

Northwest Florida Water Management District

Hydrologic Conditions Update March 28, 2012

Executive Summary

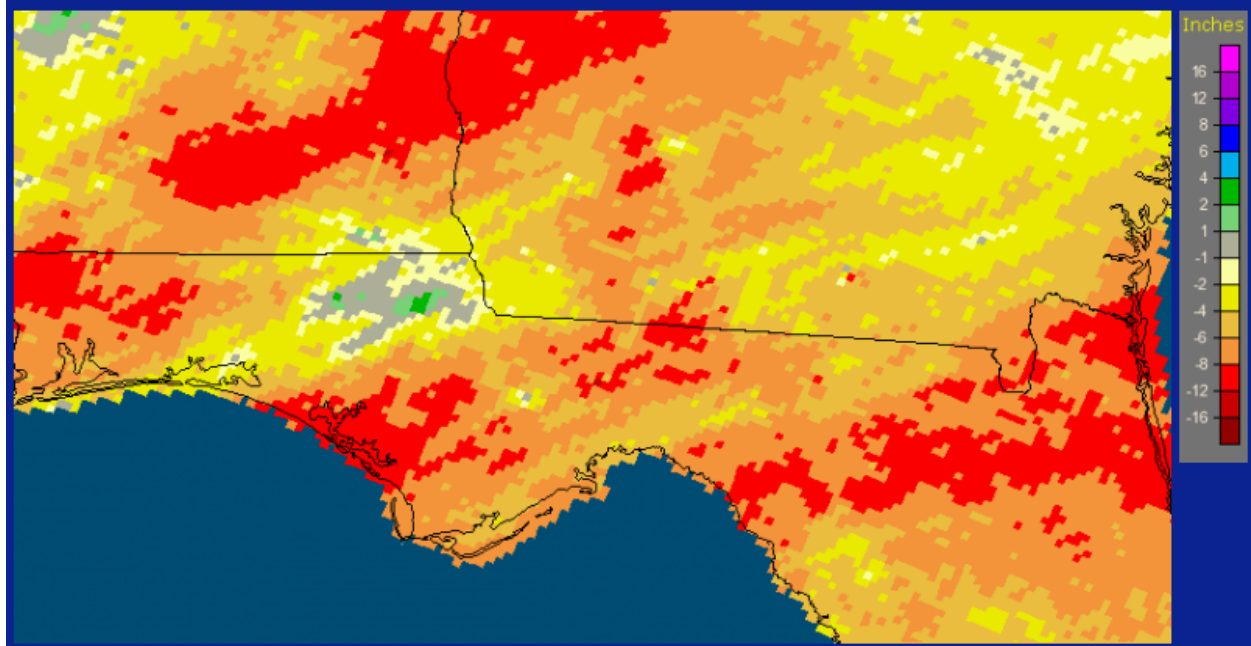
The Northwest Florida Water Management District remains under a water shortage warning calling for voluntary reduction in water use. Central and Eastern portions of the District received near-record low rainfall for the year 2011. La Niña climatic conditions (cooler surface temperatures in the Pacific Ocean that result in warmer drier conditions than normal in the southeast) were in effect for most of the 2011 calendar year. La Niña eased significantly during February 2012 and neutral conditions are expected by the end of April 2012 and predicted to remain through the summer. The current forecast calls for warmer than normal conditions during the spring months and a return to normal rainfall patterns during the spring season, which is typically a dry time of year for the region. Storage within streams, lakes, and aquifers are currently low and lower than normal conditions are expected to continue through the spring in the panhandle.

Precipitation Summary

Rainfall was below normal for most areas in northwest Florida during the winter season. Above normal rainfall occurred in portions of the central Panhandle during January through March. Rainfall in January was about 40% below normal, February was 5% below normal, and March was 37% below normal, on average, across the panhandle.

