

FEBRUARY 2026  
BIG CYPRESS BASIN  
HYDROLOGIC REPORT



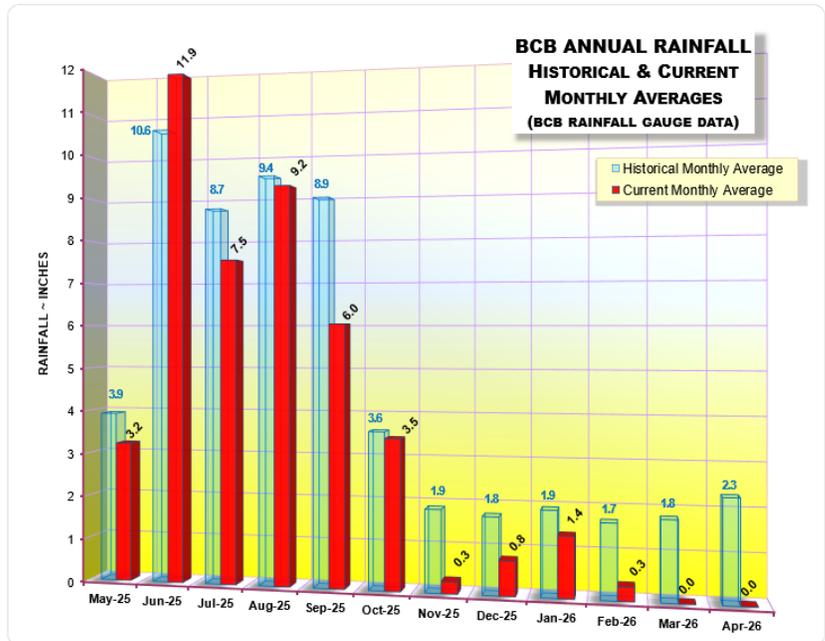
# SUMMARY OF HYDROLOGIC CONDITIONS IN THE BIG CYPRESS BASIN

February 2026

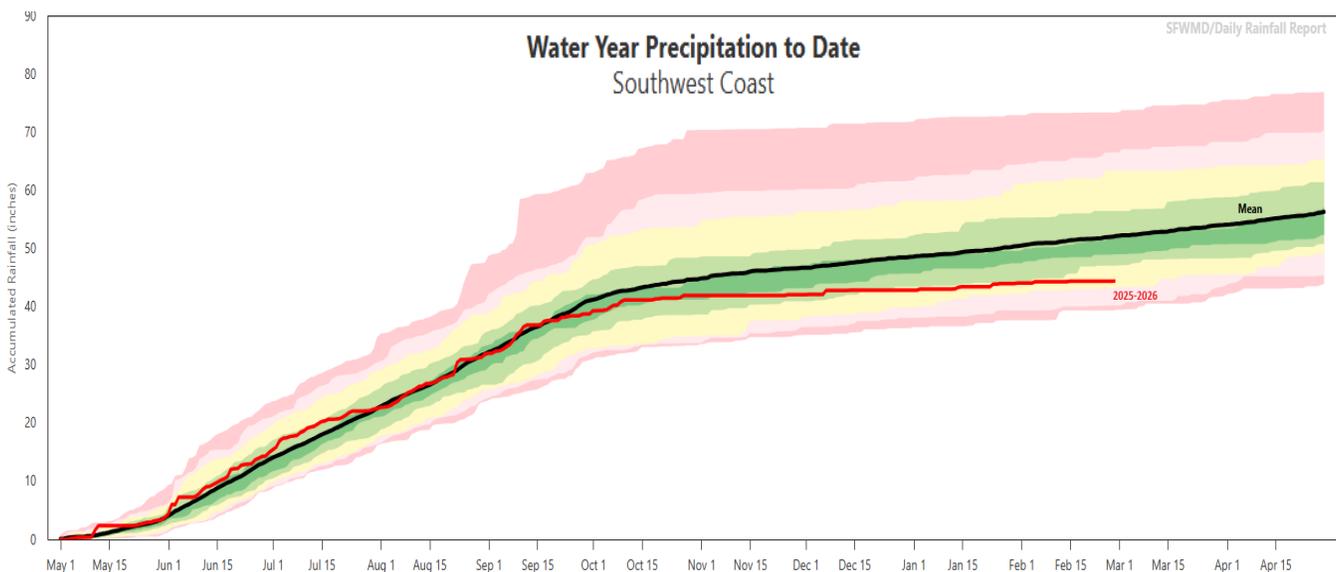
## SUMMARY

February was exceptionally dry in the Big Cypress Basin (BCB), marking the 8<sup>th</sup> consecutive month with below normal rainfall. Rain gauges across BCB recorded an average of just 0.32 inches of rainfall over the past month (19% of normal), resulting in 2026 having the BCB's fourth driest February since 1993.

To date in the current water year (May 2025 through April 2026), the BCB has received 44.1 inches of rainfall (80% of normal). Over the past four months the BCB has only received 2.8 inches of rainfall (just 40% of normal).



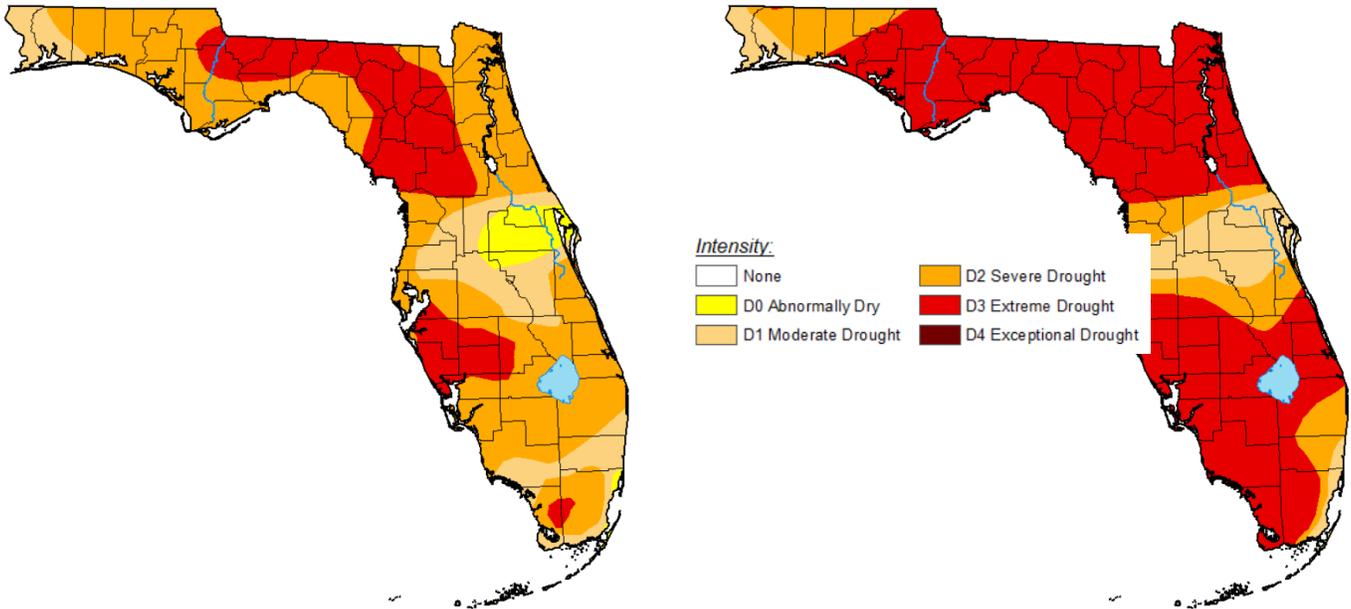
The BCB's low total rainfall for the current water year is consistent with the larger Southwest Coast's low total water year rainfall of 44.4 inches, making it one of the five driest water years on record since 1993. As evidenced in the graph below, the current water year's rainfall deviation from average began in September 2025 which only saw 6.0 inches of the normal 8.9 inches of rainfall. Though October's rainfall was closer to normal, most fell before October 11<sup>th</sup>, which marked the beginning of the 2025/2026 Dry Season. Since October 11<sup>th</sup>, rainfall totals have been substantially below normal, with only an average of 3.27 inches falling on the Southwest Coast. This exceptionally dry winter has led to further separation between the current water year's total rainfall and the long-term average.



As the unusually dry winter progressed, drought conditions continued to worsen in the BCB and Statewide. Due to the persistent subnormal precipitation, by March 3, 2026 the U.S. Drought Monitor had increased the severity of drought conditions in all of Collier County to “D3 Extreme Drought.”

**February 3, 2026**

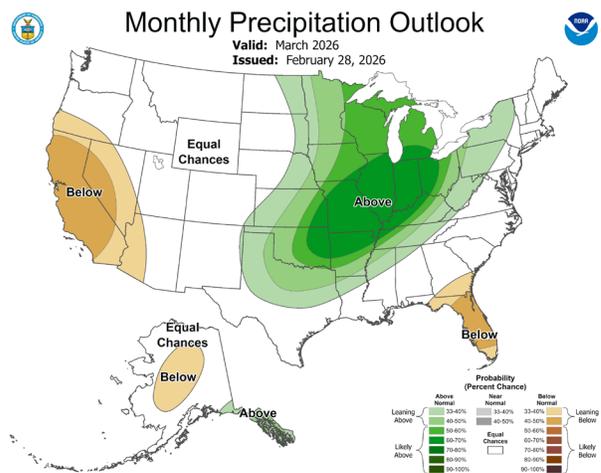
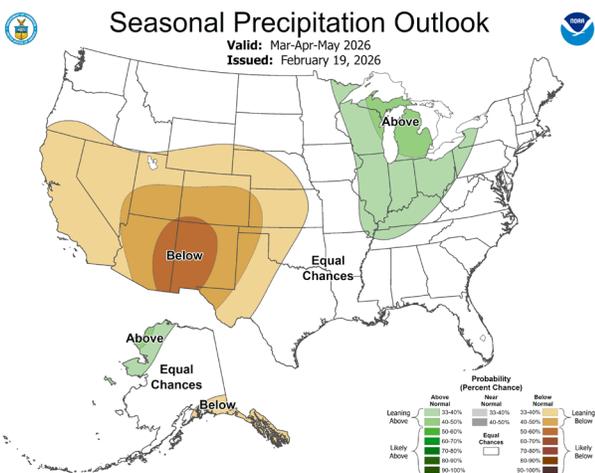
**March 3, 2026**



The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Climate Prediction Center updated the status of the El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO), stating:

- *La Niña continued in February 2026.*
- *A transition from La Niña to ENSO-neutral is expected in the next month, with ENSO-neutral favored through May-July 2026 (55% chance)*
- *In June-August 2026, El Niño is likely to emerge (62% chance) and persist through at least the end of 2026.*

