Spring Flood Outlook 2026

Northeast and Mid-Atlantic Regions

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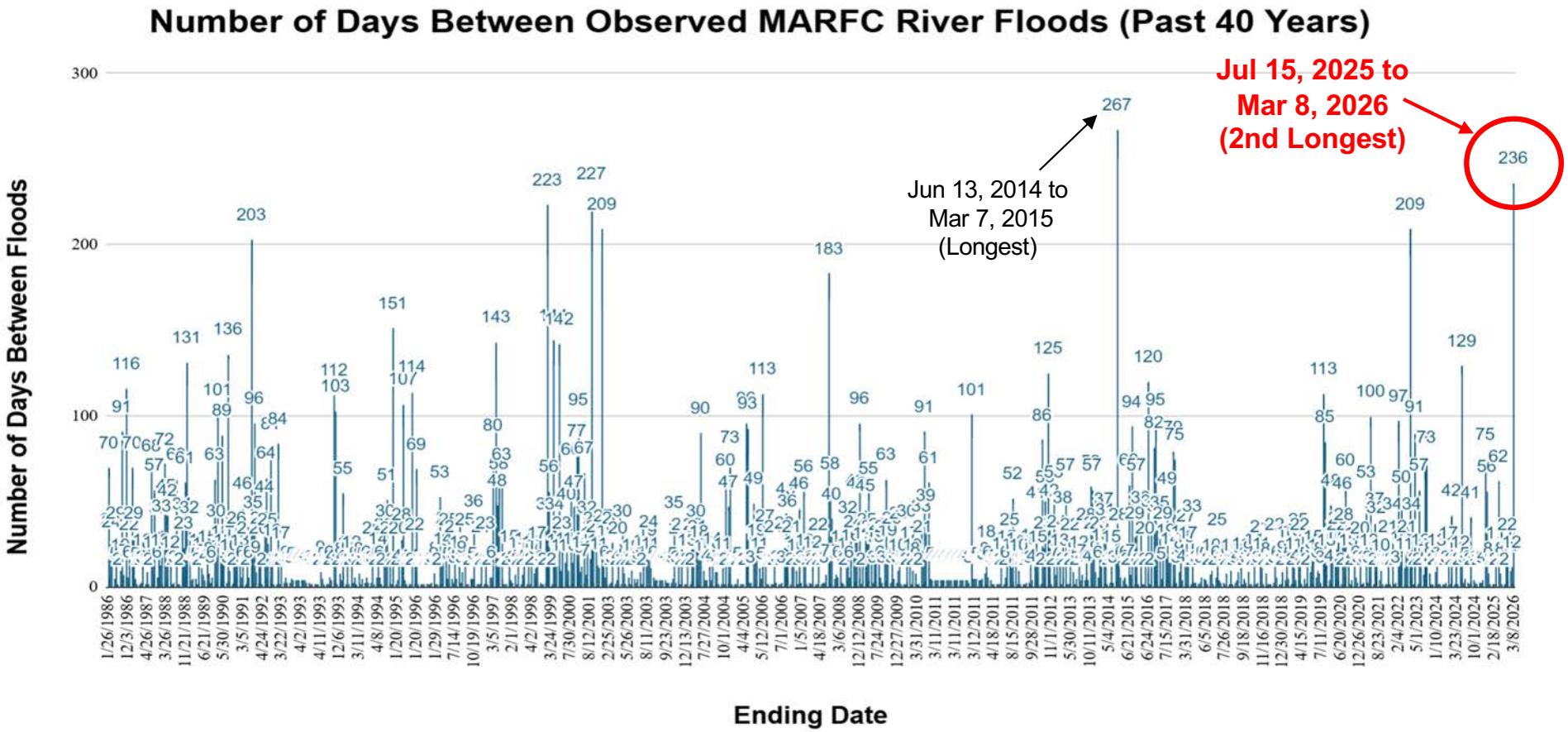
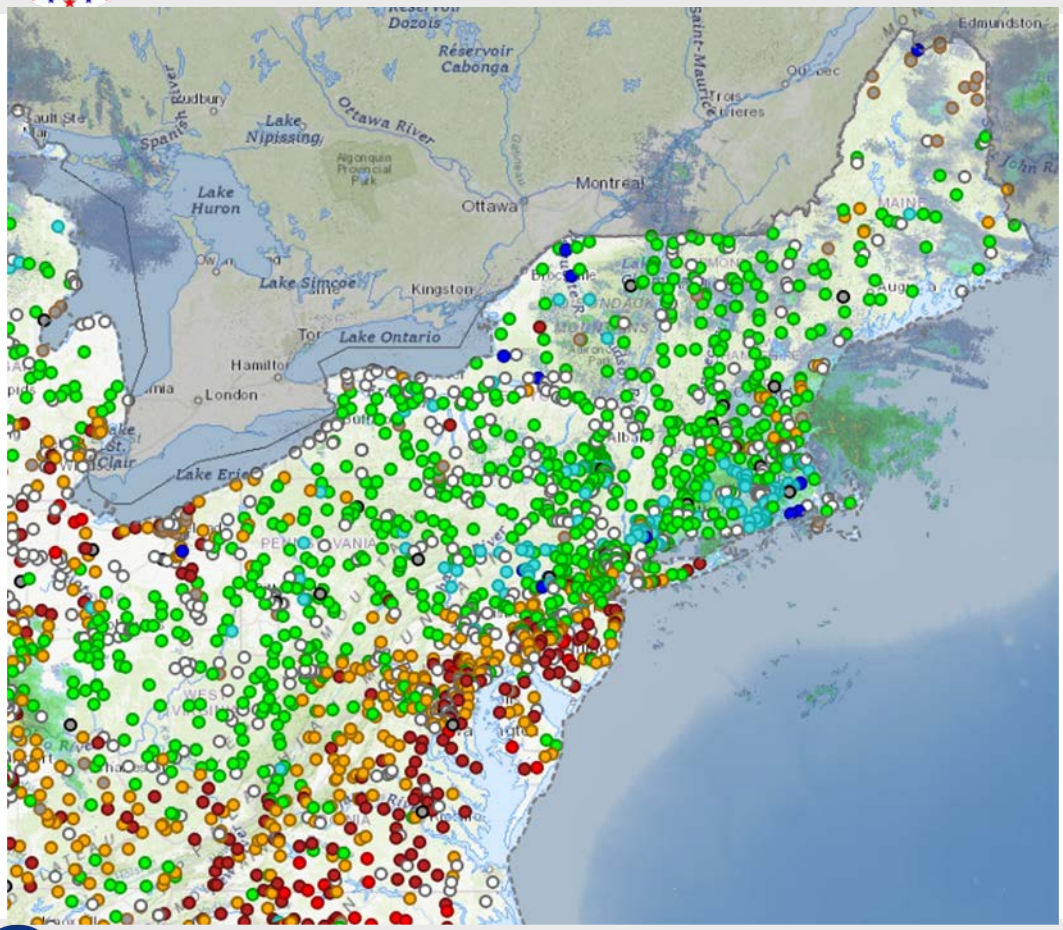
Flood “Drought” in Mid-Atlantic

236 Days between Flood Events; 2nd Longest Flood “Drought” in last 40 years



Current USGS Streamflows

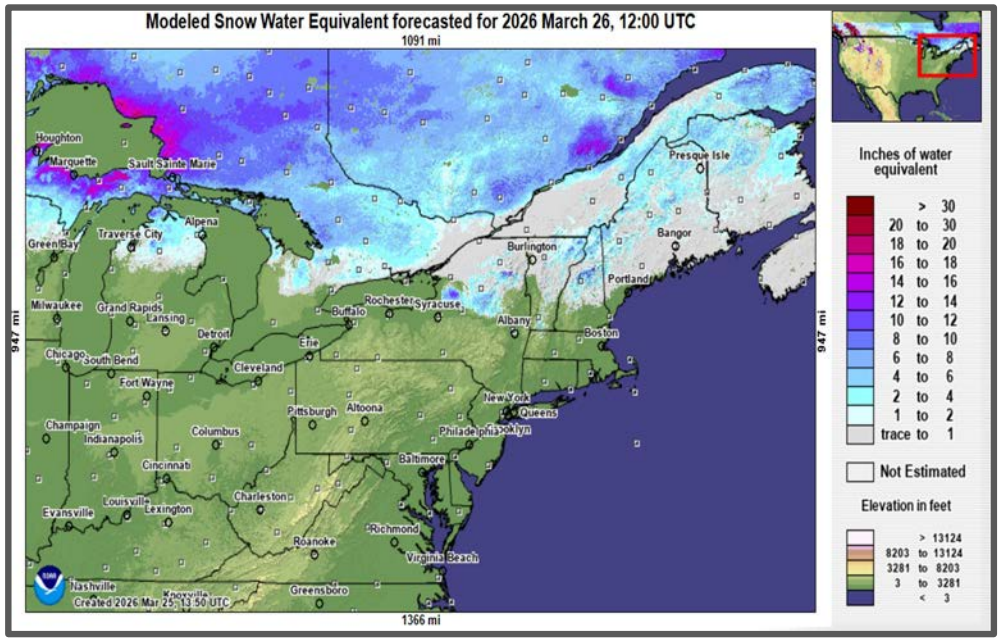


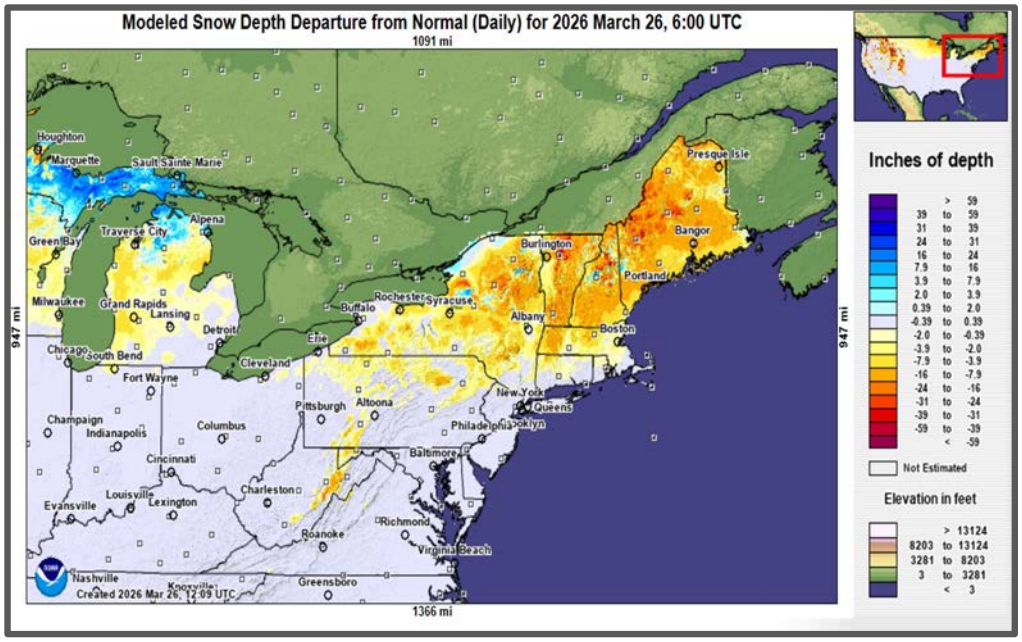
- Overall, current USGS streamflows are near to below average for this time of year across Northeast/Mid-Atlantic

