



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

Valid April 16, 2026

Issued By: National Weather Service Tallahassee, FL

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

- This product will be updated April 23, 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 as Extreme Drought Expands Westward into Southeast Alabama and the Florida Panhandle.**
 - 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

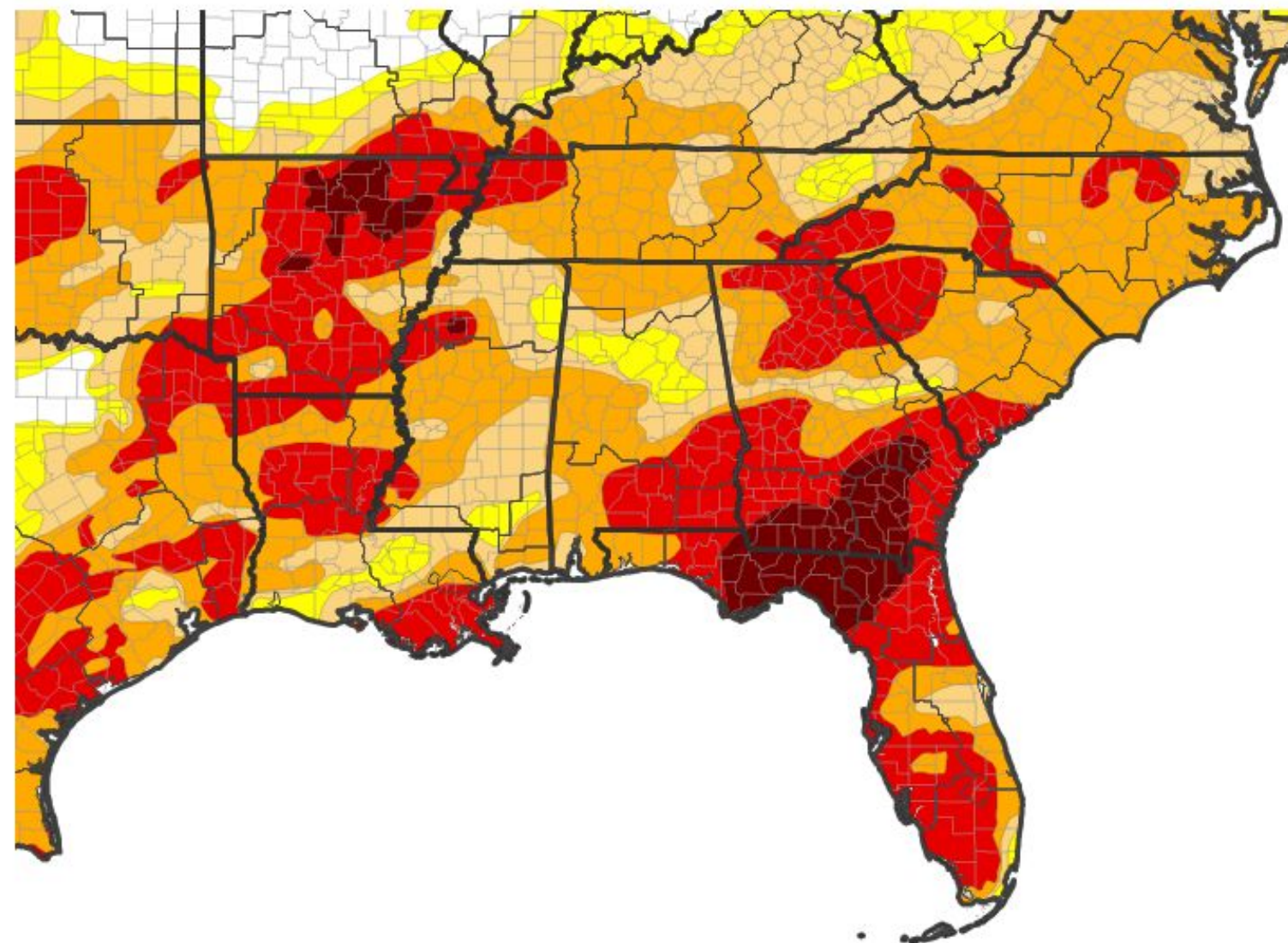
Link to the [latest U.S. Drought Monitor](#) for Southeast Alabama, Southwest Georgia, and the Florida Panhandle & Big Bend

- Little or no rain has been observed across the region in the last week. Additionally, unusually warm temperatures have led to faster drying of conditions across the region.

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: All of Southeast Alabama
- **D2 (Severe Drought):** Extreme Western Walton County.

U.S. Drought Monitor

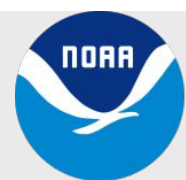


U.S. Drought Monitor



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

Data Valid: 04/14/26



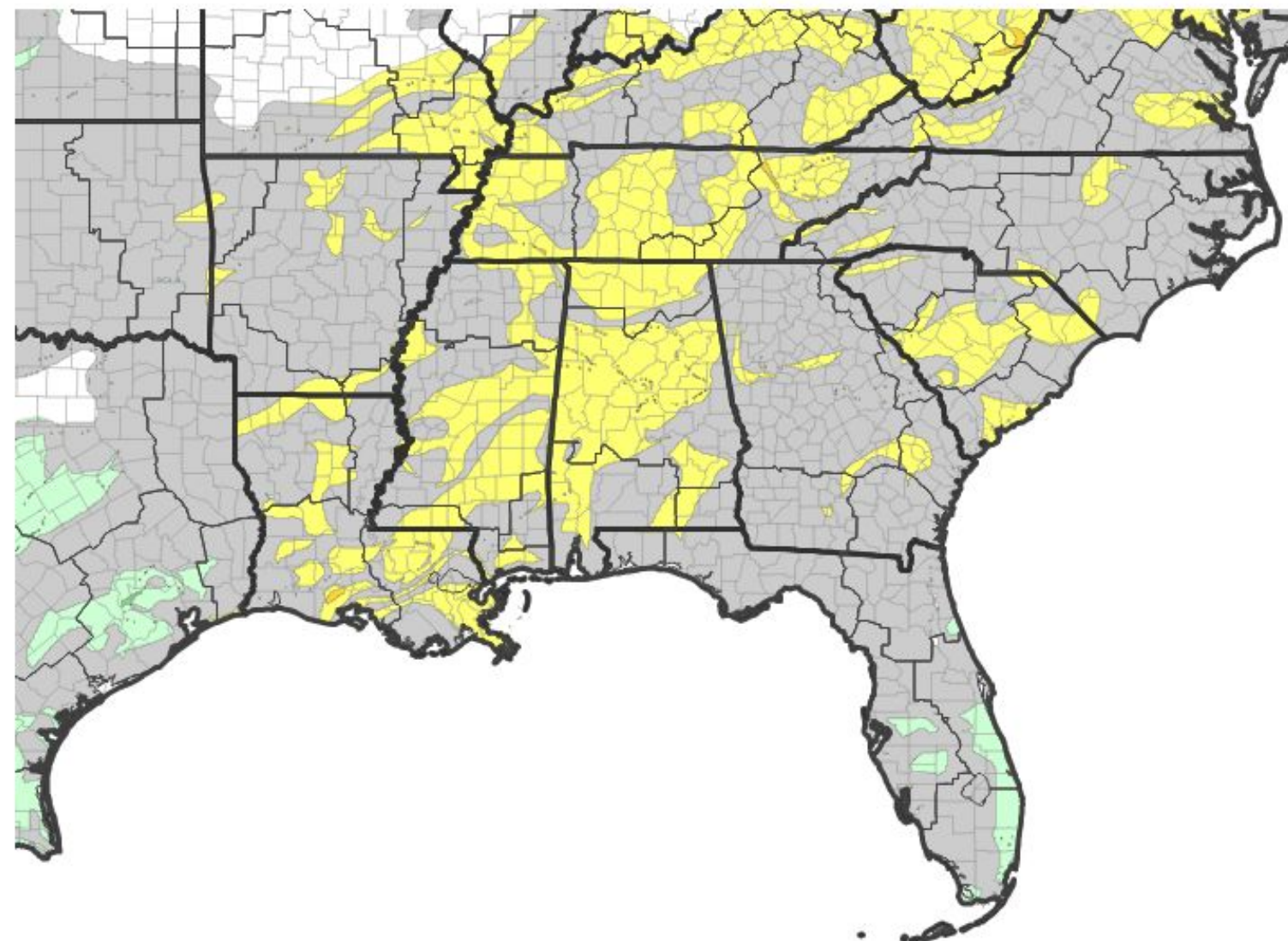


Recent Change in Drought Intensity

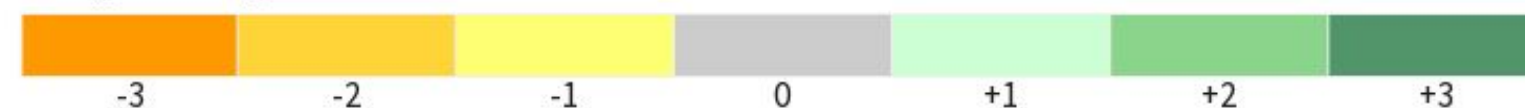
Link to the latest [4-week change map](#) for Southeast Alabama, Southwest Georgia, and the Florida Panhandle & Big Bend

- The unusually warm temperatures led to worsening of drought conditions across the region.
- One-Week Drought Monitor Class Change:
 - **1 Category Degradation:**
 - Dale, Coffee, and Western Geneva Counties in Southeast Alabama.
 - **No Change**
 - All other areas in the region.

