

MARCH 2026
BIG CYPRESS BASIN
HYDROLOGIC REPORT



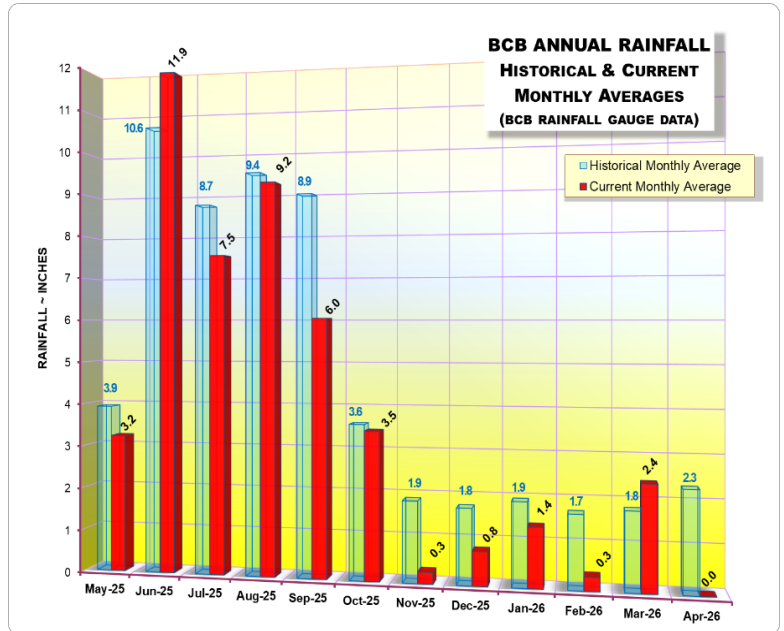
SUMMARY OF HYDROLOGIC CONDITIONS IN THE BIG CYPRESS BASIN

March 2026

SUMMARY

March saw the return of more normal rainfall to the Big Cypress Basin (BCB), marking the first month since June 2025 where rainfall exceeded the historical average. Rain gauges across BCB recorded an average of 2.41 inches of rainfall over the past month (134% of normal).

To date in the current water year (May 2025 through April 2026), the BCB has received 46.51 inches of rainfall (86% of normal). Over the past five months the BCB has only received 5.2 inches of rainfall (just 57% of normal).

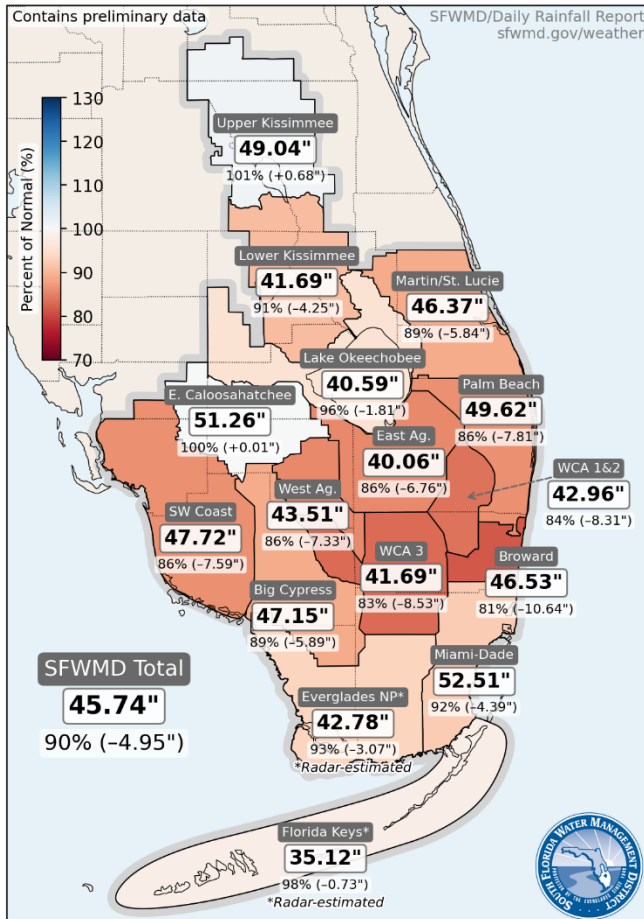


The BCB's total water year rainfall at the end of March was roughly an inch less than the larger

2025-2026 Water Year

5/1/2025 to 4/2/2026

Rainfall, Percent of Normal (shaded), and Departures



Southwest Coast's 47.72 inches. Note that though they cover much of the same area, the BCB and the Southwest Coast Forecast Area boundaries differ, resulting in variation between their respective rainfall totals. The Southwest Coast Forecast Area extends farther northward and encompasses the greater Fort Myers area, whereas the BCB area extends further eastward, most notably in the Immokalee area.

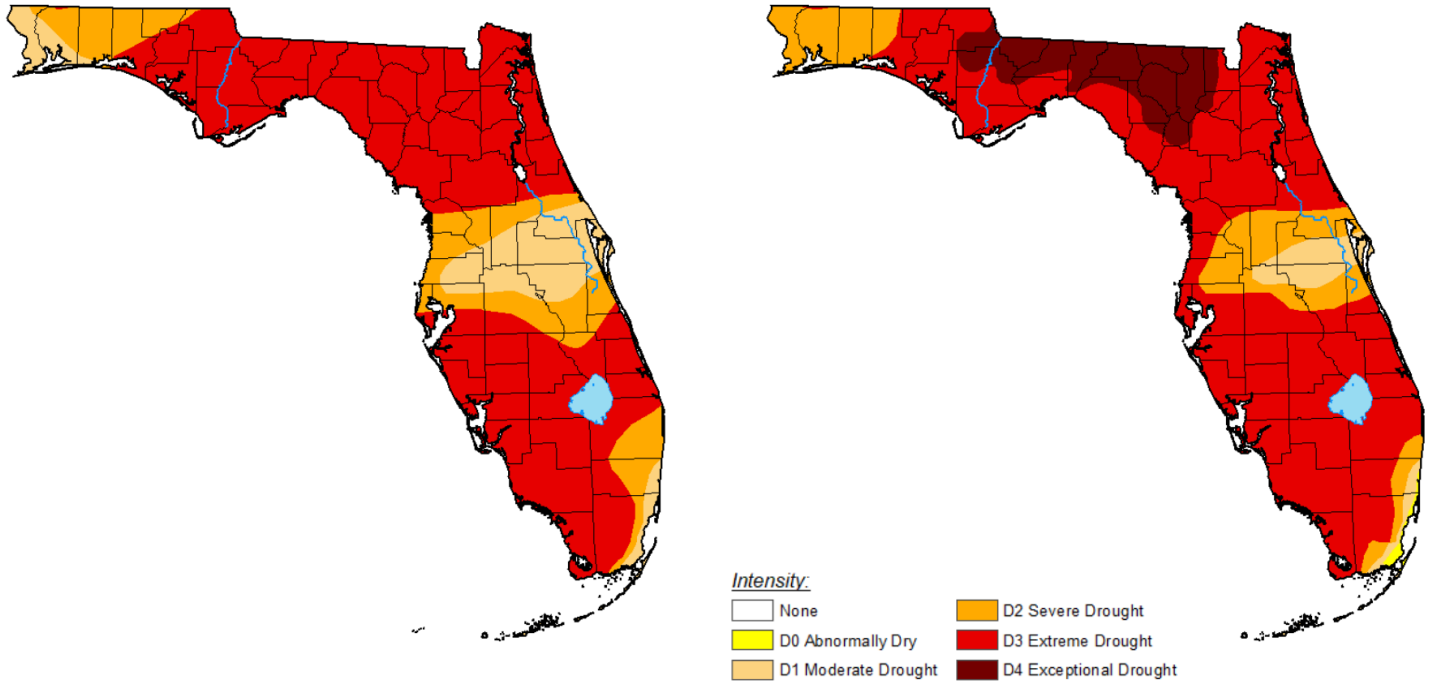
It is notable, however, that while their rainfall totals differ slightly due to their differing boundaries, both the BCB and the Southwest Coast Forecast Area have only received 86% of their normal rainfall so far this water year.

March's precipitation was a welcome return to more typical seasonal rainfall totals and was much needed after an extremely dry winter. March's rainfall improved the BCB's water year to date percentage from 80% to 86% of normal, but the total water year precipitation deficit remains near 8 inches. Additional above normal rainfall will be required to reverse the current dry conditions.

Though March’s rainfall was helpful, it was insufficient to alleviate drought conditions in Collier County and the BCB. As of the end of March, Collier County remained at “D3 Extreme Drought.” Many areas (most notably North-Central and Central Florida) saw worsening of drought conditions. Only the southeasternmost portion of the Florida coast saw a lessening of drought conditions.

March 3, 2026

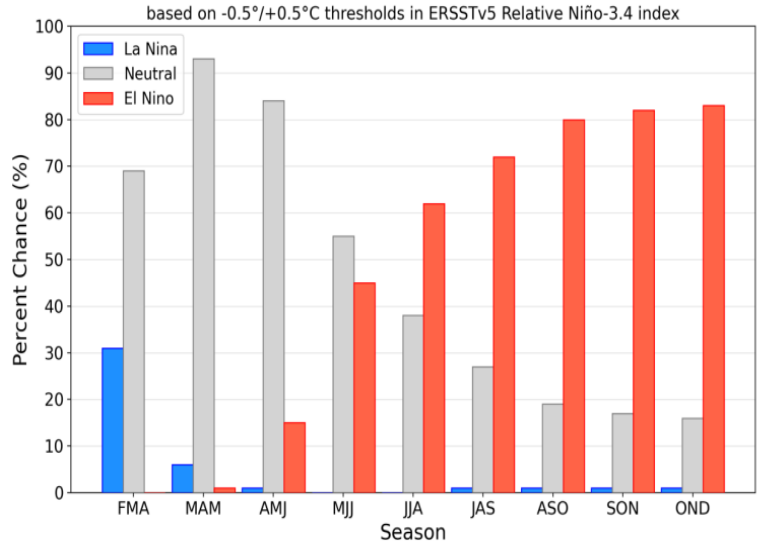
March 31, 2026



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:

- *La Niña is present.**
- *Equatorial sea surface temperatures (SSTs) are near-to-below-average in the east-central Pacific Ocean.*
- *Atmospheric anomalies over the tropical Pacific Ocean are consistent with La Niña.*
- *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.**

Official NOAA CPC ENSO Probabilities (issued March 2026)

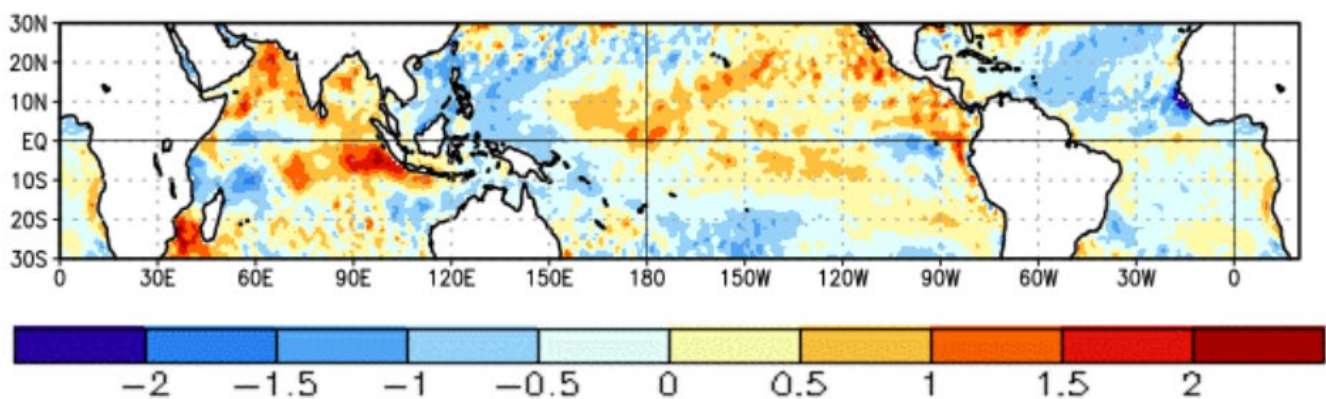


* Note: The above statements are updated once a month (2nd Thursday of each month) in association with the ENSO Diagnostics Discussion

As noted above, the official ENSO forecast is issued relatively early each month. To supplement the monthly forecast, CPC provides weekly updates to sea surface temperature (SST) anomalies and other relevant data to help track current trends between monthly updates. In its March 30, 2026 weekly update, CPC stated:

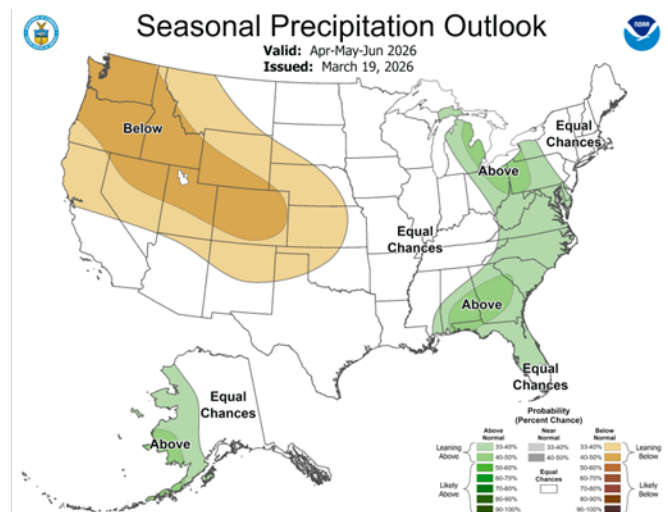
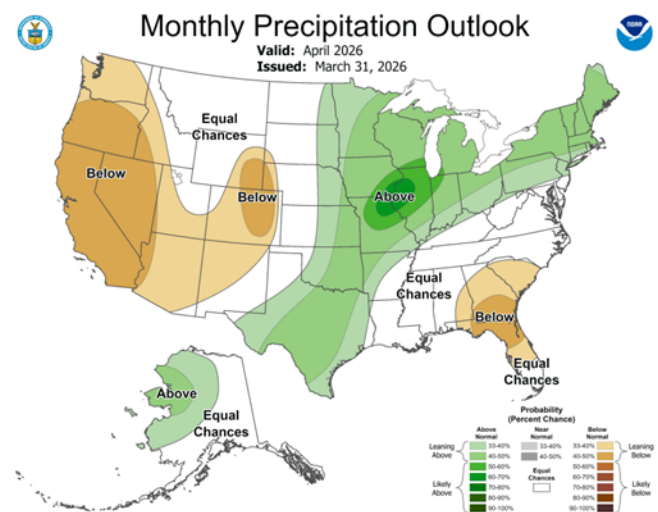
- *During the last 4 weeks, below-average equatorial SSTs weakened in the east-central Pacific Ocean.*
- *Above-average SSTs strengthened from Baja to the west-central equatorial Pacific Ocean.*
- *Above-average SSTs persisted in the far eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean*

