

Drought Indicators Report

Georgia Environmental Protection Division

March 2026

Background

Pursuant to the Rules for Drought Management, Section 391-3-3-.04 Drought Indicators and Triggers, the Director of EPD monitors climatic indicators and water supply conditions to assess drought occurrence and severity, and its impact upon the ability of public water systems to provide adequate supplies of water. These indicators and conditions generally include, but are not limited to, the following:

- U.S. Drought Monitor;
- Precipitation;
- Streamflow;
- Groundwater;
- Reservoir levels;
- Short term climate predictions;
- Soil moisture; and
- Water supply conditions.

Background

- The Rules require EPD to report on current climatic indicators at least semi-annually or monthly when any part of the state has experienced at least two consecutive months of severe drought.
- This reports compare current conditions to historical levels (and/or reservoir rule curves) for each of the following indicators:
 - Precipitation during the prior 3, 6, and 12 months;
 - Streamflow at the select United States Geological Survey gages;
 - Groundwater levels at select United States Geological Survey monitoring wells; and
 - Reservoir levels at Allatoona Lake, Lake Hartwell, Clarks Hill Lake, and Lake Lanier.
- The following sections of this presentation provide the data and information sources analyzed by EPD in developing this drought indicators report for conditions as of March 10, 2026.

Drought Indicator Analysis Summary (slide 1 of 2)

- U.S. Drought Monitor – Abnormally Dry (D0, the least intense level) exists in all Counties of GA. Moderate drought (D1) exists in most areas except four Counties (Washington, Jefferson, Burke and part of Richmond). Severe Drought (D2) exists in most areas except part of Middle GA. Extreme Drought (D3) exists in South GA, Upper Savannah Basin and three Counties in Middle GA (Harris, Talbot and Upson).
- Precipitation – Three-month precipitation and six-month precipitation are below normal in all Counties of GA. Twelve-month precipitation is below normal in most areas except part of Coosa Basin, Lower Savannah Basin, Oconee, and Ocmulgee Basins.
- Soil Moisture – Soil moisture conditions are below normal in most areas of South GA and a few Counties in North GA.

Drought Indicator Analysis Summary (slide 2 of 2)

- **Streamflow** – Stream flows at one selected USGS gages (1 out of 34) is between the lowest 20th percentile and median. Eight gages are between the lowest 20th and 10th percentiles. 13 gages are between the lowest 5th and 10th percentiles. 12 gages are below the lowest 5th percentile.
- **Groundwater Level** – One well level is between the lowest 20th percentile and median. Three well levels are between the lowest 20th and 10th percentiles. Four well levels are between the lowest 5th and 10th percentiles. Eight well levels are below the lowest 5th percentile. One well data is missing.
- **Reservoir Levels** – At the end of February, Lanier and Hartwell are in zone 3. Thurmond is in zone 2. Carters and Allatoona are in zone 1. West Point and W.F.George are in Flooding zone. ACF composite storage is in zone 1.
- **Short-term Climate Prediction** – National Climatic Prediction Center projects above normal temperature statewide and equal chance of precipitation statewide in March-May 2026. U.S. Drought Outlook predicts drought persists in most areas of GA and drought remains but improves in Northwest corner of GA in March-May 2026 .
- **Water Supplies** – No issues with water availability to water supply providers were reported.

US Drought Monitor

Data Source:

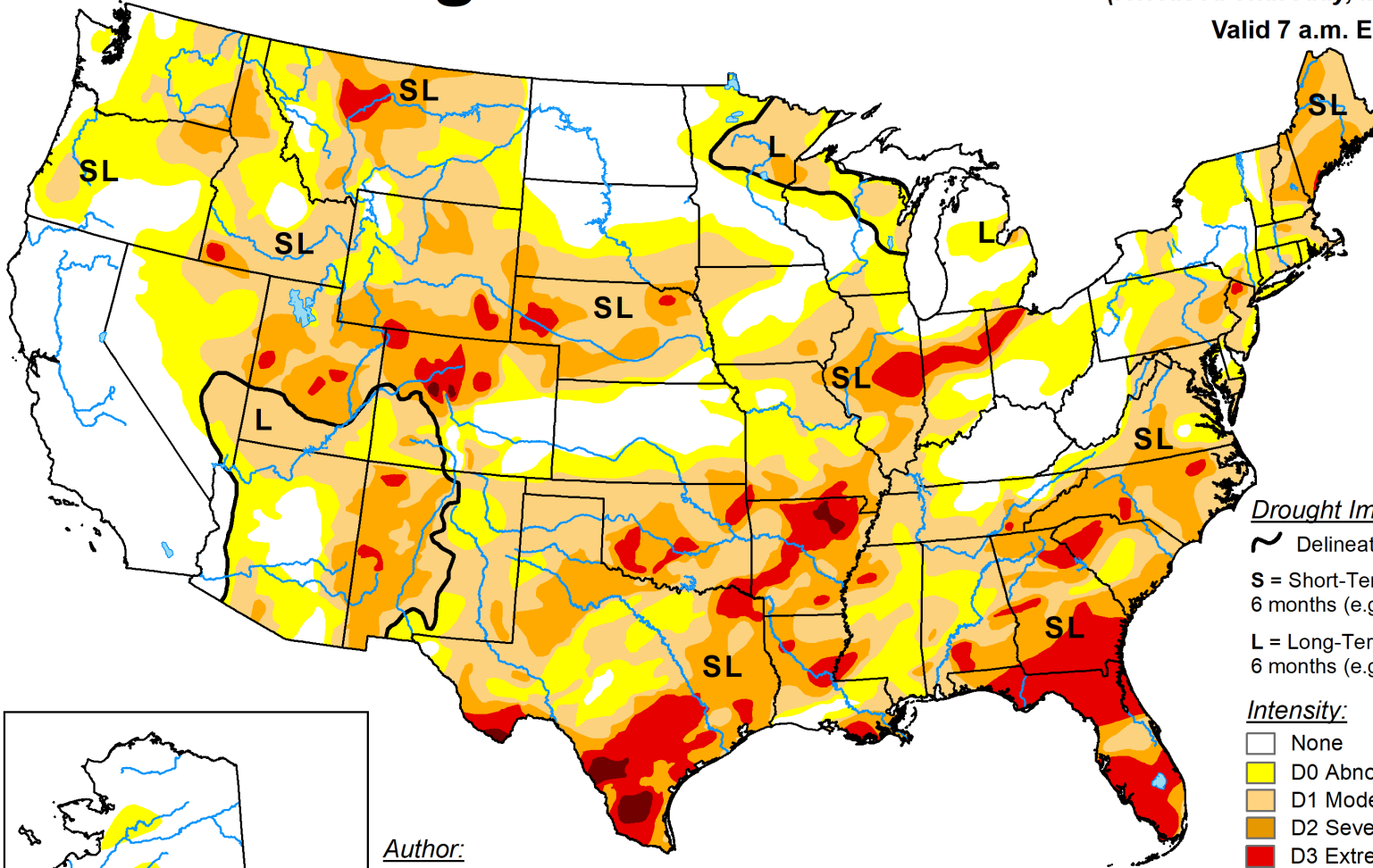
<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/>

U.S. Drought Monitor

March 3, 2026

(Released Thursday, Mar. 5, 2026)

Valid 7 a.m. EST



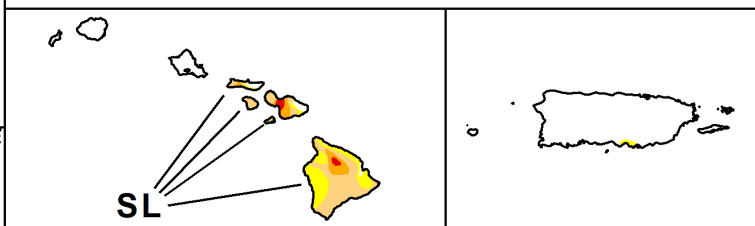
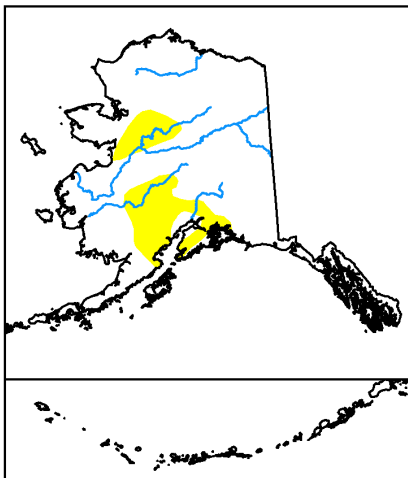
Drought Impact Types:

- ~ Delineates dominant impacts
- S = Short-Term, typically less than 6 months (e.g. agriculture, grasslands)
- L = Long-Term, typically greater than 6 months (e.g. hydrology, ecology)

Intensity:

- None
- D0 Abnormally Dry
- D1 Moderate Drought
- D2 Severe Drought
- D3 Extreme Drought
- D4 Exceptional Drought

Author:
Brad Pugh
CPC/NOAA



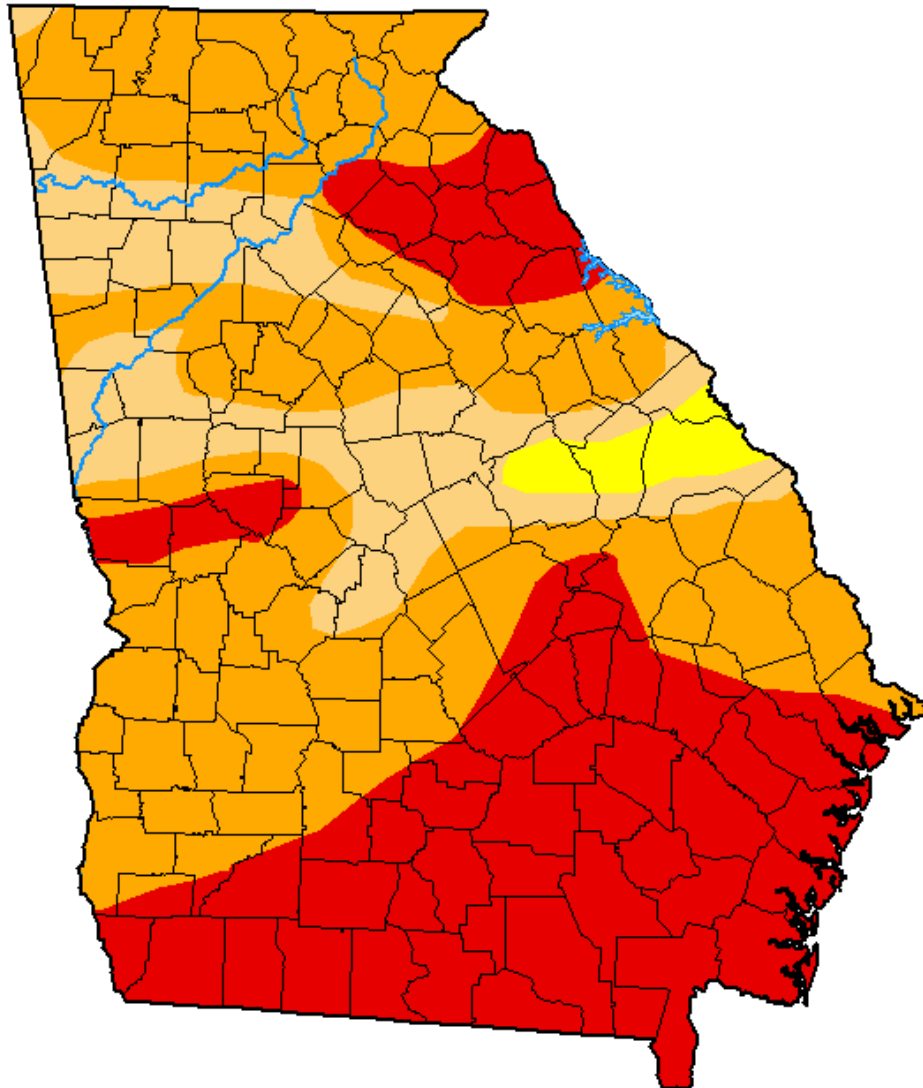
The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. For more information on the Drought Monitor, go to <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/About.aspx>



droughtmonitor.unl.edu

U.S. Drought Monitor Georgia

March 3, 2026
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Drought Conditions (Percent Area)

	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	0.00	100.00	97.82	81.68	37.34	0.00
Last Week 02-24-2026	0.00	100.00	100.00	85.86	33.20	0.00
3 Months Ago 12-02-2025	10.40	89.60	82.01	60.33	19.60	4.15
Start of Calendar Year 01-06-2026	0.00	100.00	100.00	37.96	1.21	0.00
Start of Water Year 09-30-2025	1.82	98.18	52.78	11.27	0.00	0.00
One Year Ago 03-04-2025	30.47	69.53	39.07	0.00	0.00	0.00

Intensity:

- None
- D0 Abnormally Dry
- D1 Moderate Drought
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- D3 Extreme Drought
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The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. For more information on the Drought Monitor, go to <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/About.aspx>

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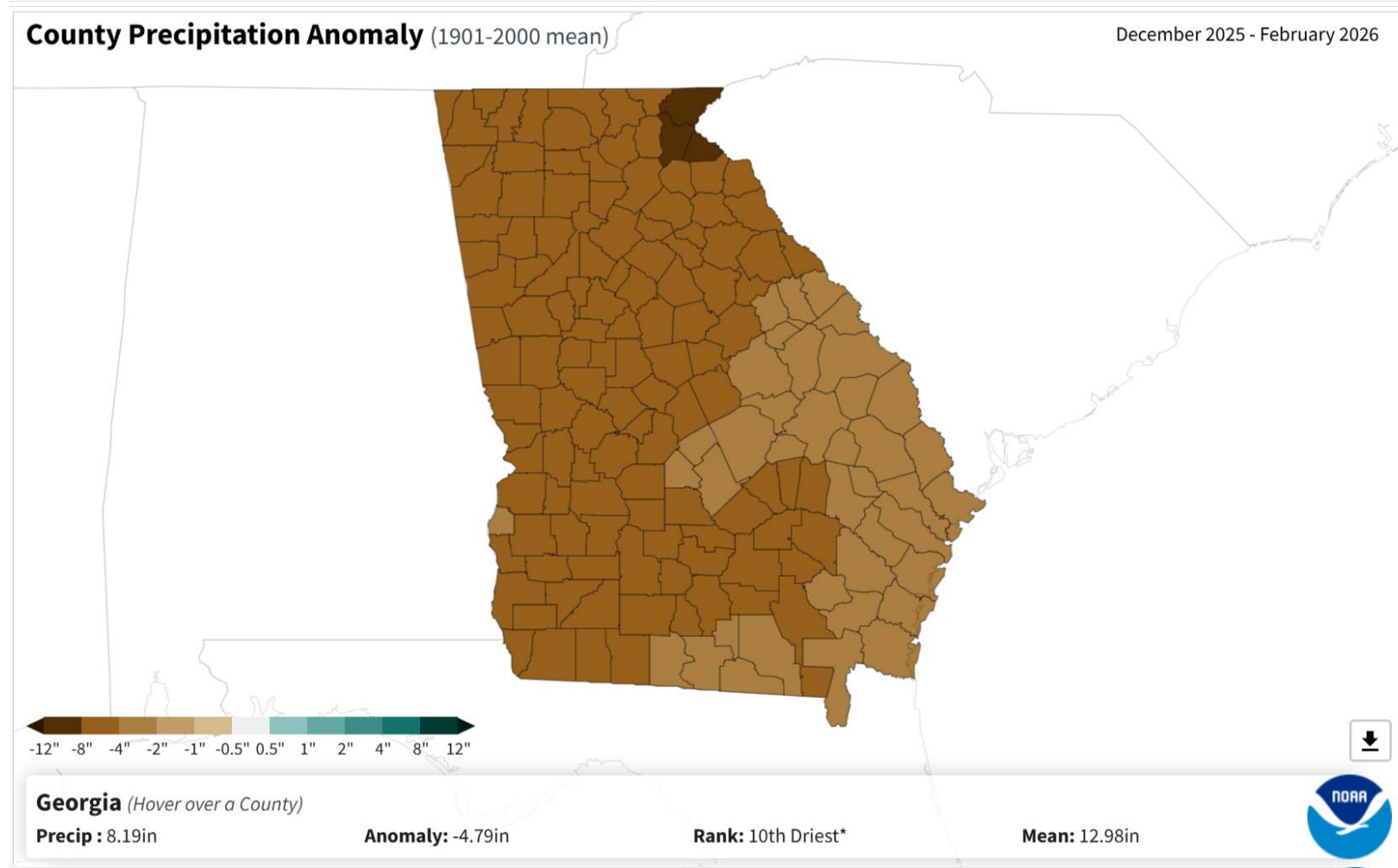
droughtmonitor.unl.edu

3, 6, and 12 Month Precipitation Anomaly

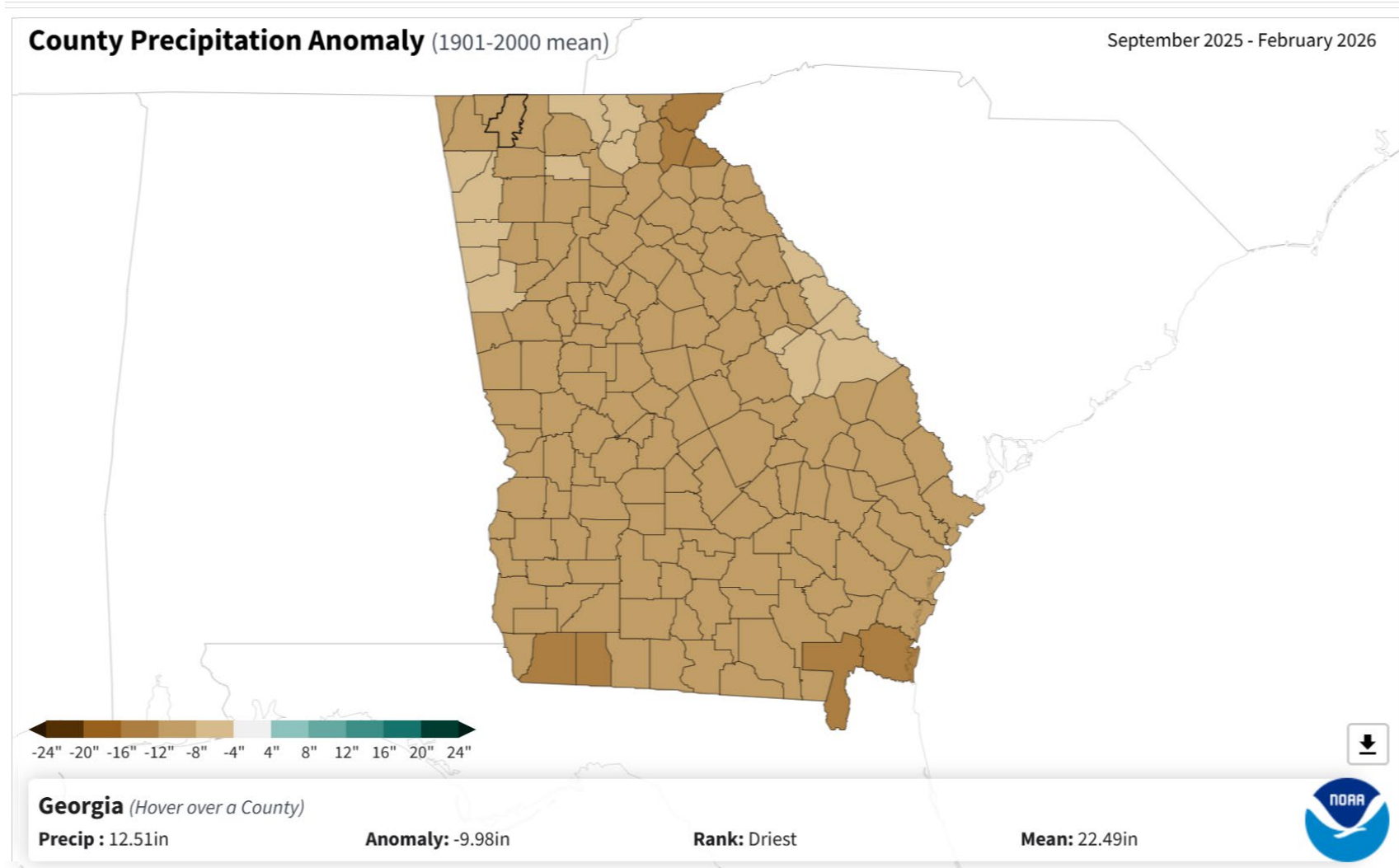
Data Source:

<https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/cag/county/mapping/>

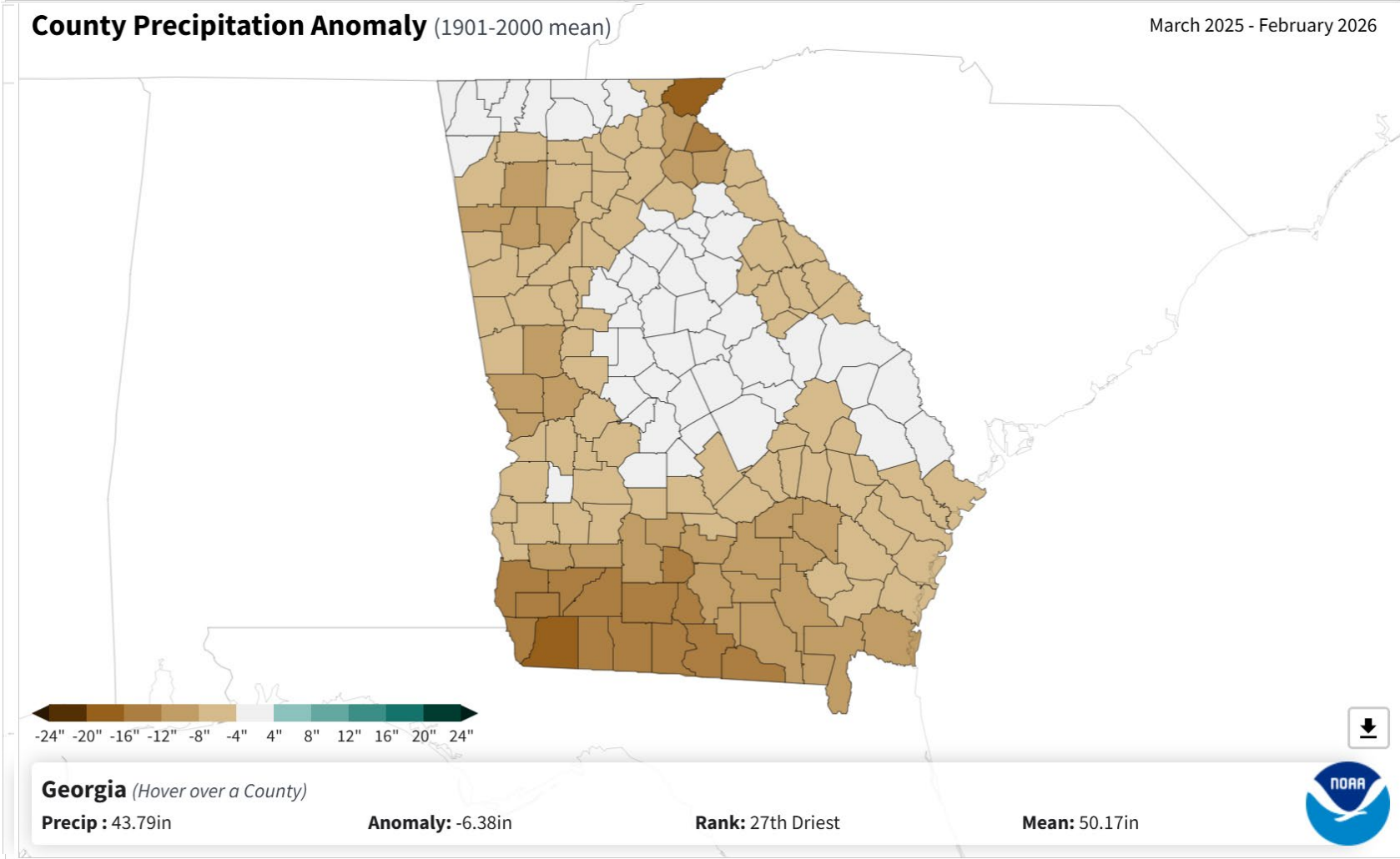
3 Month Precipitation Anomaly



6 Month Precipitation Anomaly



12 Month Precipitation Anomaly

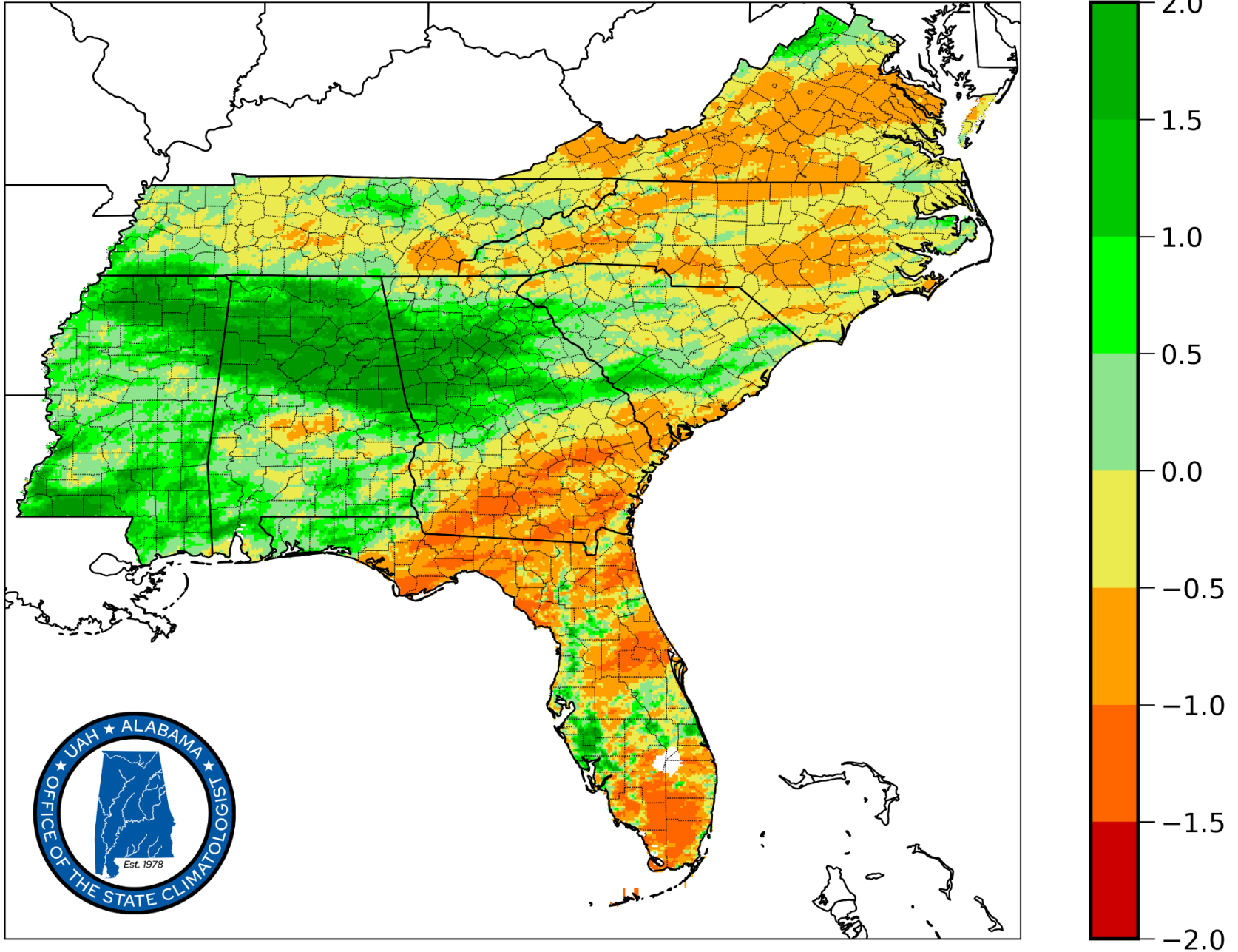


Soil Moisture Conditions

Data Source:

http://www.hydro.ucla.edu/SurfaceWaterGroup/forecast/monitor/curr/conus.mexico/east.vic.sm_qnt.gif

