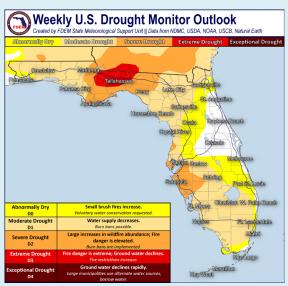
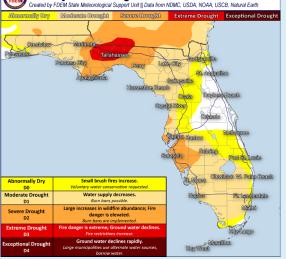
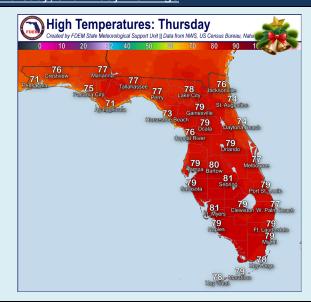


Forecast Fog Coverage: Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday Mornings







Latest Drought Monitor Outlook - Valid 12/18

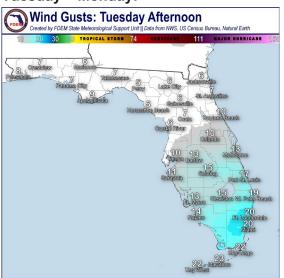
Forecast High Temperatures: Thursday





... High Pressure to Dominate the Local Weather Through the Week... Sunny and Dry Conditions Prevail... A Few Breezy Wind Gusts and an Isolated Shower Across South Florida Today... Unseasonably Warm Temperatures Across North Florida Each Afternoon... Locally Sensitive Wildfire Conditions Given Warm and Dry Conditions and Ongoing Drought... Dense Fog Development Possible Across Panhandle and Big Bend Each Night this Week... Next Cold Frontal Passage Expected Sunday with Little Meaningful Rainfall... Breezy Winds and Cooler Temperatures in the Wake of the Front Monday...

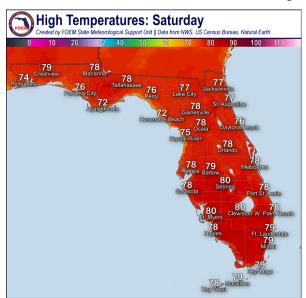
Tuesday – Monday:



A rather tranquil stretch of weather is expected through the end of the week as a large area of upper-level high pressure settles over the Central and Eastern U.S. This will keep Florida locked in under dry northwesterly flow aloft, keeping rainfall chances near zero statewide for the foreseeable future. An exception is today, where breezy onshore winds upwards of 30 mph may aid in bringing a few coastal showers or brief sprinkles onshore across coastal Southeast Florida and the Florida Keys (15-20% chance of rain). This activity may linger into the evening and early overnight hours tonight before dissipating (15-20% chance of rain). Winds will generally subside overnight tonight and on Wednesday across South Florida, though a few gusts upwards of 25 mph will be possible across the Florida Keys. There is no chance of rain anywhere across the state from Wednesday through Saturday.

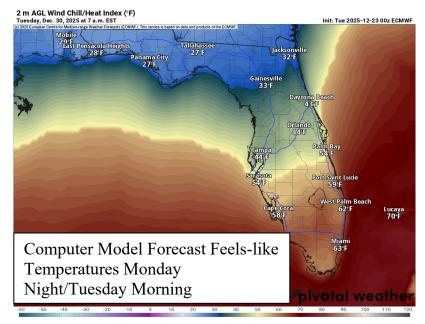
The large upper-level high pressure centered over the country will near record strength, promoting **unseasonably warm** temperatures across all North Florida through the end of the week. Highs will climb into the middle to upper 70s each afternoon, with a few lower 80s possible. This is over **10-degrees above normal** for this time of year and will result in one of the warmer holiday seasons in recent years. Highs will reach the upper 70s to lower 80s across Central and South Florida through

Sunday. Low temperatures will also remain warmer than normal across North Florida through Sunday night, only dipping into the lower to middle 50s. Lows in the middle to upper 50s are expected for Central Florida, with interior South Florida reaching the upper 50s to lower 60s and coastal Southeast Florida the middle 60s lower 70s. These warmer overnight temperatures, in tandem with clear and calm nights, will promote low cloud and patchy fog development each night this week and weekend, especially across the Panhandle and Big Bend where instances of dense fog are possible. Dense Fog Advisories will be issued as conditions warrant, with the highest probabilities of issuance across the Panhandle and Big Bend Tuesday and Wednesday nights. Instances of patchy fog may extend southward across the Nature Coast and West-Central Florida, as well as the Suwannee Valley.









