USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

NRCS
United States Virgin Islands
State Technical Committee Meeting







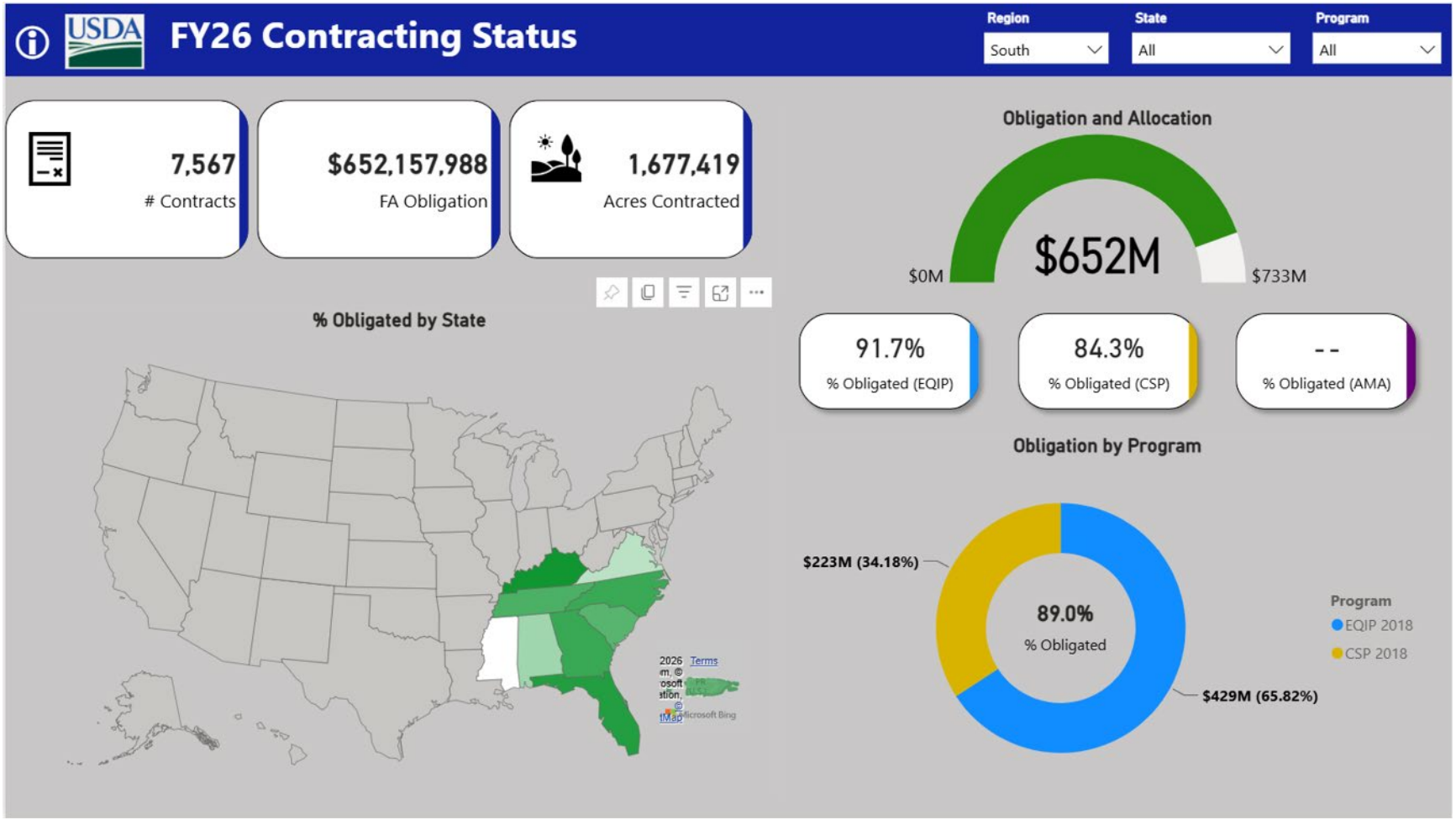
September 8, 2026
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
University of Virgin Islands, St. Thomas, VI

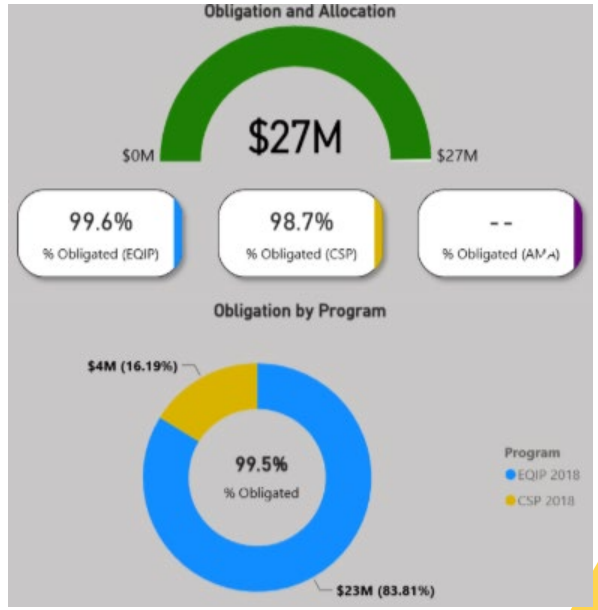
FARM PRODUCTION AND CONSERVATION
FSA | NRCS | RMA | Business Center

Agenda

1. **Directors' Welcome & Introduction – *Luis Cruz Arroyo & Dr. Louis Petersen***
2. **STC Meetings & Efforts Recap – *Luis Cruz Arroyo***
3. **NRCS Conservation Programs Update – *Javier Cruz & 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 Weather Service and Drought – *Ernesto Rodriguez & Emanuel Rodriguez Gonzalez***
6. **Forestry, Wildlife & Wetlands Subcommittee – *Sean Kelly***
7. **Partner Updates**
8. **Wrap-up**

Wins- Caribbean Area Leading the Way





Wins- Trying New Things- Placa Huellas

Before and After

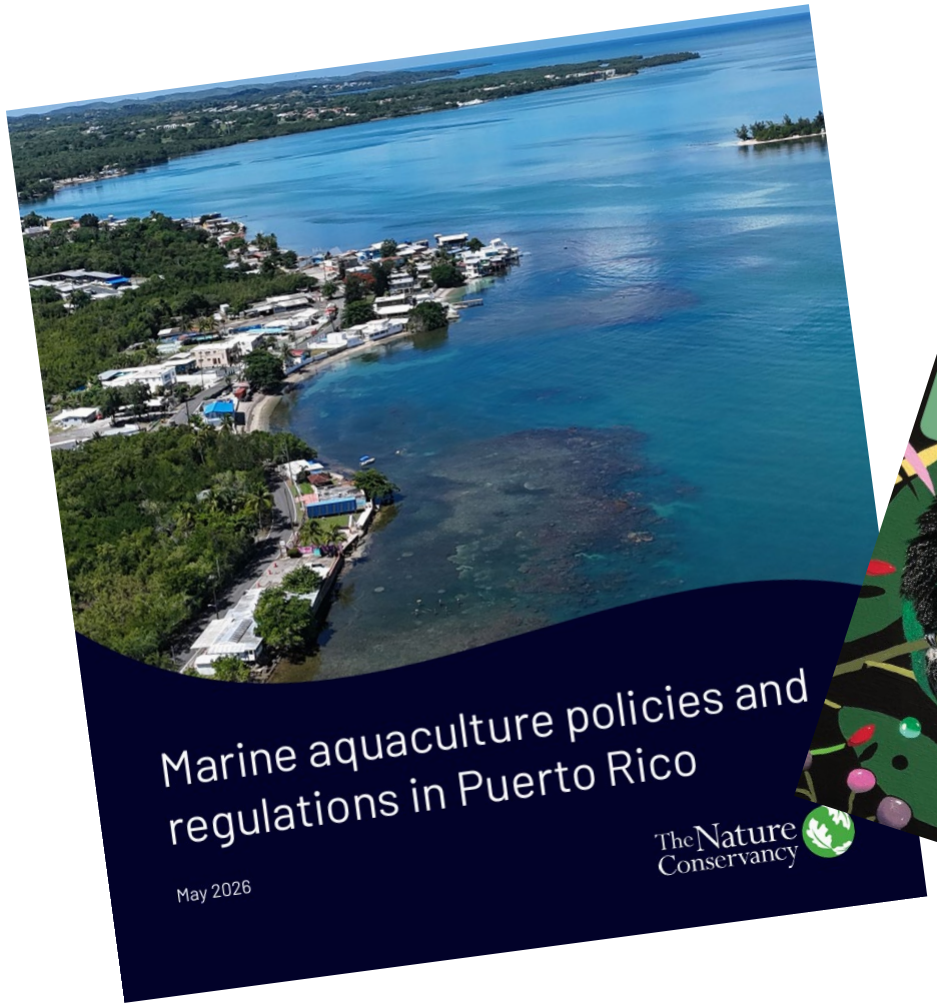


Bare clay running surface on grade, before construction (NRCS, May 2026)



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

Wins- Bringing New Products



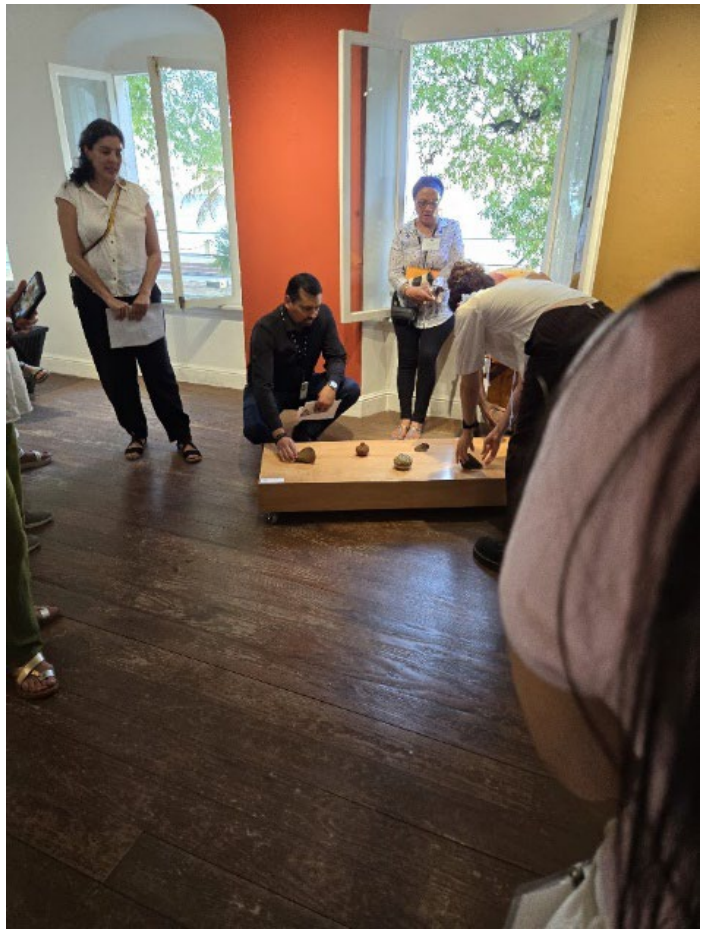


Wins- Increasing Capacity





Wins- Trying to Inspire the Future







Agenda

1. Directors' Welcome & Introduction – *Luis Cruz Arroyo & Dr. Louis Petersen*
2. **STC Meetings & Efforts Recap – *Luis Cruz Arroyo***
3. **NRCS Conservation Programs Update – *Javier Cruz & 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 Weather Service and Drought – *Ernesto Rodriguez & Emanuel Rodriguez Gonzalez***
6. **Forestry, Wildlife & Wetlands Subcommittee – *Sean Kelly***
7. **Partner Updates**
8. **Wrap-up**

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



STC Meetings & Efforts Recap

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

Past STC Meeting - March 5, 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
- **DPNR Natural Resources Priorities - Jean-Pierre Oriol and Dr. Nicole Angeli**
- **Priority Watersheds Discussion**
  - Priority watersheds/reservoirs
  - Special Watershed Projects
- **Technical Service Provider Opportunities**
- **Partner Updates:** U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Virgin Islands Department of Agriculture, University of Virgin Islands,

Agenda

1. Directors' Welcome & Introduction – *Luis Cruz Arroyo & Dr. Louis Petersen*
2. STC Meetings & Efforts Recap – *Luis Cruz Arroyo*
3. **NRCS Conservation Programs Update – *Javier Cruz & 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 Weather Service and Drought – *Ernesto Rodriguez & Emanuel Rodriguez Gonzalez***
6. **Forestry, Wildlife & Wetlands Subcommittee – *Sean Kelly***
7. **Partner Updates**
8. **Wrap-up**

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



NRCS Conservation Programs Update

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

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

FY 2026 Financial Assistance by Programs

EQIP and CSP

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

- EQIP helps producers make improvements to benefit agriculture and conservation.

Field Office	Obligation Dollars	Contracts
ST. CROIX SERVICE CENTER	$ 696,956.00	11

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

- CSP helps maintain the existing level of conservation on the land and incorporates new or advanced conservation activities to take stewardship to the next level.