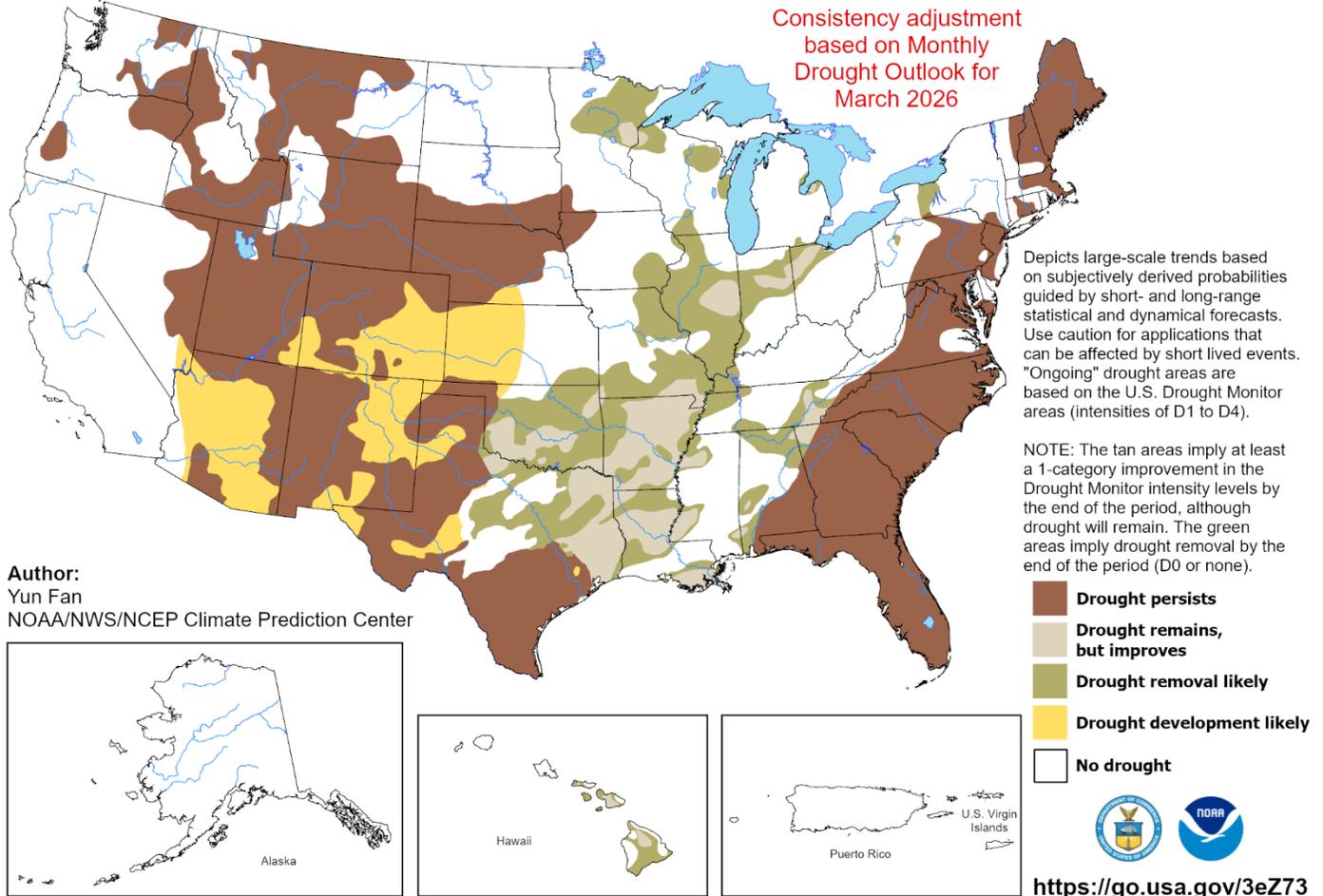
On February 19, 2026, The Climate Prediction Center (CPC) predicted equal probabilities of above or below normal rainfall for the period from March through May 2026. At the end of February, the CPC predicted March to have a slightly higher probability of drier than normal conditions.



Due to the probability of the short-term continuance of drier than normal conditions, the U.S. Monthly Drought Outlook forecasted that drought conditions will persist in March 2026.

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

Valid for March 1 - May 31, 2026  
Released February 28, 2026



BCB water managers will continue to operate the BCB system in water conservation regimens to capture and conserve as much runoff as possible though remainder of the Dry Season.

## **FEBRUARY 2026 BCB RAINFALL**

The Basin-wide averaged, gauge-measured, monthly rainfall was 0.32 inches in February 2026. This measured rainfall amounted to 19% of the historic BCB February average of 1.7 inches (**see Figures 1, 2, 3A and Table 1**). In February 2026, the rain gauge with the highest measured precipitation was R-18 COCO#3, which recorded 0.54 inches. R-5 FAKAHATCHEE STRAND HQ received the lowest rain gauge monthly total with just 0.13 inches.

**Figure 3B** shows February's calculated average rainfall estimates for each of the Basin's watersheds, based on gauge adjusted radar (Raindar). The East Naples watershed saw the highest Raindar average of 0.38 inches and the Coastal Basins watershed saw the lowest Raindar average of 0.17 inches. The BCB's overall calculated areal weighted average Raindar rainfall (by watershed) was 0.24 inches for the month, slightly lower than the basin-wide rain gauge average of 0.32 inches. The Raindar totals and their locality distribution across the BCB/Lower West Coast are shown on **Figure 3C**.

## **FEBRUARY 2026 BCB OPERATIONS AND WATER LEVELS**

During February, BCB structures remained in water conservation operations. Water levels systemwide continued their seasonal decline, exacerbated by the subnormal rainfall. Though rainfall was evenly distributed across the BCB, it was insufficient to slow the rate of water level recession. BCB canal conditions as of February 28, 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 February with no discharges to tide at GG1. By February 28<sup>th</sup>, GG Main had receded below the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile downstream of GG2, with all other areas between the 25<sup>th</sup> and 75<sup>th</sup> percentile (**see Figure 5**).

### **COCOHATCHEE SYSTEM**

The Cocohatchee Canal was kept in water conservation operations in February. By the end of the month, the most downstream segment of the system (between COCO1 and COCO2) was between the 50<sup>th</sup> and 75<sup>th</sup> percentile. The canal segment upstream of COCO2 ended the month below the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile, while the upstream of reaches of the system finished the month between the 25<sup>th</sup> and 75<sup>th</sup> percentile. The short segment immediately upstream of CORK2 remained at the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile (**Figures 6A, 6B, & 6C**).

### **FAKA UNION SYSTEM**

As with the other BCB canals, the Faka Union system operated in water conservation regimens in February. Both FU4S and FU5 gates remained closed for the duration of the month. By February 28<sup>th</sup>, the portion of Faka Union Canal upstream of FU5 had receded to the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile. At FU4S (downstream of FU5), the canal receded to just above the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile. Downstream of FU4S to the Faka Pump Station (S487), the canal finished the month near the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile. Due to low water levels, no pumping occurred at the Faka Pump Station (S487). Monitoring wells downstream of S487 – within the Picayune Strand Restoration Project (PSRP) – finished the month between the 25<sup>th</sup> and 75<sup>th</sup> percentile while downstream of the PSRP, the

remaining piece of the Faka Union Canal north of FU1 finished the month between the 25<sup>th</sup> and 50<sup>th</sup> 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 February. No discharges occurred at the HC1 structure and the system finished the month between the 25<sup>th</sup> and 50<sup>th</sup> 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 continued to show decline in February **(Table 2 and Figures 9A and 9B)**. C-462 (north of Lake Trafford) steadily declined in February but still finished the month between the 50<sup>th</sup> and 75<sup>th</sup> percentile due to the heavy localized rainfall which occurred in the area on January 24<sup>th</sup>. C-1224 (near Henderson Creek) declined in February and finished the month between the 25<sup>th</sup> and 50<sup>th</sup> percentile. C-1004R (a Tidally influenced well near Cocohatchee Canal) also declined in February, finishing the month between the 10<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> percentiles.

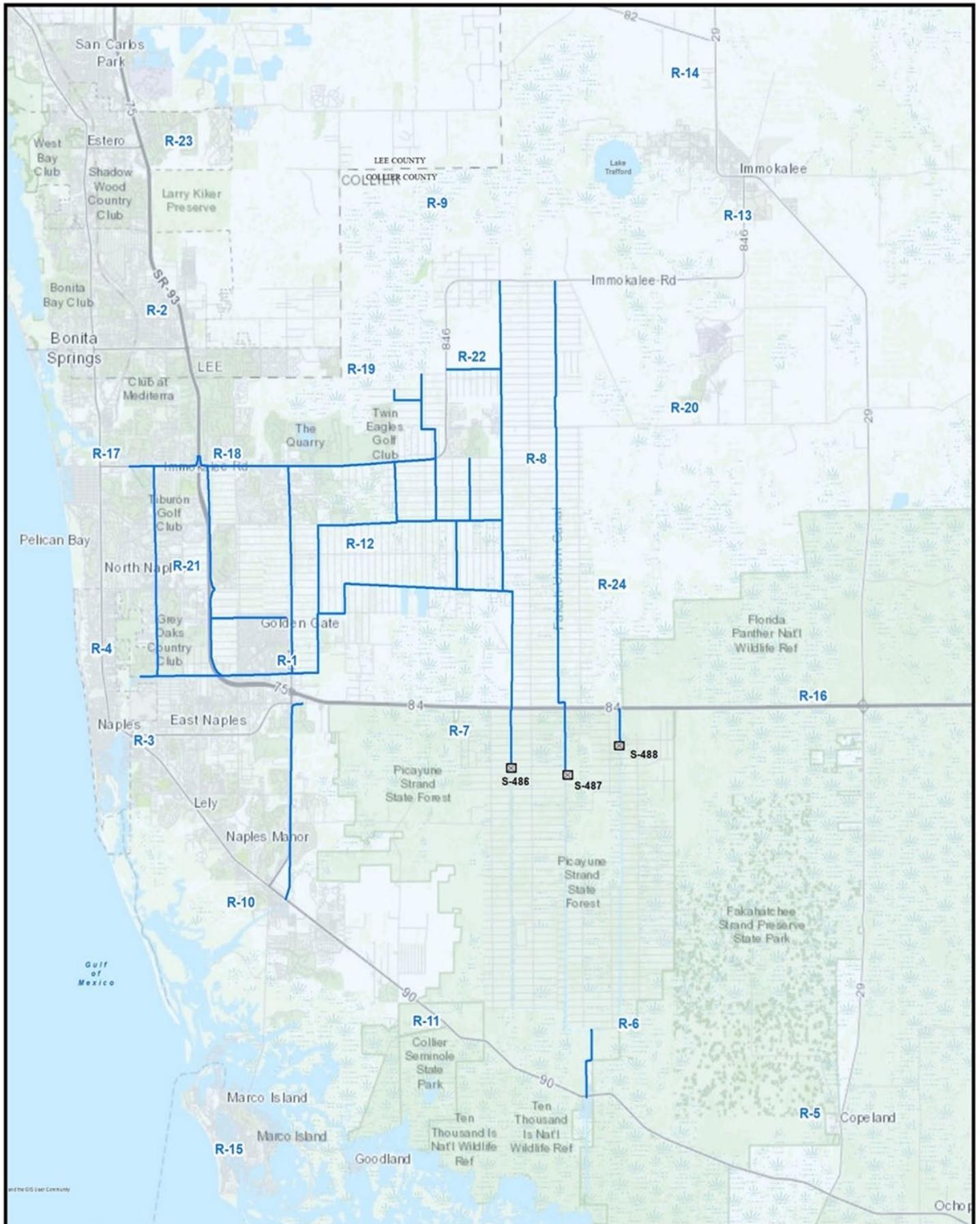
L-738 a Tamiami Aquifer well in Bonita Springs continued its trek in record low territory in February finishing the month just above the level of low concern (yellow line). Water levels in L-2194, a Sandstone Aquifer well in Bonita Springs steeply declined in the second half of February, dropping below the level of low concern and reaching record low levels for the end of February. L-2195, a surficial aquifer well in Bonita Springs, followed a more normal slope of decline (though earlier in the dry season) in February, finishing the month just above the level of low concern.