Change in Weekly Relative SST Anoms (°C)
25MAR2026 minus 25FEB2026

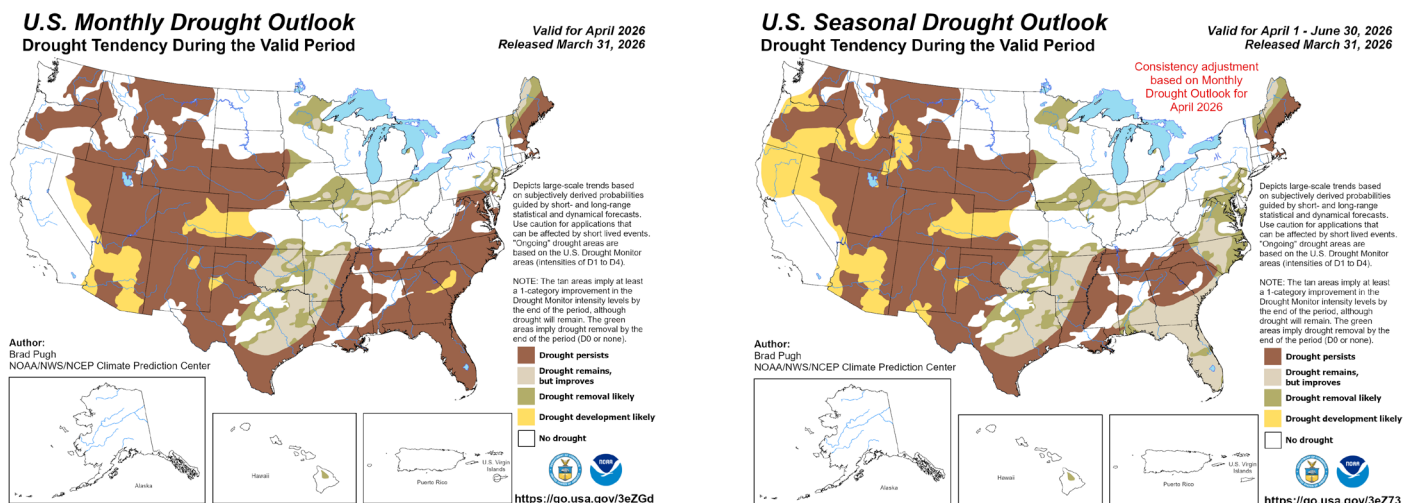


Trends indicate that La Niña conditions continue to weaken and are likely to transition to ENSO-neutral within the next several weeks with an increasing likelihood of El Niño development by mid to late summer.

As La Niña weakens and transitions toward ENSO-neutral, its influence on large-scale rainfall patterns across the BCB diminishes. With no strong climate signal favoring above- or below-average precipitation, the most recent CPC Precipitation Outlooks now indicate equal chances of above- or below-normal rainfall over the next three months, meaning rainfall outcomes are more likely to be driven by shorter-term weather patterns rather than predictable seasonal climate drivers.



Due to the increasing probability of fading La Niña conditions, along with other antecedent conditions and precipitation forecasts, the U.S. Monthly Drought Outlook predicts that drought will continue with minimal improvement in April but will gradually improve in May and June as South Florida enters the wet season.



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

MARCH 2026 BCB RAINFALL

The Basin-wide averaged, gauge-measured, monthly rainfall was 2.41 inches in March 2026. This measured rainfall amounted to 134% of the historic BCB March average of 1.81 inches (**see Figures 1, 2, 3A and Table 1**). In March 2026, the rain gauge with the highest measured precipitation was R-13 IMMOKALEE LANDFILL, which recorded 4.46 inches. R-22 GG#7 received the lowest rain gauge monthly total with just 0.59 inches.

Figure 3B shows March's calculated average rainfall estimates for each of the Basin's watersheds, based on gauge adjusted radar (Raindar). The Barron River watershed saw the highest Raindar average of 4.13 inches and the Henderson-Belle Meade Coastal Basins watershed saw the lowest Raindar average of 1.8 inches. The BCB's overall calculated areal weighted average Raindar rainfall (by watershed) was 2.67 inches for the month, slightly higher than the basin-wide rain gauge average of 2.41 inches. The Raindar totals and their locality distribution across the BCB/Lower West Coast are shown on **Figure 3C**.

MARCH 2026 BCB OPERATIONS AND WATER LEVELS

During March, BCB structures remained in water conservation operations. Canals continued their seasonal decline, finishing the month generally between the 25th and 75th percentile, despite the basin-wide above average rainfall. The continued decline is not unexpected, as typical March rainfall levels are generally insufficient to reverse seasonal canal recession. Additionally, the highest rainfall totals fell primarily east of the BCB managed canals, thus did not significantly impact canal water levels. BCB canal conditions as of March 31, 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 March with no discharges to tide at GG1. By March 31st, GG Main had returned to approximately the 50th percentile immediately upstream of GG1, while upstream areas varied, with the portion immediately upstream of GG4 finishing the month between the 25th and 50th percentile (see **Figure 5**).

COCOHATCHEE SYSTEM

The Cocohatchee Canal was kept in water conservation operations in March. By the end of the month, the most downstream segment of the system (between COCO1 and COCO2) had dropped below the 50th percentile, while upstream of COCO3 water levels remained at the 25th percentile. Further north and east, the Corkscrew Canal also continued its seasonal decline finishing the month near the 50th percentile (**Figures 6A, 6B, & 6C**).

FAKA UNION SYSTEM

The Faka Union Canal also operated in water conservation regimens in March. Both FU4S and FU5 gates remained closed for the duration of the month, and no pumping occurred at the Faka Union Pump Station (S487). By March 31st, Faka Union Canal upstream of FU5 had remained near the 75th percentile. At FU4S (downstream of FU5), the canal receded to below the 25th percentile and finished the month approximately a foot lower than on the same day last year. The stretch of the canal between FU4S and S487 finished the month near the 50th percentile. Monitoring wells downstream of S487 – within the Picayune Strand Restoration Project (PSRP) – finished the month between the 25th and 75th percentile while downstream of the PSRP, the remaining piece of the Faka Union Canal north of FU1 finished the month at the 50th 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 March. No discharges occurred at the HC1 structure and the system finished the month between the 25th and 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 varied in March, with some showing continued recession and some modest increases (**Table 2 and Figures 9A and 9B**). C-462 (north of Lake Trafford) responded favorably to rainfall in March and finished the month above the 75th percentile. C-1224 (near Henderson Creek) continued to recede in March and finished the month between the 25th and 50th percentile. C-1004R (a Tidally influenced well near Cocohatchee Canal) varied week to week and finished the month at essentially the same level as it began; ending not far below the 50th percentile.

L-738 a Tamiami Aquifer well in Bonita Springs remained near the record low daily levels for most of March, then rose later in the month, finishing above the level of low concern, but still below the 25th percentile. Water levels in L-2194, a Sandstone Aquifer well in Bonita Springs continued their steep decline in the first half of March, then leveled off thereafter, finishing near the recorded daily March 31st minimum, approximately at the level of high concern. L-2195, a surficial aquifer well in Bonita

Springs, followed a steady decline in March, near the recorded daily minimums and midway between the level of low concern and 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 March, dropping to approximately the 25th percentile by the end of the month. Both BRDROOK AND CORK3 also steadily declined in March. By the end of the month, BRDROOK remained below the 25th percentile. CORK3 reached the bottom of its ability to report water levels just prior to month's end. Figure 11 shows that though Lake Trafford responded favorably to rainfall in March, it thereafter resumed its seasonal recession, finishing the month between the 50th and 75th 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 fell and rose in response to rainfall in March, finishing the month at levels more or less similar to where they began. While SOCREW1 finished the month below the 25th percentile, SOCREW2 finished midway between the 25th and 50th 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

