Florida Division of Emergency Management
State Watch Office

Morning Situation Report

Saturday, February 28, 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	Lauren Warfield	(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	In Region	On-Call Status
Region 2: Enrique Gaston	In Region	On-Call Status
Region 3: Glen Hammers	In Region	On-Call Status
Region 4: Tara Kostich	In Region	On-Call Status
Region 5: Austin Beeghly	In Region	On-Call Status
Region 6: Paul Siddall	Out of Service	Leave (See Coverage)
Region 7: Kathryn Hollenbeck	Out of Service	Leave (See Coverage)
Region 8: Amber Durden	In Region	On-Call Status
Region 9: Brittany Bremer	In Region	On-Call Status
Region 10: Claudia Baker	Out of Service	Leave (See Coverage)

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

Status
Normal Operations
Out of Service / Unavailable

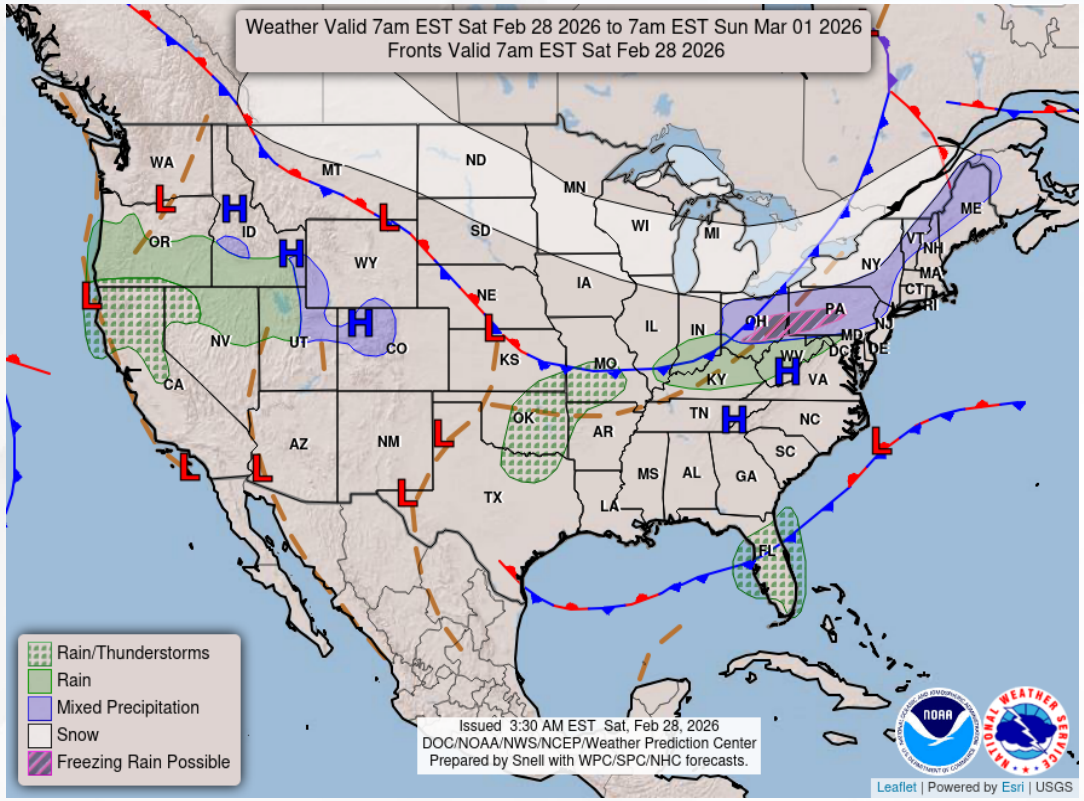
Recovery Regional Coordination Team

Team	County Location	Status / Activities
Region 1: Allison Blevins	In Region	Off & Monitoring
Region 2: Justin Lazzara	In Region	Off & Monitoring
Region 3: Kevin Blom	In Region	Off & Monitoring
Region 4: Joshua Saunders	In Region	Off & Monitoring
Region 5: Elizabeth Caison	In Region	Off & Monitoring
Region 6: Rick Rogers	Citrus	R6 Response On-Call
Region 7: Vacant	N/A	See Coverage
Region 8: Ja-Pheth Butler-Miller	Indian River	R7 Response On-Call
Region 9: Vacant	N/A	See Coverage
Region 10: Brian Lee	In Region	Off & Monitoring