Lawn-and-Garden Moisture Index for March 10, 2026



Streamflow Conditions

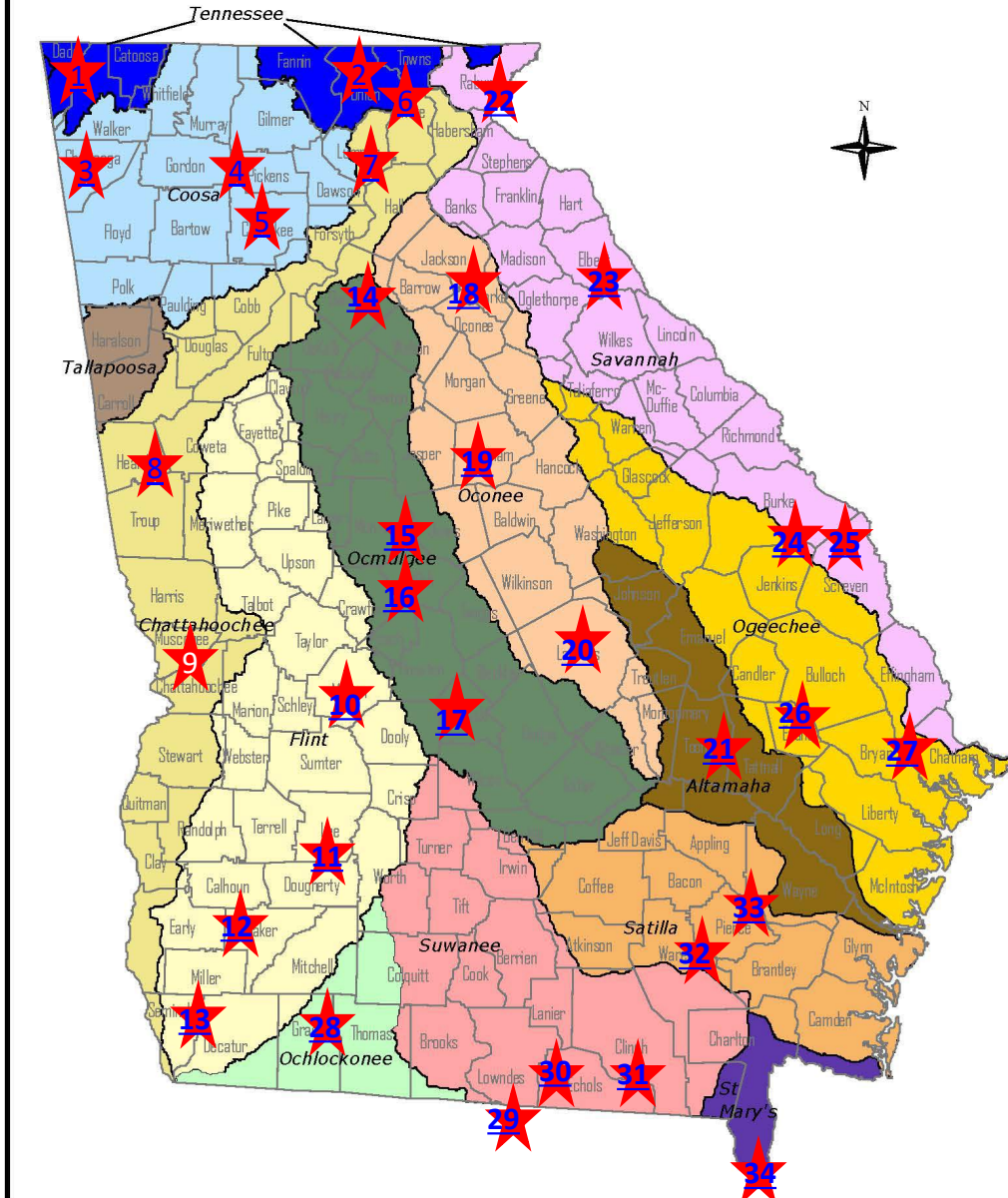
Data Source: USGS

Streamflow Monitoring

- As shown on the following slide, EPD Monitors 34 USGS stream gages in 13 of the State's major river basins to assess drought conditions.
- These gages were selected because each has:
 - Long-term and relatively complete records for recent decades; and
 - Relatively low consumptive water use implications and streamflows are not heavily influenced by dams.
- Note: Hydrologic conditions of major rivers with streamflows that are heavily influenced by dams can be assessed by reviewing status of major storage reservoirs

Georgia's 14 River Basins

USGS Stream Gages Monitored by EPD to Assess Drought Conditions



<u>GAGE#</u>	<u>Basin</u>	<u>GAGE NAME</u>
1	TENNESSEE	LOOKOUT CREEK NEAR NEW ENGLAND
2	TENNESSEE	NOTTELY RIVER NEAR BLAIRSVILLE
3	COOSA	CHATTOOGA RIVER AT SUMMERVILLE
4	COOSA	TALKING ROCK CREEK NEAR HINTON
5	COOSA	ETOWAH RIVER AT CANTON
6	CHATTAHOOCHEE	CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVER AT CORNELIA
7	CHATTAHOOCHEE	CHESTATEE RIVER NEAR DAHLONEGA
8	CHATTAHOOCHEE	NEW RIVER AT GA 100 NEAR CORINTH
9	CHATTAHOOCHEE	UPATOI CREEK AT COLUMBUS
10	FLINT	FLINT RIVER AT GA26 NEAR MONTEZUMA
11	FLINT	FLINT RIVER AT ALBANY
12	FLINT	ICHAWAYNOCHAWAY CREEK AT MILFORD
13	FLINT	SPRING CREEK NEAR IRON CITY
14	OCMULGEE	ALCOVY RIVER ABOVE COVINGTON
15	OCMULGEE	OCMULGEE RIVER AT MACON
16	OCMULGEE	TOBESOFKEE CREEK NEAR MACON
17	OCMULGEE	TUCSAWHATCHEE CREEK NEAR HAWKINSVILLE
18	OCONEE	MIDDLE OCONEE RIVER NEAR ATHENS
19	OCONEE	LITTLE RIVER NEAR EATONTON
20	OCONEE	OCONEE RIVER AT DUBLIN
21	ALTAMAHA	OHOOPEE RIVER NEAR REIDSVILLE
22	SAVANNAH	CHATTOOGA RIVER NEAR CLAYTON
23	SAVANNAH	BROAD RIVER NEAR BELL
24	SAVANNAH	BEAVERDAM CREEK NEAR SARDIS
25	SAVANNAH	BRIER CREEK AT MILLHAVEN
26	OGEECHEE	CANOOCHEE RIVER NEAR CLAXTON
27	OGEECHEE	OGEECHEE RIVER NEAR EDEN
28	OCHLOCKONEE	OCHLOCKONEE RIVER NEAR THOMASVILLE
29	SUWANEЕ	WITHLACOOCHEE RIVER NEAR PINETTA FL
30	SUWANEЕ	ALAPAHA RIVER AT STATENVILLE
31	SUWANEЕ	SUWANNEE RIVER AT US 441, AT FARGO
32	SATILLA	SATILLA RIVER NEAR WAYCROSS
33	SATILLA	LITTLE SATILLA RIVER NEAR OFFERMAN
34	ST MARY	ST MARYS RIVER NEAR MACCLENNY FL

Streamflow Graphs

- For each of the 34 gages, EPD has prepared a graph that shows monthly average streamflow from January 2026 through February 2026;
- To help put these streamflow conditions into perspective, for comparison purposes, each graph also shows:
 - Monthly average streamflows for the years 2007 and 2011 when streamflows were at or near recorded low levels across much of the state; and
 - A statistical composite of historical conditions showing the “driest” 50, 20, 10, and 5 percent of all recorded monthly average stream flows at the same gage.

How to Read the Streamflow Graphs

Example #1: Etowah River at Canton

The streamflow graph for Gage #5, [USGS Etowah River gage at Canton](#) shows :

- Average stream flow in February 2026 was 755 cfs. The statistical composite of all historical data for this gage shows that average streamflow in February has historically been lower than February 2026 about 5% of the time; 95% of the time in February it has been higher.
- Average stream flow in February 2011 was 932 cfs. The statistical composite of all historical data for this gage shows that average streamflow in February has historically been lower than February 2011 about 10-20% of the time; 80-90% of the time in February it has been higher.
- Average stream flow in February 2007 was 885 cfs. The statistical composite of all historical data for this gage shows that average streamflow in February has historically been lower than February 2007 about 10-20 % of the time; 70-80 % of the time in February it has been higher.

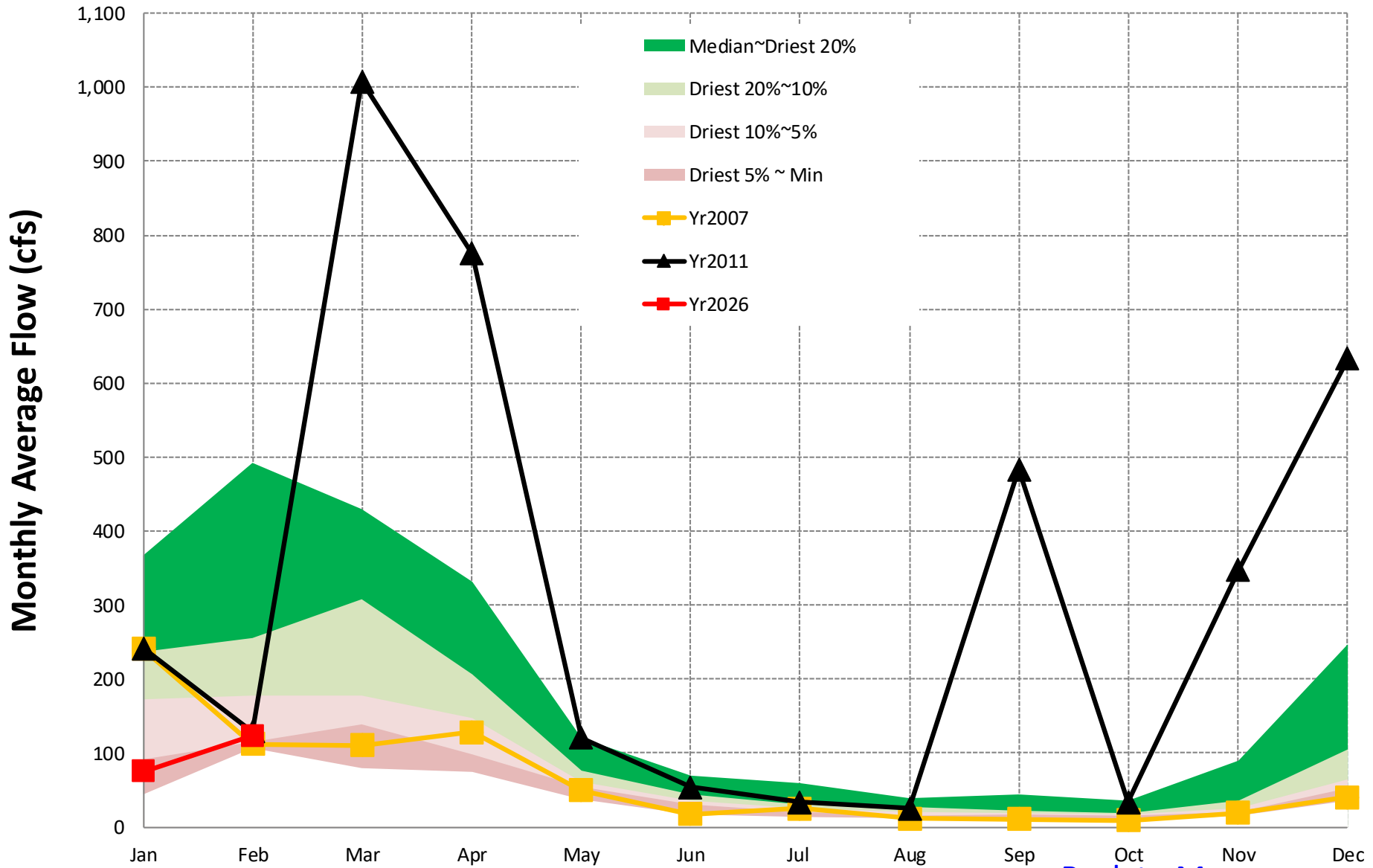
How to Read the Streamflow Graphs

Example #2: Flint River at Albany

The streamflow graph for Gage #11, [USGS Flint River gage at Albany](#) shows:

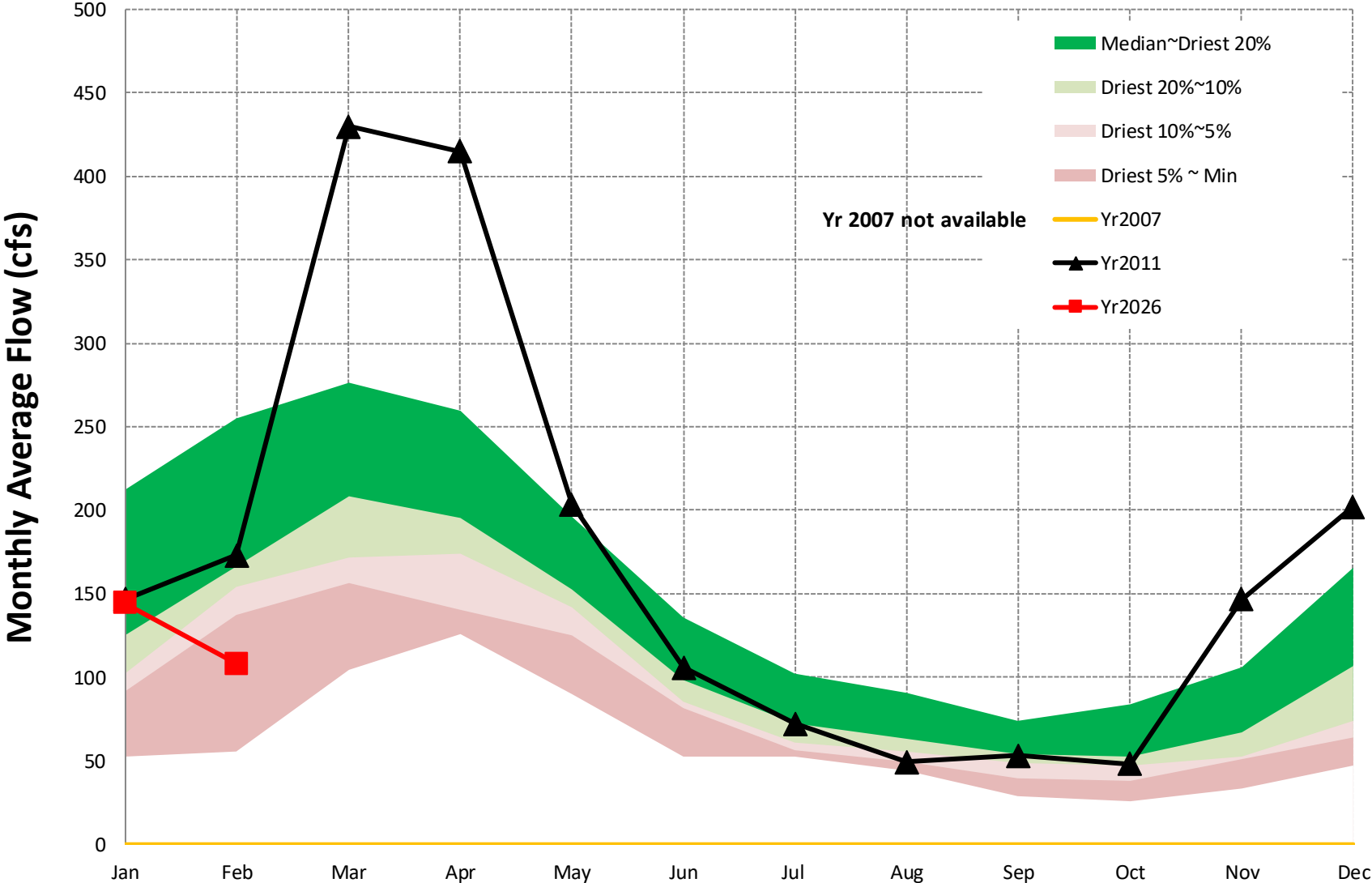
- Average stream flow in February 2026 was 3810 cfs. The statistical composite of all historical data for this gage shows that average streamflow in February has historically been lower than February 2026 about 6% of the time; about 94% of the time in February it has been higher.
- Average stream flow in February 2011 was 6534 cfs. The statistical composite of all historical data for this gage shows that average streamflow in February has historically been lower than February 2011 about 20-30 % of the time; about 70-80% of the time in February it has been higher.
- Average stream flow in February 2007 was 5590 cfs. The statistical composite of all historical data for this gage shows that average streamflow in February has historically been lower than February 2007 about 10-20% of the time; about 80-90% of the time in February it has been higher.

Gage #1. USGS #03568933, Tennessee Basin, LOOKOUT CREEK NEAR NEW ENGLAND, GA



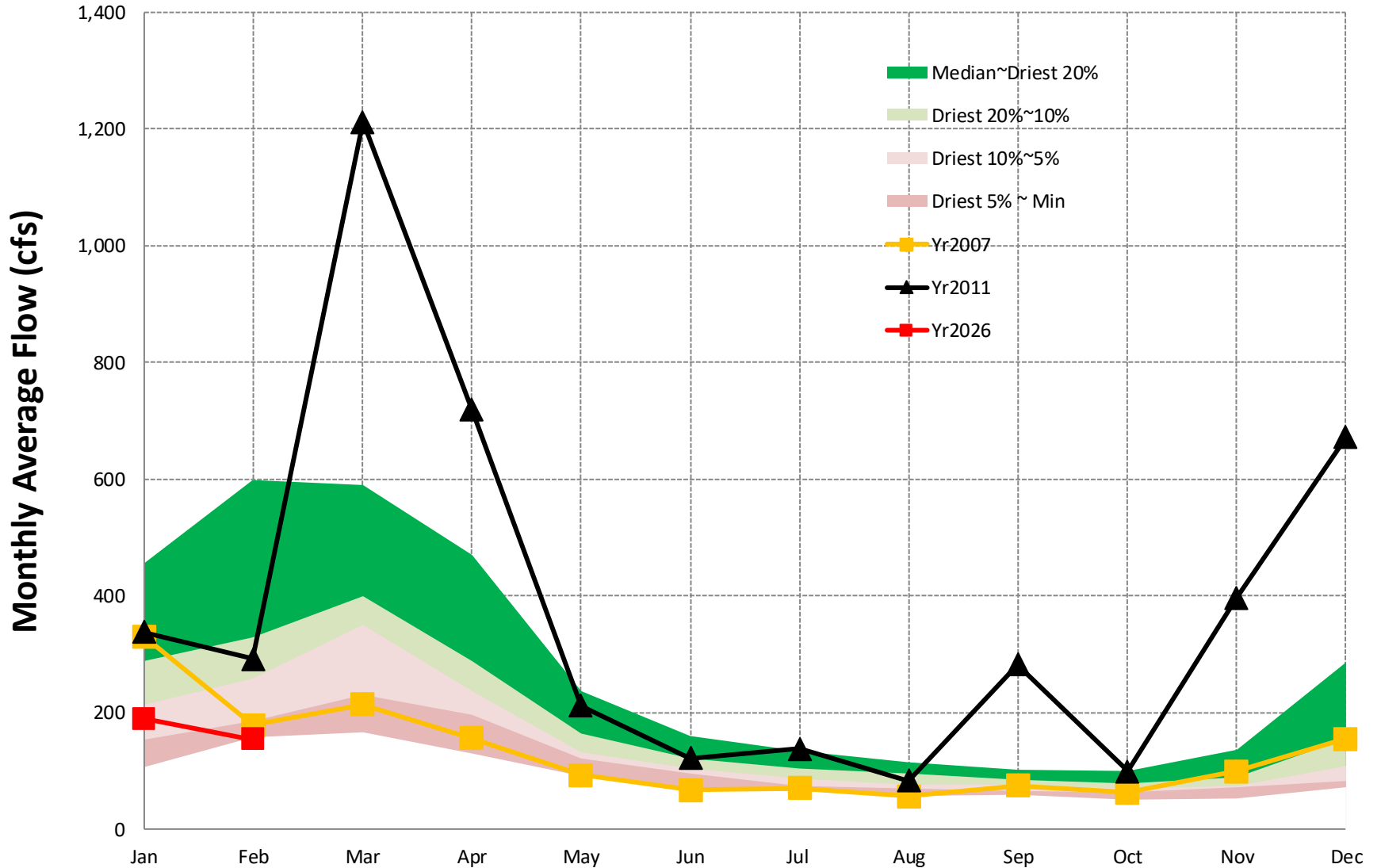
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Gage #2, USGS #03550500, Tennessee Basin, NOTTELY RIVER NEAR BLAIRSVILLE, GA



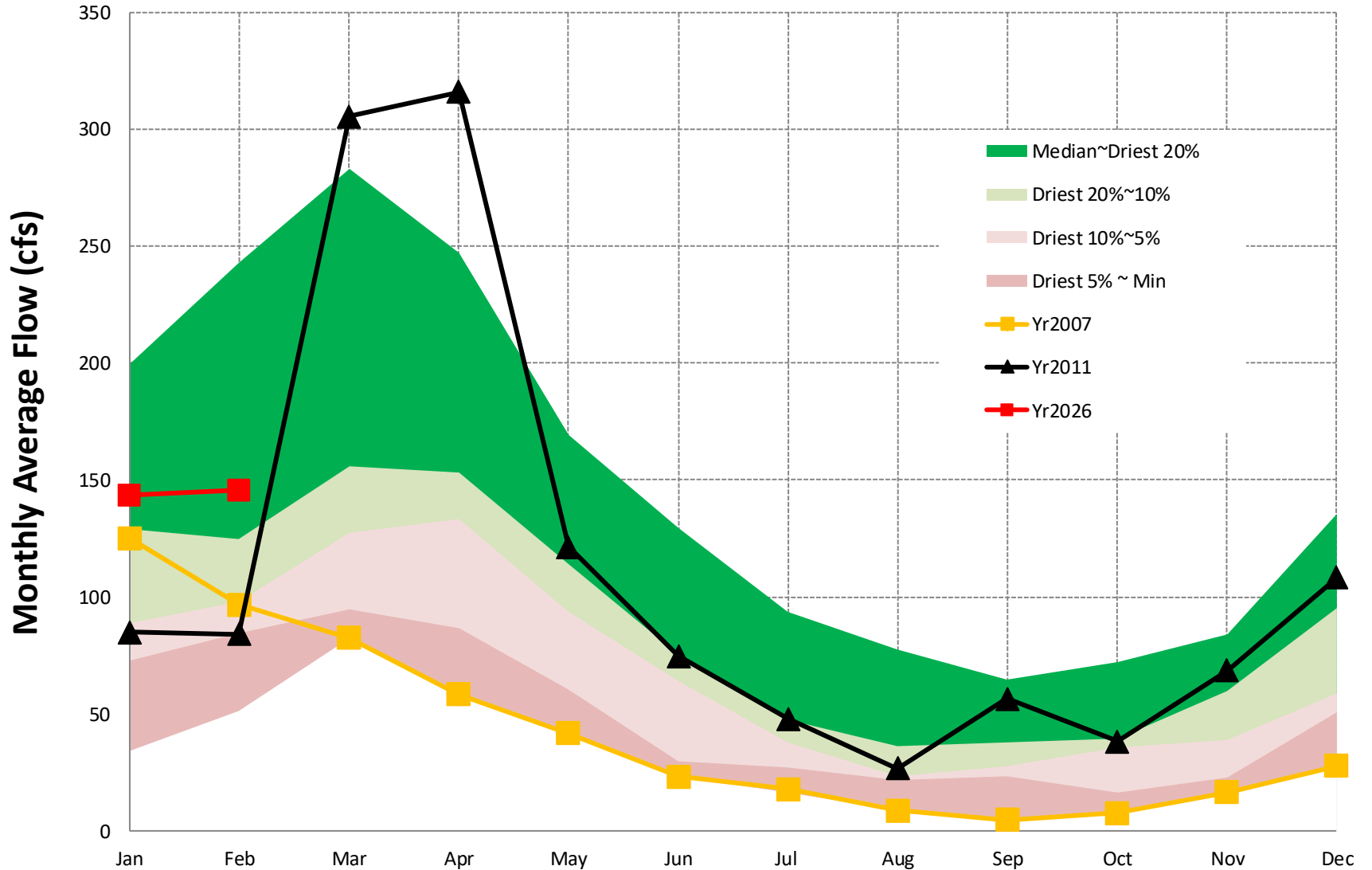
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Gage #3. USGS #02398000, Coosa Basin, Chattooga River at Summerville, GA



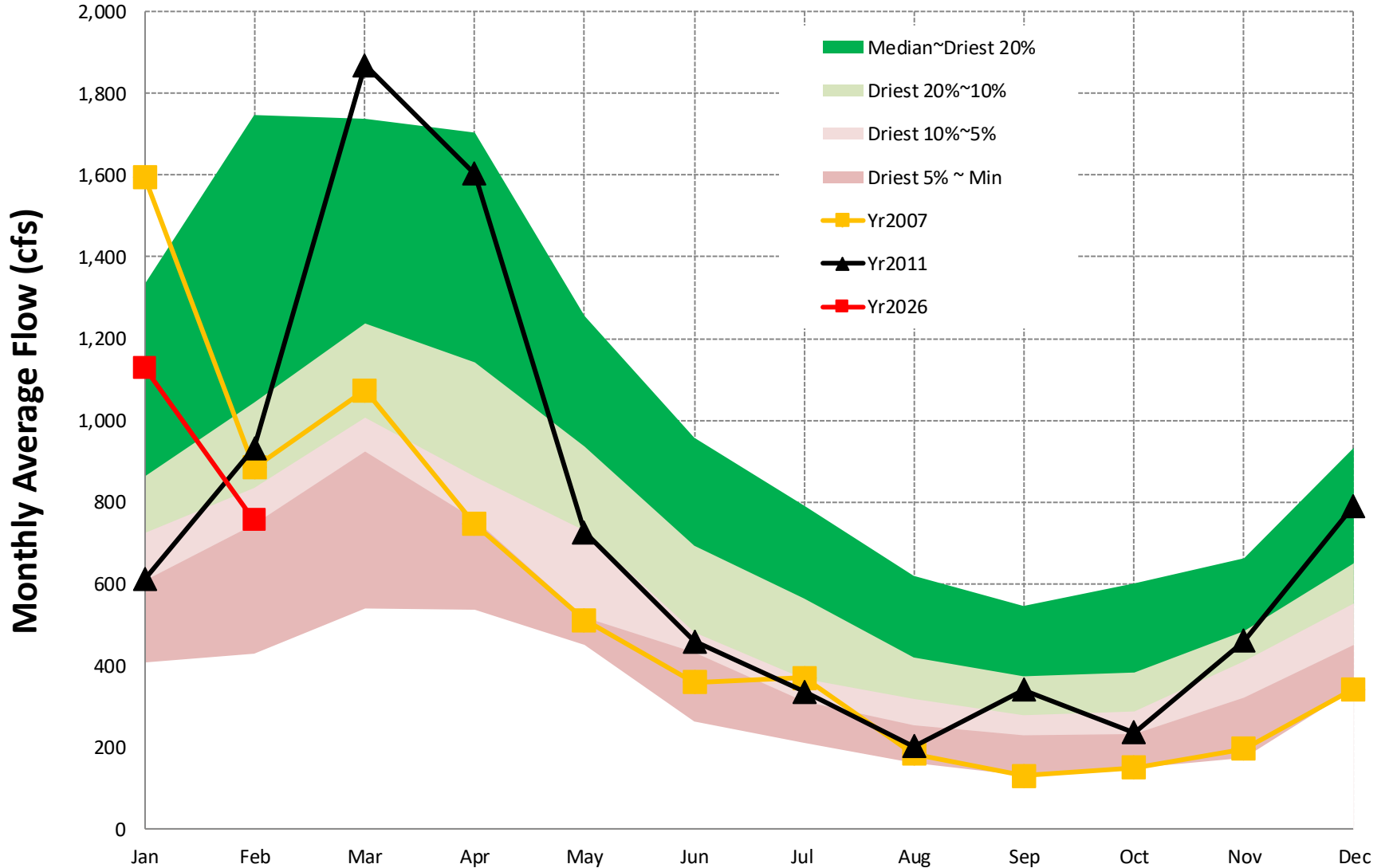
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Gage #4, USGS #02382200, Coosa Basin, TALKING ROCK CREEK NEAR HINTON, GA



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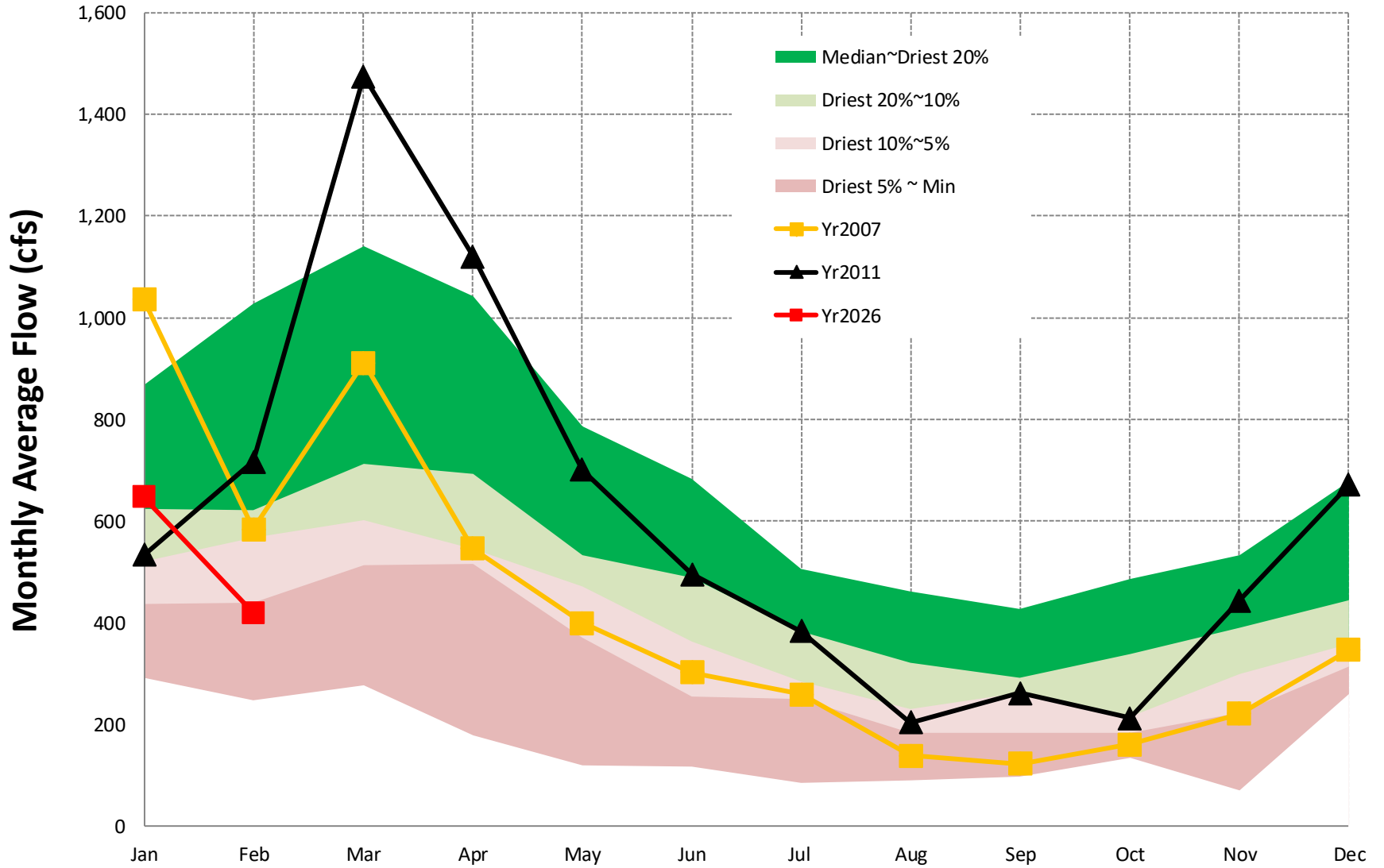
Gage #5, USGS #02392000, Coosa Basin, Etowah River at Canton, GA



