



Drought Information Statement for West Central and Southwest Florida Valid August 21, 2026

Issued By: National Weather Service Tampa Bay, FL

Contact Information: sr-tbw.webmaster@noaa.gov

- This product will be updated August 28, 2026 or sooner if drought conditions change significantly.
 - Please see all currently available products at <https://drought.gov/drought-information-statements>.
 - Please visit <https://www.weather.gov/tbw/DroughtInformationStatement> for previous statements.
 - Please visit <https://www.drought.gov/drought-status-updates> for regional drought status updates.
-
- The Abnormally Dry to Extreme Drought conditions persist across West Central and Southwest Florida.
 - There was some improvement during the last week across parts of the region thanks to the recent rainfall.



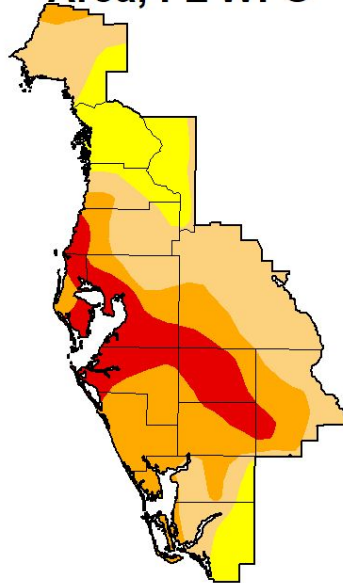


U.S. Drought Monitor

Link to the [latest U.S. Drought Monitor](#) for West Central and Southwest Florida

- The extended duration of limited rainfall has continued the need for D1 (Moderate Drought) to D3 (Extreme Drought) across much of West Central and Southwest Florida.
- Drought intensity and Extent
 - D3 (Extreme Drought):** Wrn Pasco, Nrn & Srn Pinellas, NW and Srn Hillsborough, Ext SW Polk, Wrn & Nrn Manatee, Hardee, NE Desoto, and SW Highlands County.
 - D2 (Severe Drought):** Nrn Levy, SW Hernando, Wrn Pasco, Cent Pinellas, Nrn & Ern Hillsborough, SW Polk, Srn Manatee, Sarasota, Wrn and Srn Highlands, Wrn Charlotte, and Wrn Lee County.
 - D1 (Moderate Drought):** Levy, Cent Hernando, Cent & Ern Pasco, NE Hillsborough, Nrn & Ern Polk, Ern Highlands, Ern Charlotte, and Cent Lee County.
 - D0 (Abnormally Dry):** SE Levy, Citrus, Sumter, Nrn & Ern Hernando, NE Pasco, Ern Lee and Ext Ern Charlotte Counties

U.S. Drought Monitor Tampa Bay Area, FL WFO



August 18, 2026

(Released Thursday, Aug. 20, 2026)

Valid 8 a.m. EDT

Drought Conditions (Percent Area)

	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	0.00	100.00	82.82	45.98	16.42	0.00
Last Week 08-11-2026	0.00	100.00	87.04	49.62	18.43	0.00
3 Months Ago 05-19-2026	0.00	100.00	100.00	97.54	90.45	3.95
Start of Calendar Year 01-06-2026	0.00	100.00	89.37	62.16	0.00	0.00
Start of Water Year 09-30-2025	53.01	46.99	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
One Year Ago 08-19-2025	61.79	38.21	9.75	0.00	0.00	0.00

Intensity:

None	D2 Severe Drought
D0 Abnormally Dry	D3 Extreme Drought
D1 Moderate Drought	D4 Exceptional Drought

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. For more information on the Drought Monitor, go to <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/About.aspx>

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droughtmonitor.unl.edu



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U.S. Department of Commerce

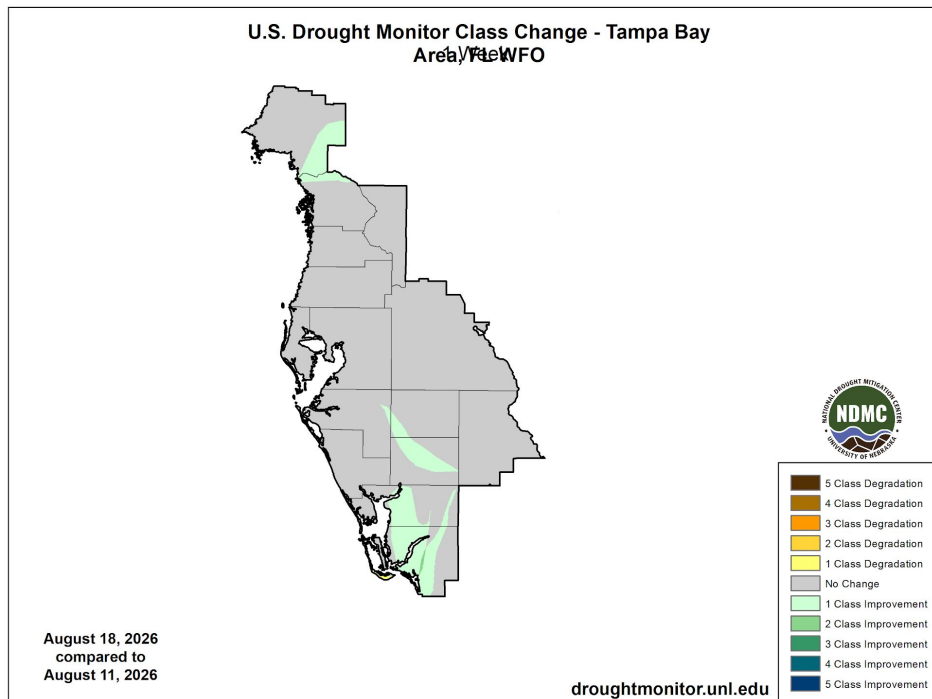
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Recent Change in Drought Intensity

