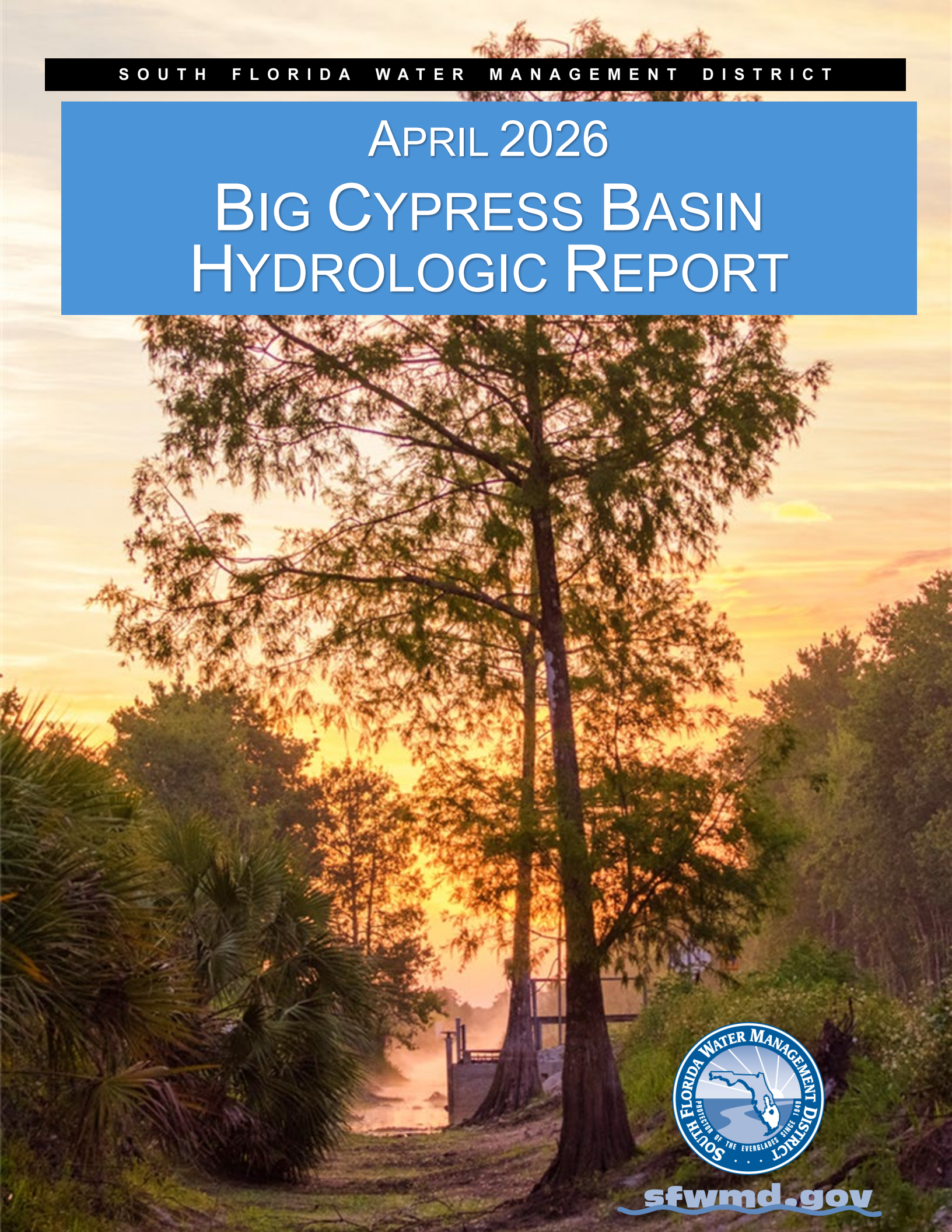
SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

APRIL 2026

BIG CYPRESS BASIN HYDROLOGIC REPORT

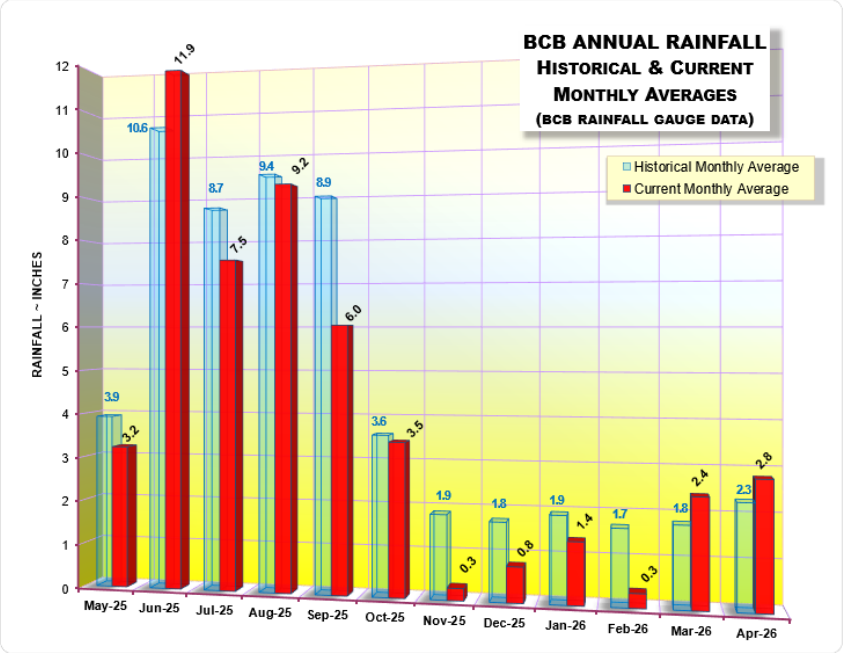


sfwmd.gov

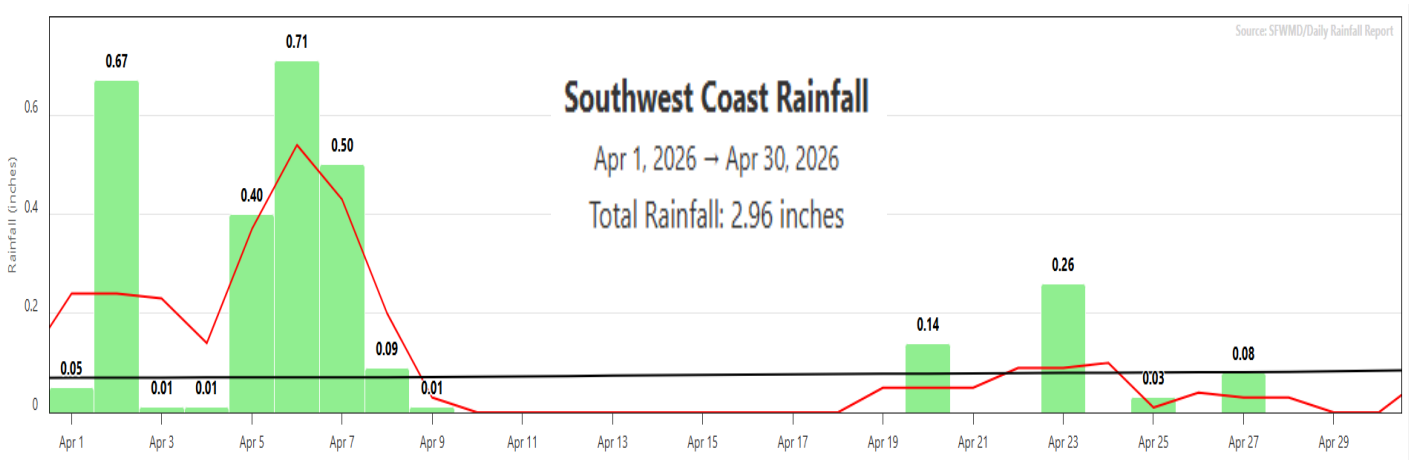
SUMMARY OF HYDROLOGIC CONDITIONS IN THE BIG CYPRESS BASIN

April 2026

SUMMARY



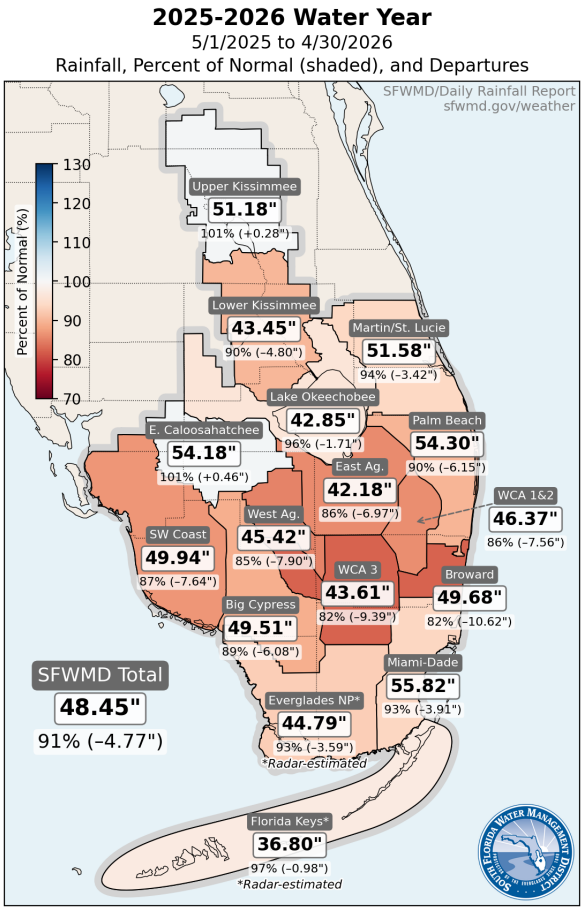
April saw a continuation of the recent, more normal, dry season monthly rainfall totals in the Big Cypress Basin (BCB), marking the second month in a row where rainfall slightly exceeded the historical average. Rain gauges across BCB recorded an average of **2.82 inches** of rainfall over the past month (122% of normal). This recent continuation of slightly above normal rainfall was helpful in slowing the rate of dry season recession across the BCB, after a prolonged eight-month period of below normal rainfall. In April, the Southwest Coast Forecast Area saw slightly more rainfall (2.96 inches total) than the smaller BCB. This small rainfall difference between the two defined areas results from the Southwest Coast Forecast Area extending farther northward and encompassing the greater Fort Myers area, whereas the BCB area extends further eastward, most notably in the Immokalee area. Though their boundaries differ slightly, the time-based distribution of rainfall over the month remains consistent between the areas. As indicated in the chart below, the time-based distribution of precipitation in April was uneven, with the majority of the rain falling in the first week of the month. Two weeks of extremely dry conditions followed, with sporadic light rain later in the month.



2025/2026 Water Year Review

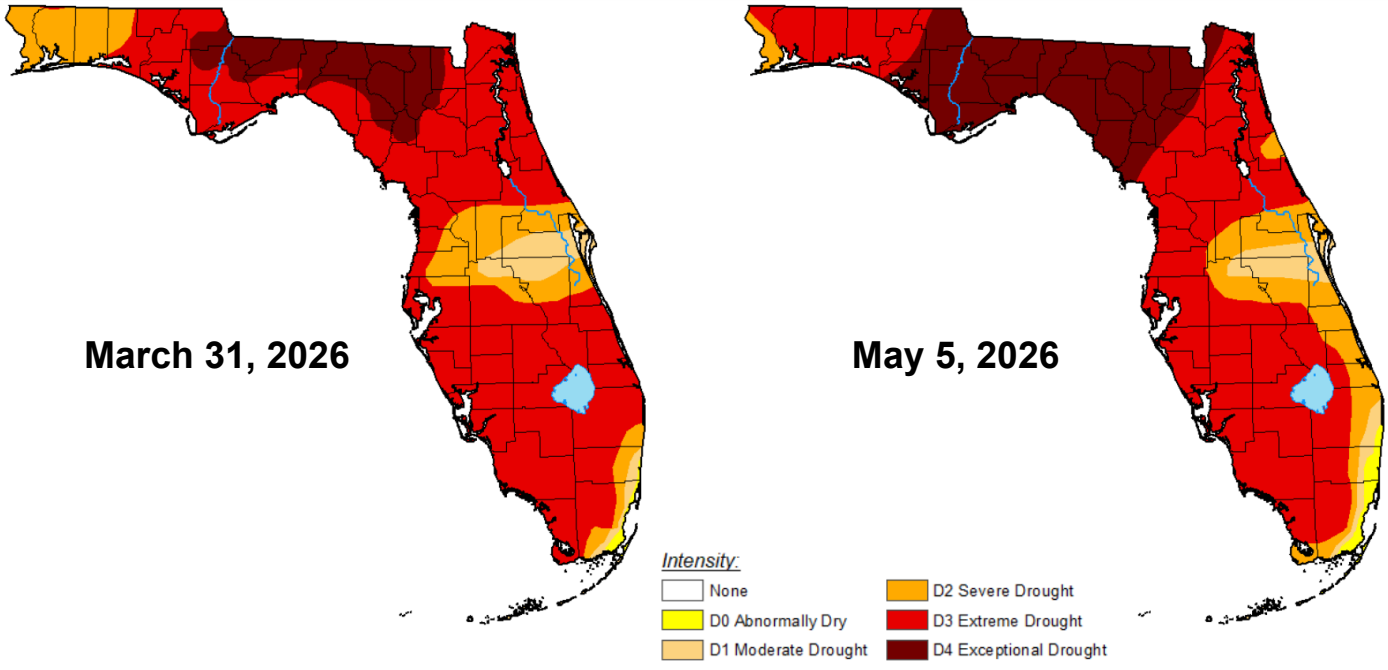
As summed from the monthly values on the BCB Annual Rainfall Chart (prior page), over the course of the 2025/2026 water year (May 2025 through April 2026), the BCB received a basin wide gauge-based average of 49.3 inches of rainfall (87% of normal). This amounts to a 7.3-inch rainfall deficit over the past twelve months. This gauge-based BCB rainfall average closely matches the Southwest Coast Forecast Area's precipitation for the 2025/2026 Water Year, which also only saw 87% of the normal water year precipitation.

It is worth noting that the rainfall deficit associated with 2025/2026 Water Year came on the heels of an extremely dry prior winter and spring, spanning from mid-October 2024 through mid-June 2025. Since November 2024, the BCB has only seen four out of eighteen months (22%) with above normal rainfall. The total rainfall deficit from November 2024 through April 2026 currently stands at 13.4 inches.



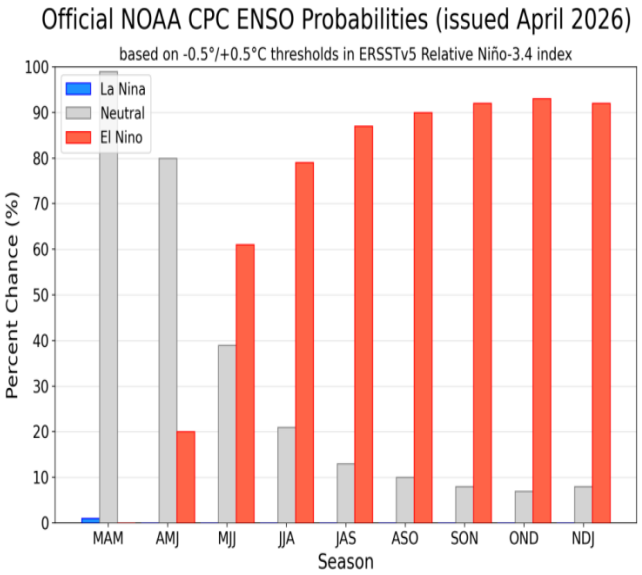
Continued Drought Conditions

Though April's normal precipitation slowed the seasonal decline in canal water levels in the BCB, it was insufficient to reverse current drought conditions. By May 5th, the U.S. Drought Monitor showed Collier County under "*D3 Extreme Drought*" – no improvement from the prior month.

