

SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

AUGUST 2026

BIG CYPRESS BASIN HYDROLOGIC REPORT



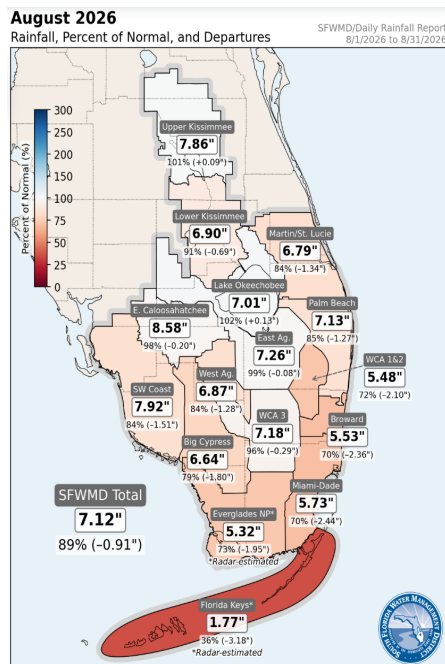
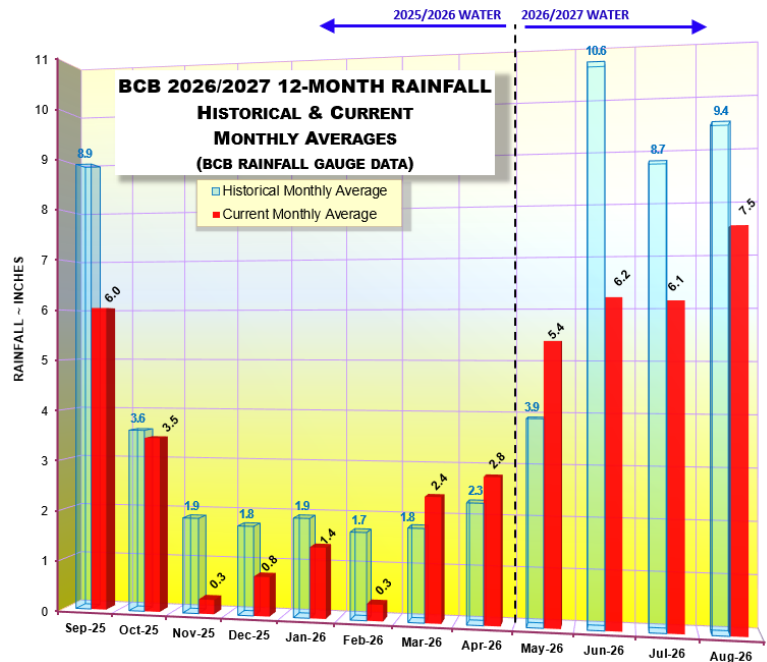
sfwmd.gov

SUMMARY OF HYDROLOGIC CONDITIONS IN THE BIG CYPRESS BASIN

August 2026

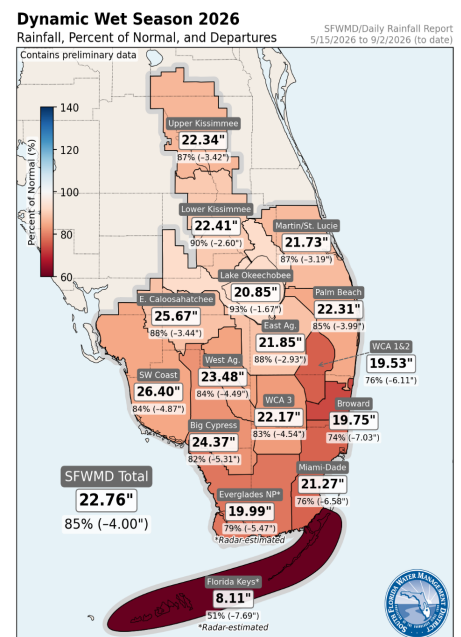
SUMMARY

August marked the third consecutive month of significantly below-normal precipitation in the Big Cypress Basin (BCB), with basin-wide gauges averaging just **7.50 inches** of rainfall (79% of normal). August's low rainfall total extended the current trend of sub-normal rainfall, leaving the BCB in significant rainfall deficit for the current wet season which began on May 15th. This rainfall deficit has led to lower than normal canal levels in some locations, such as the upper Cocohatchee, Trafford, and upper Golden Gate Main watersheds, – and has delayed a basinwide transition to flood control operations.



During August, the Southwest Coast Forecast Area (SWCFA) received an average of 7.92 inches of rainfall, more than the BCB gauge-based average of 7.5 inches. Differences in total rainfall between the two areas are common, however, as their boundaries differ, most notably in the Lee County area.

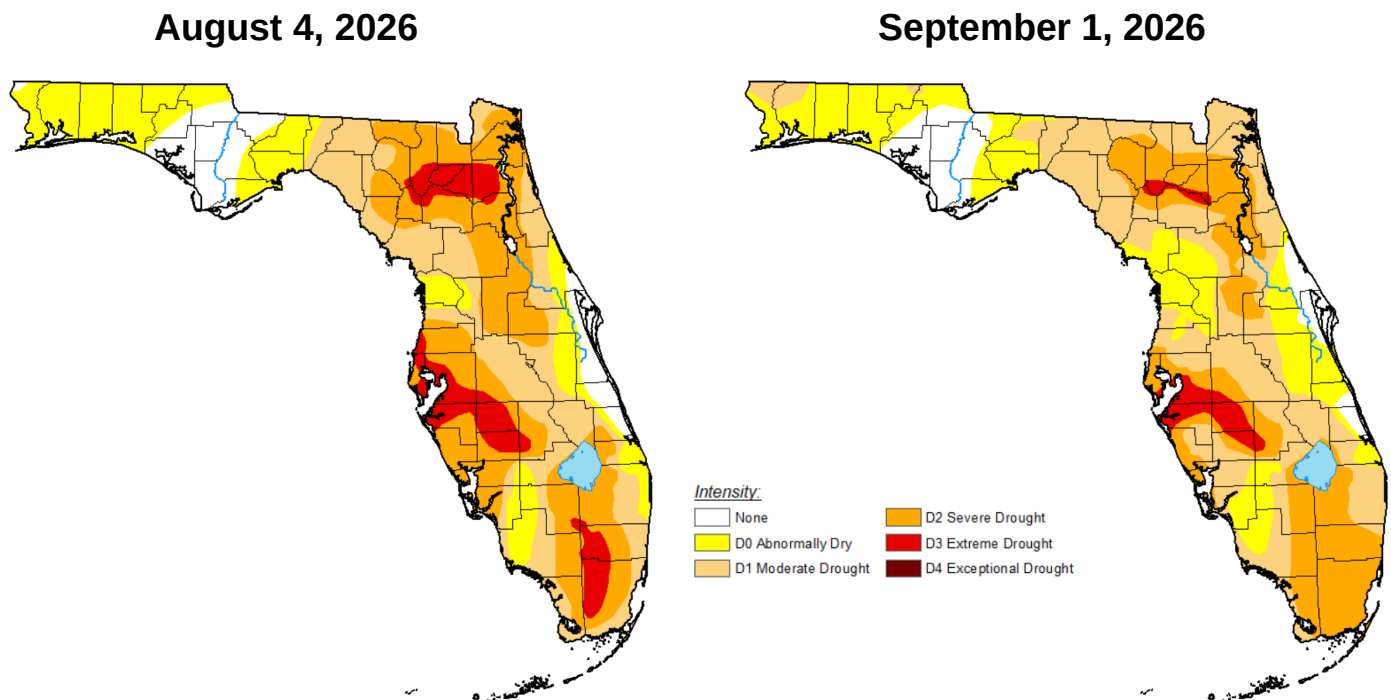
As a result of this below-normal rainfall, the SWCFA is running a 4.87-inch deficit for the 2026–2027 wet season as of September 2, 2026.



Drought Conditions

According to the U.S. Drought Monitor, as of September 1, 2026, BCB drought conditions expanded slightly near U.S. 41, but generally remained largely unchanged at “D0 Abnormally Dry”. The eastern

half of Collier County also remained unchanged as a mixture of “D1 Moderate Drought” and “D2 Severe Drought.”



El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO)

The September 8, 2026 ENSO update prepared by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Climate Prediction Center (CPC), summarizes ENSO conditions as follows:

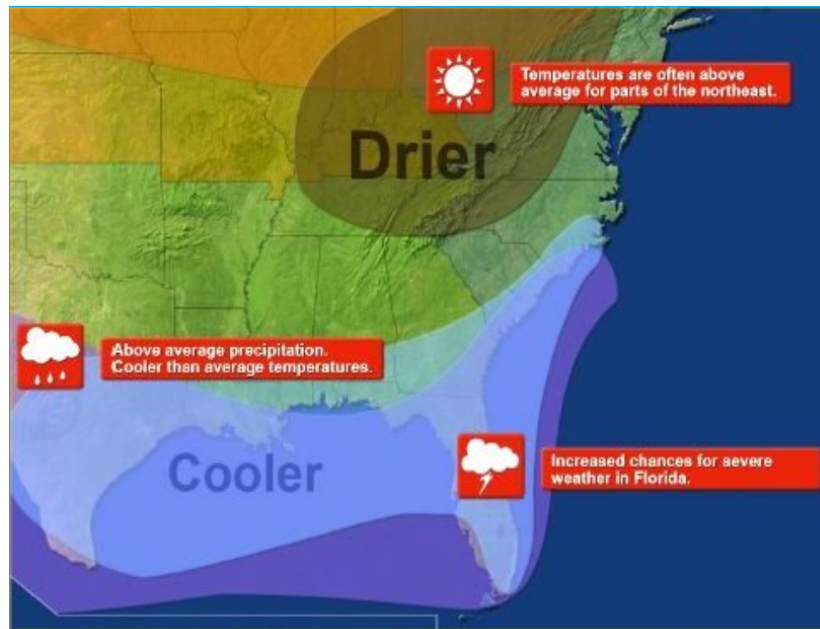
- El Niño is present.*
- Equatorial sea surface temperatures (SSTs) are above average across the central and eastern Pacific Ocean.
- The atmospheric circulation anomalies over the equatorial Pacific Ocean are consistent with El Niño.
- El Niño is strengthening, with a greater than 90% chance of a very strong event during the Northern Hemisphere fall and winter 2026-27.*

**Note: These statements are updated once a month (2nd Thursday of each month) in association with the ENSO Diagnostics Discussion, which can be found at:*

https://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/analysis_monitoring/enso_advisory/

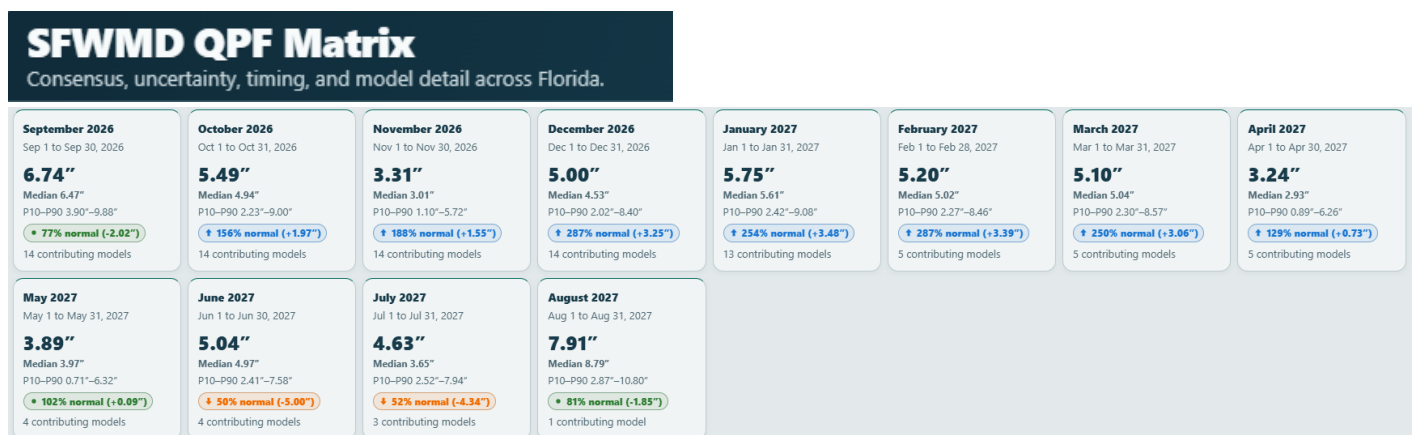
For South Florida right now, El Niño’s influence is relatively modest because its strongest and most reliable effects here occur from late fall through winter. The summer pattern remains dominated by the tropical Atlantic, sea-breeze thunderstorms, and other short-term weather patterns. In October and November, El Niño is predicted to increasingly favor a wetter, stormier pattern. Historically, El Niño conditions tend to increase rainfall across Florida during the fall, winter and early spring.

The most notable El Niño impacts are forecast to manifest during December through February. El Niños typically strengthen and shift the subtropical jet stream southward, steering more disturbances across or near Florida. For South Florida, that generally means more frequent cloudy/rainy periods, more frontal passages, and above-normal rainfall during the normally dry winter season. As a result, temperatures tend to run somewhat cooler than normal, not necessarily because of numerous arctic outbreaks, but because of the stronger influence of the subtropical jet stream. Storm tracks are farther south on average, producing more clouds, rain, and severe weather as indicated in the NOAA National Weather Service exhibit shown below.



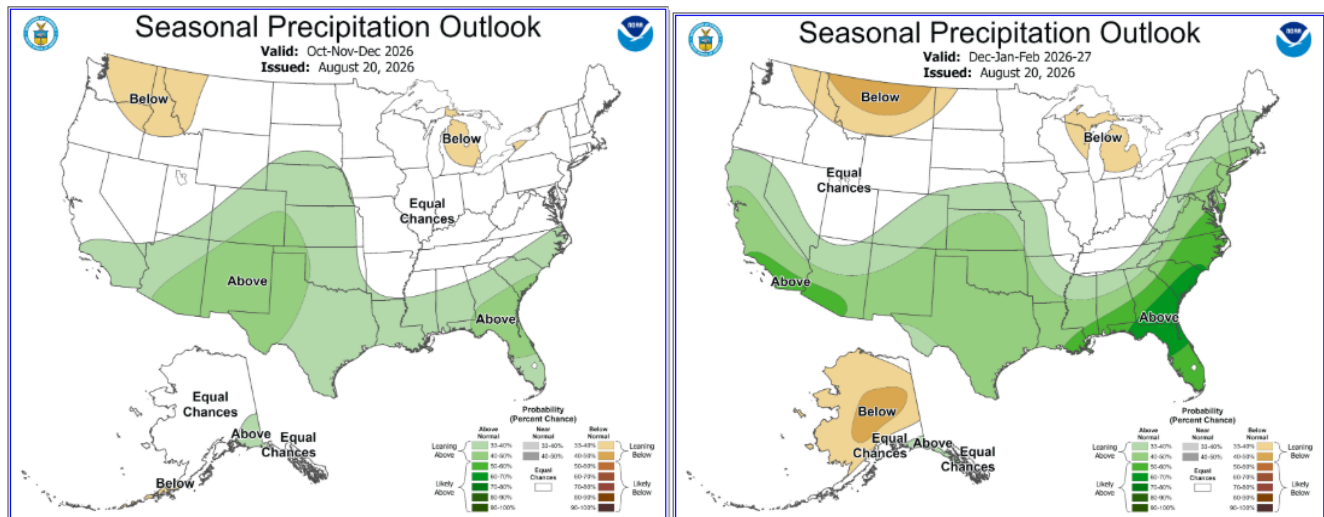
The North Atlantic Oscillation and Arctic Oscillation can substantially alter the temperature pattern, occasionally allowing much stronger cold-air outbreaks into Florida. This year's El Niño is predicted to be the strongest in the modern record, leading to a wetter-than-normal fall, a notably wet and stormier winter, and more opportunities for cool spells and significant rain events across South Florida.