Streamflow: Status

Above flood stage	
All-time high for this day	100th percentile (maximum)
Much above normal	>90th percentile
Above normal	76th – 90th percentile
Normal	25th – 75th percentile
Below normal	10th – 24th percentile
Much below normal	<10th percentile
All-time low for this day	0th percentile (minimum)
Not flowing	
Not ranked	
Measurement flag	
Recent measurement unavailable	

Current Snow Status





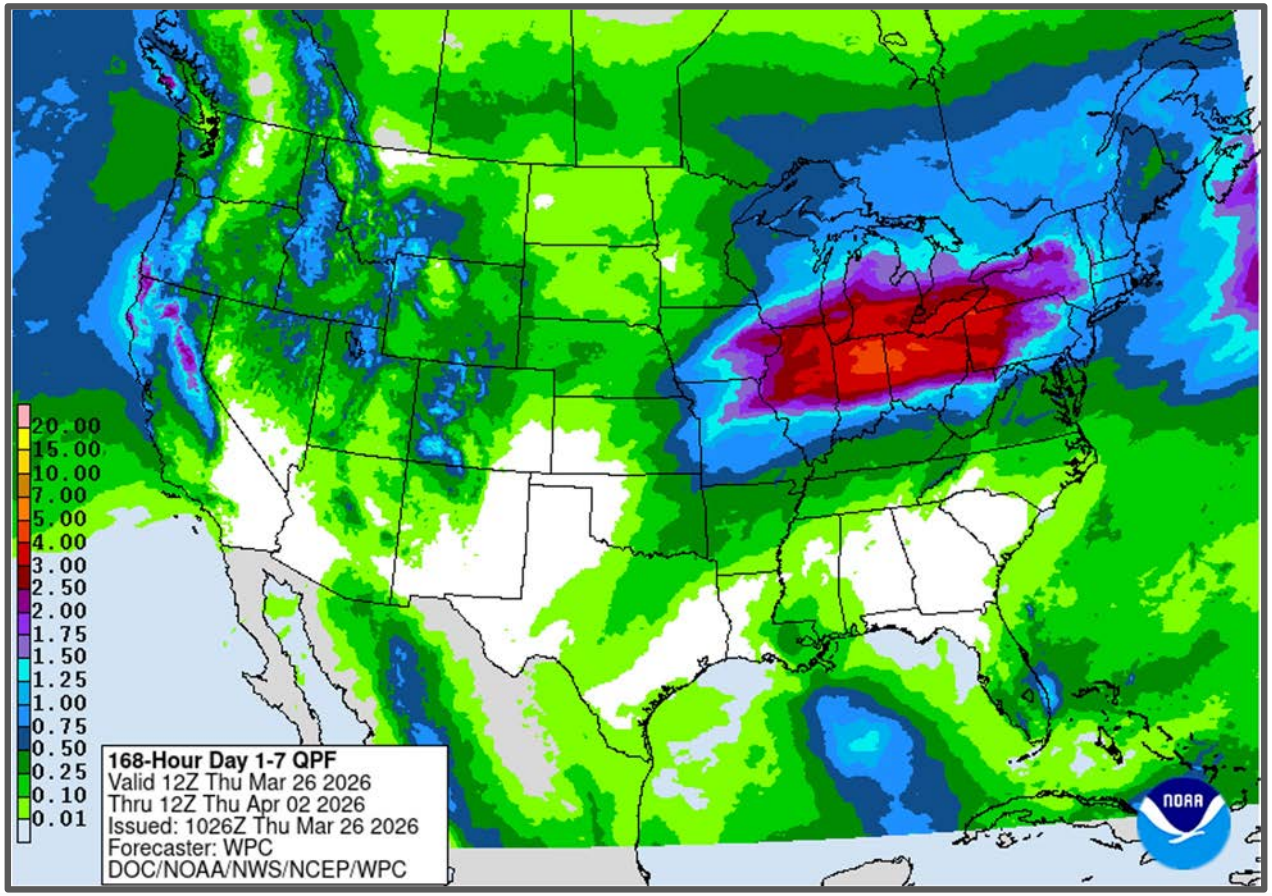
➔ Generally below normal Snow Water Equivalent (SWE) and Snow Depths across the Mid Atlantic and Northeast.

Precipitation Forecast

Valid March 26 to April 2, 2026

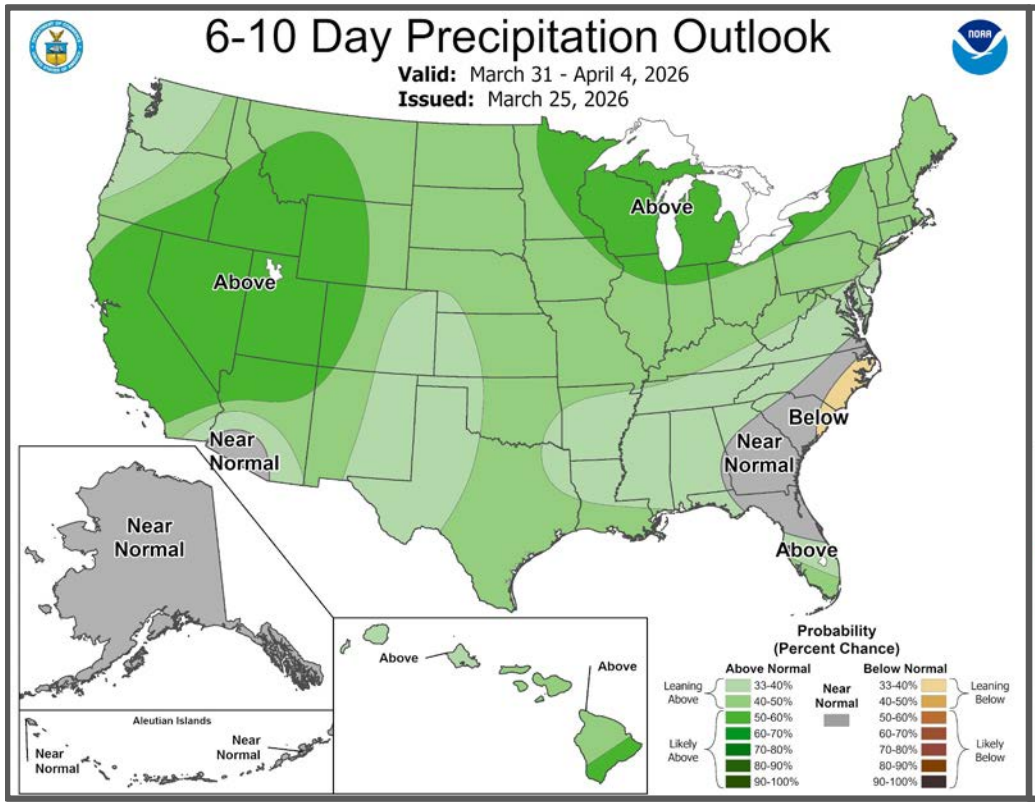
Forecast Precipitation (Next 7 Days)

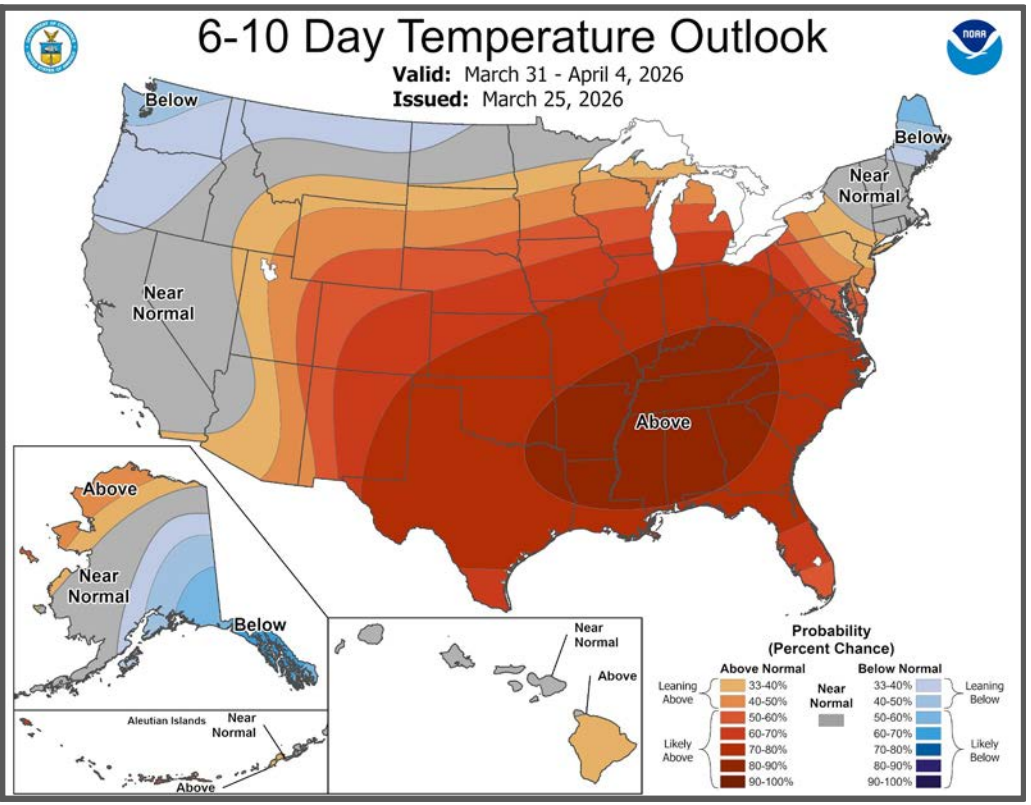
- ➔ Next round of rain moves through the area on today through Friday
- ➔ Additional rain/snow possible by early to mid next week
- ➔ 7-day total precipitation could exceed 3”, particularly in western PA and western NY



Short-Term Outlooks (6-10 Day)