### **CORKSCREW SWAMP**

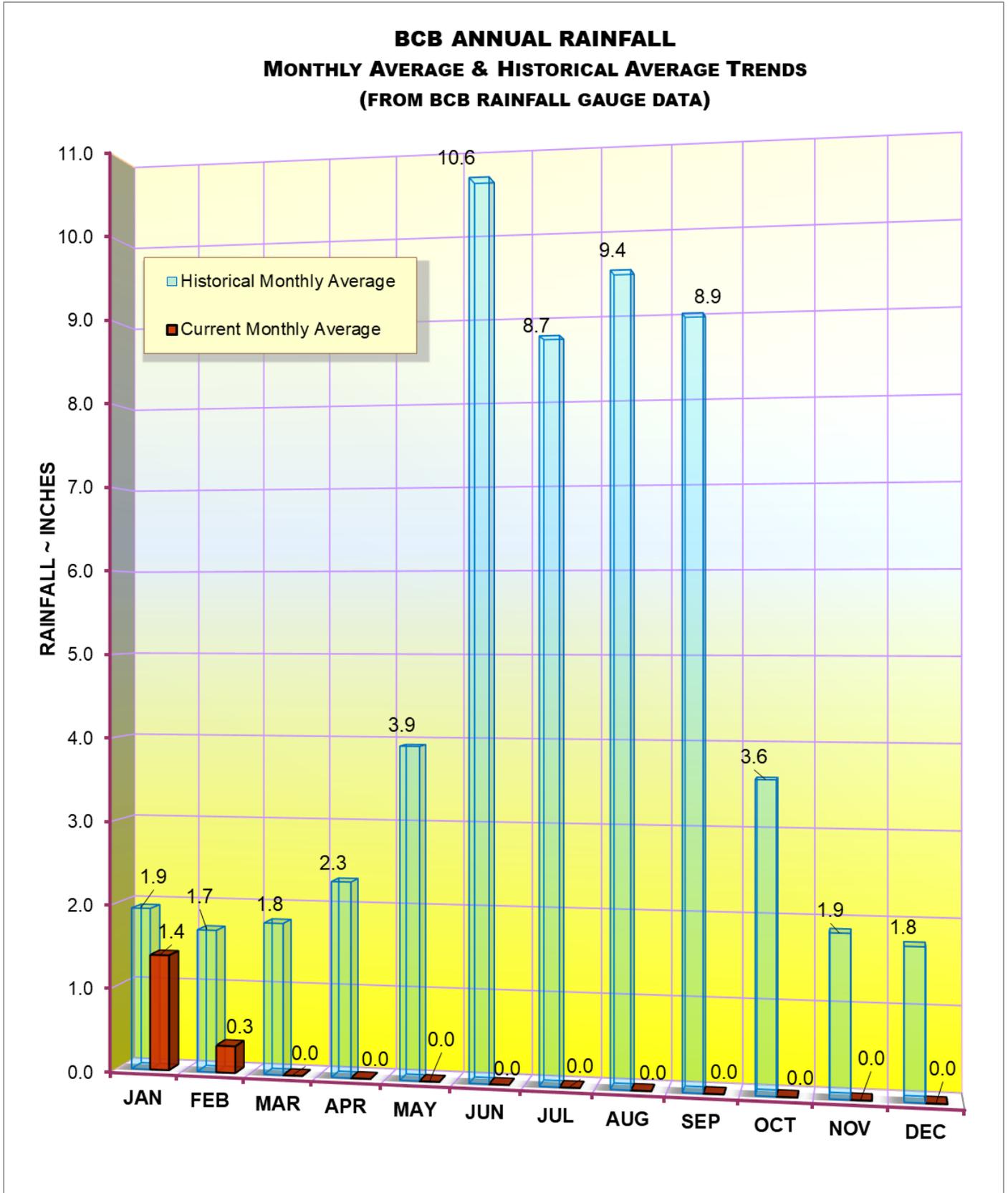
**Figure 10** shows the historical trends for Corkscrew Swamp (CRKSWPS), Bird Rookery (BRDROOK), and the Cork 3 (CORK3) structure, and their 2026 corresponding levels. CRKSWPS resumed its decline in February, dropping from the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile to below the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile by the end of the month. Both BRDROOK AND CORK3 steadily declined in February. By the end of the month, BRDROOK was well below the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile and not far above the record low for February 28<sup>th</sup>. CORK3 remained above the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile but reached the lowest end of February level since 2022. **Figure 11** shows that though Lake Trafford steadily declined in February, it remained between the 50<sup>th</sup> and 75<sup>th</sup> percentile at the end of the month due to the intense localized rainfall which occurred on January 24<sup>th</sup>.

**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 continued their dry season decline in February and maintained their trends below their historical daily minimum levels. The SOCREW sites 3, 4, 5 and 6 are newer sites and have a period of record of less than 4 years, therefore, they do not have adequate data for statistical cyclic analysis.

# FIGURE 1 RAIN GAUGE LOCATIONS



**FIGURE 2**  
**BCB GAUGE MEASURED RAINFALL MONTHLY AVERAGES**  
**CALENDAR YEAR 2026**

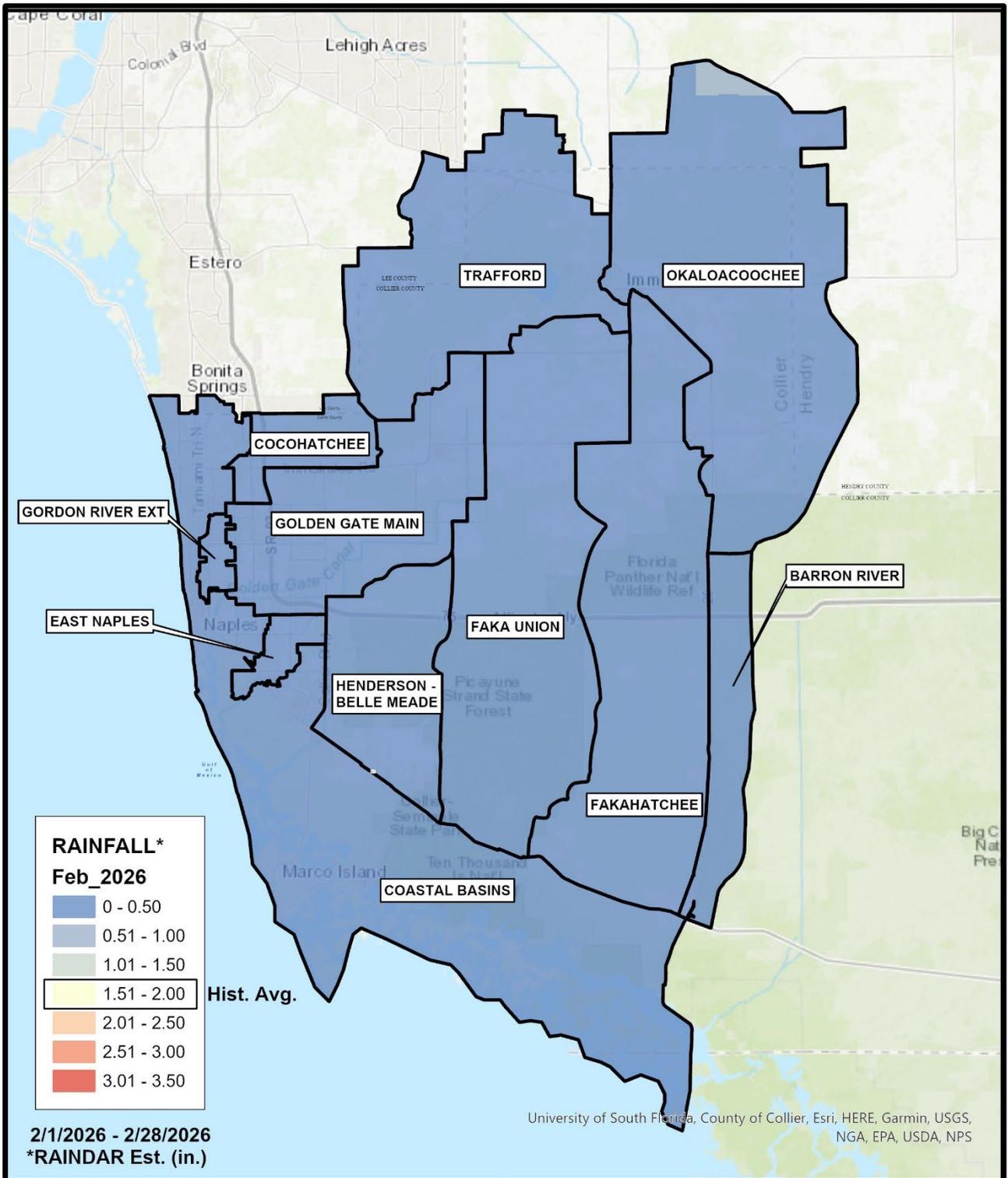


**TABLE 1**  
**RAINFALL REPORT - FEBRUARY, 2026**  
**DISTRICT/BASIN RAINFALL STATIONS**  
 (ALL NUMBERS ARE IN INCHES)

STATION INDEX NO.	STATION NAME	Feb-26	LONG TERM MONTHLY AVERAGE	MONTHLY DIFFERENCE	CALENDAR YEAR 2025 CUMULATIVE TOTAL	AVERAGE CALENDAR YEAR TO DATE	YEAR TO DATE DIFFERENCE
R-1	GG#3	0.45	1.28	-0.83	1.79	3.71	-1.92
R-2	BONITA SPRINGS WATER PLANT	0.43	1.91	-1.48	1.33	3.92	-2.59
R-3	COLLIER COUNTY COURTHOUSE	0.47	1.90	-1.43	1.44	3.77	-2.33
R-4	FREEDOM PARK	0.35	1.27	-0.92	1.56	3.67	-2.11
R-5	FAKAHATCHEE STRAND HQ	0.13	1.86	-1.73	0.46	3.60	-3.14
R-6	DANHOUSE PRAIRIE	0.29	1.51	-1.22	0.99	3.04	-2.05
R-7	SGGE WEATHER STATION	0.44	1.61	-1.17	1.26	3.33	-2.07
R-8	FAKA UNION #5	0.35	1.80	-1.45	1.72	4.43	-2.71
R-9	CORKSCREW SWAMP NORTH END	0.27	1.66	-1.39	2.47	3.55	-1.08
R-10	ROOKERY BAY HQ	0.26	1.74	-1.48	0.92	3.71	-2.79
R-11	COLLIER SEMINOLE STATE PARK	0.15	1.65	-1.50	0.61	3.47	-2.86
R-12	G.G. FIRE STATION	0.21	1.82	-1.61	1.34	3.79	-2.45
R-13	IMMOKALEE LANDFILL	0.36	1.79	-1.43	4.09	3.95	0.14
R-14	IFAS	0.22	2.00	-1.78	2.84	3.95	-1.11
R-15	MARCO R.O. PLANT	0.21	1.93	-1.72	0.72	4.33	-3.61
R-16	FAKAHATCHEE STRAND NORTH END	0.35	2.10	-1.75	1.54	4.44	-2.90
R-17	COCO#1	0.45	1.83	-1.38	1.41	3.62	-2.21
R-18	COCO#3	0.54	1.85	-1.31	1.79	3.57	-1.78
R-19	BIRD ROOKERY	0.36	1.30	-0.94	1.09	2.96	-1.87
R-20	AVE MARIA	0.23	1.75	-1.52	4.96	3.92	1.04
R-21	I75W2	0.27	1.32	-1.05	1.46	2.94	-1.48
R-22	GG#7	0.28	1.32	-1.04	2.22	2.89	-0.67
R-23	FPWX	0.27	1.72	-1.45	1.57	3.53	-1.96
R-24	DSOTO10	0.31	1.81	-1.50	1.19	3.16	-1.97

AVERAGES	0.32	1.70	-1.38	1.70	3.64	-1.94
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Miles