Field Office	Obligation Dollars	Contracts
ST. CROIX SERVICE CENTER	$ 65,174.00	2

FY 2026 Active Contracts

Field Office	Obligation Dollars	Contracts
ST. CROIX SERVICE CENTER	$ 3,637,375.51	85

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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
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 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

FY 2027 Programs Implementation Schedule

EQIP, CSP, RCPP and ACEP

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

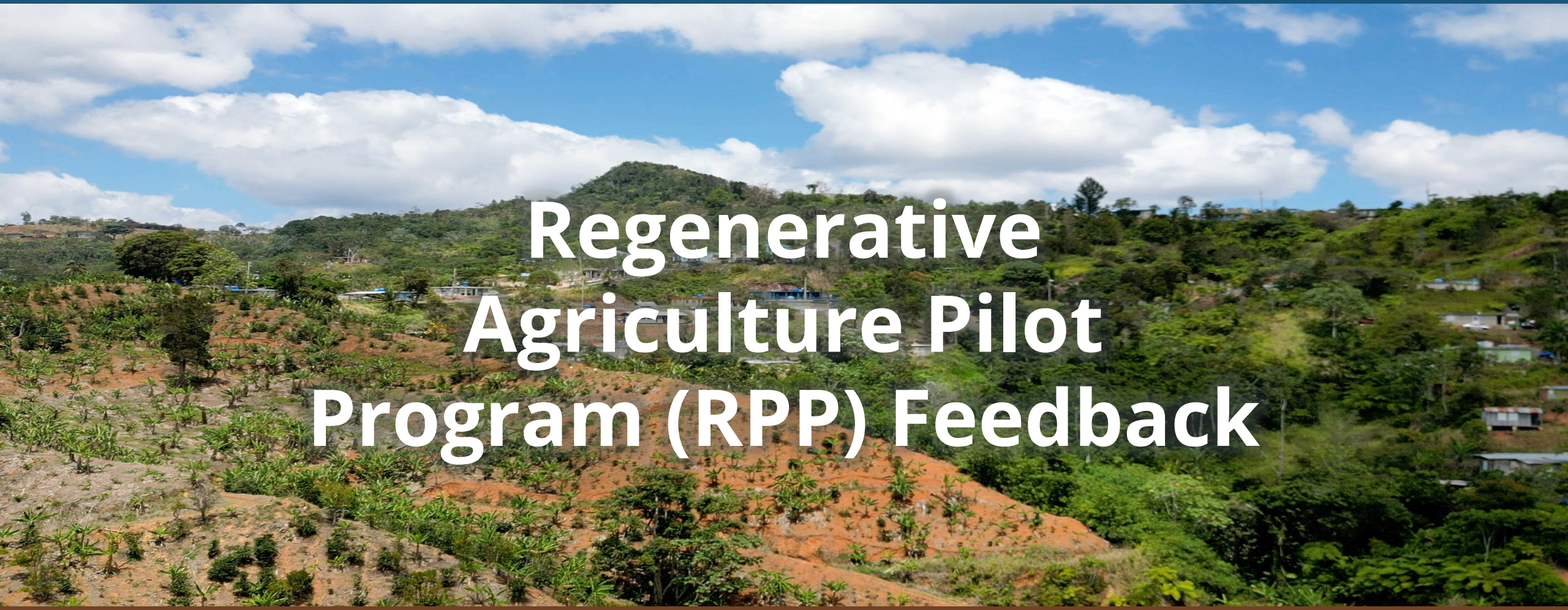
Ten clear months. Field capacity goes to CSP delivery and to certifying the practice backlog already under contract.

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 Accepatance 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 Accepatance 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 Accepatance 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 Accepatance 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 Accepatance 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 maling 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.**							

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



Regenerative Agriculture Pilot Program (RPP) Feedback

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

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

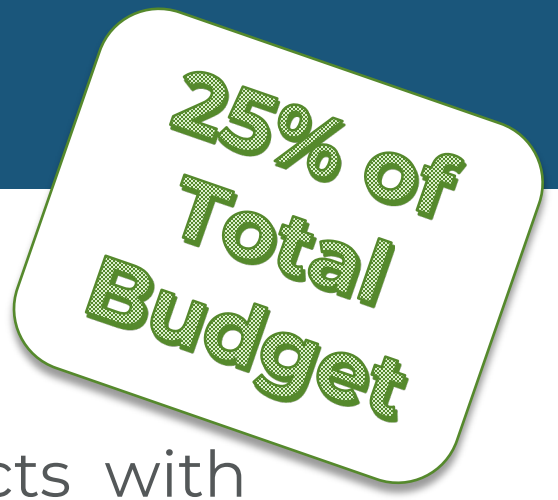
FY26 First-Year Implementation Accomplishments

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

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=lprLink

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

Questions?

Thanks

Agenda

1. Directors' Welcome & Introduction – *Luis Cruz Arroyo & Dr. Louis Petersen*
2. STC Meetings & Efforts Recap – *Luis Cruz Arroyo*
3. NRCS Conservation Programs Update – *Javier Cruz & 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 Weather Service and Drought – *Ernesto Rodriguez & Emanuel Rodriguez Gonzalez***
6. **Forestry, Wildlife & Wetlands Subcommittee – *Sean Kelly***
7. **Partner Updates**
8. **Wrap-up**

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



NRCS Farmer Roundtables

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

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

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

USVI NRCS Farmer Rountable

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.

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: 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.

APRIL 2026 *Helping People Help the Land* CARIBBEAN AREA

USVI NRCS FARMER ROUNDTABLE 2



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.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender. nrcs.usda.gov/pr

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.

Agenda

1. Directors' Welcome & Introduction – *Luis Cruz Arroyo & Dr. Louis Petersen*
2. STC Meetings & Efforts Recap – *Luis Cruz Arroyo*
3. NRCS Conservation Programs Update – *Javier Cruz & 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 Weather Service and Drought – *Ernesto Rodriguez & Emanuel Rodriguez Gonzalez*
6. Forestry, Wildlife & Wetlands Subcommittee – *Sean Kelly*
7. Partner Updates
8. Wrap-up

National Weather Service and Drought

Ernesto Rodríguez Fernández
Emanuel Rodríguez González
Weather Forecast Office San Juan, Puerto Rico

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

Monthly Meteorological Hazards

JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN JUL AUG SEP OCT NOV DEC



Forecasts and Bulletins













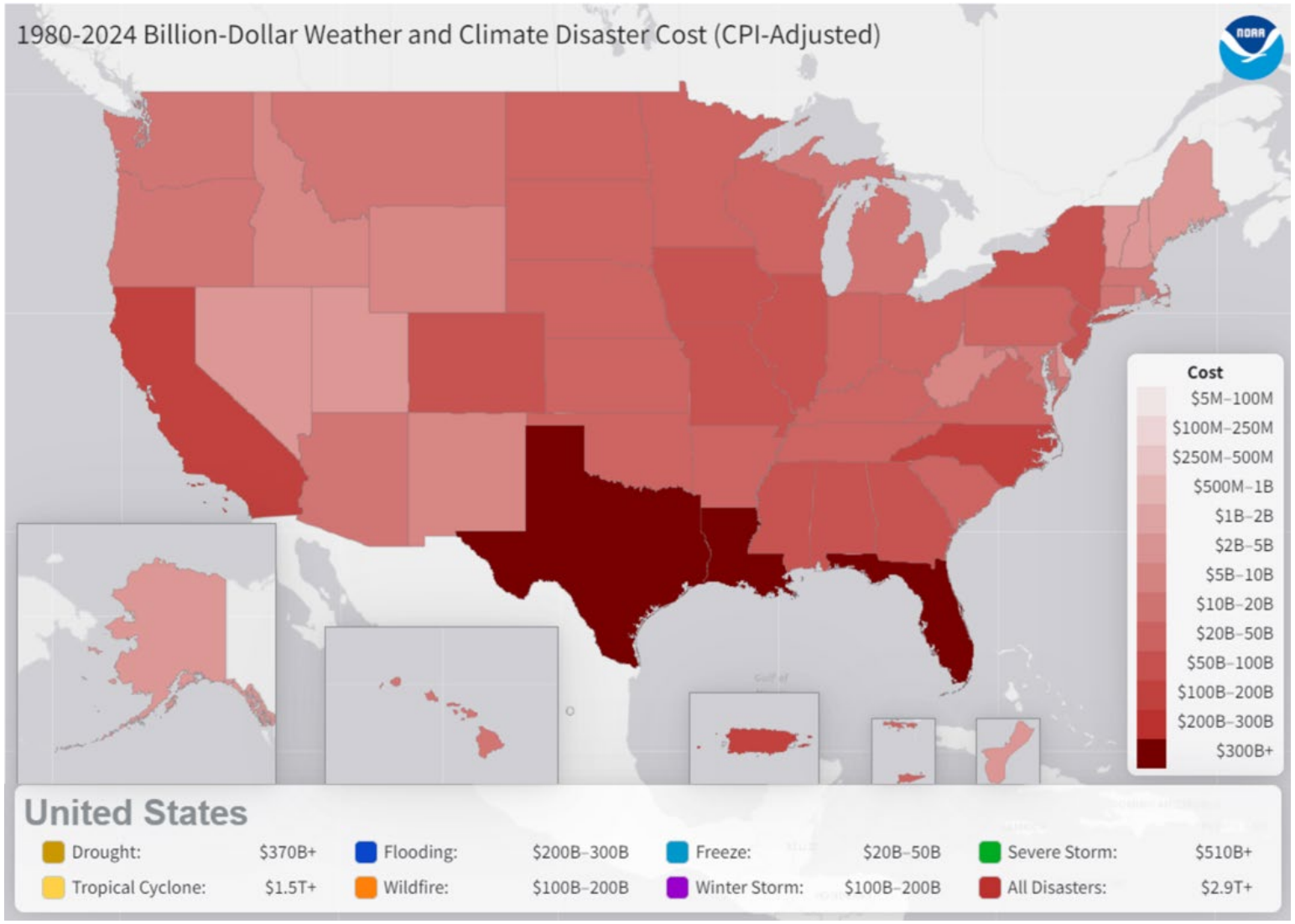
Forecasts and Warnings

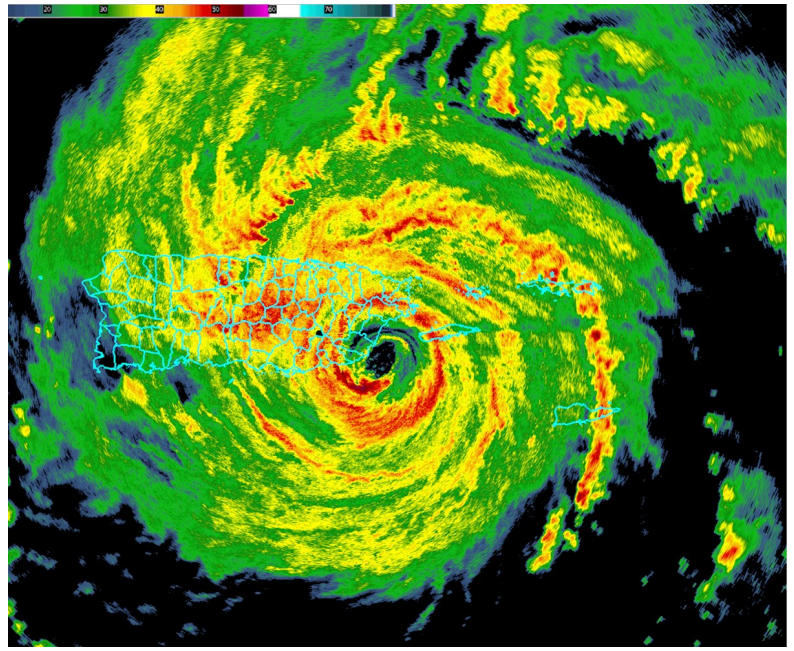






Vulnerability Cost: Irma and Maria











It’s not just hurricanes…





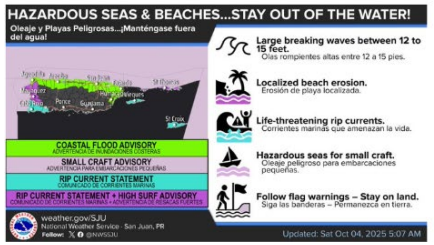








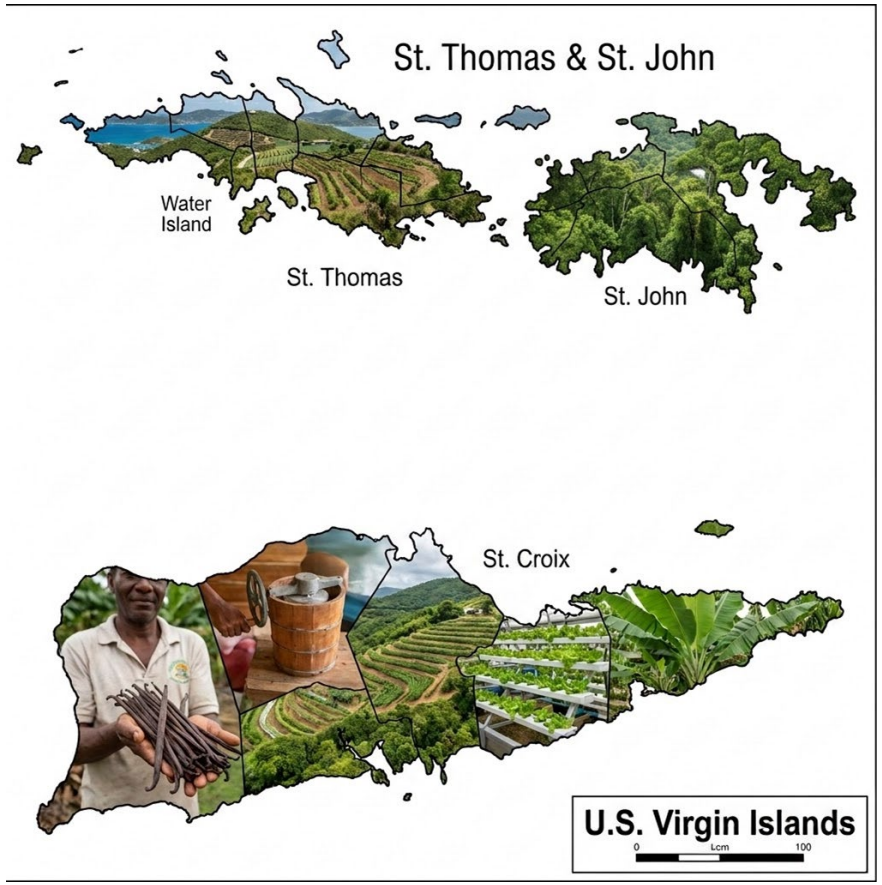






What it’s drought?

