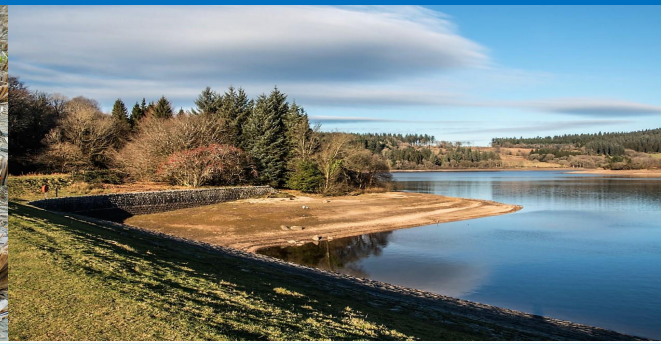
Drought Information Statement for North and Central Georgia

Valid December 28, 2023

Issued By: NWS Atlanta / Peachtree City, GA

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

- This product will be updated on January 11, 2024 or sooner if conditions change significantly.
- Please see all currently available products at https://drought.gov/drought-information-statements.
- Please visit https://www.weather.gov/ffc/DroughtInformationStatement for previous statements.



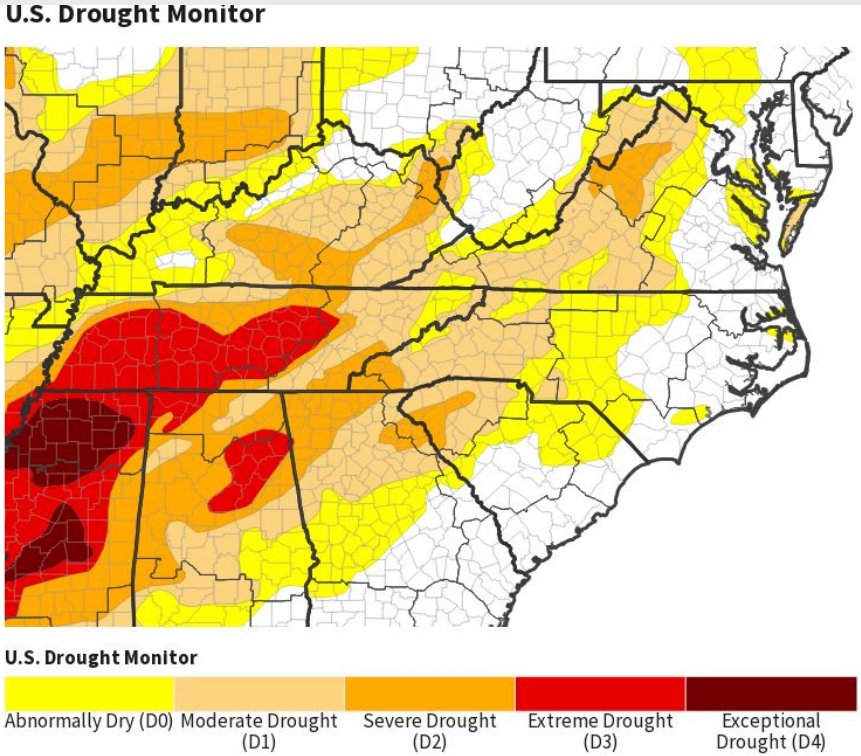
U.S. Drought Monitor

Link to the latest U.S. Drought Monitor for Georgia

- Recent rainfall yielded significant improvements in the short-term drought in Georgia, including the removal of nearly all the D3 Extreme Drought

- Drought intensity and extent for north and central GA
  Counties listed under most significant drought category.