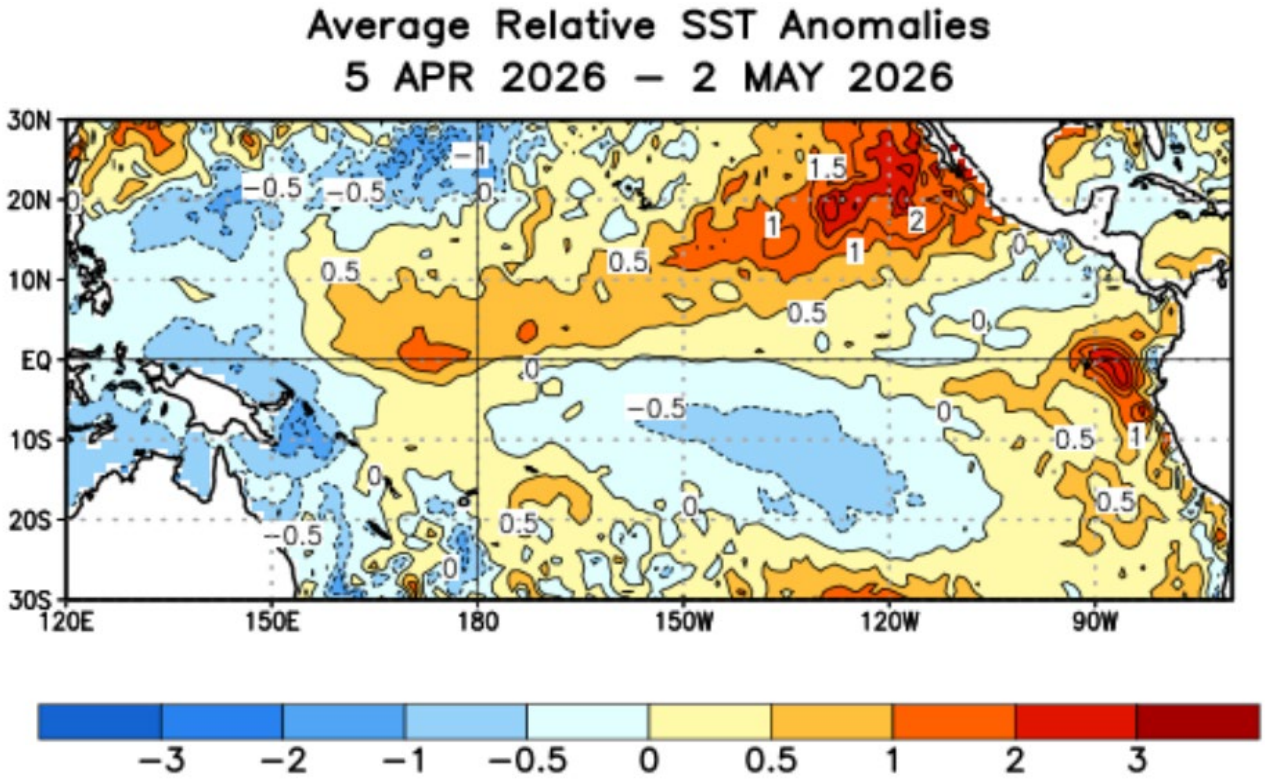


The current El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) status and forecast, as issued by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Climate Prediction Center (CPC), states:

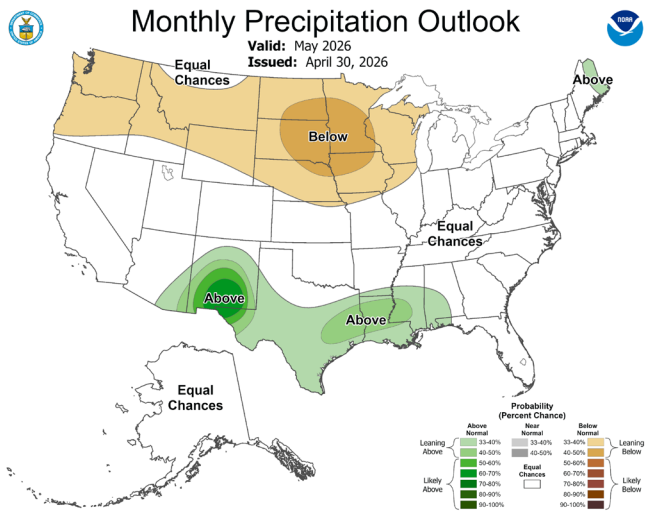
- *ENSO-neutral conditions are present.**
- *Equatorial sea surface temperatures (SSTs) are near-to-above-average in the central and eastern Pacific Ocean.*
- *ENSO-neutral conditions favored through April-June 2026 (80% chance). In May-July 2026, El Niño is likely to emerge (61% chance) and persist through at least the end of 2026.**

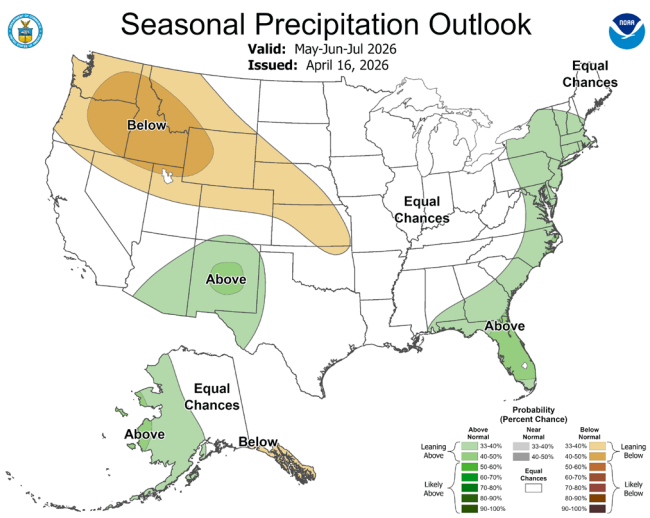


** Note: The above statements are updated once a month (**2nd Thursday of each month**) in association with the ENSO Diagnostics Discussion*

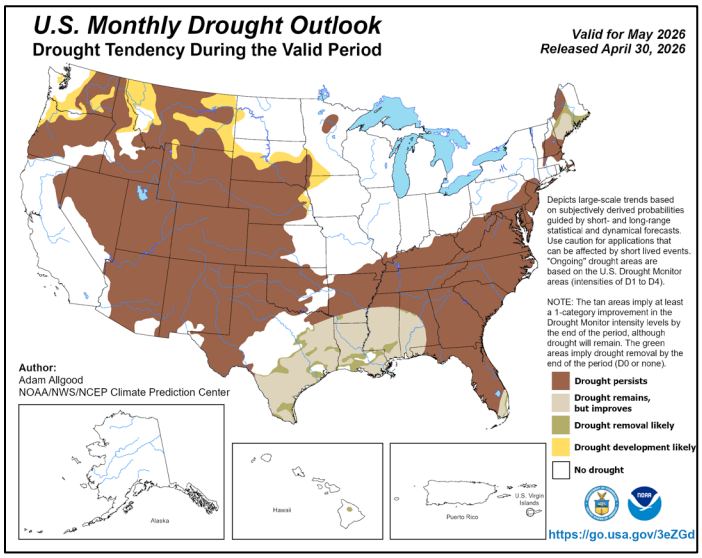


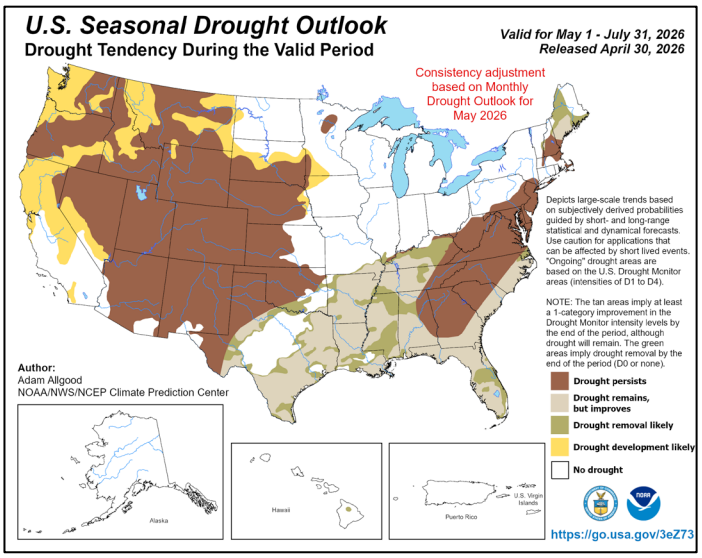
During periods of ENSO neutral conditions, influence on BCB precipitation from large-scale rainfall patterns diminishes. With no strong climate signal favoring above- or below-average precipitation, the most recent CPC Precipitation Outlook for May 2026 indicates equal chances of above- or below-normal rainfall. Though early summer impacts of a developing El Niño are indirect and inconsistent, the CPC – when considering all climatological factors – predicts a slightly higher probability of above normal precipitation in the late spring and early summer.





Due to the uncertainty of precipitation in the coming month, the U.S. Monthly Drought Outlook predicts that drought conditions will persist in the BCB during May but are forecast to gradually improve by the end of July as the probability of above normal precipitation increases.





Dry season typically reaches its end sometime in mid to late May, however, the exact timing of the transition to wet season is not currently forecast and thus remains uncertain. BCB water managers will continue to operate the BCB system in water conservation regimens for the remainder of the Dry Season – and shortly thereafter as necessary – to bring canal water levels up to their normal wet season operational range. As canal water levels approach normal wet season operational levels, the BCB will transition to flood control operations.

APRIL 2026 BCB RAINFALL

The Basin-wide averaged, gauge-measured, monthly rainfall was 2.82 inches in April 2026. This measured rainfall amounted to 122% of the historic BCB April average of 2.32 inches **(see Figures 1, 2, 3A and Table 1).** In April 2026, the rain gauge with the highest measured precipitation was R-23 FPWX, which recorded 5.03 inches. R-14 IFAS received the lowest rain gauge monthly total with just 1.13 inches.

Figure 3B shows April's calculated average rainfall estimates for each of the Basin's watersheds, based on gauge adjusted radar (Raindar). The Henderson-Belle Meade watershed saw the highest Raindar average of 4.11 inches and the Gordon River Extension watershed saw the lowest Raindar average of 1.2 inches. The BCB's overall calculated areal weighted average Raindar rainfall (by watershed) was 2.58 inches for the month, slightly below the basin-wide rain gauge average of 2.82 inches. The Raindar totals and their locality distribution across the BCB/Lower West Coast are shown on **Figure 3C**.

APRIL 2026 BCB OPERATIONS AND WATER LEVELS

During April, BCB structures remained in water conservation operations. Due to the more normal April rainfall – and its distribution across the Basin – changes to canal levels varied significantly by location. Some areas continued their seasonal decline; some briefly rose then finished the month at levels similar to the prior month; and some saw a month-to-month increase in stage. Overall, the BCB canals finished April generally between the 25th and 75th percentile with some exceptions discussed below. Continued canal recession in April (and into May) is normal, as spring brings a rise in the rate of evapotranspiration resulting from the increase in temperatures and seasonal vegetative growth. Canal water levels generally begin their sustained rise once rainfall intensity and frequency increases, due to pattern changes associated with the onset of the wet season. BCB canal conditions as of April 30, 2026 are shown on **Figure 4**.

GOLDEN GATE SYSTEM

Control structures in the Golden Gate Main Canal (GG Main) system remained in water conservation regimens for the month of April with no discharges to tide at GG1. By April 30th, the majority of GG Main segments remained between the 25th and 50th percentile of their historic end of April levels, while the portion immediately upstream of GOLDW5 (GG5) remained at approximately the 50th percentile. Though the headwater level at the GG1 structure ended April at approximately the same level as it began the month, the upstream portions of the GG Main Canal saw a month-to-month decline in water levels (**see Figure 5)**.

COCOHATCHEE SYSTEM

The Cocohatchee Canal was kept in water conservation operations in April. By the end of the month, all portions of the canal were between the 25th and 50th percentile, including the Corkscrew Canal system to the east and north. As with GG1, COCO1 showed no month-to-month decline in water levels, however, this outcome was not observed upstream at CORK1 and CORK2, where only a brief leveling of canal stage was followed by continued recession **(Figures 6A, 6B, & 6C).**

FAKA UNION SYSTEM

The Faka Union Canal also remained in water conservation operations during April. The FU4S and FU5 gates remained closed throughout the month as early April rainfall was insufficient to raise water levels to operational thresholds. As a result of water conservation operations, the Faka Union Canal upstream of FU5 rose to near the 90th percentile by the end of April. Just downstream at FU4S, the canal also responded to rainfall, with water levels briefly rising before resuming their seasonal recession and ending the month between the 25th and 50th percentiles, near their level at the beginning of April. Downstream of FU4S, the canal reach between FU4S and S487 (Faka Pump Station) ended the month at the 75th percentile, although water levels were not high enough to resume pumping at S487. Monitoring wells downstream of S487 – within the Picayune Strand Restoration Project (PSRP) – finished the month generally near the 75th percentile of historic levels. The remaining segment of the Faka Union Canal north of FU1 also finished the month at the 75th percentile. **(Figures 7A & 7B).**

HENDERSON CREEK SYSTEM

As with the other BCB canals, water control structures in the Henderson Creek Canal remained in water conservation operations in April and no discharges to tide occurred at the HC1 structure. Due to the higher concentration of rainfall within the Henderson-Bell Meade watershed, the canal upstream of HC1 saw a month-to-month increase of approximately 0.5 feet; finishing the month at the 75th percentile. Upstream of HC2, the impact of April's rainfall was less pronounced, but remained sufficient to stop the month-to-month decline. The segment upstream of HC2 finished the month between the 50th and 75th percentile, a notable percentile improvement from the prior month **(Figure 8A & 8B).**

BIG CYPRESS BASIN & LOWER WEST COAST GROUNDWATER LEVELS

For the Lower West Coast [LWC], water level trends in the groundwater monitoring stations varied in April, with most showing continued recession **(Table 2 and Figures 9A and 9B).** C-462 (north of Lake Trafford) receded in April but still finished the month at the 75th percentile, largely due to heavy rainfalls earlier in the dry season. C-1224 (near Henderson Creek) saw a significant increase in water level due to heavy rain in the watershed, and finished April between the 75th and 90th percentile, well above the level of low concern. C-1004R (a Tidally influenced well near Cocohatchee Canal) did not fare as well in April. Levels in C-1004R quickly rose to between the 50th and 75th percentile early in the month, but shortly thereafter quickly receded to between the 10th and 25th percentile (below the level of low concern) by month's end.

L-738 a Tamiami Aquifer well in Bonita Springs showed high variability by rising from near the record daily low levels at the beginning of the month to above the 25th percentile. L-738 then quickly receded back to near record daily lows by the end of the month, finishing below the level of high concern. Water levels in L-2194, a Sandstone Aquifer well in Bonita Springs, followed a similar pattern by climbing quickly from the level of high concern to the 25th percentile, then dropping back below the level of high concern by the end of the month. Similarly, L-2195, a surficial aquifer well in Bonita

Springs, briefly climbed in early April, then resumed its recession and finished the month near the 10th percentile, approaching the level of high concern.

CORKSCREW SWAMP

Figure 10 shows the historical trends for Corkscrew Swamp (CRKSWPS), Bird Rookery (BRDROOK), and the Cork 3 (CORK3) structure, and their 2026 corresponding levels. CRKSWPS continued its recession in April after a rise early in the month due to rainfall. By the end of the month CRKSWPS had dropped back to the 25th percentile. Both BRDROOK AND CORK3 also saw brief increases in stage due to early April rainfall, then steadily declined thereafter. By mid-month – as is common in late dry season – CORK3 again receded below its ability to measure water levels. Similarly, by late April, BRDROOK also reached the lower limit of its ability to measure water levels. **Figure 11** shows that Lake Trafford continued its seasonal recession but remains between the 50th and 75 percentile due to the heavy rains earlier in the dry season.