- 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

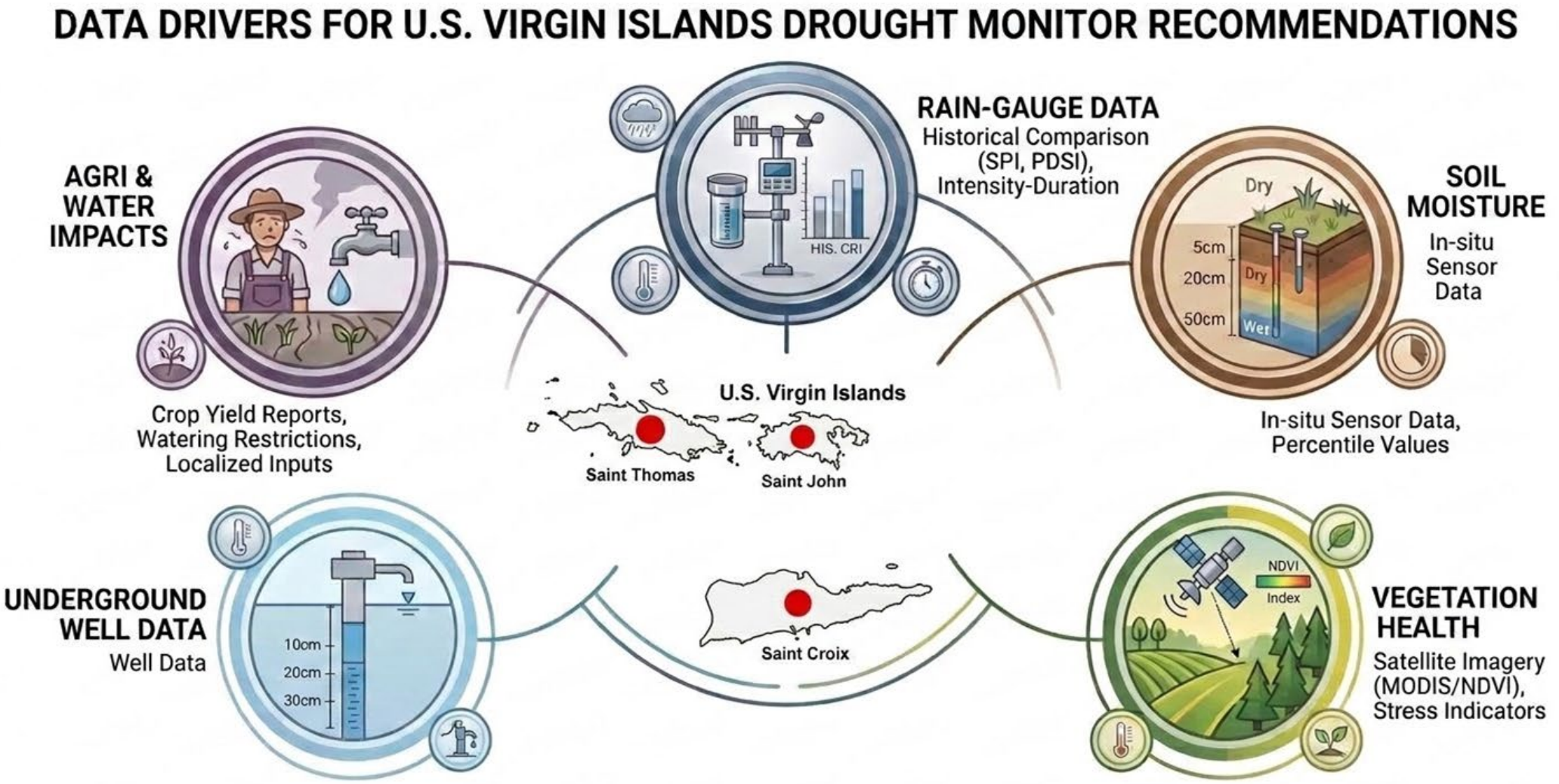
Exceptional Drought

- 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



Drought and ENSO

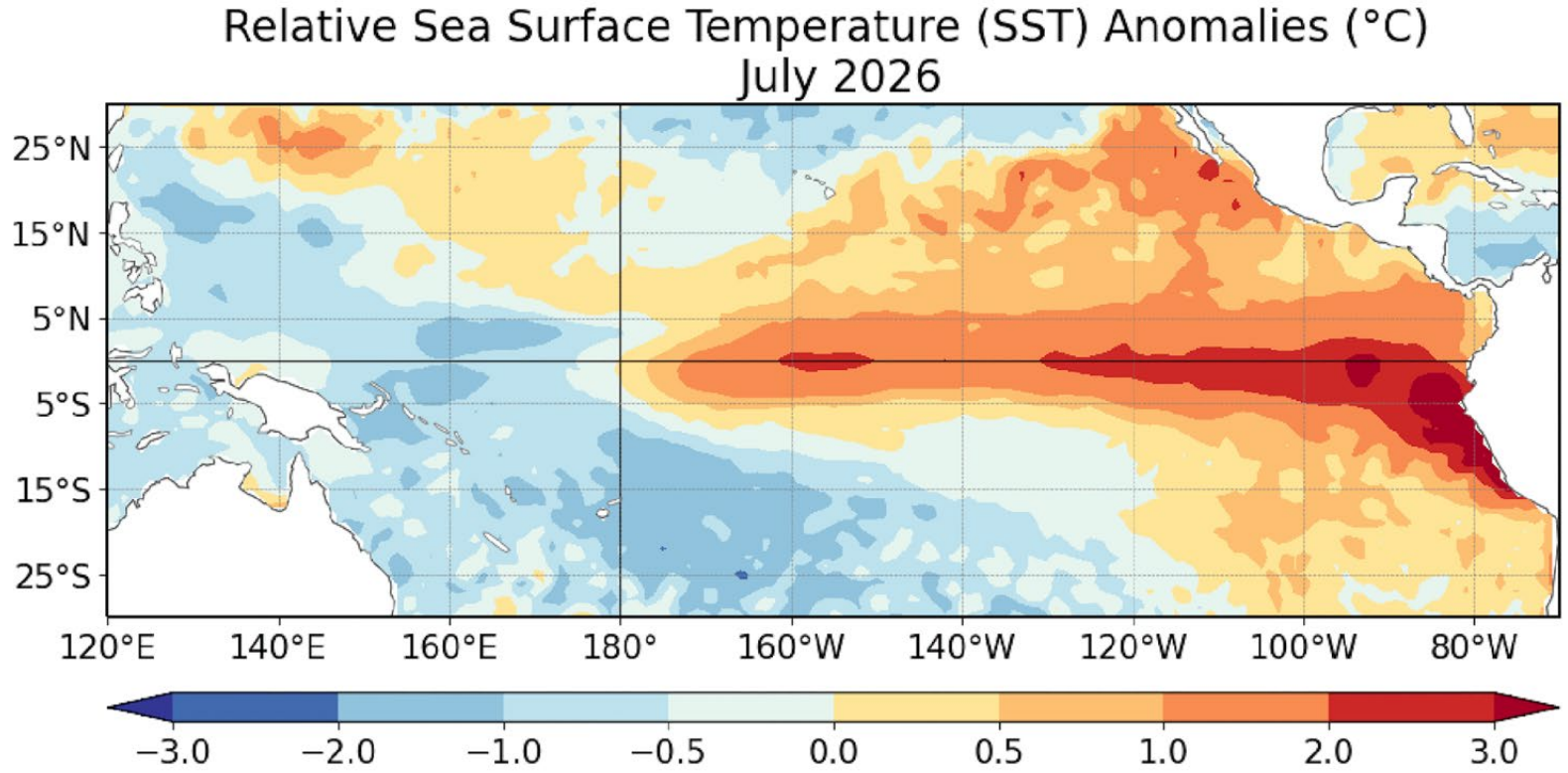
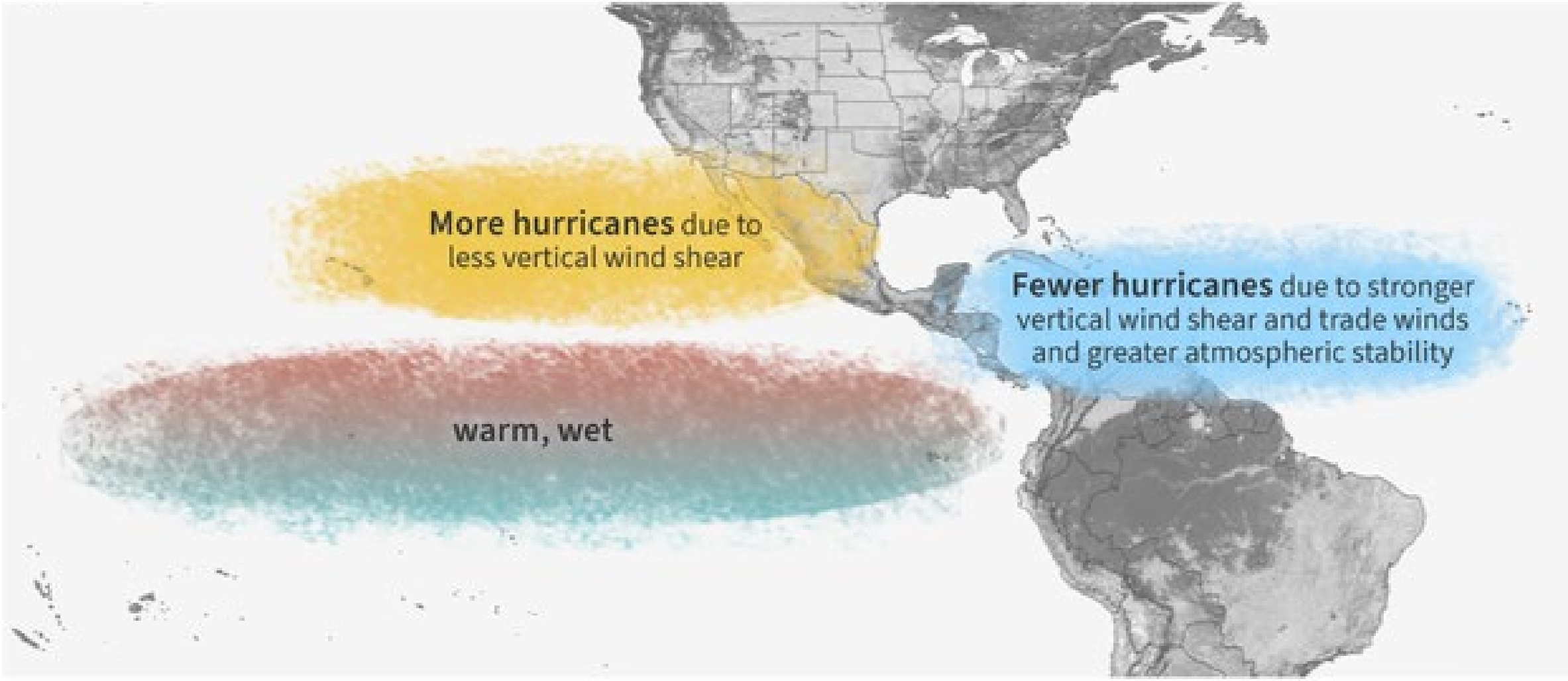


Figure 1. Average relative sea surface temperature (SST) anomalies (°C) for July 2026. Anomalies are computed with respect to the 1991-2020 base period monthly means. Data: OISSTv2.1.
https://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/analysis_monitoring/enso_update/Monthly_RelSSTA_map-hr.png

Typical El Niño influence



NOAA Climate.gov

ENSO Outlook

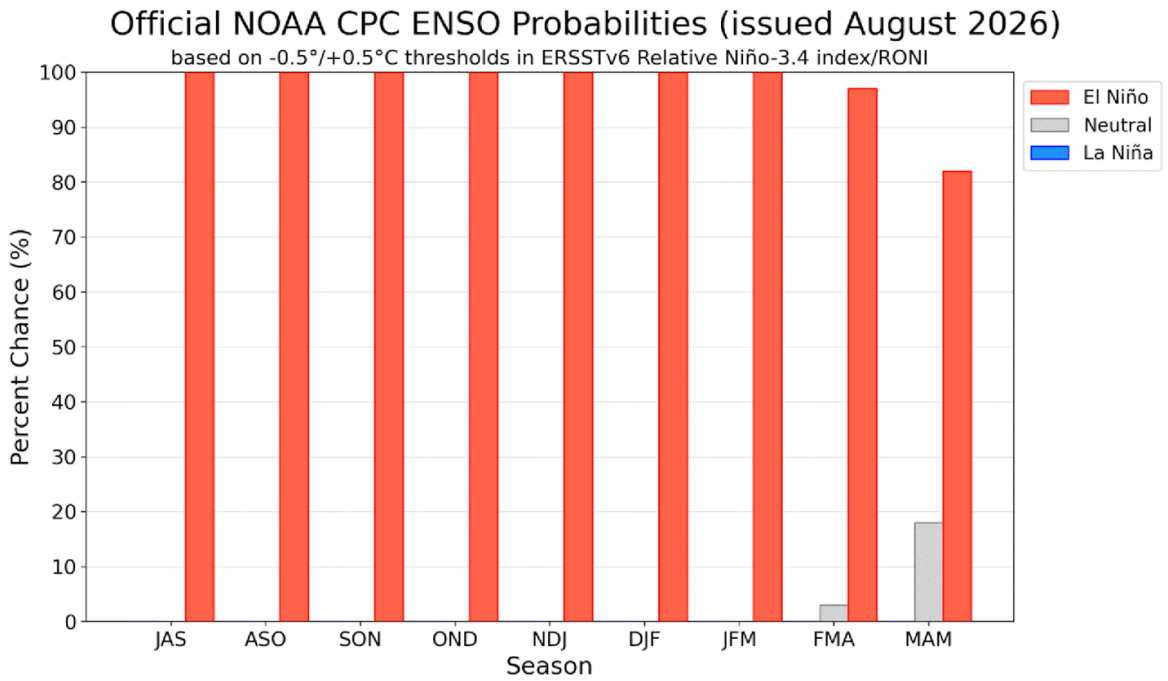


Figure 7. Official ENSO probabilities for the Niño-3.4 relative sea surface temperature index (5°N-5°S, 170°W -120°W) minus tropical mean (20°N-20°S). The relative index is re-scaled to match the variance of the traditional index. Figure updated 13 August 2026. Higher resolution image/table: https://cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/analysis_monitoring/enso/roni/probab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