Due to the climatological conditions associated with the current El Niño, the SFWMD QPF Matrix for the Southwest Coast indicates a high probability of above normal rainfall for coming months, with October through March potentially seeing rainfall totals well in excess of historic averages.



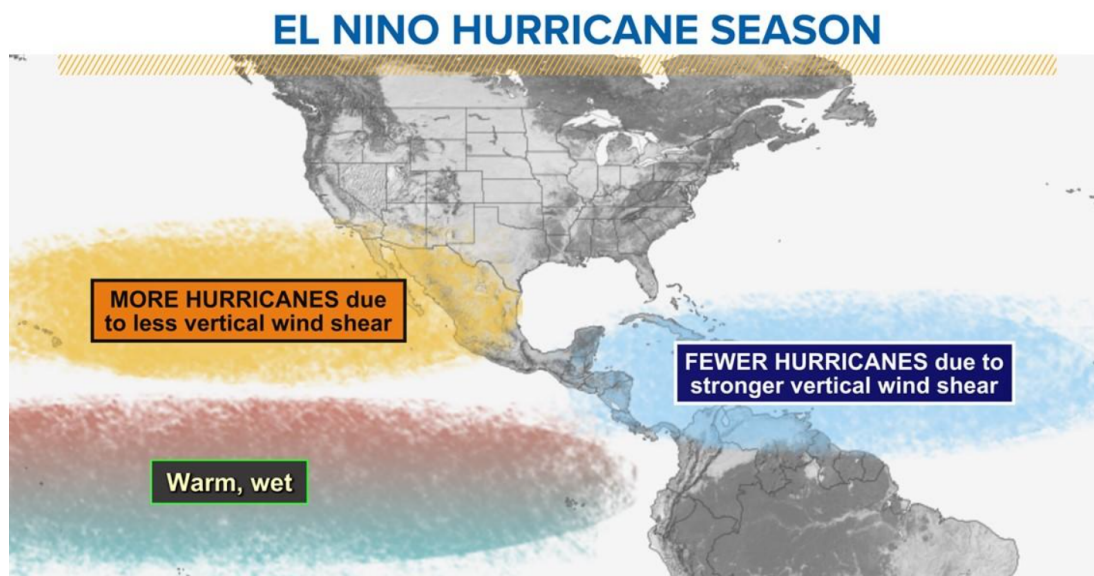
The above model-based predictions are consistent with the CPCs long range precipitation forecasts which show an increased probability of above normal rainfall in the coming autumn and winter.

It should be noted, however, that though dry season precipitation is forecast to be substantially above normal, these monthly predictions still fall well short of wet season values. As such, a measured balance of water conservation and flood control operations will be necessary as the BCB transitions into and through the winter months.



For the remainder of 2026, NOAA expects El Niño to persist and strengthen through the peak of the Atlantic hurricane season, with the agency identifying it as a major suppressing influence on tropical development. NOAA currently gives a 75% chance of a below-normal 2026 Atlantic season.

El Niño conditions alter the atmospheric circulation and typically result in an increase to vertical wind shear over the tropical Atlantic and Caribbean. Strong wind shear can tilt and disrupt a developing storm, making it harder for thunderstorms to organize around a central circulation, thus suppressing tropical storm and hurricane development as indicated in the below exhibit from NOAA Climate.



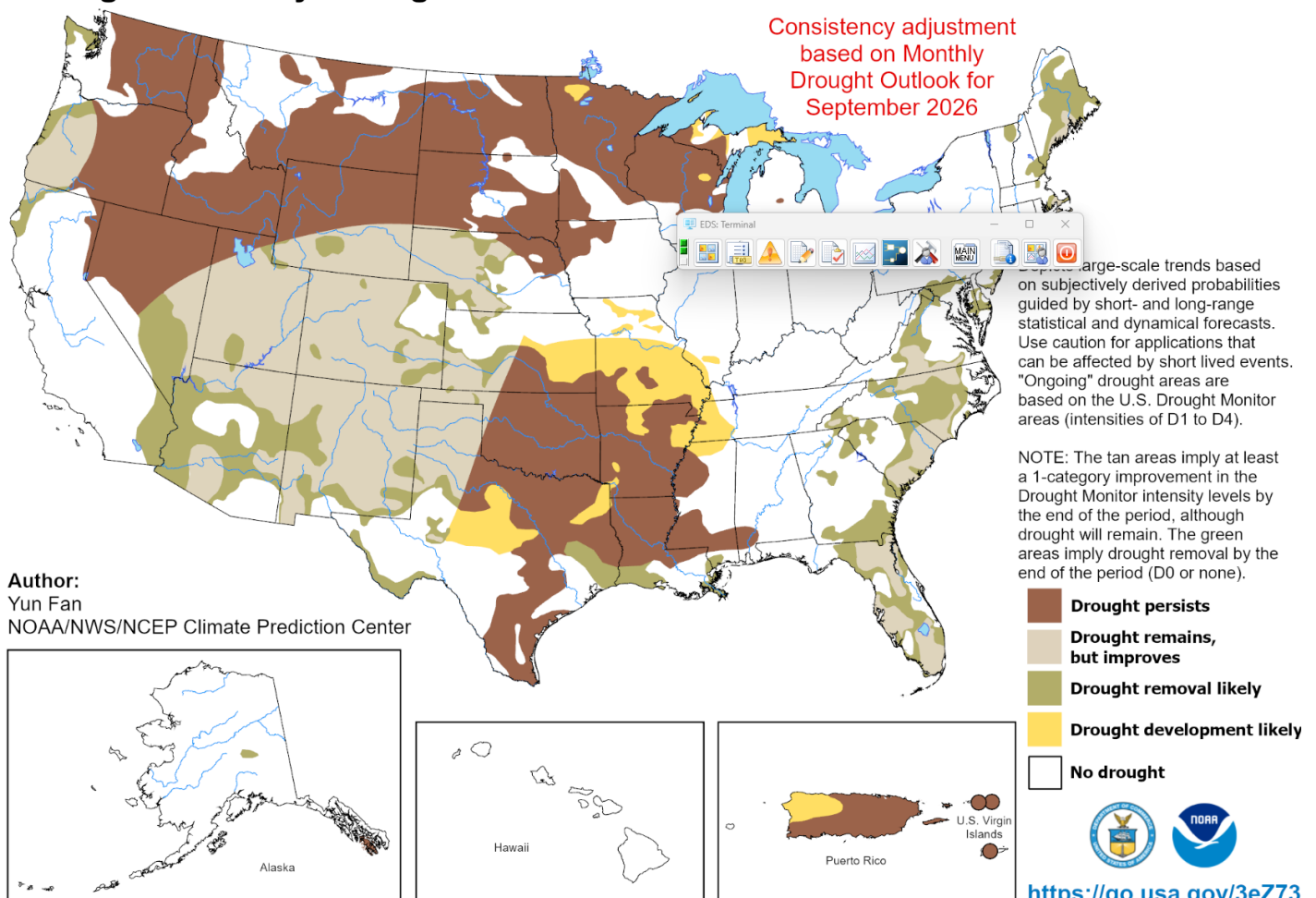
Additionally, El Niño conditions tend to lead to more sinking air and greater atmospheric stability over parts of the Atlantic Ocean, creating an environment less favorable for tropical cyclone formation. As a result, fewer Cape Verde cyclones may develop from African easterly waves, particularly in the Main Development Region of the tropical Atlantic, and fewer of those storms tend to become major hurricanes.

El Niño does not by itself guarantee a quiet hurricane season. Other factors, including Atlantic Ocean temperatures and regional atmospheric patterns can offset some of its influence. NOAA notes that during El Niño years, activity can shift somewhat toward the Gulf Coast and subtropical Atlantic, where conditions may be more favorable for tropical cyclone development.

The U.S. Monthly Drought Outlook predicts that the areas in the BCB currently shown as “D0 Abnormally Dry” will not see a return to drought conditions by November 30, 2026. Additionally, areas within Collier County currently under drought conditions will likely see a lessening or removal of drought conditions in the coming months.

U.S. Seasonal Drought Outlook Drought Tendency During the Valid Period

Valid for September 1 - November 30, 2026
Released August 31, 2026



August 2026 BCB RAINFALL

The Basin-wide averaged, gauge-measured, monthly rainfall was 7.50 inches in August 2026. This measured rainfall amounted to just 79% of the historic BCB August average of 9.45 inches (**see Figures 1, 2, 3A and Table 1**). August rainfall was highly variable by location. The rain gauge with the highest measured precipitation was R-1 GG #3 which recorded 13.84 inches. R-5 FAKAHATCHEE STRAND HQ received the lowest rain gauge monthly total with just 3.25 inches.

Figure 3B shows August's calculated average rainfall estimates for each of the Basin's watersheds, based on gauge adjusted radar (Raindar). The Golden Gate Main watershed saw the highest Raindar average of 10.13 inches and the Coastal Basins watershed saw the lowest Raindar average of 4.61 inches. The BCB's overall calculated area weighted average Raindar rainfall (by watershed) was 6.7 inches for the month, approximately 0.8 inches lower than the basin-wide rain gauge average of 7.5 inches. The Raindar totals and their locality distribution across the BCB/Lower West Coast are shown on **Figure 3C**.

August 2026 BCB OPERATIONS AND WATER LEVELS

During August, BCB structures continued to operate in a mixture of flood control and water conservation regimens depending upon location, respective water levels and precipitation forecasts. An uneven distribution of rainfall has led to upstream areas failing to rise to normal seasonal water levels, while downstream areas are generally operating within normal ranges. As a result of this uneven hydrologic distribution, upstream water control structures continue to largely operate in water conservation while downstream structures continue to operate in flood control and water conservation modes as conditions warrant.

The lower and middle segments of the Golden Gate Main Canal were intentionally lowered to provide more capacity in the canal as the District transitions into flood control operations. The upper reaches of the Golden Gate Canal remain in water conservation mode. However, efforts to conserve water were not enough to bring water levels up to normal wet season conditions in the upper segments of the Cocohatchee and the Corkscrew Canal. In fact, water levels slightly declined in the upper segments of the Cocohatchee Canal. BCB canal conditions as of August 31, 2026 are shown on **Figure 4**.

GOLDEN GATE SYSTEM

Water levels in the Golden Gate Main Canal varied by location due to the afore-mentioned uneven distribution of rainfall over the watershed. The Structures closest to the coast (e.g. GG1, GG2, and GG3) were generally operated in intermediate flood control operations in August, to maintain water levels at sufficient levels to accommodate intense rainfall events associated with the wet season. GG4 structure operated in a mixture of flood control and water conservation modes as warranted. Structures further upstream (GOLD5, GG6, and GG7) remained in water conservation operations as canals in these areas remained below normal. The canal segment immediately upstream of GG1 (to AR1 and GG2) finished August at the 75th percentile. Discharge to tide at GG1 began August with lower flows and later peaked by month's end due to localized heavy

rainfall events near GG3. Canals in the middle reaches of the Golden Gate Main system also finished August at normal levels, near the 50th percentile. Due to water conservation operations, areas upstream of GG4 remained between the 25th and 75th percentile, despite the August rainfall deficit. The stage and percentile difference between the lower (GG1) water level and middle/upper (GG4) Golden Gate Mail Canal water level is shown on **Figure 5**.

COCOHATCHEE SYSTEM

As with the Golden Gate Main system, Cocohatchee Canal water levels varied by location, with the downstream segments (up to COCO3) finishing the month above the 75th percentile. Upstream of COCO3, however, conditions were notably drier, finishing the month below the 10th percentile. Due to the slow rate of upstream canal water level increase, the Cocohatchee system remained in water conservation operations for the majority of August, with minimal and infrequent discharges at COCO1 in response to localized rainfall. (**Figures 6A, 6B, & 6C**).

FAKA UNION SYSTEM

FU4S operated for this the first time this wet season, with minimal and infrequent discharges in response to heavy rainfall. FU5 transitioned into flood control operations in late August as flows increased as a result of intense localized rainfalls in the watershed. By the end of August, the canal upstream of FU5 remained at the 90th percentile. The water level between FU4S and FU5 finished at the 50th percentile. (**Figures 7A & 7B**).

Downstream of FU4S, the canal reach between FU4S and S487 (Faka Pump Station) ended the month above the 90th percentile. Periodic pumping at the Faka Pump Station (S487) continued in August but was limited to electric low-flow pumps. The high-flow diesel pumps remain secured until flows increase sufficiently to warrant their operation. Pumping at the Merritt Pump Station (S488) also continued with similar operations in August. As with S487, Merritt pumping also remained limited to low flow electric pumps. The Miller Pump Station, on the other hand, started pumping with one high-flow diesel pump by the middle of the month along with its electric low-flow pumps. Monitoring wells downstream of S487 – within the Picayune Strand Restoration Project (PSRP) – finished the month above generally above the 50th percentile in the eastern two-thirds of PSRP, and at or above the 75th percentile in the western third.

HENDERSON CREEK SYSTEM

Due to below average rainfall in the watershed, HC1 and HC2 water control structures were operated in water conservation modes for almost the entire course of the month, however, switched to flood control operations in the final few days of the month due to a significant rainfall event. HC1 finished the month at the 75th percentile while HC2 finished just below the 50th percentile. (**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 were mixed during August (**Table 2 and Figures 9A and 9B**). **C-462** (north of Lake Trafford saw a slight month-to-month increase and finished August well below the 25th percentile. **C-1224** (near

Henderson Creek), saw a significant month-to-month decline and finished the month just below the 25th percentile. **C-1004R** (a Tidally influenced well near Cocohatchee Canal) saw a sharp decline during the beginning and middle parts of the month, hitting near record lows. Then, followed by a sharp increase towards the end of the month to finish with a slight month-to-month increase in level, however, still finishing well below the 25th percentile.

L-738 (a Tamiami Aquifer well in Bonita Springs) saw a sharp decline over the course of the month, hitting near record lows. Then, followed by a sharp increase in the final days of the month to finish with a slight month-to-month increase in level, however, still trending near record lows. **L-2194** (a Sandstone Aquifer well in Bonita Springs) continued its positive trend, climbing above the level of low concern, but still trending near record low territory. **L-2195** (a surficial aquifer well in Bonita Springs) saw a month-to-month decline and finished the month at a record low August 31st level.