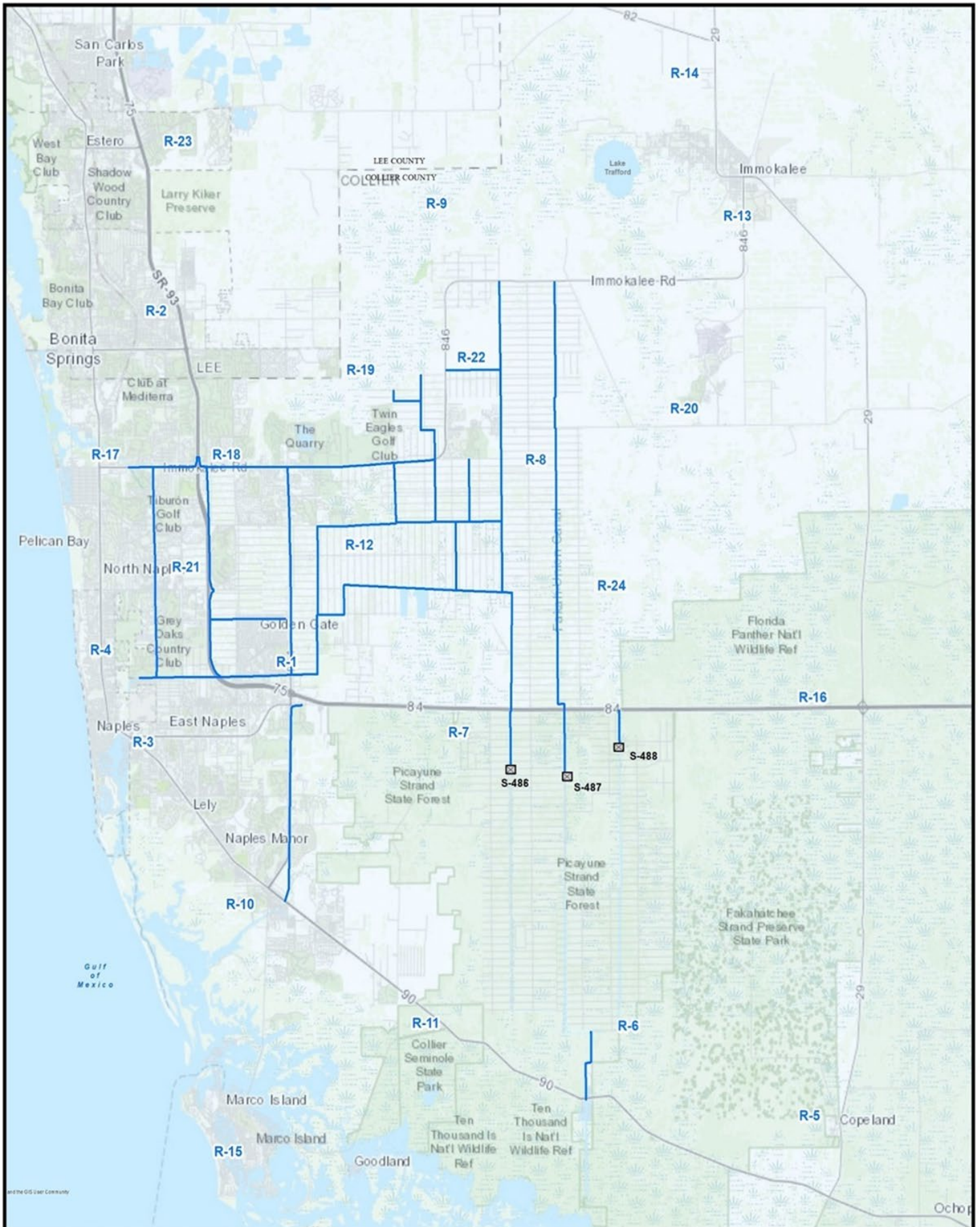


FIGURE 2
BCB GAUGE MEASURED RAINFALL MONTHLY AVERAGES
CALENDAR YEAR 2026

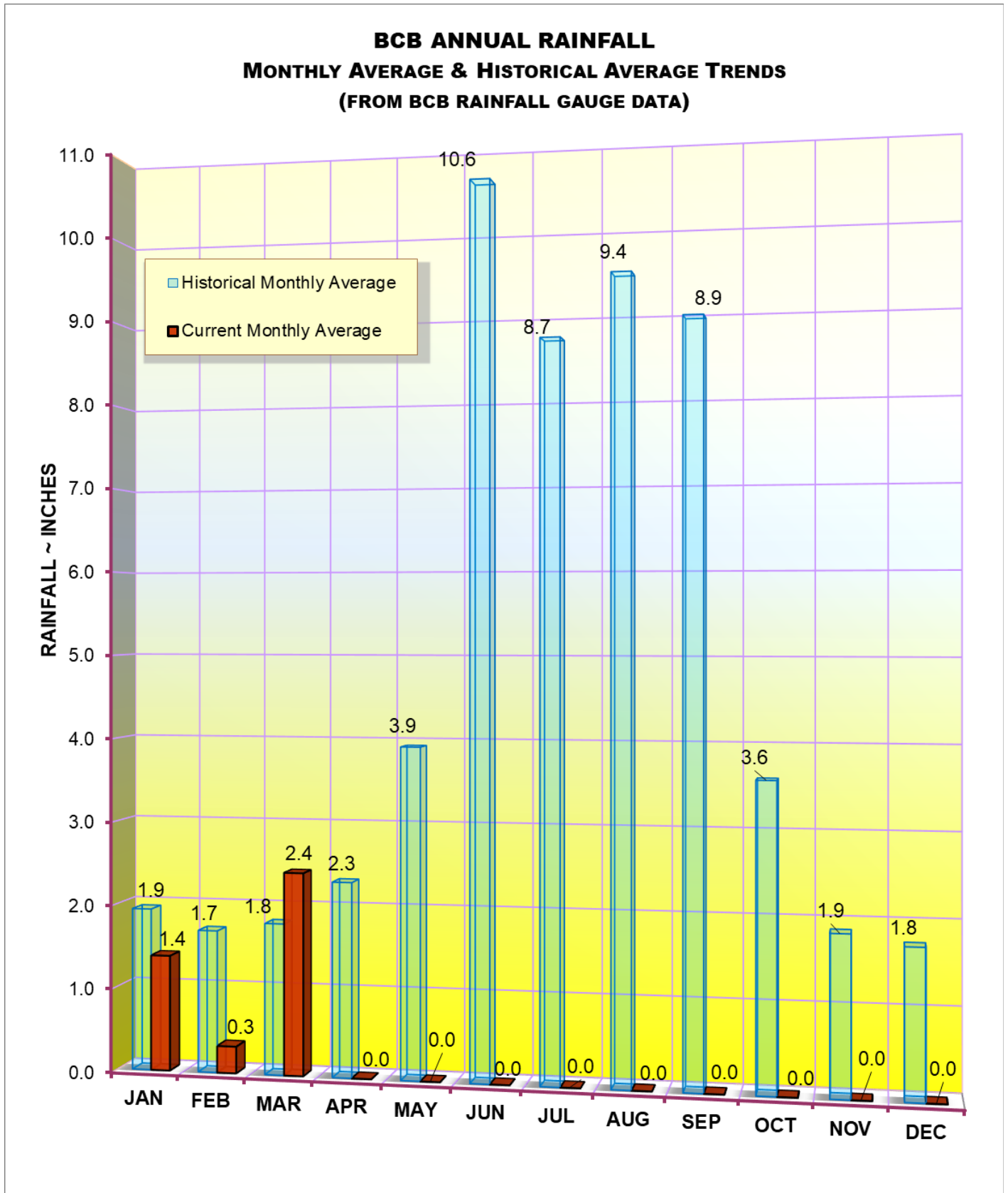
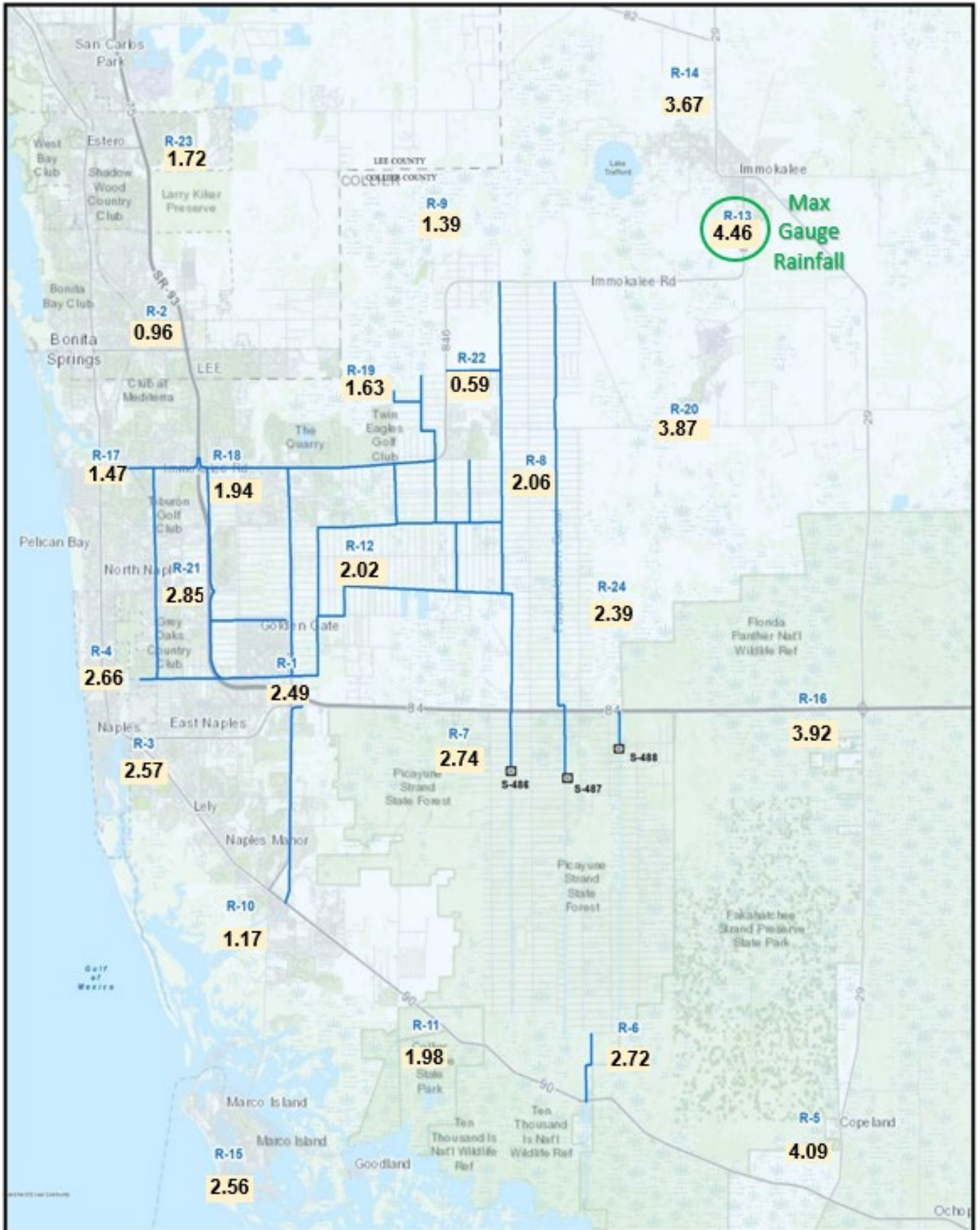
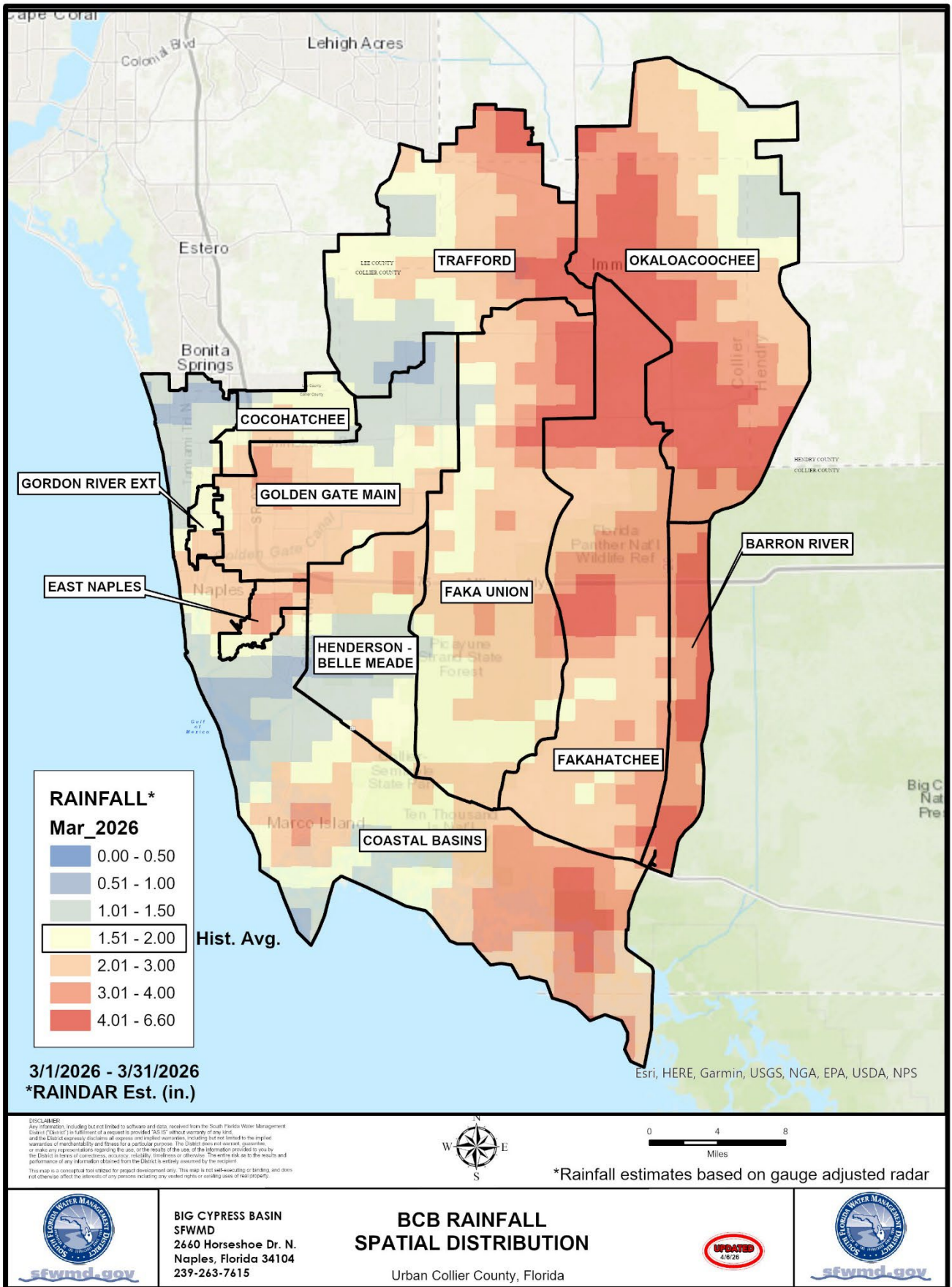


TABLE 1
RAINFALL REPORT - MARCH 2026
DISTRICT/BASIN RAINFALL STATIONS
RAINFALL VALUES ARE IN INCHES

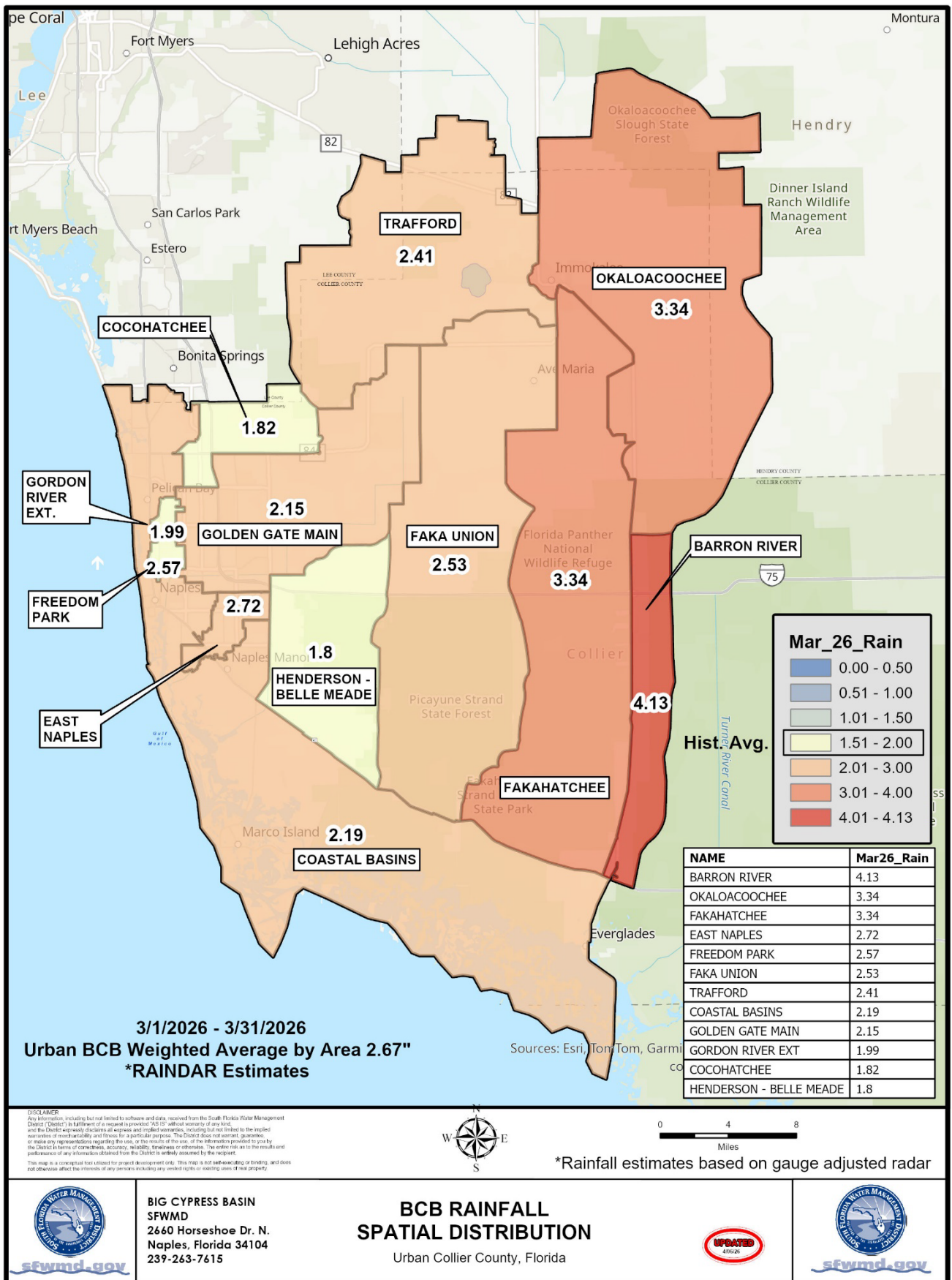
STATION INDEX NO.	STATION NAME	Mar-26	LONG TERM MONTHLY AVERAGE	MONTHLY DIFFERENCE	CALENDAR YEAR 2025 CUMULATIVE TOTAL	AVERAGE CALENDAR YEAR TO DATE	YEAR TO DATE DIFFERENCE
R-1	GG#3	2.49	1.04	1.45	4.28	4.75	-0.47
R-2	BONITA SPRINGS WATER PLANT	0.96	2.20	-1.24	2.29	6.12	-3.83
R-3	COLLIER COUNTY COURTHOUSE	2.57	1.93	0.64	4.01	5.70	-1.69
R-4	FREEDOM PARK	2.66	1.34	1.32	4.22	5.01	-0.79
R-5	FAKAHATCHEE STRAND HQ	4.09	2.22	1.87	4.55	5.83	-1.28
R-6	DAN HOUSE PRAIRIE	2.72	1.58	1.14	3.71	4.62	-0.91
R-7	SGGE WEATHER STATION	2.74	1.42	1.32	4.00	4.75	-0.76
R-8	FAKA UNION #5	2.06	1.39	0.67	3.78	5.82	-2.04
R-9	CORKSCREW SWAMP NORTH END	1.39	1.60	-0.21	3.86	5.14	-1.28
R-10	ROOKERY BAY HQ	1.17	1.49	-0.32	2.09	5.20	-3.11
R-11	COLLIER SEMINOLE STATE PARK	1.98	2.03	-0.05	2.59	5.50	-2.91
R-12	G.G. FIRE STATION	2.02	2.14	-0.12	3.36	5.93	-2.57
R-13	IMMOKALEE LANDFILL	4.46	2.37	2.09	8.55	6.32	2.23
R-14	IFAS	3.67	2.60	1.07	6.51	6.55	-0.04
R-15	MARCO R.O. PLANT	2.56	1.92	0.64	3.28	6.25	-2.97
R-16	FAKAHATCHEE STRAND NORTH END	3.92	2.41	1.51	5.46	6.85	-1.39
R-17	COCO#1	1.47	1.99	-0.52	2.88	5.60	-2.72
R-18	COCO#3	1.94	1.45	0.49	3.73	5.02	-1.29
R-19	BIRD ROOKERY	1.63	1.28	0.35	2.72	4.24	-1.52
R-20	AVE MARIA	3.87	2.25	1.62	8.83	6.17	2.66
R-21	I75W2	2.85	1.18	1.67	4.31	4.12	0.19
R-22	GG#7	0.59	1.56	-0.97	2.81	4.45	-1.64
R-23	FPWX	1.72	1.99	-0.27	3.29	5.52	-2.23
R-24	DSOTO10	2.39	1.99	0.40	3.58	5.15	-1.57
AVERAGES		2.41	1.81	0.61	4.11	5.44	-1.33



