



Florida Division of Emergency Management State Watch Office

Morning Situation Report

Thursday, February 26, 2026



State Emergency Operations Center Activation Level

Level 2 Activation



SERT On-Call Personnel

Position	Personnel	Phone	Email
Operations Chief	Amy Godsey	(850) 519-8483	Amy.Godsey@em.myflorida.com
Watch Officer	Sam Walters	(850) 519-8638	Sam.Walters@em.myflorida.com
Duty Officer	Jay Griffin	(850) 524-4094	Kellen.Griffin-Jay@em.myflorida.com
Operations Officer- Day	Austin Johnson	(850) 815-4001	SWP@em.myflorida.com
Operations Officer- Swing	Ahnaya Benjamin	(850) 815-4001	SWP@em.myflorida.com
Operations Officer- Night	Jim Lawhon	(850) 815-4001	SWP@em.myflorida.com
Meteorologist	Caitlyn Gillespie	(850) 688-2119	Caitlyn.Gillespie@em.myflorida.com
Plans Chief	Kaylynn Perry	(850) 254-5657	Plans_Command@em.myflorida.com
Logistics Chief	Christina Goetzman	(850) 519-8581	Christina.Goetzman@em.myflorida.com
Human Services Director	Pam Hughes	(850) 528-5638	Pamela.Hughes@em.myflorida.com
Emergency Services	Tim Kenyon	(850) 591-7732	Tim.Kenyon@em.myflorida.com
Infrastructure Branch Director	Paige Lay	(850) 591-9933	paige.lay@em.myflorida.com
ESF 8 On-Call	Hunter Stafford	(866) 786-4673	DLDOHDutyOfficers@flhealth.gov
Public Information Officer	Stephanie Hartman	(850) 570-3053	Stephanie.Hartman@em.myflorida.com
DEM Finance and Admin	Jeremy Smith	(850) 273-1273	Jeremy.Smith@em.myflorida.com



Response Regional Coordination Team

Team	County Location	Visits
Region 1: Jim Roberts	Bay	Airport Full Scale Exercise / Response Coordinators Meeting
Region 2: Enrique Gaston	Leon	State Exercise Meeting
Region 3: Glen Hammers	Alachua	School Mass Care / Reunification TTX
Region 4: Tara Kostich	Clay	Response Coordinators Meeting
Region 5: Austin Beeghly	Leon, Seminole	Return to Region 5 Travel / response Coordinators Meeting
Region 6: Paul Siddall	Hillsborough	Vehicle Maintenance
Region 7: Kathryn Hollenbeck	Out of Service	Leave (See Coverage)
Region 8: Amber Durden	Indian River	Response Coordinators Meeting
Region 9: Brittany Bremer	Collier	SWFL LEPC Meeting / Big Cypress National Preserve Visit
Region 10: Claudia Baker	Miami-Dade	FIFA Exercise



Region 7 Coverage Provided By Response Coordinator 6
 Region 10 Coverage Provided By Response Coordinator 8

Status
Normal Operations
Out of Service / Unavailable



Recovery Regional Coordination Team

Team	County Location	Status / Activities
Region 1: Allison Blevins	Bay	FSE: NWFL Airport
Region 2: Justin Lazzara	Jefferson	County EM Meeting
Region 3: Kevin Blom	Alachua	FSE: MCI
Region 4: Joshua Saunders	Alachua	FSE: MCI
Region 5: Elizabeth Caison	In State	Leave
Region 6: Rick Rogers	Citrus	County EM Meeting
Region 7: Vacant	N/A	See Coverage
Region 8: Ja-Pheth Butler-Miller	Palm Beach	Municipal F-ROC Mtg
Region 9: Vacant	N/A	See Coverage
Region 10: Brian Lee	Miami-Dade	TTX: Op. Lasso II-Cyber & Critical Infrastructure

