Drought Information Statement for southeast MS, southwest AL, and the western FL Panhandle

Valid 09/26/2024

Issued By: WFO Mobile/Pensacola

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

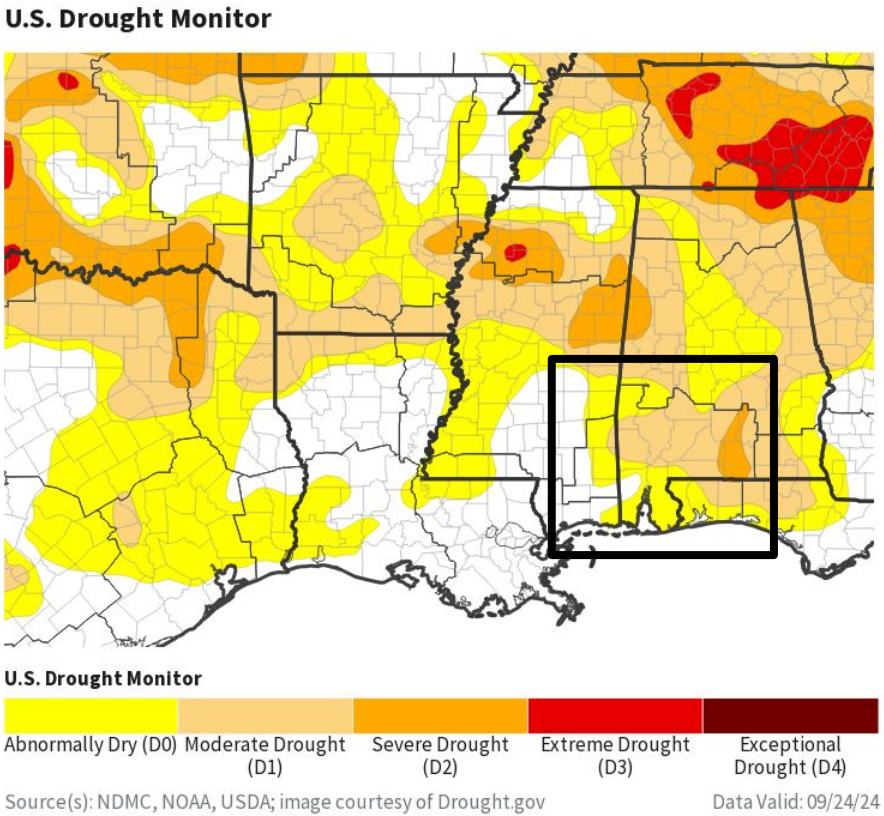
- This product will be updated October 3, 2024 or sooner if drought conditions change significantly.
- Please see all currently available products at https://drought.gov/drought-information-statements.
- Please visit weather.gov/mob/DroughtInformationStatement for previous statements.
- Please visit Drought Status Updates for regional drought status updates.

- DROUGHT HOLDS ACROSS CENTRAL GULF COAST INTERIOR
  - *Severe drought lingers over a small portion of south-central AL.*
  - *Moderate drought lingers over interior southwest AL and portions of the interior of the Western FL Panhandle.*

U.S. Drought Monitor

Link to the latest U.S. Drought Monitor for the SE US and central Gulf Coast

- Drought intensity and Extent
  - **D2 (Severe Drought)**: Much of Covington AL. County border areas of Escambia, Conecuh, Butler and Crenshaw Co's. in AL.
  - **D1 (Moderate Drought)**: Much of the remainder of interior southwest AL and northern Okaloosa and Santa Rosa Co's. in FL.
  - **D0: (Abnormally Dry)**: Northern Choctaw Co., portions of interior southeast MS and coastal southwest AL into the coastal western FL Panhandle.

