

<b>NWS FORM E-5</b> (11-88) (PRES. by NWS Instruction 10-924)	<b>U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE</b> NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE	HYDROLOGIC SERVICE AREA (HSA) <b>Tulsa, Oklahoma (TSA)</b>
		REPORT FOR: MONTH                      YEAR <b>March</b> <b>2012</b>
<b>MONTHLY REPORT OF RIVER AND FLOOD CONDITIONS</b>		SIGNATURE <b>Steven F. Piltz</b> (Meteorologist-in-Charge)
TO: Hydrometeorological Information Center, W/OH2 NOAA / National Weather Service 1325 East West Highway, Room 7230 Silver Spring, MD 20910-3283		DATE <b>April 2, 2012</b>

*When no flooding occurs, include miscellaneous river conditions, such as significant rises, record low stages, ice conditions, snow cover, droughts, and hydrologic products issued (NWS Instruction 10-924)*

An "X" in the box indicates no flood stages were reached in this Hydrologic Service Area (HSA) during the month above.

March 2012 was the hottest March on record for much of eastern OK and northwest AR, including Tulsa and Fort Smith. A heavy rainfall event from March 19-22, 2012 led to widespread flash flooding and river flooding, and helped to eliminate drought conditions across the region. March also ended up as one of the top ten wettest Marches on record at Tulsa and Fort Smith. Normal precipitation for the month of April ranges from 3.1 inches in Pawnee County to 4.7 inches in Latimer County. The Ozark region of northwest Arkansas averages 4.3 inches for the month.

**Monthly Summary**

Using the radar-derived estimated observed precipitation from the RFCs (Fig. 1a), rainfall totals for March 2012 ranged from 3"-12" across eastern OK and northwest AR, with a large portion of eastern OK and west central AR receiving 5"-9" of rain this month. The only area that reported below normal rainfall this month was Washington County AR, where the rainfall total was 75%-90% of normal for March. The remainder of the region had near or above normal rainfall this month, with much of the area getting 150%-300% of the normal March rainfall (Fig. 1b).

Tulsa, OK (TSA): March, 2012 Monthly Observed Precipitation  
 Valid at 4/1/2012 1200 UTC- Created 4/1/12 23:42 UTC

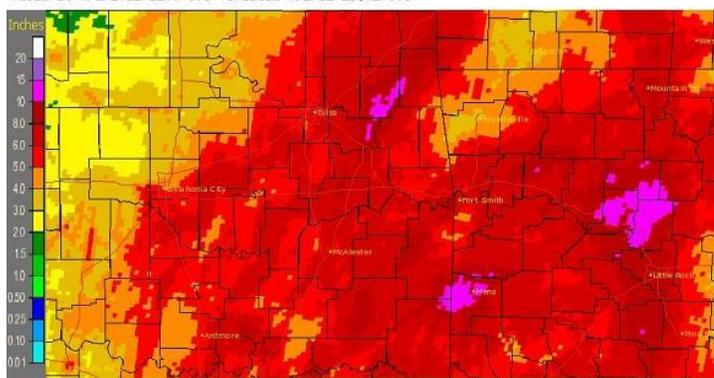


Fig. 1a. Estimated Observed Rainfall for March 2012

Tulsa, OK (TSA): March, 2012 Monthly Percent of Normal Precipitation  
 Valid at 4/1/2012 1200 UTC- Created 4/1/12 23:45 UTC

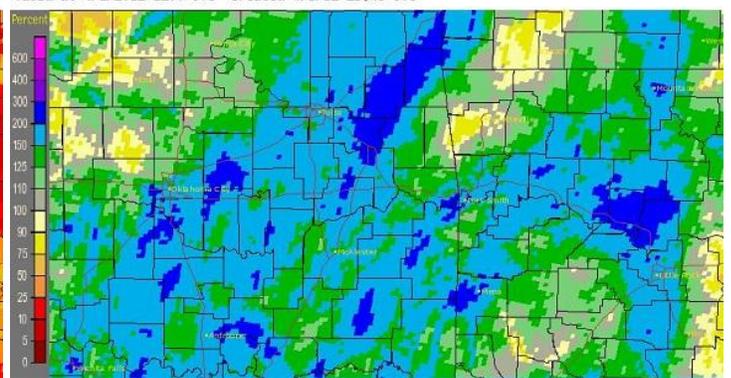


Fig. 1b. Estimated % of Normal Rainfall for March 2012

In Tulsa, OK, March 2012 ranked as the 1<sup>st</sup> warmest March (61.5°F; since records began in 1905) and the 9<sup>th</sup> wettest March (6.24"; since records began in 1888). Fort Smith, AR, was the 1<sup>st</sup> warmest March (63.6°F) and the 7<sup>th</sup> wettest March (8.06") since records began in 1883.

Some of the larger precipitation reports (in inches) for March 2012 included:

Spavinaw, OK (coop)	9.97	Pryor, OK (meso)	8.61	Fort Smith, AR (ASOS)	8.06
Mountainburg 2NE, AR (coop)	8.03	Clayton, OK (meso)	8.03	Jay, OK (meso)	7.99
Inola, OK (meso)	7.66	Miami, OK (coop)	7.66	Antlers, OK (coop)	7.62

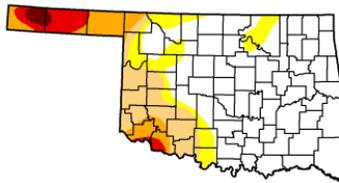
Some of the lowest precipitation reports (in inches) for March 2012 included:

Pawnee, OK (coop)	3.35	Ralston, OK (coop)	3.51	Pawnee, OK (meso)	3.66
Burbank, OK (meso)	3.88	Foraker, OK (meso)	4.06	Eureka Springs 3WNW, AR (coop)	4.35
NW AR Regional Arprt, AR (ASOS)	4.69	Fayetteville, AR (ASOS)	4.70	Berryville 5NW, AR (coop)	4.95
Westville, OK (meso)	4.95				

## U.S. Drought Monitor Oklahoma

March 27, 2012  
Valid 7 a.m. EST

	Drought Conditions (Percent Area)					
	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	66.48	33.52	23.84	11.88	4.97	1.05
Last Week (03/20/2012 mes)	63.01	36.99	25.51	11.88	7.42	3.16
3 Months Ago (12/27/2011 mes)	14.83	85.17	78.76	50.55	27.48	3.33
Start of Calendar Year (12/27/2011 mes)	14.83	85.17	78.76	50.55	27.48	3.33
Start of Water Year (09/27/2011 mes)	0.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	78.97	66.42
One Year Ago (03/22/2011 mes)	4.38	95.62	83.58	54.46	8.78	0.00



**Intensity:**



The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements.

<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu>



Released Thursday, March 29, 2012  
Eric Luebbehusen, USDA

Fig. 2. Drought Monitor for Oklahoma

## U.S. Drought Monitor Arkansas

March 27, 2012  
Valid 7 a.m. EST

	Drought Conditions (Percent Area)					
	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	99.96	0.04	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Last Week (03/20/2012 mes)	98.49	1.51	0.23	0.00	0.00	0.00
3 Months Ago (12/27/2011 mes)	86.20	13.80	3.95	1.06	0.23	0.00
Start of Calendar Year (12/27/2011 mes)	86.20	13.80	3.95	1.06	0.23	0.00
Start of Water Year (09/27/2011 mes)	1.21	98.79	75.99	39.48	18.92	1.53
One Year Ago (03/22/2011 mes)	1.55	98.45	79.51	47.84	17.37	0.00



**Intensity:**



The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements.

<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu>



Released Thursday, March 29, 2012  
Eric Luebbehusen, USDA

Fig. 3. Drought Monitor for Arkansas

According to the [U.S. Drought Monitor](#) (USDM) from March 27, 2012 (Figs 2, 3), abnormally Dry (D0) conditions affected portions of Osage and Pawnee Counties. These abnormally dry conditions are a result of long-term indicators, including lake levels at Birch and Skiatook Lakes. There was a significant improvement in the drought conditions this month due to the heavy rain from March 19-22, combined with the rainfall totals over the last few months.

According to statistics from the [Oklahoma Climatological Survey](#) (OCS):

Rank since 1921	Spring (Mar 1-Apr 1, 2012)	Year-to-Date (Jan 1 – Apr 1, 2012)	Water Year (Oct 1, 2011 – Apr 1, 2012)	Last 120 Days (Dec 4, 2011 – Apr 1, 2012)	Last 365 days (Apr 3, 2011– Apr 1, 2012)
Northeast OK	9 <sup>th</sup> wettest	16 <sup>th</sup> wettest	18 <sup>th</sup> wettest	21 <sup>st</sup> wettest	43 <sup>rd</sup> wettest
East Central OK	12 <sup>th</sup> wettest	17 <sup>th</sup> wettest	17 <sup>th</sup> wettest	23 <sup>rd</sup> wettest	32 <sup>nd</sup> wettest
Southeast OK	8 <sup>th</sup> wettest	12 <sup>th</sup> wettest	11 <sup>th</sup> wettest	12 <sup>th</sup> wettest	34 <sup>th</sup> wettest
Statewide	9 <sup>th</sup> wettest	11 <sup>th</sup> wettest	13 <sup>th</sup> wettest	18 <sup>th</sup> wettest	25 <sup>th</sup> driest

Most of the major reservoirs in the Tulsa HSA were operating in their flood pools, some as much as 35%, as of March 30, 2012. Only two reservoirs were reporting conservation pool deficits as of March 30, 2012: Birch Lake 77% and Skiatook Lake 62%. However, Birch Lake increased from 47% at the end of February to 77% at the end of March and Skiatook Lake increased from 62% at the end of February to 72% at the end of March.

### Outlooks

The [Climate Prediction Center](#) (CPC) outlook for April 2012 (issued March 31, 2012) indicates an enhanced chance for above normal temperatures and equal chances for above, near, and below median precipitation for the entire area. This outlook was based primarily on short-term dynamic computer models with La Niña impacts considered.

For the 3-month period Apr-May-Jun 2012, CPC is forecasting a slightly enhanced chance for above average temperatures across southeast OK and northwest AR, with equal chances for above, near, and below normal

temperatures elsewhere. This outlook also indicates equal chances for above, near, and below median precipitation across the region (outlook issued March 15, 2012). This outlook is based primarily on dynamic computer models. According to CPC, La Niña continued to weaken at the end of March. La Niña conditions in the tropical Pacific are likely to transition to ENSO-neutral by the end of April, though atmospheric and soil moisture impacts may linger a little longer.

### **Summary of Precipitation Events**

#### **March 1 – 11:**

March began with a widespread tornado outbreak across the Ohio Valley and Southeast U.S., while across eastern OK and northwest AR, wildfire was the main concern. Very strong winds and low relative humidity created conditions conducive to rapid fire spread. The Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry, Forestry Services reported 26 fires, burning approximately 1500 acres, within their protection district in eastern OK on the 5<sup>th</sup>. This included large fires in Cherokee, Delaware, Sequoyah, and McIntosh Counties.

Two widespread rainfall events affected the area from late on the 7<sup>th</sup> through the 11<sup>th</sup> as an upper-level low meandered over the southwest U.S. A strong cold front moved into eastern OK and northwest AR during the late evening hours of the 7<sup>th</sup>. Light showers developed both ahead and behind the front overnight, with more widespread showers and thunderstorms developing during the day on the 8<sup>th</sup>. As the front slowed during the evening across the Arklatex region, the flow aloft became more parallel to the frontal boundary, leading to heavy rain north of the front in southeast OK and west central AR. A large part of northeast OK received 0.10" to 0.25", while the remainder of the region had 0.5" to 2" of rainfall. Isolated areas of southeast OK and west central AR received near 3" of rain. Sleet was reported across northeast OK and northwest AR as colder air moved in behind the cold front; however, with surface temperatures well above freezing, no accumulations occurred.

The second round of showers and thunderstorms began on the evening of the 10<sup>th</sup> as the upper-level low began to move northeast. Widespread rain expanded from south to north during the overnight hours before ending during the afternoon of the 11<sup>th</sup>. Rainfall totals ranged from around 0.50" to around 1", with the highest totals of 1.5" to 2.5" across much of Franklin County.

For the two events combined, most of eastern OK and northwest AR received around 0.75" to around 1.5", with isolated higher amounts of 2"-5" in southeast OK and west central AR (see figs. 4, 5). Since the rain was generally slow and steady, a lot of the water was able to soak into the ground and no flooding was reported from either event.

Tulsa, OK (TSA): Current 7-Day Observed Precipitation  
Valid at 3/13/2012 1200 UTC- Created 3/13/12 23:56 UTC

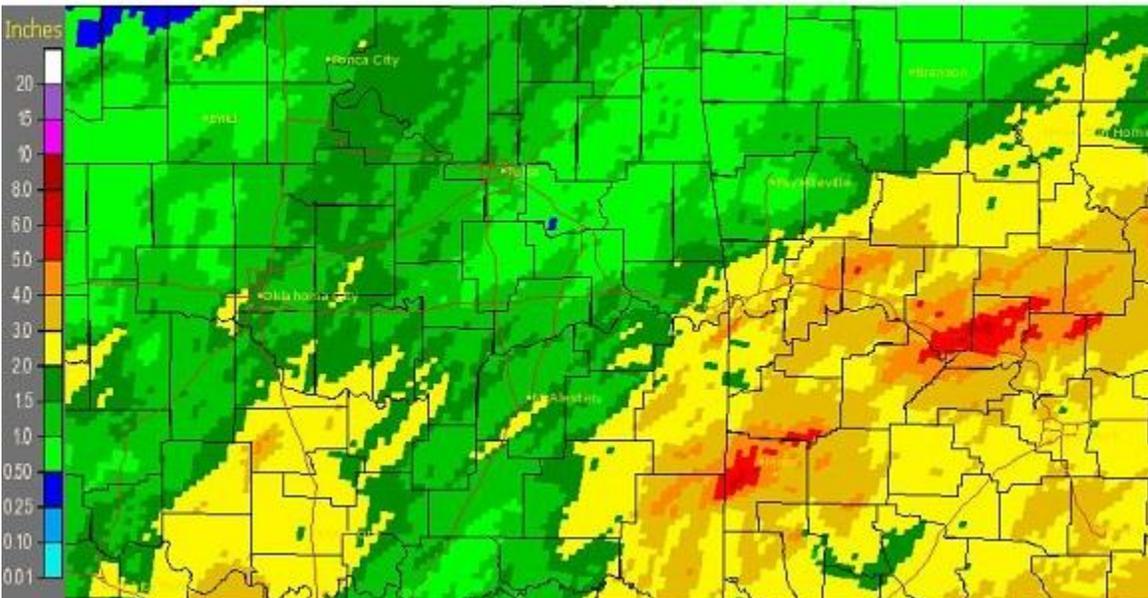


Fig. 4. Rainfall for the two widespread rainfall events from 03/07-08/2012 and 03/10-11/2012.