\*Rainfall estimates based on gauge adjusted radar

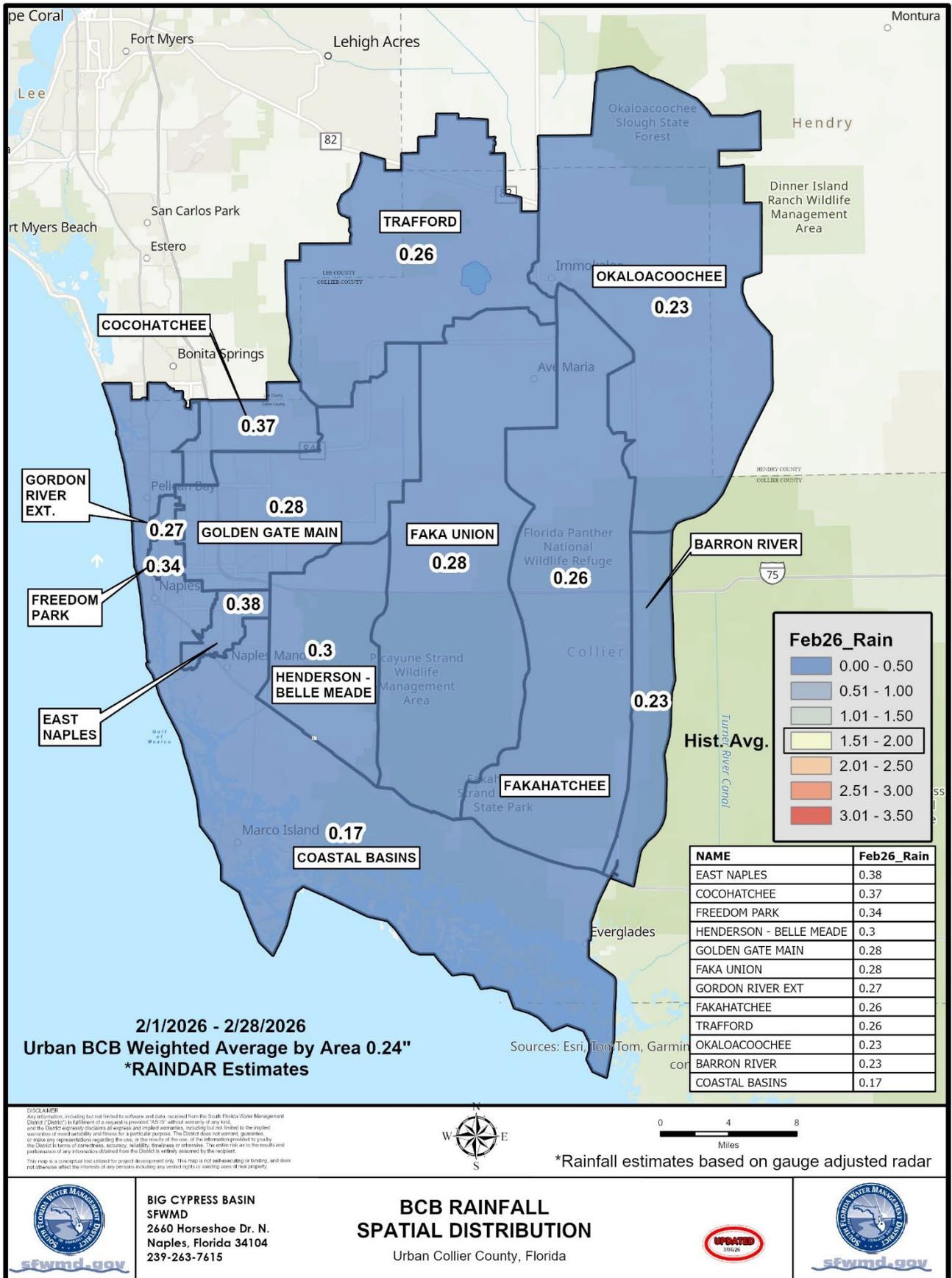


**BIG CYPRESS BASIN  
SFWMD**  
2640 Horseshoe Dr. N.  
Naples, Florida 34104  
239-263-7615

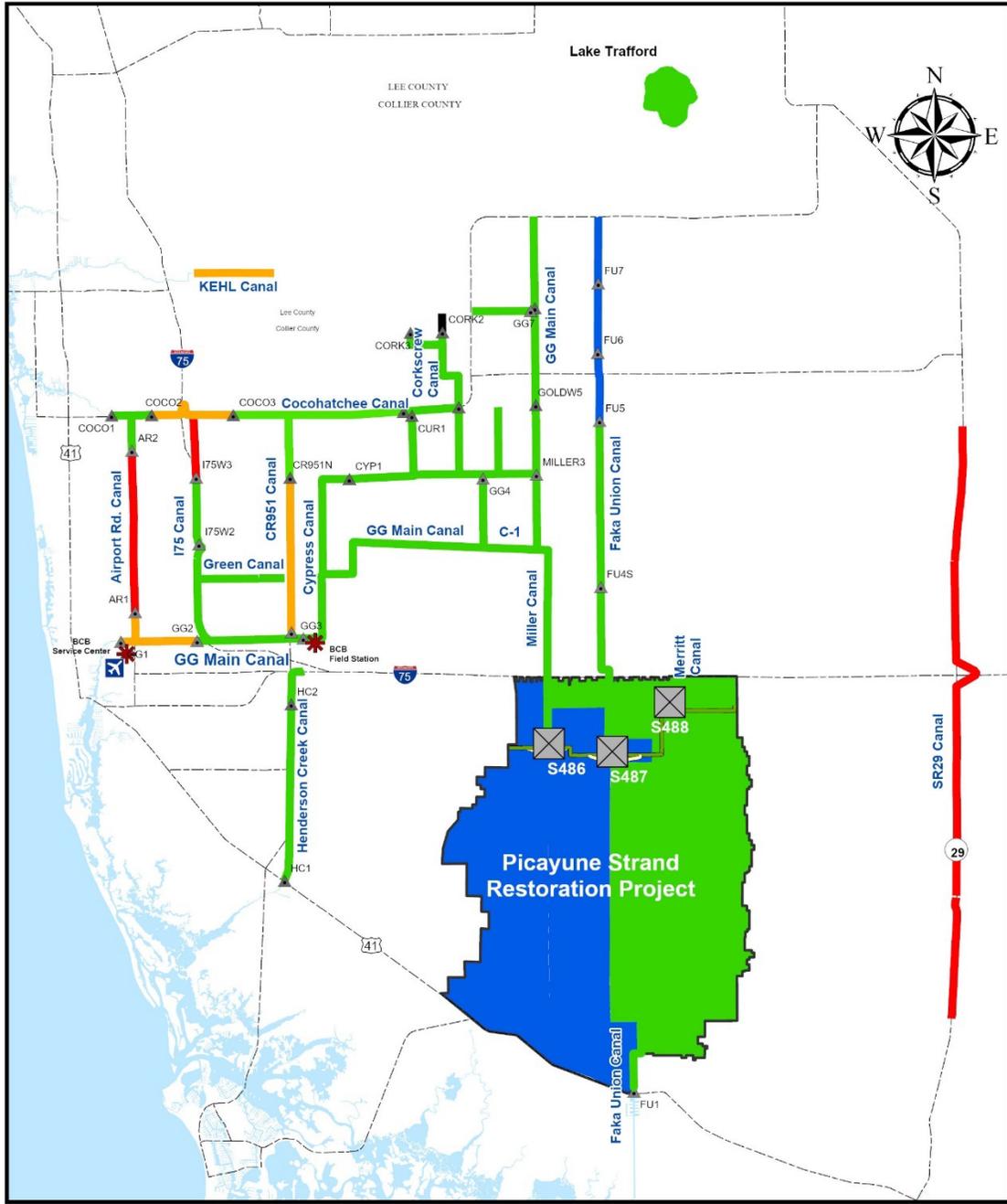
**BCB RAINFALL  
SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION**  
Urban Collier County, Florida



**FEBRUARY 2026 — FIGURE 3B**



**FEBRUARY 2026 —FIGURE 3C**



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\* Based on period of record for each canal reach