The next cold frontal passage is currently forecasted for Sunday and Sunday night, which may finally bring a reprieve from the unseasonably warm conditions across North Florida. Confidence is low in any meaningful rainfall associated with this frontal passage as moisture will remain limited. As such, a mostly dry frontal passage is expected, however a few isolated showers cannot be ruled out across the Panhandle Sunday and Sunday night (15-20% chance of rain). In the wake of this frontal passage Monday, breezy post frontal winds with gusts upwards of 30 mph will be possible. Paired with low relative humidities, elevated wildfire conditions may manifest on Monday

across the Panhandle. Given the long lead time to Monday, confidence remains low in reaching Red Flag Warning criteria, however trends in computer forecast model guidance will continue to be monitored. Highs will reach the lower to middle 50s across the Panhandle on Monday, with upper 60s to lower 70s across Northeast Florida. Lower to middle 70s are expected across Central Florida and upper 70s to lower 80s in South Florida. Temperatures may plummet across North Florida Monday night with a localized freeze possible north of the I-10 corridor where lows dip into the upper 20s to lower 30s. Patchy frost may develop across the Suwannee Valley with lows in the middle 30s. Across the rest of the state, lows in the 40s to lower 50s can be expected for Central Florida and upper 50s to middle 60s in South Florida.

Hydrology & Flooding:

There is no risk for flash flooding over the next five (5) days. Only a few isolated showers may move onshore along coastal Southeast Florida today, though rainfall totals will be meager, at best. A cold frontal passage Sunday and Sunday night will only bring a few isolated showers, at most, to the Panhandle. For the latest on the rainfall outlook, please visit the Weather Prediction Center (WPC) website.

There are no riverine concerns at this time. Rivers and streams across North Florida remain near or below normal with the ongoing long-term drought. For more information, visit the <u>River Forecast</u> Center.

Lake Okeechobee's average elevation is 13.50 feet, which is within the operational band and 1.18 feet <u>below</u> normal for this time of year.

Drought & Fire Weather:

On last week's Drought Monitor outlook update (12/18), some relief of the long-term drought was evident through reduction of most drought categories across North Florida. West of SR 231, severe drought was reduced to a **Moderate Drought (level 1 of 4)** where the heaviest recent rainfall fell. A **Severe Drought (level 2 of 4)** remains in place across the Big Bend region, though was reduced back to a **Moderate Drought (level 1 of 4)** over the I-10 corridor across Northeast Florida and the Suwannee Valley. **Extreme Drought (level 3 of 4)** remains in place across northern Liberty, Gadsden, Leon, and Jefferson counties where 2–4-inch rainfall totals fell in the past two weeks, with parts of Jackson, Calhoun, and Madison counties reduced to a **Severe Drought (level 2 of 4)**. However, 60 to 90-day rainfall departures remain below normal (3-5 inches below normal) over all

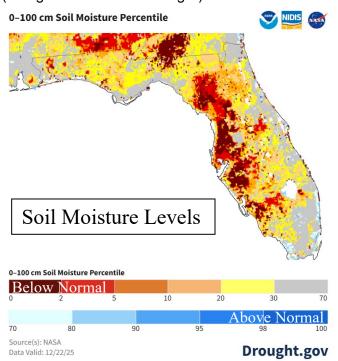




North Florida which has kept at least some drought category in place despite the recent rainfall. On the contrary, rainfall has been harder to come by across West-Central Florida near the Tampa Bay metro where a Severe Drought (level 2 of 4) was slightly expanded to include more of Hardee and DeSoto counties. Here, 3-month rainfall departures have begun to near 7 inches in some localized areas. A Moderate Drought (level 1 of 4) remains in place across nearly all South Florida south of Lake Okeechobee, with abnormally dry (emerging drought) conditions in place along coastal Southeast Florida.

