



# Drought Information Statement for West Central and Southwest Florida Valid September 11, 2026

Issued By: National Weather Service Tampa Bay, FL

Contact Information: [sr-tbw.webmaster@noaa.gov](mailto:sr-tbw.webmaster@noaa.gov)

- This product will be updated September 18, 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.
  - With the rainy season continuing, there was slight improvement during the last week across Central Florida. Otherwise, no changes.

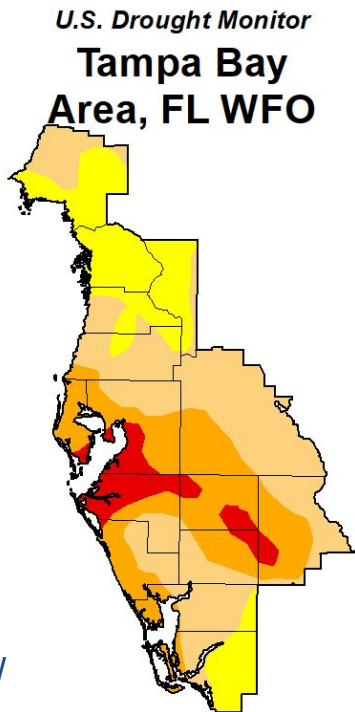




# U.S. Drought Monitor

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):** S Pinellas, S Hillsborough, W & N and Manatee, NW and SE Hardee, NE Desoto, and SW Highlands Counties.
  - D2 (Severe Drought):** N and Central Pinellas, Central Hillsborough, SW Polk, W Highlands, Central DeSoto, Western Sarasota, Western Charlotte, Western Lee Counties.
  - D1 (Moderate Drought):** N Levy, E Sumter, S Hernando, Pasco, NE Hillsborough, E Polk, E Highlands, SE Manatee, E Sarasota, Central Charlotte, N Lee Counties.
  - D0 (Abnormally Dry):** E Lee, E Charlotte, S Levy, Citrus, W and Central Sumter, N and NE Hernando, N Pasco Counties.



**September 8, 2026**

(Released Thursday, Sep. 10, 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 | 77.62  | 34.70 | 7.80  | 0.00 |
| Last Week<br>09-01-2026                 | 0.00  | 100.00 | 77.80  | 34.70 | 13.25 | 0.00 |
| 3 Months Ago<br>06-09-2026              | 0.00  | 100.00 | 100.00 | 96.92 | 49.55 | 0.00 |
| Start of<br>Calendar Year<br>01-06-2026 | 0.00  | 100.00 | 89.37  | 62.16 | 0.00  | 0.00 |
| Start of<br>Water Year<br>09-30-2025    | 53.01 | 46.99  | 0.00   | 0.00  | 0.00  | 0.00 |
| One Year Ago<br>09-09-2025              | 89.62 | 10.38  | 0.00   | 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](https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu)



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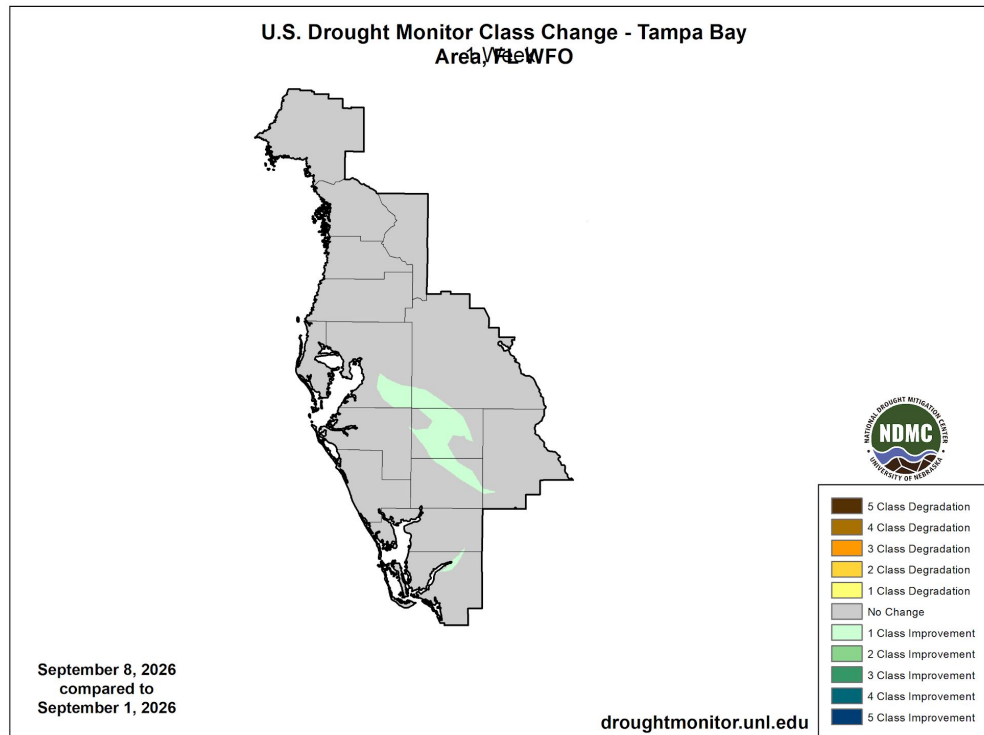
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# Recent Change in Drought Intensity