North Florida: March 28, 2012 - 90 Day Departure from Normal Precipitation

Tallahassee, FL (TAE): Current 90-Day Departure from Normal Precipitation
Valid at 3/28/2012 1200 UTC - Created 3/28/12 16:17 UTC

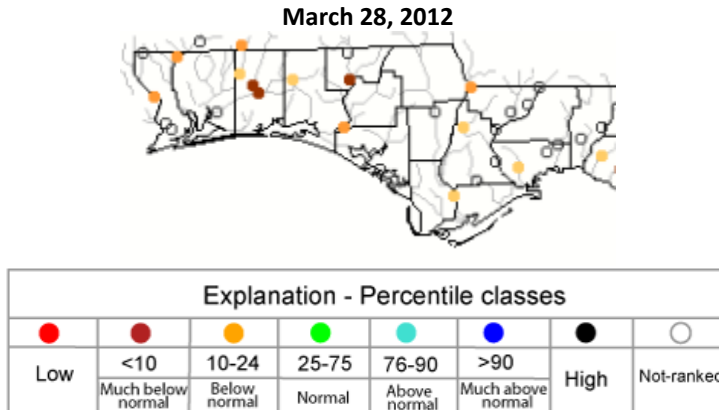


Source: <http://water.weather.gov/precip/>

River and Stream Flows and Levels

Stream flows and levels for most major rivers and streams in the panhandle have been below normal during the winter season compared with historical flows. Flows slowly started falling below normal in mid-March 2011 across most of the panhandle in response to below normal rainfall. In the western and central Panhandle, a rainfall event on February 19-20, 2012 brought flows and levels up above seasonal normal. The central and eastern areas of the Panhandle responded to rainfall during early March with levels increasing above the seasonal normal for a short period otherwise stream flows have consistently been below normal over the past three months.

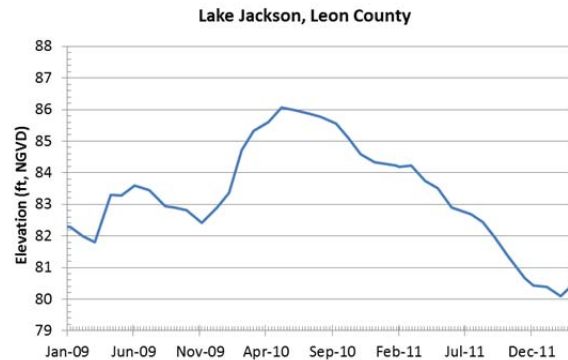
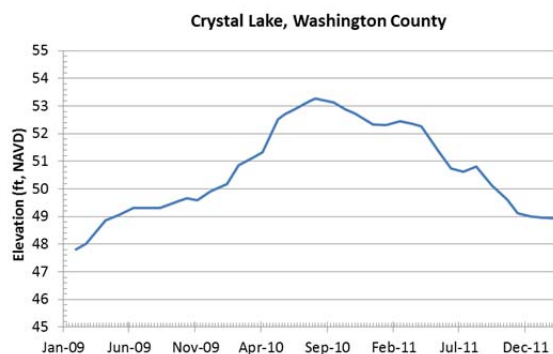
Map of 28-day average stream flow compared to historical stream flow for the day of the year (NFWWMD)

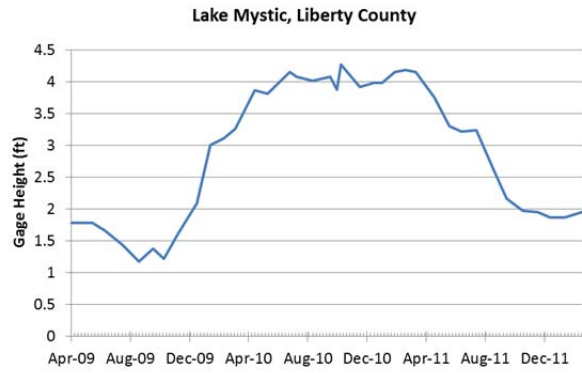
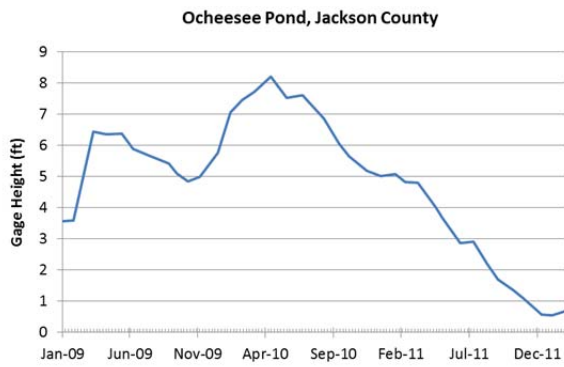