U.S. Drought Monitor 1-Week Change Map

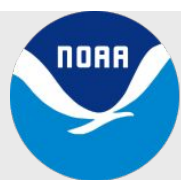


Drought Change Since Last Week



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

Data Valid: 04/14/26



National Oceanic and
Atmospheric Administration

U.S. Department of Commerce

National Weather Service
Tallahassee, FL

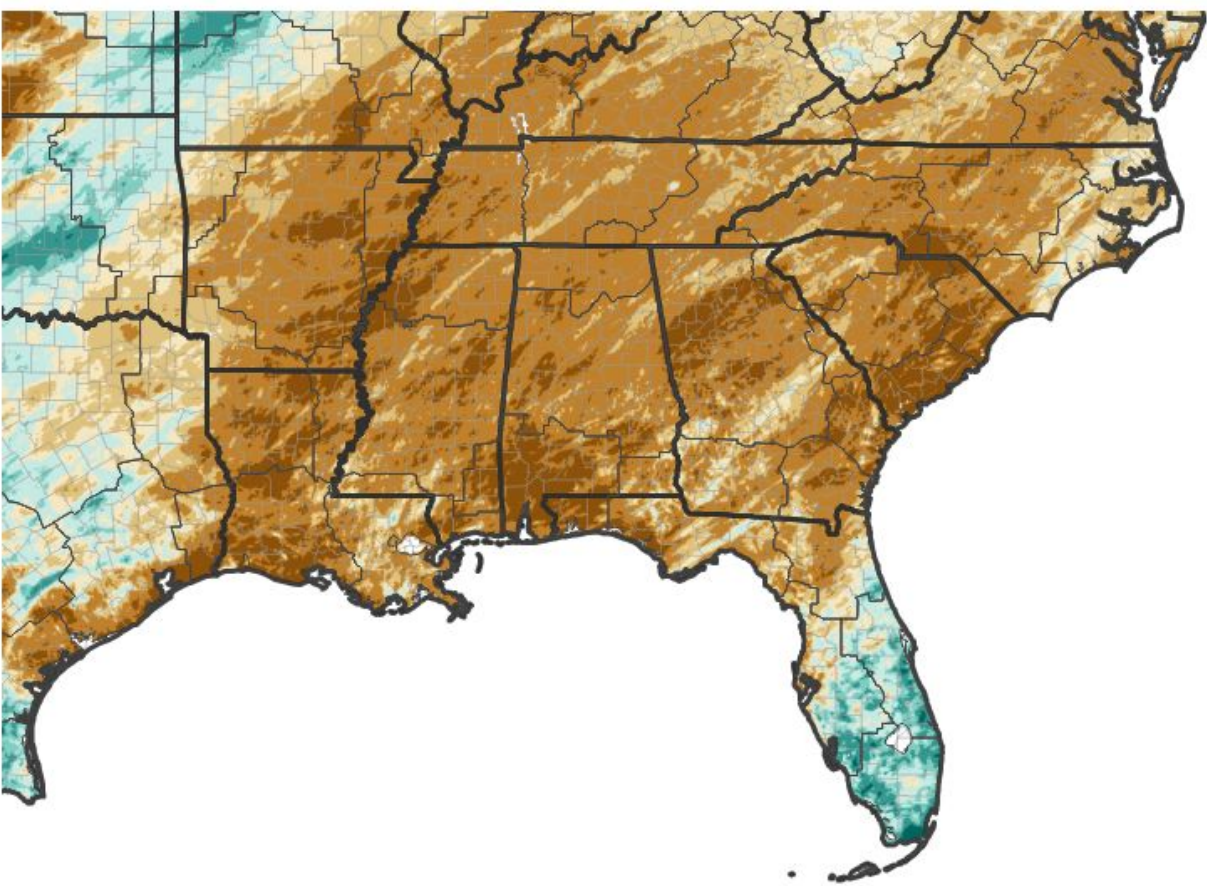


Precipitation

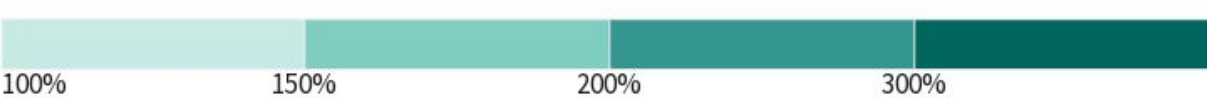
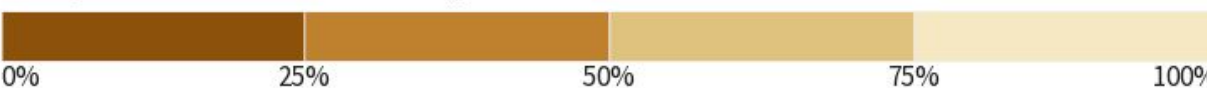
Note: Precipitation after 7 AM EST/6 AM CST Tuesday is incorporated in next week’s Drought Monitor

	Last 30 Days		Last 90 Days	
	Rainfall	Percent	Rainfall	Percent
DeFuniak Springs*	1.77"	34.9%	10.13"	64.6%
Panama City ECP	0.14"	2.9%	4.36"	29.3%
Dothan	1.23"	26.1%	8.65"	60.1%
Marianna	0.93"	22.1%	6.64"	49.5%
Georgetown**	2.88"	63.3%	10.27"	72.3%
Dawson**	0.63"	14.2%	7.75"	54.9%
Arlington**	0.98"	21.9%	7.54"	52.7%
Albany	2.75"	70.4%	10.58"	85.7%
Cairo**	0.06"	1.4%	4.81"	35.2%
Tallahassee	0.18"	4.3%	4.90"	36.3%
Moultrie**	0.57"	13.5%	4.78"	35.1%
Monticello*	0.33"	7.8%	6.99"	52.3%
Ty Ty**	0.51"	12.6%	7.33"	55.9%
Alapaha**	0.08"	2.1%	4.04"	31.6%
Valdosta	0.18"	4.9%	5.79"	53.5%
Perry***	1.24"	31.8%	4.96"	40.9%

30-Day Percent of Normal Precipitation

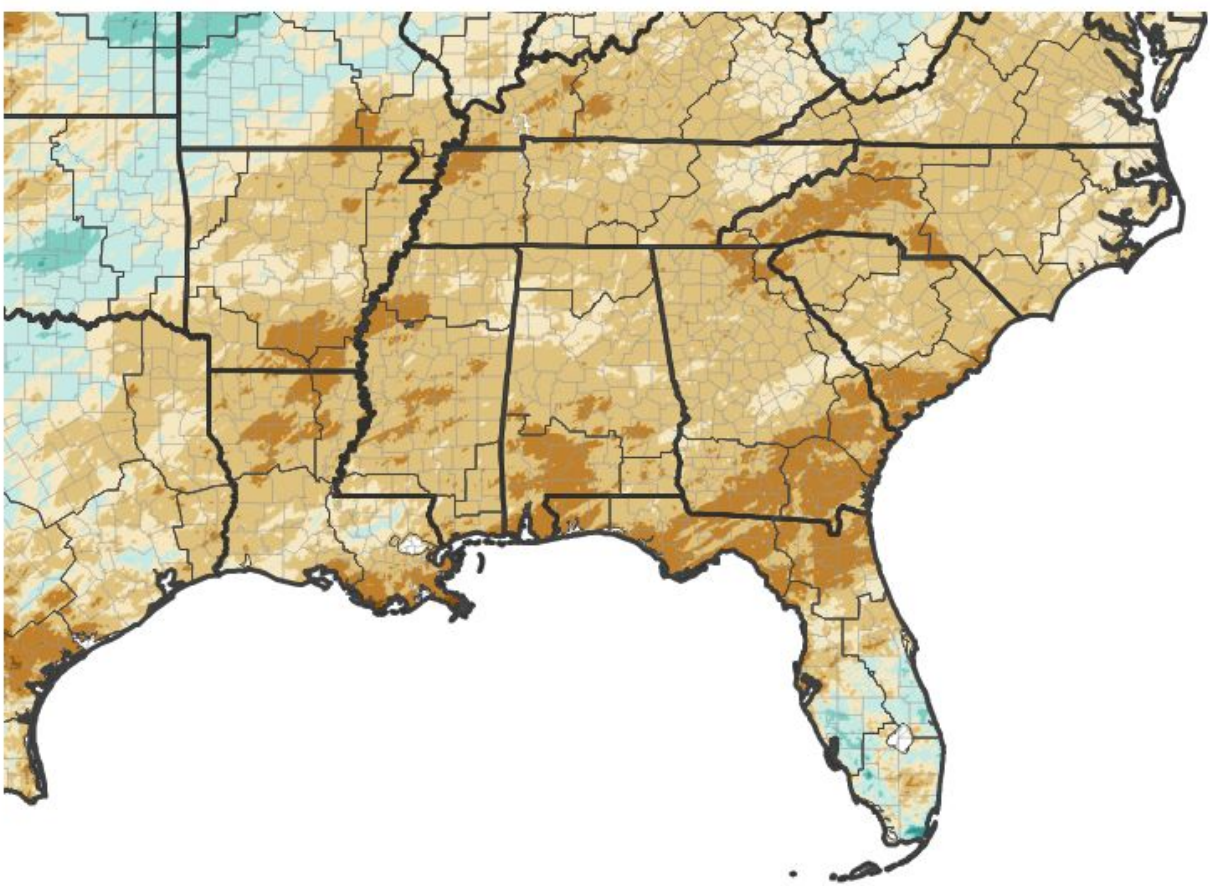


Precipitation Shown as a Percentage of Normal Conditions

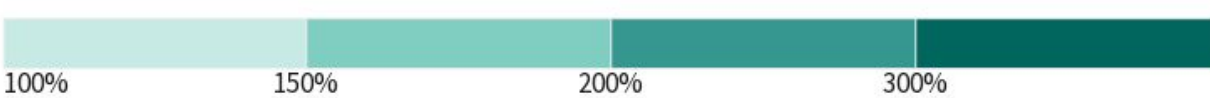
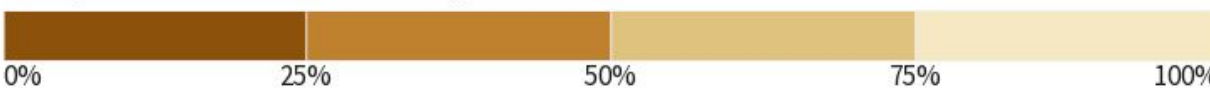


Source(s): National Weather Service Multi-Radar Multi-Sensor System; Last Updated: 04/16/26
image courtesy of Drought.gov

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: 04/16/26
image courtesy of Drought.gov

Rainfall totals through April 16, 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.