  - **D4 (Exceptional Drought)**: None
  - **D3 (Extreme Drought)**: Floyd county
  - **D2 (Severe Drought)**: Dade, walker, Catoosa, Whitfield, Murray, Gilmer, Fannin, Union, Towns, Chattooga, Gordon, Pickens, Dawson, Lumpkin, Bartow, Cherokee, Hall, Banks, Jackson, Madison, Polk, Haralson, Paulding, Cobb, and Carroll counties
  - **D1 (Moderate Drought)**: White, Forsyth, North Fulton, Gwinnett, Barrow, Clarke, Douglas, South Fulton, DeKalb, Rockdale, Walton, Oconee, Oglethorpe, Heard, Coweta, Fayette, Clayton, Henry, Newton, Morgan, Greene, Taliaferro, Wilkes, and Troup counties
  - **D0: (Abnormally Dry):** Meriwether, Pike, Lamar, Monroe, Putnam, Hancock, Warren, Jones, Baldwin, Washington, Harris, Talbot, Upson, Crawford, Bibb, Twiggs, Wilkinson, Muscogee, Chattahoochee, Marion, Schley, Taylor, Macon, Peach, Houston, Stewart, Webster, Sumter, and Dooly counties



D3 Extreme Drought covered 0.13% of the NWS Atlanta area on December 26 – an improvement from 7.84% coverage on December 19.

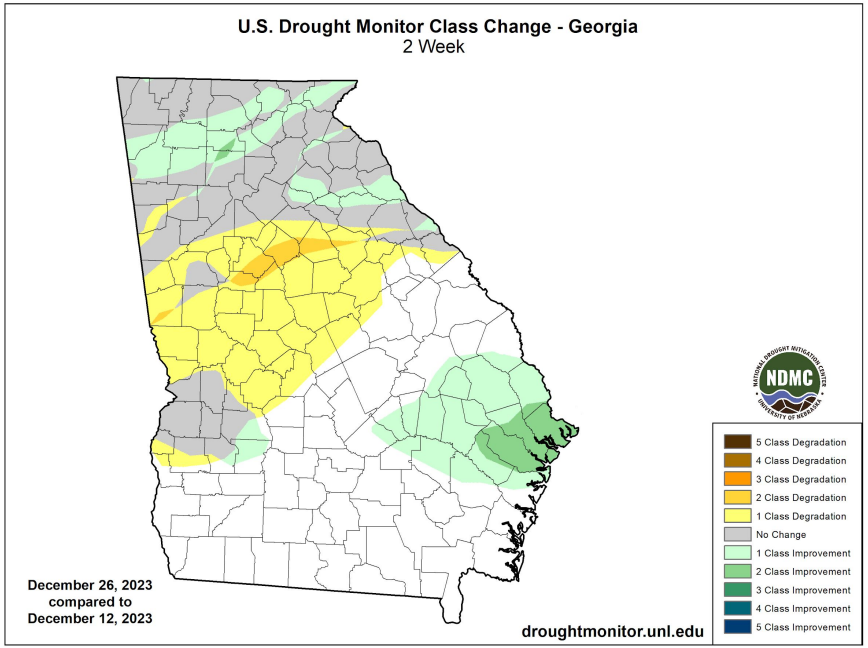
Recent Change in Drought Intensity

Link to the latest 2-week change map for Georgia

Two-Week Drought Monitor Class Change for North and Central Georgia

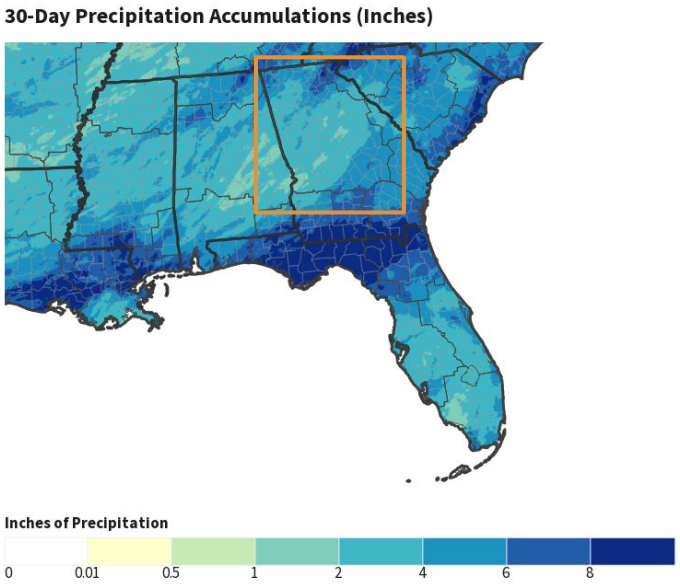
- **Drought Worsened**
  - Generally along and south of I-20, extending through much of middle Georgia, there was a one-class degradation, except in the southeast Metro Atlanta area, which saw a two-class degradation.