Region 7 Coverage Provided By Recovery Coordinator 6 & 8
Region 9 Coverage Provided By Recovery Coordinator 6 & 8

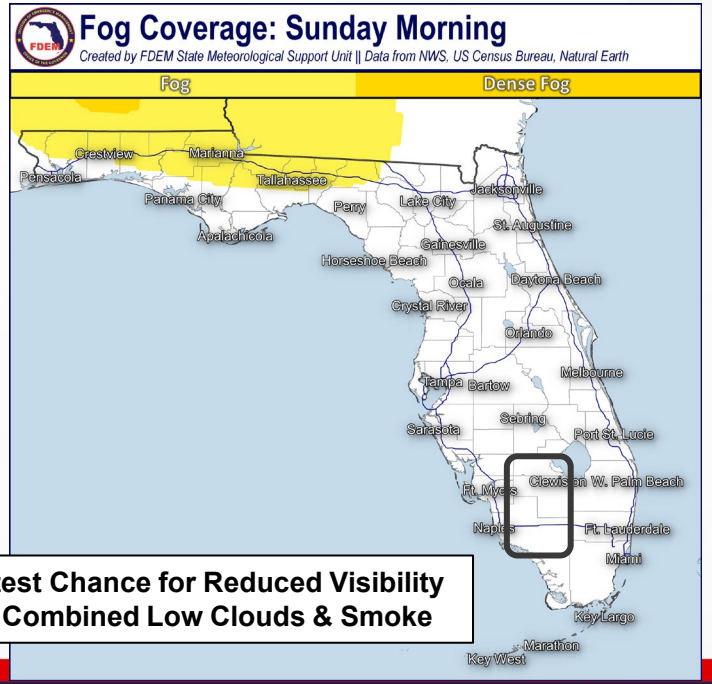
Status
Normal Operations
In Region / Delayed Response
Deployed / Delayed Response
Out of Service / Unavailable

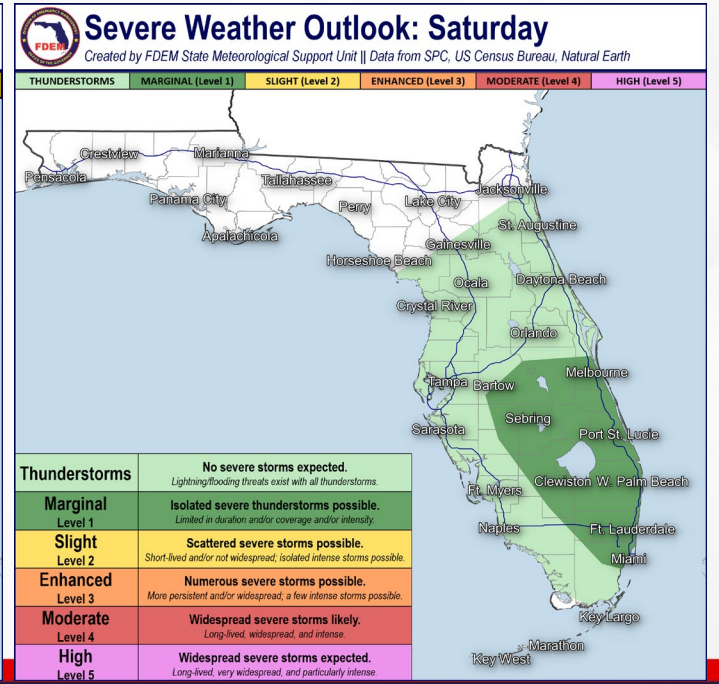
Meteorology Summary



Today's Weather Map

Threat	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	R10
Lightning					L	L	L	L	L	L
Tornado										
Damaging Wind							L	L	L	L
Hail							L	L	L	L
Flash Flooding							L	L		L
Freeze (Overnight)										
Fog (Overnight)	M	M	M	M	L	L	L	M	H	M
Wildfire	L	L	L	L	L	L	M	H	H	M
Rip Currents	H	H	L	M	M	L		M	L	L
Lake Okeechobee Elevation	12.25 ft. (2.28 ft. Below Normal)									
Keetch-Byram Drought Index	501 (+5) on a scale from 0 (very moist) to 800 (very dry)									





