

Drought Information Statement for West Central and Southwest Florida

Valid October 9, 2026

Issued By: National Weather Service Tampa Bay, FL

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

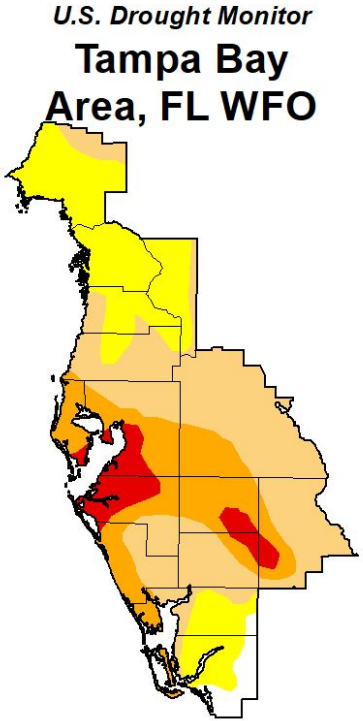
- This product will be updated October 16, 2026 or sooner if drought conditions change significantly.
- Please see all currently available products at https://drought.gov/drought-information-statements.
- Please visit https://www.weather.gov/tbw/DroughtInformationStatement for previous statements.
- 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.
- Slight improvements continued this week across small portions of the region.

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



October 6, 2026
(Released Thursday, Oct. 8, 2026)
Valid 8 a.m. EDT

Drought Conditions (Percent Area)

	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	2.92	97.08	70.24	27.96	6.85	0.00
Last Week 09-29-2026	2.47	97.53	70.87	27.96	6.85	0.00
3 Months Ago 07-07-2026	0.00	100.00	97.49	86.32	26.80	0.00
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 10-07-2025	46.62	53.38	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Intensity:
None
D0 Abnormally Dry
D1 Moderate Drought
D2 Severe Drought
D3 Extreme 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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CPC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP

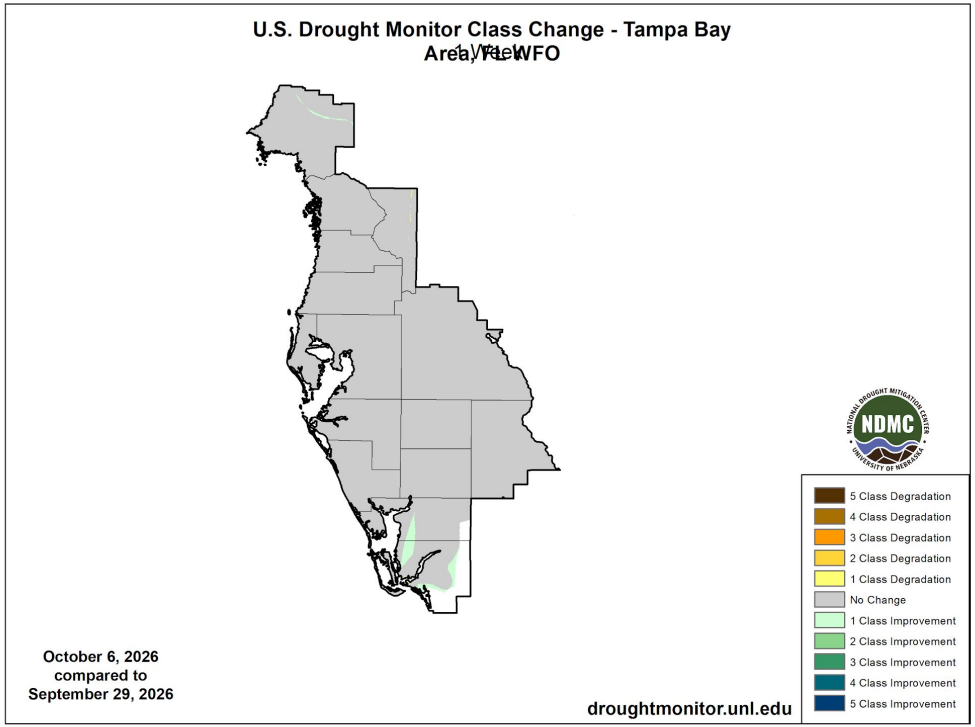
droughtmonitor.unl.edu

Recent Change in Drought Intensity

Link to the latest 1-week change map for West Central and Southwest Florida

- There have been some 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**: Small parts of Charlotte, Lee, and Levy Counties.
  - **No Change:** Remainder of West Central and Southwest Florida.

