



Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

NRCS Puerto Rico State Technical Committee Meeting



September 2, 2026
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
Forest Service - International Institute of Tropical Forestry

FARM PRODUCTION AND CONSERVATION
FSA | NRCS | RMA | Business Center

Agenda

- 1. Director's Welcome & Introduction – *Luis Cruz Arroyo***
- 2. STC Meetings & Efforts Recap – *Ricardo Colón***
- 3. NRCS Conservation Programs Update – *Frank Velazquez & Mario Rodriguez***
 - a) FY 2026 Recap
 - b) FY 2027 Focus
 - a) Ranking Categories
 - b) Regenerative Agriculture Pilot Program (RPP) Feedback
- 4. NRCS Farmer Roundtables – *Mario Rodriguez***
- 5. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) – *Ernesto Rodriguez***
- 6. Forestry, Wildlife & Wetlands Subcommittee – *Iván Llerandi Román***
- 7. Partner Updates**
- 8. Wrap-up**



Wins- Trying New Things- Placa Huellas

Before and After



Bare clay running surface on grade, before construction (NRCS, May 2026)



Completed placa huella on the same alignment (NRCS, July 2026)





Wins- Bringing New Products



Wins- Increasing Capacity



Wins- Trying to Inspire the Future



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A photograph of a terraced coffee field on a hillside. The terraces are made of dark brown soil and are arranged in a series of concentric, wavy lines that follow the contour of the hill. The field is surrounded by lush green vegetation, including trees and shrubs. In the background, a small cluster of houses is visible on a hillside under a clear blue sky.

STC Meetings & Efforts Recap

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Past STC Meeting - February 11, 2026

- **NRCS FY26 Chief Priorities & Agency Initiatives**
- **Conservation Programs Update**
 - FY2025 Recap (funds obligated)
 - FY2026 Focus (funds allocated)
 - Conservation Program Application Ranking Categories
 - Caribbean Geographic Area Rate Cap (GARC) for Wetland Reserve Easements (WRE): 95% of fair market value (FMV), NTE \$20,000/ac
- **National Cooperative Soil Survey Activities & New Crop Productivity Indexes**
- **Priority Watersheds Discussion**
 - Priority watersheds/reservoirs
 - Special Watershed Projects
- **Partner Updates:** USDA Forest Service, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Envirosurvey Inc., Caonilla Soil & Water Conservation District, PR Department of Natural & Environmental Resources, RAFL, Coccoloba, The Nature Conservancy, Protectores de Cuencas

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NRCS Conservation Programs Update

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FY 2026 Financial Assistance by Programs

EQIP and CSP

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

- EQIP is NRCS' flagship financial assistance program for working lands, helping producers make improvements to benefit agriculture and conservation.

Field Office	Obligation Dollars	Contracts
ARECIBO SERVICE CENTER	\$ 2,050,132.00	17
CAGUAS SERVICE CENTER	\$ 1,320,936.00	22
COROZAL SERVICE CENTER	\$ 798,739.00	21
JUANA DIAZ SERVICE CENTER	\$ 3,328,223.00	23
MAYAGUEZ SERVICE CENTER	\$ 2,617,169.00	11
SAN SEBASTIAN SERVICE CENTER	\$ 9,801,152.00	68
ST. CROIX SERVICE CENTER	\$ 696,956.00	11
UTUADO SERVICE CENTER	\$ 2,005,731.00	46
Grand Total	\$ 22,619,038.00	219

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

- CSP offers financial incentives for producers to not only maintain the existing level of conservation on the land, but to incorporate new or advanced conservation activities to take stewardship to the next level.

Field Office	Obligation Dollars	Contracts
ARECIBO SERVICE CENTER	\$ 1,175,022.00	26
CAGUAS SERVICE CENTER	\$ 678,954.00	27
COROZAL SERVICE CENTER	\$ 364,863.00	14
JUANA DIAZ SERVICE CENTER	\$ 331,778.00	10
MAYAGUEZ SERVICE CENTER	\$ 196,740.00	5
SAN SEBASTIAN SERVICE CENTER	\$ 1,256,939.00	43
ST. CROIX SERVICE CENTER	\$ 65,174.00	2
UTUADO SERVICE CENTER	\$ 299,892.00	12
Grand Total	\$ 4,369,362.00	139



FY 2026 Active Contracts

Field Office	Obligation Dollars	Contracts
ARECIBO SERVICE CENTER	\$ 10,374,249.66	130
CAGUAS SERVICE CENTER	\$ 7,412,887.93	155
COROZAL SERVICE CENTER	\$ 6,818,096.02	122
JUANA DIAZ SERVICE CENTER	\$ 14,658,411.99	171
MAYAGUEZ SERVICE CENTER	\$ 8,335,890.67	94
SAN SEBASTIAN SERVICE CENTER	\$ 19,984,338.23	208
ST. CROIX SERVICE CENTER	\$ 3,637,375.51	85
UTUADO SERVICE CENTER	\$ 6,915,305.57	177
Grand Total	\$ 78,136,555.58	1142



FY 2027 Accounts and Allocations by Program Focus

EQIP, CSP and ACEP

FY 2026 EQIP Categories Allocated

Account Type	Allocation	Amount
EQIP Total	100%	\$14,070,000
CPAs, DIAs, CEMAs	2%	\$281,400
Beginning Farmers & Ranchers (BFR)	5%	\$703,500
Disaster	4%	\$562,800
Water Quantity	8%	\$1,125,600
CAFO/Energy	5%	\$703,500
Wildlife & Joint Chief*	10%	\$1,407,000
SDFR Mountainous Region	15%	\$2,110,500
SDFR Coastal, Hills and Valleys Region	23%	\$3,236,100
Regenerative Pilot Program	25%	\$3,517,500
General/Organic	1%	\$140,700
Reserve/Overrun Subaccount	2%	\$281,400
Reserved I	0%	\$0
Reserved II	0%	\$0

*\$250,000 must be used for Joint Chief Initiative.

FY 2026 EQIP Categories Final Funding

Account Type	Allocation	Amount Allocated
EQIP Total	100%	\$22,710,000
CPAs, DIAs, CEMAs	1.8%	\$409,653.00
Beginning Farmers & Ranchers (BFR)	9.1% 	\$2,063,016.00
Disaster	0% 	\$0.00
Water Quantity	22.8% 	\$5,167,709.00
CAFO/Energy	5.3%	\$1,217,852.00
Wildlife & Joint Chief*	6.4% 	\$1,453,942.00
SDFR Mountainous Region	16.1% 	\$3,657,878.00
SDFR Coastal, Hills and Valleys Region	17.2% 	\$3,902,474.00
Regenerative Pilot Program	20.5% 	\$4,659,220.00
General/Organic	0.6% 	\$133,452.00
Reserve/Overrun Subaccount	0.2%	\$44,804.00
Reserved I	0%	\$0.00

FY 2027 EQIP Categories Allocated Proposed

Account Type	Allocation	Amount
EQIP Total	100%	\$14,070,000
CPAs, DIAs, CEMAs	2%	\$281,400
Beginning Farmers & Ranchers (BFR)	5%	\$703,500
Disaster	4%	\$562,800
Water Quantity	8%	\$1,125,600
CAFO/Energy	5%	\$703,500
Wildlife & Joint Chief*	10%	\$1,407,000
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Regenerative Pilot Program	25%	\$3,517,500
General/Organic	1%	\$140,700
Reserve/Overrun Subaccount	2%	\$281,400
Reserved I	0%	\$0
Reserved II	0%	\$0

*\$250,000 must be used for Joint Chief Initiative.

FY 2026 CSP Categories Allocated

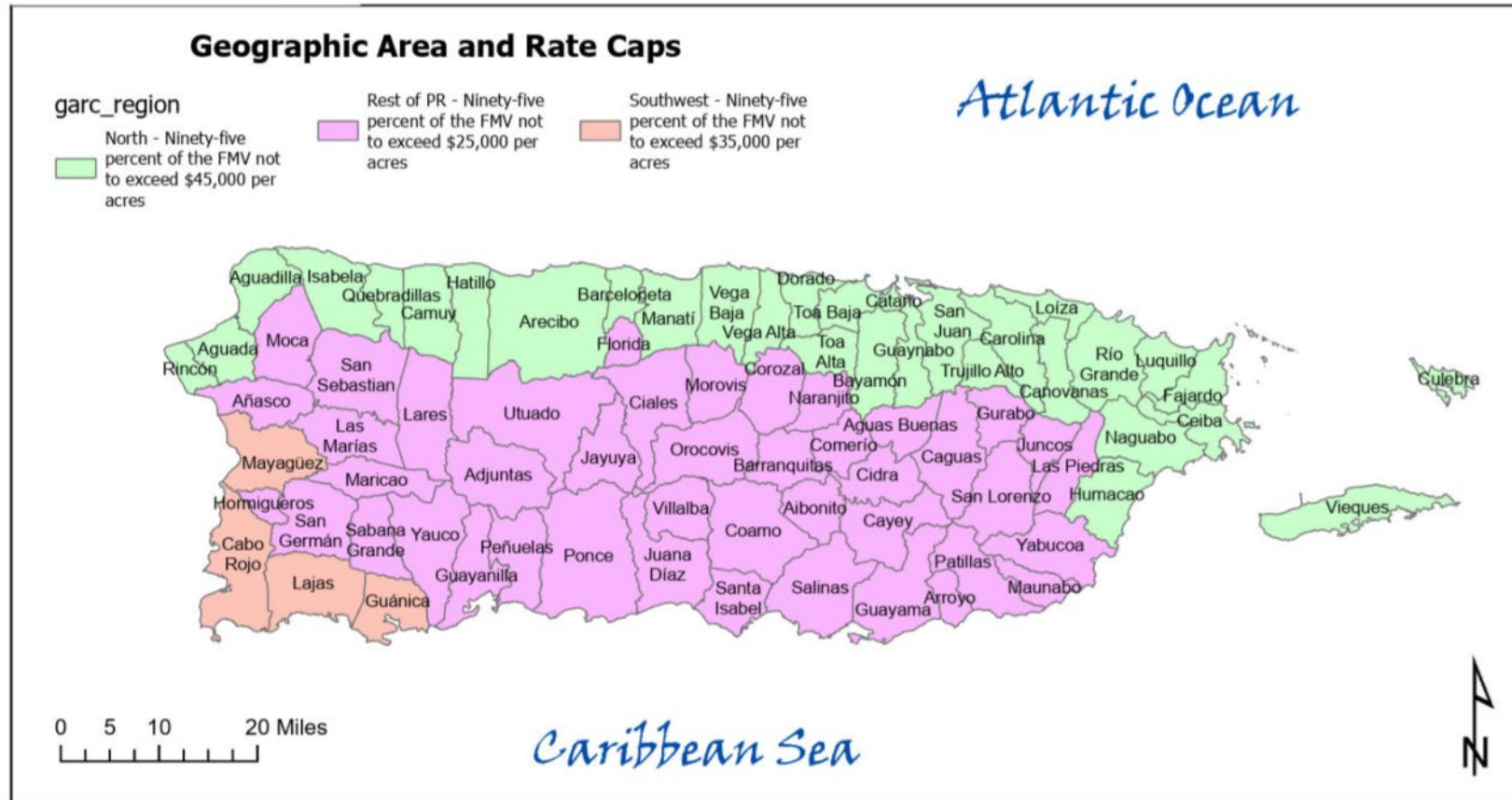
Funding Pool	Account Type	Allocation	Amount
	CSP Total	100%	\$4,428,000
NIPF		15%	\$664,200
Agricultural	Beginning Farmers & Ranchers (BFR)	5%	\$221,400
	Socially Disadvantaged (SD)	50%	\$2,214,000
	Regenerative Pilot Program	25%	\$1,107,000
	General	1%	\$ 44,280.00
	Organic	1%	\$ 44,280.00
	Reserve/Overrun Subaccounts	3%	\$132,840
	Reserved Categories I, II, III	0%	\$0

FY 2027 ACEP Accounts

Agricultural Conservation Easements Program	Allocation
Agricultural Land Easements General	\$1,000,000
Wetland Reserve Easements General	\$1,000,000
Wetland Reserve Easements Stewardship	\$10,000

USDA United States
Department of
Agriculture

Natural Resources Conservation Service
Caribbean Area | Soils Program





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FY 2027 Programs Implementation Schedule

EQIP, CSP, RCPP and ACEP



1

PRIORITY ONE

EQIP FY27 sign-up and obligation

Get the obligation decisions made in the first eight weeks of the fiscal year, so the remaining ten months belong to implementation instead of paperwork.