Figures 12 and Figure 13 show the locations for Southern Corkscrew (SOCREW) Sites 1 through 6, all of which are combination surface and groundwater monitoring wells. Also shown are the historical trends for SOCREW1 and SOCREW2, which have been monitored since 2016. Both SOCREW1 and SOCREW2 responded favorably to early April rains, but quickly resumed their recession thereafter. Due to these rains, however, month-to-month recession for these stations was minimal, resulting in an overall improvement in their end of April percentile status. SOCREW1 finished the month between the 25th and 50th percentile and SOCREW2 finished the month at the 50th percentile. Both of these sites thus showed improvement from their near record low end of March percentiles. SOCREW sites 3, 4, 5 and 6 are newer sites with a period of record of less than 4 years, therefore, they do not have adequate data to generate meaningful statistical cyclic analysis.

FIGURE 1
RAIN GAUGE LOCATIONS

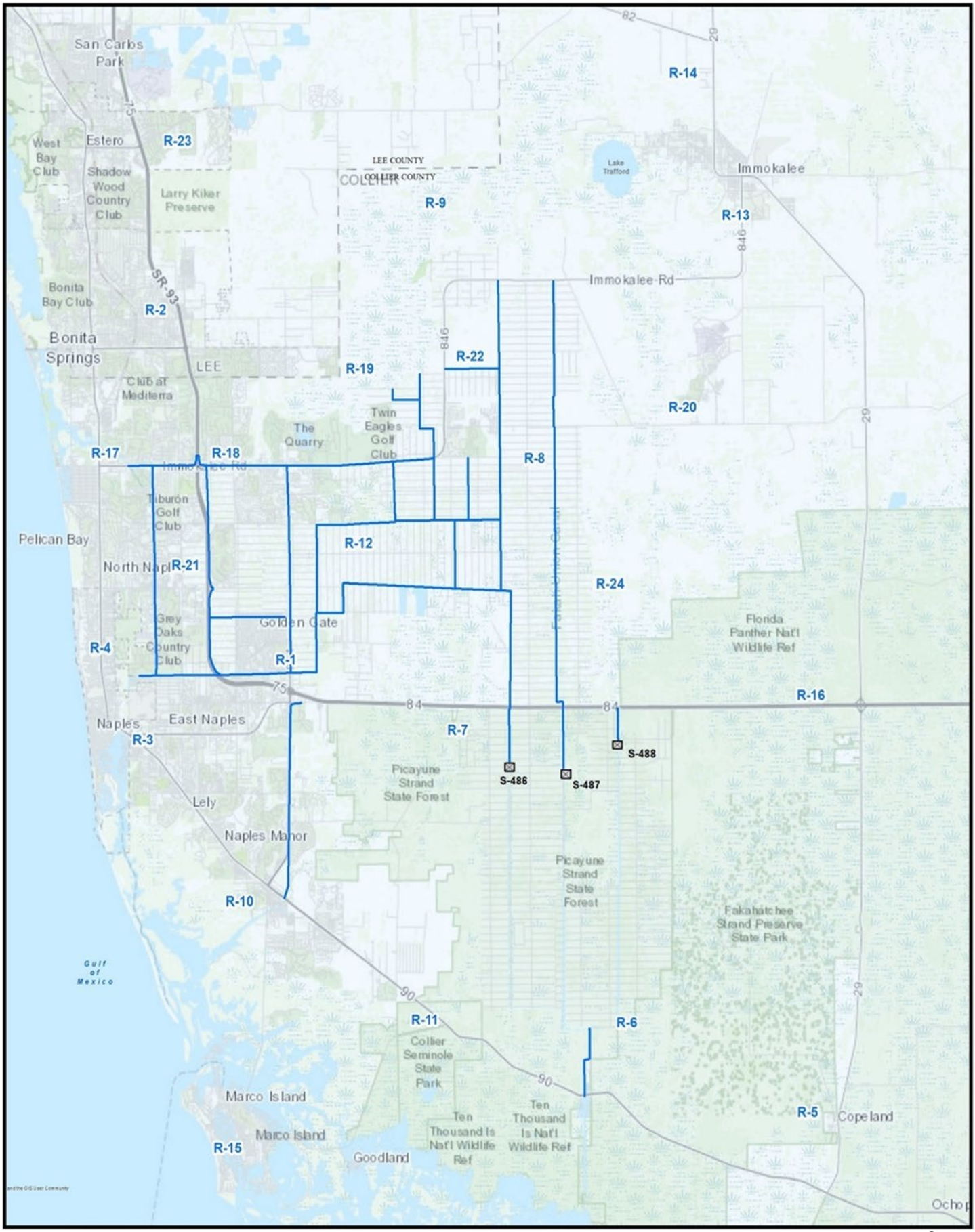
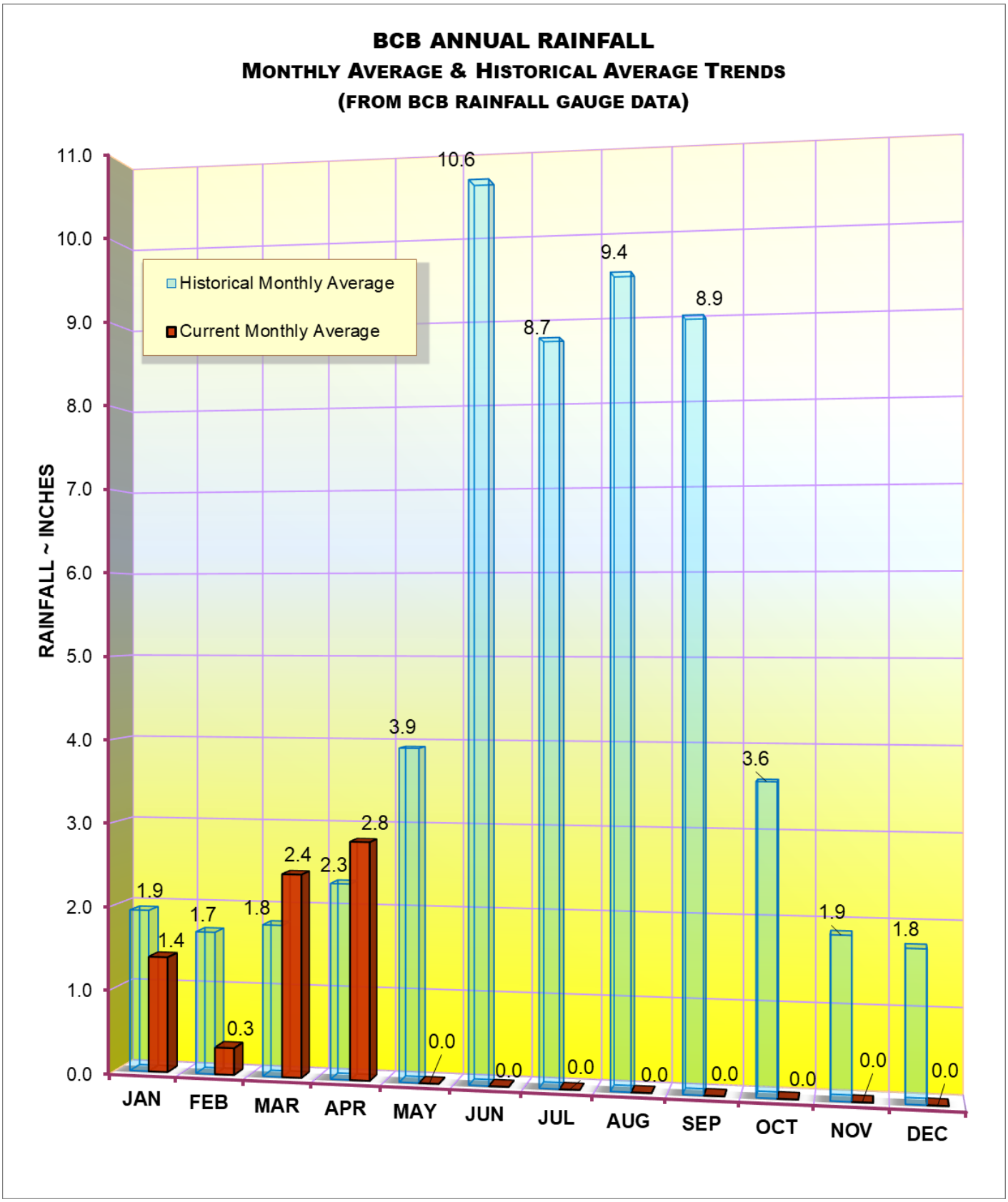


FIGURE 2
BCB GAUGE MEASURED RAINFALL MONTHLY AVERAGES
CALENDAR YEAR 2026



RAINFALL REPORT - APRIL 2026
DISTRICT/BASIN RAINFALL STATIONS
(ALL NUMBERS ARE IN INCHES)

STATION INDEX NO.	STATION NAME	Apr-26	LONG TERM MONTHLY AVERAGE	MONTHLY DIFFERENCE	CALENDAR YEAR 2026 CUMULATIVE TOTAL	AVERAGE CALENDAR YEAR TO DATE	YEAR TO DATE DIFFERENCE
R-1	GG#3	2.15	2.38	-0.23	6.43	7.13	-0.70
R-2	BONITA SPRINGS WATER PLANT	2.35	1.91	0.44	4.64	8.03	-3.39
R-3	COLLIER COUNTY COURTHOUSE	4.32	2.29	2.03	8.33	7.98	0.35
R-4	FREEDOM PARK	1.85	1.92	-0.07	6.07	6.93	-0.86
R-5	FAKAHATCHEE STRAND HQ	3.12	2.23	0.89	7.67	8.06	-0.39
R-6	DAN HOUSE PRAIRIE	1.36	2.21	-0.85	5.07	6.83	-1.76
R-7	PSRP WEATHER STATION	2.50	2.72	-0.22	6.50	7.47	-0.97
R-8	FAKA UNION #5	3.88	2.54	1.34	7.66	8.36	-0.70
R-9	CORKSCREW SWAMP NORTH END	3.93	2.06	1.87	7.79	7.21	0.58
R-10	ROOKERY BAY HQ	4.37	2.12	2.25	6.46	7.31	-0.85
R-11	COLLIER SEMINOLE STATE PARK	4.04	2.34	1.70	6.63	7.84	-1.21
R-12	G.G. FIRE STATION	1.90	2.39	-0.49	5.26	8.32	-3.06
R-13	IMMOKALEE LANDFILL	1.39	2.28	-0.89	9.94	8.60	1.34
R-14	IFAS	1.13	2.33	-1.20	7.64	8.88	-1.24
R-15	MARCO R.O. PLANT	2.19	2.27	-0.08	5.47	8.52	-3.05
R-16	FAKAHATCHEE STRAND NORTH END	2.32	2.99	-0.67	7.78	9.84	-2.06
R-17	COCO#1	1.78	1.94	-0.16	4.66	7.55	-2.89
R-18	COCO#3	2.75	2.27	0.48	6.48	7.29	-0.81
R-19	BIRD ROOKERY	2.47	1.91	0.56	5.19	6.14	-0.95
R-20	AVE MARIA	2.52	2.49	0.03	11.35	8.66	2.69
R-21	I75W2	1.66	1.96	-0.30	5.97	6.08	-0.11
R-22	GG#7	4.14	2.16	1.98	6.95	6.61	0.34
R-23	FPWX	5.03	2.29	2.74	8.32	7.81	0.51
R-24	DSOTO10	4.43	3.59	0.84	8.01	8.74	-0.73
	AVERAGES	2.82	2.32	0.50	6.93	7.76	-0.83