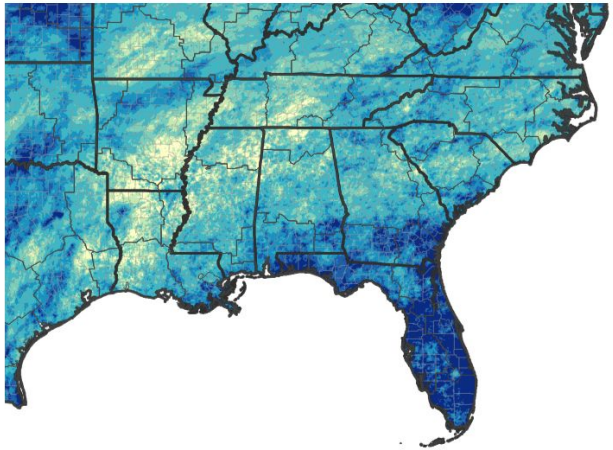


Precipitation

Last 30 Days

- Everyone has seen rainfall over the last month.
- Through Tuesday, some areas had seen above normal rainfall, while others were still 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

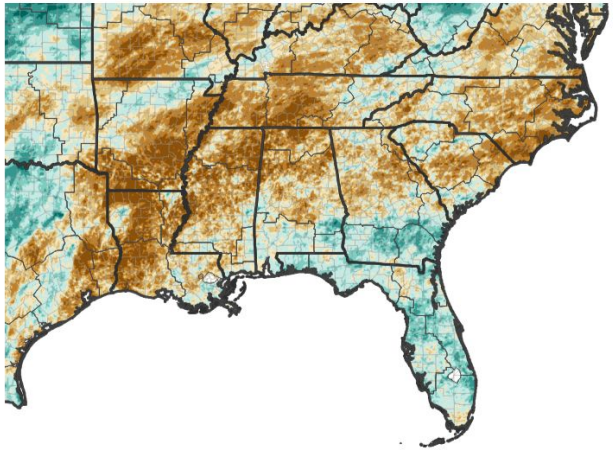
0 | 0.01 | 0.5 | 1 | 2

2 | 4 | 6 | 8

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

Last Updated: 10/09/26

30-Day Percent of Normal Precipitation



Precipitation Shown as a Percentage of Normal Conditions

0% | 25% | 50% | 75% | 100%

100% | 150% | 200% | 300%

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

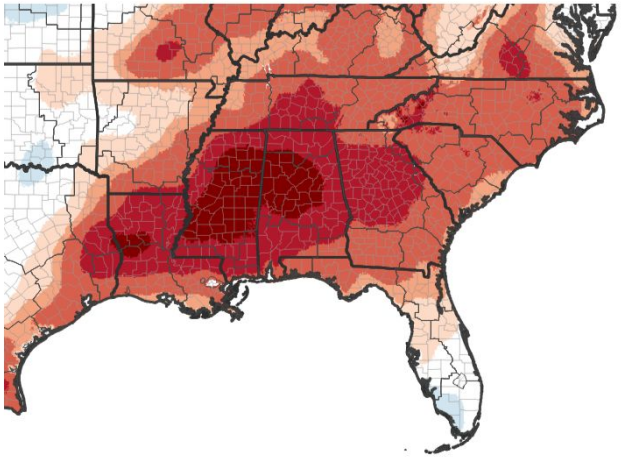
Last Updated: 10/09/26

Temperature

7-Day and 30-Day Temperature Anomalies

- Temperatures over the last week were above normal across the Nature Coast, near normal in South Central Florida, and below normal in SWFL.
- Looking ahead, temperatures are forecast to be near to slightly above normal.