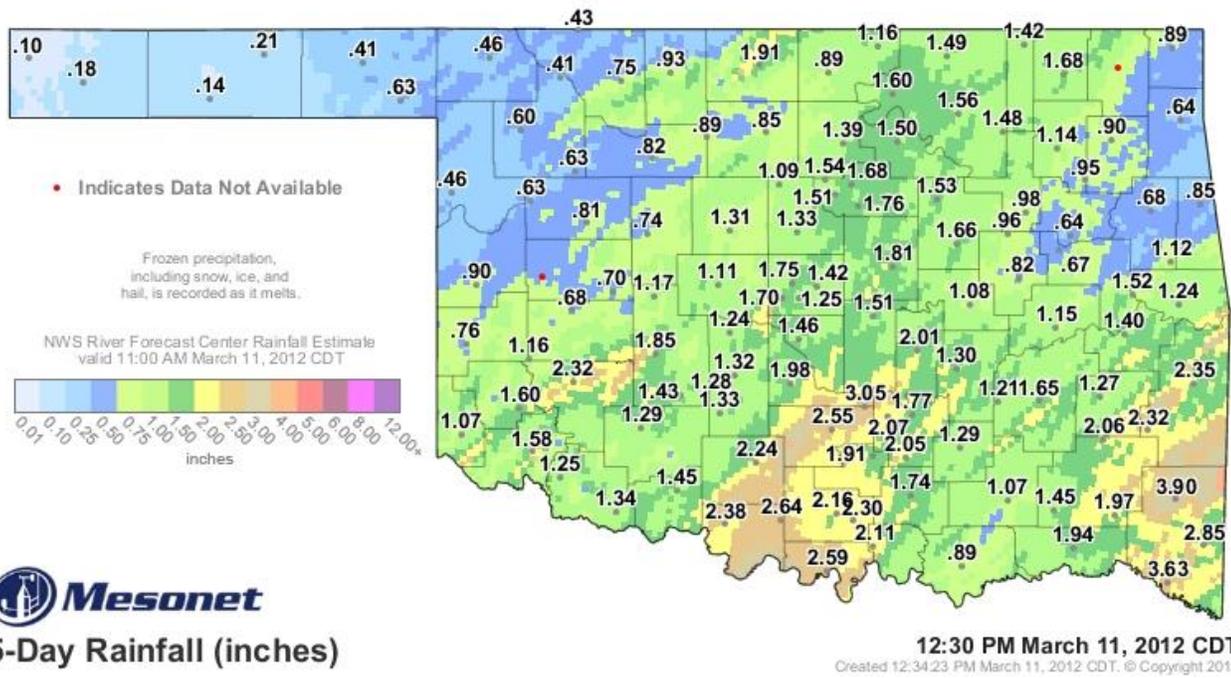


Fig. 5. Rainfall totals across OK for the two widespread rainfall events from 03/07-08/2012 and 03/10-11/2012.

**March 12 – 31:**

The southwesterly flow of the subtropical jet over the Southern Plains made conditions more like summer than spring from March 12-18, with high temperatures climbing into the mid-70s to mid-80s across a large portion of the area! These temperatures were nearly 15-20 degrees above the normal temperatures for this time of year, and several records were broken across the area.

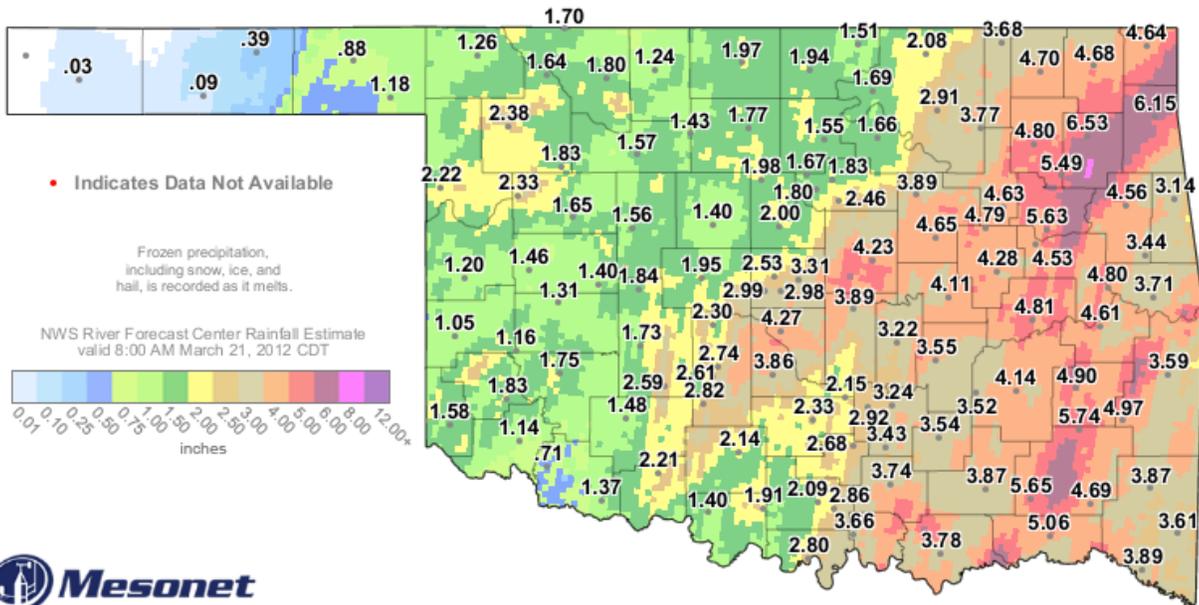
A widespread heavy rain and flood event affected eastern OK and northwest AR March 19-22. An upper-level low became cut-off over western TX on the 19<sup>th</sup>, with only very slow eastward progress on the 20<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup>. Strong moisture transport occurred ahead of the low, with unusually high deep layer moisture over eastern Oklahoma and northwest Arkansas. A cold front initially moved into eastern OK on the 19<sup>th</sup>, with showers and thunderstorms developing along it. As the upper low became cut-off, the surface boundary stalled. Rainfall rates of 1"-2" per hour were common due to the high atmospheric moisture. The high amplitude nature of the upper-level storm system resulted in mid- and upper-level flow (and resultant storm movement) being parallel to the surface boundary, which caused training of heavy rain producing storms. In addition to the heavy rain, a line of strong to severe thunderstorms moved slowly eastward across the area during the afternoon and evening hours of the 19<sup>th</sup>, with reports of damaging winds and large hail. The storms produced at least one tornado, which was on the ground for about 13 miles from southwest of Uniontown to west of Chester in Crawford County, Arkansas. The stronger storms moved east of the area, while additional rounds of heavy rain continued near the stalled boundary. Showers and isolated thunderstorms continued for much of the day on the 20<sup>th</sup>, before shifting east. Additional light to moderate rain then redeveloped over the area on the 21<sup>st</sup> as the upper-level low continued to spin over north central TX. When the upper-level low finally moved northeast over OK on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, showers and isolated thunderstorms developed beneath it. This storm system finally moved out of the region with rain ending on the evening of the 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Widespread rainfall totals of 3"-5" affected a large portion of eastern OK and western AR from March 19-20 (Figs. 6, 7). The highest totals of 6" to 8" affected most of Mayes County and portions of Ottawa, Delaware, Rogers, Wagoner, Cherokee, Muskogee, McIntosh, Pushmataha, and Choctaw Counties. This amount of rain led to widespread flash flooding and many street closures (including state highways). Moderate to Minor river flooding also occurred due to all of the rain (refer to the E3 report for additional details as well as the preliminary hydrographs at the end of this report). Interestingly, the highest rainfall totals occurred over the Grand Neosho River Basin, including the Grand, Hudson, and Ft. Gibson Lakes (Fig. 8). These lakes rose 7-18 feet due to the heavy rain and run-off, and greatly helped to reduce the flooding impact over this area. If the rain had occurred just 20 miles further south, significant flooding would have likely occurred along the Illinois River.

With an additional 0.25"-1.75" of rain falling March 21-22, the highest storm total rainfall was 6" to 9", with localized higher amounts (Figs. 9, 10). The storm total in Tulsa was 4.83", with a new daily record rainfall of 2.81" set on the 19<sup>th</sup> (previous record was 1.15" in 1968). Fort Smith had a storm total of 3.94", and also set a new daily rainfall record of 2.11" on the 20<sup>th</sup> (previous record 1.92" in 1955).

Some of the highest rainfall totals included:

Monkey Island 2.6 SSE, OK (CoCoRaHS)	11.85	Chouteau 10S, OK (CoCoRaHS)	9.11	Chouteau L&D, OK	9.02
Spavinaw, OK (coop)	8.93	Locust Grove, OK	8.87	Wagoner 4.1ESE, OK (CoCoRaHS)	8.85
Hudson Lake, OK	8.48	New Eucha 5W, OK	8.33	Pryor, OK (meso)	7.61
Grand Lake, OK	7.61				



### 3-Day Rainfall (inches)

9:35 AM March 21, 2012 CDT

Created 9:39:19 AM March 21, 2012 CDT. © Copyright 2012

Fig. 6. Rainfall totals across OK from March 19 through 9:35am March 21.

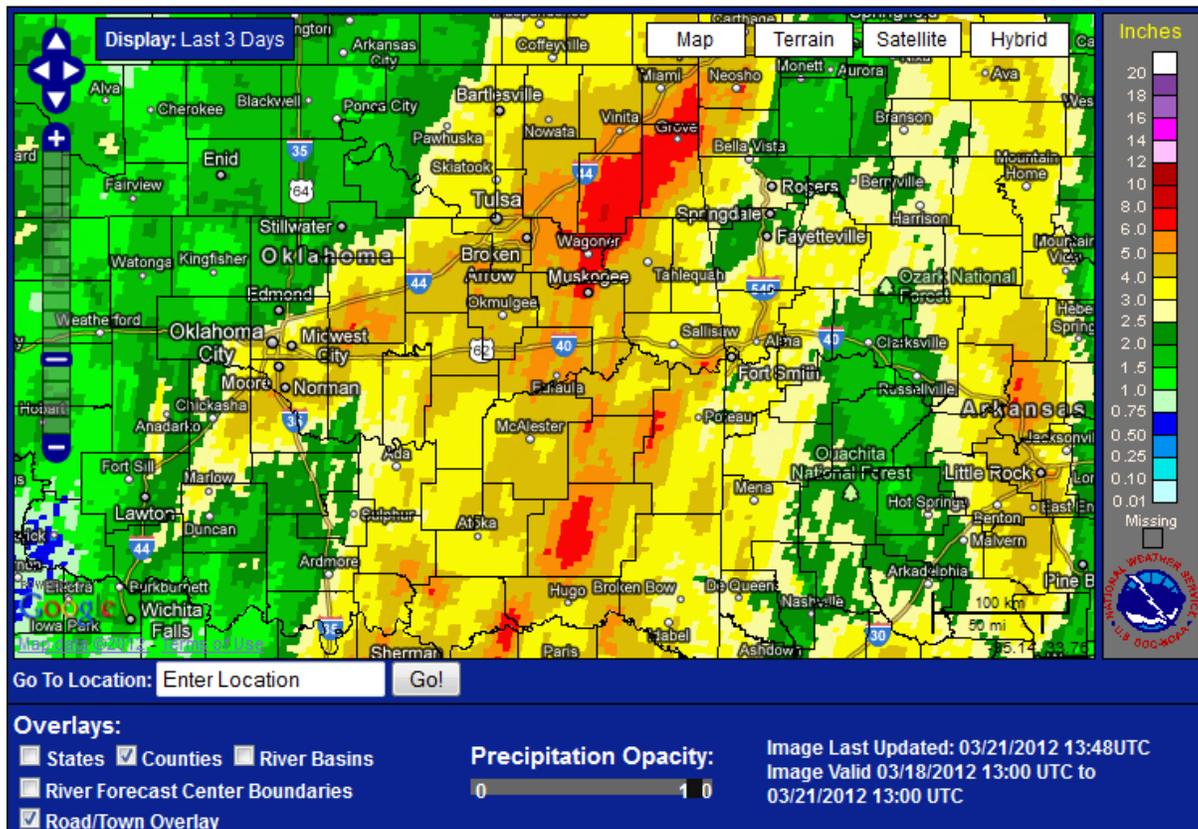


Fig. 7. Rainfall totals across eastern OK and northwest AR from March 19 through 9am March 21.

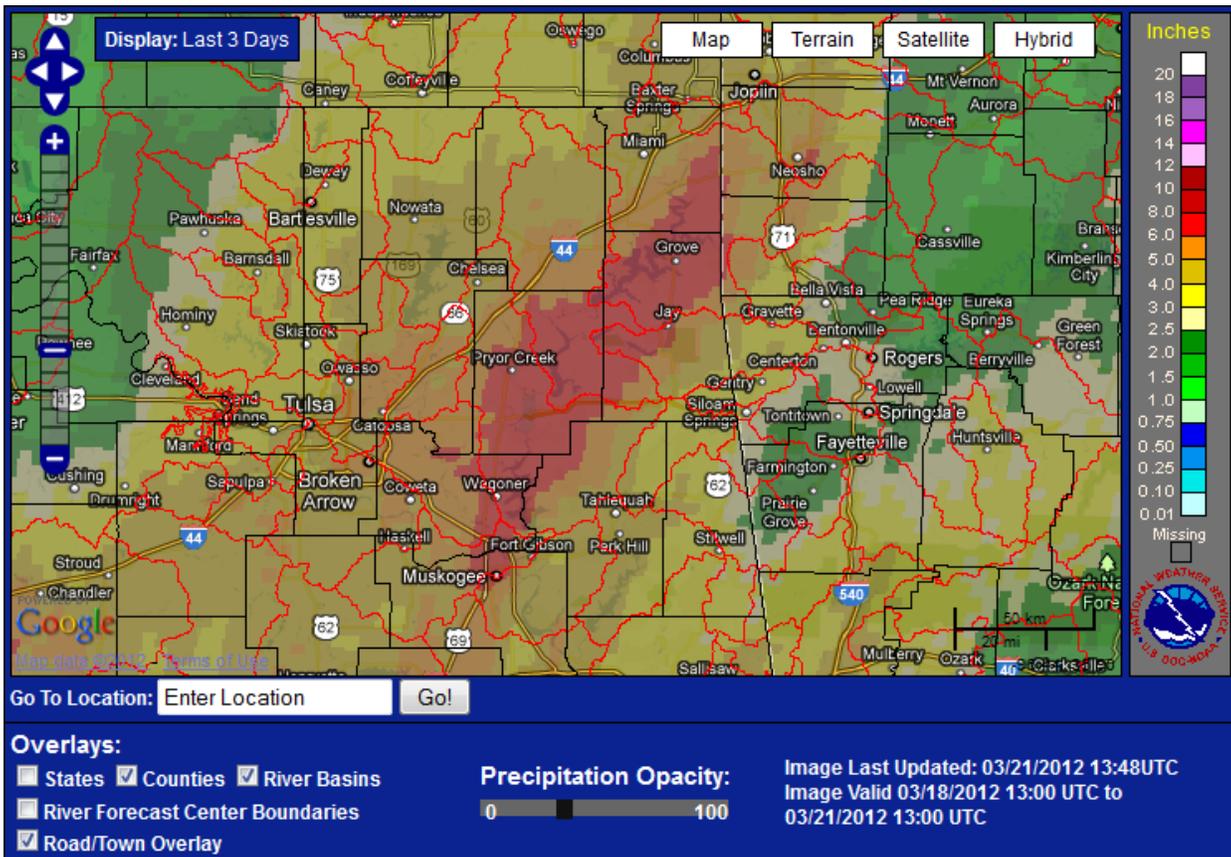


Fig. 8. Rainfall totals over the Neosho River lakes in northeast OK from March 19 through 9am Mar 21.