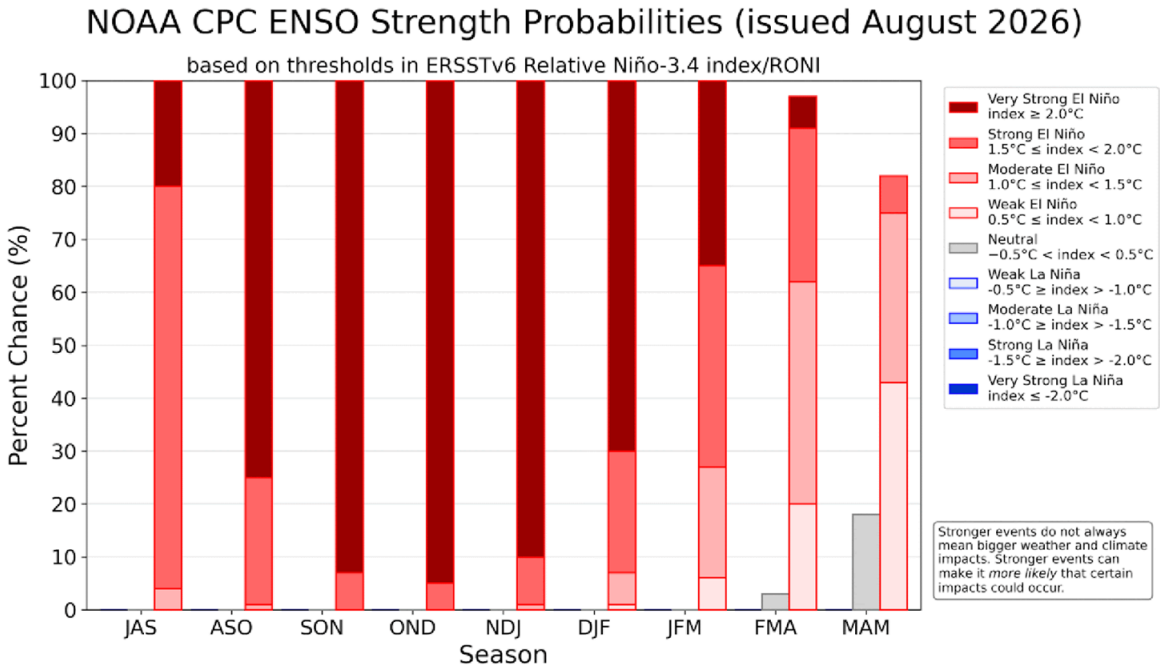
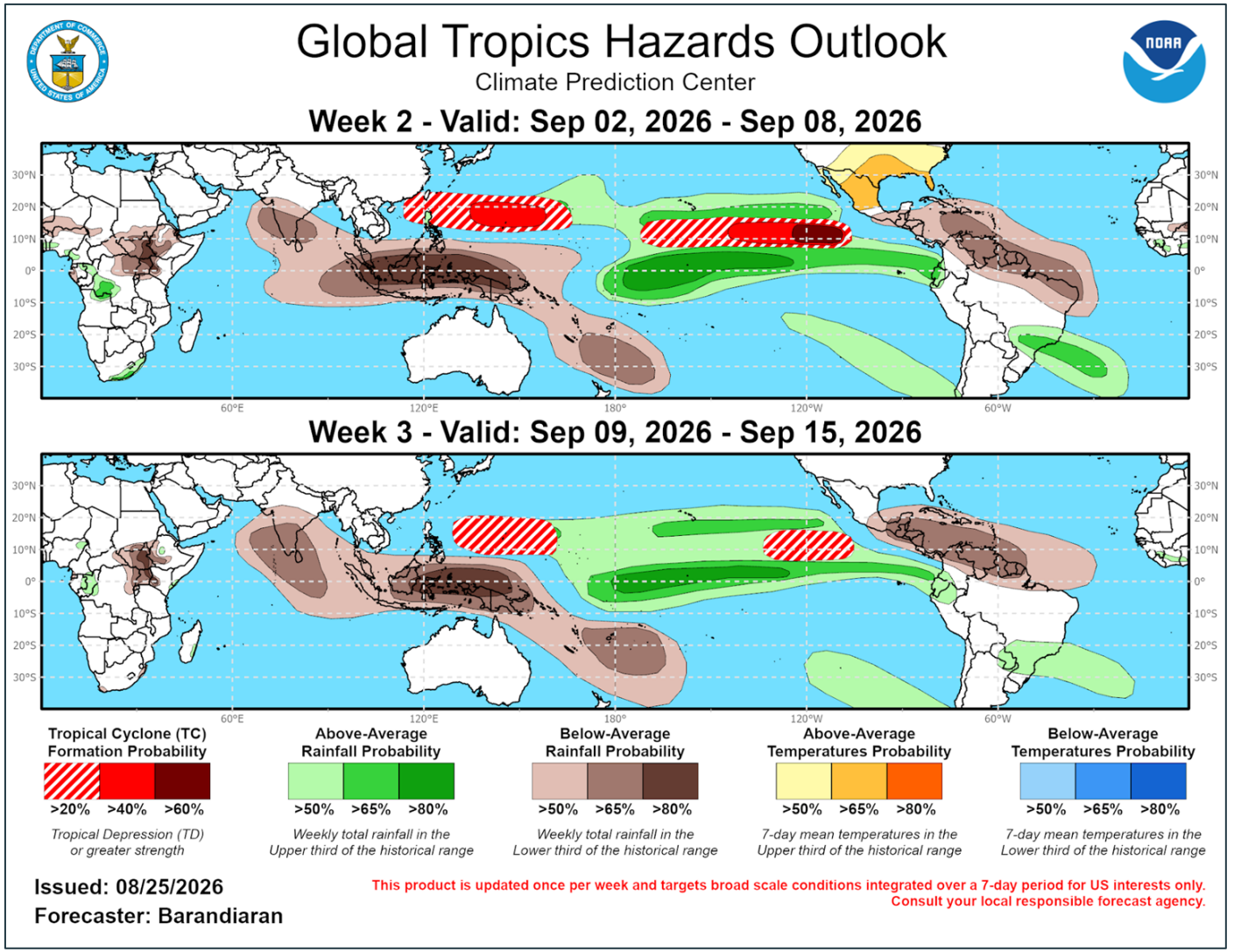
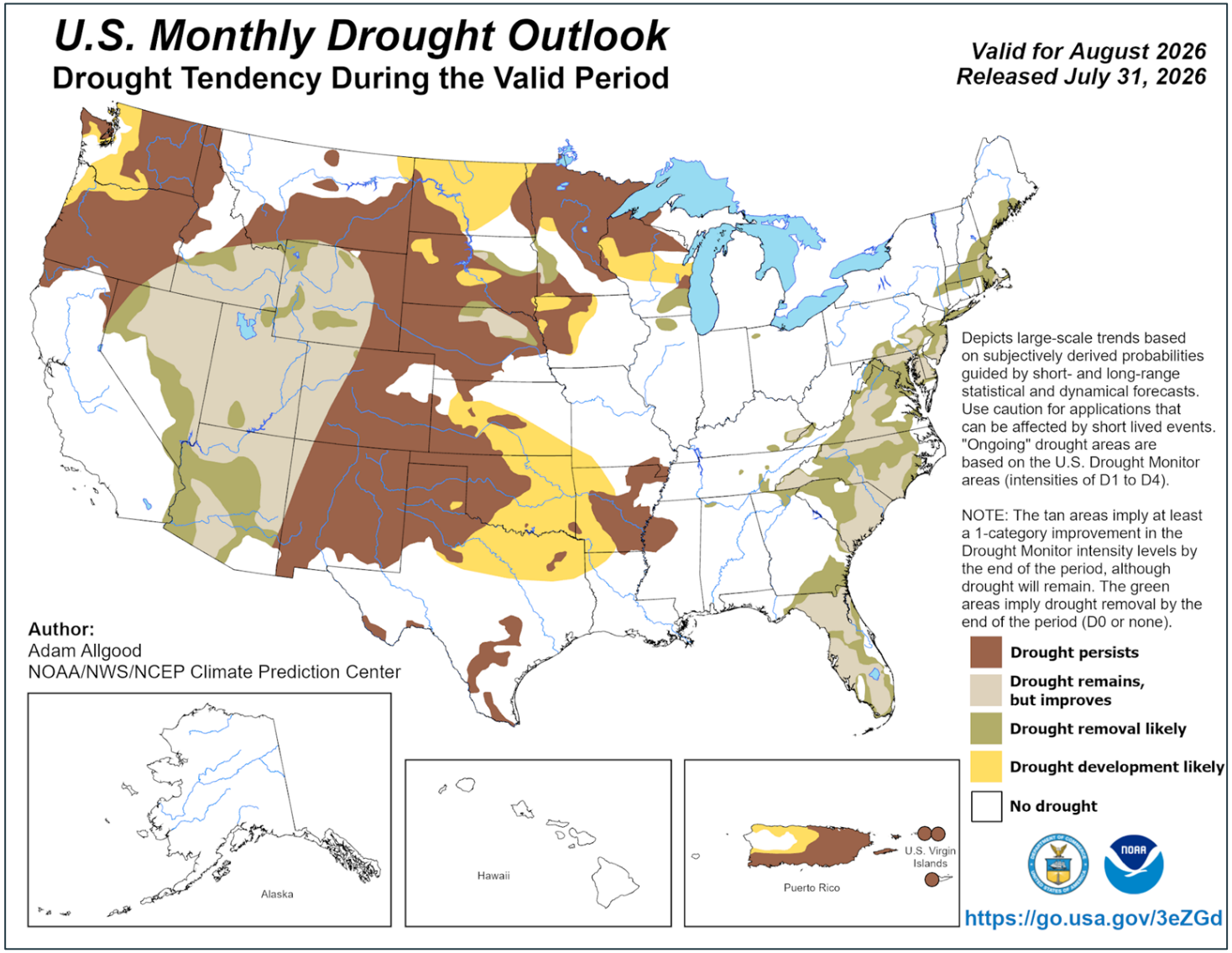


Figure 8. ENSO strength probabilities for the Niño-3.4 relative sea surface temperature index (5°N-5°S, 170°W-120°W) minus tropical mean (20°N-20°S). The relative index is re-scaled to match the variance of the traditional index. Figure updated 13 August 2026. Higher resolution image/table: https://cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/analysis_monitoring/enso/roni/strengt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

