Northwest Florida Water Management District

Hydrologic Conditions Report

December 2025

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Northwest Florida Water Management District

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Summary

December 2025 was characterized by near-normal precipitation and near-normal temperatures (averaging around 54.9 degrees Fahrenheit). An ongoing cumulative rainfall deficit is causing continued below-normal hydrologic conditions across most of the Panhandle. Drought conditions improved slightly in December 2025, but rainfall was not enough to return hydrologic conditions to normal.

Rainfall

December 2025, an average of 5.02 inches of rain was recorded across the Panhandle . This amount was 0.39 inches (8.1%) above the District normal rainfall for the month of December, which is 4.63 inches (**Table 1; Figures 1 – 7**). This was the first time the District received near-normal rainfall since August 2025. Normal rainfall is defined as average monthly rainfall for the 1991-2020 30-year reference period. The total rainfall for the 2025 calendar year (January 1, 2025 – December 31, 2025) was 54.75 inches. This was 7.45 inches (12.7%) below the normal annual rainfall for the District, which is 62.20 inches.

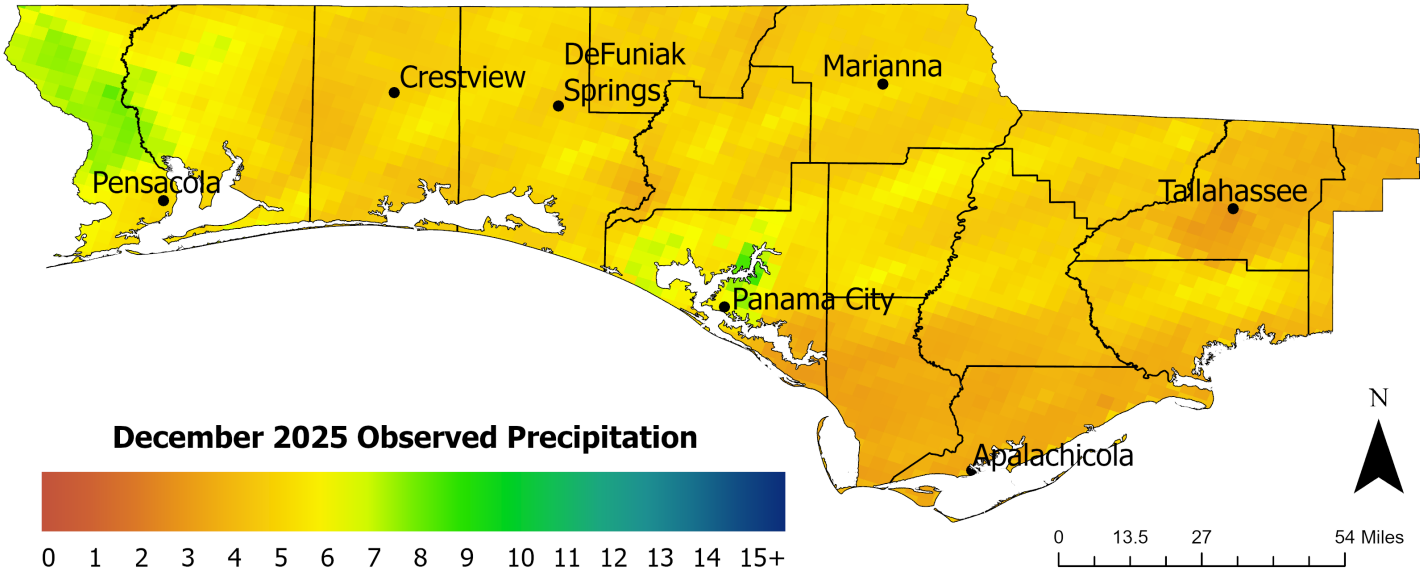
All rainfall received in the Panhandle during December 2025 was as a result of frontal systems. The most significant rain event occurred December 4 - 8, 2025, caused by a frontal boundary that stalled over the District for several days. This system produced the majority of the observed rainfall for the month including 2.10 inches at the Tallahassee Regional Airport, 2.63 inches at the Marianna Municipal Airport, 4.16 inches in Niceville, and 3.28 inches at the Pensacola Regional Airport (**Table 1**).

Table 1: December 2025 rainfall compared to 30-year normal monthly rainfall for Tallahassee, Marianna, Niceville, and Pensacola

Station	December Normal Rainfall (1991 to 2020)	December 2025 Observed Rainfall	Percent Difference
Tallahassee Regional Airport	4.24	3.45	-21%
Marianna Regional Airport	4.81	4.38	-9.4%
Niceville, FL	5.68	5.84	2.8%
Pensacola Regional Airport	5.40	5.21	-3.6%

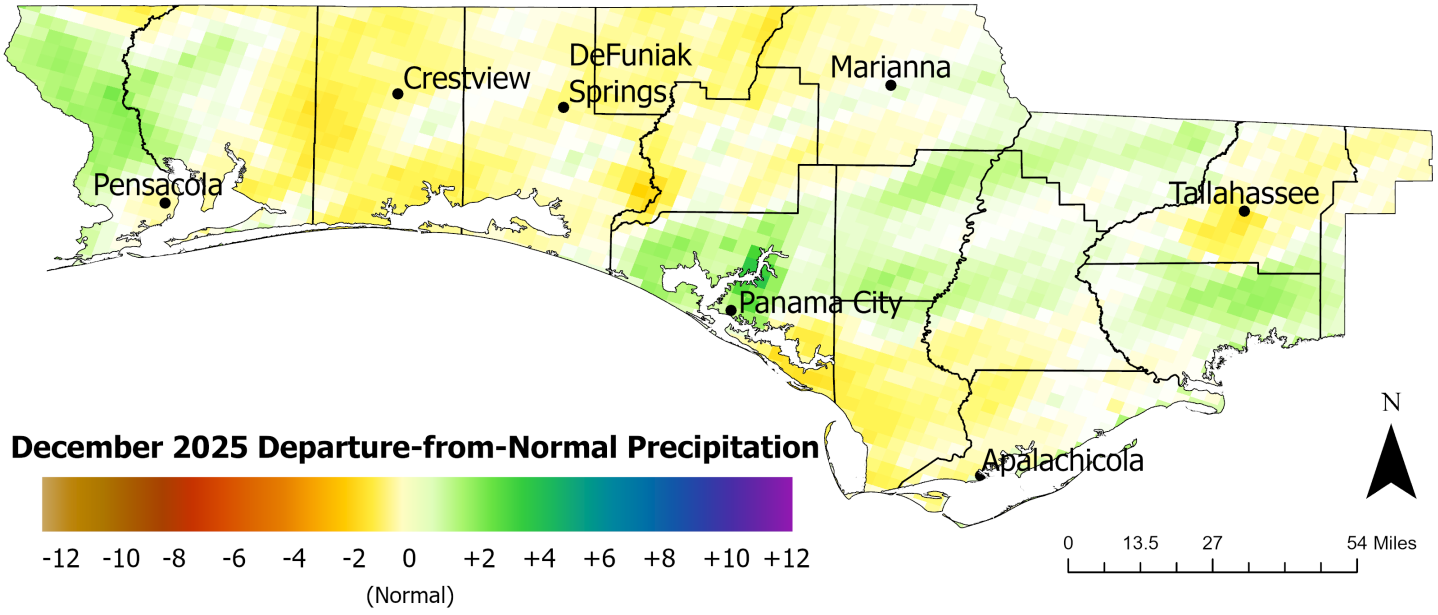
Source: https://www.weather.gov/wrh/Climate?wfo=tae
https://www.weather.gov/wrh/Climate?wfo=mob

Figure 1: District-wide December 2025 observed rainfall



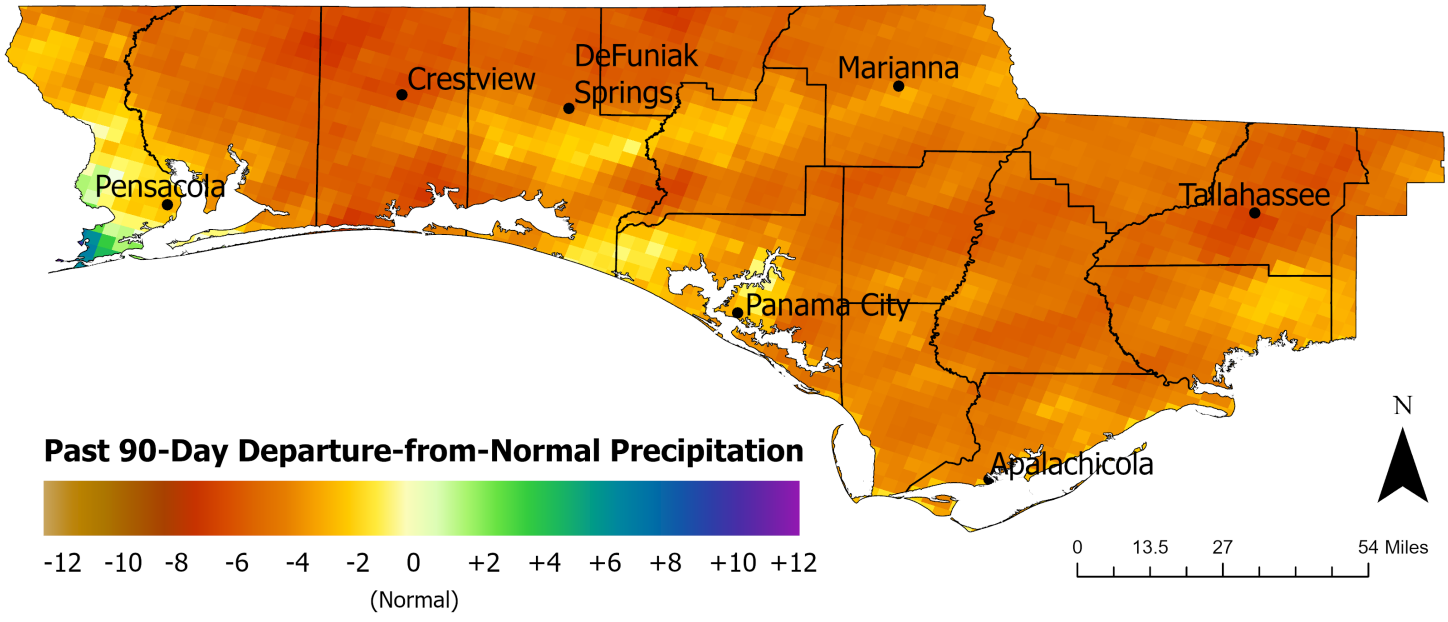
Source: *https://water.noaa.gov/resources/downloads/precip/stageIV/*