Region 5 Coverage Provided By Recovery Coordinator 8

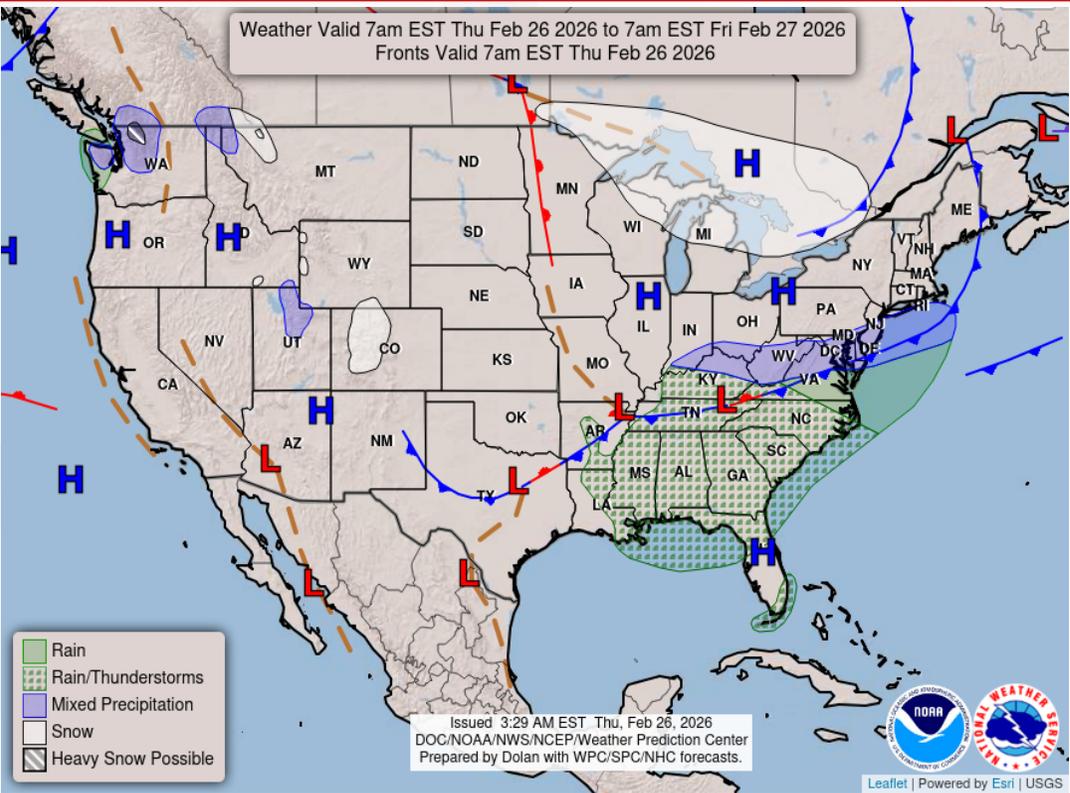
Region 7 Coverage Provided By Recovery Coordinator 6 & 8

Region 9 Coverage Provided By Recovery Coordinator 6 & 8

Status
Normal Operations
In Region / Delayed Response
Deployed / Delayed Response
Out of Service / Unavailable