Link to the latest [1-week change map](#) for West Central and Southwest Florida

- There have been some considerable improvements in the long-term deficits across parts of the region.
- More rainfall is still needed to allow the system to fully recover.
- **One Week Drought Monitor Class Change**
 - **Drought Improved:** Areas in Levy, Citrus, Charlotte, and Lee Counties. Small parts of Manatee, Hardee, and Desoto Counties.
 - **No Change:** Remainder of West Central and Southwest Florida.



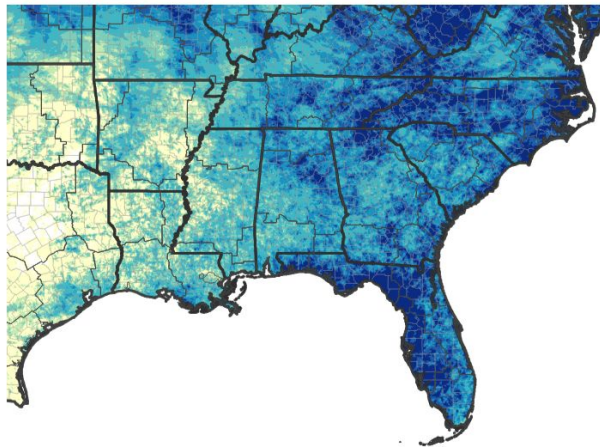


Precipitation

Last 30 Days

- Some much needed rainfall has occurred over the last month, with many areas seeing slightly above normal amounts, while parts of Levy and Citrus are running well above normal.
- However, the long term deficits continue to have an impact.

30-Day Precipitation Accumulations (Inches)



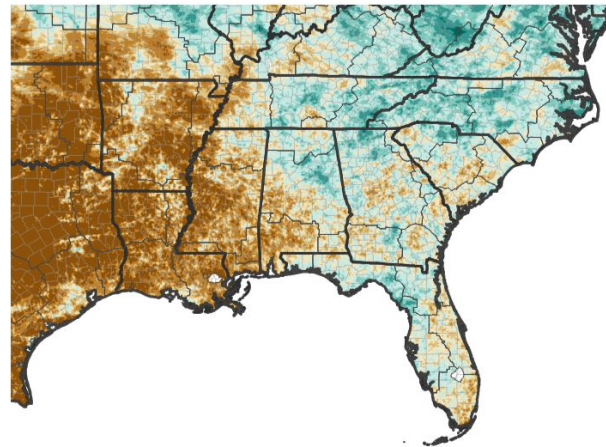
Inches of Precipitation



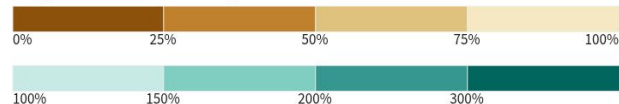
Source(s): National Weather Service Multi-Radar Multi-Sensor System; image courtesy of Drought.gov

Last Updated: 08/20/26

30-Day Percent of Normal Precipitation



Precipitation Shown as a Percentage of Normal Conditions



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

Last Updated: 08/20/26



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Local Precipitation

Table of Accumulated Rainfall (inches) for some Official Locations - Since September 1, 2025

- Since September 1, 2025 rainfall has been well below normal across much of the area with some locations less than 50% of normal for this time period.
- A few locations are still the Driest on Record, with several others in the Top 5 Driest, for the time period, since September 1, 2025.