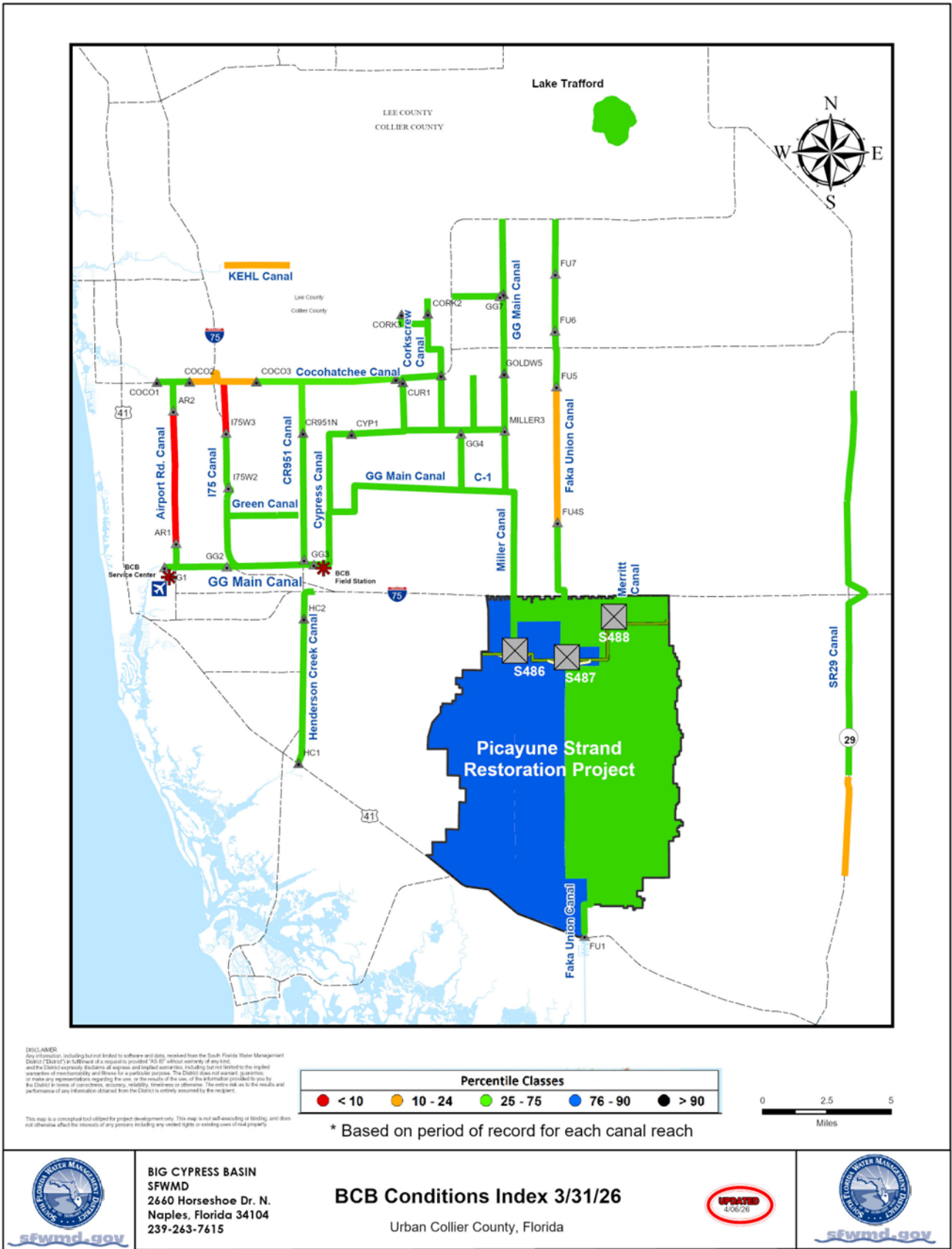
**FIGURE 3A
BCB RAINFALL DISTRIBUTION
MARCH 2026**