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, but trends are on the right track.
- **One Week Drought Monitor Class Change**
  - **Drought Improved:** SE Hillsborough, SW Polk, Central Hardee, Central DeSoto, N and Central Lee Counties.
  - **No Change:** Remainder of West Central and Southwest Florida.



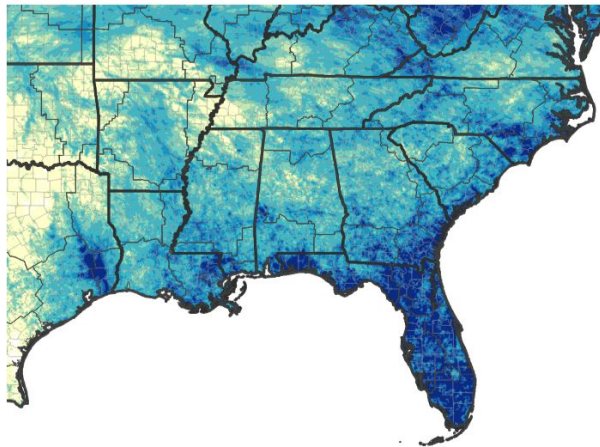


# Precipitation

Last 30 Days

- Everyone has seen some rainfall over the last month.
- Some areas have seen above normal rainfall, while others were below normal; this is a product of the pop-up summertime thunderstorms.
- Regardless, the long term deficits continue to have an impact.

30-Day Precipitation Accumulations (Inches)



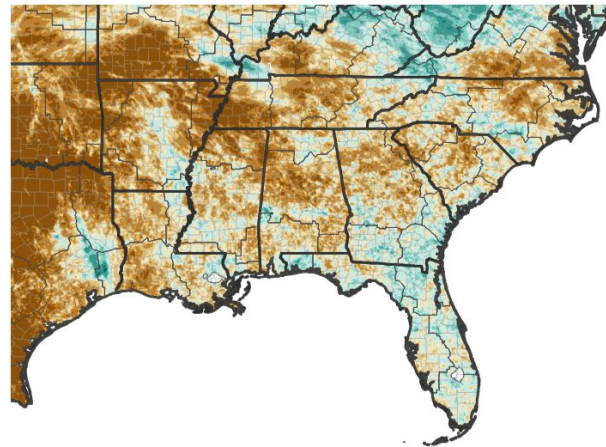
Inches of Precipitation



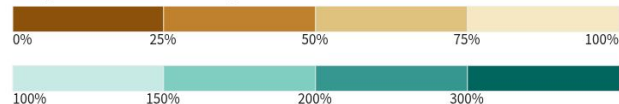
Source(s): National Weather Service Multi-Radar Multi-Sensor System; image courtesy of Drought.gov