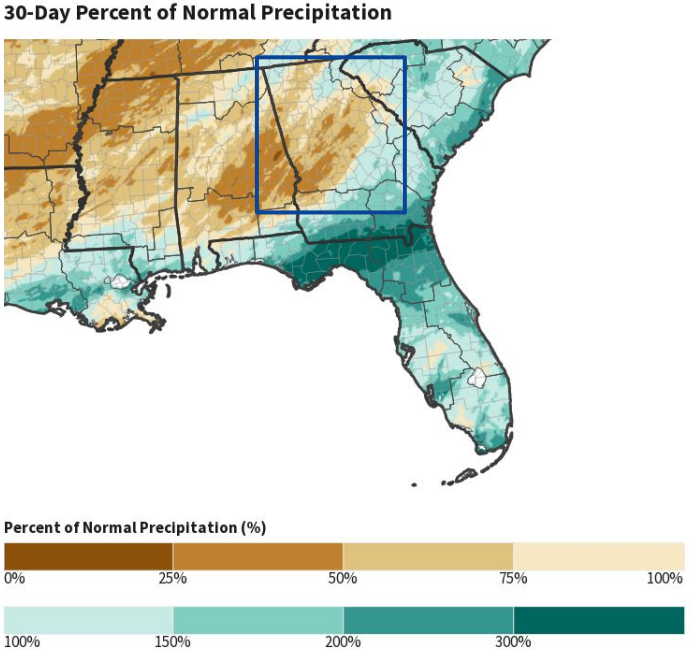
- **Drought Improved** or Remained Steady
  - Generally along and north of I-20, the drought improved by one class or was stable. In portions of Pickens and Cherokee counties there was a two-class improvement.
  - Over southeast Georgia, there was a one- to two-class improvement.



Precipitation - Past 30 Days

Over the last 30 days, rainfall over north and central Georgia generally ranged from 2 to 9 inches. Over nearly two thirds of the area, accumulations were 2 to 4 inches (40 to 90 percent of normal), with the lowest amounts near Columbus, Roberta and Eatonton closer to 1.5 inches (35 percent of normal). Over north and east central Georgia, amounts were higher, with accumulations of 5 to 9 inches (100 to 200 percent of normal). The highest totals over the northeast Georgia mountains near 11 inches (200 percent of normal).





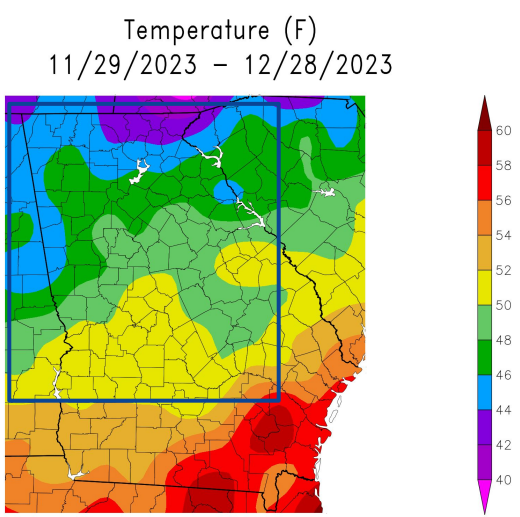
30-day rainfall totals
(compared to normal):

Rome (**RMG**): 3.91” (80%)
Atlanta (**ATL**): 3.43” (77%)
Gainesville (**GVL**): 6.65” (**147%**)
Athens (**AHN**): 4.34” (**103%**)
Peachtree-DeKalb (**PDK**): 4.10” (**97%**)
Peachtree City (**FFC**): 2.88” (66%)
Columbus (**CSG**): 1.86” (**40%**)

Image Captions:
Left - Precipitation Amount for Georgia
Right - Percent of Normal Precipitation for Georgia
Data Courtesy High Plains Regional Climate Center.
Data over the past 30 days ending December 28, 2023