MARCH 2026 — FIGURE 3B



MARCH 2026 —FIGURE 3C



**FIGURE 4
 BCB WATER CONDITIONS**

Figure 5 Golden Gate Canal Historic Average Daily Headwater Percentiles

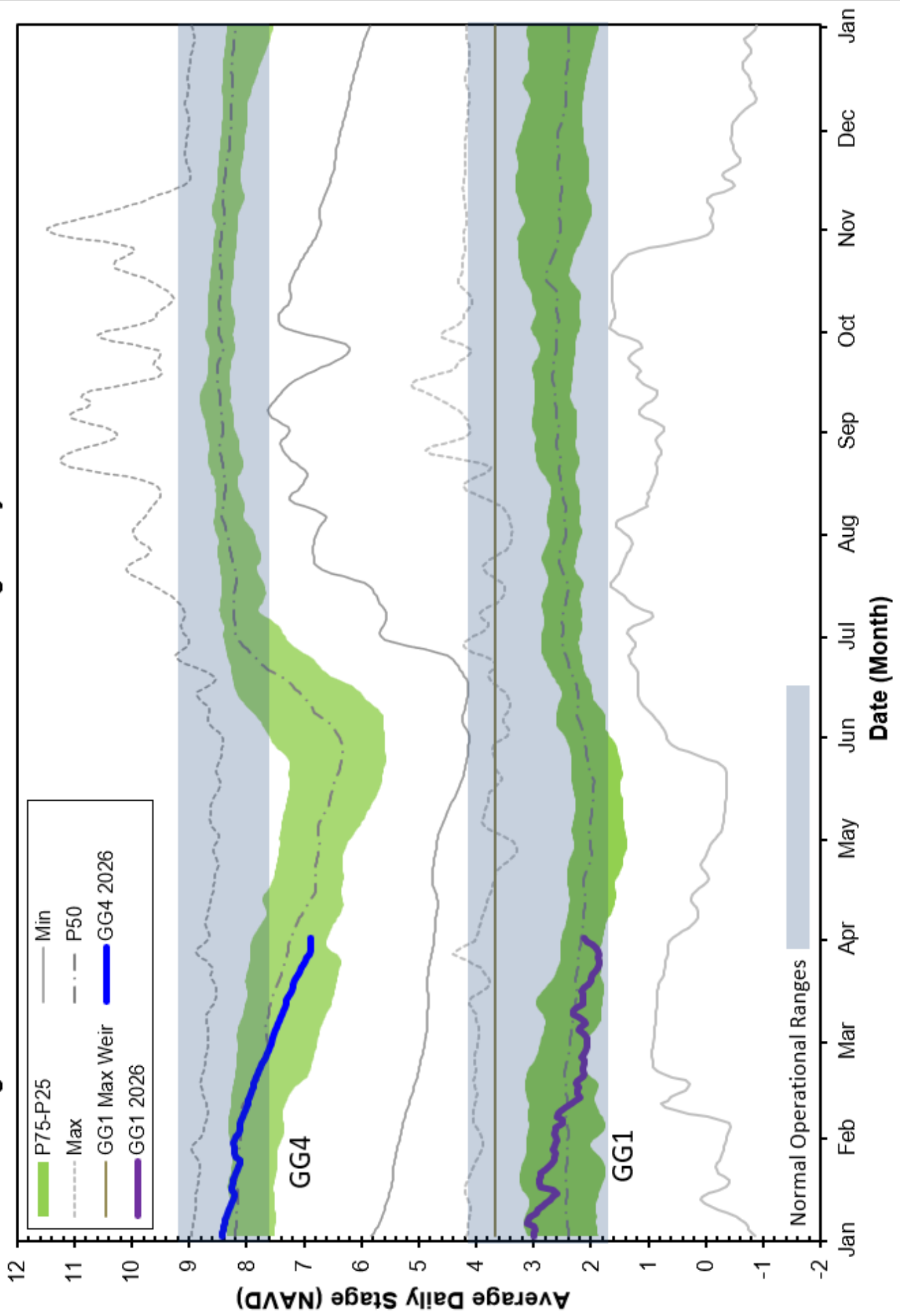


Figure 6A Cocohatchee Canal Historic Average Daily Headwater Percentiles

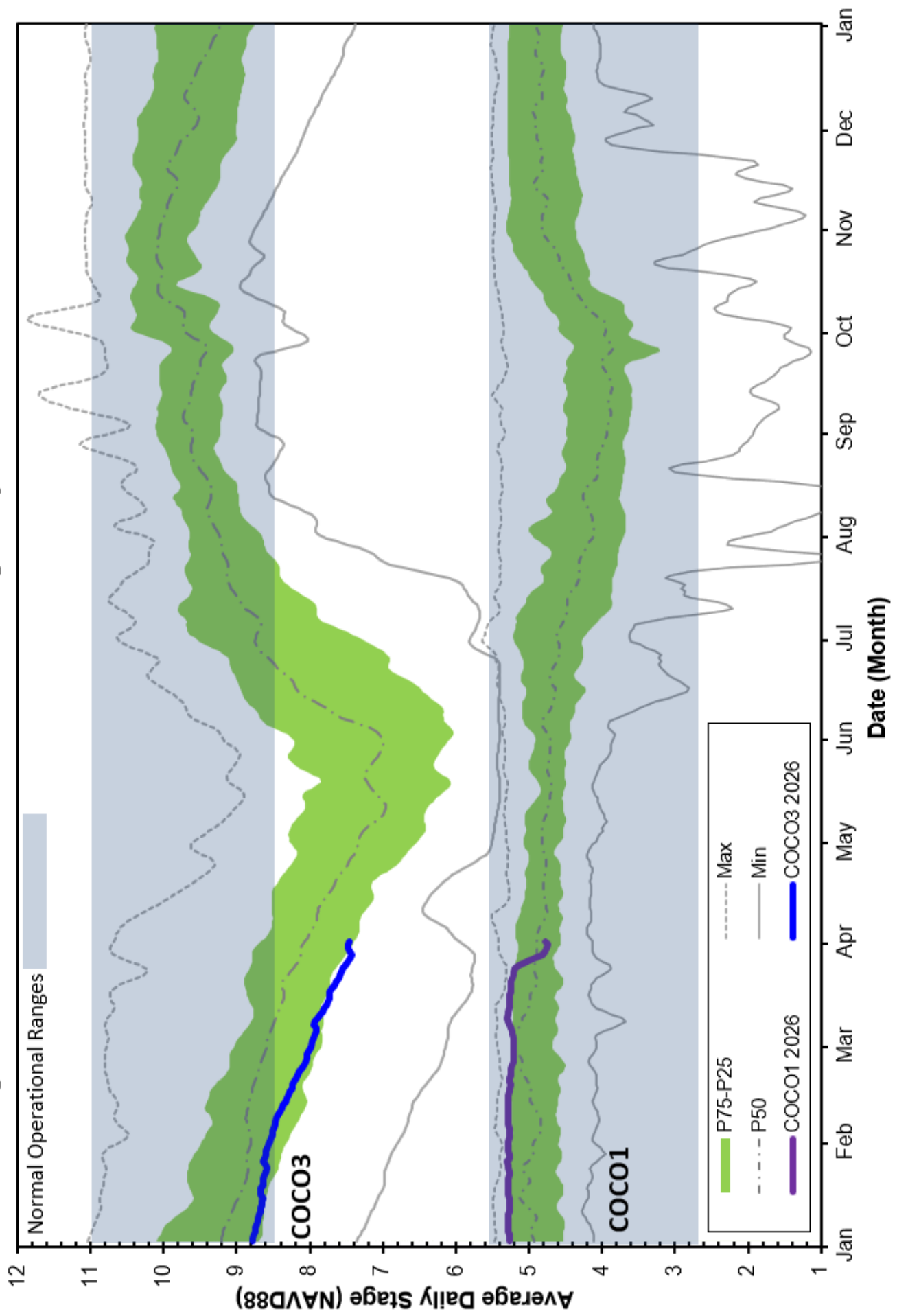


Figure 6B CORK1 Historic Average Daily Headwater Percentiles

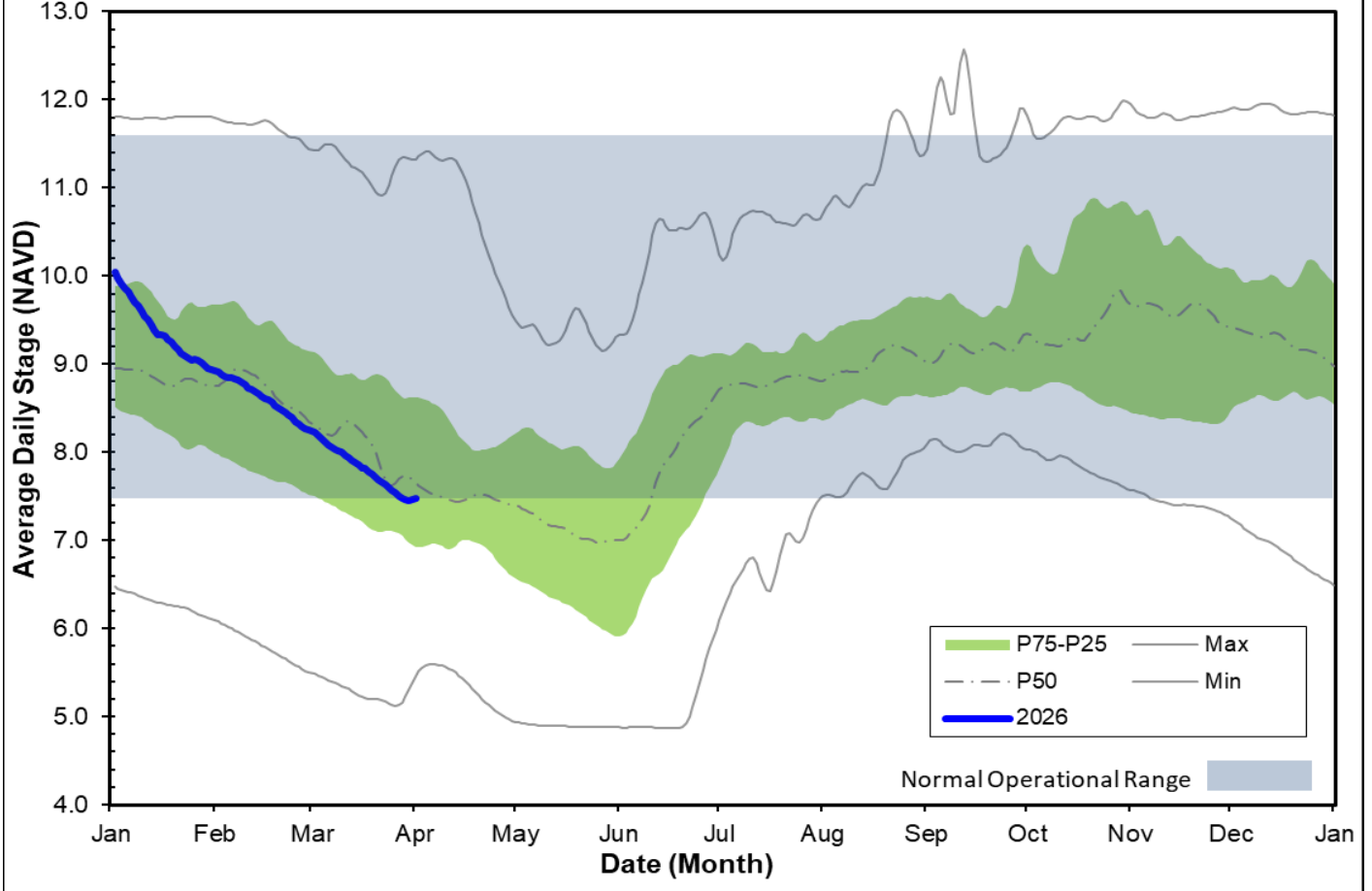


Figure 6C - CORK2 Historic Average Daily Headwater Percentiles

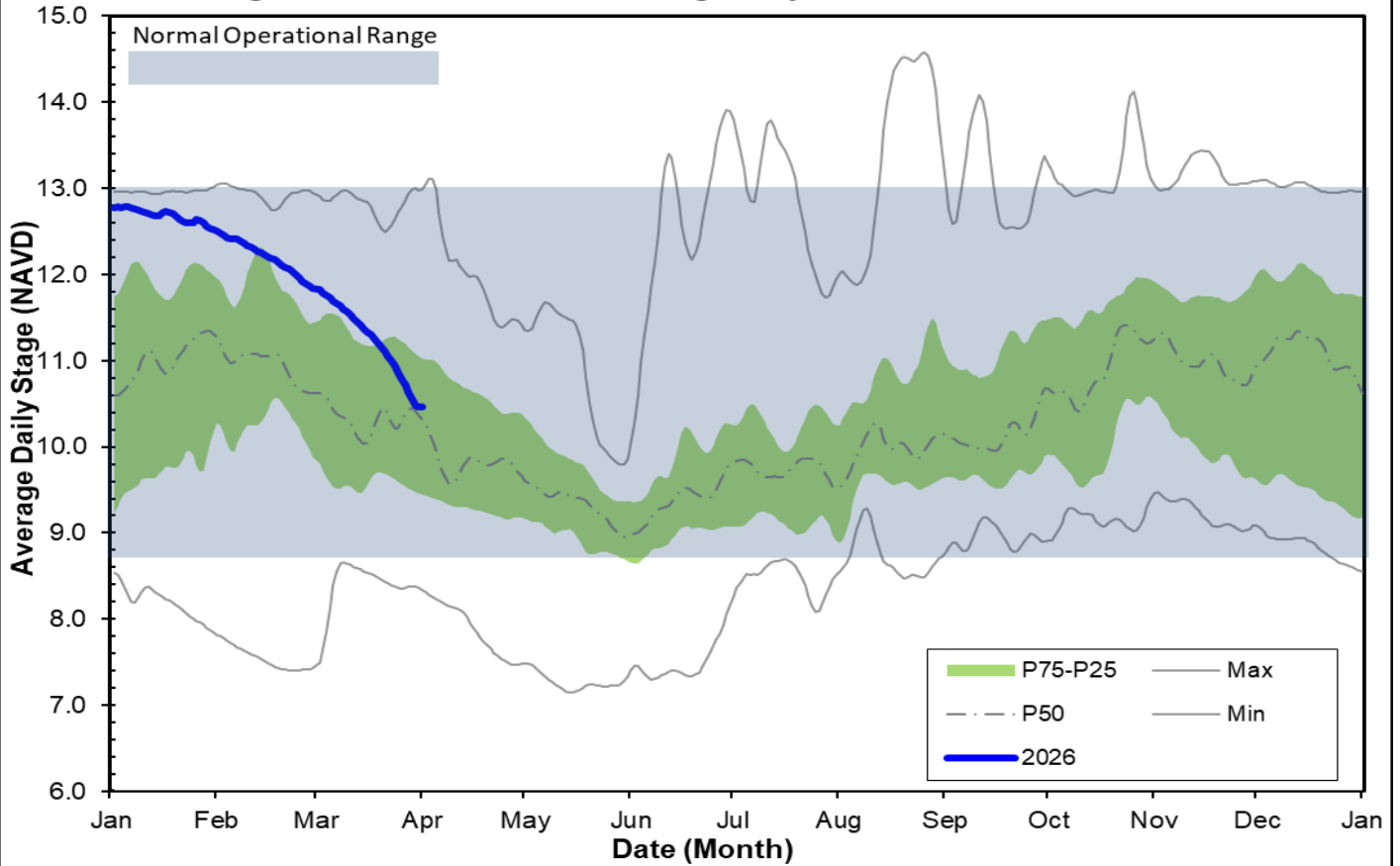


Figure 7A Faka Union Canal Historic Average Daily Headwater Percentiles

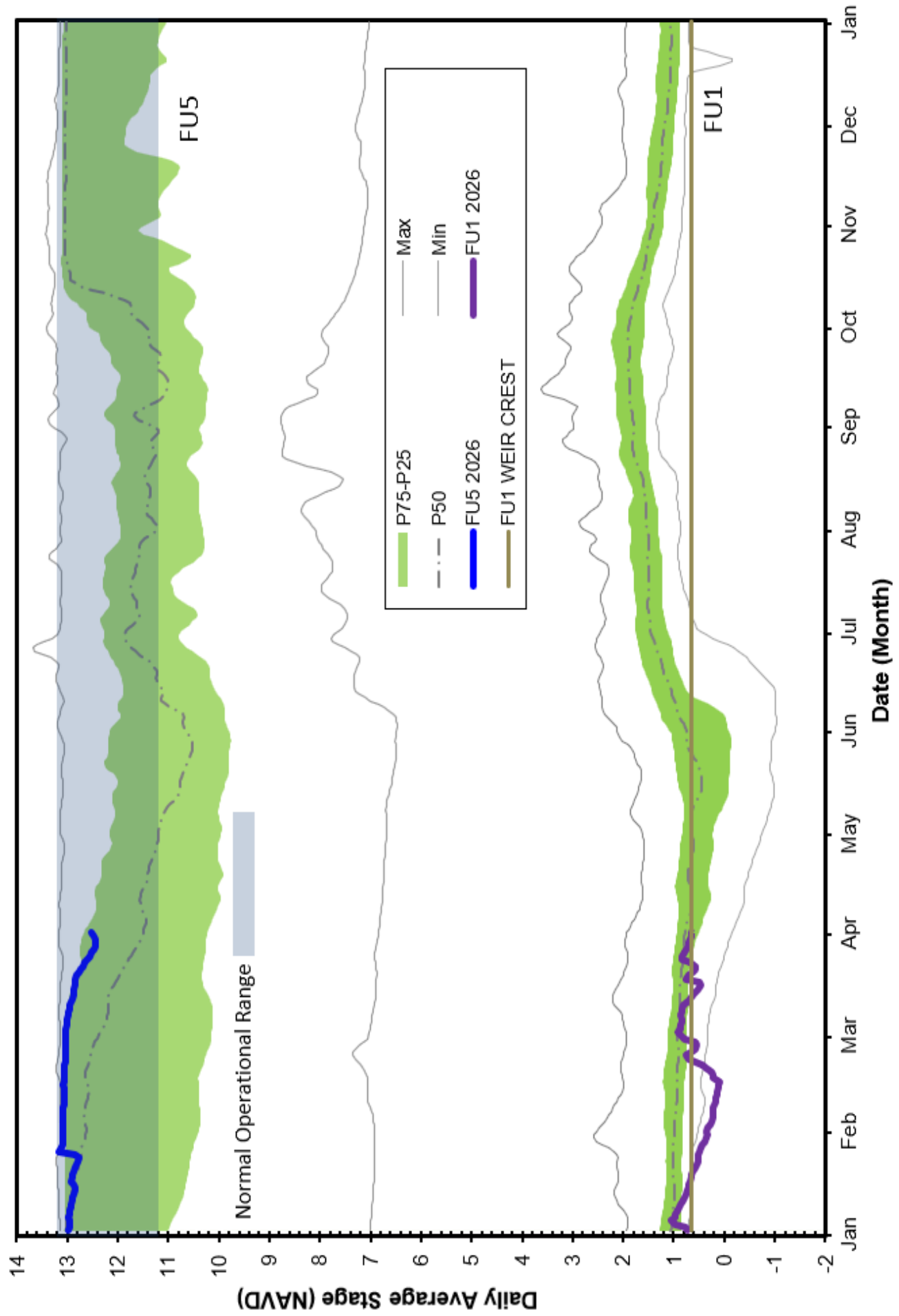


Figure 7B FU4S Historic Average Daily Water Percentiles

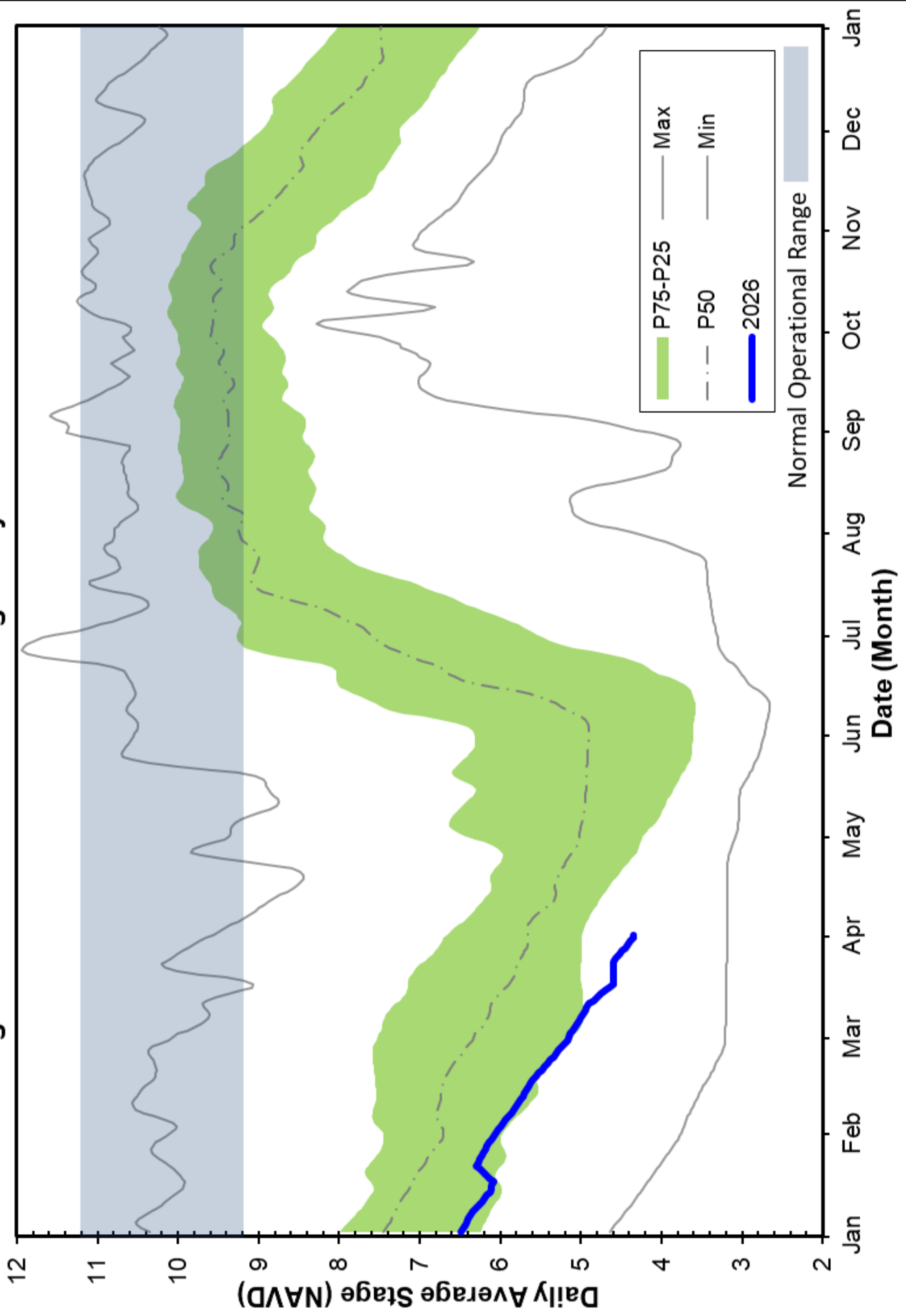
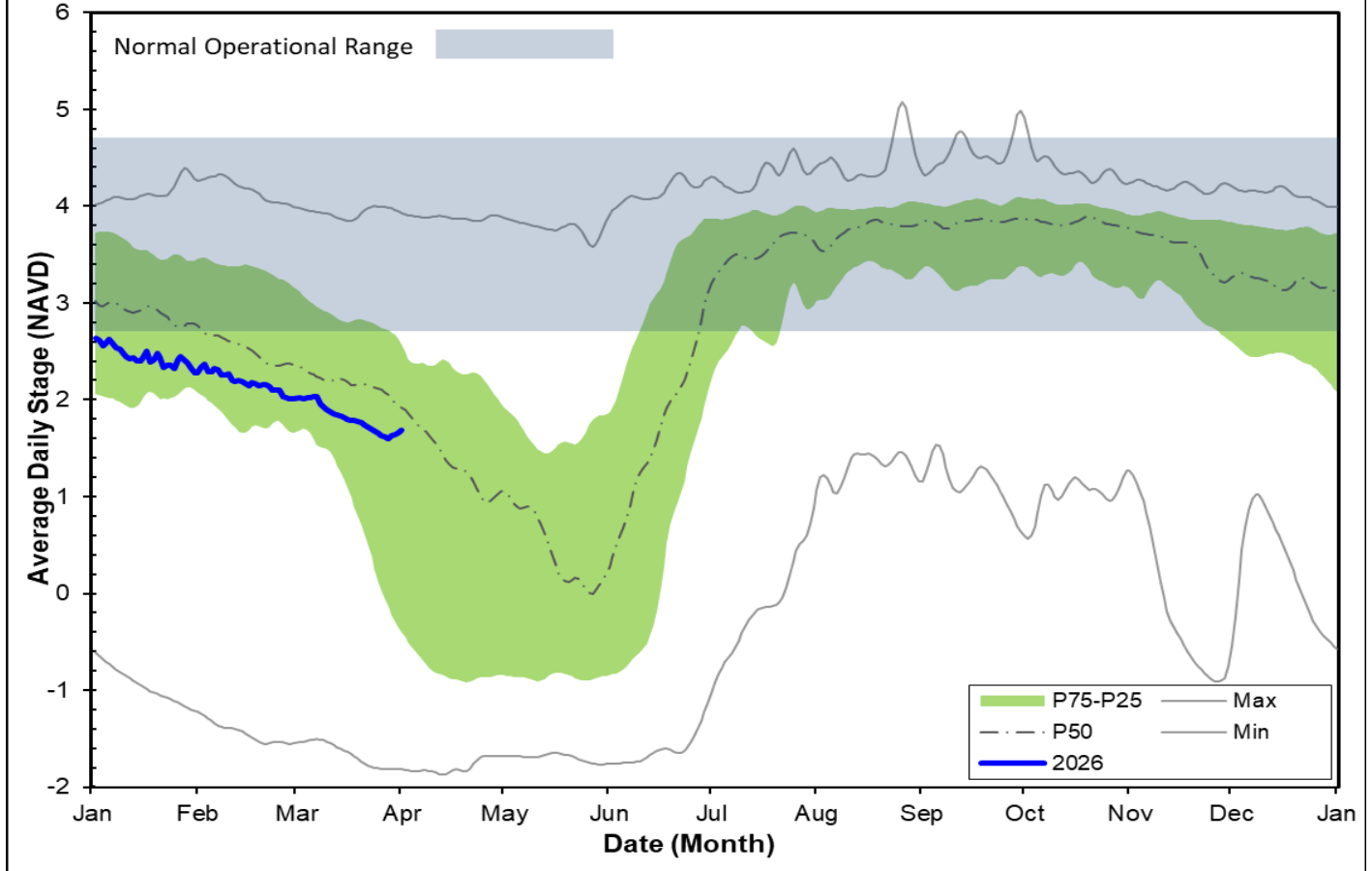
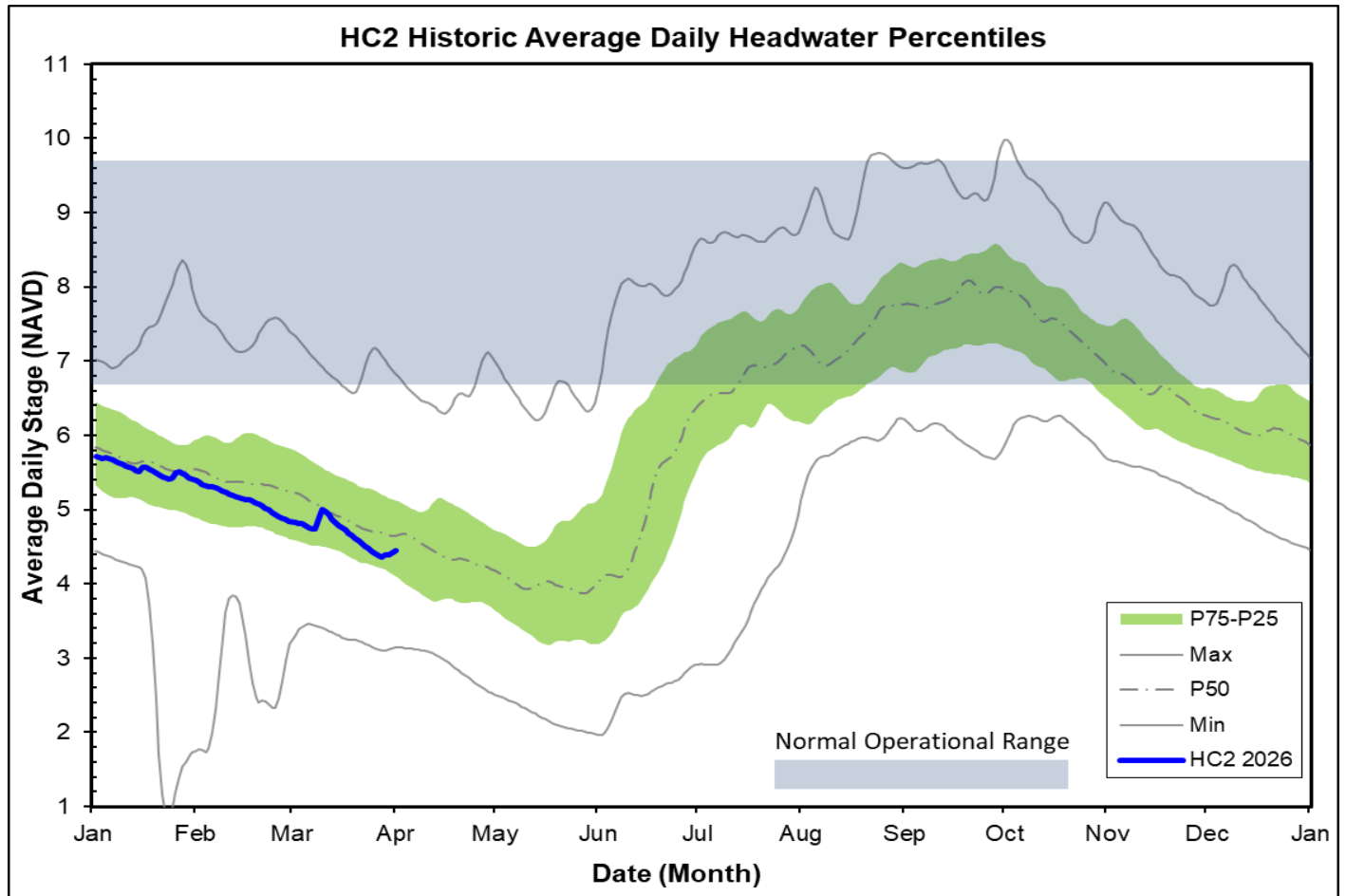


Figure 8A - HC1 Historic Average Daily Headwater Percentiles



HC2 Historic Average Daily Headwater Percentiles



