

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

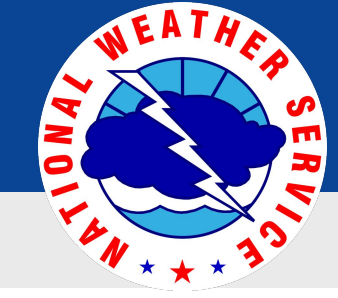
Valid May 7, 2026

Issued By: National Weather Service Tallahassee, FL

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

- This product will be updated May 15, 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 across much of the region.**
 - **Recent rainfall was welcome, but it did not change drought severity.**
 - This drought is eclipsing the intensity of the 2011/2012 drought.
 - Long term hydrologic drought impacts persist with significant impacts to rivers and streams. Lakes and ponds are at exceptionally low levels or dry.
 - Ongoing rain into the weekend may lead to some near term drought improvement, however, significant rainfall is needed to end the drought.





U.S. Drought Monitor

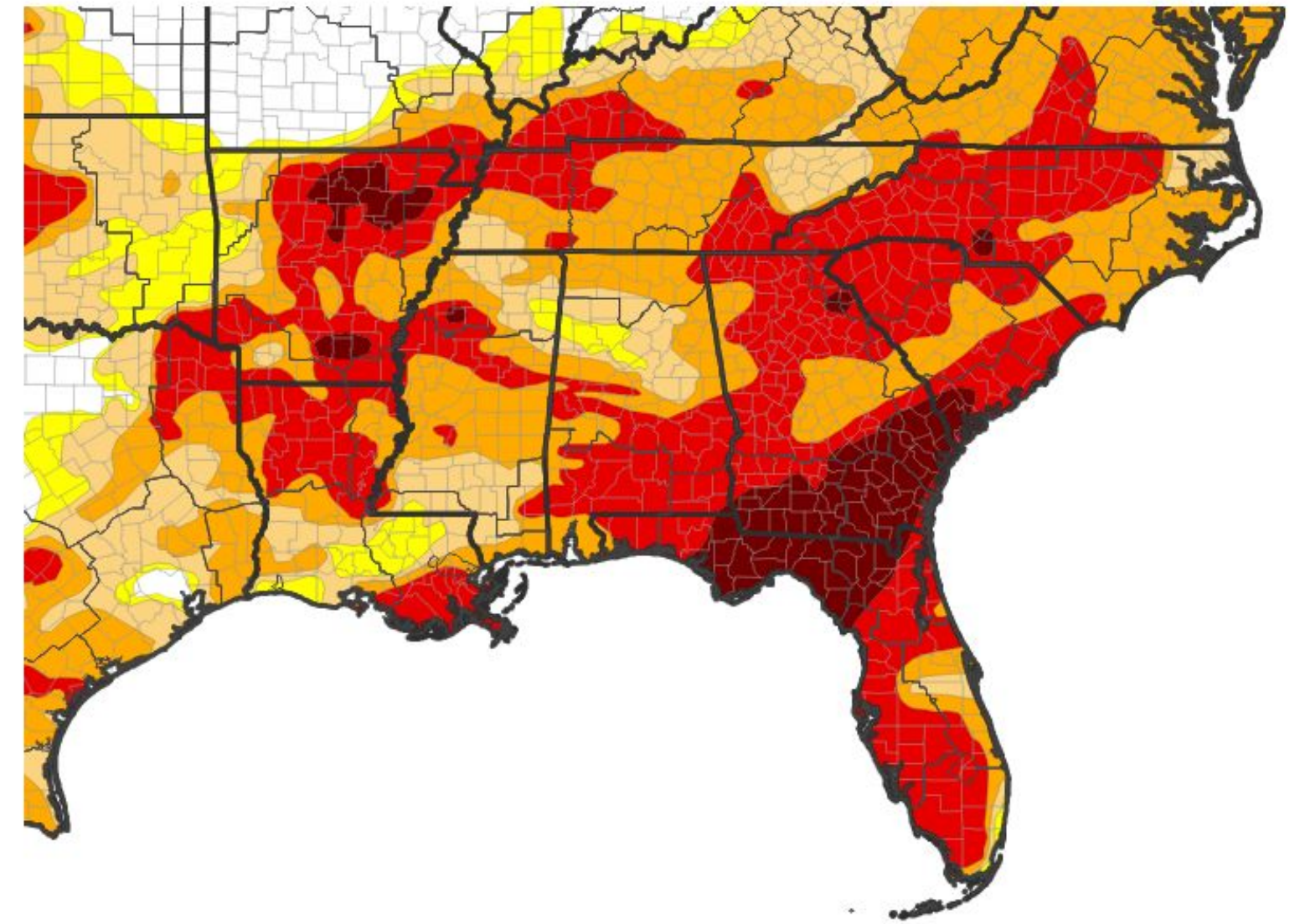
Link to the [latest U.S. Drought Monitor](#) for Southeast Alabama, Southwest Georgia, and the Florida Panhandle & Big Bend

- Even with recent rains, drought conditions were unchanged this week given long standing deficits and very poor hydrologic conditions.

Drought intensity and Extent:

- **D4 (Exceptional Drought):**
 - In Georgia: Generally south of a line from AL/GA/FL border to Fitzgerald.
 - In Florida: From Bay County to Jackson County eastward to the Suwannee River.
- **D3 (Extreme Drought):**
 - In Florida: West Bay and Jackson Counties to Walton County.
 - In Georgia: The remainder of South Georgia.
 - In Alabama: All of Southeast Alabama

U.S. Drought Monitor

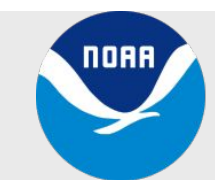


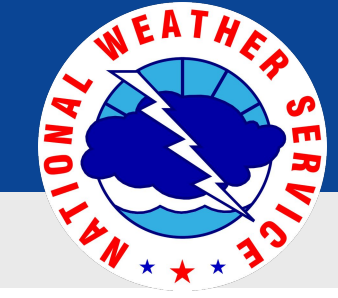
U.S. Drought Monitor



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

Data Valid: 05/05/26



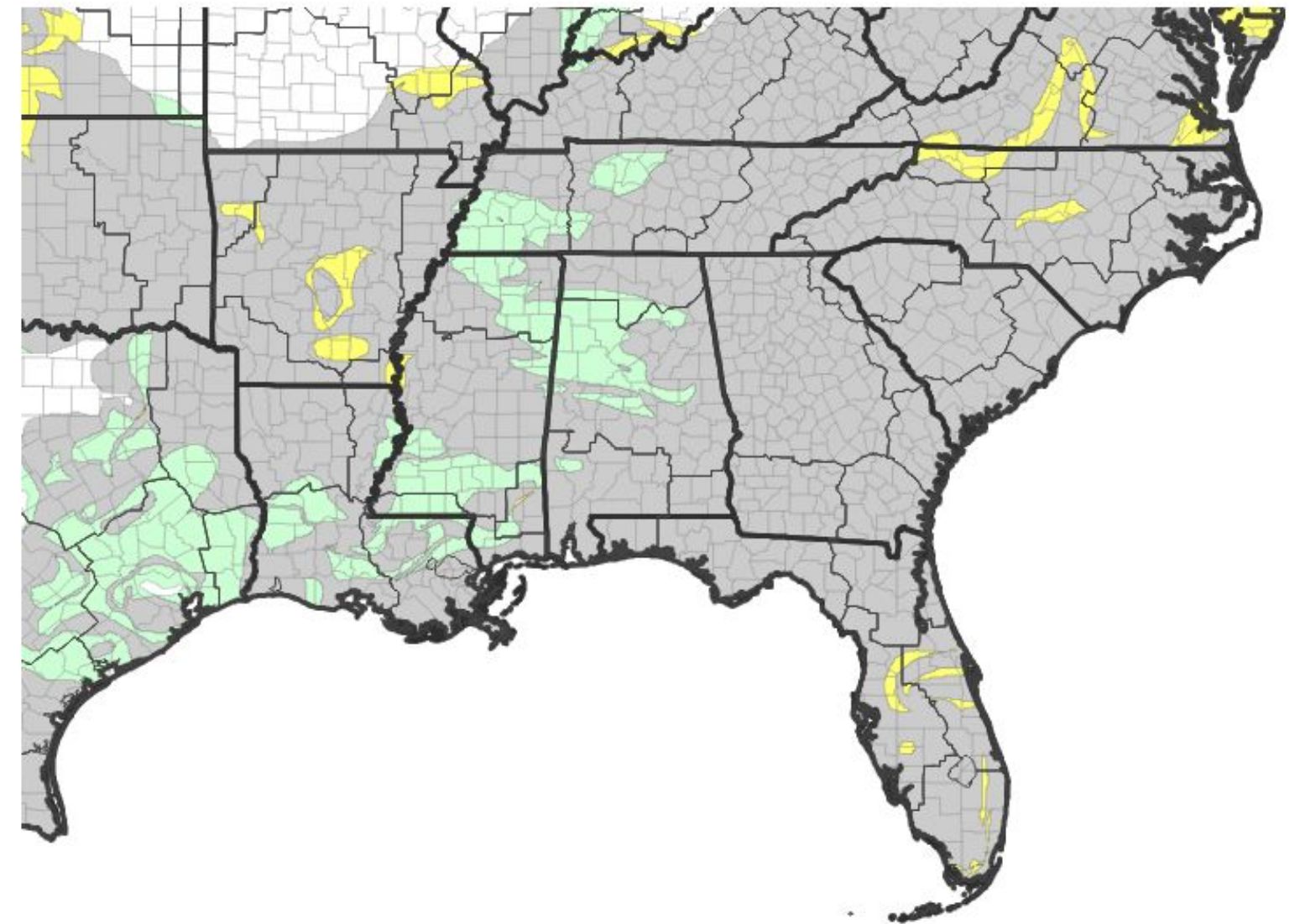


Recent Change in Drought Intensity

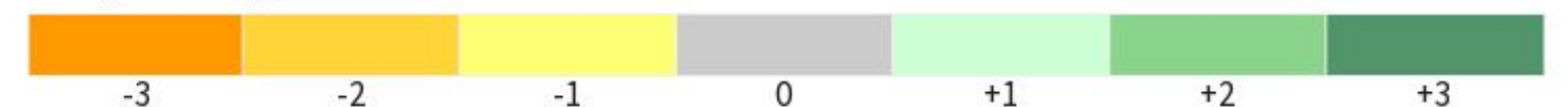
Link to the latest [4-week change map](#) for Southeast Alabama, Southwest Georgia, and the Florida Panhandle & Big Bend

- Even with recent rains, this was not enough to change the severity of ongoing drought conditions across the region.
- One-Week Drought Monitor Class Change:
 - **No Change**
 - All areas in the region.