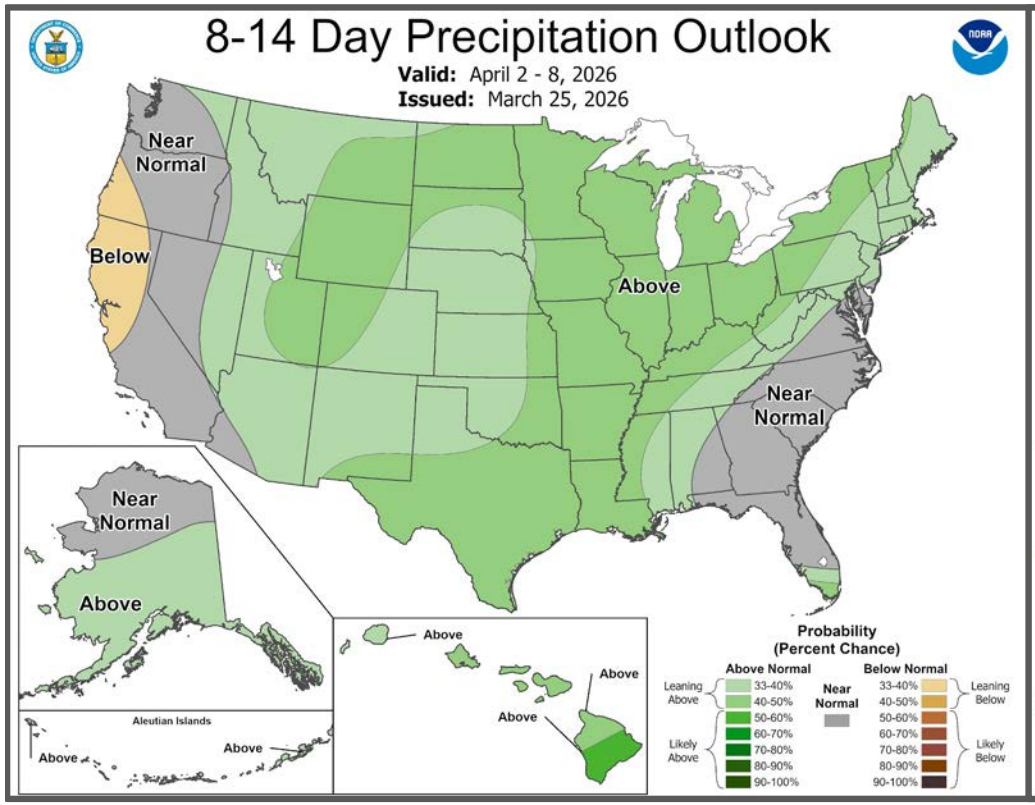
Valid March 31 - April 4, 2026

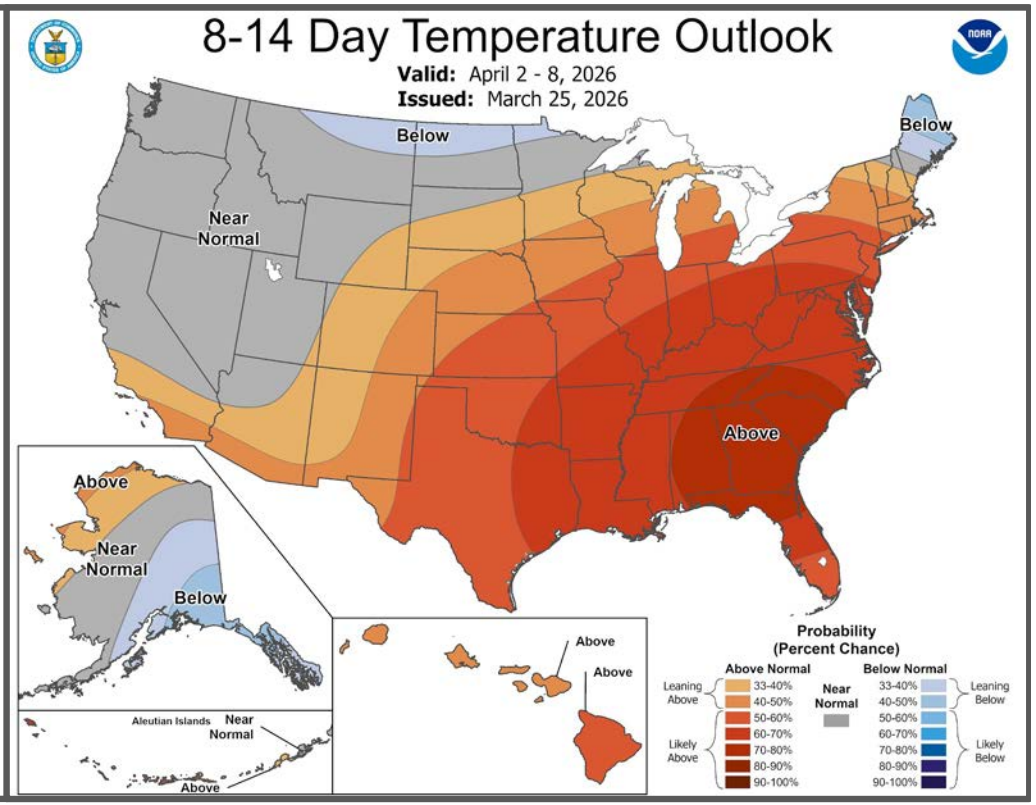




Short-Term Outlooks (8-14 Day)