 Rainfall Sep 1, 2025 - Aug 17, 2026								
Site ID	Site Name	County	Rainfall (in.) Sep 1, 2025 - Aug 17, 2026	Normal Rainfall (in.) Sep 1-Aug 17	Departure from Normal	Percent of Normal	Ranking Sep 1-Aug 17	Records Began
BKV	Brooksville	Hernando	34.01	48.36	-14.35	70%	6th Driest	1892
FMY	Fort Myers - Page Field	Lee	36.93	52.56	-15.63	70%	8th Driest	1902
GIF	Winter Haven	Polk	37.51	43.09	-5.58	87%	12th Driest	1941
PGD	Punta Gorda	Charlotte	43.61	48.81	-5.20	89%	35nd Driest	1914
PIE	St. Pete/Clearwater	Pinellas	33.04	49.80	-16.76	66%	2nd Driest	1998
RSW	Fort Myers - SW Int'l	Lee	43.11	49.37	-6.26	87%	8th Driest	1998
SPG	St. Petersburg	Pinellas	26.22	42.81	-16.59	61%	2nd Driest	1914
SRQ	Sarasota-Bradenton Int'l	Manatee	33.64	44.52	-10.88	76%	5th Driest	1911
TPA	Tampa Int'l	Hillsborough	31.77	45.51	-13.74	70%	14th Driest	1890
ACHF1	Archbold Bio Stn	Highlands	30.45	50.30	-19.85	61%	2nd Driest	1969
BRAF1	Bradenton 5 ESE	Manatee	30.84	51.95	-21.11	59%	Driest	1965
DSOF1	Desoto City 8 SW	Highlands	21.58	44.00	-22.42	49%	Driest	1947
FTGF1	Fort Green 12 WSW	Manatee	33.04	48.43	-15.39	68%	2nd Driest	1948
INVF1	Inverness 3 SE	Citrus	38.88	48.72	-9.84	80%	7th Driest	1948
LLDF1	Lakeland Linder	Polk	35.96	52.85	-16.89	68%	4th Driest	1915
PLCF1	Plant City	Hillsborough	41.38	52.30	-10.92	79%	19th Driest	1892
TBW	Ruskin - NWS Tampa Bay	Hillsborough	23.87	49.81	-25.94	48%	Driest	1976
TRPF1	Tarpon Springs	Pinellas	25.23	49.80	-24.57	51%	Driest	1892
VNCF1	Venice	Sarasota	31.54	47.27	-15.73	67%	5th Driest	1955
WAUF1	Wauchula	Hardee	30.45	48.29	-17.84	63%	2nd Driest	1933

 Rainfall Sep 1, 2025 - Jul 31, 2026								
Site ID	Site Name	County	Rainfall (in.) Sep 1, 2025 - Jul 31, 2026	Normal Rainfall (in.) Sep 1-Jul 31	Departure from Normal	Percent of Normal	Ranking Sep 1-Jul 31	Records Began
BARF1	Bartow	Polk	26.97	43.10	-16.13	63%	3rd Driest	1892
LWLF1	Mountain Lake	Polk	29.65	44.71	-15.06	66%	6th Driest	1935
MKCF1	Myakka River State Park	Sarasota	26.32	50.95	-24.63	52%	2nd Driest	1943
STLF1	St. Leo	Pasco	33.43	45.18	-11.75	74%	10th Driest	1895



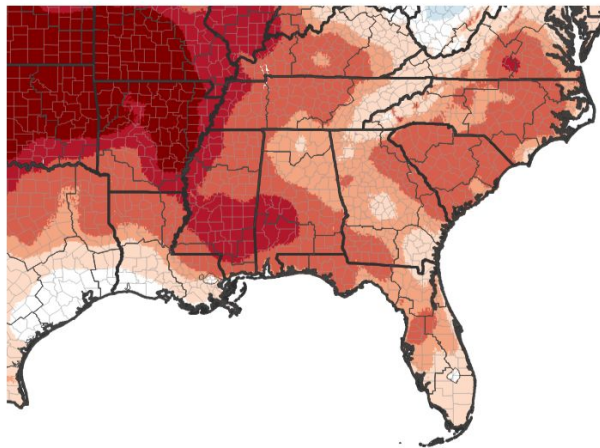


Temperature

7-Day and 30-Day Temperature Anomalies

- Temperatures were above normal last week thanks to more sun and less rainfall. Meanwhile, over the last month they have remained near normal.
- Vegetation uses more water this time of year.
- With depleted groundwater supplies, this means that rainfall is quickly being used by vegetation.
- Slightly above normal temperatures are expected over the next few weeks, contributing to greater evaporation of water as well.

7-Day Temperature Anomaly



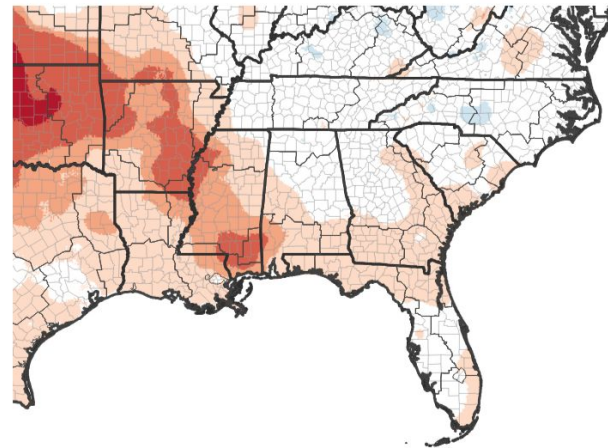
Departure from Normal Max Temperature (°F)



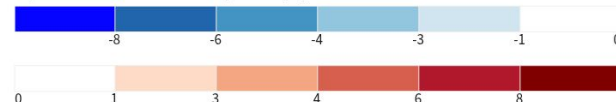
Source(s): NOAA's National Centers for Environmental Information; image courtesy of Drought.gov

Data Valid: 08/16/26

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: 08/16/26





Summary of Impacts

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

Hydrologic Impacts

- The Southwest Florida Water Management District provided a [River System Update](#) on **August 3, 2026** for the Withlacoochee River.
- Streamflows remain exceptionally low in many spots for this time of year, and continue to decline. In some areas, there is still no water flow at all. This is leading to algae blooms along portions of some area rivers. To report an algae bloom, go to [ReportAlgalBloom.com](#) or call the hotline at 1-855-305-3903.
- River flows remain very low exiting the Green Swamp, with hardly any flow up past Hwy 48 (Bushnell).
- Further downstream from Hwy 44 past Hwy 200, water levels and flows did increase a little last month, but also remain very low for this time of year.