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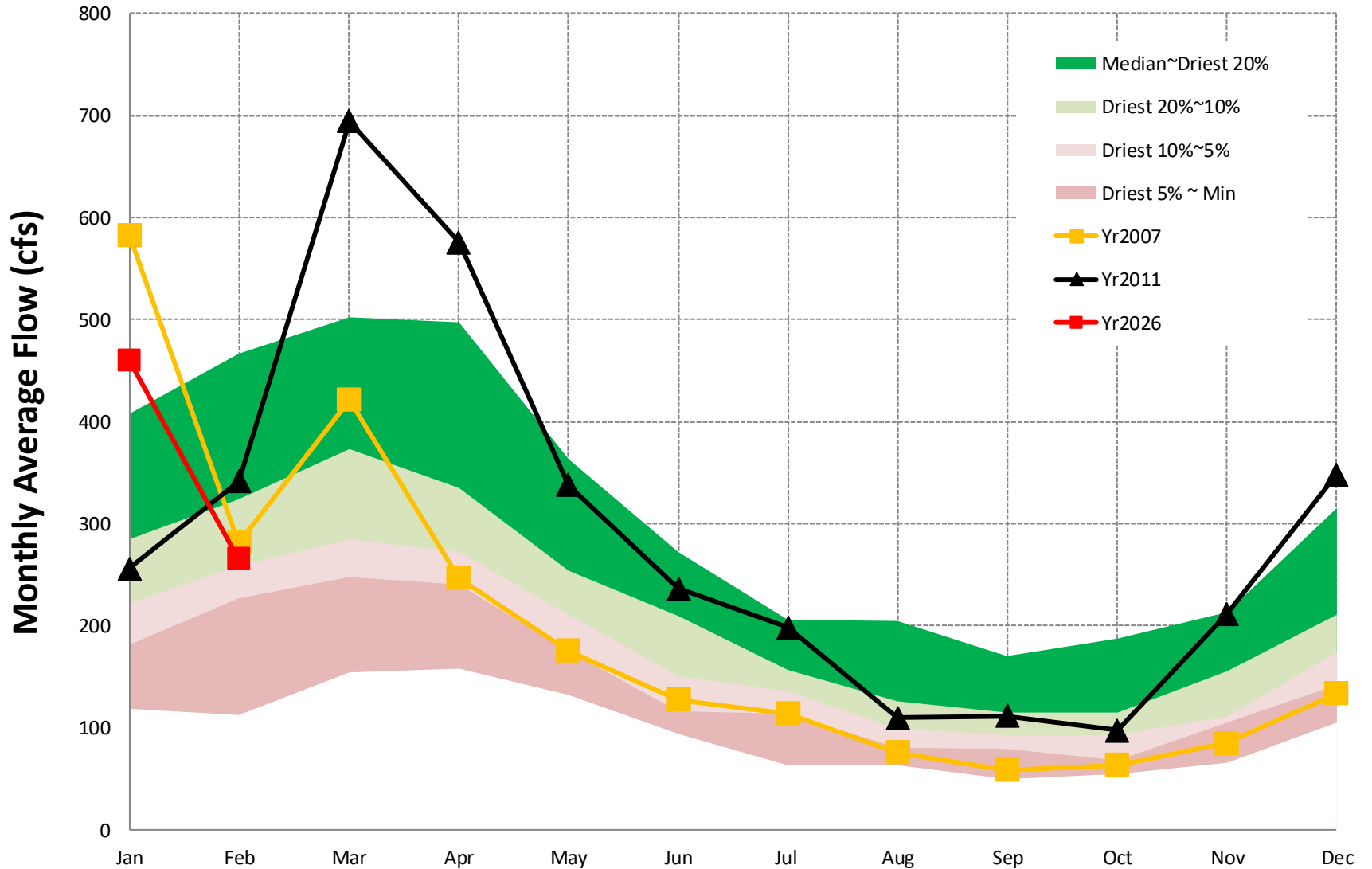
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Gage #6, USGS #02331600, Chatthoochee Basin, CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVER AT CORNELIA, GA



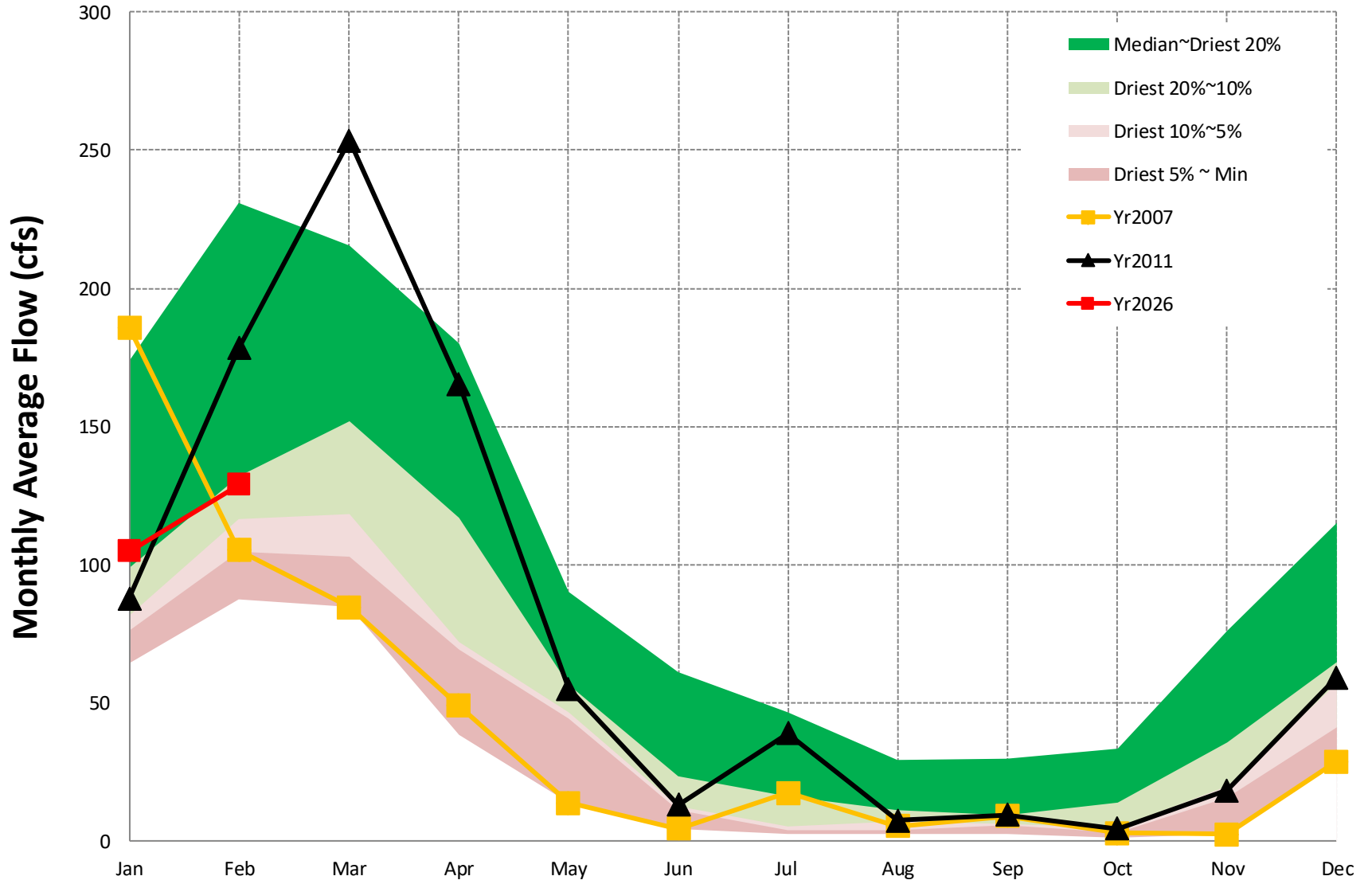
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Gage #7, USGS #02333500, Chatahoochee Basin, CHESTATEE RIVER NEAR DAHLONEGA, GA



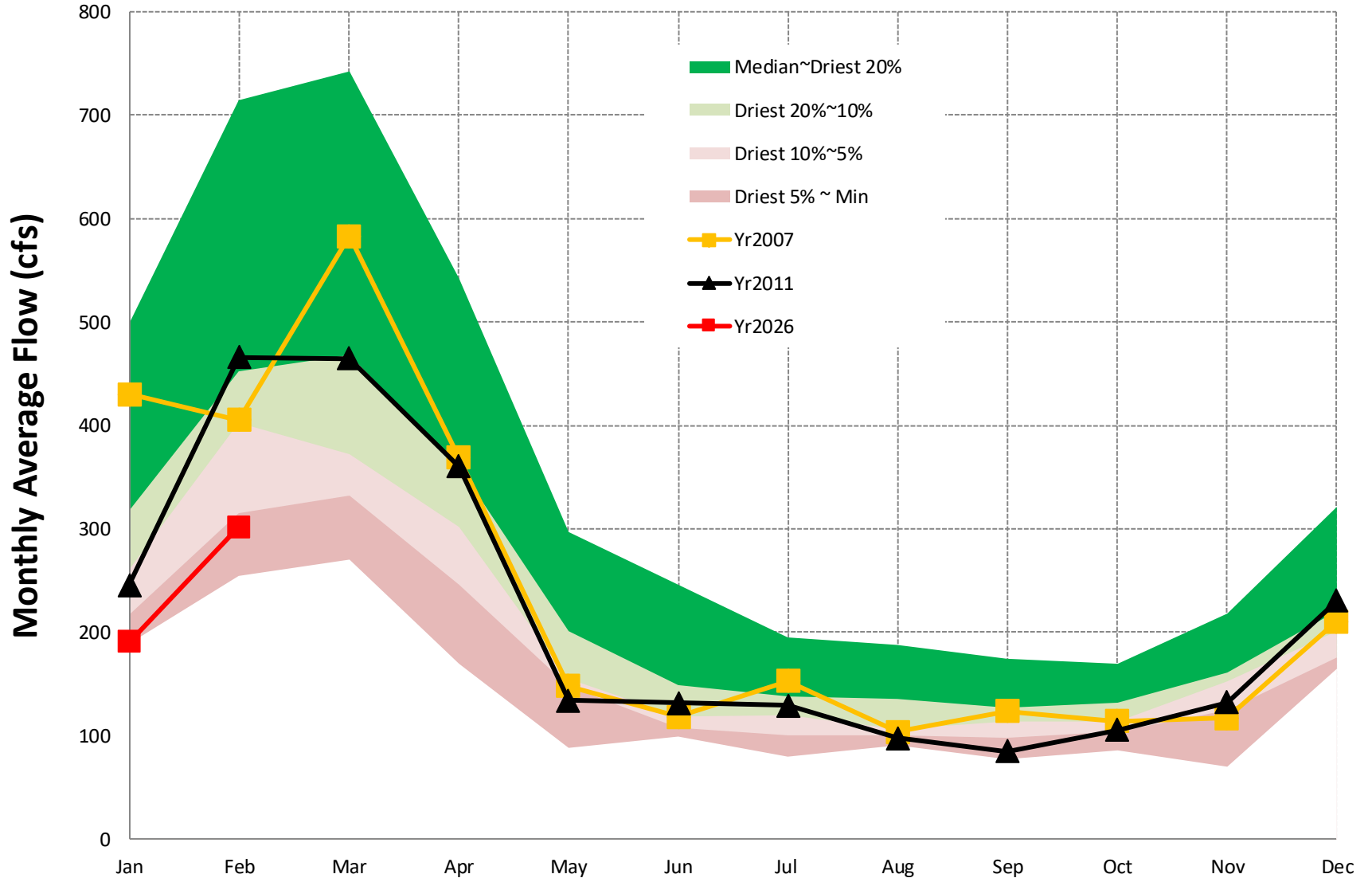
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Gage #8, USGS #02338660, Chattahoochee Basin, NEW RIVER AT GA 100, NEAR CORINTH



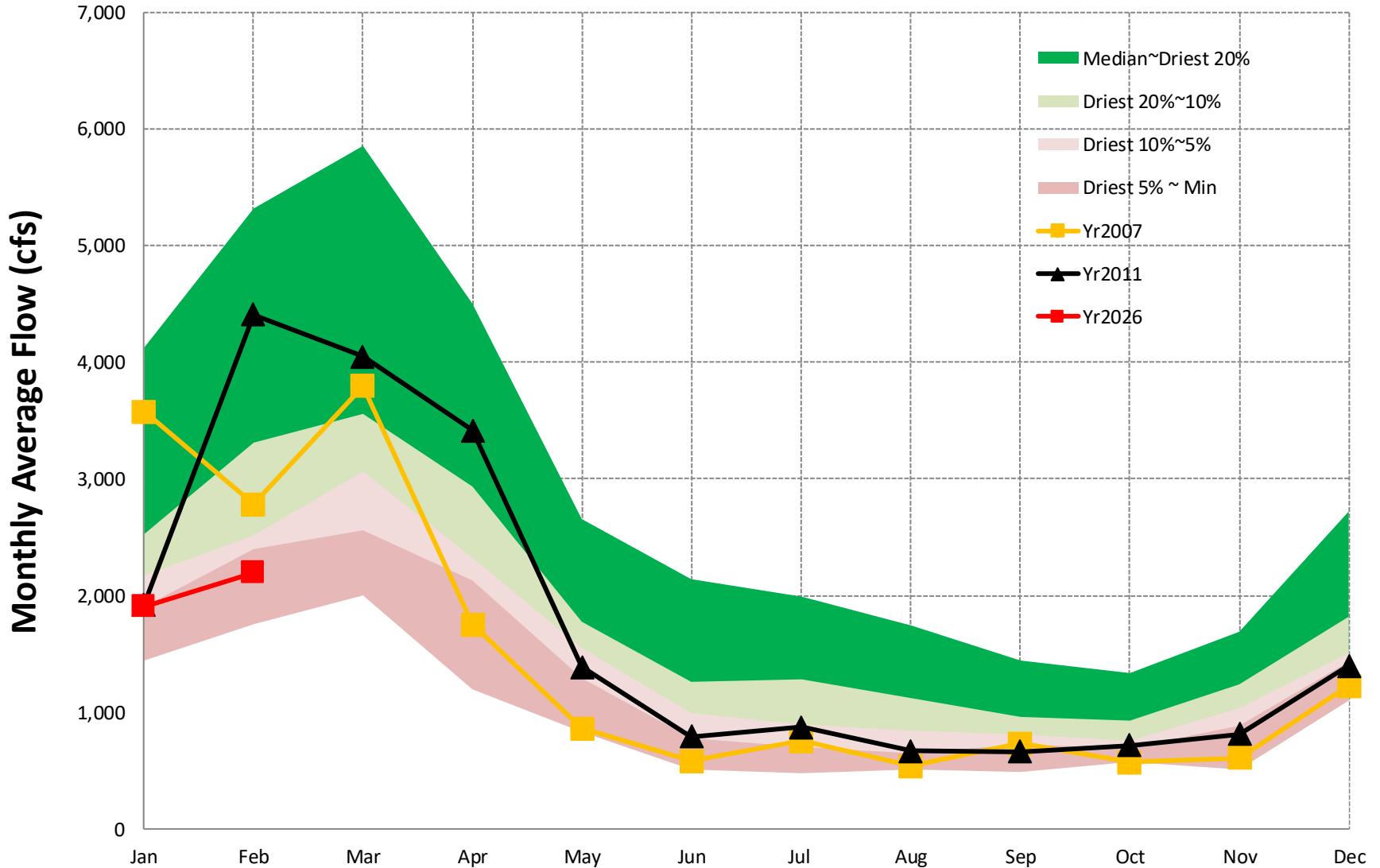
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Gage #9, USGS #02341800, Chattahoochee Basin, UPATOI CREEK NEAR COLUMBUS, GA



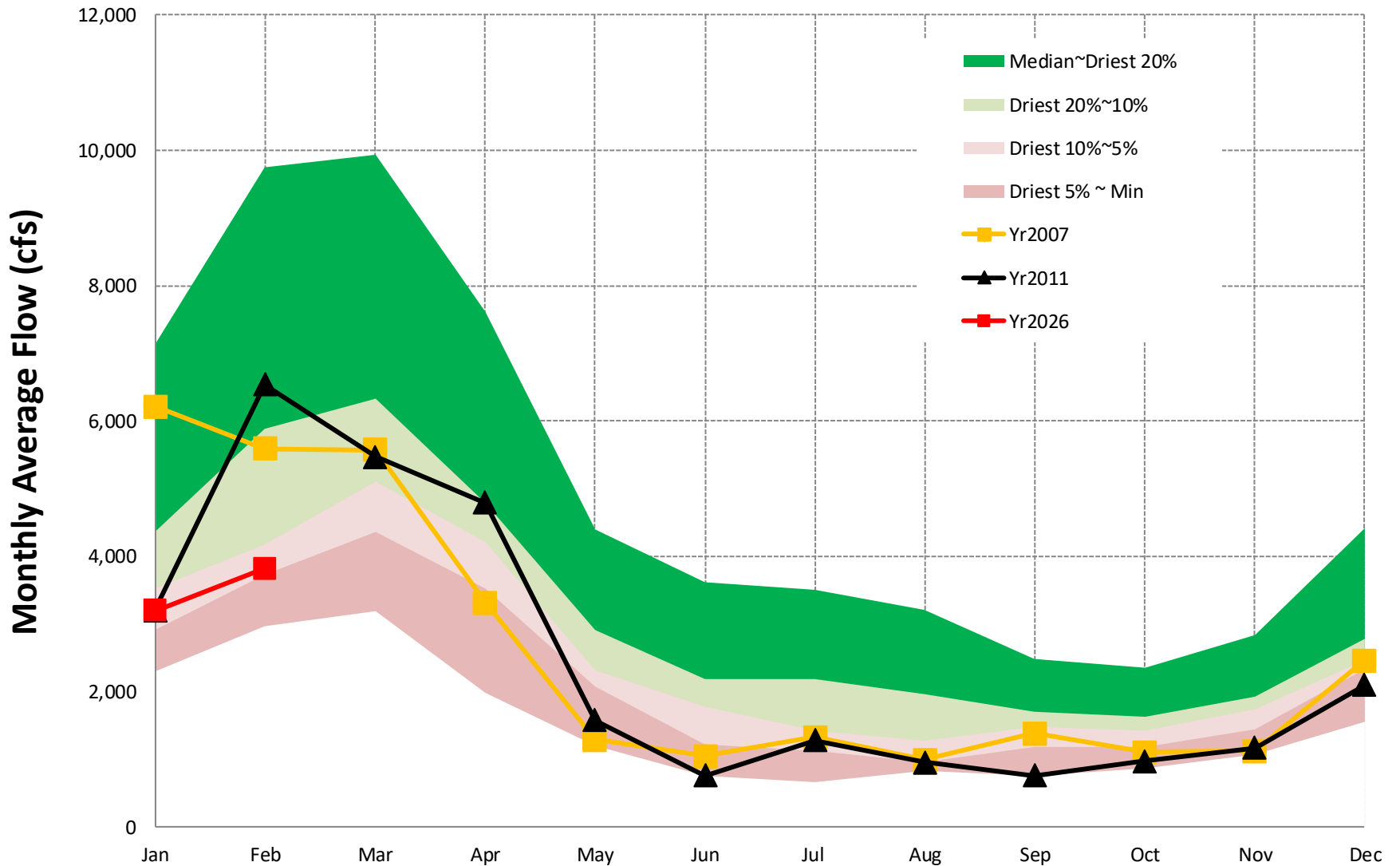
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Gage #10. USGS #02349605, Flint Basin, FLINT RIVER AT GA26 NEAR MONTEZUMA, GA



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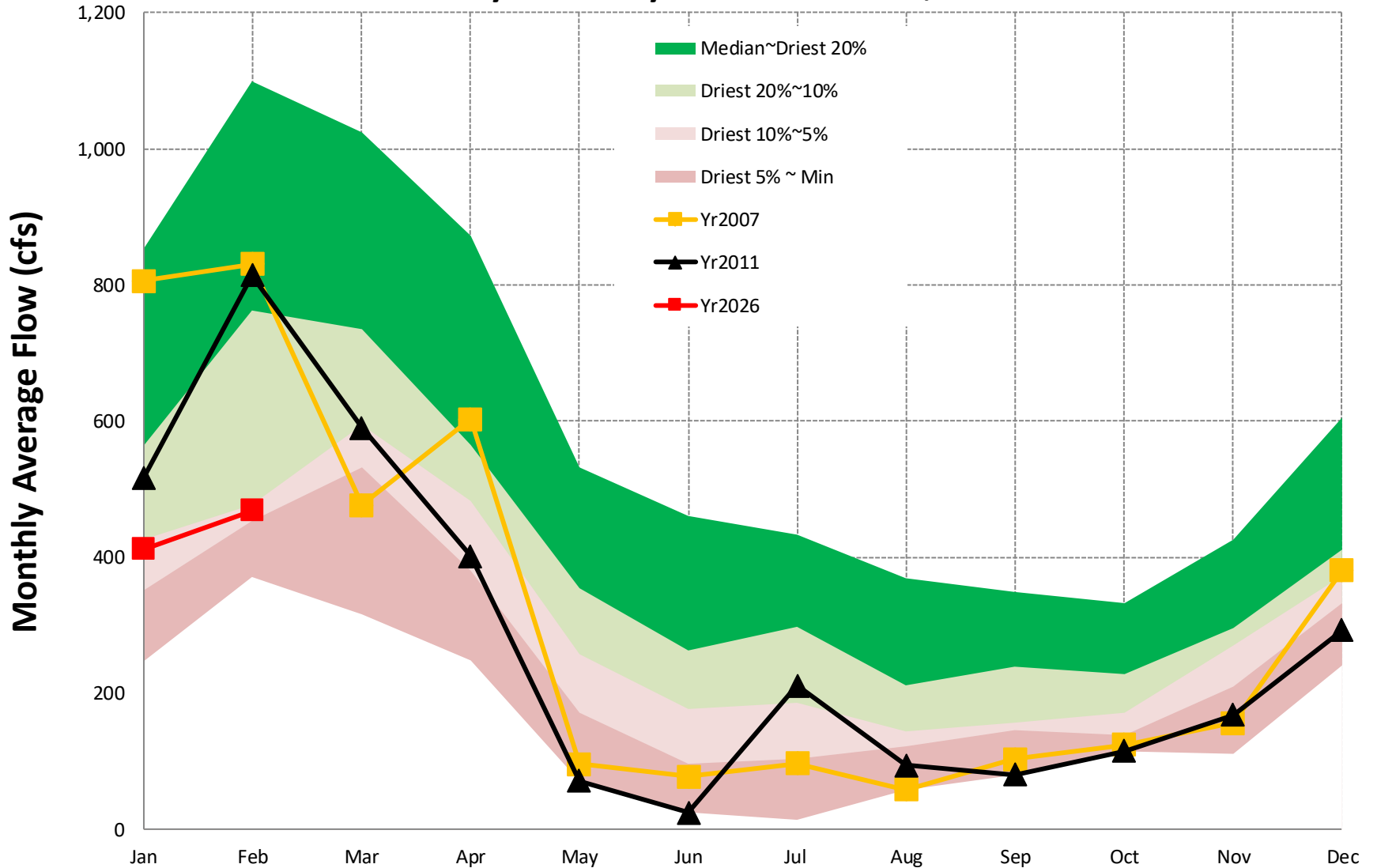
Gage #11, USGS #02352500, Flint Basin, FLINT RIVER AT ALBANY, GA



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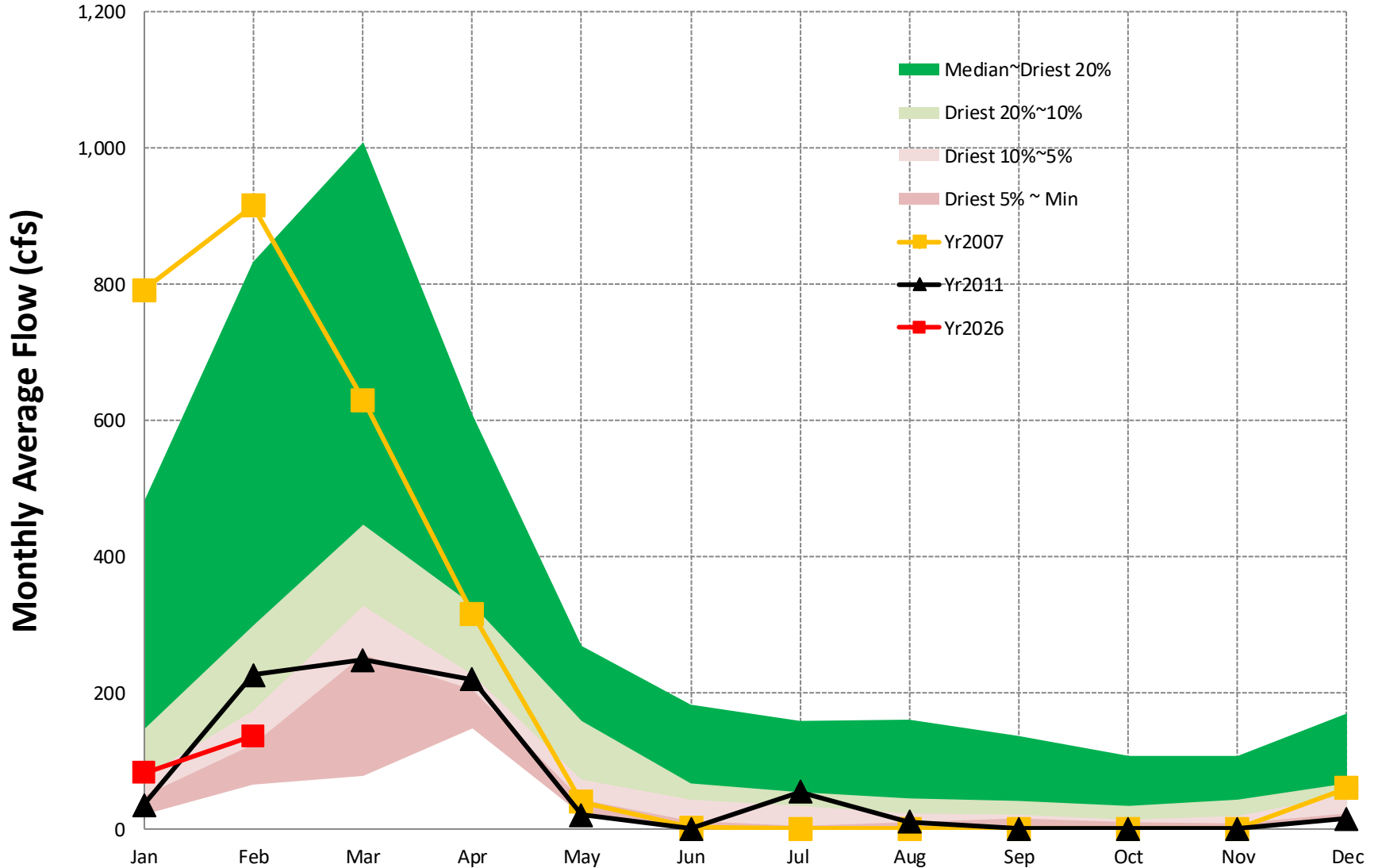
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Gage #12. USGS #02353500, Flint Basin, Ichawaynochaway Creek at Milford, GA