U.S. Drought Monitor 1-Week Change Map

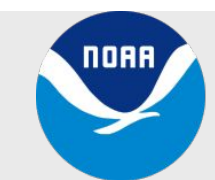


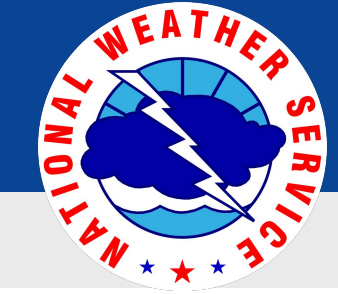
Drought Change Since Last Week



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

Data Valid: 05/05/26



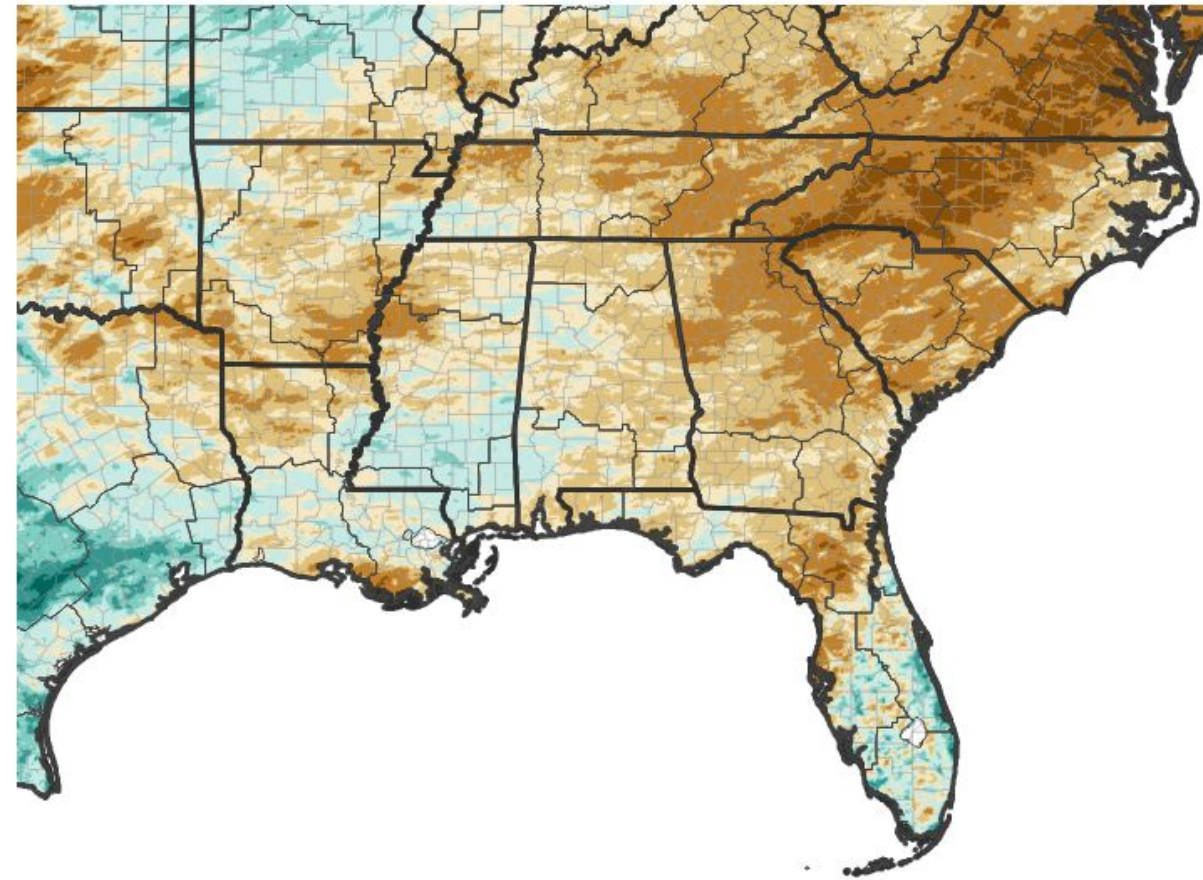


Precipitation

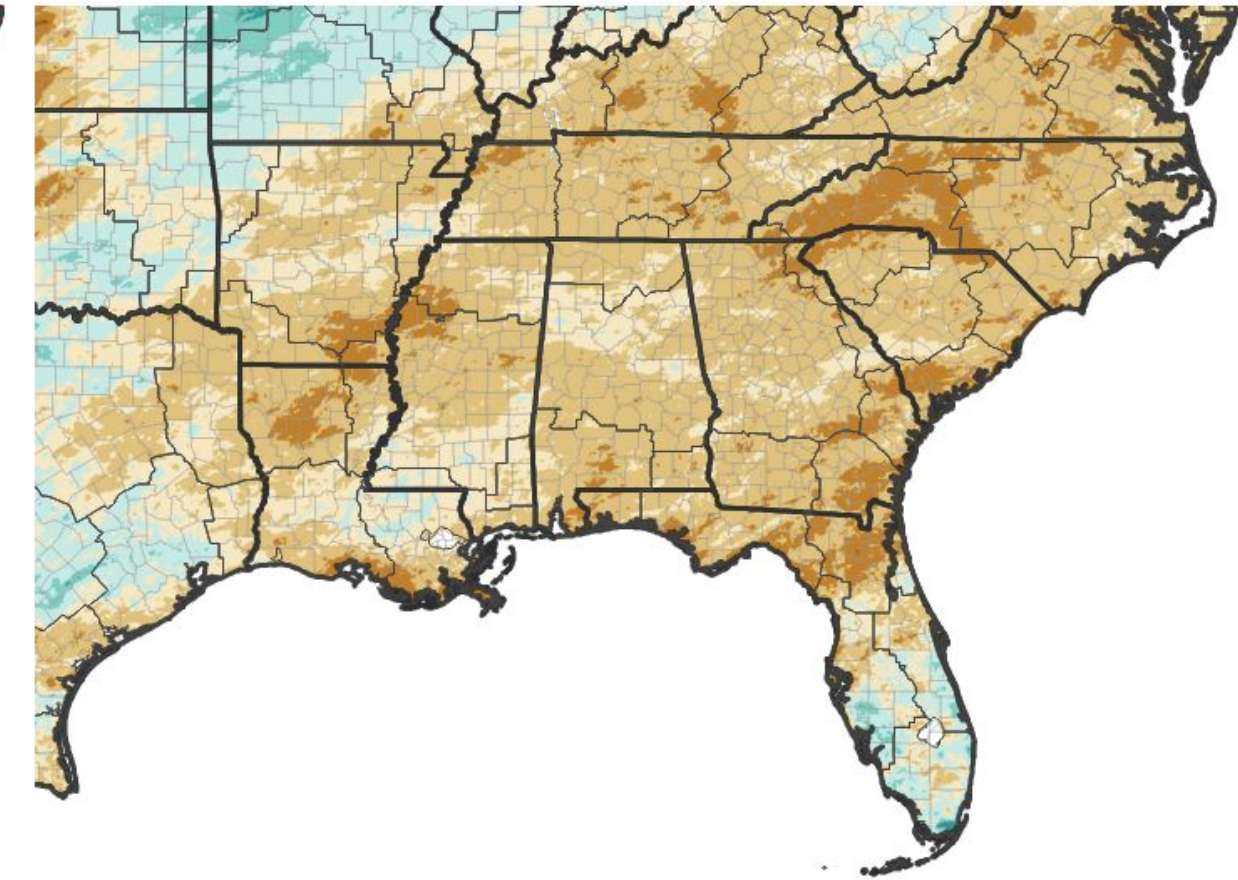
Note: Precipitation after 7 AM EST/6 AM CST Tuesday is incorporated in next week's Drought Monitor

	Last 30 Days		Last 90 Days	
	Rainfall	Percent	Rainfall	Percent
DeFuniak Springs*	4.63"	98.1%	12.5"	82.1%
Panama City ECP	1.74"	39.5%	3.81"	26.2%
Dothan	2.80"	65.5%	8.18"	58.9%
Marianna	4.32"	121.9%	8.70"	67.4%
Georgetown**	2.92"	71.5%	10.16"	74.5%
Dawson**	3.11"	79.6%	7.29"	54.3%
Arlington**	3.71"	96.2%	8.46"	62.4%
Albany	3.52"	106.5%	11.82"	101.4%
Cairo**	4.43"	126.6%	7.24"	56.4%
Tallahassee	2.34"	67.6%	5.77"	44.9%
Moultrie**	3.76"	113.5%	7.08"	55.7%
Monticello*	2.90"	79.7%	8.15"	64.4%
Ty Ty**	3.79"	113.3%	8.22"	66.8%
Alapaha**	3.54"	114.2%	5.97"	50.4%
Valdosta	1.85"	54.0%	6.53"	61.6%
Perry***	1.06"	32.1%	5.00"	43.5%

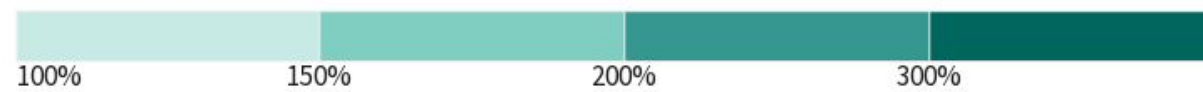
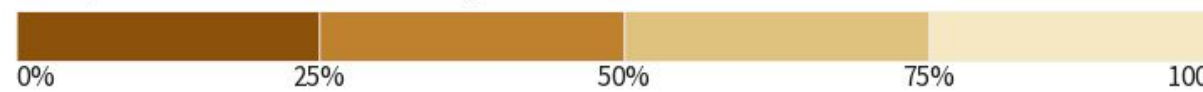
30-Day Percent of Normal Precipitation



90-Day Percent of Normal Precipitation

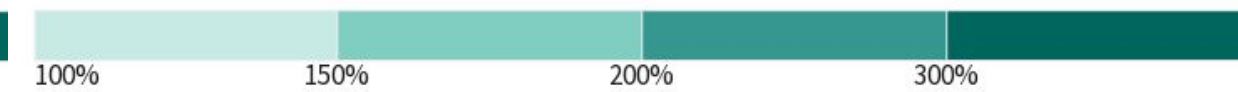
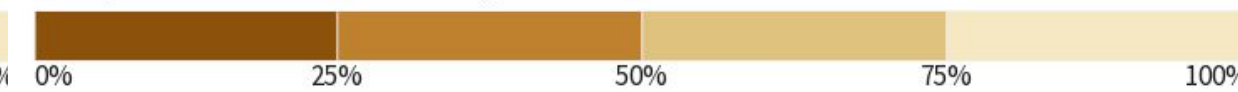


Precipitation Shown as a Percentage of Normal Conditions



Source(s): National Weather Service Multi-Radar Multi-Sensor System; Last Updated: 05/07/26
image courtesy of Drought.gov

Precipitation Shown as a Percentage of Normal Conditions



Source(s): National Weather Service Multi-Radar Multi-Sensor System; Last Updated: 05/07/26
image courtesy of Drought.gov

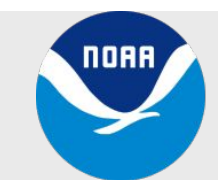
Rainfall totals through May 7, 2026. Non-NWS Data Courtesy:

*University of Florida - Florida Automated Weather Network

**University of Georgia Weather Network

***Suwannee River Water Management District

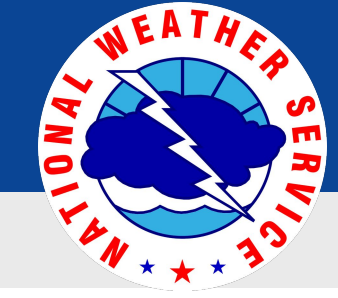
Climatology for non-NWS stations is estimated using PRISM data.



National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

U.S. Department of Commerce

National Weather Service
Tallahassee, FL

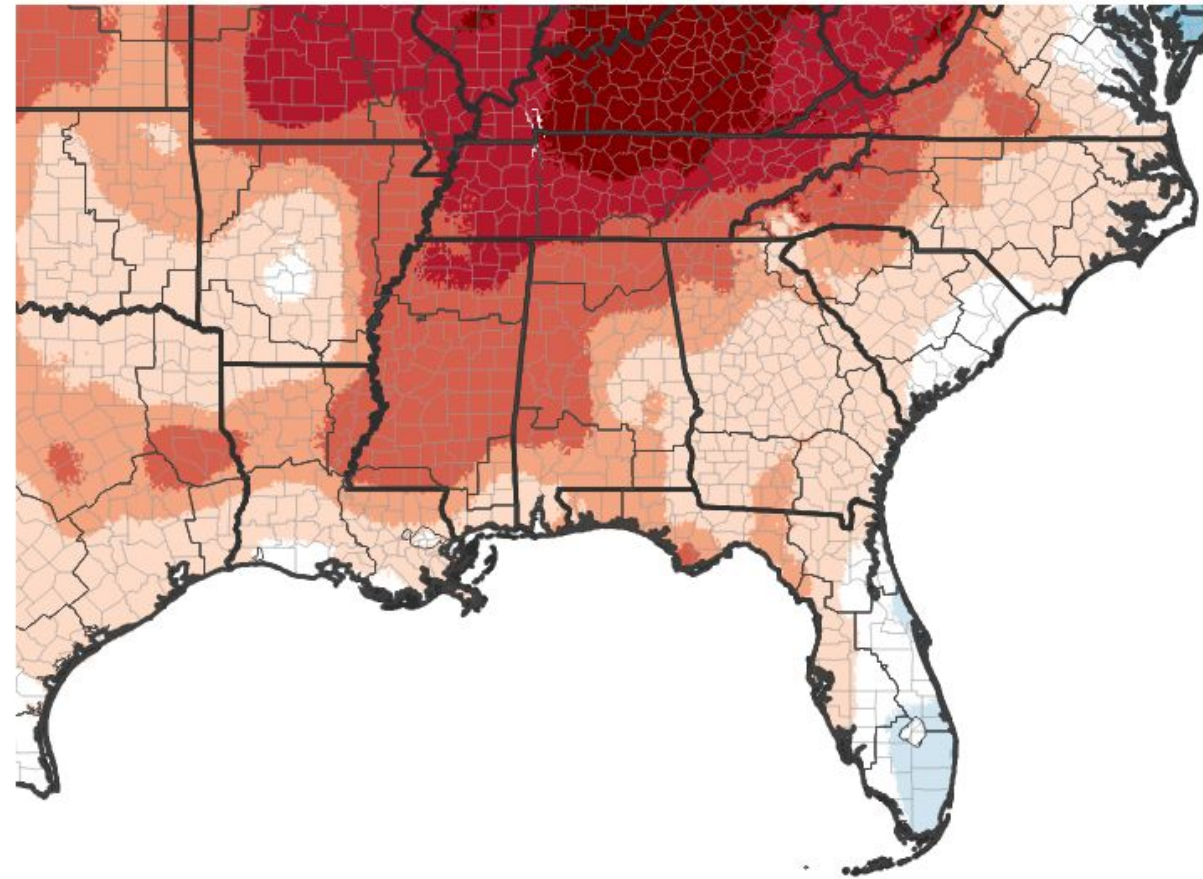


Temperature

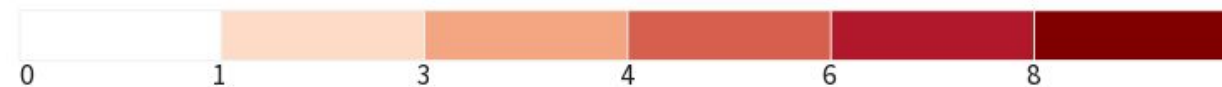
	Last 30 Days	
	Average High (Departure)	Average Low (Departure)
Tallahassee	84.3° (+4.0°)	56.0° (+1.5°)
Albany	79.7° (+2.3°)	55.9° (+1.5°)
Valdosta	83.9° (+4.2°)	55.1° (+2.2°)
Marianna	83.0° (+2.8°)	56.2° (+1.0°)
Dothan	81.4° (+2.0°)	56.0° (+0.6°)

- Temperatures continued to be above normal, even with a couple of cool mornings earlier this week.
- Daily relative humidities have also been fairly low until Thursday, which dries out soils and fuels for wildfires.