- General sign-up deadline: October 2, 2026
- Act Now threshold set between 50 and 65 points
- Pre-approvals complete by November 30, 2026
- No emergency sign-up - it fragments the calendar and we absorbed the FY26 cost of that



FY27 OBLIGATION CALENDAR

EQIP First Round FY2027

OCT 2

General sign-up closes

EQIP general cutoff. We receive application year round however we batch application to address financial obligations.

OCT

Act Now applied

Threshold points are set by the Director to expedite the obligation process. All assessment not selected are archive for reassessment and ranking - no new field visit required to rank.

NOV 30

Pre-approvals complete

Majority of obligation authority committed. Anything unresolved by this date competes with implementation season for staff time.

DEC-SEP

Implementation window

Ten clear months. Field capacity goes to CSP delivery and to certifying the practice backlog already under contract.

Why no emergency sign-up. EQIP emergency program structure is design to manage disaster and fail practices, instead addressing drought as the later requires extensive engineering and planning to address the need thus consuming time that the farmer needs to operate. We encourage farmer to seek assistance to USDA FSA.

FY 2027 Program Implementation Schedule

Caribbean Area NRCS Program Implementation Schedule FY2027

Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)							
Fund Pools	Application Acceptance Deadline	Eligibility Deadline (All documents submitted to FSA)	WPT (Screening) (FO)	CART Assessment & Ranking Deadline (FO)	Application Preapprovals (SO)	Contracts Submitted for Obligation Review	Last Day of Obligation (ASTC-P)
EQIP FA (Signup 1) ACT NOW 65pts	2-Oct-26	30-Oct-26			6-Nov-26	20-Nov-26	18-Dec-26
Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)							
Fund Pools	Application Acceptance Deadline	Eligibility Deadline (All documents submitted to FSA)	WPT (Screening) (FO)	CART Assessment & Ranking Deadline (FO)	Application Preapprovals (SO)	Contracts Submitted for Obligation Review	Last Day of Obligation (ASTC-P)
EQIP FA (Signup 2)	5-Mar-27	18-Jun-27			9-Jul-27	6-Aug-27	17-Sep-27
Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)							
Fund Pools	Application Acceptance Deadline	Eligibility Deadline (All documents submitted to FSA)	WPT (Screening) (FO)	CART Assessment & Ranking Deadline (FO)	Application Preapprovals (SO)	Contracts Submitted for Obligation Review	Last Day of Obligation (ASTC-P)
CSP Classic (Signup 2027-1)	25-Sep-26	29-Jan-27	N/A	26-Mar-27	9-Apr-27	11-Jun-27	13-Aug-27
Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)							
Fund Pools	Application Acceptance Deadline	Eligibility Deadline (All documents submitted to FSA)	WPT (Screening) (FO)	CART Assessment & Ranking Deadline (FO)	Application Preapprovals (SO)	Contracts Submitted for Obligation Review	Last Day of Obligation (ASTC-P)
2498 Restoration Initiative RGA	25-Sep-26	29-Jan-27	N/A	26-Mar-27	9-Apr-27	11-Jun-27	13-Aug-27
Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)							
Fund Pools	Application Acceptance Deadline	Eligibility Deadline (All documents submitted to FSA)	WPT (Screening) (FO)	CART Assessment & Ranking Deadline (FO)	Application Preapprovals (SO)	WRPO Finalized and Cost Estimates in CD	LO Deadline to Respond
ACEP WRE	15-Jan-2027	13-Feb-2027	N/A	17-Apr-27	17-Apr-27	17-Apr-27	31-Jul-27

*Field offices are responsible for making intent to proceed letters and completing field verifications after application preapproval.

*Fund pools with a deadline under the WPT column, will require a the WPT to be completed on **ALL** eligible and pending applications for which participant submitted all documentation to FSA but is still appears ineligible in our business tools. Only **HIGH** priority applications will be **ranked** in first funding cycle. If funds are still available, we will reallocate funds and open a second funding cycle period to evaluate "high" and "medium" applications. In the second round, the applications will be selected by ranking score regardless of the priority. Applications with a medium priority CANNOT be ranked in the first funding cycle.
FY2027 Fund Assessment dates: TBD per Allocation Letter.



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Regenerative Agriculture Pilot Program (RPP) Feedback

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Purpose of Today's Consultation

Why We Are Here

NRCS Caribbean is seeking STAC input to help guide FY27 implementation of the Regenerative Pilot Program in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Today's discussion will cover:

- What the Regenerative Pilot Program is
- What the pilot is targeting in PR/USVI
- FY26 first-year implementation accomplishments
- FY27 implementation projections
- NRCS Caribbean priorities for STAC consultation
- Informal polls to capture STAC input



STAC Role and Process Guardrails

STAC Provides Advisory Input

The State Technical Advisory Committee provides:

- Information
- Analysis
- Technical recommendations
- Local and partner perspectives
- Input on resource priorities and program implementation



What Is the Regenerative Pilot Program?

RPP in Brief

The Regenerative Pilot Program supports producers in implementing conservation systems that improve soil health, water outcomes, and long-term resilience.

The pilot is delivered through:

- EQIP and CSP
- Whole-farm or whole-operation conservation planning
- Multi-year contracts
- Primary regenerative management practices
- Supporting practices when tied to a primary practice
- Soil health testing to establish baseline and outcome data



Core RPP Framework

How the Pilot Works

RPP Element	What It Means
Program delivery	Implemented through EQIP and CSP
Planning approach	Whole-farm or whole-operation conservation planning
Contract length	Minimum 5-year contract period
Eligibility trigger	At least one primary regenerative management practice
Supporting practices	Eligible when associated with a primary practice
Soil health testing	Required in the first and final contract years
Measurement tool	CEMA 216 Soil Health Testing



What Is the Pilot Targeting?

Target Resource Concerns in PR/USVI

For the Caribbean Area, RPP is focused on soil and water resource concerns commonly observed across cropland, pasture, forest, range, orchard, and perennial systems.

Priority concerns include:

- Soil organic matter depletion
- Aggregate instability

- Soil compaction
- Sheet and rill erosion
- Nutrient transport to surface water
- Poor infiltration and increased runoff
- Reduced soil biological function
- Drought vulnerability
- Sediment movement to water bodies



CEMA 216 Soil Health Testing

Establishing Baseline and Tracking Outcomes

RPP requires soil health testing during:

- The first and the final contract year

CEMA 216 provides quantitative testing for biological, chemical, and physical soil characteristics using approved laboratory methods.

Testing may include indicators such as:

- Soil organic carbon
- Aggregate stability
- Soil respiration

- POXC
- pH
- Soil texture

Other required soil health indicators

Sampling strategies may include:

- Random sampling
- Stratified sampling
- Problem-area sampling
- Representative sampling by planning land unit



FY26 First-Year Implementation Accomplishments

In FY26, NRCS Caribbean began establishing the foundation for RPP implementation in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

First-year accomplishments include:

- Initiated RPP implementation process for PR/USVI
- Integrated RPP planning with EQIP/CSP delivery
- Identified priority soil and water concerns for Caribbean conditions
- Began aligning eligible land uses and practices with local needs
- Incorporated CEMA 216 soil health testing into RPP planning
- Advanced internal coordination on eligibility and implementation requirements
- Prepared STAC consultation materials for FY27 planning
- Began improving producer and field office readiness for multi-year regenerative contracts



**25% of
Total
Budget**

RPP 2026 Metrics

Applications received: 183 applications

Contracts obligated: 63 under RPP category, 130 contracts with practice 216 in other categories

Acres planned or contracted: CSP 1913.10 Ac, EQIP 5327.4 Ac

PR participants: 130

USVI participants: 0

Land uses represented: Crop 90 / Pasture 13 / Forest 2 / Other 1



FY26 Lessons Learned and FY27 Outlook

Building from Year One

FY26 implementation highlighted several needs for FY27:

- Clearer identification of locally relevant primary practices
- Consistent use of CEMA 216 sampling and documentation
- Stronger connection between soil testing, planning land units, and practice selection
- Continued field staff training on RPP eligibility requirements
- Improved producer communication on multi-year contract expectations
- Better alignment between national RPP criteria and Caribbean production systems
- Earlier coordination with partners and technical specialists



FY27 Outlook

For FY27, NRCS Caribbean expects to:

- Expand producer participation in eligible land uses
- Prioritize applications addressing critical soil and water concerns
- Increase use of CEMA 216 for baseline soil health data
- Support whole-farm planning through EQIP/CSP
- Promote primary regenerative practices suited to PR/USVI conditions
- Use STAC input to refine priorities, land uses, and practice emphasis



NRCS Caribbean Priorities for STAC Consultation

NRCS Caribbean is requesting STAC input on the following priority areas:

- **Critical soil and water concerns**
Which concerns should receive highest priority in FY27?
- **Priority land uses**
Which land uses should be emphasized for RPP implementation?
- **Primary regenerative practices**
Which practices are most applicable to Caribbean production systems?
- **CEMA 216 implementation**
What sampling, timing, lab, or documentation issues should NRCS consider?
- **Outreach and partner coordination**
Where is additional producer education or partner support needed?
- **Application screening and ranking considerations**
What factors should NRCS consider when evaluating FY27 applications?



Polls to Capture STAC Input

Present Poll

Polls Are Input — Not Votes

<https://forms.cloud.microsoft/g/rfeppikBLu?origin=lpr>
Link

NRCS Caribbean will use informal polls to organize STAC input.

Poll results will help:

- Summarize technical recommendations
- Support PR and USVI recommendation memos
- Inform FY27 implementation planning
- Document STAC consultation
- Identify local priorities for resource concerns, land uses, and practices





Next Steps, Timeline, and References

What Happens After STAC Consultation?

After consultation, NRCS Caribbean will:

- Review poll results and discussion notes
- Summarize STAC input
- Identify recommended priority resource concerns
- Identify recommended priority land uses
- Identify locally relevant primary practices
- Include CEMA 216 implementation considerations
- Prepare PR and USVI recommendation summaries
- Submit the recommendation package to the State Conservationist
- Copy the National RPP Coordinator, as applicable



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Questions?
Thanks

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NRCS Farmer Roundtables

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What Is an NRCS Farmer Roundtable?

Purpose:

A Farmer Roundtable is a structured forum where farmers and NRCS staff exchange information to improve conservation planning, technical assistance, and program delivery.

Main Goal:

To better understand farmers' experiences with conservation practice standards, scenarios, payment schedules, implementation outcomes, and local challenges.

Key Features:

- Direct farmer-to-NRCS dialogue
- Review of specific conservation practices
- Identification of local barriers and practical solutions
- Collection of producer feedback to improve standards and scenarios
- Follow-up action items for NRCS and partners

Value:

Roundtables help ensure conservation practices are practical, locally appropriate, and responsive to Caribbean agricultural conditions.



USVI Farmer Roundtables: Overview

Location: Sejah Farm Learning Center, St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands

Dates: April 28, 2026 and June 4, 2026

Participants: USVI farmers, NRCS Caribbean Area staff, and virtual attendees

Conservation Practices Discussed Included:

- Windbreaks
- Alley Cropping
- Irrigation Land Leveling
- Row Arrangement
- Prescribed Burning
- Silvopasture
- Wildlife Habitat Planting
- Land Clearing
- Tree/Shrub Site Preparation

- Road/Trail/Landing Closure and Treatment
- Recreation Land Improvement and Protection

Farmer Concerns Identified:

- Labor shortages and limited contractor availability
- High material and labor costs in the islands
- Lack of local soil testing facilities
- Water access, well permitting, and rainfall limitations
- Wildlife and animal damage to crops
- Steep terrain and equipment access constraints
- Need for standards that reflect Caribbean conditions



USVI Roundtable

USVI NRCS Farmer Roundtable

St. Croix, VI - April 28, 2026



Summary

NRCS Caribbean Area met with United States Virgin Island (USVI) farmers for a Farmer Roundtable event on April 28, 2026. The meeting was held at the Sejah Farm Learning Center at St. Croix, VI.

NRCS Farmer Roundtable main goal: Create a structured space for farmers and NRCS staff to exchange information and better understand farmers' experience with conservation practice standards, scenarios, and implementation outcomes and processes.