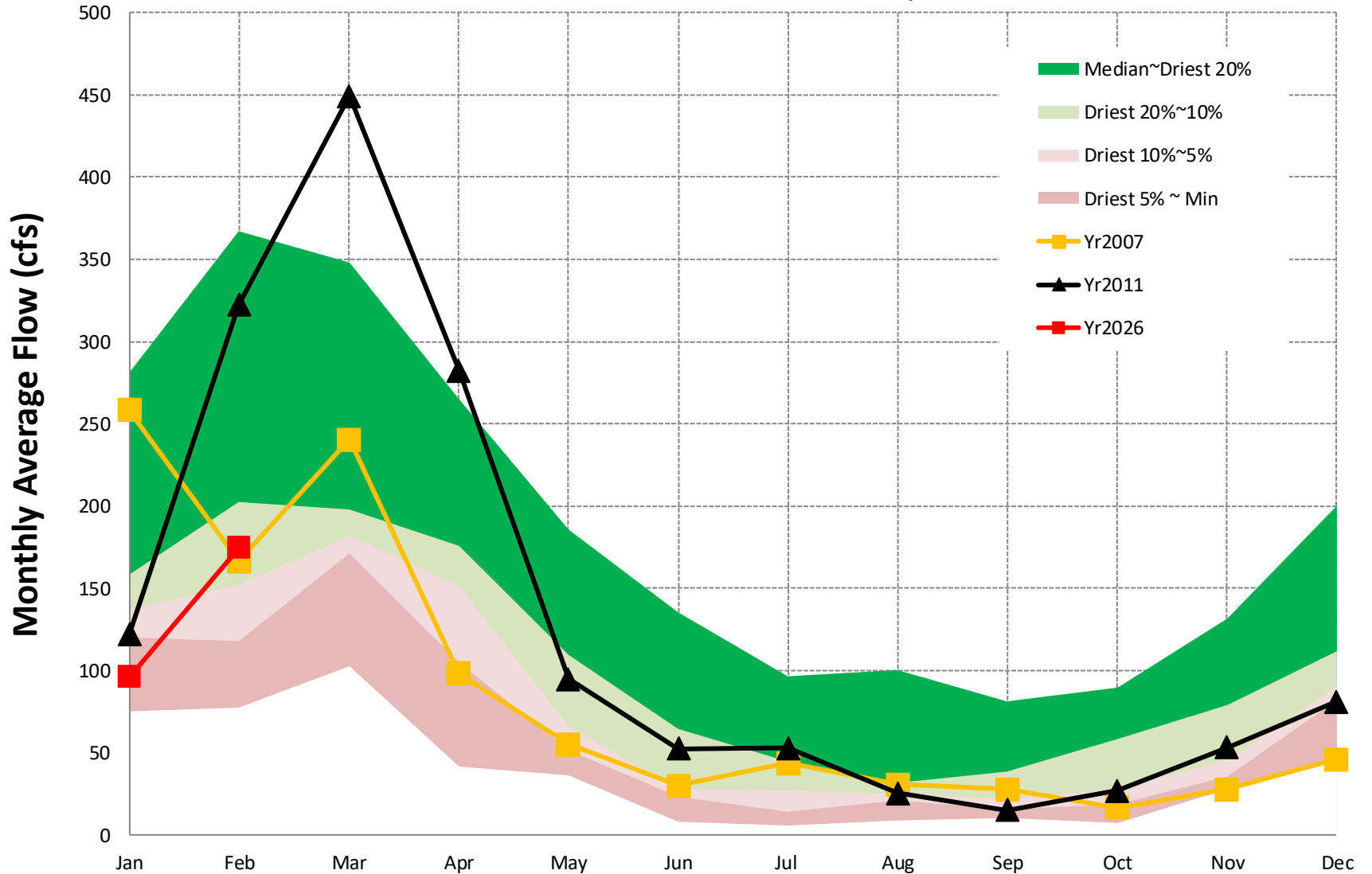
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Gage #13. USGS #02357000, Flint River, Spring Creek near Iron City, GA



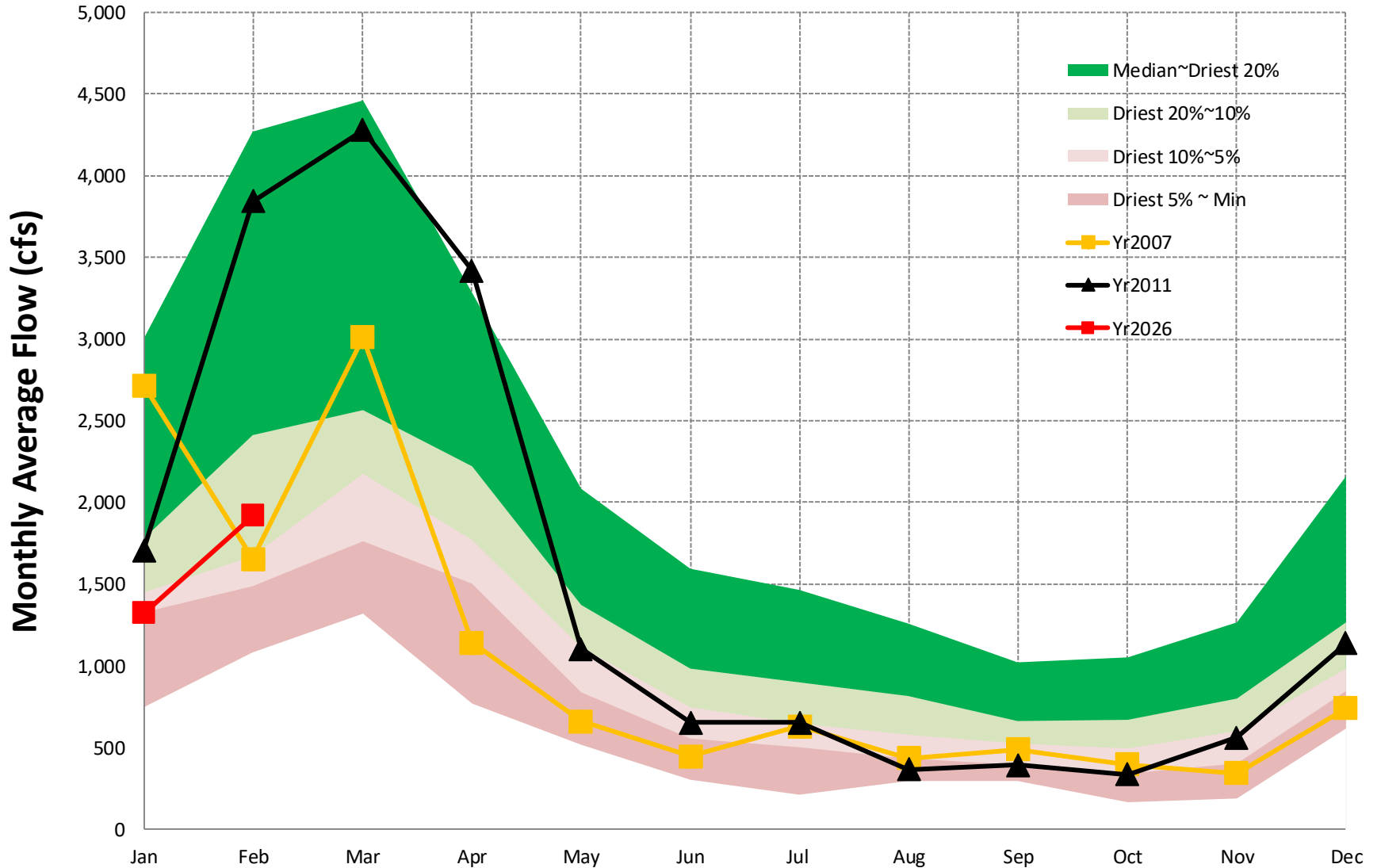
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Gage #14. USGS #02208450, Ocumulgee Basin, ALCOVY RIVER above COVINGTON, GA



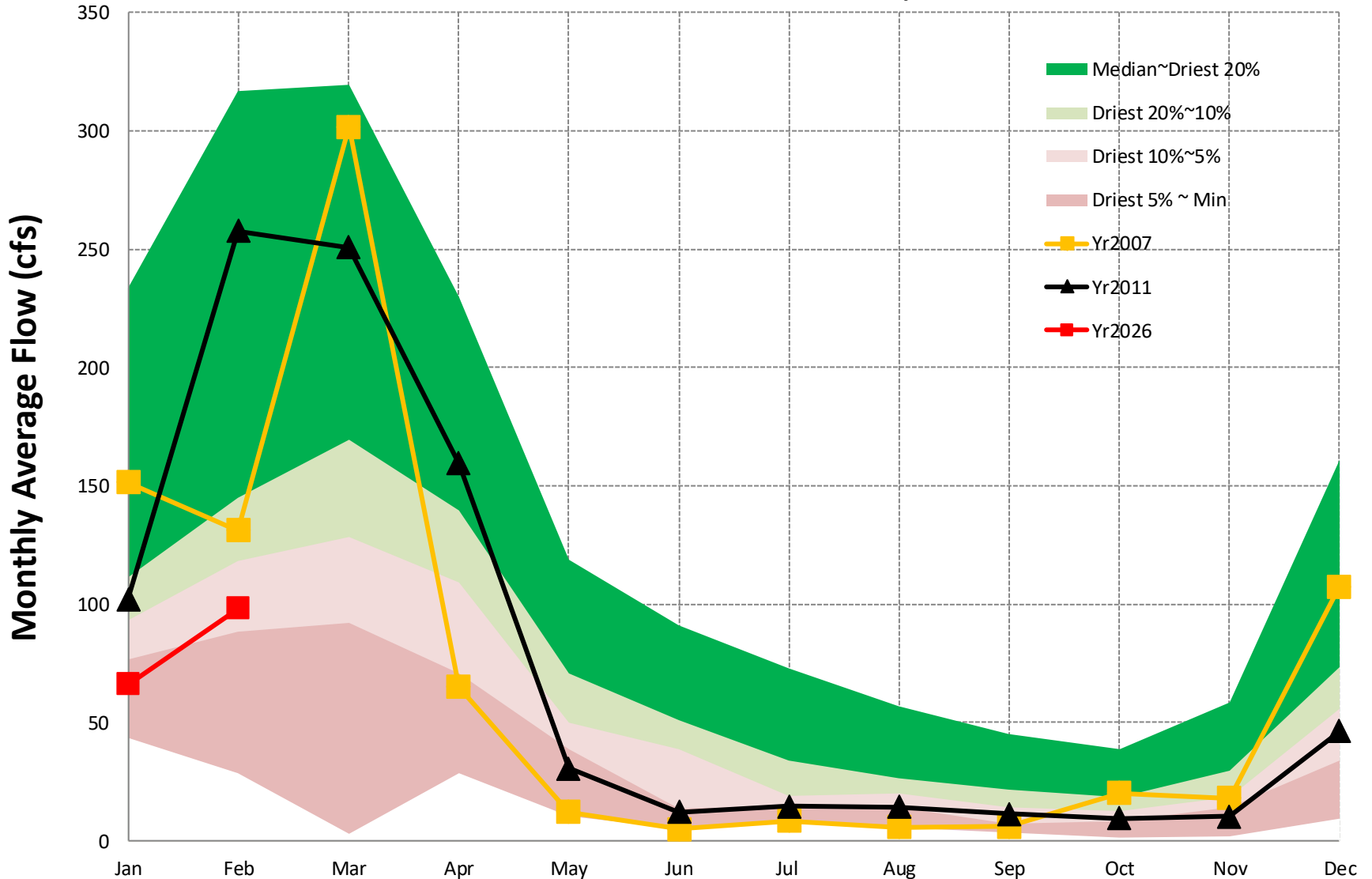
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Gage #15. USGS #02213000, Ocmulgee Basin, Ocmulgee River at Macon, GA



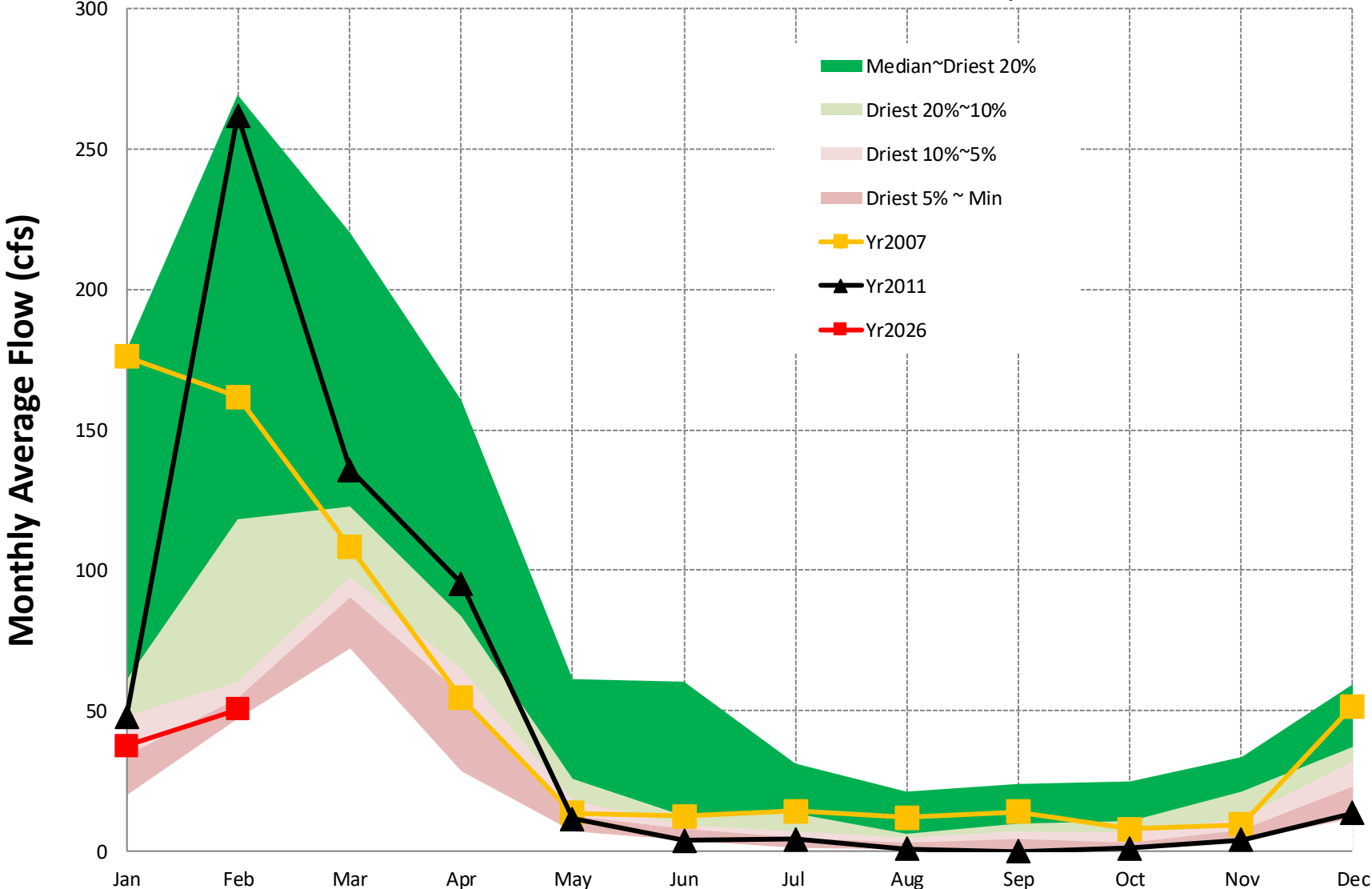
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Gage #16. USGS #02213500, Ocmulgee Basin, TOBESOFKEE CREEK near MACON, GA



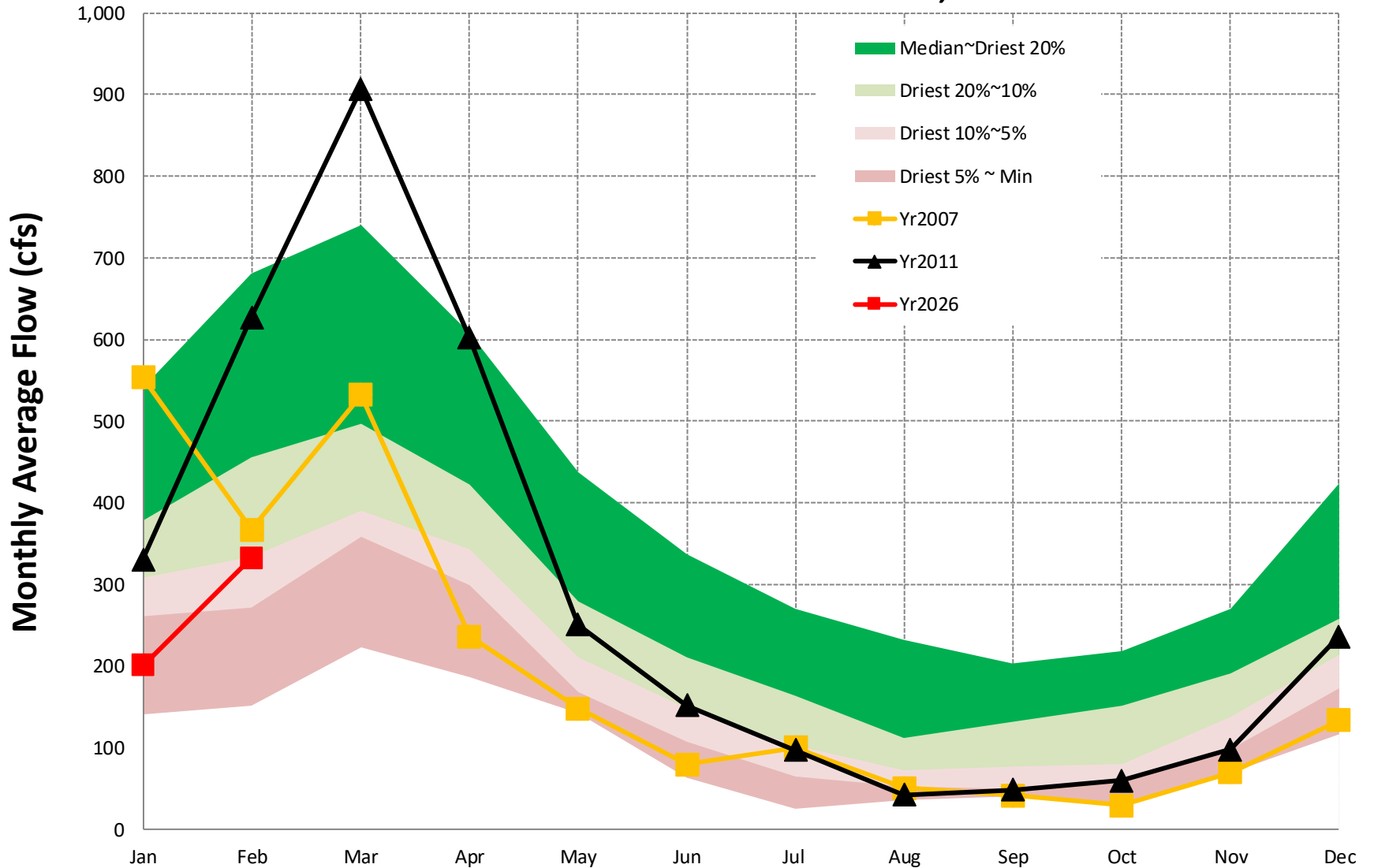
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Gage #17. USGS #02215100, Ocmulgee Basin, TUCSAWHATCHEE CREEK near HAWKINSVILLE, GA



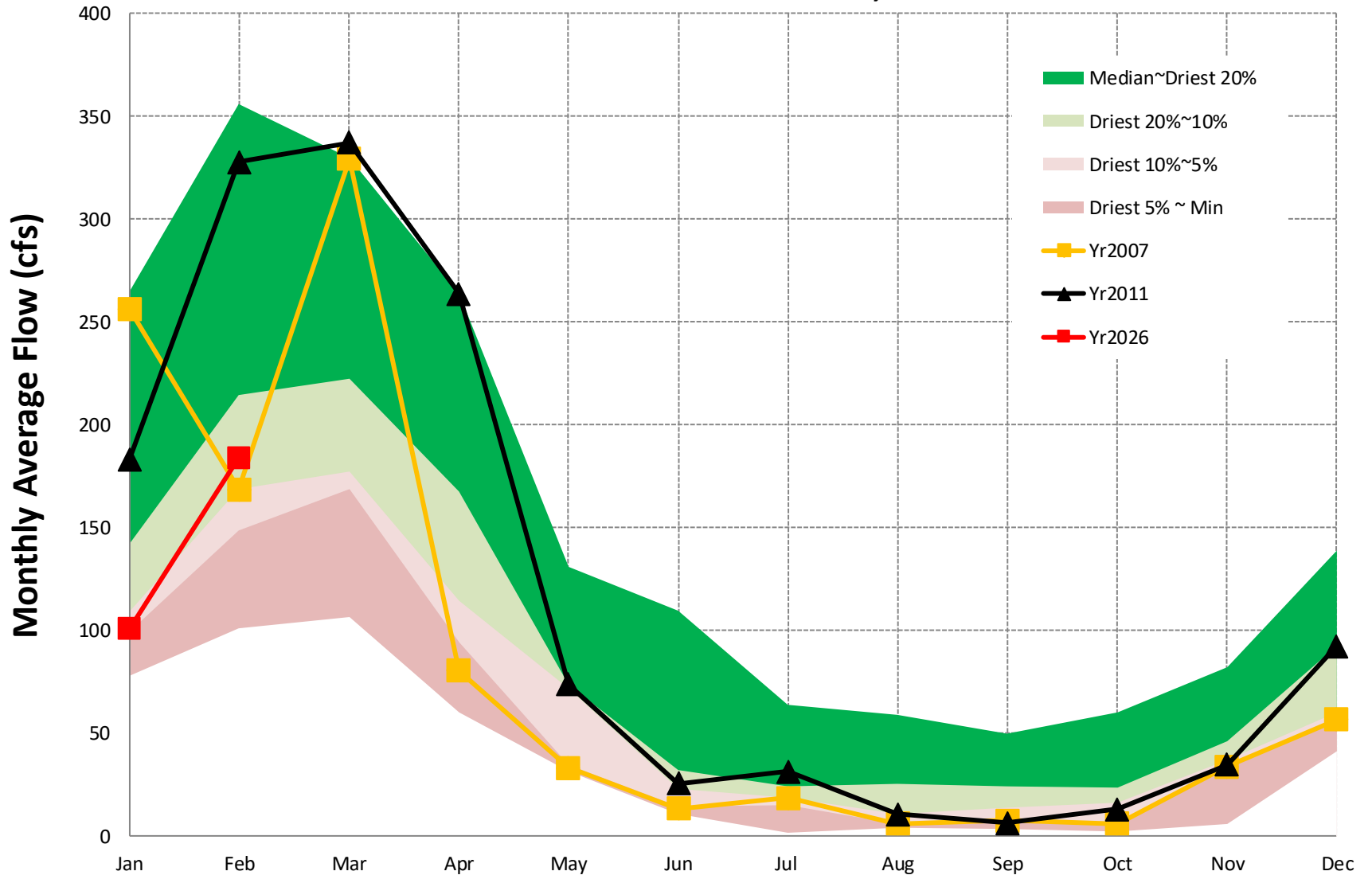
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Gage #18. USGS #02217500, Oconee Basin, MIDDLE OCONEE RIVER near ATHENS, GA

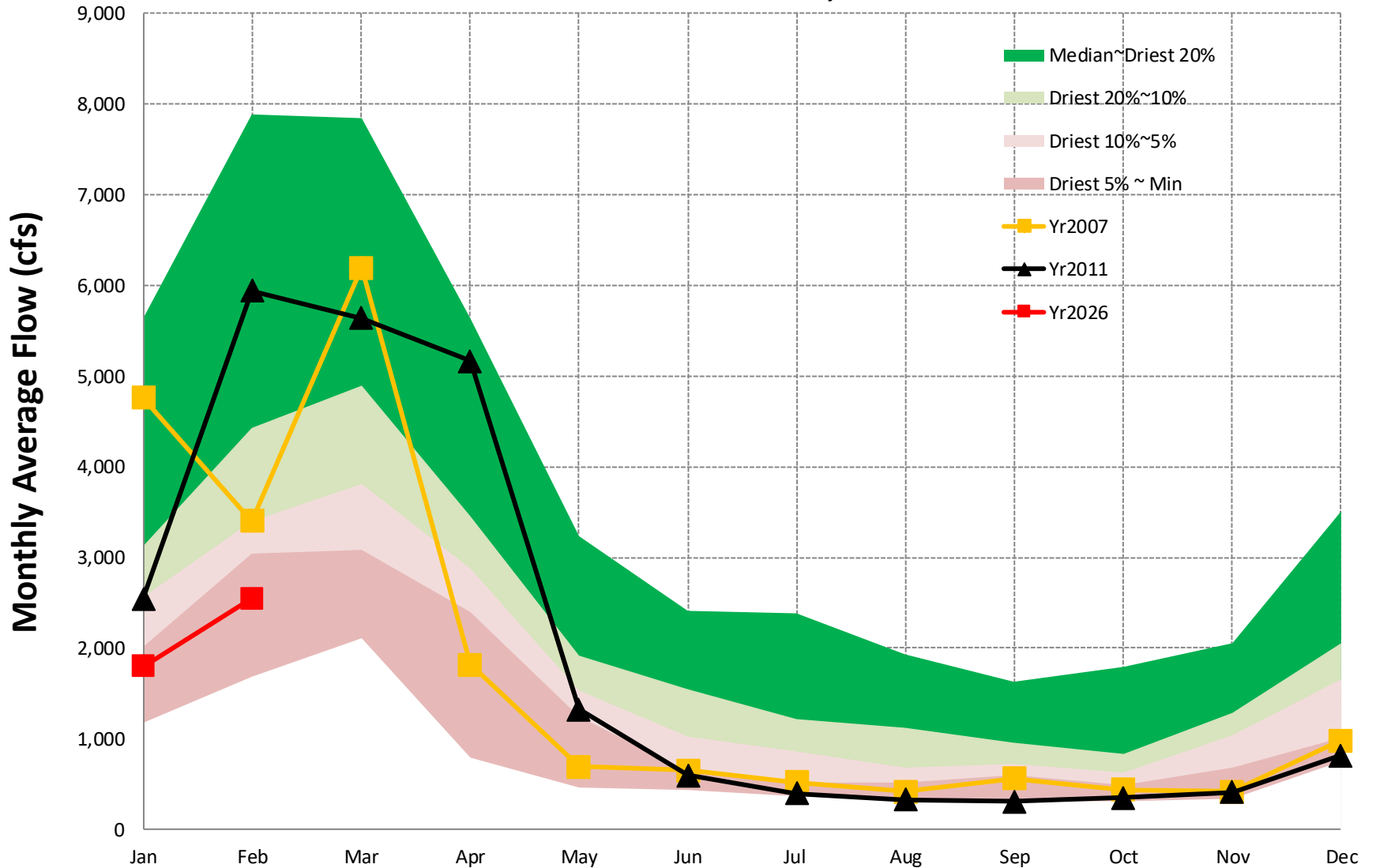


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Gage #19. USGS #02220900, Oconee Basin, LITTLE RIVER near EATONTON, GA