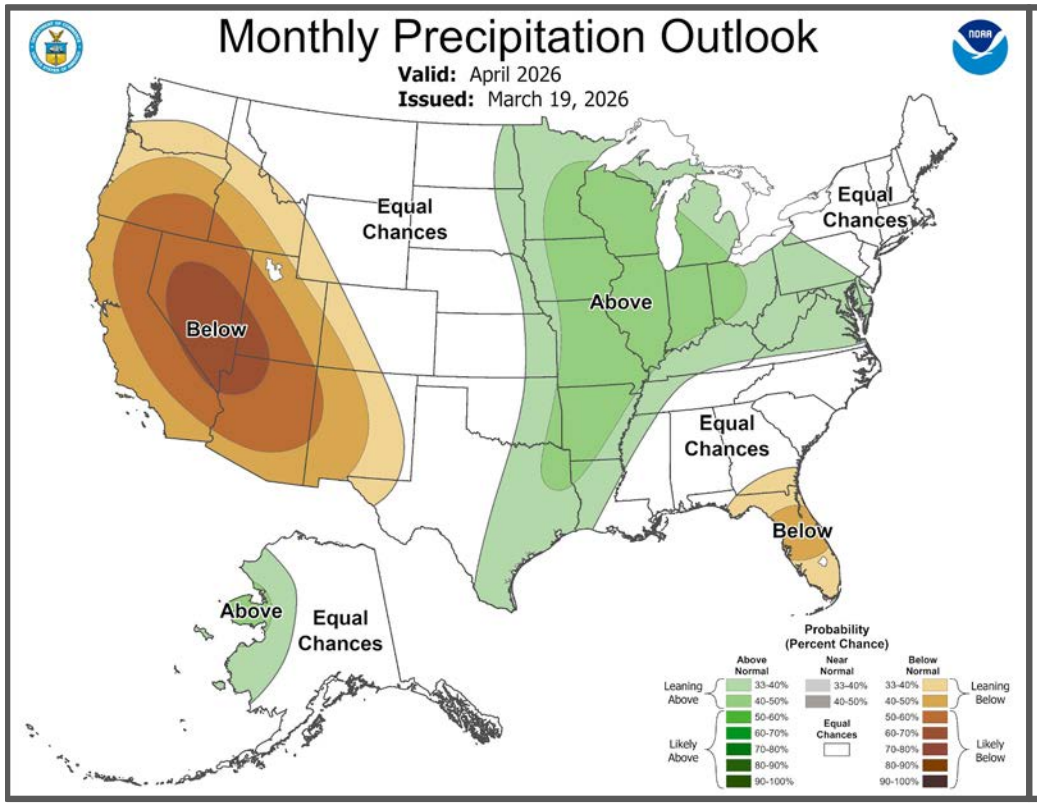
Valid April 2-8, 2026

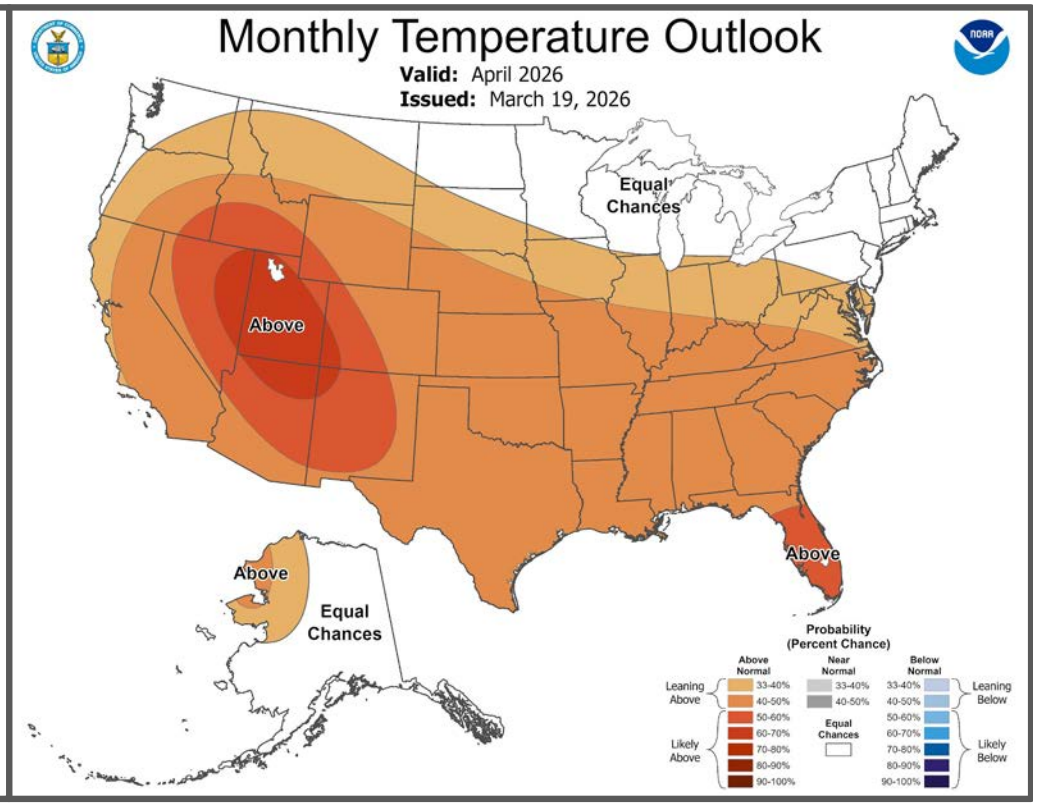




Monthly Outlooks

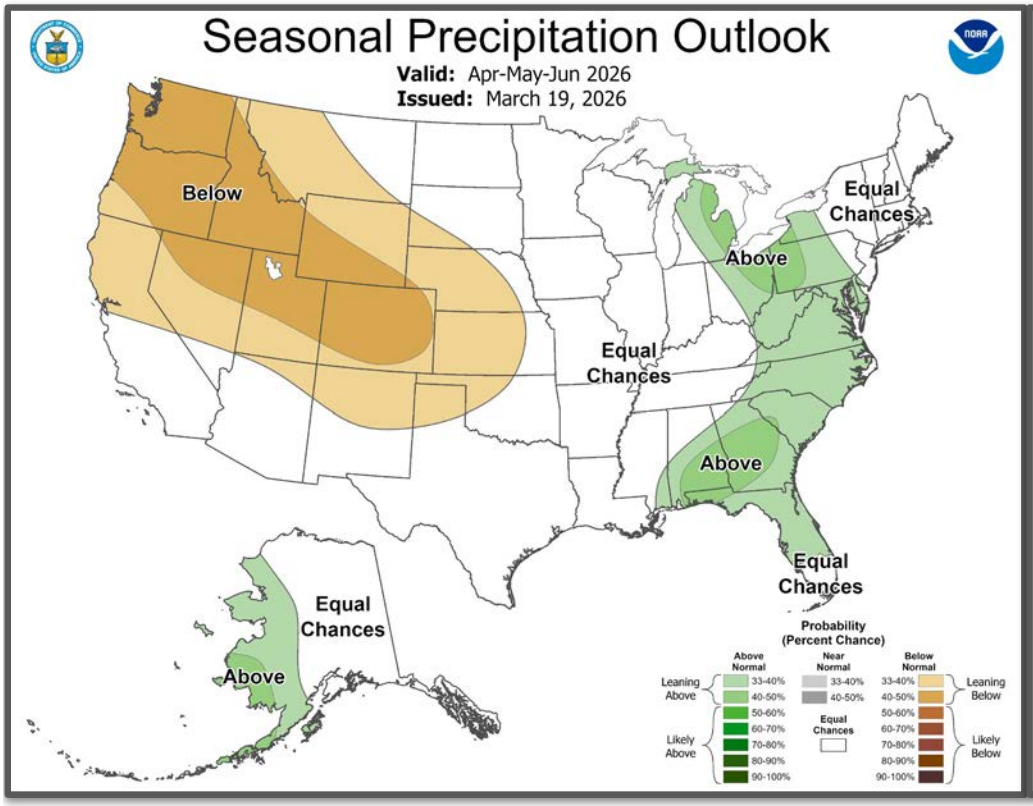
Valid April 2026

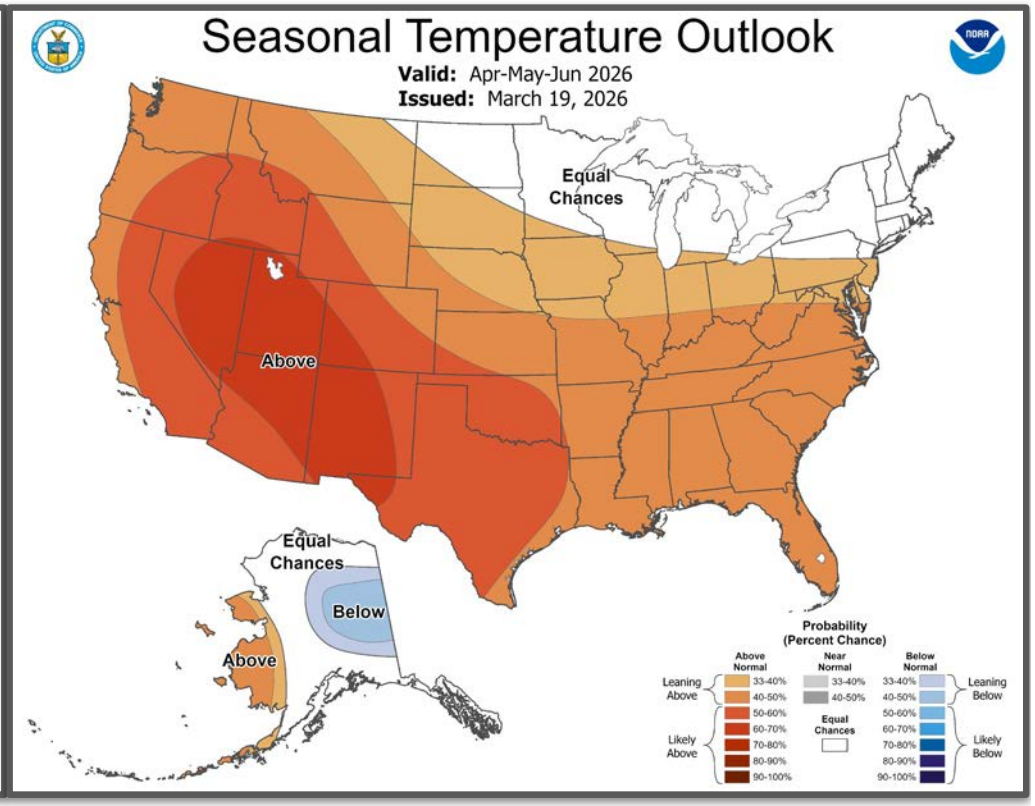




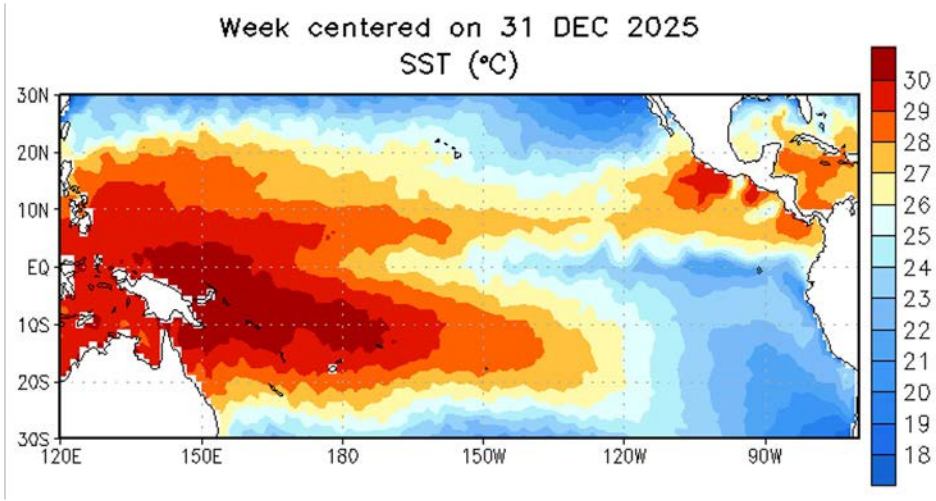
Seasonal Outlooks

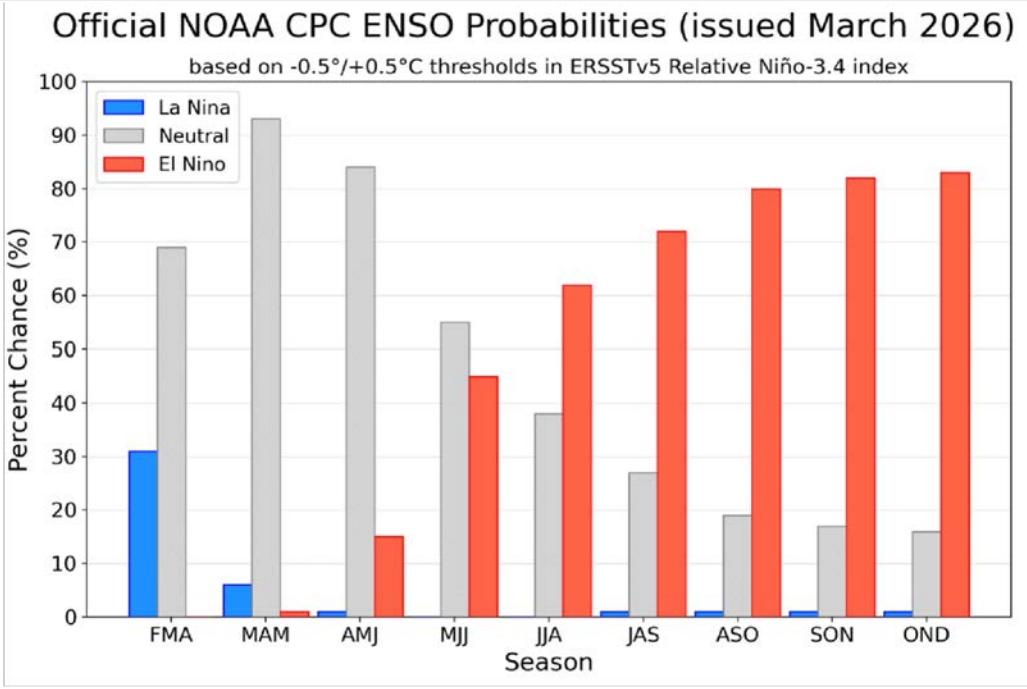
Valid April, May, June 2026





El Nino/Southern Oscillation

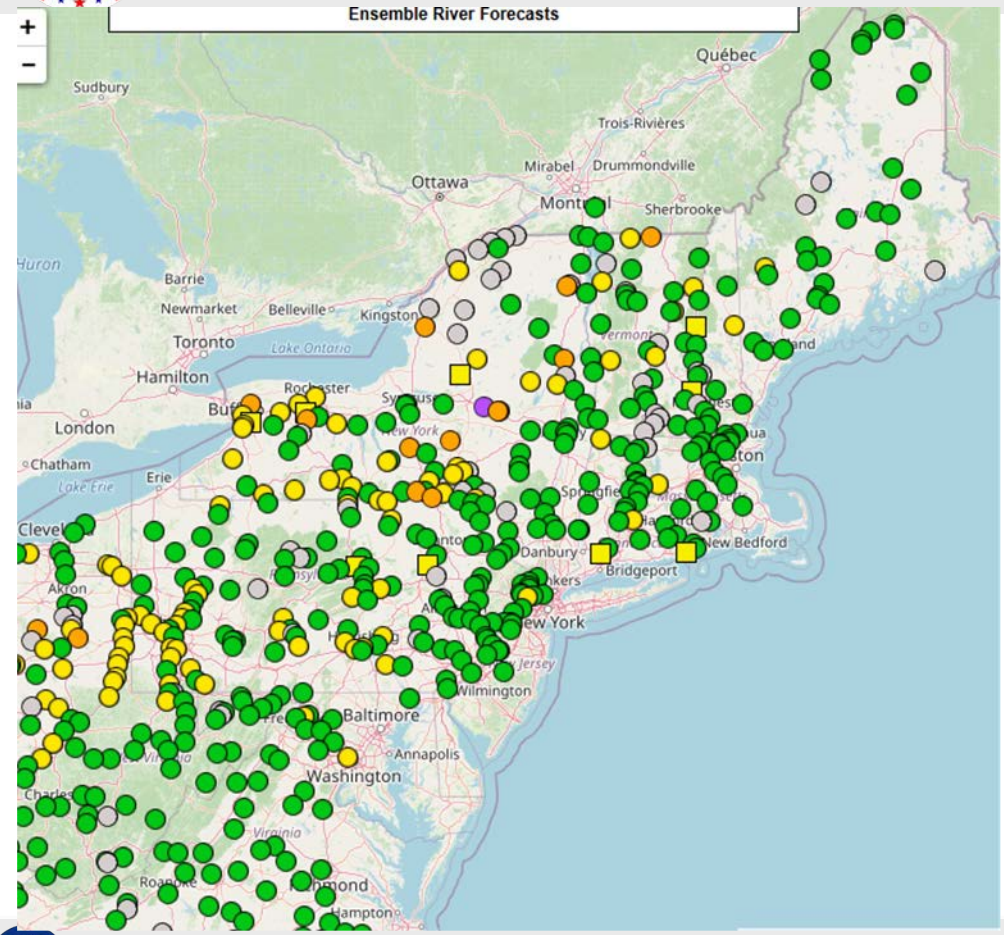




NWS Climate Prediction Center: A transition from La Niña to ENSO-neutral is expected in the next month, with ENSO-neutral favored through May-July 2026 (55% chance). In June-August 2026, El Niño is likely to emerge (62% chance) and persist through at least the end of 2026.

Strong El Nino conditions often coincide with below average Atlantic tropical cyclone seasons.

River Ensemble Outlooks



- Over the next 10 days, the river flood risk is relatively low, based on NAEFS ensemble forecasts of precipitation and snowmelt.