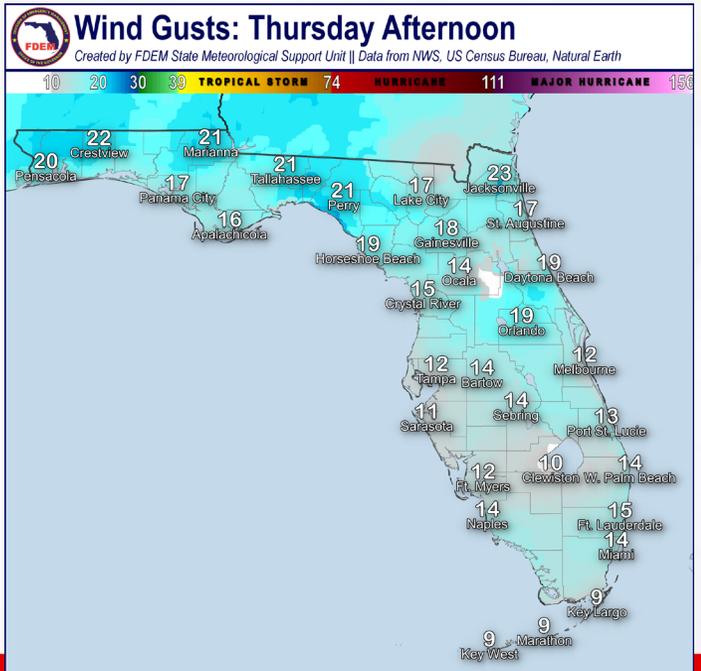
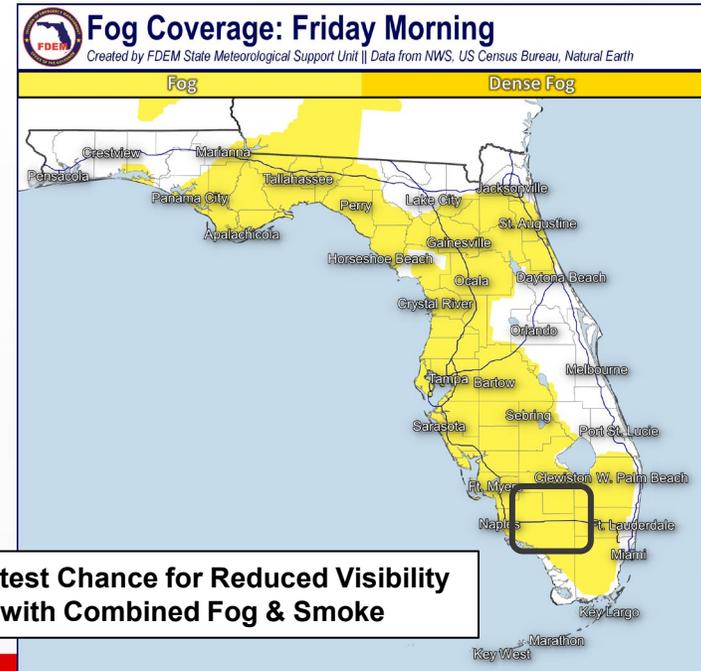


Meteorology Summary



Today's Weather Map

Threat	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	R10
Lightning										
Tornado										
Damaging Wind										
Hail										
Flash Flooding										
Freeze (Overnight)										
Fog (Overnight)	M	M	M	L	L	M	M	L	H	H
Wildfire	L	L	M	M	H	M	M	H	H	M
Rip Currents	H	H	L	M	H	L		H	L	H
Lake Okeechobee Elevation	12.27 ft. (2.27 ft. <u>Below</u> Normal)									
Keetch-Byram Drought Index	493 (+2) on a scale from 0 (very moist) to 800 (very dry)									