Last Reading Date :		March 31, 2026					
Previous Period Reading Date:		February 28, 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	0.39	29.01	29.40	↑	GREEN
C-1004R	Naples	Lower Tamiami Aquifer	0.40	-0.86	-0.46	↑	GREEN
C-1224	Marco Lakes	Lower Tamiami Aquifer	-0.47	1.41	0.94	↓	GREEN
C-948R	Golden Gate	Mid Hawthorn Aquifer	-1.24	26.13	24.89	↓	
C-951R	Golden Gate	Lower Tamiami Aquifer	0.28	-0.85	-0.57	↑	
L-2194	Bonita Springs	Sandstone Aquifer	-0.93	-1.67	-2.60	↓	YELLOW
L-2195	Bonita Springs	Surficial Aquifer System	-0.58	6.57	5.99	↓	YELLOW
L-738	Bonita Springs	Lower Tamiami Aquifer	0.07	-4.38	-4.31	↑	GREEN

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

BIG CYPRESS BASIN

MARCH 31, 2026

GROUNDWATER LEVEL DAILY TRENDS
COMPARED TO HISTORICAL AVERAGE

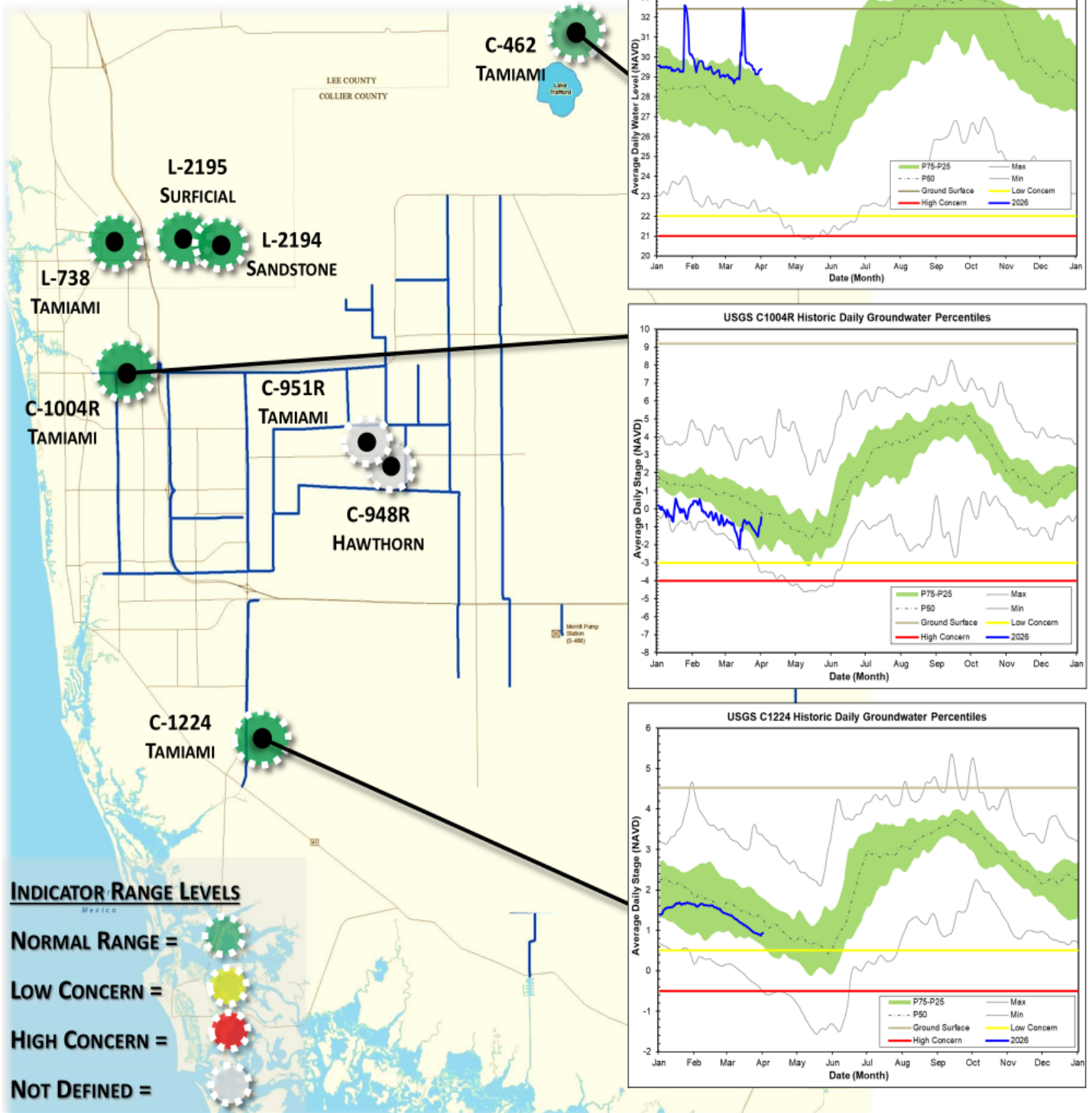
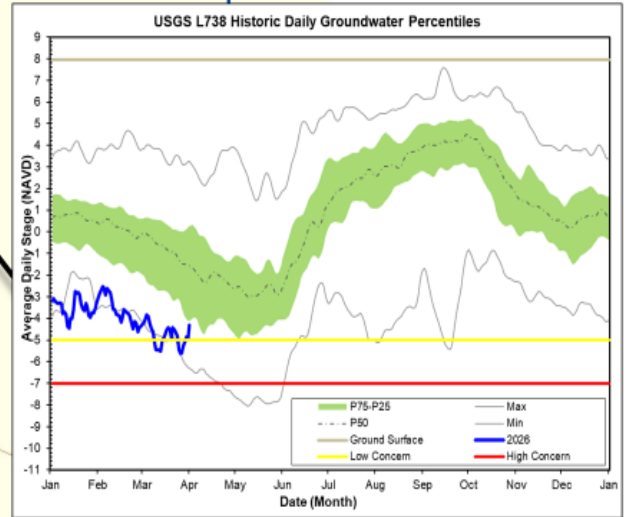
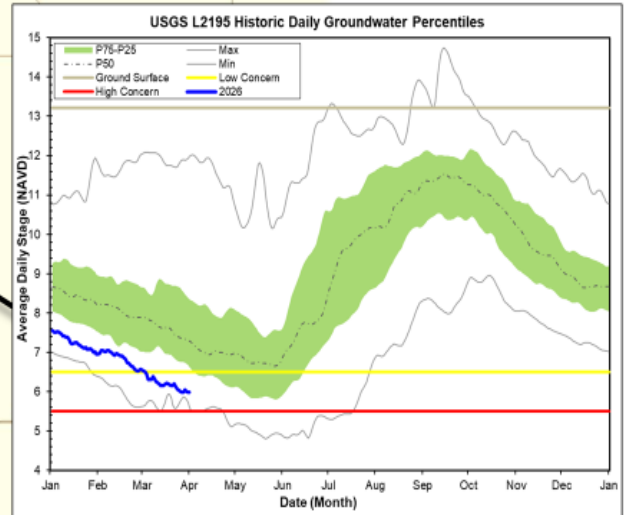
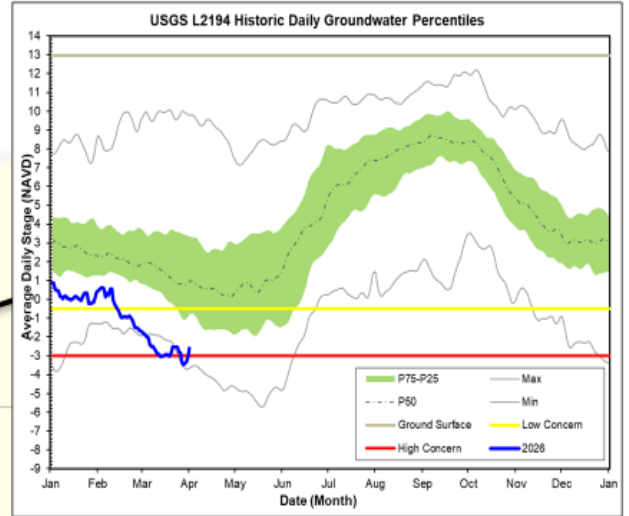
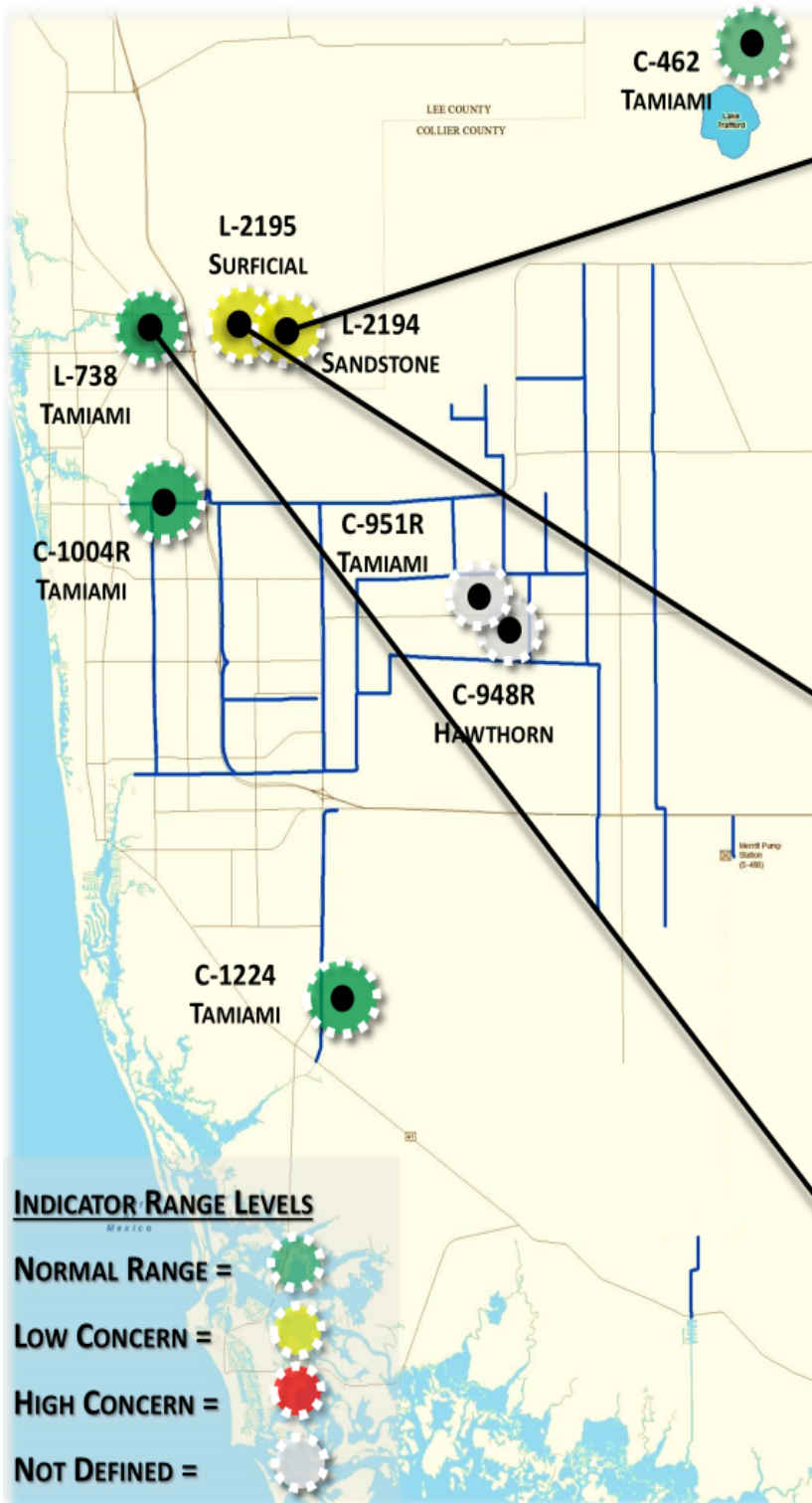