7-Day Temperature Anomaly



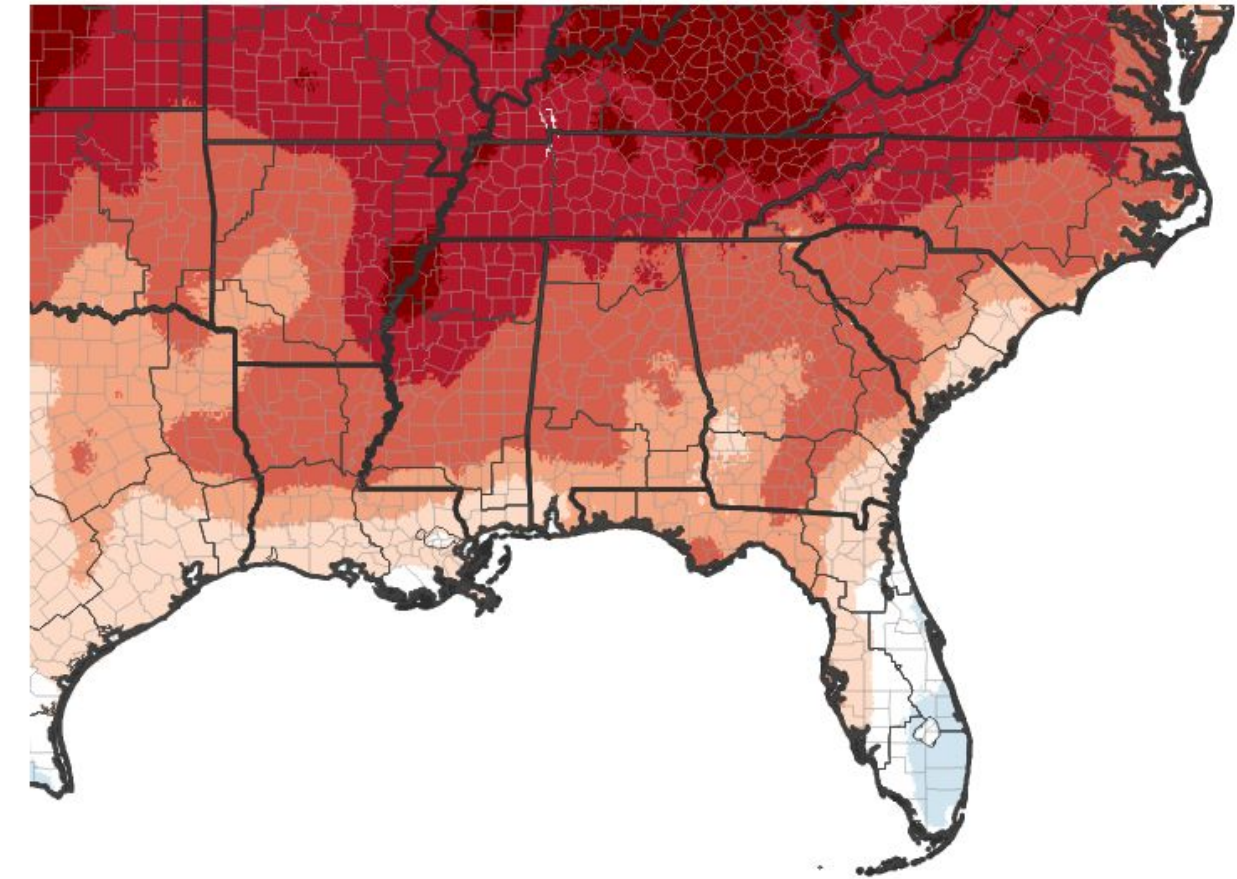
Departure from Normal Max Temperature (°F)



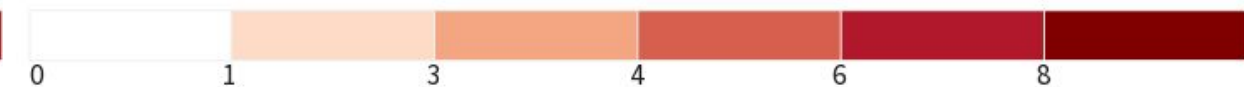
Source(s): NOAA's National Centers for Environmental Information; image courtesy of Drought.gov

Data Valid: 04/29/26

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: 04/29/26





Summary of Impacts - Southeast Alabama

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

Hydrologic Impacts

- Recent rain events have improved streamflows in the near term, but streamflows averaged over the last 28 days remain exceptionally low for this time of year.
- Surface and groundwater levels remain exceptionally low as well. A report from Coffee County indicated that recent rains only marginally improved water levels in holding ponds.

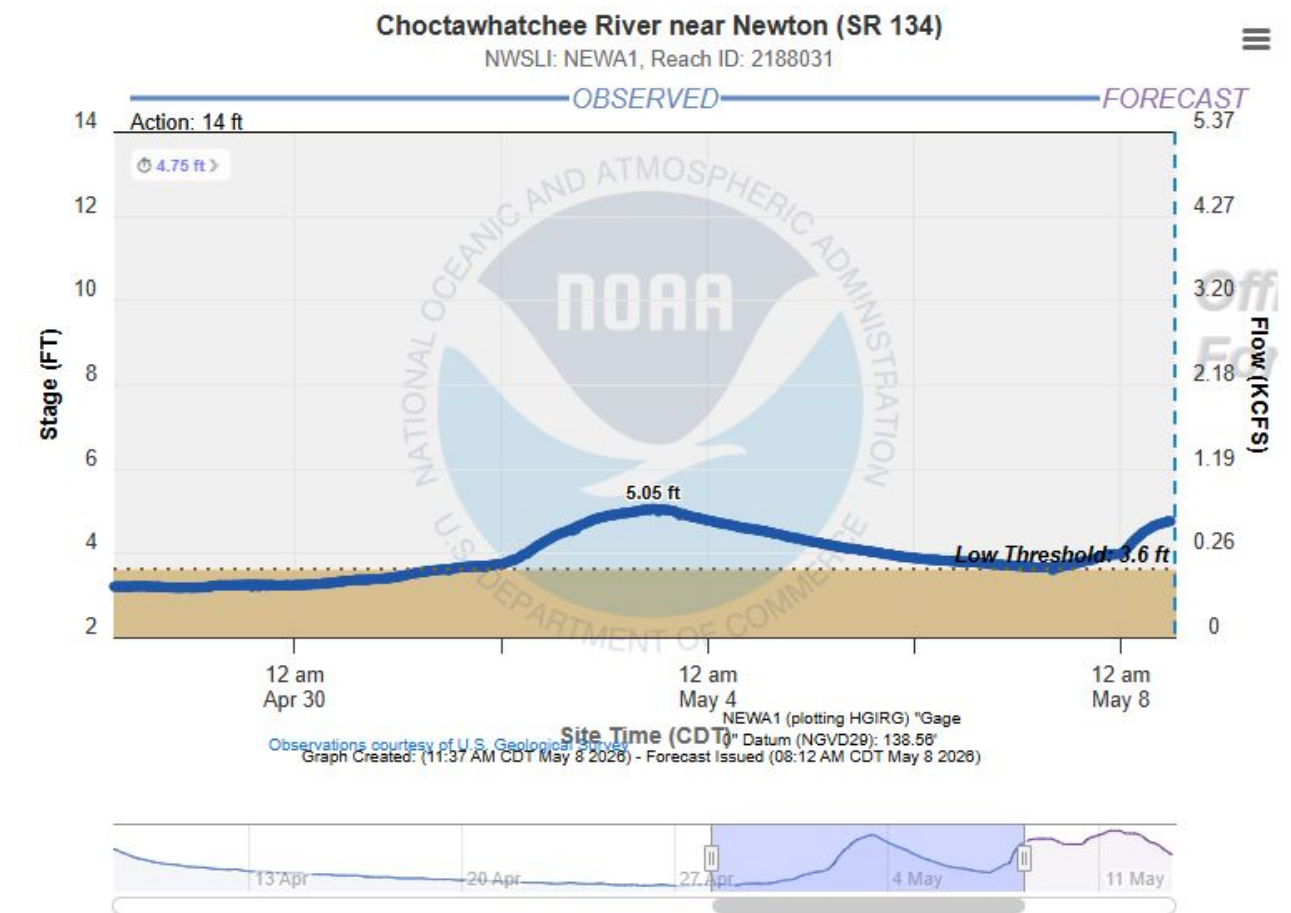
Agricultural Impacts

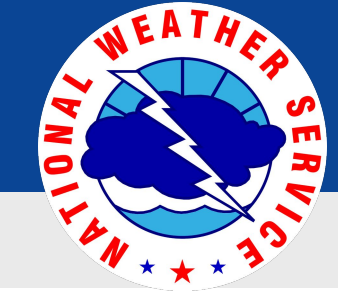
- Pastures have had some improvement with recent rains, but irrigation remains necessary to sustain most crops.

Fire Hazard Impacts

- Keetch-Byram Drought Index (KBDI) values range from 200-400 across the region.
- The KBDI is very responsive to recent rainfall. Fuels dry out quickly even after heavy rainfall in very warm and dry conditions.
- Southern Area Coordination Center [issued a Fuels and Fire Behavior Advisory](#)

Choctawhatchee hydrograph over the last two rainfall events (10 days) shown. The steady decline in water levels after the early May rain event is evident, followed by a recent rise from rainfall on Wednesday night into Thursday. The Choctawhatchee Basin had been near all time lows at the end of April.