Greatest Chance for Reduced Visibility with Combined Fog & Smoke



Meteorology Summary

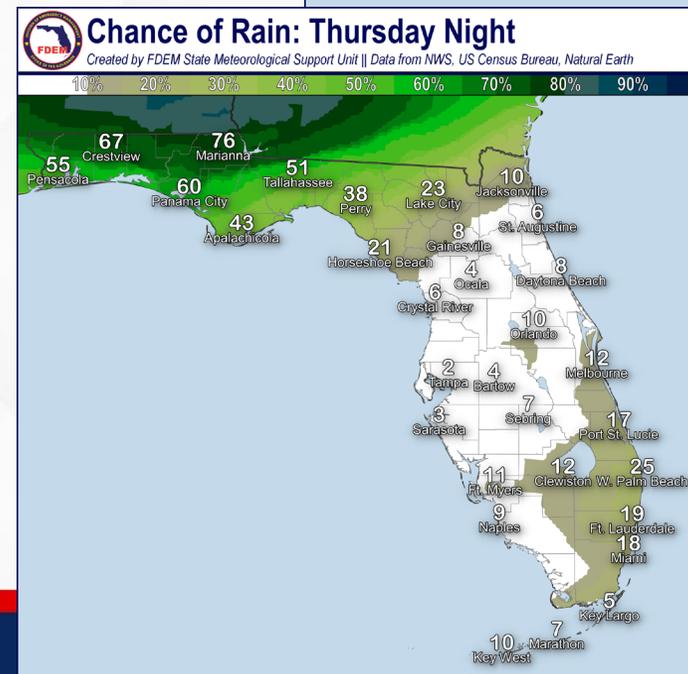
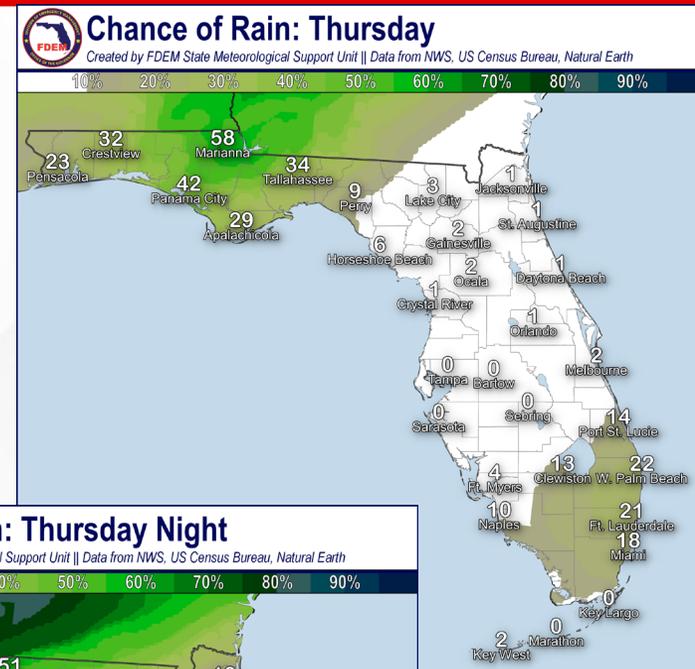
Statewide Overview, Next 24 Hours:

Following our transition day on Wednesday, isolated pockets of **patchy fog and low clouds** were present this morning as low-level moisture gradually returns to the Sunshine State. Spotty showers this morning along the Florida Panhandle will set the stage for increasing rain chances through the daytime hours (40-60%), becoming increasingly widespread this evening and overnight (50-80% chance of rain) as a frontal boundary slowly sags southward over the embedded thunderstorm activity will trend into Friday across the interior Florida Panhandle. Southerly winds build ahead of our next frontal system, with wind gusts reaching **20-25 mph** across North Florida and localized gusts upwards of **30 mph** possible along the immediate coastline.

A mixture of sunshine and clouds can be expected throughout the Florida Peninsula, with a slight chance for a few showers this afternoon across Southeast Florida (20-25%). Afternoon temperatures continue to rebound after our cold start to the week, with highs reaching the lower to middle 70s across North Florida and the middle to upper 70s throughout the Florida Peninsula; a few locations within the interior southern Florida Peninsula look to eclipse the 80-degree mark.

The primary weather headline today will continue to be **sensitive to elevated wildfire conditions** across the Florida Peninsula, with **Red Flag Warnings** going into effect this afternoon across East-Central Florida until 6:00 PM EST. While low-level moisture returns, **long-term drought** and **extremely dry fuels/vegetation** will continue to promote wildfire ignition and spread. Areas of **dense smoke** will likely pool near ongoing wildfires or burns; this is especially impactful near the large wildfire (*National Wildfire*) burning within Big Cypress National Preserve where periods of reduced visibility are likely along Alligator Alley (I-75) in Collier and Broward Counties.

Tonight, areas of **fog and low clouds** will develop ahead of the rain activity to the north. Where fog and smoke combine, visibility reductions may become significant, creating hazardous nighttime driving conditions. Low temperatures remain mild statewide in the upper 50s to middle 60s.





Coastal Hazards & Hydrology

Rip Currents: Breezy pre-frontal winds today will yield a **high risk of rip currents** for Florida Panhandle, East-Central Florida, and Southeast Florida beaches today. A **moderate risk of rip currents** continues along all Northeast Florida beaches, with low risk conditions residing along the Florida West Coast. For the latest Rip Current Outlook, visit www.weather.gov/beach.