Dry inflow canal between the
Withlacoochee River and Floral City Pool
from July 2026. Courtesy of SWFWMD





Summary of Impacts

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

Hydrologic Impacts

- The C.W. Bill Young Regional Reservoir held 4.6 billion gallons as of August 20th, about 29.7 percent of its 15.5-billion-gallon capacity.
- Areawide, surface/groundwater levels remain lower than normal for this time of year, accentuating the long term nature of this drought.
- While not necessarily seeing further decline, rainfall has not been enough yet to really replenish what has been lost.





Summary of Impacts

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

Agricultural Impacts

- Hernando, Polk, Hardee, and Sarasota County farmers have noted that the dryness was the worst seen in at least 15 to 20 years. Some improvement has been noted.
- Some crop plantings were delayed by farmers.
- Many plants less drought-resistant have begun to recover from drought-induced stress as summer rains continue.
- Cisterns had to be used in some areas to supplement the normal potable water supply.
- Some ponds had to be dug deeper to keep a water supply available for livestock.
- Supplemental feeding with hay and other feed has been required to sustain livestock. [Report impacts here.](#)

Fire Hazard Impacts

- The [Keetch-Byram Drought Index \(KBDI\)](#) remains near 450 in a few areas, but overall soils have moistened across the region thanks to the widespread rainfall we've seen over the last month.
- Brush fires continue to occur, with a few large, highly visible fires and some other smaller fires across the Florida peninsula. Some wildfires have caused damage to structures, temporary road closures, and have grown to thousands of acres before containment.





Summary of Impacts

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

Mitigation Actions - Southwest Florida Water Management District

- Southwest Florida Water Management District has extended a [Modified Phase III “Extreme” Water Shortage](#) until October 1, 2026. Always refer to [city or county](#) regulations first.

Mitigation Actions - Other Partners

- A [State of Emergency](#) was issued for the area due to the impacts of Winter Weather, Drought, and the increased Wildfire Risks.
- A modified Phase II Water Shortage is in effect for a portion of [Northeast Cape Coral](#) in Lee County.
- [Burn Bans](#) remain in effect for a couple of counties in West Central and Southwest Florida. Please contact the county for specifics.
- Several locks on the north shore of Lake Okeechobee remain closed. More info [here](#).





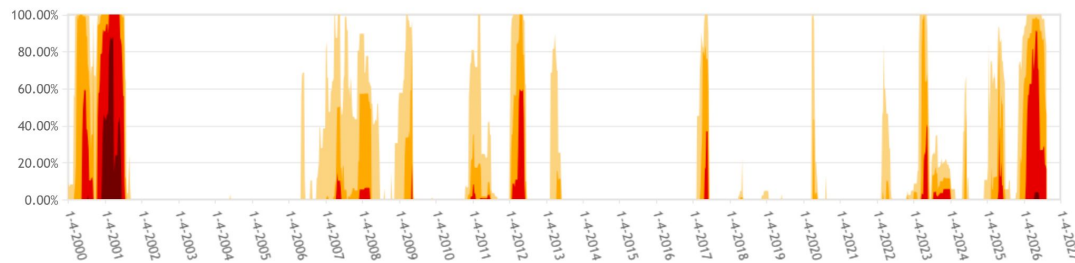
A Perspective on this Drought

Link to [Drought Monitor Time Series](#)

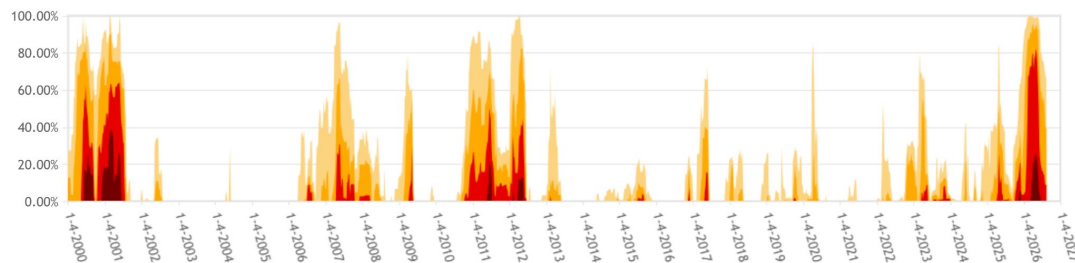
How does this drought compare to past long term droughts in the NWS Tampa Bay forecast area?

- There have been four long duration droughts since 2000 in West Central and Southwest Florida, including the current drought.
- While conditions are significant, they have not reached the intensity and duration experienced in the 2000/2001 drought.
- This is the most impactful drought within the NWS Tampa Bay area since 2012.
- This was the first time since the drought monitor began in 2000 that the **entire** State of Florida was D1 (Moderate drought) or worse.

Tampa Bay/Ruskin, FL (TBW) WFO Percent Area in U.S. Drought Monitor Categories



Florida Percent Area in U.S. Drought Monitor Categories



Graphs Courtesy of the U.S. Drought Monitor website
Time series depiction of D1, D2, D3, and D4 drought across the NWS Tampa Bay forecast area by percentage (top).
State of Florida Time Series of D1, D2, D3, and D4 drought by percentage (bottom). Records go back to 2000.



