

# Regional Drought and Water Supply Status

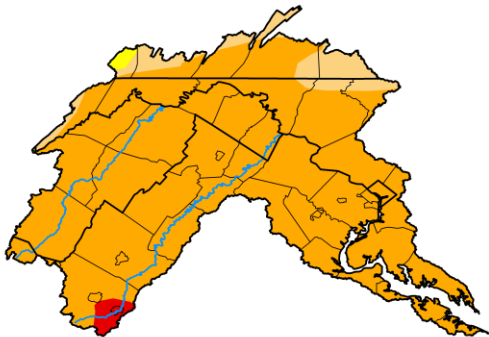
May 2026

## Summary of Current Conditions in the COG Region

Based on the latest U.S. Drought Monitor (map released May 7, 2026; data valid May 5, 2026), drought conditions persist across much of the Potomac watershed. According to the U.S. Drought Monitor percent-area statistics for the May 5, 2026, map (from the U.S. Drought Monitor Data Download/Comprehensive Statistics export), approximately 90% of the Potomac basin is in severe drought (D2) or worse. Potomac streamflows are low for this time of year, and recent precipitation and groundwater levels are below normal. Wildfire risk continues to be a serious concern across the region due to ongoing dry conditions.

Although COG’s drought stage is Normal as defined in the Regional Water Supply and Drought Plan, a Watch may be considered when the Drought Coordination Technical Committee meets later this month, depending on updated indicators at that time. The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality has issued a Drought Warning advisory for multiple regions, including Northern Virginia. In Maryland, the Department of the Environment’s most recent regional drought evaluation lists the Central and Western drought regions in Drought Watch and the Eastern Shore drought region in Drought Warning. The metropolitan Washington regional drought stage under COG’s Water Supply and Drought Plan remains Normal.

### U.S. Drought Monitor Potomac Watershed



**May 5, 2026**  
(Released Thursday, May 7, 2026)  
Valid 8 a.m. EDT

Drought Conditions (Percent Area)

	None	D0	D1	D2	D3	D4
<b>Current</b>	0.00	0.47	6.83	91.43	1.27	0.00
<b>Last Week</b> 04-30-2026	0.00	0.47	6.83	92.70	0.00	0.00
<b>3 Months Ago</b> 02-05-2026	0.00	0.17	11.85	87.98	0.00	0.00
<b>Start of Calendar Year</b> 01-08-2026	0.00	0.00	14.96	85.04	0.00	0.00
<b>Start of Water Year</b> 10-01-2025	4.61	34.38	39.54	17.48	4.01	0.00
<b>One Year Ago</b> 05-08-2025	0.54	16.70	49.76	33.00	0.00	0.00

Intensity:

- None
- D0 Abnormally Dry
- D1 Moderate Drought
- D2 Severe Drought
- D3 Extreme Drought
- D4 Exceptional Drought

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. For more information on the Drought Monitor, go to <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/About.aspx>

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[droughtmonitor.unl.edu](https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu)

## Potomac River Streamflow Conditions

Instantaneous flows as of May 7, 2026

CO-OP Drought Management Status: Not active (Drought Monitoring Status: Inactive).	Current Flow (cfs)	Median Flow (cfs)
Location		
Little Falls	3,630	11,650
Point of Rocks	3,330	9,050

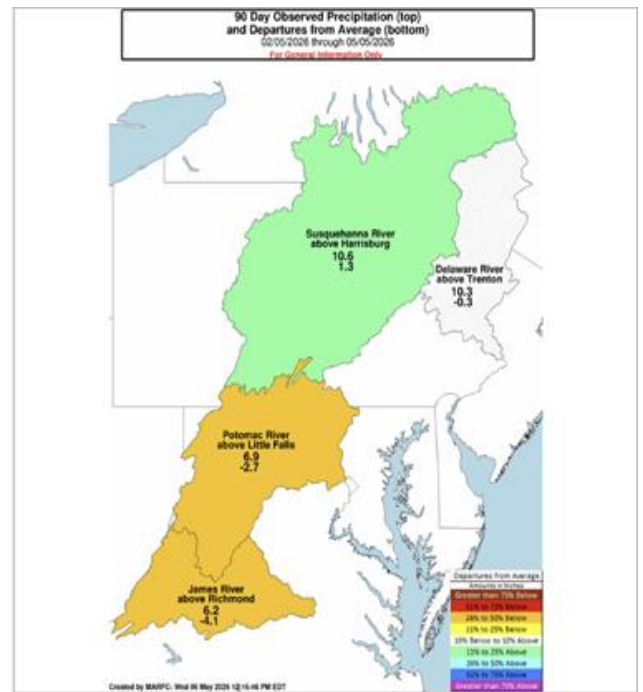
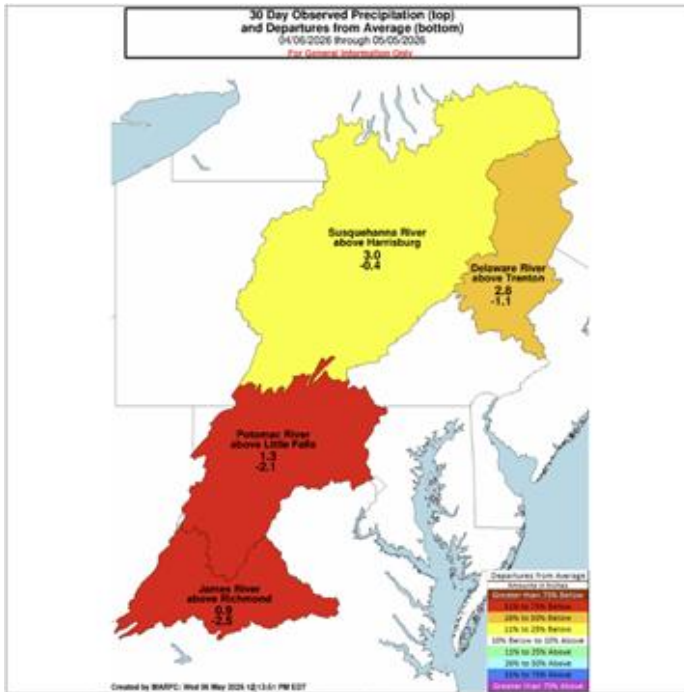
Source: [USGS Little Falls](#) Source: [USGS Point of Rocks](#)