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

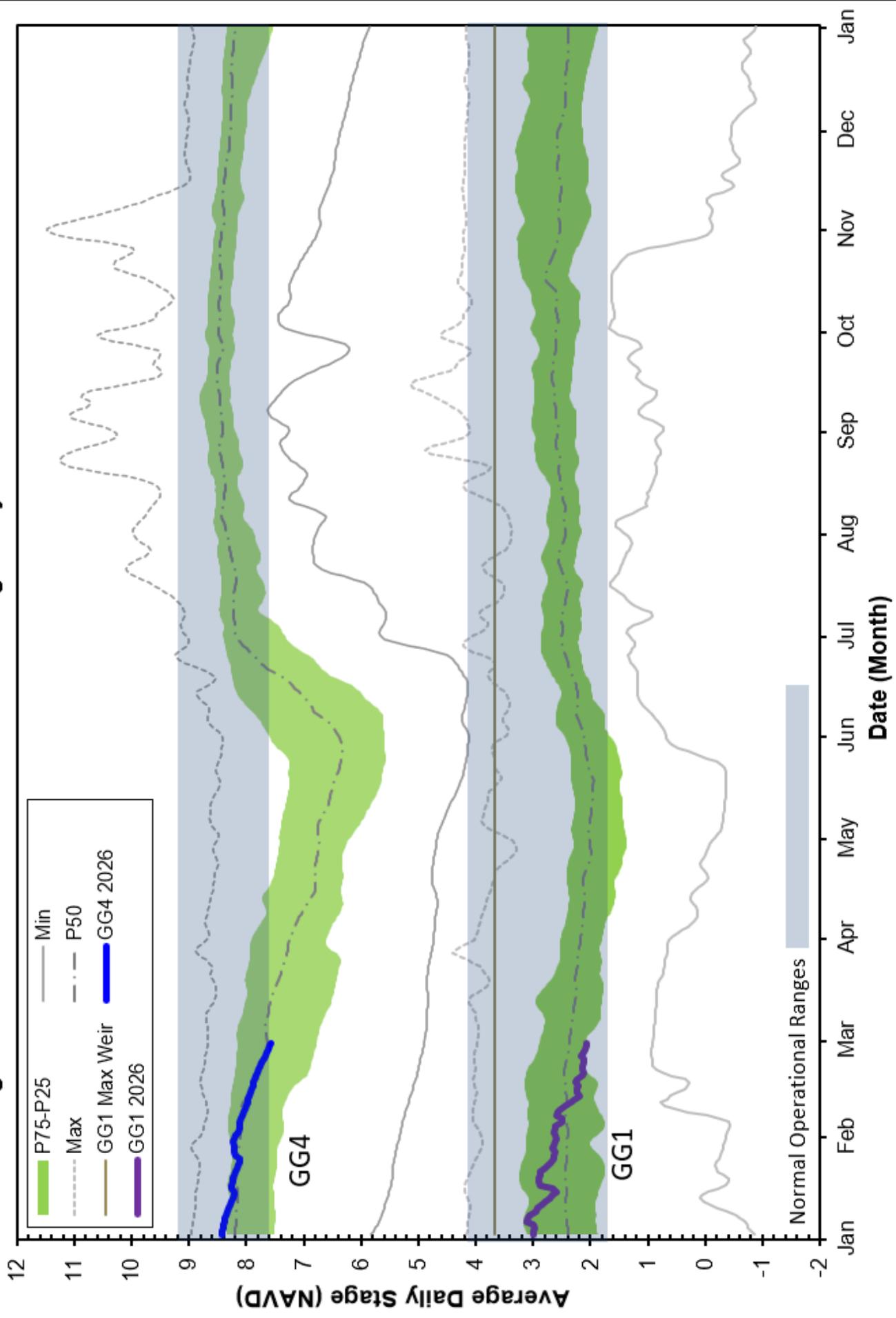
**BCB Conditions Index 2/28/26**

Urban Collier County, Florida

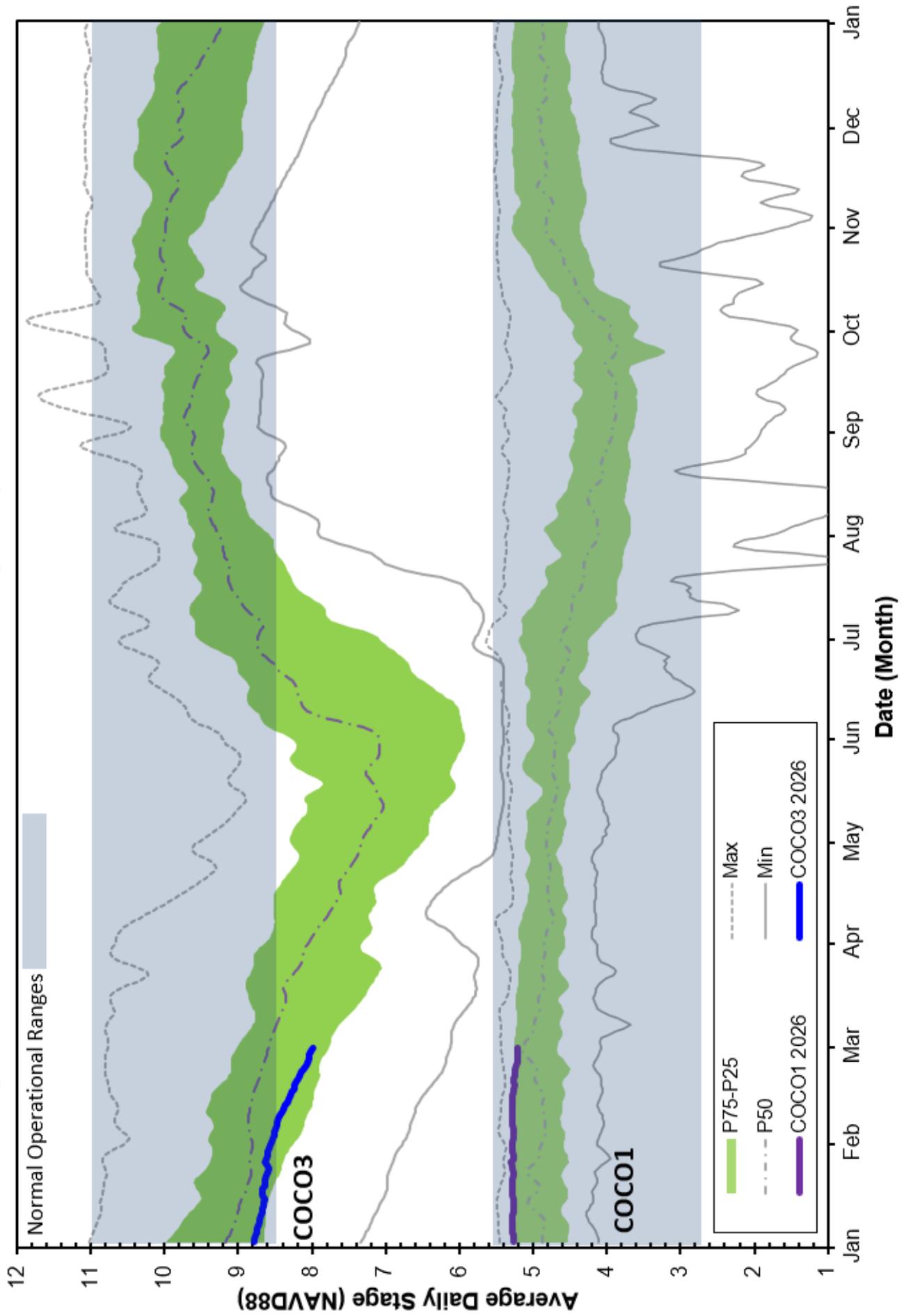


**FIGURE 4**  
**BCB WATER CONDITIONS**

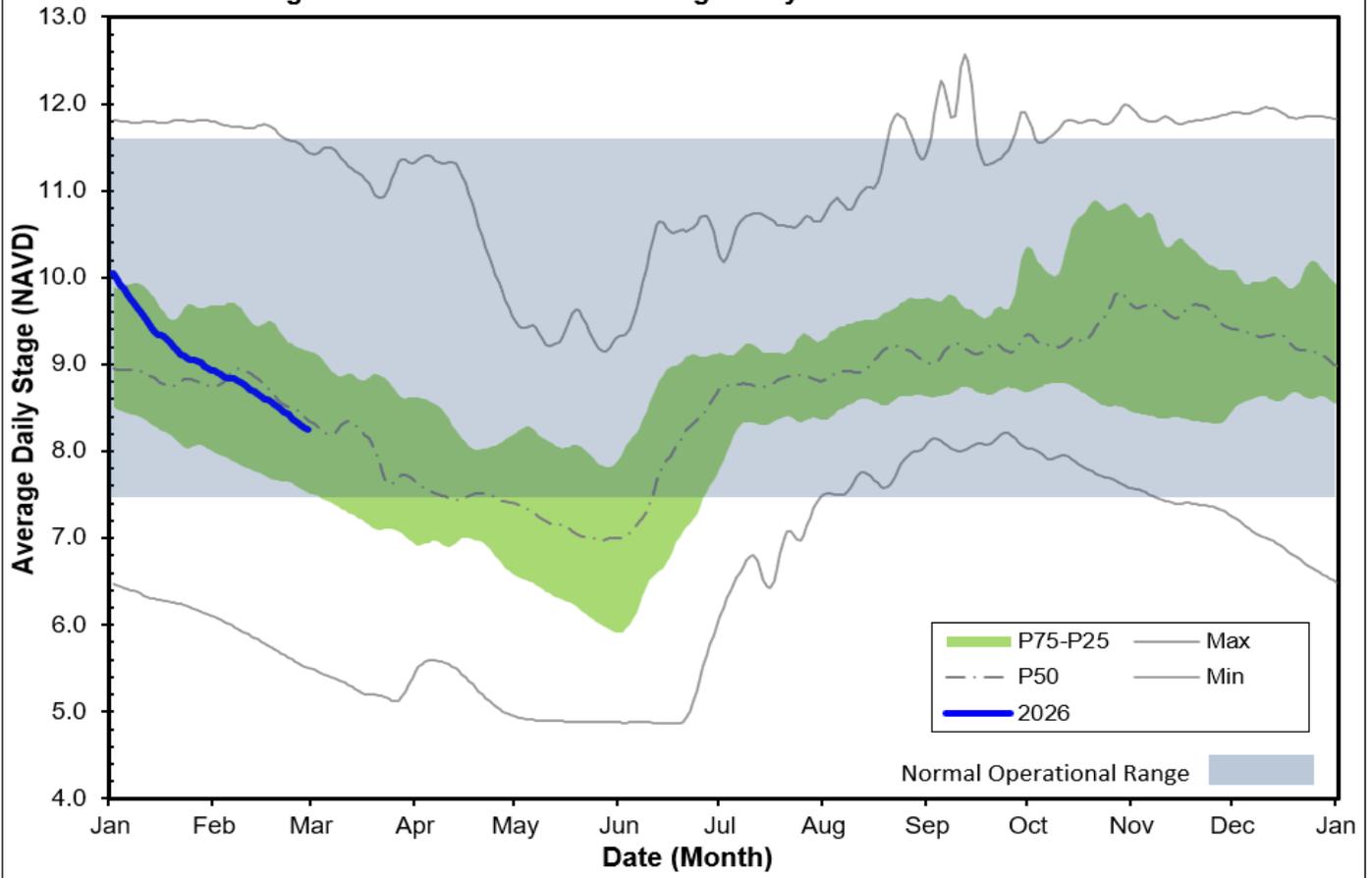
**Figure 5 Golden Gate Canal Historic Average Daily Headwater Percentiles**



**Figure 6A Cochatchee Canal Historic Average Daily Headwater Percentiles**



**Figure 6B CORK1 Historic Average Daily Headwater Percentiles**



**Figure 6C - CORK2 Historic Average Daily Headwater Percentiles**

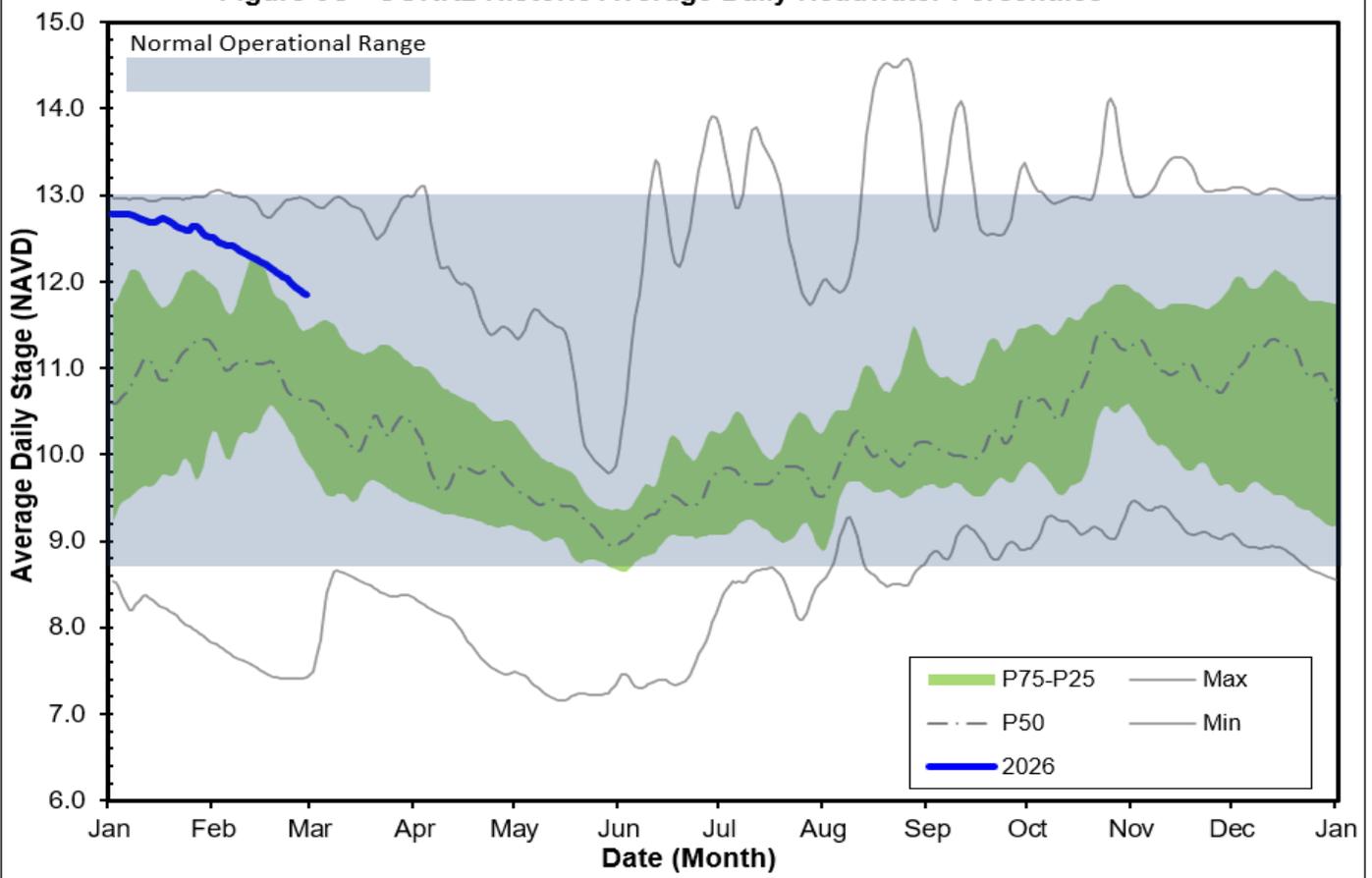
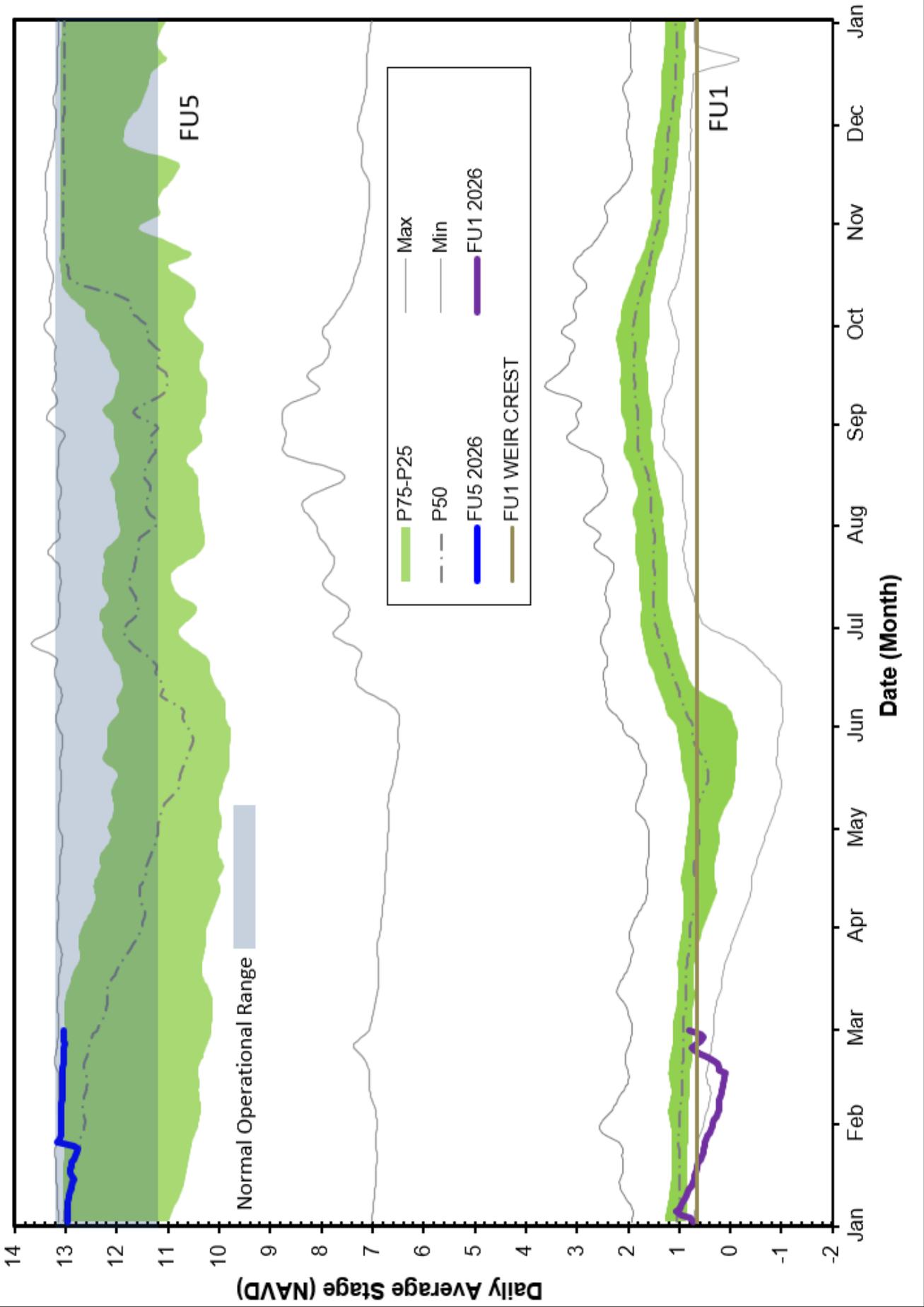


