

North Carolina Drought Update

Created By:

North Carolina Drought Management Advisory Council

www.ncdrought.org

NORTH CAROLINA CLIMATE OFFICE

climate.ncsu.edu

NC STATE

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For the assessment period ending **Apr. 30, 2024**

From the US Drought Monitor, with input from the NC DMAC

The Main Takeaway

Abnormally Dry (D0) conditions further expanded in the Mountains, Triad, Sandhills, and northeast, reflecting the limited rainfall and rapid drying in recent weeks.

This Week's Summary

April was a decidedly dry month across the state, and while our excess moisture from March helped avoid a sooner slide into dryness, the past few weeks have seen more impacts emerging, particularly with warmer temperatures and springtime planting now underway.

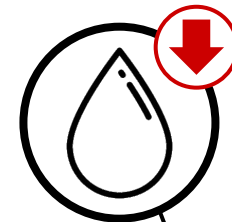
Reservoir Report

Demands facing reservoirs at this time of year include higher evaporation rates, targets rising to summer levels, boosted downstream releases for recreation and fish spawning, and as in April, lower inflows. In spite of that, major lakes in NC are holding near their targets.

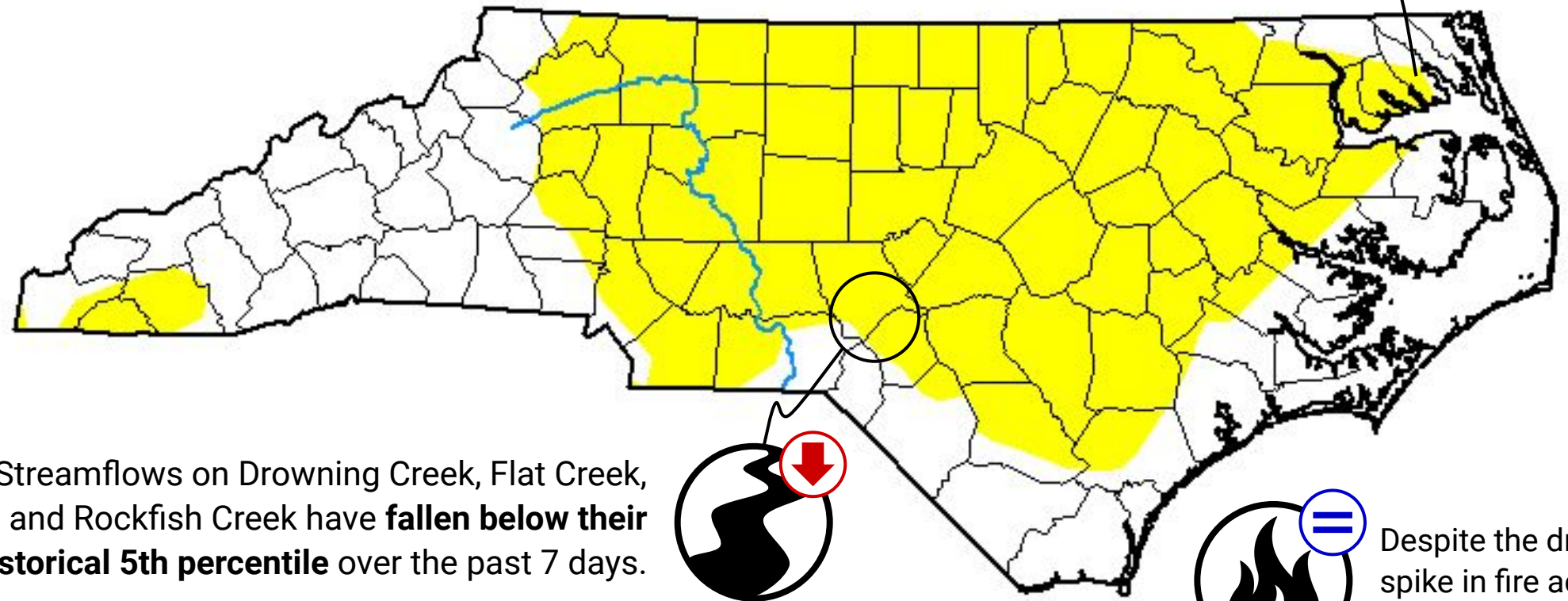
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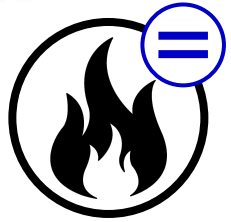
Planting has slowed in some areas as farmers await more rain, particularly for small grains and newly planted crops.