Last Updated: 09/11/26

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

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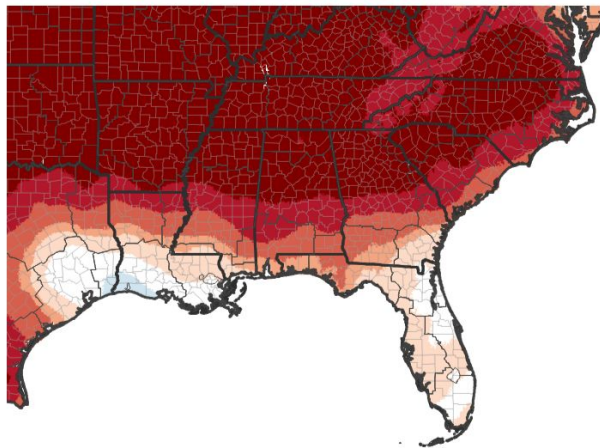


# Temperature

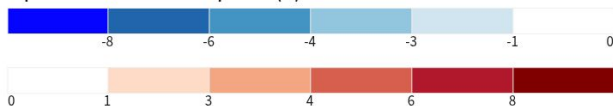
## 7-Day and 30-Day Temperature Anomalies

- Temperatures over the last week and month have remained near to slightly above normal.
- Slightly above normal temperatures are expected over the next few weeks.
- It won't necessarily be any hotter than it has been, but because this is typically when a slight seasonal decline in temperature starts to occur, the continued warm, humid conditions will be above normal.

7-Day Temperature Anomaly



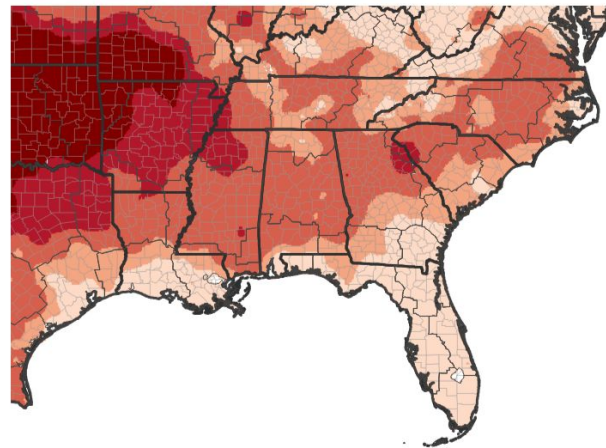
Departure from Normal Max Temperature (°F)



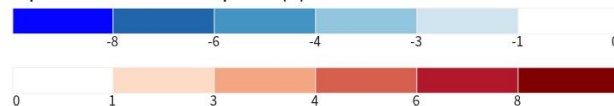
Source(s): NOAA's National Centers for Environmental Information; image courtesy of Drought.gov

Data Valid: 09/07/26

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: 09/07/26



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# 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 **September 01, 2026** for the Withlacoochee River.
- Streamflows remain exceptionally low in many spots for this time of year; but have increased slightly.
- The C.W. Bill Young Regional Reservoir held 5.9 billion gallons as of September 2, about 38.1 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. Aquifer levels as of the first week of September are in the 21st percentile.
- We are gradually seeing the deficit diminish. More water is being stored, but remains well below normal.

Dry wetlands between the Withlacoochee River and Tsala Apopka Chain of Lakes (August 2026). Courtesy of SWFWMD





# Summary of Impacts

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

## Agricultural Impacts

- Agricultural impacts have declined due to summer rainfall.
- [Report impacts here.](#)

## Fire Hazard Impacts

- The [Keetch-Byram Drought Index \(KBDI\)](#) has decreased substantially. Near-surface soils are more saturated.
- Brush fire activity has diminished quite significantly, but the occasional brush fire does continue to occur.

## Mitigation Actions - Southwest Florida Water Management District

- A [Modified Phase III “Extreme” Water Shortage](#) until October 1, 2026 from the South Florida Water Management District. Always refer to [city or county](#) regulations first.

## Mitigation Actions - Other Partners

- A modified Phase II Water Shortage is in effect for a portion of [Northeast Cape Coral](#) in Lee County.
- No [Burn Bans](#) remain in effect due to drought conditions. However, some annual bans remain in place.