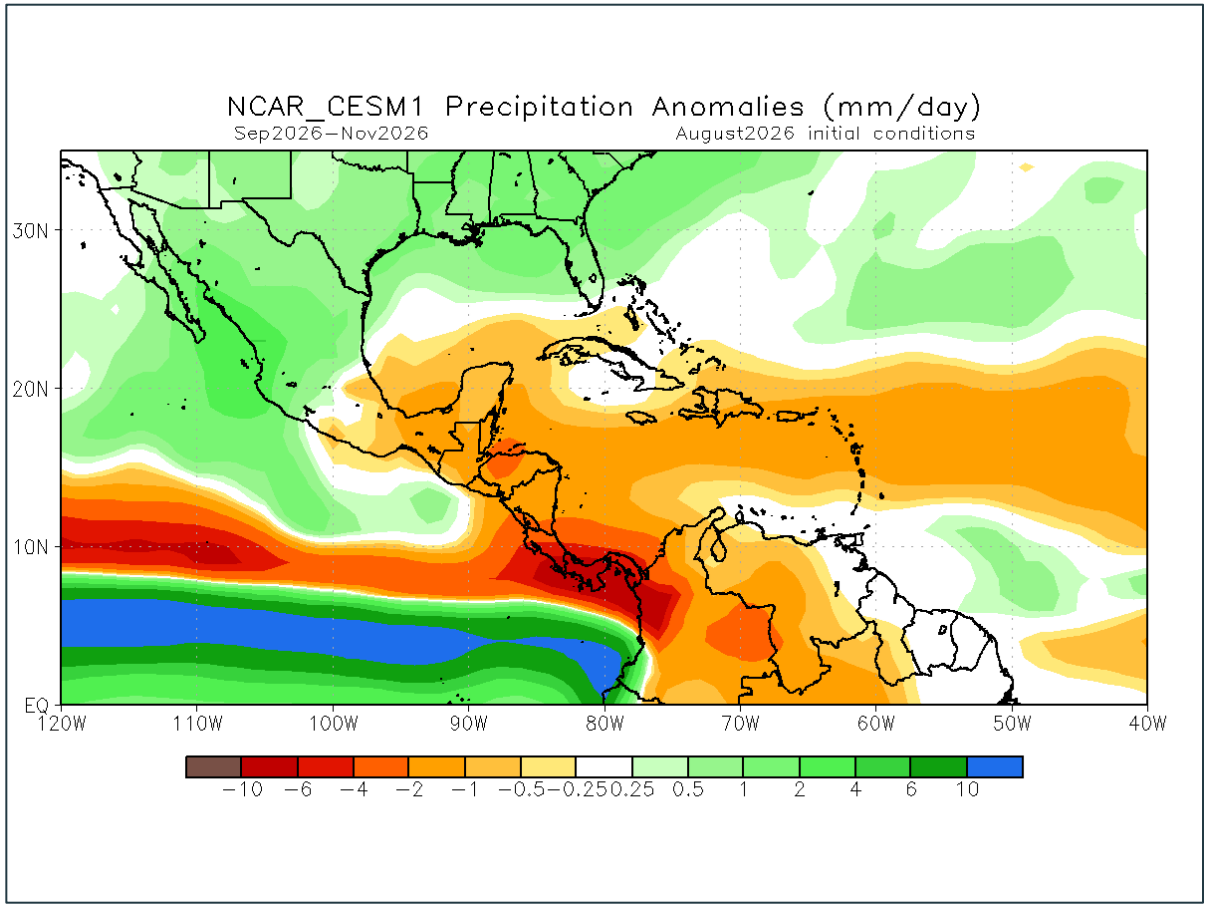
Week two and three Outlook

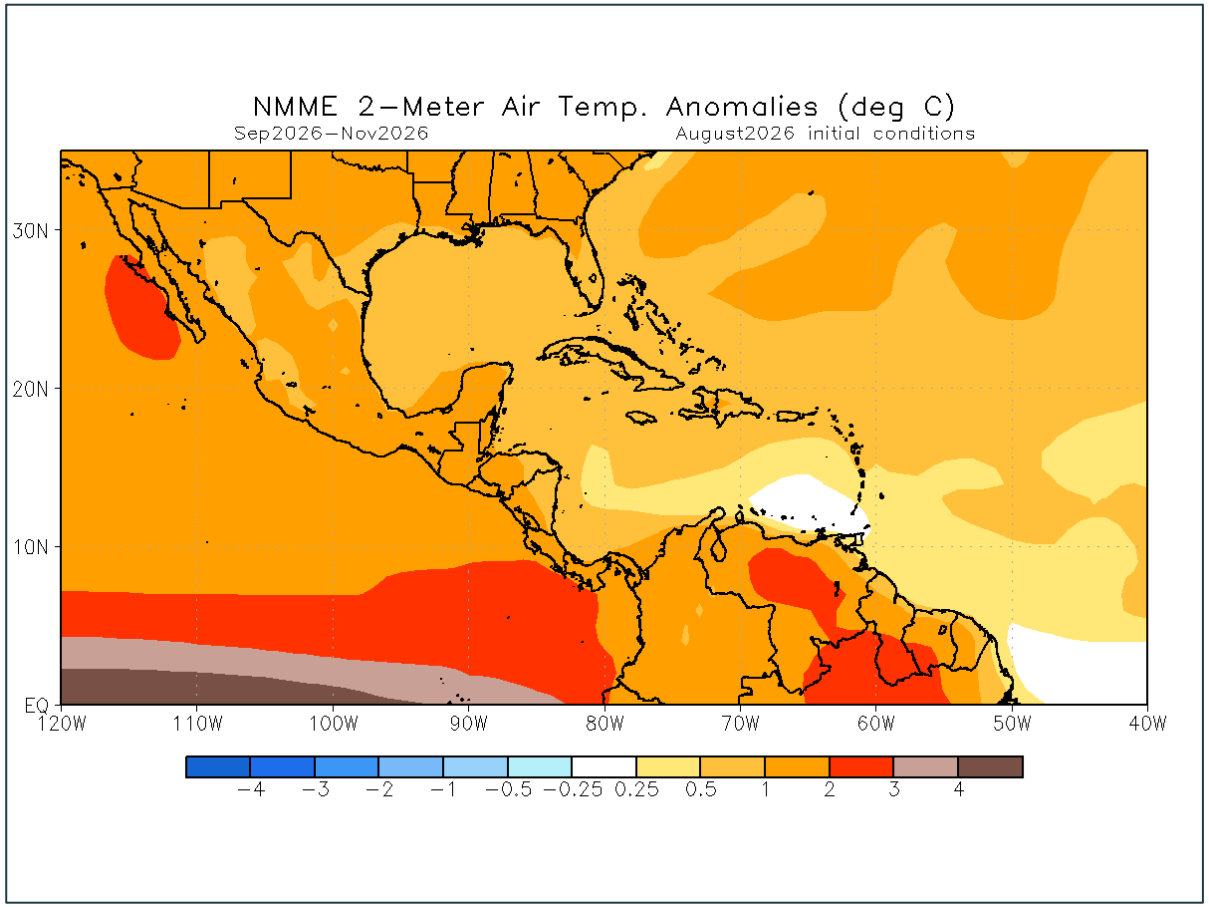


CPC Drought Outlook

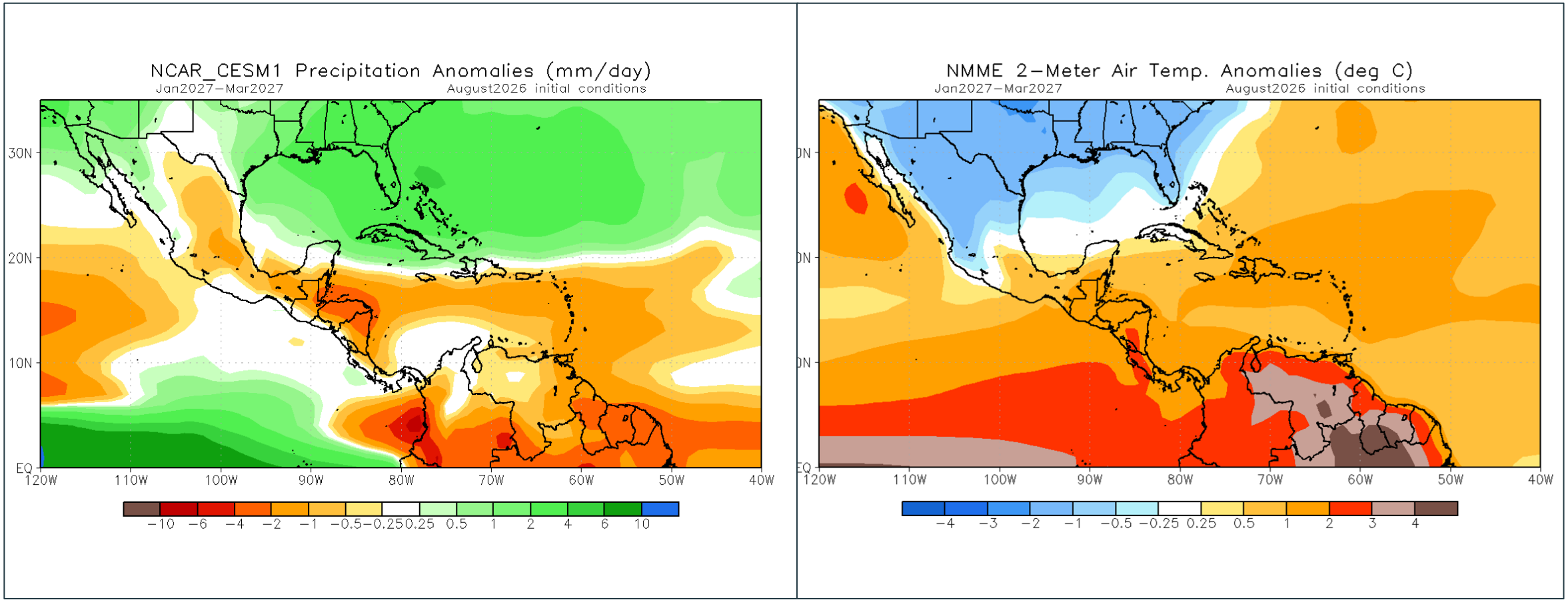


Rainfall and Temperature Outlook





January March 2027 Outlook



Citizenship Contributions

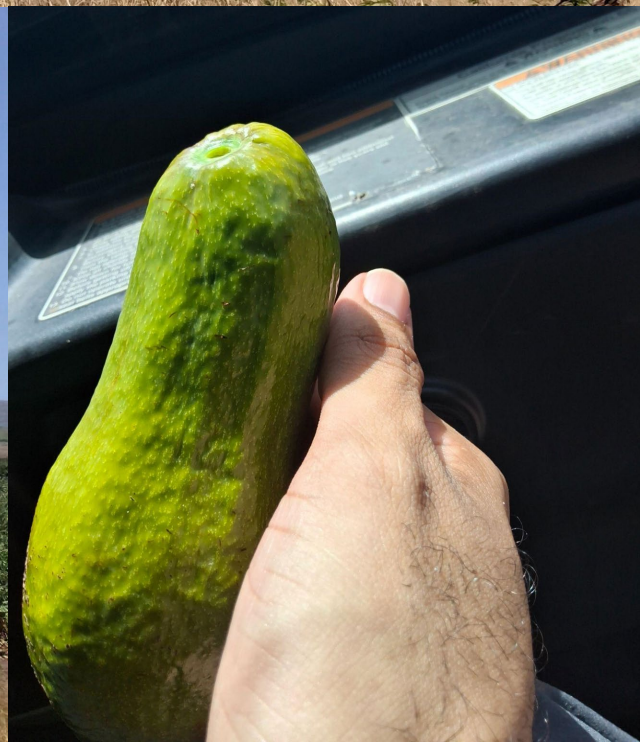

3









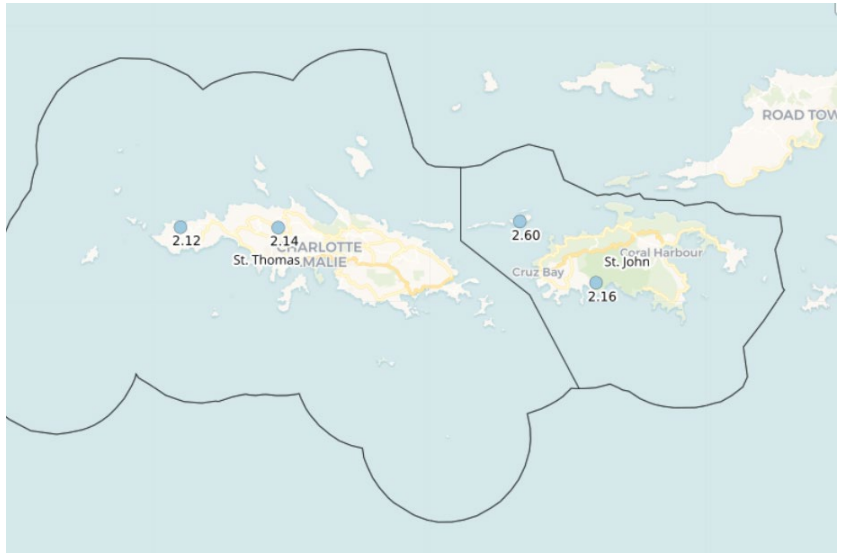


CoCoRaHS Map

CoCoRaHS Legend

Accumulated Precipitation
Aug 1, 2026 to Aug 31, 2026
At least 90% data completeness

- **NA**
- **Zero**
- **Trace**
- **0.01 - 3.47 in.**
- **3.48 - 6.28 in.**
- **6.29 - 8.69 in.**
- **8.70 - 10.88 in.**
- **10.89 - 13.46 in.**
- **13.47 - 38.18 in.**