Greatest Chance for Reduced Visibility with Combined Low Clouds & Smoke

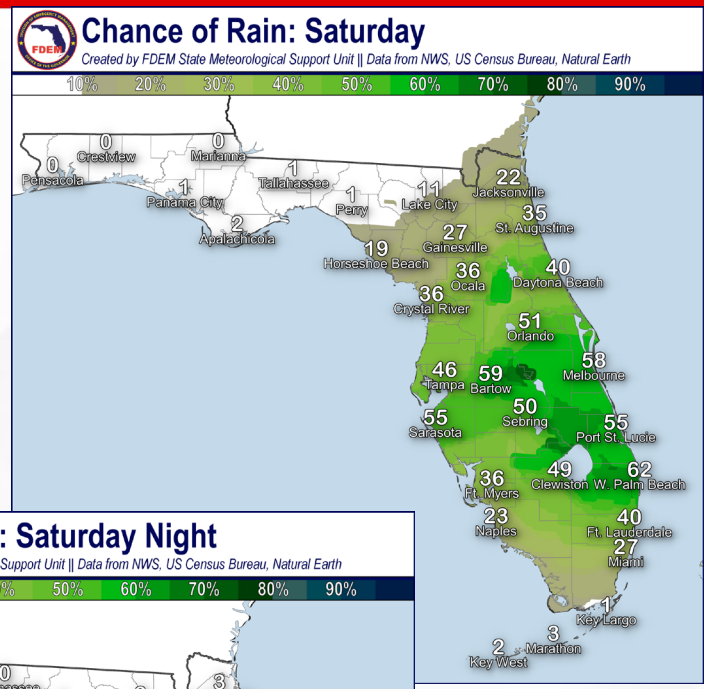
Meteorology Summary

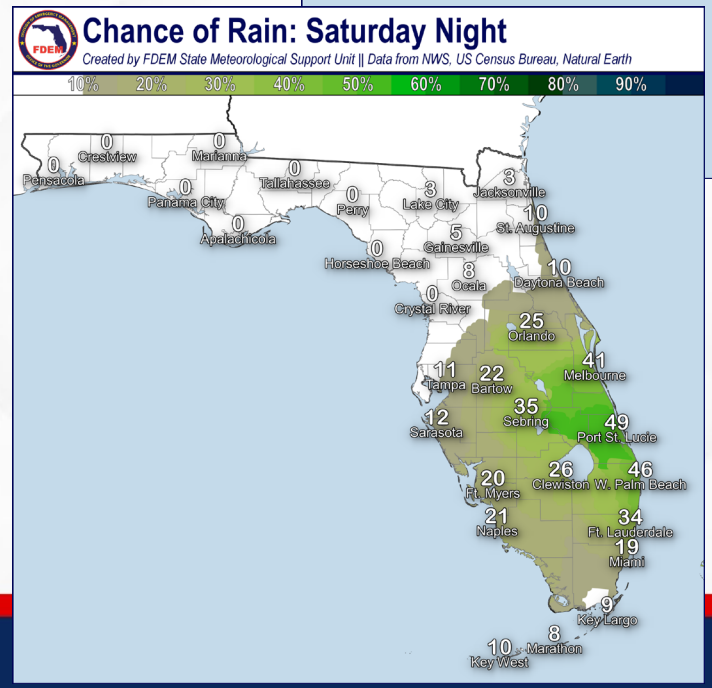
Statewide Overview, Next 24 Hours:

Areas of **patchy dense fog** have developed across the Panhandle and Big Bend this morning and will be slow to lift and dissipate by mid-morning. Otherwise, a sunny and dry day is expected across much of North Florida as a slow-moving frontal boundary remains draped through Central Florida. A few isolated to widely scattered showers and thunderstorms are expected to develop this afternoon throughout the Peninsula along this front (35-60% chance of rain), some of which could be **locally strong to severe**. A **Marginal Risk (level 1 of 5) for Severe Weather** has been outlooked for East-Central and Southeast Florida this afternoon for a few thunderstorms capable of producing gusty winds (40-60 mph), small hail, frequent lightning, and locally heavy downpours. Instances of **nuisance flooding** and **ponding of water** cannot be ruled out in urban and low-lying areas that receive repeated rounds of heavy downpours. Relative humidities will remain well above critical thresholds this afternoon throughout the state, though **sensitive** to **locally elevated wildfire conditions** will persist given the ongoing drought. Winds will remain generally light this afternoon, though gusty/erratic winds and lightning accompanied with thunderstorms could pose a threat for additional wildfire ignition/spread, especially throughout Central and South Florida.