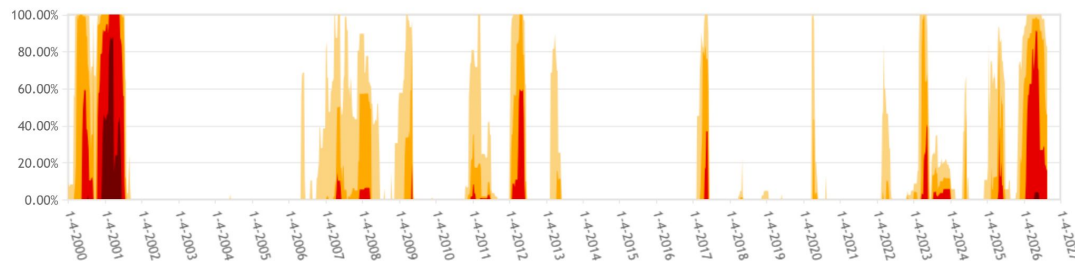
# A Perspective on this Drought

Link to [Drought Monitor Time Series](#)

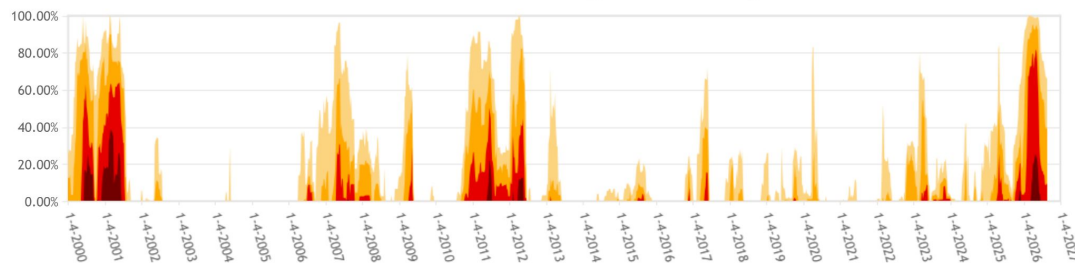
## How does this drought compare to past long term droughts in the NWS Tampa Bay forecast area?

- 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)



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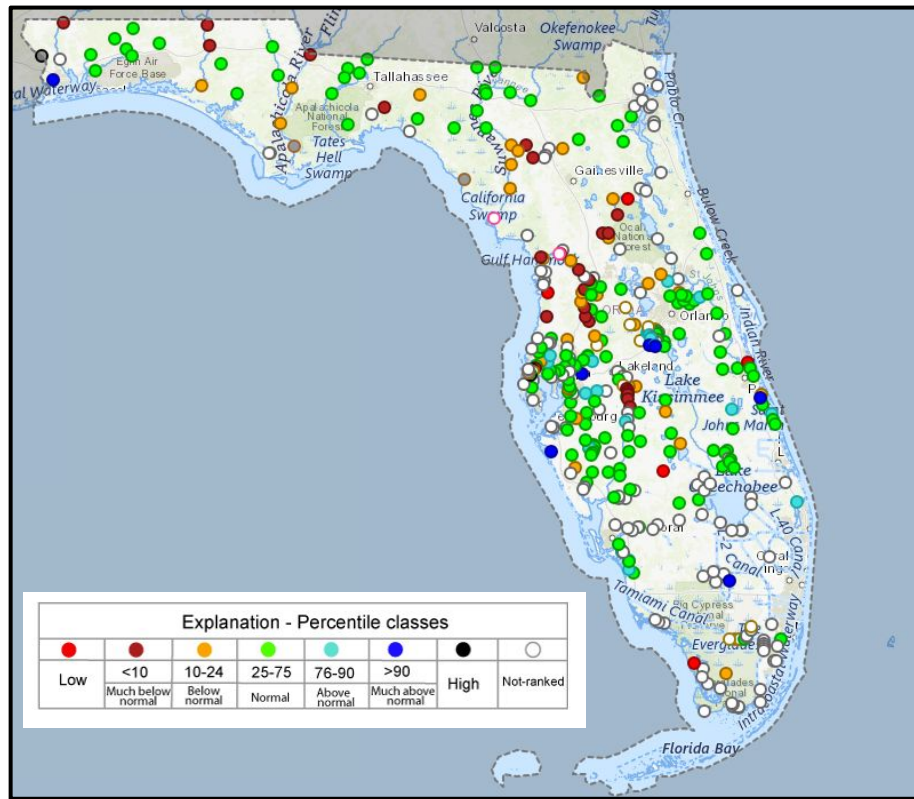
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# Hydrologic Conditions and Impacts