The Conservation Practices Discussed were:

1. 380 - Windbreaks
2. 311 - Alley Cropping
3. 372 - Combustion System Replacement
4. 441 - Irrigation Land Leveling
5. 557 - Row Arrangement

Attendance: There were eight farmers in person and 1 joined online, via Microsoft Teams.



Photo: During the USVI NRCS Farmer Roundtable event, NRCS Caribbean Area staff discussed five Conservation Practices and collected input about the farmers' experience and lessons learned, with the goal of making informed decisions and improve conservation programs, technical assistance, and local agricultural outcomes.



General Farmer Concerns

- Labor shortages and difficulty finding reliable helpers were repeatedly mentioned as a major challenge.
- Funding and cost-share programs often do not cover the true costs of materials and labor in the islands, especially for fencing and infrastructure.
- Lack of local soil testing facilities and the need to send samples off-island is a significant barrier.
- Issues with contractors not following plans or specifications, leading to additional expenses and potential loss of funding.
- Interest in more monitoring after the implementation of conservation practices and measurements of success.
- Problems with animal damage (deer, goats, hogs, iguanas) and limitations on fencing support for crop protection.
- Challenges with water access, well permitting, and aquifer variability.
- Concerns about new equipment (tractors) being too computerized and hard to maintain locally.



Photo: USVI NRCS Farmer Roundtable at Sejah Farm Learning Center in St. Croix, VI.

Action Items / Tasks for Follow-Up

- NRCS to explore adjusting payment schedule scenarios to better reflect local labor and material costs; farmers to provide contractor quotes and cost data for review.
- Agency to consider developing local soil testing options or partnerships with universities.
- To minimize issues with contractors, pre-construction meetings and the use of video calls for practice implementation status monitoring were recommended, where NRCS can also be part of that conversation.
- NRCS to review and possibly revise technical standards for terracing, including alternative materials that are easier to obtain locally.
- Farmers report issues with fencing, animal exclusion, and water access to NRCS for scenario updates and advocacy with other agencies.
- NRCS to provide technical recommendations for irrigation filters and water management plans.
- Consider group purchasing or coordination for equipment maintenance and mechanics in the islands.
- NRCS to continue piloting new water collection technologies and update farmers on progress.

Additional Notes

- The meeting emphasized the importance of farmer input for adapting conservation practices to Caribbean conditions.
- Multiple practices (alley cropping, row arrangement, windbreaks, irrigation land leveling, combustion system improvement) were reviewed, with practical implementation details discussed.



Photo: Farmer Sherron Carlos was an active participant in discussions and offered valuable recommendations for NRCS.



Accomplishments of the USVI Roundtables

1. Strengthened Farmer Engagement

- Created a formal space for producers to share real-world experiences.
- Farmers provided practical recommendations on conservation practice implementation.

2. Identified Local Barriers

- Documented challenges related to costs, labor, water access, contractors, soil testing, wildlife pressure, and terrain.

3. Generated Actionable Follow-Up Items

NRCS identified opportunities to:

- Review payment schedule scenarios to better reflect local costs.
- Explore local soil testing partnerships with universities.
- Improve contractor coordination through pre-construction meetings and video check-ins.
- Review technical standards for locally available materials.

- Provide guidance on irrigation filters, water management, slope stabilization, and species selection.
- Compile local fire management regulations and recommended tree species.

4. Advanced Locally Adapted Conservation Planning

- Reinforced the importance of adapting conservation practice standards to island conditions.
- Helped align NRCS technical assistance with producer needs and Caribbean realities.



Opportunities for Implementing Roundtables in Puerto Rico

Opportunity 1: Improve Local Program Delivery

Puerto Rico roundtables could help NRCS better understand regional differences in farming systems, terrain, rainfall, soil conditions, labor availability, and infrastructure needs.

Opportunity 2: Adapt Conservation Practices to Puerto Rico Conditions

Producer input can support improvements to practice standards, scenarios, and payment schedules for practices such as:

- Irrigation and water management
- Erosion control and slope stabilization
- Agroforestry and silvopasture
- Wildlife habitat and vegetative barriers

- Soil health and crop protection practices

Opportunity 3: Strengthen Partnerships

Roundtables could include universities, Extension, conservation districts, municipalities, farmer organizations, and local agencies to address:

- Soil testing access
- Contractor capacity
- Permitting processes
- Equipment and maintenance needs
- Local species recommendations



Opportunities for Implementing Roundtables in Puerto Rico

Opportunity 4: Build a Feedback-to-Action Process

Puerto Rico roundtables can establish a repeatable model:

- Select priority conservation practices.
- Invite diverse producers by region and commodity.
- Document challenges, costs, and recommendations.
- Assign follow-up actions to NRCS and partners.
- Report back to farmers on progress and updates.

Bottom Line:

Implementing Farmer Roundtables in Puerto Rico would support more practical, producer-informed conservation solutions and improve NRCS responsiveness across the Caribbean Area.

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National Weather Service and Drought

Emanuel Rodríguez González
Weather Forecast Office San Juan, Puerto Rico





NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

Peligros Meteorológicos Mensuales



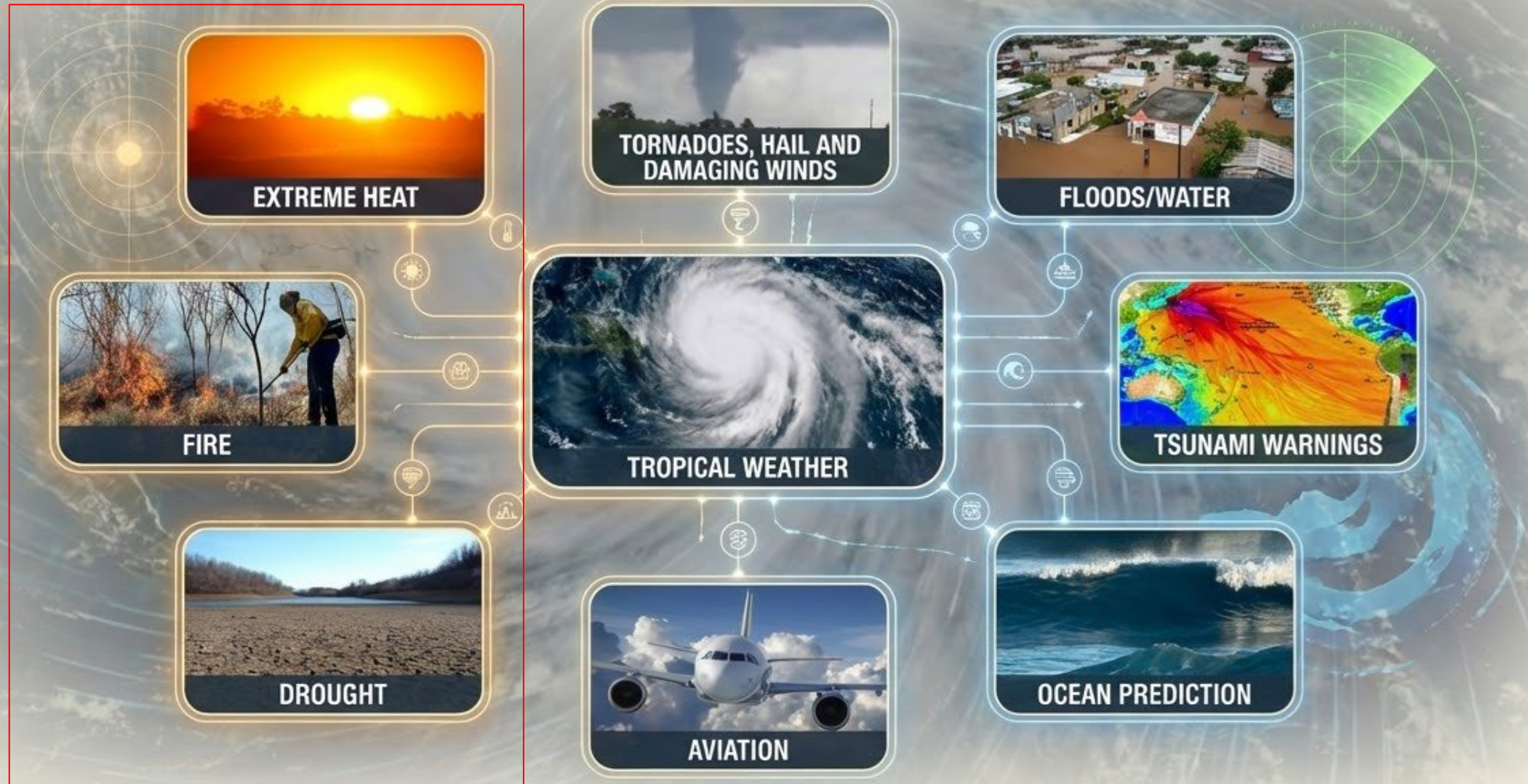
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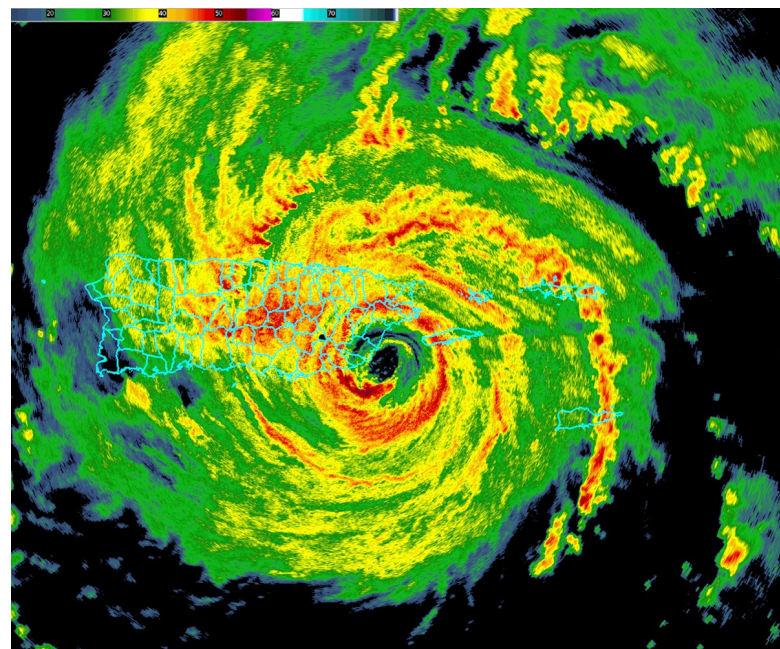
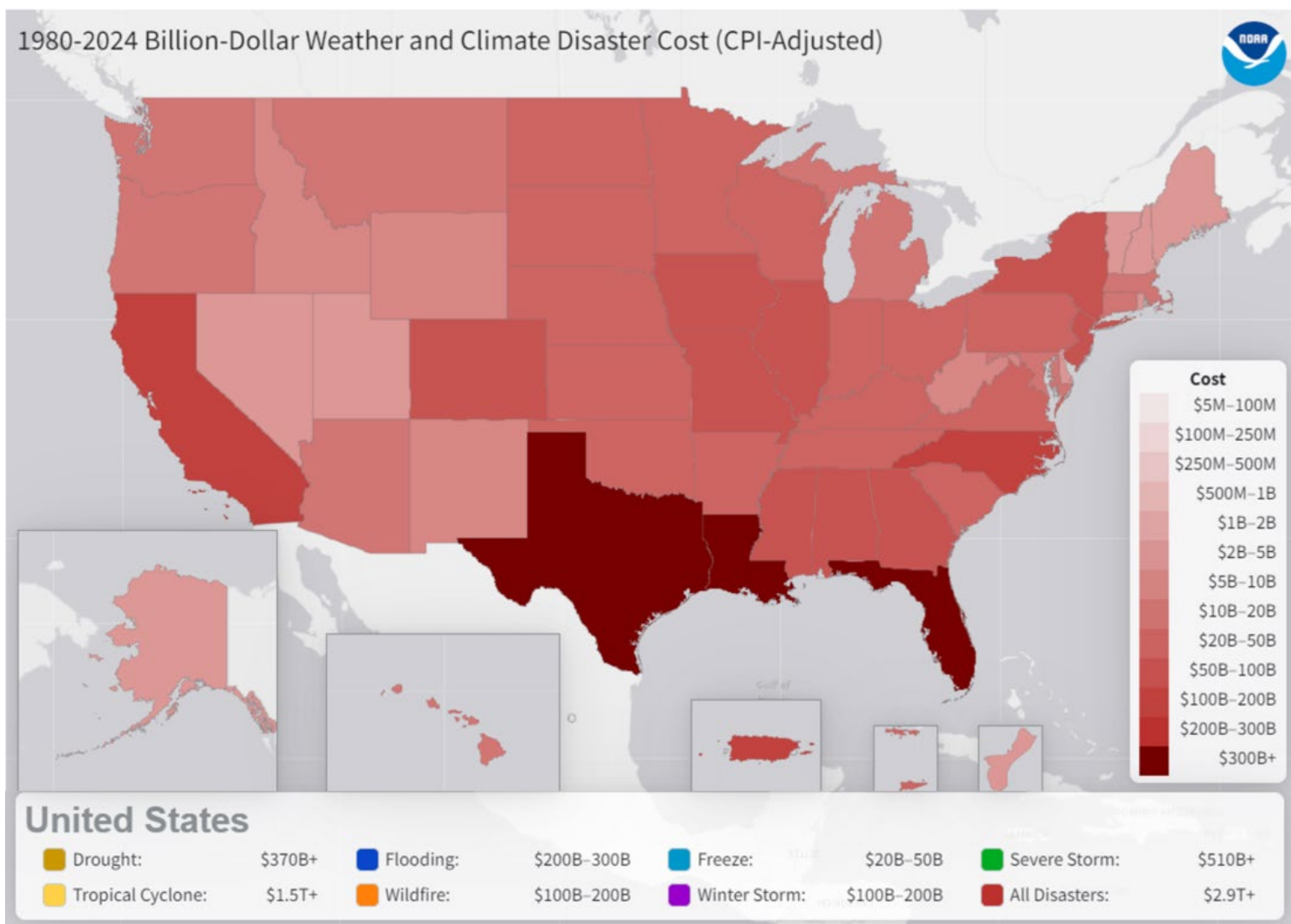
Pronósticos y Advertencias