Temperatures - Past 30 Days

- Average temperatures for the last 30 days



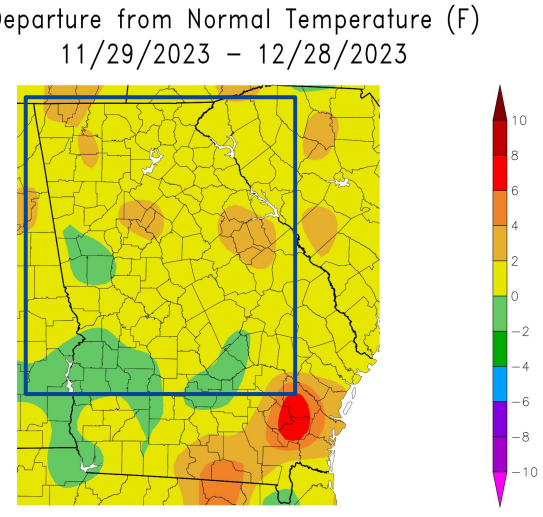


Image Captions:
Left - Average Temperature
Right - Departure from Normal Temperature
Data Courtesy High Plains Regional Climate Center.
Data over the past 30 days ending Month, DD, YYYY

Summary of Impacts

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

Hydrologic Impacts

- Overall, 7-day streamflow averages are below normal to normal, except over west central Georgia where much below conditions have developed. Heavy rainfall over northeast Georgia has allowed northern reservoirs to rebound, with Lake Lanier's 1.5 foot pool elevation increase being the most notable. See next slide for more details.

Agricultural Impacts

- Please see the latest Georgia Crop Progress and Condition Report (Next update not until the end of December.)
- Good rainfall amounts in the last week helped replenish and improve water resources and soil moisture over the state. At last update, farmers were reporting fair pasture conditions, supplemental feeding of livestock, but some green up of fields with the recent rain. Soil moisture has improved since last update, and the recent Lawn and Garden Index continues to show favorable moisture conditions across much of the area.

Fire Hazard Impacts

- Wildfire activity has subsided significantly, but several counties and park areas continue their burn bans through the end of the calendar year. See slide 9 for more details.

Other Impacts

- There are no known impacts at this time

Mitigation Actions

- Please refer to your municipality and/or water provider for mitigation information.

Hydrologic Conditions and Impacts

Main Takeaways

- In the last week, rainfall over north and eastern Georgia was 0.75 inches or more, with 3 to 5 inches over the northeast mountain counties. This rainfall really improved headwater conditions in the Tennessee and upper Chattahoochee River basins. The 7-day average streamflow (right) for these areas are now *normal*. Normal streamflows also continue in the Savannah, Oconee, upper Flint, Chattahoochee, and Tallapoosa River basins.

- Above normal streamflows were present in the Altamaha and Ogeechee River basins.

- Below normal conditions persist in the Coosa, lower Flint, and Ocmulgee River basins.

- Lake and Reservoir levels have improved, with many reservoirs near seasonal targets. The pool elevation at Lake Lanier rose 1.5 feet since Christmas Day, though still remains below normal.