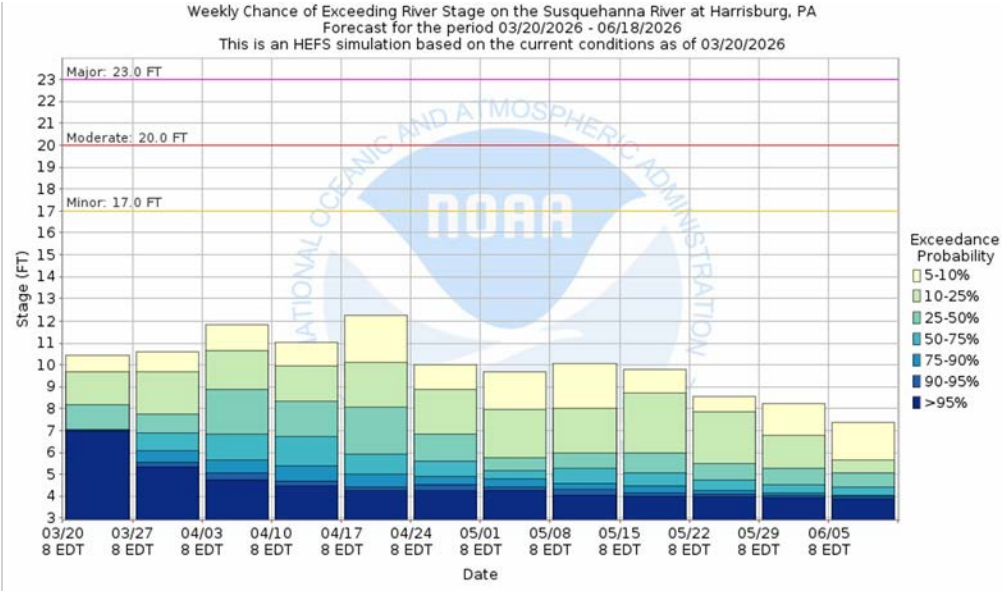
NAEFS

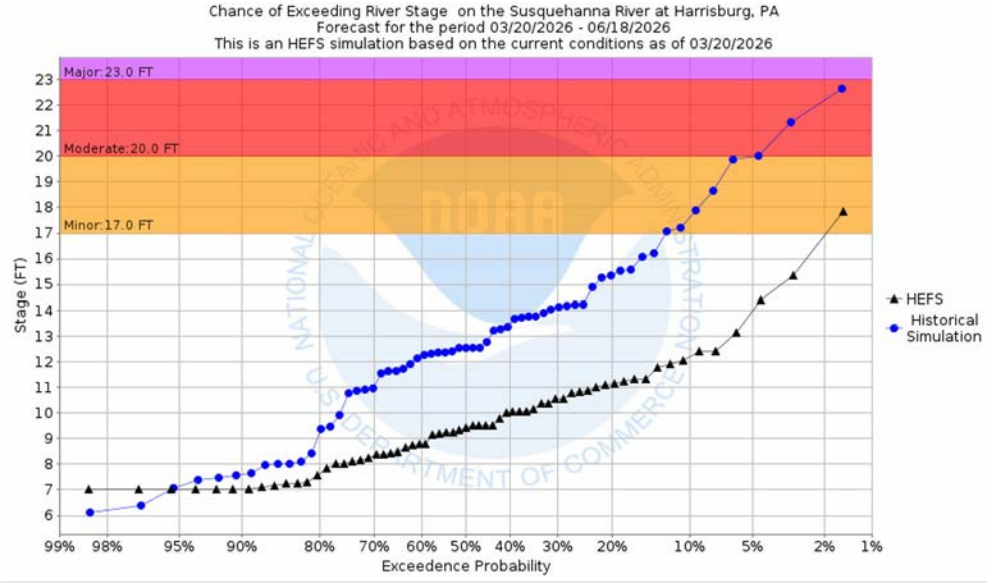
North American Ensemble Forecast System

Chance of Exceedance		
30%	Level	70%
●	Action	■
●	Minor Flood	■
●	Moderate Flood	■
●	Major Flood	■
● = less than 30% chance of reaching Action level		
● = no critical levels defined for this point		

90-Day Ensemble Graphics

NEW: Ensemble graphics on NWPS have been expanded from 30 days to 90 days.