7-Day Temperature Anomaly



Departure from Normal Max Temperature (°F)

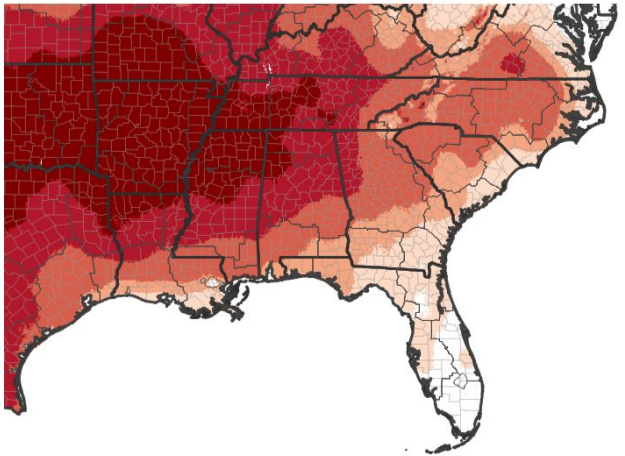
-8 -6 -4 -3 -1 0

0 1 3 4 6 8

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

Data Valid: 10/04/26

30-Day Temperature Anomaly



Departure from Normal Max Temperature (°F)

-8 -6 -4 -3 -1 0

0 1 3 4 6 8

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

Data Valid: 10/04/26

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 **October 1, 2026** for the area and the Withlacoochee River.
- Streamflows have increased in many spots thanks to the recent rain and are above normal to much above normal around Tampa Bay, with near to below normal flows elsewhere across West Central and Southwest Florida.
- The C.W. Bill Young Regional Reservoir held 10.39 billion gallons as of October 8th, about 67 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 remain below normal, currently in the 20th percentile for this time of year .

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 with near-surface soils 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 has been extended through March 31, 2027 from the Southwest Florida Water Management District. Always refer to city or county regulations first.

Mitigation Actions - Other Partners

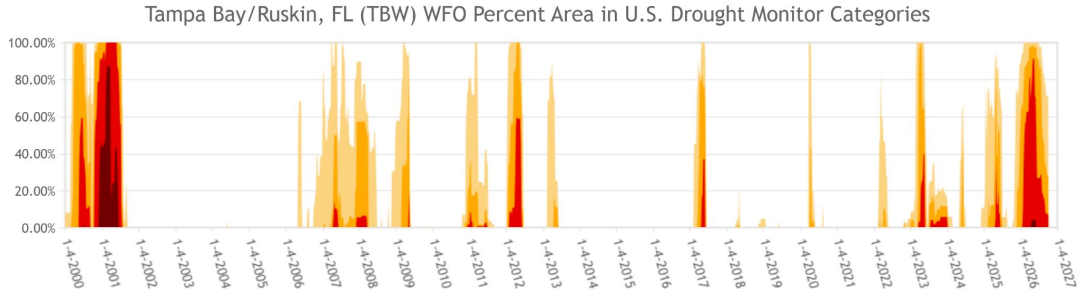
- A modified Phase II Water Shortage is in effect for a portion of Northeast Cape Coral in Lee County.
- No Burn Bans remain in effect due to drought conditions. However, some annual bans remain in place.

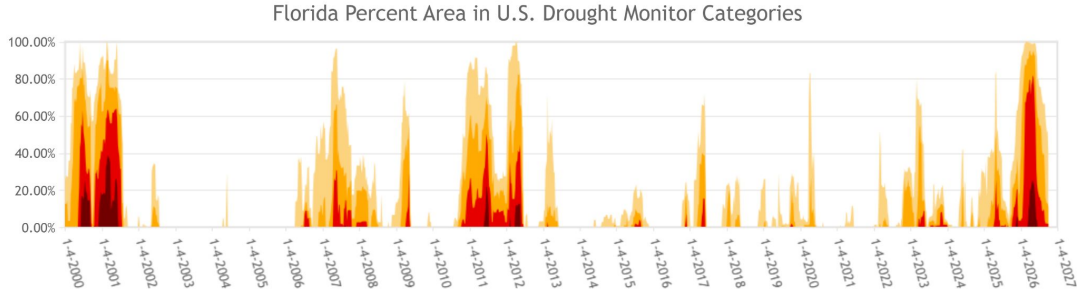
A Perspective on this Drought

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.