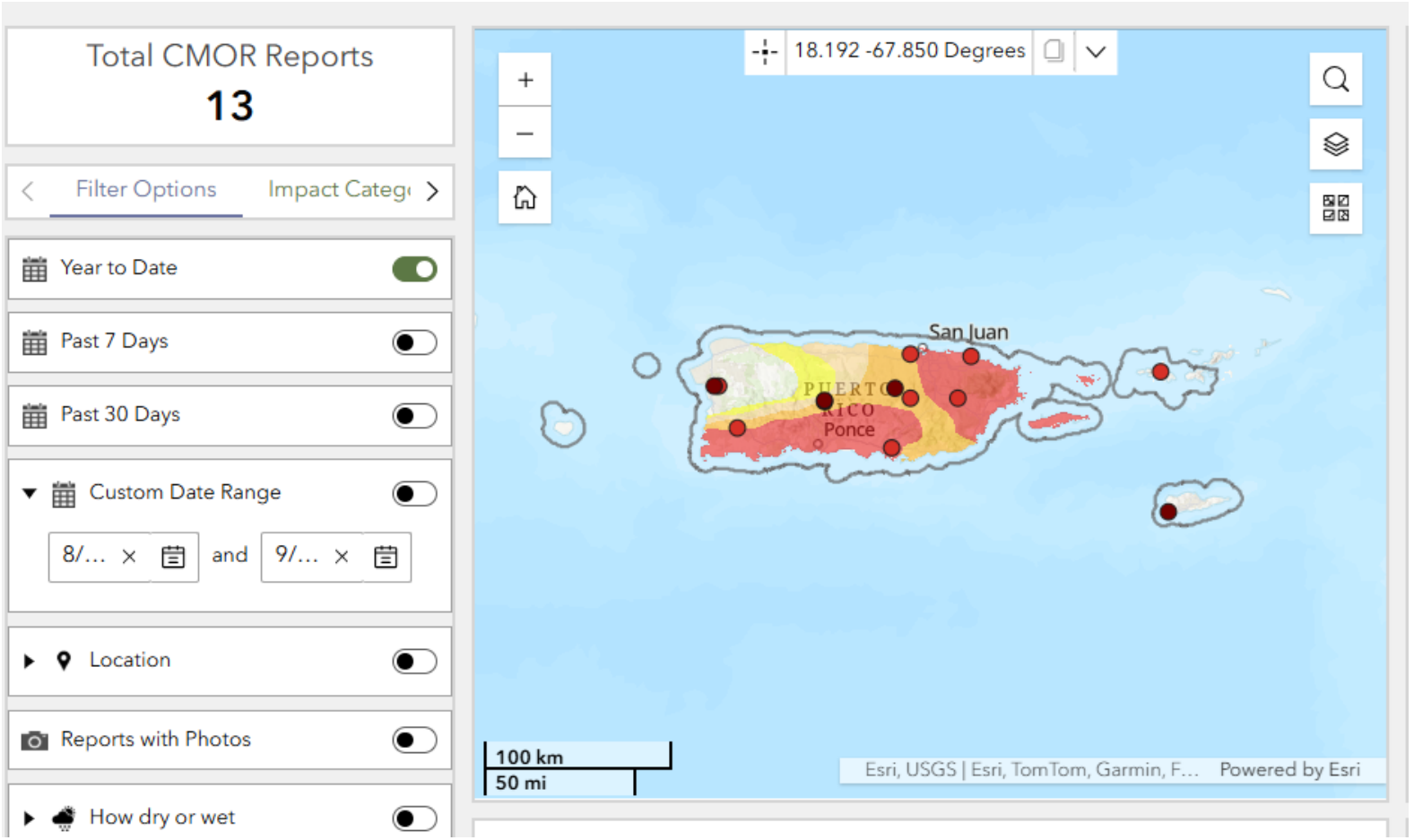
Farmers and Observers Observations

- 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



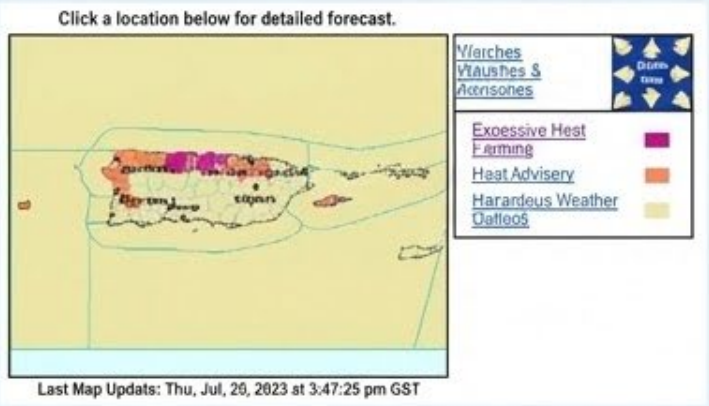
NWS San Juan, PR - Digital Resources & Alerts

Weather.gov Website & Forecasts



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

Hide Gqetion



Visit weather.gov/sju

FEMA Mobile App (Español/English)

App Features & Resources



Social Media & Emergency Alerts

Connect with Us

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 til 5:15 PM AST. Avoid flood areas. Check local media. - NWS

All Hazards NOAA Weather Radio

Scan for Mobile Website

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

Social Media

facebook

Log In



US National Weather Service San Juan Puerto Rico

266K followers · 326 following

Posts | About | Reels | Photos | Videos

NWS San Juan

43.8K posts



Follow

NWS San Juan

@NWSSanJuan

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

San Juan, Puerto Rico | weather.gov/sanjuan | Joined May 2012

425 Following **83.4K** Followers

Posts | Replies

NOAA NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
San Juan, Puerto Rico

CONTACT

nws.sanjuan@noaa.gov
787-253-4589
787-253-4024

WEB PAGE

PLAN

POINT FORECAST

Agenda

1. Directors' Welcome & Introduction – *Luis Cruz Arroyo & Dr. Louis Petersen*
2. STC Meetings & Efforts Recap – *Luis Cruz Arroyo*
3. NRCS Conservation Programs Update – *Javier Cruz & 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 Weather Service and Drought – *Ernesto Rodriguez & Emanuel Rodriguez Gonzalez*
6. **Forestry, Wildlife & Wetlands Subcommittee – *Sean Kelly***
7. **Partner Updates**
8. **Wrap-up**

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



Forestry, Wildlife & Wetlands Subcommittee

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

USVI NRCS State Technical Advisory Committee Meeting

Subcommittee for Forestry, Wildlife and Wetlands

Dr. Sean P. Kelly

USFWS Fish and Wildlife Biologist

Caribbean Ecological Services Field Office

Objectives of the Subcommittee

- Recommend conservation priorities of natural resources, and conservation practices.
- Provide criteria for prioritization of conservation contracts and/or projects or new initiatives
- Recommend strategies for the utilization of NRCS funds, conservation practices and/or potential needs for mitigation actions
- Develop proposals in collaboration with partners to compliment NRCS funding with funds from other agencies and/or organizations.
- Provide assistance in reviewing strategies to protect, conserve and restore wildlife species and their habitats, increase forest cover and conserve and protect wetlands.

Members of the Subcommittee

Name (First, Last)	In which island are you a resident?	Name of your organization, institution, agency, or company?	Which description best describes your organization, institution, agency, or company?
Mathilde A. Wilson	St. Croix	Agriculture Department-VIDA	State/Territorial Government Agency
Hilary Lohmann	St. Croix	DPNR - Division of Coastal Zone Management	State/Territorial Government Agency
Jennifer Valiulis	St. Croix	DPNR - Division of Fish and Wildlife	State/Territorial Government Agency
Alfonso Garcia Jr	St. Croix	DPNR - Division of Fish and Wildlife	State/Territorial Government Agency
Nicole Angeli	St. Croix	DPNR - Division of Fish and Wildlife	State/Territorial Government Agency
Sennai, Habtes	St. Thomas	DPNR - Division of Fish and Wildlife	State/Territorial Government Agency
Mark Gestwicki	St. John	Friends of Virgin Islands National Park	Non-Profit
Brian, Daley	St. Croix	GEOGRAPHIC Consulting	Private Business
Jose Luis Herrera	Puerto Rico	Island Conservation	Non-Profit
Evan Gwilliam	St. Croix	National Park Service	Federal Agency
Alissa Burmeister	St. Croix	St Croix Environmental Association	Non-Profit
Jennifer Valiulis	St. Croix	St. Croix Environmental Association	Non-Profit
Jessica Ward	St. Croix	The Nature Conservancy	Non-Profit
Olasee Davis	St. Croix	University of the Virgin Islands	University
Gregory Guannel	St. Thomas	University of the Virgin Islands	University
Kristin, Grimes	St. Thomas	University of the Virgin Islands	University
Damari Acosta	St. Croix	USDA Forest Service	Federal Agency
Maya Quinones	Puerto Rico	USDA Forest Service	Federal Agency
Jo Ann Santana	Puerto Rico	USDA Forest Service	Federal Agency
Magaly Figueroa	Puerto Rico	USDA Forest Service	Federal Agency
Lombard, Claudia	St. Croix	USDA Forest Service	Federal Agency
Tamara, Heartsill Scalley	Puerto Rico	USDA Forest Service	Federal Agency
Christina, De Jesús Villanueva	Puerto Rico	USDA Forest Service	Federal Agency
Bárbara I. Sánchez Santana	Puerto Rico	USDA-NRCS	Federal Agency

Representation

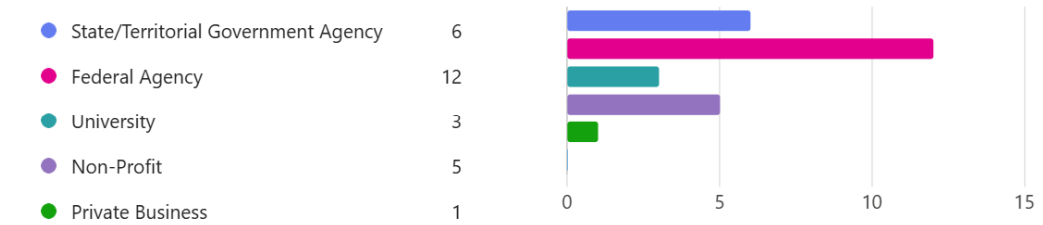
3. In which island are you a resident?

More details



5. Which description best describes your organization, institution, agency, or company?

More details



Forestry

Information last updated: 2/13/2026 1:25 PM
Report prepared: 7/10/2026 9:35 PM

State and Private Forestry Fact Sheet
Virgin Islands 2026

Investment in State's Cooperative Programs

Program	FY 2025 Final
Community Forest and Open Space Conservation	$0
Cooperative Lands — Forest Health Management	$74,980
Forest Legacy	$70,000
Forest Stewardship	$55,500
Landscape Scale Restoration	$0
State Fire Assistance	$141,000
Urban and Community Forestry	$300,000
Volunteer Fire Assistance	$0
Total	**$641,480**

NOTE: This funding is for all entities within the state, not just the State Forester's office.





Researchers from UW-Madison enter the Estate Thomas Experimental Forest on St. Croix. (Photo by Spencer Atkinson) 2 of 5

STX's Estate Thomas Experimental Forest: A Resource for the Future

Niki Mazaroli August 12, 2019

Wildlife



USVI State Wildlife Action Plan Home

New to the USVI SWAP in this 2025 update, is:

- an analysis of the USVI SGCNs in the Regional Context
- a comprehensive plant list
- terrestrial invertebrates
- freshwater species
- range maps for select species

USVI State Wildlife Action Plan Home About Public and Expert Review Species Habitats More

U.S. Virgin Islands Species of Greatest Conservation Need

Species Profiles : Prioritized Species

Species Name	Scientific Name	Group	2015 Conservation Status	20
Yellow Mottled Coqui	*Eleutherodactylus lentu*	Amphibians	Low Risk	Species of Gre
Virgin Islands Coqui	*Eleutherodactylus schv*	Amphibians	High Risk- possibly Extirpated	High Risk- pos
American Eel	*Anguilla rostrata*	Freshwater Fauna	High Risk	Medium Risk

Plant Working Group: A working group made up of expert botanists from all three islands developed a list of plants most in need of conservation. They started with from a review of recent major botanical publications, landscaping consultants, government agencies, and historical documents and based on current needs and prioritizations, and narrowed the list to 66 species which are now part of the SGCN list. The working group worked over three years and was facilitated by Division of Fish and Wildlife to aggregate the plant lists, review all candidate species, and justify their inclusion as SGCN (Guyant et al, in preparation).

Freshwater Fauna: Through a C-SWG, the Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership and Clemson University conducted surveys across the territory for freshwater fauna. One of the components to this project was to develop a list of suggested SGCN for freshwater fauna based on survey results.

Terrestrial Invertebrates: Through a partnership with the Southeast Climate Adaptation Science Center, we were able to add a list of terrestrial invertebrates. This list was based on a review of all verified observations through GBIF, specimen collections, and recent surveys by the USGS Bee Lab. Although most terrestrial invertebrates continue to be data deficient, we will be able to work toward filling those data gaps for the next SWAP update.

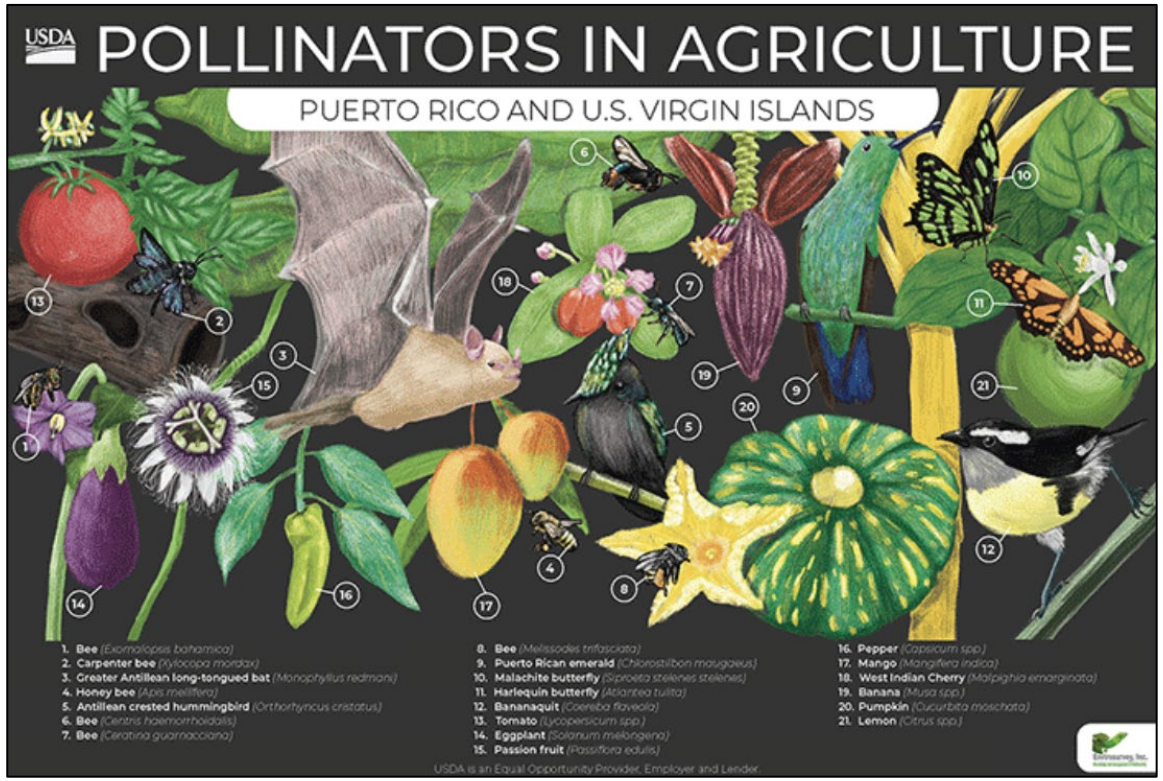
Range Maps: In previous USVI SWAPs, distribution of species was based exclusively on SGCNs' associations with habitats. Through a partnership with WildMon, range maps for 83 SGCN were produced. These species were selected based on the availability of sufficient occurence data. Range maps were developed from occurrence records derived from GBIF records supplemented by Acoustic monitoring conducted by WildMon, and the USGS Gap Analysis. Column L indicates which species were mapped and Column M indicates the total area of the Extent of Occurrence (EOO) which describes the potential broad-scale geographic extension of species beyond just the observed occurrences.