Elizabeth City had its 3rd-driest April on record, with only 0.55 inches of precipitation all month.

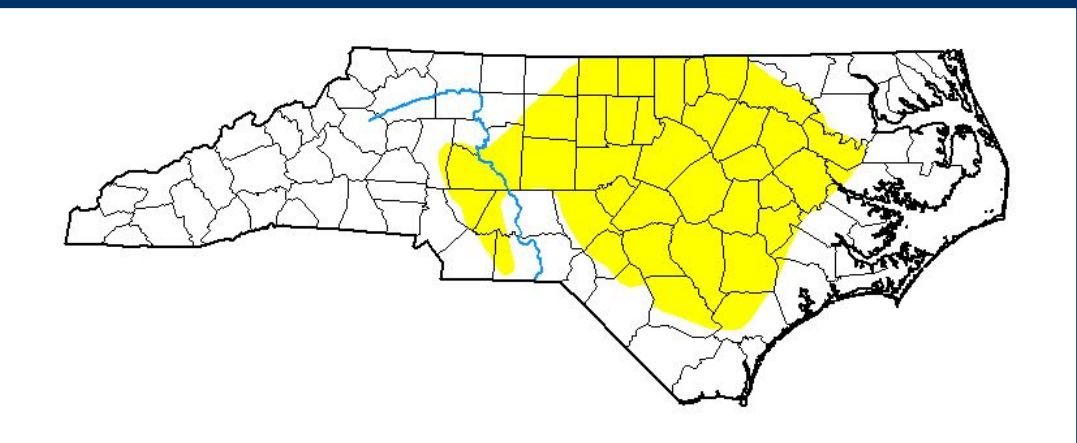


Streamflows on Drowning Creek, Flat Creek, and Rockfish Creek have **fallen below their historical 5th percentile** over the past 7 days.



Despite the dryness, we haven't seen a spike in fire activity because **vegetation has fully greened up in many areas.**

Last Week's Drought Status



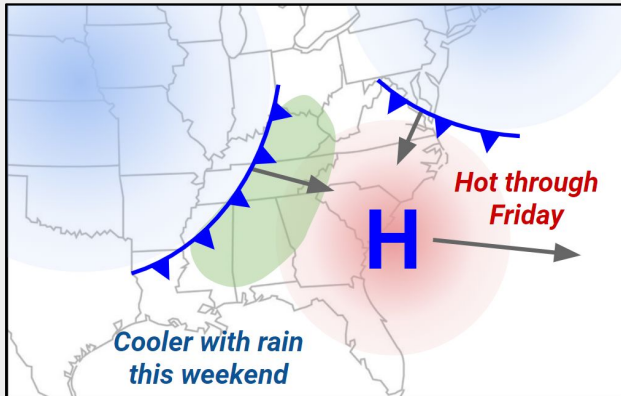
Statewide Coverage by Category

Category	Current Coverage	Change Since Last Week
D0: Abnormally Dry	60.90%	+20.79%
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