Summary of Impacts - Southwest Georgia

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

Hydrologic Impacts

- Streamflows have only improved marginally and are very low for this time of year. Most sites are above all time minimums due to recent rains.
- 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

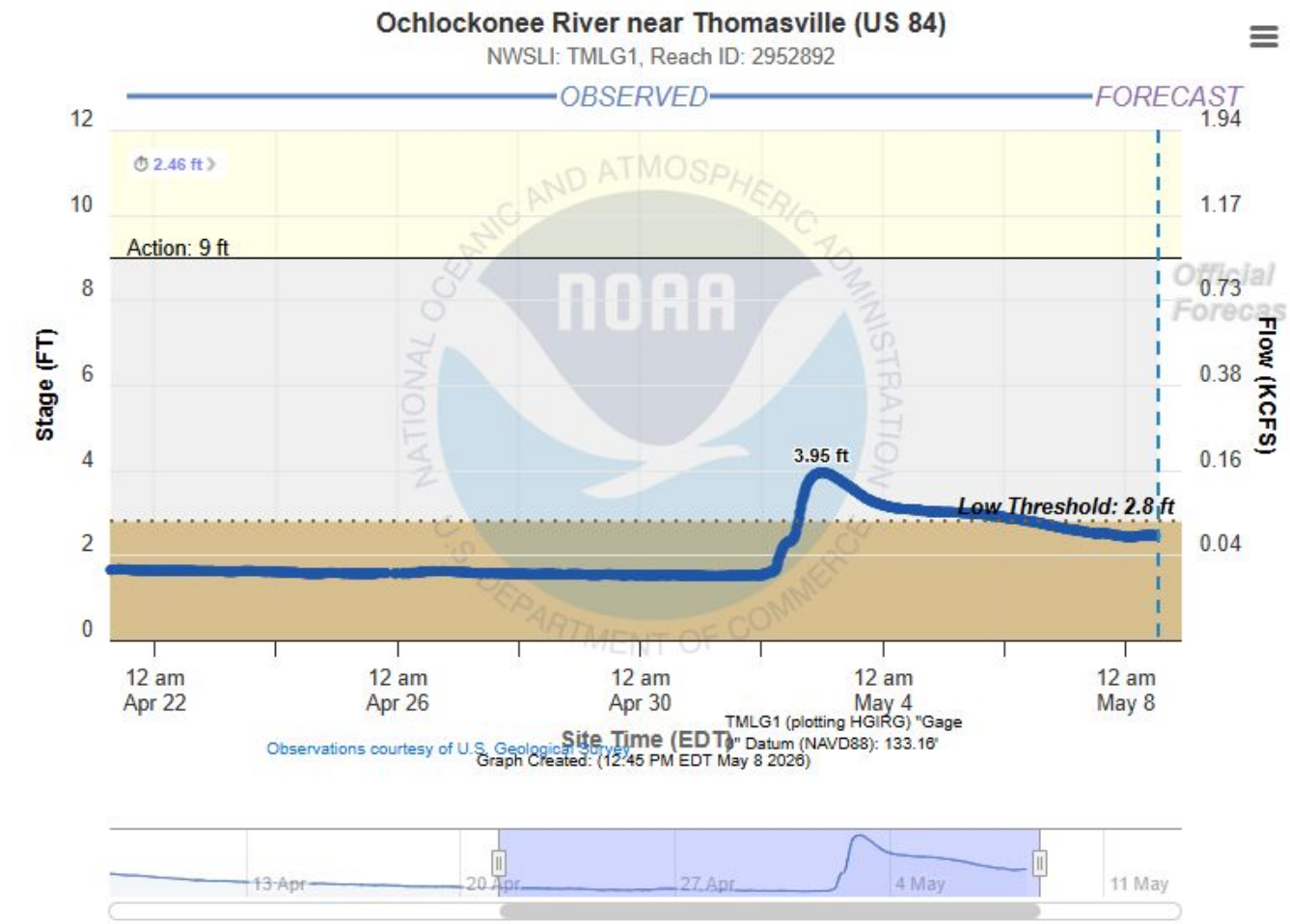
- Planting season continues with irrigation carrying a heavy load. Recent rains are allowing planting to expand..
- Non-irrigated fields delayed planting, so the growing season was impacted in these areas.

Fire Hazard Impacts

- Keetch-Byram Drought Index (KBDI) values range from 350-500 across the region, highest close to I-75.
- A state issued burn ban is in effect for Lowndes and Berrien Counties.

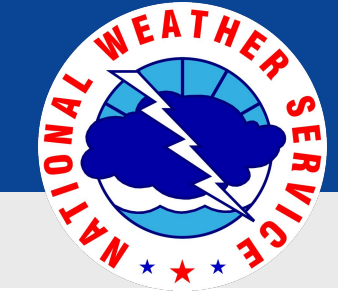
Mitigation Actions

- Southern Area Coordination Center [issued a Fuels and Fire Behavior Advisory](#)



Hydrograph for the Ochlockonee River near Thomasville. Recent rains at the first of May led to rise from record low flows. However, the river has resumed a steady decline in the absence of widespread rainfall.





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, though many sites are now above daily record lows.
- 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

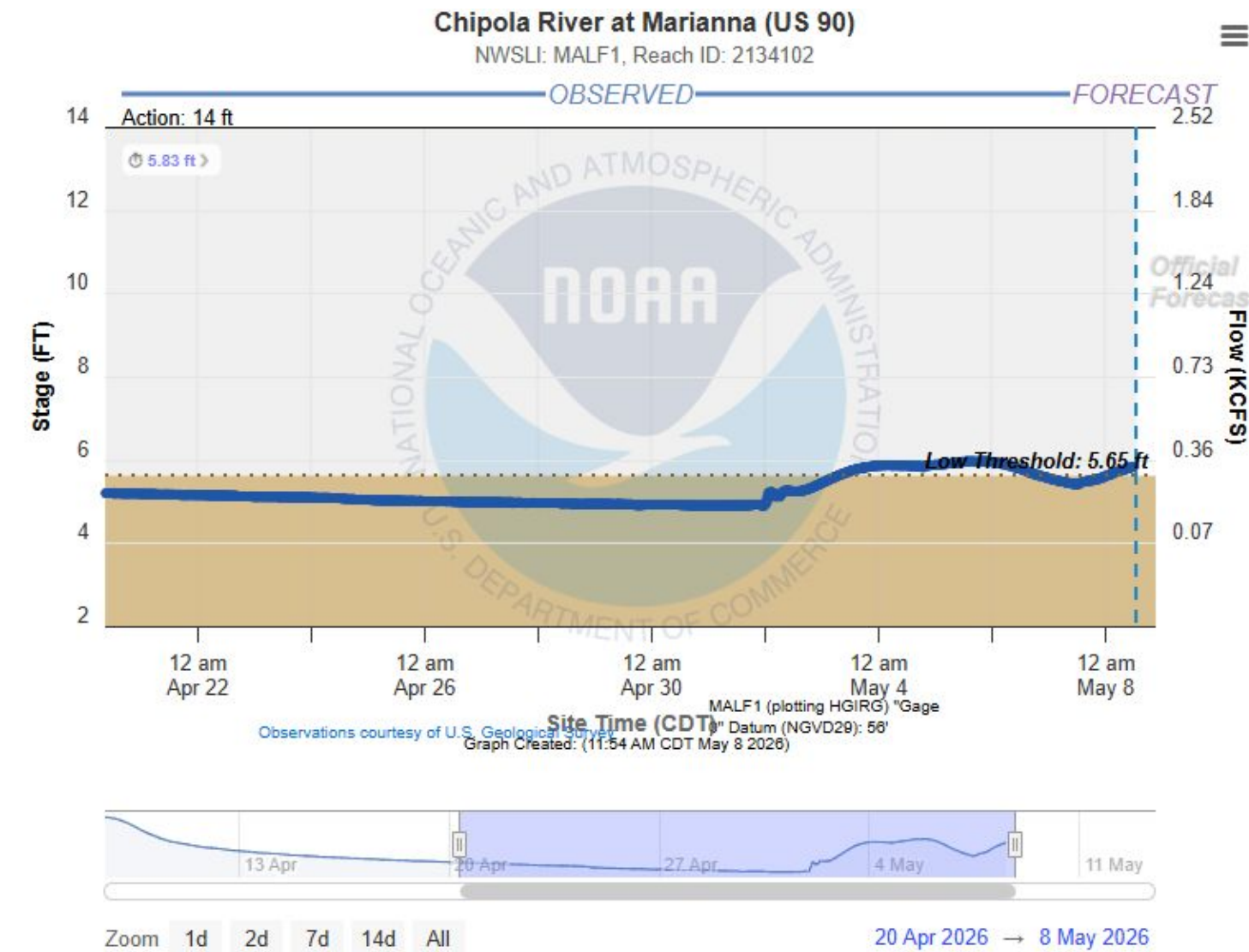
- Planting season is underway, but concerns exist given exceptionally low sub-surface water levels that irrigation will further stress the water table as farmers draw water from wells.

Fire Hazard Impacts

- Keetch-Byram Drought Index (KBDI) values range from 250-550 across the region.
- Burn bans are in place for Walton, Washington, Jackson, Bay, Calhoun, and Gulf Counties.

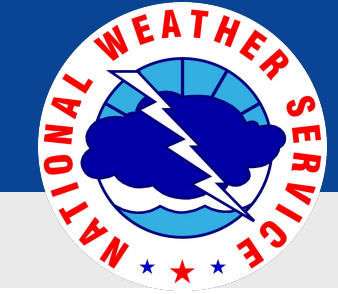
Mitigation Actions

- Northwest Florida Water Management District has issued a [water shortage warning](#) for their watershed.
- Southern Area Coordination Center [issued a Fuels and Fire Behavior Advisory](#)



Hydrograph for the Chipola River at Marianna. Even with recent rains, only marginal improvement is noted with streamflows on the Chipola River.





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, though some in the Ochlockonee Basin are above record low flows given recent rainfall. Exceptionally low flows to record low flows continue on the Suwannee Basin.
- Surface and groundwater levels are exceptionally low. Numerous lakes and holding ponds are dry across the Big Bend.

Agricultural Impacts

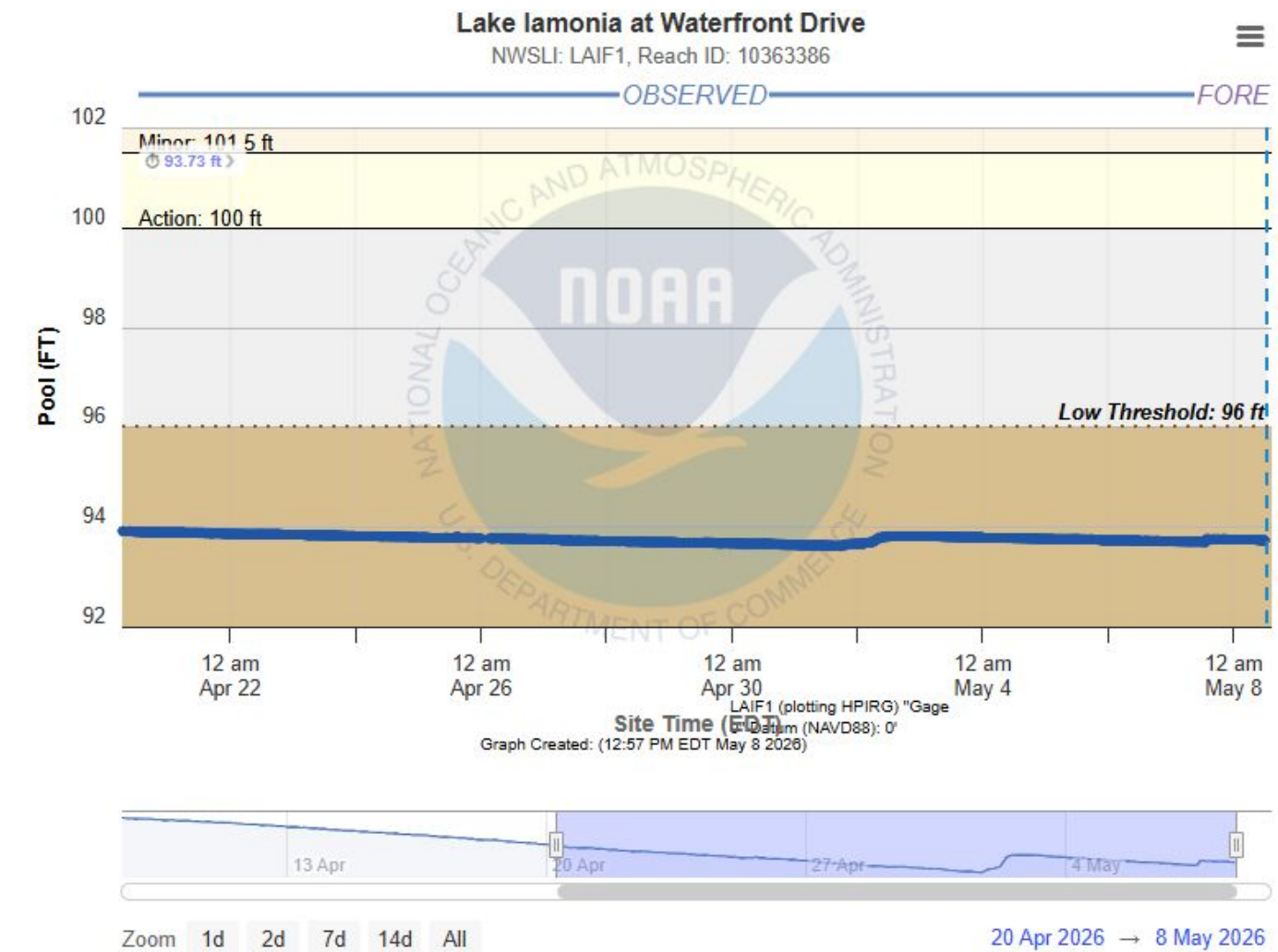
- Planting season is underway, but concerns exist given exceptionally low sub-surface water levels that irrigation will further stress the water table.

Fire Hazard Impacts

- Keetch-Byram Drought Index (KBDI) values range from 400-650, highest in Dixie County.
- Burn bans are in effect for Gadsden, Liberty, Franklin, Leon, Wakulla, Jefferson, Madison, Taylor, Lafayette, and Dixie Counties.