## USGS Streamflow Map for Florida

- In areas where there has been good rainfall coverage this week, streamflows have increased substantially.
- However, rainfall has not been uniform everywhere; in areas that have not seen as much rain, streamflows remain below normal. This remains especially true in the Withlacoochee and Upper Peace River Basins.
- Streamflows are likely to remain the same or rise some over the next week as near normal rainfall is forecast across the area.



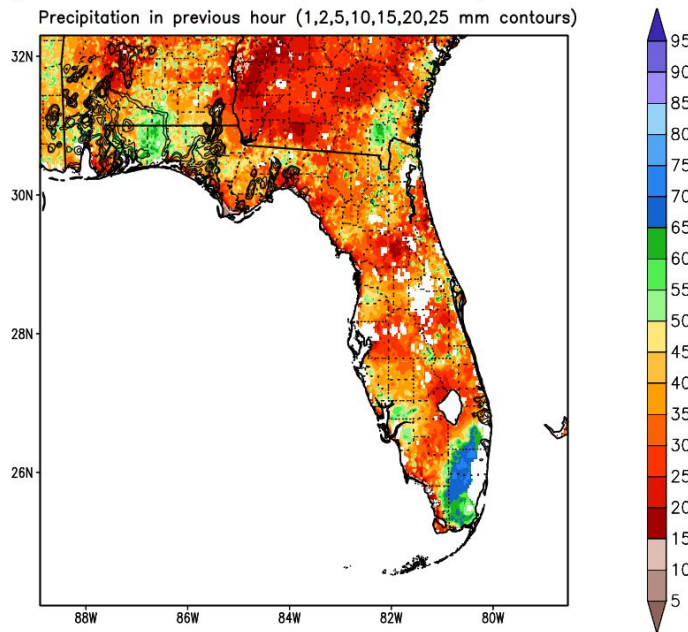


# Agricultural Impacts

## 2025 Florida Crop Report

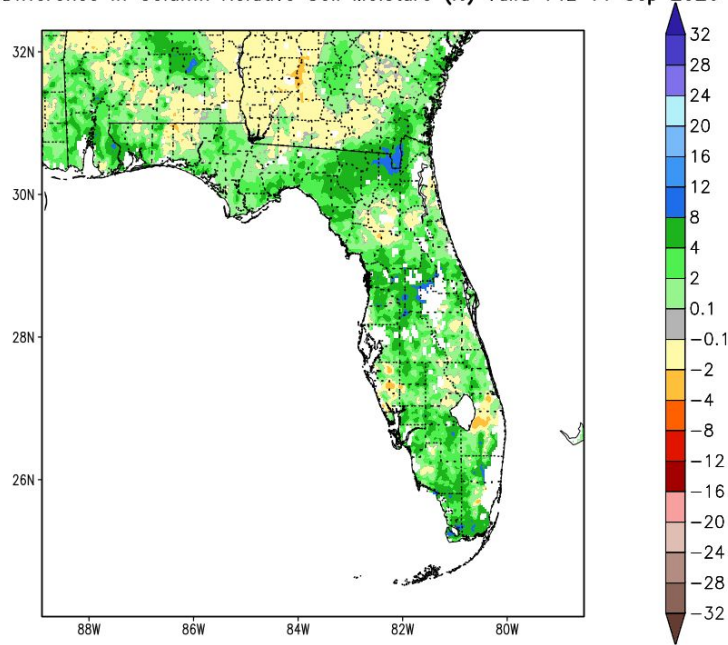
Gradually, deeper layer soil moisture is increasing with the more consistent rains of the last few weeks.