- D1 (Moderate Drought)
- D2 (Severe Drought)
- D3 (Extreme Drought)
- D4 (Exceptional Drought)

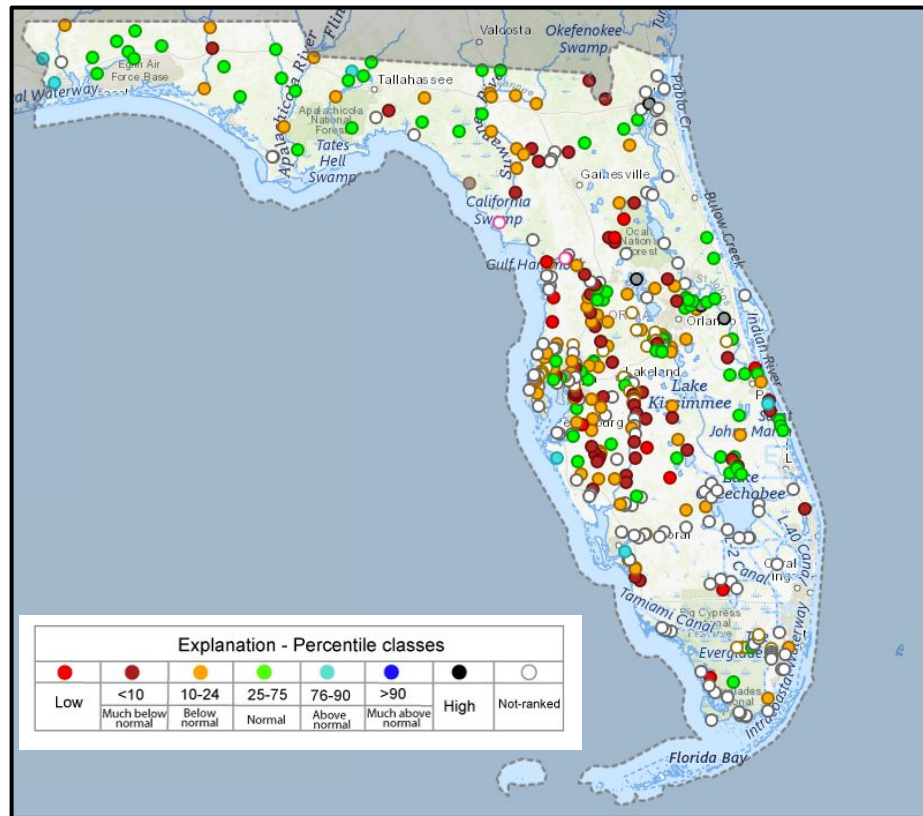




Hydrologic Conditions and Impacts

USGS Streamflow Map for Florida

- Streamflows have fallen some over the last week with the diminished rainfall coverage.
- Streamflows are likely to remain about the same or fall some more as rainfall coverage over the next week is expected to remain near to below normal.