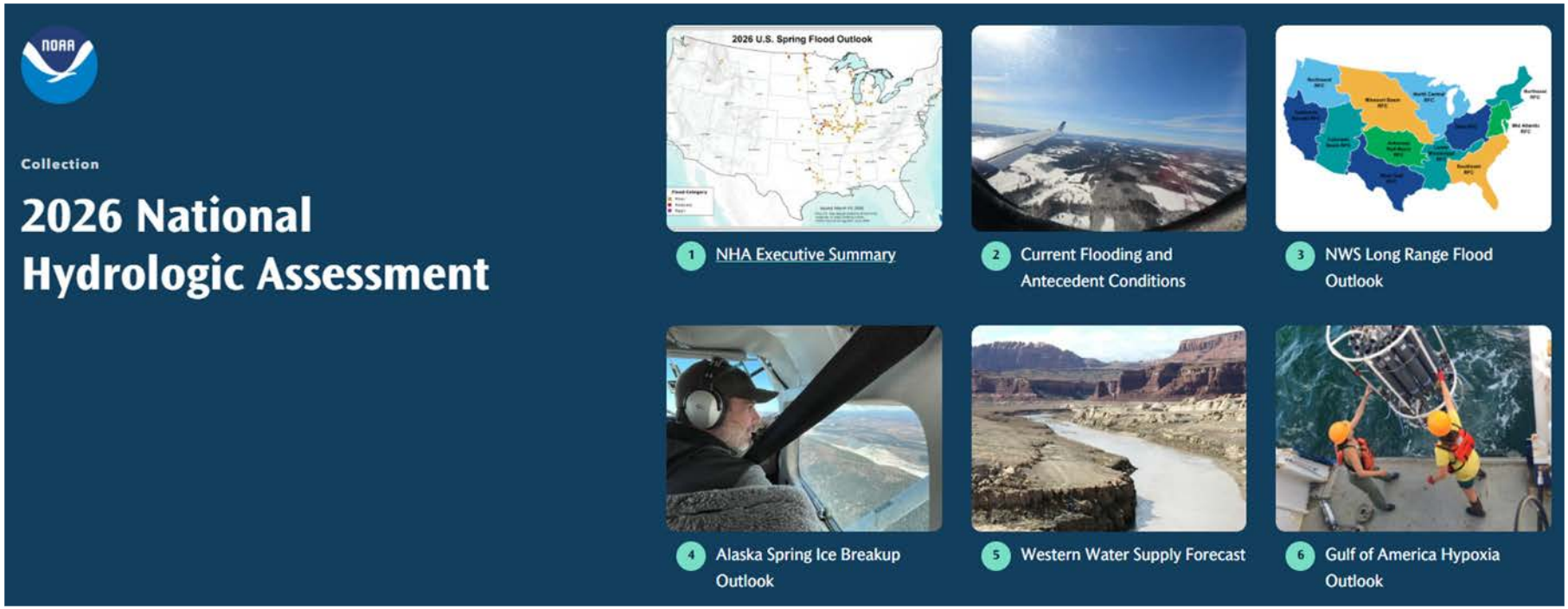


Example:
https://water.noaa.gov/gauges/HARP1

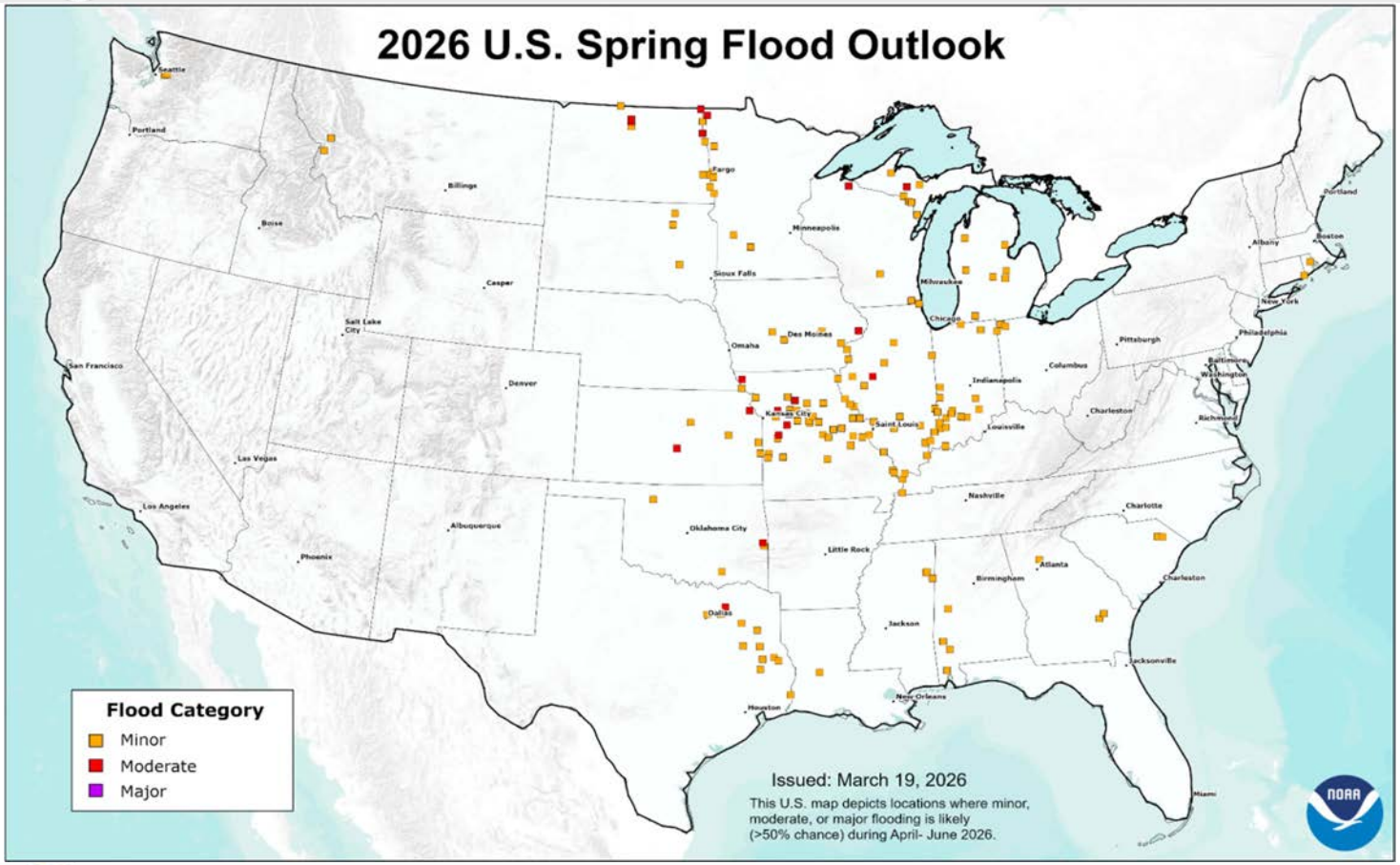
2026 National Hydrologic Assessment

Released Mar 19, 2026

https://storymaps.arcgis.com/collections/de248c5b879a45609ba0e4457cc336f8



2026 National Hydrologic Assessment

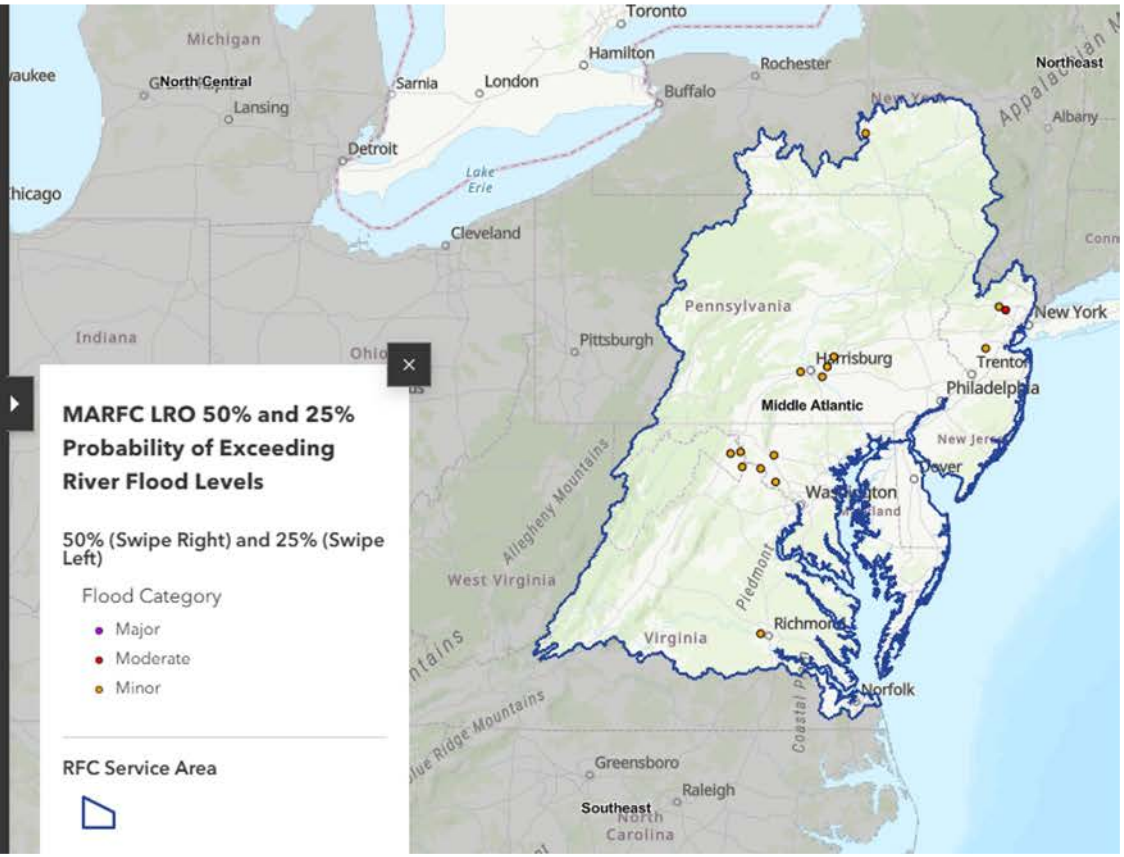


- This U.S. map depicts locations where minor, moderate, or major flooding is likely **(>50% chance)** during April-June 2026.

Long Range Flood Outlook: Mid-Atlantic

Mid-Atlantic

- Minor to isolated moderate flooding is possible into mid-March for portions of southern New York and northern New Jersey as any rainfall may combine with any diminishing snowpack that remains across the region.
- By the end of March, little to no snowpack is expected to remain across the Mid-Atlantic region which will reduce the potential for any river flooding caused by spring snowmelt.
- Dry conditions over the region will help reduce the potential flooding for the remainder of the spring, however heavy rainfall at any time can lead to flooding.



Long Range Flood Outlook: Northeast

Northeast

- Isolated minor flooding is possible through the remainder of March for portions of New York, Vermont, and southern New England.
- After mid-March, the existing snowpack will have melted off. This will end the snowmelt related flood risk moving into the spring.
- Spring flooding in the Northeast is usually driven by a combination of rainfall, snowmelt, and ice jamming on rivers.

Summary

Key Messages

➔ Recent active weather pattern is likely to continue, but the Northeast/Mid-Atlantic region is still experiencing longer-term precipitation deficits.

➔ Average to below average river flood risk this Spring for our area.

Harmful Algae Blooms

What are HABs?

- Occur when algae (simple photosynthetic organisms that live in sea & freshwater) grow out of control while producing toxic or harmful effects on people, fish, shellfish, marine mammals, and birds.

- Blooms of toxic dinoflagellates
  - Dinoflagellates - microscopic algae
    - Existed before dinosaurs
  - Types common to the Northeast:
    - **Alexandrium Catenella**
    - Margalefidinium polykrikoides
    - Pseudo-nitzschia

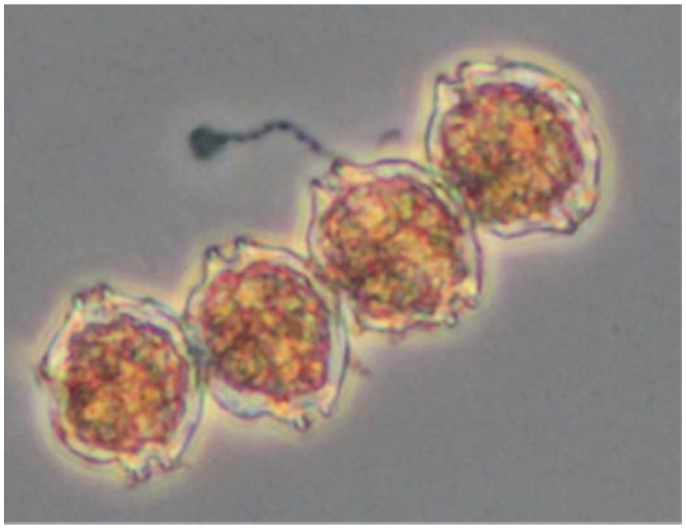


Photo credit: Brian Bill, NOAA

- Also referred to as Red Tides:
  - Most blooms are luminescent
  - Rarely will a bloom be so concentrated that it produces a “redish” appearance.

Harmful Algae Blooms

What are HABs Continued…

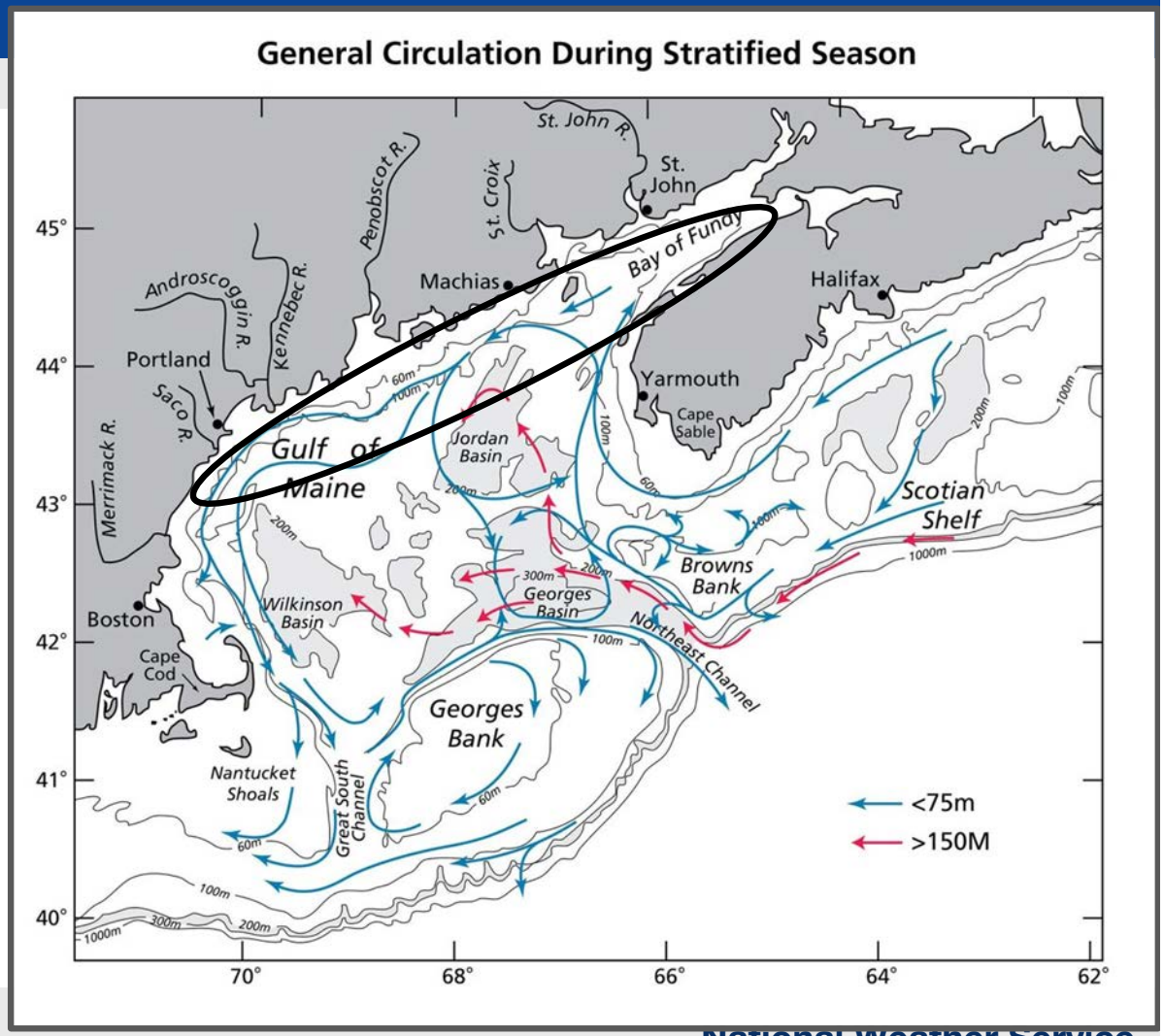
- Non-vegetative periods
  - Become encapsulated - “cyst stage”
  - Can be dormant on the ocean floor for several years
  - Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution (WHOI) maps cysts each fall to estimate the potential bloom magnitude next spring

- During germination - become re-suspended
  - Grow depending on water temperature and chemistry
  - Driven by oceanic processes which control concentration of dissolved inorganic nitrogen and silicate

- Where does NERFC fit in here?
  - Growth/spread driven by rivers emptying into the Gulf of Maine and surface winds - east/northeast wind favors a transport from eastern Maine to the MA coastline

Coastal Currents

- Transport mechanism down the coast is the coastal current
- Typically, the current splits in early spring where ⅔ of current goes east and ⅓ moves down the coast
- Illustration on right by Jack Cook, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution



What do they cause?