Column—Integrated Relative Soil Moisture (available water; %) valid 14z 11 Sep 2026



\*\*NOTE\*\*  
\*\*Experimental\*\*

1-Week Difference in Column Relative Soil Moisture (%) valid 14z 11 Sep 2026



\*\*NOTE\*\*  
\*\*Experimental\*\*



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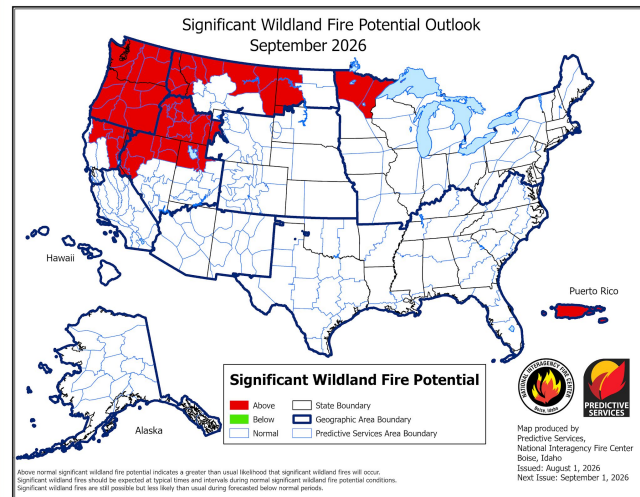
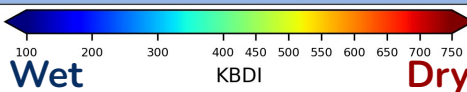
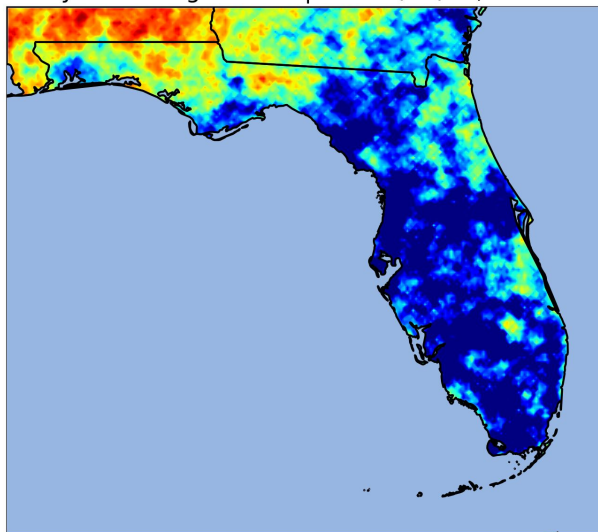


# Fire Hazard Impacts

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 Significant Wildland Fire Potential Outlook for the September depicts near normal fire activity across the area.

Keetch-Byram Drought Index | Thu 09/10/26, 02:00 PM EDT



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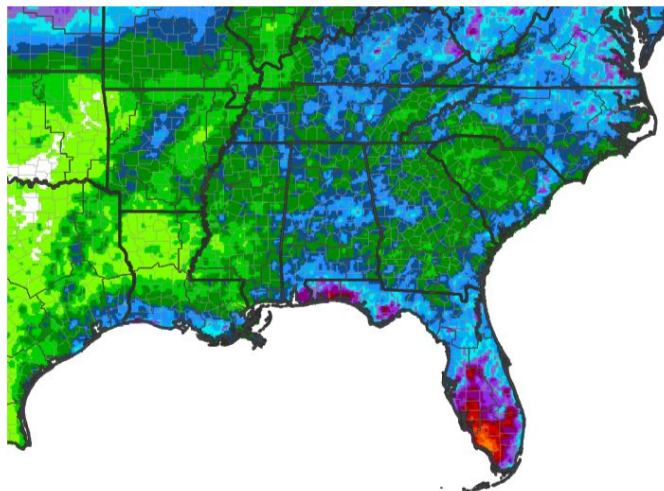
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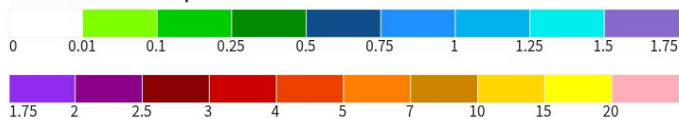
# Precipitation Outlook