Additional rainfall that fell this past Thursday (12/18) across the Panhandle may lead to additional drought relief and could be reflected in the coming drought outlook this week. However, warm and dry conditions will return for the foreseeable future across the state which may lead to further deterioration of drought conditions across the state. Very little rainfall fell across West-Central and Southwest Florida in the past week or two which has led to developing short-term flash drought.

The <u>Keetch-Byram Drought Index</u> average for Florida is **431 (+4)** on a scale from 0 (very wet) to 800 (very dry). There are <u>24</u> Florida counties that have an average KBDI above 500 (drought/increased fire danger).



Relative humidities will remain above critical thresholds across the state through much of the forecast period, which will help to keep the overall wildfire threat low. However, warm and dry conditions will continue to help dry out and cure the vegetation across the state which will lead to locally sensitive wildfire conditions nearly statewide each afternoon. The lowest relative humidities will be found across West-Central and South Florida where developing short-term flash drought will promote the highest chances for additional brush fire or wildfire development. Come Monday in the wake of a strong frontal passage, breezy winds upwards of 30 mph will overspread the Panhandle co-located with low relative humidities potentially below critical thresholds (25-35% RH values). This will encourage locally elevated wildfire conditions across the Panhandle Monday, with Red Flag Warning criteria possible. However, there remains uncertainty regarding the severity of fire weather on Monday given that we remain guite a

few days away. Computer forecast model guidance will continue to be monitored regarding the potentially breezy and dry conditions Monday. According to the <u>Florida Forest Service</u>, there are currently 26 active wildfires across the state burning approximately 227 acres.

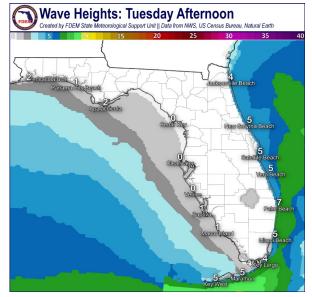
Rip Currents & Marine Hazards:

A low to moderate risk for rip currents is expected for all Panhandle beaches with light and variable winds through the end of the week. A return of a high risk for rip currents is expected late this coming weekend and early next week as winds increase ahead of and in the wake of the cold frontal passage. A high risk for rip currents will remain along East Coast beaches today, though diminishing surf and winds will bring a return of a low to moderate risk for rip currents starting Wednesday. Increasing winds will bring a high risk for rip currents to East Coast beaches this weekend. A low risk for rip currents is expected for West Coast beaches, though increasing surf on Monday may bring a localized moderate risk. For the latest Rip Current Outlook, visit www.weather.gov/beach.





Some lingering elevated surf near 2' is expected Tuesday and Wednesday across Panhandle beaches but will diminish back down to near 1' through the weekend. Similarly, elevated surf of **4-6**' on Tuesday across most East Coast beaches will quickly diminish back down to **2-4**' each afternoon



through the weekend. Some increase in surf may occur post-front on Monday. Southeast Florida beaches can expect surf near 6-8' on Tuesday, though will diminish back down to 2-4' Wednesday and Thursday. Waves near 1-2' can be expected starting Friday. West Coast beaches will see waves near 1' through the forecast period.

The latest <u>Blue-Green Algae</u> report shows algal bloom conditions were observed within Lake Okeechobee at moderate to <u>high bloom potential</u>, with the highest concentrations along the southern shoreline of the lake. <u>High bloom potential</u> was also observed near Lake Okeechobee by the Tieback Canal and in the Dorothy B. Oven Park Pond in Tallahassee. <u>Moderate bloom potential</u> was observed along all shorelines of Lake George in Northeast Florida, as well as near Shands Bridge and Mandarin Point within the St. Johns River.

NWS Mobile Daily Hazards
NWS Jacksonville Daily Hazards
NWS Tampa Daily Graphical Hazards

NWS Tallahassee Daily Graphical Hazards
NWS Melbourne Daily Graphical Hazards
NWS Miami Daily Graphical Hazards
NWS Key West Daily Hazards

For the official National Weather Service forecast, please click on the following cities:

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Orlando Tampa Fort Myers West Palm Beach Miami Key West
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For coastal and offshore forecasts throughout Florida and Georgia, please click here.

Have a wonderful holiday week and weekend!

Evan Newman, Assistant State Meteorologist Florida Division of Emergency Management www.FloridaDisaster.org/Weather