High temperatures will reach the lower to middle 70s across the Panhandle and Big Bend this afternoon, middle 70s to lower 80s throughout Central Florida, and lower to middle 80s in South Florida. Portions of Northeast Florida will remain cooler today with onshore flow, keeping temperatures in the middle to upper 60s.

Shower and thunderstorm activity will begin to push offshore by this evening across Central and South Florida, though some activity may linger before midnight (25-50% chance of rain). Another night of **fog and low clouds** is expected throughout portions of the Panhandle and Big Bend, as well as locally throughout interior South Florida. Some of this fog could be **locally dense** and **Dense Fog Advisories** may be issued as conditions warrant. *Where dense fog and ongoing **wildfire smoke** mix, visibilities may be significantly reduced.* Low temperatures will fall into the upper 40s to lower 50s throughout North Florida, middle 50s to lower 60s in Central Florida, and middle to upper 60s in South Florida.





Coastal Hazards & Hydrology

Rip Currents: A **high risk of rip currents** is expected for most Florida Panhandle beaches with breezy onshore winds this afternoon. A **moderate risk** is expected for East Coast beaches, meanwhile a low risk remains for all West Coast and Southeast beaches. For the latest Rip Current Outlook, visit www.weather.gov/beach.

Marine Hazards: Calmer seas will return to the Panhandle today with surfing diminishing back down to 1-2'. Waves of 1-3' are expected for all other West Coast and East Coast beaches.

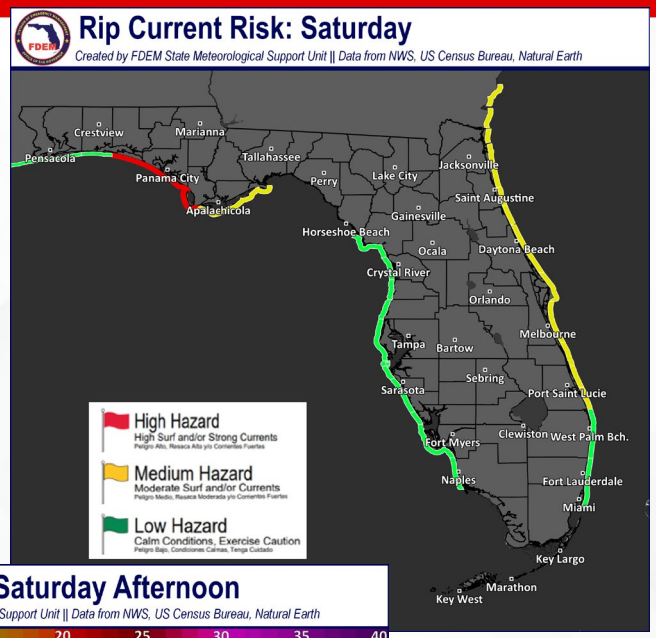
Red Tide was observed at background conditions in two samples from Bay County. It was not observed along the Florida East Coast or Southwest Florida (valid 2/27/2026).