## Observed Precipitation Conditions

30-Day Total: 1.3 inches (2.1 inches below normal)

90-Day Total: 6.9 inches (2.7 inches above normal)

Source: [NOAA Middle Atlantic River Forecast Center](#)



## Groundwater Conditions

Groundwater levels are below normal across the region.

Source: <https://dashboard.waterdata.usgs.gov/app/nwd/?region=lower48&aoi=default>

<https://waterdata.usgs.gov/va/nwis/current/?type=gw>

<https://waterdata.usgs.gov/md/nwis/current/?type=gw>

## Reservoir Storage Conditions

Jennings Randolph and Little Seneca reservoirs are within normal operating ranges.

Source: [U.S. Army Corps of Engineers](#)

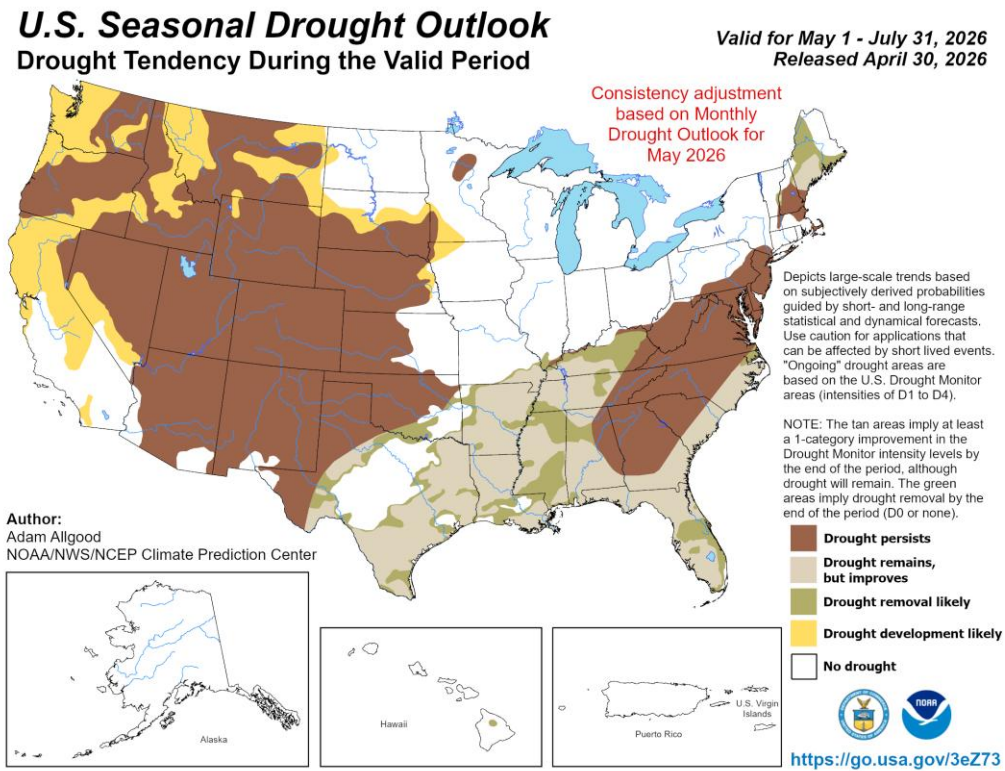
## Probability of Water Supply Releases

As of the April 2026 Water Supply Outlook, the probability of needing water supply releases from the Washington metropolitan area's backup reservoirs during summer and fall 2026 is above normal. Typically, the use of Jennings Randolph and Little Seneca reservoirs is triggered by low river flows resulting from a combination of low precipitation and low groundwater levels. There is a 14 to 21 percent conditional probability that natural Potomac flow will drop below 600 to 700 million gallons per day (MGD) at Little Falls through December 31, 2026. At these flow levels, releases may occur when predicted Potomac River flow is less than metropolitan-area demand plus the required 100 MGD environmental flow-by at Little Falls.