FIGURE 9A

BIG CYPRESS BASIN

MARCH 31, 2026

GROUNDWATER LEVEL DAILY TRENDS COMPARED TO HISTORICAL AVERAGE



INDICATOR RANGE LEVELS

- NORMAL RANGE =
- LOW CONCERN =
- HIGH CONCERN =
- NOT DEFINED =

FIGURE 9B

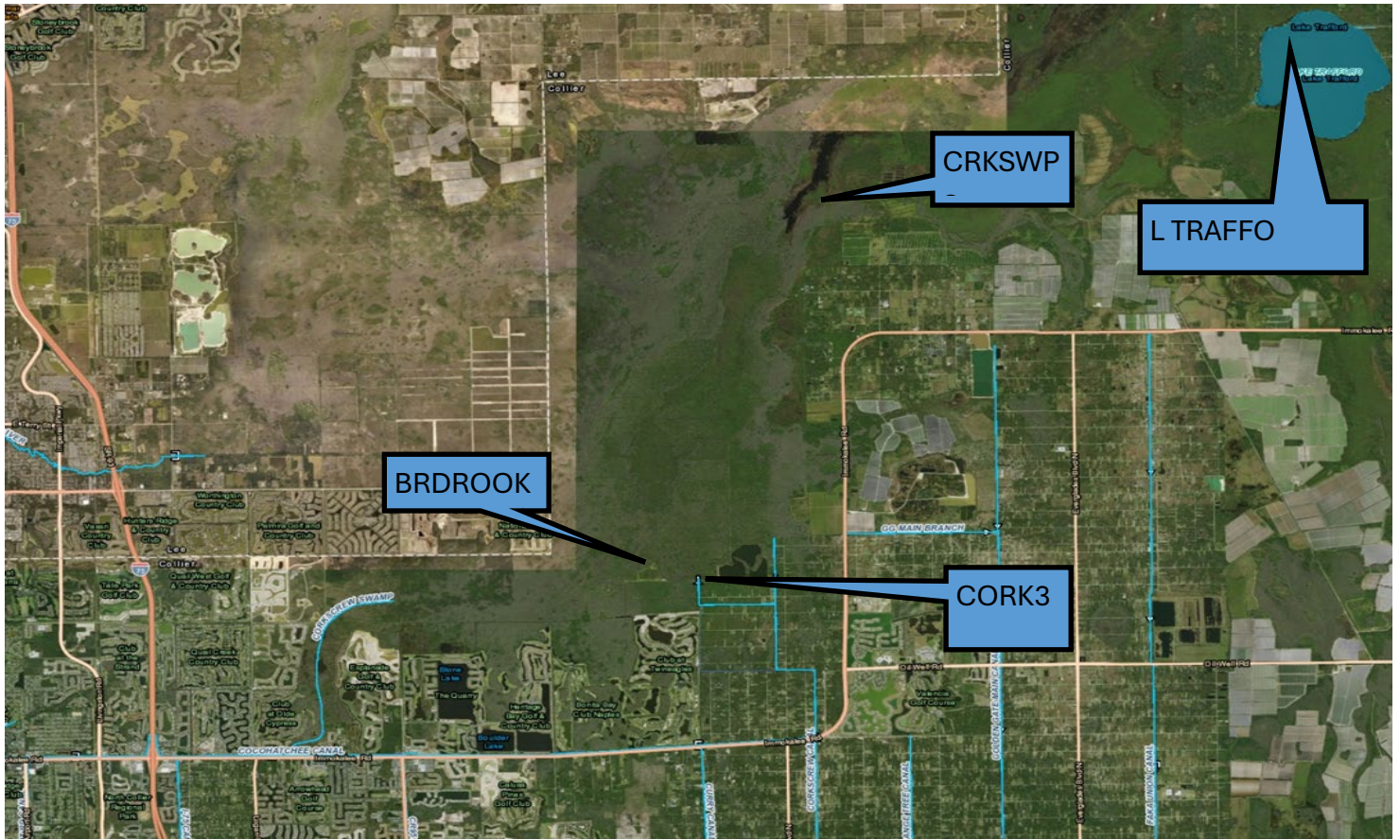


Figure 10-Corkscrew Historic Average Daily Headwater Percentiles (1984-2024)

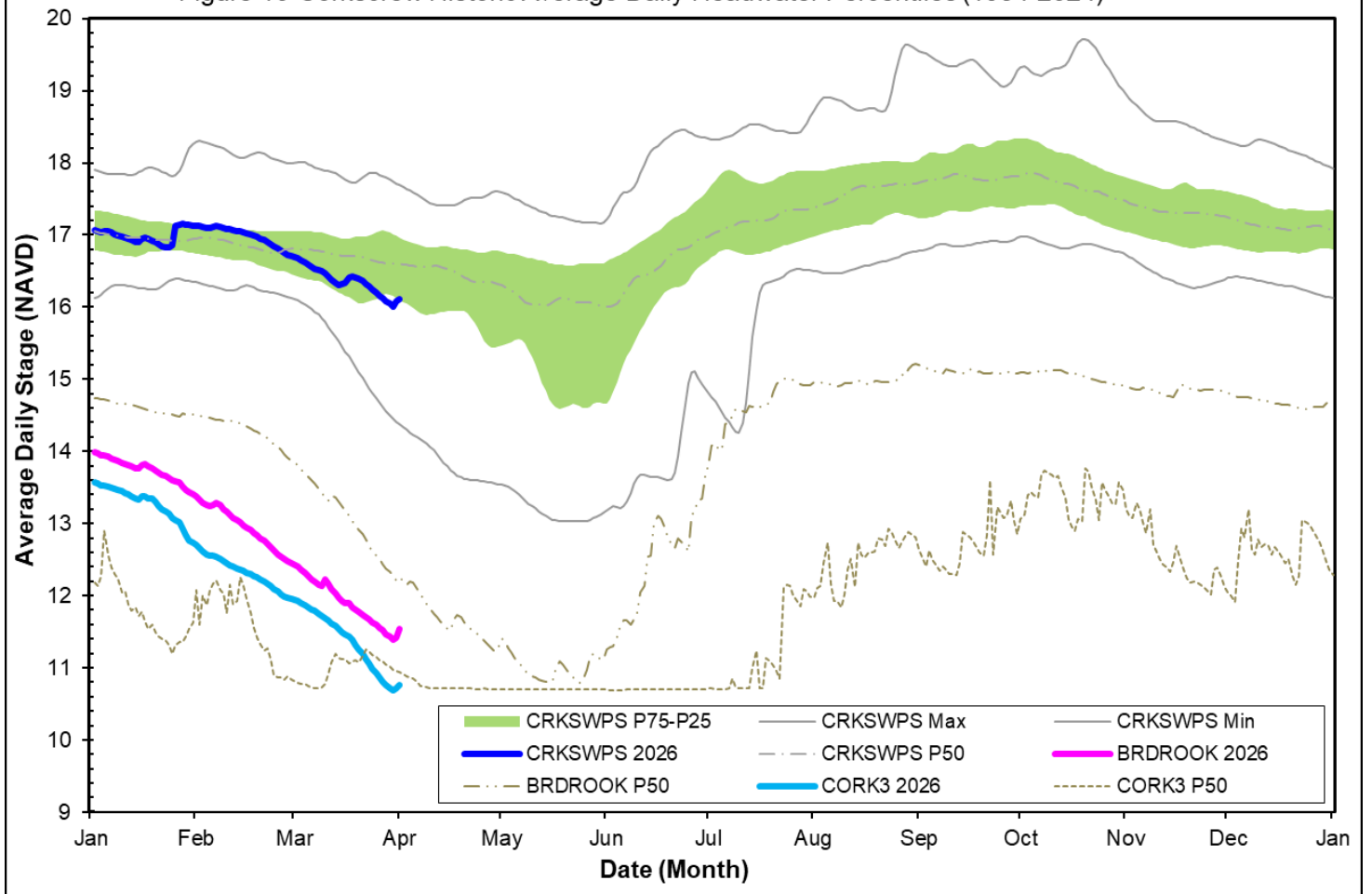
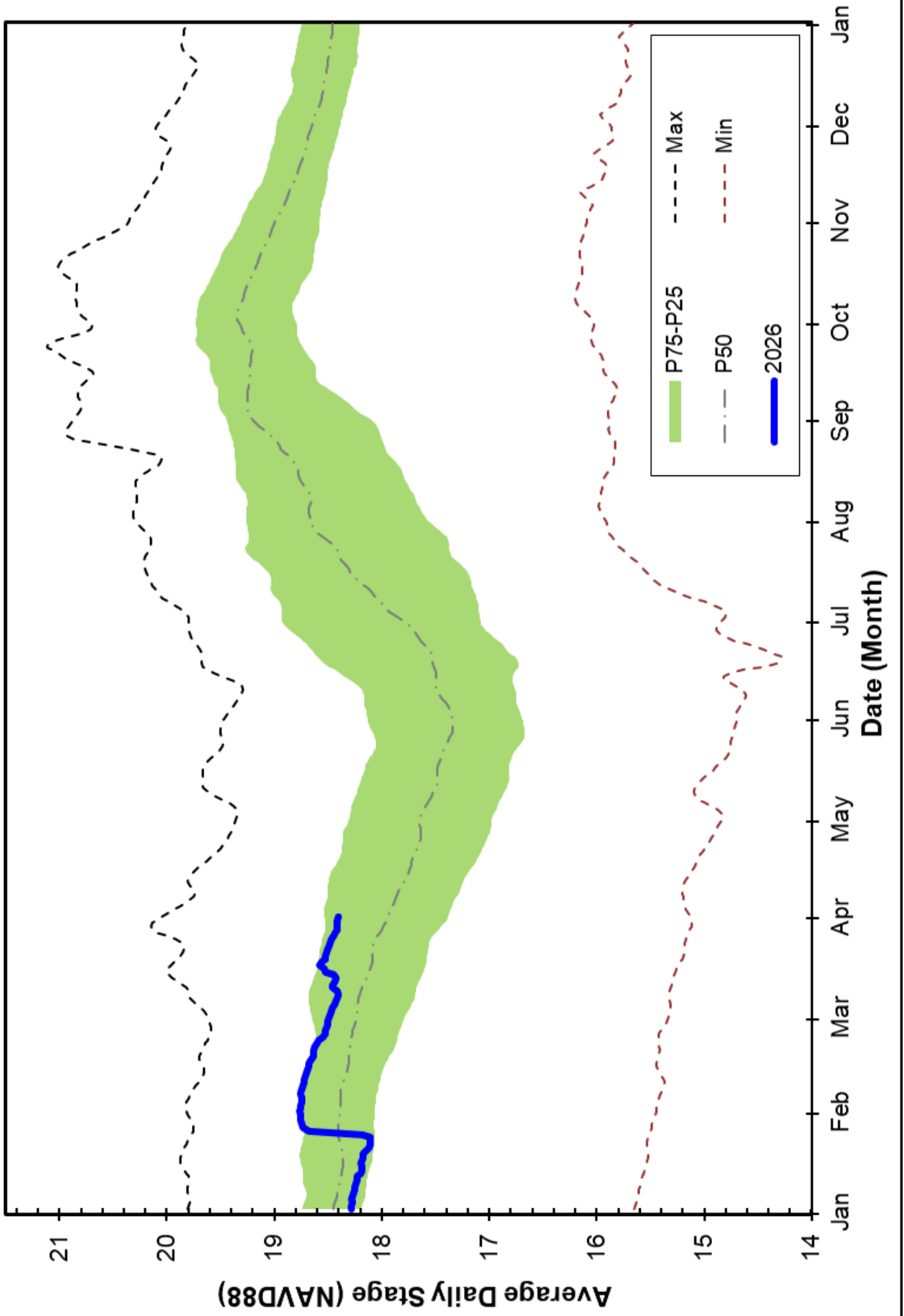