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 saw a steady decline over the course of August and slightly increased in the later days of the month, however, still finished almost a foot below record low territory. During the month of August CORK3 remained at stages below the lower detection level limit of its water level sensor, resulting in the continued “flatline” appearance, however, BRDROOK finally ascended above the lower detection level limit in the last days of the month for the first time since April. **Figure 11** shows that Lake Trafford continued its recession through most of August, dropping well below the 10th percentile.

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 both saw significant drops in water level over the course of August dipping nearly a foot below record low territory, but then rapidly recovered in the final days of the month. Nevertheless, SOCREW 1 still finished near record low territory and SOCREW 2 finished at the 25th percentile. 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

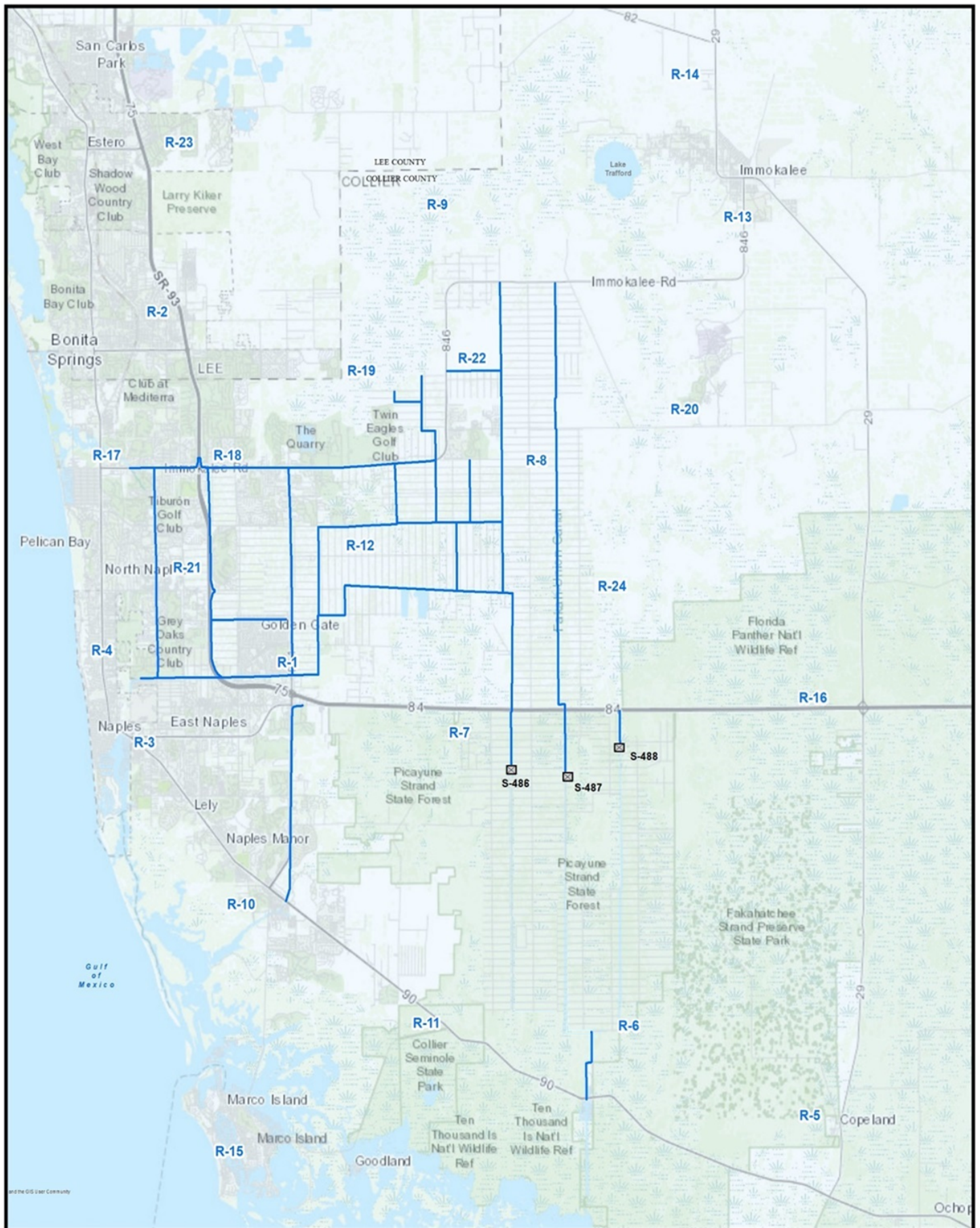


FIGURE 2
BCB GAUGE MEASURED RAINFALL MONTHLY AVERAGES
CALENDAR YEAR 2026

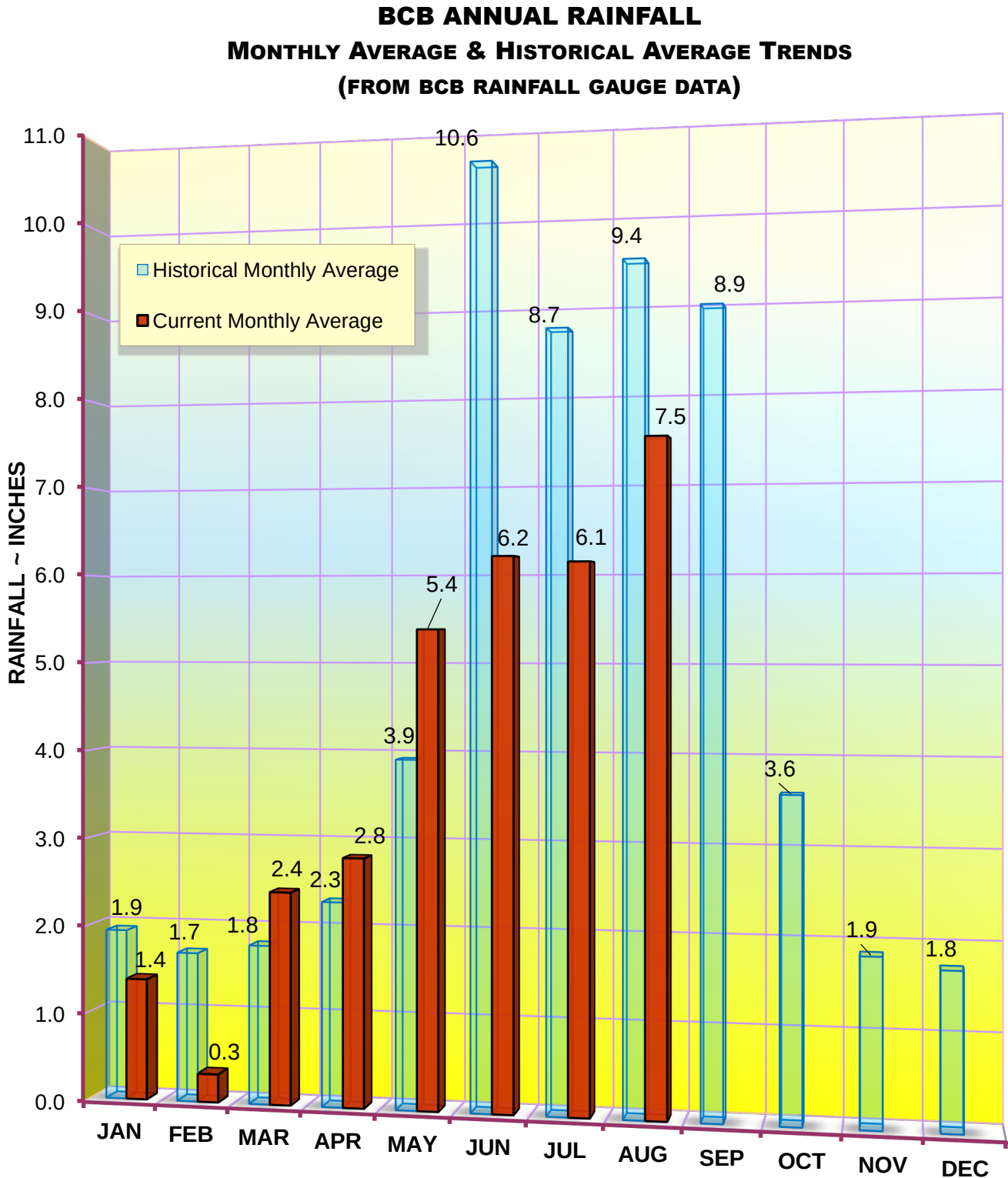


TABLE 1
RAINFALL REPORT - AUGUST 2026 *(updated through 8/31/26)*
DISTRICT/BASIN RAINFALL STATIONS
 (ALL NUMBERS ARE IN INCHES)

STATION INDEX NO.	STATION NAME	Aug-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	13.84	11.82	2.02	44.53	45.73	-1.20
R-2	BONITA SPRINGS WATER PLANT	6.21	9.04	-2.83	30.70	37.30	-6.60
R-3	COLLIER COUNTY COURTHOUSE	7.27	8.93	-1.66	31.36	37.71	-6.35
R-4	FREEDOM PARK	6.39	9.44	-3.05	24.79	39.92	-15.13
R-5	FAKAHATCHEE STRAND HQ	3.25	10.51	-7.26	29.89	43.21	-13.32
R-6	DAN HOUSE PRAIRIE	5.43	9.19	-3.76	34.16	37.21	-3.05
R-7	SGGE WEATHER STATION	7.50	10.89	-3.39	36.48	44.14	-7.66
R-8	FAKA UNION #5	9.71	9.90	-0.19	41.59	45.25	-3.66
R-9	CORKSCREW SWAMP NORTH END	5.41	7.78	-2.37	31.38	38.04	-6.66
R-10	ROOKERY BAY HQ	6.03	9.77	-3.74	32.17	39.22	-7.05
R-11	COLLIER SEMINOLE STATE PARK	5.43	10.05	-4.62	32.01	40.39	-8.38
R-12	G.G. FIRE STATION	11.10	10.34	0.76	40.92	43.11	-2.19
R-13	IMMOKALEE LANDFILL	5.08	7.62	-2.54	26.07	37.21	-11.14
R-14	IFAS	5.58	7.82	-2.24	22.72	37.01	-14.29
R-15	MARCO R.O. PLANT	3.33	8.97	-5.64	22.05	37.41	-15.36
R-16	FAKAHATCHEE STRAND NORTH END	9.00	9.51	-0.51	33.29	44.05	-10.76
R-17	COCO#1	8.26	8.15	0.11	29.36	34.58	-5.22
R-18	COCO#3	6.75	10.66	-3.91	30.41	40.18	-9.77
R-19	BIRD ROOKERY	10.64	9.78	0.86	33.66	43.57	-9.91
R-20	AVE MARIA	10.94	8.66	2.28	33.62	38.27	-4.65
R-21	I75W2	10.94	11.11	-0.17	36.45	42.23	-5.78
R-22	GG#7	7.88	8.81	-0.93	30.33	40.69	-10.36
R-23	FPWX	4.96	9.53	-4.57	30.18	38.57	-8.39
R-24	DSOTO10	9.16	8.48	0.68	33.56	45.31	-11.75
AVERAGES		7.50	9.45	-1.94	32.15	40.43	-8.28