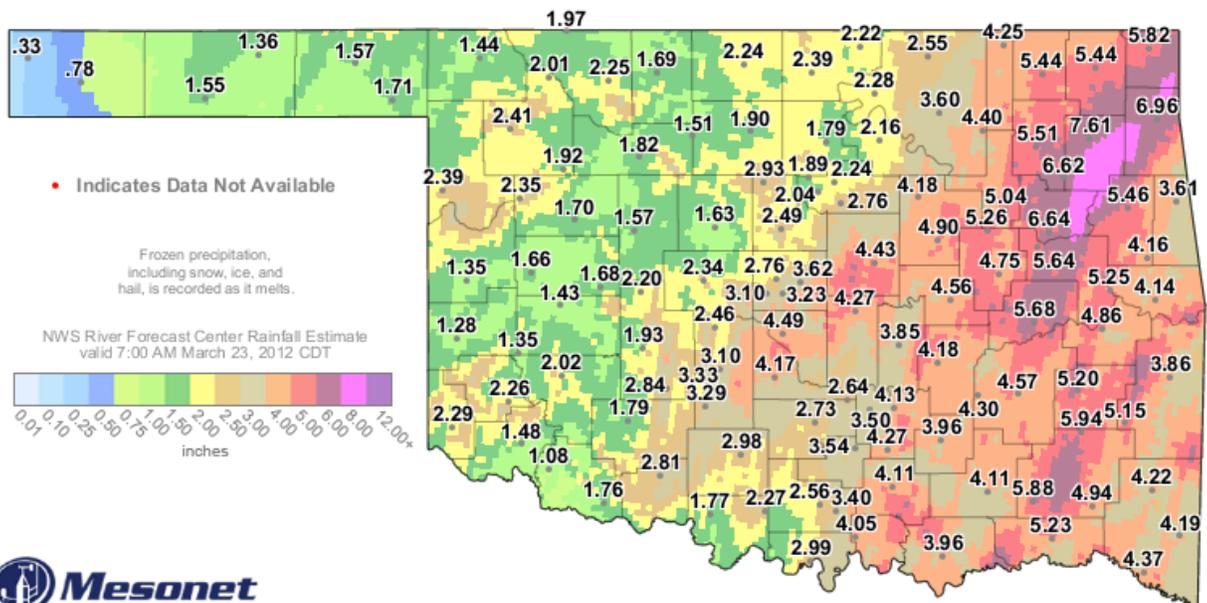


Fig. 9. Rainfall totals across OK for the March 19-22 event.

Tulsa, OK (TSA): Current 7-Day Observed Precipitation  
Valid at 3/23/2012 1200 UTC- Created 3/23/12 13:56 UTC

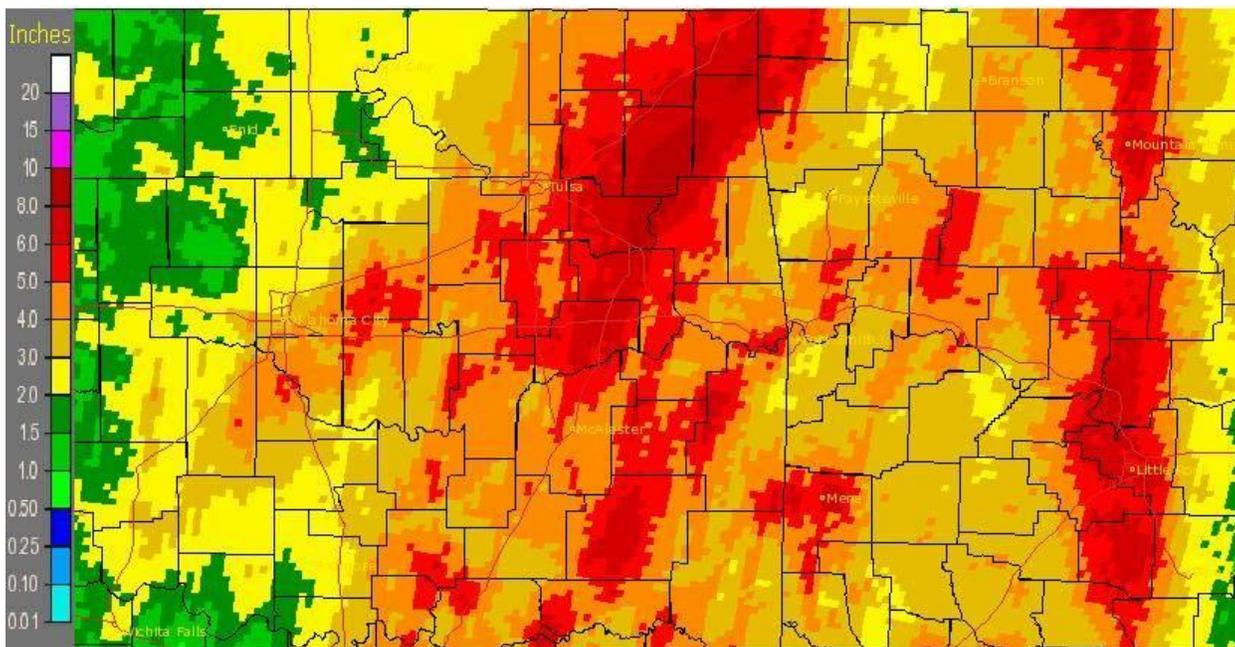


Fig. 10. Rainfall totals across eastern OK and northwest AR for the March 19-22 event.

Additional information about the March 19-22, 2012 heavy rain and flood event can be found at:  
[http://www.srh.noaa.gov/tsa/?n=weather-event\\_2012marflood](http://www.srh.noaa.gov/tsa/?n=weather-event_2012marflood)

Written by:

Nicole McGavock  
Service Hydrologist  
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Products issued:

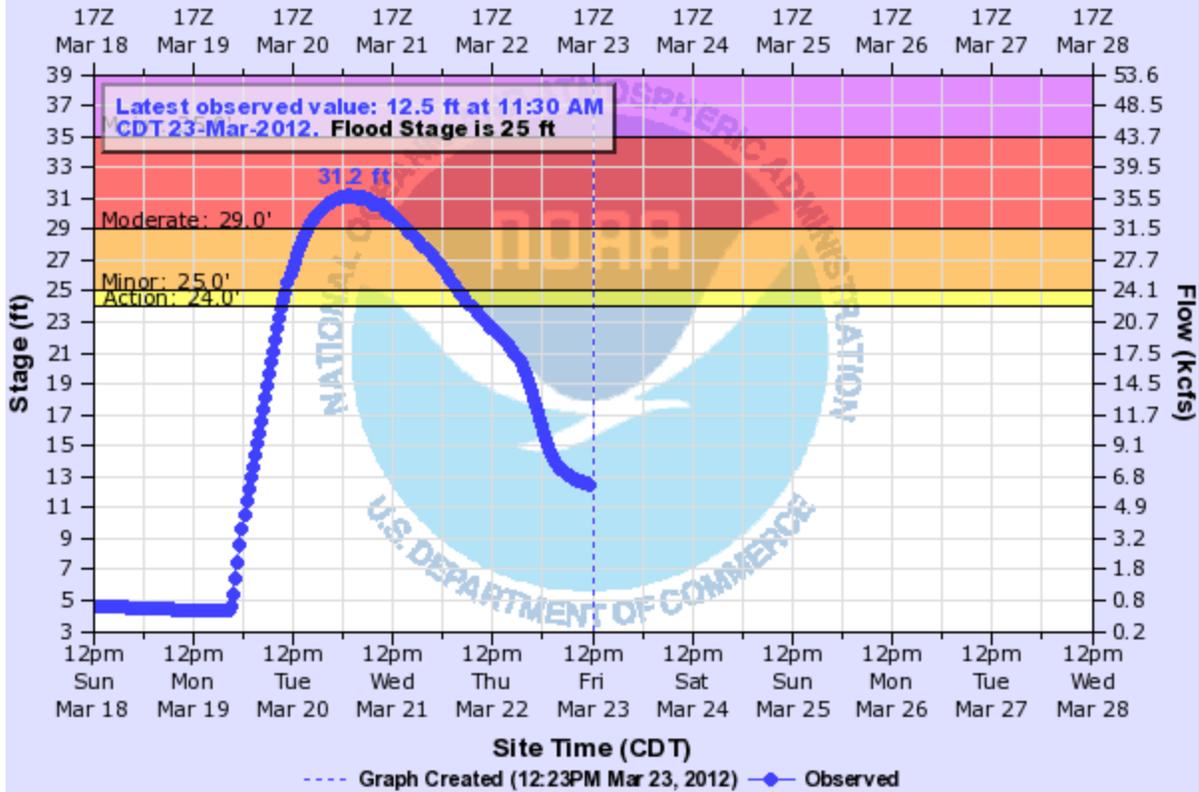
- 21 River Flood Warnings (FLW)
- 95 River Flood Statements (FLS)
- 2 River Flood Advisories (FLS) (3 Advisory FLS CON/EXT/CAN)
- 13 River Flood Watches (FFA) (14 Watch FFA CON/EXT/CAN)
- 2 River Statements (RVS)
- 2 Hydrologic Outlooks (ESF)
- 2 Drought Information Statements (DGT)

Preliminary Hydrographs:

Data gaps from March 21-23 are due to GOES-West outage.

## KIAMICHI RIVER NEAR ANTLERS

Universal Time (UTC)

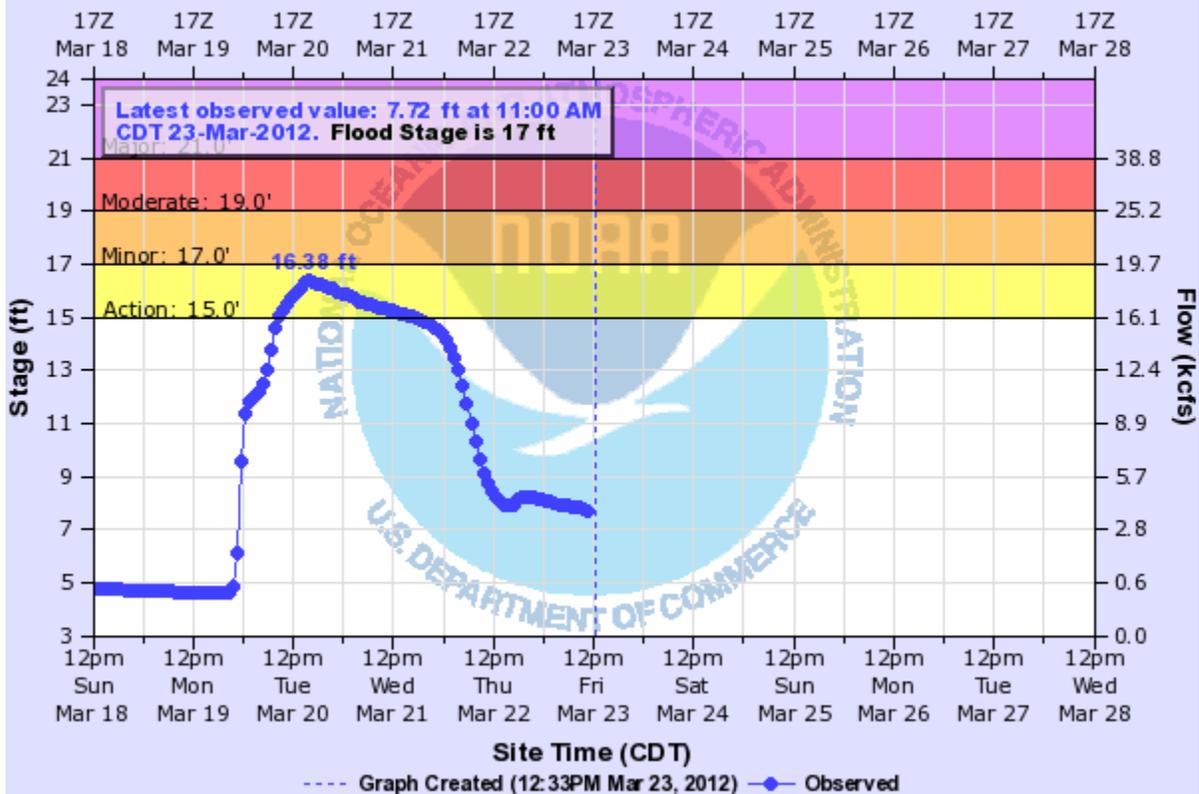


ANTO2(plotting HGIRG) "Gage 0" Datum: 419.82'

Observations courtesy of US Geological Survey

## KIAMICHI RIVER NEAR CLAYTON

Universal Time (UTC)

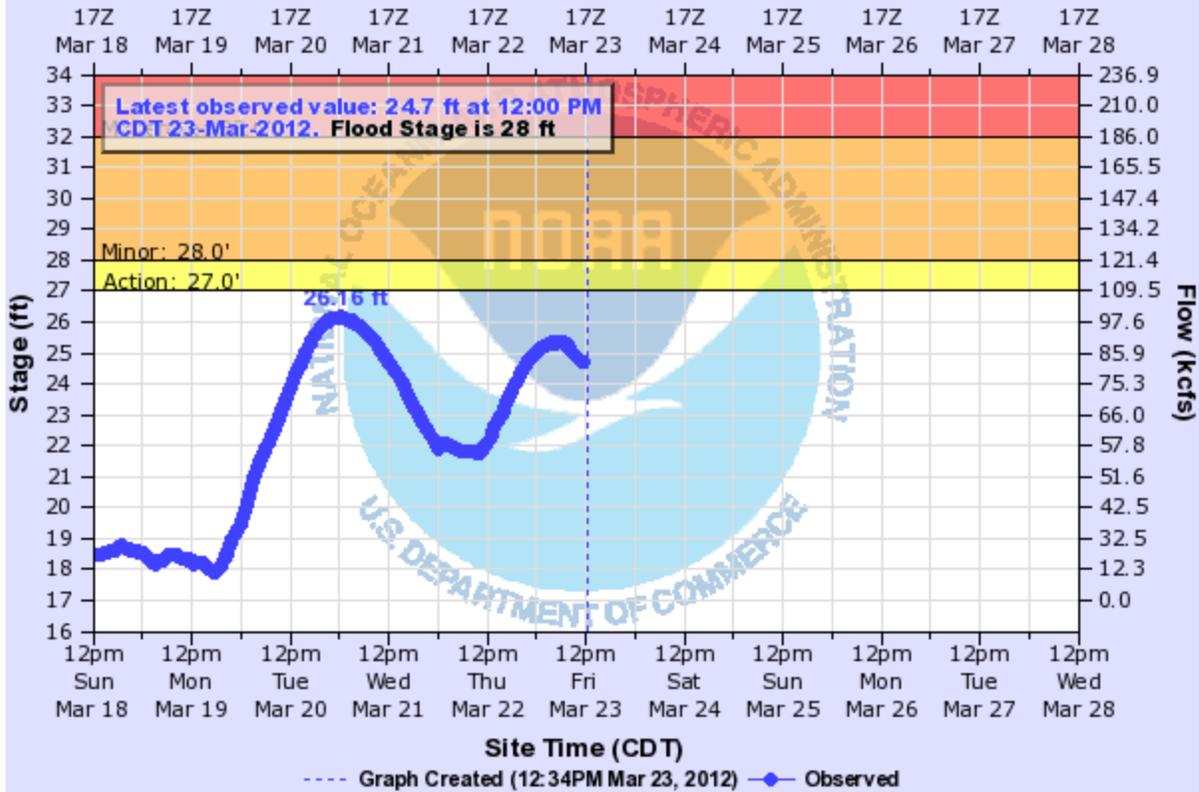


CLTO2(plotting HGIRG) "Gage 0" Datum: 520'