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Tallahassee, FL

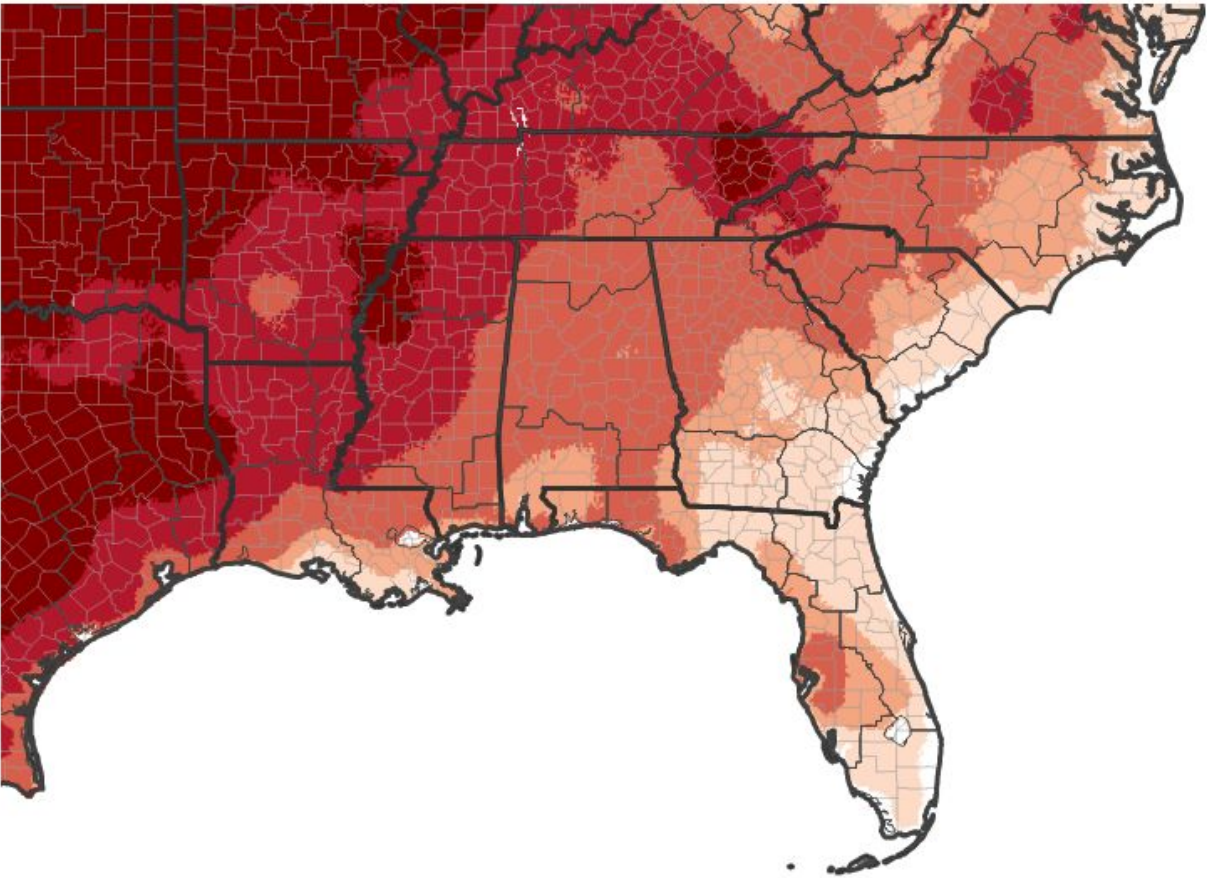


Temperature

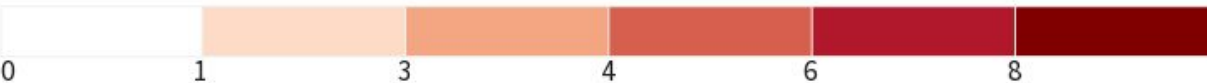
	Last 30 Days	
	Average High (Departure)	Average Low (Departure)
Tallahassee	82.1° (+4.8°)	55.1° (+3.5°)
Albany	80.2° (+3.9°)	54.4° (+3.0°)
Valdosta	81.1° (+4.8°)	53.7° (+3.6°)
Marianna	81.4° (+4.3°)	55.1° (+2.9°)
Dothan	79.7° (+3.4°)	54.2° (+2.2°)

- Recently temperatures have been much above normal.
- This combined with the dry conditions has led to worsening of drought conditions.
- Daily relative humidities have also been fairly low, which has increased wildfire potential.
- Near record warmth is expected on April 17th and April 18th.

7-Day Temperature Anomaly



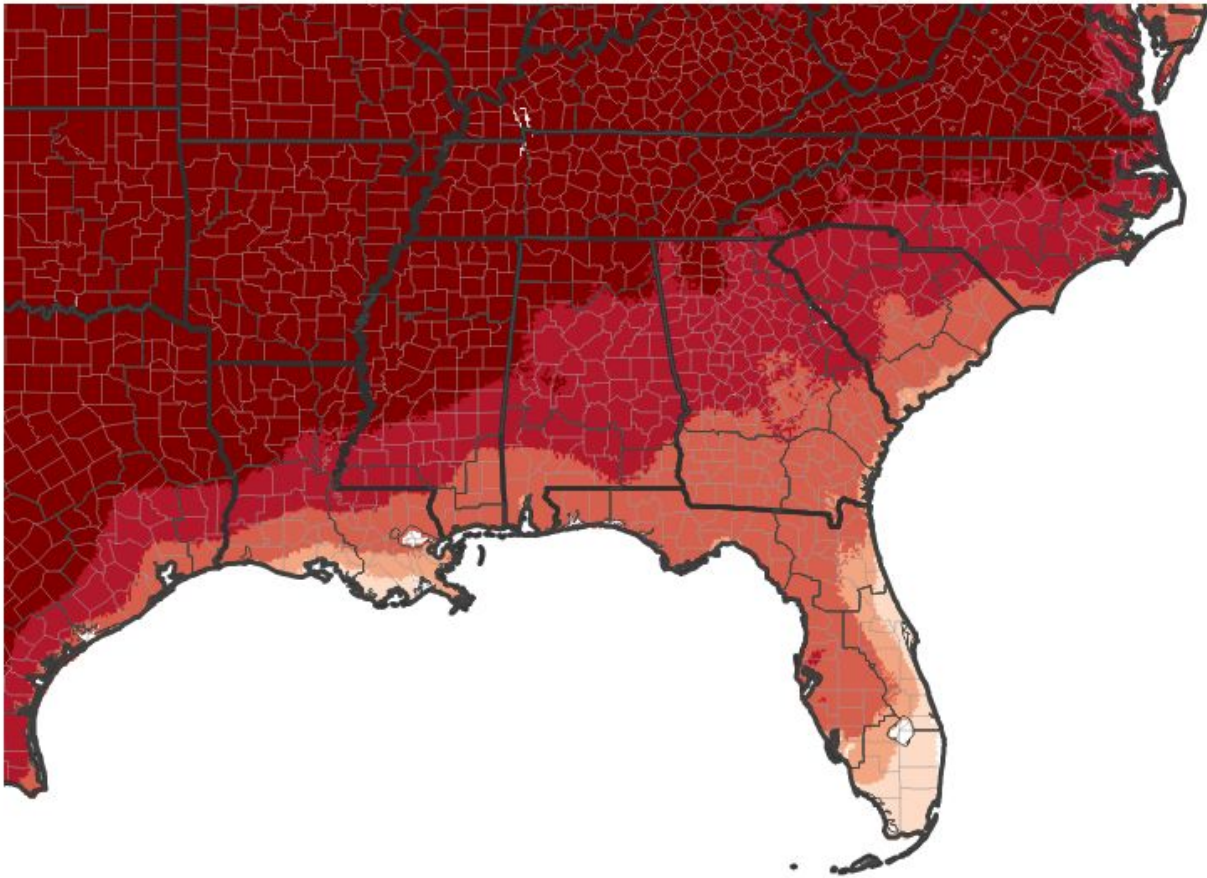
Departure from Normal Max Temperature (°F)



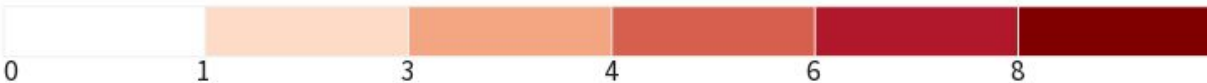
Source(s): NOAA's National Centers for Environmental Information; image courtesy of Drought.gov

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. Daily streamflows for the Pea River are near or at all time record lows.
- Surface and groundwater levels are exceptionally low. A report from Dale County, Alabama mentioned holding ponds at low levels not seen in 20 years.

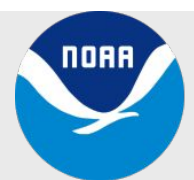
Agricultural Impacts

- Irrigation is necessary to help farmers maintain planted crops. Corn is already struggling in Dale County. In Houston County, two reports from farmers stated, "It is too dry to plant." This places farmers well behind schedule for planting.

Fire Hazard Impacts

- Keetch-Byram Drought Index (KBDI) values range from 300-500 across the region.
- The State of Alabama has issued a Fire Alert that is in effect through Monday, April 20th. This alert may be extended based on conditions at that time. This restricts burning only to certified burn plan managers.

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. Reports indicate that holding ponds have gone dry in numerous counties. Swampy areas and small creeks are also dry.

Agricultural Impacts

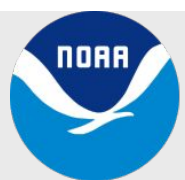
- Planting season has begun with corn where irrigation is available. Absent irrigation, some farmers are choosing not to plant crops until more soil moisture is available. Bedded fields ready for tobacco transplanting are being watered, but growers are still waiting for more moisture before starting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

Fire Hazard Impacts

- Keetch-Byram Drought Index (KBDI) values range from 450-650 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

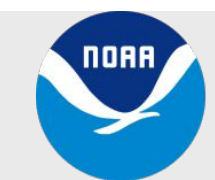
- Keetch-Byram Drought Index (KBDI) values range from 300-600 across the region, highest in Bay, Gulf, and Calhoun Counties.
- KBDI responds quickly to any recent rains. Recent rainfall less than a couple inches does not immediately mitigate the fire threat.
- Burn bans are in place for Holmes, Washington, Bay, Gulf, and Calhoun Counties.

Mitigation Actions

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



Ocheesee Pond in Jackson County from late March, courtesy of Northwest Florida Water Management District. Water has receded further since this photo was taken, with even more areas now dry.





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.

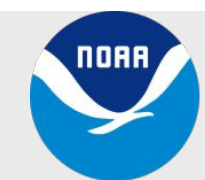
Fire Hazard Impacts

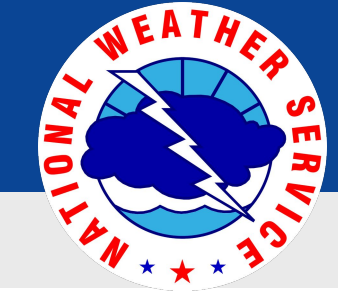
- Keetch-Byram Drought Index (KBDI) values range from 450-650, highest in Taylor, Dixie, and Lafayette Counties.
- Gadsden, Franklin, Liberty, Leon, Wakulla, and Jefferson Counties have a burn ban in effect.

Mitigation Actions

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

Photos Credits: Northwest Florida Water Management - Lake Jackson in Leon County. Photos from early March. Water levels have continued to decline with more of the lake bed exposed.