Figure 7A Faka Union Canal Historic Average Daily Headwater Percentiles



**Figure 7B FU4S Historic Average Daily Water Percentiles**

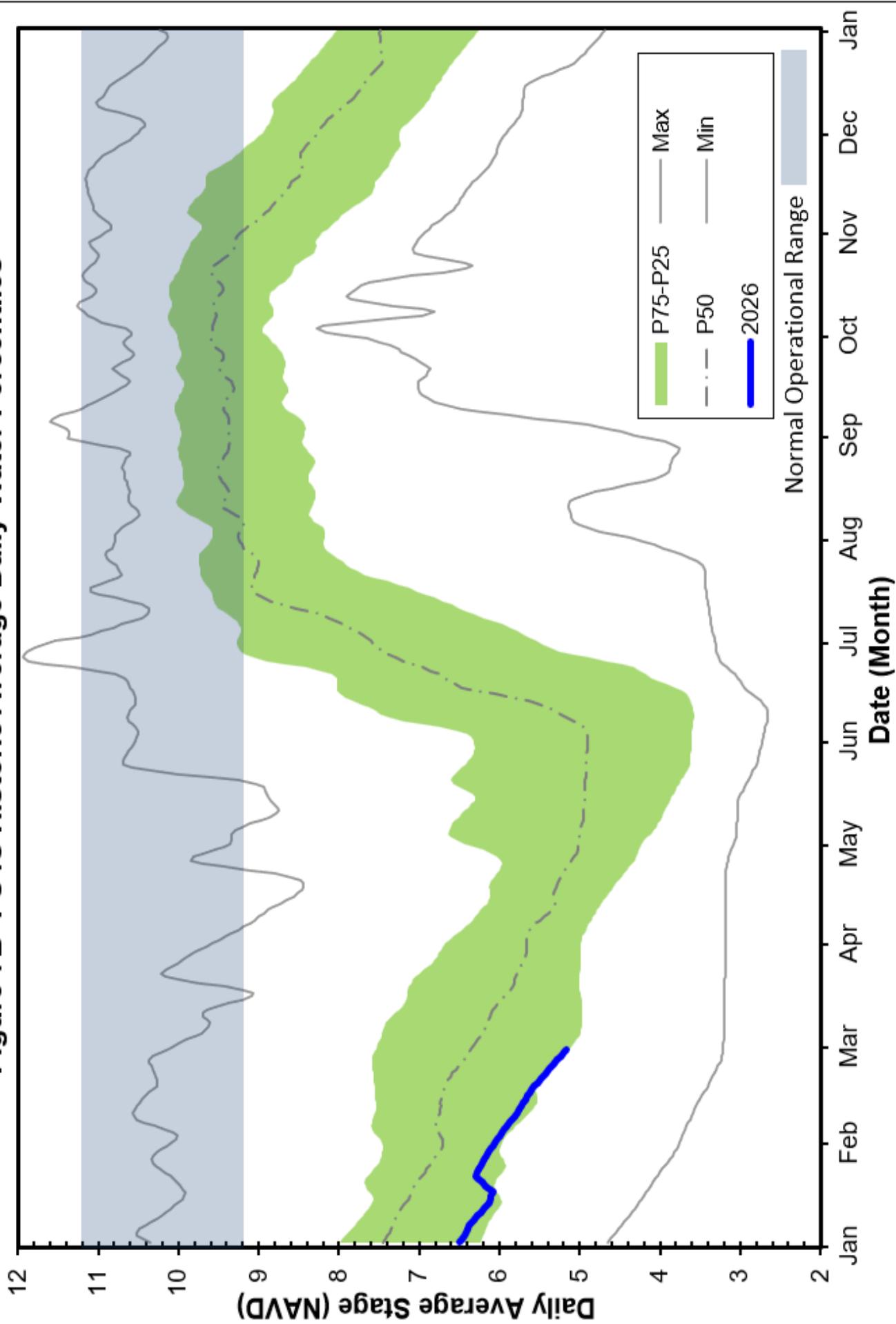


Figure 8A - HC1 Historic Average Daily Headwater Percentiles

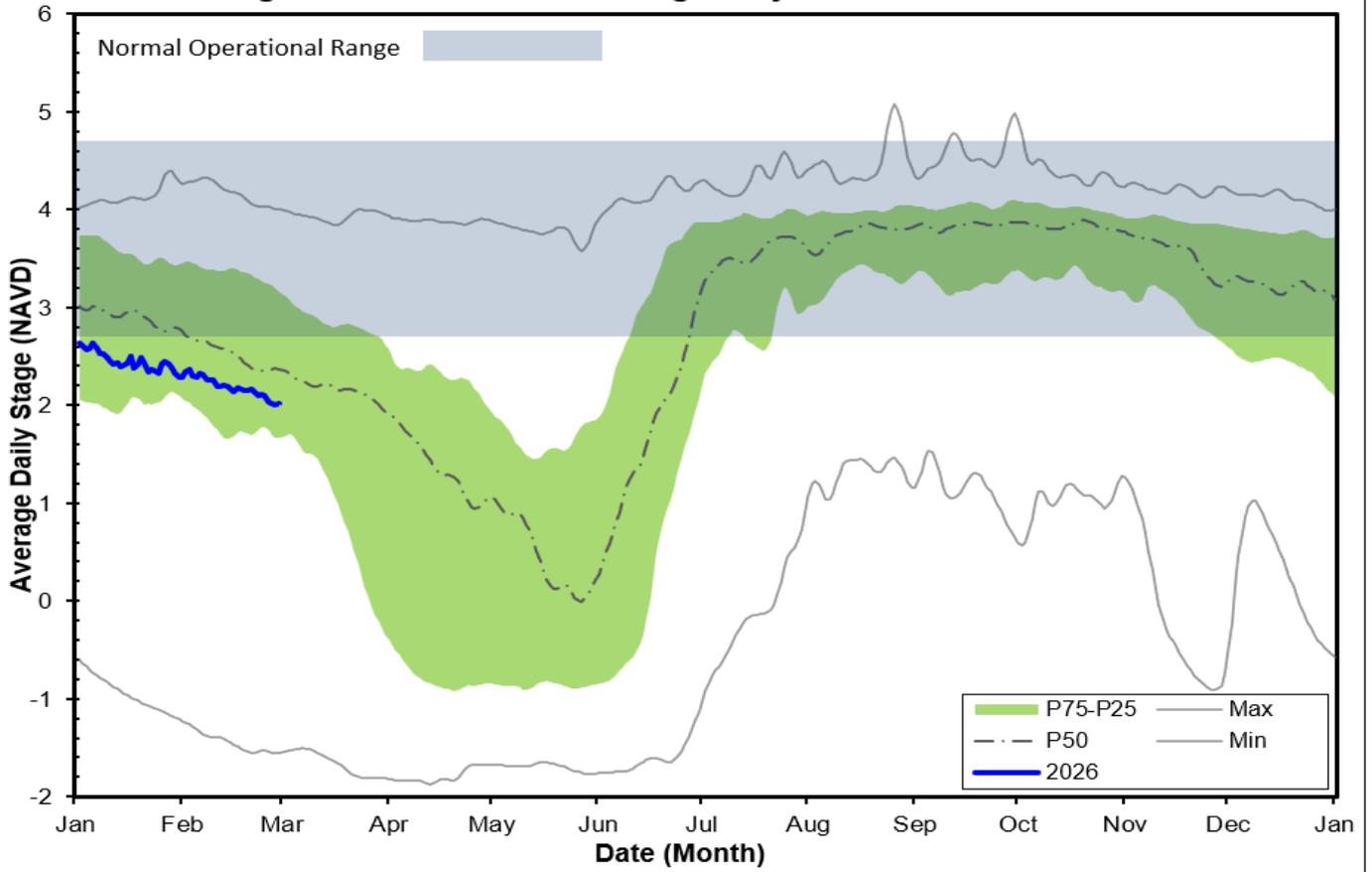
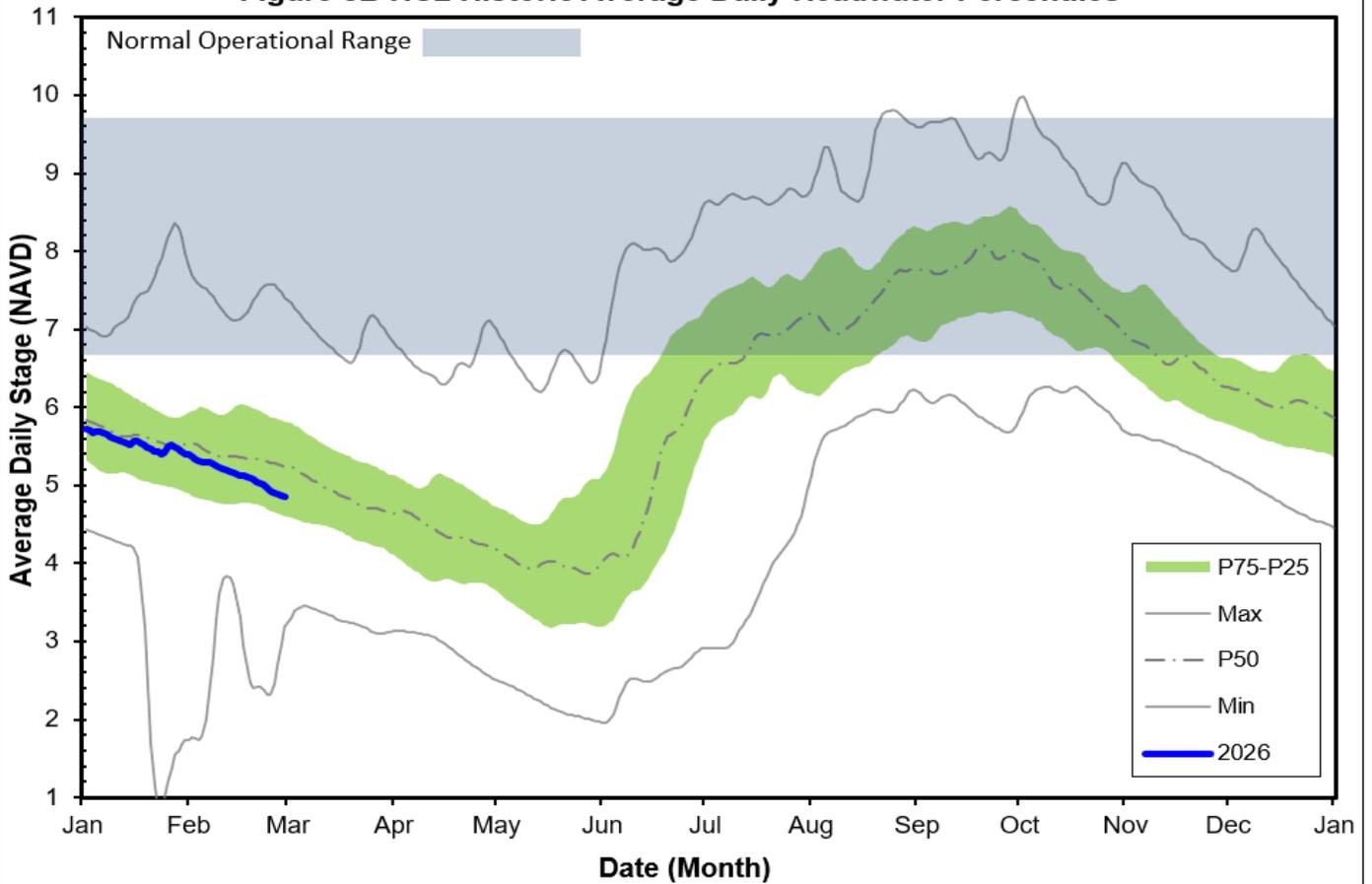