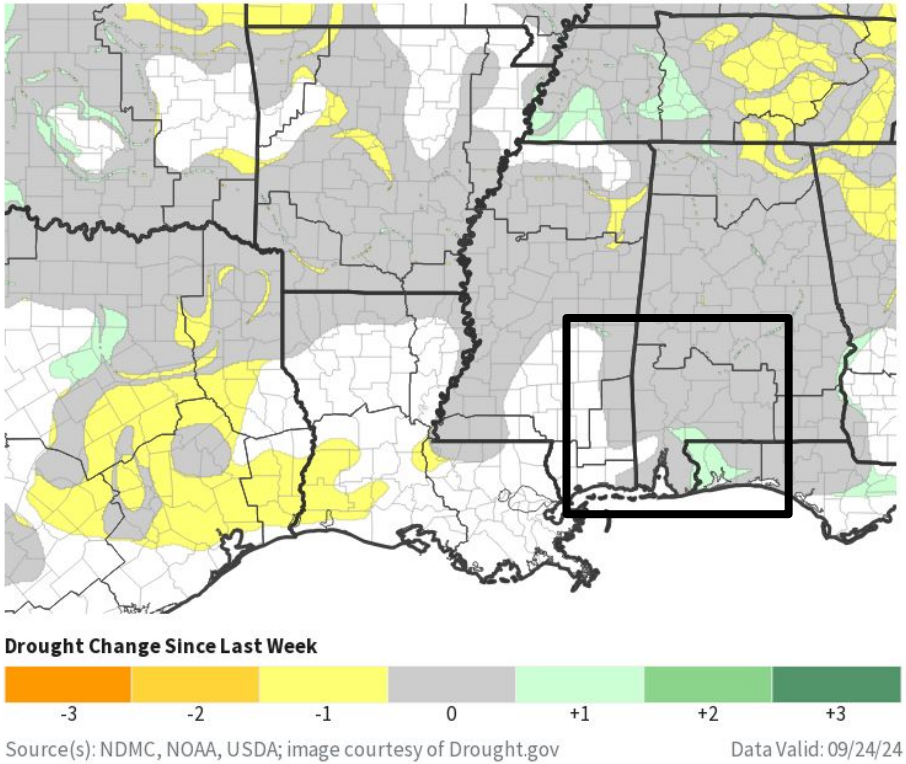


Recent Change in Drought Intensity

Link to the latest 1-week change map for the SE US and central Gulf Coast

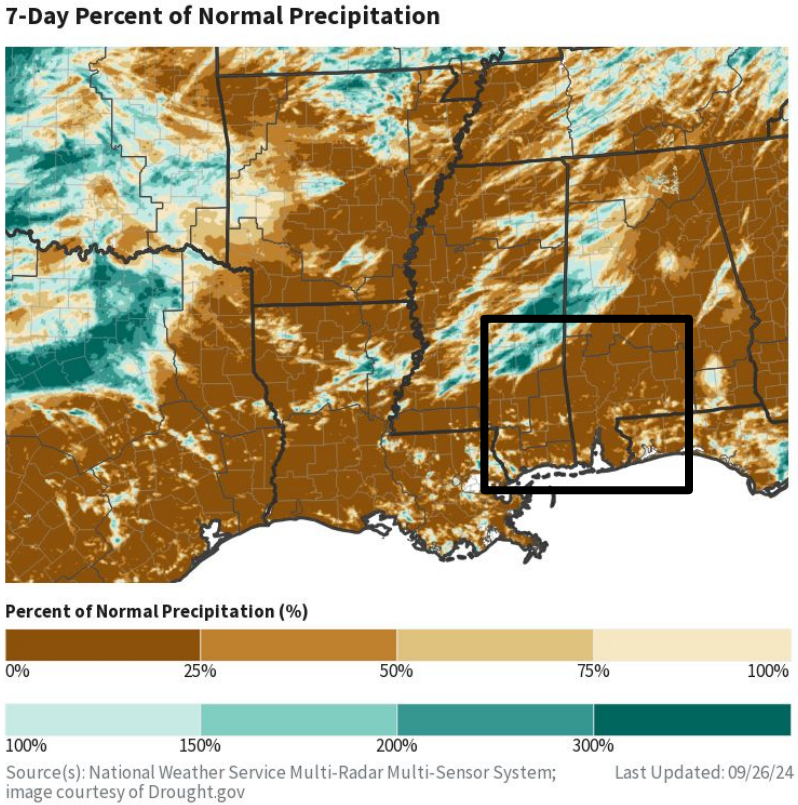
- One Week Drought Monitor Class Change:
  - **No Change:** A majority of the local area saw no change in drought over the past week.
  - **Drought Improved:** Areas along a line from Atmore AL, southward to Escambia and western portions of Santa Rosa Co's in FL experienced a one class drought improvement.

U.S. Drought Monitor 1-Week Change Map



Precipitation

- Since Francine, much of the area the past week turned dry again. Much of the area received 50% or less of normal, late September weekly rainfall.