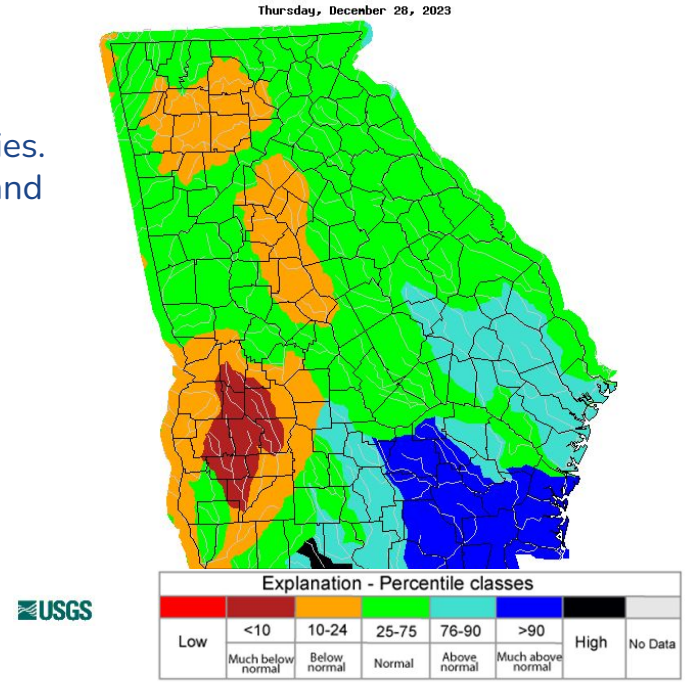
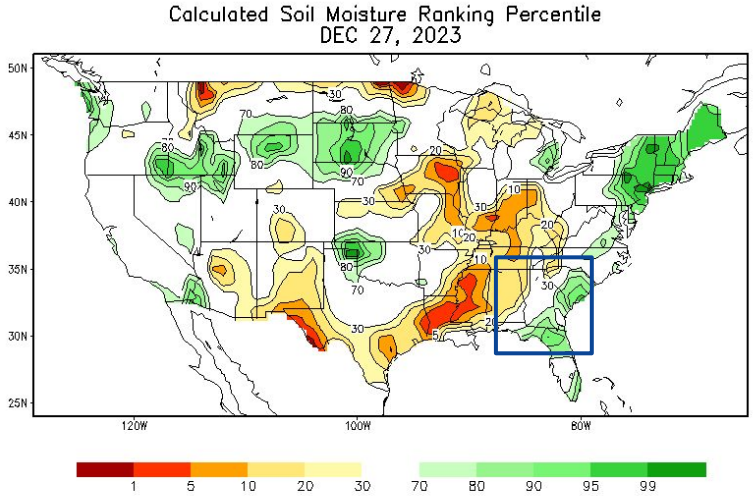


Image Caption: USGS 7 day average streamflow HUC map valid December 28, 2023.

Agricultural Impacts

- The Soil Moisture Ranking Percentile (below) shows dry to near-normal rankings as of December 28, 2023.
- Of the nine crop divisions (right), the majority are near normal, with eastern and south Georgia ranging from Abnormally Moist to Wet – an improvement over the last two weeks. This index focuses on the shallow soil profile and responds more quickly to recent rainfall.



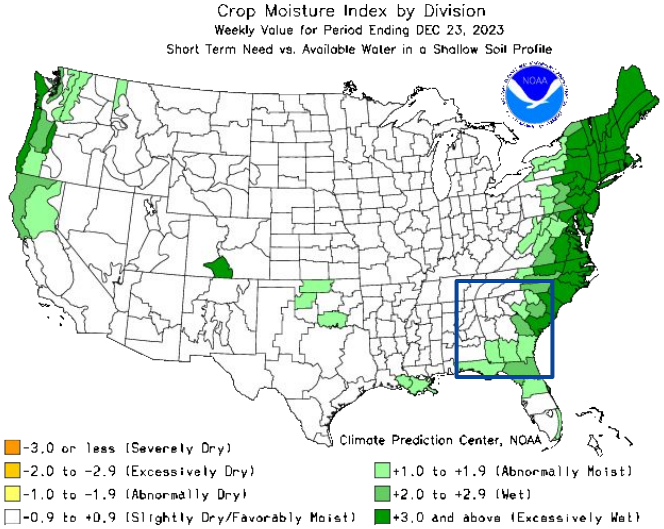
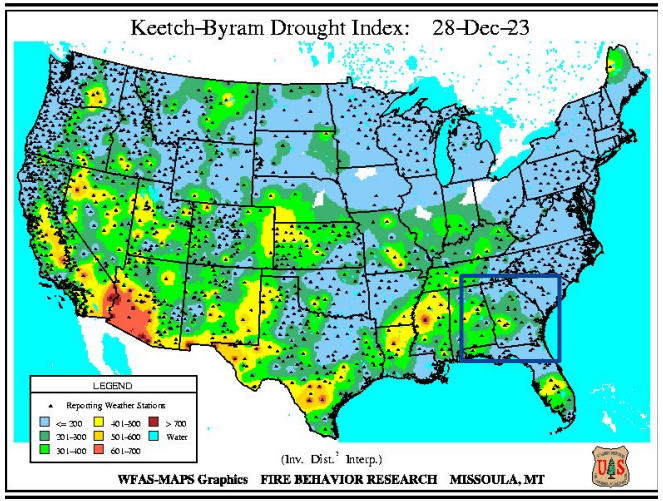