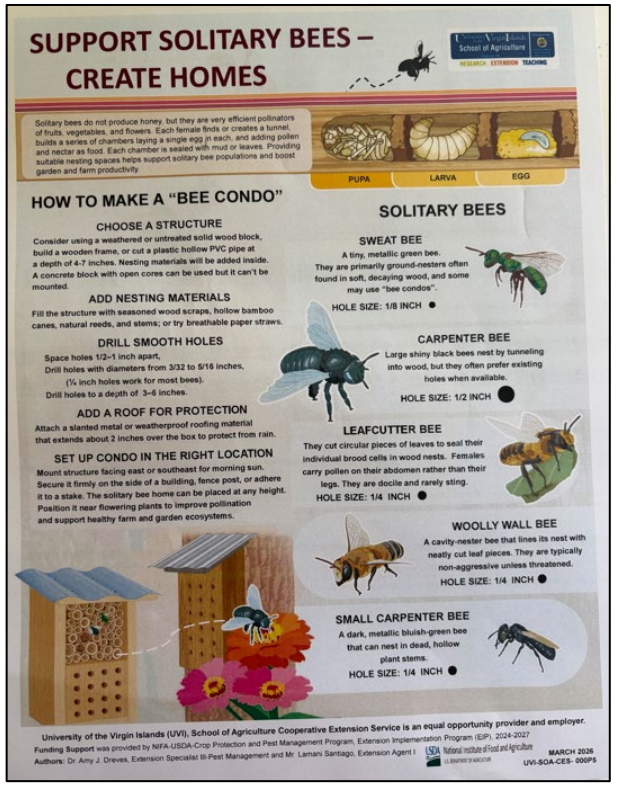
Wildlife

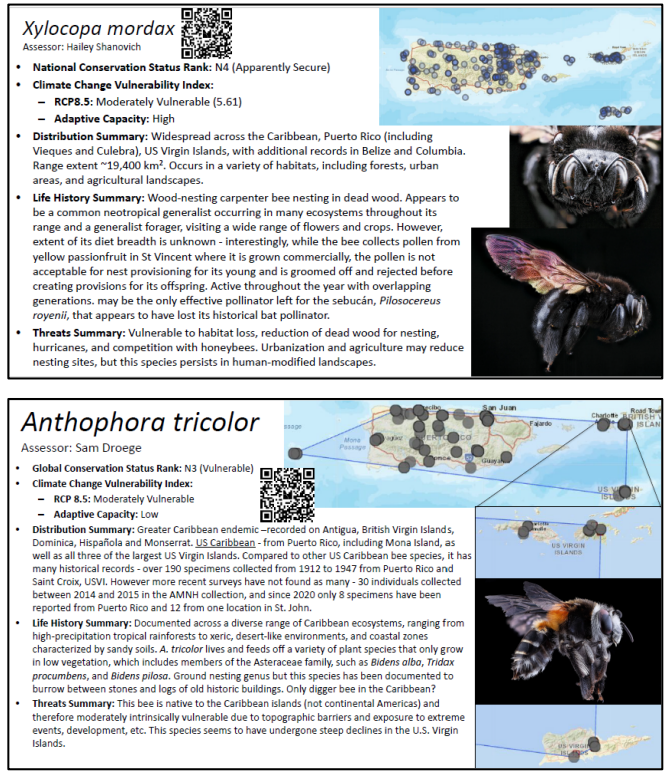
- NRCS Pollinators in Agriculture (UVI Extension, UPR-Mayaguez
- UVI Outreach Materials (Dr. Amy Dreves)
- Pollinator Workshop- Caribbean Bees (SECASC/SEAFWA)
  - Sam Droege (USGS Bee Lab, USVI Surveys 2024-2026)

SOUTHEAST Climate Adaptation Science Center

SOUTHEASTERN ASSOCIATION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE AGENCIES



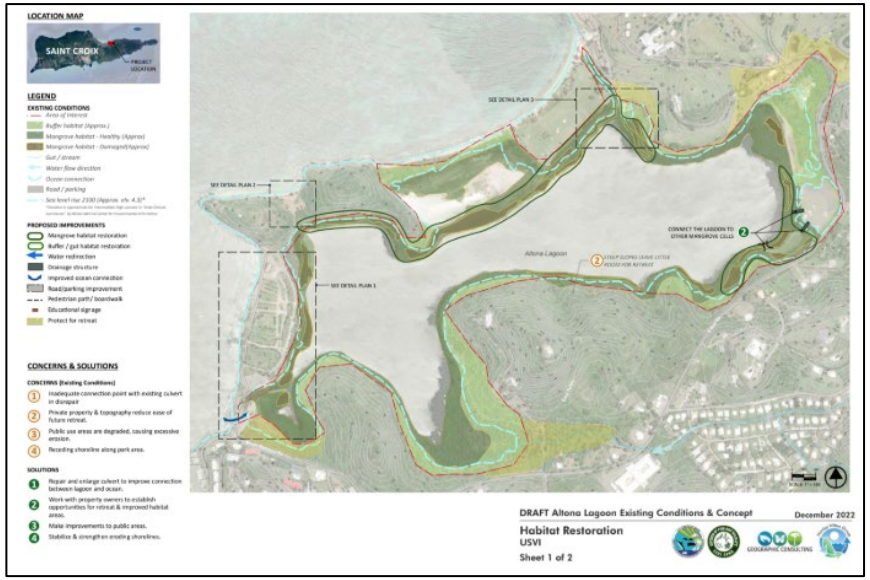


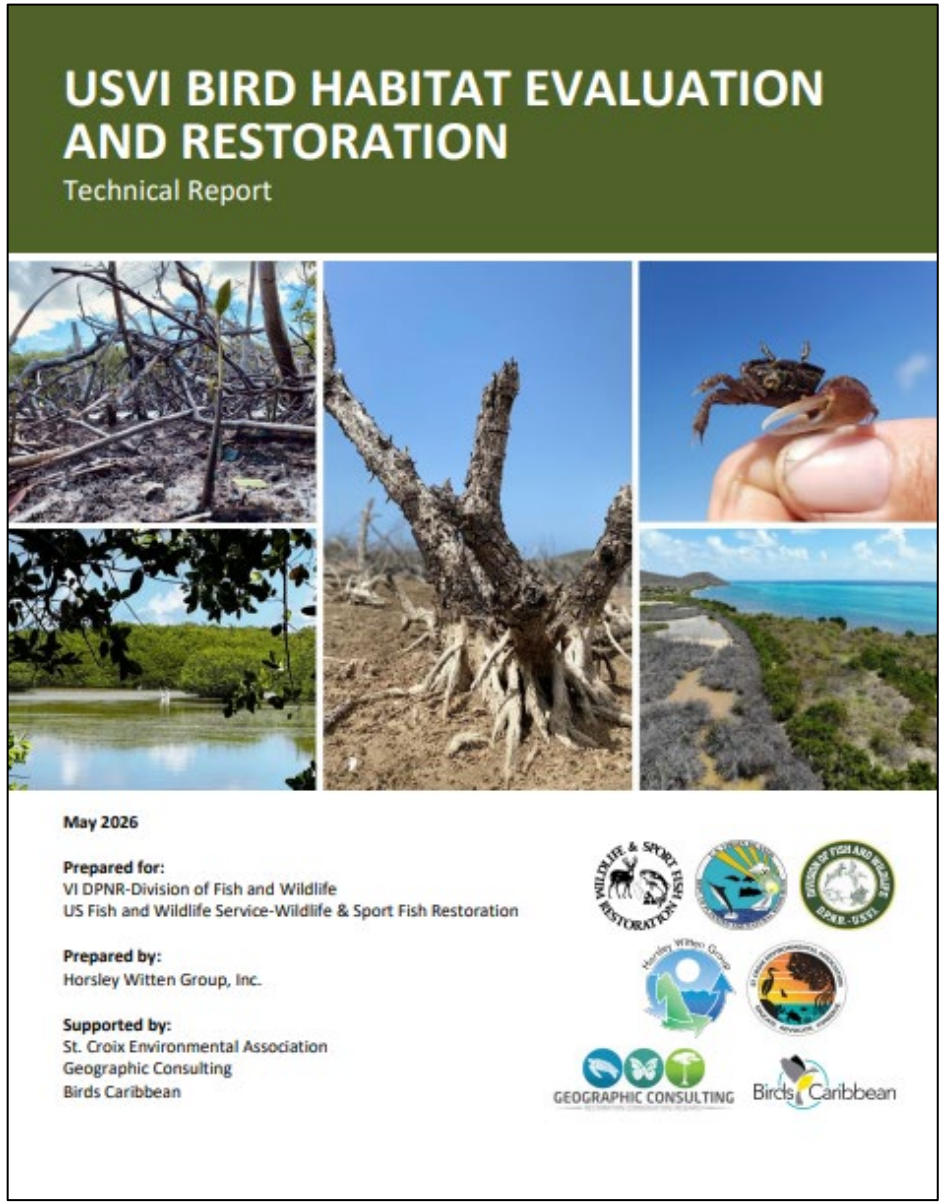


Wetlands


HOME
BIRD SURVEYS
MAPS
RESTORATION
MORE...
USVI BIRD HABITAT RESTORATION
The United States Virgin Islands (USVI) is home to a rich Caribbean culture and hosts visitors from around the world, including birds! Declines in bird counts and damage to coastal wetlands over


Bird Habitat Restoration
A snapshot of restoration sites and initial design concepts for improving water quality, hydrology, and habitat for birds in the USVI.
User 03
January 6, 2023


LOCATION MAP
SAINT CROIX
LEGEND
EXISTING CONDITIONS
PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS
CONCERNS & SOLUTIONS
DRAFT Altona Lagoon Existing Conditions & Concept
December 2022
Habitat Restoration
USVI
Sheet 1 of 2


USVI BIRD HABITAT EVALUATION AND RESTORATION
Technical Report
May 2026
Prepared for:
VI DPNR-Division of Fish and Wildlife
US Fish and Wildlife Service-Wildlife & Sport Fish Restoration
Prepared by:
Horsley Witten Group, Inc.
Supported by:
St. Croix Environmental Association
Geographic Consulting
Birds Caribbean
GEOGRAPHIC CONSULTING
Birds Caribbean

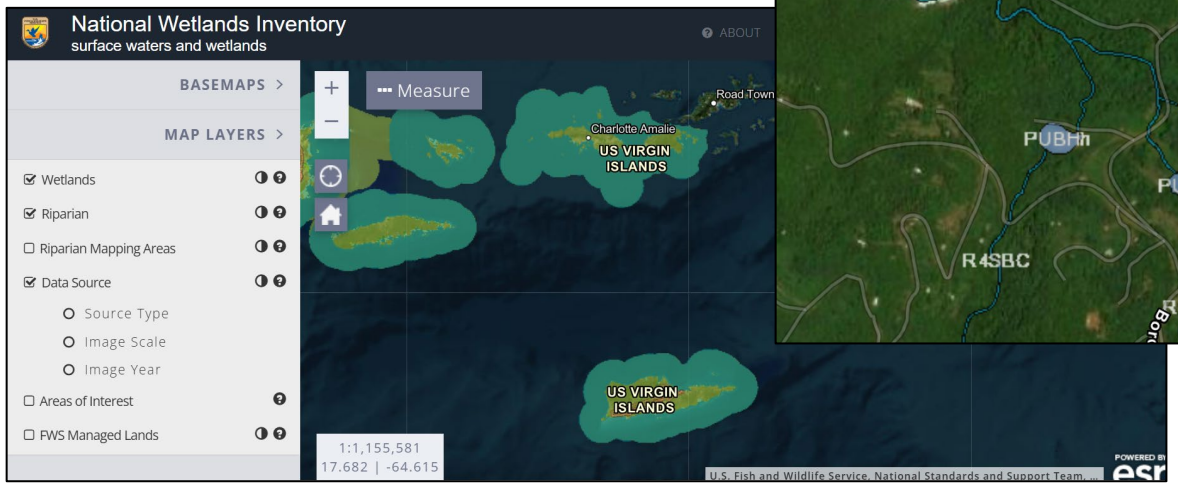
Wetlands

- DPNR Division of Fish and Wildlife, Director Nicole Angeli, secured an EPA Wetland Program Development Grants to update the USFWS National Wetland Inventory in the USVI. Work was conducted by Ducks Unlimited (2022-2023).