Summary of Impacts

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

Hydrologic Impacts

- The US Geological Survey (USGS) indicates that flow and stage on many local area river and stream points, generally focused over coastal southwest AL into the western Florida Panhandle, have trended below to much below normal over the past week. Rivers and streams that are running below normal in stage, may result in typically deeply submerged objects being likely closer to the water's surface or in some cases exposed, presenting a waterway hazard for safe recreational boating and commercial navigation.

Agricultural Impacts

- The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) indicates that topsoil moisture in the state of AL remains short but has improved since last week. AL though still remains drier than the 5 and 10 year means for this time of year. Drought conditions have contributed to Alabama's worst pine beetle outbreak since 2001, leading to widespread damage (Source: AL Political Reporter, Montgomery AL). Supplemental feeding initiatives are required to maintain livestock condition.

Fire Hazard Impacts

- Data from the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) Predictive Services Unit indicates the most significant wildland fire potential will be focused over the Mid-South to across northern AL into the upcoming month of October. For the remainder of the local area, decayed timber and very dry underbrush in area forests along with dry grasslands will promote favorable conditions for fire growth and spread. It's also important to note that in the event of strong cold frontal passages, periods of critically low daytime humidity in combination with gusty northerly winds will bring periods of increased wildfire potential.

Mitigation Actions

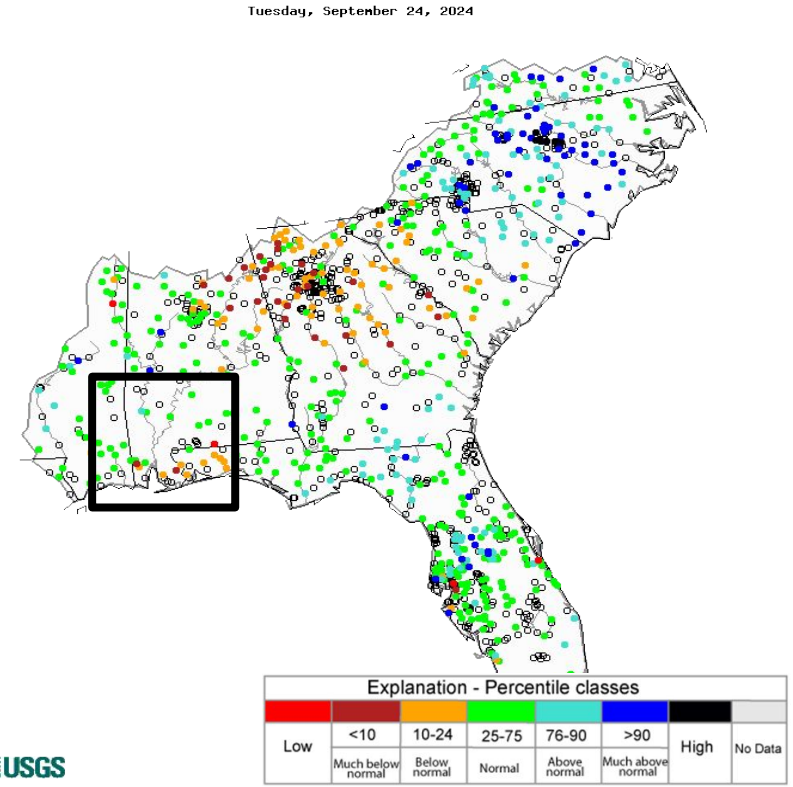
- Water conservation techniques are strongly encouraged in drought areas. Please refer to your municipality and/or water provider for mitigation information. Local water restriction ordinances may be in place.

Hydrologic Conditions and Impacts

- Several local area rivers and streams over coastal AL and the western FL Panhandle have trended to below normal in flow and stage over the past week, with a few of these at much below normal.