Image Captions:
Left: CPC Calculated Soil Moisture Ranking Percentile (data 1932-2000) valid December 27, 2023
Right: Crop Moisture Index by Division. Weekly value for period ending December 23, 2023

Fire Hazard Impacts

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

- Keetch Byram Drought Index values have dropped below 300 nearly statewide, with a pocket of 300 to 500 over the greater Columbus area.
- The Significant Wildland Fire Potential Outlook for Georgia is normal for January (far right).
- In many north Georgia localities, burn bans that were previously in place have now been lifted with the improving drought conditions.



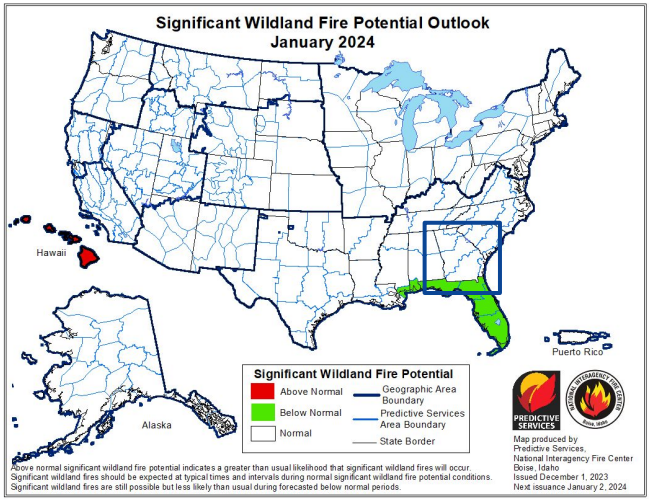
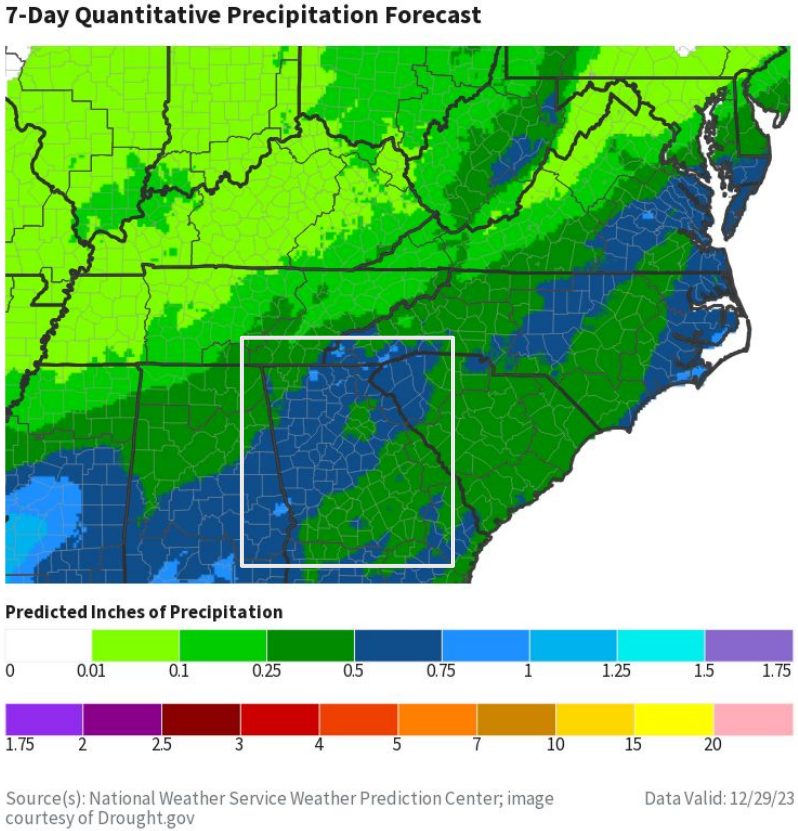


Image Captions:
Above: Significant Wildland Fire Potential Monthly Outlook for January 2024
Left: Keetch Byram Drought Index for December 28, 2023

Seven Day Precipitation Forecast

The 7-day outlook (through 7am Fri, Jan 5):

- A more active weather pattern setting up next week will bring two opportunities for (light) rain.
  - Seven-day amounts of 0.25 to 0.75 inches are expected at this time, with isolated higher amounts up to 1 inch.
  - There is still some uncertainty with coverage and intensity of rainfall for late Wednesday through Thursday
- Into January, weather pattern looks active enough to rotate rain through the state every 2-4 days.