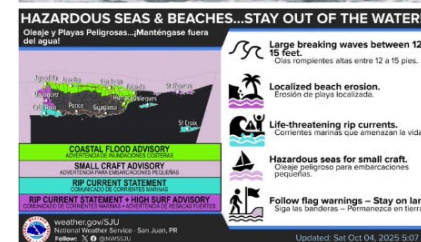
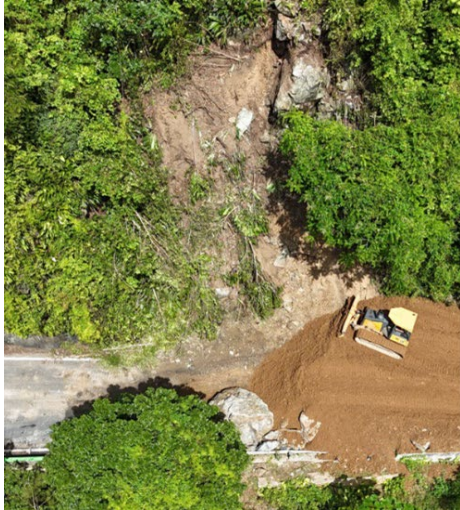
Forecasts and Warnings



Vulnerability Cost: Irma and Maria



It's not just hurricanes...



What it's drought?

- It's a complex phenomenon that it's defined by rainfall deficits that creates water scarcity, dry soils and damages to crops.
- Usually, the process starts slow until it begins to affect agriculture
- Drought has different phases that develop at different timescales.

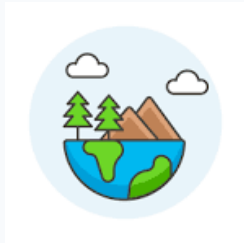


Types of drought



Agricultural

Deficiency in soil moisture for crops



Ecological

Effects to ecosystems (flora and fauna)



Meteorological

Below normal rainfall



Hydrologic

Streams, wells, and lake levels



Socioeconomic

Impacts to people and businesses

U.S. Drought Monitor Categories: & What Do They Mean?

Source: NCEI



D0

**Abnormally
Dry**

- Short-term dryness slowing planting, growth of crops or pastures
- Some lingering water deficits
- Pastures or crops not fully recovered



D1

**Moderate
Drought**

- Some damage to crops, pastures
- Streams, reservoirs, or wells low, some water shortages developing or imminent
- Voluntary water-use restrictions requested



D2

**Severe
Drought**

- Crop or pasture lost likely
- Water shortages common
- Water restrictions imposed



D3

**Extreme
Drought**

- Major crop/pasture losses
- Widespread water shortages or restrictions



D4

**Exceptional
Drought**

- Exceptional and widespread crop/pasture losses
- Shortages of water in reservoirs, streams, and wells creating water emergencies

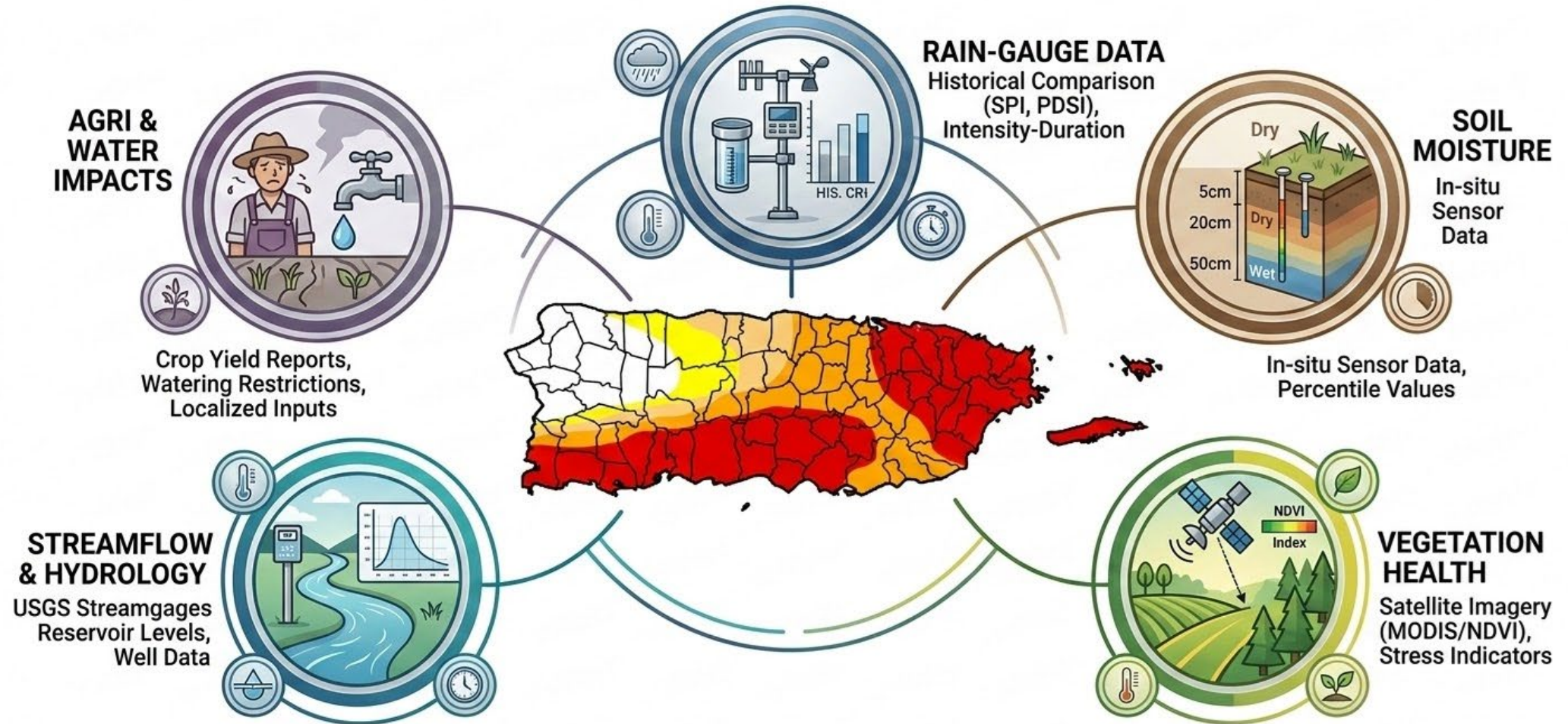


National Weather Service San Juan

weather.gov/sju

Drought Recommendations

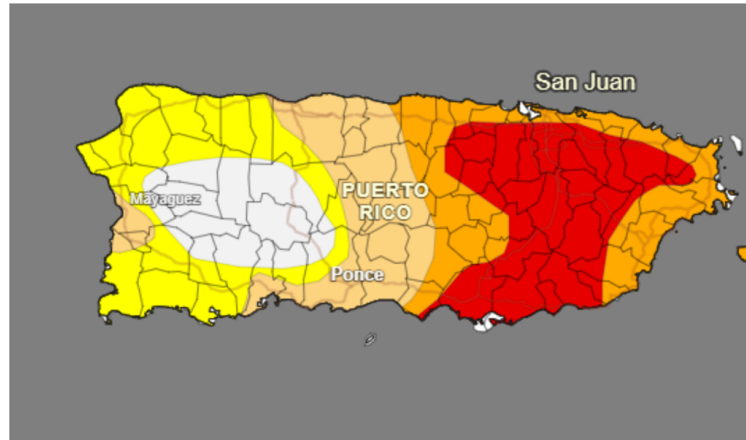
DATA DRIVERS FOR PUERTO RICO DROUGHT MONITOR RECOMMENDATIONS



Current Drought vs 2015

U.S. Drought Monitor

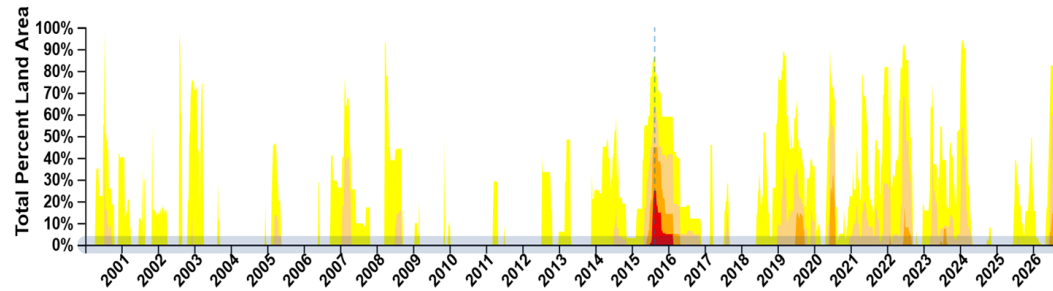
August 18, 2015



USDM values for Puerto Rico

D0	Abnormally Dry	22.7%
D1	Moderate Drought	18.9%
D2	Severe Drought	19.9%
D3	Extreme Drought	24.9%
D4	Exceptional Drought	0.00%

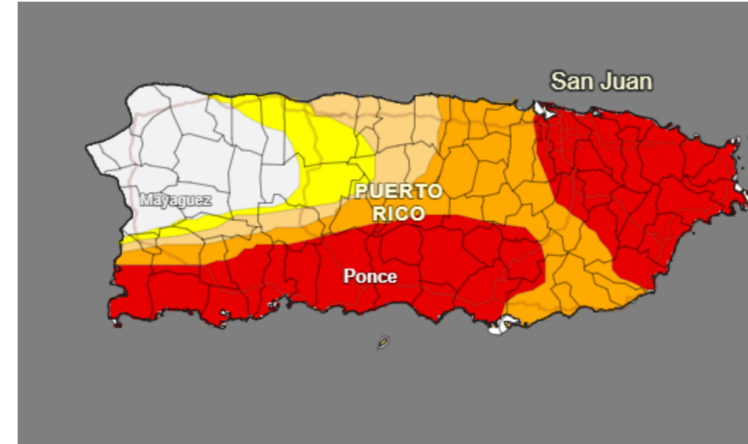
Total Area in Drought **63.70%**



Drought.gov

U.S. Drought Monitor

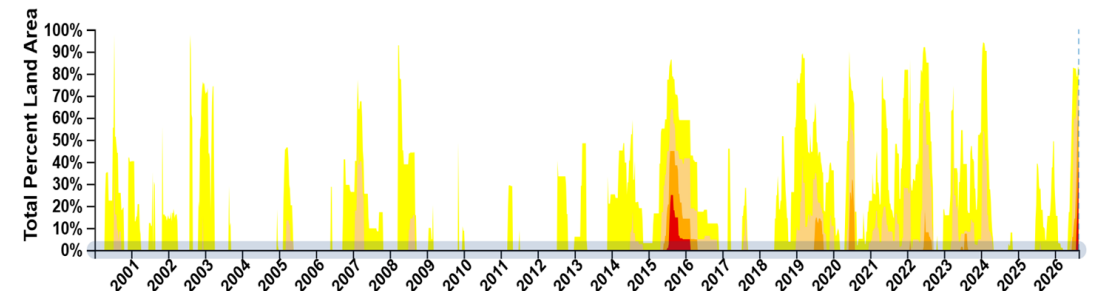
August 25, 2026



USDM values for Puerto Rico

D0	Abnormally Dry	7.7%
D1	Moderate Drought	8.6%
D2	Severe Drought	22.2%
D3	Extreme Drought	44.5%
D4	Exceptional Drought	0.00%