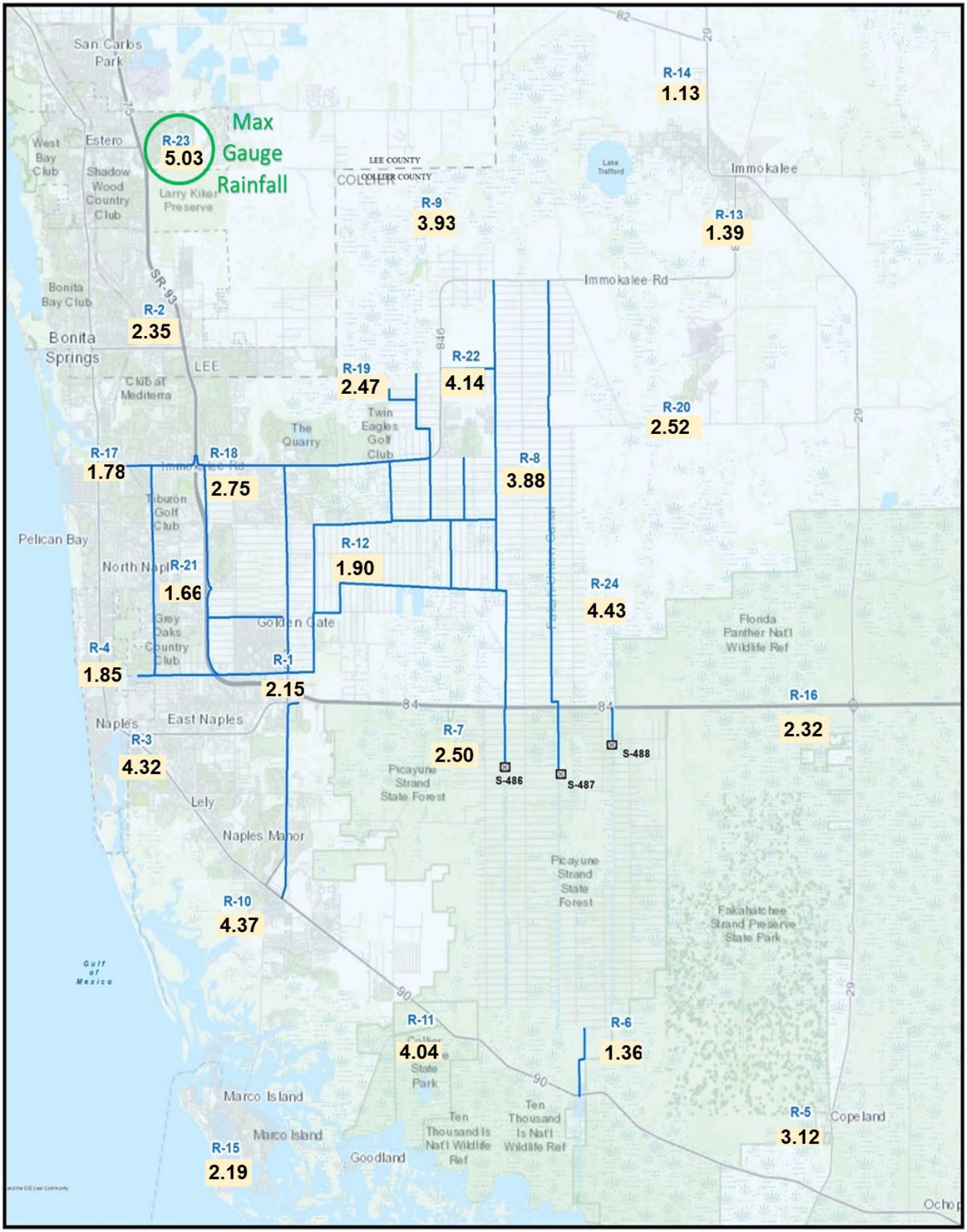
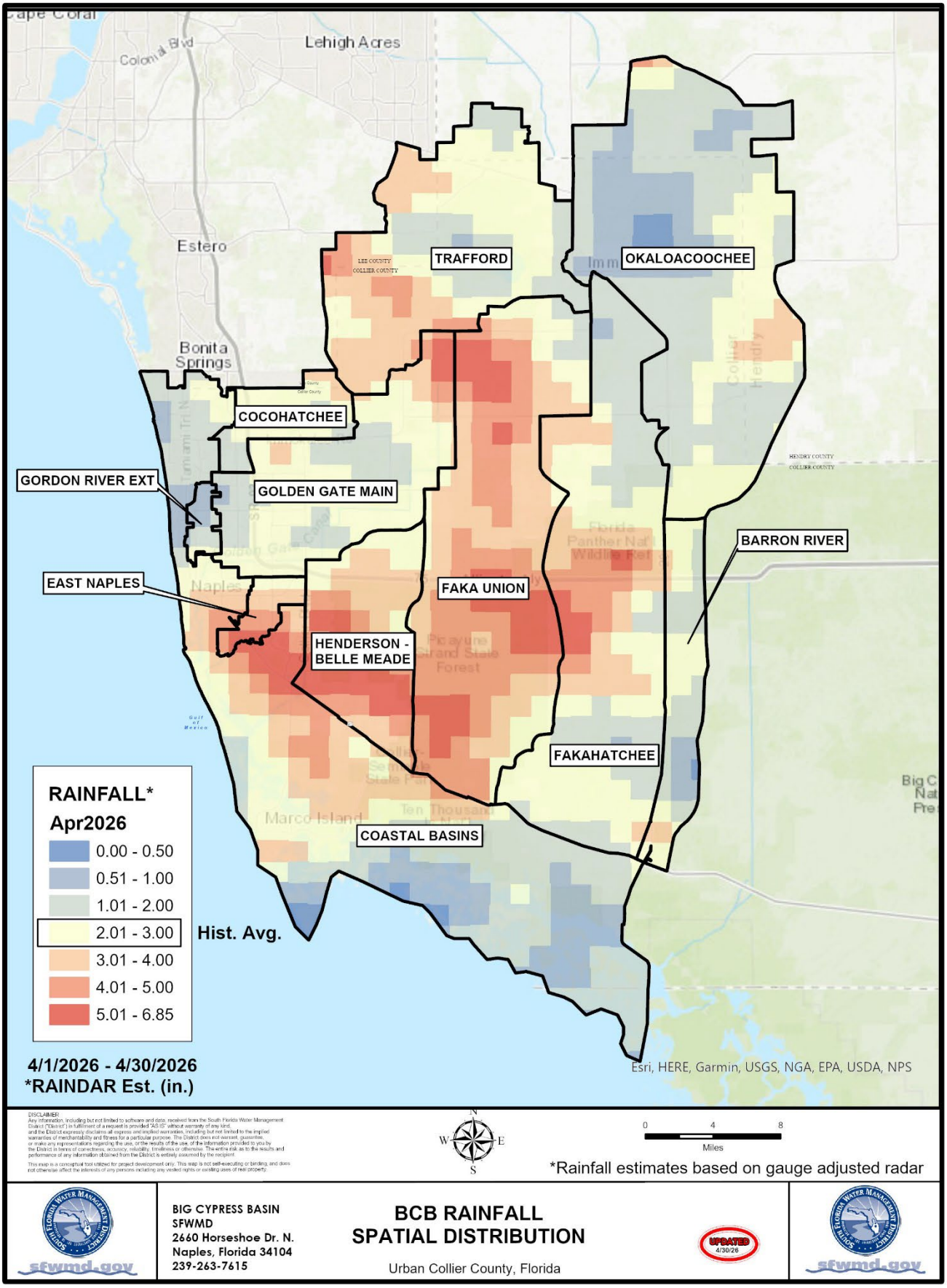
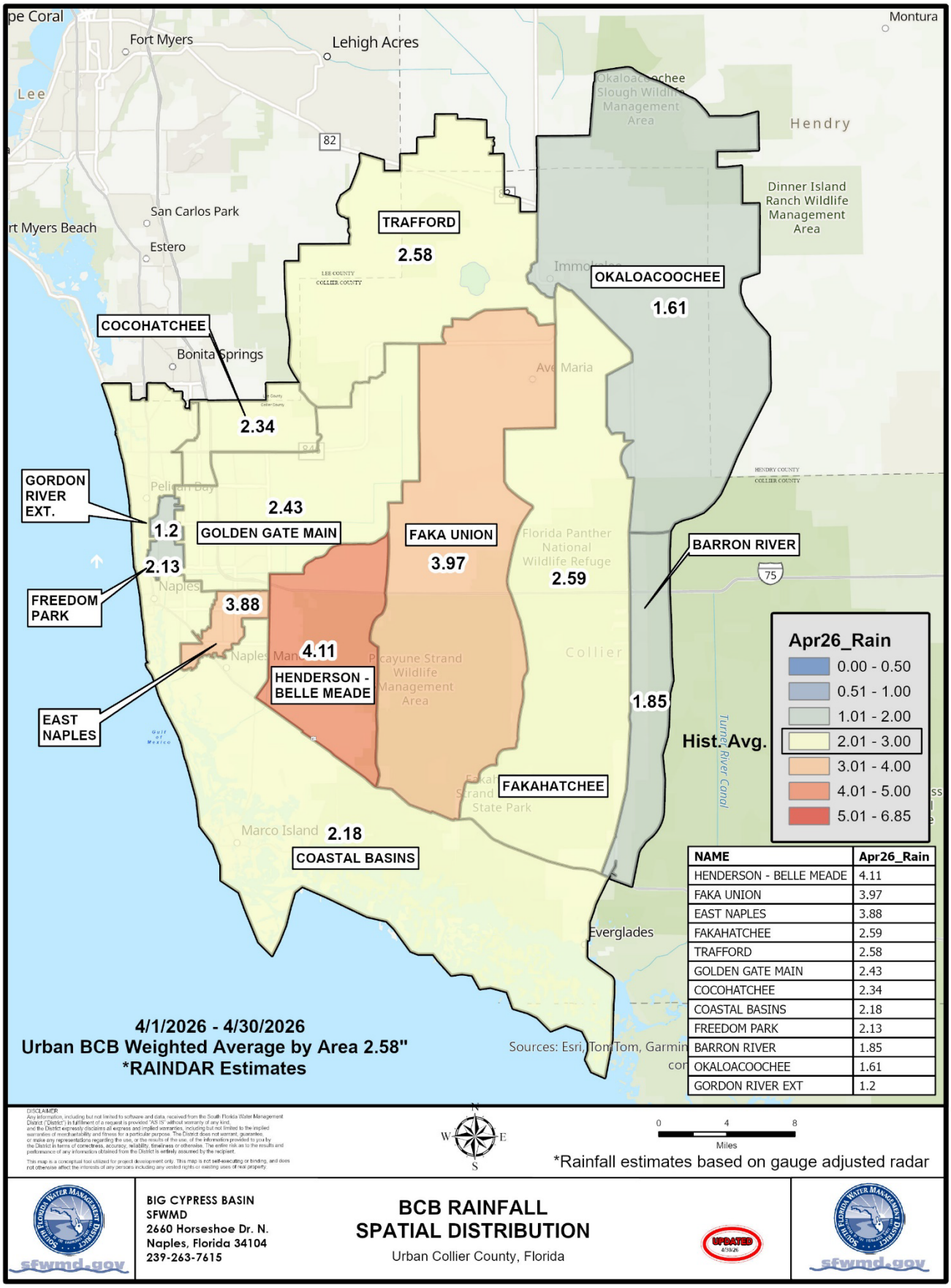


FIGURE 3A
BCB RAINFALL DISTRIBUTION
APRIL 2026



APRIL 2026 — FIGURE 3B



APRIL 2026 —FIGURE 3C

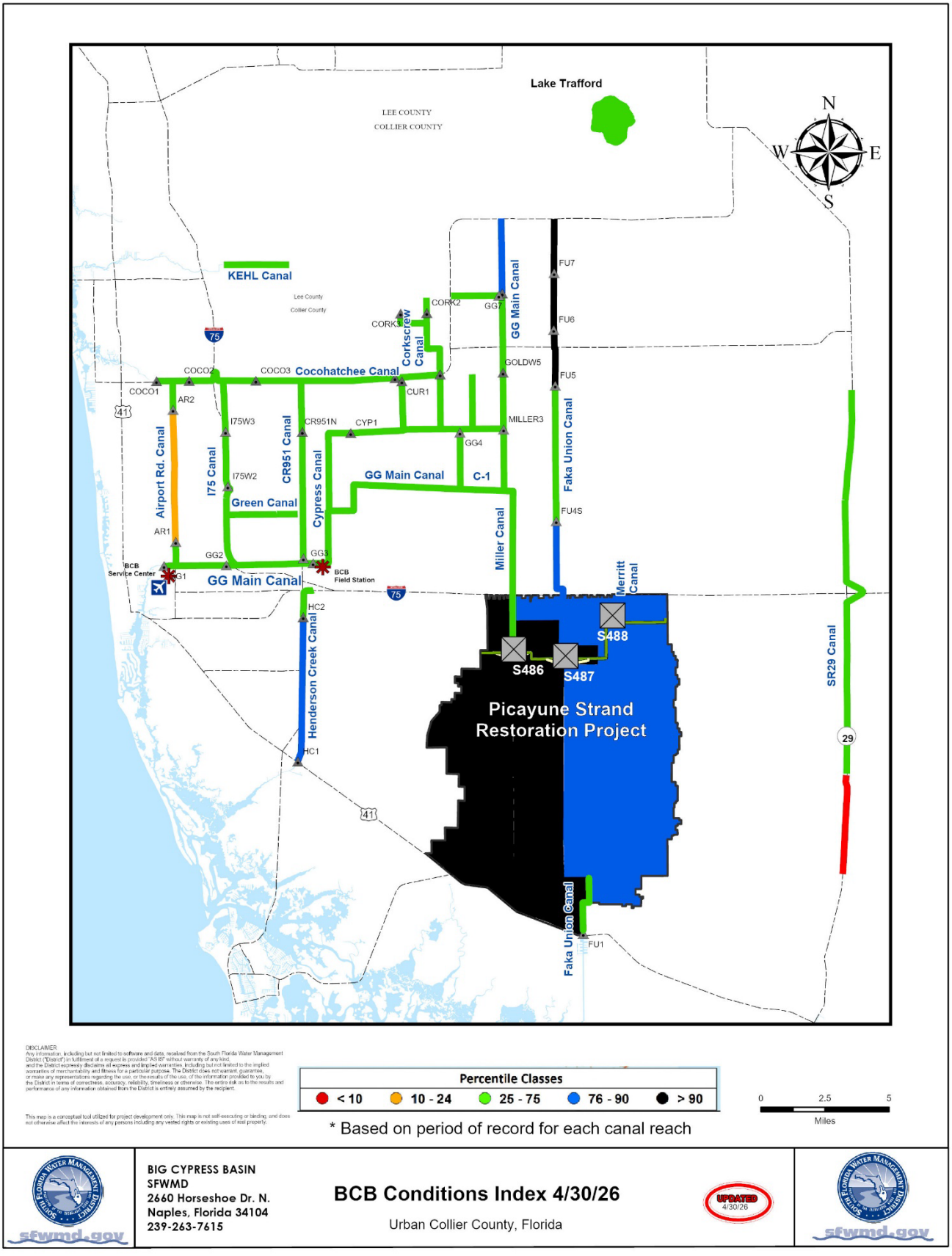


FIGURE 4
BCB WATER CONDITIONS

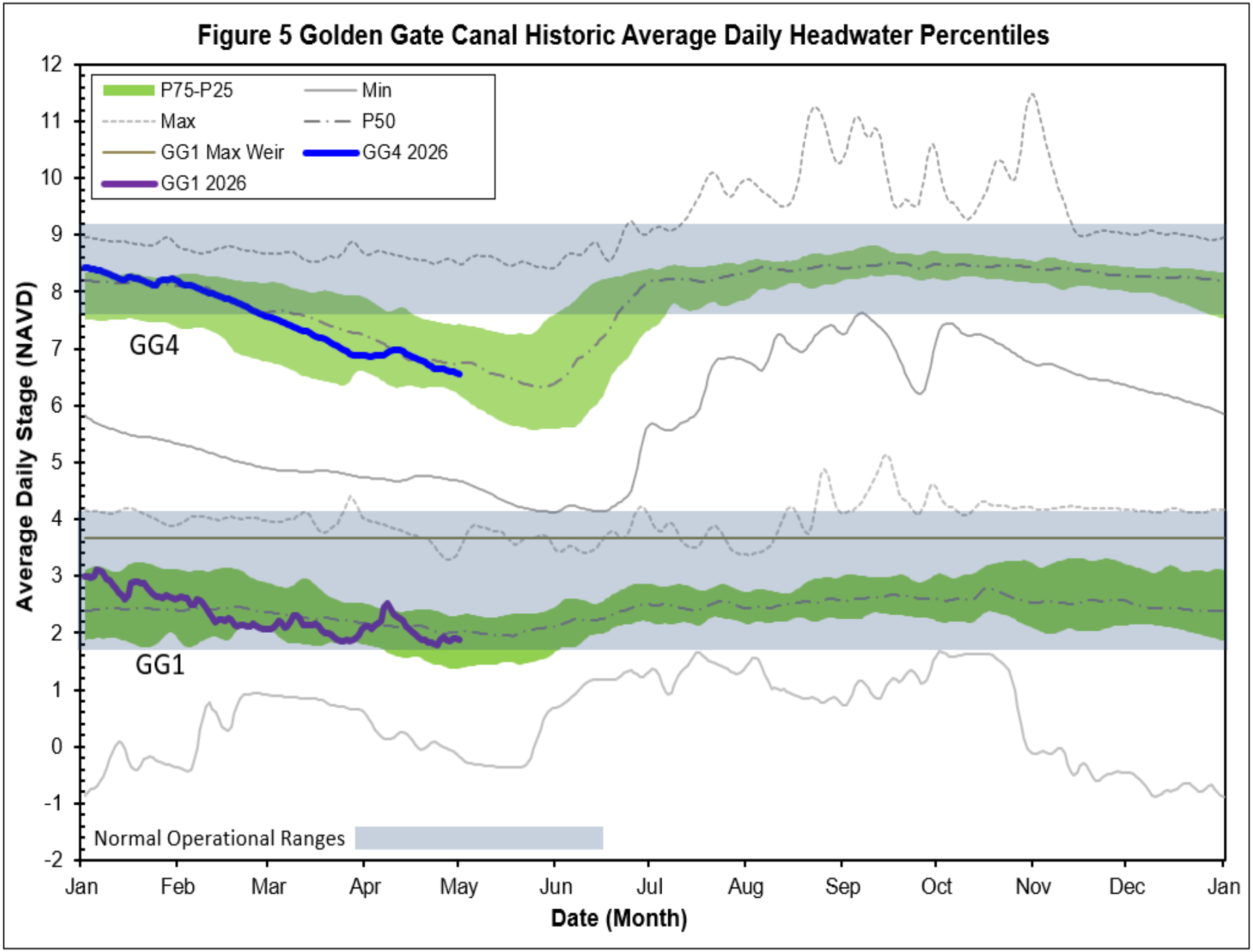


Figure 5 Golden Gate Canal Historic Average Daily Headwater Percentiles
P75-P25
Min
Max
P50
GG1 Max Weir
GG4 2026
GG1 2026
GG4
GG1
Normal Operational Ranges
Average Daily Stage (NAVD)
12
11
10
9
8
7
6
5
4
3
2
1
0
-1
-2
Jan
Feb
Mar
Apr
May
Jun
Jul
Aug
Sep
Oct
Nov
Dec
Jan
Date (Month)