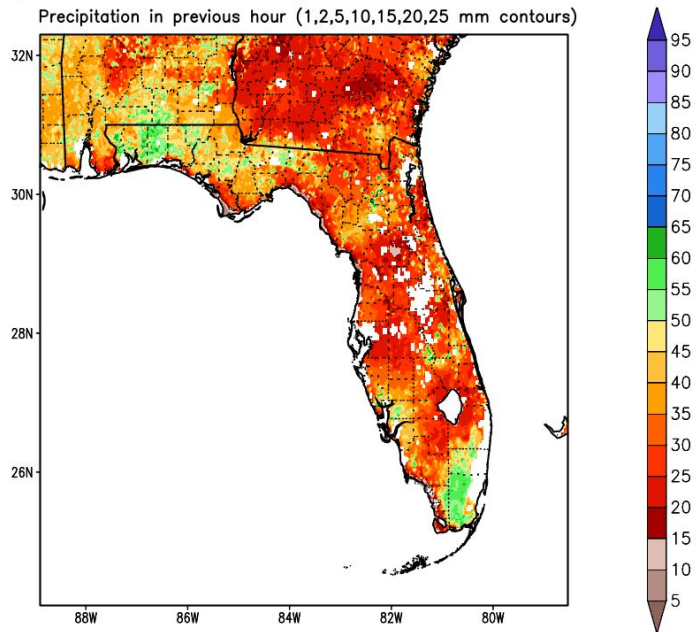


Agricultural Impacts

2025 Florida Crop Report

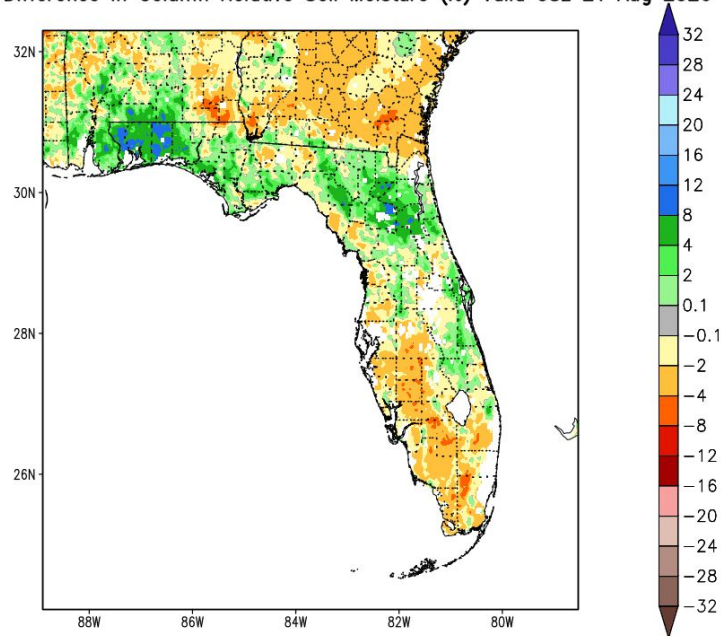
Less shower and thunderstorm coverage along with hotter temperatures over the last week has caused soils to dry out across much of the area. Water is also being absorbed by vegetation, filtering into groundwater storage, and evaporating due to the warm weather.

Column—Integrated Relative Soil Moisture (available water; %) valid 08z 21 Aug 2026



NOTE
Experimental

1-Week Difference in Column Relative Soil Moisture (%) valid 08z 21 Aug 2026



NOTE
Experimental



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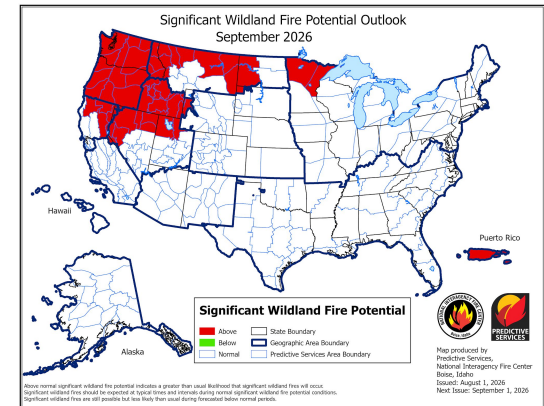
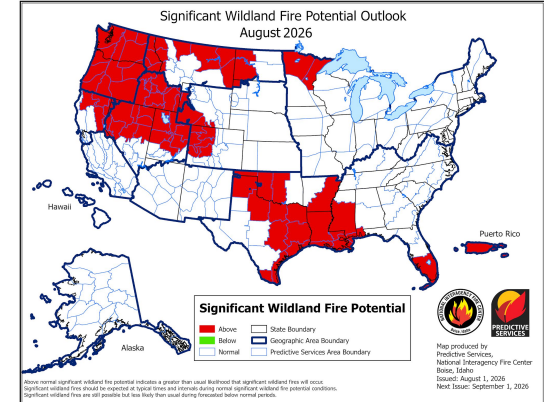
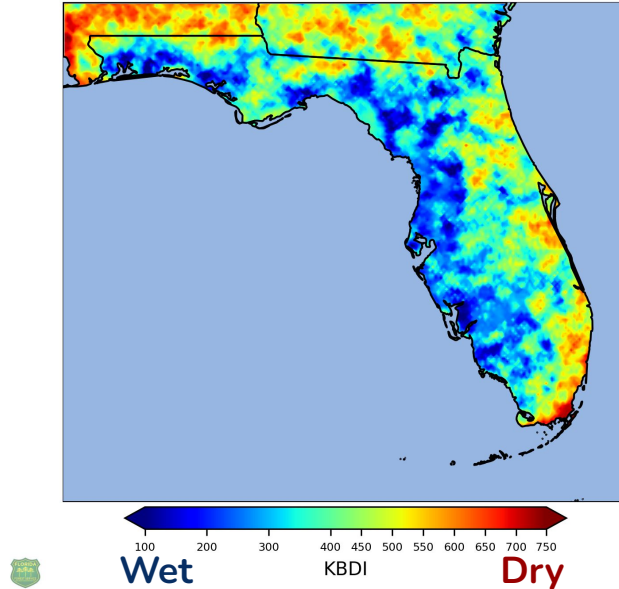


Fire Hazard Impacts

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

- The Keetch-Byram Drought Index (KBDI) has remained low across much of the area thanks to the rainfall over the last few weeks.
- The KBDI will rise quickly when it does not rain for a few days, with antecedent conditions favoring the rapid absorption and consumption of the water that falls.
- Brush fires have continued to occur with [Burn Bans](#) in effect for a couple of counties.
- The Significant Wildland Fire Potential Outlook for the August continues to support above normal fire activity across the southern half of the area, then near normal for the entire area during September.