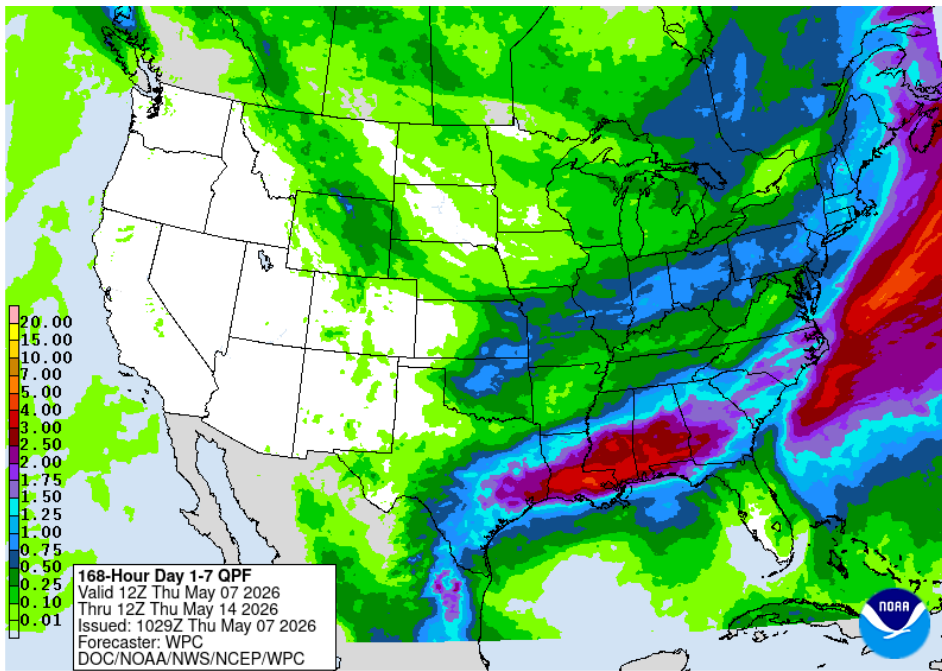
Source: [ICPRB – Cooperative Water Supply Operations on the Potomac](#)

## Climate and Drought Outlooks

The U.S. Seasonal Drought Outlook indicates that the drought is likely to persist over the next three months.



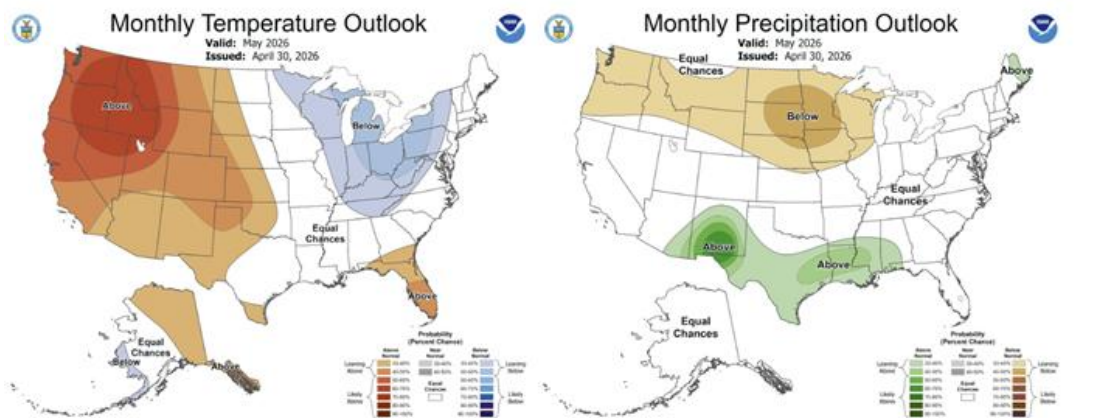
The 7-day quantitative precipitation forecast calls for approximately 0.1 – 0.25 inches.



Source: [NOAA NWS Weather Prediction Center](https://www.weather.gov/wpc)

## Updated OFFICIAL 30-Day Forecasts

Issued: April 30, 2026



NOAA/ National Weather Service  
National Centers for Environmental Prediction  
Climate Prediction Center

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The May outlook from the National Weather Service [Climate Prediction Center](https://www.weather.gov/climate) indicates equal chances for above-, below-, and near-normal temperatures and precipitation for the Northeast, while the [three-month outlook](#) (May-July) favors above-normal temperatures for the entire region. Source: [NOAA NWS Climate Prediction Center](https://www.weather.gov/climate)