Rapid Onset Drought Outlook

Links to the latest Climate Prediction Center 8 to 14 day Temperature Outlook and Precipitation Outlook.

- No rapid onset drought is expected for any area in the Southeast U.S.
- For the next 8 to 14 days, above normal temperatures and above normal precipitation are expected for Georgia.

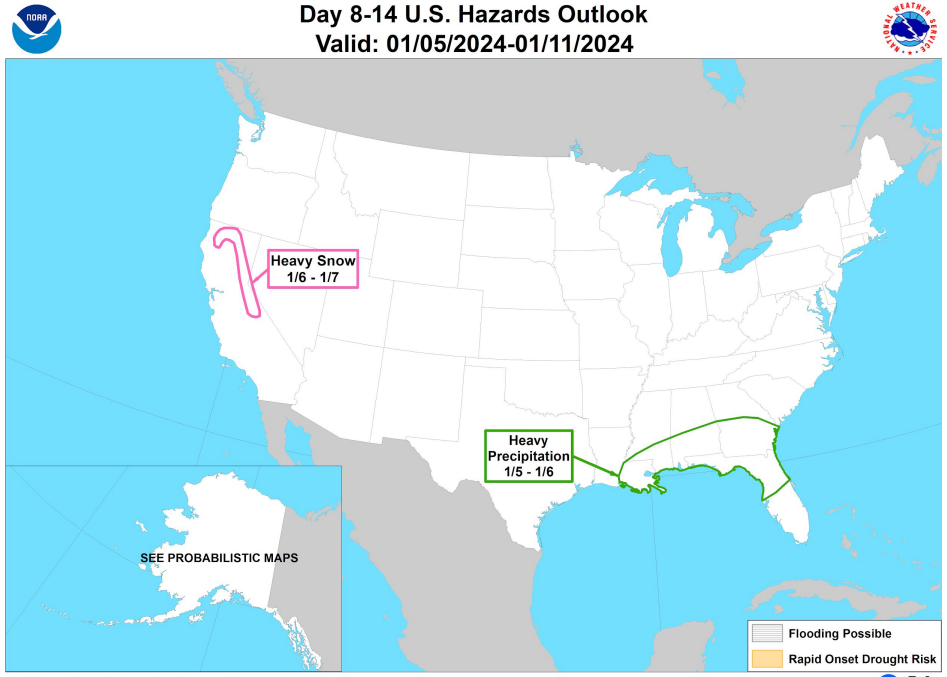


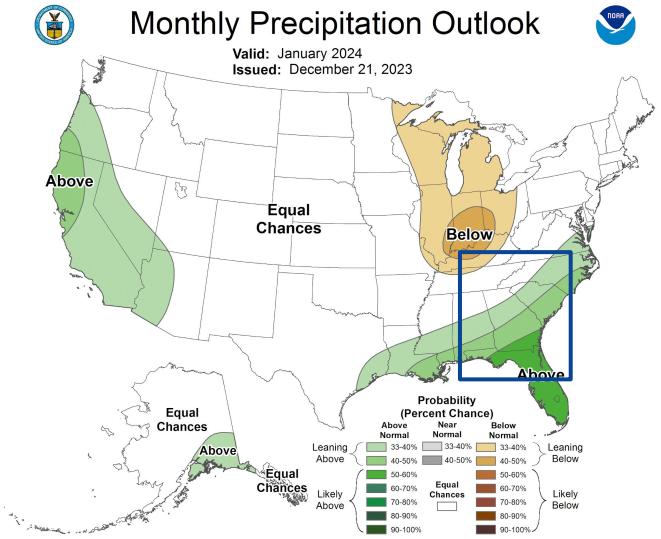
Image Caption:
Days 8 to 14 U.S. Hazards Outlook
Valid October 27-November 2, 2023

Long-Range Outlooks

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

For **January**:

- Above normal rainfall is expected for the southern three-quarters of the state.
- There is an equal chance of above or below normal temperatures statewide.