Keetch-Byram Drought Index | Thu 08/20/26, 02:00 PM EDT



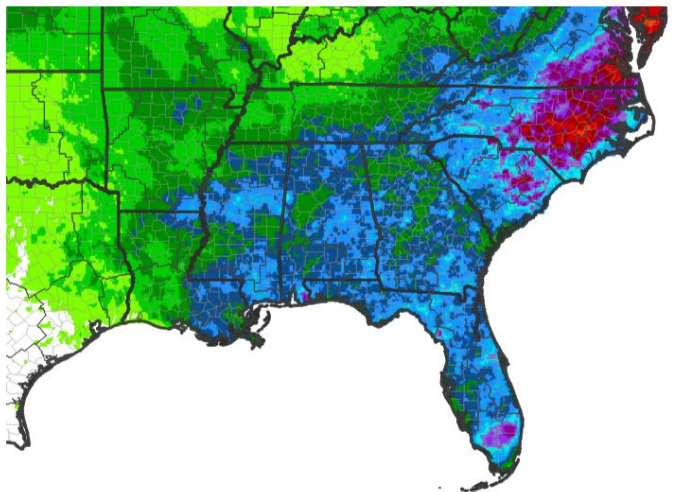


Precipitation Outlook

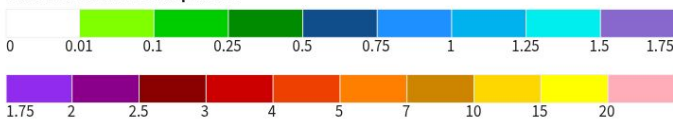
7-Day and 8-14 Day Precipitation Outlooks

- Isolated to scattered showers and thunderstorms are forecast each day over the next week with near to below normal rainfall expected across the area.
- Near normal rainfall is expected for week two, but little overall improvement is expected.
- A consistent period of regular, near daily rainfall is needed to substantially alleviate the long-term drought conditions.

7-Day Quantitative Precipitation Forecast for August 20, 2026–August 27, 2026



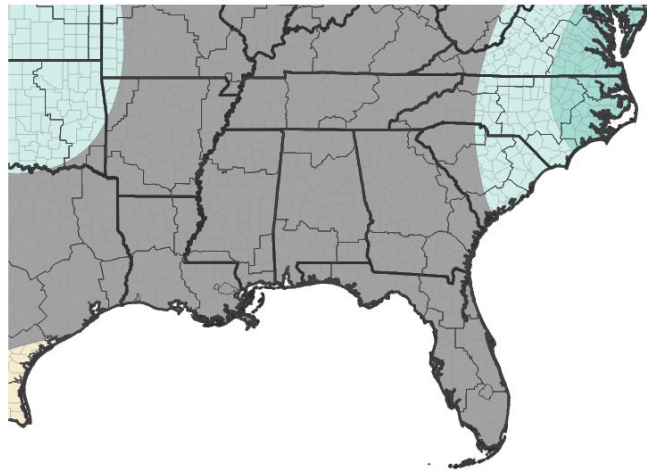
Predicted Inches of Precipitation



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

Last Updated: 08/20/26

8-14 Day Precipitation Outlook for August 28, 2026–September 3, 2026



Probability of Below-Normal Precipitation



Probability of Above-Normal Precipitation



■ Near-Normal Conditions

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

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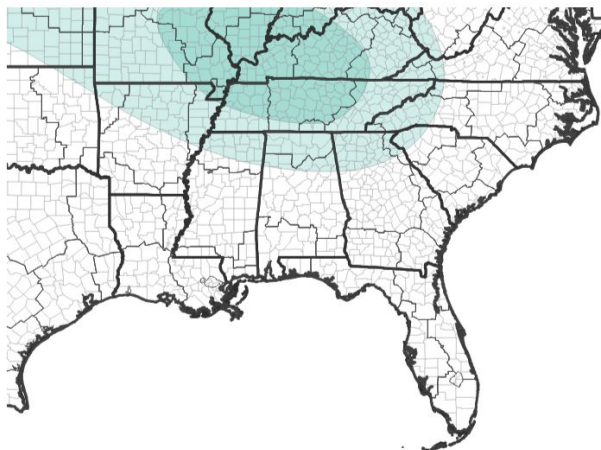


Long-Range Outlooks

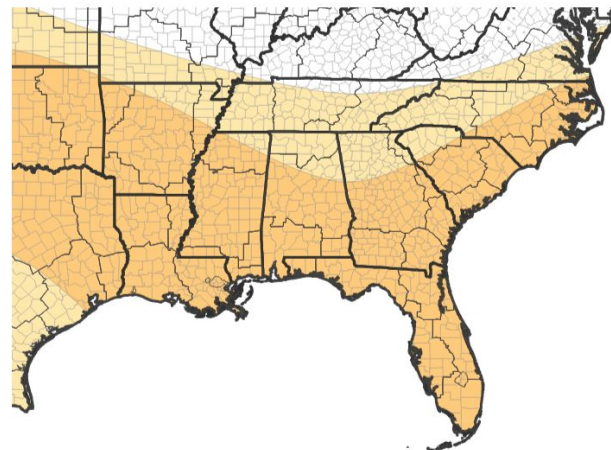
The latest monthly and seasonal outlooks can be found on the [CPC homepage](#)

- The outlook for September suggests equal chances of above, below, and near normal rainfall, with a 40-50% chance of above normal temperatures.
- This suggests that drought conditions may hold steady.