Total Area in Drought **75.30%**



Drought.gov

Drought and ENSO

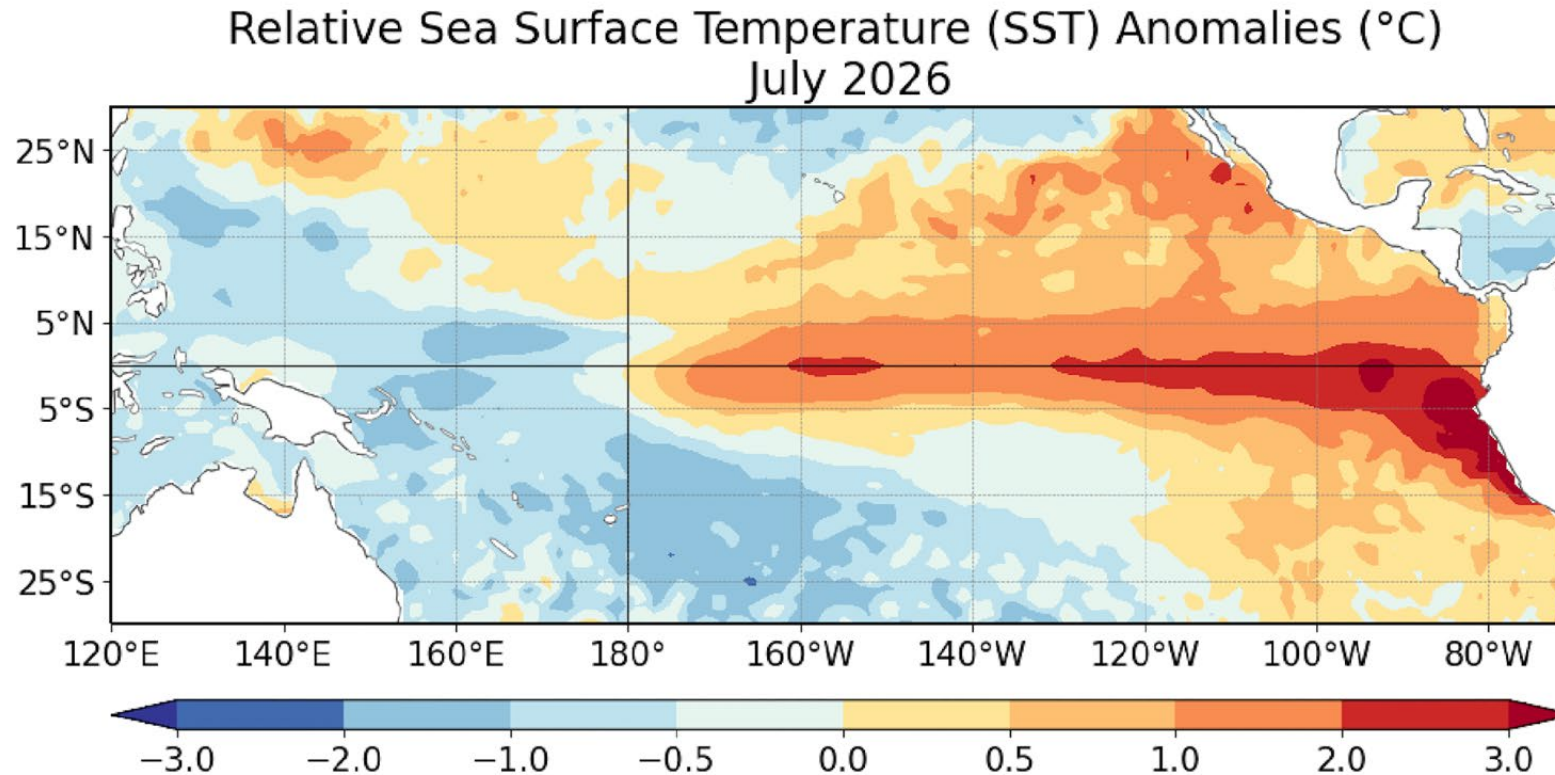
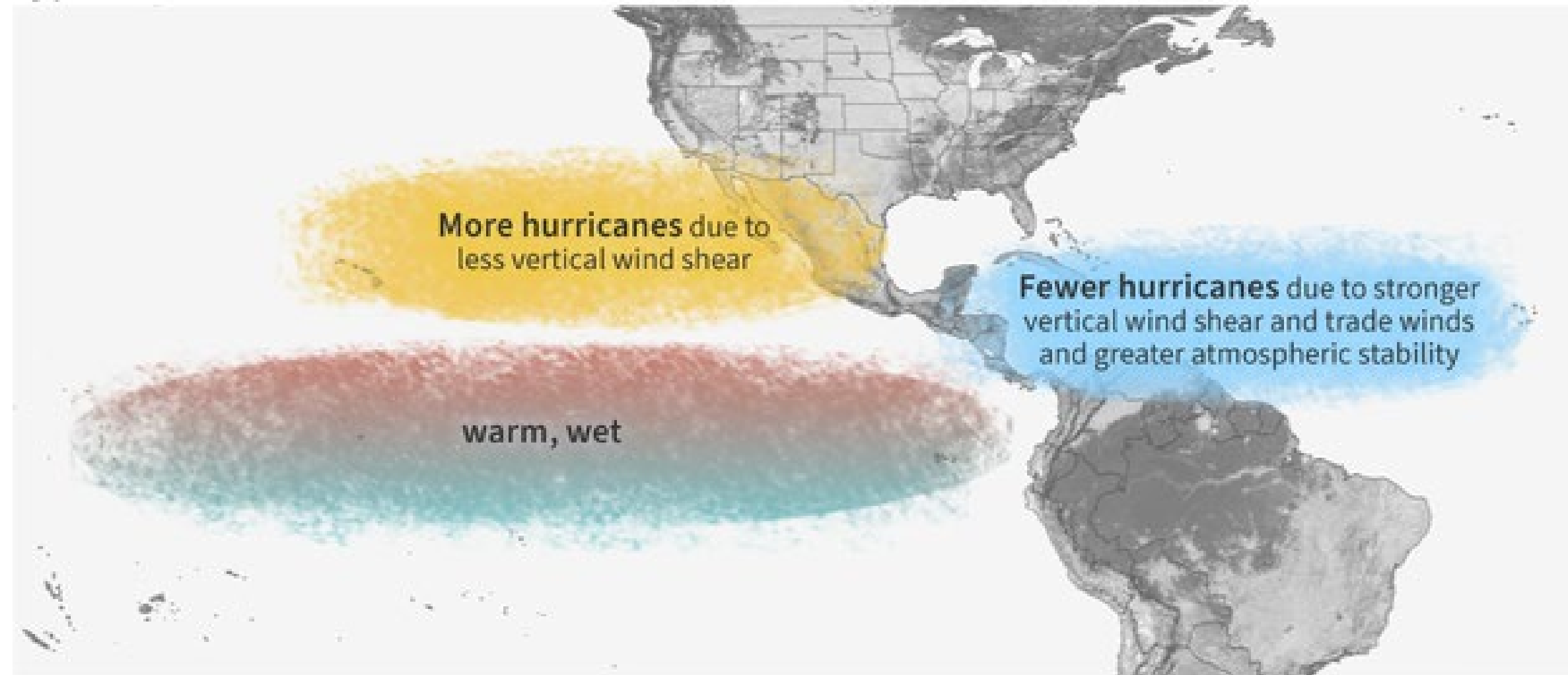


Figure 1. Average relative sea surface temperature (SST) anomalies (°C) for July 2026. Anomalies are computed with respect to the 1991-2020 base period monthly means. Data: OISSTv2.1.

https://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/analysis_monitoring/enso_update/Monthly_RelSSTA_map-hr.png

Typical El Niño influence



ENSO Outlook

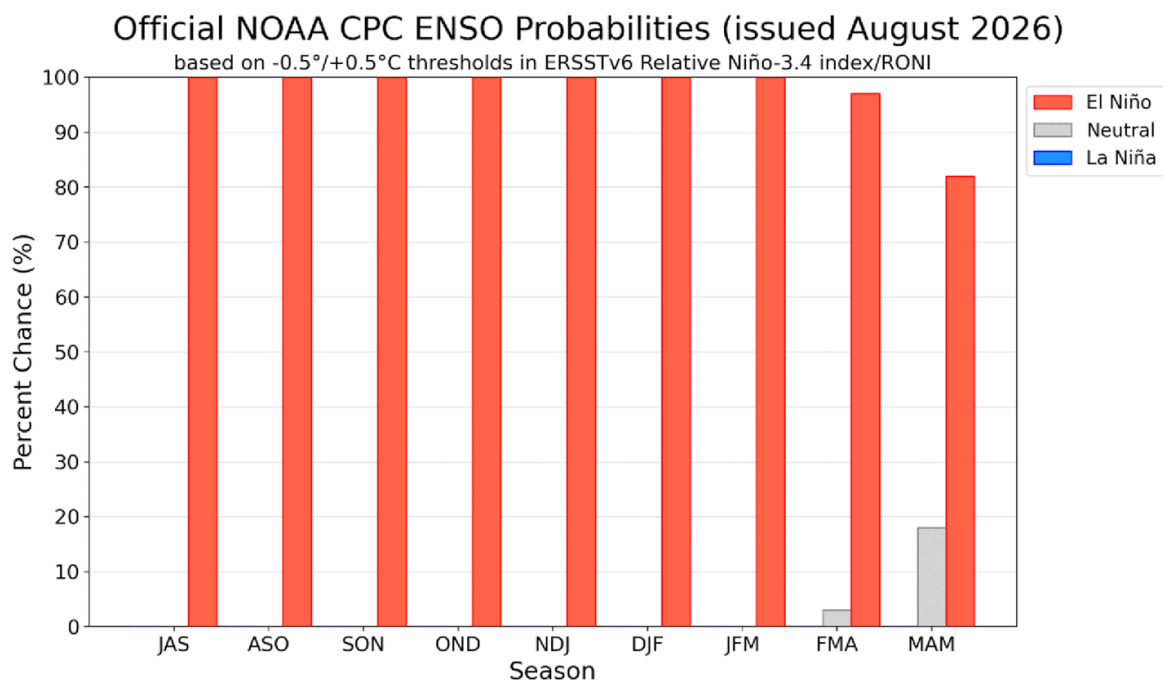


Figure 7. Official ENSO probabilities for the Niño-3.4 relative sea surface temperature index (5°N - 5°S , 170°W - 120°W) minus tropical mean (20°N - 20°S). The relative index is re-scaled to match the variance of the traditional index. Figure updated 13 August 2026. Higher resolution image/table: https://cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/analysis_monitoring/enso/roni/probabilities/

