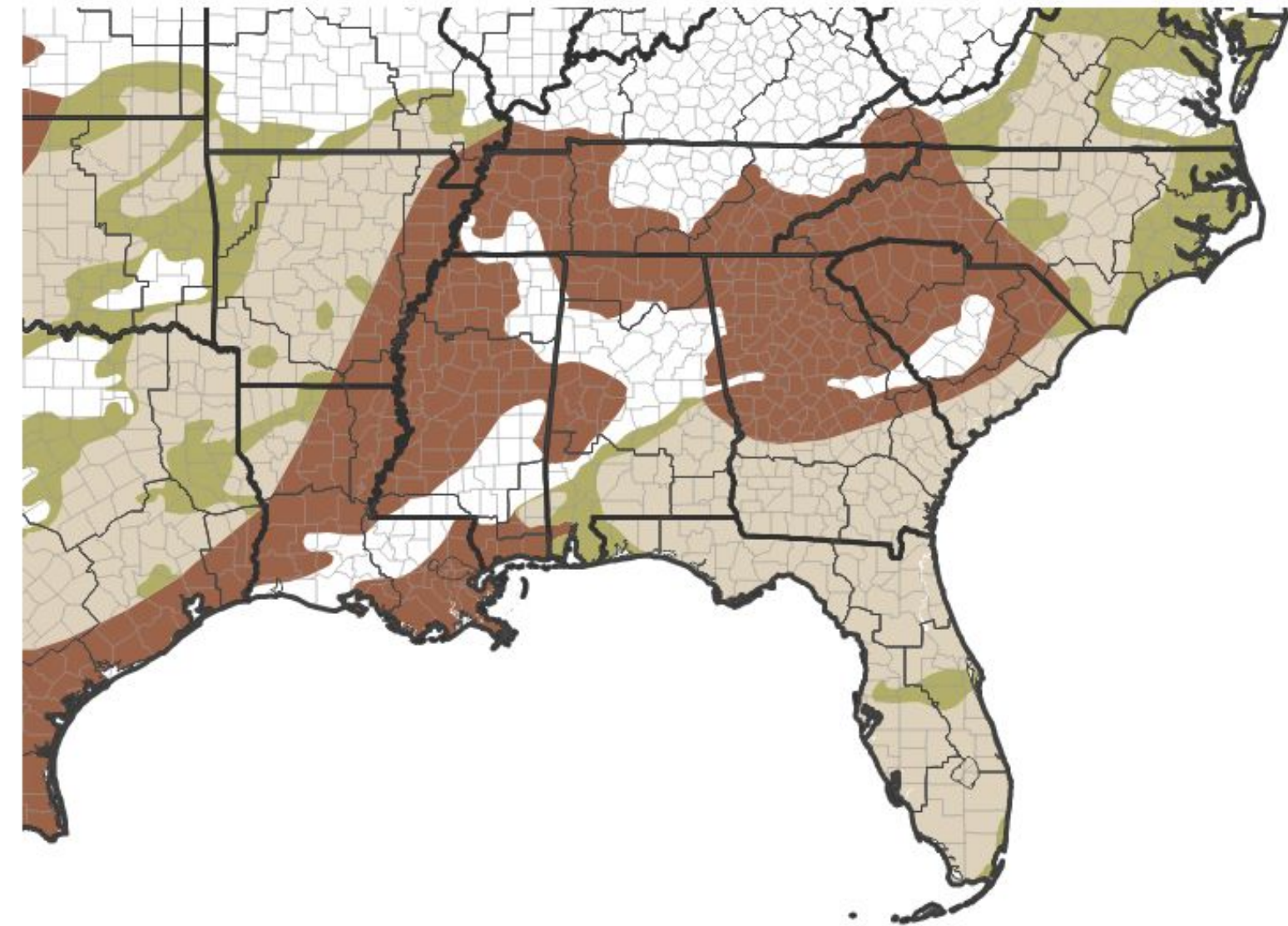


Drought Outlook

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 once the summer sea breeze season begins.
- Keep in mind, this is a 3-month outlook. Conditions will worsen in April as below normal rainfall across our area is expected.
- 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 drought.

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



Drought Is Predicted To...



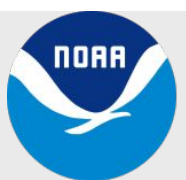
Source(s): Climate Prediction Center; image courtesy of Drought.gov

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

National Weather Service
Tallahassee, FL