Monthly Precipitation Outlook for September 1, 2026–September 30, 2026



Monthly Temperature Outlook for September 1, 2026–September 30, 2026



Normals	September	
	Temp	Rain
Brooksville	79.8°	5.79"
Tampa	82.7°	6.09"
Lakeland	81.7°	7.62"
Sarasota	82.2°	6.00"
Punta Gorda	82.1°	6.87"
Fort Myers	82.2°	9.00"

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: 08/20/26

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

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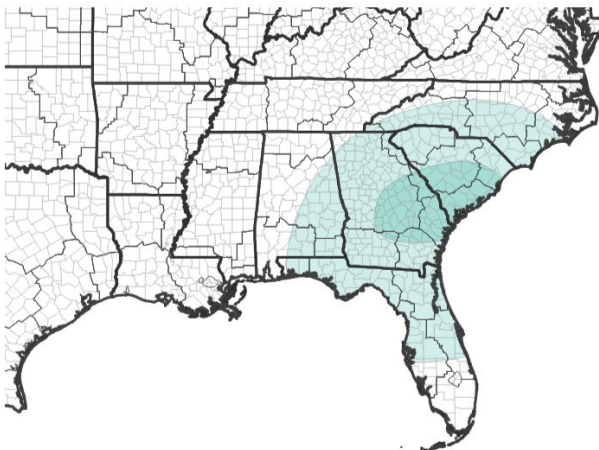


Long-Range Outlooks

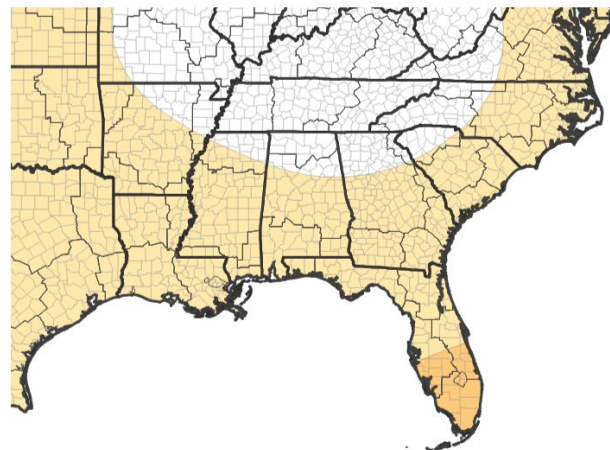
The latest monthly and seasonal outlooks can be found on the [CPC homepage](#)

- The outlook for September through November calls for a near normal to 40% chance of above normal rainfall, with a 33-50% chance of above normal temperatures.

Seasonal (3-Month) Precipitation Outlook for September 1, 2026–November 30, 2026



Seasonal (3-Month) Temperature Outlook for September 1, 2026–November 30, 2026



Normals	September		October		November	
	Temp	Rain	Temp	Rain	Temp	Rain
Brooksville	79.8°	5.79"	73.1°	2.79"	65.1°	1.59"
Tampa	82.7°	6.09"	77.4°	2.34"	69.8°	1.40"
Lakeland	81.7°	7.62"	76.4°	3.04"	69.2°	1.93"
Sarasota	82.2°	6.00"	77.3°	2.76"	70.1°	1.81"
Punta Gorda	82.1°	6.87"	77.2°	3.02"	70.2°	2.12"
Fort Myers	82.2°	9.00"	78.0°	3.08"	71.5°	1.78"

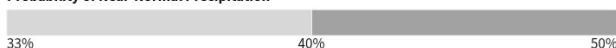
Probability of Below-Normal Precipitation



Probability of Above-Normal Precipitation



Probability of Near-Normal Precipitation



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

Last Updated: 08/20/26

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

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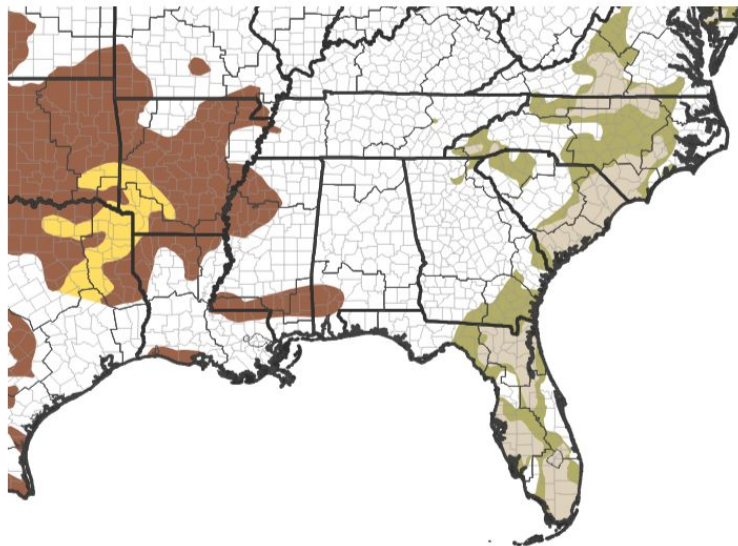


Drought Outlook

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

- Given the prediction for near normal rainfall in the months ahead, drought is expected to improve across the region over the next three months - if not end altogether.
- Should rainfall over the next three months be below normal, drought improvement may be delayed or persist, especially now that summer is in full swing.

Seasonal (3-Month) Drought Outlook for August 20, 2026–November 30, 2026



Drought Is Predicted To...



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

Last Updated: 08/20/26

Links to the latest:

[Climate Prediction Center Monthly Drought Outlook](#)

[Climate Prediction Center Seasonal Drought Outlook](#)



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