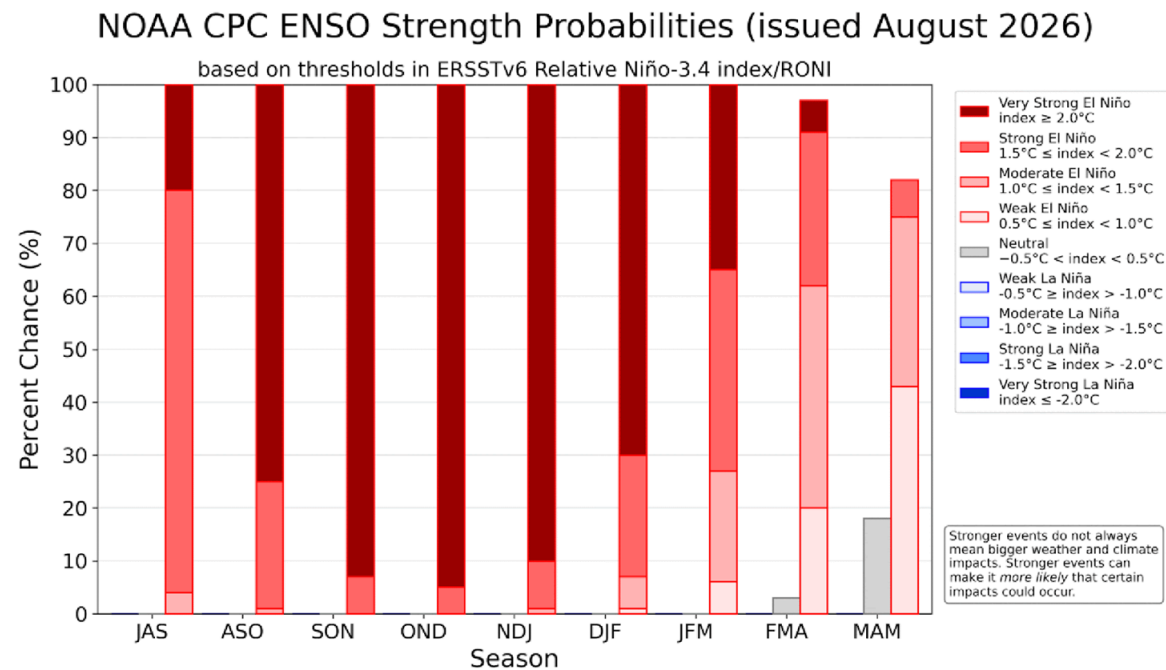
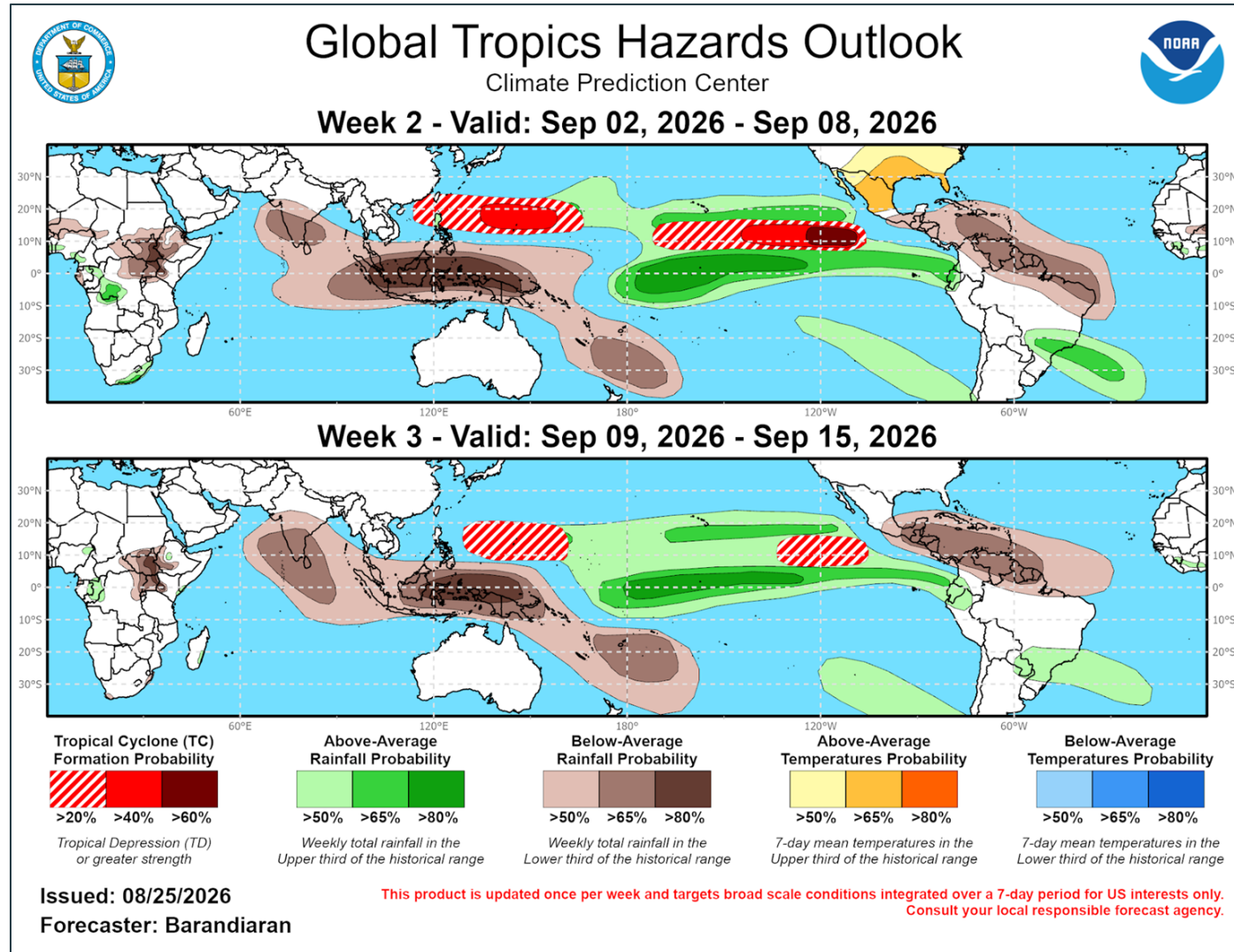


Figure 8. ENSO strength probabilities for the Niño-3.4 relative sea surface temperature index (5°N - 5°S , 170°W - 120°W) minus tropical mean (20°N - 20°S). The relative index is re-scaled to match the variance of the traditional index. Figure updated 13 August 2026. Higher resolution image/table: https://cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/analysis_monitoring/enso/roni/strengths/

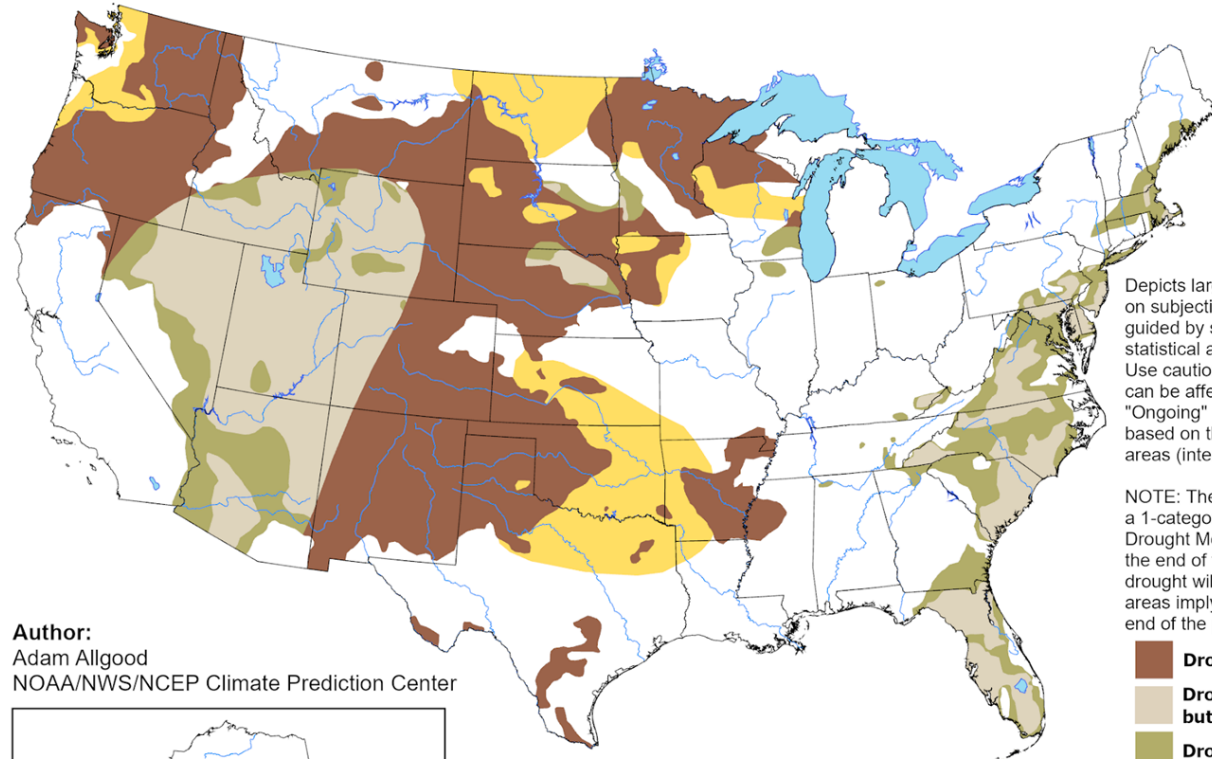
Week two and three Outlook



CPC Drought Outlook

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

Valid for August 2026
Released July 31, 2026

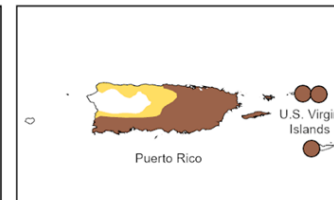
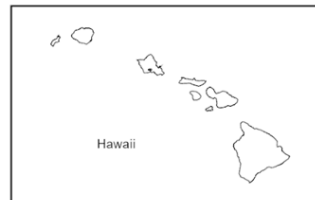


Depicts large-scale trends based on subjectively derived probabilities guided by short- and long-range statistical and dynamical forecasts. Use caution for applications that can be affected by short lived events. "Ongoing" drought areas are based on the U.S. Drought Monitor areas (intensities of D1 to D4).

NOTE: The tan areas imply at least a 1-category improvement in the Drought Monitor intensity levels by the end of the period, although drought will remain. The green areas imply drought removal by the end of the period (D0 or none).

- Drought persists
- Drought remains, but improves
- Drought removal likely
- Drought development likely
- No drought

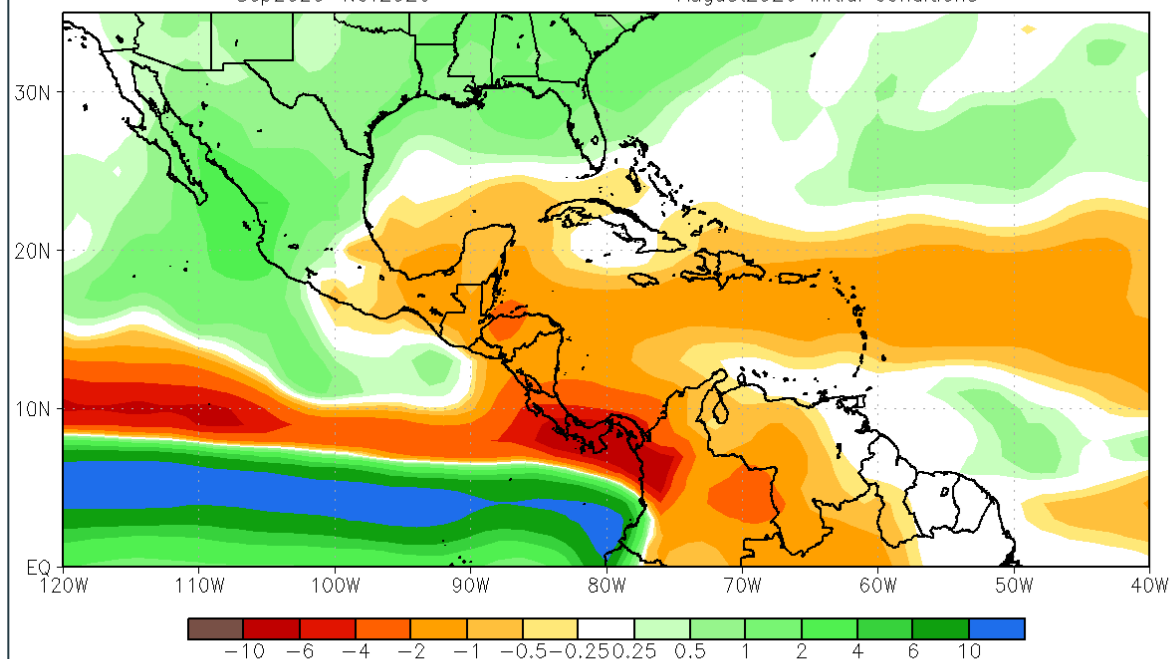
Author:
Adam Allgood
NOAA/NWS/NCEP Climate Prediction Center