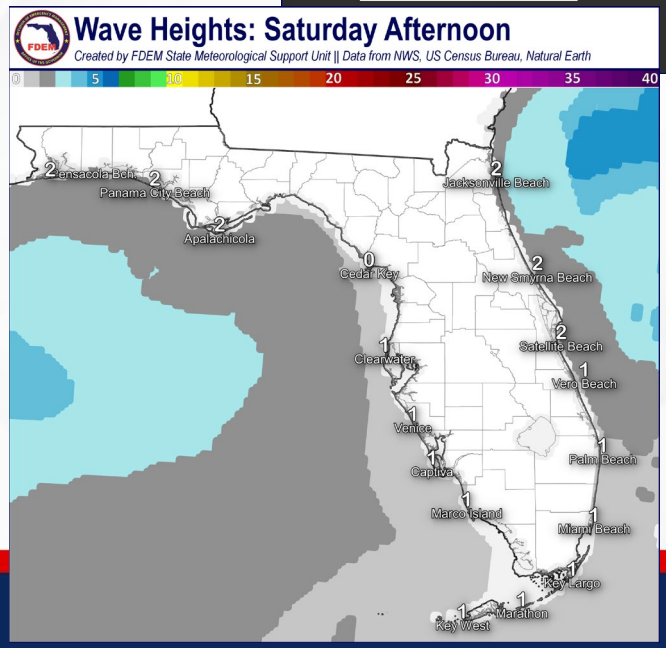
Coastal Flooding: There is no risk for coastal flooding today.

Flash Flooding: There is no organized risk for flash flooding today. Scattered showers and embedded thunderstorms may bring a few **locally heavy downpours** to portions of Central and South Florida through tonight. Rainfall totals will generally remain below 1", though **localized totals** upwards of 3" cannot be ruled out in areas that receive repeated rounds of heavy downpours.

Riverine Flooding: The Shoal River near Crestview and Bruce Creek near Redbay across the Panhandle have reached, or are forecast to reach, Action State (*bank-full)* this weekend due to recent rainfall. There are no other riverine concerns across Florida. For more information, visit the River Forecast Center.

Lake Okeechobee's average elevation is 12.25 feet, which is within the operational band and is 2.28 feet below normal for this time of year.