Figure 2: District-wide December 2025 precipitation departure from normal



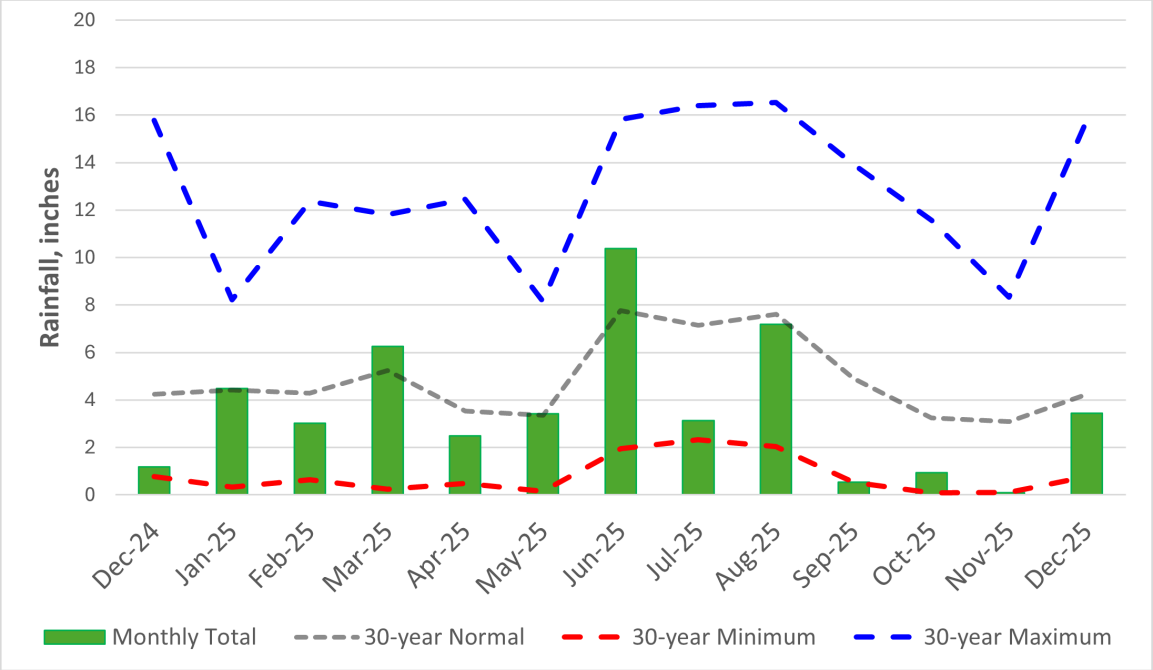
Source: *https://water.noaa.gov/resources/downloads/precip/stageIV/*

Figure 3: District-wide precipitation departure from normal for the previous 90 days



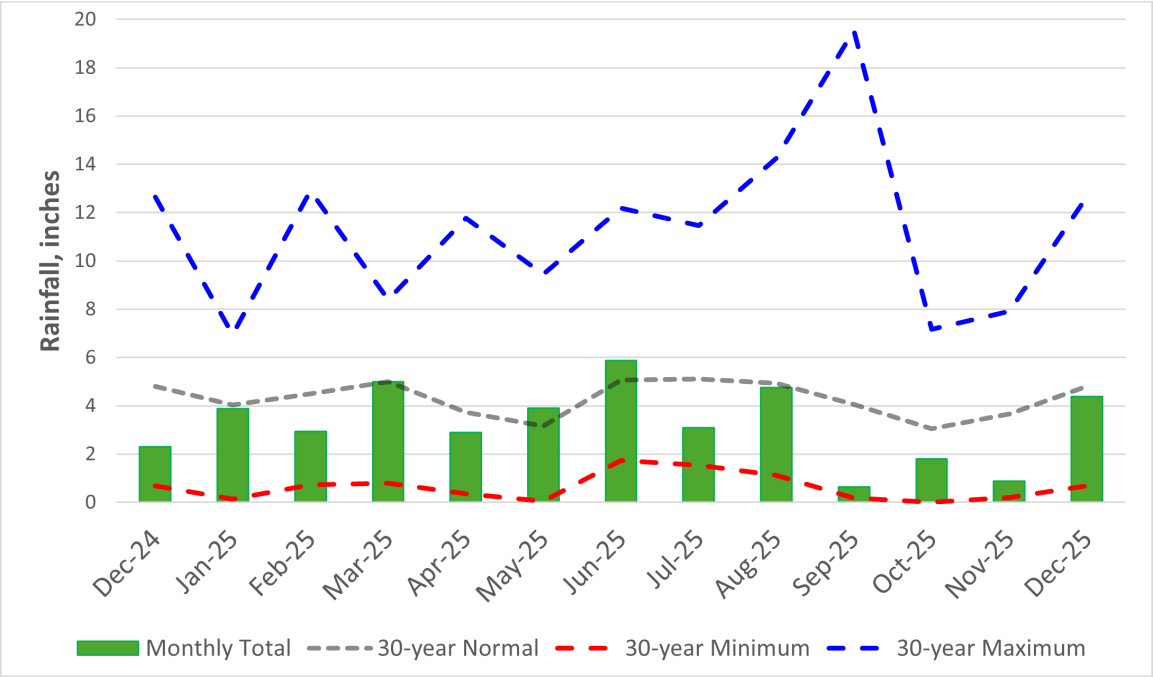
Source: *https://water.noaa.gov/resources/downloads/precip/stageIV/*

Figure 4: Observed rainfall at Tallahassee Regional Airport for the past 13 months compared to the 30-year normal, minimum, and maximum precipitation for each month



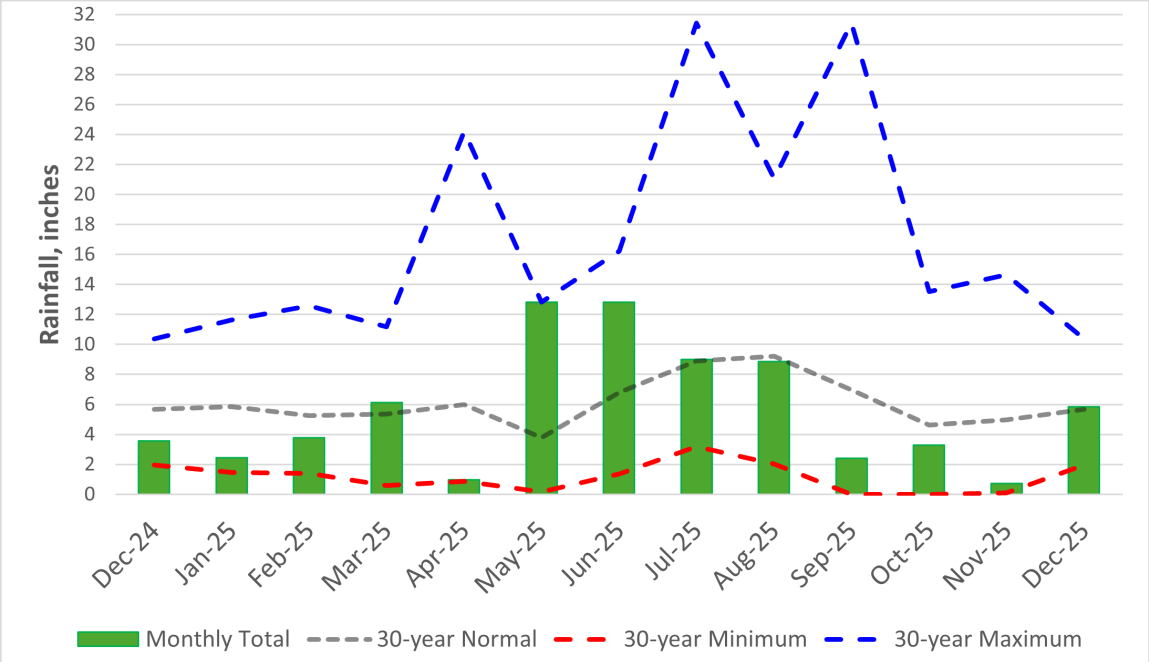
Source: https://www.weather.gov/wrh/Climate?wfo=tae

Figure 5: Observed rainfall at Marianna Regional Airport for the past 13 months compared to the 30-year normal, minimum, and maximum precipitation for each month



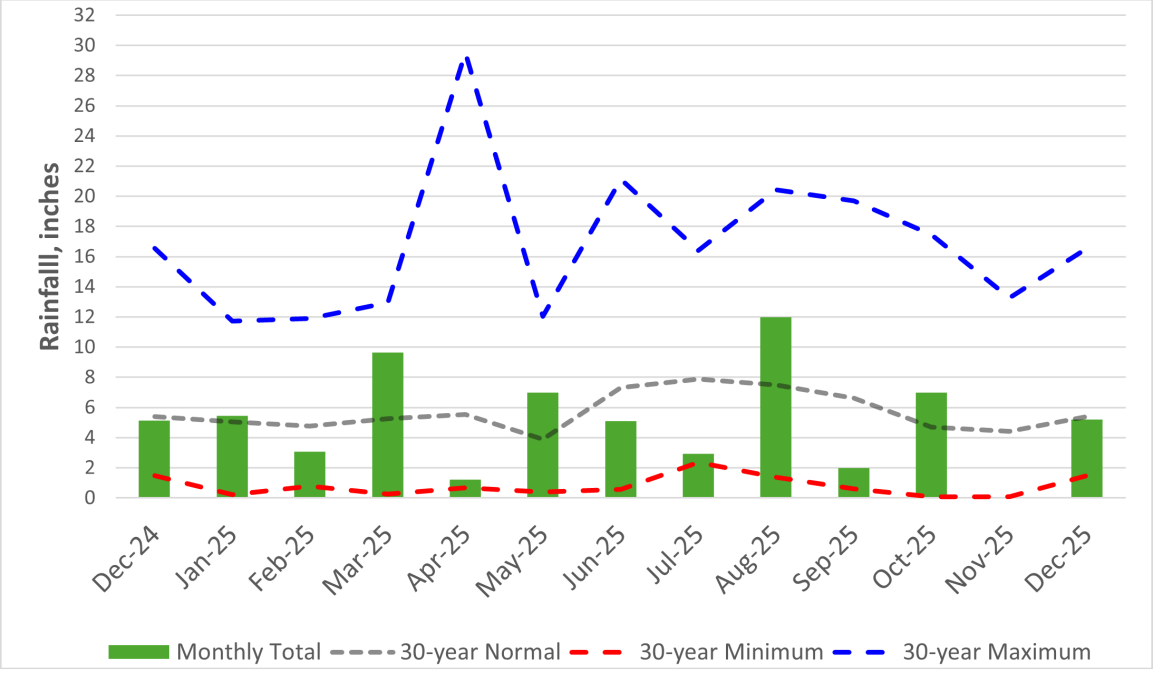
Source: https://www.weather.gov/wrh/Climate?wfo=tae

Figure 6: Observed rainfall in Niceville for the past 13 months compared to the 30-year normal, minimum, and maximum precipitation for each month



Source: https://www.weather.gov/wrh/Climate?wfo=mob

Figure 7: Observed rainfall at Pensacola Regional Airport for the past 13 months compared to the 30-year normal, minimum, and maximum precipitation for each month