Marine Hazards: Increasing surf can be expected to arrive along the Florida Panhandle today, with breakers in the surf zone reaching **3-4'** this afternoon. Elsewhere, wave heights of 1-3' can be expected.

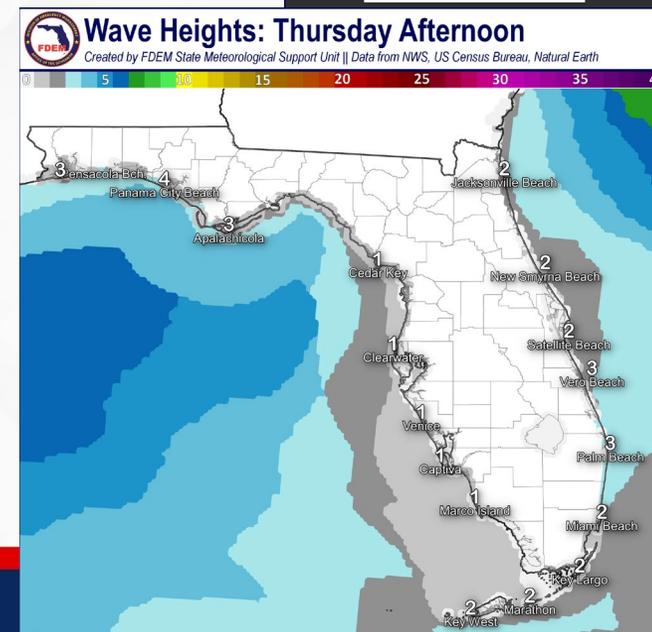
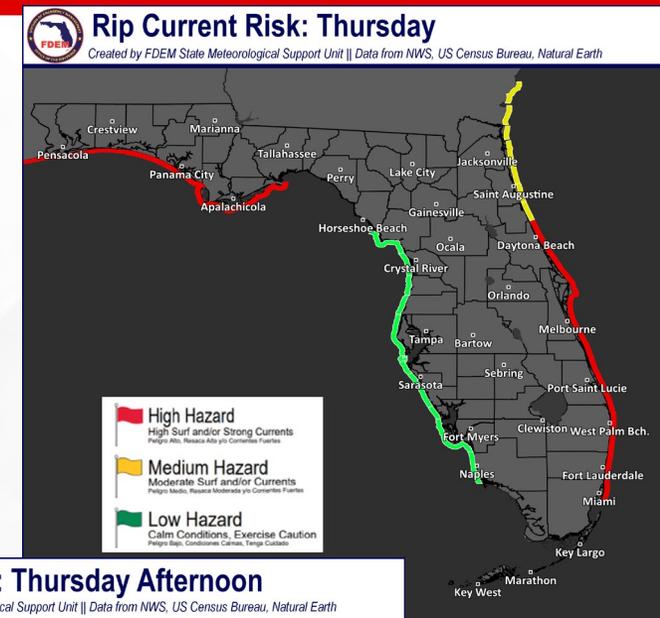
Red Tide was observed at background conditions offshore of Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties, with very low concentrations sampled along Bay County (valid 2/20/2026).

Coastal Flooding: There is no risk for coastal flooding today.

Flash Flooding: There is no organized risk for flash flooding today.

Riverine Flooding: There are no riverine concerns across Florida. For more information, visit the [River Forecast Center](#).

Lake Okeechobee's average elevation is 12.27 feet, which is within the operational band and is 2.27 feet below normal for this time of year.