Source: <http://waterwatch.usgs.gov/new/index.php?m=pa07d&r=fl&w=map>

Lake Levels

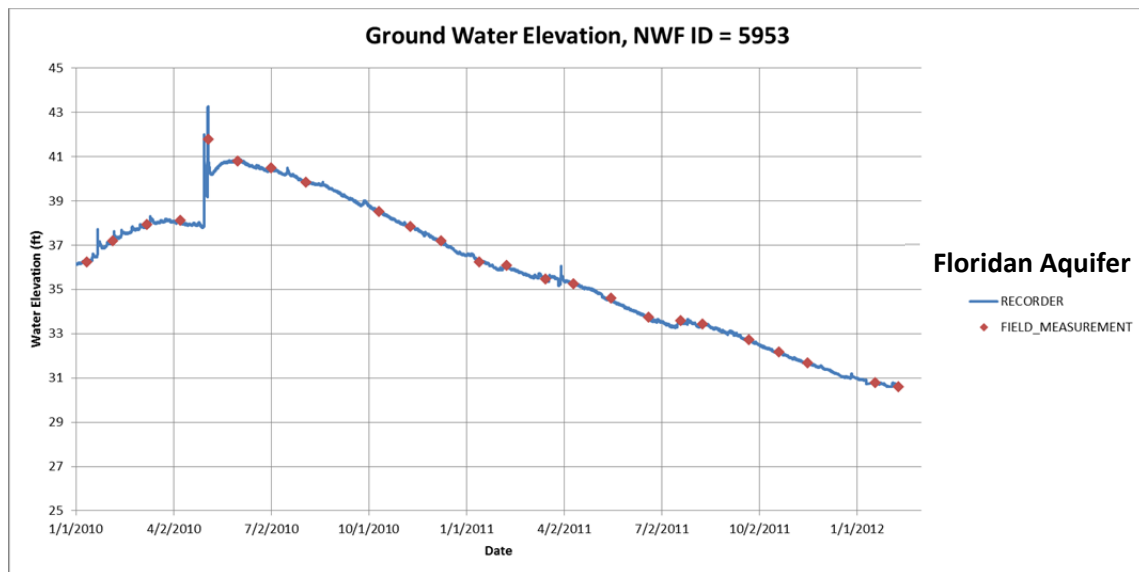
Water levels have generally been declining in lakes District-wide since the summer of 2010. During the winter months, both lakes with prominent surface drainage contribution and lakes with ground water recharge (such as the Sand Hill lakes and Lake Mystic) have continued to decline. However, current lake levels are generally higher than the low levels brought about by the 2000-2001 and 2006-2007 drought periods.