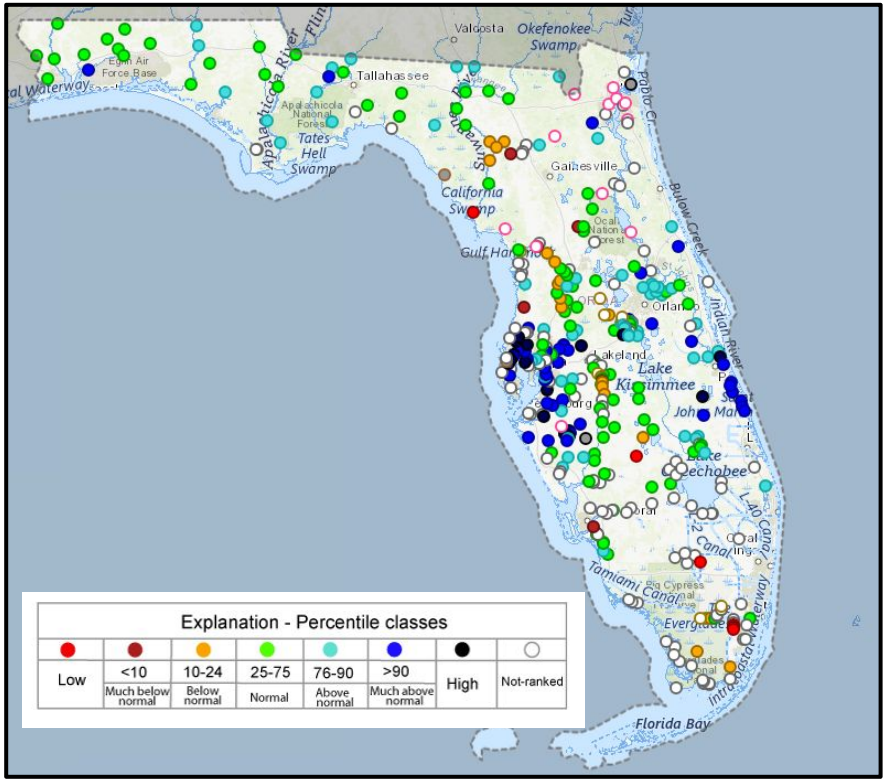
Graphs Courtesy of the U.S. Drought Monitor website
Time series depiction of D1, D2, D3, and D4 drought across the NWS Tampa Bay forecast area by percentage (top). State of Florida Time Series of D1, D2, D3, and D4 drought by percentage (bottom). Records go back to 2000.

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

Hydrologic Conditions and Impacts

USGS Streamflow Map for Florida

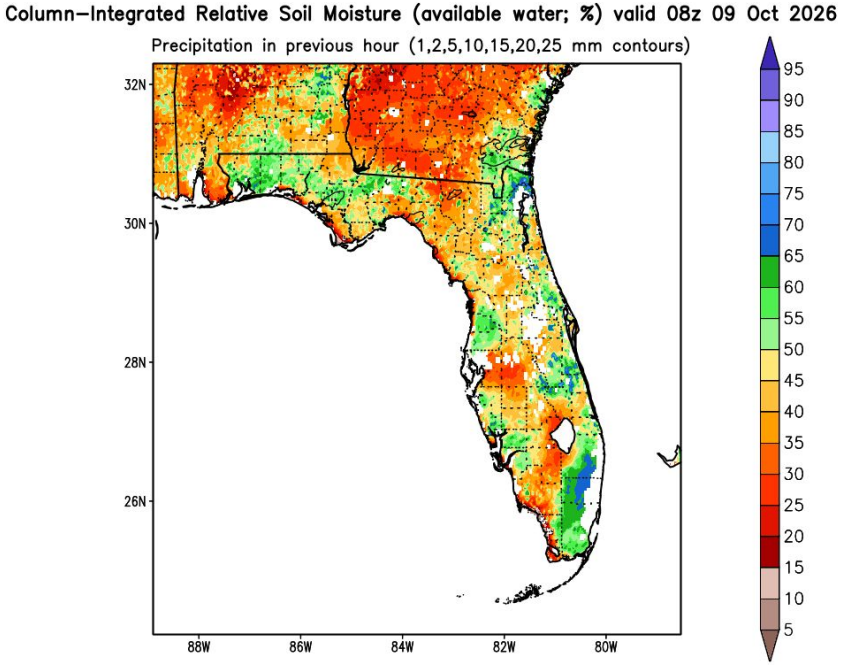
- Decent rainfall has occurred across the region over the last few days with streamflows increasing this week.
- With additional rainfall forecast this weekend, streamflows are likely to increase some more or remain the same.