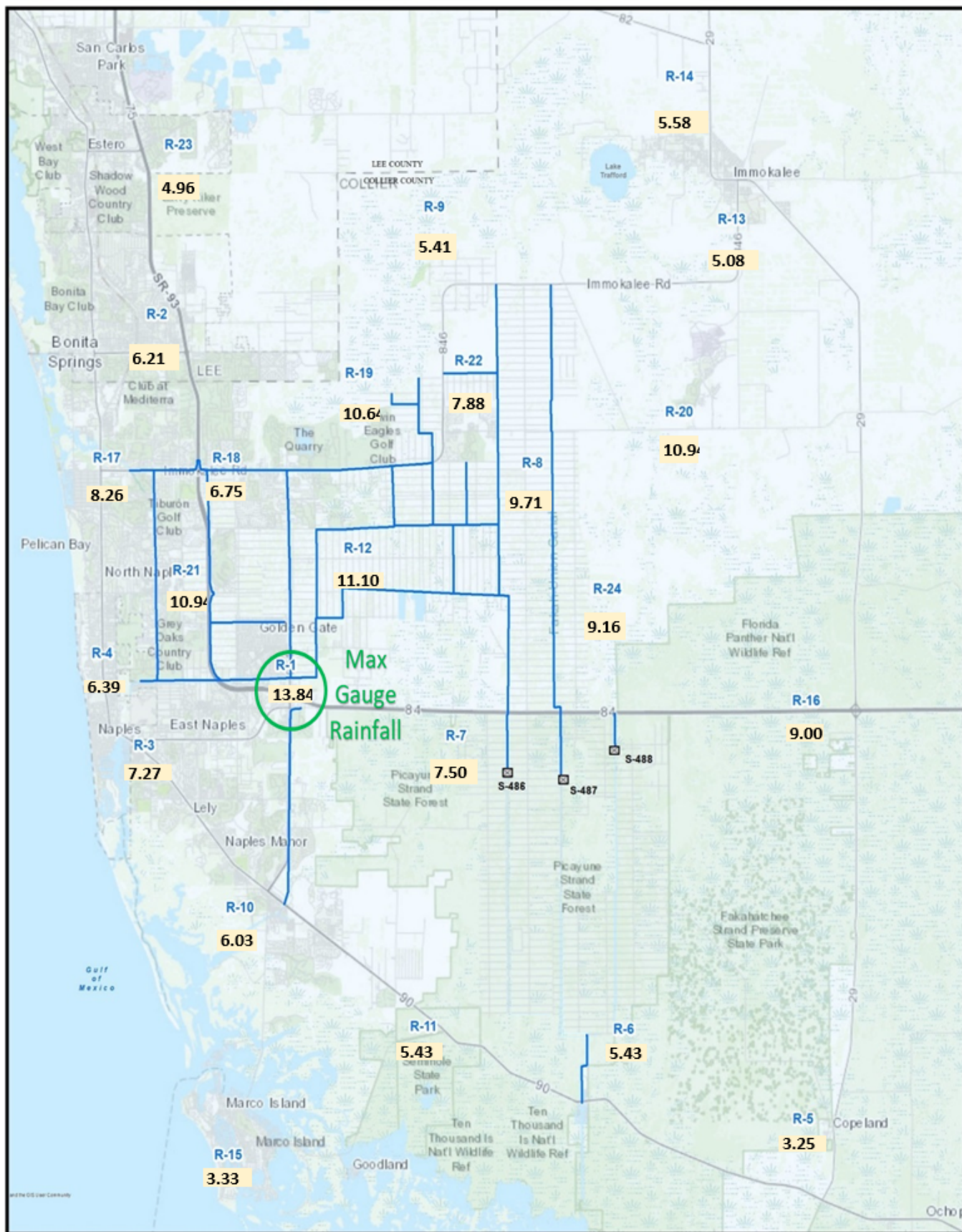
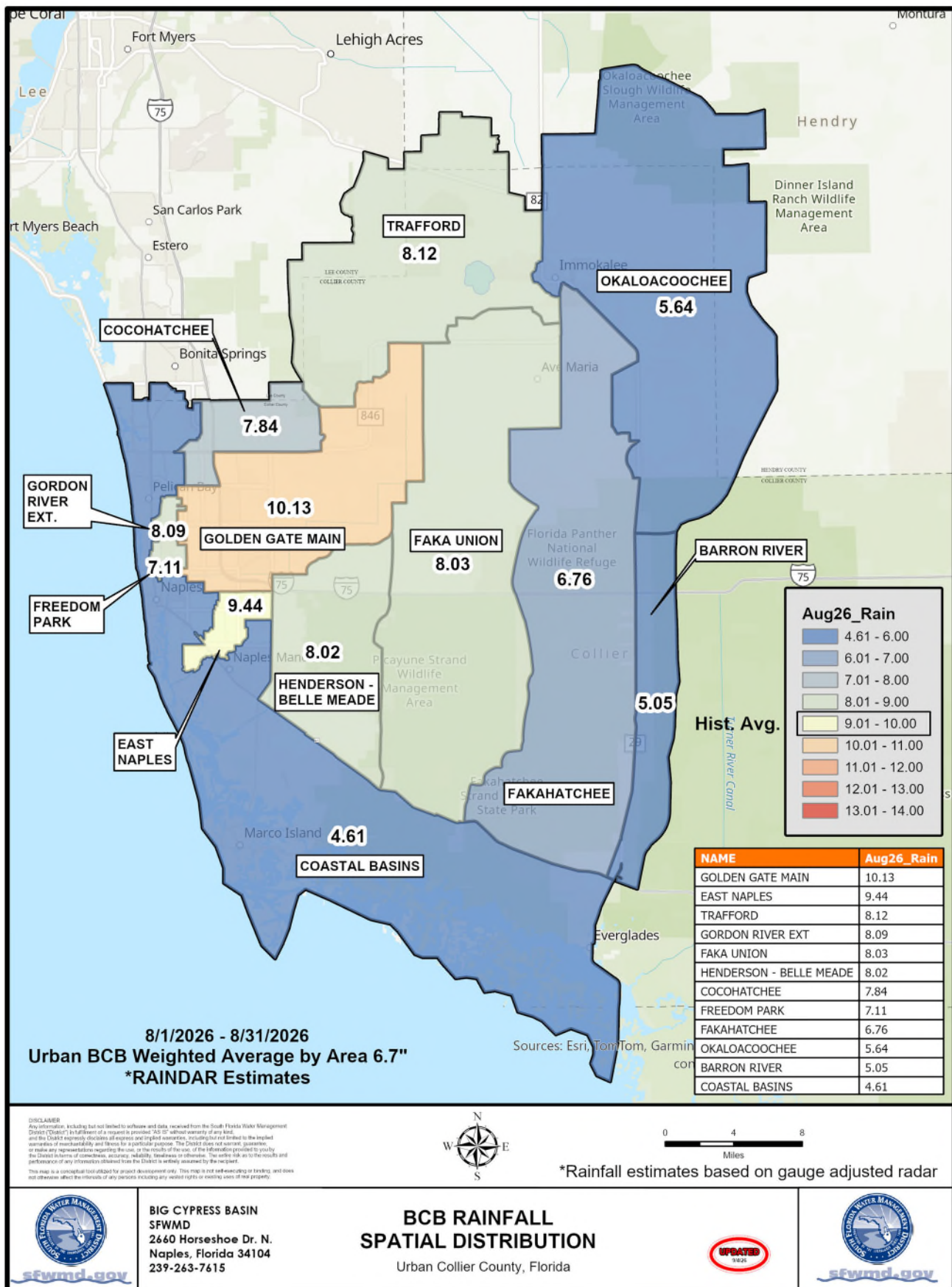
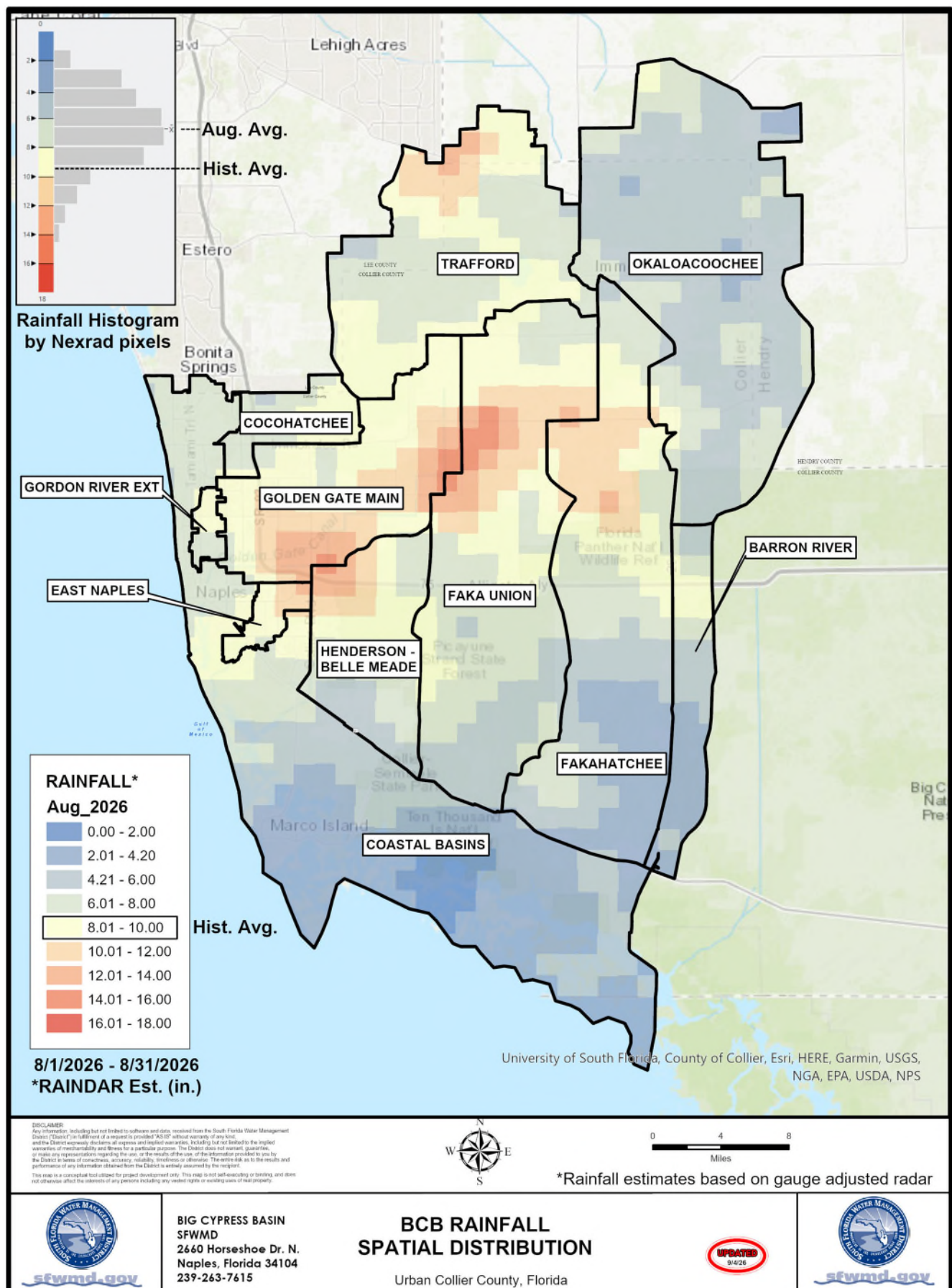


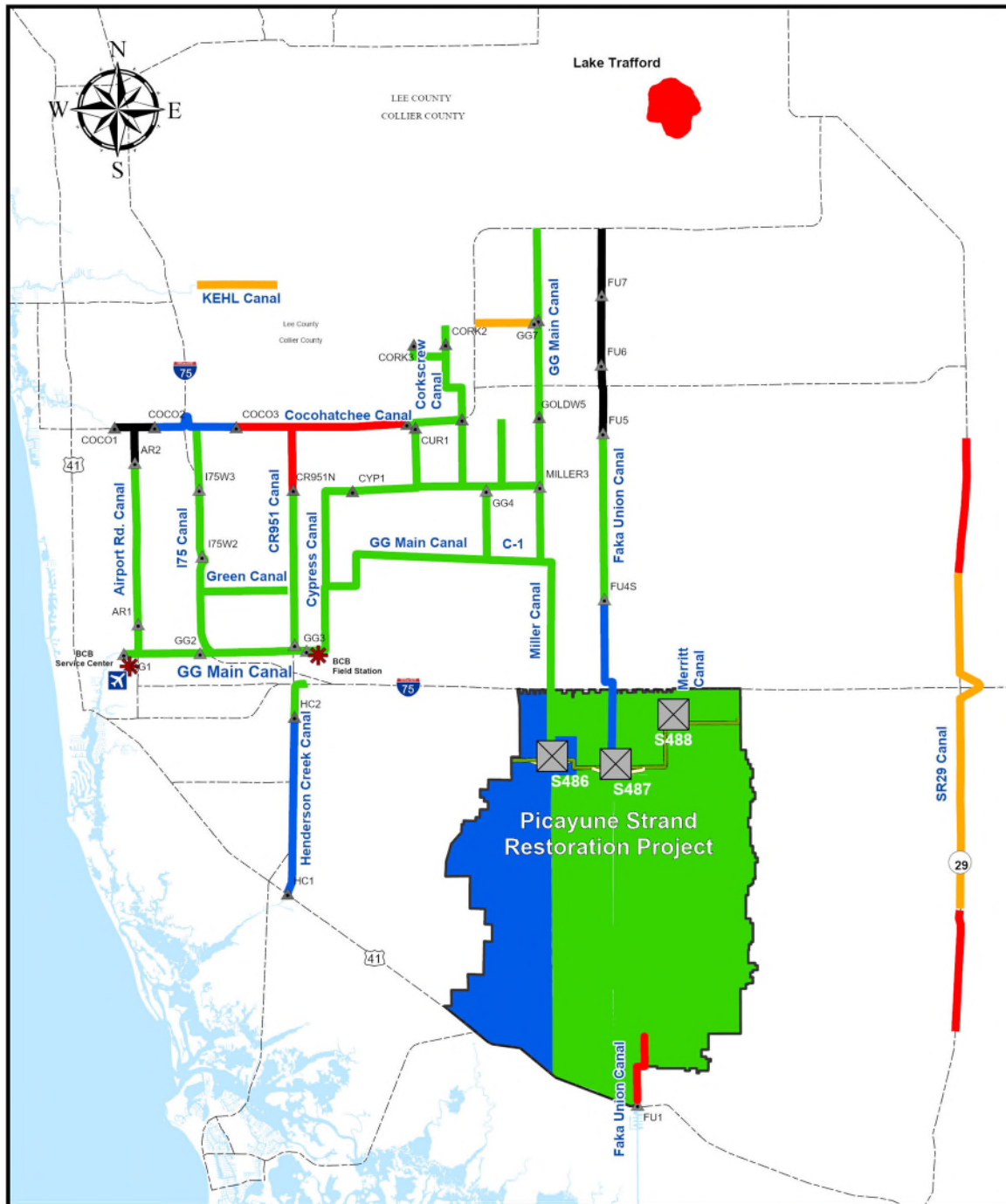
FIGURE 3A
BCB RAINFALL DISTRIBUTION
AUGUST 2026



AUGUST 2026 — FIGURE 3B



August 2026 — FIGURE 3C



DISCLAIMER
Any information, including but not limited to software and data, received from the South Florida Water Management District ("District") is furnished as a service to the user without warranty of any kind, and the District expressly disclaims all express and implied warranties, including but not limited to the implied warranties of merchantability and fitness for a particular purpose. The District does not warrant, guarantee, or make any representations regarding the use, or the results of the use, of the information provided to you by the District in terms of completeness, accuracy, reliability, timeliness or otherwise. The entire risk as to the results and performance of any information obtained from the District is entirely assumed by the recipient.

This map is a conceptual tool utilized for project development only. This map is not self-insulating or binding, and does not otherwise affect the interests of any persons including any vested rights or existing uses of real property.