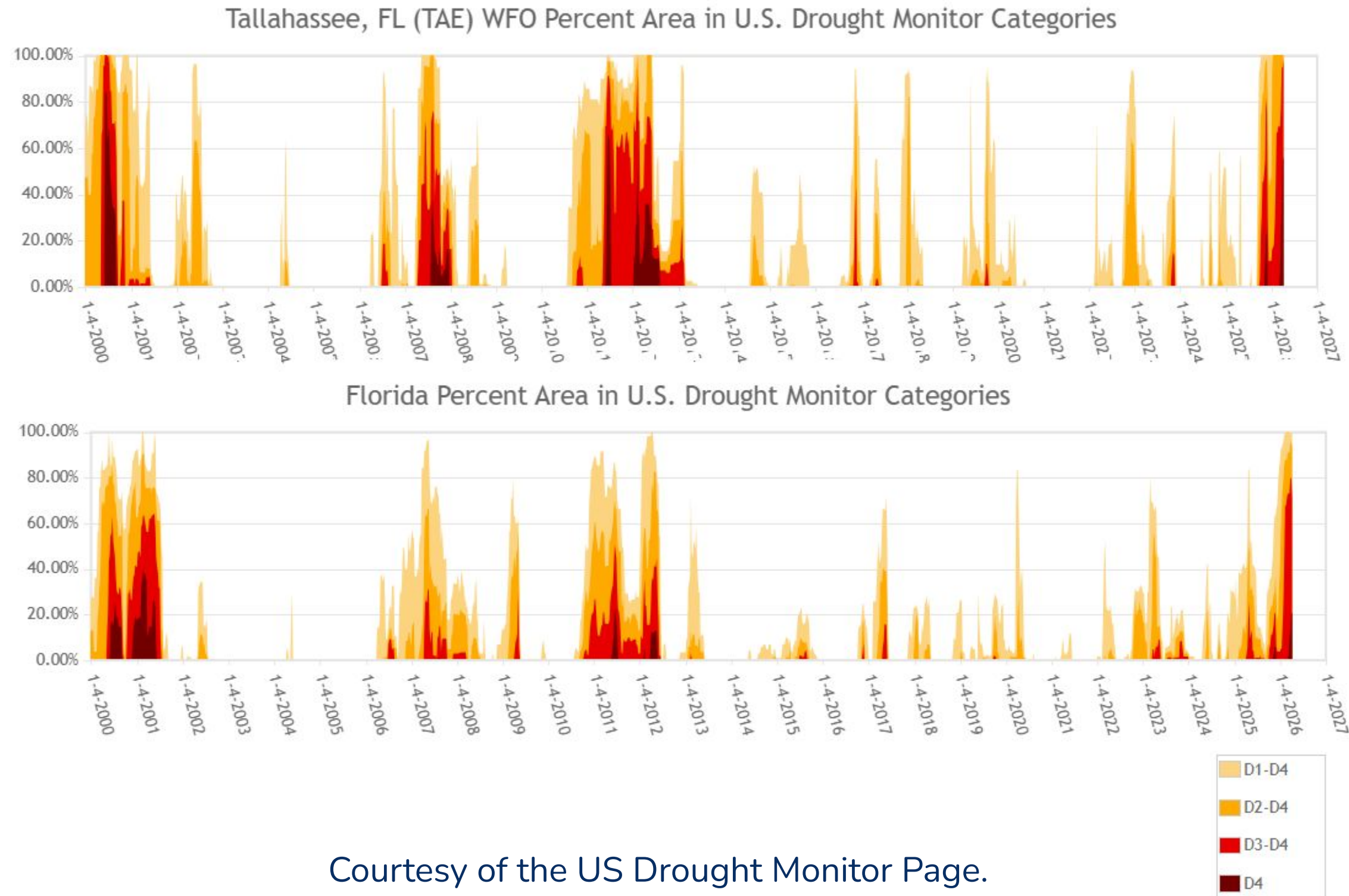


A Perspective on this Drought

Links: [Drought Monitor Time Series](#)

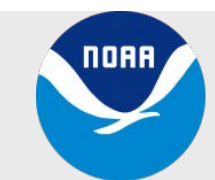
How does this drought compare to past long term droughts in the Tallahassee forecast area?

- 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.
- In the Tallahassee forecast area this is the highest percent coverage of D3 since the 2000 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.



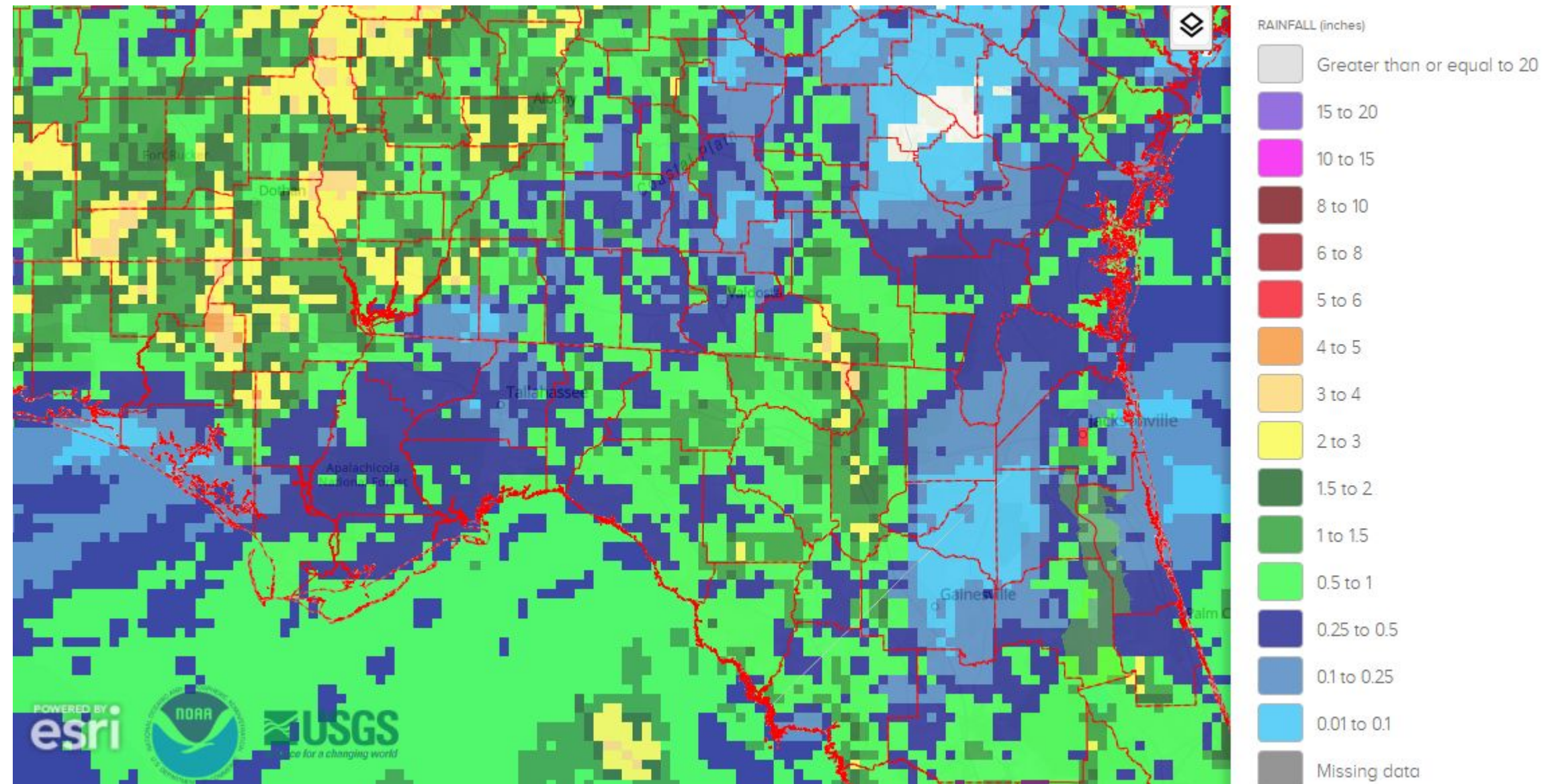


A Perspective on this Drought - Why it continues

It rained two weeks ago, why is the drought still getting worse?

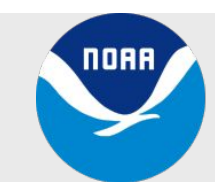
It rained two weeks ago, but I don't see any improvement in the drought conditions. In some areas it actually worsened. Why?

- Two weeks ago, 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.
- Many of the smaller streams and rivers are now **lower** than before the rain two weeks ago.
- Since river levels did not improve and have clearly worsened and groundwater levels remain incredibly low, no improvements in drought severity were made.



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.

