

North Carolina Drought Update

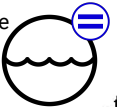
For the assessment period ending March 17, 2020

Note: updates will be issued monthly when the state is **not** experiencing dry or drought conditions.

This Week's Drought Monitor of North Carolina Map

From the US Drought Monitor, authored by Deborah Bathke (National Drought Mitigation Center) with input from the North Carolina Drought Management Advisory Council (ncdrought.org)

Many reservoirs continue to be at or above target levels, though **releases have been lowered to account for decreasing inflows.**



Reports from CoCoRaHS Condition Monitoring observers suggest that while rain would be welcomed, **no on-the-ground dry weather impacts are occurring at this time.**



In parts of the Piedmont and Coastal Plain, 7- and 28-day average streamflows have declined over a very short time. **Nearly 40% of 7-day average flows are below normal, compared to 0% at the beginning of March.**



A well located in Grantham (Wayne County) is below normal for this time of year. All other wells in the state indicate **groundwater conditions are near or above normal, although levels are declining.**

Last Week's Drought Map



A PRODUCT OF **PROJECT NIGHTHAWK**
<https://climate.ncsu.edu/nighthawk>



Statewide Condition Summary

What's Changed? The state continues to be free of drought or Abnormally Dry (D0) conditions, according to the US Drought Monitor.

What's New? As spring has started to emerge across the state, so too has a shift in our weather pattern. Precipitation amounts have lagged for the past few weeks, and temperatures are warming. Though conditions are holding steady for now, there is the potential for things to dry out quickly in the coming weeks.

What's Next? Little precipitation (<0.5") is expected across the state over the next week, combined with a forecast for above-normal temperatures.

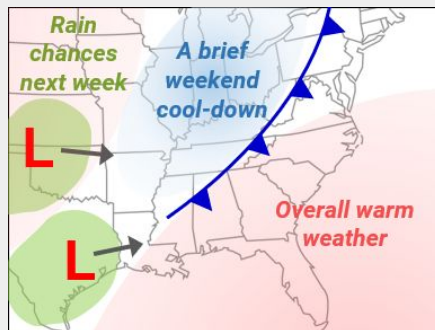
Statewide Coverage By Category

Category	Coverage This Week	Change Since Last Week
D0: Abnormally Dry	0.00%	0.00%
D1: Moderate Drought	0.00%	0.00%
D2: Severe Drought	0.00%	0.00%
D3: Extreme Drought	0.00%	0.00%
D4: Exceptional Drought	0.00%	0.00%

Short-Range Outlook for North Carolina

Week 1:

March 19 to 25, 2020



Up and Down (and Up) Temperatures



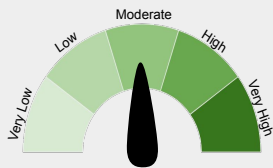
High temperatures will reach the upper 70s to low 80s on Thursday and Friday before falling into the 50s behind Saturday's cold front. Expect highs to rebound into the 70s by next Wednesday.

High Winds and Low Pressure



Ahead of the cold front, expect winds gusting up to 30 mph on Friday. That front will only bring light rain, but better chances may come with a series of low pressure systems early next week, possibly totalling 1 to 1.5 inches.

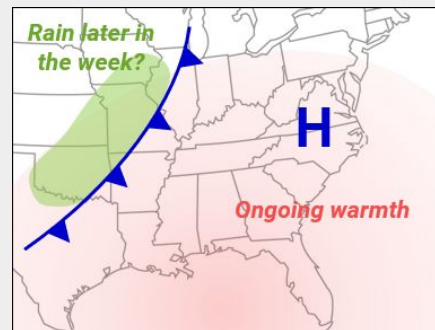
Forecast Confidence



The greatest uncertainty surrounds how much our temperatures warm up and how quickly rain moves in by the middle of next week.

Week 2:

March 26 to April 1, 2020



Warmer Weather Continues



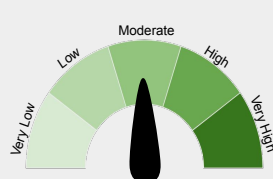
Expect highs to remain in the upper 60s to low 70s for most of this week with no foreseeable frost or freeze threats through the end of March. Typical last freeze dates across North Carolina are in late March or early April.

Building Rain Chances



After a dry start to this week with high pressure overhead by Sunday, March 29, we could see several weather systems moving through early in the following week, potentially bringing more rainfall.

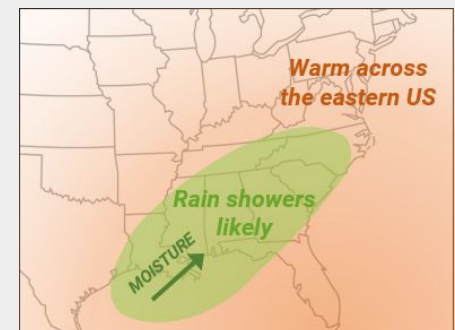
Forecast Confidence



Most forecasts are in good agreement about an overall warm pattern, but it's too early to say exactly when and how much rain we might receive.

Weeks 3-4:

April 2 to 15, 2020



Spring Stays Warm



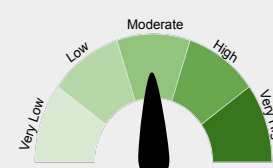
A ridge in the jet stream over the eastern US favors above-normal temperatures for much of this two-week period. Average highs in North Carolina in early April are in the upper 60s to low 70s.

Rain Remains Likely



Even with high pressure in place, Gulf moisture could spread north to fuel regular rainfall across the Southeast US. As we move into the spring, our precipitation will increasingly come from pop-up showers and storms.

Forecast Confidence



Models remain consistent with the overall atmospheric and temperature pattern, so a warm start to April is looking likely.