## 7-Day and 8-14 Day Precipitation Outlooks

7-Day Quantitative Precipitation Forecast for September 11, 2026–September 18, 2026



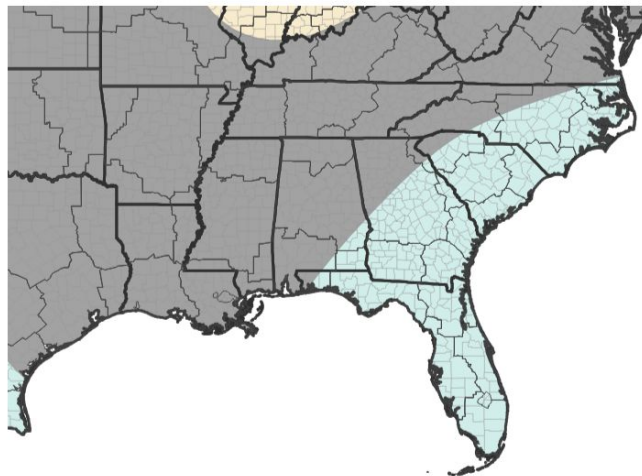
Predicted Inches of Precipitation



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

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8–14 Day Precipitation Outlook for September 18, 2026–September 24, 2026



Probability of Below-Normal Precipitation



Probability of Above-Normal Precipitation



■ Near-Normal Conditions

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

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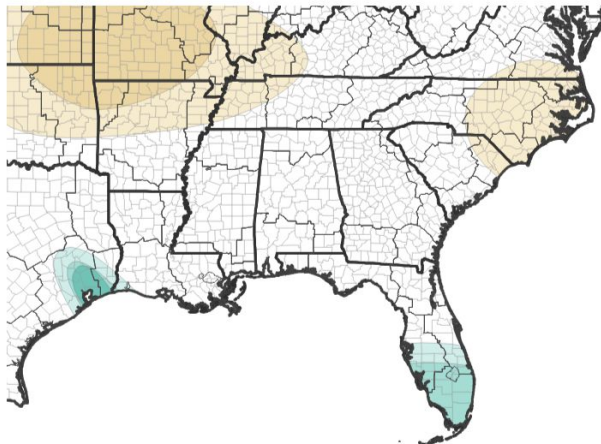


# Long-Range Outlooks

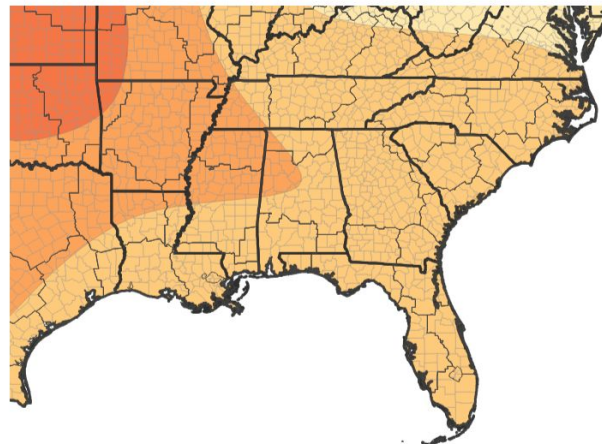
The latest monthly and seasonal outlooks can be found on the [CPC homepage](#)

- The outlook for September suggests near normal precip across the northern half of the Florida peninsula to above normal precipitation for the southern half.
- Temperatures are favored to remain above normal.
- This suggests that drought conditions may continue to improve.