* Based on period of record for each canal reach



BIG CYPRESS BASIN
SFWMD
2660 Horseshoe Dr. N.
Naples, Florida 34104
239-263-7615

BCB Conditions Index 8/31/26

Urban Collier County, Florida

UPDATED
9/4/26



FIGURE 4
BCB WATER CONDITIONS

Figure 5 Golden Gate Canal Historic Average Daily Headwater Percentiles

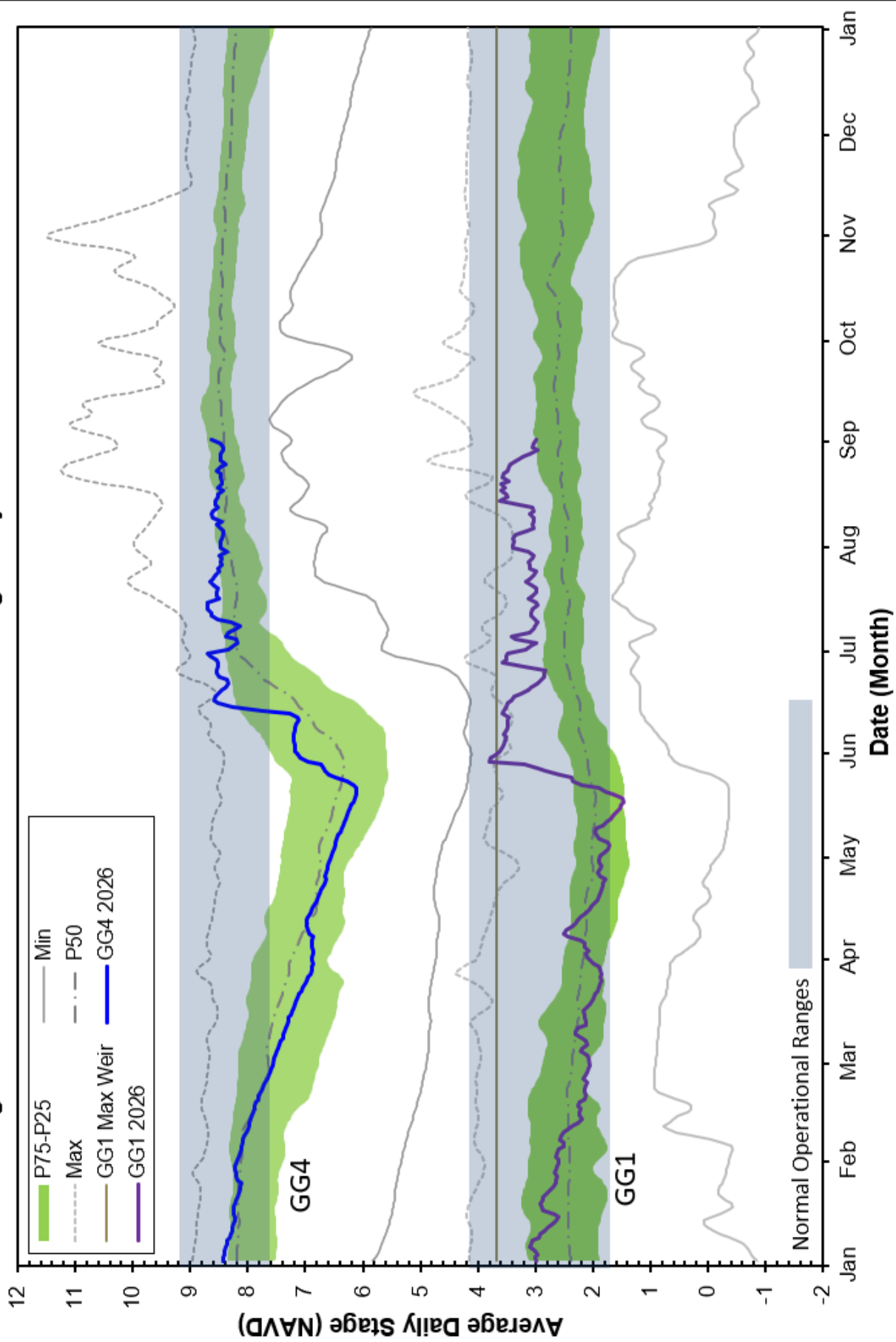


Figure 6A Ccohatchee Canal Historic Average Daily Headwater Percentiles

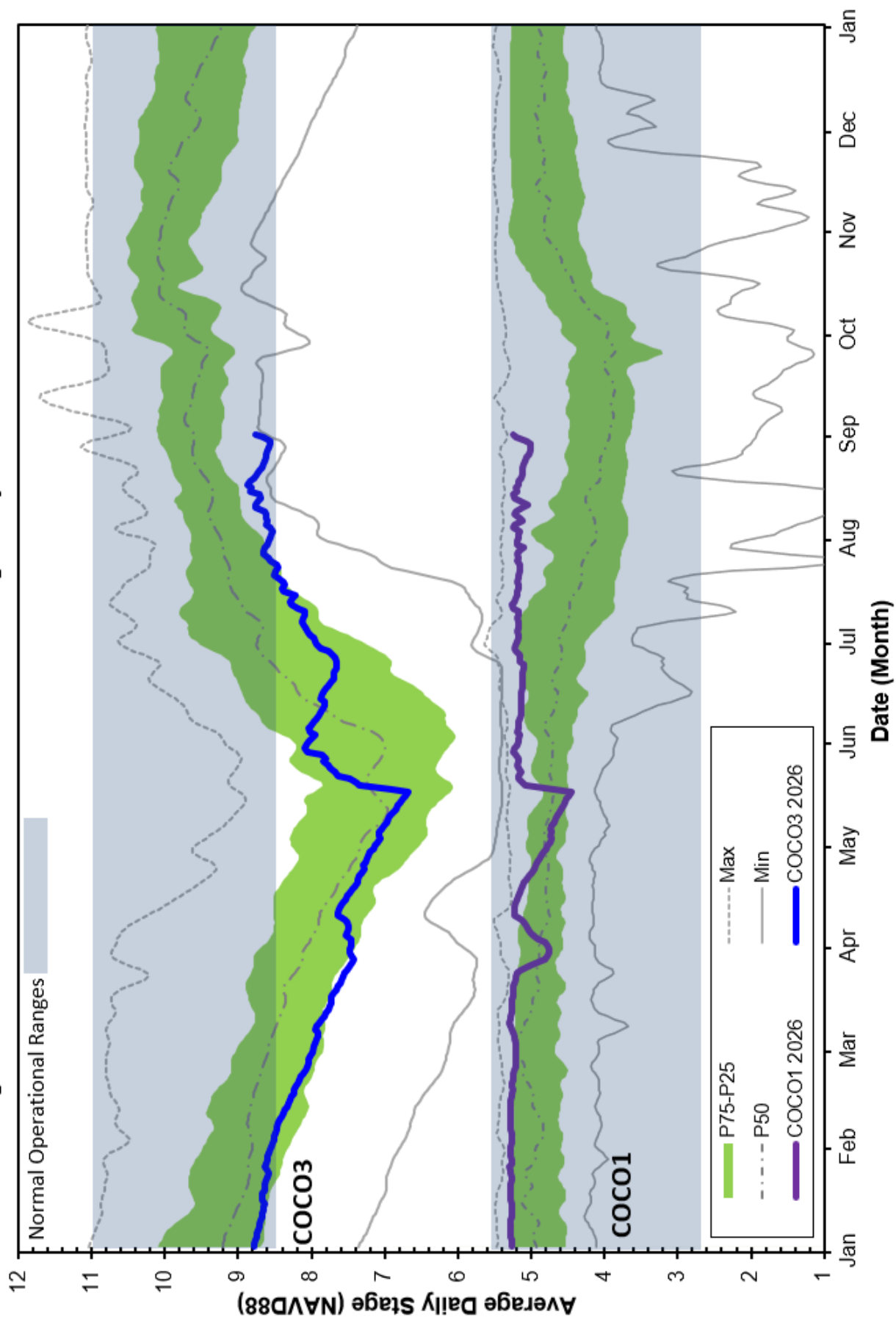


Figure 6B CORK1 Historic Average Daily Headwater Percentiles

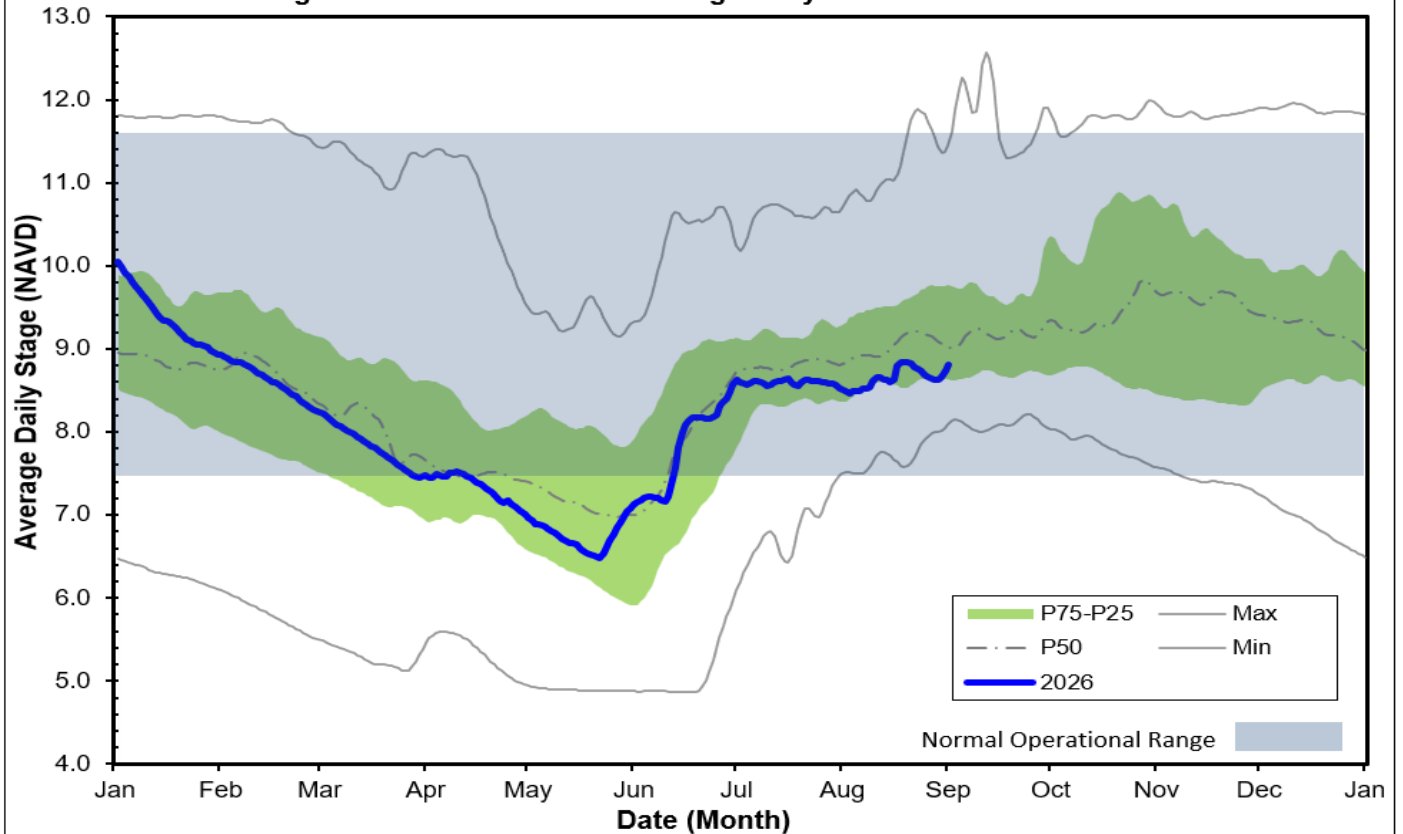


Figure 6C - CORK2 Historic Average Daily Headwater Percentiles

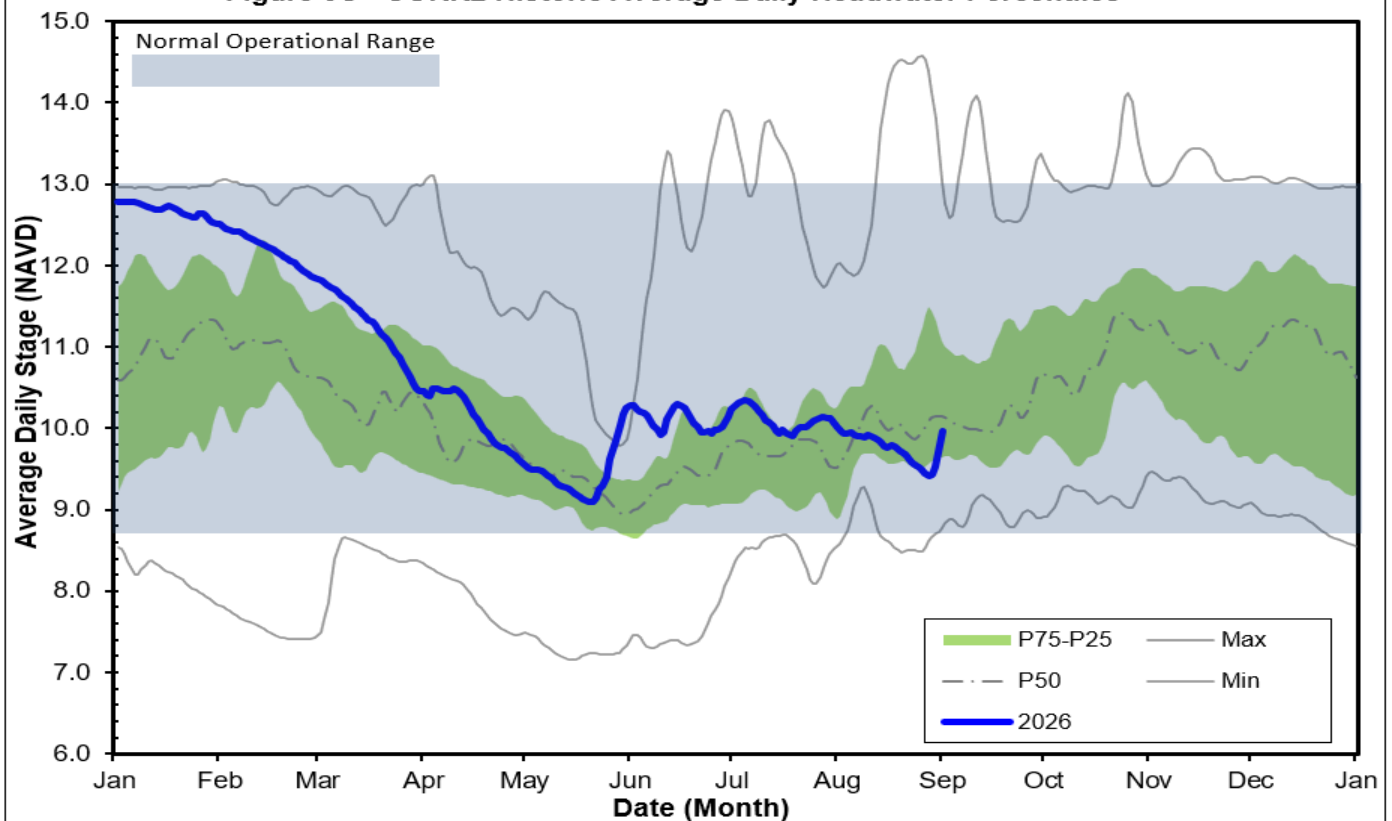


Figure 7A Faka Union Canal Historic Average Daily Headwater Percentiles

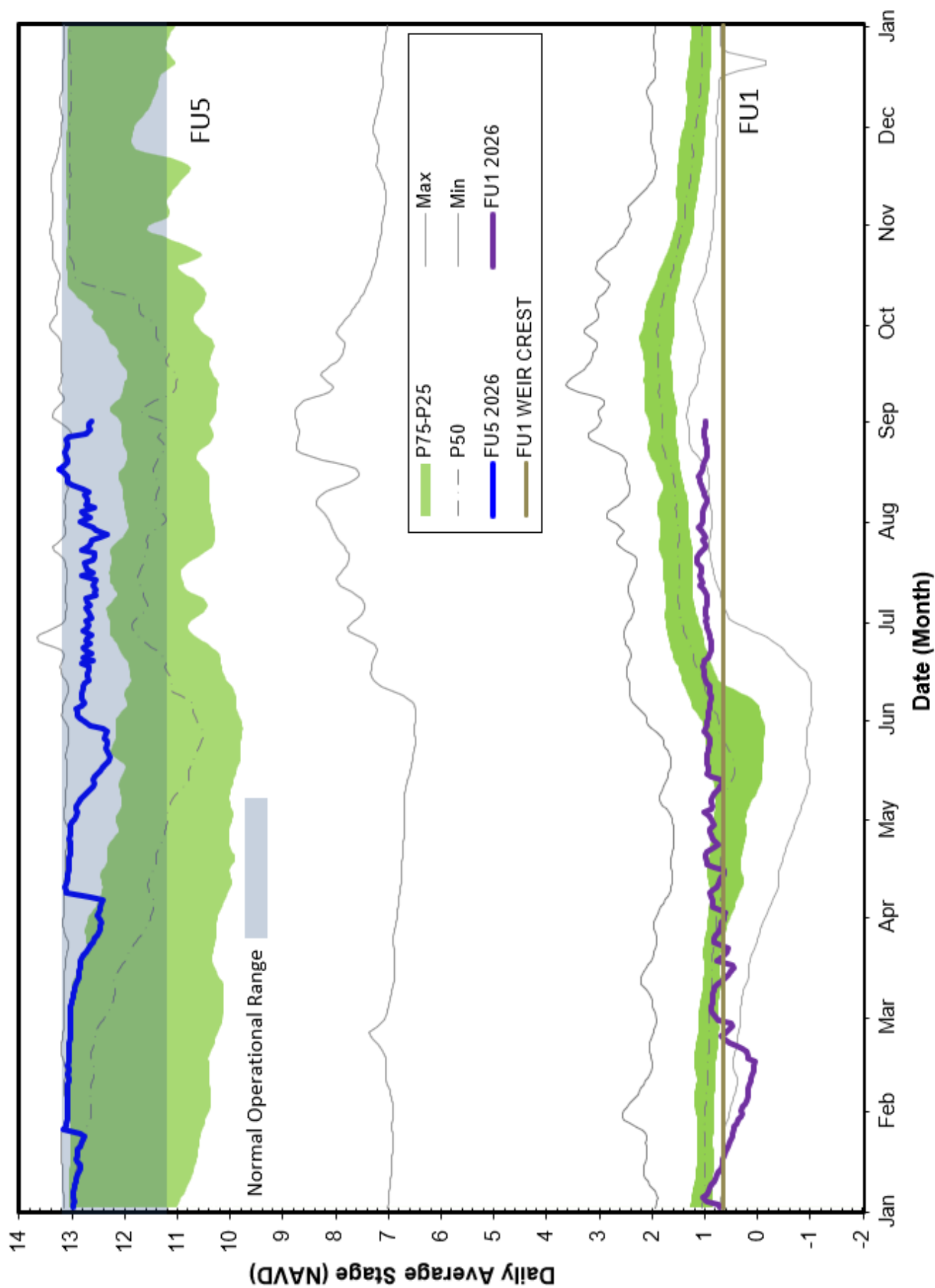


Figure 7B FU4S Historic Average Daily Water Percentiles

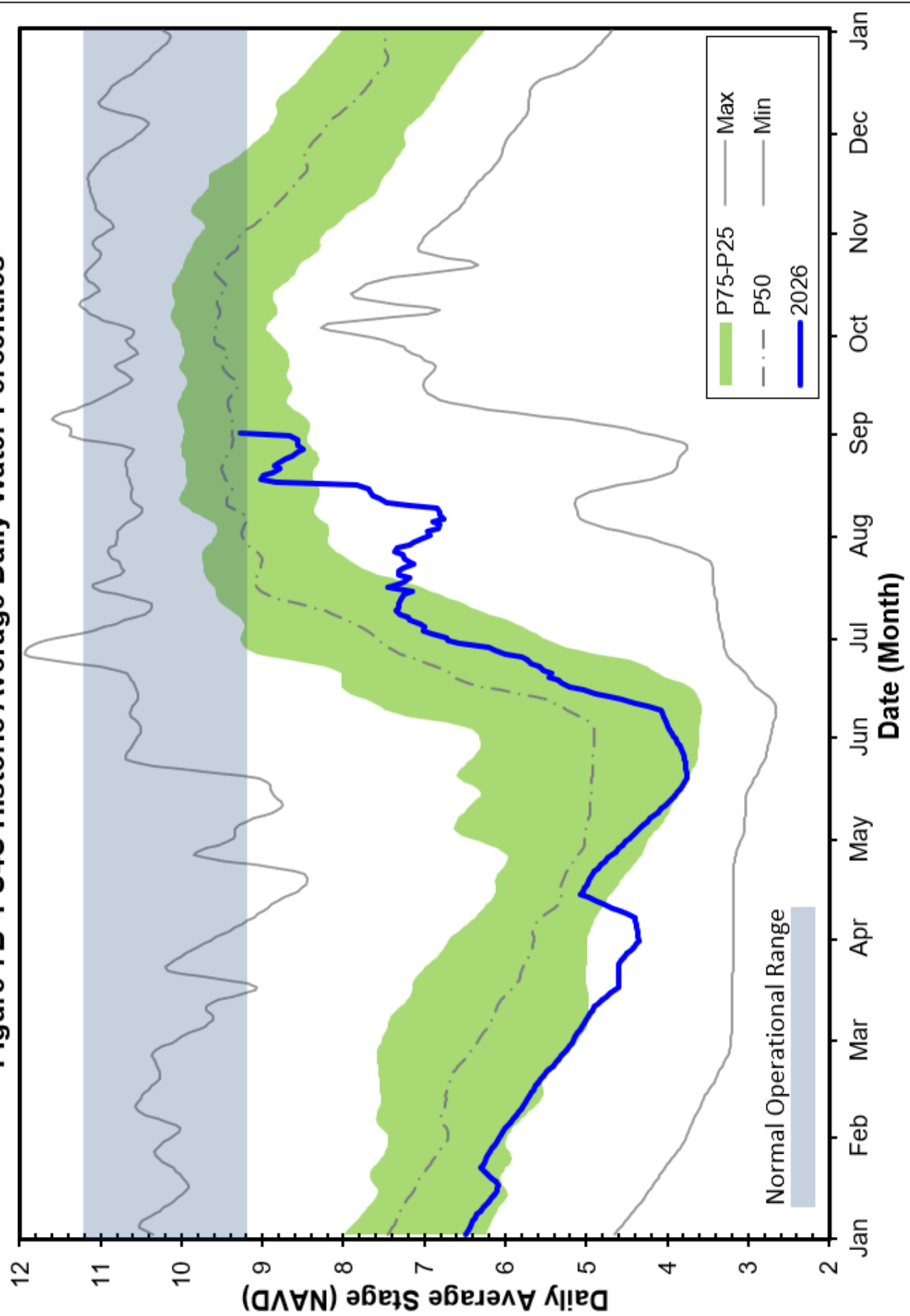