Source: https://www.weather.gov/wrh/Climate?wfo=mob

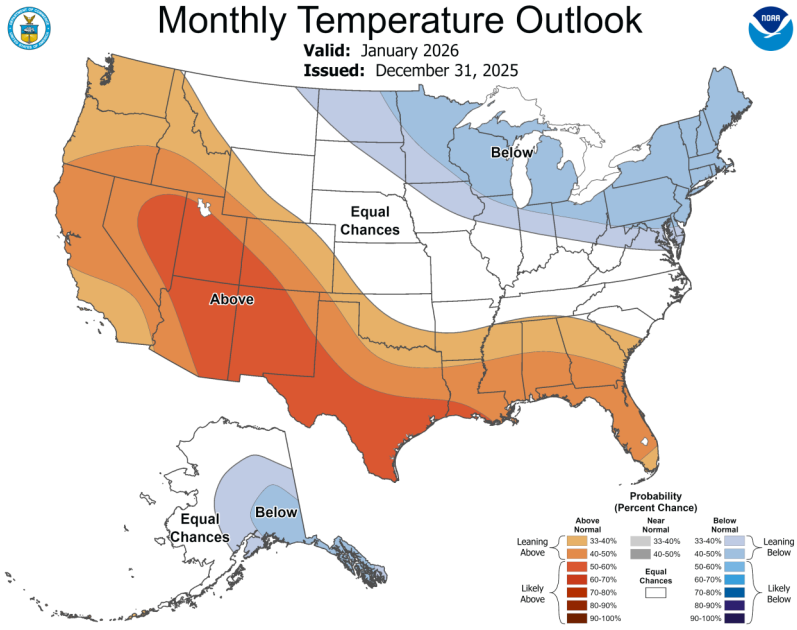
Climate Outlook

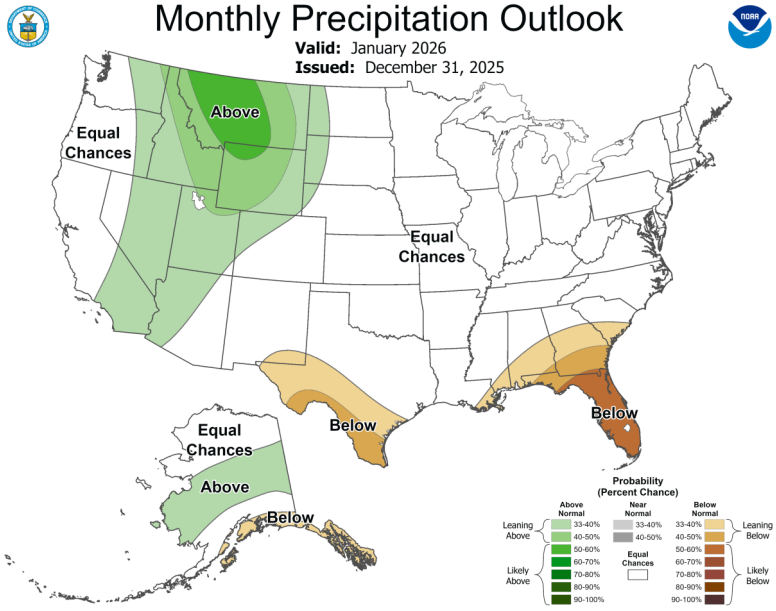
According to NOAA's Climate Prediction Center, the forecast issued December 31, 2025, for January 2025 showed a slight chance for above-normal temperatures and a slight chance of below-normal rainfall in the District (Figure 8).

As of January 5, 2025, La Niña conditions were present and favored to persist through the Northern Hemisphere winter. La Niña conditions typically lead to warmer temperatures and below-normal precipitation during winter in Northern Florida. A transition to ENSO-neutral conditions was forecast to occur sometime between January and March 2026 (68% chance).

Source: https://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/predictions/30day/
https://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/analysis_monitoring/lanina/enso_evolution-status-fcsts-web.pdf

Figure 8: January 2026 Temperature and Precipitation Outlooks for the United States



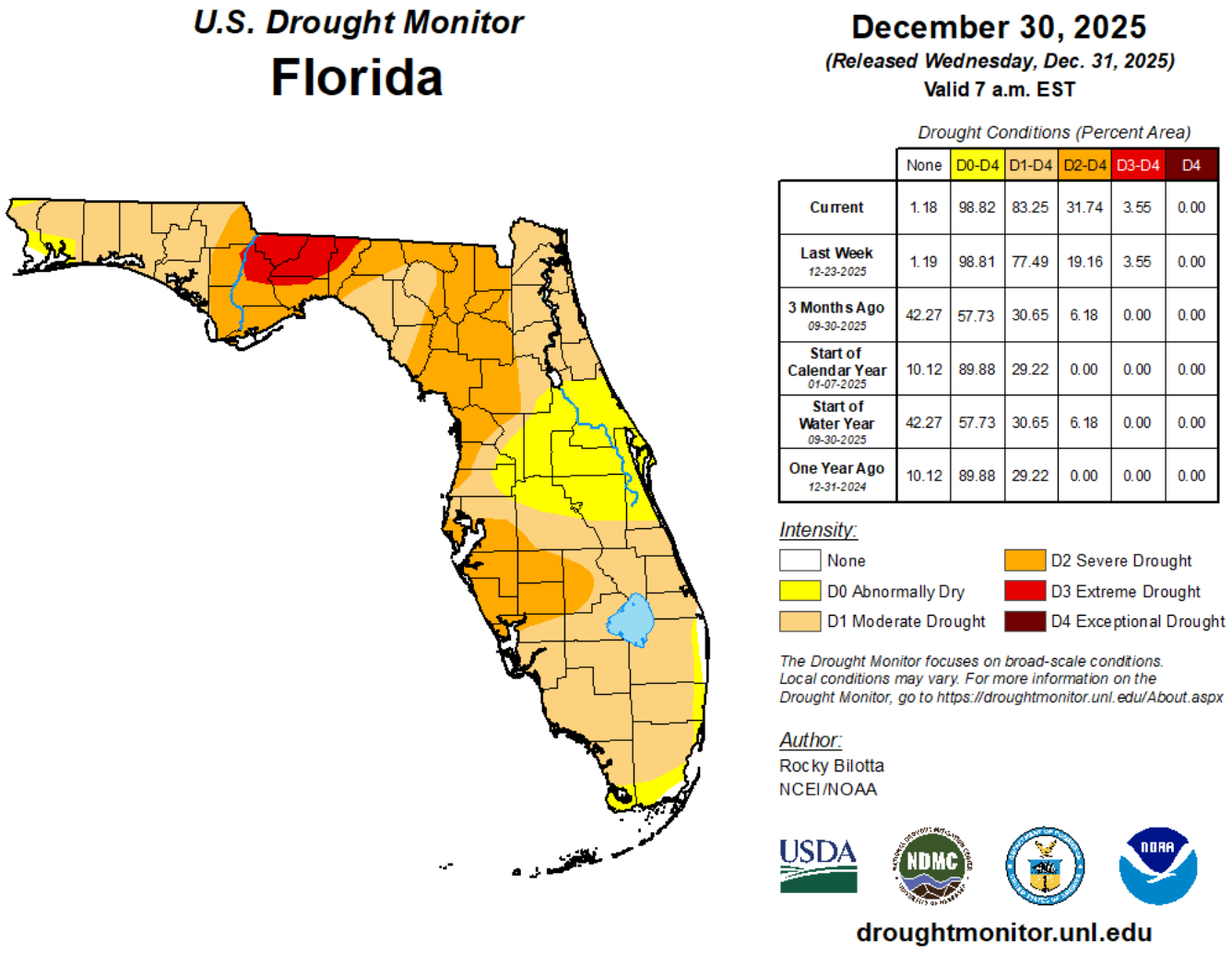


Drought Conditions

The U.S. Drought Monitor report released for December 30, 2025, showed most of the District under at least abnormally dry conditions with the majority of the Panhandle under moderate, severe, or extreme drought conditions (Figure 9). Though the District received near-normal precipitation in December 2025 (Figure 2), the rainfall was not enough to completely reverse the severe rainfall deficit that was built between September and November 2025 throughout the Panhandle. The only area in the District that was not under any drought conditions is southern Escambia County, which received above-normal rainfall in the past 90 days (Figure 3).

According to the U.S. Monthly Drought Outlook for December 2025, existing drought conditions are expected to persist. This is likely as a result of the slight chances for above-normal temperatures and below-normal rainfall according to the Climate Prediction Center's outlooks for January 2026 (Figure 8).

Figure 9: Florida Drought Conditions on December 30, 2025



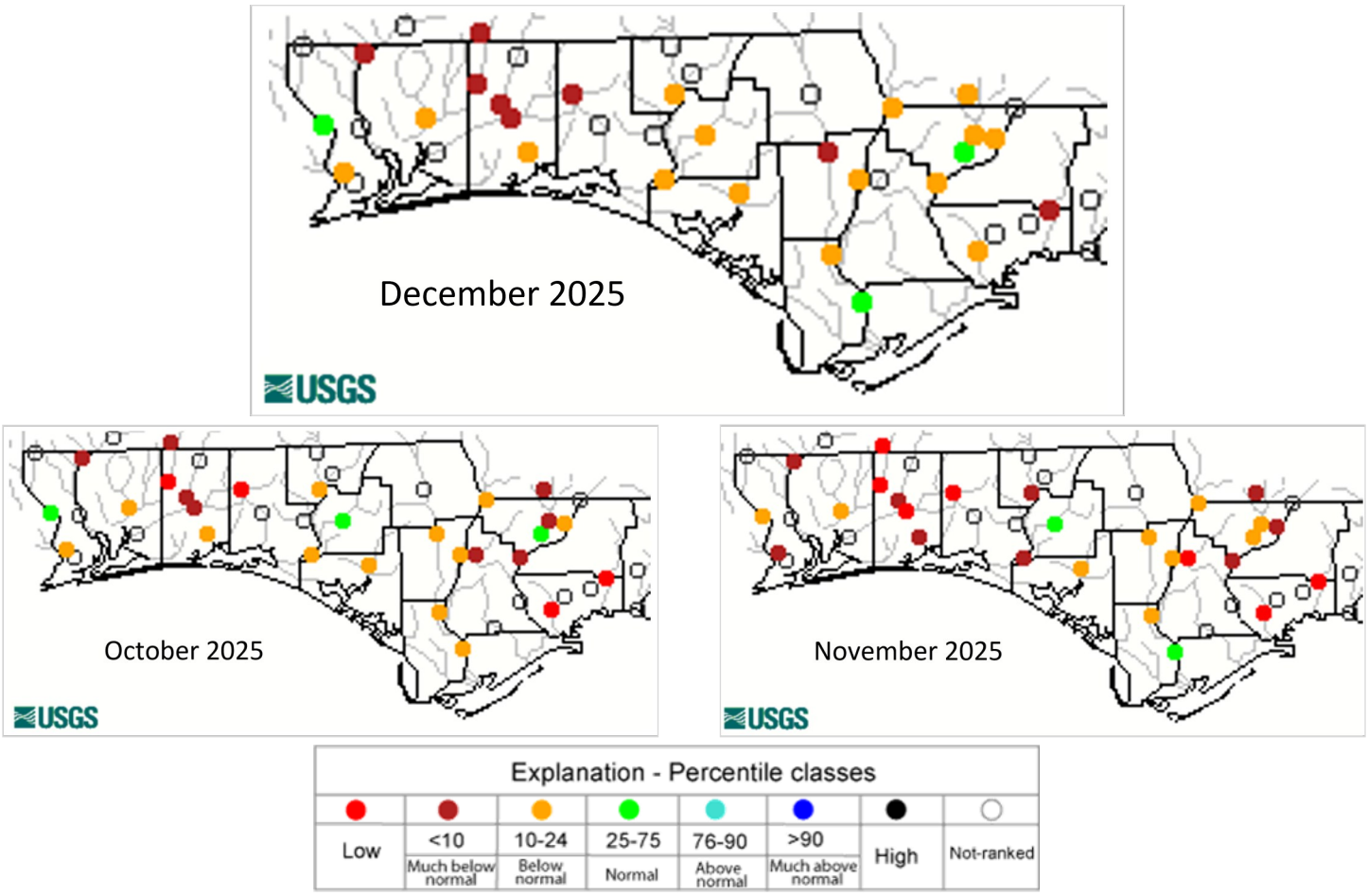
Source: https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/CurrentMap/StateDroughtMonitor.aspx?FL

Surface Water

Streamflows. During December 2025, two streamflow stations in the District recorded flows on average within normal ranges, 11 streamflow stations recorded below-normal flows, and 7 stations recorded much-below-normal flows (**Figures 10 – 16**). Stations along the Apalachicola River were not included in the analysis because its flows are more indicative of conditions in Georgia and Alabama due to it being dam-controlled at its headwaters.

Although a majority of streamflow stations were still classified as below normal or much below normal, this was an improvement from the previous two months in that there were zero stations that recorded flows that were classified as low for the month. This slight improvement came because of the slightly above-normal rainfall that was received during December 2025 but was not enough to bring most streamflow sites back to normal flows. All streamflow stations with depicted time-series plots recorded increased flow during and immediately after the significant rain event from December 4 - 8, 2025, before flows began to decline again (**Figures 11 – 16**).

