

North Carolina Drought Update

Created By:

North Carolina
Drought Management Advisory Council
www.ncdrought.org

 NORTH CAROLINA
CLIMATE OFFICE
climate.ncsu.edu

 NC STATE
@NCSCO

For the assessment period ending **Feb. 3, 2026**
From the US Drought Monitor, with input from the NC DMAC

The Main Takeaway

While most of the state saw significant snow last week, low liquid totals and a slow snow melt have prevented any immediate improvements on this week's map.

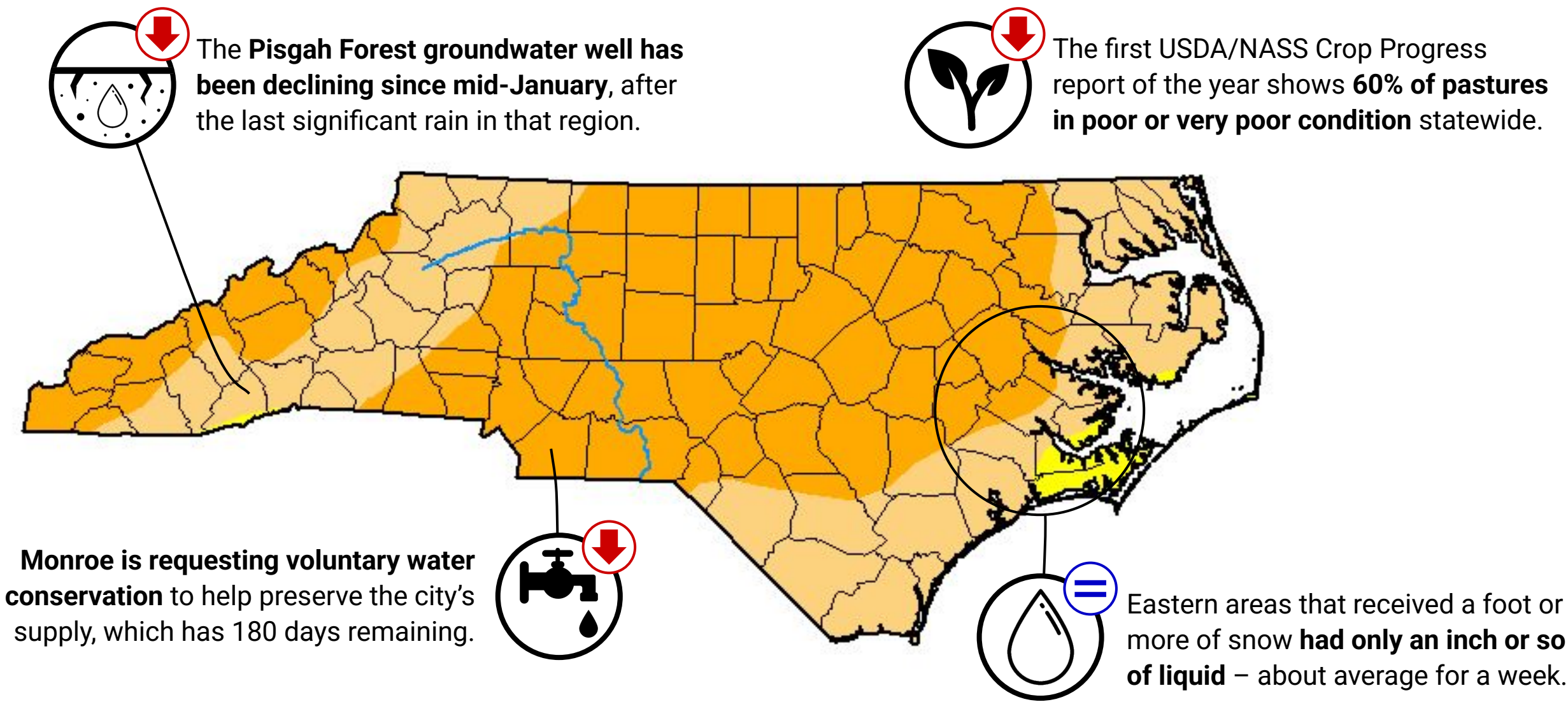
This Week's Summary

Despite seeing the biggest snow in decades in parts of the state, it has had little to no impact on our drought situation so far. Cold temperatures since the storm have delayed the snow melt, and due to the frozen ground, some snow is subliming – or converting from ice to vapor – rather than soaking into the soil. That means lakes and streams haven't seen any boost yet.