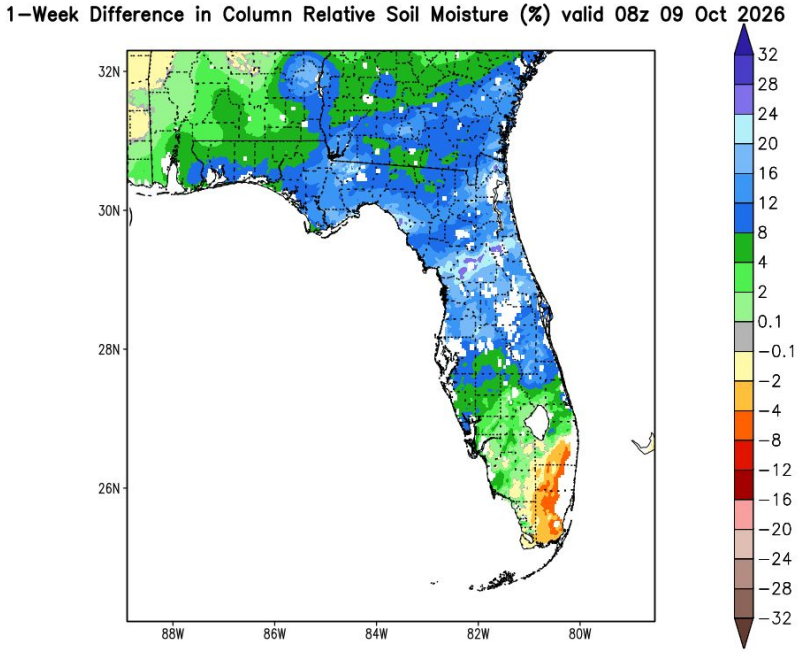
Agricultural Impacts

2025 Florida Crop Report

With the rainy weather lately, soil moisture has increased in many areas.