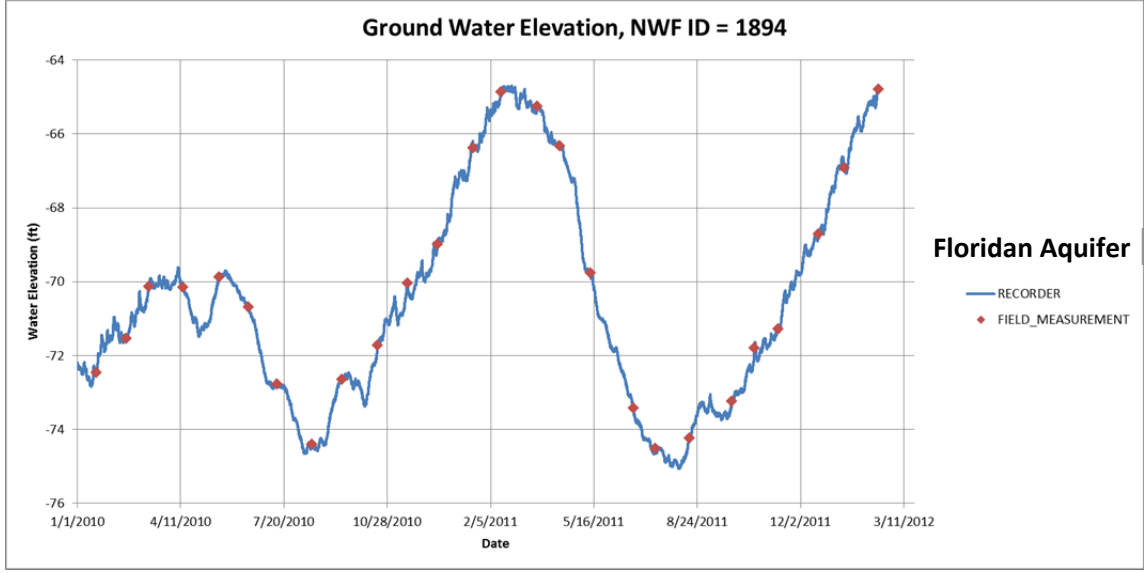
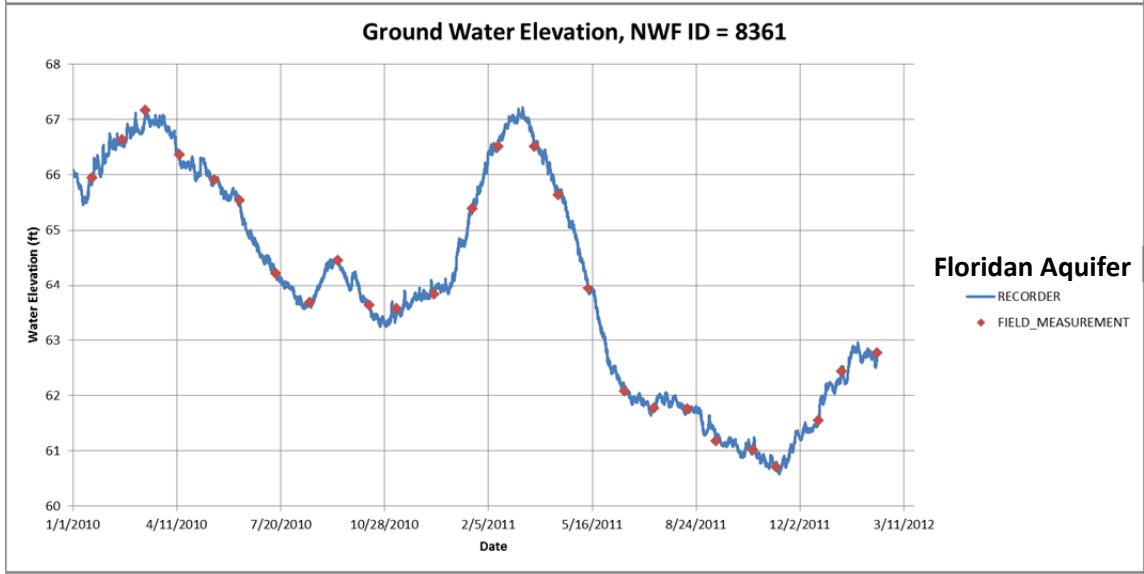
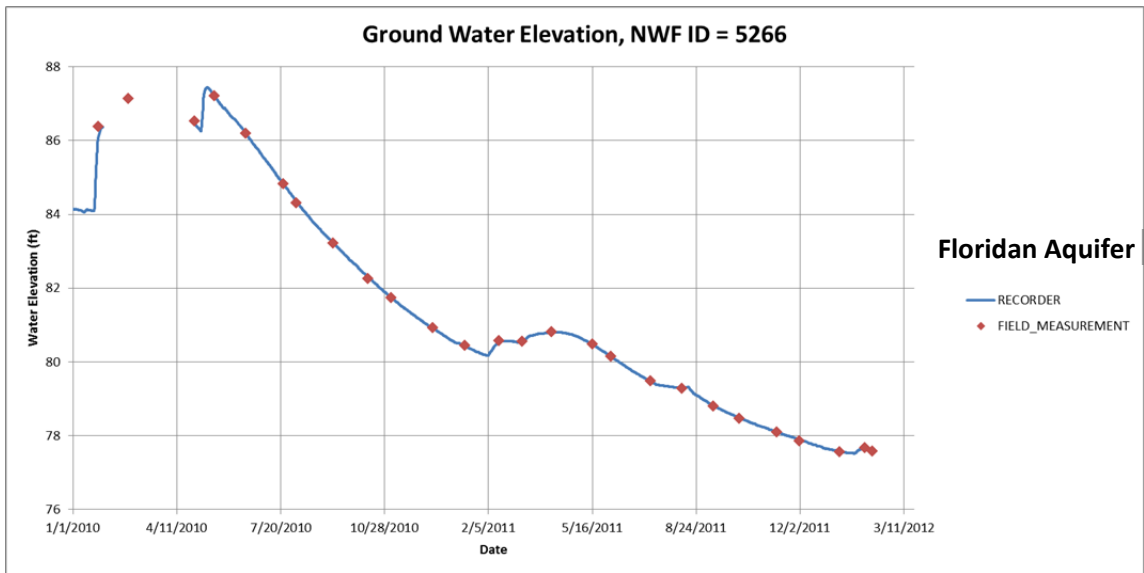