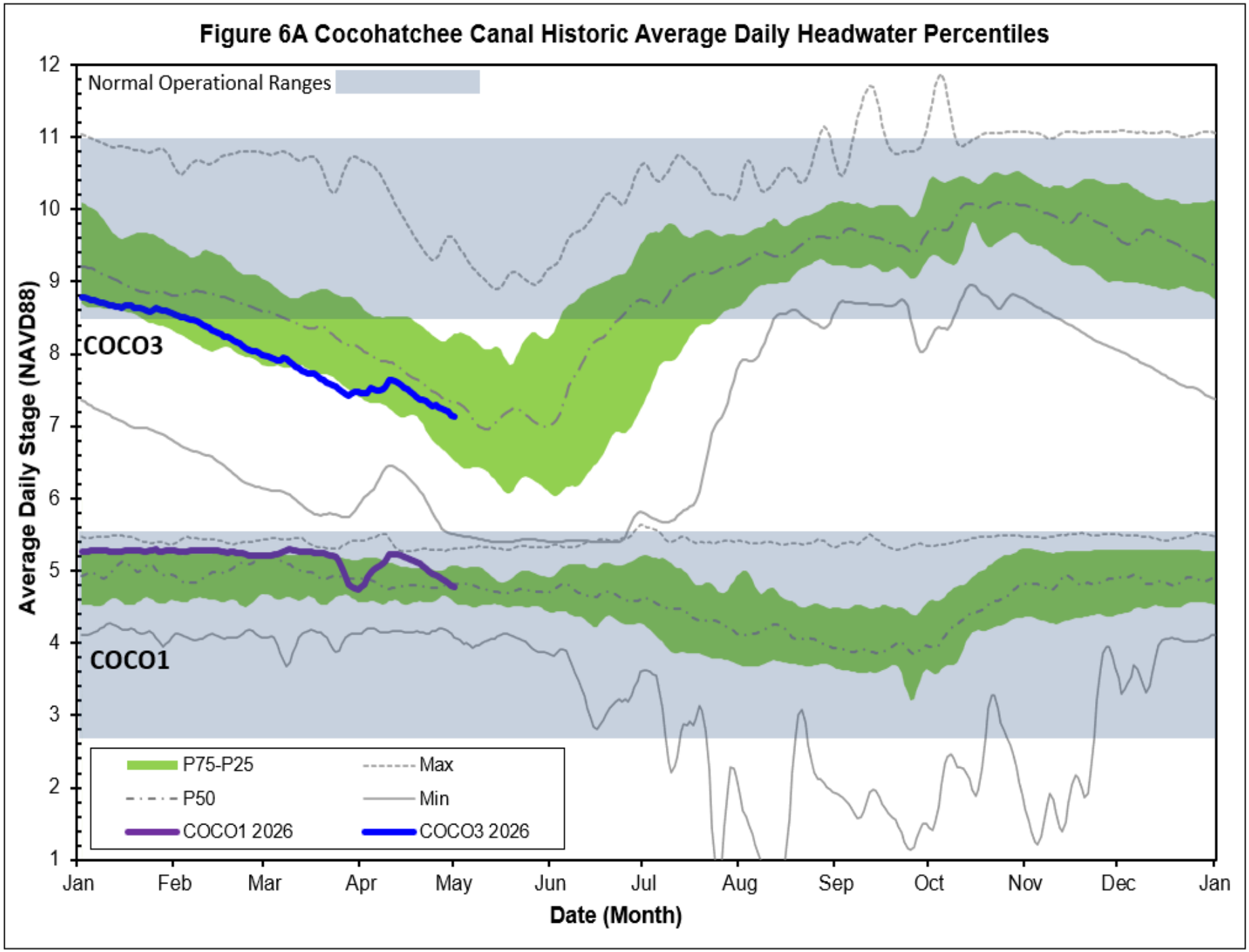


Figure 6A Cocohatchee Canal Historic Average Daily Headwater Percentiles
Normal Operational Ranges
COCO3
COCO1
Average Daily Stage (NAVD88)
12
11
10
9
8
7
6
5
4
3
2
1
Jan
Feb
Mar
Apr
May
Jun
Jul
Aug
Sep
Oct
Nov
Dec
Jan
Date (Month)
P75-P25
Max
P50
Min
COCO1 2026
COCO3 2026

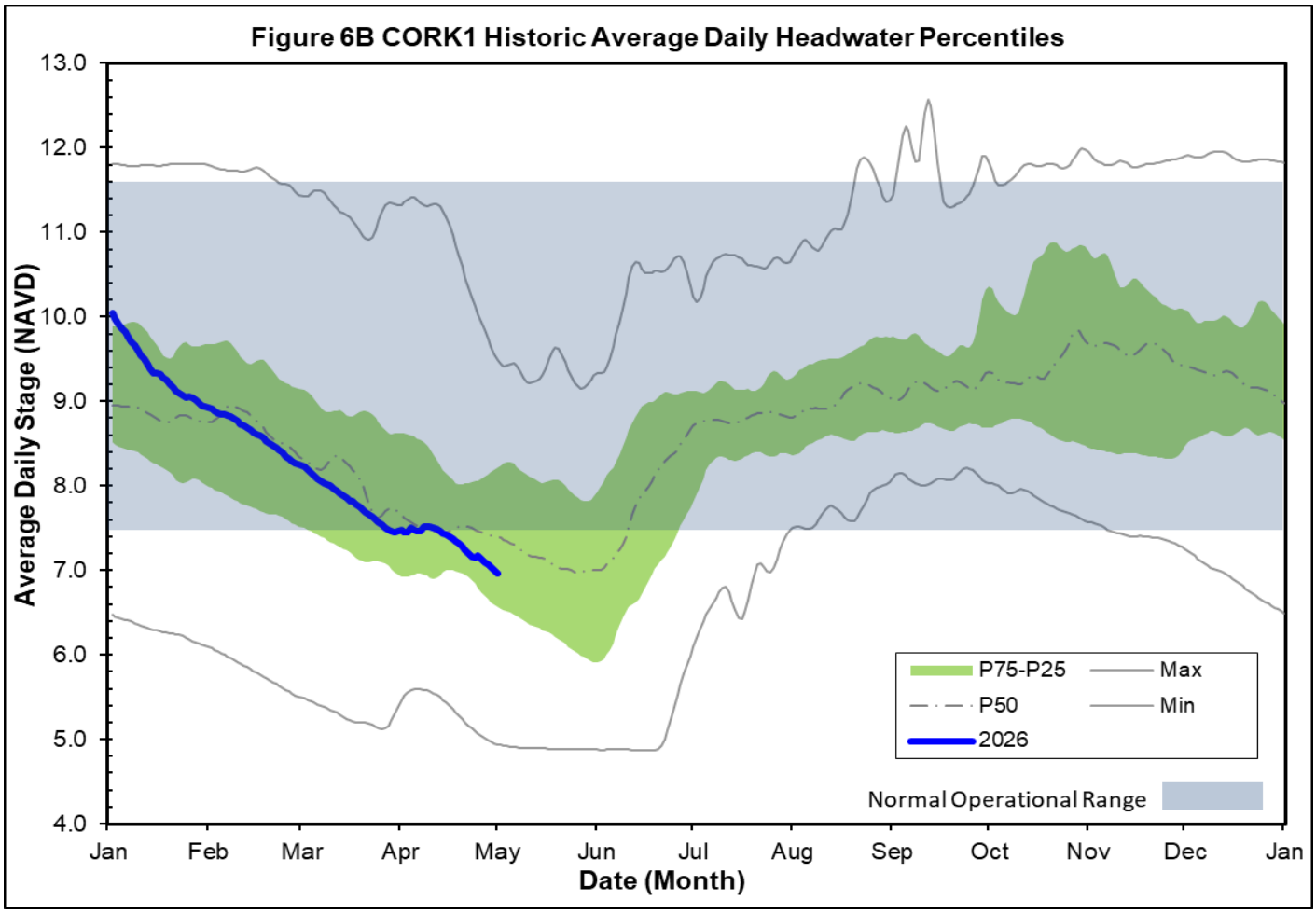


Figure 6B CORK1 Historic Average Daily Headwater Percentiles
Average Daily Stage (NAVD)
13.0
12.0
11.0
10.0
9.0
8.0
7.0
6.0
5.0
4.0
Jan
Feb
Mar
Apr
May
Jun
Jul
Aug
Sep
Oct
Nov
Dec
Jan
Date (Month)
P75-P25
Max
P50
Min
2026
Normal Operational Range

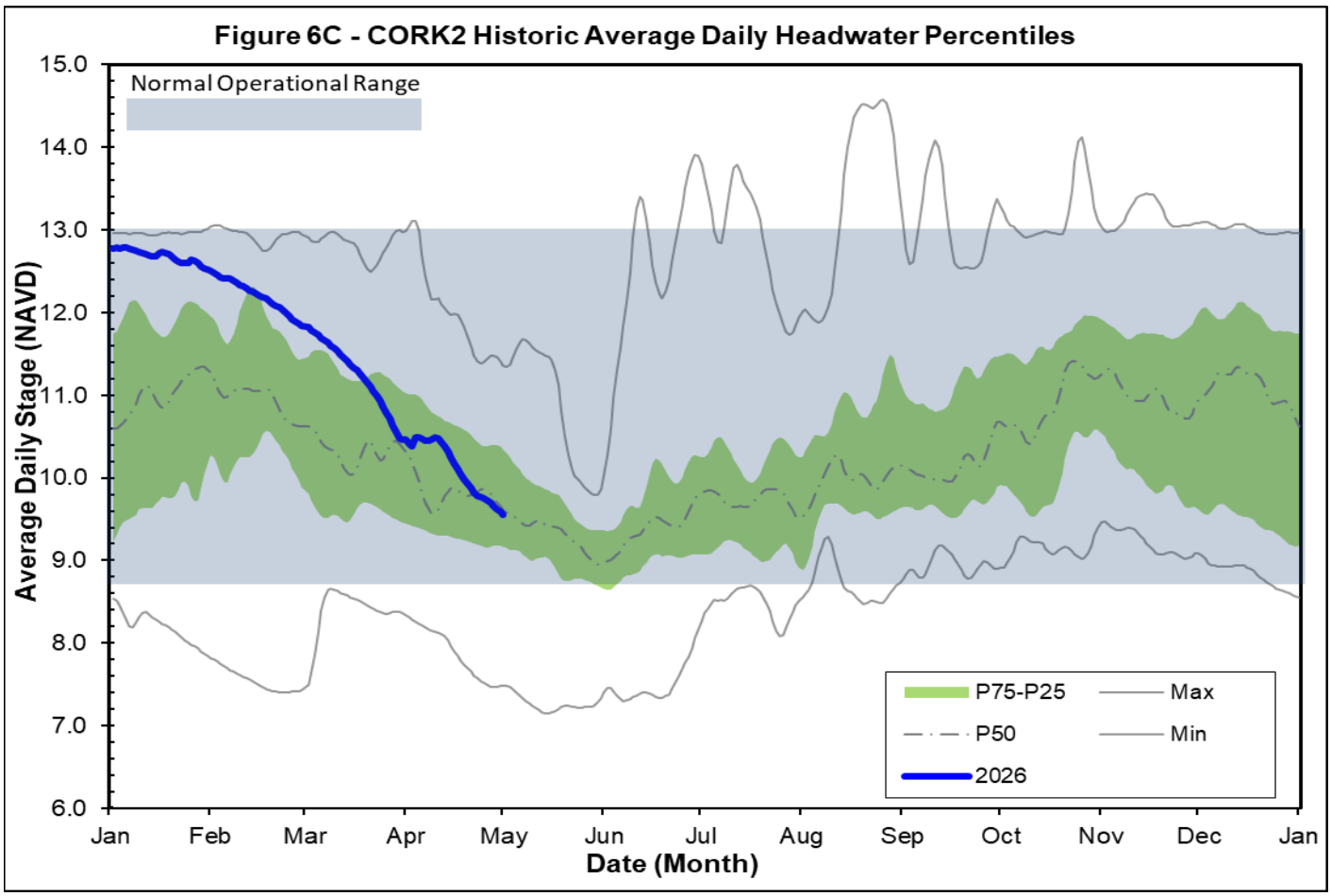


Figure 6C - CORK2 Historic Average Daily Headwater Percentiles
Normal Operational Range
Average Daily Stage (NAVD)
15.0
14.0
13.0
12.0
11.0
10.0
9.0
8.0
7.0
6.0
Jan
Feb
Mar
Apr
May
Jun
Jul
Aug
Sep
Oct
Nov
Dec
Jan
Date (Month)
P75-P25
Max
P50
Min
2026

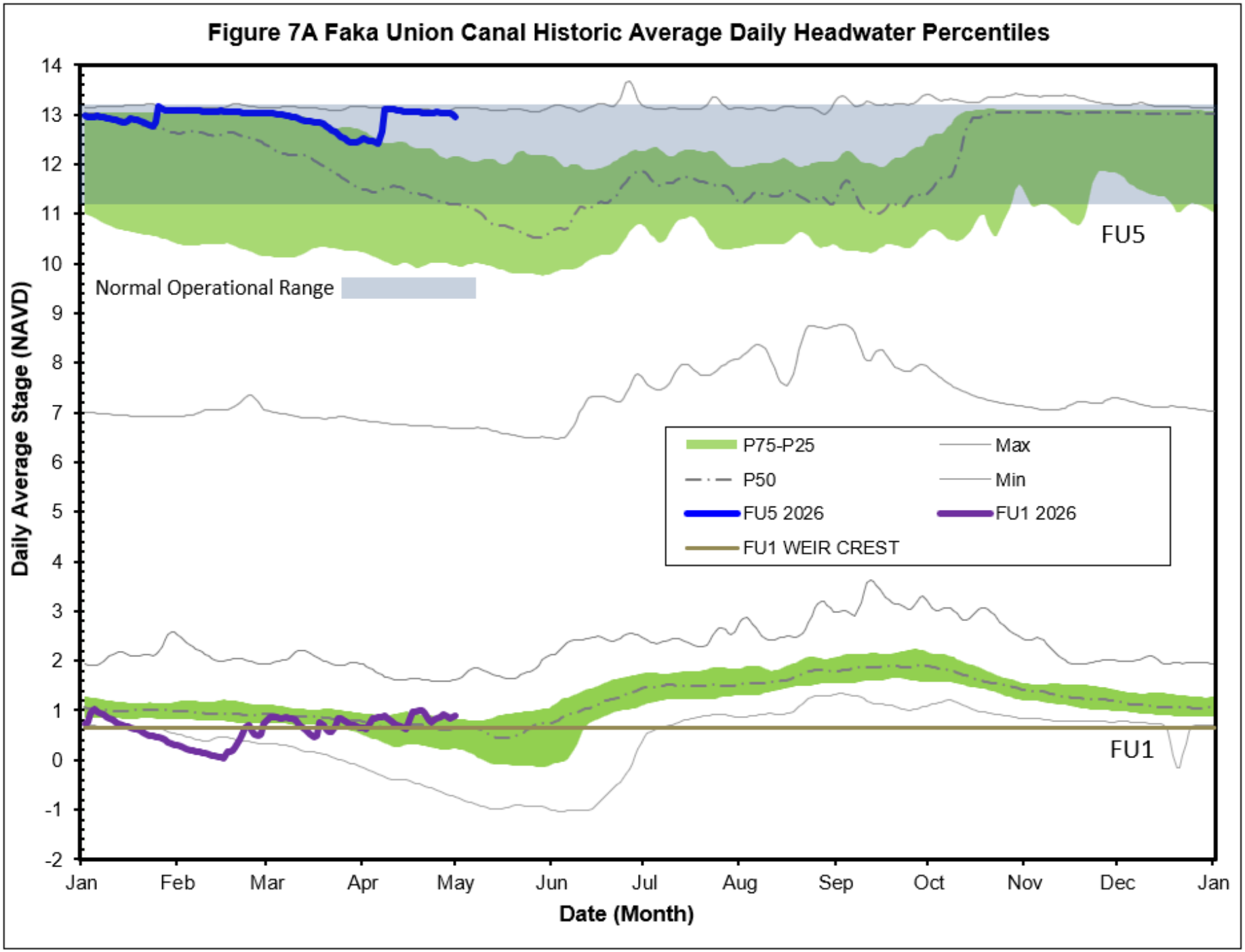


Figure 7A Faka Union Canal Historic Average Daily Headwater Percentiles
Daily Average Stage (NAVD)
14
13
12
11
10
9
8
7
6
5
4
3
2
1
0
-1
-2
Normal Operational Range
FU5
FU1
P75-P25
Max
P50
Min
FU5 2026
FU1 2026
FU1 WEIR CREST
Jan
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Mar
Apr
May
Jun
Jul
Aug
Sep
Oct
Nov
Dec
Jan
Date (Month)