NOTE
Experimental



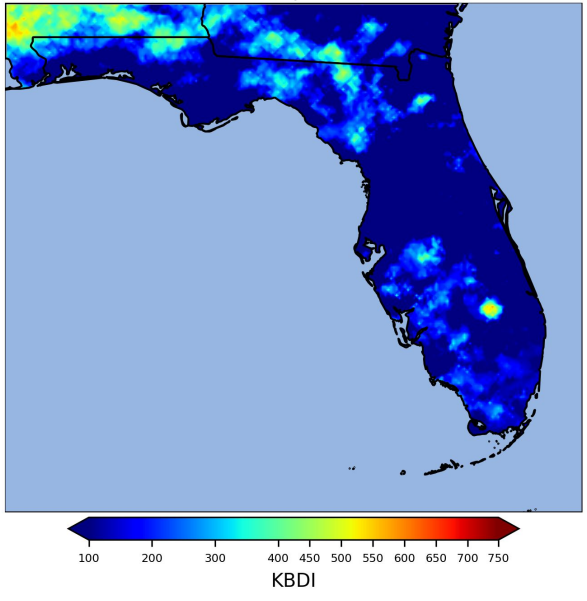
NOTE
Experimental

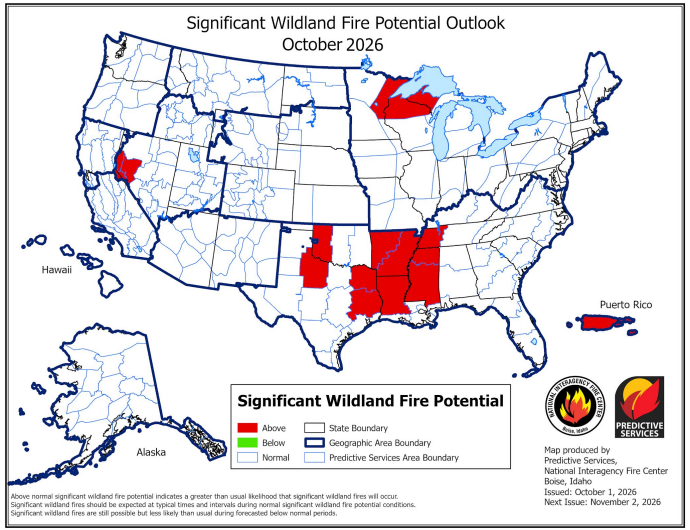
Fire Hazard Impacts

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

- Keetch-Byram Drought Index (KBDI) indicates rather wet soils across most of the region thanks to the rainfall over the last few days.
- The Significant Wildland Fire Potential Outlook for October depicts near normal fire activity across the area.

Keetch-Byram Drought Index | Thu 10/08/26, 02:00 PM EDT



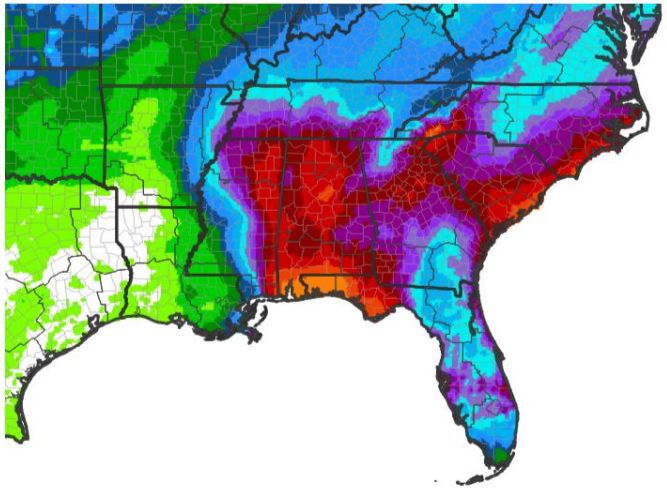


Precipitation Outlook

7-Day and 8-14 Day Precipitation Outlooks

- Scattered to numerous showers and thunderstorms remain in the forecast through the weekend.
- Drier conditions are then expected to return for much of next week.
- A better chance for above normal rainfall sets up during week two as a cold front moves into the area.

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



Predicted Inches of Precipitation

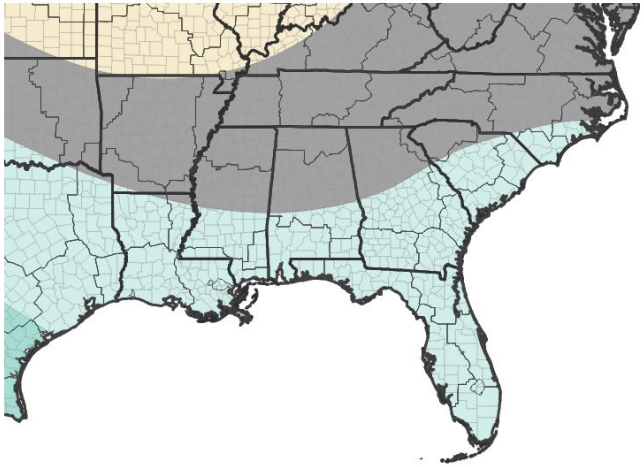
0 0.01 0.1 0.25 0.5 0.75 1 1.25 1.5 1.75

1.75 2 2.5 3 4 5 7 10 15 20

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

Last Updated: 10/08/26

8–14 Day Precipitation Outlook for October 16, 2026–October 22, 2026



Probability of Below-Normal Precipitation

33% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Probability of Above-Normal Precipitation

33% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Near-Normal Conditions

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

Last Updated: 10/08/26

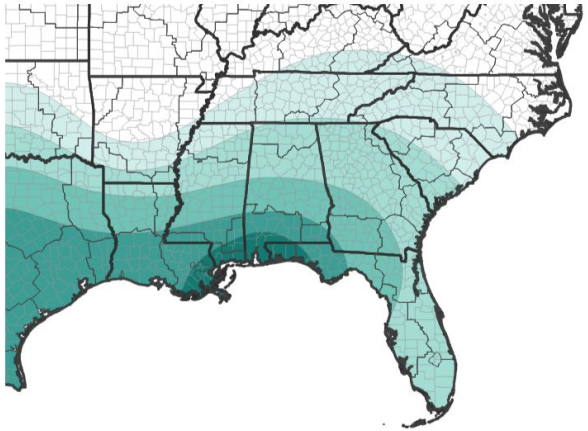
Long-Range Outlooks

The latest monthly and seasonal outlooks can be found on the CPC homepage

- The outlook for October suggests above normal rainfall across the Florida peninsula.
- Temperatures are favored to remain above normal.
- This suggests that drought conditions may improve and/or linger.

Normals	October	
	Temp	Rain
Brooksville	73.1°	2.79"
Tampa	77.4°	2.34"
Lakeland	76.4°	3.04"
Sarasota	77.3°	2.76"
Punta Gorda	77.2°	3.02"
Fort Myers	78.0°	3.08"

Monthly Precipitation Outlook for October 1, 2026–October 31, 2026



Probability of Below-Normal Precipitation

33% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Probability of Above-Normal Precipitation

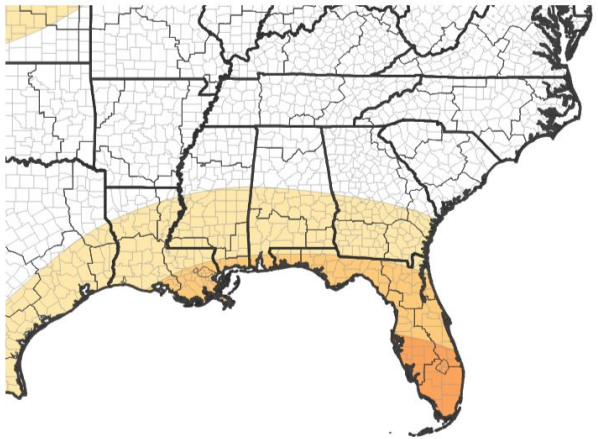
33% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Probability of Near-Normal Precipitation

33% 40% 50%

Source(s): Climate Prediction Center; image courtesy of Drought.gov Last Updated: 09/30/26

Monthly Temperature Outlook for October 1, 2026–October 31, 2026



Probability of Below-Normal Temperatures

33% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Probability of Above-Normal Temperatures

33% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Probability of Near-Normal Temperatures

33% 40% 50%

Source(s): Climate Prediction Center; image courtesy of Drought.gov Last Updated: 09/30/26

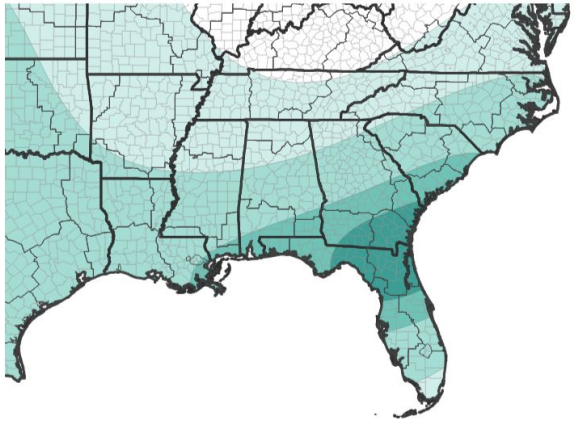
Long-Range Outlooks

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- The outlook for October through December calls for a 40-70% chance of above normal rainfall, with a 33-40% chance of above normal temperatures.
- Historically, El Niño winters have produced above normal rainfall, tracking with the current outlook.