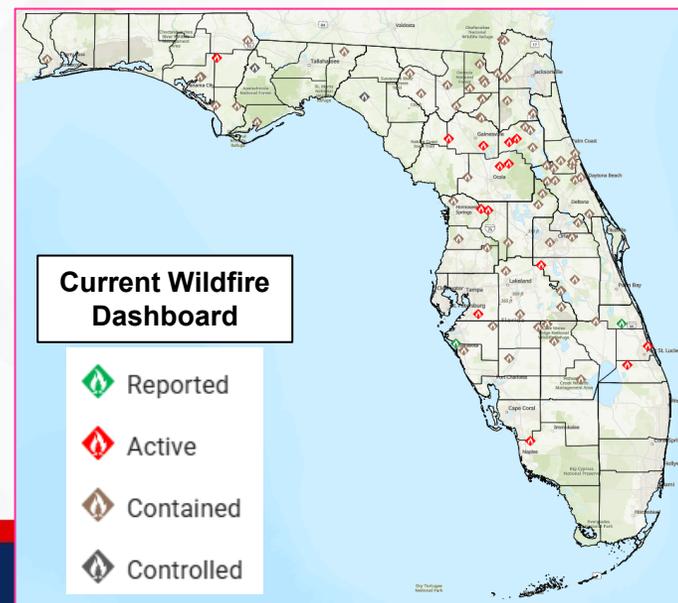
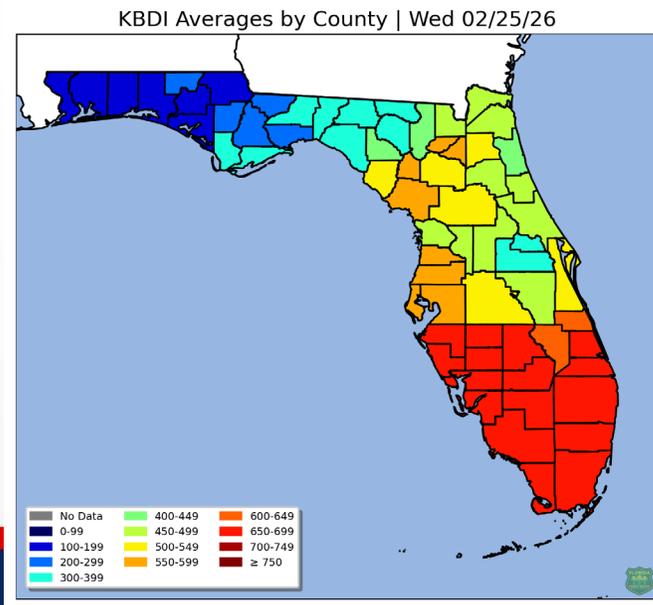
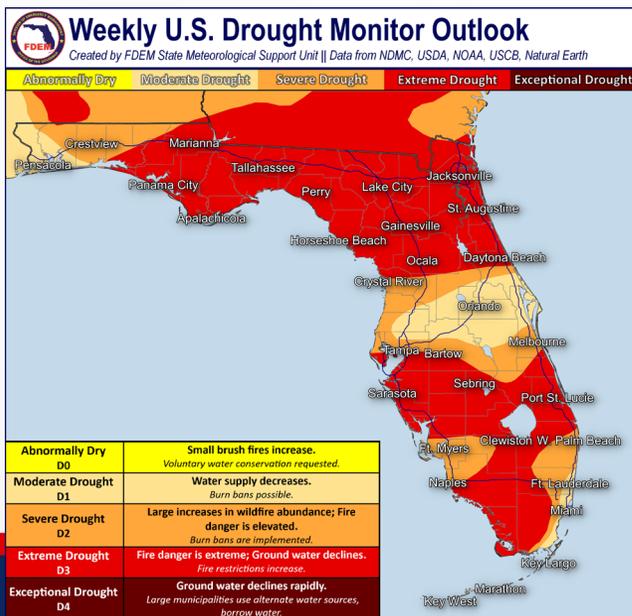
Drought & Fire Weather

Fire Weather: **Elevated to sensitive wildfire conditions** will continue to run as our primary weather headline today, with **Red Flad Warnings** to go into effect across East-Central Florida this afternoon. Breezy conditions across North and Central Florida can be expected today, with wind gusts of **20-25 mph** likely this afternoon; localized higher wind gusts reaching **30 mph** will be possible along the immediate Florida Panhandle coastline. While low-level moisture will gradually return to the Sunshine State, another afternoon featuring relative humidity values **at or below critical thresholds (35-45%)** will continue to promote wildfire ignition and spread. Lighter wind regimes later in the day and south of the I-4 corridor will allow for areas of **dense smoke** to pool near ongoing wildfires or burns. This is especially impactful near the large wildfire (**National Wildfire**) burning within Big Cypress National Preserve where periods of reduced visibility are likely along Alligator Alley (I-75) in Collier and Broward Counties. Tonight, areas of **fog and low clouds** will develop ahead of the rain activity; where fog and smoke combine, visibility reductions may become significant, creating hazardous nighttime driving conditions. According to the [Florida Forest Service](#), there are 82 active wildfires across the state burning approximately 4,062 acres.