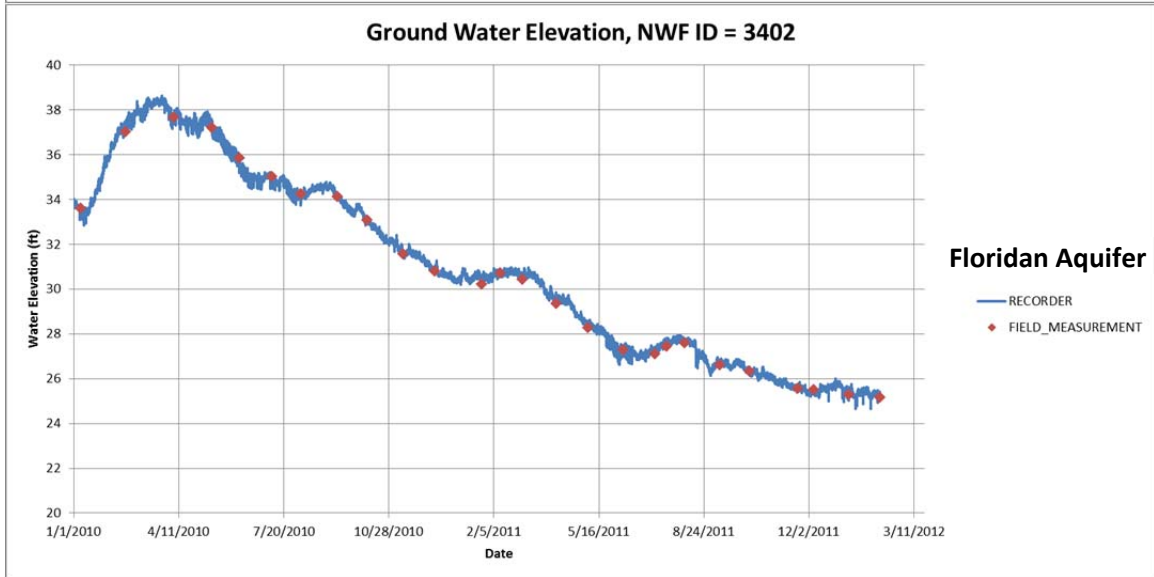
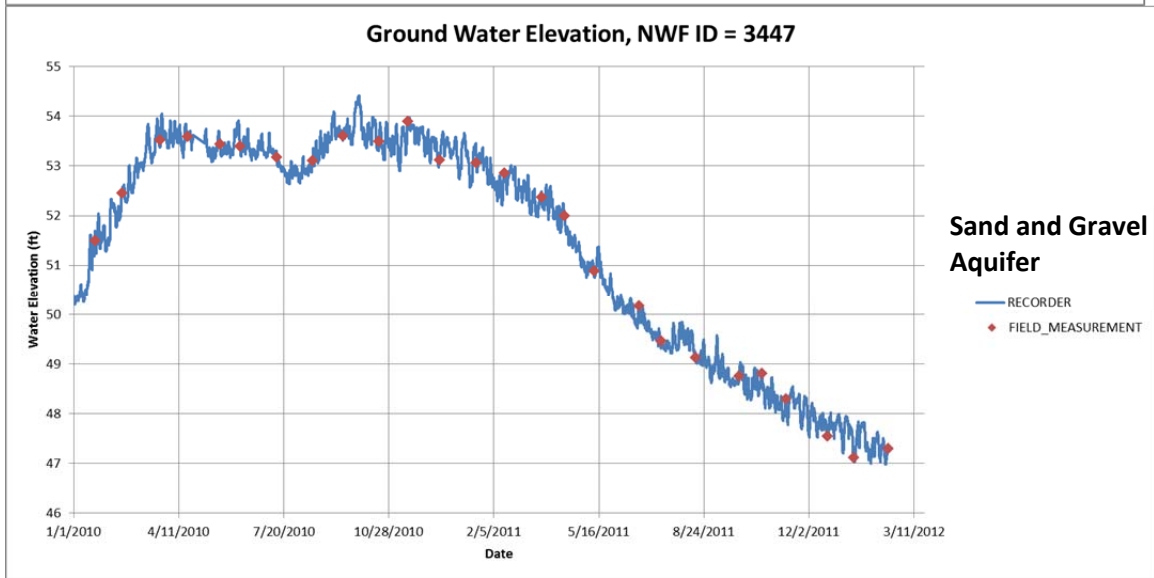