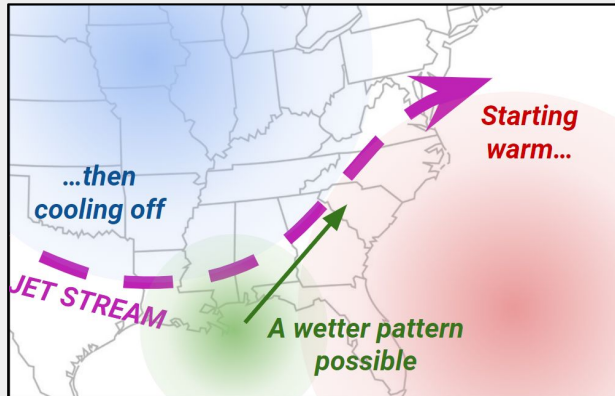
Week 1:

May 2 to 8, 2024



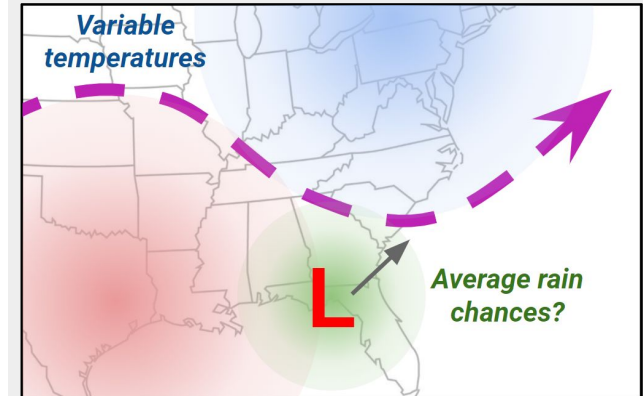
Week 2:

May 9 to 15, 2024



Weeks 3-4:

May 16 to 29, 2024

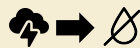


A Hot Start, Then Cooler



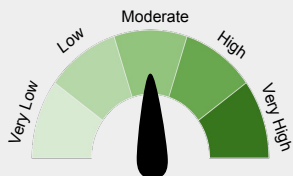
Our temperatures will hit the upper 80s on Thursday and Friday before high pressure shifts offshore and a series of cold fronts converge on NC, dropping our temperatures to near-normal levels this weekend. After that, we should warm up again early next week.

Showers on the Way



Along and ahead of this weekend's incoming frontal systems, scattered showers and thunderstorms will be on the increase from Friday night through Monday night. Half an inch of rain or more is possible across the state, with local totals of an inch or more likely.

Forecast Confidence



Confidence is lower in the timing and rain amounts this weekend, but the best chances may come on Saturday night & Sunday.

Another Cool Weekend



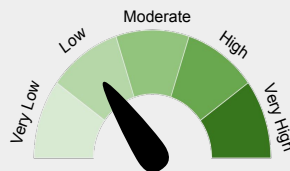
We'll heat up next Thursday and Friday before a jet stream trough shifts eastward and brings another weekend cooldown. We may warm up again later as high pressure builds offshore, but it's too early to pinpoint how soon that bounce-back may happen.

Better Rain Chances



As the upper-level trough moves over, it should put us in line with the storm track pulling moisture out of the Gulf of Mexico. That could mean multiple rain events, with the first possible going into next weekend and at least one more later in the week.

Forecast Confidence



The timing of the pattern change is still uncertain, as some models are showing a weaker trough being slower to arrive.

Mixed Temperatures



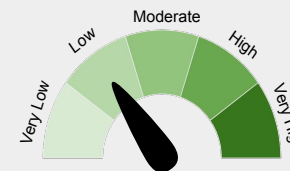
The active and constantly evolving jet stream pattern seen in Week 2 is expected to continue through late May, bringing variable temperatures. Another trough building in Week 3 could mean another brief cool-down, with warmer weather returning for Week 4.

On-and-Off Precipitation?



An active pattern should offer at least a few decent rain chances as systems track near or through our region, and showers or storms could contribute too. However, there are no strong indications that our precipitation will be either above or below normal.

Forecast Confidence



A volatile pattern plus the challenge of warm-season precipitation forecasting makes the confidence low for this late-month period.