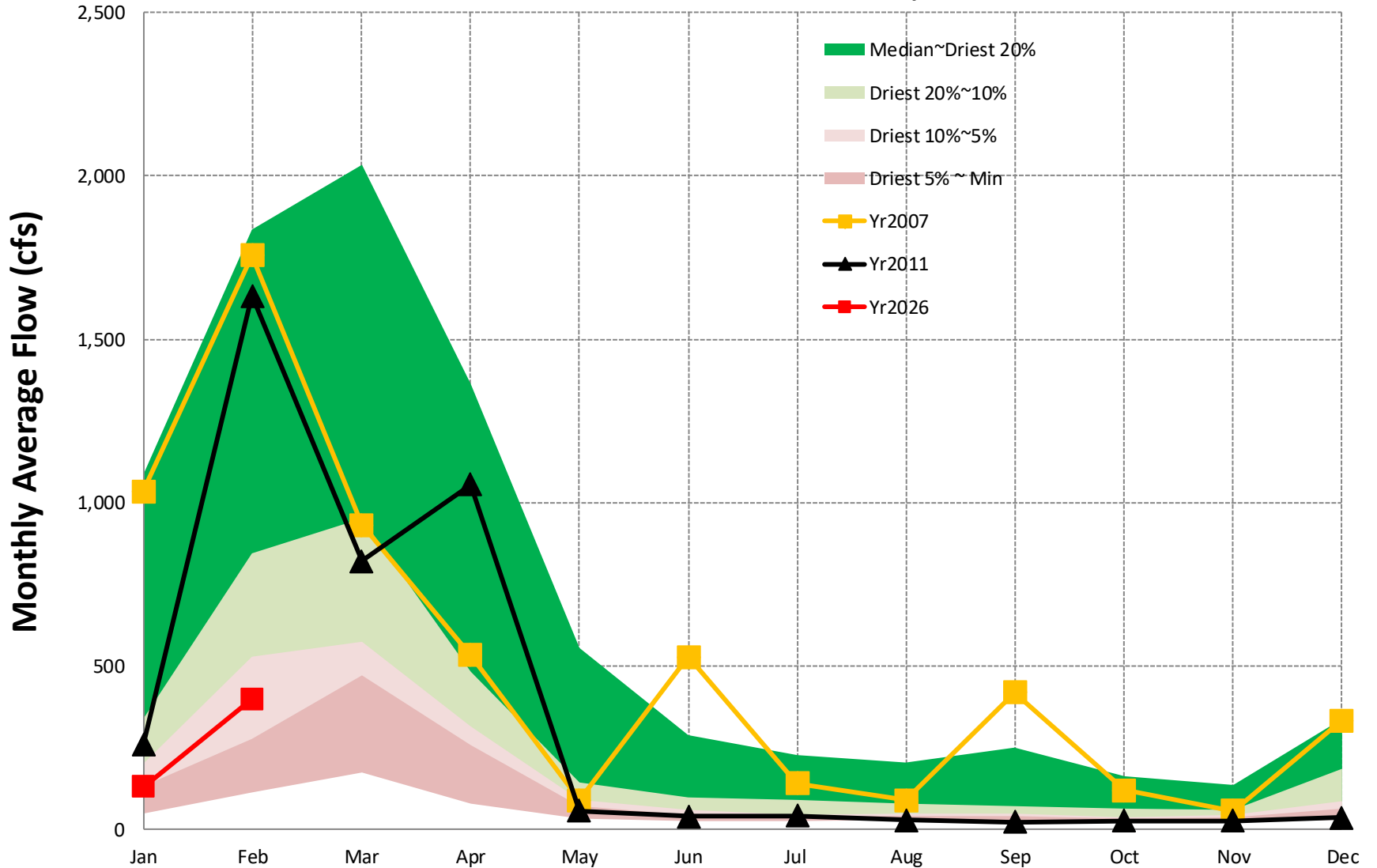


Gage #20. USGS #02223500, Oconee Basin, Oconee River at Dublin, GA



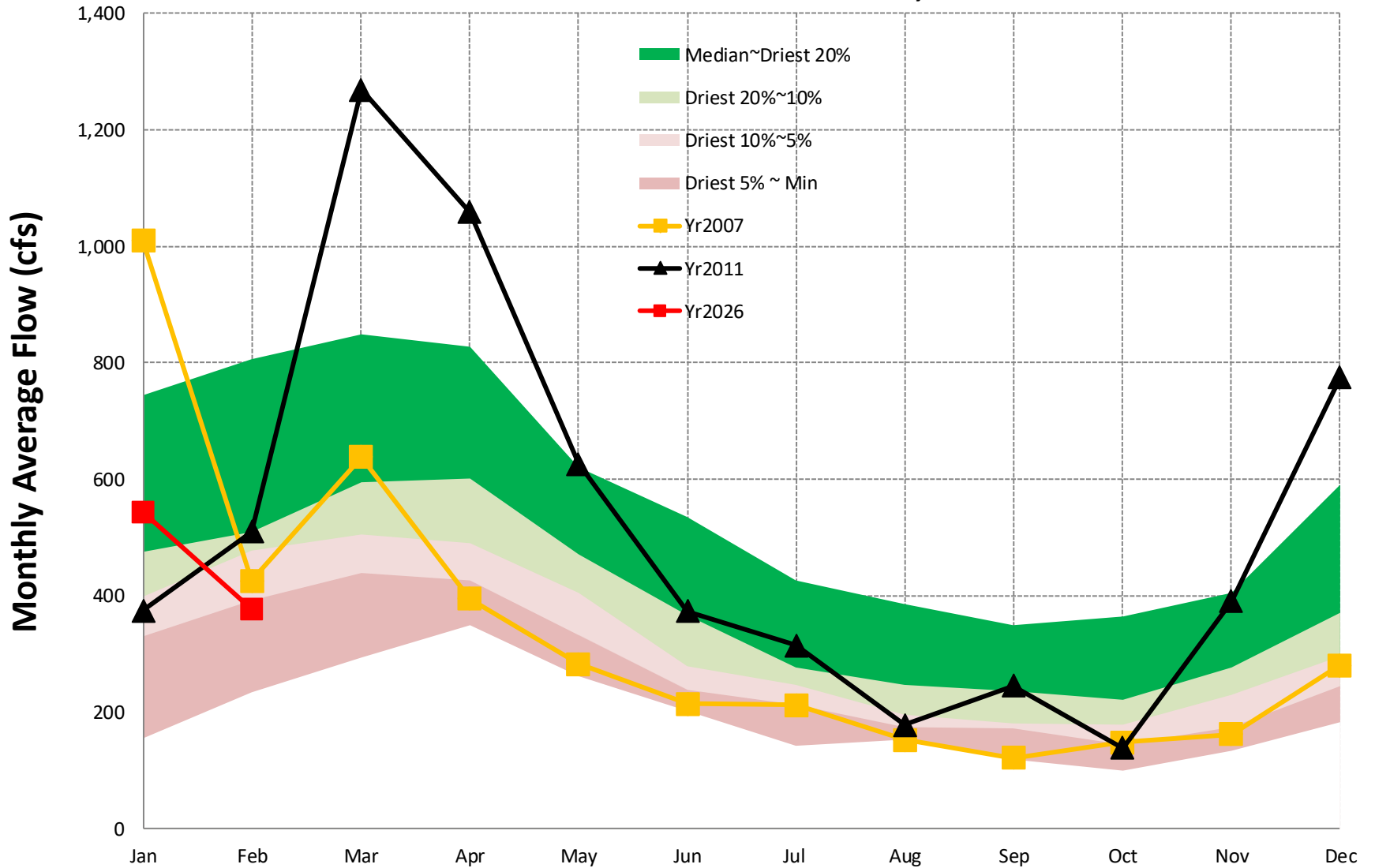
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Gage #21. USGS #02225500, Altamaha Basin, OHOOPEE RIVER near REIDSVILLE, GA

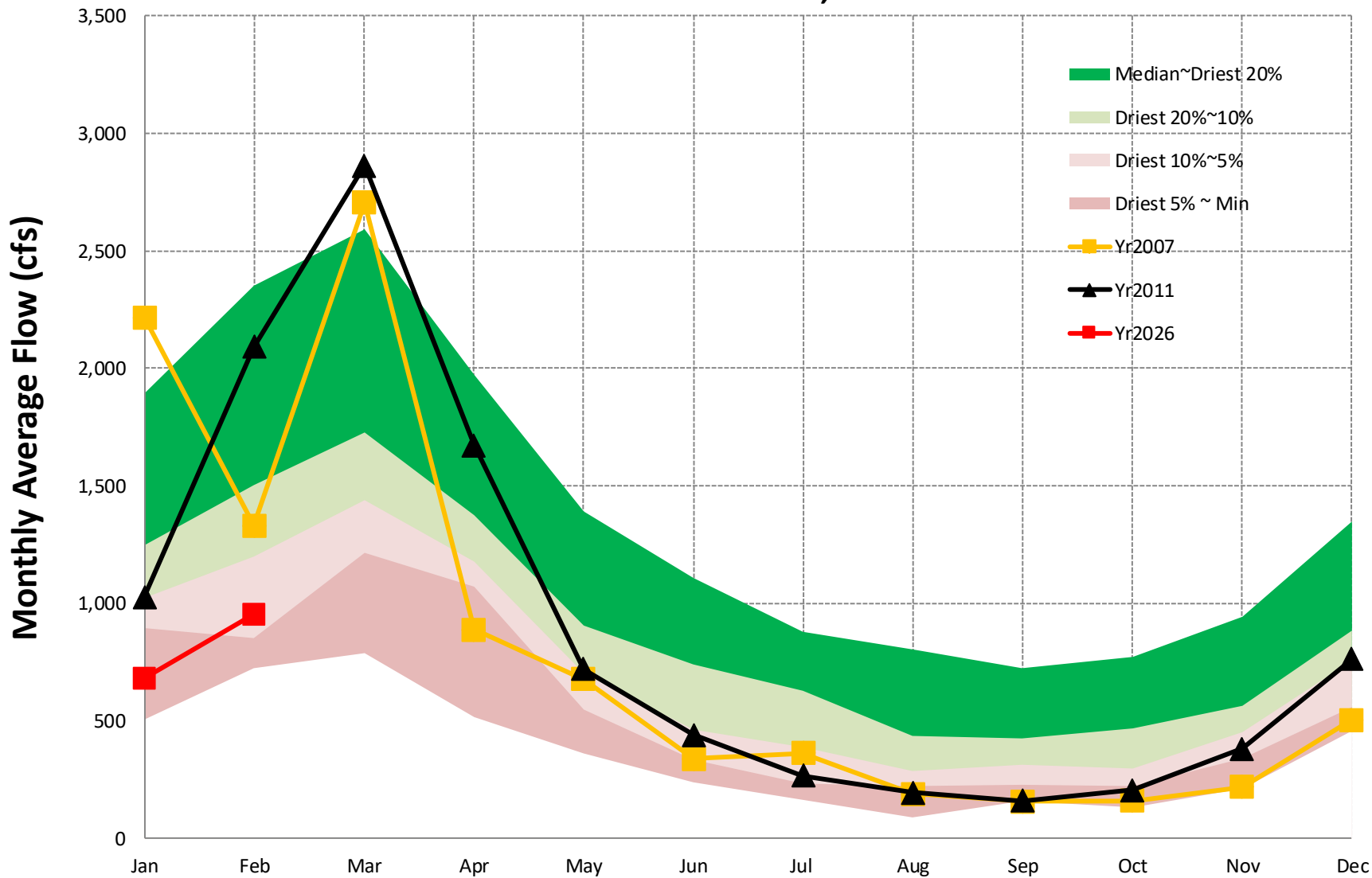


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Gage #22. USGS #02177000, Savannah Basin, CHATTOOGA RIVER near CLAYTON, GA

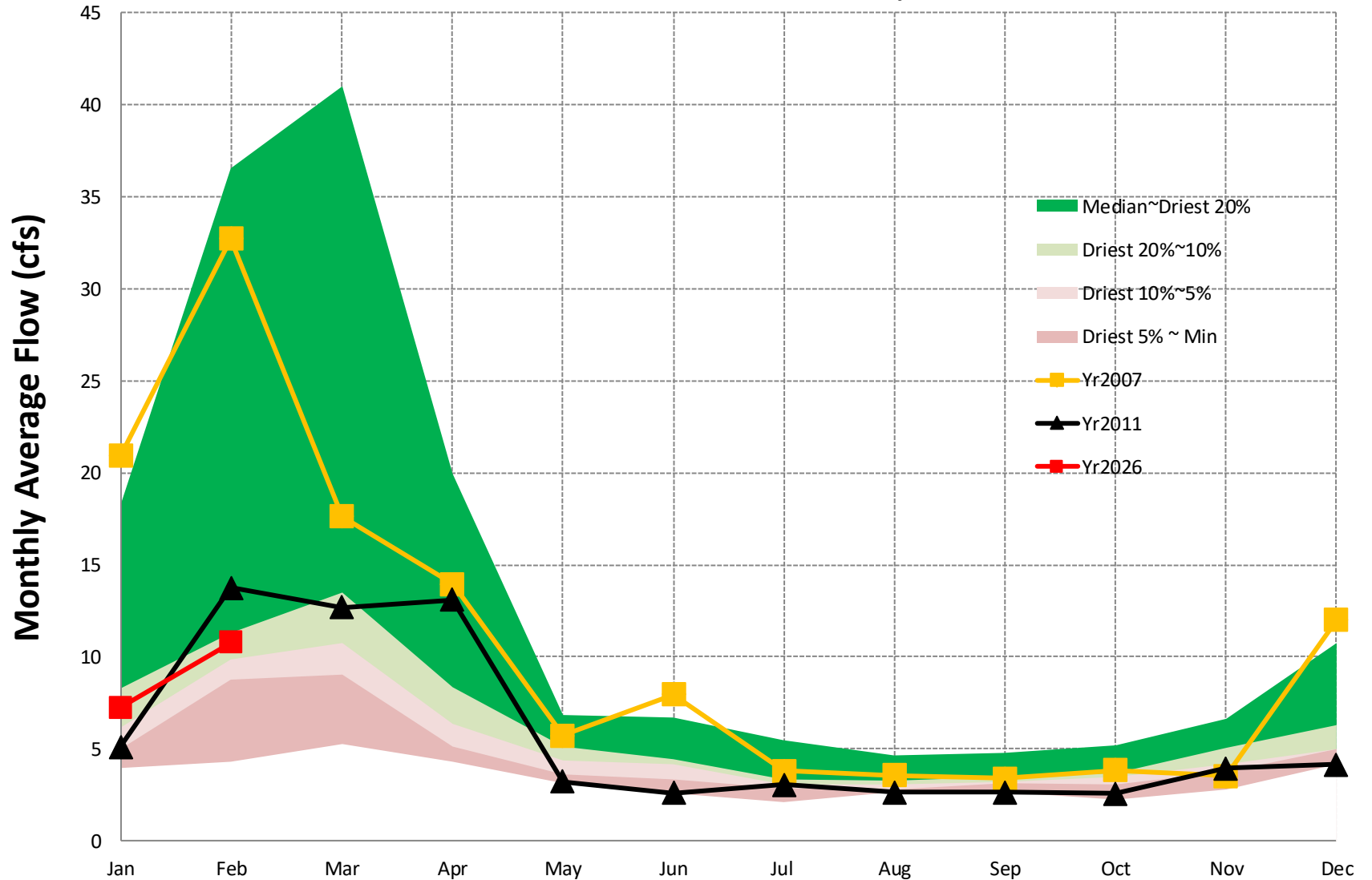


Gage #23. USGS #02192000, Savannah Basin Broad River near Bell, GA



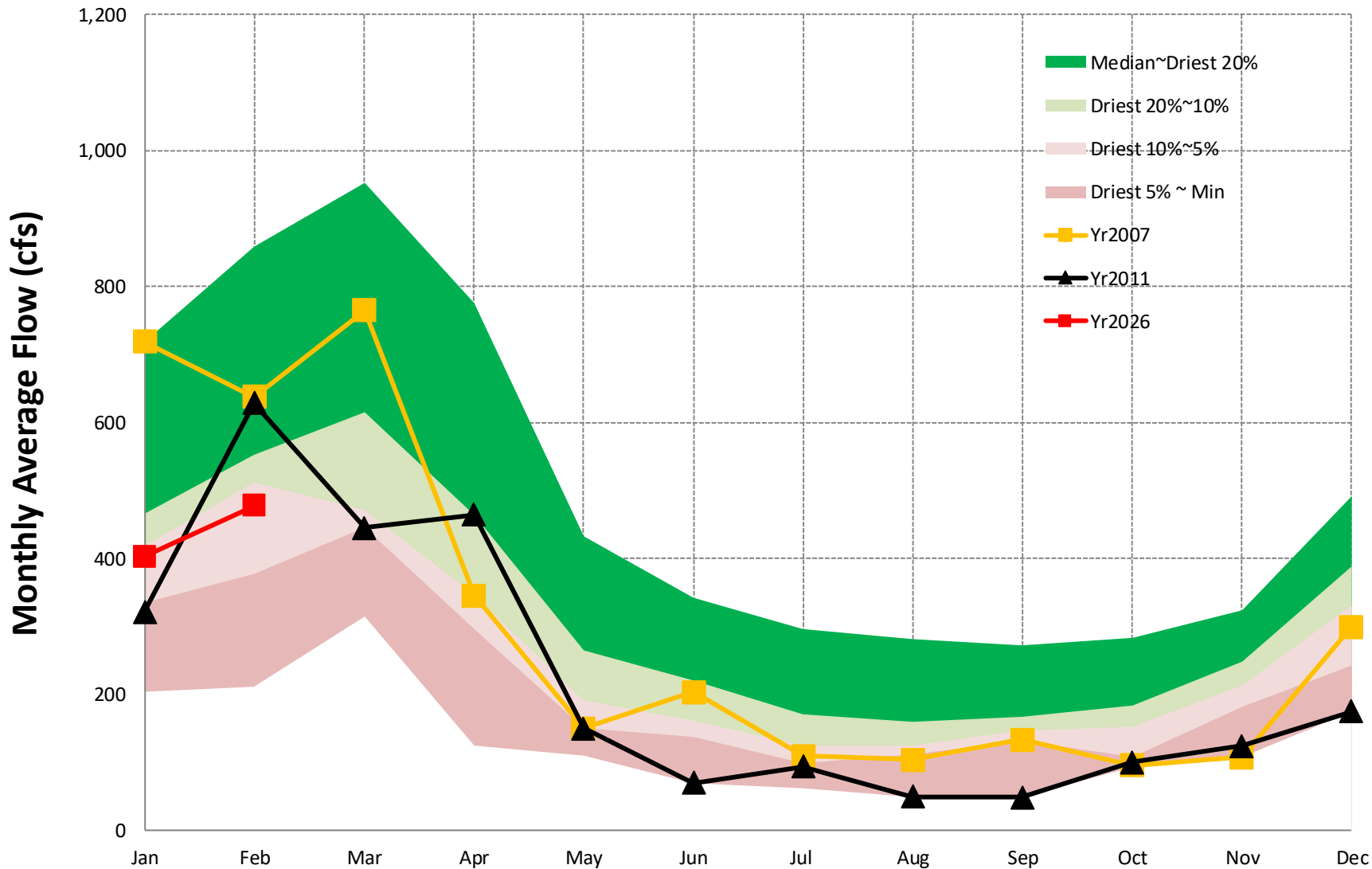
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Gage #24. USGS #02198100, Savannah Basin, BEAVERDAM CREEK near SARDIS, GA



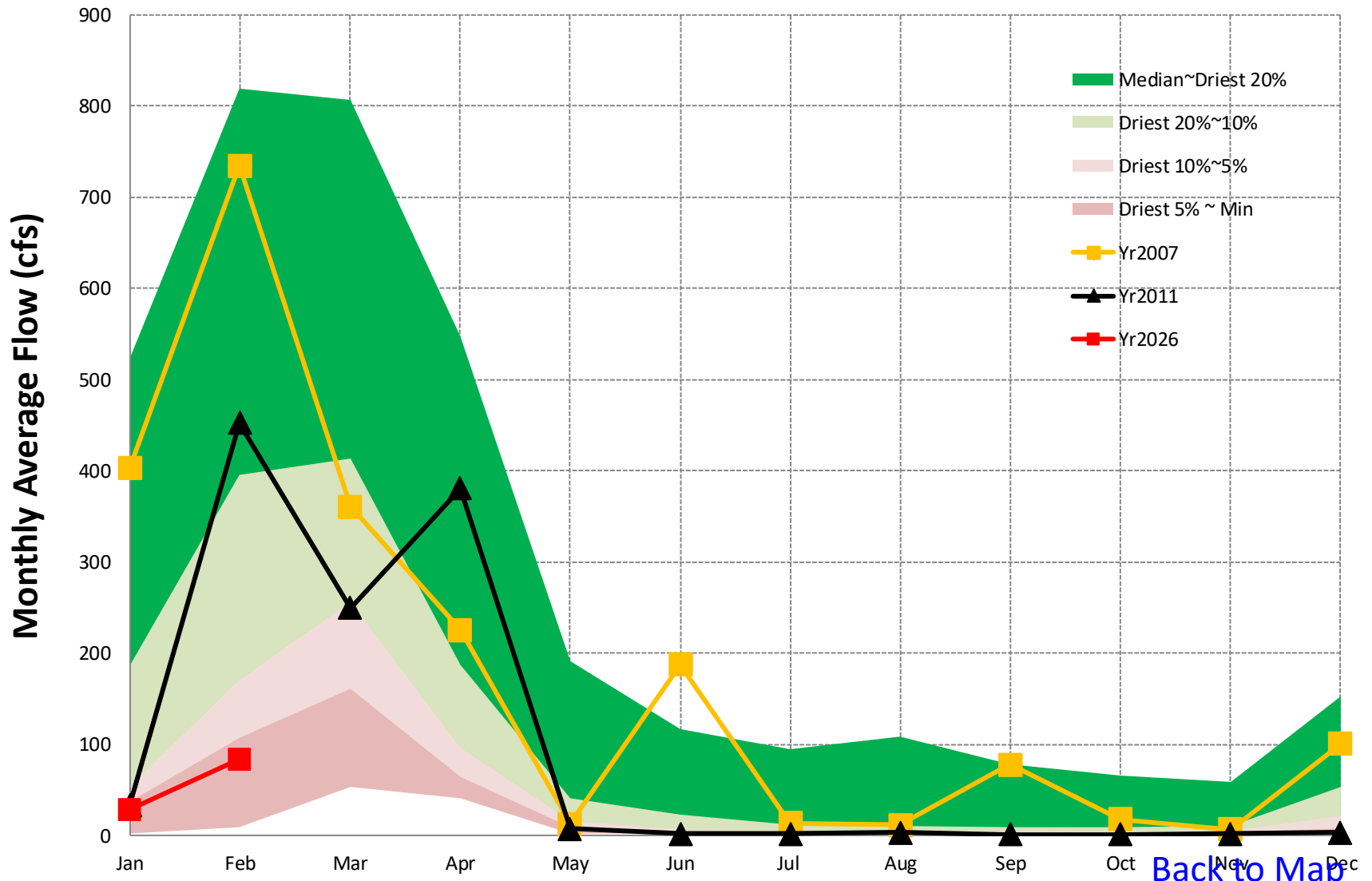
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Gage #25. USGS #02198000, Savannah Basin, BRIER CREEK at MILLHAVEN, GA



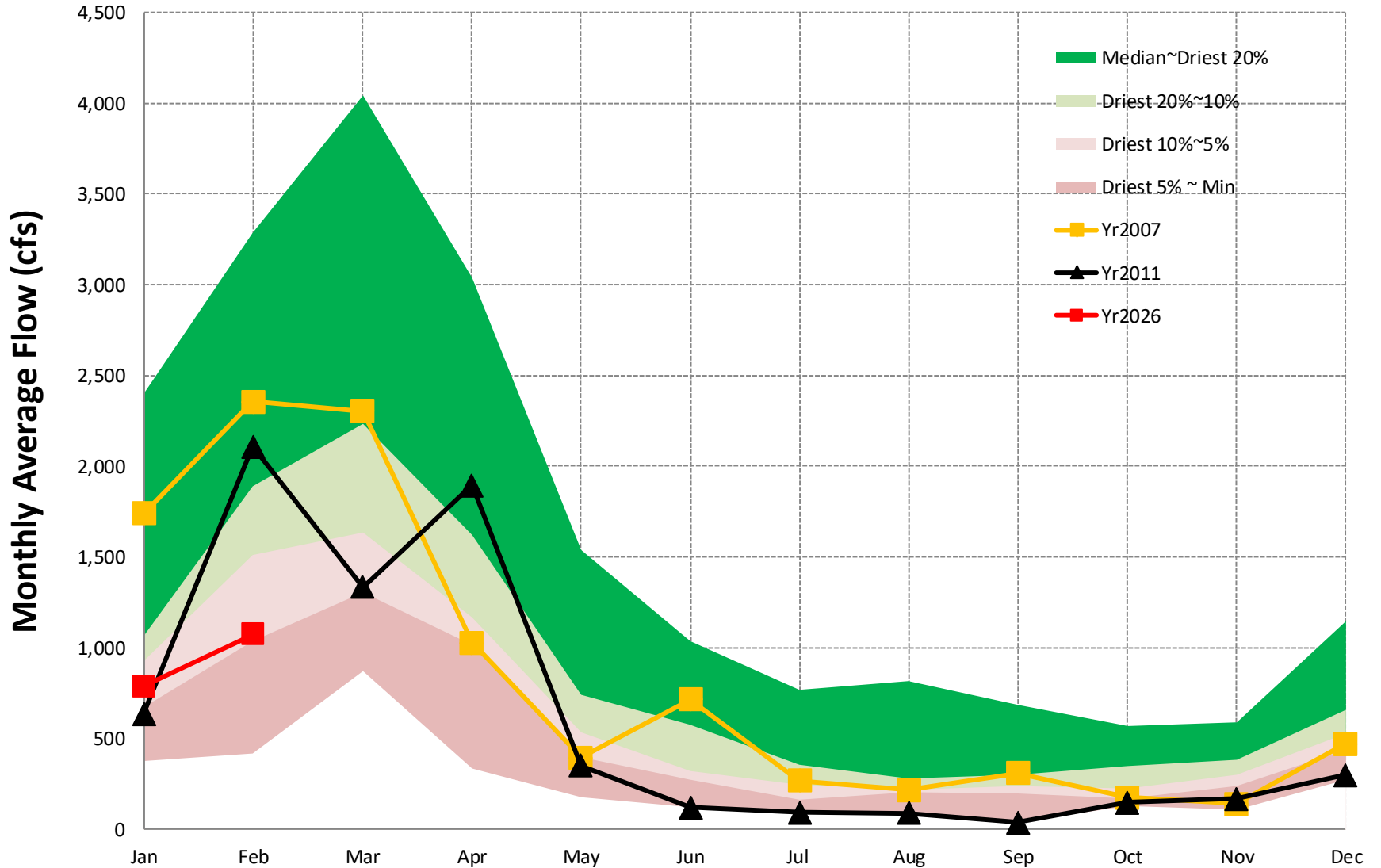
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Gage #26. USGS #02203000, Ogeechee Basin, CANOOCHEE RIVER near CLAXTON, GA



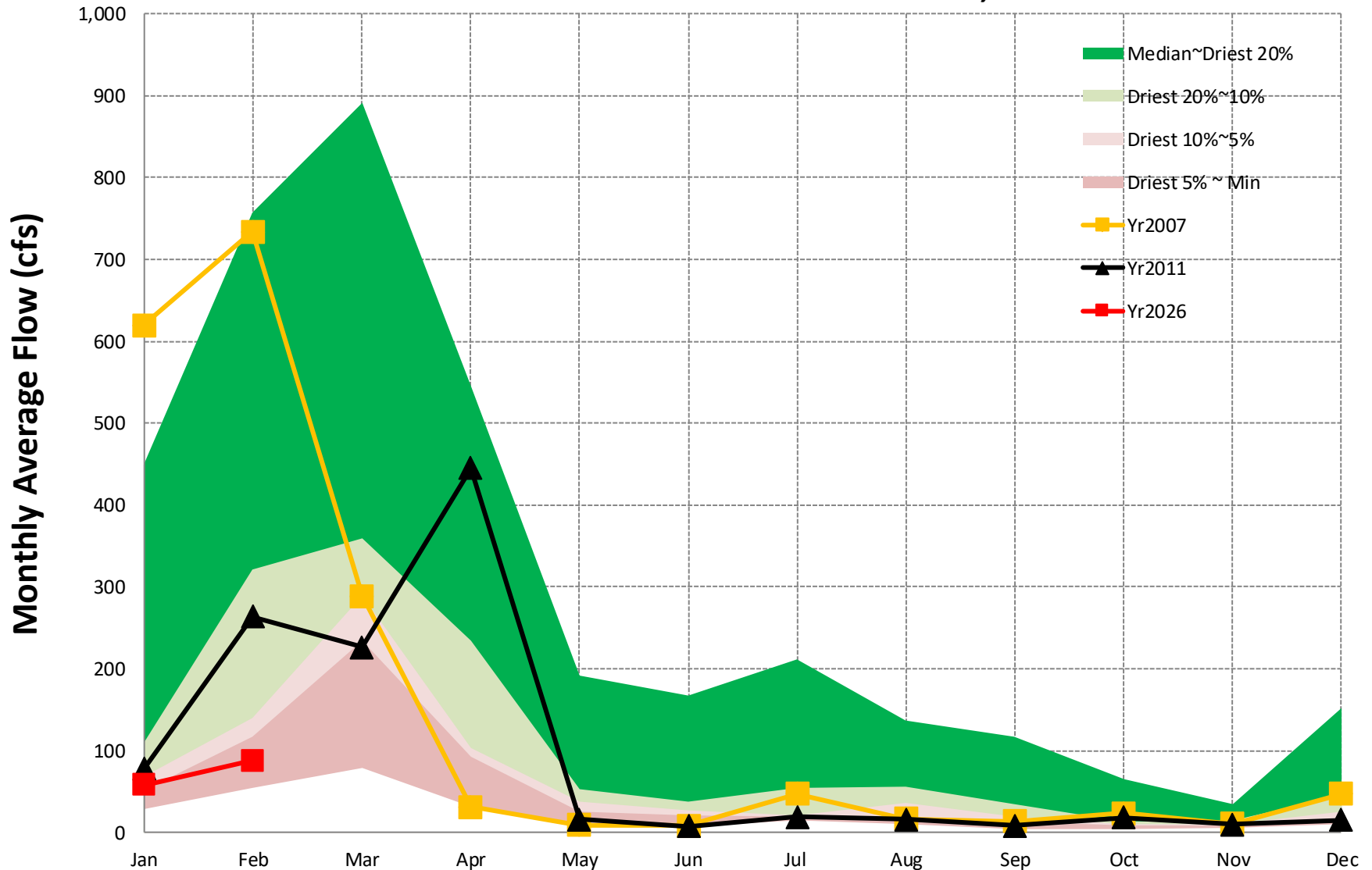
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Gage #27. USGS #02202500, Ogeechee Basin, Ogeechee River near Eden, GA

