

7. As of April 1, 2026, hydrologic conditions indicate that there is an increased likelihood that there will be insufficient water to meet the estimated user demands or to protect the water resource from serious harm in all counties within the District, as well as in unincorporated areas of Alachua and Levy counties within other water management District boundaries, in accordance with interagency agreements in place. Surface water conditions are below normal to much below normal, Upper Floridan Aquifer levels are below the 20th percentile, and rainfall in each District county is deficient.

8. Drought indicators are summarized as follows:

Rainfall

- For the period April 1, 2025, through March 31, 2026, for the fourteen counties within the District, there was an average rainfall deficit of approximately 20 inches based on records beginning in 1932.
- The 12-month rainfall ending March 29, 2026, is in the lowest 10 percentile on average of all 12-month periods, with 13 counties showing below 5 percent of all 12-month periods.

Groundwater Conditions

- Of the 92 long-term upper Floridan monitor wells polled on March 28, 2026, seventeen had levels in the lowest 10 percent of all records, considered extremely low. Sixty-one other wells had levels in the lowest 25 percent of all records.

Surface water Conditions

- The Suwannee River at Branford gage monitors flow contributed by 79 percent of the 9,973-square mile Suwannee River drainage area and has continuous records since 1931. The average flow rate on March 29, 2026, was in the lowest 10 percent of all 7-day and 8-week average flows.
- The Santa Fe River near Fort White gage monitors flow contributed by 74 percent of the 1,374-square mile Santa Fe River drainage area and has continuous records since 1927. The average flow rate on March 29, 2026, was in the lowest 5 percent of all 7-day and 8-week average flows.
- The Econfina River near Perry was in the lowest 10 percent of all 7-day and 8-week average flows as of March 29, 2026.
- The Steinhatchee River near Cross City was in the lowest 30 percent of all 7-day flows and the lowest 20 percent of all 8-week flows ending March 29, 2026.
- The average flow rate on March 29, 2026, for the Withlacoochee near Pinetta was in the lowest 35 percent for all 7-day and the lowest 20 percent for all 8-week average flows.
- As of March 29, 2026, flow rates for other gauging stations in the upper Santa Fe River basin at Worthington Springs, near Graham, and on the New River are near long-term daily minimum flow records based on USGS statistics.

Drought Indices

- As of April 2, 2026, the U.S. Drought Monitor for Florida designates the District within either the Extreme Drought (D3) or Exceptional Drought (D4) categories. Drought impacts in neighboring water management districts are equally intense and have prompted Southwest Florida Water Management District to issue a Phase III Water Shortage Order for the entire area of the district. The U.S. Drought Monitor monthly outlook for April 2026 shows drought persisting within the District.
- The Long-Term Composite Drought Indicators Map published by the National Drought Mitigation Center shows North Florida with areas of severe drought, moderate drought, and abnormally dry for the week of March 30, 2026.