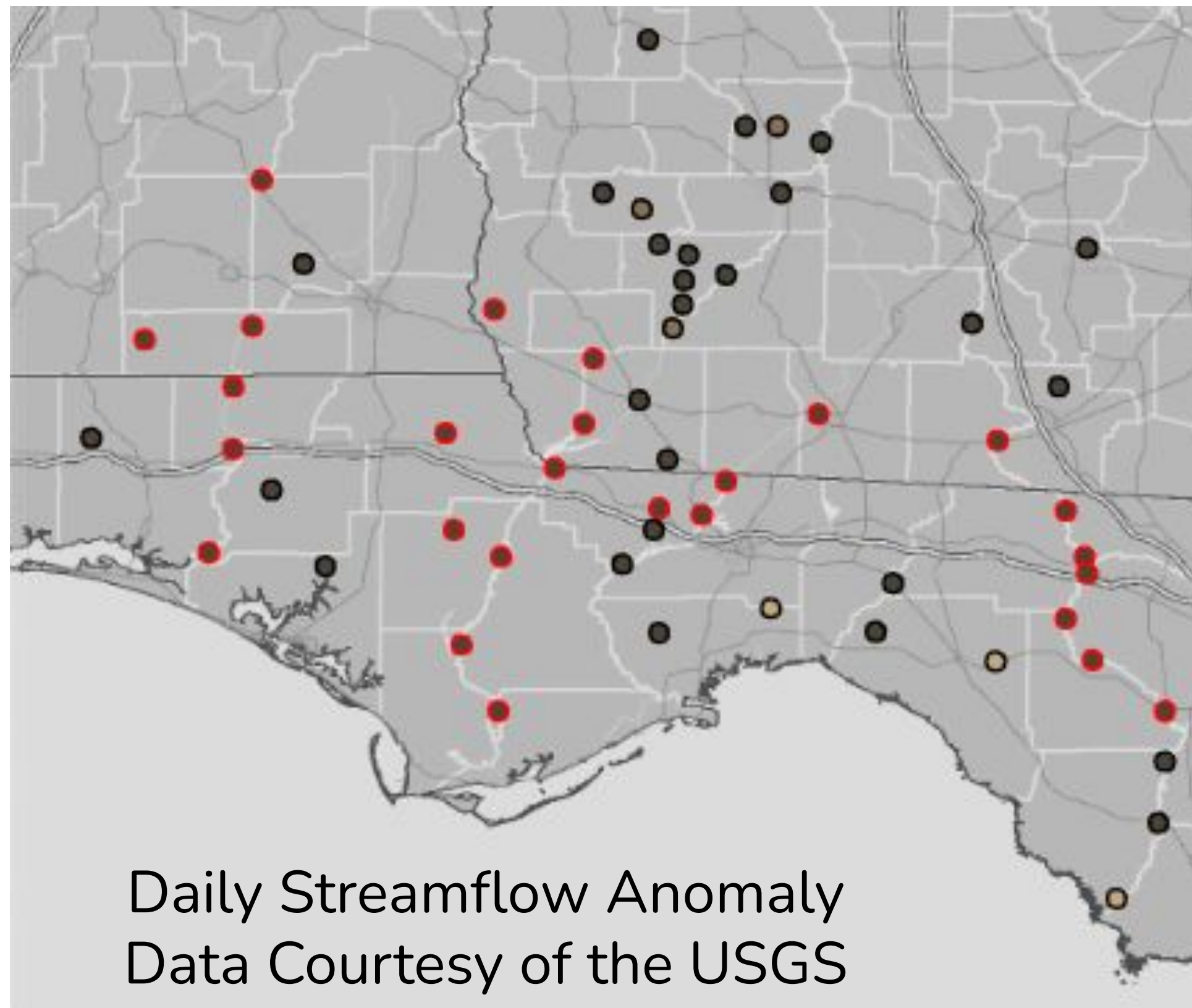




Hydrologic Conditions and Impacts

- Streamflow conditions are exceptionally low and well below normal for this time of year, with several sites at daily record low flows.
- This is recharge season across the Southeast, and the lack of substantive rainfall will only worsen drought conditions.
- Planting season is underway. Irrigation and plant growth is pulling additional water from the soil. With no substantive rain to replace it, groundwater levels will continue to worsen.
- 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

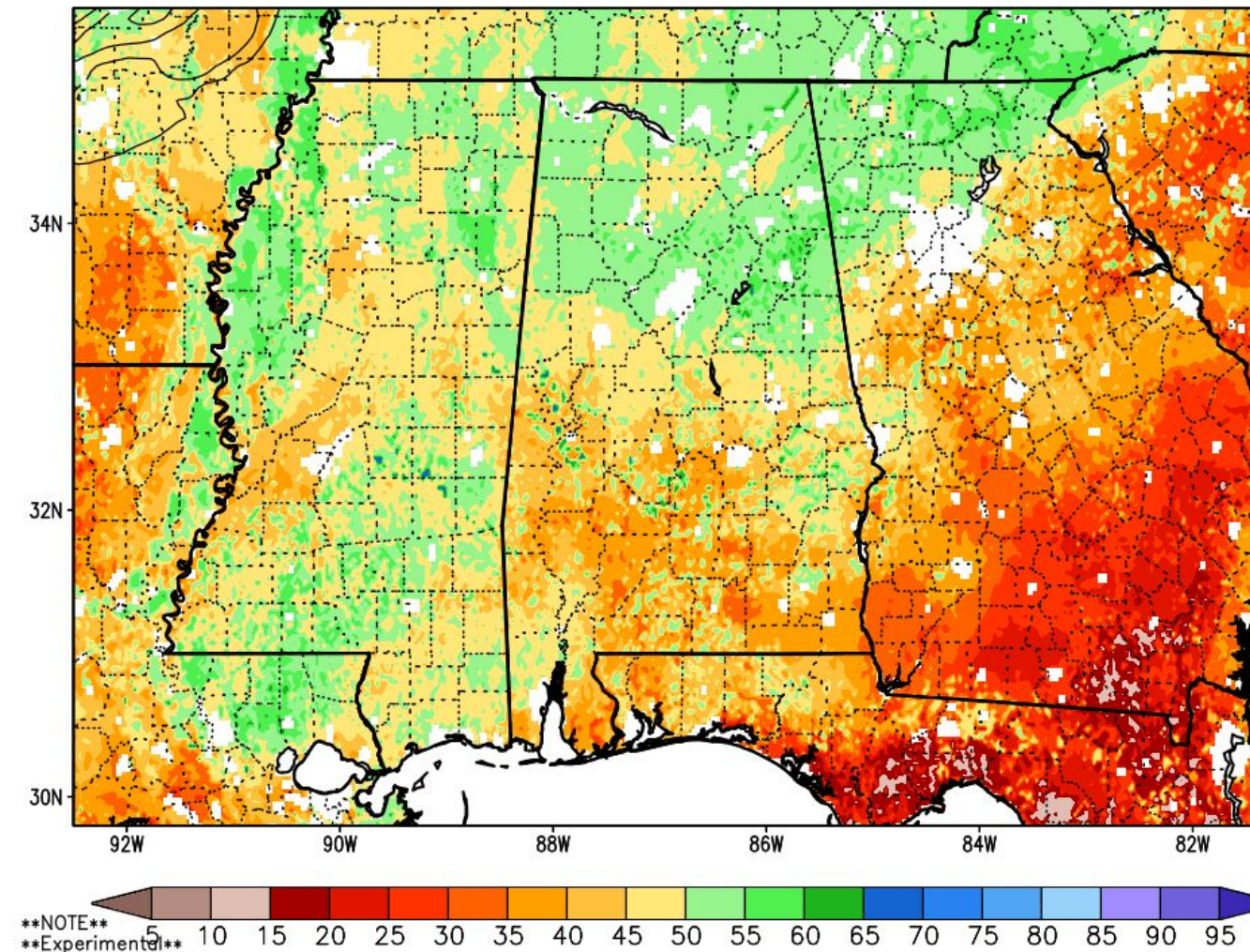




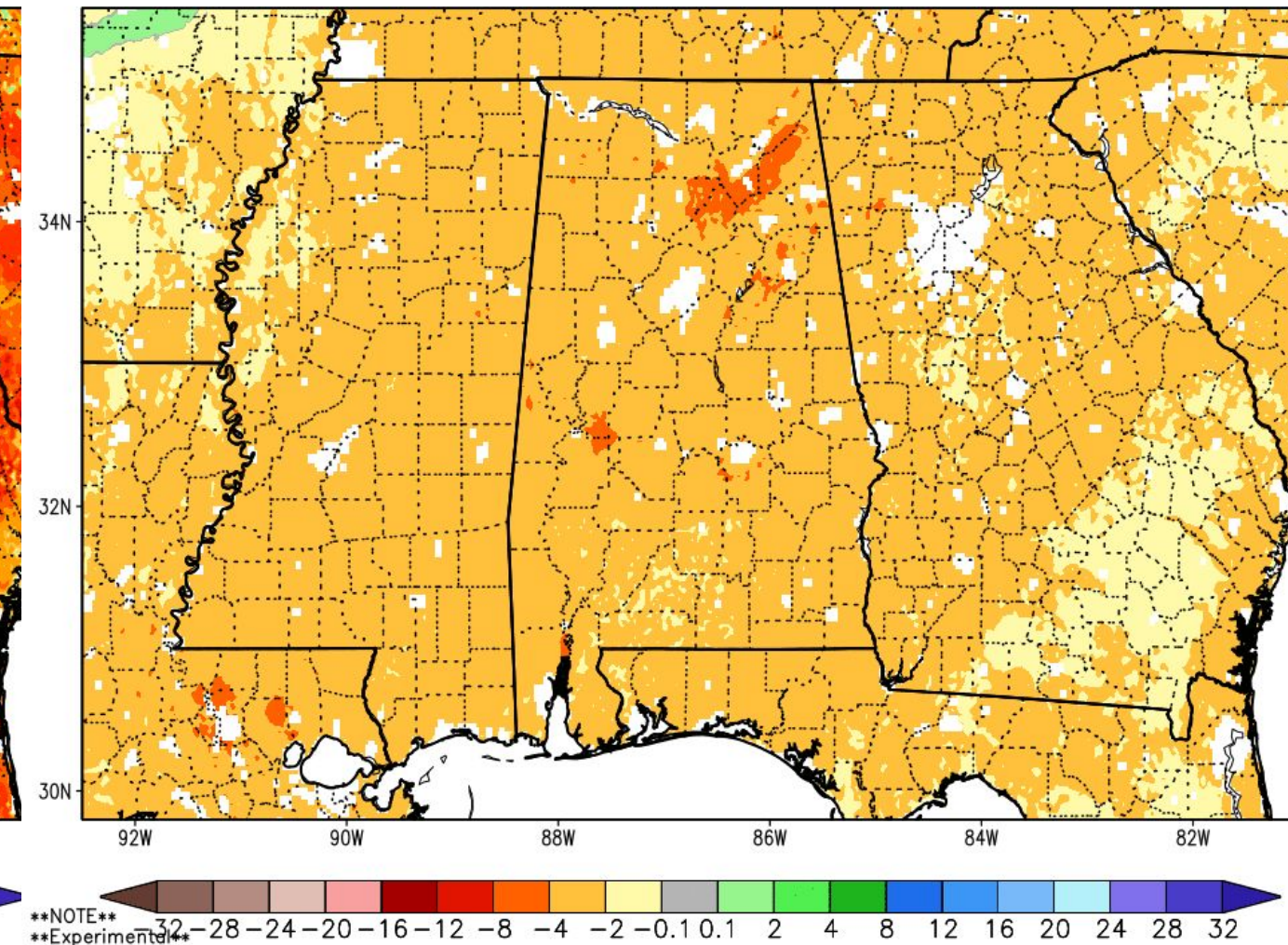
Agricultural Impacts

- 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.
- With no rain this past week, soil moisture continues to decline.