Mitigation Actions

- Suwannee River Water Management District has issued a [water shortage advisory](#) for their watershed.
- Southern Area Coordination Center [issued a Fuels and Fire Behavior Advisory](#)



Hydrograph for Lake Iamonia. Lake Iamonia is a prairie lake in Northern Leon County. Even with recent rains, which barely resulted in any improvement, the lake depends on high flows from the Ochlockonee to refill much of the lake. The lake and river are indirectly connected at the southwestern end of the lake.





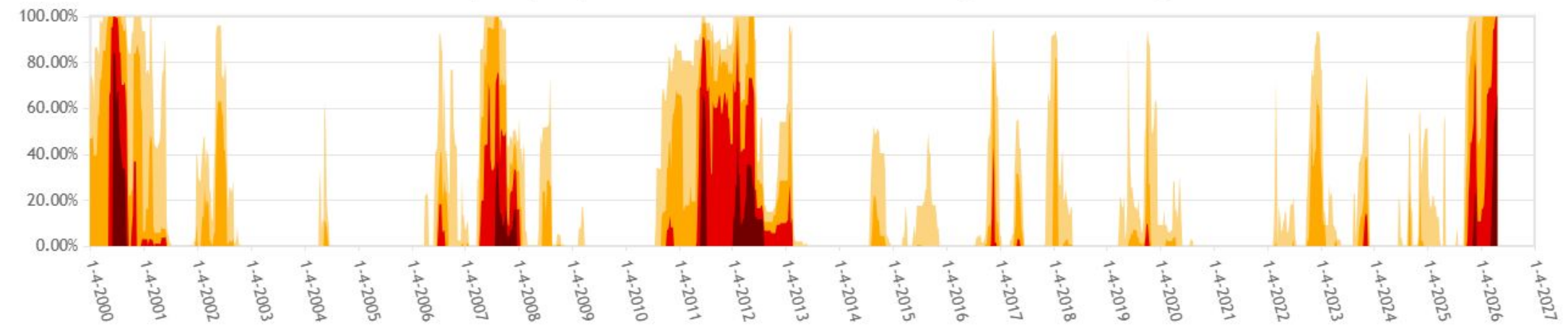
A Perspective on this Drought

Links: [Drought Monitor Time Series](#)

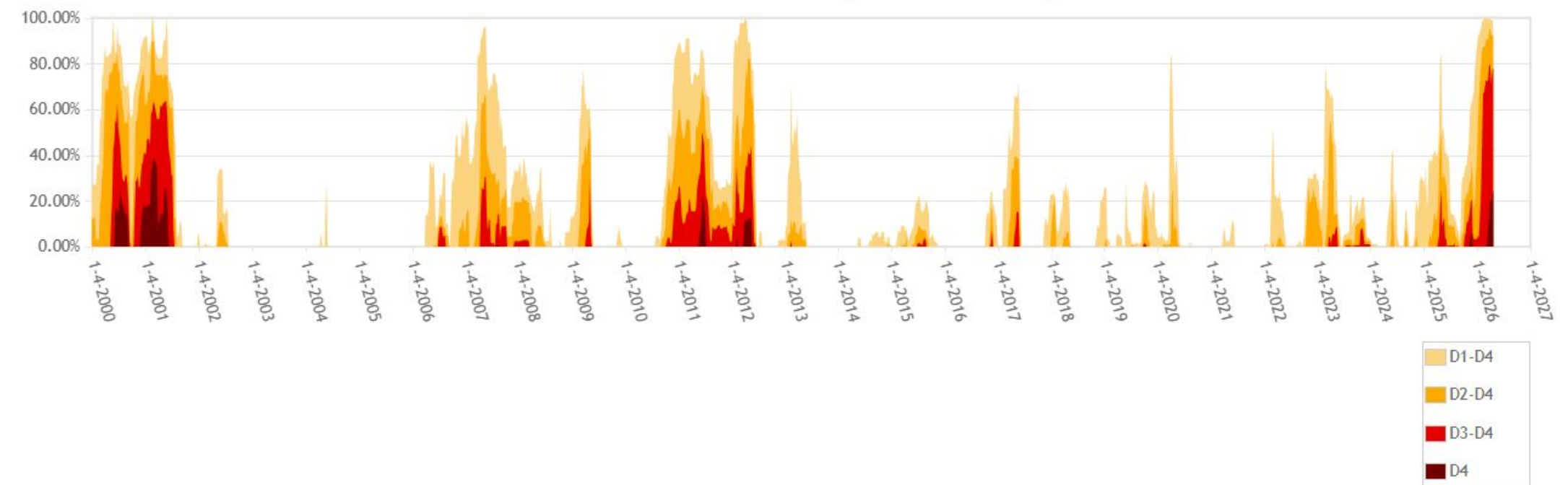
How does this drought compare to past long term droughts in the Tallahassee forecast area?

- There have been four long duration extreme droughts since 2000 in our region, including this current drought.
- This drought is not as long as the 2011/2012 drought, but the severity has now matched that of the 2000 drought.
- The entire Tallahassee forecast area is D3 (Extreme Drought) or worse. This did not occur in the 2011/2012 drought.
- In the Tallahassee forecast area this is the highest percent coverage of D3 since the 2000 drought.
- 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

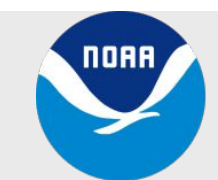


Florida Percent Area in U.S. Drought Monitor Categories



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.

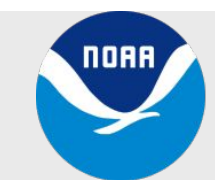
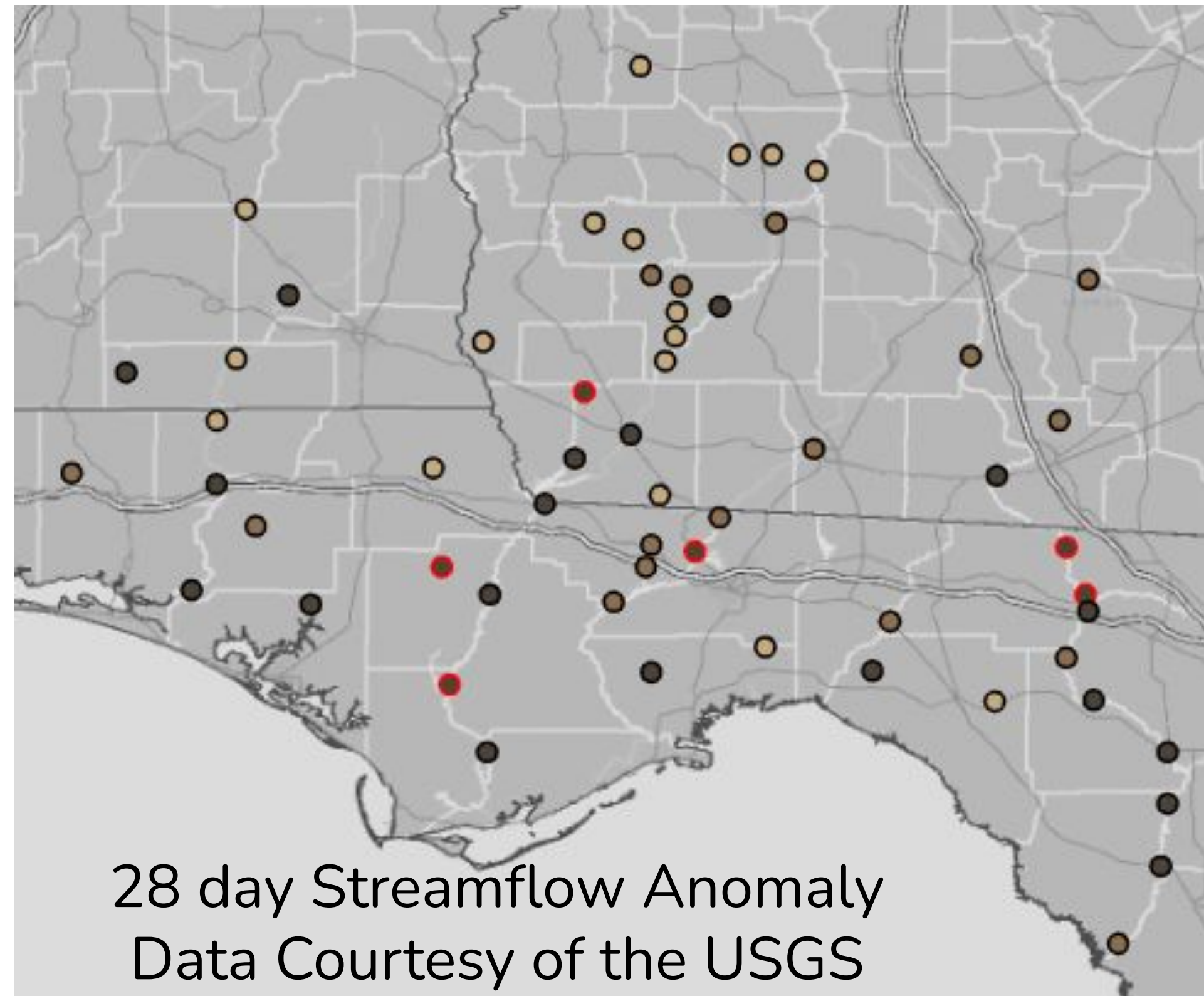




Hydrologic Conditions and Impacts

- Streamflow conditions are exceptionally low with a few sites at record lows over the last month.
- Recharge season has ended, and the lack of significant rainfall during that time frame makes it difficult for river levels to improve heading into Summer.
- Planting season is underway. Irrigation and plant growth is pulling additional water from the soil. More rain is needed to alleviate groundwater issues.
- 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

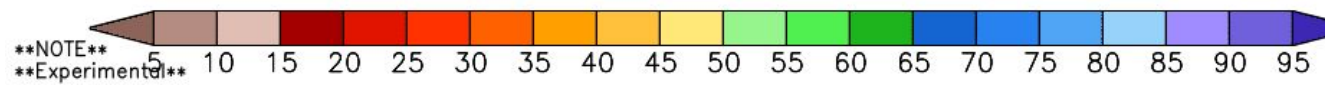
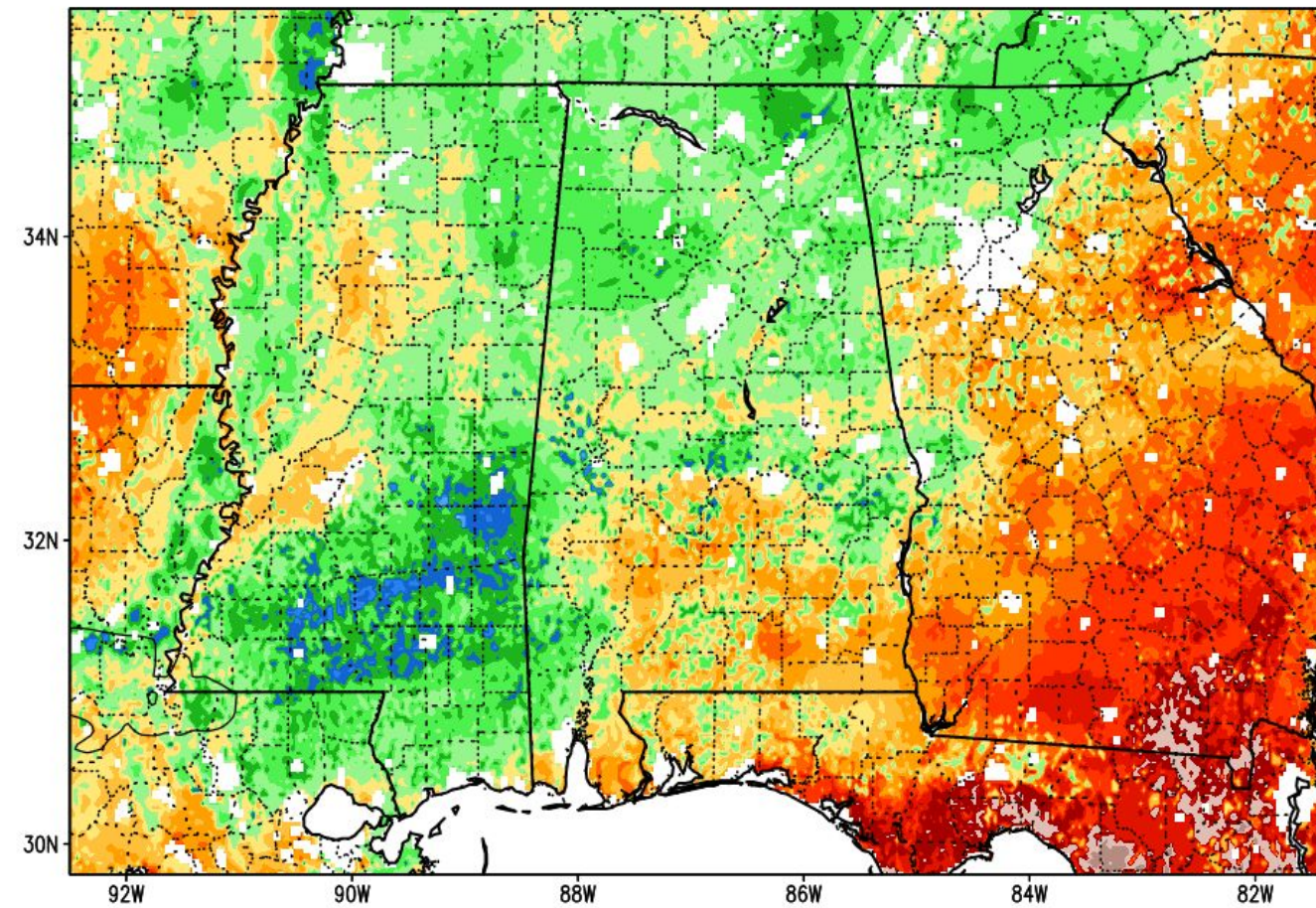