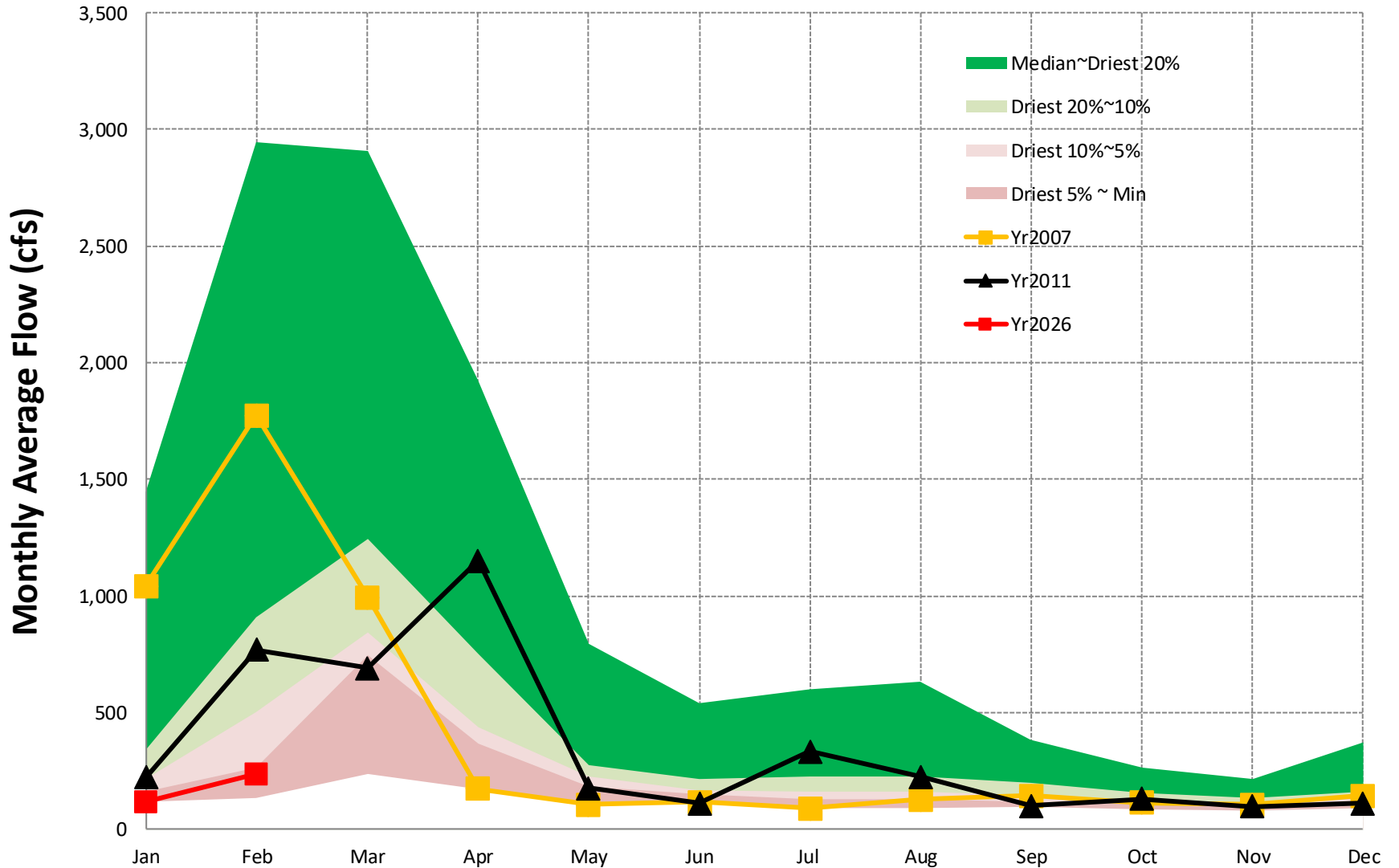


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Gage #28. USGS #02327500, Ochlockonee Basin, OCHLOCKONEE RIVER near THOMASVILLE, GA

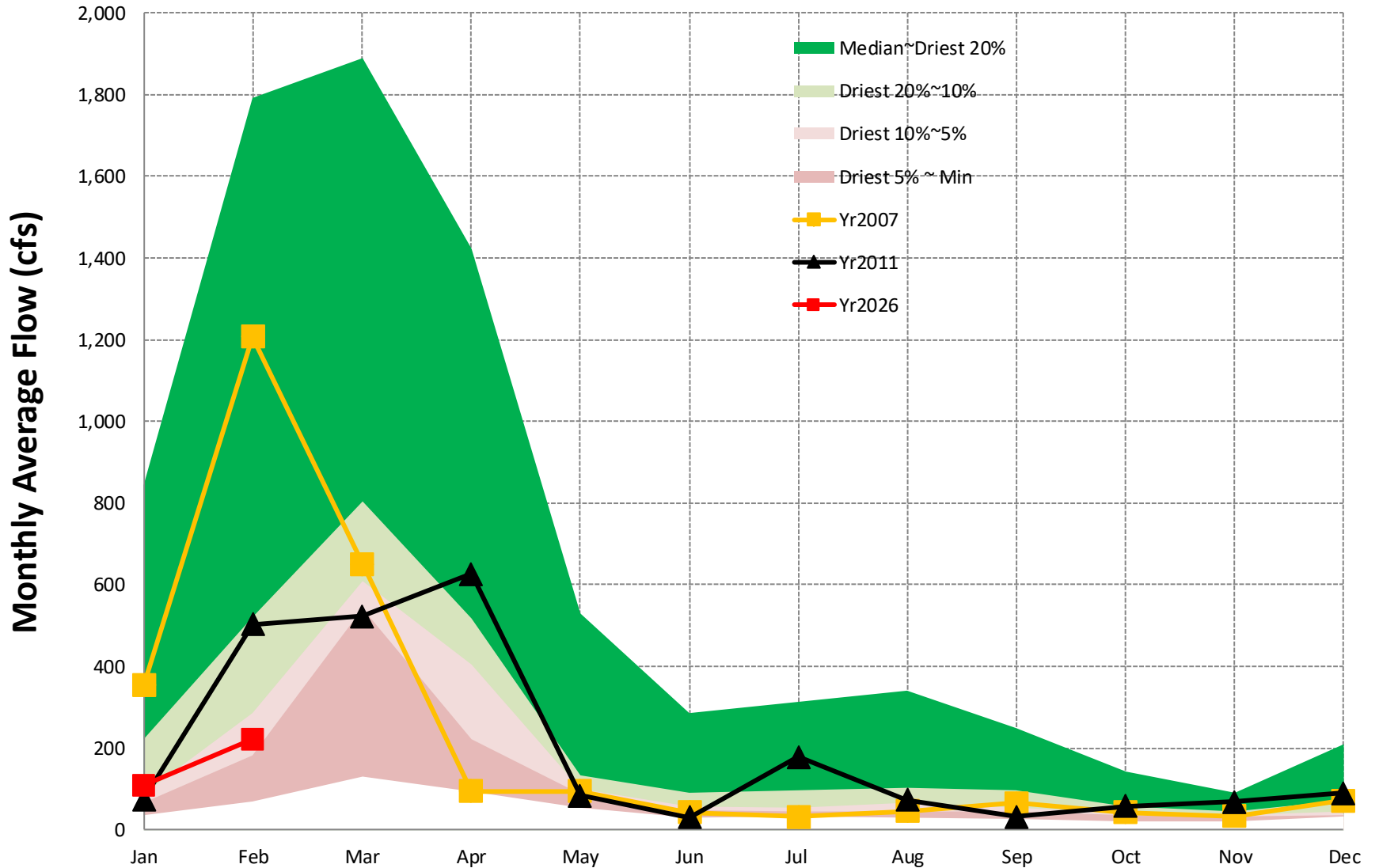


Gage #29. USGS #02319000, Suwanee Basin, WITHLACOOCHEE RIVER near PINETTA, FL



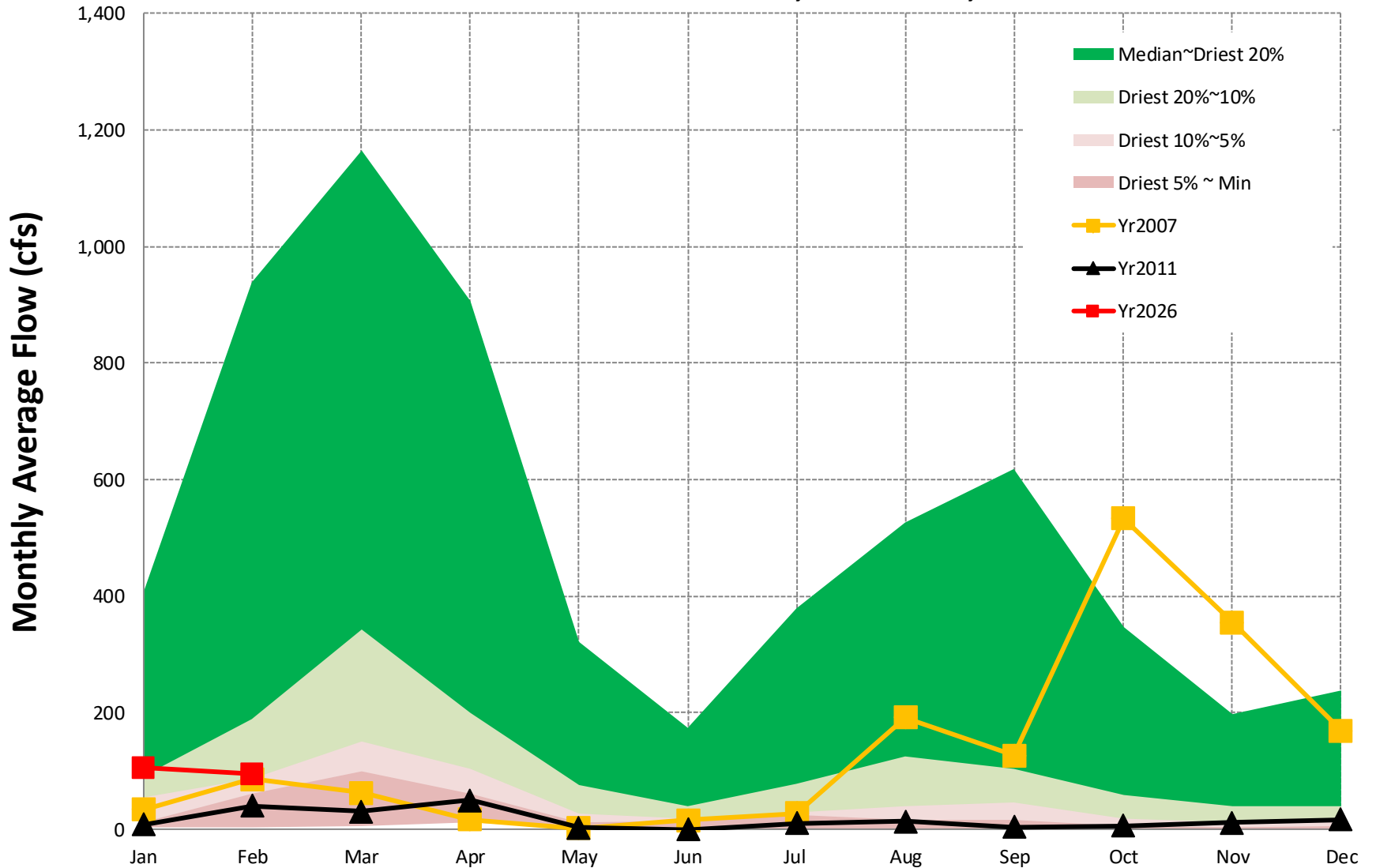
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Gage #30. USGS #02317500, Suwanee Basin, Alapaha River at Statenville, GA



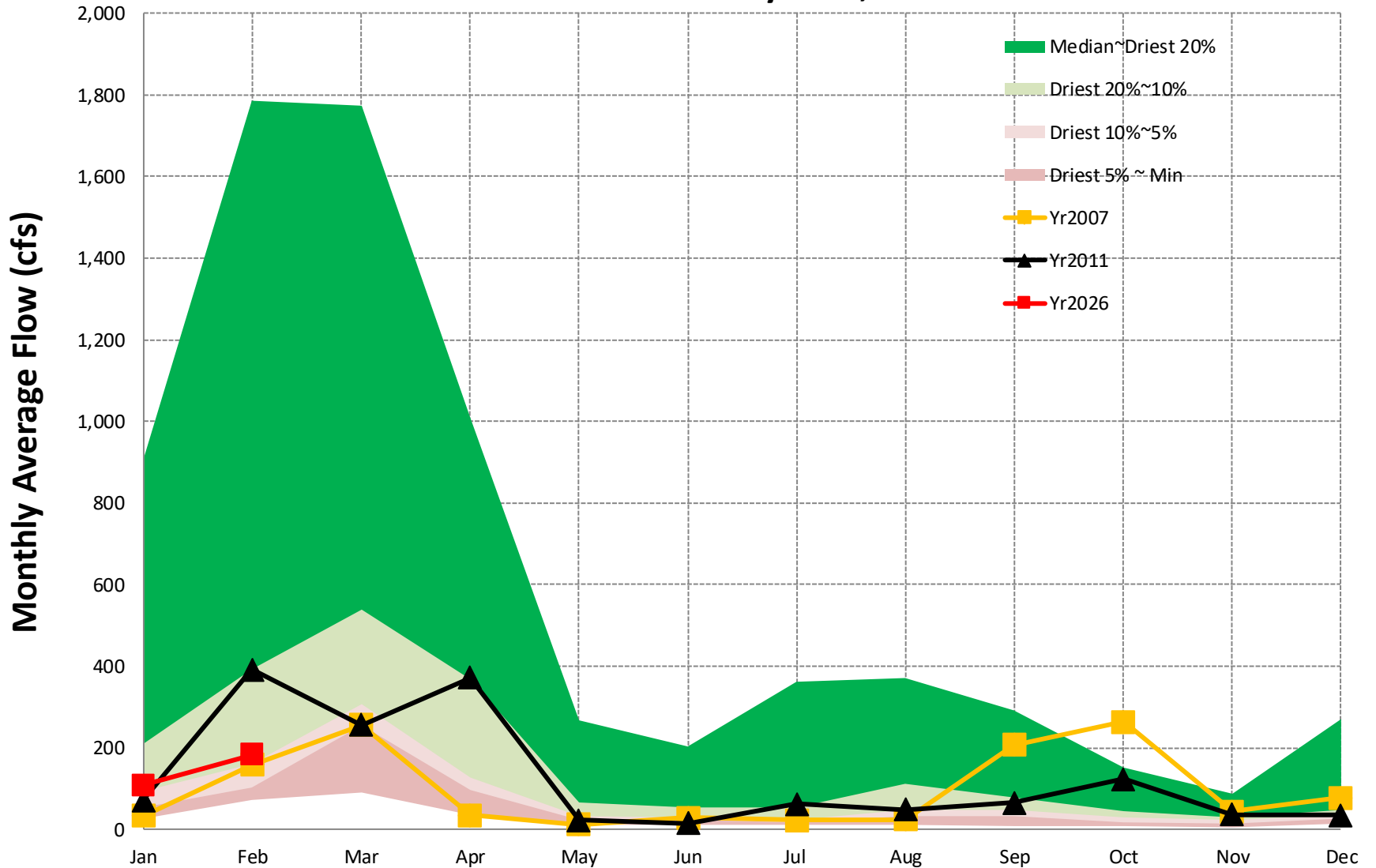
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Gage #31. USGS #02314500, Suwannee Basin, SUWANNEE RIVER AT US 441, AT FARGO, GA



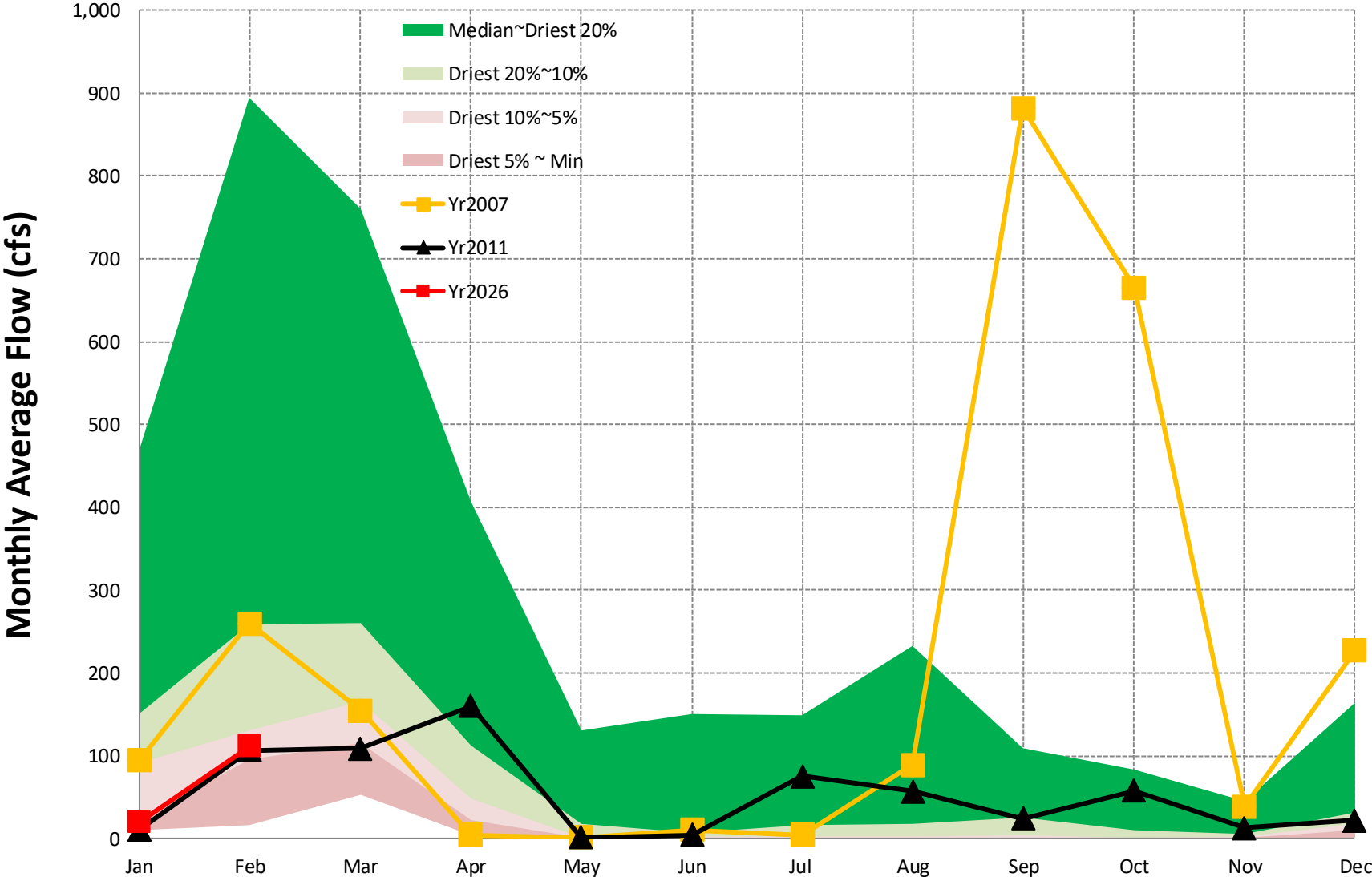
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Gage #32. USGS #02226500, Satilla Basin, Satilla River near Waycross, GA

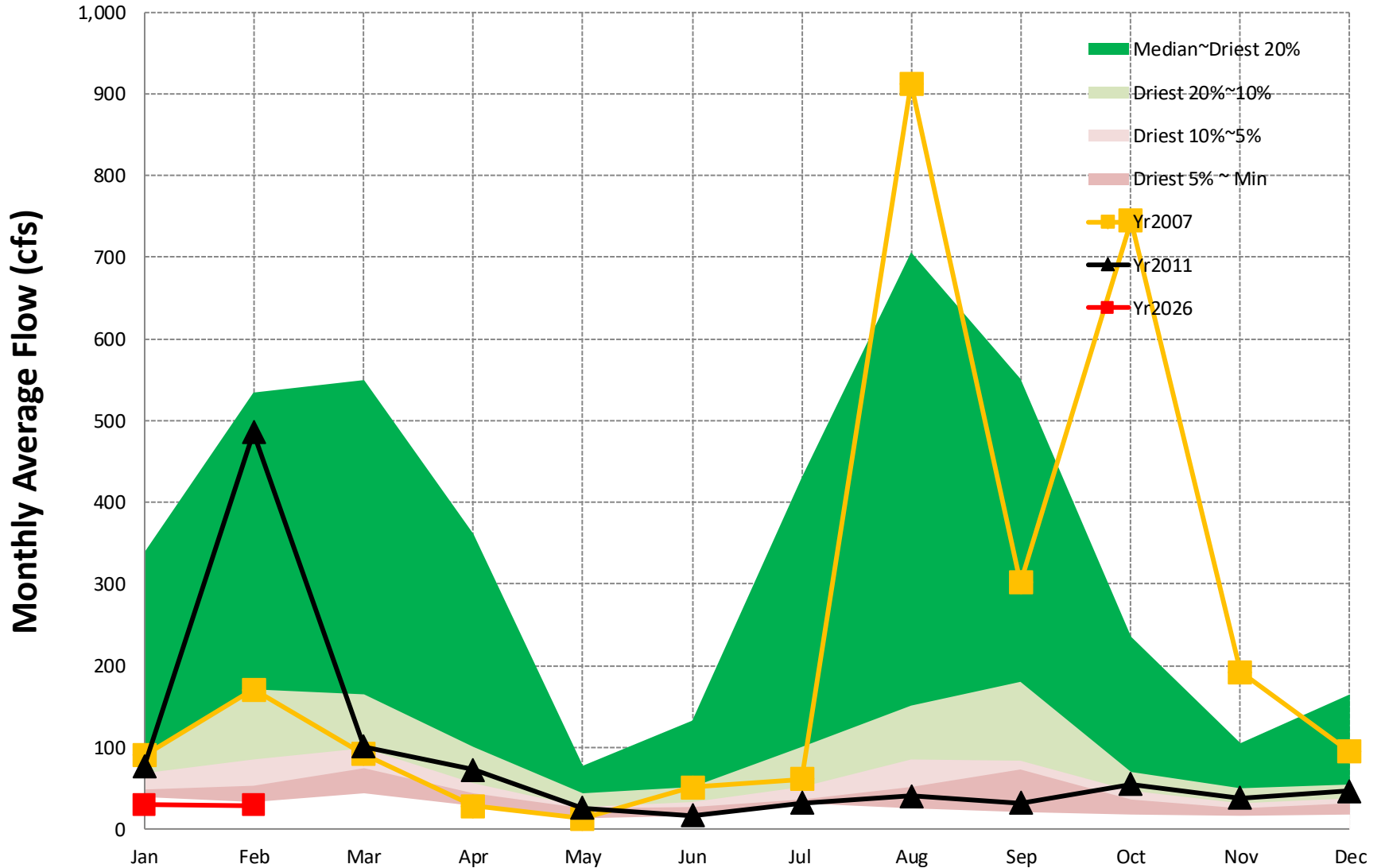


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Gage #33. USGS #02227500, Satilla Basin, LITTLE SATILLA RIVER near OFFERMAN, GA



Gage #34. USGS #02231000, St Mary Basin, ST. MARYS RIVER near MACCLENNY, FL



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Groundwater Levels

Data Source: USGS

Rationale for Choosing USGS Monitoring Wells

EPD monitors 17 groundwater USGS monitoring wells shown on the following slide to assess drought conditions. These wells were selected for monitoring because they have:

- Long-term monitoring records consisting of three decades or more of data; and
- Real-time monitoring that represents the most up-to-date conditions.

USGS Wells Monitored

Chattahoochee Basin

1. 16MM03

Flint Basin

- 2. 11AA01
- 3. 13L180
- 4. 12M017
- 5. 08K001
- 6. 11K003
- 7. 12K014
- 8. 13J004
- 9. 08G001
- 10. 10G313
- 11. 09F520
- 16. 11J011

Oconee Basin

12. 21T001

Tennessee Basin

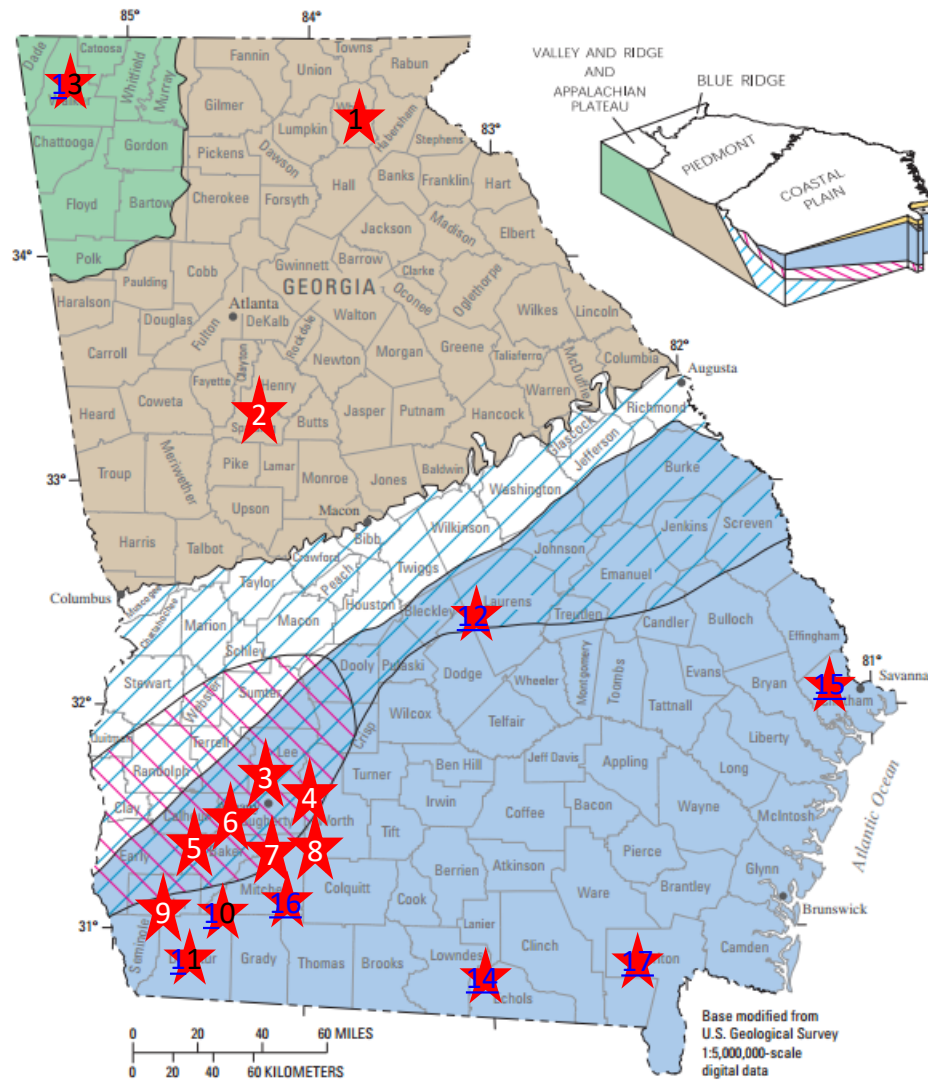
13. 03PP01

Suwanee Basin

- 14. 19E009
- 17. 27E004

Ogeechee Basin

15. 35P094



EXPLANATION

Coastal Plain aquifers	Piedmont and Blue Ridge aquifers
Surficial aquifer system—Not a principal aquifer. Shown on block only	Crystalline-rock aquifers
Floridan aquifer system	Valley and Ridge and Appalachian Plateau aquifers
Claiborne and Clayton aquifers	Paleozoic-rock aquifers
Cretaceous aquifer system	

Figure 2. Area of use of principal aquifers and physiographic provinces in Georgia (modified from U.S. Geological Survey, 2006).

Groundwater Level Graphs

- For each of the 17 groundwater wells, EPD has prepared a graph that shows monthly average groundwater levels from January 2026 through February 2026;
- To help put these levels into perspective, for comparison purposes, each graph also shows:
 - Monthly average levels at that same well for the years 2007 and 2011 when groundwater levels were at or near recorded low levels across much of the state; and
 - And a statistical composite of historical conditions at that same gage showing the “lowest” 50, 20, 10, and 5 percent of all recorded monthly average levels at the same well.