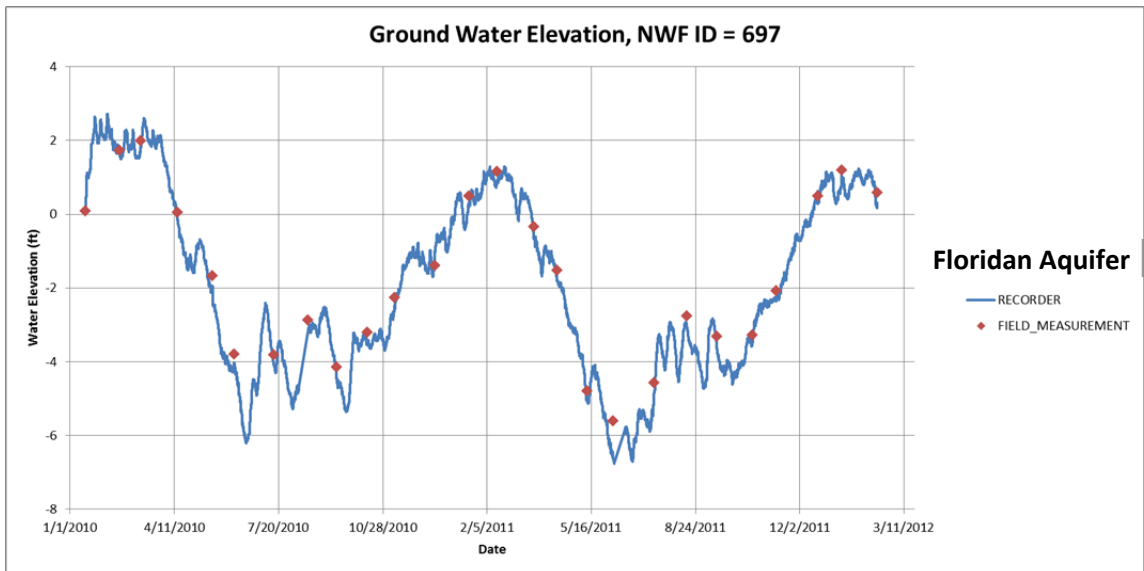