Observations courtesy of US Geological Survey

## ARKANSAS RIVER NEAR MUSKOGEE

Universal Time (UTC)

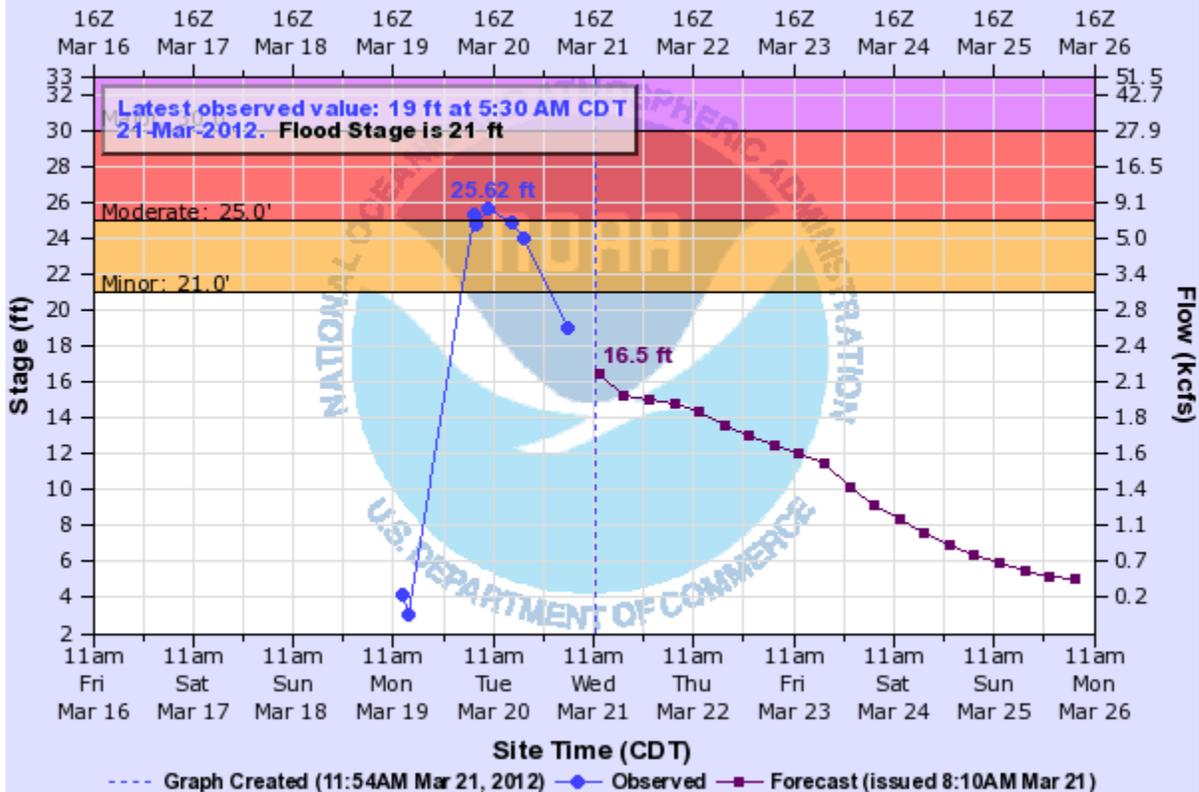


MKGO2(plotting HGIRG) "Gage 0" Datum: 471.38'

Observations courtesy of US Geological Survey

## POLECAT CREEK NEAR SAPULPA

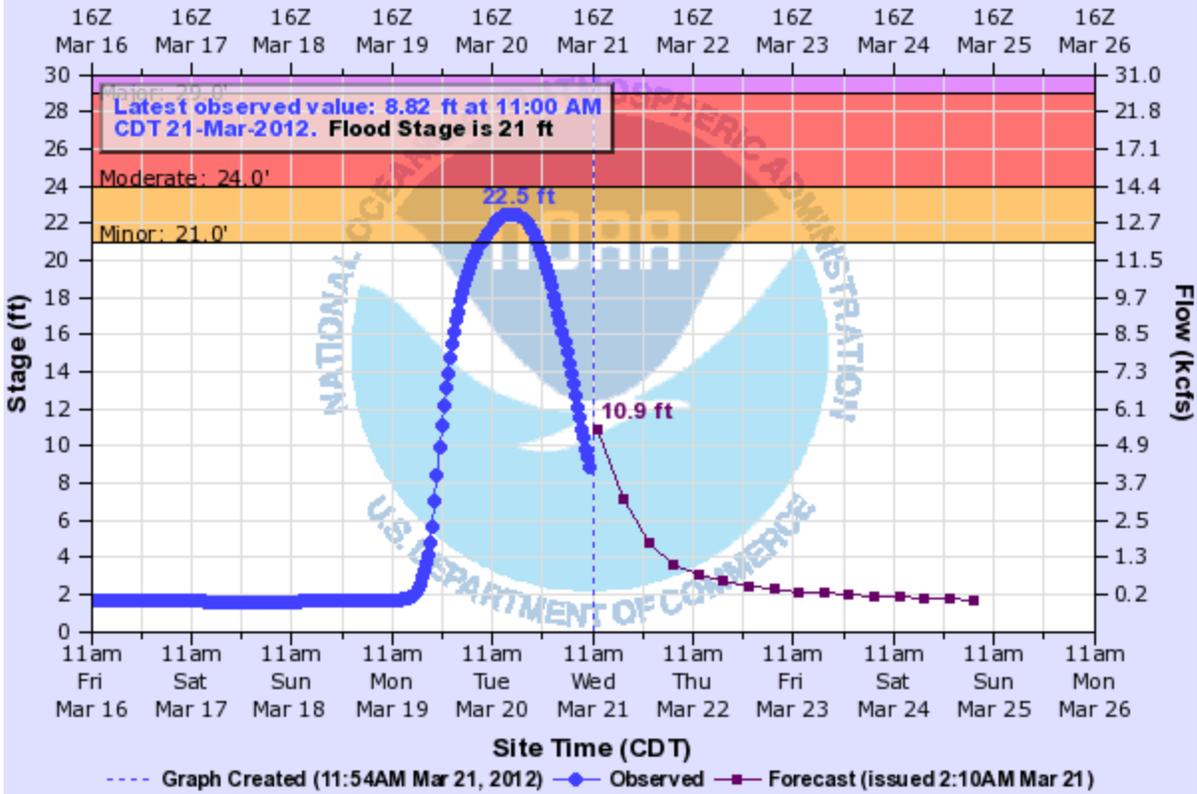
Universal Time (UTC)



SPCO2(plotting HGIRZ) "Gage 0" Datum: 626.2'

## BIRD CREEK NEAR SPERRY

Universal Time (UTC)

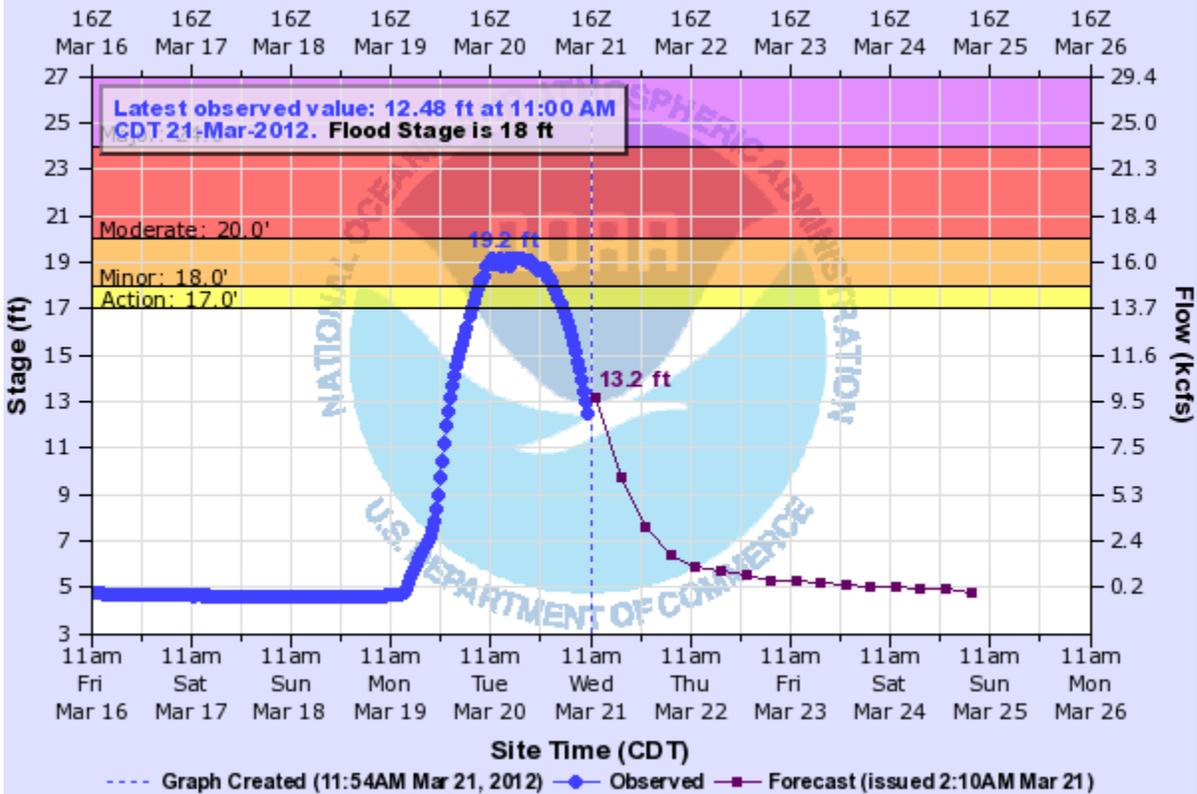


SPEO2(plotting HGIRG) "Gage 0" Datum: 579.43'

Observations courtesy of US Geological Survey

## BIRD CREEK NEAR OWASSO

Universal Time (UTC)

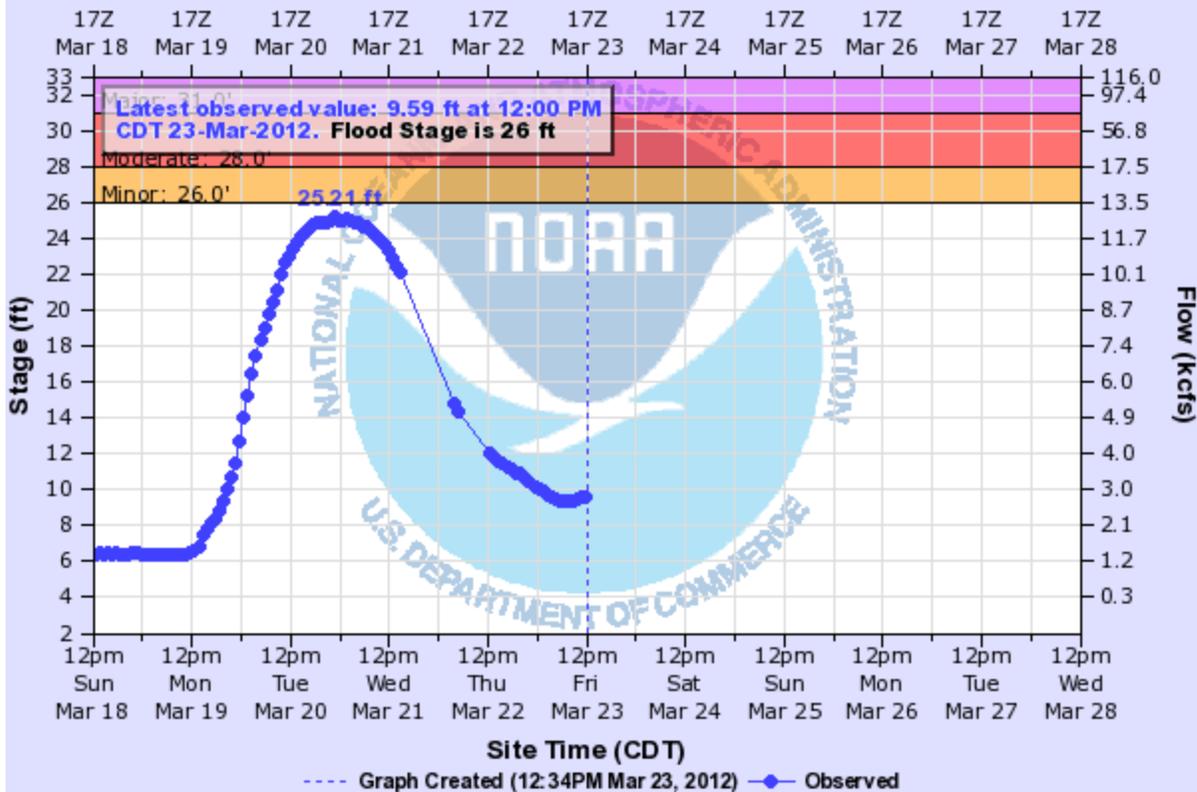


OWSO2(plotting HGIRG) "Gage 0" Datum: 560.17'

Observations courtesy of US Geological Survey

### CANEY RIVER NEAR RAMONA

Universal Time (UTC)