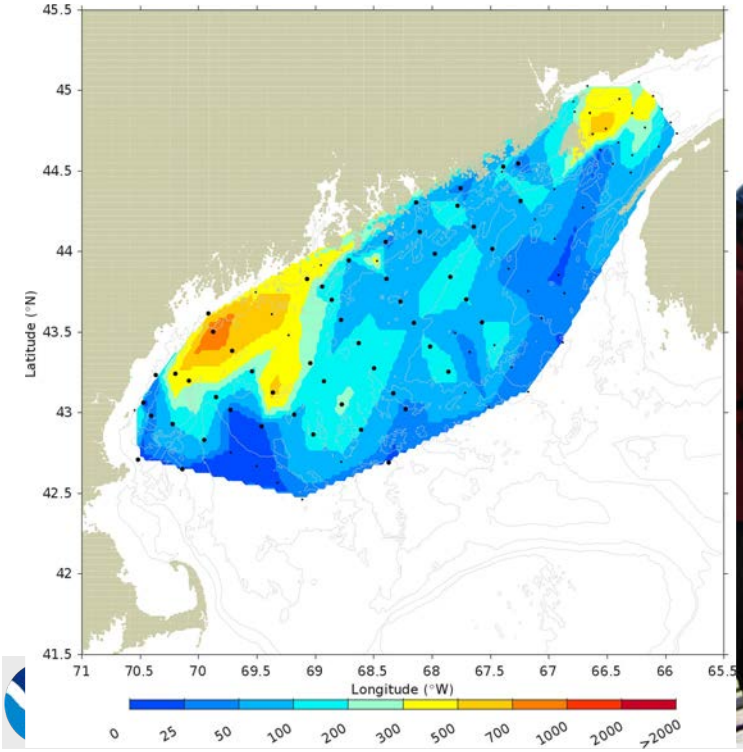
- Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning - PSP
  - Shellfish digest the algae
  - Biotoxin is retained in the shellfish tissue
  - Human consumption of toxic tissue can result in serious illness or death

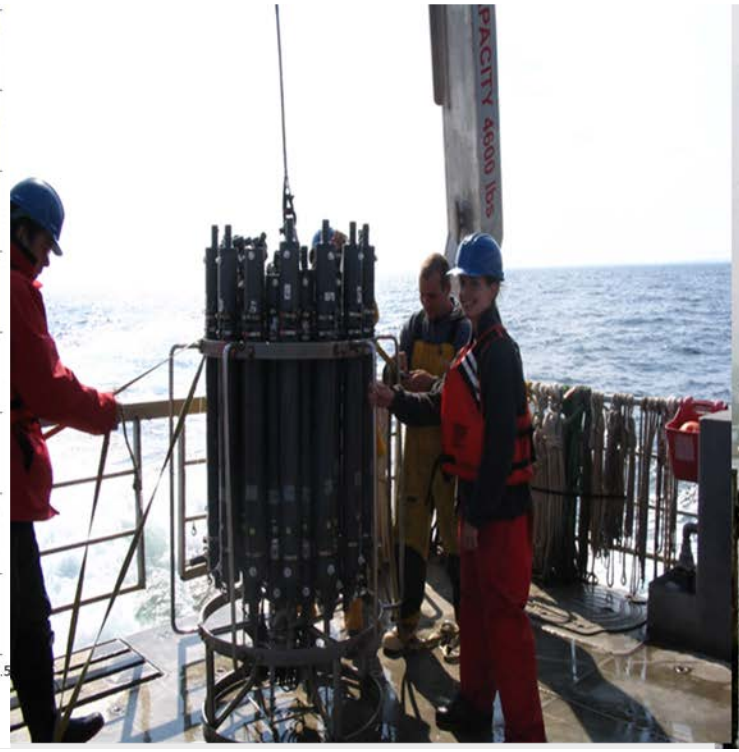
- Shellfish types include:
  - Blue mussels, carnivorous snails, conch, ocean quahogs, razor clams, sea scallops, soft shell clams, surf clams and moon snails

Monitoring & Detection

- States do shellfish sampling
- WHOI does offshore measuring

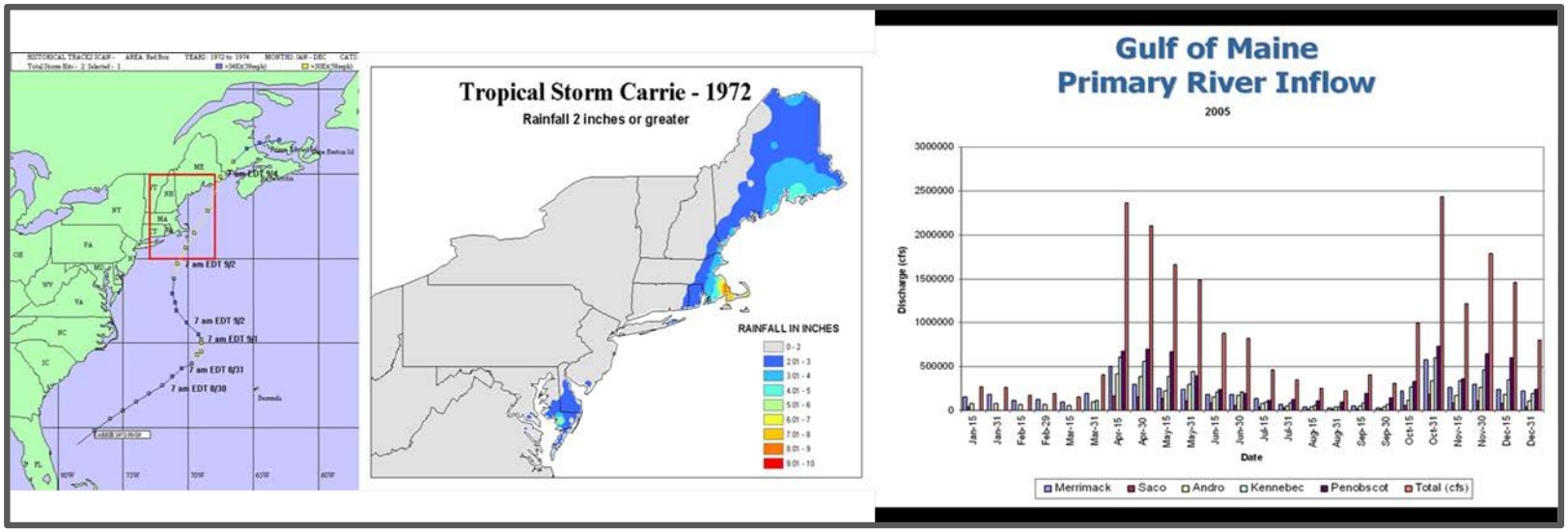
Abundance for top 1 cm sediment layer in Oct 2024





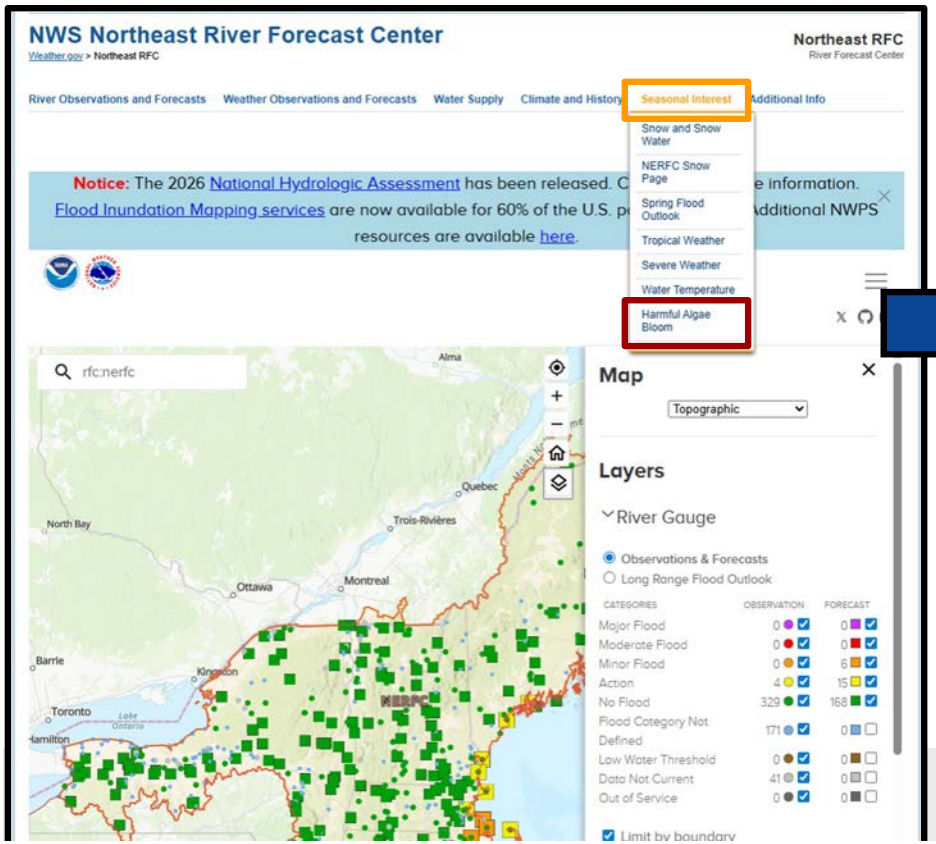
Where NERFC fits in…

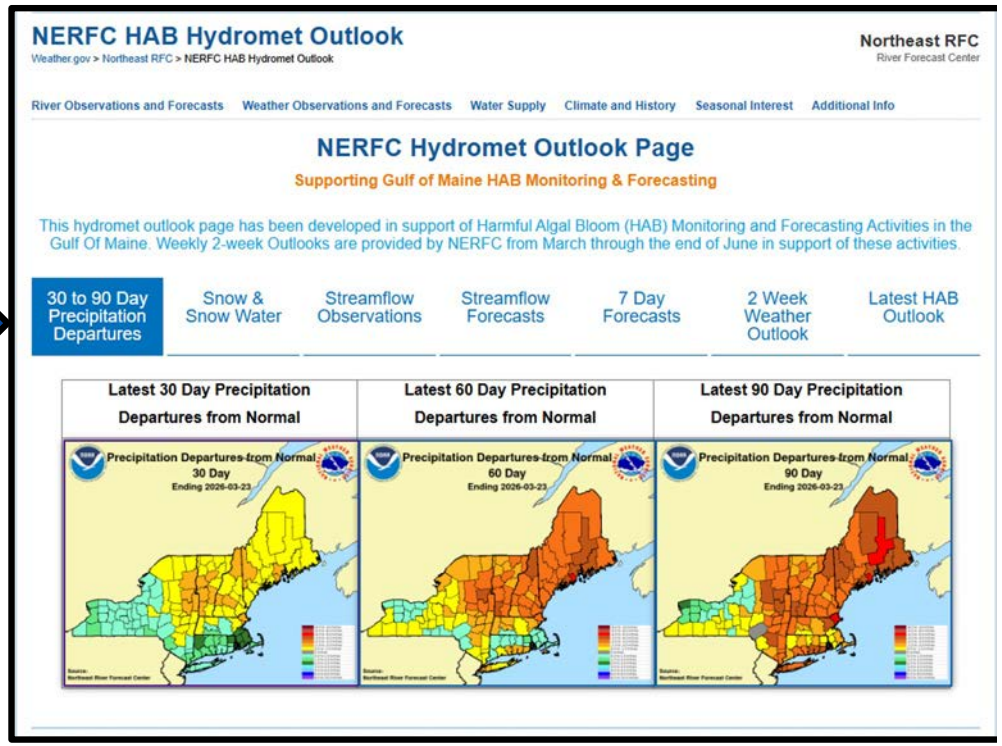
- Weather and Water Connection
  - 1972 - Heavy rains associated with Tropical Storm Carrie and her slow movement induced strong northeast winds
  - 2005 - Significant freshwater inflow during May rain/Maine snowmelt - accompanied by consecutive nor'easters



Where NERFC fits in continued….