Figure 8A - HC1 Historic Average Daily Headwater Percentiles

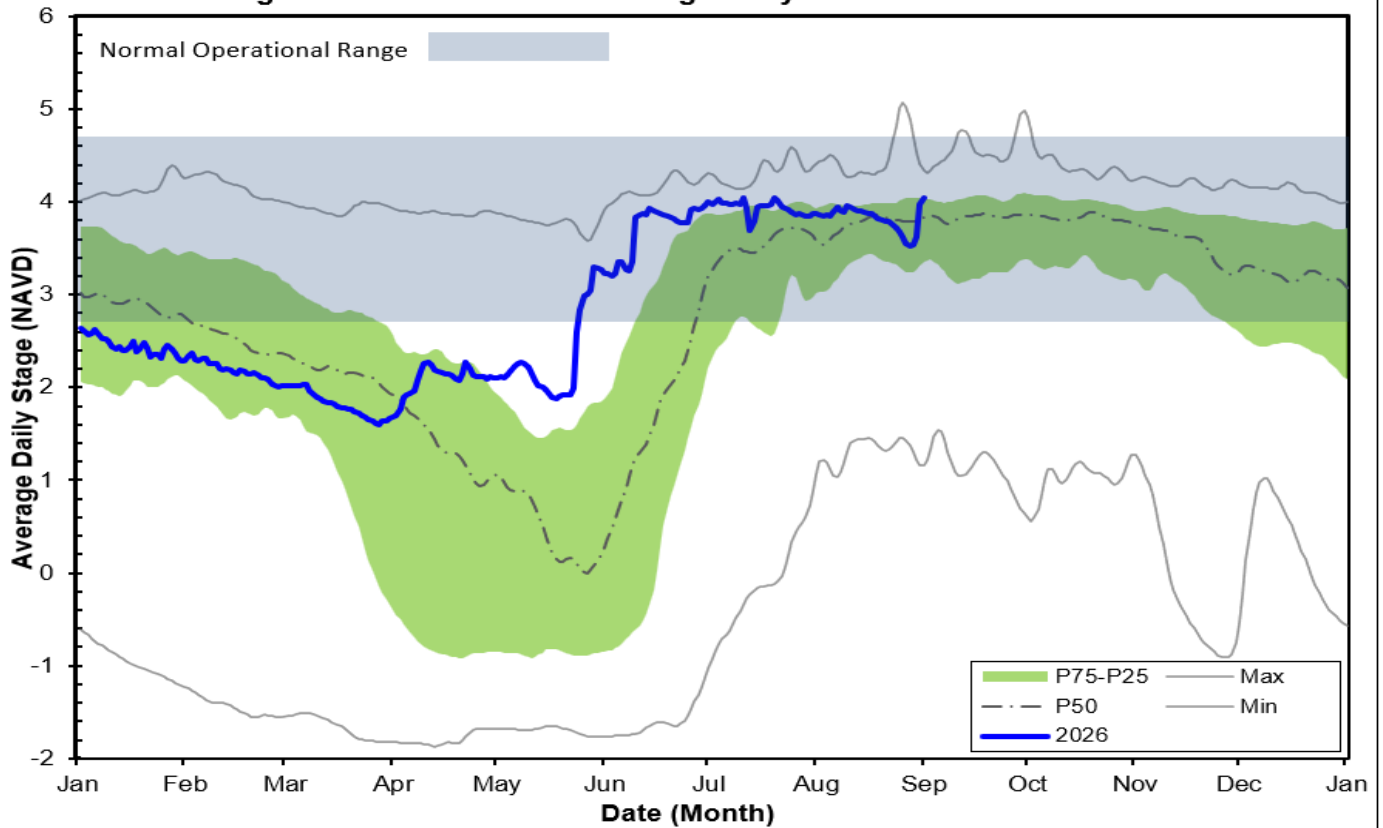


Figure 8B HC2 Historic Average Daily Headwater Percentiles

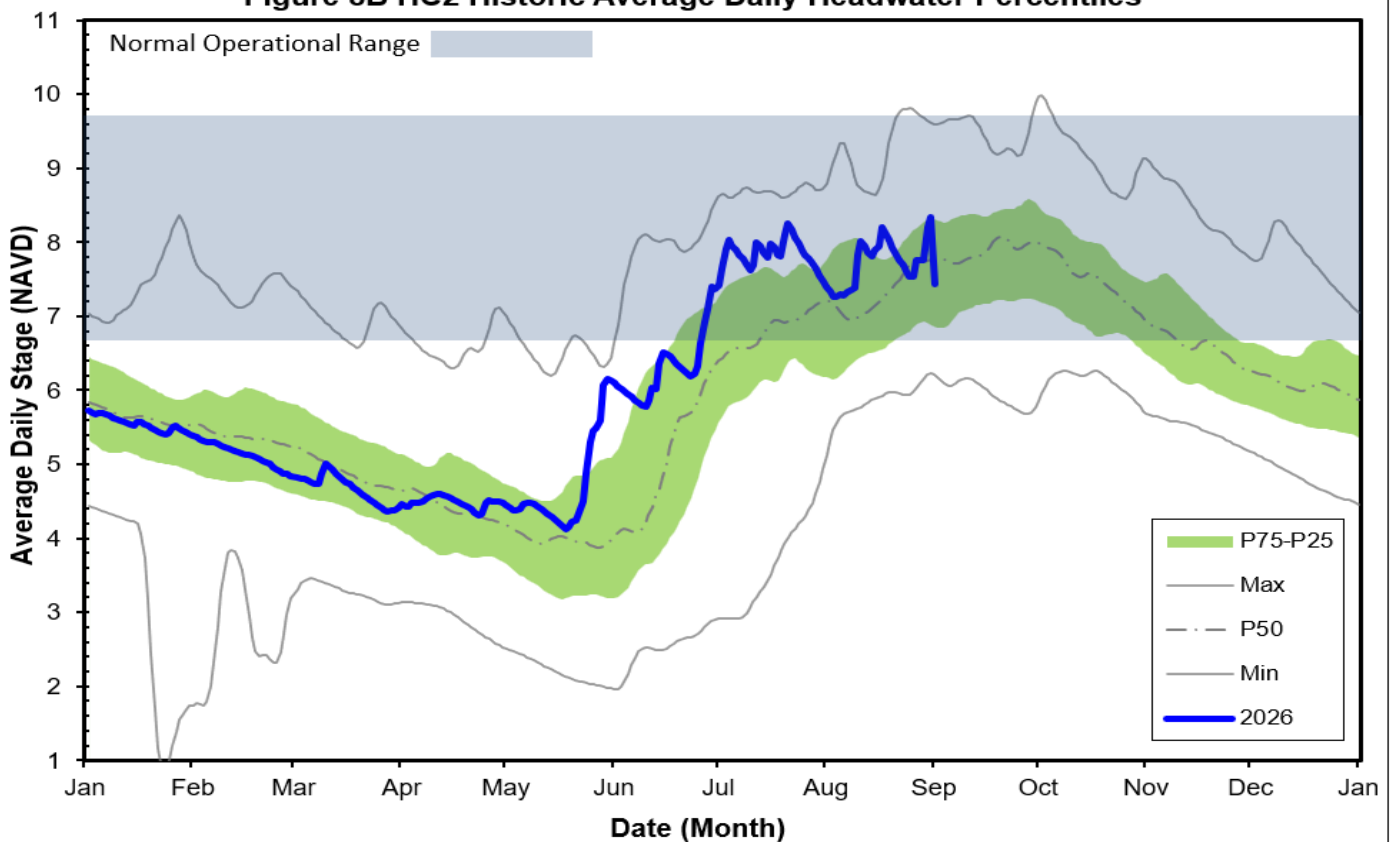


TABLE 2
WATER CONDITIONS SUMMARY - AUGUST 2026
SELECTED STATIONS for BCB AREA / SW FLORIDA

Last Reading Date :		August 31, 2026					
Previous Period Reading Date:		July 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	0.48	27.24	27.72	↑	GREEN
C-1004R	Naples	Lower Tamiami Aquifer	0.80	1.06	1.86	↑	GREEN
C-1224	Marco Lakes	Lower Tamiami Aquifer	-0.47	3.37	2.90	↓	GREEN
C-948R	Golden Gate	Mid Hawthorn Aquifer	-1.09	28.62	27.53	↓	
C-951R	Golden Gate	Lower Tamiami Aquifer	0.71	2.26	2.97	↑	
L-2194	Bonita Springs	Sandstone Aquifer	0.69	1.44	2.13	↑	GREEN
L-2195	Bonita Springs	Surficial Aquifer System	-0.05	8.24	8.19	↓	GREEN
L-738	Bonita Springs	Lower Tamiami Aquifer	0.06	-1.62	-1.56	↑	GREEN

SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

BIG CYPRESS BASIN

AUGUST 31, 2026

GROUNDWATER LEVEL DAILY TRENDS COMPARED TO HISTORICAL AVERAGE

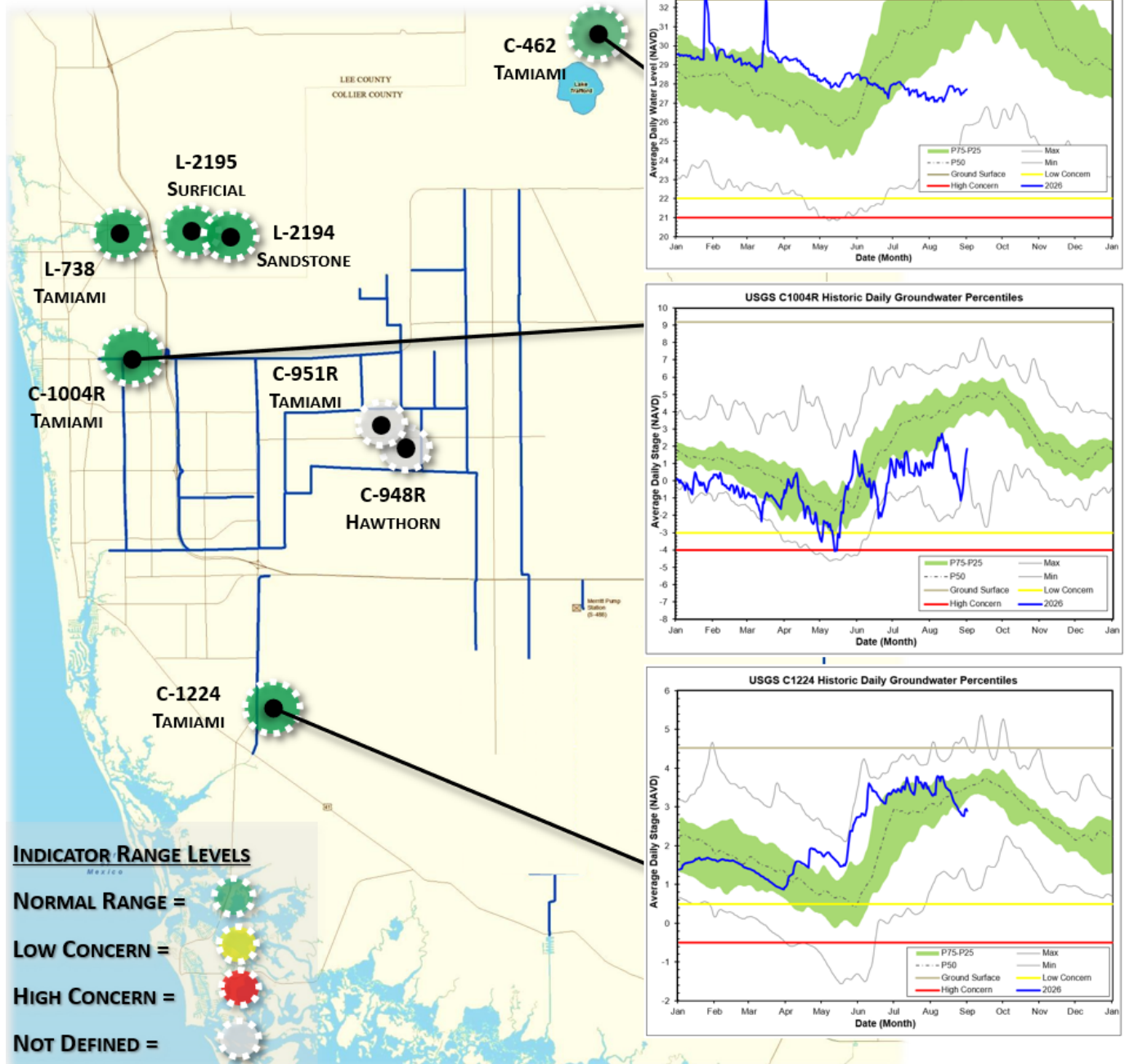


FIGURE 9A

BIG CYPRESS BASIN

AUGUST 31, 2026

GROUNDWATER LEVEL DAILY TRENDS
COMPARED TO HISTORICAL AVERAGE

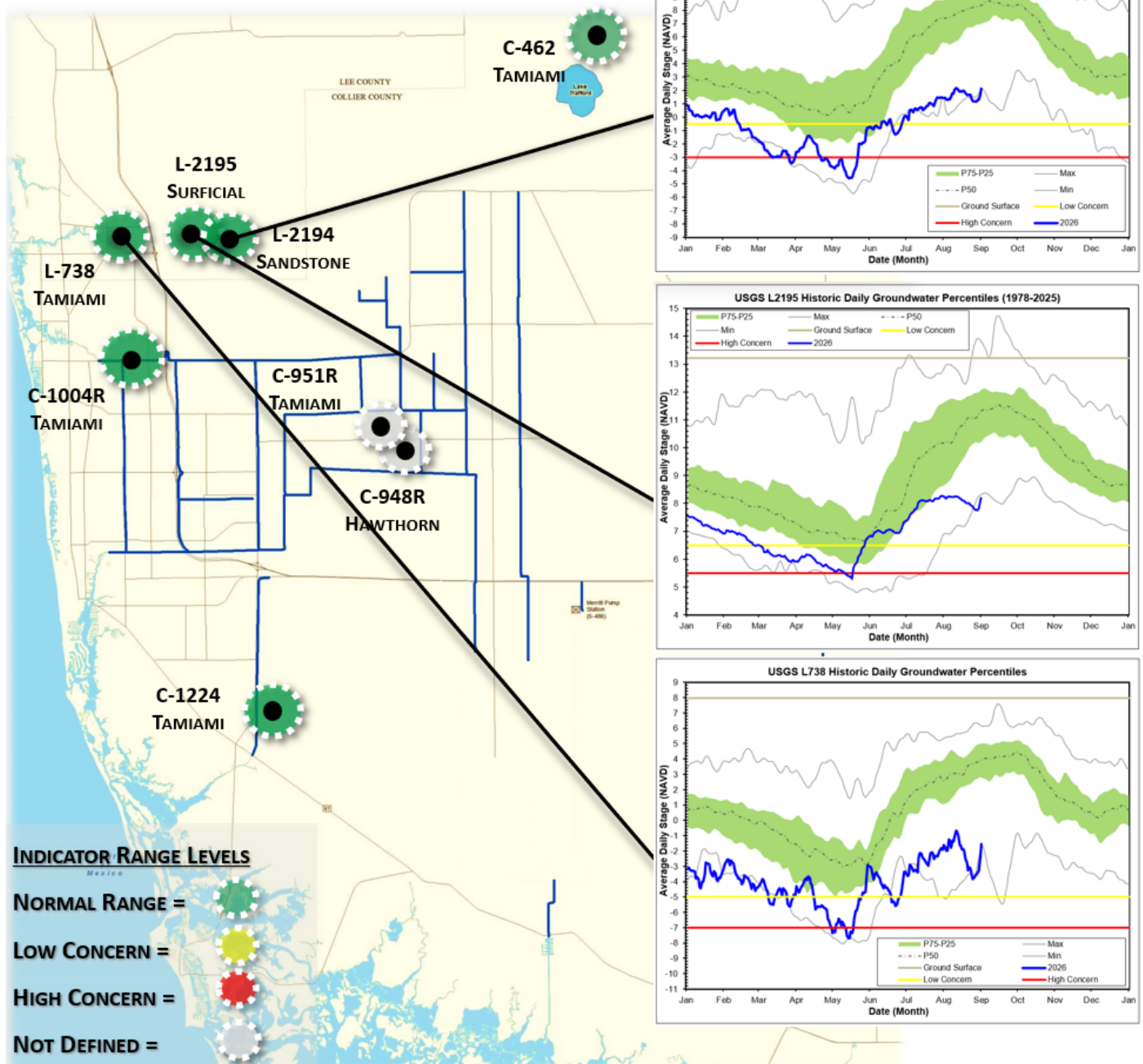


FIGURE 9B