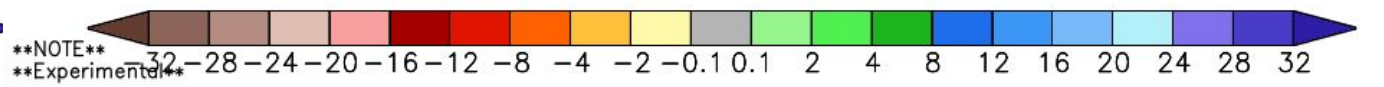
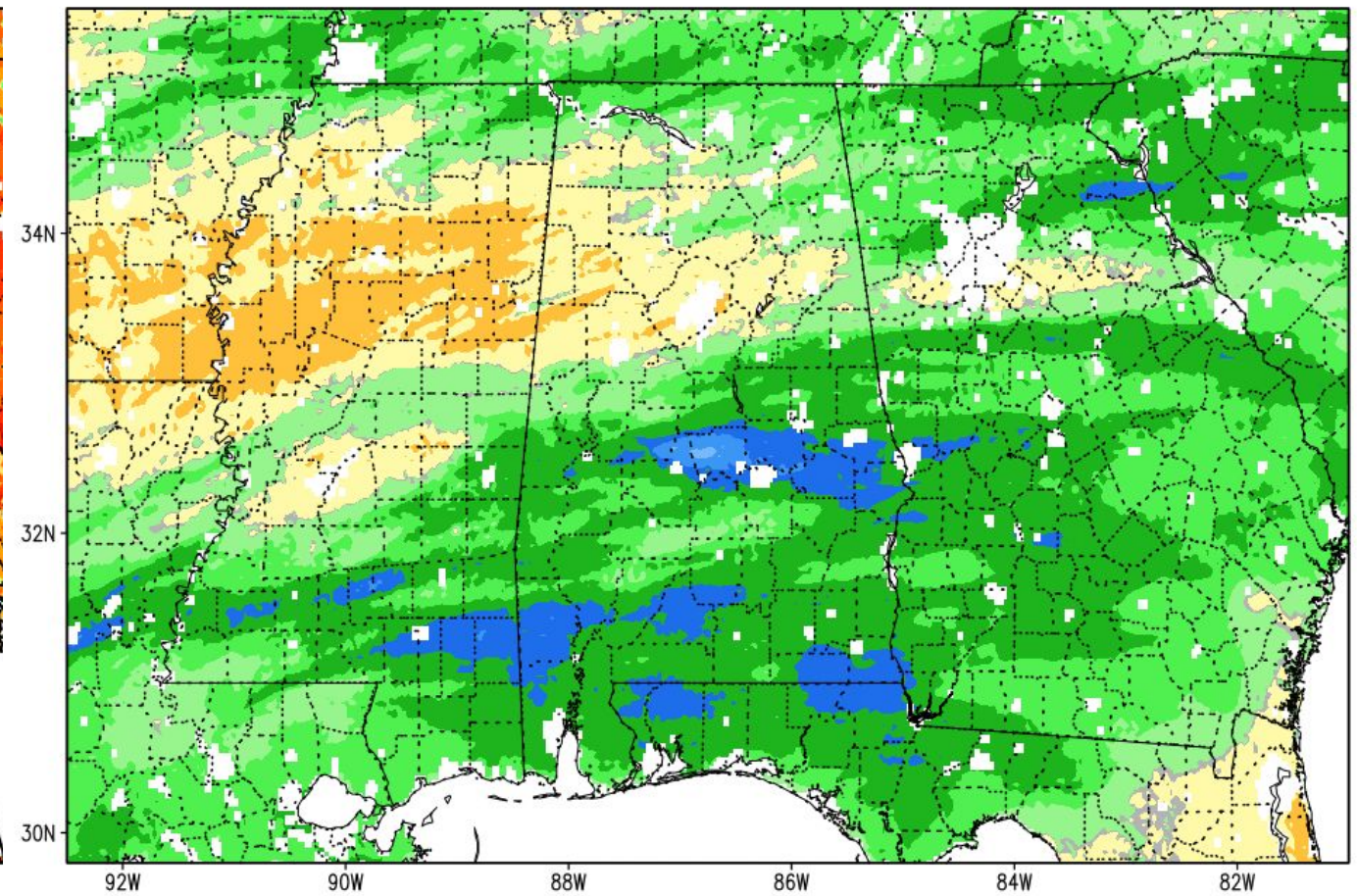
Agricultural Impacts

- Deep layer soil moisture remains drier than normal across the region, especially in our harder hit drought areas in South Georgia and North Florida.
- Recent rains have improved soil conditions, especially across Southeast Alabama and the Florida Panhandle.

Column-Integrated Relative Soil Moisture (available water; %) valid 12z 08 May 2026
Precipitation in previous hour (1,2,5,10,15,20,25 mm contours)

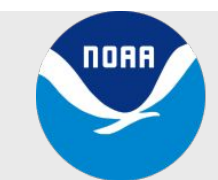


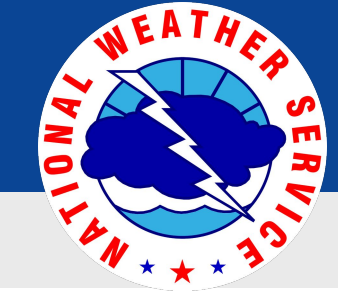
1-Week Difference in Column Relative Soil Moisture (%) valid 12z 08 May 2026



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](#)



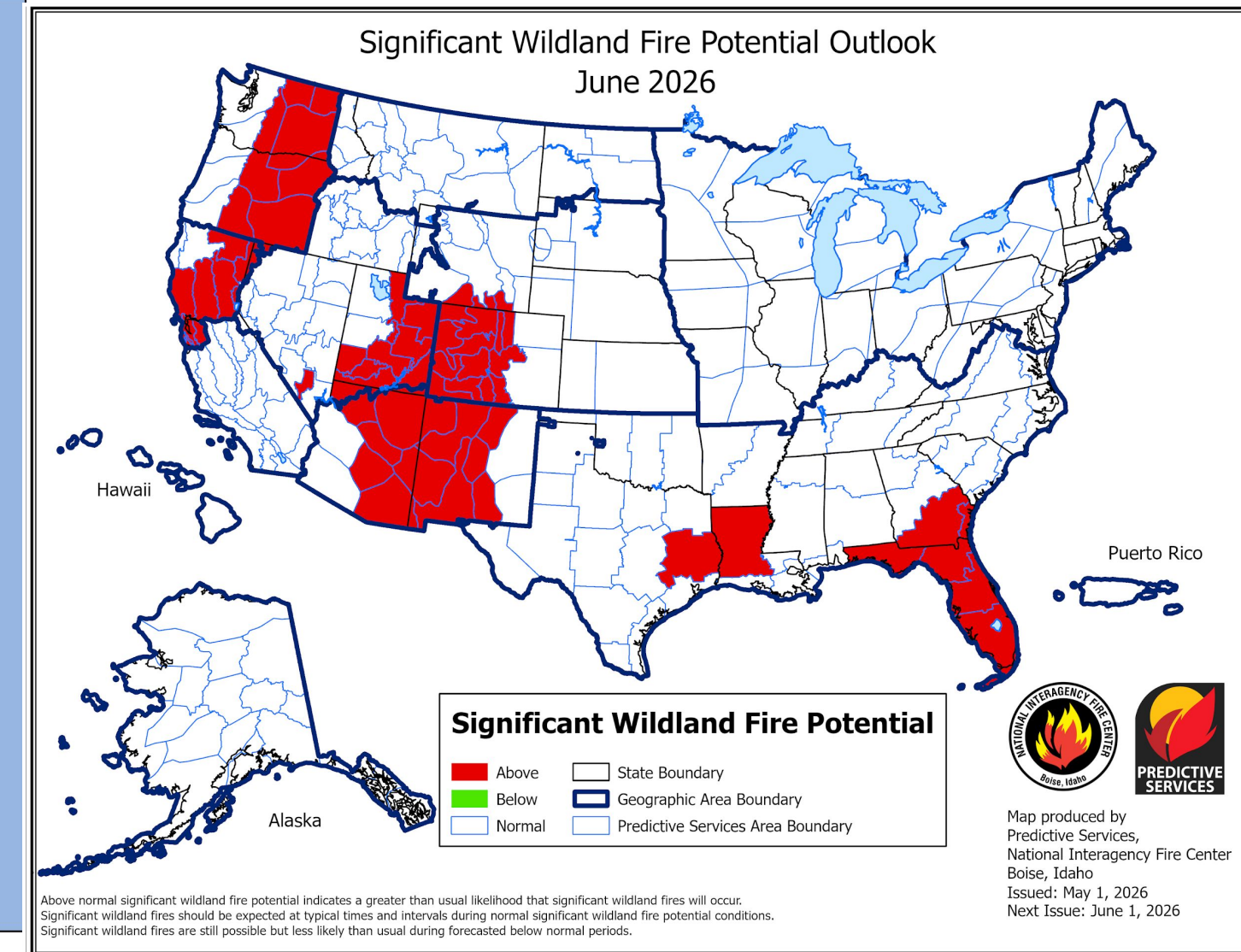
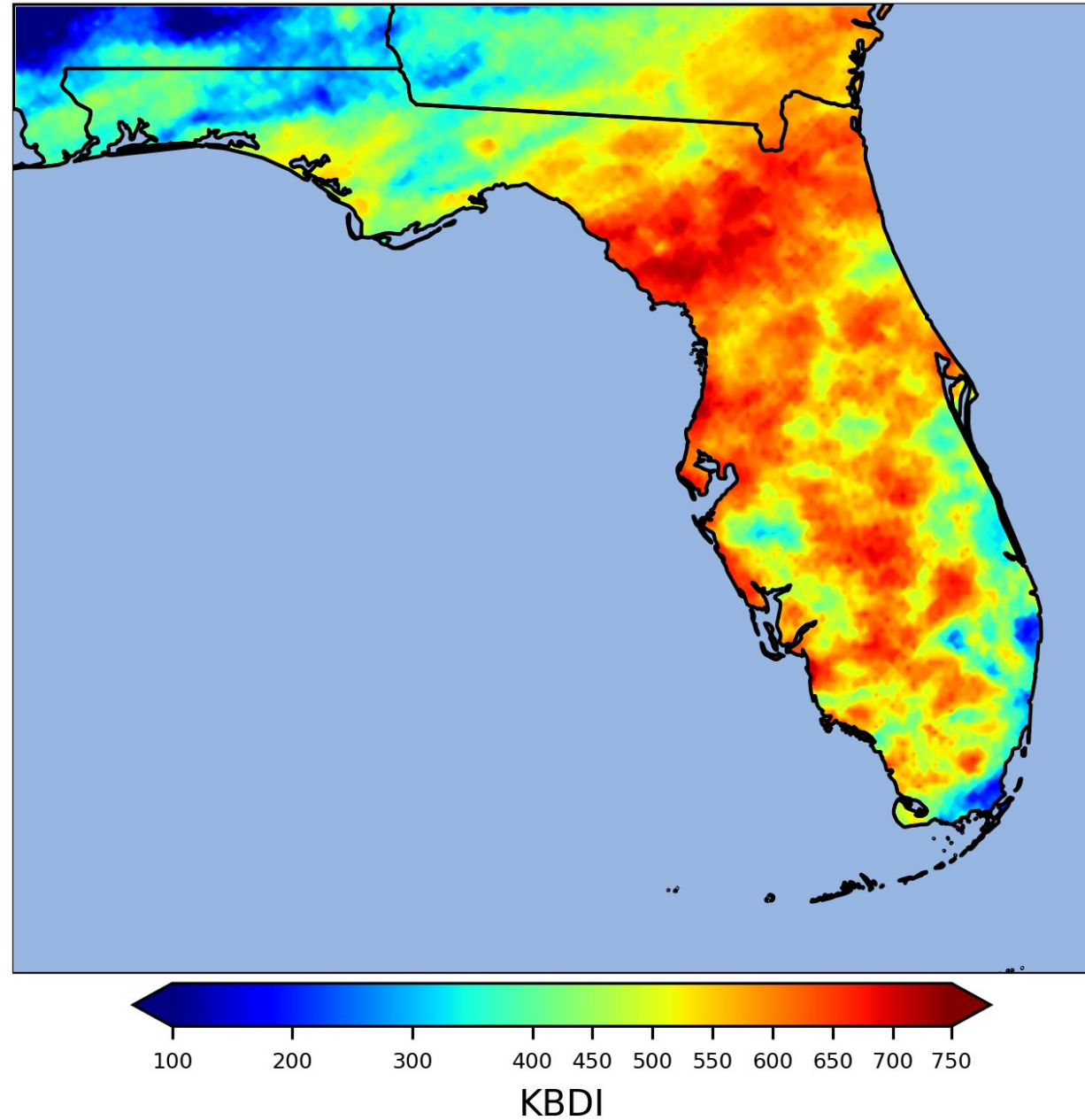