Figure 10: Northwest Florida October 2025 to December 2025 monthly streamflow percentiles



Source: http://waterwatch.usgs.gov/index.php

Figure 11: Daily streamflows and percentile ranges for USGS station 02326900 St. Marks River Near Newport, Florida

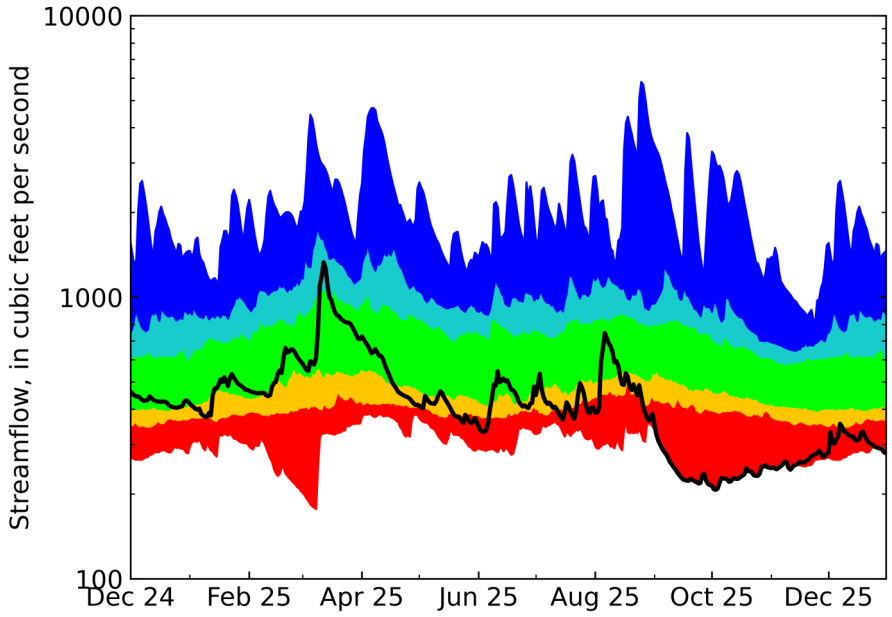


Figure 12: Daily streamflows and percentile ranges for USGS Station 02329000 Ochlockonee River Near Havana, Florida

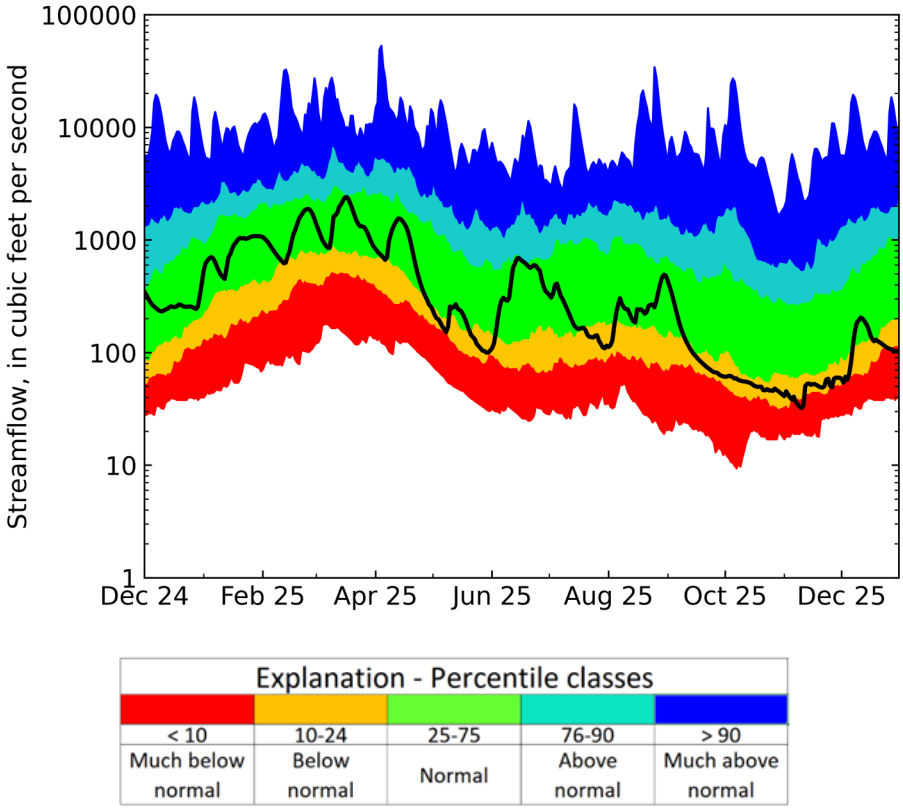


Figure 13: Daily streamflows and percentile ranges for USGS Station 02358700 Apalachicola River Near Blountstown, Florida

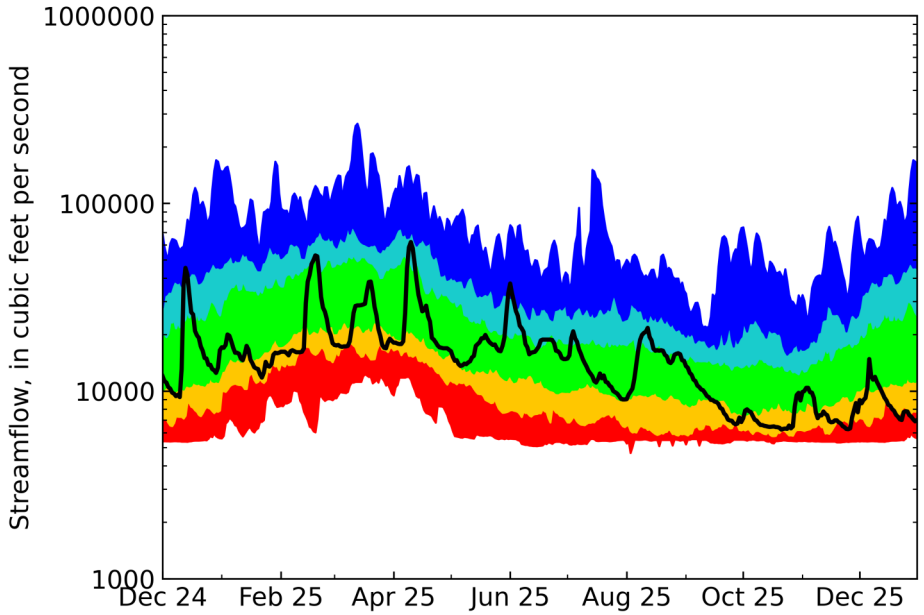
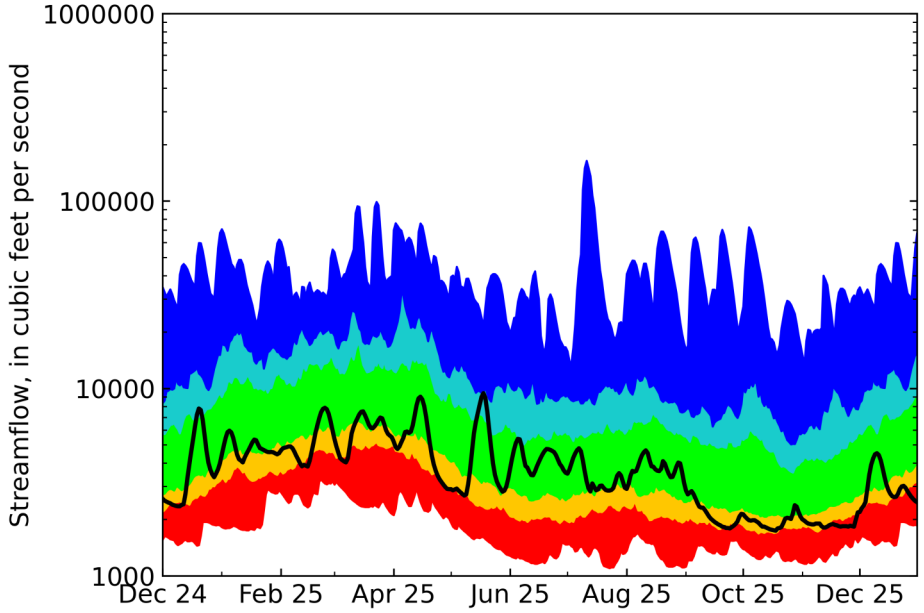


Figure 14: Daily streamflows and percentile ranges for USGS Station 02366500 Choctawhatchee River Near Bruce, Florida



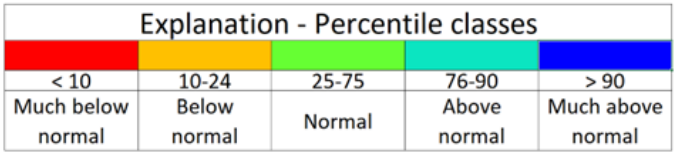


Figure 15: Daily streamflows and percentile ranges for USGS Station 02370000 Blackwater River Near Baker, Florida