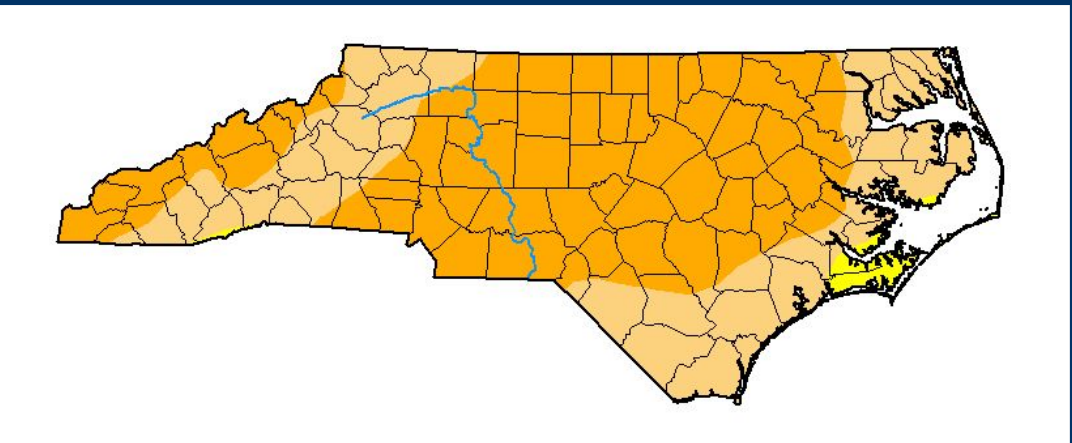
Current Precipitation Deficits

Since November 1, most of the state is more than 4 inches below normal, including a 6.55-inch deficit in Charlotte for its driest Nov/Dec/Jan period on record.

For your local drought status, visit www.ncdrought.org



Last Week's Drought Status



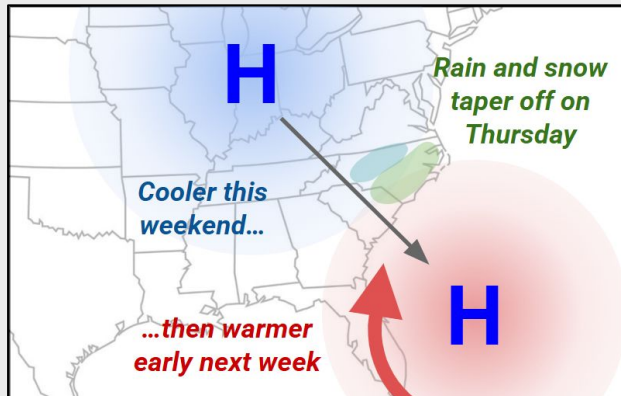
Statewide Coverage by Category

Category	Current Coverage	Change Since Last Week
D0: Abnormally Dry	2.04%	0.00%
D1: Moderate Drought	35.71%	0.00%
D2: Severe Drought	62.25%	0.00%
D3: Extreme Drought	0.00%	0.00%
D4: Exceptional Drought	0.00%	0.00%

Short-Range Outlook for North Carolina

Week 1:

February 5 to 11, 2026

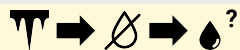


Another Weekend Chill



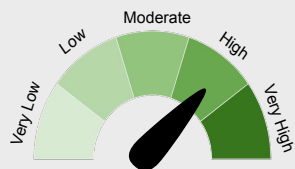
After a brief warm-up into the upper 40s on Friday, the next Arctic high pressure system will dive south, cooling us off again this weekend. Once that high shifts offshore, our temperatures will rebound, with highs approaching 60°F by Tuesday and Wednesday.