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" |

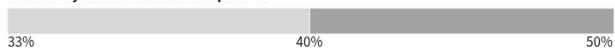
Probability of Below-Normal Precipitation



Probability of Above-Normal Precipitation



Probability of Near-Normal Precipitation



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

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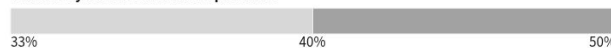
Probability of Below-Normal Temperatures



Probability of Above-Normal Temperatures



Probability of Near-Normal Temperatures



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

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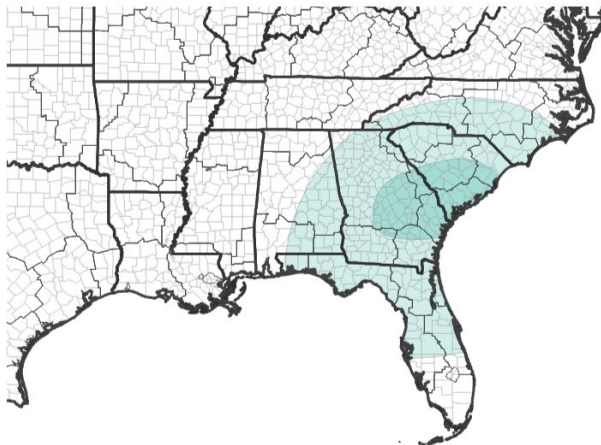


# Long-Range Outlooks

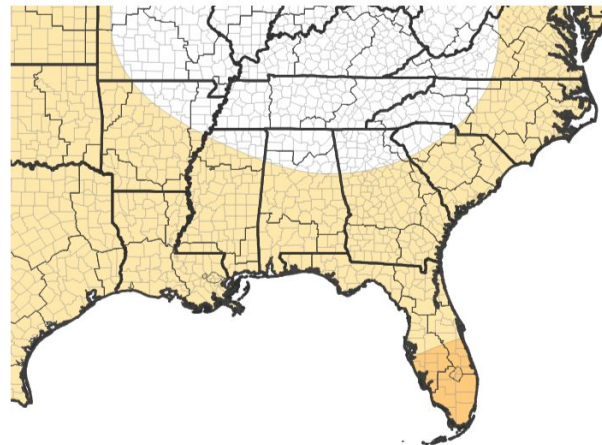
The latest monthly and seasonal outlooks can be found on the [CPC homepage](#)

- 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" |

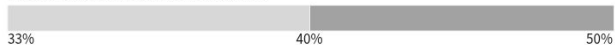
Probability of Below-Normal Precipitation



Probability of Above-Normal Precipitation



Probability of Near-Normal Precipitation



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

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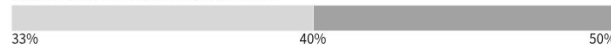
Probability of Below-Normal Temperatures



Probability of Above-Normal Temperatures



Probability of Near-Normal Temperatures



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

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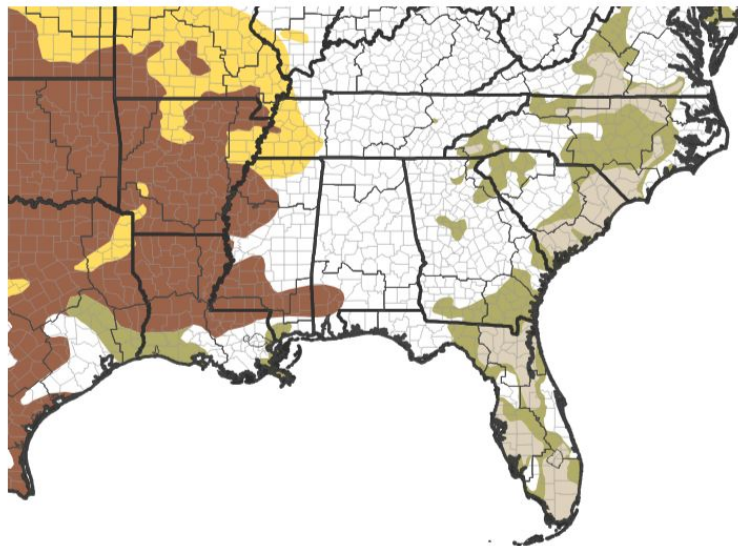


# Drought Outlook

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

- Given the prediction for near to above normal rainfall in the months ahead, drought is expected to improve across the region over the next three months - if not end altogether.

**Seasonal (3-Month) Drought Outlook for August 31, 2026–November 30, 2026**



**Drought Is Predicted To...**



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

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Links to the latest:

[Climate Prediction Center Monthly Drought Outlook](#)

[Climate Prediction Center Seasonal Drought Outlook](#)



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