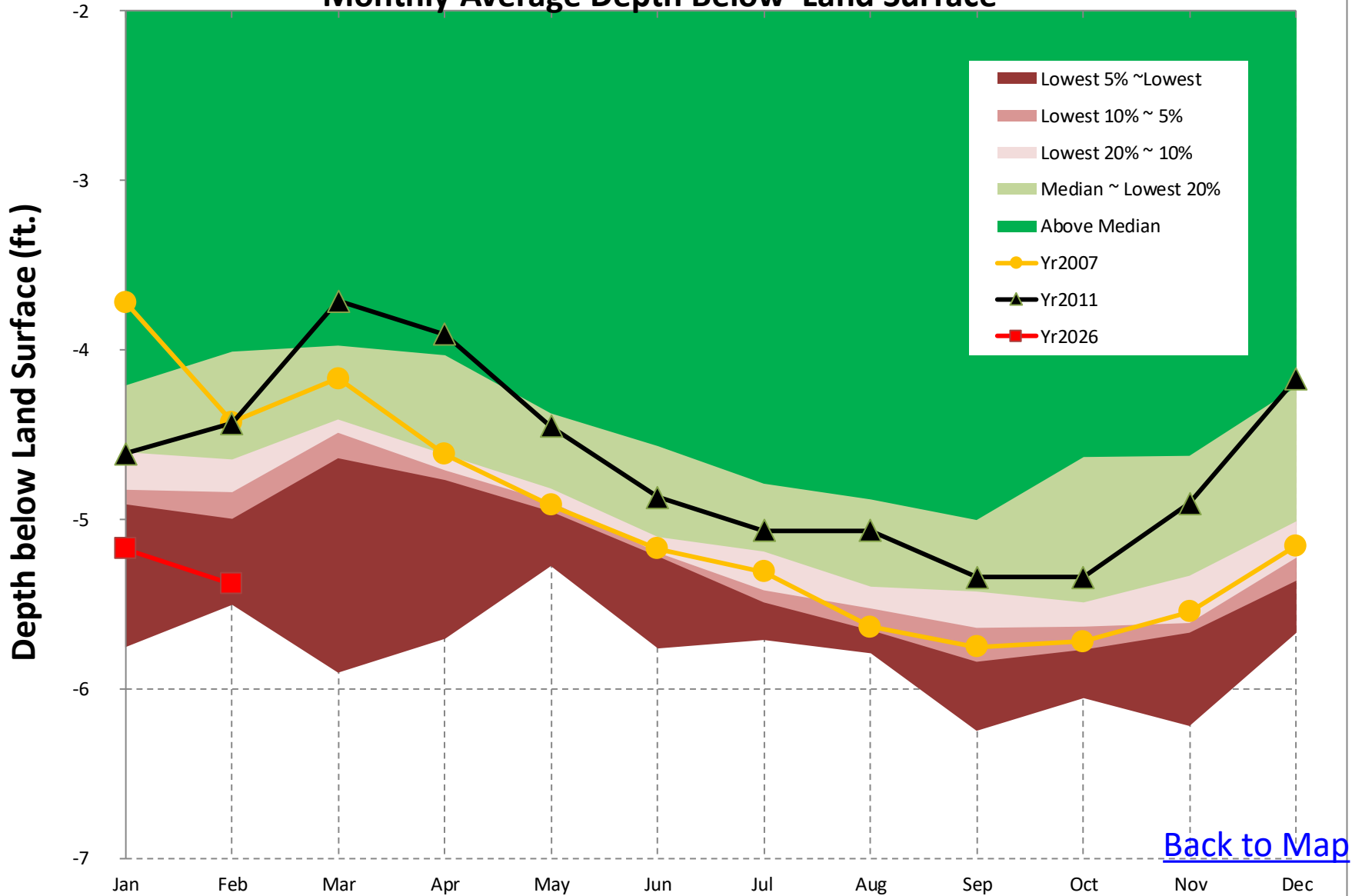
How to Read the Groundwater Level Graphs

Example: Well #11, 09F520, Flint River Basin

The groundwater level graph for Well #11, USGS 09F520 shows:

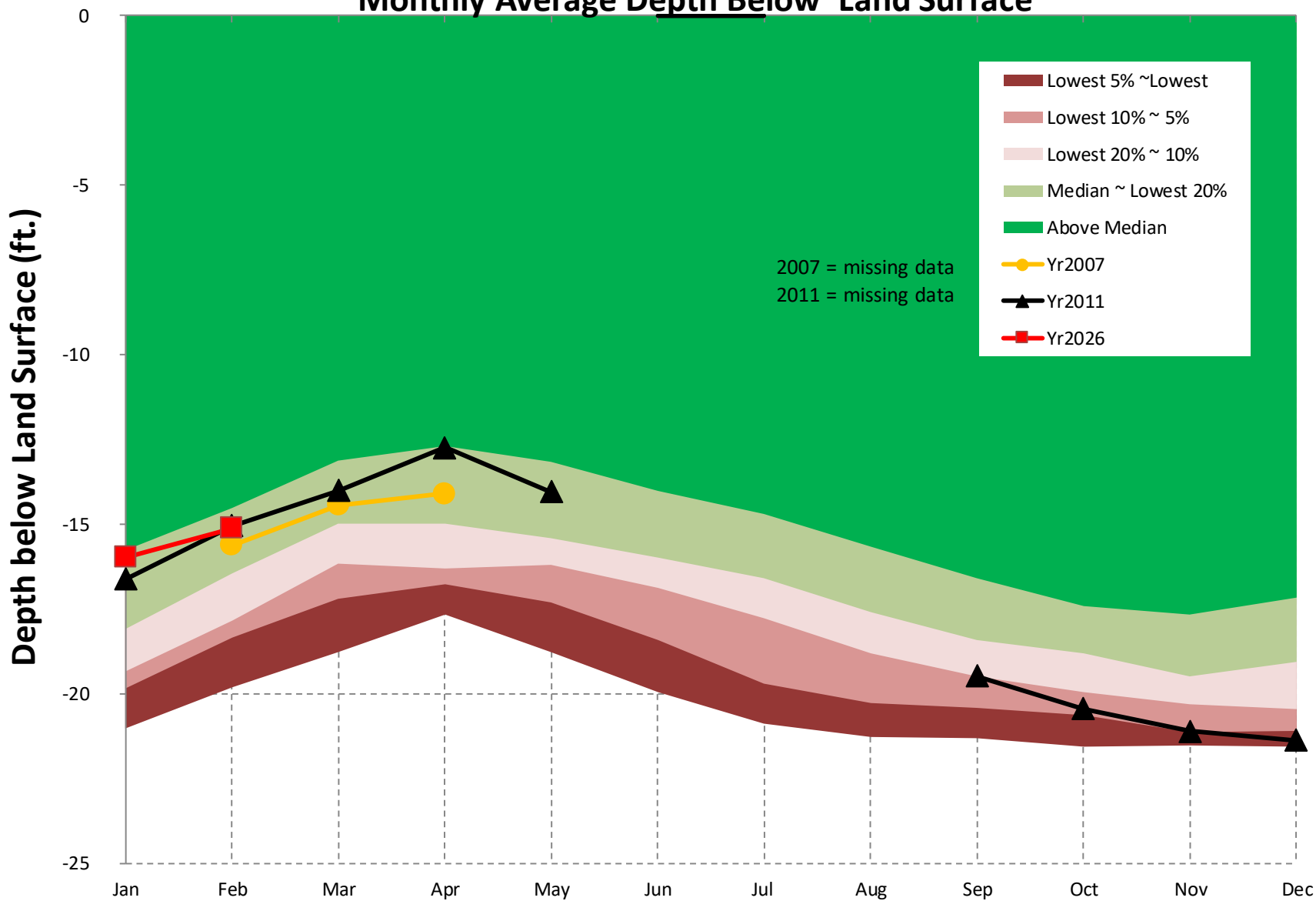
- The average monthly groundwater level in February 2026 was 49.8 ft below land surface. The statistical composite of all historical data for this well shows that monthly average groundwater levels in February have historically been lower than February 2026 about 5% of the time; about 95% of the time in February they have been higher.
- The average monthly groundwater level in February 2011 was 49.1 ft below land surface. The statistical composite of all historical data for this well shows that monthly average groundwater levels in February have historically been lower than February 2011 about 10-20% of the time; about 80-90% of the time in February they have been higher.
- The average monthly groundwater level in February 2007 was 46.8 ft below land surface. The statistical composite of all historical data for this well shows that monthly average groundwater levels in February have historically been lower than February 2007 about 40% of the time; about 60% of the time in February they have been higher.

Well #1, 16MM03, Crystalline Rocks Aquifer in Chattahoochee Basin, Monthly Average Depth Below Land Surface



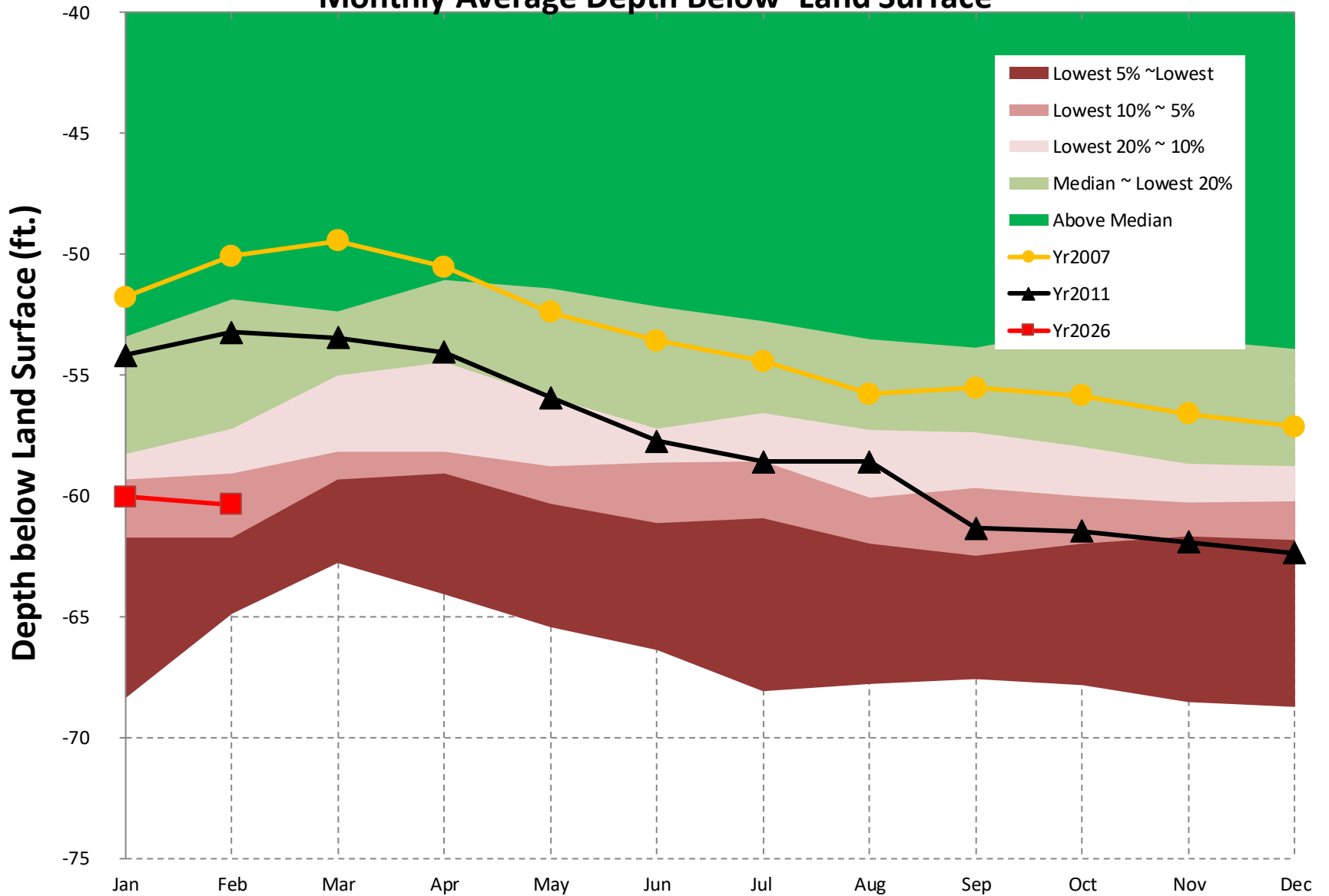
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Well #2, 11AA01, Surficial Aquifer in Flint Basin, Monthly Average Depth Below Land Surface



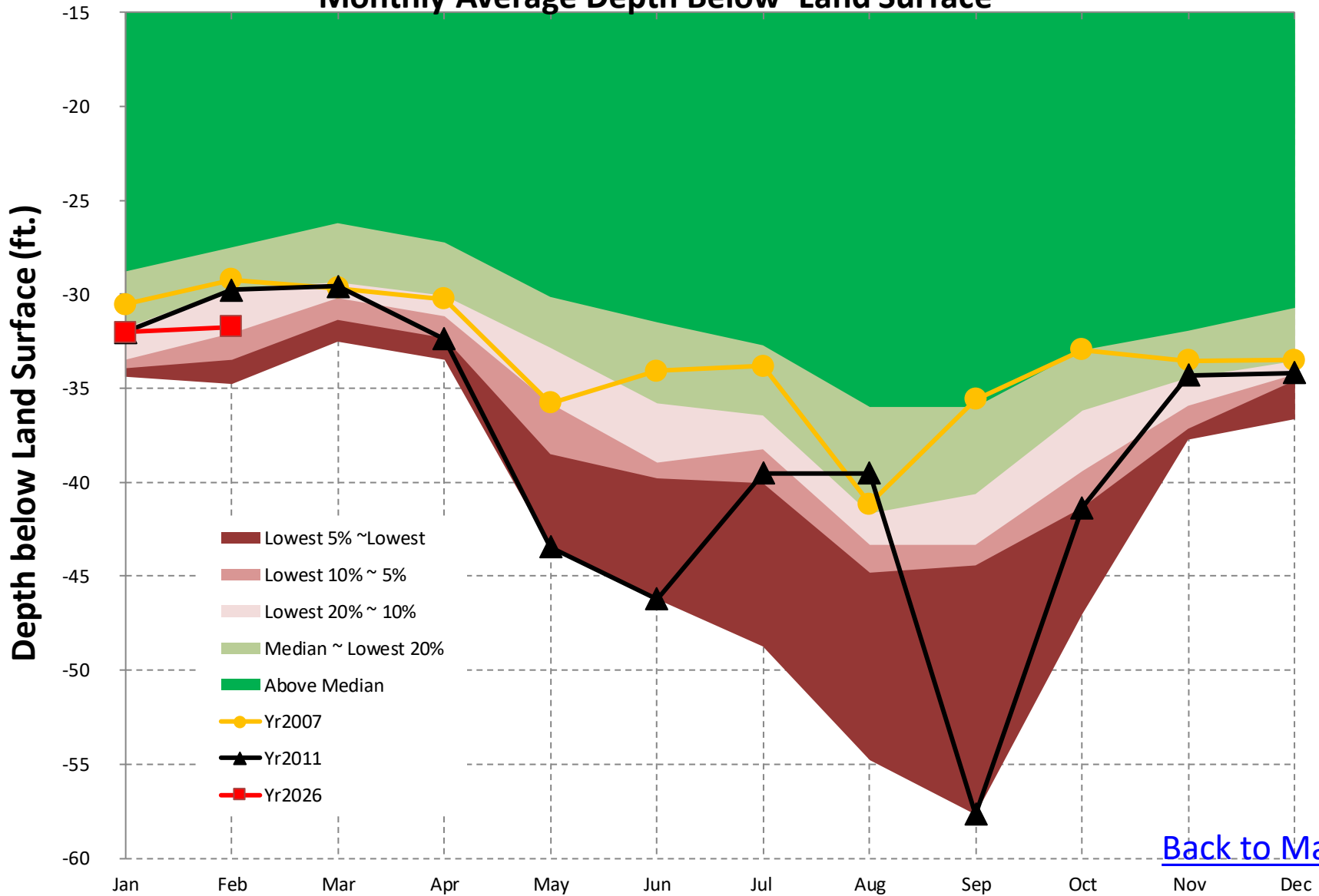
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Well #3, 13L180, Floridan Aquifer in Flint Basin, Monthly Average Depth Below Land Surface



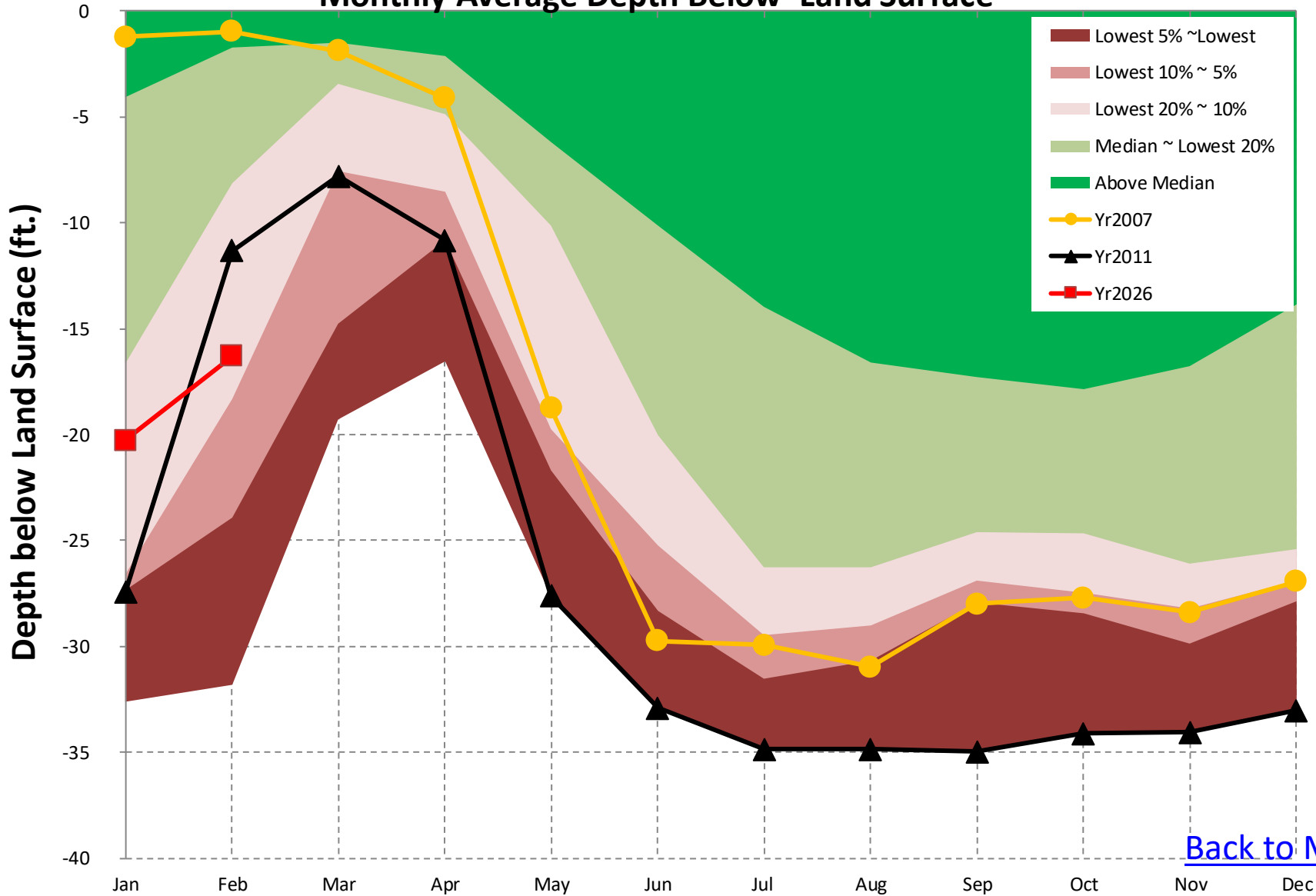
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Well #4, 12M017, Floridan Aquifer in Flint Basin, Monthly Average Depth Below Land Surface



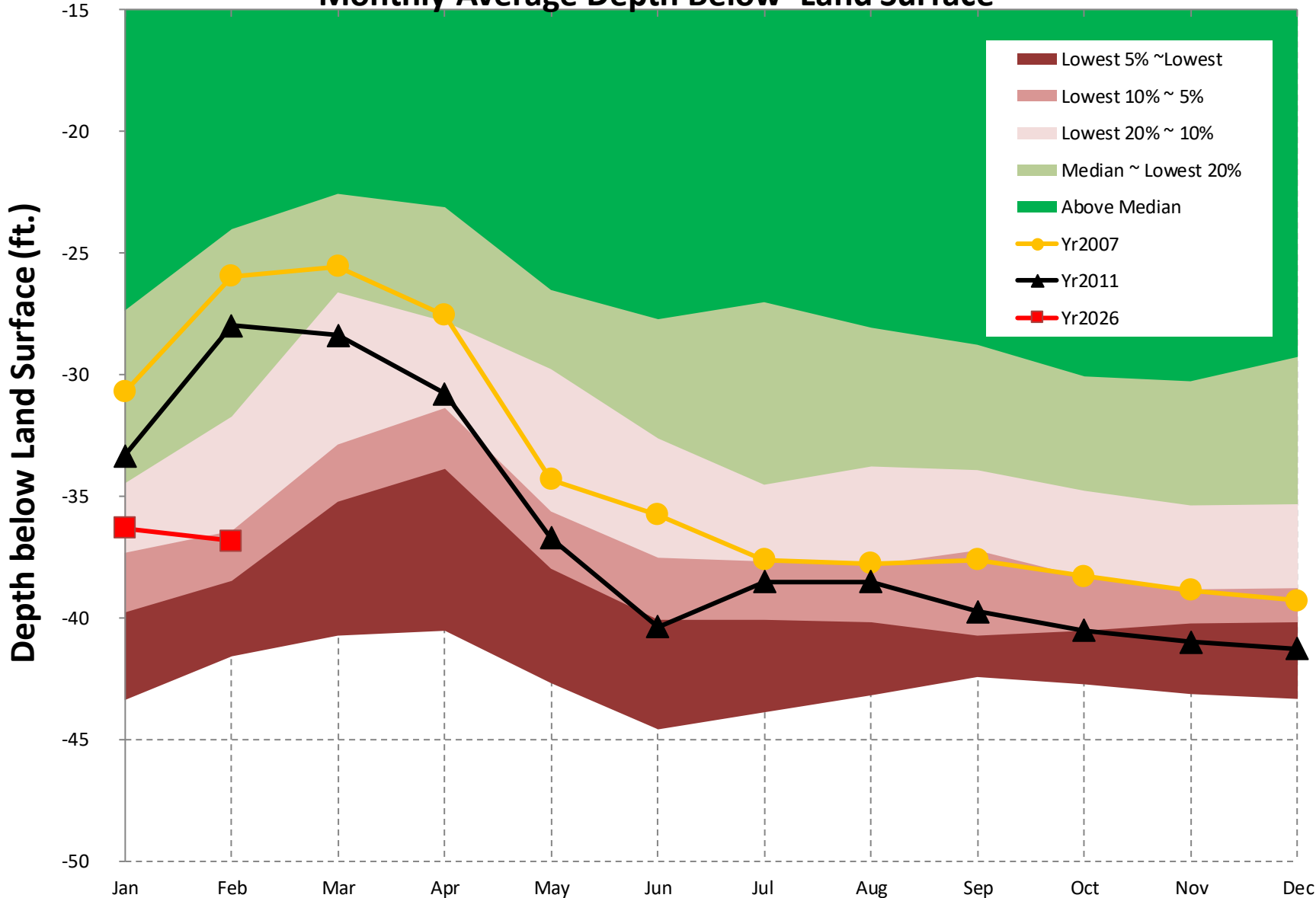
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Well #5, 08K001, Floridan Aquifer in Flint Basin, Monthly Average Depth Below Land Surface



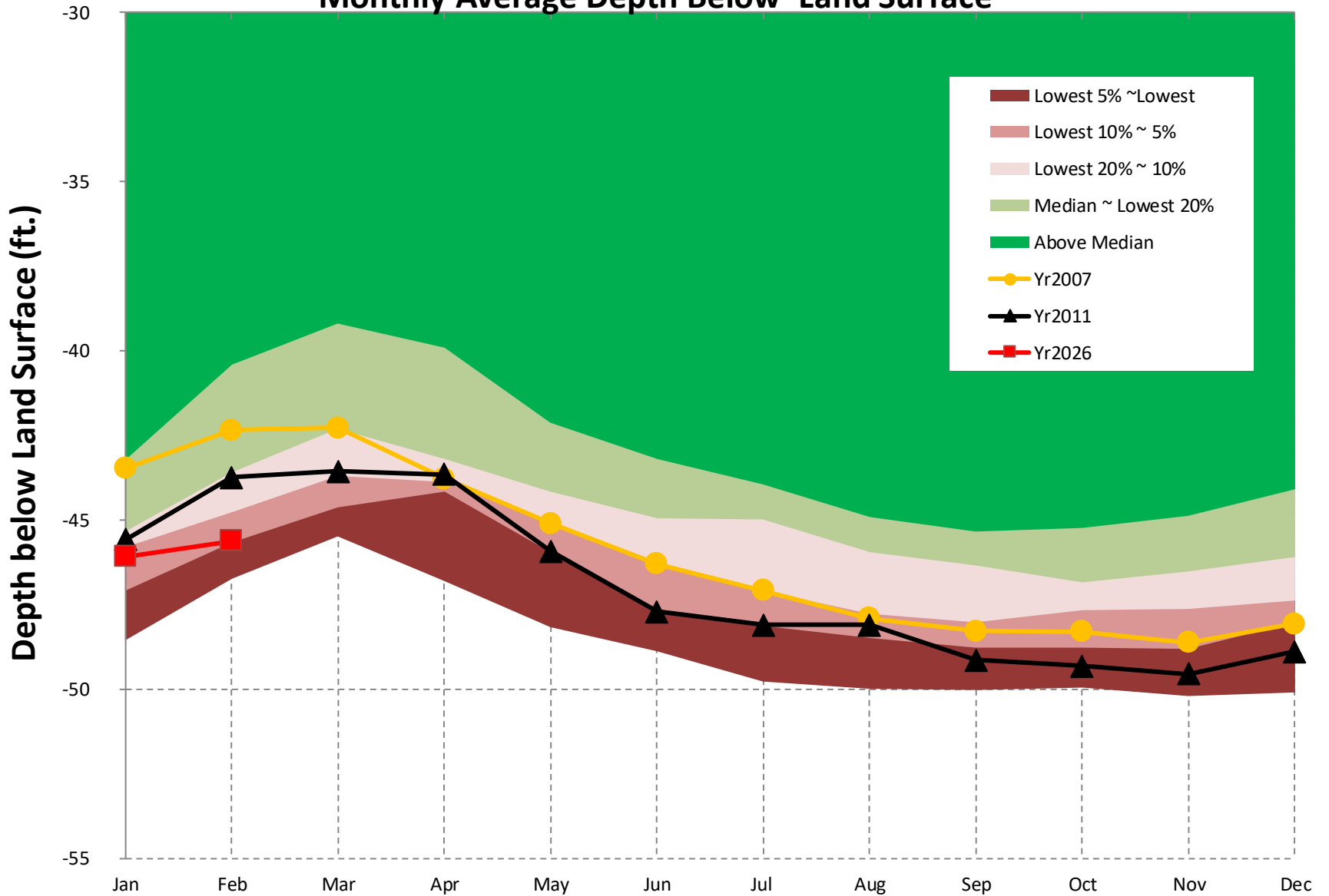
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Well #6, 11K003, Floridan Aquifer in Flint Basin, Monthly Average Depth Below Land Surface



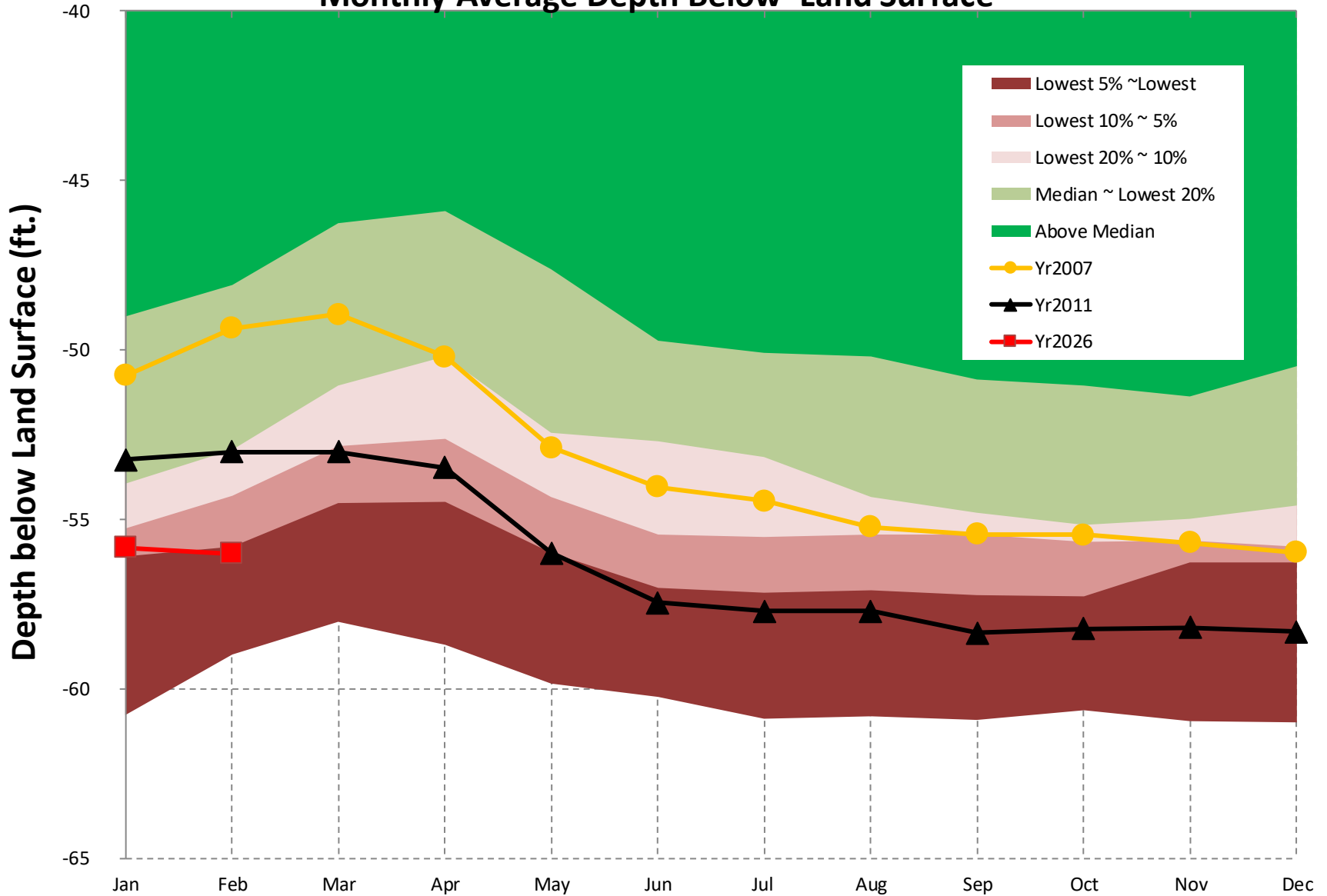
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Well #7, 12K014, Floridan Aquifer in Flint Basin, Monthly Average Depth Below Land Surface