Dry Weather Returns



After any lingering rain and snow showers dissipate on Thursday morning, we will enter a dry pattern this weekend as high pressure passes overhead. The warmer southwesterly flow returning early next week could fuel scattered rain showers by Wednesday.

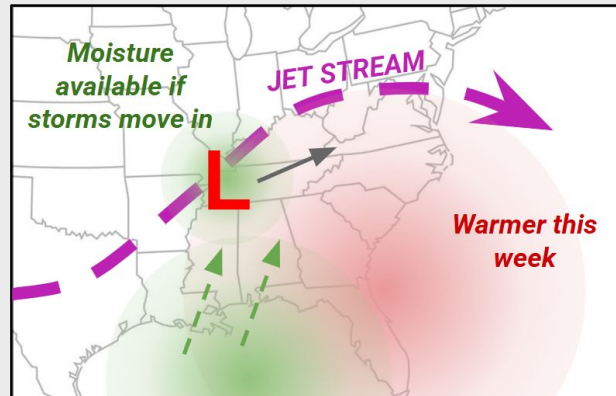
Forecast Confidence



While we could see some slick spots on Thursday morning, impacts should be minimal after that with high confidence in a quiet week.

Week 2:

February 12 to 18, 2026

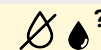


A Warming Trend



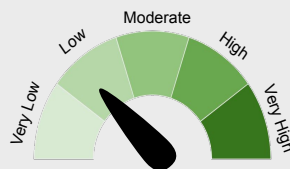
Jet stream ridging is expected to build over the eastern US through mid-February, finally breaking our cold pattern after almost a month. Although some seasonably cold nights will still be possible, our warmest afternoons could reach well into the 60s.

Tracking Possible Rainfall



While the upper-level high pressure or ridging pattern over us should still favor dry weather for most of the week, recent forecasts have shown a potential rain chance from a storm system tracking across the Appalachians and pulling in moisture out of the Gulf.

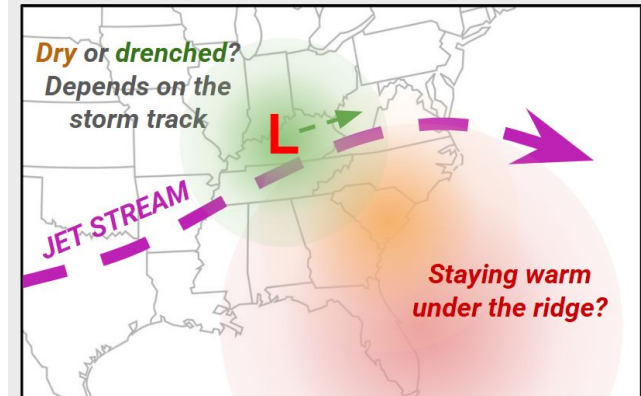
Forecast Confidence



With lots of uncertainty about the strength and duration of this ridge, or where the storm track will set up, confidence is low.

Weeks 3-4:

Feb. 19 to Mar. 4, 2026

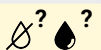


Spring Arrives Early?



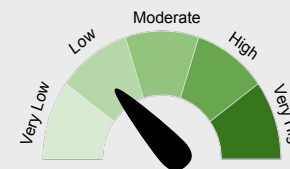
The late-month forecasts have shifted over the past week, initially showing cooler weather but now favoring ongoing warmth. For now, a continued ridging pattern over the Southeast US is most likely, which would keep our temperatures above normal.

A Razor's Edge Rainfall Outlook



As in Week 2, our precipitation chances in late February and early March will likely come down to how far south the storm track dips. If those storms stay to the north, we'll be mostly dry. However, any southward shift could lead to better rain chances.

Forecast Confidence



Still-evolving forecasts for the large-scale patterns have big implications for our temperatures and precipitation by late month.