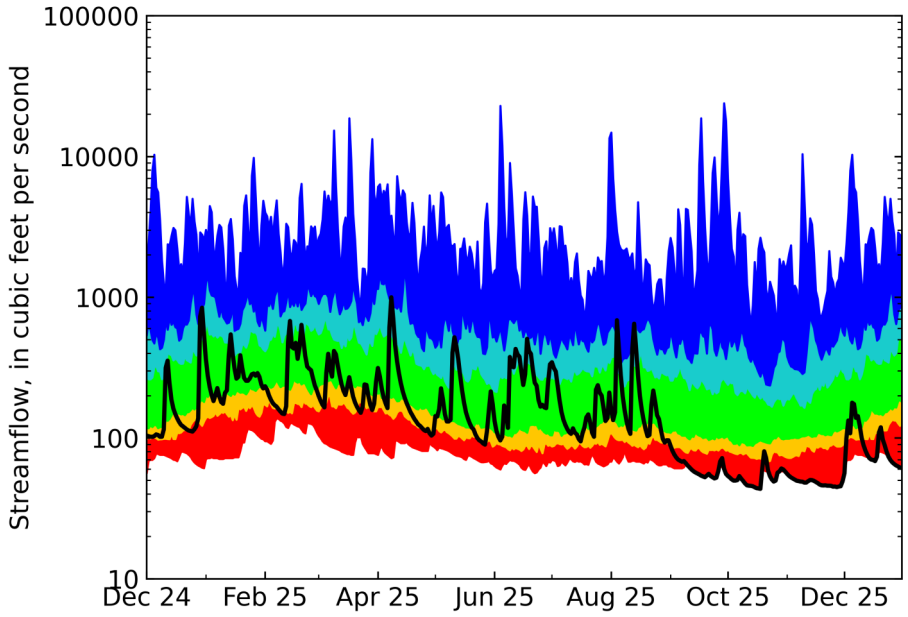
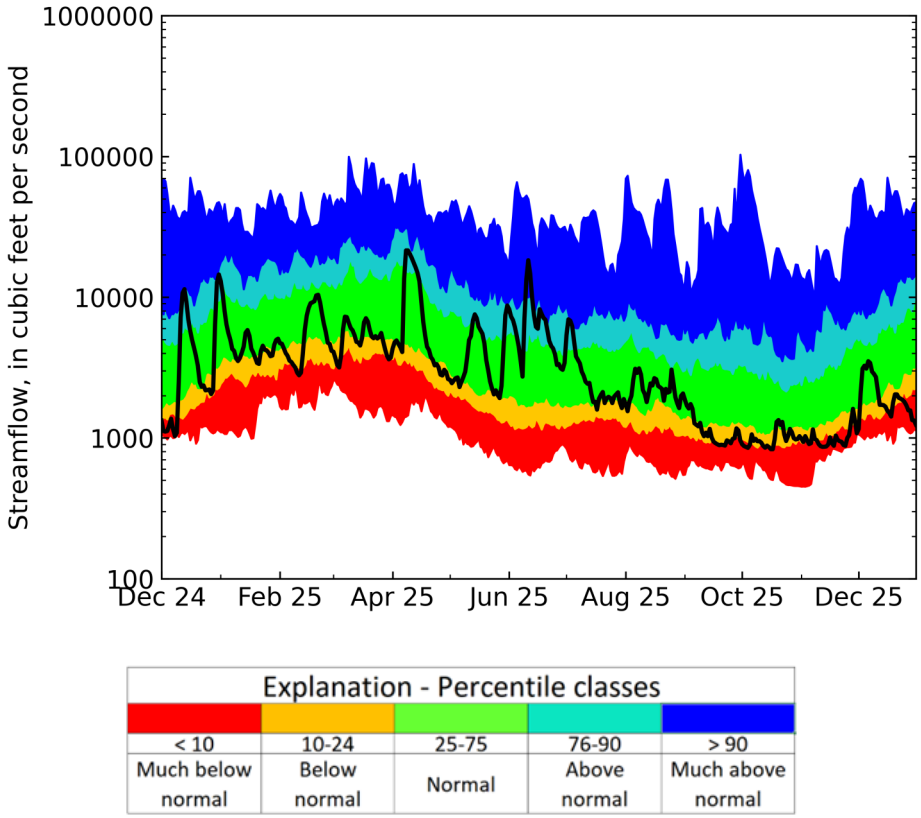
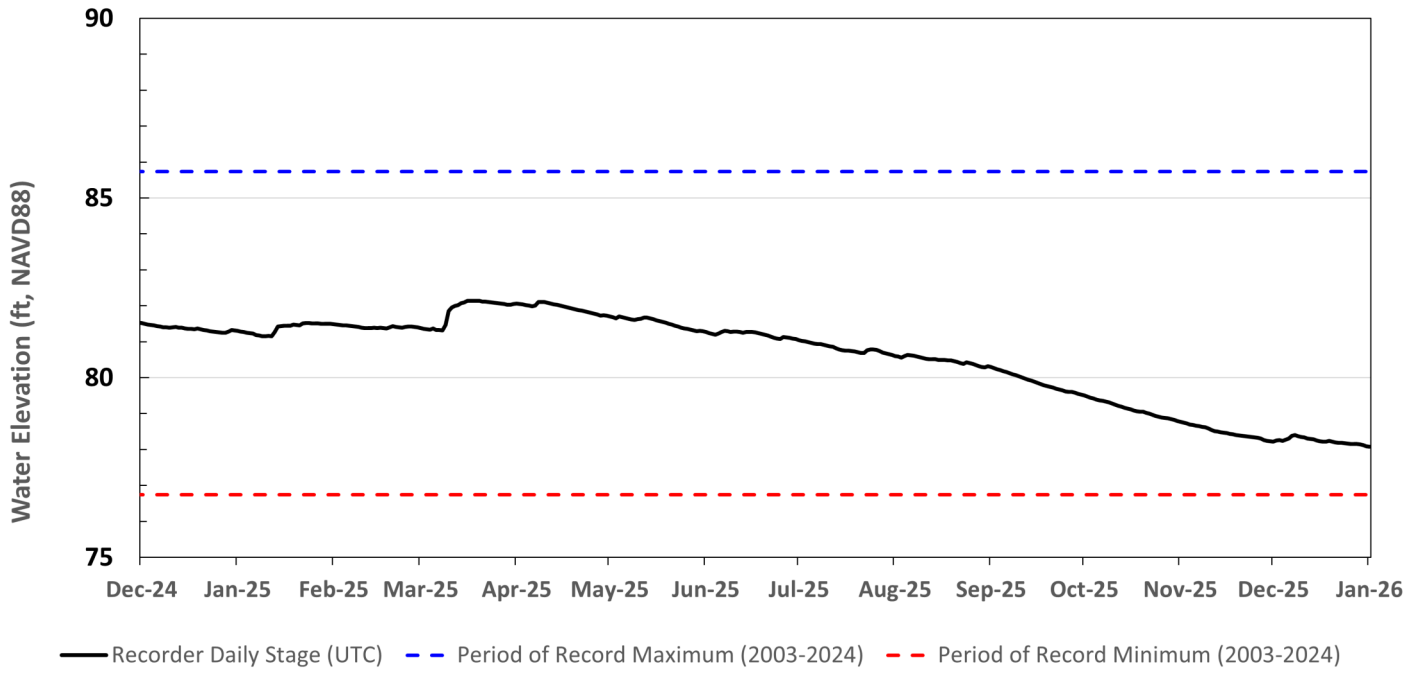


Figure 16: Daily streamflows and percentile ranges for USGS Station 02375500 Escambia River Near Century, Florida



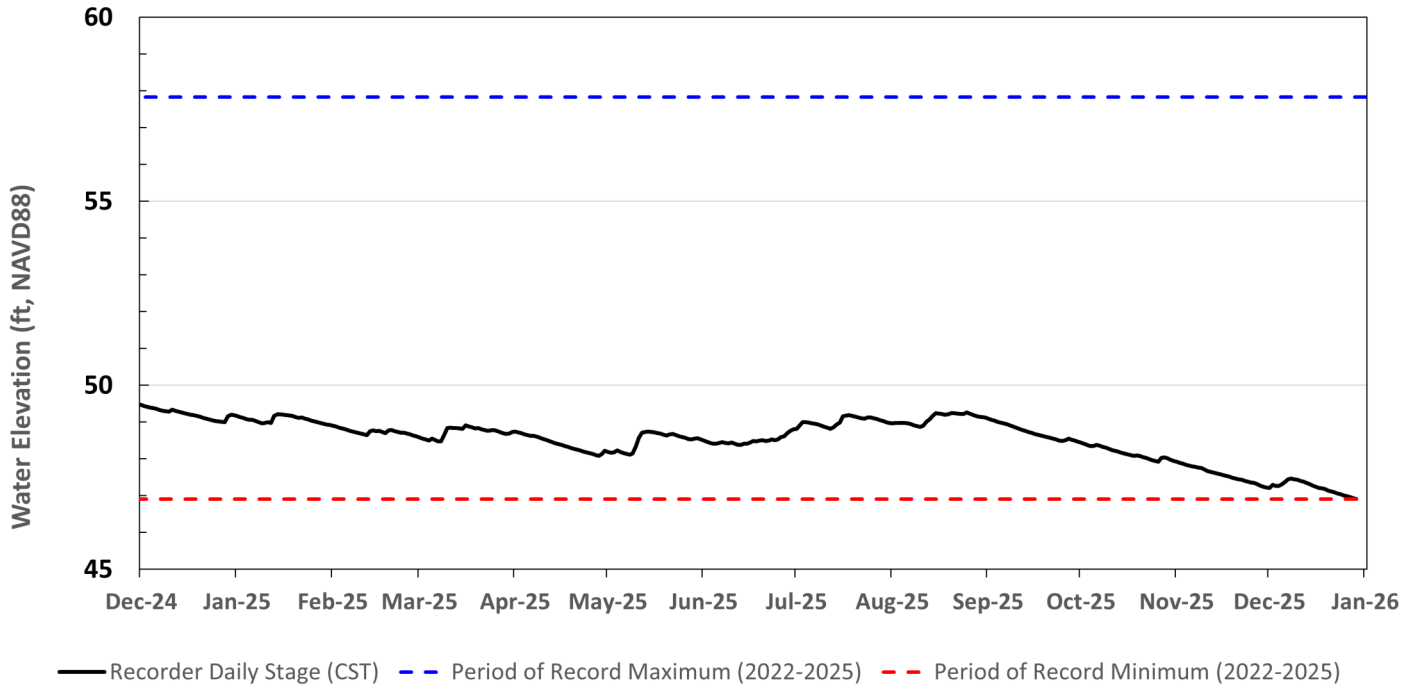
Lake Levels. Water levels at Lake Jackson in Leon County increased 0.18 feet during the significant rain event from December 4 - 8, 2025, and then declined by 0.32 feet for the remainder of the month. Lake Jackson ended the month with a stage level of 78.08 feet, NAVD 1988. Late in November 2025, much of Lake Jackson drained into Porter Sink for the first time since 2021 (**Figure 17**). Porter Sink stops draining and will be covered in water again when there is enough rainfall to fill the aquifer below the lake. The long-term (January 29, 2003, to December 31, 2025) average stage level for Lake Jackson is 80.87 feet, NAVD 1988, and the full pool level is 85.74 feet, NAVD 1988.

Figure 17: Daily water levels at Lake Jackson at Miller Landing, Leon County



At Piney Lake in southern Washington County, water levels increased 0.26 feet during and after the significant rain event from December 4 - 8, 2025. The lake then decreased at least 0.59 feet for the remainder of the month before the lake level dropped below the in-place water level sensor. The water level sensor is out of the water when the lake drops below 46.88 feet, NAVD 1988. (Figure 18). When the water levels at Piney Lake drop below 51.42 feet, NAVD 1988, the lake separates into two distinct "lobes". Based on the lake level data being collected at Piney Lake since 2022, the lake has likely been continuously separated since December 15, 2023.

Figure 18: Daily water levels at Piney Lake, Washington County



Spring Flows

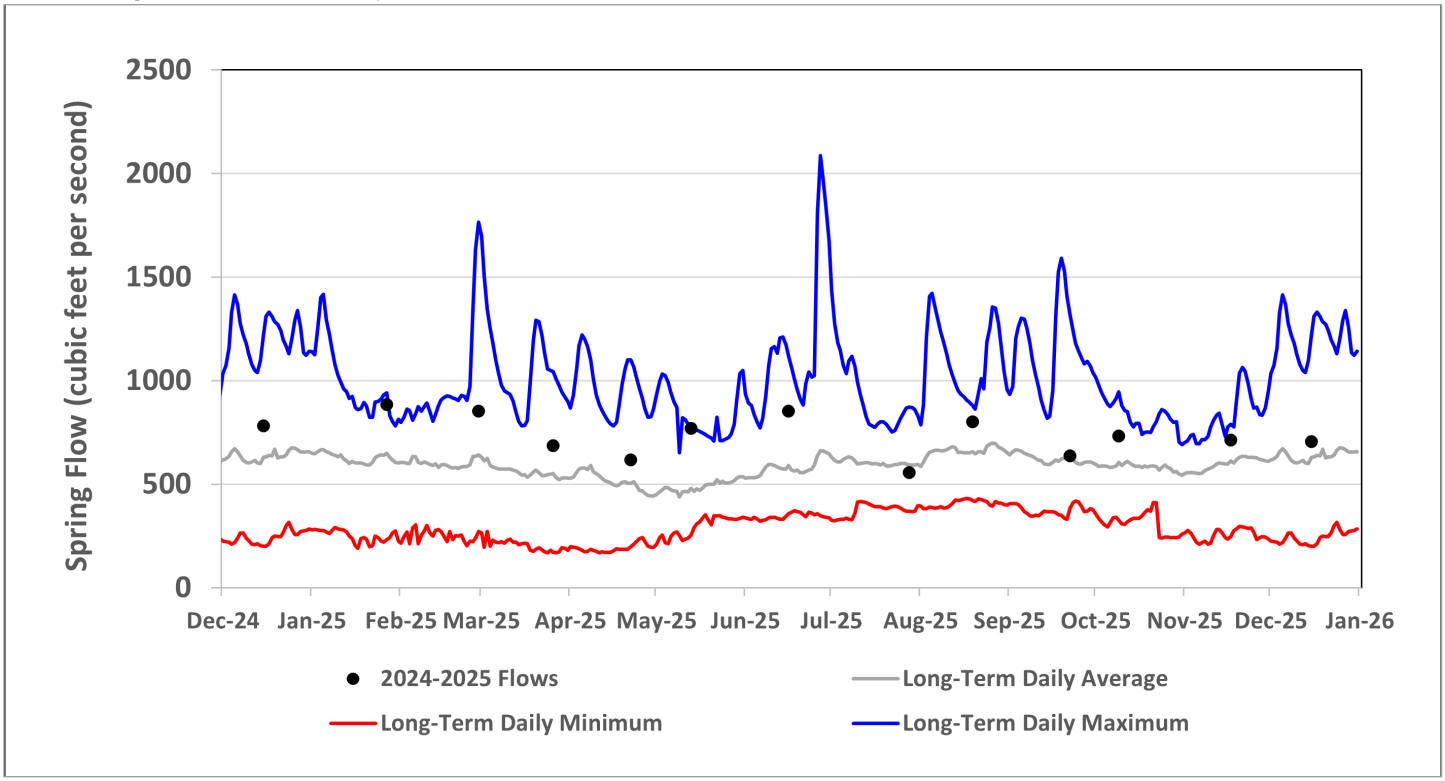
Wakulla and Sally Ward Spring System. Flow from Wakulla Spring decreased 7 cubic feet per second (cfs) between the measurements taken in November and December 2025. The most recent flow measurement for Wakulla Spring was 705 cfs, which was conducted on December 19, 2025 (**Figure 19**). This measurement was 66 cfs higher than the long-term (October 23, 2024, to December 19, 2025) average flow for the month of December of 639 cfs.