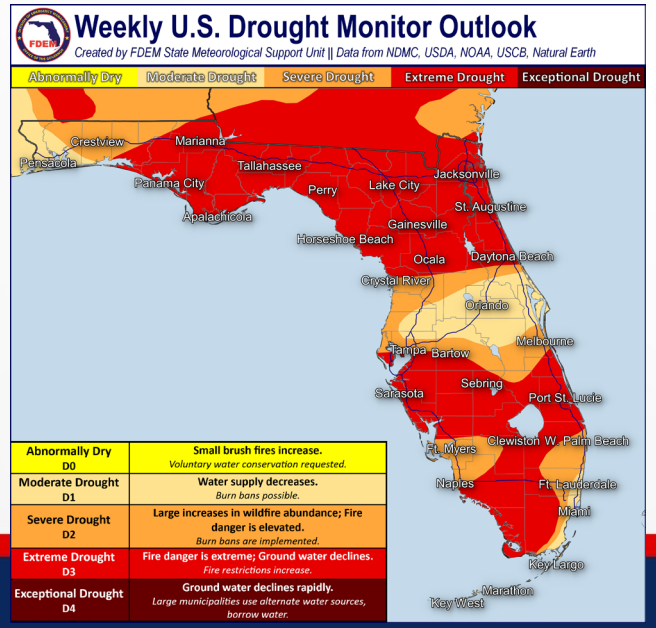


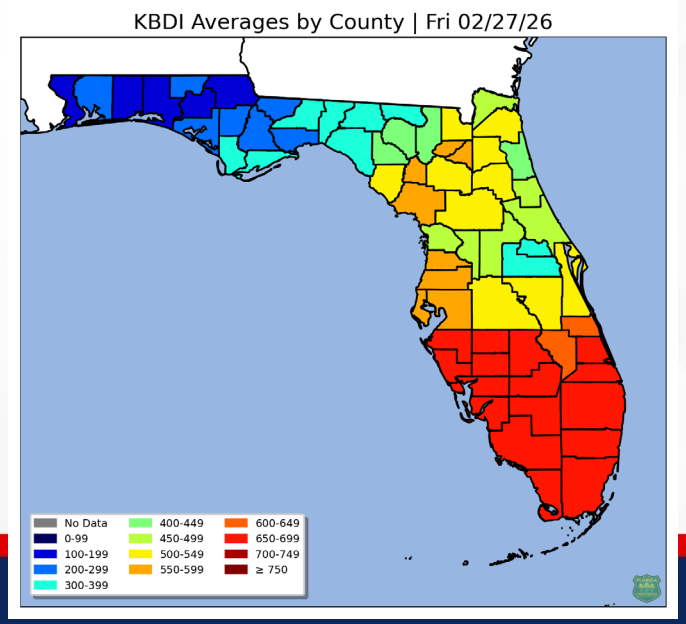
Drought & Fire Weather

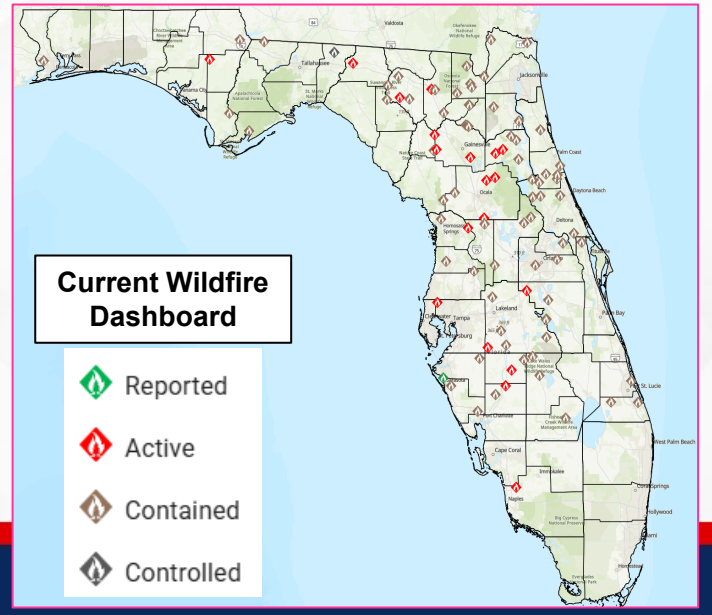
Fire Weather: **Sensitive** to **locally elevated wildfire conditions** are expected throughout much of the state where ongoing long-term drought persists. However, scattered showers and embedded thunderstorms will develop across much of Central and South Florida today which will bring some beneficial wetting rainfall. Moist southerly flow will keep relative humidities well above critical thresholds throughout much of the state, though pockets of **lower relative humidities** cannot be ruled out, including across interior South Florida in the vicinity of the **National Wildfire** in the Big Cypress National Preserve. Areas of **dense wildfire smoke** will pool near and around active wildfires with light south winds this afternoon which may lead to reduced visibilities along Alligator Alley (I-75) in Collier and Broward counties. *Lightning and gusty/erratic winds may accompany any stronger thunderstorm activity which can lead to additional wildfire ignition or spread.* Tonight, areas of **fog and low clouds** may develop across portions of the Panhandle, Big Bend, and interior South Florida; where fog and smoke combine, visibility reductions may become significant, creating hazardous nighttime driving conditions. According to the Florida Forest Service, there are 83 active wildfires across the state burning approximately 5,280 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 brings100% 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.

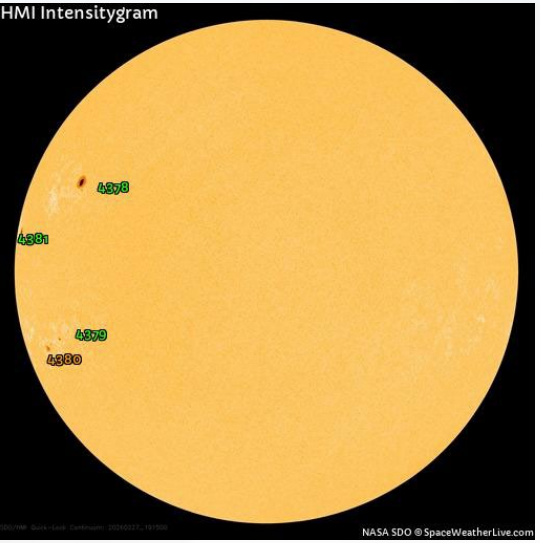
The **Keetch-Byram Drought Index** average for Florida is **501 (+5)** on a scale from 0 (very wet) to 800 (very dry). There are **36** Florida counties that have an average KBDI above 500 (drought/increased fire danger).