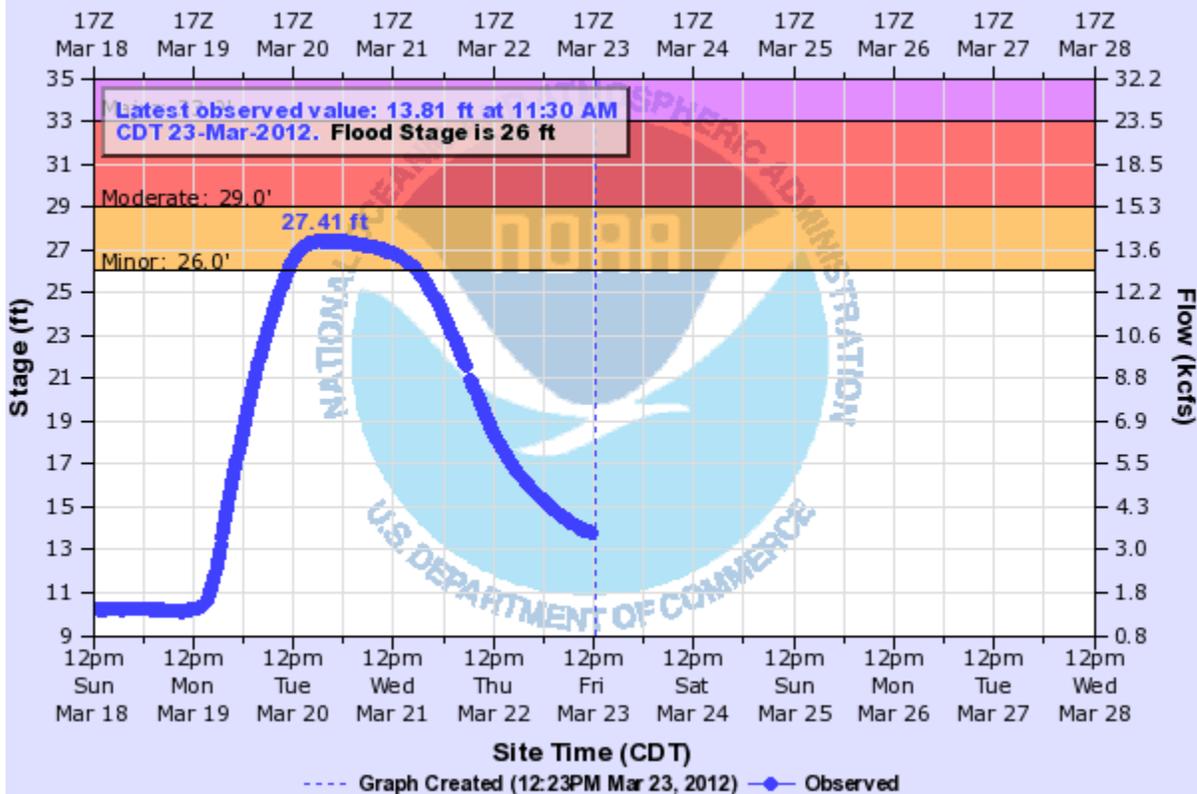


RAMO2(plotting HGIRG) "Gage 0" Datum: 586.43'

Observations courtesy of US Geological Survey

### CANEY RIVER NEAR COLLINSVILLE

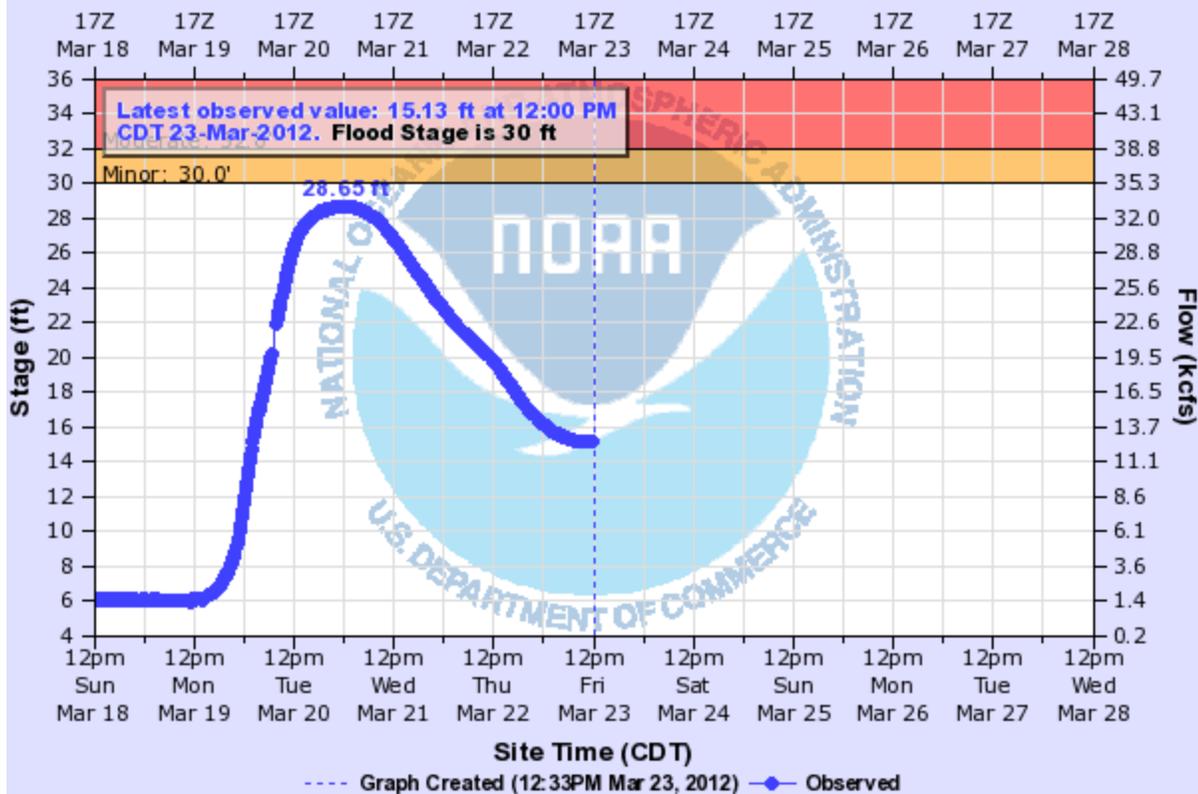
Universal Time (UTC)



CVL02(plotting HGIRG) "Gage 0" Datum: 565.72'

## VERDIGRIS RIVER NEAR LENAPAH

Universal Time (UTC)

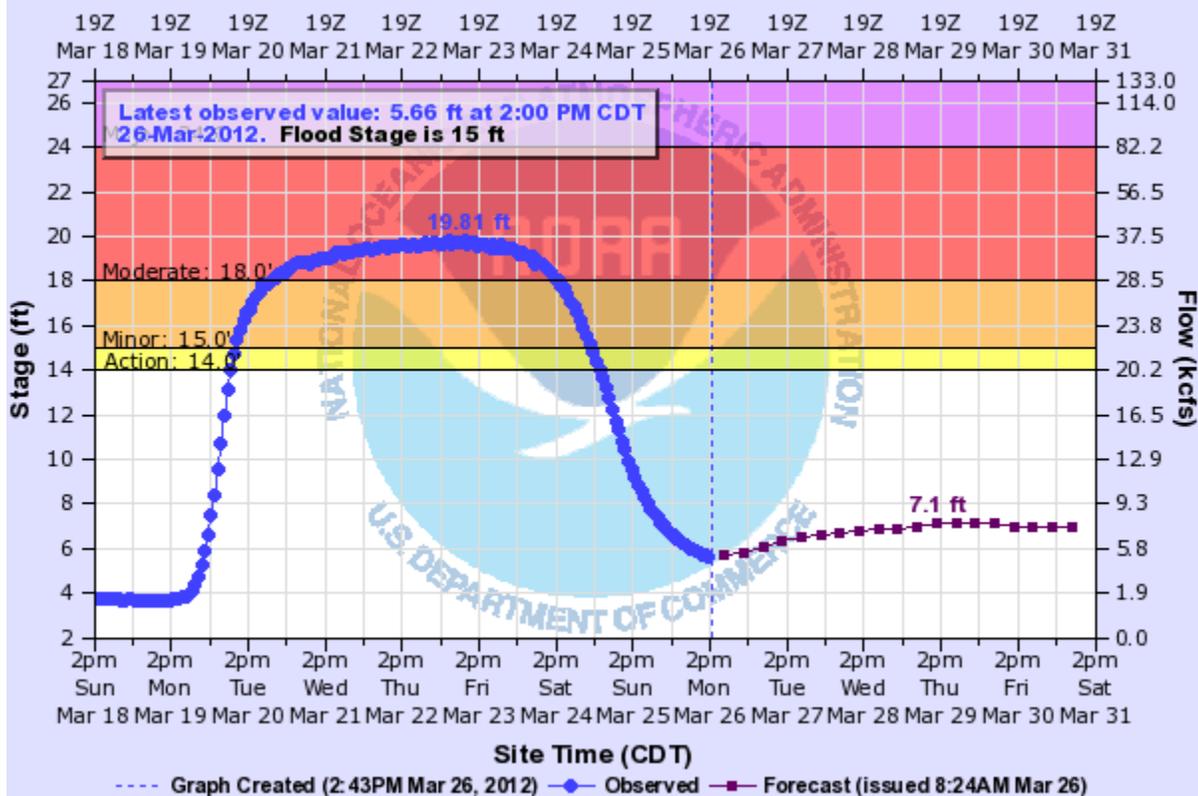


LEPO2(plotting HGIRG) "Gage 0" Datum: 644.9'

Observations courtesy of US Geological Survey

## NEOSHO RIVER NEAR COMMERCE

Universal Time (UTC)

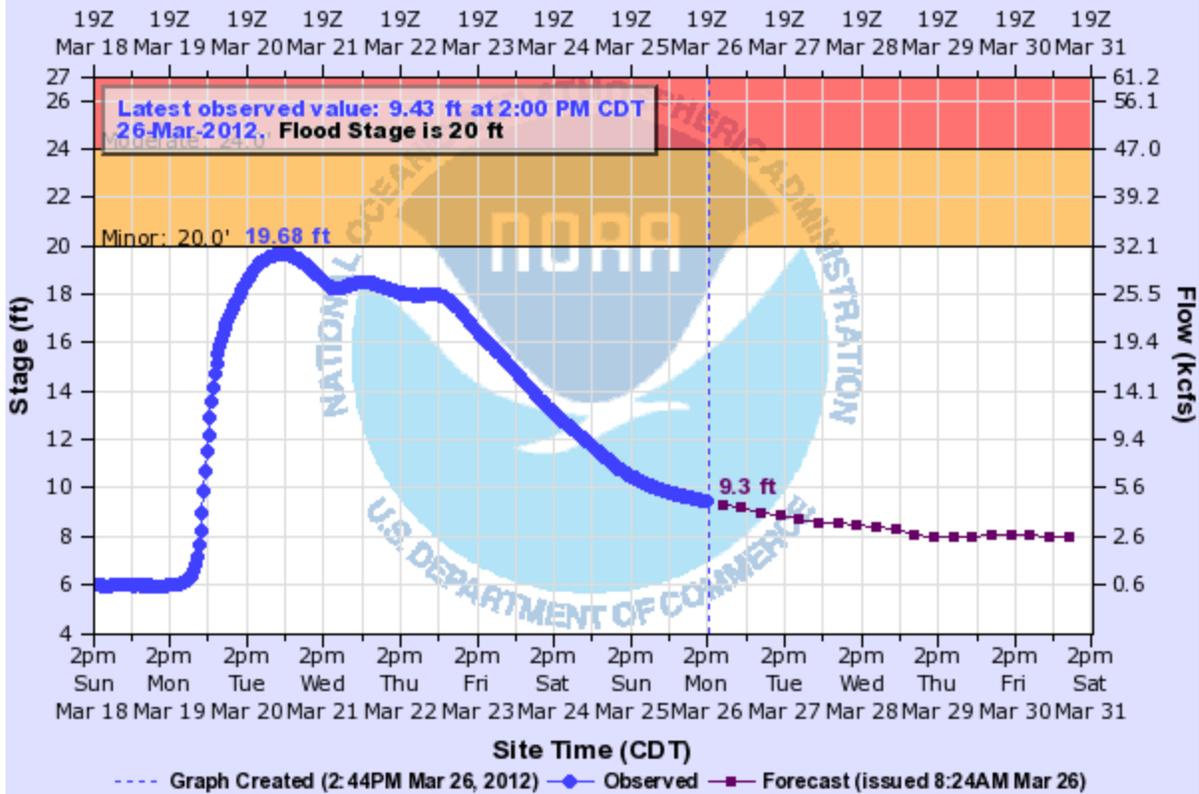


COMO2(plotting HGIRG) "Gage 0" Datum: 748.97'

Observations courtesy of US Geological Survey

## SPRING RIVER NEAR QUAPAW

Universal Time (UTC)

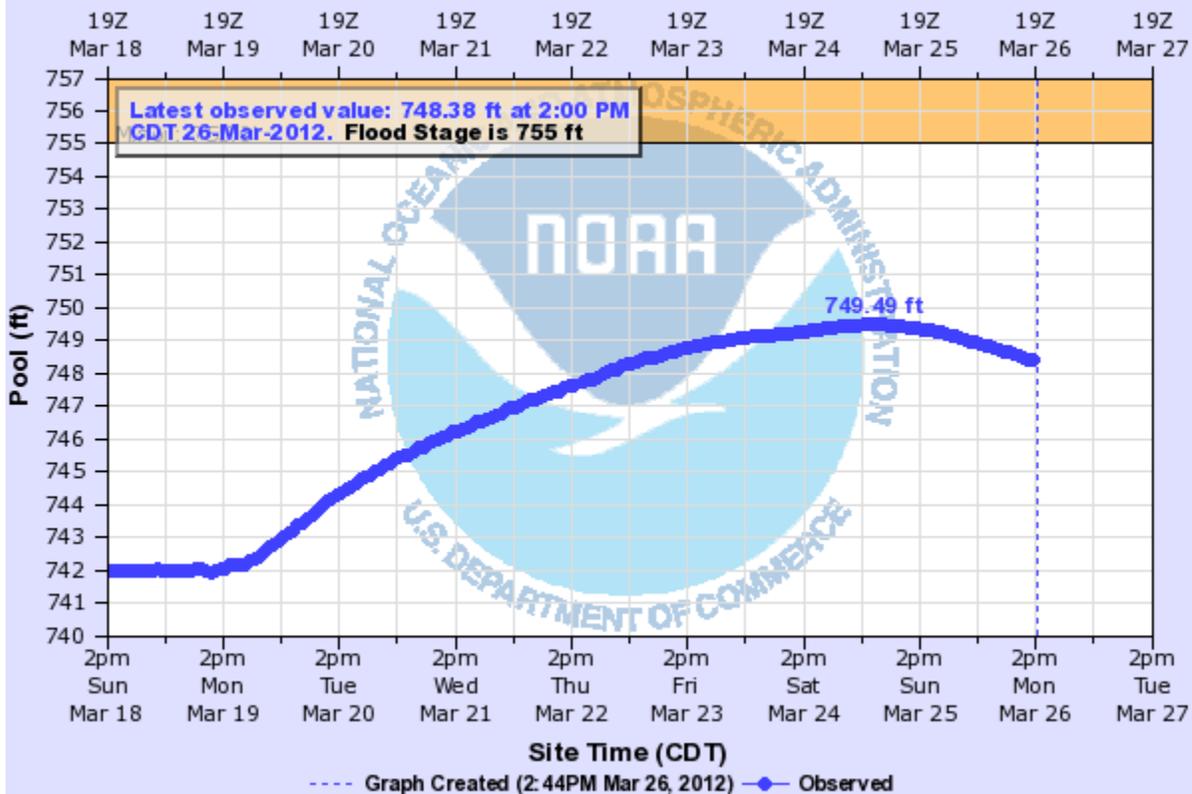


QUAO2(plotting HGIRG) "Gage 0" Datum: 746.25'

Observations courtesy of US Geological Survey

## EASTERN OKLAHOMA LAKES AT GRAND LAKE

Universal Time (UTC)