Flow at Sally Ward Spring decreased by 0.6 cfs between the measurements taken in November and December 2025. The most recent flow measurement for Sally Ward was 22.2 cfs on December 19, 2025. This measurement was 3.9 cfs lower than the long-term (November 1, 2004, to December 19, 2025) average flow for the month of November of 19.8 cfs.

The minimum flow established for the combined Wakulla and Sally Ward Spring System under Florida Administrative Code chapter 40A-8.041 continues to be met. The long-term (October 23, 2004, through October 9, 2025) average flows for Wakulla and Sally Ward springs are 589 cfs and 24.2 cfs, respectively. The combined long-term spring flow for both systems is 613.2 cfs, which exceeds the established minimum flow of 538 cfs by 75.2 cfs.

Figure 19: Wakulla Spring flows

Data from October 1, 2023, through December 19, 2025, represent discrete measurements. Daily statistics are based on the October 23, 2004, through December 19, 2025, period of record.

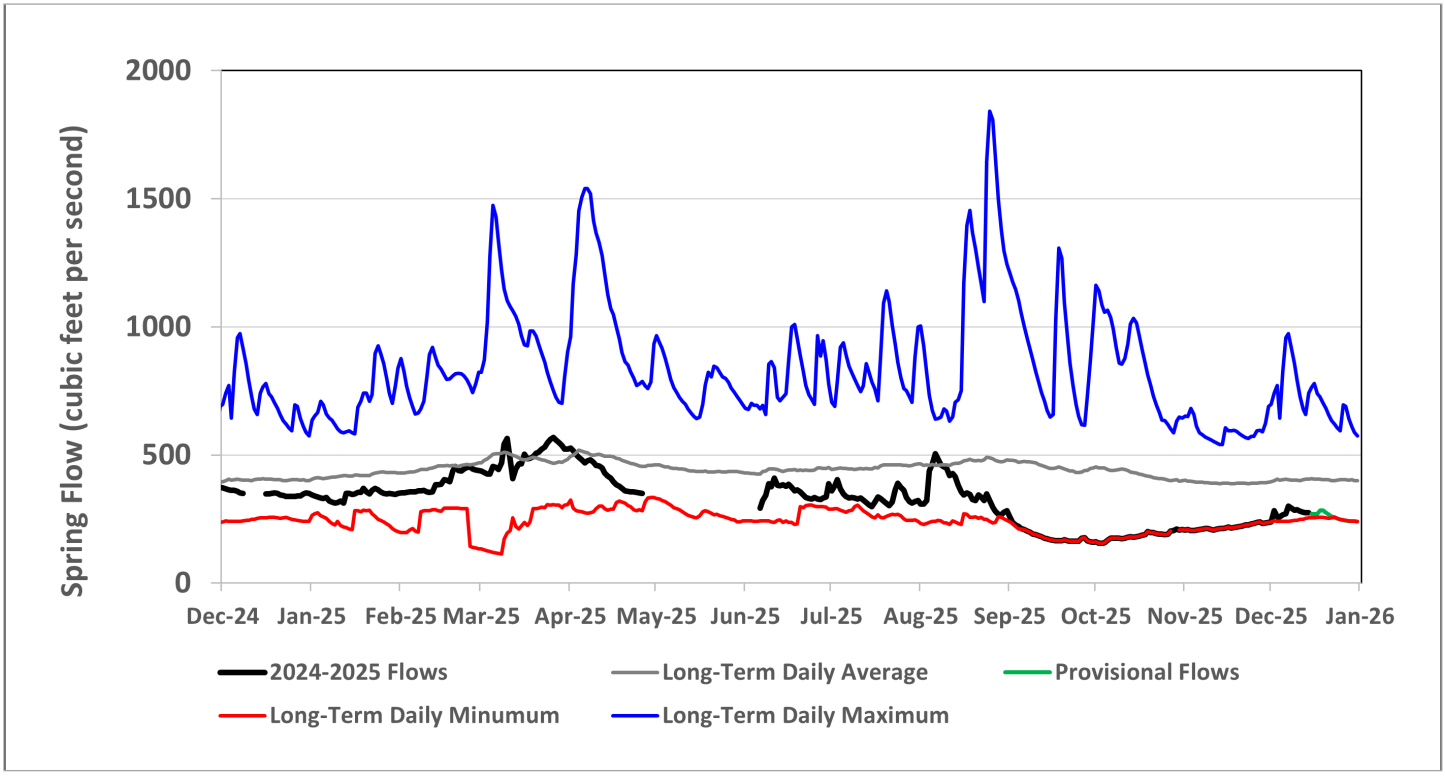


St. Marks River Rise. The mean daily spring flow for December 2025 at the St. Marks River Rise was 266 cfs, based on the available USGS provisional data which extends through December 31, 2025 (**Figure 20**). This was much below the long-term (October 1, 1956, through December 31, 2025) average flow for the month of December of 403 cfs. Flows this month were so low that there was a new long-term minimum flow for nearly every day in December.

The current 30-year moving average spring flow for the St. Marks River Rise based on the most recent approved USGS data (November 15, 1993, through December 3, 2024) is 423 cfs. If the provisional data from December 4, 2024, through November 30, 2025, are included, the 30-year moving average spring flow for the St. Marks River Rise is 419 cfs.

The established minimum flow for the St. Marks River Rise is 419 cfs. Whether using the approved or provisional data, the 30-year moving average flow exceeded the established minimum flow for the St. Marks River Rise by 4 cfs and 0 cfs, respectively.

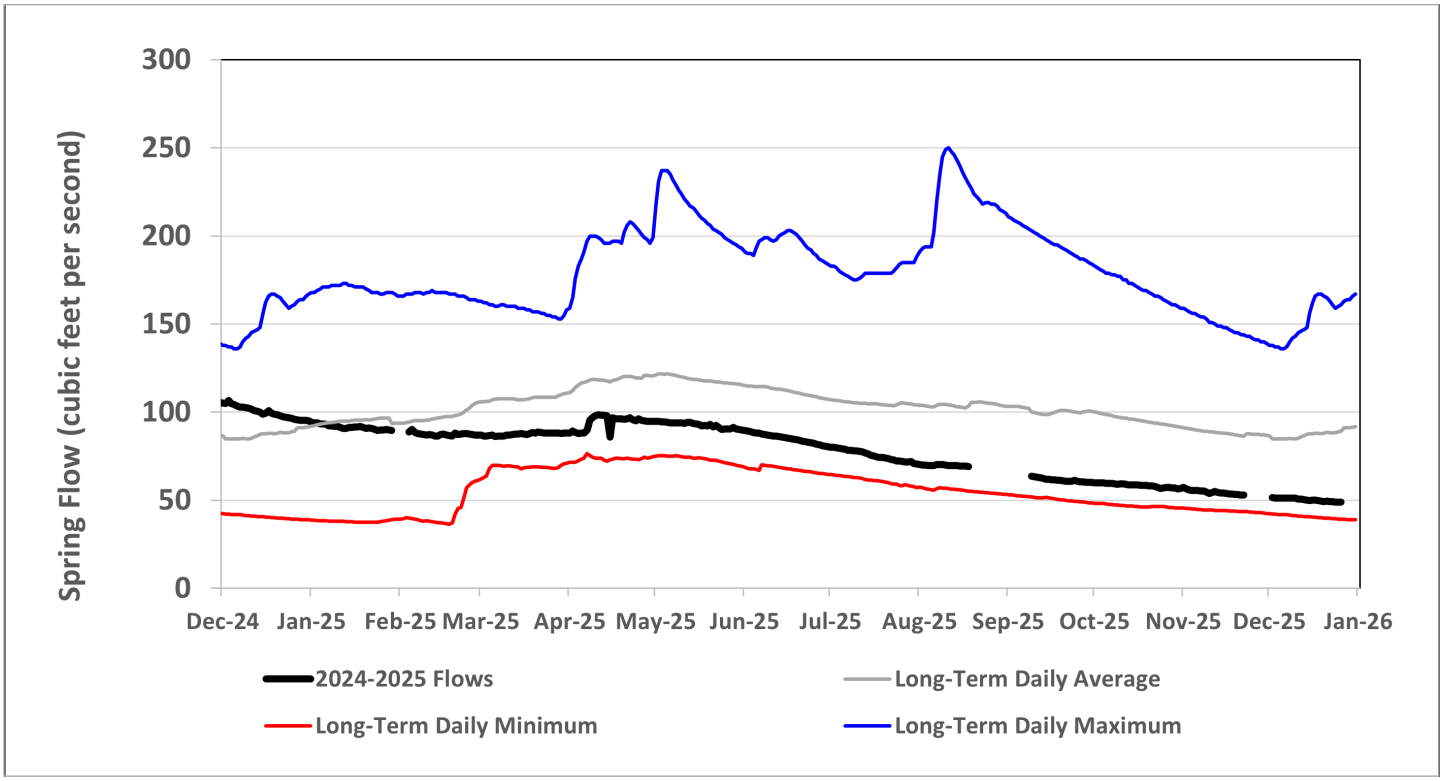
Figure 20: Spring flows for the St. Marks River Rise



Jackson Blue Spring. Daily flows at Jackson Blue Spring for the month of December 2025 (December 2 through 26, 2025) averaged 50.0 cfs. This was below the long-term average flow of 87.4 cfs for the month of December, based on the December 21, 2004, through December 26, 2025, period of record (**Figure 21**). Flows from Jackson Blue Spring have been below the long-term average flow since January 2025.

Figure 21: Spring flows for Jackson Blue Spring

Data represents daily averages. Long-term flows represent the daily average between December 21, 2004, and December 26, 2025.