- To view the most current stages and flow for each state's, stream and river points, please visit:

  MS: https://waterwatch.usgs.gov/index.php?r=ms&m=real
  AL: https://waterwatch.usgs.gov/index.php?r=al&m=real
  FL: https://waterwatch.usgs.gov/index.php?r=fl&m=real



Agricultural Impacts

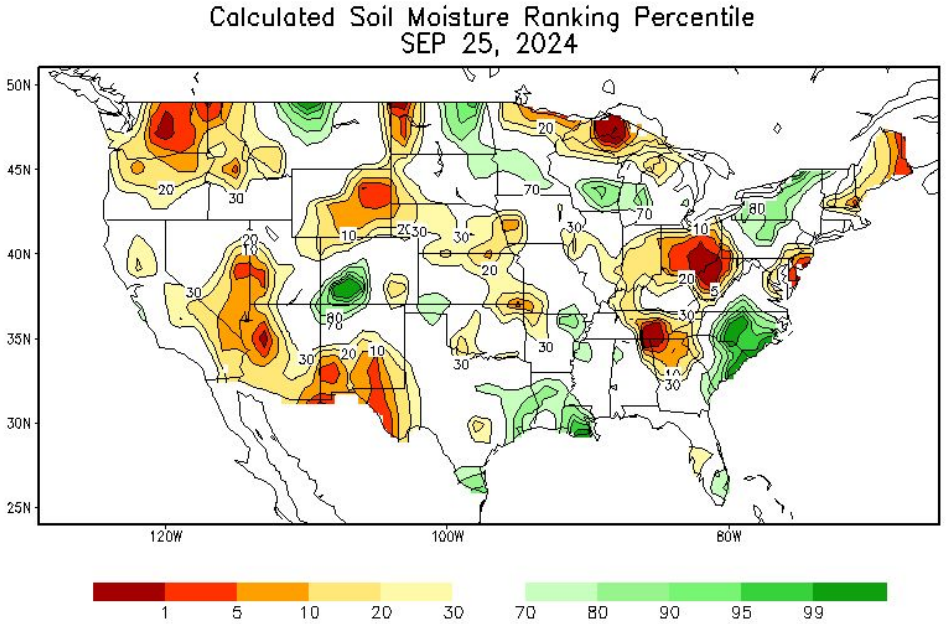
- Crop condition in the driest of areas is very poor. Crop disease and insect damage elevated. Pasture lands provide little to no livestock feed. Supplemental feeding is required to maintain livestock condition.

- Leading to very poor crop condition is the short to very short subsoil moisture being drier than normal.

- The latest state-wide top soil moisture metrics vs 5 year means:

  (Upper 6” Moisture Depth, courtesy of USDA 09/22/24).
  - MS: 18% Wetter than Normal (Avg: 54.8%).
  - AL: 44% Dry (Avg: 39.4%).
  - FL: 10% Wetter than Normal (Avg: 19.6%).

- **It is recommended that farmers reach out to local USDA office for details on available funding assistance.**