Column-Integrated Relative Soil Moisture (available water; %) valid 12z 16 Apr 2
Precipitation in previous hour (1,2,5,10,15,20,25 mm contours)

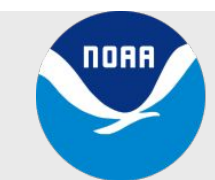


1-Week Difference in Column Relative Soil Moisture (%) valid 12z 16 Apr 2026



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](#)



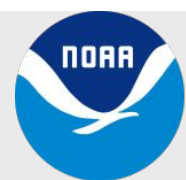
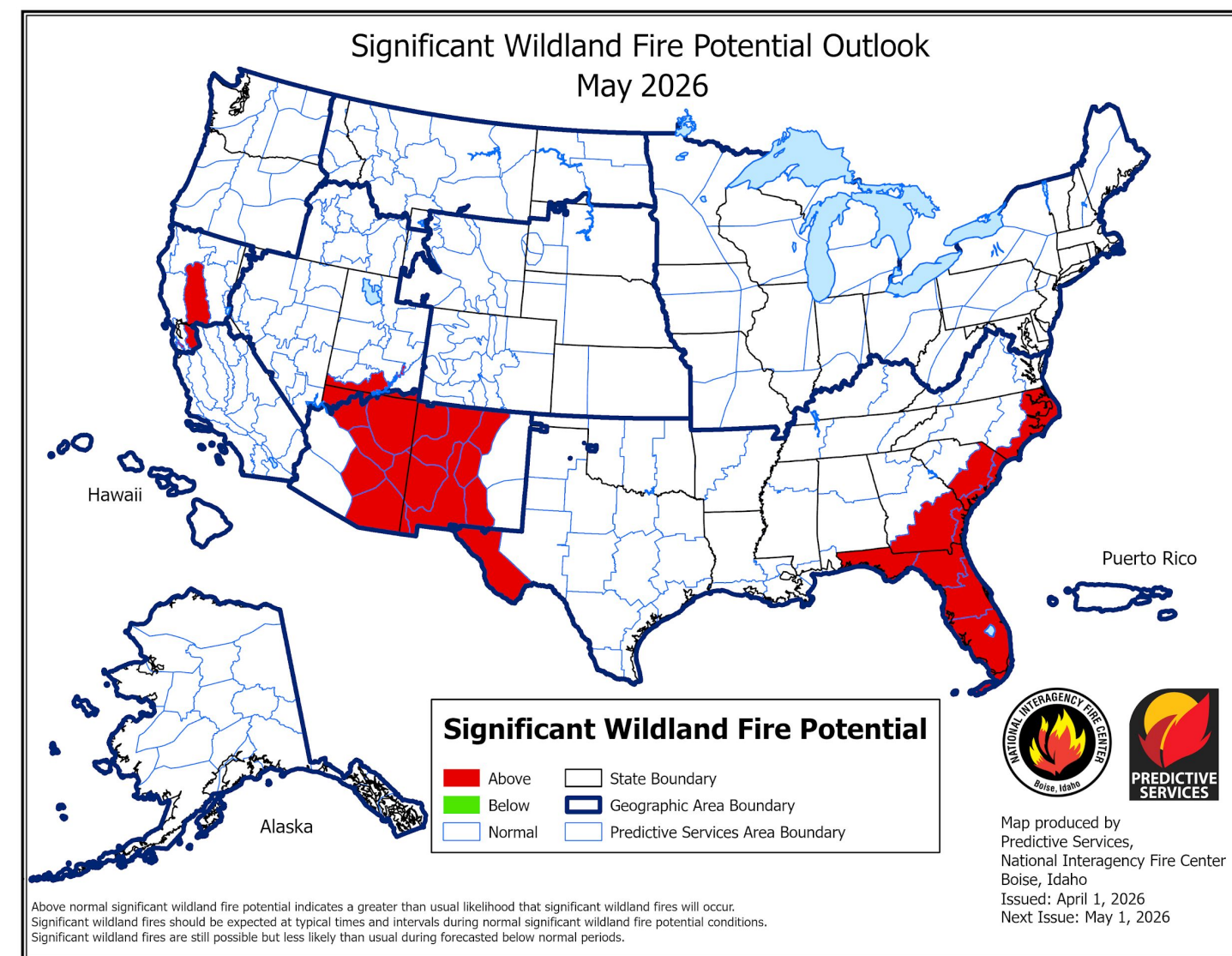
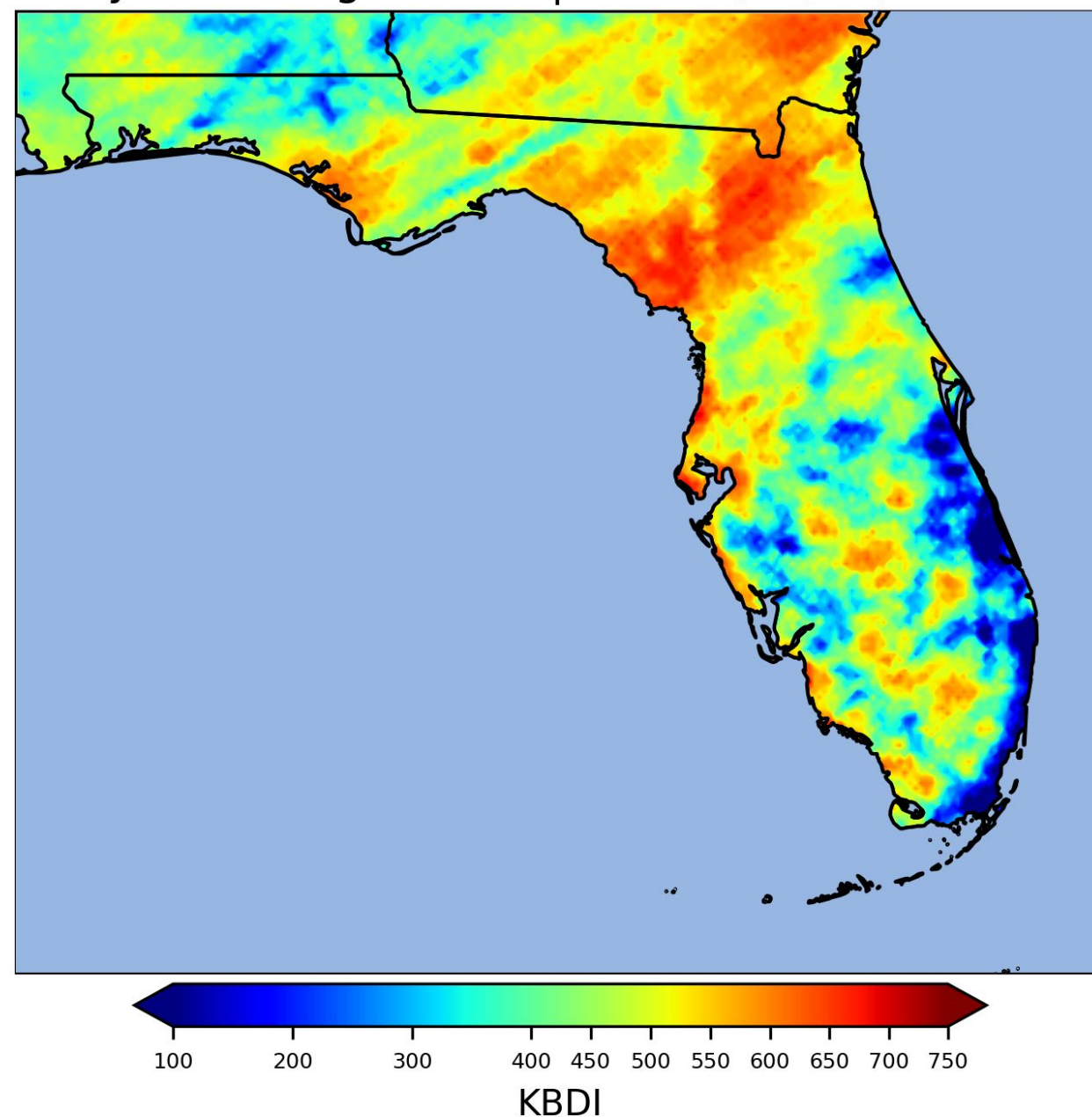


Fire Hazard Impacts

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

- Keetch-Byram Drought Indices are rising steadily across 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 04/15/26, 02:00 PM EDT





Fire Hazard Impacts - April 17 through April 24

Link to [National Weather Service Tallahassee](https://www.weather.gov/tallahassee)

- This local outlook from the NWS office in Tallahassee highlights the potential for prolonged fire danger across the region.
- Monday, April 20th could be particularly impactful due to windy and very dry conditions.

Prolonged Fire Danger

Warm and Dry, then throw in Wind

For more forecast information, Visit [weather.gov/tallahassee](https://www.weather.gov/tallahassee)

Ongoing extreme to exceptional drought also a contributing factor.

Friday		Saturday		Sunday		Monday	Tuesday through Friday
Near record highs: Upper 80s to low 90s		Near record highs: Upper 80s to low 90s		Brief, spotty rain AM		MUCH Drier: Humidity 15-20%, locally lower	No rain
<u>Fire Danger</u> Elevated		<i>A little more wind</i>		Behind front: slightly cooler, but <u>windier</u> (gusts 20-25 mph)		Breezy: Even 15 mph gusts would be problematic	Dry afternoons (25-40% humidity)
A Fire Weather Watch may be needed for Saturday.		<u>Fire Danger</u> High - critical conditions possible		<u>Fire Danger</u> High PM - poor overnight humidity recovery		Seasonably warm	Warming Trend, Less Wind
		A Red Flag Warning may be needed.				<u>Critical fire danger expected</u>	<u>Fire Danger</u> Elevated each afternoon

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
Tallahassee Florida
weather.gov/tallahassee
f X @NWSTallahassee

Impact Levels

Little to None	Minor	Moderate	Major	Extreme
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Updated: 3 am EDT, April 17, 2026