Figure 8B HC2 Historic Average Daily Headwater Percentiles



Last Reading Date :		February 28, 2026					
Previous Period Reading Date:		January 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	-1.16	30.17	29.01	↓	GREEN
C-1004R	Naples	Lower Tamiami Aquifer	-1.02	0.16	-0.86	↓	GREEN
C-1224	Marco Lakes	Lower Tamiami Aquifer	-0.23	1.64	1.41	↓	GREEN
C-948R	Golden Gate	Mid Hawthorn Aquifer	-0.67	26.80	26.13	↓	
C-951R	Golden Gate	Lower Tamiami Aquifer	-1.57	0.72	-0.85	↓	
L-2194	Bonita Springs	Sandstone Aquifer	-2.04	0.37	-1.67	↓	YELLOW
L-2195	Bonita Springs	Surficial Aquifer System	-0.38	6.95	6.57	↓	GREEN
L-738	Bonita Springs	Lower Tamiami Aquifer	-1.30	-3.08	-4.38	↓	GREEN

**TABLE 2  
BCB WATER CONDITIONS SUMMARY  
FEBRUARY 2026**

BIG CYPRESS BASIN

FEBRUARY 28, 2026

GROUNDWATER LEVEL DAILY TRENDS  
COMPARED TO HISTORICAL AVERAGE

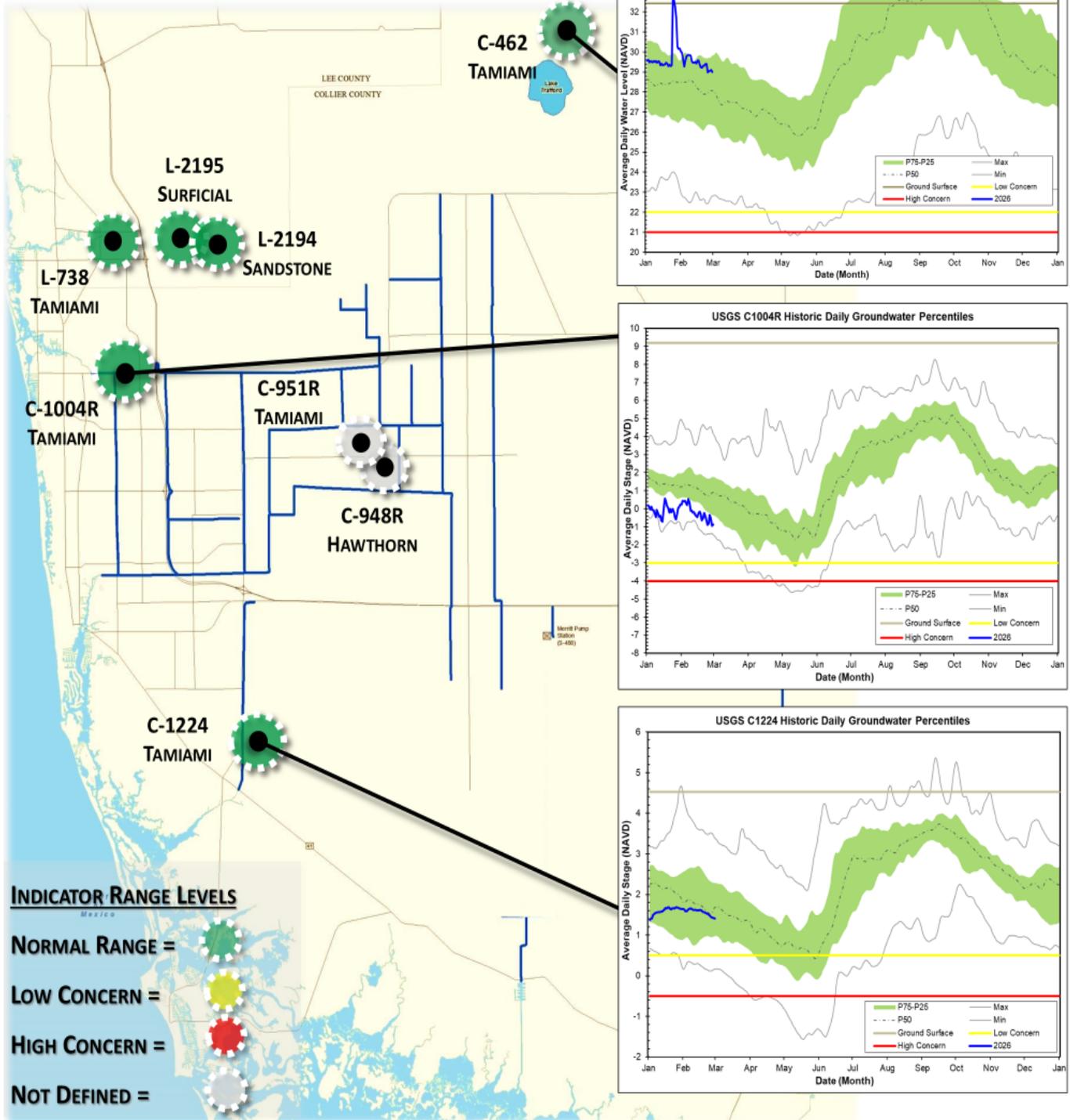
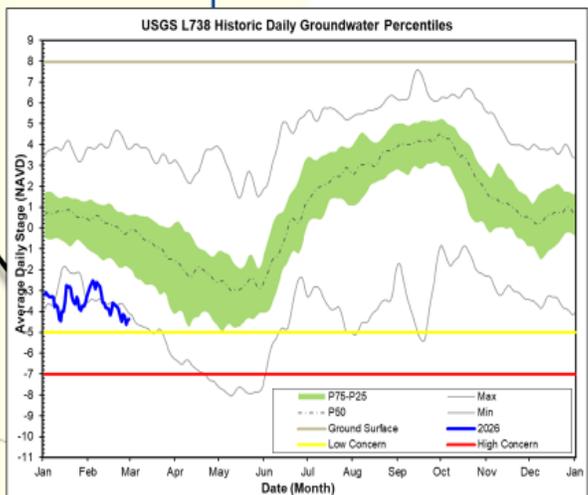
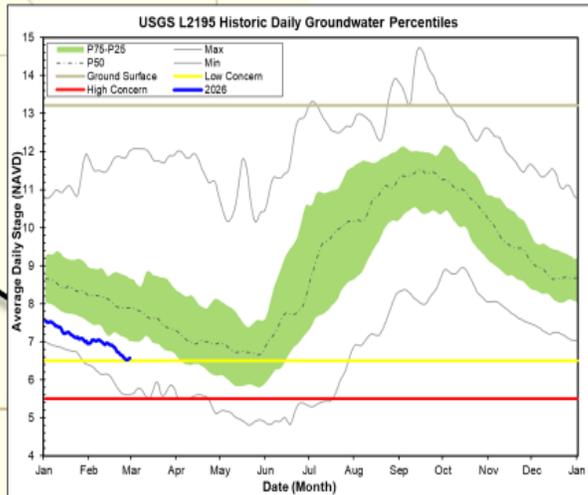
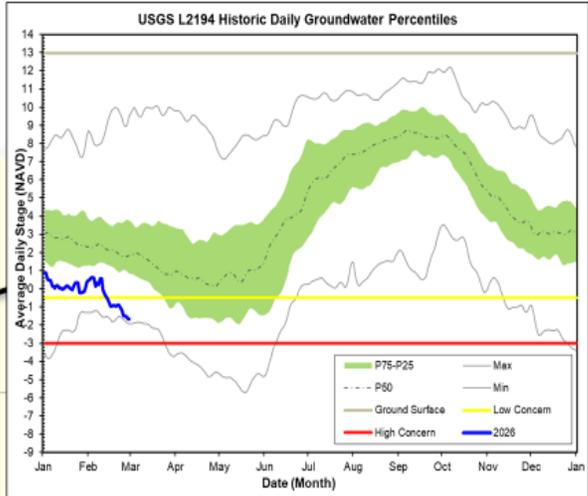
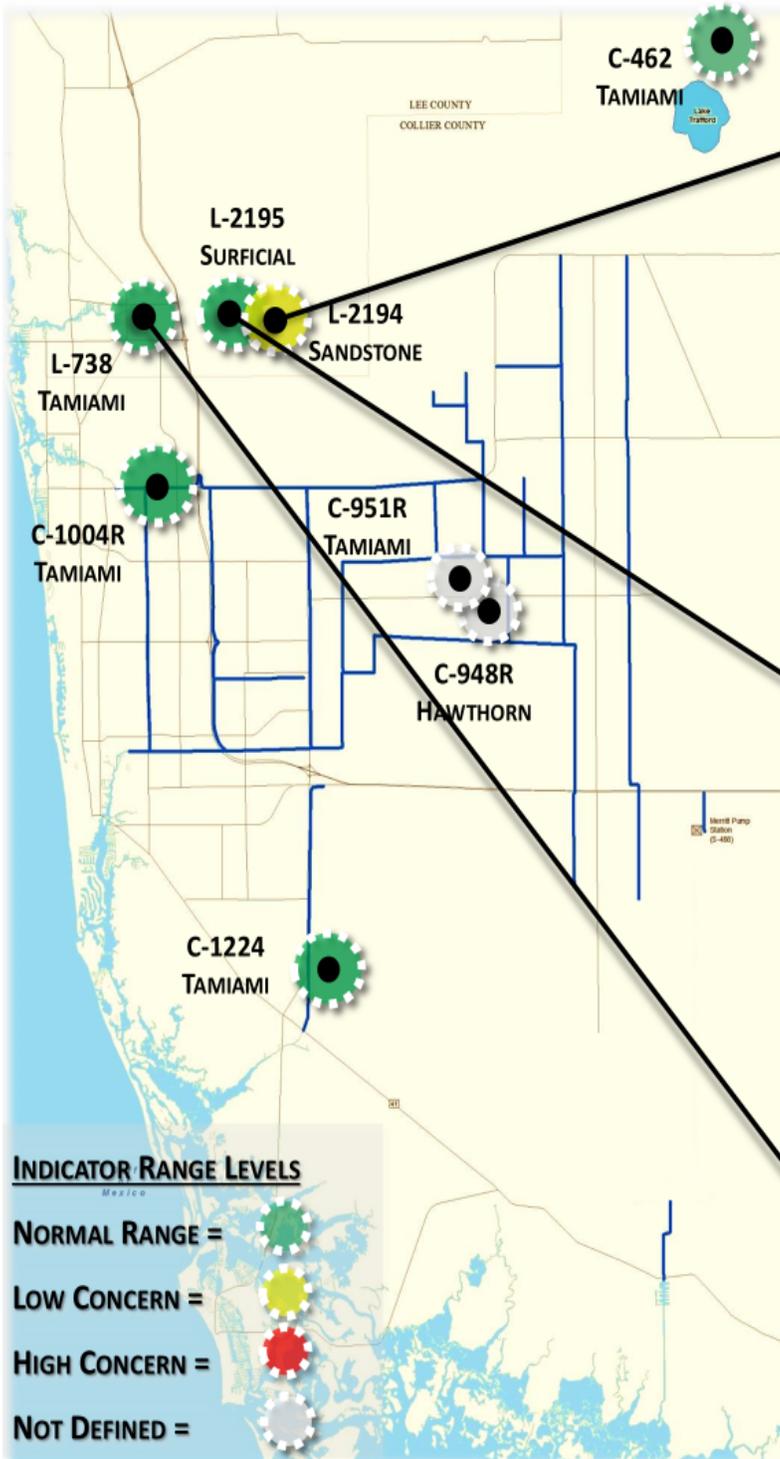