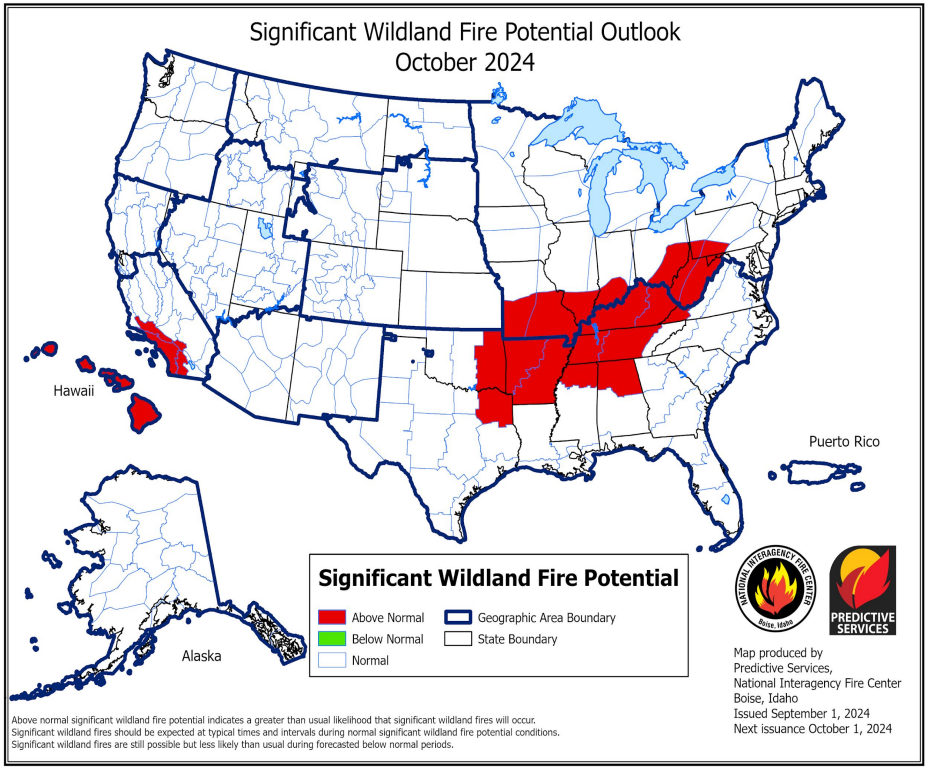


Fire Hazard Impacts

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

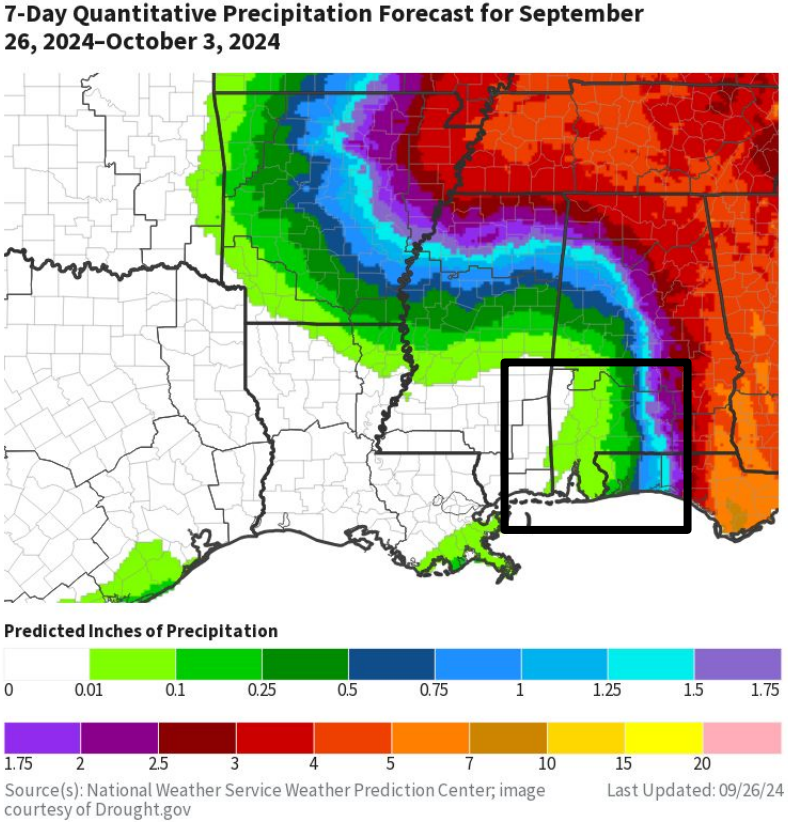
- Decayed timber and very dry underbrush in area forests along with dry grasslands pose an above normal risk for development and spread of fire.
- It's also important to note that in the event of strong cold frontal passages, periods of critically low daytime humidity in combination with gusty northerly winds will bring periods of increased wildfire potential.
- To view the seven day significant fire potential maps, please refer to the link above.

Latest Burn Bans and/or Advisories By State:
Mississippi and Alabama and Florida



Seven Day Precipitation Forecast

- A gradient of better rainfall sets up over eastern AL, associated with the northward movement of Hurricane Helene up across the central Florida Panhandle and Georgia.
- Isolated pockets of 1 to 3 inch storm total rains, generally along and east of a line from Greenville AL to Navarre FL, looks to mostly occur through Friday Sep. 27th.
- Once Helene lifts quickly out, rainfall ends with the remainder of the period Saturday Sep. 28th to Thursday Oct. 3rd looking rain-free.

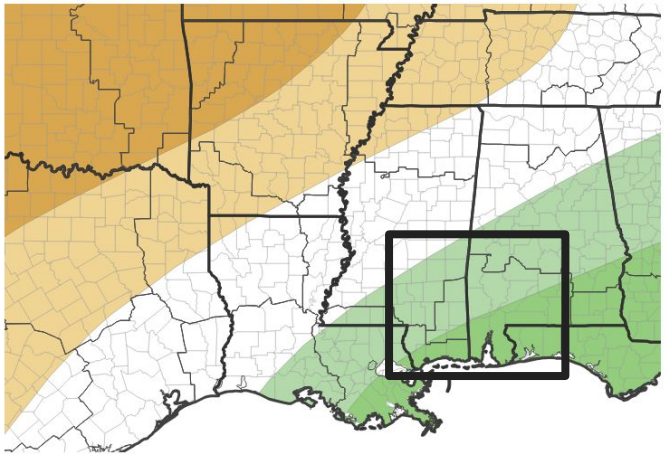


Long-Range Outlooks

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

- A look at the October outlook for temperature is favored to see equal chances of above or below normal numbers. In the precipitation department, amounts are favored to lean above normal for the central Gulf Coast.