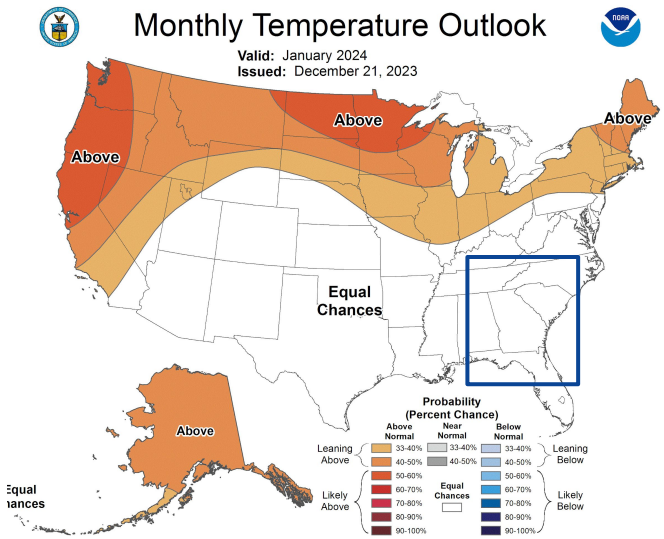
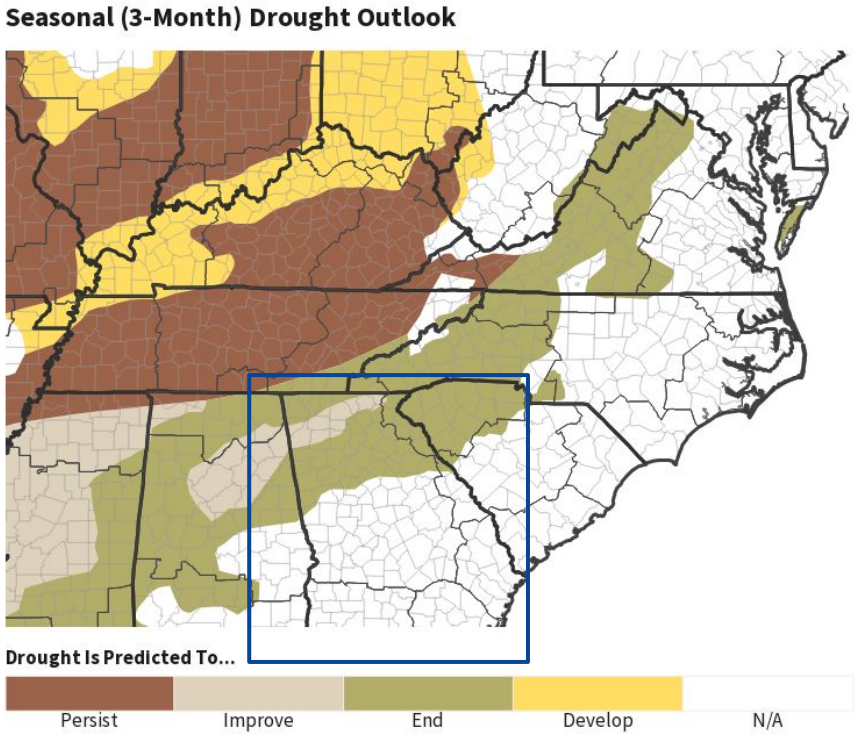


Image Captions:
Left - Climate Prediction Center Monthly Temperature Outlook.
Right - Climate Prediction Center Monthly Precipitation Outlook.
Valid January 2024, issued December 21, 2023

Drought Outlook

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

- Drought is expected to end over much of the state through the winter months.
- A small stretch of north Georgia, generally from Rome, to Ellijay, to Hiawassee, may not see drought completely come to an end, they are expected to see improvements through Winter and into early Spring.



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