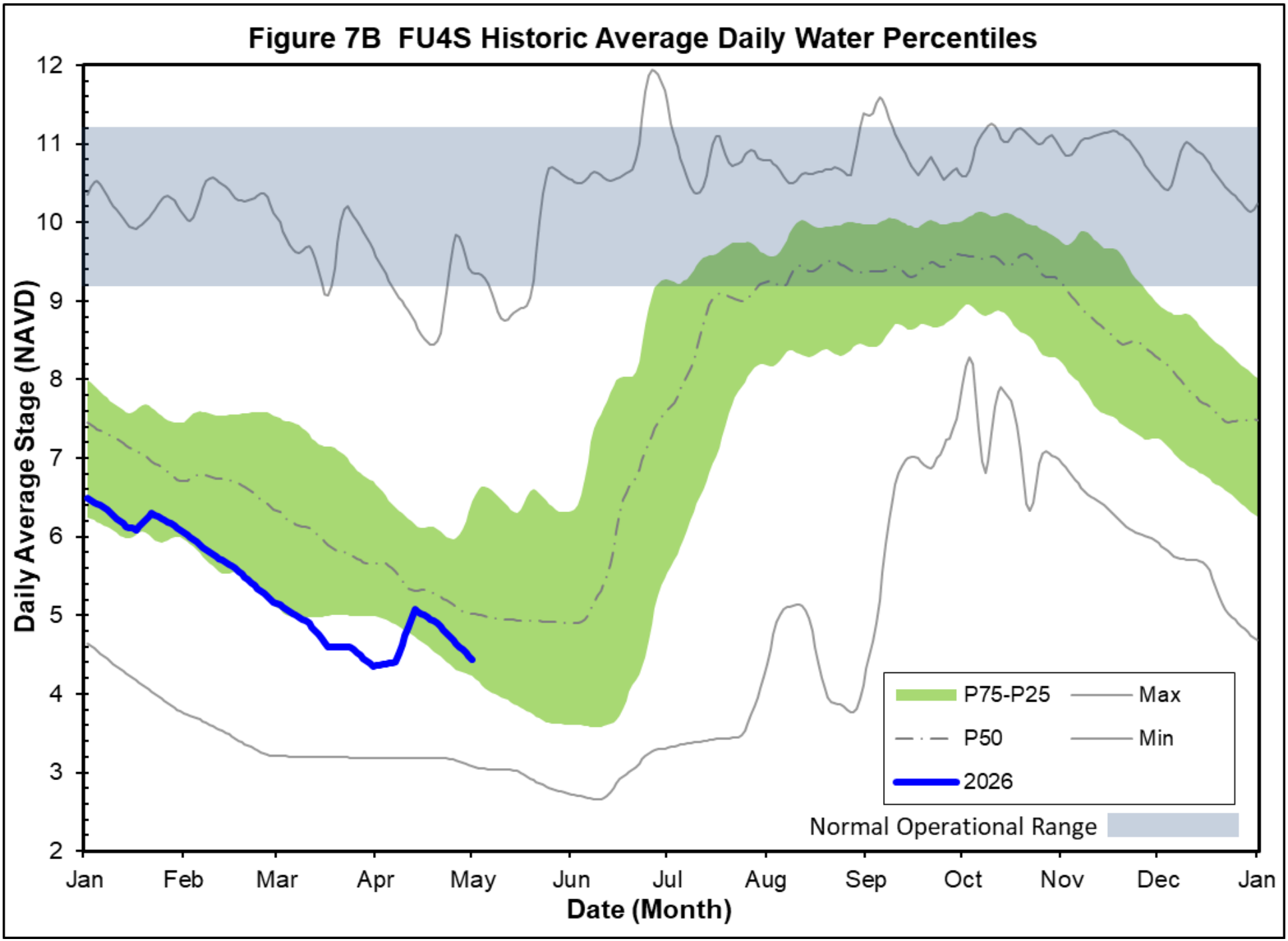


Figure 7B FU4S Historic Average Daily Water Percentiles
Daily Average Stage (NAVD)
12
11
10
9
8
7
6
5
4
3
2
Jan
Feb
Mar
Apr
May
Jun
Jul
Aug
Sep
Oct
Nov
Dec
Jan
Date (Month)
P75-P25
Max
P50
Min
2026
Normal Operational Range

Figure 8A - HC1 Historic Average Daily Headwater Percentiles

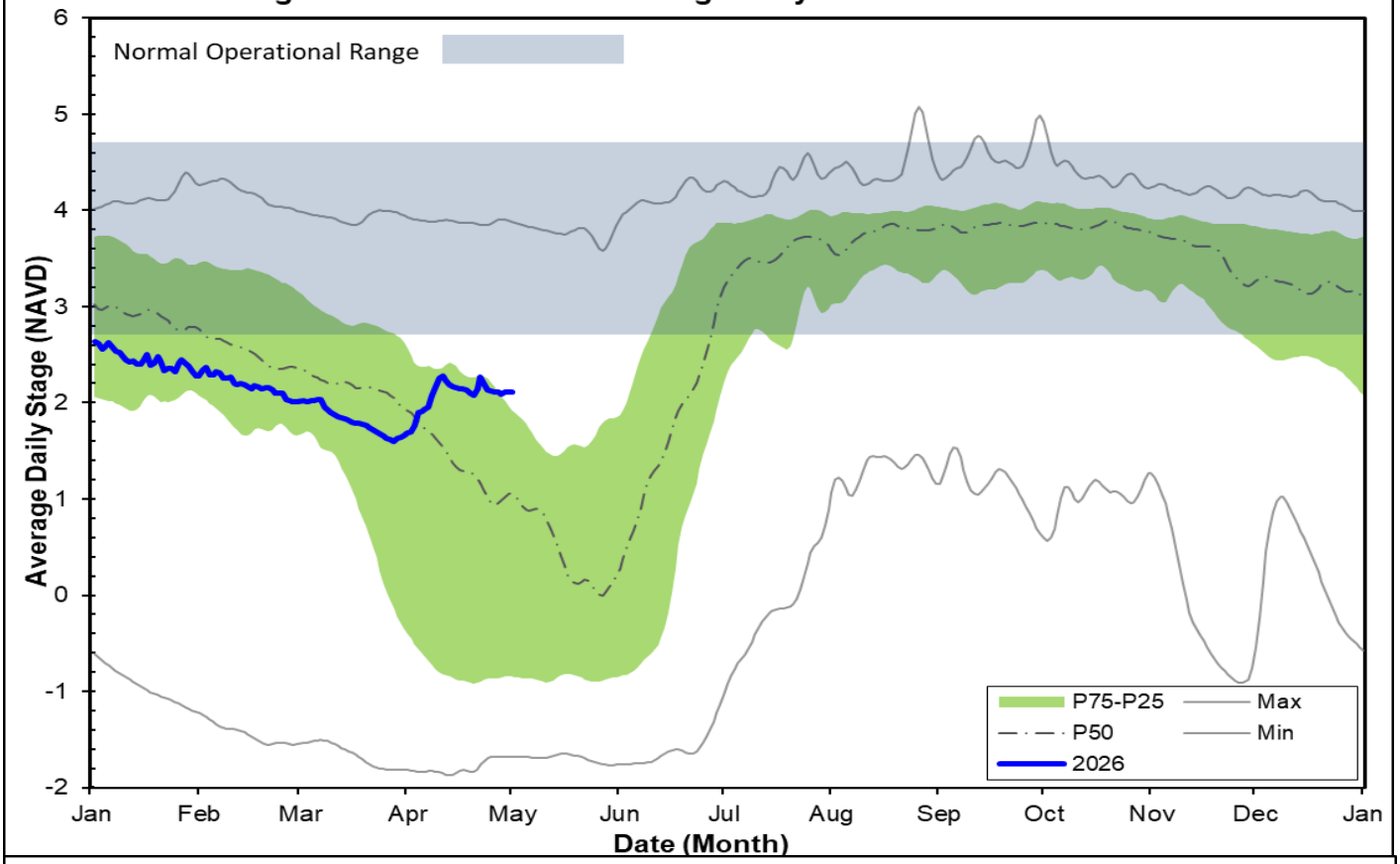


Figure 8B HC2 Historic Average Daily Headwater Percentiles

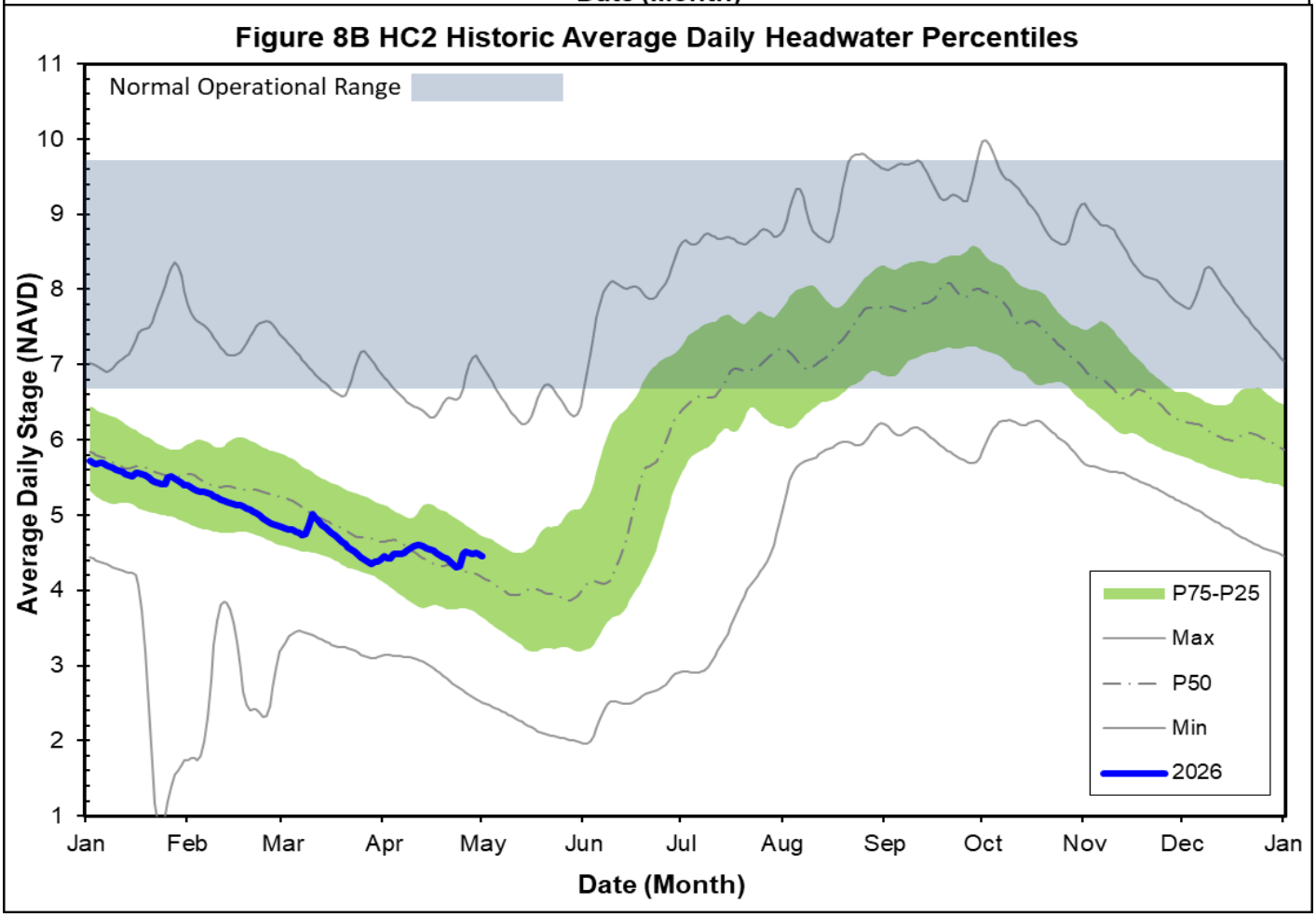


TABLE 2

WATER CONDITIONS SUMMARY - APRIL 2026

SELECTED STATIONS for BCB AREA / SW FLORIDA

Last Reading Date :		April 30, 2026					
Previous Period Reading Date:		March 31, 2026					
STATION INDEX NO.	WELL LOCATION	WELL / AQUIFER - TYPE	CHANGE (from previous date)	PREVIOUS LEVEL	CURRENT LEVEL (ft)	DIRECTION OF CHANGE	CONCERN INDICATOR
ALL INDICATOR LEVELS SHOWN IN FT-NAVD88							
C-462	Immokalee	Lower Tamiami Aquifer	-1.28	29.40	28.12	↓	GREEN
C-1004R	Naples	Lower Tamiami Aquifer	-2.77	-0.54	-3.31	↓	YELLOW
C-1224	Marco Lakes	Lower Tamiami Aquifer	0.85	0.94	1.79	↑	GREEN
C-948R	Golden Gate	Mid Hawthorn Aquifer	-0.48	24.89	24.41	↓	
C-951R	Golden Gate	Lower Tamiami Aquifer	0.32	-0.57	-0.25	↑	
L-2194	Bonita Springs	Sandstone Aquifer	-1.13	-2.60	-3.73	↓	RED
L-2195	Bonita Springs	Surficial Aquifer System	-0.27	5.99	5.72	↓	YELLOW
L-738	Bonita Springs	Lower Tamiami Aquifer	-3.08	-4.31	-7.39	↓	RED