Normals	October		November		December	
	Temp	Rain	Temp	Rain	Temp	Rain
Brooksville	73.1°	2.79"	65.1°	1.59"	60.3°	2.56"
Tampa	77.4°	2.34"	69.8°	1.40"	64.9°	2.56"
Lakeland	76.4°	3.04"	69.2°	1.93"	64.8°	2.61"
Sarasota	77.3°	2.76"	70.1°	1.81"	65.2°	2.33"
Punta Gorda	77.2°	3.02"	70.2°	2.12"	65.8°	1.99"
Fort Myers	78.0°	3.08"	71.5°	1.78"	67.3°	1.90"

Seasonal (3-Month) Precipitation Outlook for October 1, 2026–December 31, 2026



Probability of Below-Normal Precipitation

33% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Probability of Above-Normal Precipitation

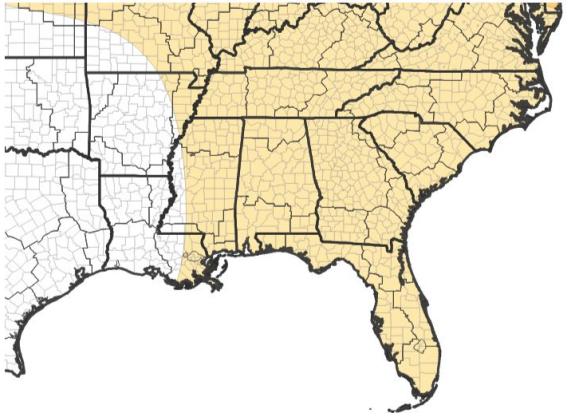
33% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Probability of Near-Normal Precipitation

33% 40% 50%

Source(s): Climate Prediction Center; image courtesy of Drought.gov Last Updated: 09/17/26

Seasonal (3-Month) Temperature Outlook for October 1, 2026–December 31, 2026



Probability of Below-Normal Temperatures

33% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Probability of Above-Normal Temperatures

33% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Probability of Near-Normal Temperatures

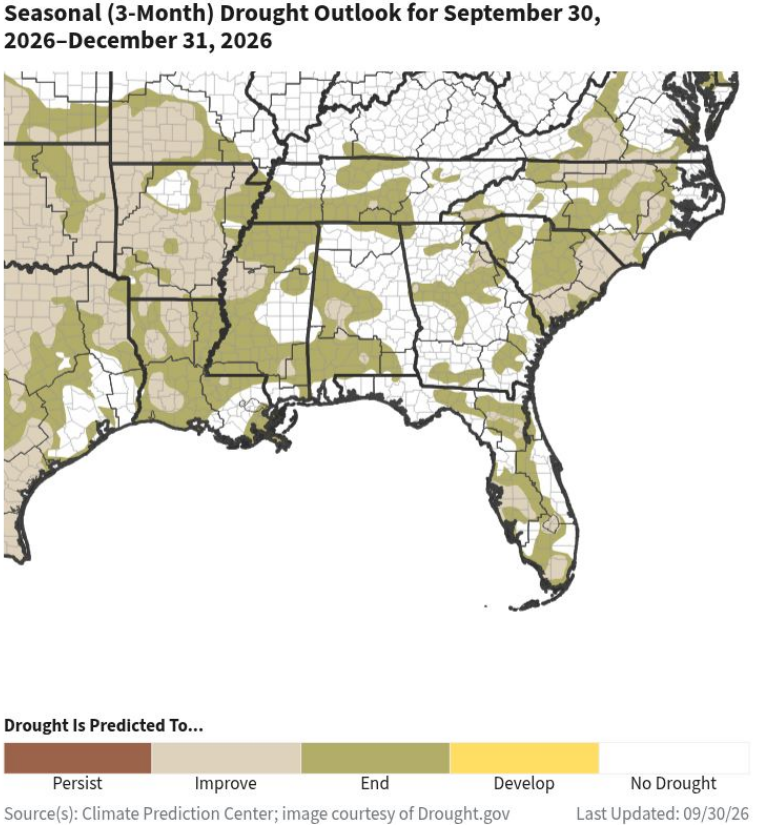
33% 40% 50%

Source(s): Climate Prediction Center; image courtesy of Drought.gov Last Updated: 09/17/26

Drought Outlook

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- If the above normal rainfall is realized this winter, drought conditions may improve as the end of the year approaches, if not end altogether.



Links to the latest:
Climate Prediction Center Monthly Drought Outlook
Climate Prediction Center Seasonal Drought Outlook