FIGURE 9A

BIG CYPRESS BASIN

FEBRUARY 28, 2026

GROUNDWATER LEVEL DAILY TRENDS COMPARED TO HISTORICAL AVERAGE



**INDICATOR RANGE LEVELS**

NORMAL RANGE = [Green Gear Icon]

LOW CONCERN = [Yellow Gear Icon]

HIGH CONCERN = [Red Gear Icon]

NOT DEFINED = [Grey Gear Icon]

FIGURE 9B



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

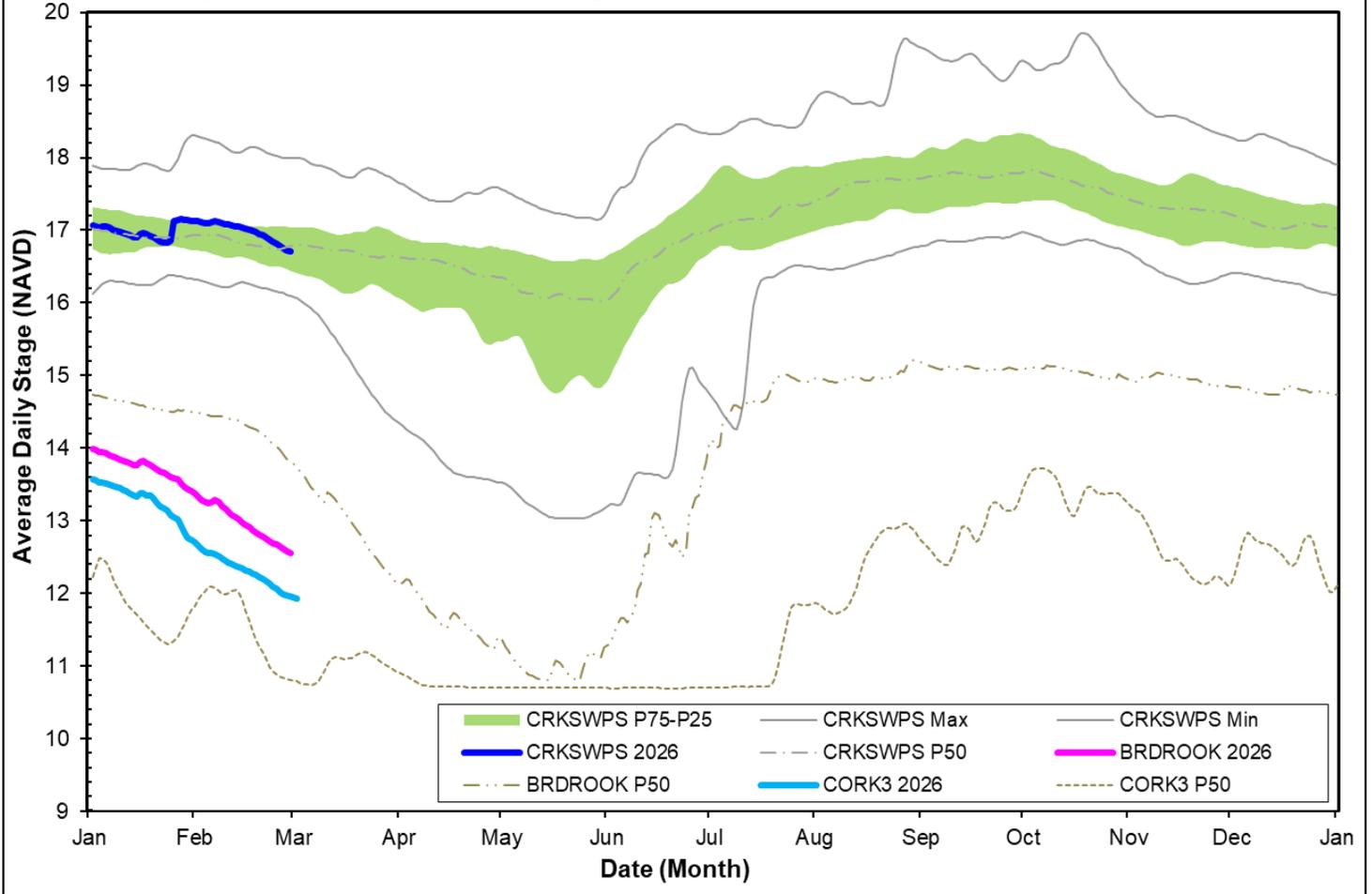
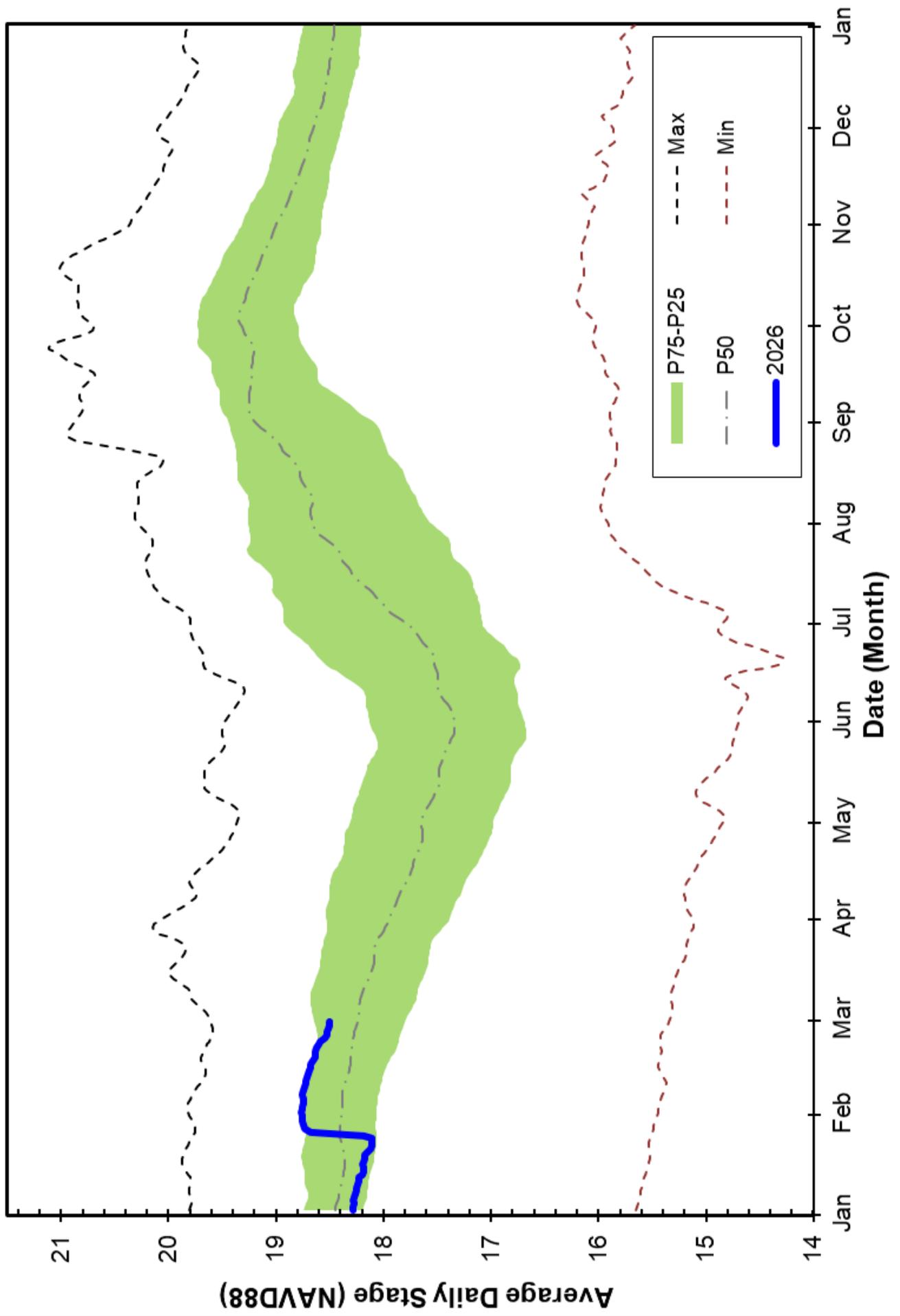


Figure 11 Lake Trafford Historic Average Daily Headwater Percentiles (1941-2024)



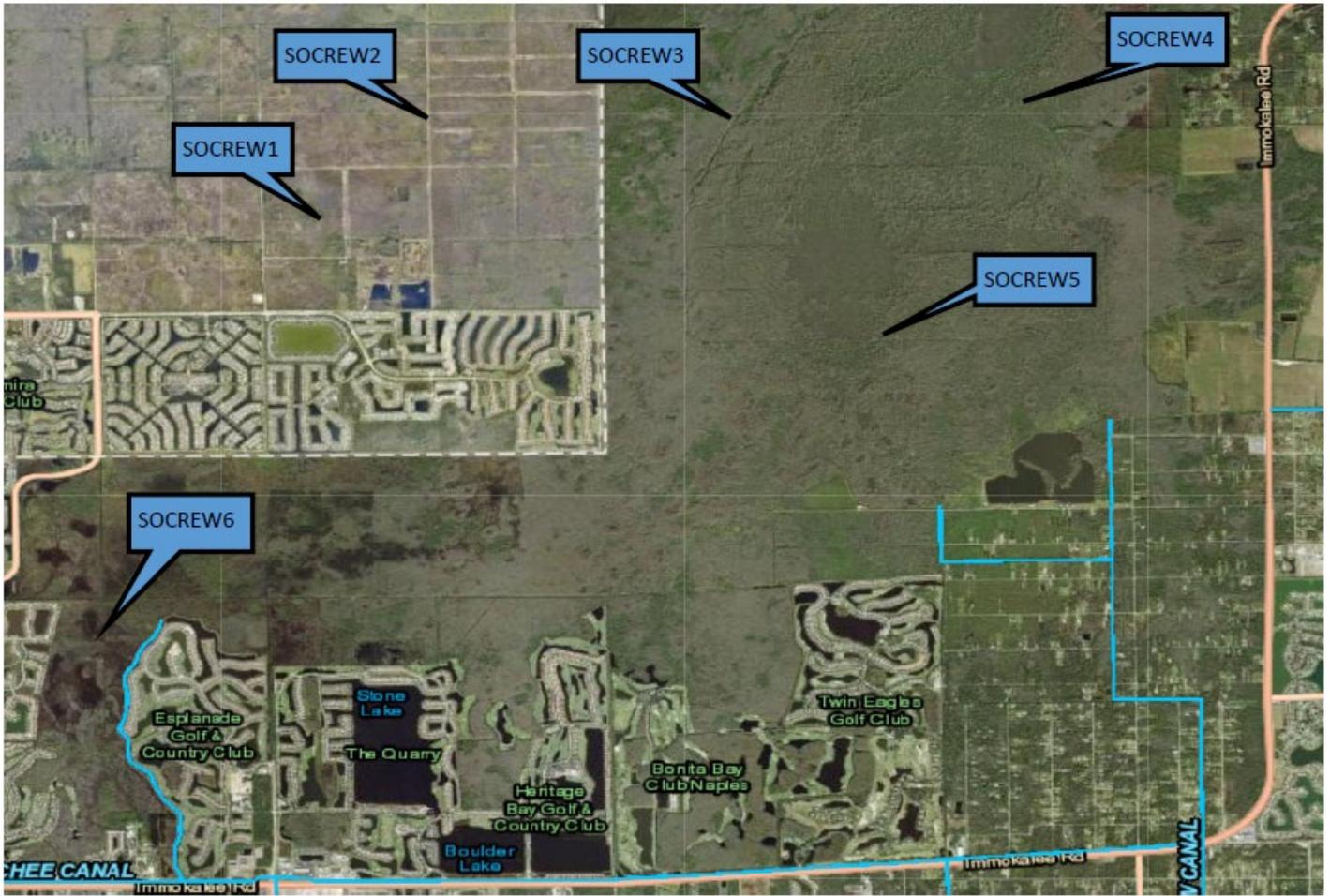


Figure 12 - SOCREW1 Historic Average Daily Headwater Percentiles