Fire Hazard Impacts

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

- Keetch-Byram Drought Indices have dropped given recent rains, though this index is responsive to recent rain.
- Burn bans are in place for Lowndes and Berrien Counties in South Georgia and nearly all of the Florida Big Bend and most of the Florida Panhandle.
- The Significant Wildland Fire Potential Outlook for June is for above normal wildfire activity in most of the region.

Keetch-Byram Drought Index | Thu 05/07/26, 02:00 PM EDT

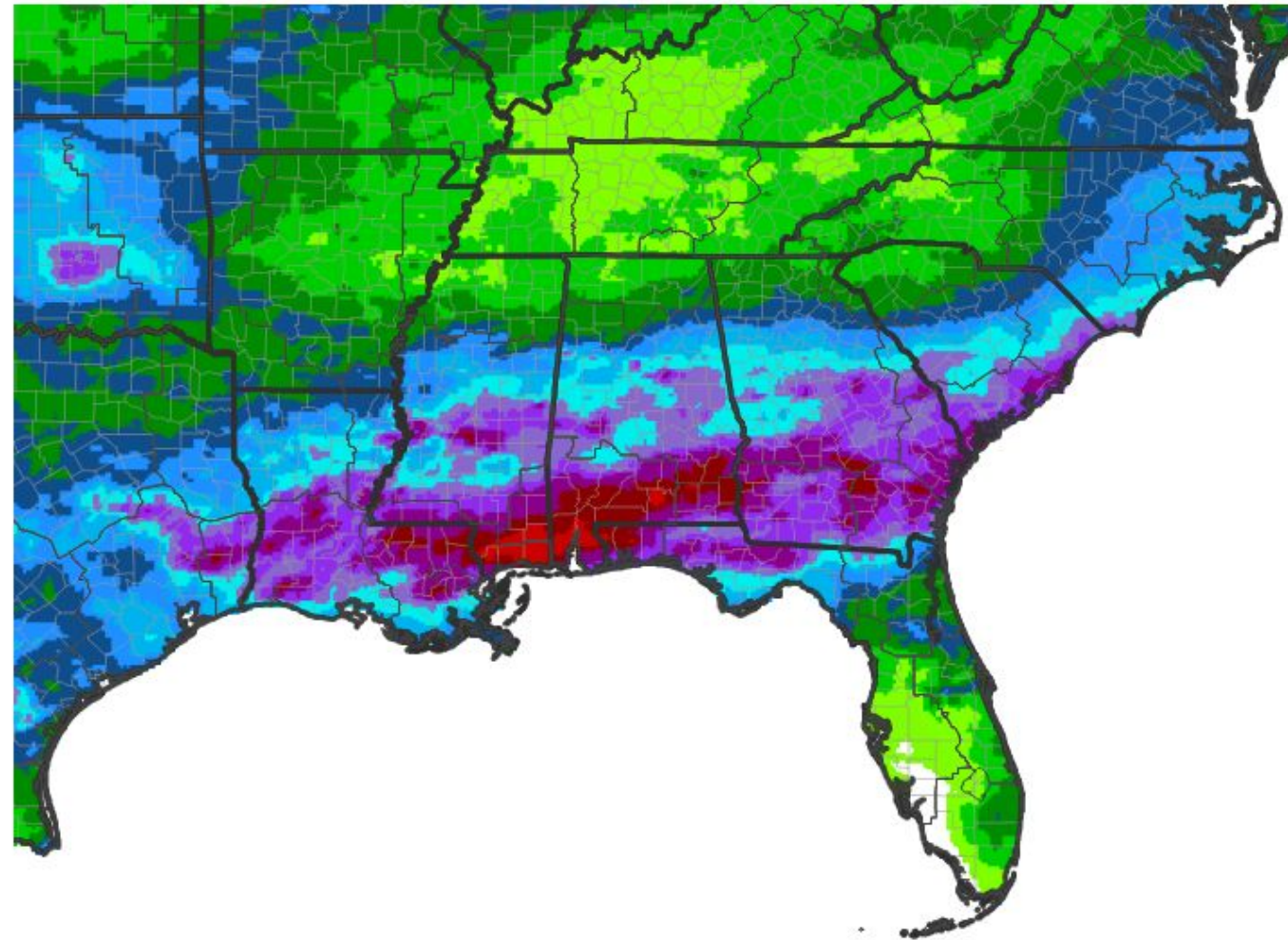




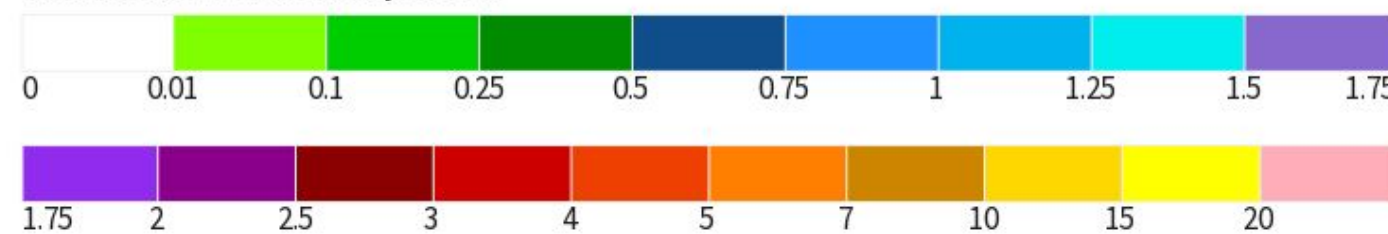
Precipitation Outlook

- Rain is expected over the weekend and into Monday before drier conditions return.
- Depending on the path of thunderstorms along a stalled frontal boundary 2-3 inches of rain with isolated heavier totals are possible, mainly north of Interstate 10.
- There is a signal for above normal precipitation in the [8-14 day outlook](#) (5/14 - 5/20).