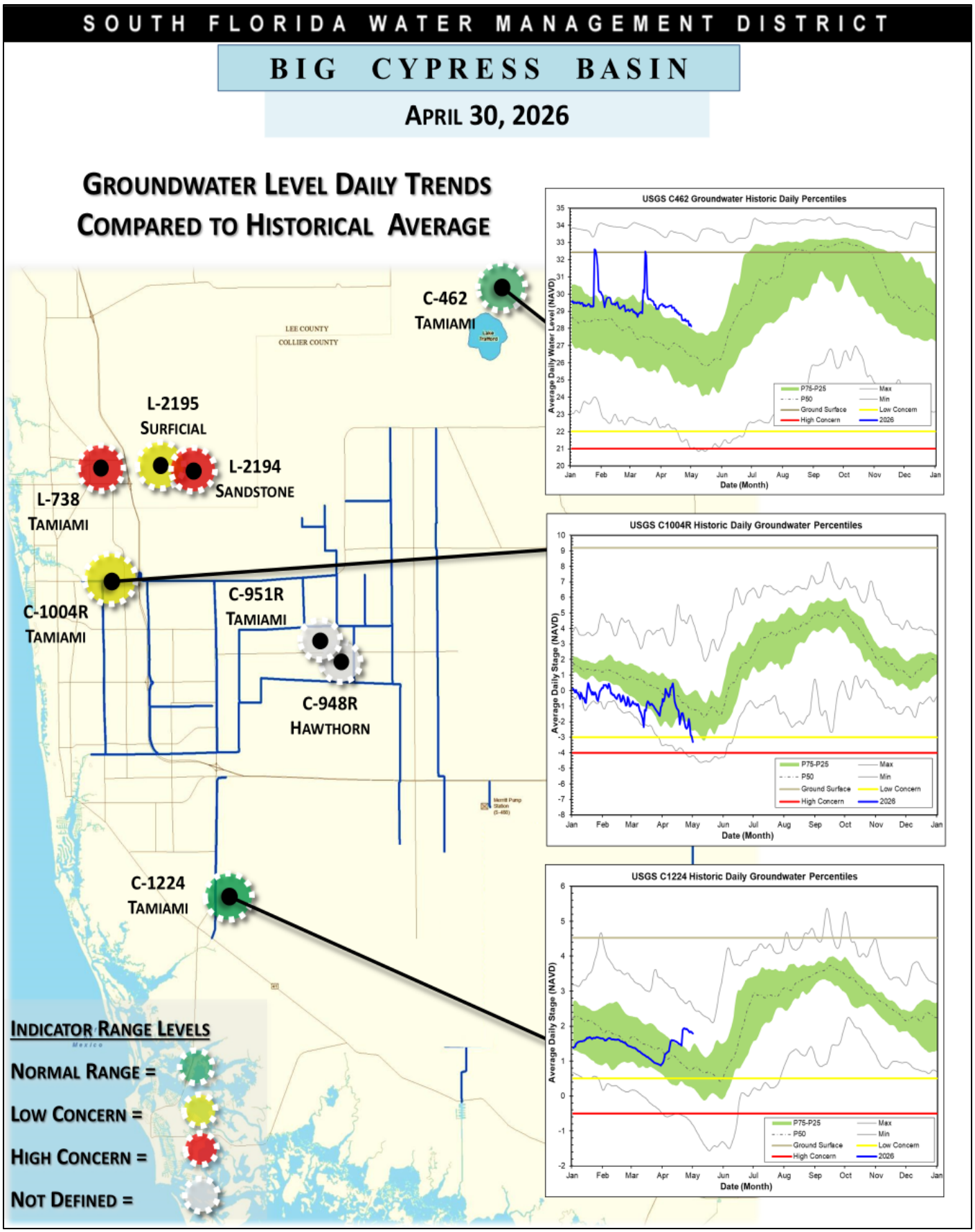

SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT
BIG CYPRESS BASIN
APRIL 30, 2026
GROUNDWATER LEVEL DAILY TRENDS
COMPARED TO HISTORICAL AVERAGE
C-462
TAMIAMI
LEE COUNTY
COLLIER COUNTY
L-2195
SURFICIAL
L-2194
SANDSTONE
L-738
TAMIAMI
C-1004R
TAMIAMI
C-951R
TAMIAMI
C-948R
HAWTHORN
C-1224
TAMIAMI
INDICATOR RANGE LEVELS
NORMAL RANGE =
LOW CONCERN =
HIGH CONCERN =
NOT DEFINED =
USGS C462 Groundwater Historic Daily Percentiles
Average Daily Water Level (NAVD)
Date (Month)
USGS C1004R Historic Daily Groundwater Percentiles
Average Daily Stage (NAVD)
Date (Month)
USGS C1224 Historic Daily Groundwater Percentiles
Average Daily Stage (NAVD)
Date (Month)
P75-P25
P50
Ground Surface
High Concern
Max
Min
Low Concern
2026
Jan
Feb
Mar
Apr
May
Jun
Jul
Aug
Sep
Oct
Nov
Dec

FIGURE 9A

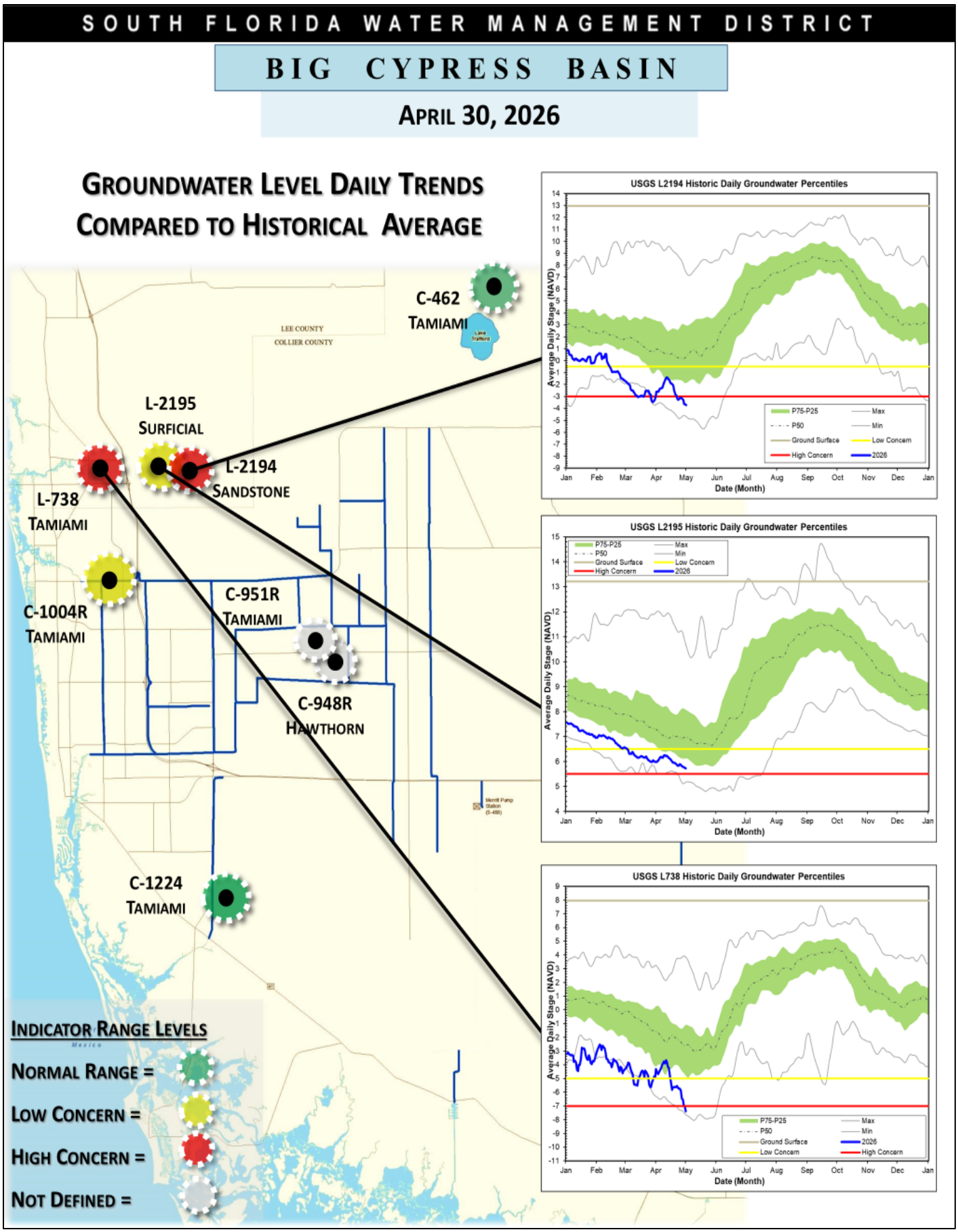

SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT
BIG CYPRESS BASIN
APRIL 30, 2026
GROUNDWATER LEVEL DAILY TRENDS
COMPARED TO HISTORICAL AVERAGE
C-462
TAMIAMI
LEE COUNTY
COLLIER COUNTY
L-2195
SURFICIAL
L-2194
SANDSTONE
L-738
TAMIAMI
C-1004R
TAMIAMI
C-951R
TAMIAMI
C-948R
HAWTHORN
C-1224
TAMIAMI
INDICATOR RANGE LEVELS
NORMAL RANGE =
LOW CONCERN =
HIGH CONCERN =
NOT DEFINED =
USGS L2194 Historic Daily Groundwater Percentiles
USGS L2195 Historic Daily Groundwater Percentiles
USGS L738 Historic Daily Groundwater Percentiles
Average Daily Stage (NAVD)
Date (Month)
P75-P25
P50
Ground Surface
High Concern
Max
Min
Low Concern
2026
Jan
Feb
Mar
Apr
May
Jun
Jul
Aug
Sep
Oct
Nov
Dec

FIGURE 9B

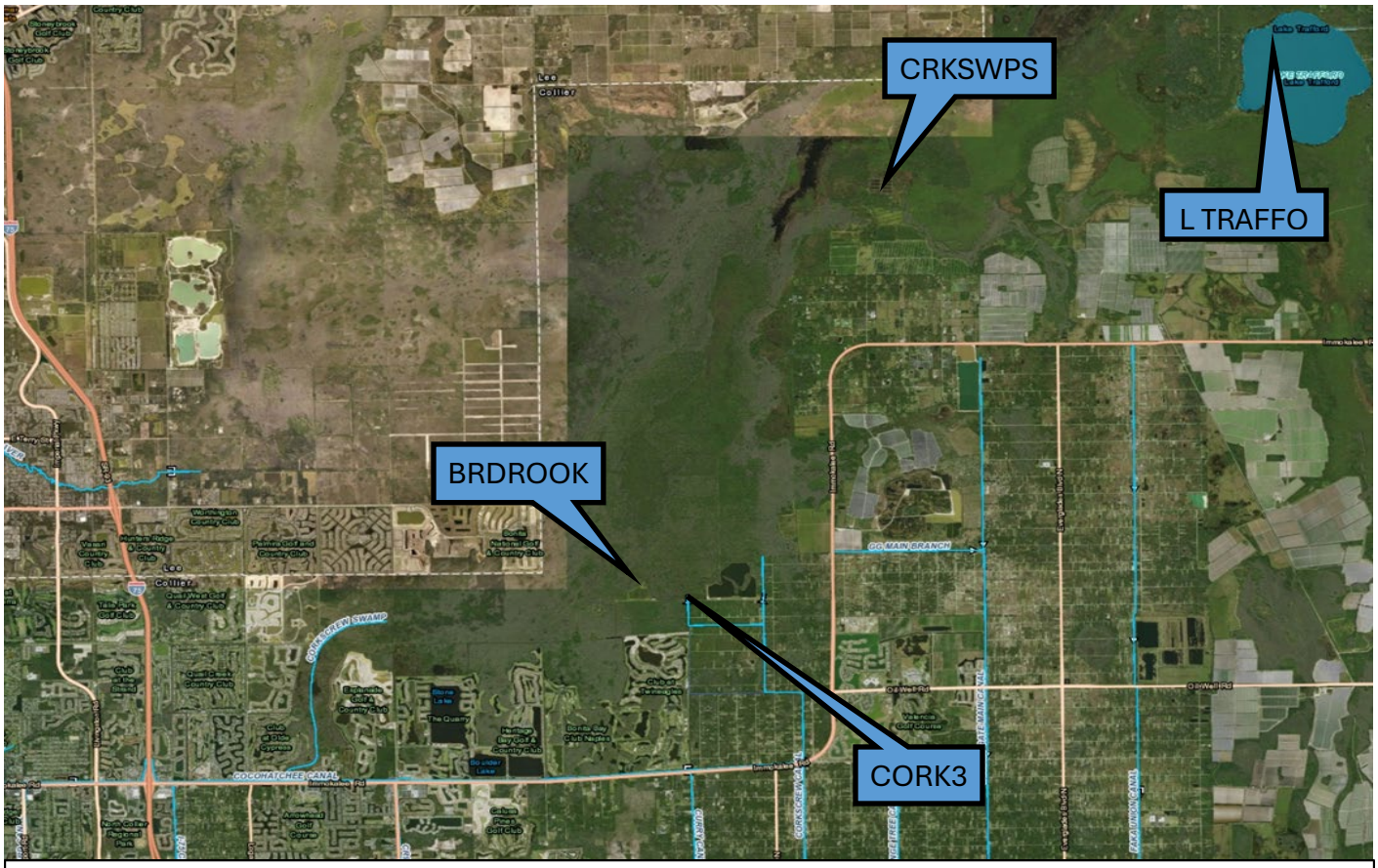
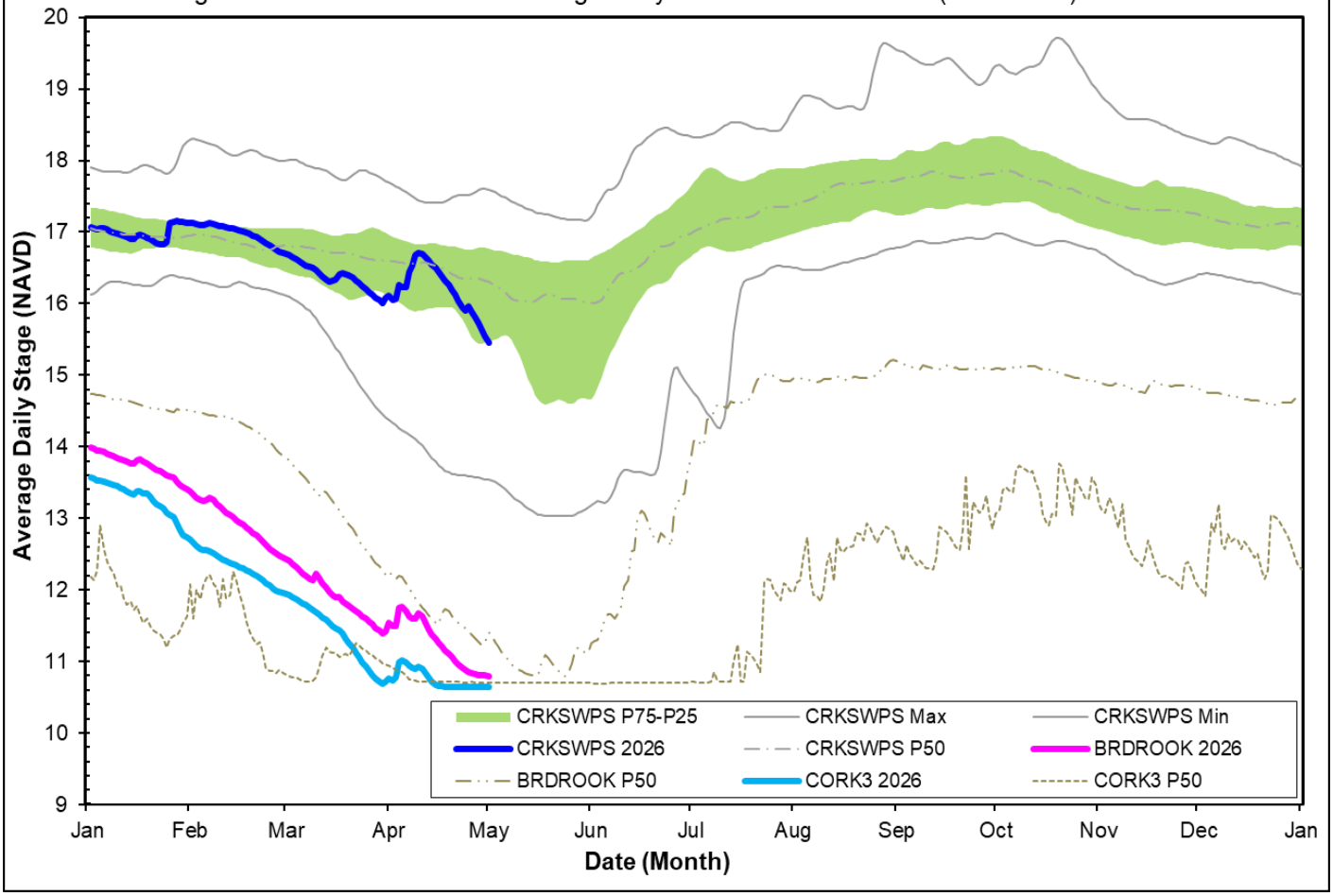


Figure 10-Corkscrew Historic Average Daily Headwater Percentiles (1984-2024)