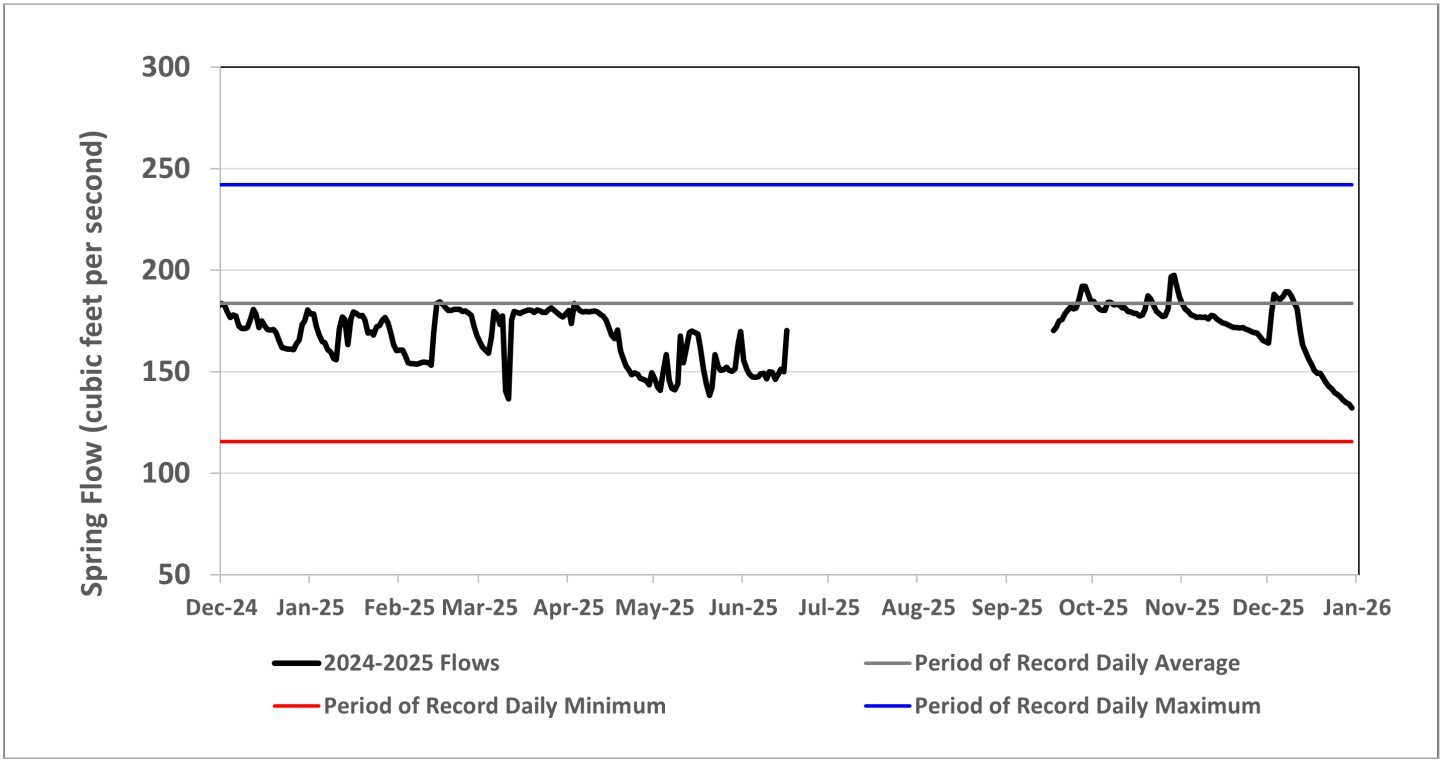


Gainer Spring Group. During December 2025, the average flow at the Gainer Spring Group was 159 cfs (**Figure 22**). The record period (October 28, 2019, through December 31, 2025) average monthly spring flow for the month of December is 182 cfs. It should be noted that there is a relatively brief period of record for this system, and spring flows among the highest and lowest on record are to be expected.

Throughout the time-series, there are several drops and recoveries in the spring flow. This is caused by Econfina Creek spiking in stage adjacent to the spring group after rain events. The extra pressure exerted on the groundwater by the higher surface water in the stream slows flow from the spring group. Since Econfina Creek does not tend to stay high for long after the conclusion of a rain event as the stage level quickly drops, the flow from the spring group recovers since there is less head pressure from the stream.

Figure 22: Gainer Spring Group flows

Data represents daily averages. Streamflow statistics are not shown due to the relatively short period of daily data.

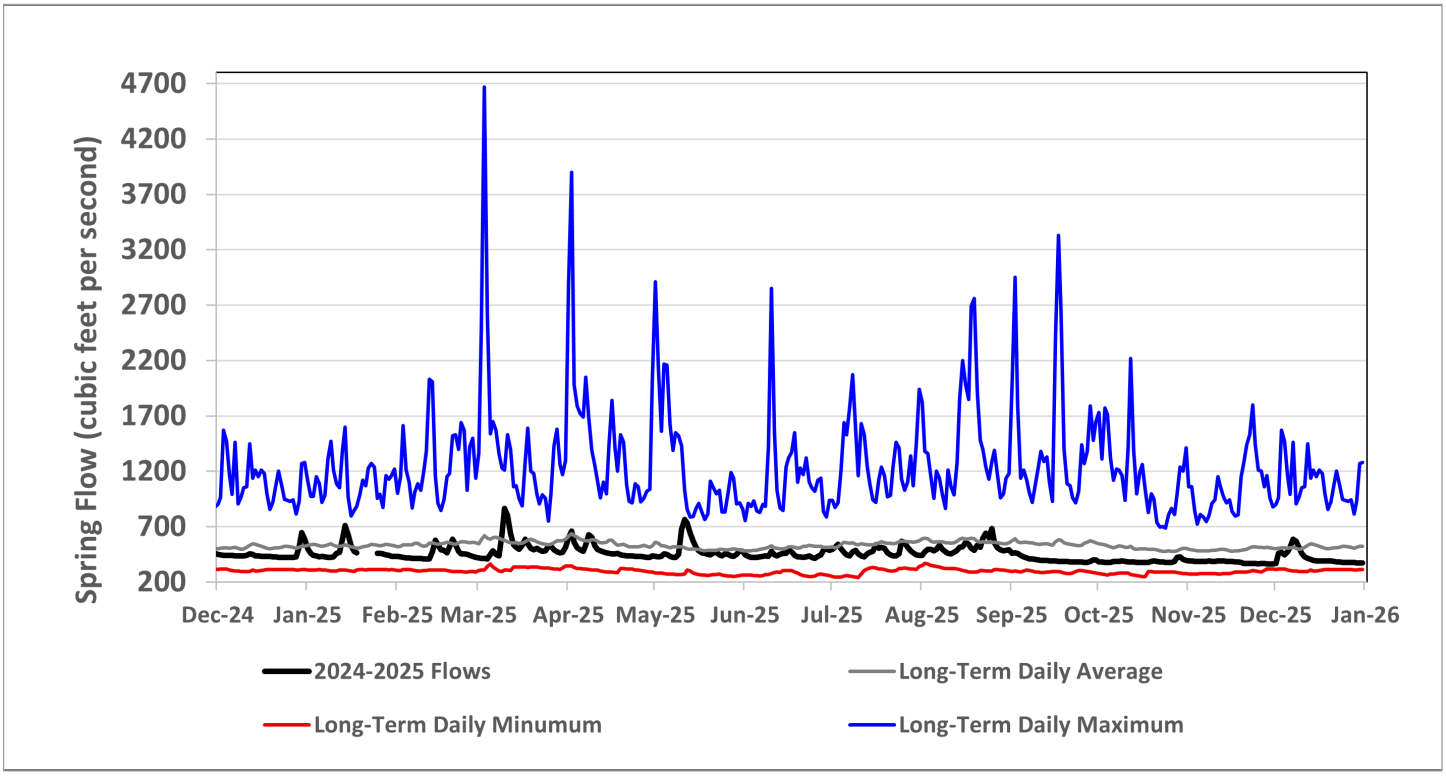


Middle Econfina Creek. The mean daily flow for December 2025 at Middle Econfina Creek was 419.5 cfs, based on the available USGS provisional data which extends through December 31, 2025 (**Figure 23**). This was below the long-term (October 1, 1935, through December 31, 2025) average flow for the month of December of 512 cfs.

The current 30-year moving average flow for Middle Econfina Creek based on the most recent approved USGS data (October 1, 1935, through December 3, 2024) is 519 cfs. If the provisional data from December 4, 2024, through December 31, 2025, the 30-year moving average flow for Middle Econfina Creek is 516 cfs.

A minimum flow of 486 cfs was formally adopted on June 29, 2025, for Middle Econfina Creek, which includes the Gainer, Sylvan, and Williford spring groups. Whether using the approved or provisional data, the 30-year moving average flow exceeded the established minimum flow for Middle Econfina Creek by 33 cfs and 30 cfs, respectively.

Figure 23: Spring flows for Middle Econfina Creek (Econfina @ Bennett)



Aquifer Levels

In the middle of December 2025, of a total of nine Floridan aquifer monitor wells, four were classified as having groundwater levels within normal ranges, two were classified as below-normal, and three were classified as much-below-normal (**Figures 24 - 30**). Most Floridan monitor wells with percentiles continued to decline through December 2025 except for Fannin Airport monitor well (NWFID 697), which continued to increase throughout the month (**Figure 29**). Pittman VISA Floridan monitor well (NWFID 5266) in eastern Jackson County remained classified as much-below-normal as groundwaters continued to decline (**Figure 27**). Groundwater levels at Still upper Floridan monitor well (NWFID 5417) in northern Walton County and Sand Hill upper Floridan monitor well (NWFID 5597) in northwestern Okaloosa County continued to decline and remained classified as much-below-normal.

Of three sand-and-gravel aquifer monitor wells, one well, Allen Tower Deep monitor well (NWFID 5401), had water levels classified as within normal ranges in mid-December 2025. Water levels at Weller Ave Deep monitor well (NWFID 1382) in southern Escambia County, increased into above-normal ranges (**Figure 30**). The Oak Grove Deep monitor well (NWFID 5479) continued to record below normal groundwater levels, as it has for several months (**Figure 24**).

Figure 24: Monitor wells and aquifer level percentiles for mid-December 2025
Percentile class rankings are based on each well's period of record. All wells have a minimum of 20 years of data.