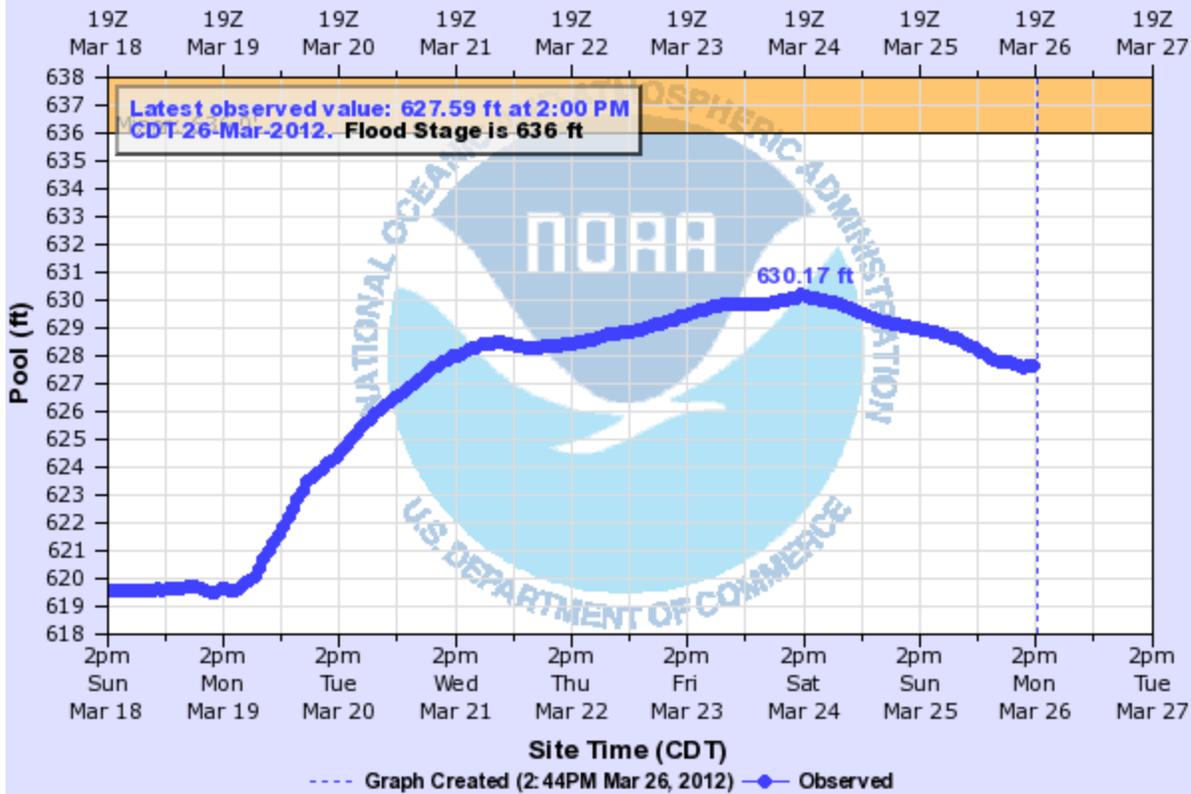


PEN02(plotting HPIRG) "Gage 0" Datum: n/a

Observations courtesy of US Army Corps of Engineers

## EASTERN OKLAHOMA LAKES AT HUDSON LAKE

Universal Time (UTC)

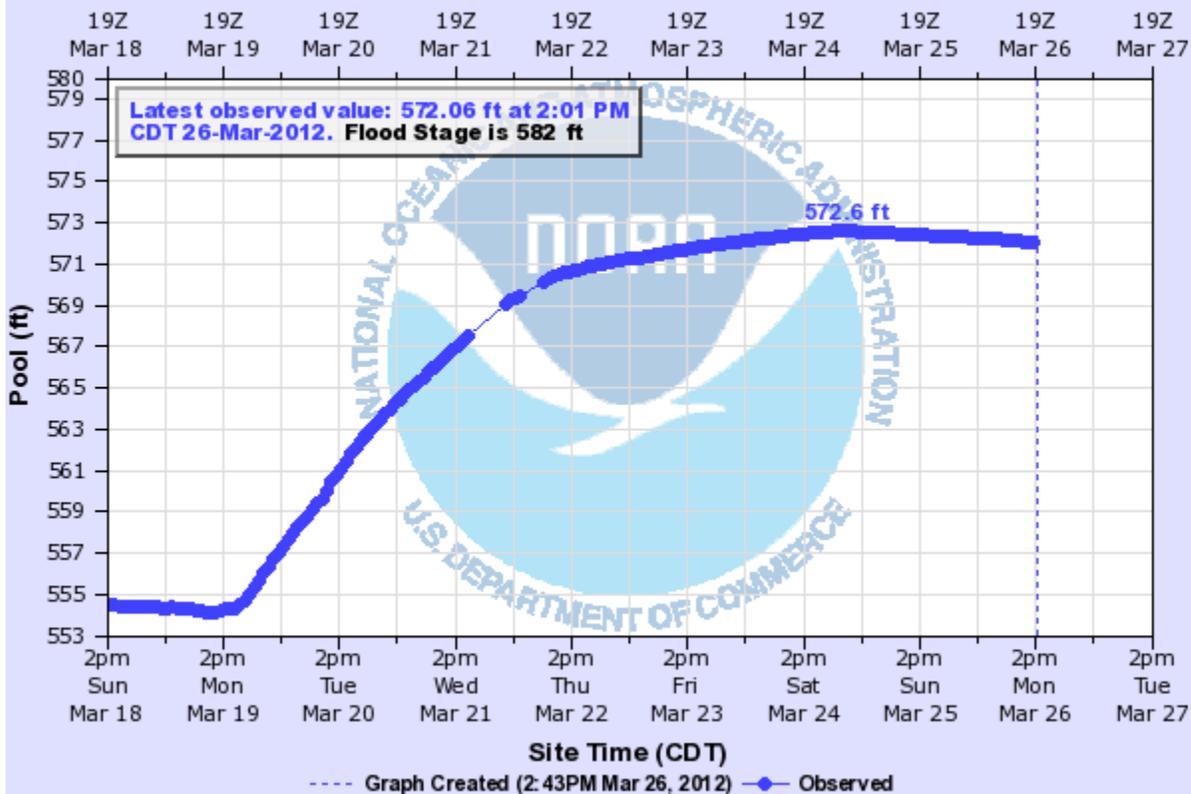


MFDO2(plotting HPIRG) "Gage 0" Datum: n/a

Observations courtesy of US Army Corps of Engineers

## EASTERN OKLAHOMA LAKES AT FT. GIBSON LAKE

Universal Time (UTC)

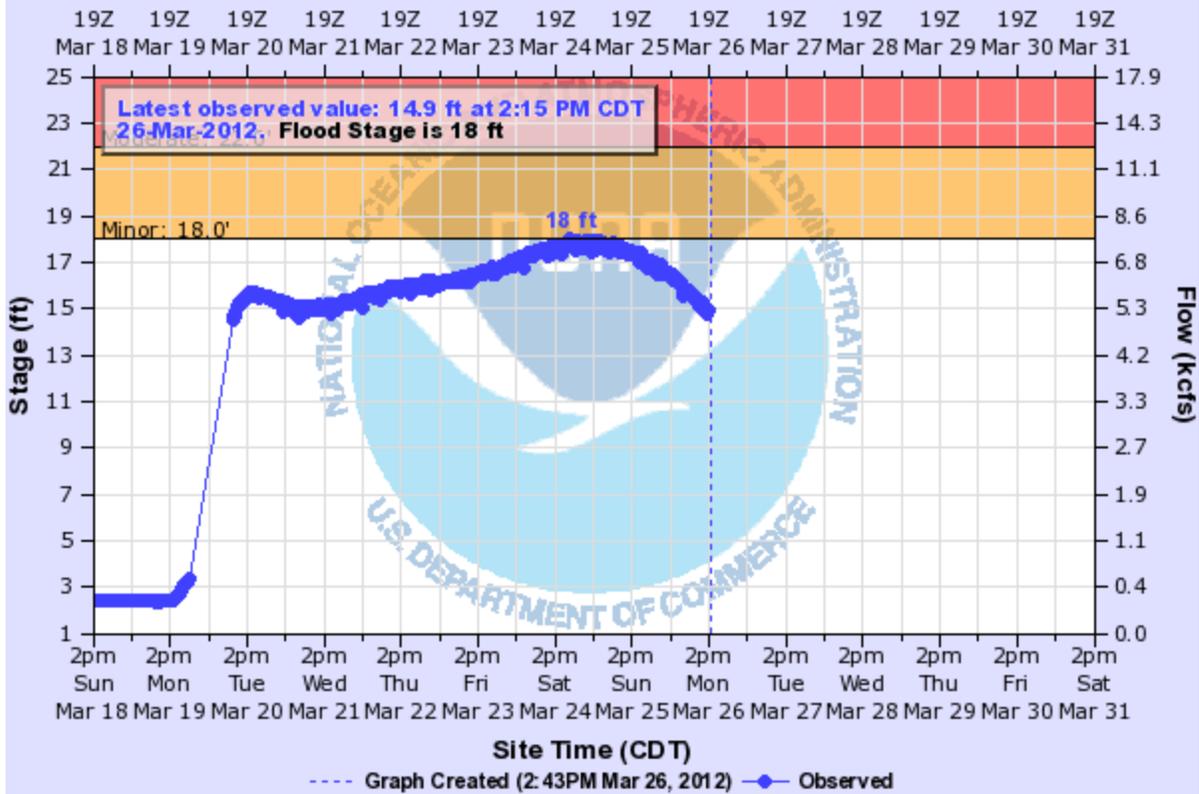


GIBO2(plotting HPIRG) "Gage 0" Datum: n/a

Observations courtesy of US Army Corps of Engineers

## DEEP FORK RIVER NEAR BEGGS

Universal Time (UTC)

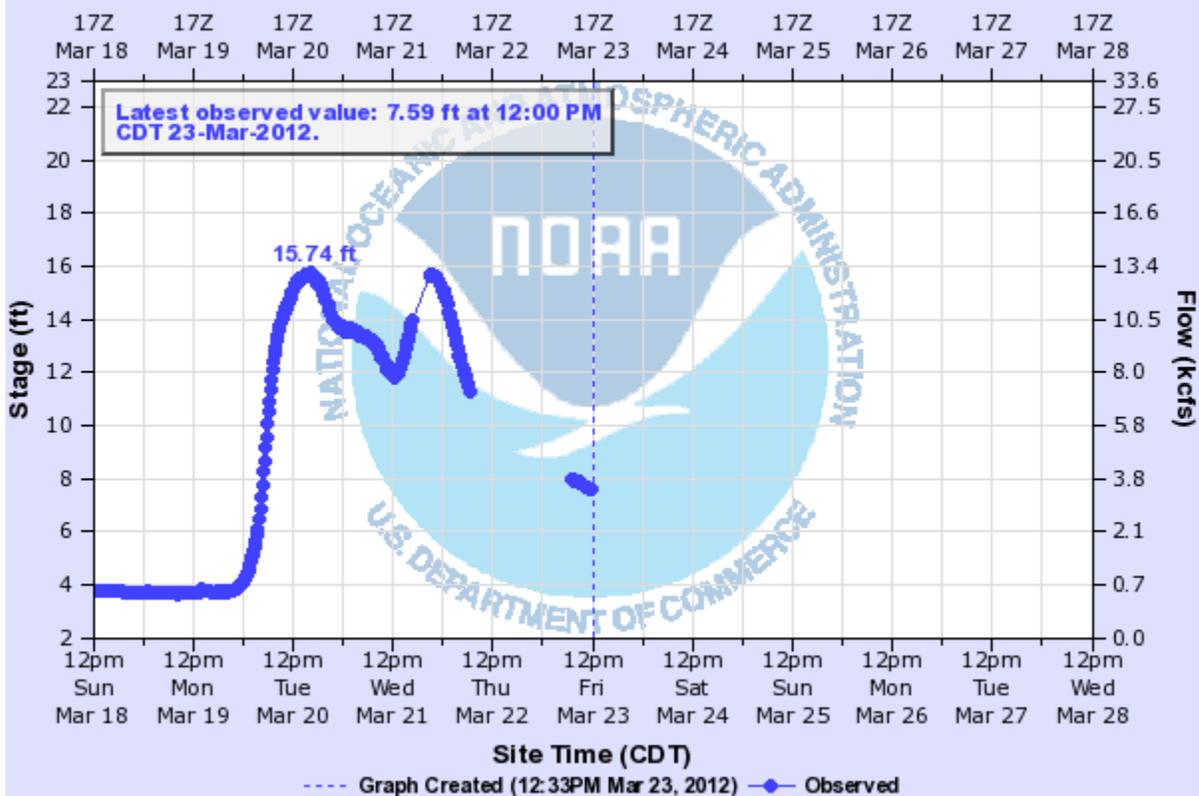


BGS02(plotting HGIRG) "Gage 0" Datum: 632.55'

Observations courtesy of US Geological Survey

## WHITE RIVER NEAR FAYETTEVILLE

Universal Time (UTC)

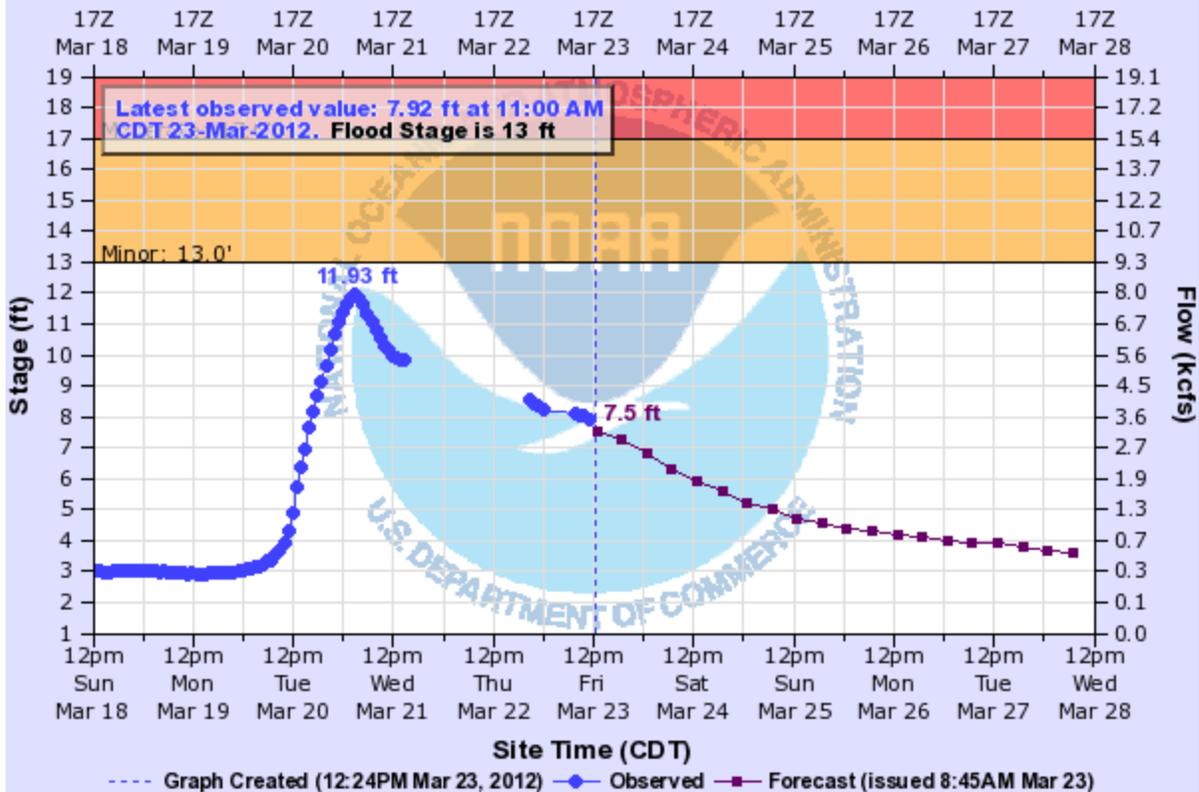


FYGA4(plotting HGIRG) "Gage 0" Datum: 1138.25'