- Go to:
  - weather.gov/nerfc -> Seasonal Interest -> Harmful Algae Bloom

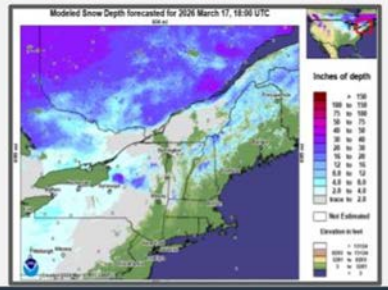


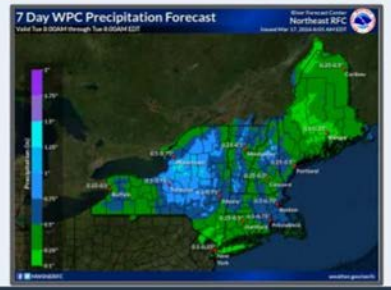


HAB Outlook

- NERFC creates a briefing every Tuesday in March through June.
- Situational Awareness briefing provides analysis on hydro-meteorological antecedent conditions and a 5 to 10 Day Outlook.
- Focus is for targeted monitoring in anticipation of hydromet conditions conducive to bloom productivity and movement toward the shoreline.

March 17, 2026	Hydromet Outlook — Northeast River Forecast Center
ACTIVE WEATHER PATTERN WITH LIMITED OPPORTUNITIES FOR EAST TO NORTHEAST WINDS INTO MID NEXT WEEK	
STREAMFLOWS	▪ River flows into the Gulf of ME are near to much above normal.
SNOW WATER	▪ Snowpack largely eroded following recent rainfall. ▪ Where snowpack exists, water content is below normal. ▪ Only locations where there is significant snow water (6"+) are across the White Mountains in NH & ME. ▪ Snowpack is ripe from central to northeast ME. ▪ Could add to the snowpack of the higher terrain before next outlook.
PRECIPITATION DEPARTURES	▪ Over the last 30 days precipitation is roughly near to 3 inches lower than normal.
SYNOPTIC OVERVIEW	▪ Active pattern with rain opportunities for southeastern half of ME this weekend of 0.10-0.50". Generally snow across the NW portions of ME. ▪ Below normal temperatures into and through next week. ▪ Any opportunities for E to NE flow are limited and less 12 hrs over the next 10 days.
NEXT BRIEFING	▪ March 24, 2026



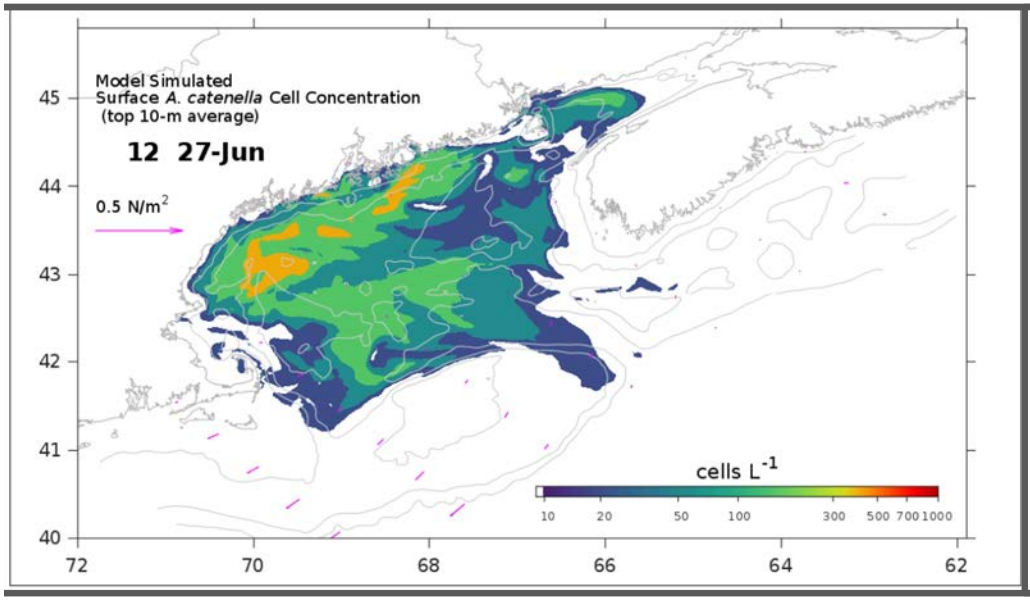


ISSUED: 03/17/2026 3:19 PM 03/17/2026 3:19 PM

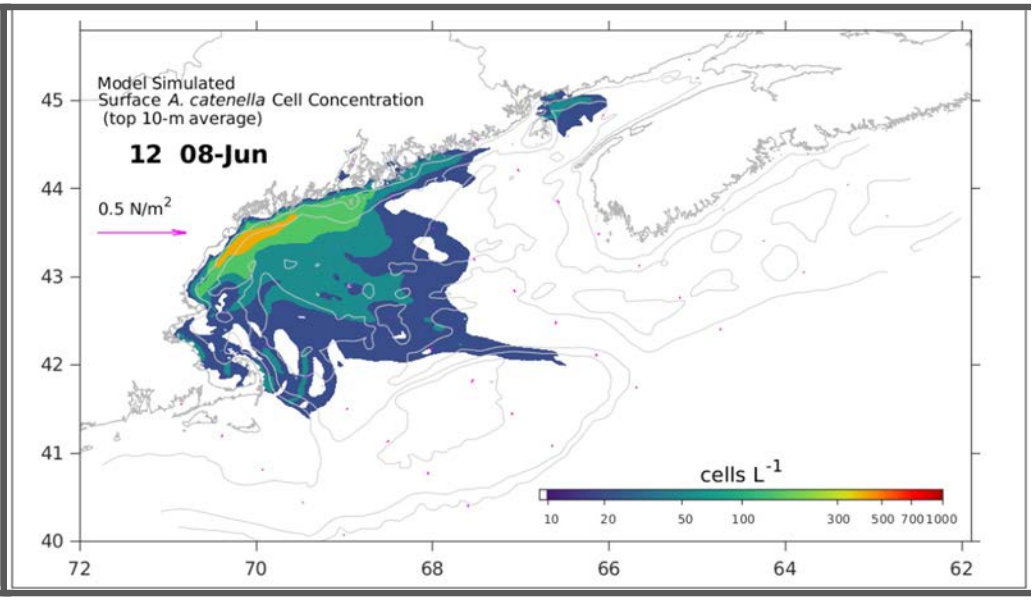
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce

Model Scenarios

Model Simulation from 2025



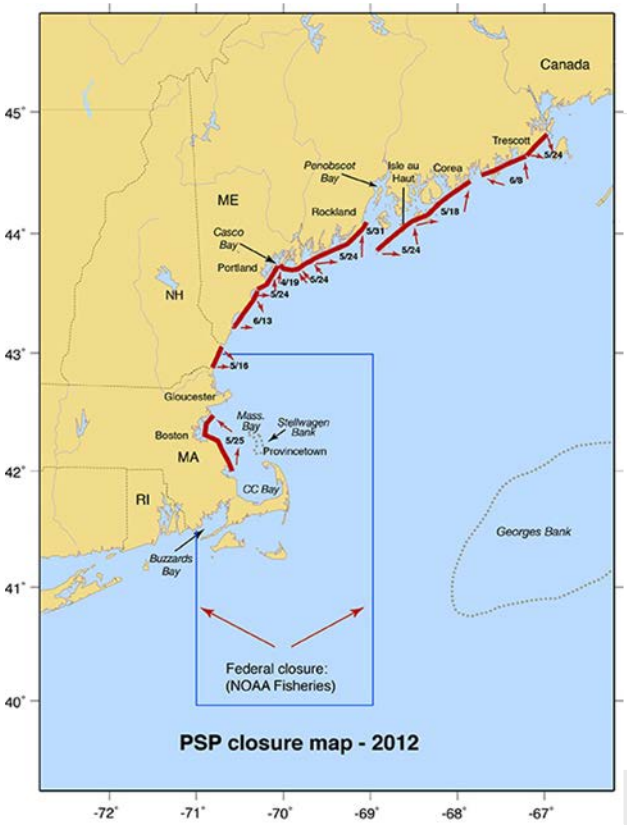
Model Simulation from 2023

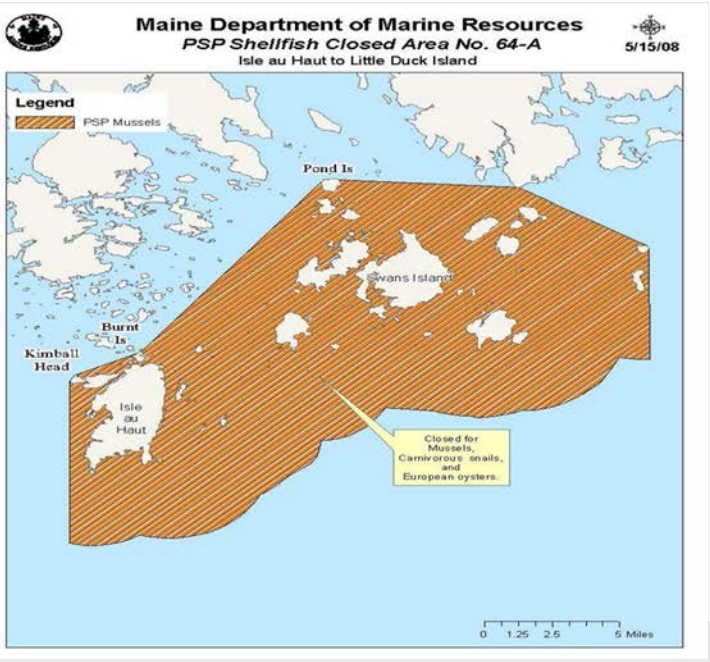


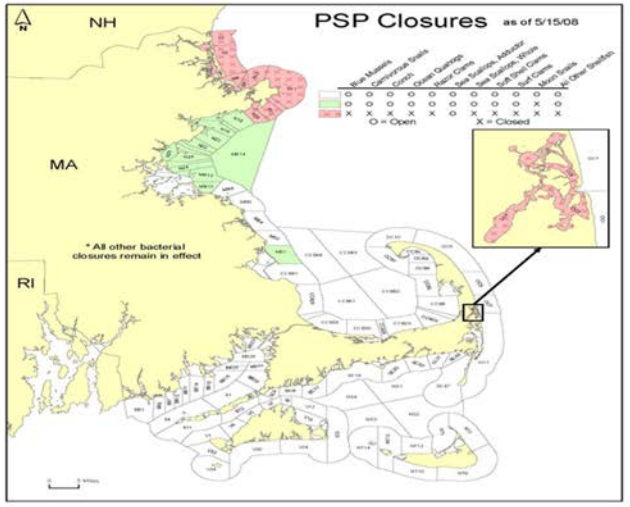
Experimental GOM Nowcast/Forecast Simulations
from National Centers For Coastal Ocean Science (NCCOS):
https://coastalscience.noaa.gov/science-areas/habs/hab-forecasts/gulf-of-maine/nowcast-forecast-simulation/

HAB Notifications

- State level closures nearshore
- Federal closures offshore







Summary

Key Messages

- ➔ HAB Outlook produced by NERFC on Tuesdays March through June to aid in situational awareness for factors that are conducive for bloom productivity
  - ◆ Increased runoff into the Gulf of Maine and prolonged periods of east to northeast winds

- ➔ National Centers For Coastal Ocean Science (NCCOS) produce surface cell concentration model for A. Cantenella.

- ➔ HABs can cause toxic or harmful effects on people, fish, shellfish, marine mammals, and birds