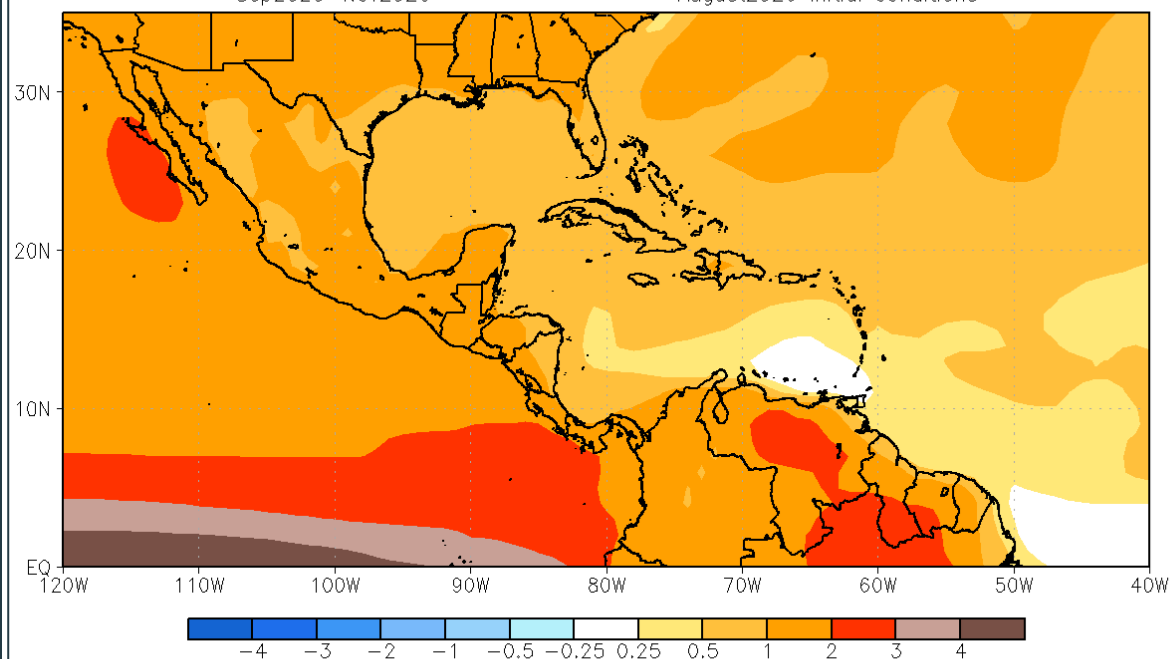
<https://go.usa.gov/3eZGd>

Rainfall and Temperature Outlook

NCAR_CESM1 Precipitation Anomalies (mm/day)
Sep2026–Nov2026
August2026 initial conditions

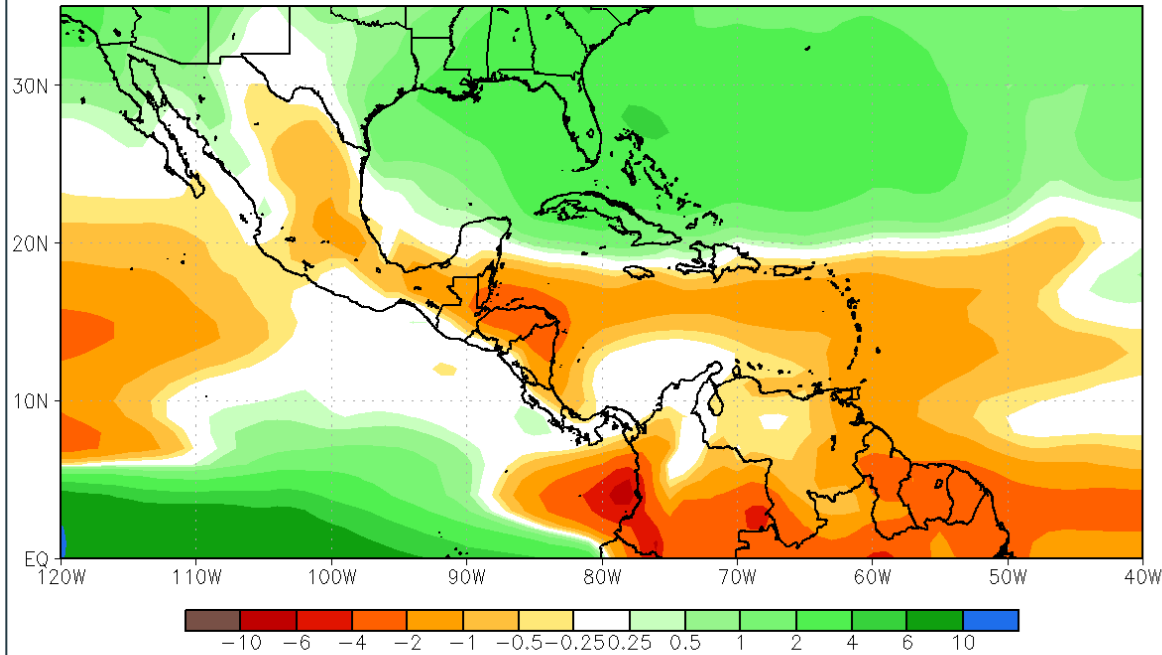


NMME 2-Meter Air Temp. Anomalies (deg C)
Sep2026–Nov2026
August2026 initial conditions

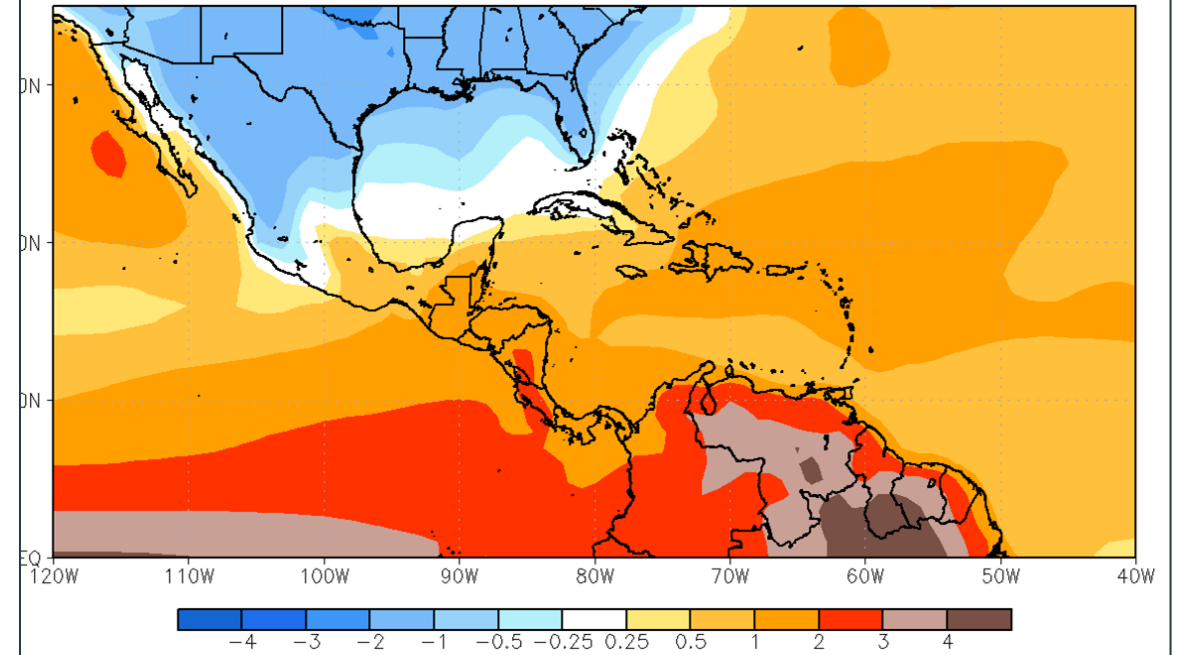


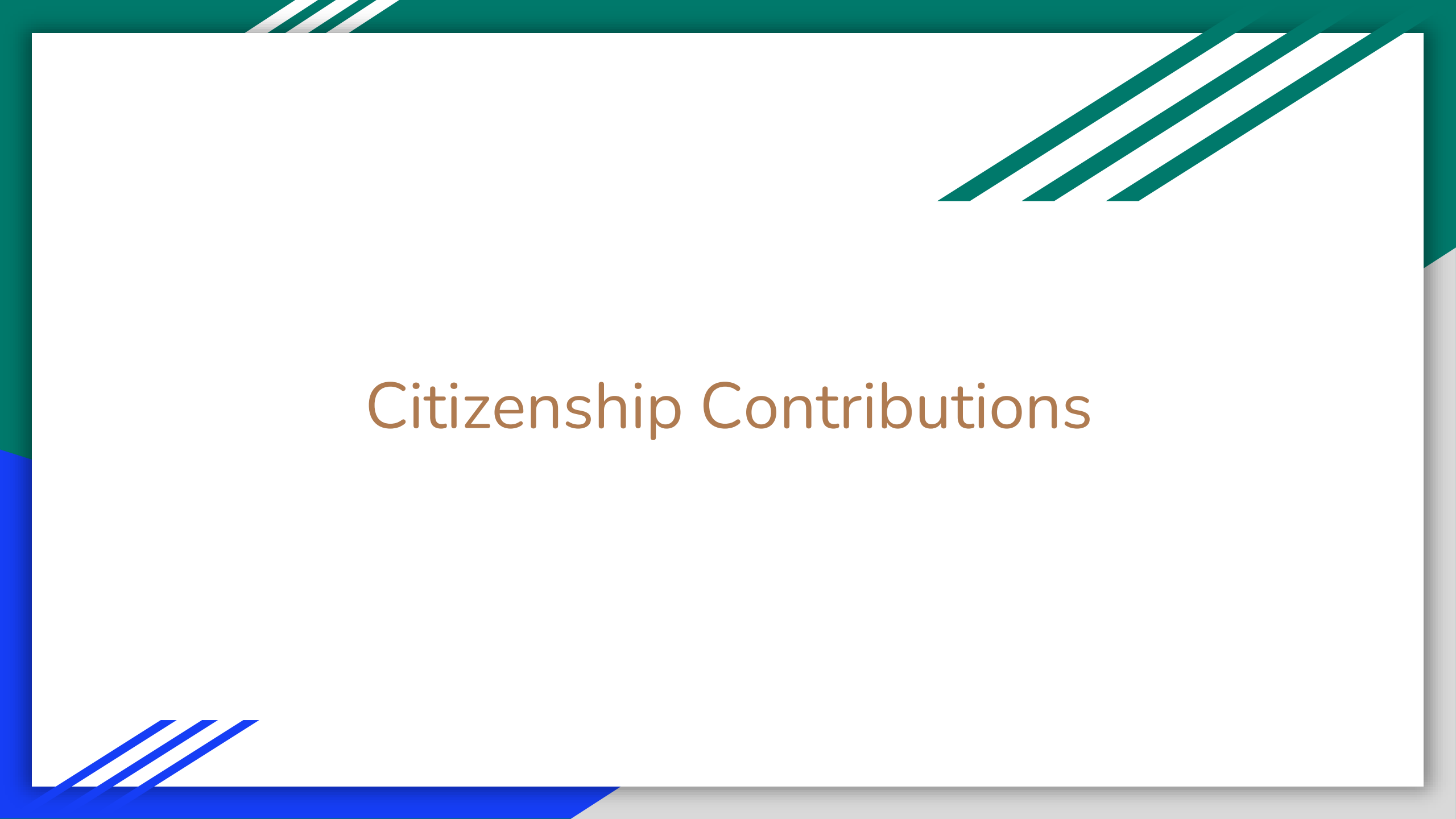
January March 2027 Outlook

NCAR_CESM1 Precipitation Anomalies (mm/day)
Jan2027–Mar2027 August2026 initial conditions



NMME 2-Meter Air Temp. Anomalies (deg C)
Jan2027–Mar2027 August2026 initial conditions