Figure 11 Lake Trafford Historic Average Daily Headwater Percentiles (1941-2024)



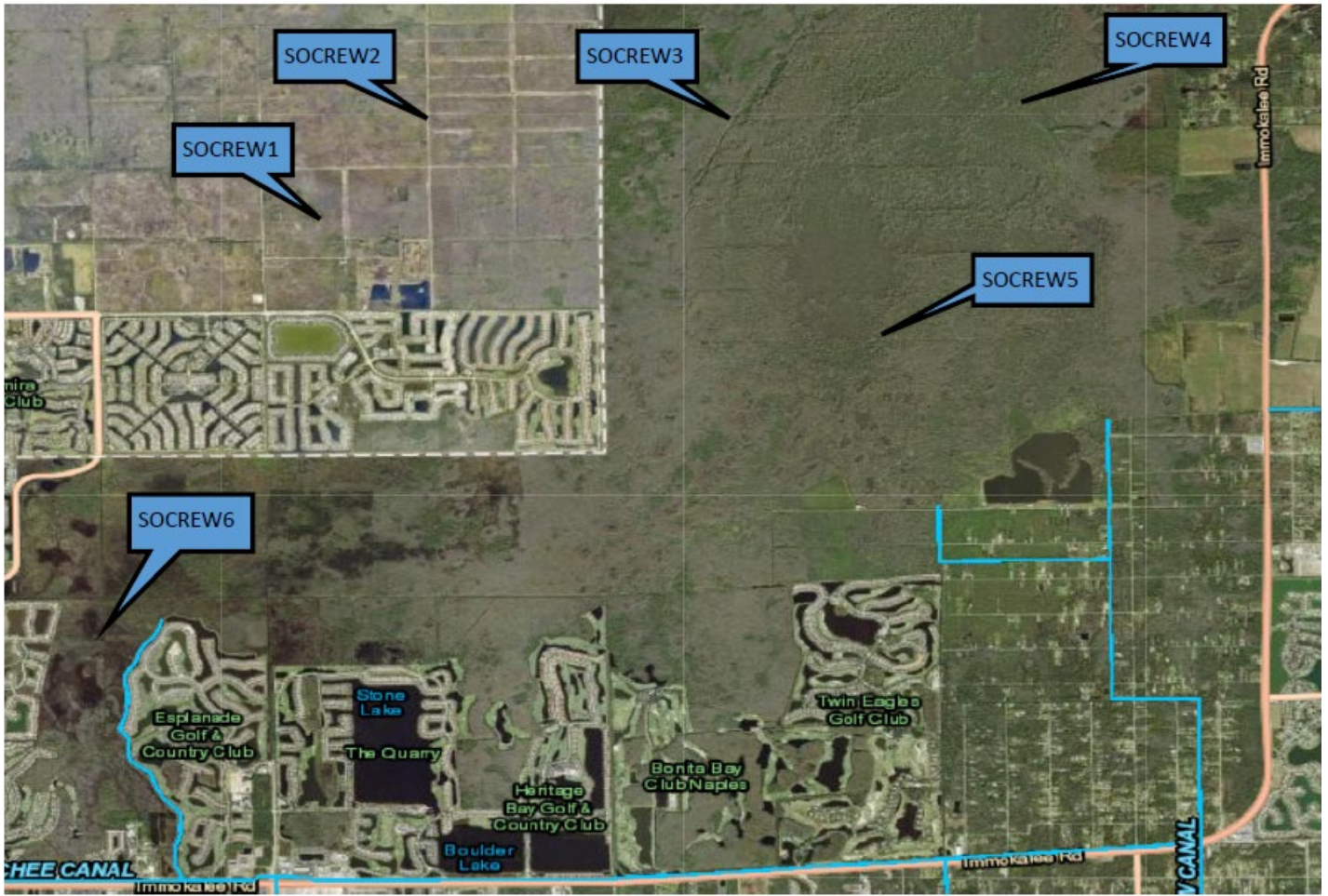
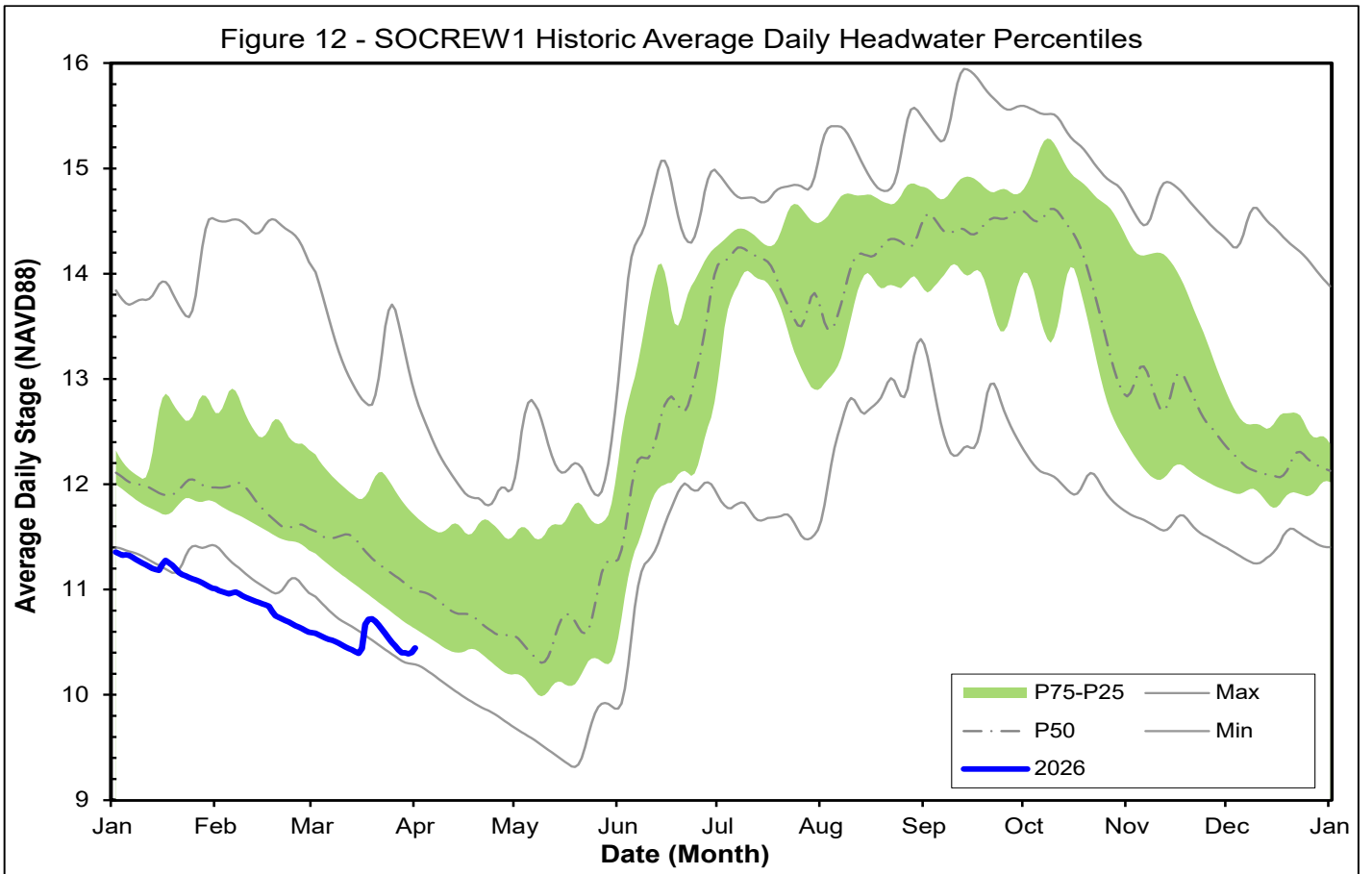


Figure 12 - SOCREW1 Historic Average Daily Headwater Percentiles



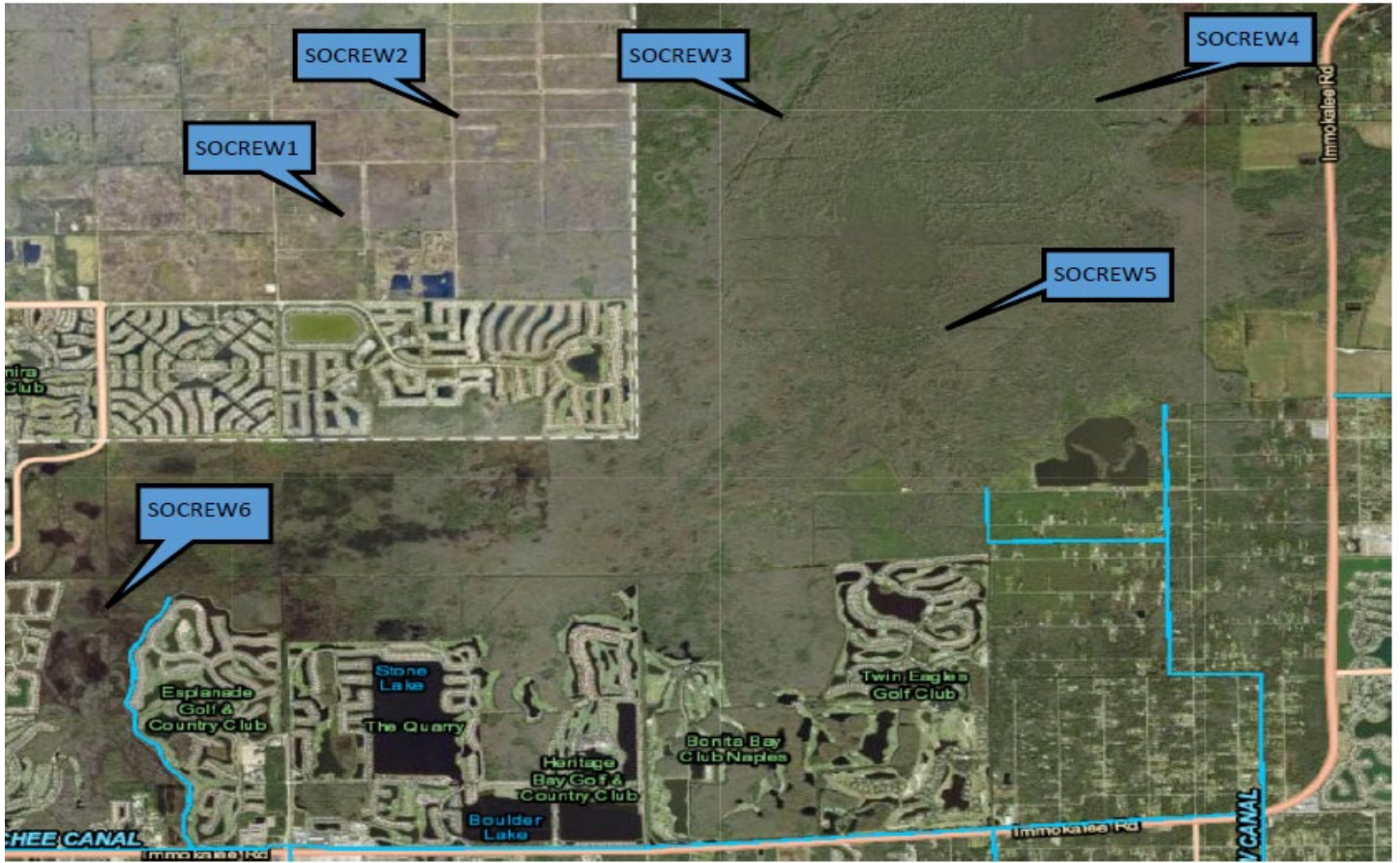


Figure 13 - SOCREW2 Historic Average Daily Headwater Percentiles