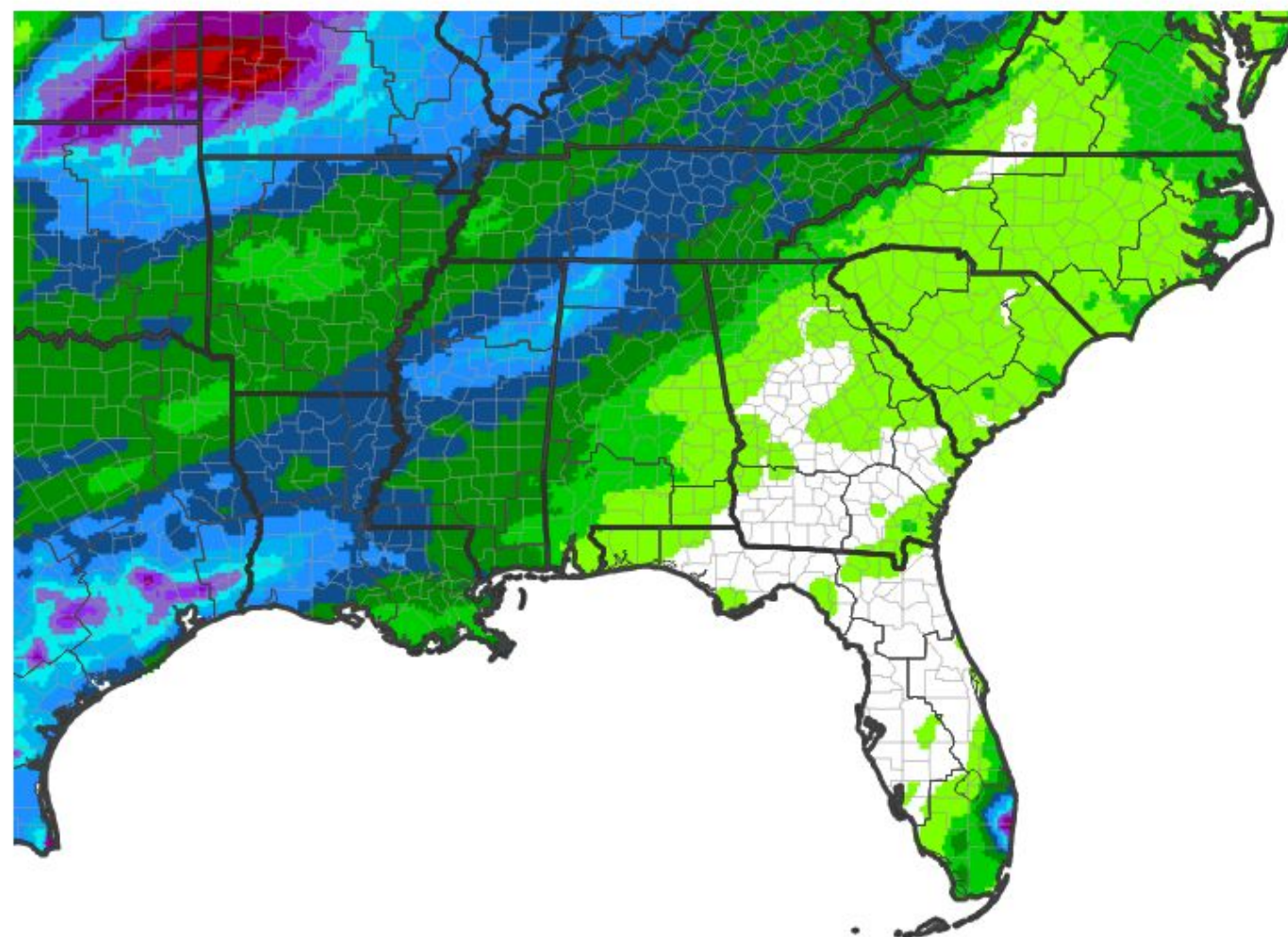




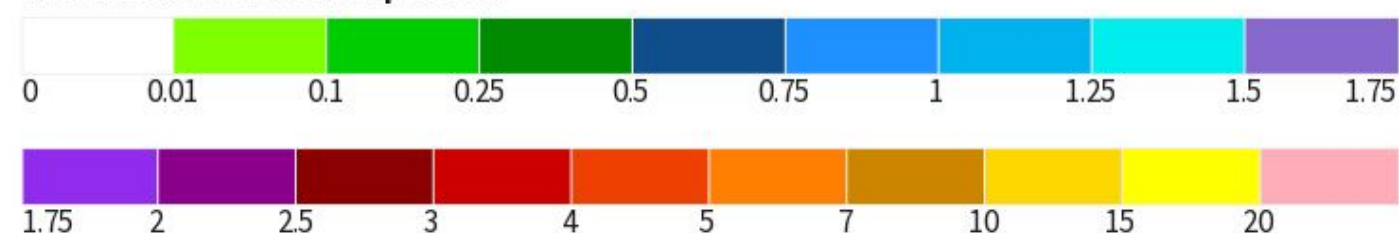
Precipitation Outlook

- A dry cold front will pass through the region on Sunday.
- No rain is expected through April 24th.
- Beyond that time, some models suggest rain could return to the forecast by April 27th. As a result the [8-14 day outlook](#) (4/22 - 4/29) is for slightly above normal precipitation.

7-Day Quantitative Precipitation Forecast for April 17, 2026–April 24, 2026



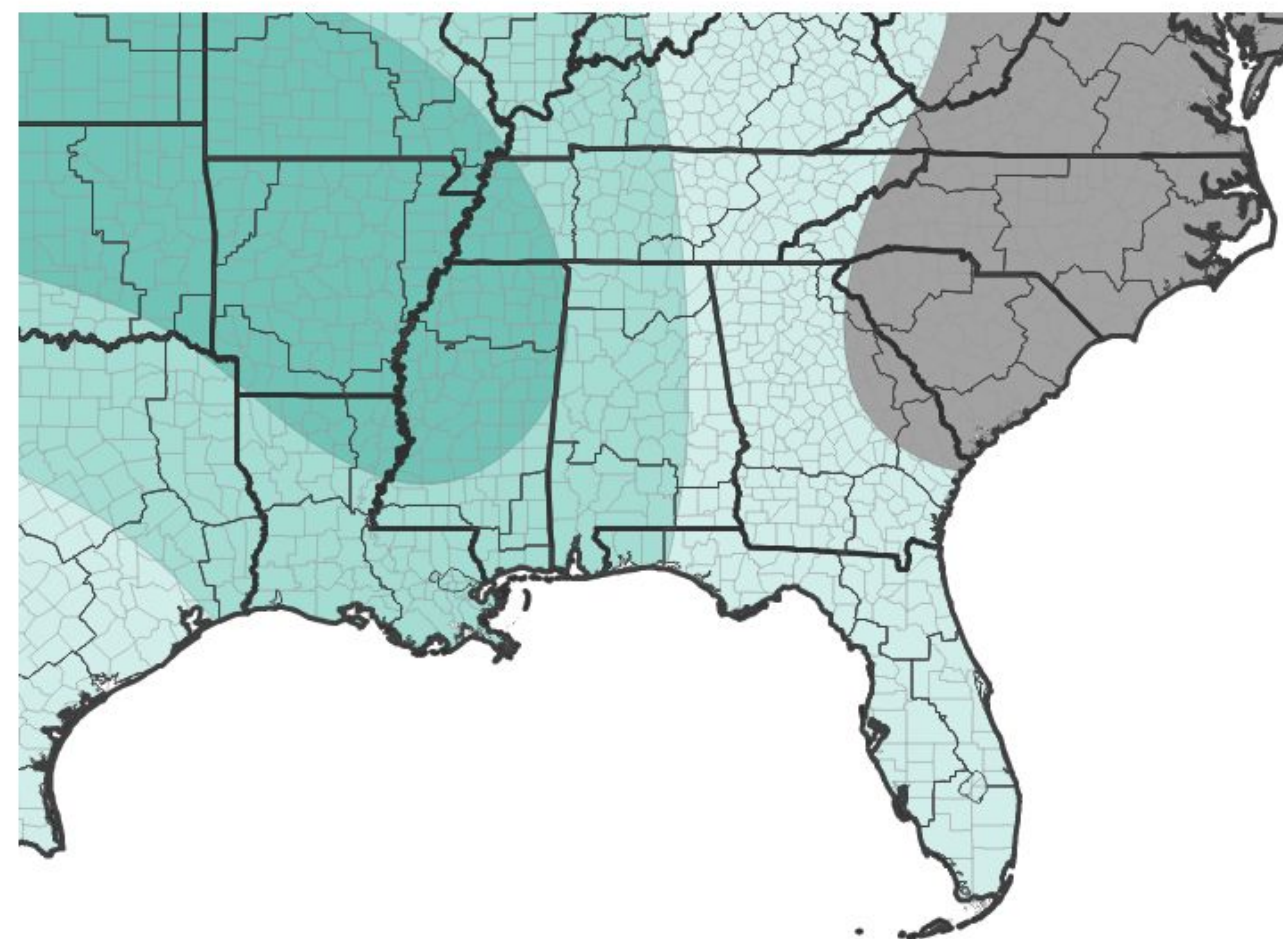
Predicted Inches of Precipitation



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

Last Updated: 04/17/26

8–14 Day Precipitation Outlook for April 23, 2026–April 29, 2026



Probability of Below-Normal Precipitation



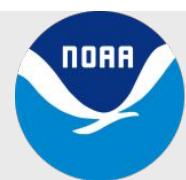
Probability of Above-Normal Precipitation