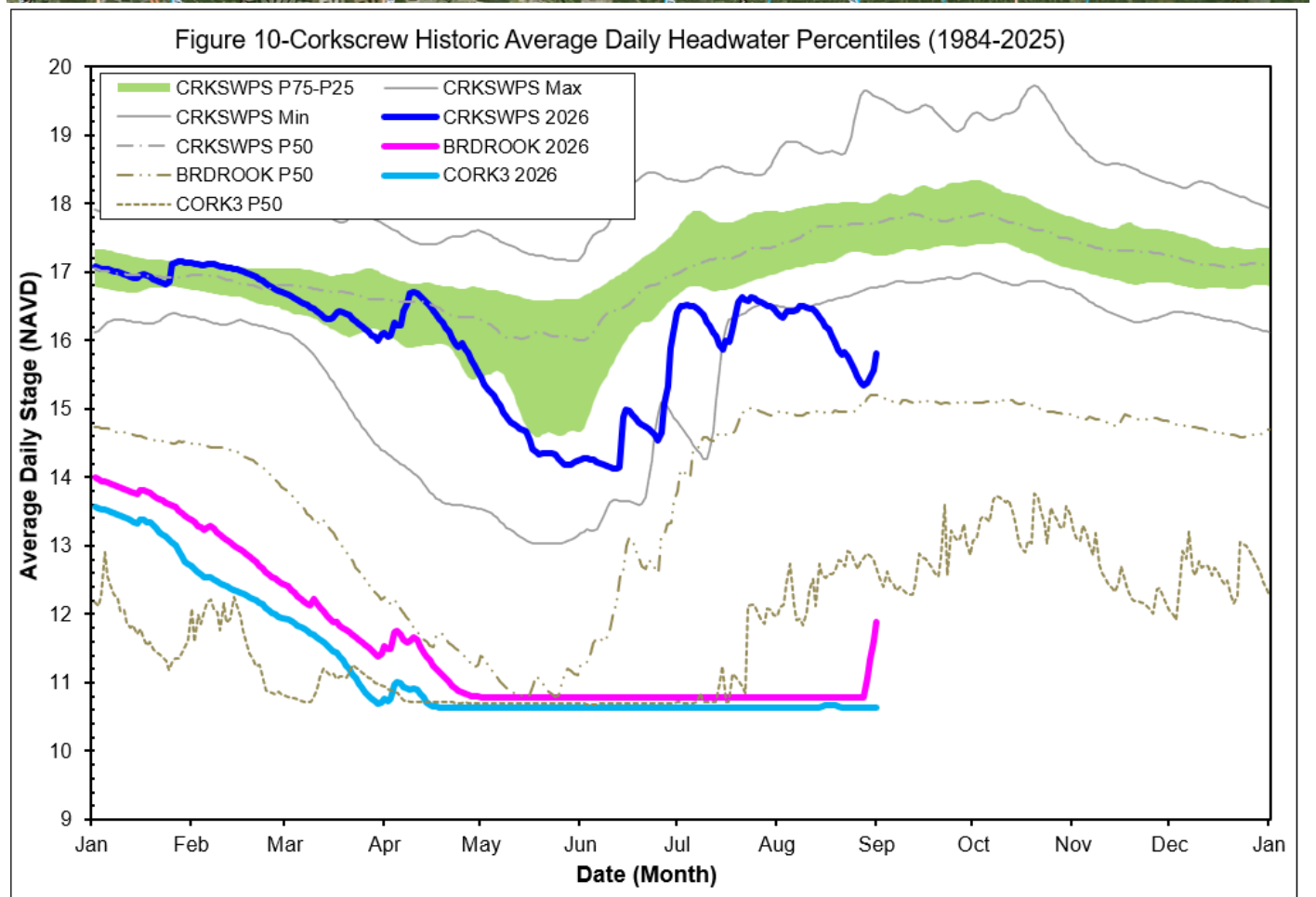
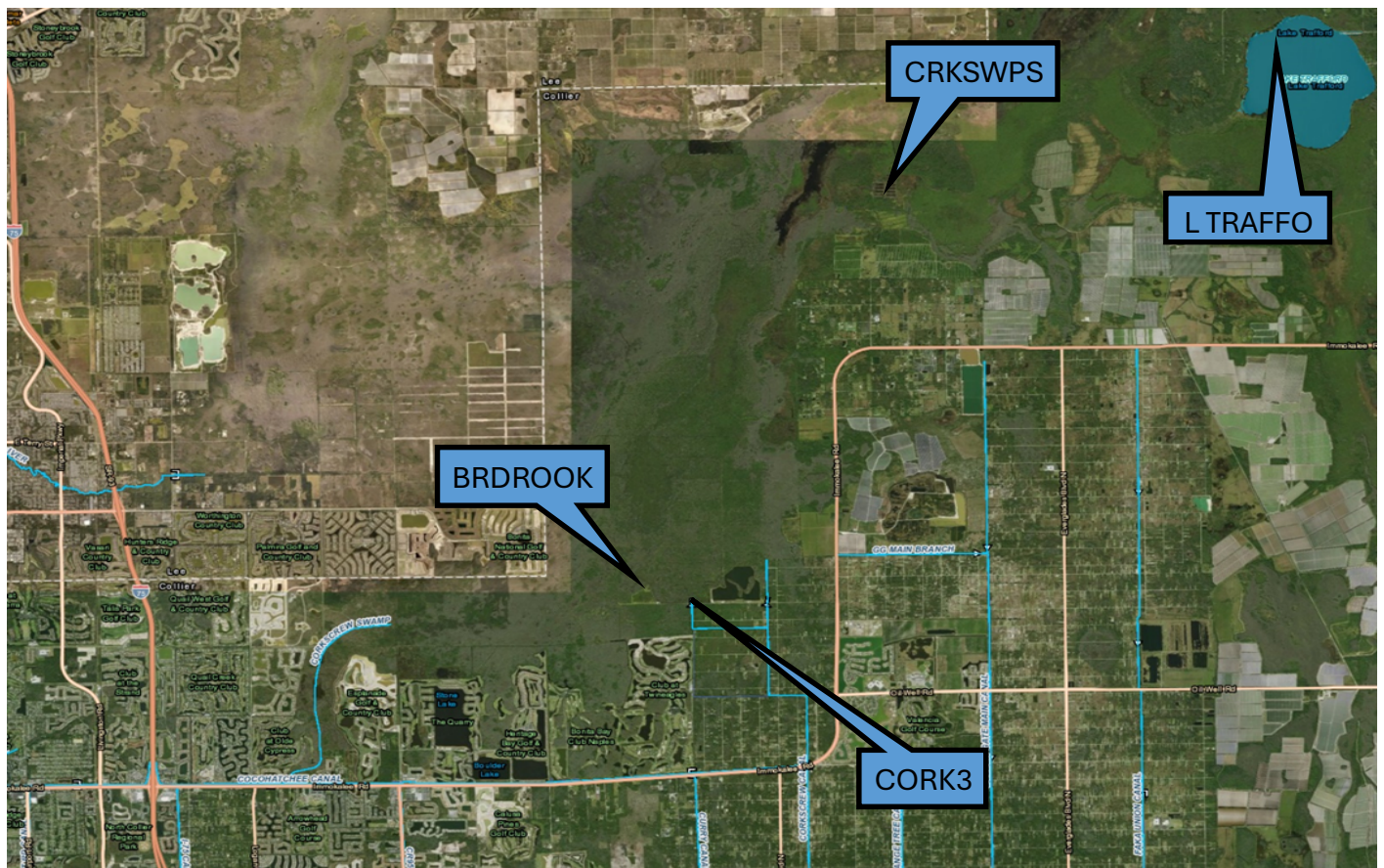
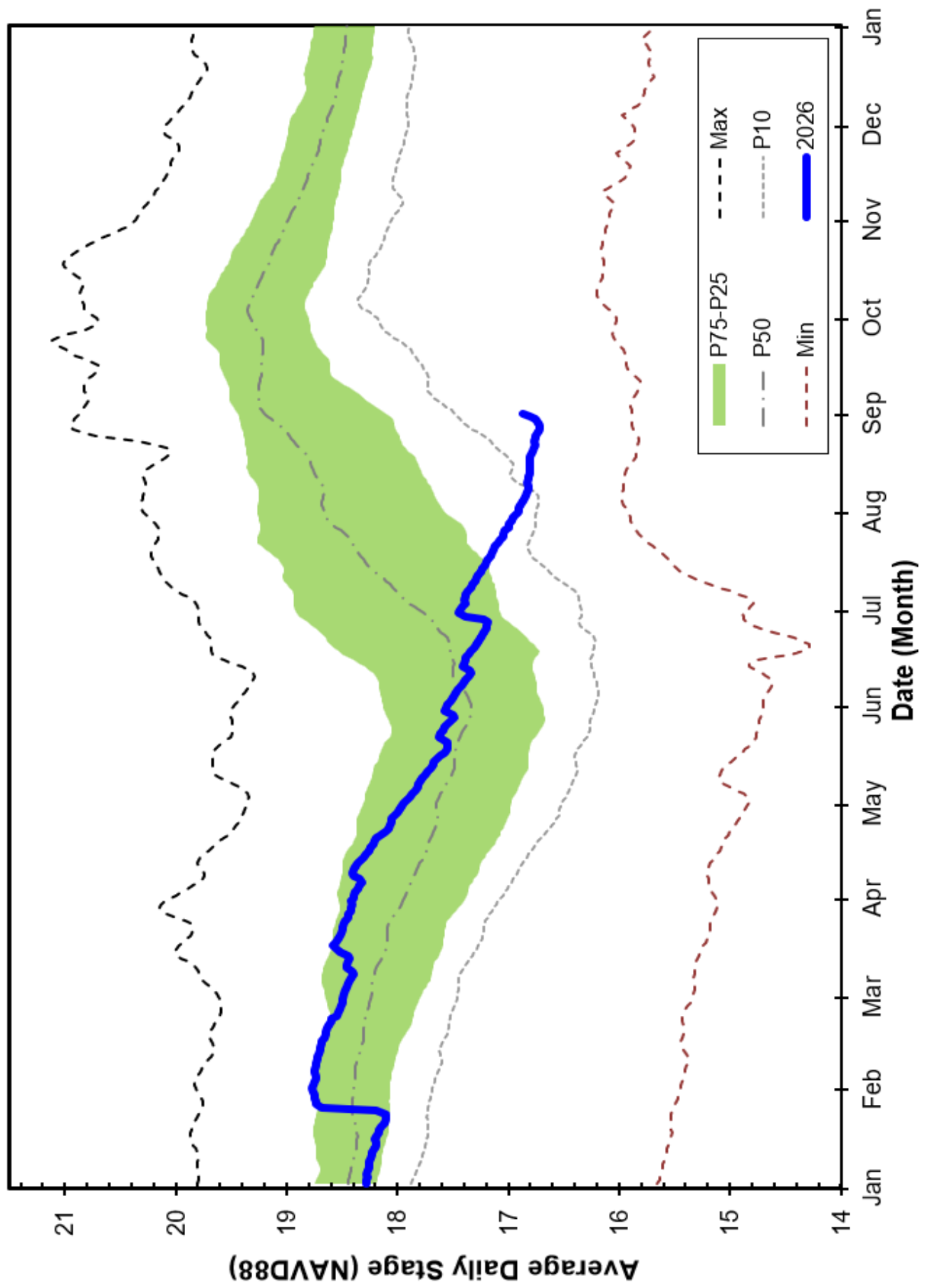
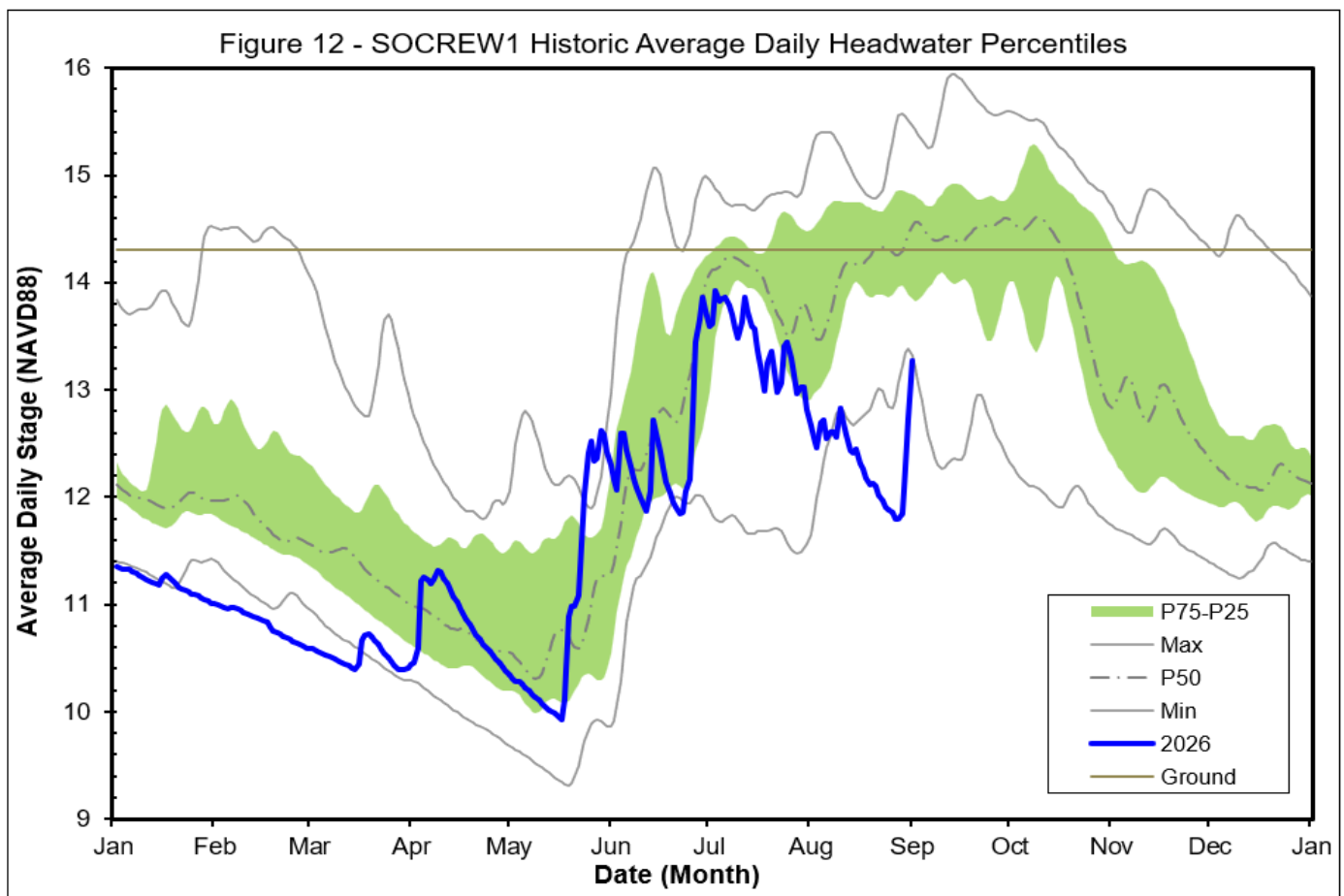
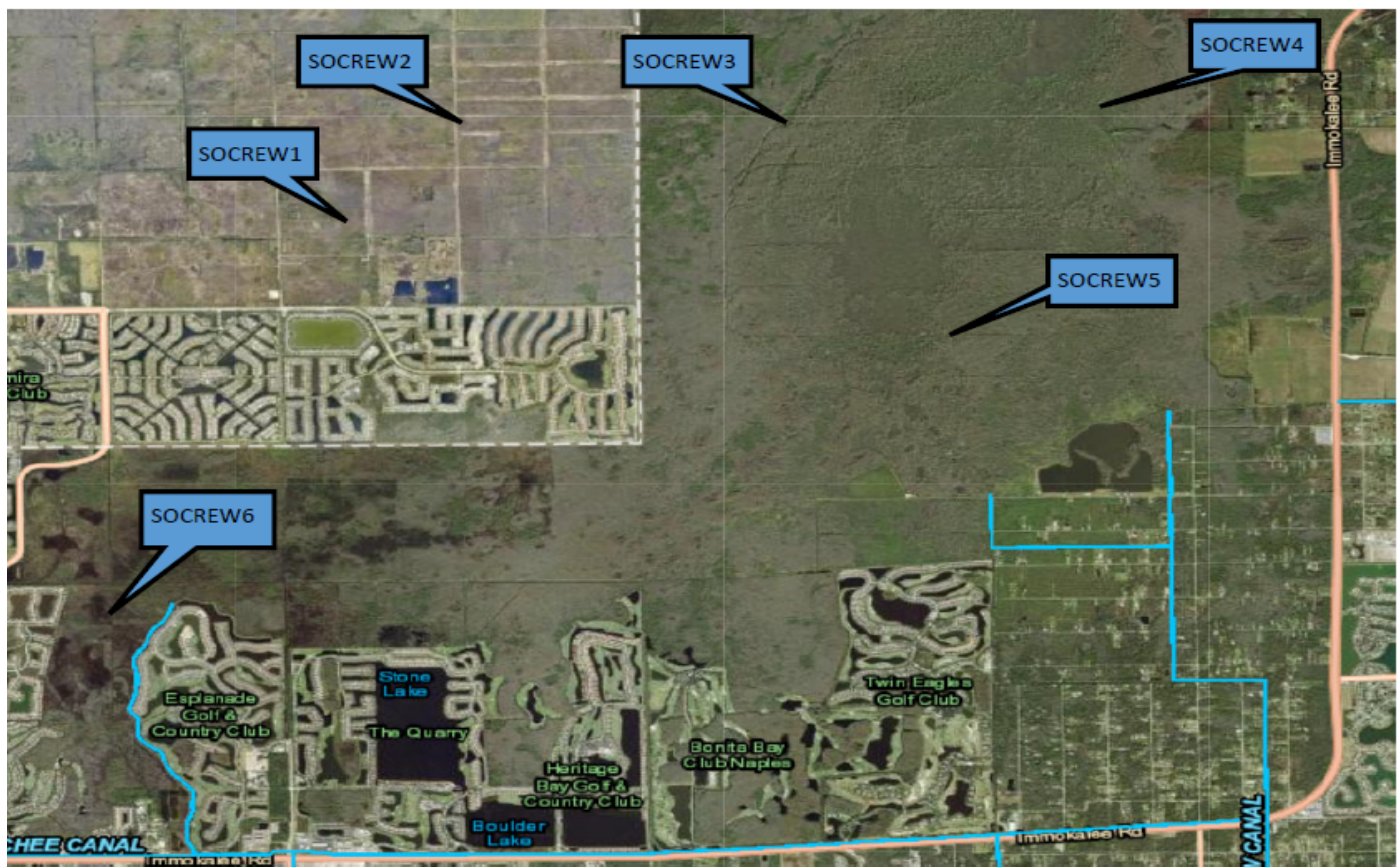


Figure 11 Lake Trafford Historic Average Daily Headwater Percentiles (1941-2024)





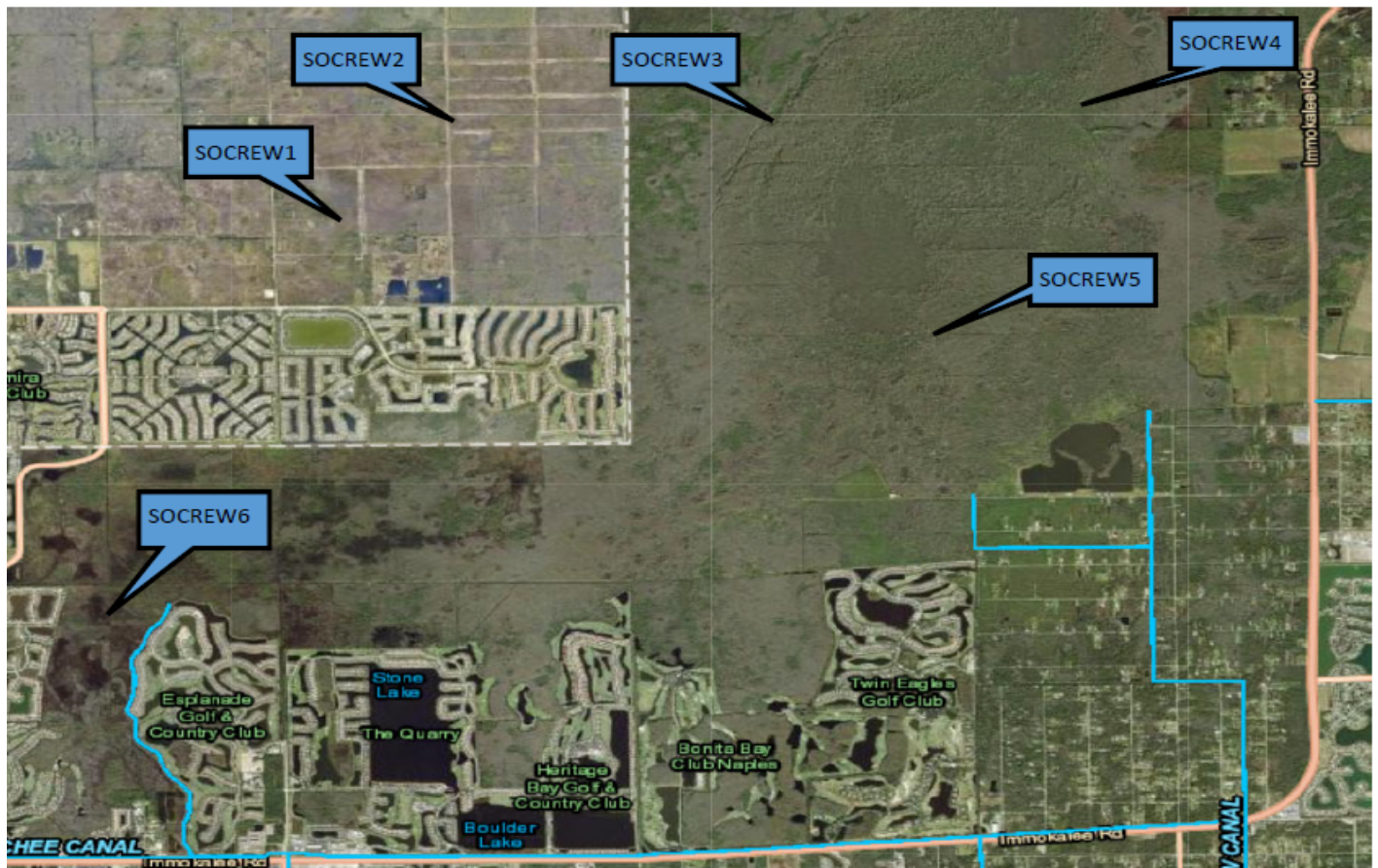


Figure 13 - SOCREW2 Historic Average Daily Headwater Percentiles