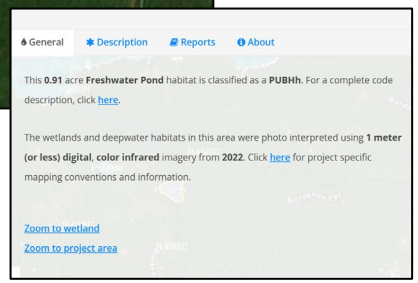


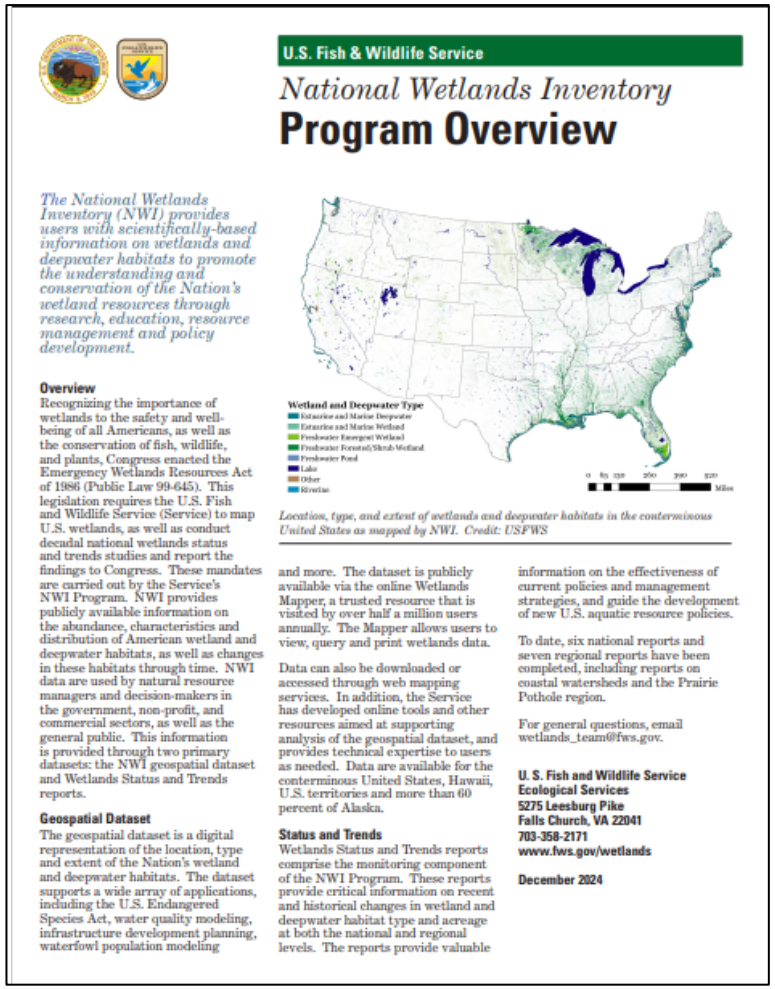










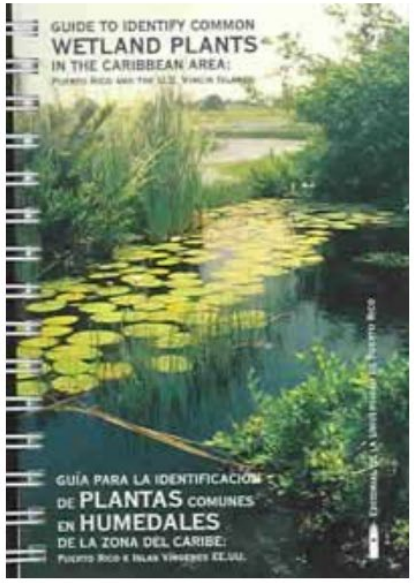


Wetlands

- Wetland Delineation Workshops (Manati, PR)
  - Run by EPA Wetlands, NRCS, USACE and USFWS
  - DPNR DFW staff attended in 2023
    - Learned to Identify wetland soil types and plants







Guide to identify common wetlands plants in the Caribbean area: Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands (English and Spanish Edition)

Commonwealth and International Conference on Sport, Physical Education, Dance, Recreation, and Health (8th : 1986 : Glasgow, Scotland)

ISBN 10: 0847703312 / ISBN 13: 9780847703319
Published by Universidad De Puerto Rico, 2000
Language: English

CONDITION: USED - VERY GOOD | SOFT COVER

Save for Later

THANK YOU!

QUESTIONS?

If you are interested in joining the Subcommittee for Forestry, Wildlife and Wetlands please contact me Sean_Kelly@fws.gov

Agenda

1. Directors' Welcome & Introduction – *Luis Cruz Arroyo & Dr. Louis Petersen*
2. STC Meetings & Efforts Recap – *Luis Cruz Arroyo*
3. NRCS Conservation Programs Update – *Javier Cruz & 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 Weather Service and Drought – *Ernesto Rodriguez & Emanuel Rodriguez Gonzalez*
6. Forestry, Wildlife & Wetlands Subcommittee – *Sean Kelly*
7. **Partner Updates**
8. **Wrap-up**

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



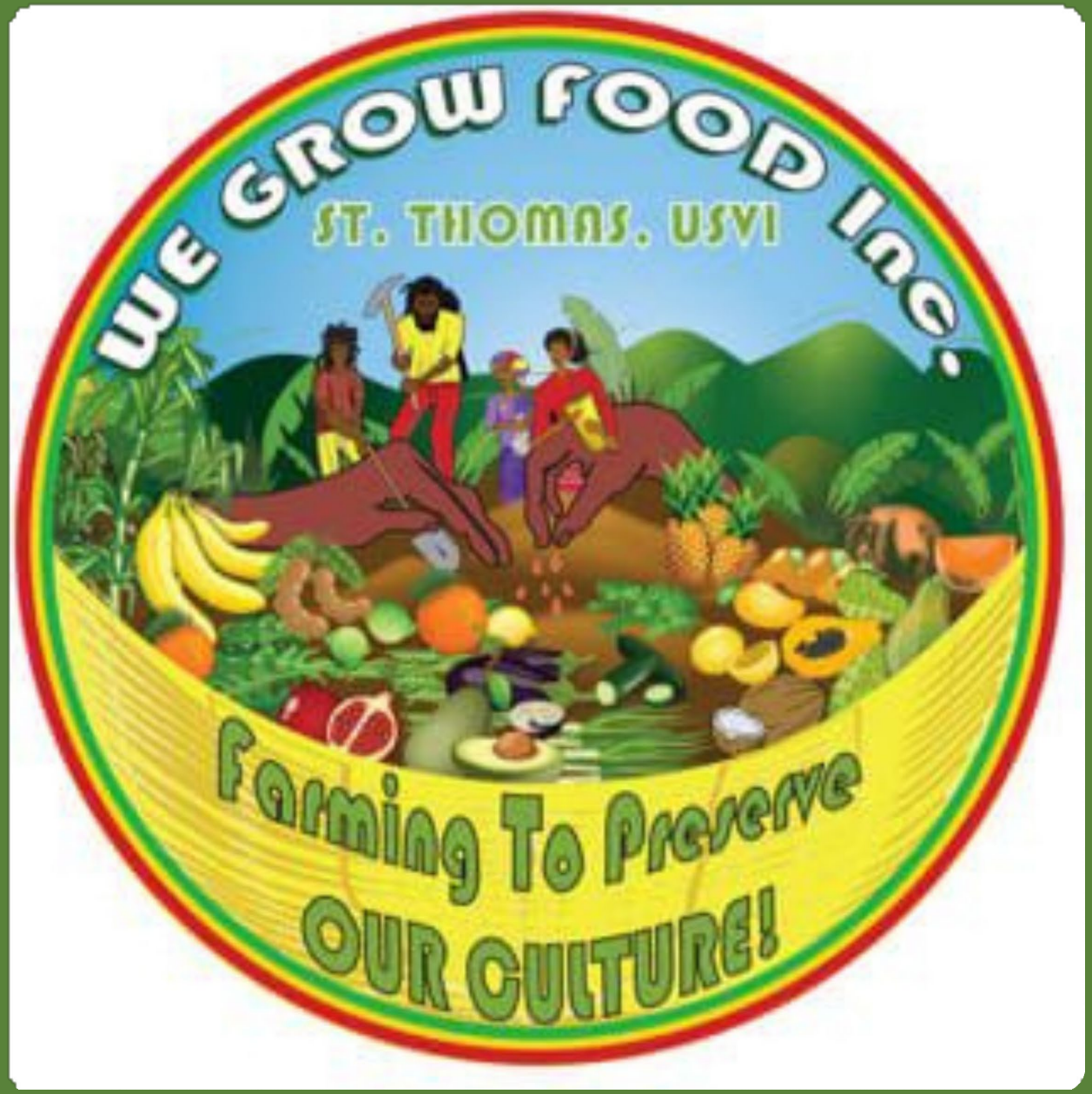
Partner Updates

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

Local Natural Resources

Farmers, backyard growers and environmental advocates were surveyed

Collected by WGFI



Local Natural Resource Priorities

Top 3 Resource Concerns

- WATER (CLEAN)
- SOIL,
- LABOR PEOPLE,
- TREES,
- WATER MANAGEMENT
    - STORM WATER RUNOFF
- WATER COLLECTION AND STORAGE

Local Natural Resource Priorities

Which concerns have changed or newly emerged since last year? 3 Resource Concerns

EXTREME HEAT AND DROUGHT

Local Natural Resource Priorities

Are specific land uses (cropland, pasture, forestland, urban, coastal) facing increased needs?

SINCE LAST YEAR PESTS HAVE BEEN INCREASING.
EROSION CONTROL OF THE LAND, MORE TERRACING, MORE VETIVER USE ETC.

Barriers to Accessing NRCS Programs

What challenges prevent producers from participating in NRCS programs?

LACK OF INFORMATION; LACK OF LOCAL OFFICE/AUTHORITY, LONG PROCESS, LACK OF UPFRONT CAPITA

Barriers to Accessing NRCS Programs

What improvements would strengthen access to NRCS services? a subheading

HAVING A LOCAL OFFICE, MORE INFORMATION, GETTING ACCESS TO ENGINEERS TO TRAVEL HERE, BETTER RESPONSE FROM AGENTS,

Program Implementation Recommendations

Which conservation practices or enhancements should be prioritized?

WATER CATCHMENT, DRIP IRRIGATION, COVERS FOR CROPS, NURSERY ETC. MORE INFORMED DECISIONS MADE BY STATISTICAL DATA AND EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE, MORE LOCAL STATISTICAL DATA TO HELP IN AGRICULTURAL PLAN TO MAKE CHANGES FOR THE FUTURE

Program Implementation Recommendations

Are program adjustments needed to better address local concerns

YES: REASSESS PROGRAM STANDARDS BECAUSE THEY MAY NOT ALIGN WITH LOCAL LIMITATIONS AND RESTRICTIONS. STANDARDS CAN BE TOO RIGID E.G. CATCHMENT AND THE MONEY NEEDED TO MEET THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY GET TOO EXPENSIVE

SOME SEEMS UNNECESSARY. E.G. WAITING FOR APPROVAL FROM OFFICE BEFORE ONE CAN MOVE FORWARD ON FARM

4. Outreach & Engagement

Which audiences or geographic areas need more outreach?

Youth education, programs, Homeowners, Non-agricultural landowners

Outreach & Engagement Needs

What outreach approaches or partnerships would be most effective locally?

PARTNERSHIP WITH FARM ORGANIZATION, COMMUNITY HOMEOWNERSHIP, TOWN HALL MEETINGS, OUTREACH TO SCHOOLS,

Local Agricultural & Community Trends

What agricultural trends (new crops, climate impacts, land-use shifts) are emerging?

The people are interested in more knowledge for necessary shifting of farm planning etc., however due to lack of government oversight, involvement and forecasting, farmers are on their own.

Local Agricultural & Community Trends

Are community-level changes affecting conservation needs?

More residential development around farm land creates pressure on conservation needs, as well as, agricultural zoning loss. Growing urbanization creating agricultural loss.

Opportunities for Partnerships Agricultural & Community Trends

Which organizations (NGOs, municipalities, universities, community groups) should NRCS collaborate with?

VI Good Food; We Grow Food Inc, University of Virgin Islands, Department of Education,

Opportunities for Partnerships Agricultural & Community Trends

What partnership opportunities could enhance conservation or outreach?

DPNR, Public Works, Department of Education-Culture, Tourism of the Virgin Islands, Department of Education, Rotary Clubs, Media outlets-The Source, AARP

Feedback on NRCS Customer Service for Partnerships Agricultural & Community Trends

How can NRCS improve field office accessibility and customer service?

Mr. Rudy O'reilly is top notch. Improve Funding and "red tape" for agents to travel to the VI.

Feedback on NRCS Customer Service for Partnerships Agricultural & Community Trends

What additional support do producers need when navigating NRCS programs?

We need an office here. More farmer to farmer networking to show evidence of program success.

Agenda

1. **Directors' Welcome & Introduction – *Luis Cruz Arroyo & Dr. Louis Petersen***
2. **STC Meetings & Efforts Recap – *Luis Cruz Arroyo***
3. **NRCS Conservation Programs Update – *Javier Cruz & 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 Weather Service and Drought – *Ernesto Rodriguez & Emanuel Rodriguez Gonzalez***
6. **Forestry, Wildlife & Wetlands Subcommittee – *Sean Kelly***
7. **Partner Updates**
8. **Wrap-up**

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

NRCS
United States Virgin Islands
State Technical Committee Meeting







September 8, 2026
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
University of Virgin Islands, St. Thomas, VI

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

Non-Discrimination Statement

- In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.
- Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the State or local Agency that administers the program or contact USDA through the Telecommunications Relay Service at 711 (voice and TTY). Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.
- To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Mail Stop 9410, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.