Observations courtesy of US Geological Survey

## ILLINOIS RIVER NEAR WATTS

Universal Time (UTC)

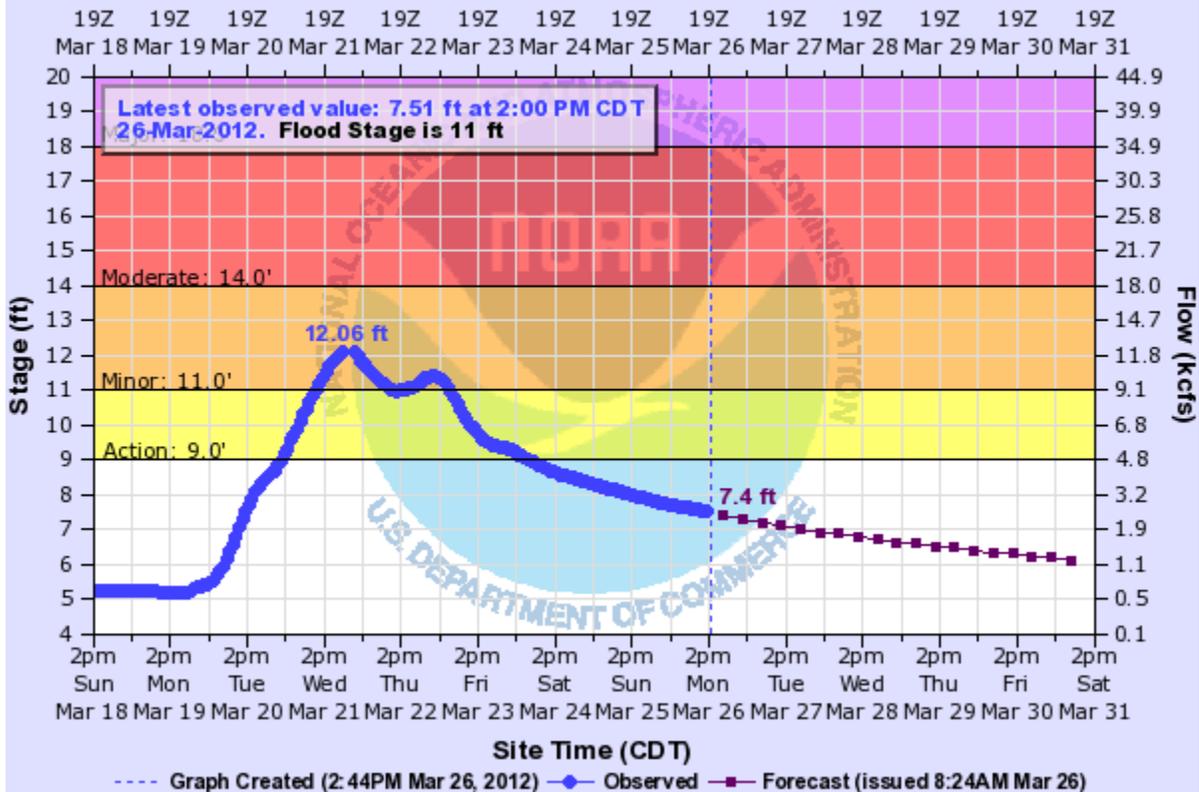


WT02(plotting HGIRG) "Gage 0" Datum: 893.77'

Observations courtesy of US Geological Survey

## ILLINOIS RIVER NEAR TAHLEQUAH

Universal Time (UTC)

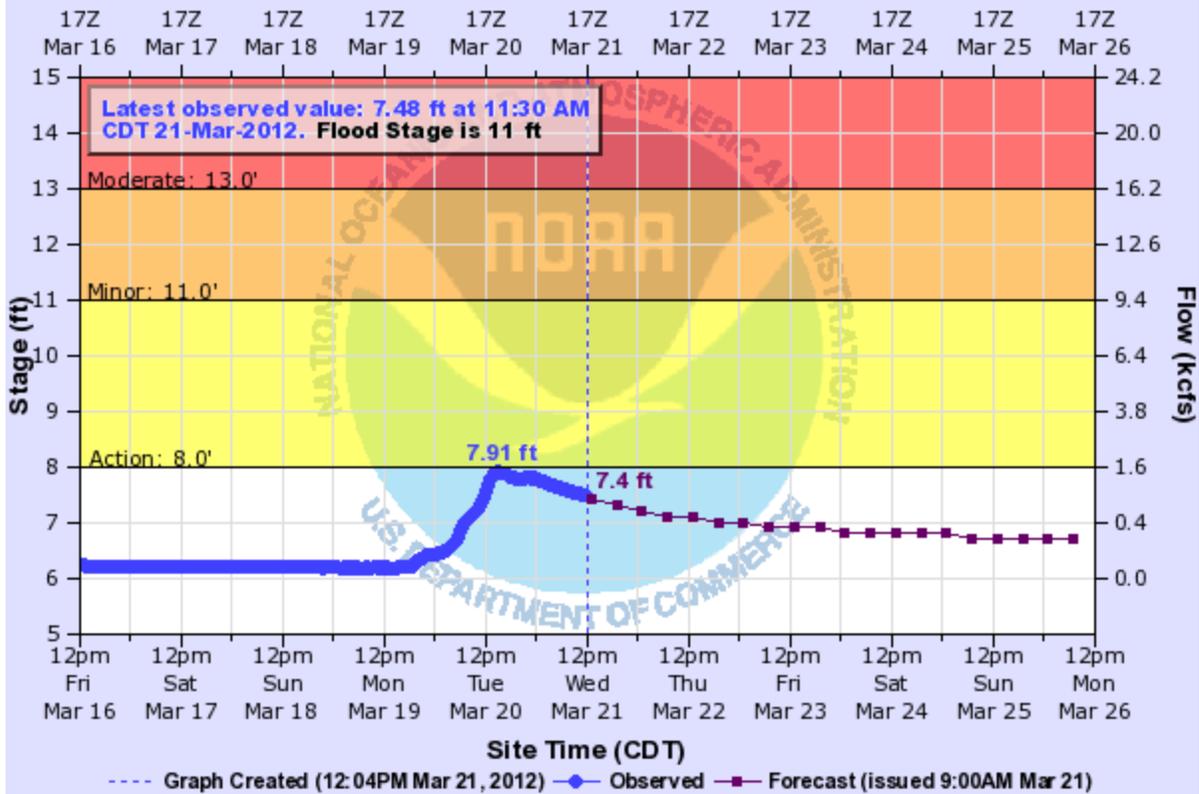


TAL02(plotting HGIRG) "Gage 0" Datum: 664.14'

Observations courtesy of US Geological Survey

## FLINT CREEK NEAR KANSAS

Universal Time (UTC)

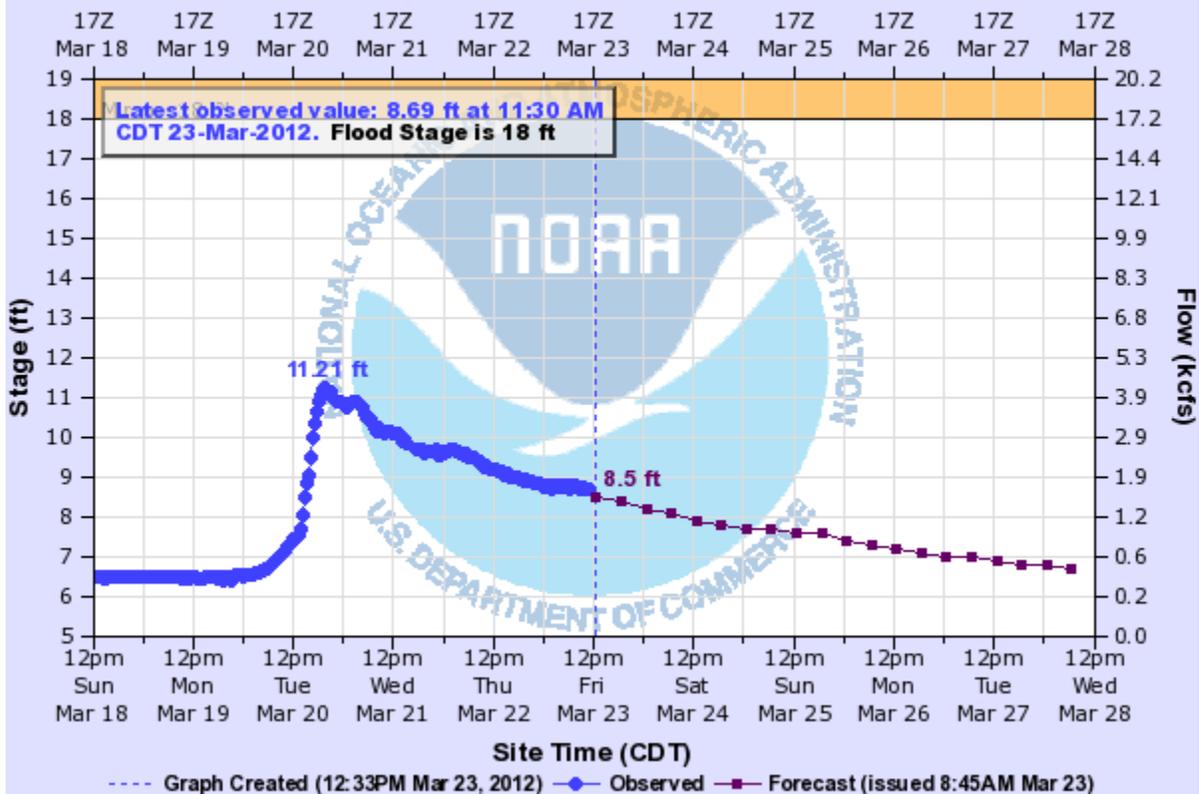


KNSO2(plotting HGIRG) "Gage 0" Datum: 854.59'

Observations courtesy of US Geological Survey

## BARON FORK AT ELDON

Universal Time (UTC)

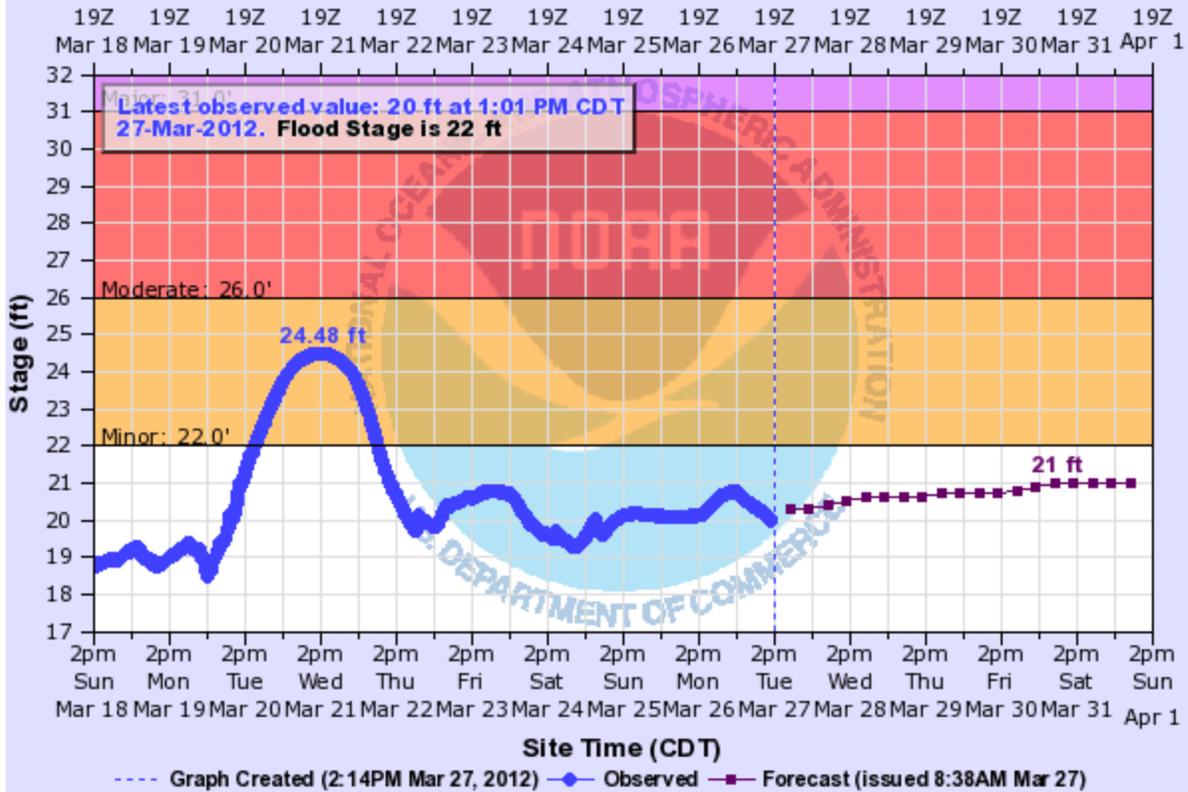


ELDO2(plotting HGIRG) "Gage 0" Datum: 701.14'