Ground Water Levels

Ground water levels in the Floridan and Sand and Gravel Aquifers have declined overall since the beginning of 2011, reflecting the below average rainfall for the year. In addition, due to the ongoing drought, aquifer levels have declined significantly from the recent highs measured during the summer of 2010. Seasonal reduction of ground water withdrawals over the winter months has resulted in increased aquifer levels in some areas.





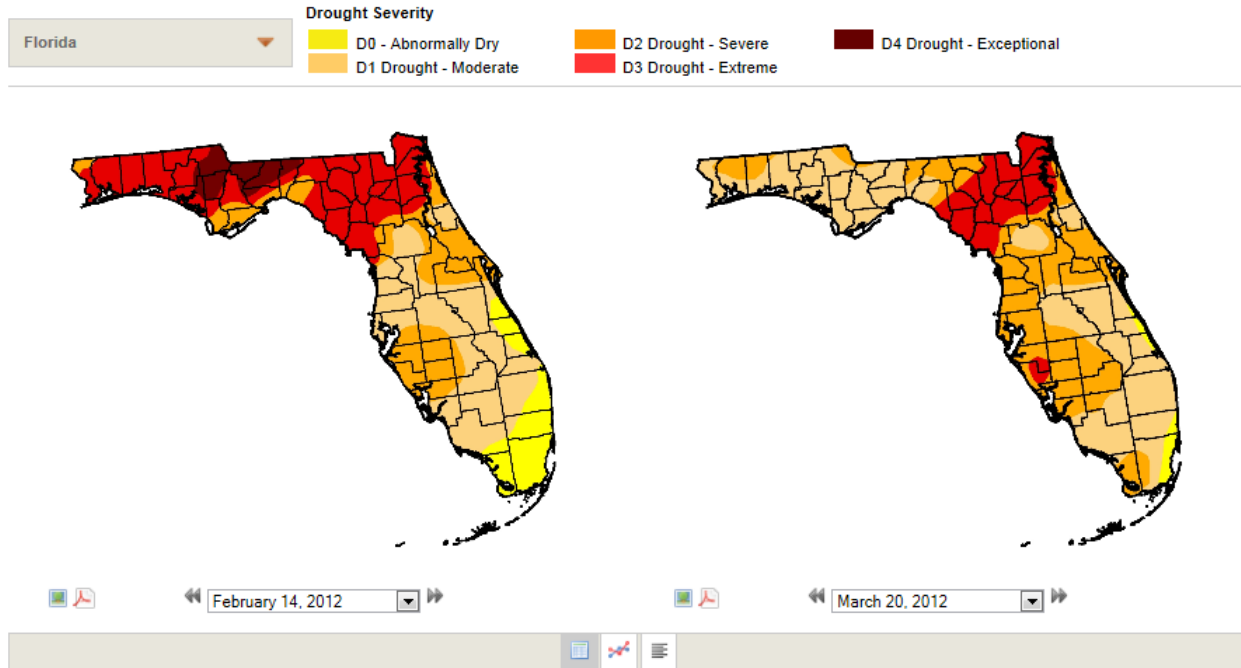


Drought Report

Rainfall in February and March eased the rainfall deficit across the District and improved the extreme and exceptional drought conditions of mid-winter. Overall, the District is classified in moderate drought with portions of Jackson, Jefferson, Okaloosa, and Santa Rosa counties classified in severe drought. Drought conditions are expected to persist through the spring months.

U.S. Drought Monitor

Florida



Week	Nothing	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
February 14, 2012	0.00	100.00	88.60	57.29	35.33	5.57
March 20, 2012	0.00	100.00	97.81	52.28	15.18	0.00

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements.

<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu>



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Eric Luebehusen, USDA