■ Near-Normal Conditions

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

Last Updated: 04/15/26



National Oceanic and
Atmospheric Administration

U.S. Department of Commerce

National Weather Service
Tallahassee, FL

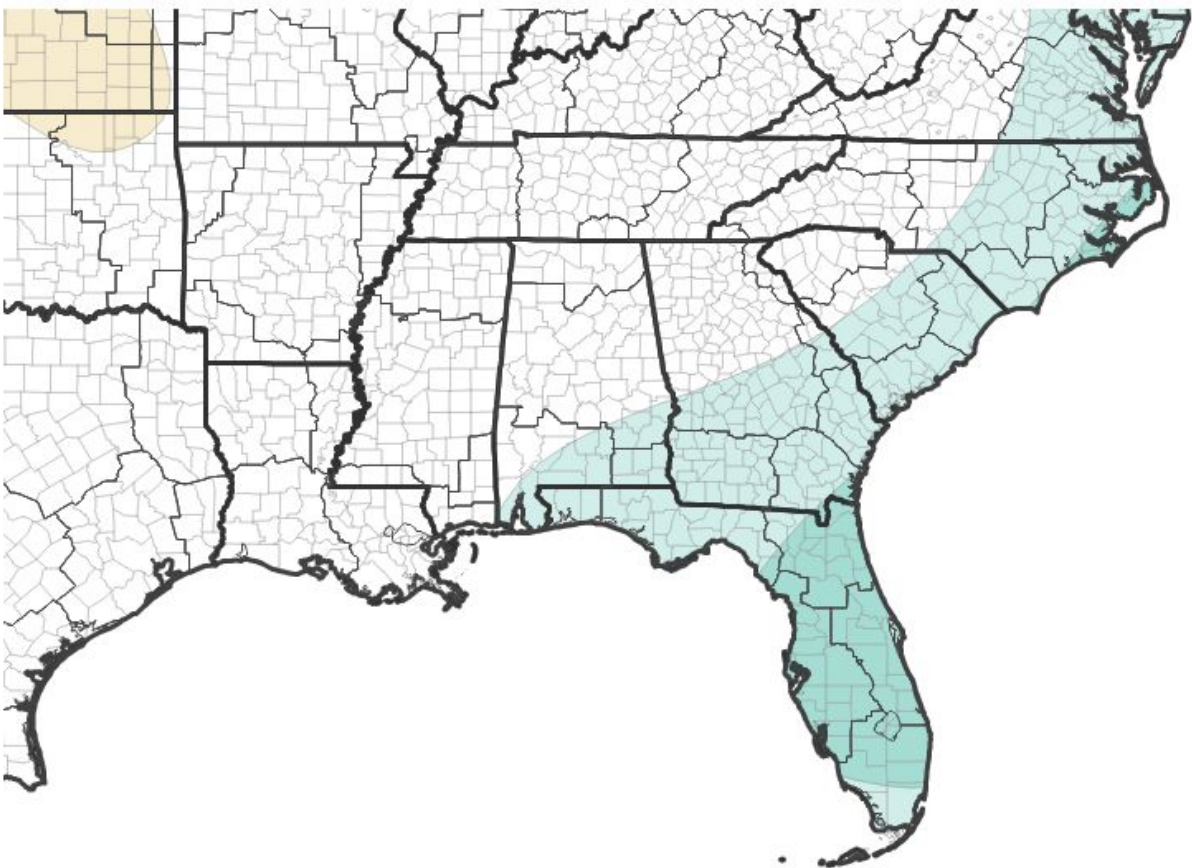


Long-Range Outlooks

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 May 1, 2026–July 31, 2026



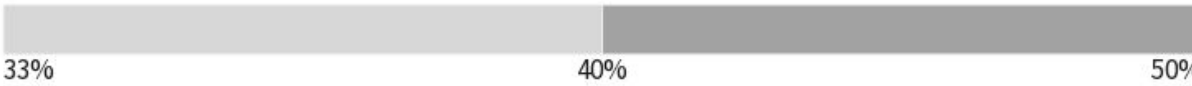
Probability of Below-Normal Precipitation



Probability of Above-Normal Precipitation



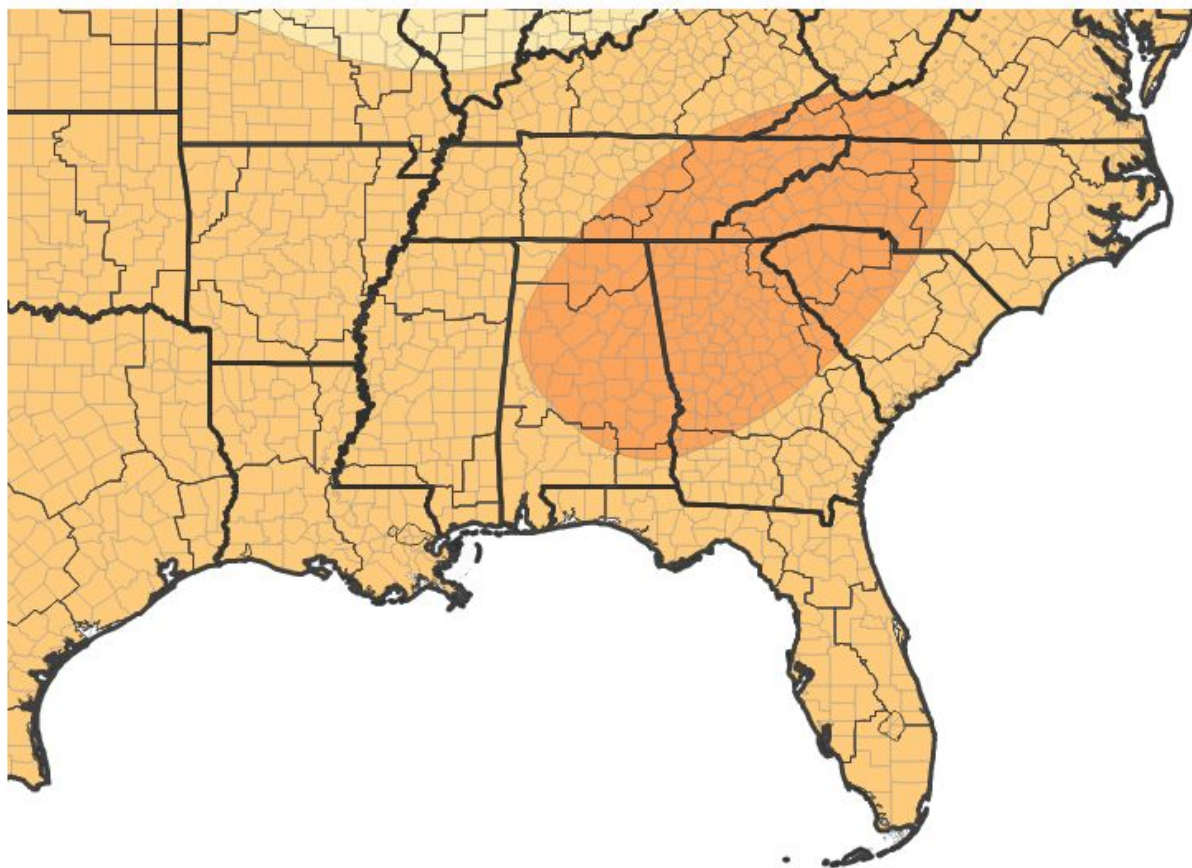
Probability of Near-Normal Precipitation



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

Last Updated: 04/16/26

Seasonal (3-Month) Temperature Outlook for May 1, 2026–July 31, 2026



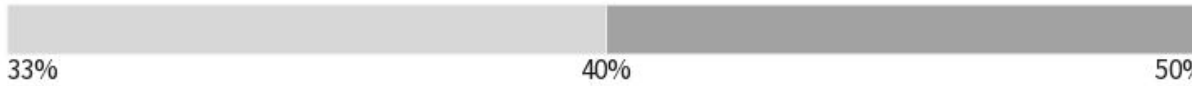
Probability of Below-Normal Temperatures



Probability of Above-Normal Temperatures



Probability of Near-Normal Temperatures



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

Last Updated: 04/16/26

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](#).

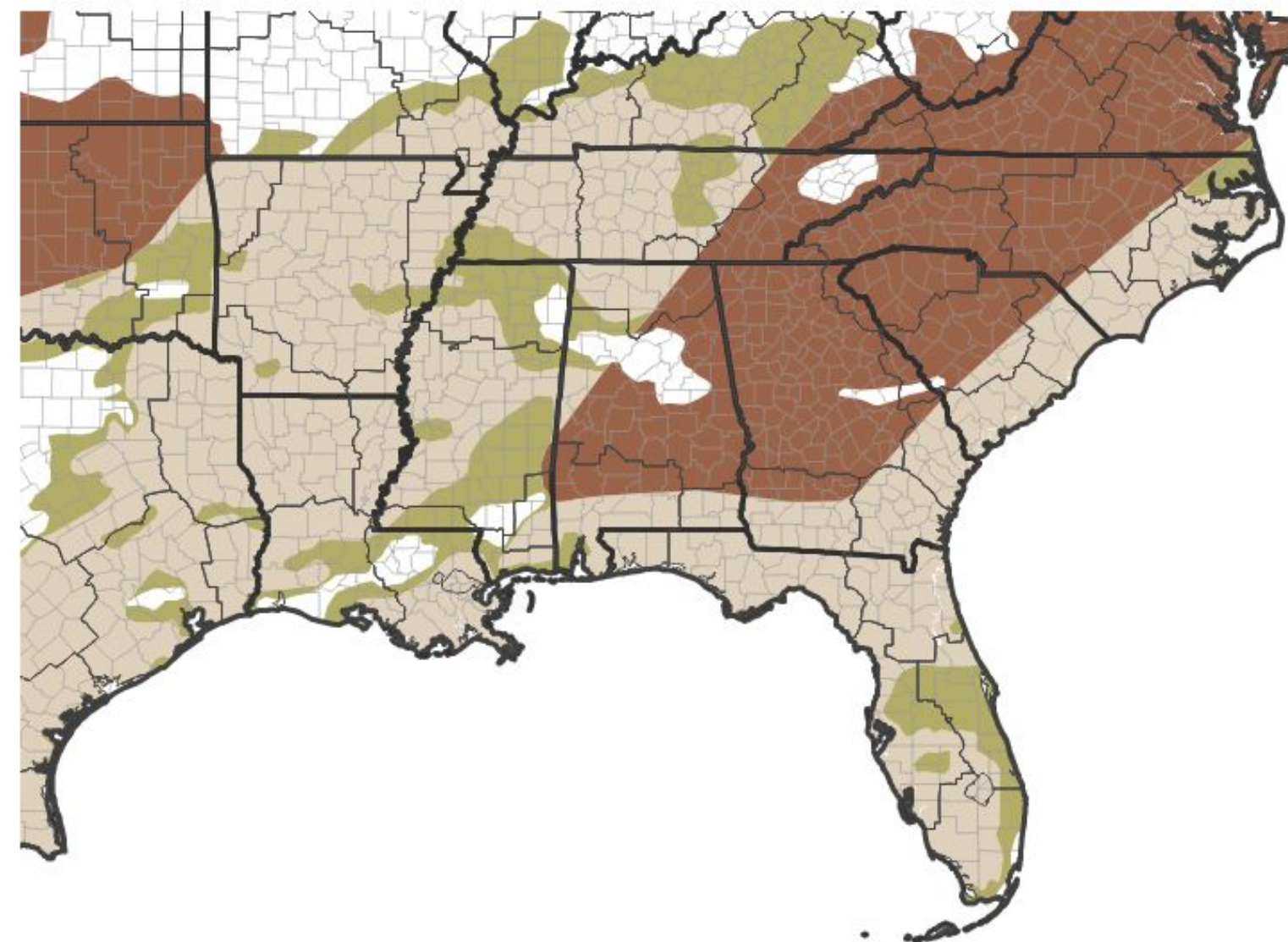
- Given the prediction that favors above normal precipitation in the months ahead, drought is expected to persist, but the severity may improve across the region once the summer sea breeze season begins.
- Keep in mind, this is a 3-month outlook. Conditions will worsen in April as below normal rainfall 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.

Links to the latest:

[Climate Prediction Center Monthly Drought Outlook](#)

[Climate Prediction Center Seasonal Drought Outlook](#)

Seasonal (3-Month) Drought Outlook for April 16, 2026–July 31, 2026

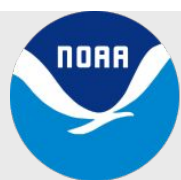


Drought Is Predicted To...



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

Last Updated: 04/16/26



**National Oceanic and
Atmospheric Administration**

U.S. Department of Commerce

**National Weather Service
Tallahassee, FL**