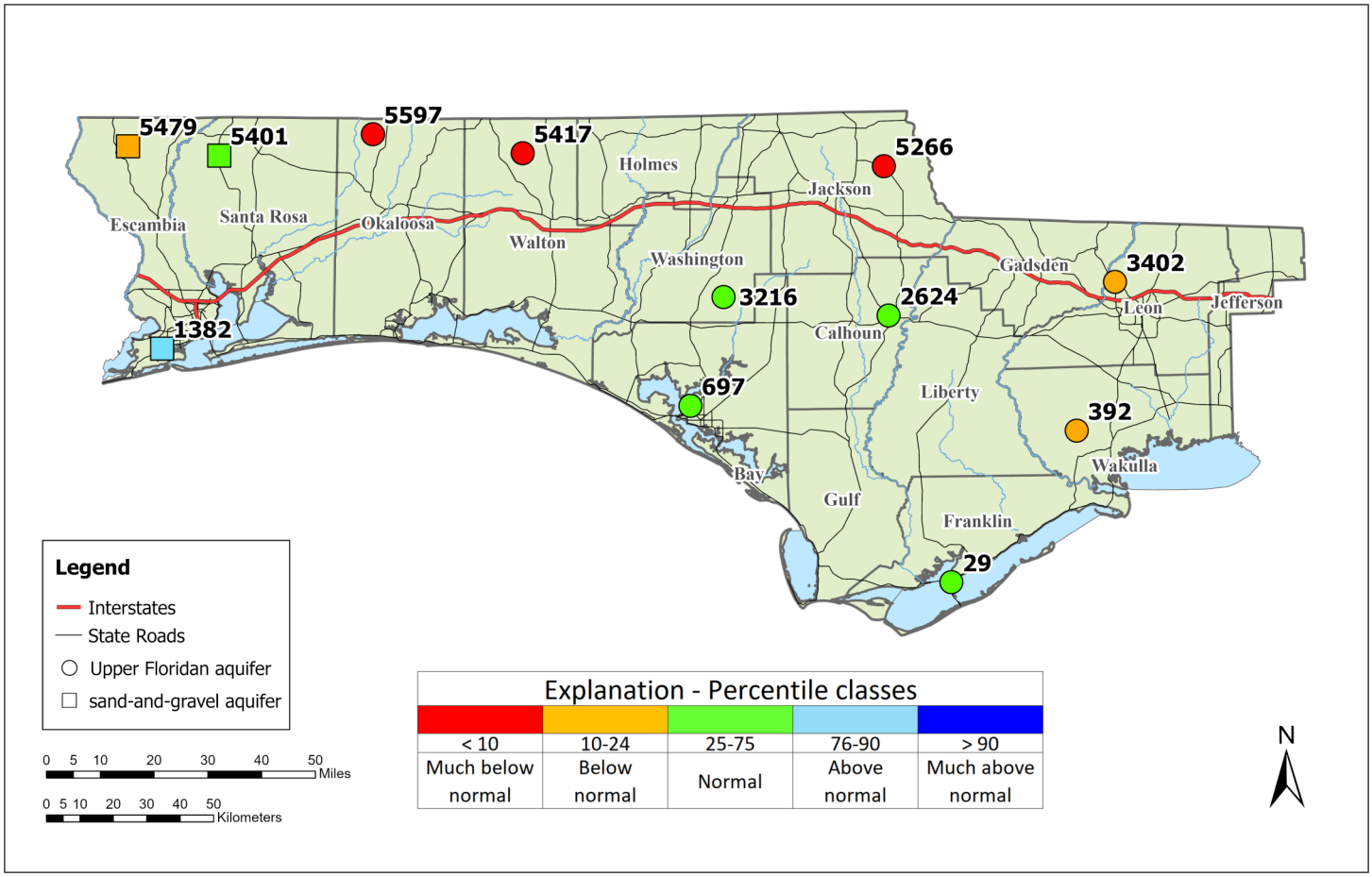


Figure 25: Daily upper Floridan aquifer levels at USGS-Lake Jackson well (NWFID 3402), Leon County

Land surface elevation is 121.40 ft, NAVD 88

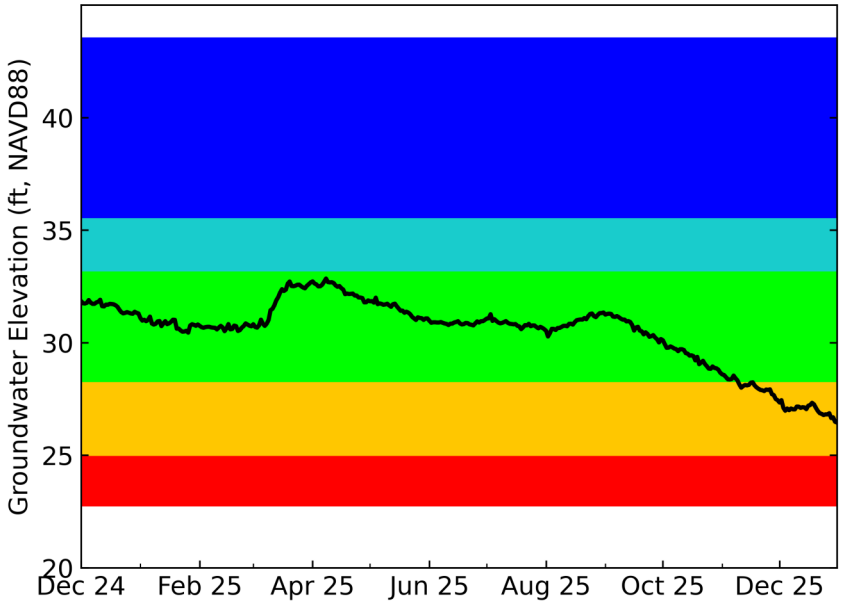
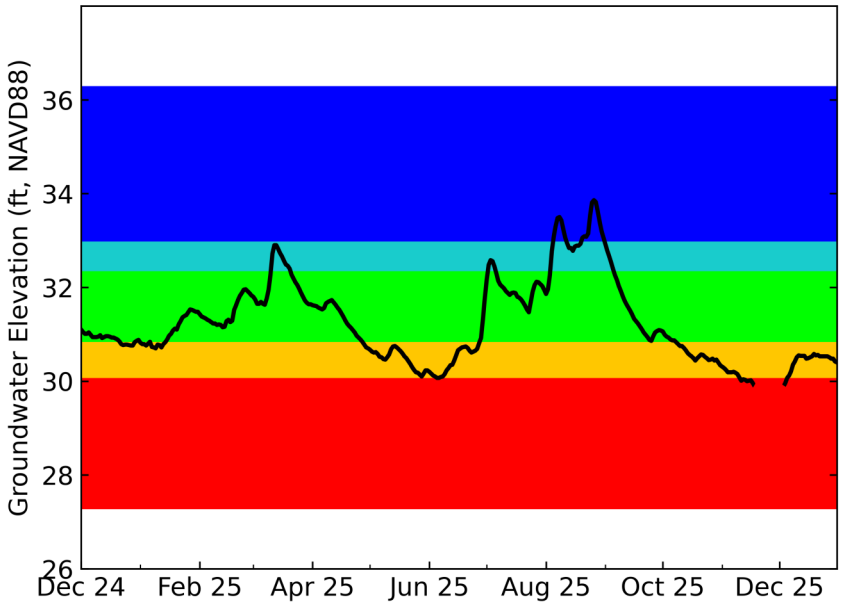


Figure 26: Daily upper Floridan aquifer levels at USGS Benchmark well (NWFID 392), Wakulla County

Land surface elevation is 46.27 ft, NAVD 88



Explanation - Percentile classes

< 10	10-24	25-75	76-90	> 90
Much below normal	Below normal	Normal	Above normal	Much above normal

Figure 27: Daily upper Floridan aquifer levels at NWFWMD Pittman Visa well (NWFID 5266), Jackson County

Land surface elevation is 127.31 ft, NAVD 88

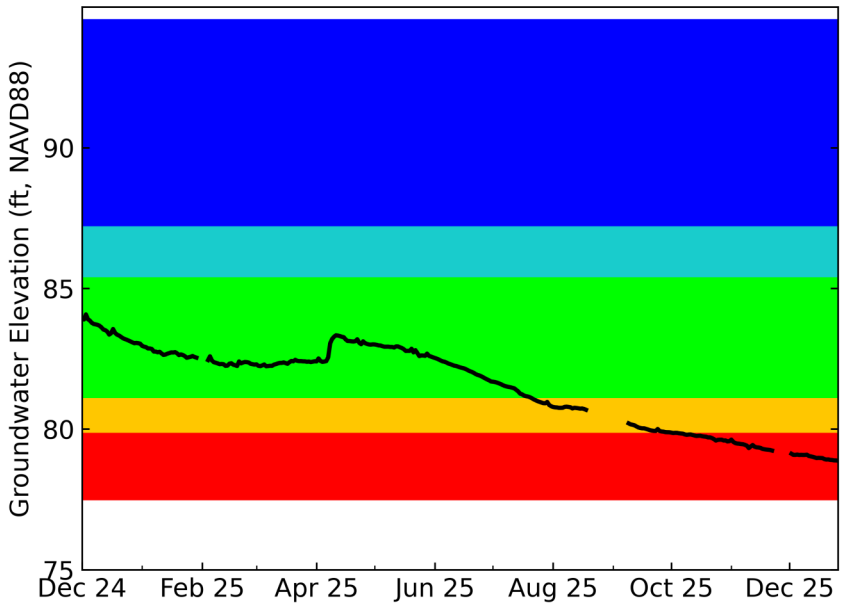


Figure 28: Daily upper Floridan aquifer levels at USGS-422A Near Greenhead well (NWFID 3216), Washington County

Land surface elevation is 66.75 ft, NAVD 88

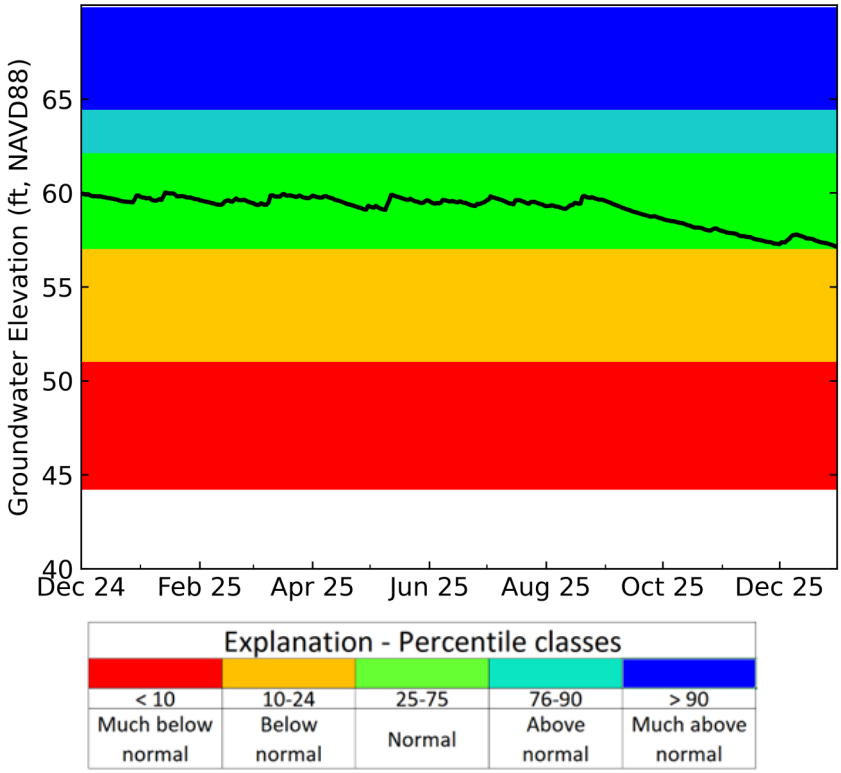


Figure 29: Daily upper Floridan aquifer levels at Fannin Airport well (NWFID 697), Washington County

Land surface elevation is 4.05 ft, NAVD 88

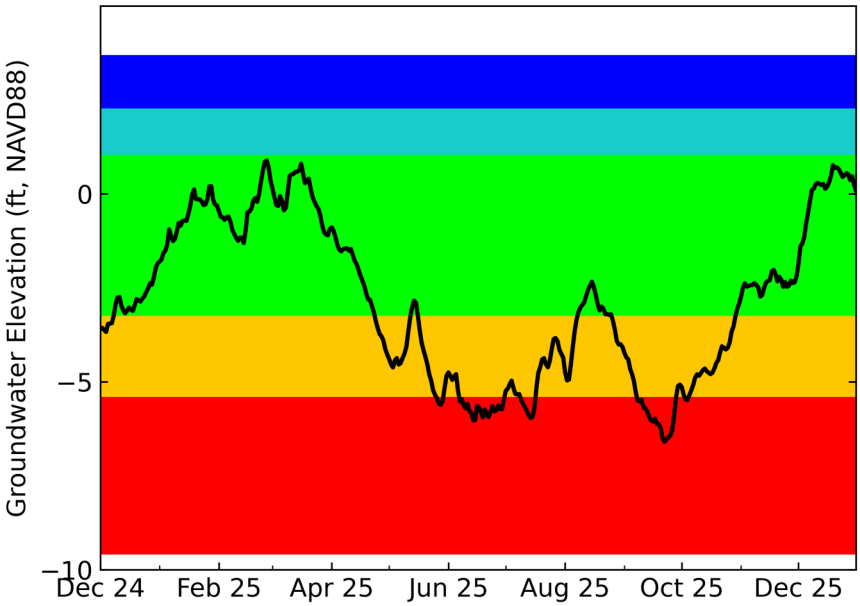


Figure 30: Daily sand-and-gravel aquifer levels at NWFWMD Weller Ave Deep well (NWFID 1382), Escambia County

Land surface elevation is 25.09 ft, NAVD 88