Monthly Precipitation Outlook for October 1, 2024–October 31, 2024



Probability of Below-Normal Precipitation

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

Probability of Above-Normal Precipitation

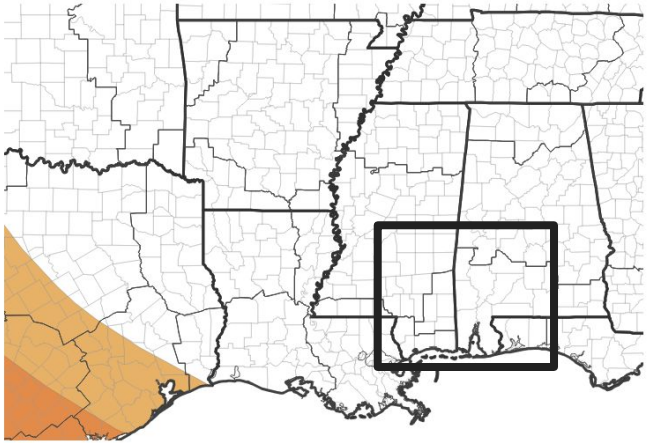
33% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Probability of Near-Normal Precipitation

33% 40% 50%

Source(s): Climate Prediction Center; image courtesy of Drought.gov Last Updated: 09/19/24

Monthly Temperature Outlook for October 1, 2024–October 31, 2024



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%

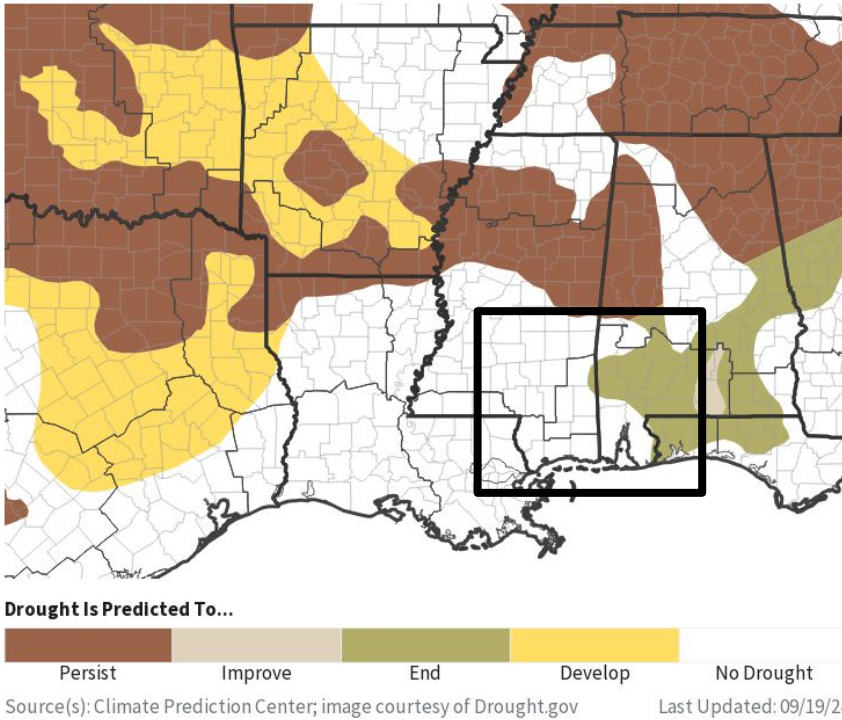
Source(s): Climate Prediction Center; image courtesy of Drought.gov Last Updated: 09/19/24

Drought Outlook

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

- The seasonal drought outlook through the end of 2024 favors an improvement or an end to drought.

Seasonal (3-Month) Drought Outlook for September 19, 2024–December 31, 2024



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