Observations courtesy of US Geological Survey

## ARKANSAS RIVER AT VAN BUREN

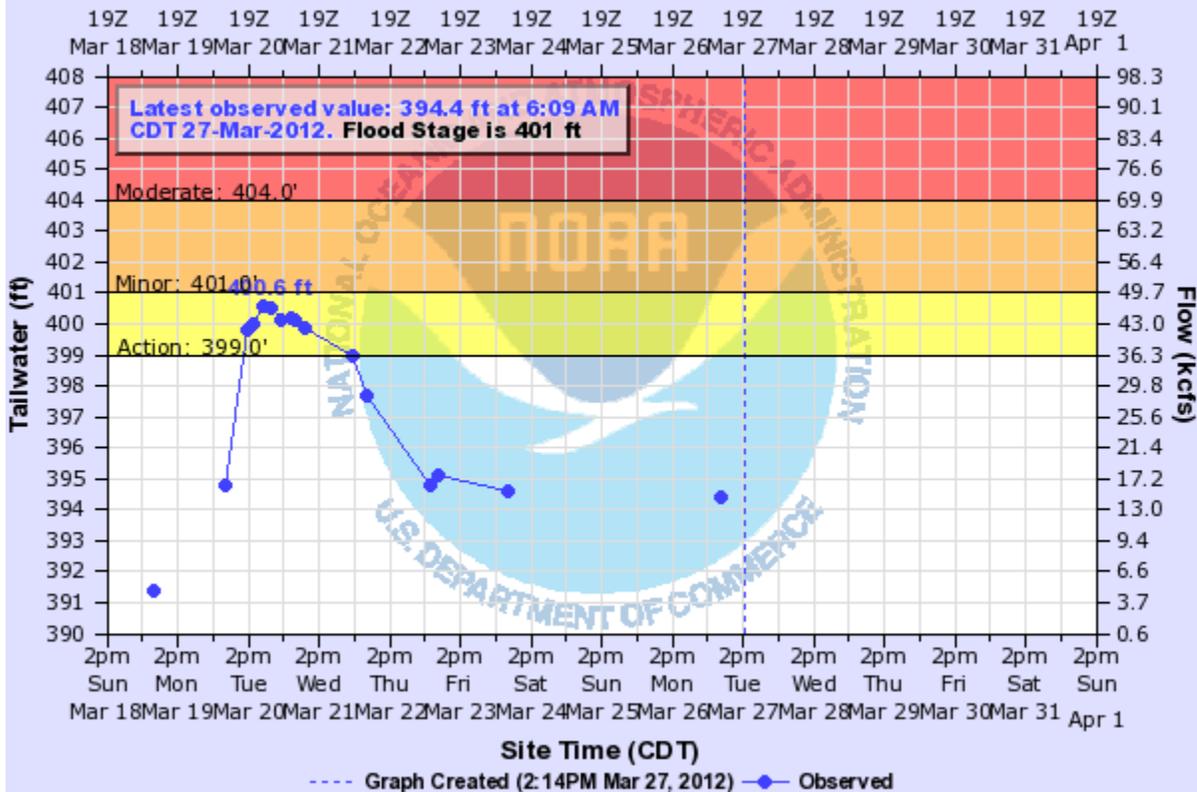
Universal Time (UTC)



VBUA4(plotting HGIRG) "Gage 0" Datum: 372.36'

## LEE CREEK NEAR VAN BUREN LCR

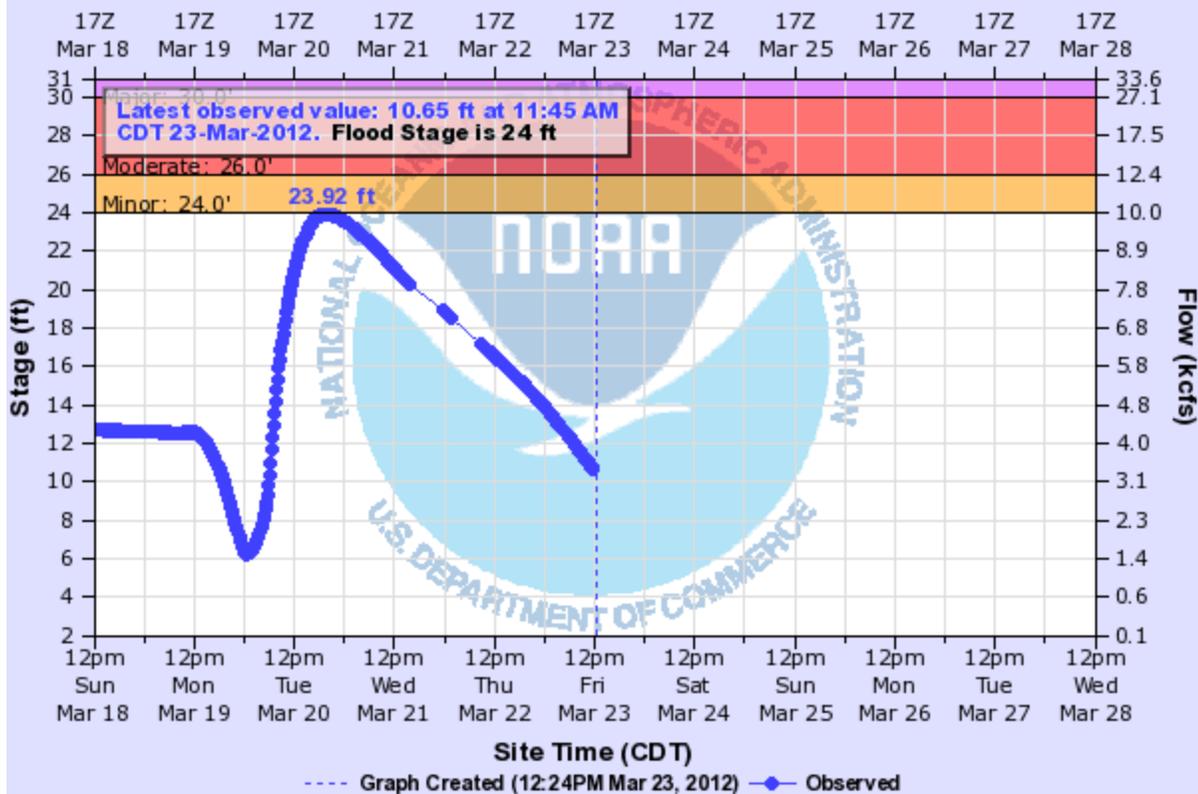
Universal Time (UTC)



VBRA4(plotting HTIRZ) "Gage 0" Datum: n/a

## POTEAU RIVER NEAR POTEAU

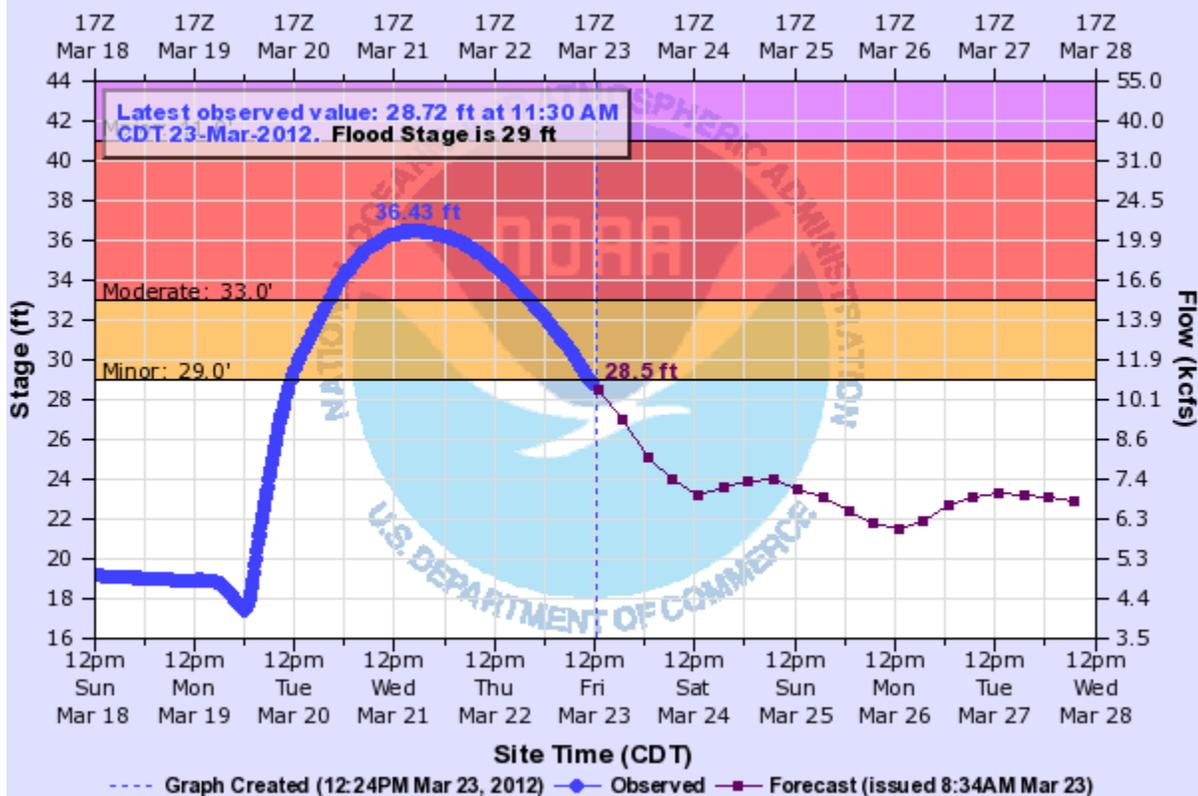
Universal Time (UTC)



PTAO2(plotting HGIRG) "Gage 0" Datum: 409.4'

## POTEAU RIVER NEAR PANAMA

Universal Time (UTC)

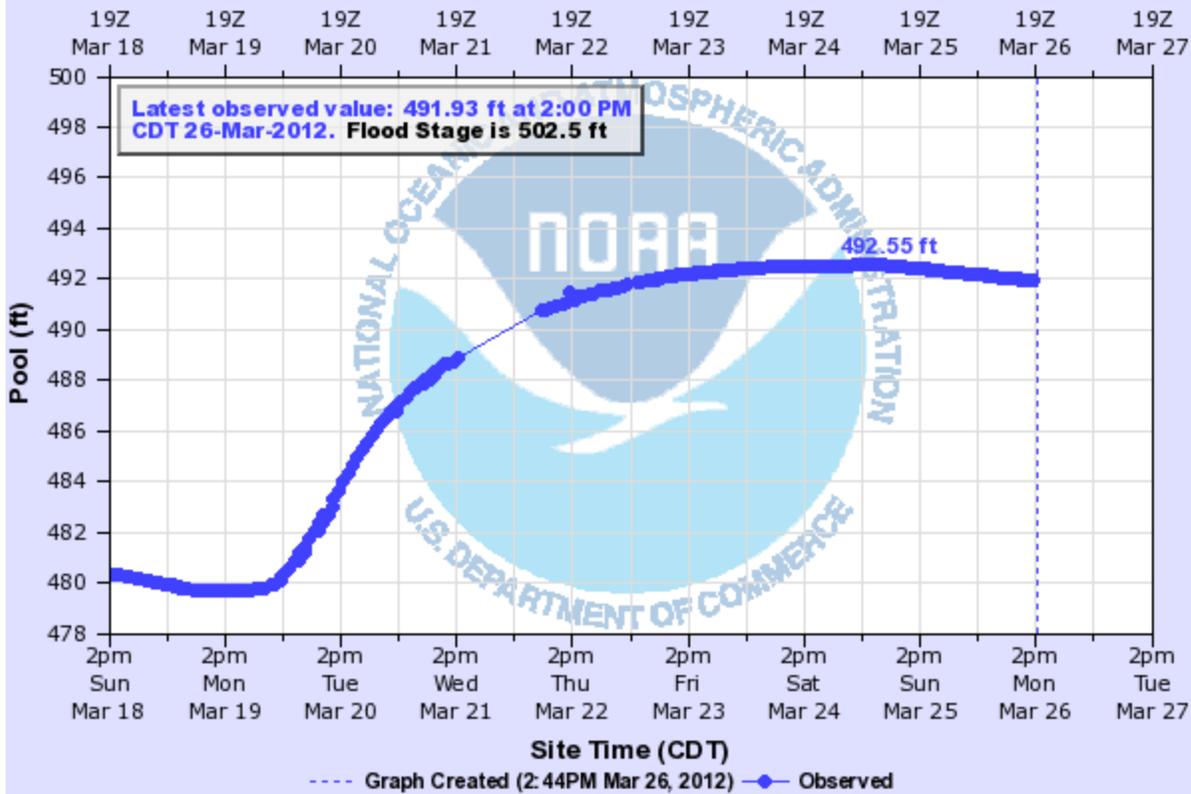


PANO2(plotting HGIRG) "Gage 0" Datum: 387.97'

Observations courtesy of US Geological Survey

## EASTERN OKLAHOMA LAKES AT WISTER LAKE

Universal Time (UTC)

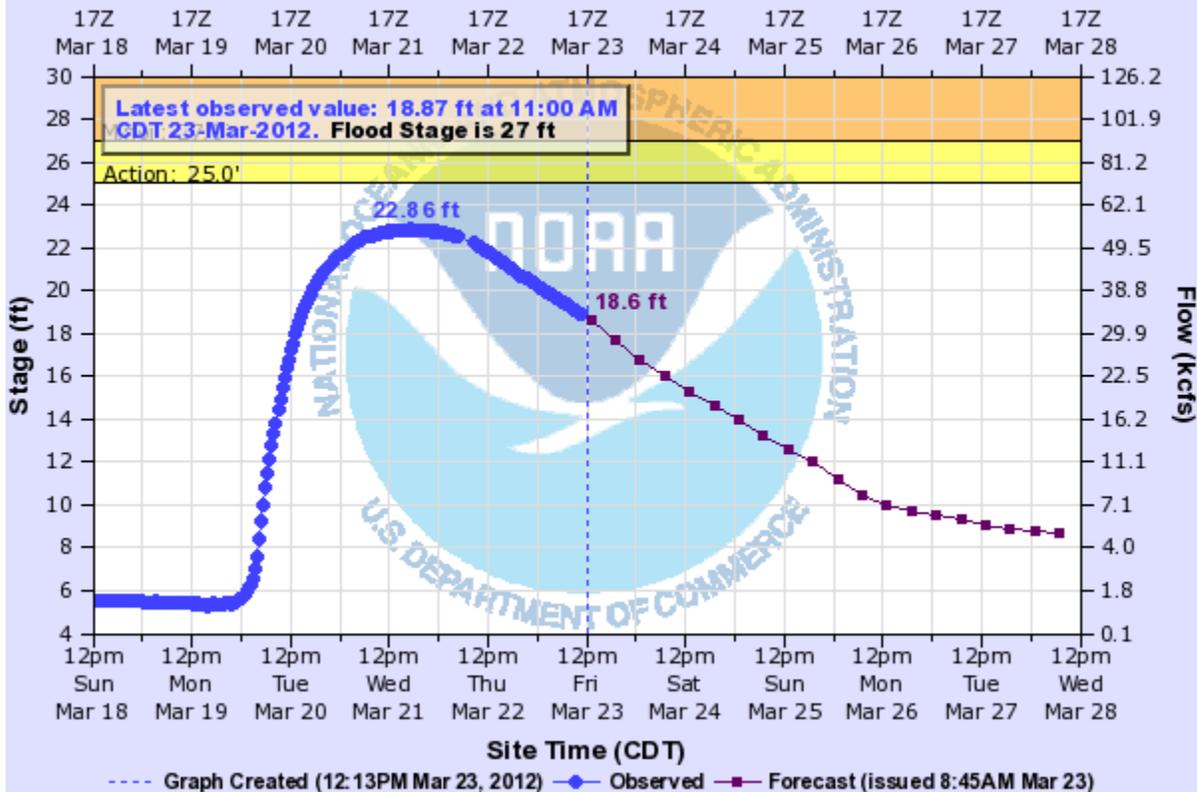


WSLO2(plotting HPIRG) "Gage 0" Datum: n/a

Observations courtesy of US Army Corps of Engineers

## RED RIVER AT ARTHUR CITY

Universal Time (UTC)



ARCT2(plotting HGIRG) "Gage 0" Datum: 375.07'

Observations courtesy of US Geological Survey