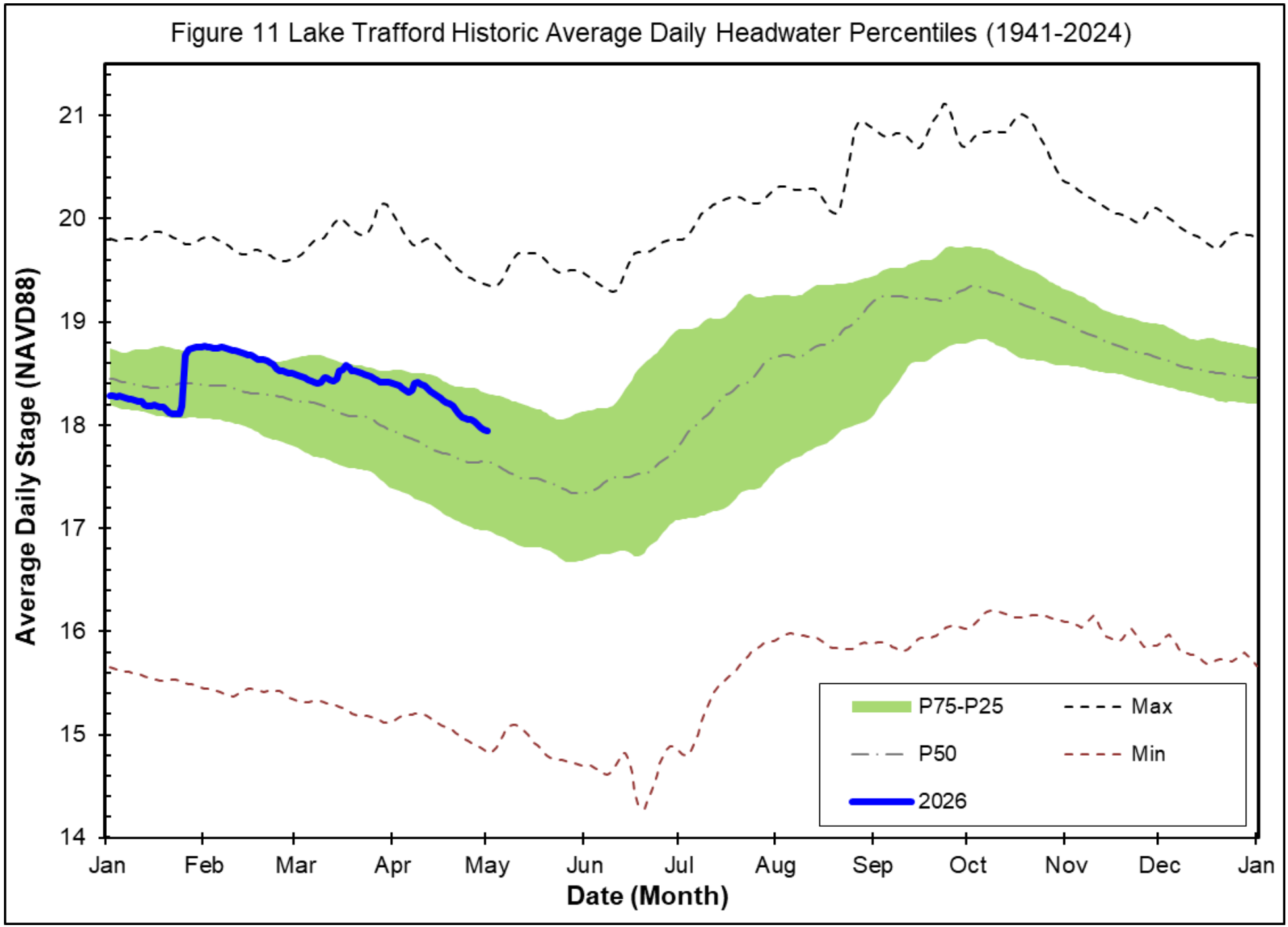


Figure 11 Lake Trafford Historic Average Daily Headwater Percentiles (1941-2024)
Average Daily Stage (NAVD88)
21
20
19
18
17
16
15
14
Jan
Feb
Mar
Apr
May
Jun
Jul
Aug
Sep
Oct
Nov
Dec
Jan
Date (Month)
P75-P25
Max
P50
Min
2026

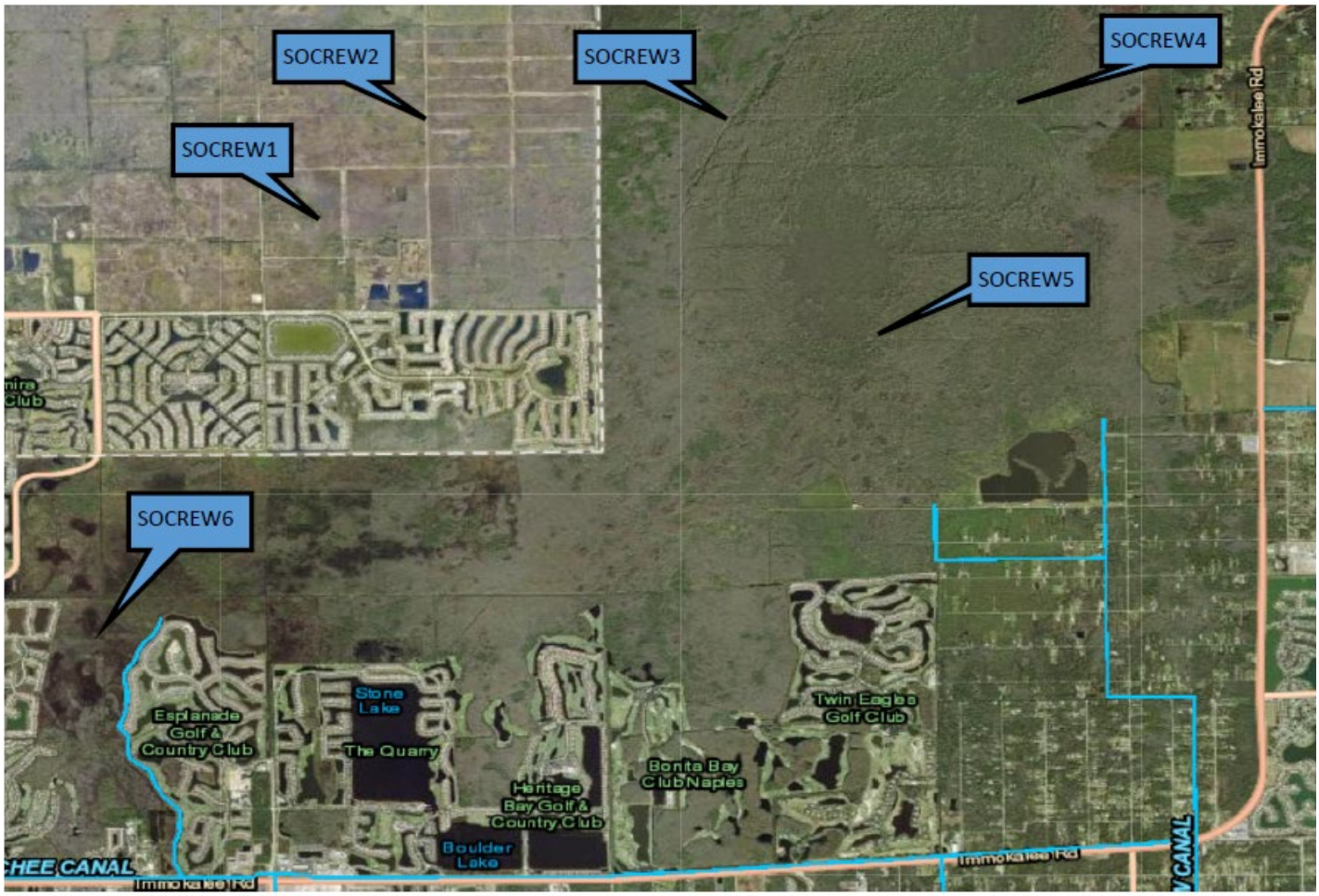
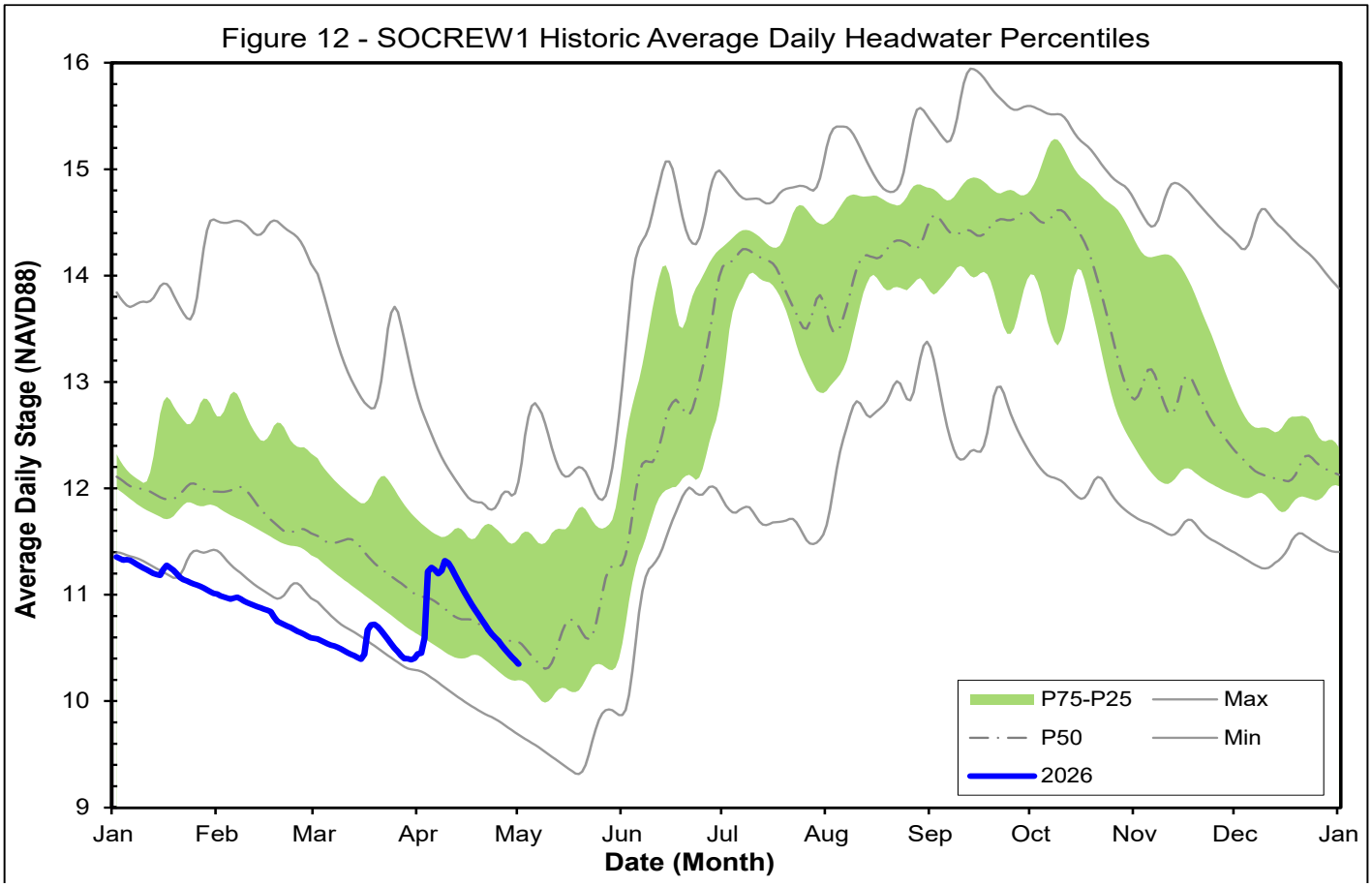


Figure 12 - SOCREW1 Historic Average Daily Headwater Percentiles



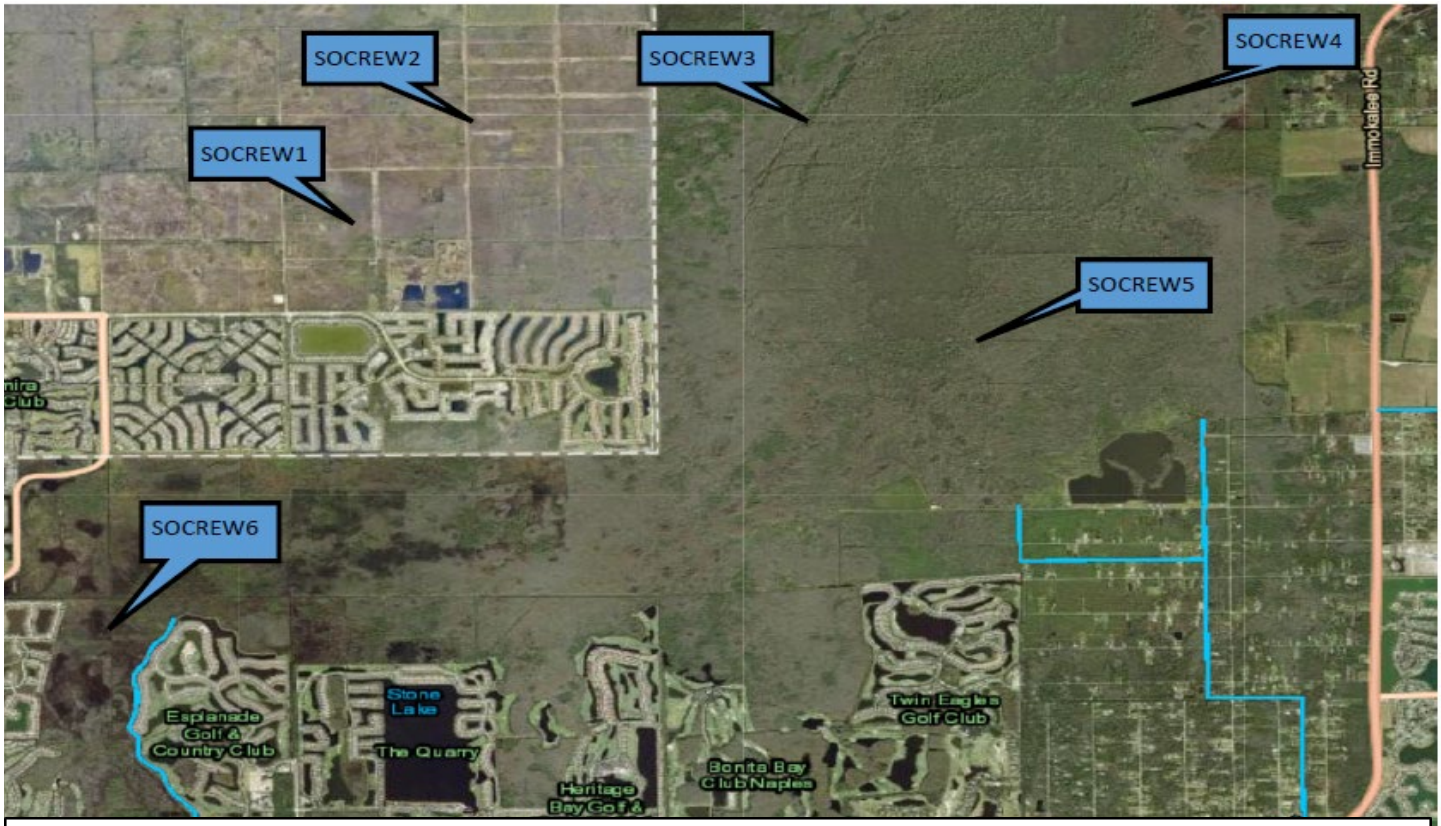


Figure 13 - SOCREW2 Historic Average Daily Headwater Percentiles