Drought (2/26/26): Showers bypassed many areas of the Southeast United States, leading to slowly worsening drought conditions on this week's Drought Monitor update. The recent uptick in wildfires across Northeast Florida and the Florida Peninsula are a result of increasing both near-term and long-term rainfall deficits throughout the Sunshine State, and are truly indicative of how dry Florida's soil and fuel/vegetation is nearly statewide. 90-day rainfall totals have now trended **5-7" below normal** for this time of year across North and Southeast Florida, with rainfall deficits of **2-4" below normal** noted elsewhere across the state.

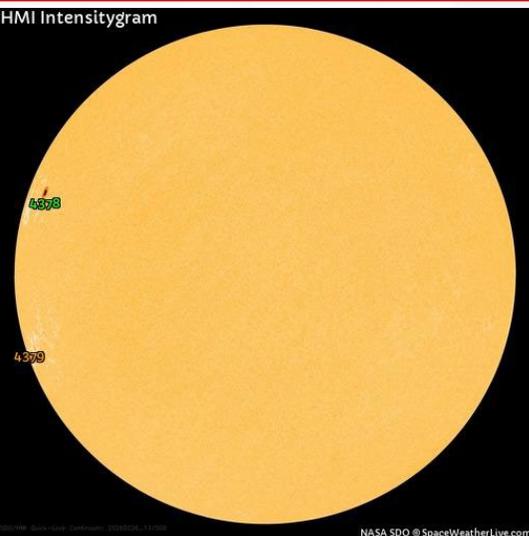
Extreme drought (level 3 of 4) areas have expanded across North Florida and into the Florida Panhandle, now stretching from coastal Walton County to Volusia County; **extreme drought (level 3 of 4)** persists south of the I-4 corridor across the southern Florida Peninsula. Other changes to note include the upgrade of all remaining areas of Abnormally Dry (*emerging drought*) conditions into **moderate drought (level 1 of 4)**, this now brings 100% of land area across Florida within a category of drought. Rainfall forecast over the next 7 days will certainly be beneficial for North and Central Florida; however, any observed rainfall has quite an uphill battle against the long-term drought. Unfortunately, rainfall totals remain sparse to widely isolated throughout the southern Florida Peninsula as frontal systems will not be able to remain intact as it advances through the state.

The **Keetch-Byram Drought Index** average for Florida is **493 (+2)** on a scale from 0 (very wet) to 800 (very dry). There are **32** Florida counties that have an average KBDI above 500 (drought/increased fire danger).