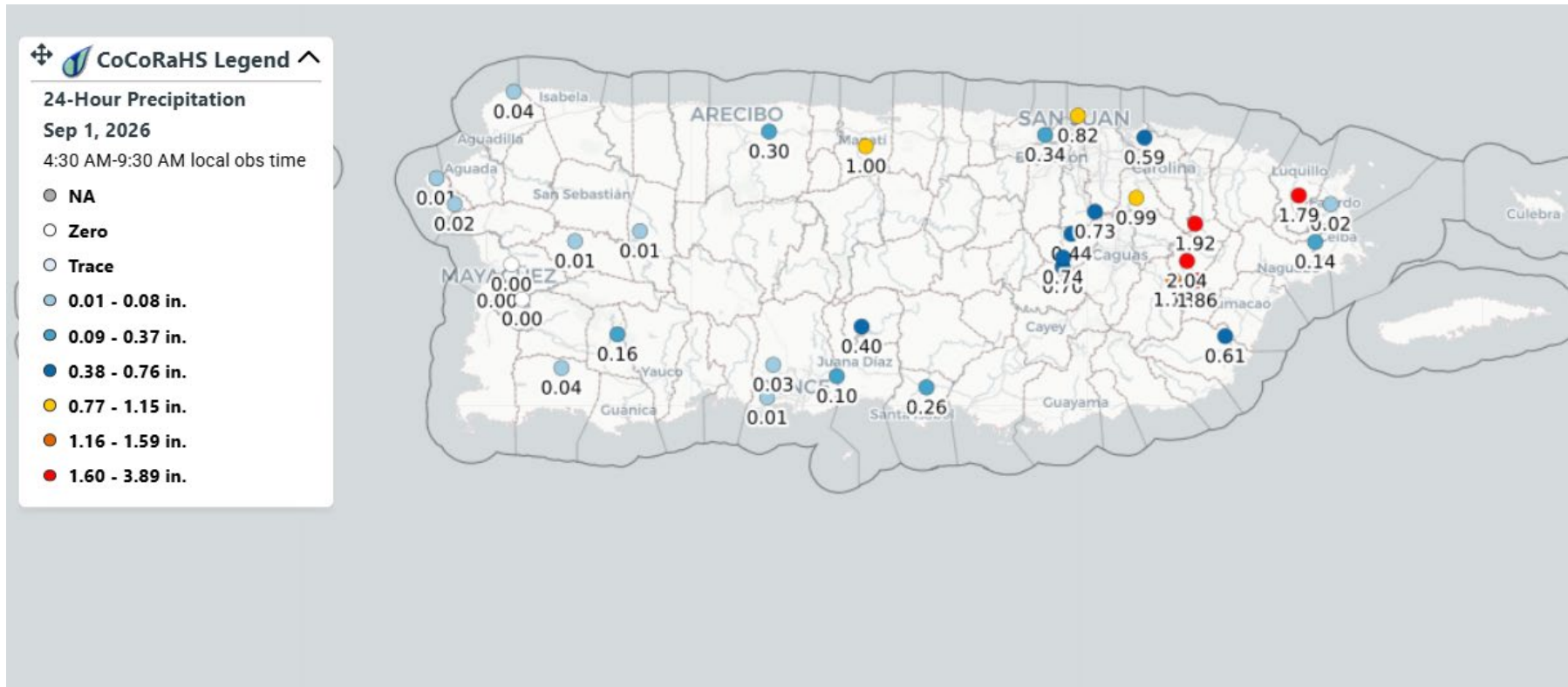




Citizenship Contributions



CoCoRaHS Map

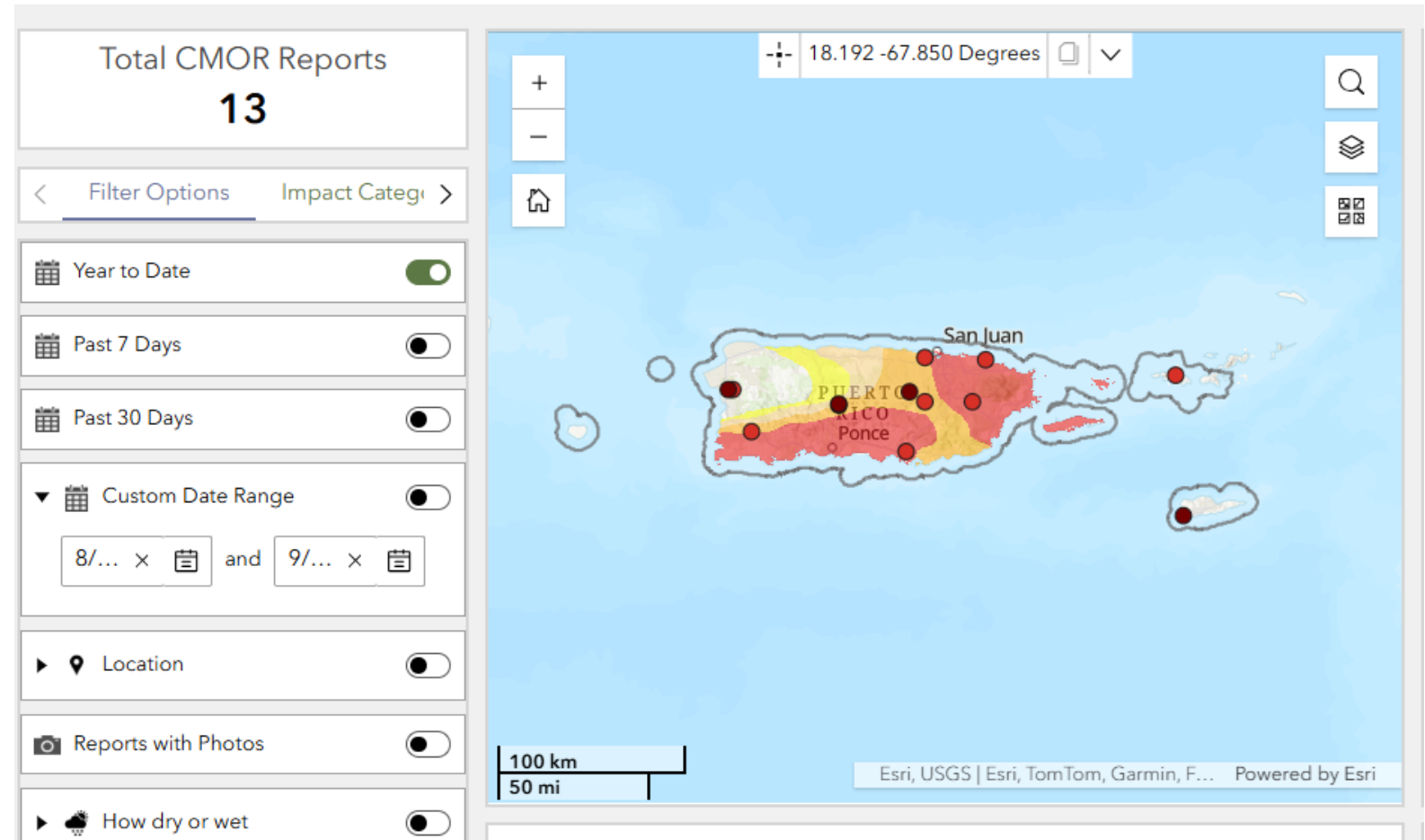


Farmers and Observers Observations

- How dry is it?
- How are the soil, vegetation, and streams?
- Have brush fires been reported?
- Is it affecting agriculture?
- Or reports received in the Condition Monitoring Observer Reports (CMOR) on Drought!



CMOR Reports



NWS San Juan, PR - Digital Resources & Alerts

Weather.gov Website & Forecasts

Monitoring the Tropics

8 AM AST Thursday, July 20th, 2023



San Juan, PR
WEATHER FORECAST OFFICE



THIS IS NOT A TRACK FORECAST

The areas around on the globe represent the potential formation area during the forecast period.

National Hurricane Center Tropical Outlook

Forecast for the tropical weather system



The National Hurricane Center is monitoring has systems across the Atlantic Ocean.

Action Items • The National Hurricane Center is issuing advisories on Tropical Storm don, located in the central Atlantic.

1. **Tropical West** • While dry air to the north may prevent development, the area may develop into a tropical system in the next 7 days.

✓ Unusually is the Virgin but residents and visitors should be aware of the National Hurricane Center & National Weather Service, San Juan office.

Formation Dates

1 Tropical Storm

48 Hours

10% OF

7 days

10% OF

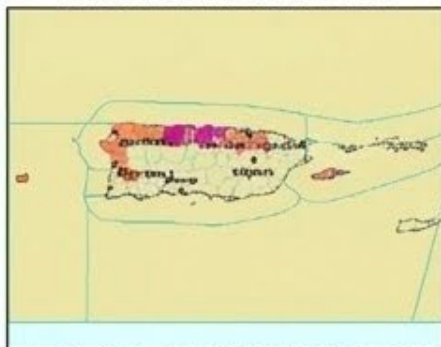
[f](#) [@NWSSanJuan](#) [KPRwx](#) [RUSVwx](#)

For more information, visit: [hurricane.gov](#) | [weather.gov/sju](#)

The National Hurricane Center is monitoring a tropical place with a low formation chance in the next seven days.

[Hide Caption](#)

Click a location below for detailed forecast.



[Marches](#)
[Marches &](#)
[Marches](#)

[Excessive Heat](#)
[Farming](#)

[Heat Advisory](#)

[Hazardous Weather](#)
[Outlook](#)

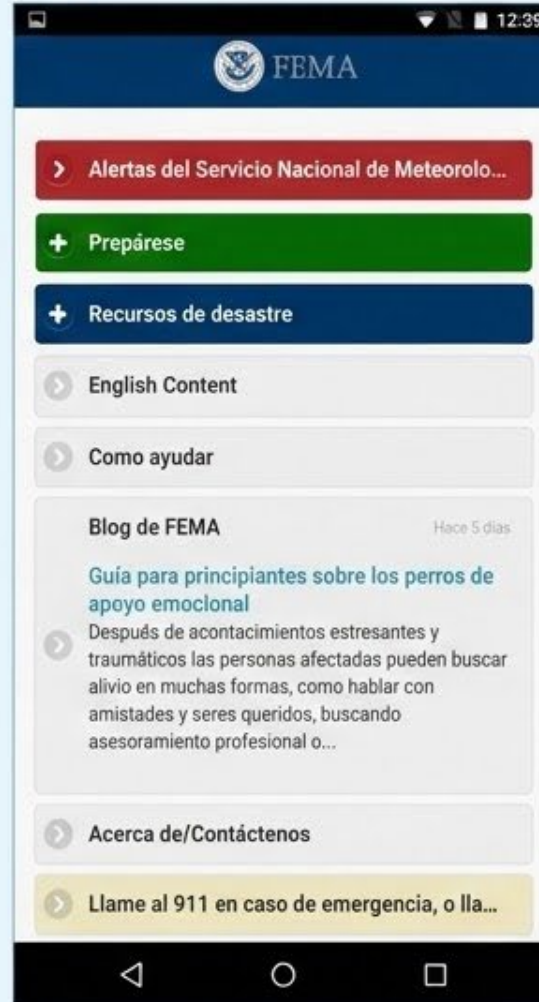


Last Map Updates: Thu, Jul, 20, 2023 at 3:47:25 pm GST

Visit [weather.gov/sju](#)

FEMA Mobile App (Español/English)

App Features & Resources



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U.S. National Weather Service
San Juan, Puerto Rico



@NWSSSanJuan



<https://www.weather.gov/sju>

Emergency Alerts

WIRELESS
EMERGENCY
ALERTS
CAPABLE



Emergency alert:
Severe

Flash Flood Warning this area
till 5:15 PM AST. Avoid flood
areas. Check local media. -
NWS



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Official X account for the National Weather Service in San Juan. Details:
weather.gov/nws_x. Use [#prwx](#) or [#usviwx](#) when reporting weather.

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NOAA NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

San Juan, Puerto Rico



CONTACT



nws.sanjuan@noaa.gov



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WEB PAGE



PLAN



POINT FORECAST



Agenda

1. Director's Welcome & Introduction – *Luis Cruz Arroyo*
2. STC Meetings & Efforts Recap – *Ricardo Colón*
3. NRCS Conservation Programs Update – *Frank Velazquez & Mario Rodriguez*
 - a) FY 2026 Recap
 - b) FY 2027 Focus
 - a) Ranking Categories
 - b) Regenerative Agriculture Pilot Program (RPP) Feedback
4. NRCS Farmer Roundtables – *Mario Rodriguez*
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Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forestry, Wildlife & Wetlands Subcommittee

FARM PRODUCTION AND CONSERVATION
FSA | NRCS | RMA | Business Center

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Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Partner Updates

FARM PRODUCTION AND CONSERVATION
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Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

NRCS Puerto Rico State Technical Committee Meeting



September 2, 2026
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
Forest Service - International Institute of Tropical Forestry

FARM PRODUCTION AND CONSERVATION
FSA | NRCS | RMA | Business Center

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