7-Day Quantitative Precipitation Forecast for May 8, 2026–May 15, 2026



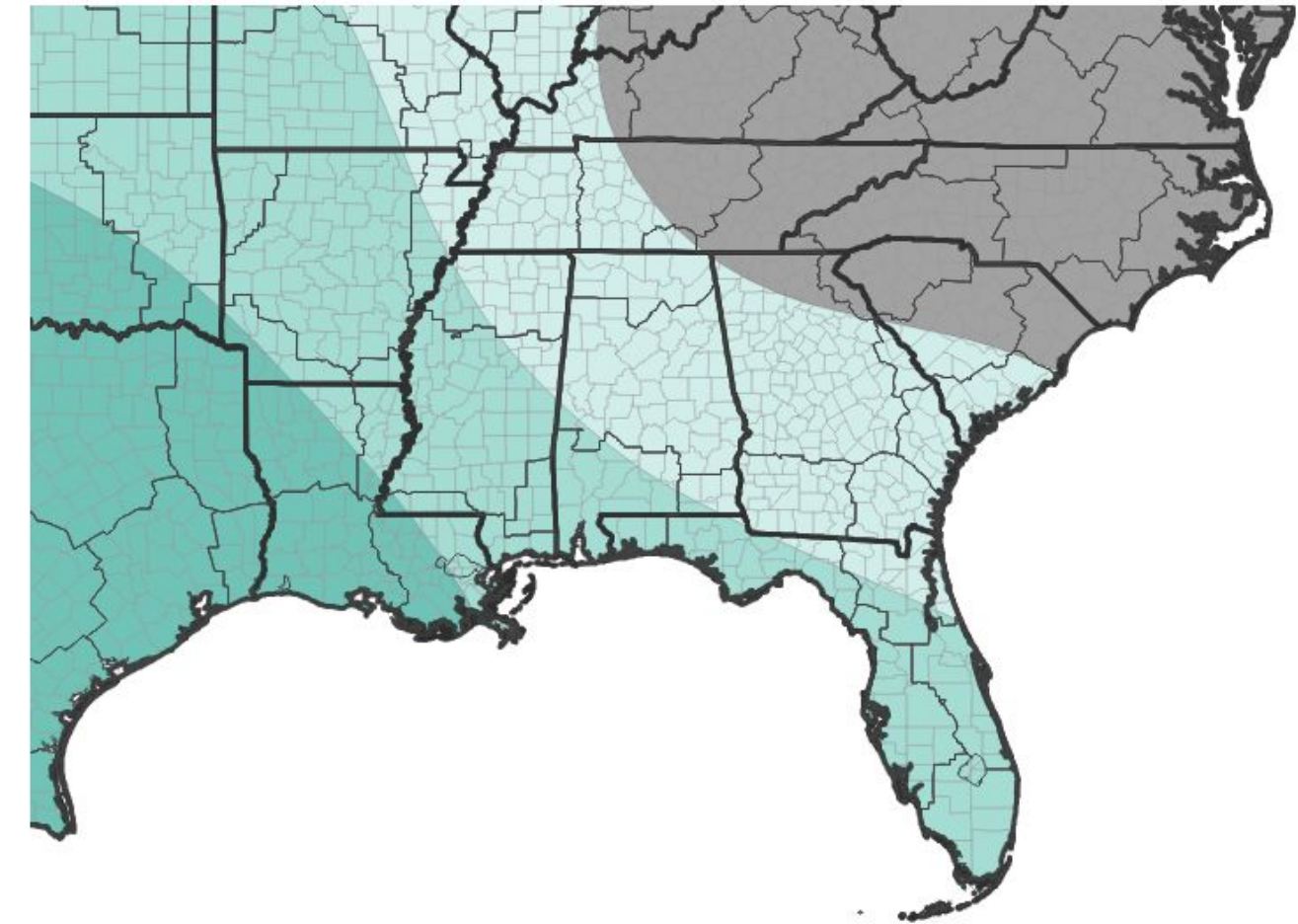
Predicted Inches of Precipitation



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

Last Updated: 05/08/26

8-14 Day Precipitation Outlook for May 14, 2026–May 20, 2026



Probability of Below-Normal Precipitation



Probability of Above-Normal Precipitation

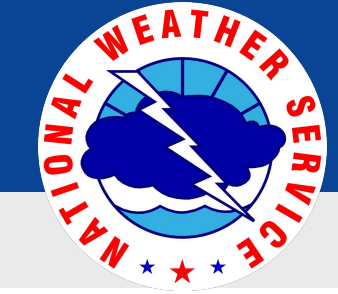


■ Near-Normal Conditions

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

Last Updated: 05/06/26



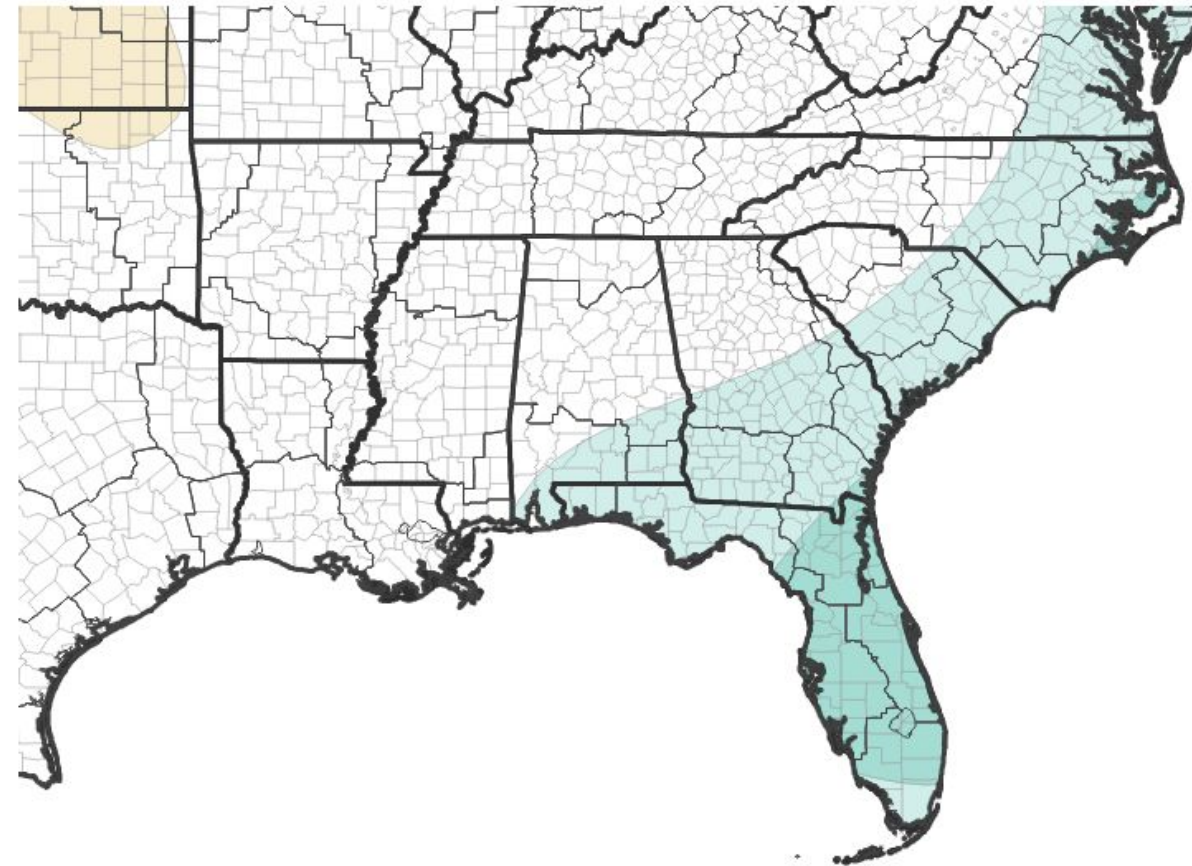


Long-Range Outlooks

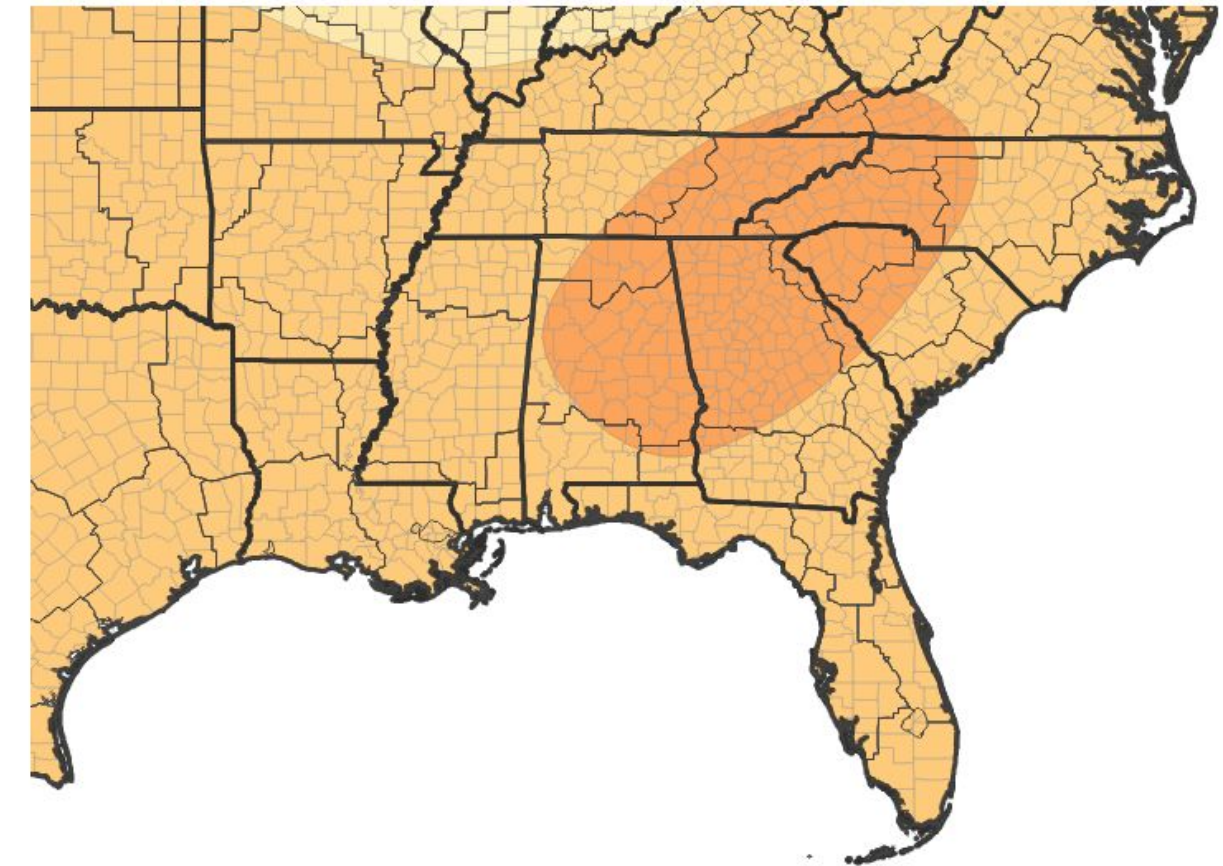
The latest monthly and seasonal outlooks can be found on the [CPC homepage](#).

- The next 3 months favor above normal temperatures and slightly above normal precipitation.
- As sea breeze season approaches in late May, the potential for near to slightly above normal rainfall exists. Nonetheless, significant rainfall is needed to improve the drought.

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



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



Average	May		June		July	
	Temp	Rain	Temp	Rain	Temp	Rain
Tallahassee	75.2°	3.36"	80.8°	7.76"	82.5°	7.14"
Apalachicola	74.8°	1.87"	80.7°	5.86"	82.2°	5.74"
Albany	75.3°	2.41"	80.9°	5.06"	83.1°	5.12"
Valdosta	73.4°	2.84"	79.0°	7.08"	81.1°	5.33"
Marianna	75.9°	3.15"	81.1°	5.07"	82.7°	5.10"
Dothan	75.6°	2.92"	81.1°	5.08"	83.0°	5.95"

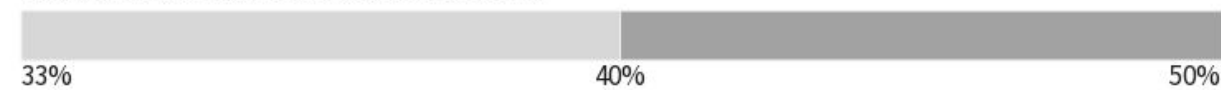
Probability of Below-Normal Precipitation



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

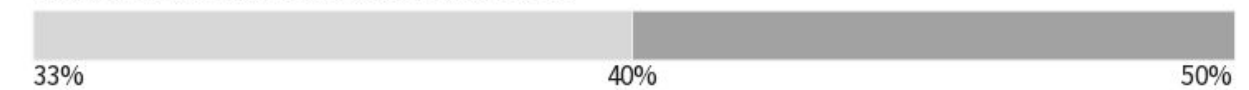
Probability of Below-Normal Temperatures



Probability of Above-Normal Temperatures

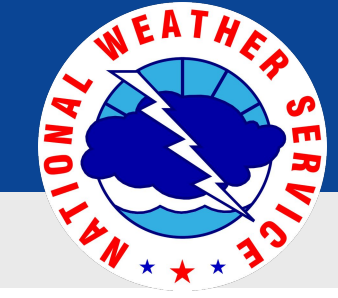


Probability of Near-Normal Temperatures



Source(s): Climate Prediction Center; image courtesy of Drought.gov Last Updated: 04/16/26



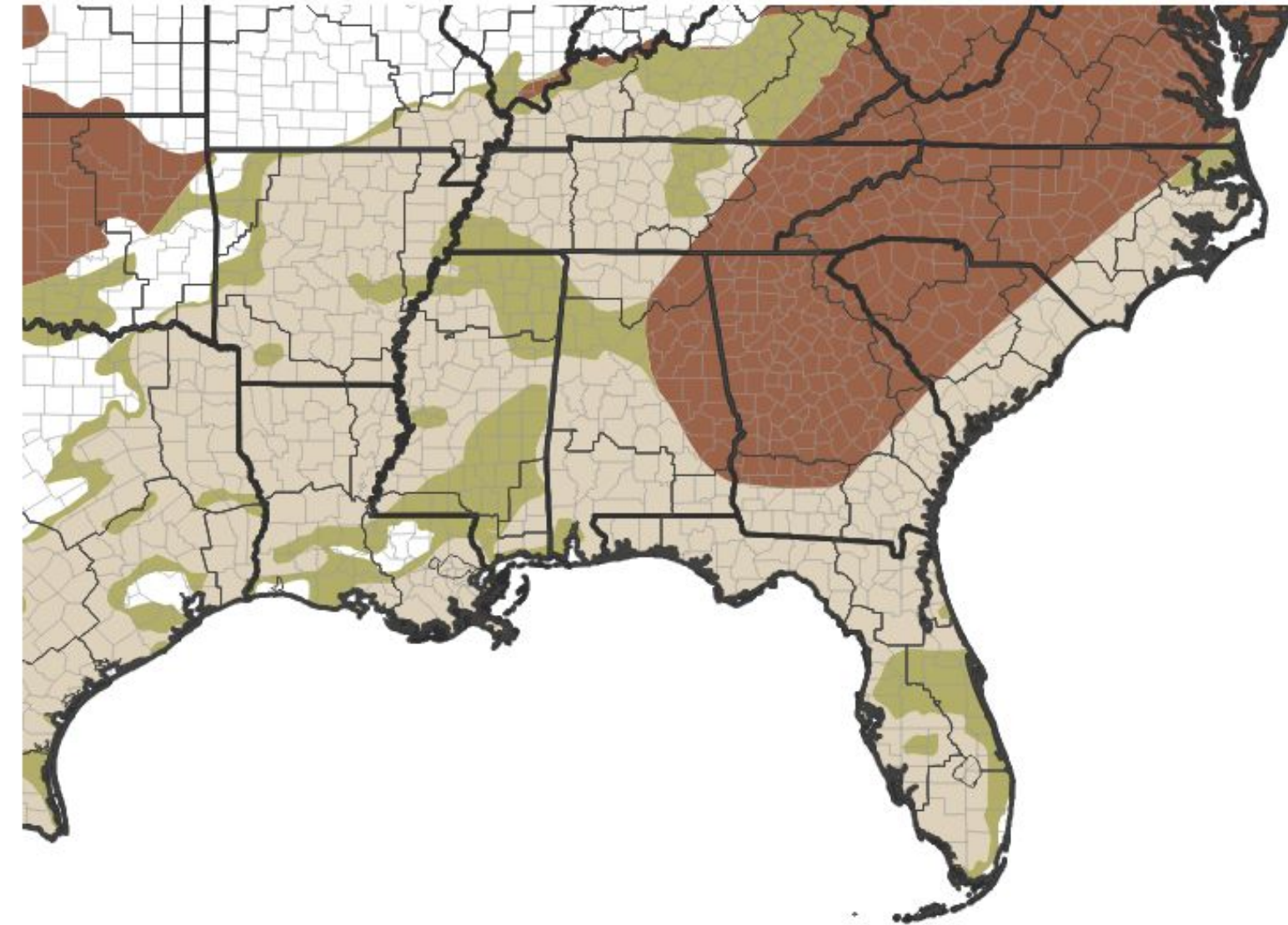


Drought Outlook

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

- Given the prediction that favors slightly above normal precipitation in the months ahead, drought is expected to persist, but the severity may improve given recent rains through mid May.
- This three month outlook is not calling for an end of drought conditions across the region. It is important to note that even with recent rains and the approaching sea breeze season, significant rainfall is needed to end drought conditions across the region.
- If the start of the summer sea breeze season is delayed, drought conditions could worsen and eclipse the severity of the 2000 drought.

Seasonal (3-Month) Drought Outlook for April 30, 2026–July 31, 2026



Drought Is Predicted To...



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

Last Updated: 04/30/26

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