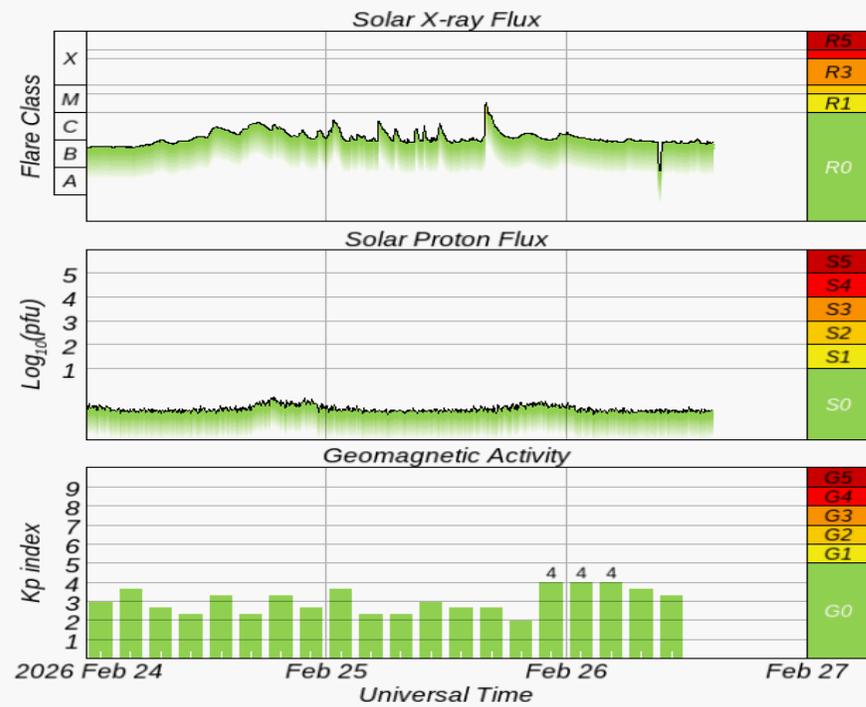




Space Weather

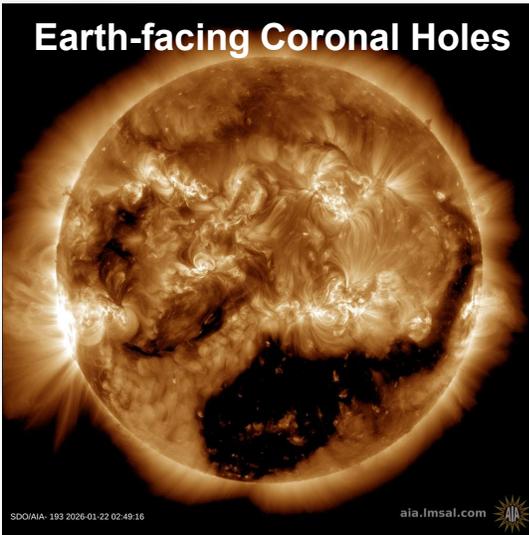


Current Sunspots



Solar Flare Risk	Active Watches & Warnings	Past 24 hours
M-class: 50%	Geomagnetic Storm: None	M2 Solar Flare
X-class: 5%	Radiation Storm: None	R1 Radio Blackout

48-Hour Geomagnetic Forecast	
2/26	2/27
Max Kp= 4 (G0)	Max Kp= 3 (G0)
Chance of minor activity = 10% severe activity = 1%	Chance of minor activity = 15% severe activity = 1%



Space Weather: Solar activity is expected to be at low levels through the end of the week, with a higher chance for isolated M-class (strong) activity associated with active sunspot region #4379. Minor to moderate (R1-R2) radio blackouts may accompany the stronger or more organized flare activity. Solar wind parameters will remain enhanced today due to coronal hole influences before returning to nominal levels Friday. New elevations within the solar wind will be possible later this week due to a potential early arrival of the Coronal Mass Ejection that occurred on 2/25. There is no organized risk for geomagnetic storming, and the overall space weather threat to Florida remains very low.



SWO Communications Systems & Contact Information

Equipment	Contact	Status	Comments
Phone:	800-320-0519, 850-815-4001, 850-591-0071 (Backup Cell)	Operational	
Backup Landline:	850-487-3234, 850-487-3228	Operational	
Fax:	850-815-4979	Operational	
Email:	SWP@em.myflorida.com	Operational	
SWO Tracker:	https://apps.floridadisaster.org/SWO/	Operational	
SLERS:	DEM Statewide	Operational	
FNARS:	WGY974	Operational	
Federal NAWAS:	State Watch Office	Operational	
EMnet Message:	FL.000- State Watch Office	Operational	
EMnet Voice:	FL SWP- State Watch Office	Operational	
IPAWS:	LP.1 Stations via Emnet	Operational	
FIN:	SOFEOC	Operational	
Satellite Phones:	MSAT 888-890-5178 or Iridium 480-263-8838	Operational	
Website:	http://www.floridadisaster.org	Operational	

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