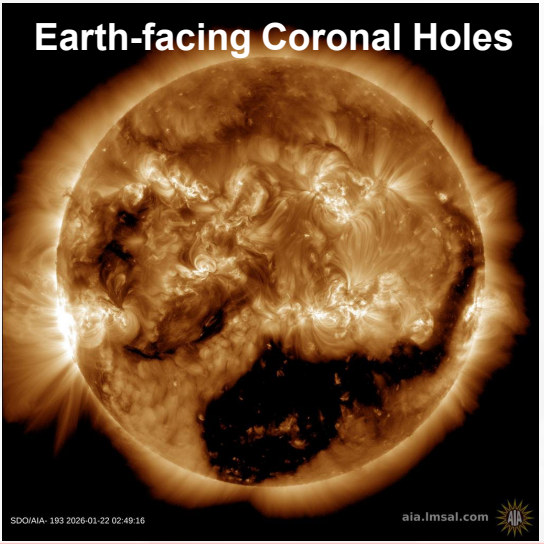




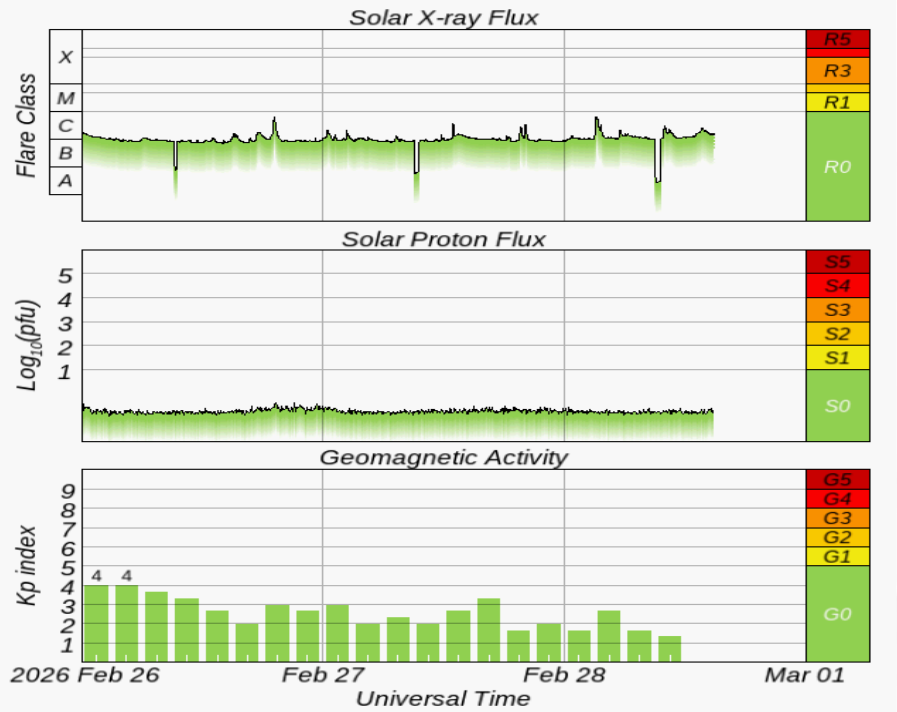


Space Weather





Current Sunspots



Solar Flare Risk	Active Watches & Warnings	Past 24 hours
M-class: 25%	Geomagnetic Storm: None	C6 Solar Flare
X-class: 5%	Radiation Storm: None	No Radio Blackout

48-Hour Geomagnetic Forecast

2/28	3/1
Max Kp= 3 (G0)	Max Kp= 4 (G0)
Chance of minor activity = 5% severe activity = 1%	Chance of minor activity = 15% severe activity = 1%

Space Weather: Solar activity is expected to remain at low levels with a chance for isolated M-class (strong) activity associated with active sunspot regions #4380 and #4381. Minor to moderate (R1-R2) radio blackouts may accompany the stronger or more organized flare activity. Solar wind conditions will remain enhanced through the weekend due to the arrival of a Coronal Mass Ejection (CME) that left the Sun on 2/25, as well as the arrival of coronal hole influences. The Earth's geomagnetic field is expected to continue at quiet to unsettled levels today, followed by active conditions on Sunday and Monday due to the CME arrival. Minor (G1) storming may accompany the strongest periods of activity. The overall space weather threat to Florida is 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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Jay Griffin

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