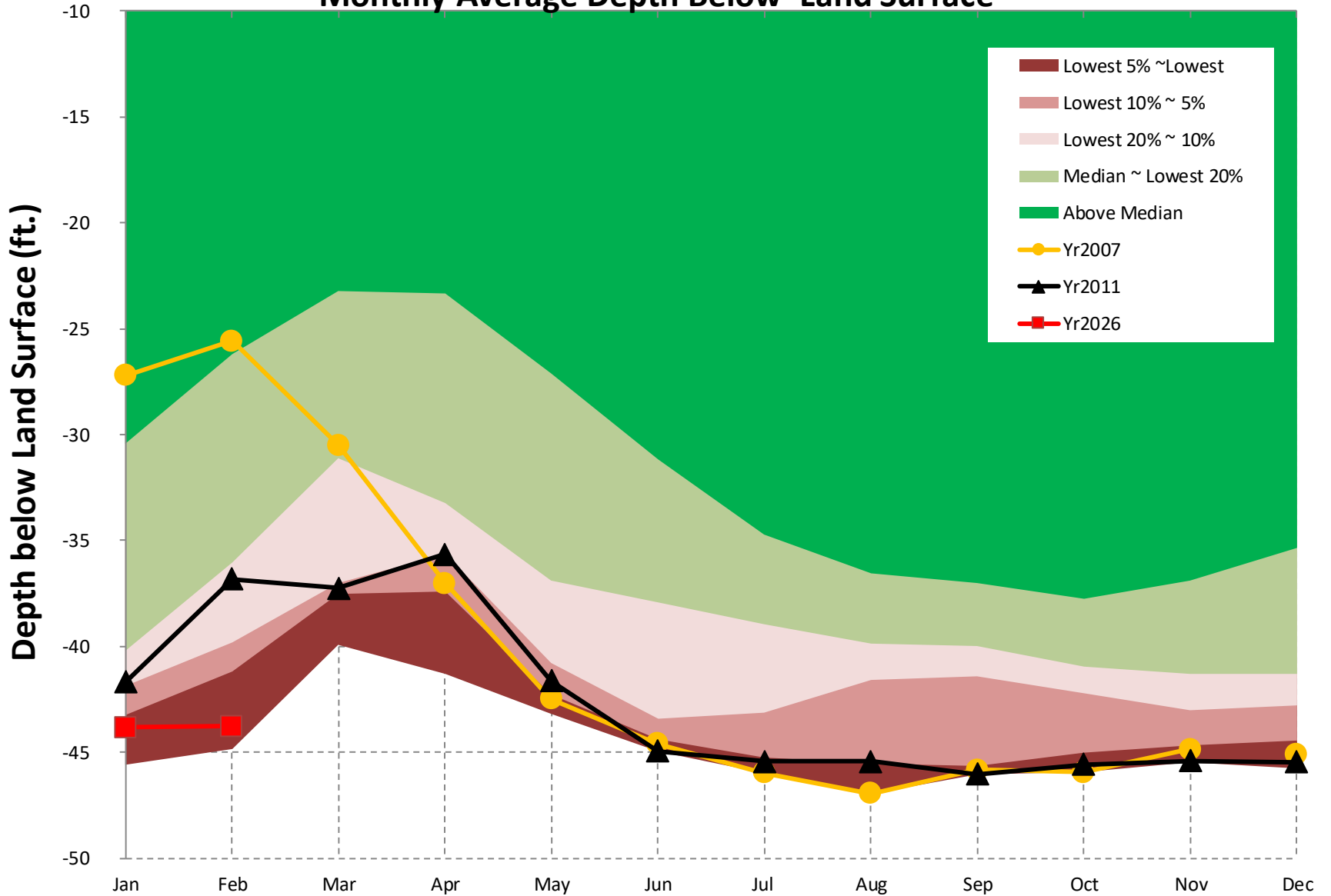


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Well #8, 13J004, Floridan Aquifer in Flint Basin, Monthly Average Depth Below Land Surface

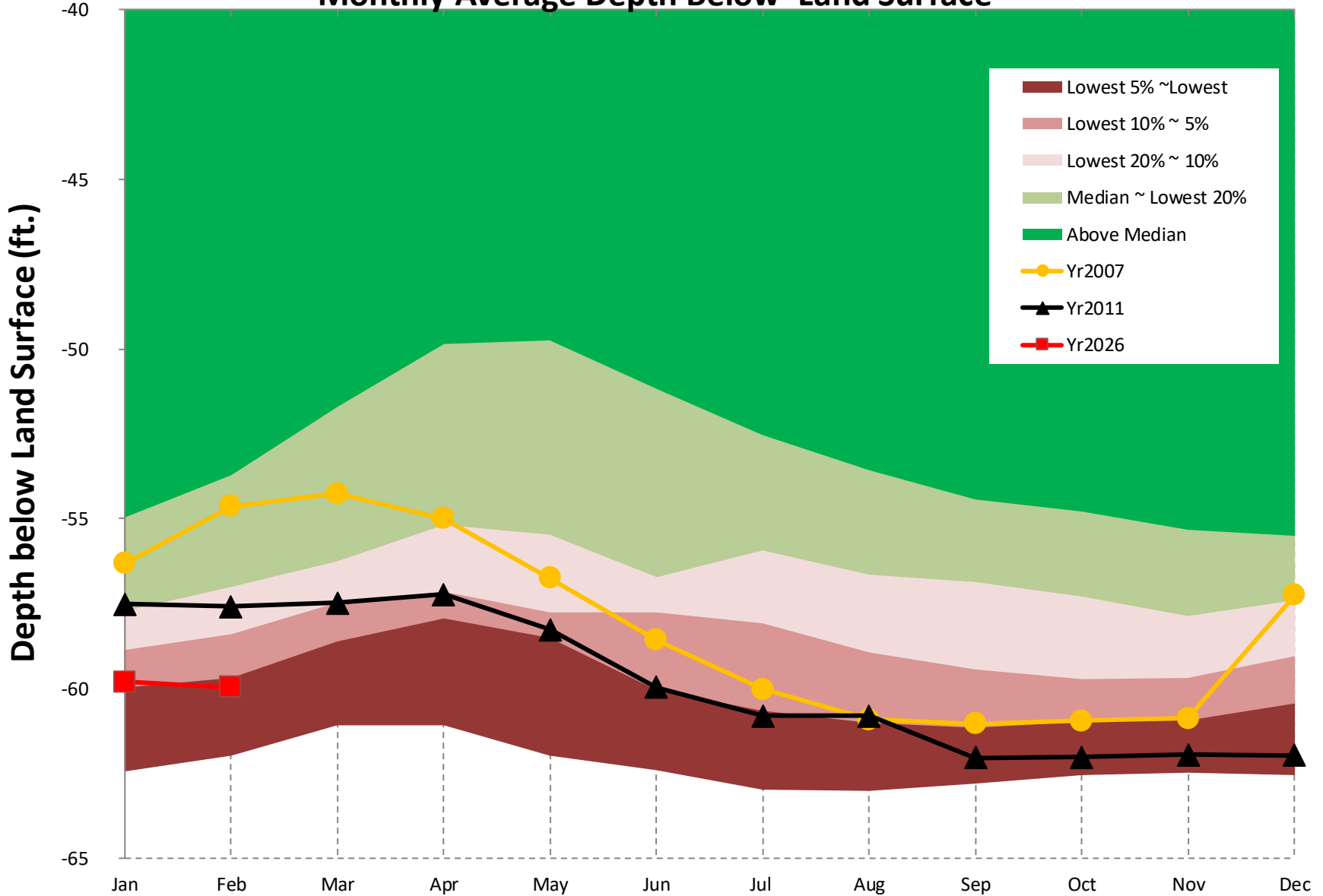


Well #9, 08G001, Floridan Aquifer in Flint Basin, Monthly Average Depth Below Land Surface



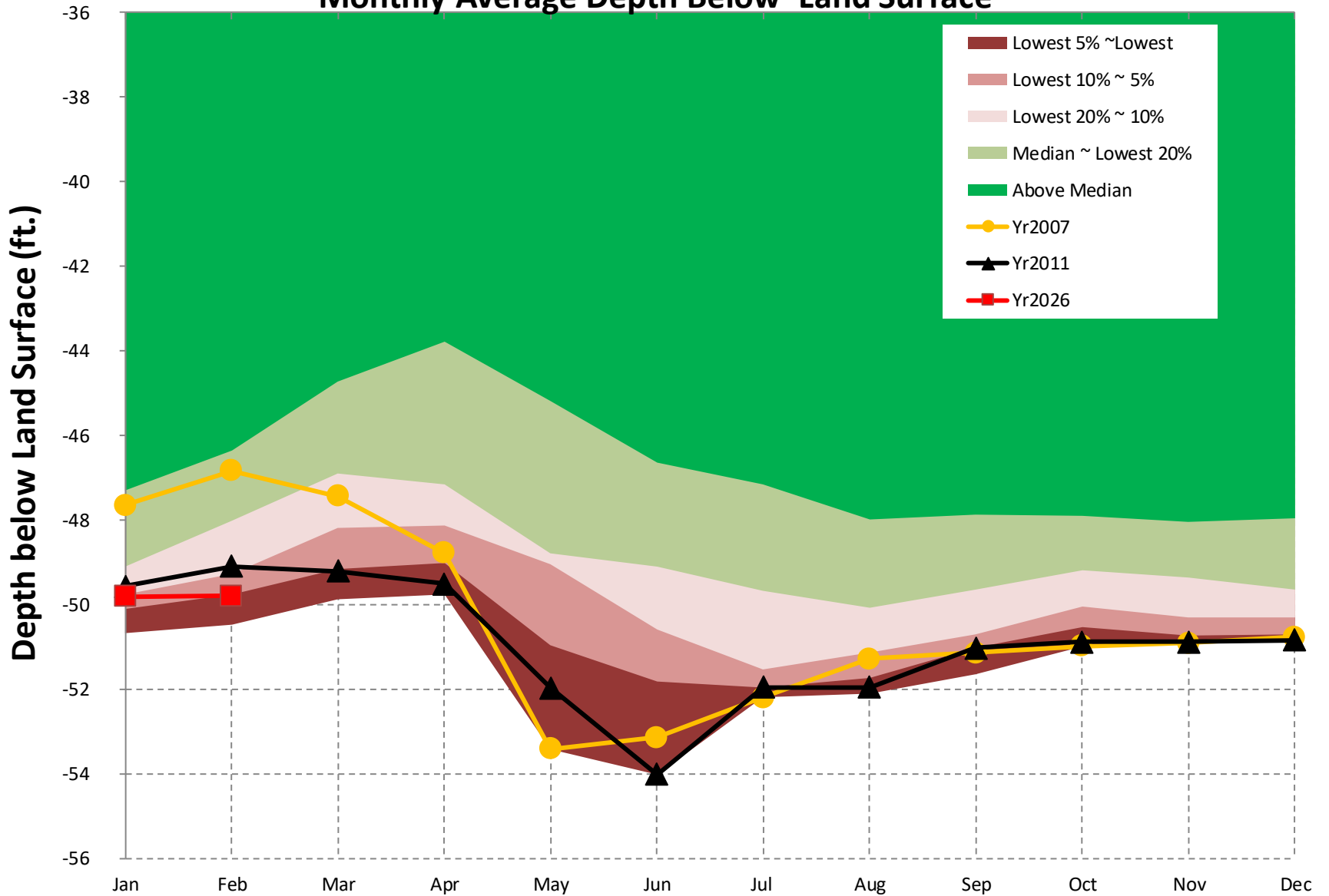
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Well #10, 10G313, Floridan Aquifer in Flint Basin, Monthly Average Depth Below Land Surface

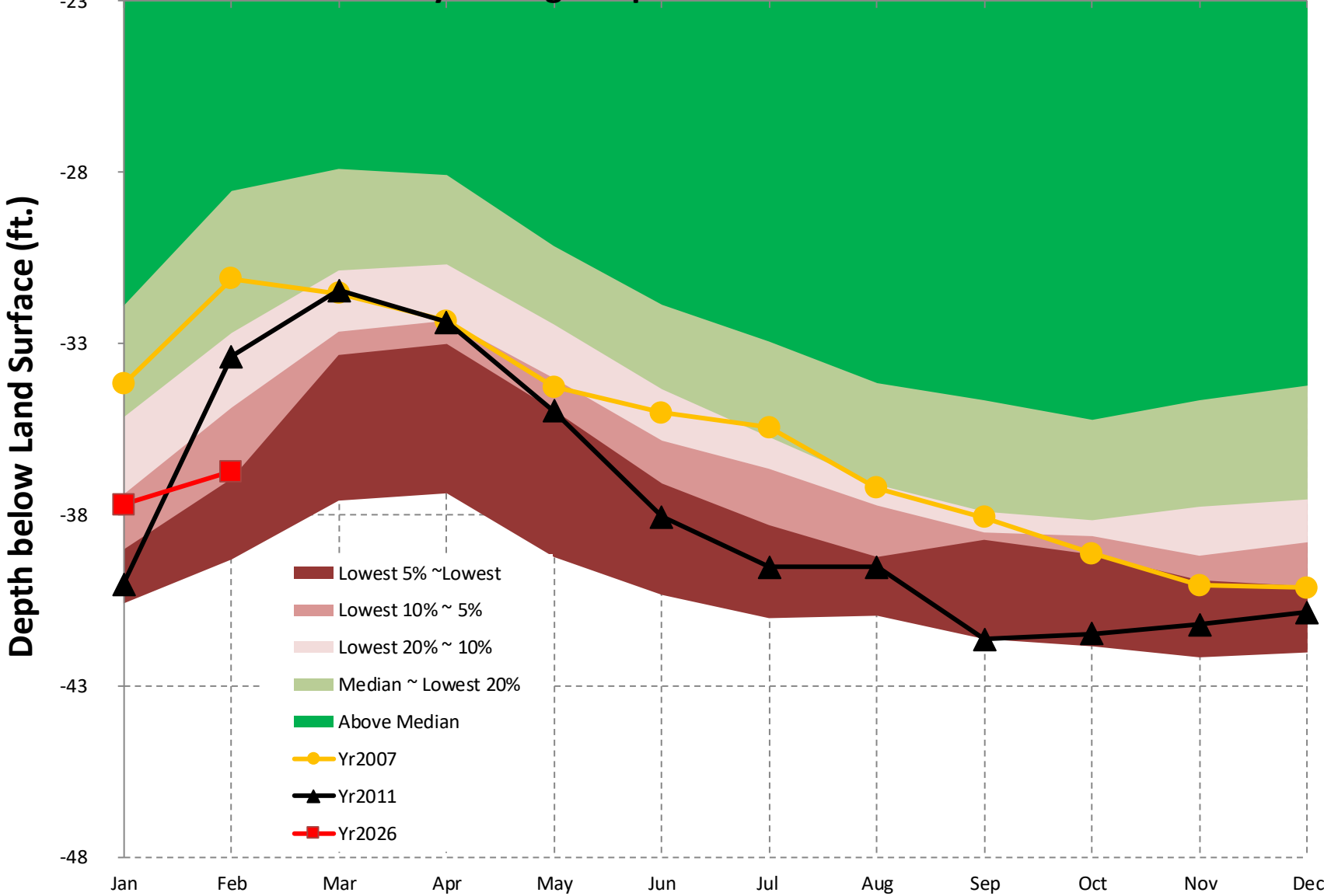


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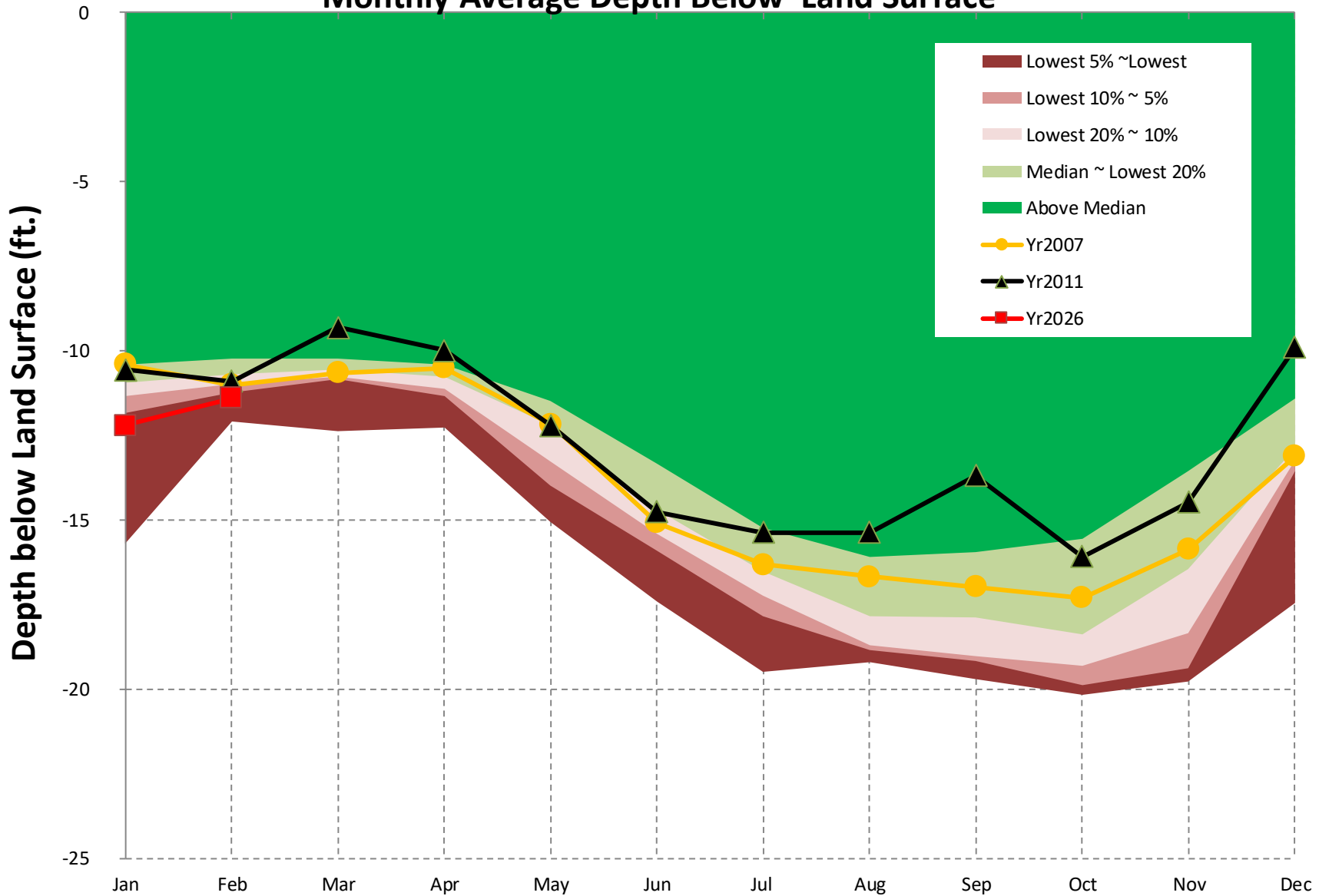
Well #11, 09F520, Floridan Aquifer in Flint Basin, Monthly Average Depth Below Land Surface



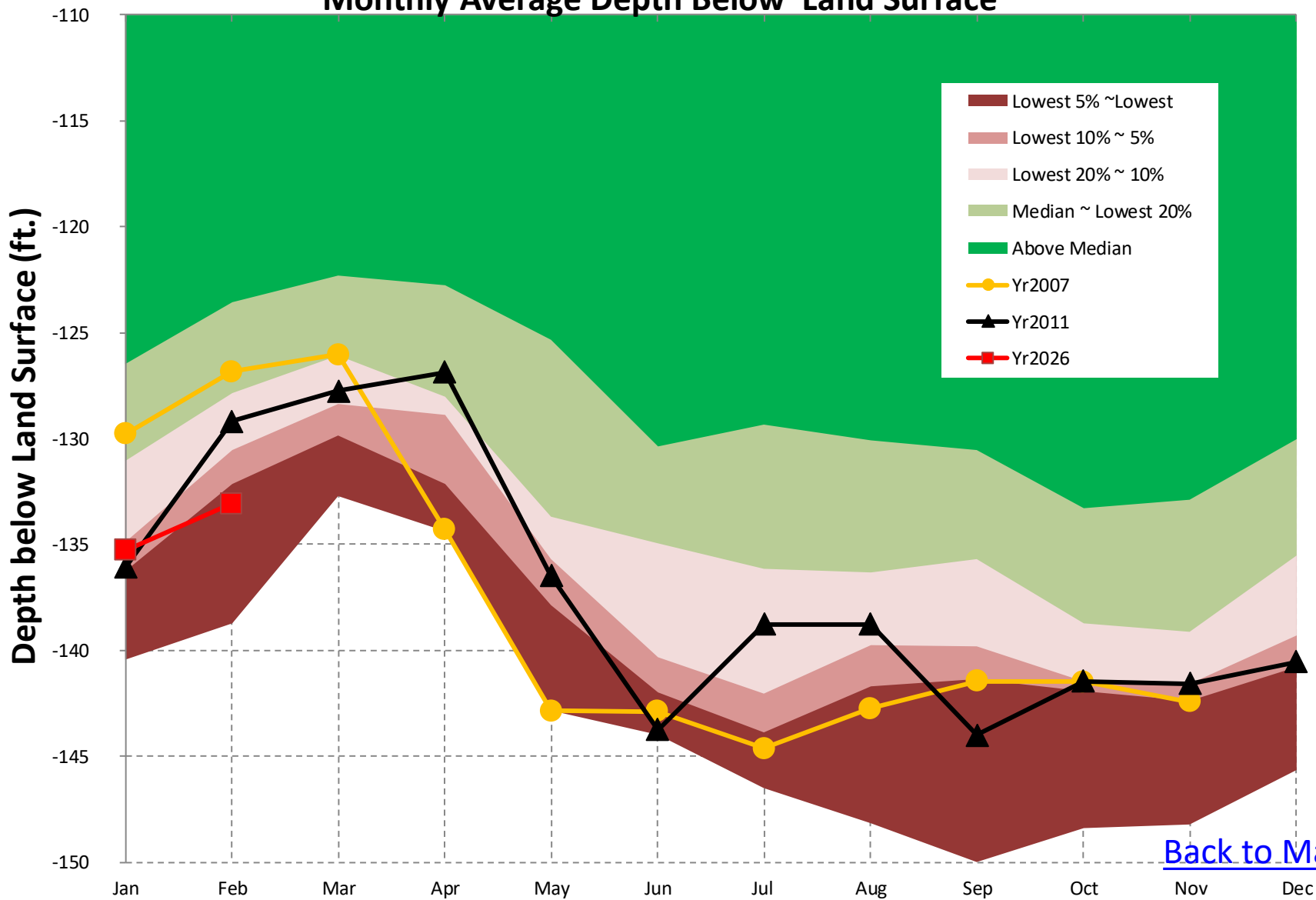
Well #12, 21T001, Floridan Aquifer in Oconee Basin, Monthly Average Depth Below Land Surface



Well #13, 03PP01, Valley and Ridge Aquifer in Tennessee Basin, Monthly Average Depth Below Land Surface

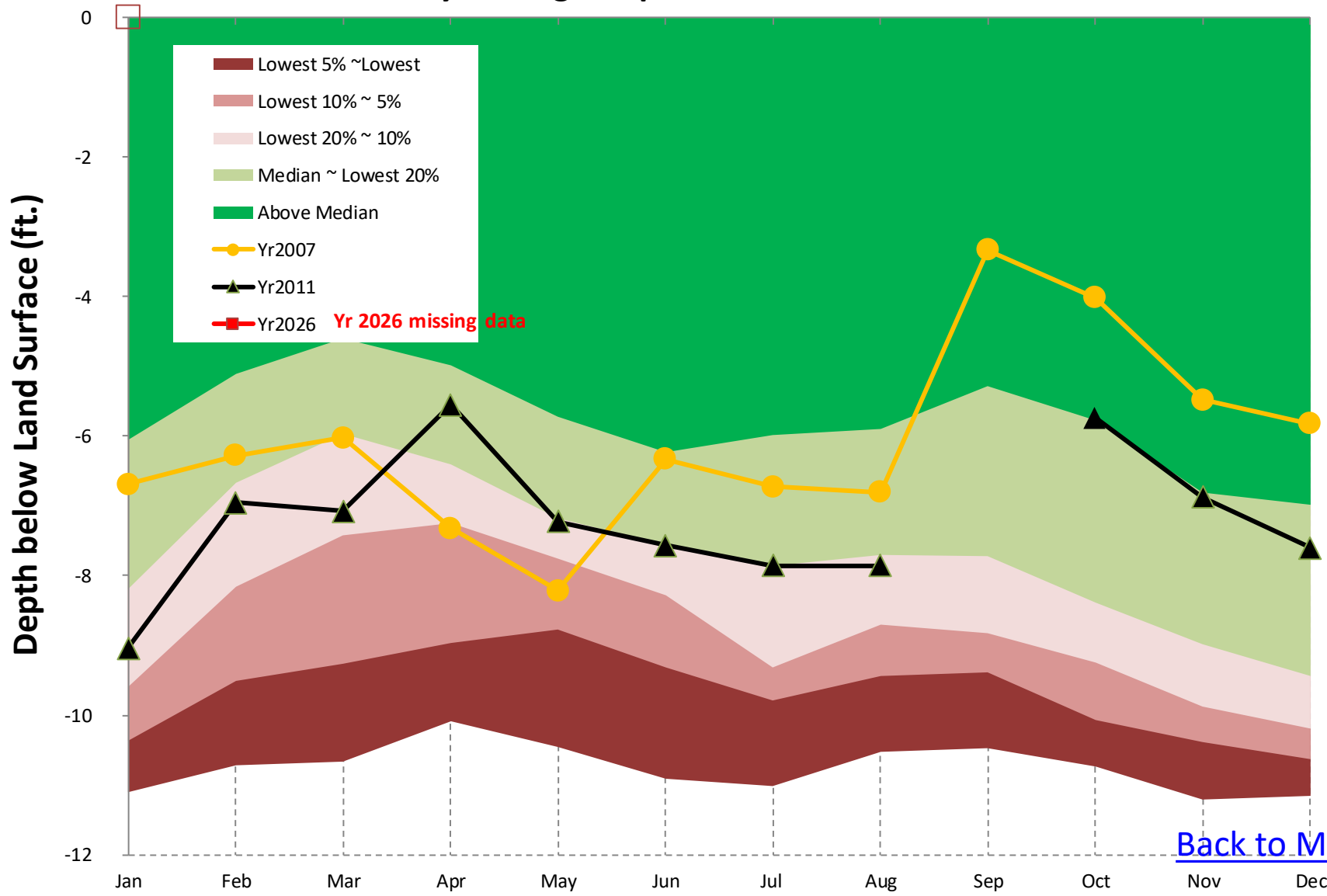


Well #14, 19E009, Floridan Aquifer in Suwanee Basin, Monthly Average Depth Below Land Surface



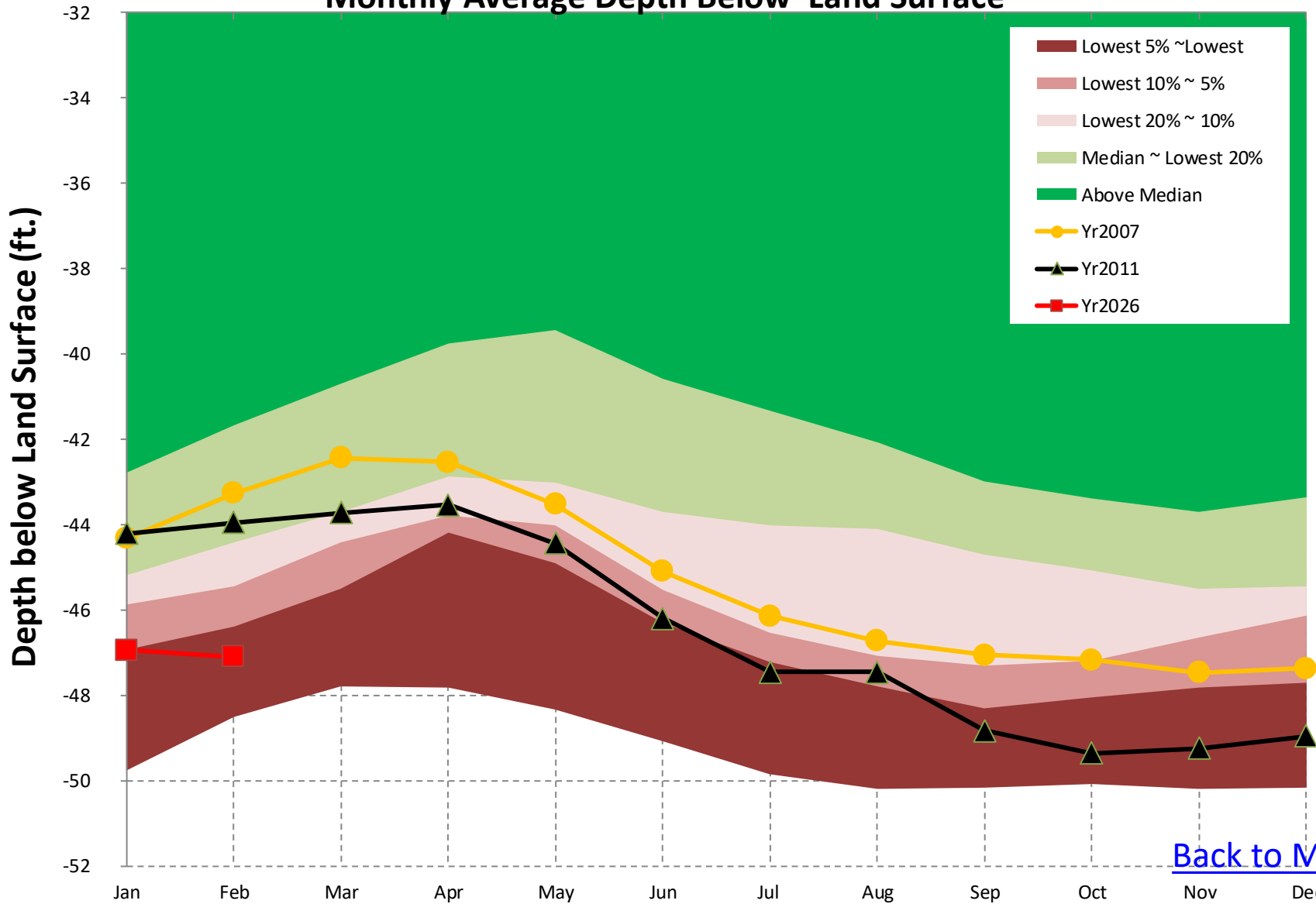
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Well #15, 35P094, Surficial Aquifer in Ogeechee Basin, Monthly Average Depth Below Land Surface



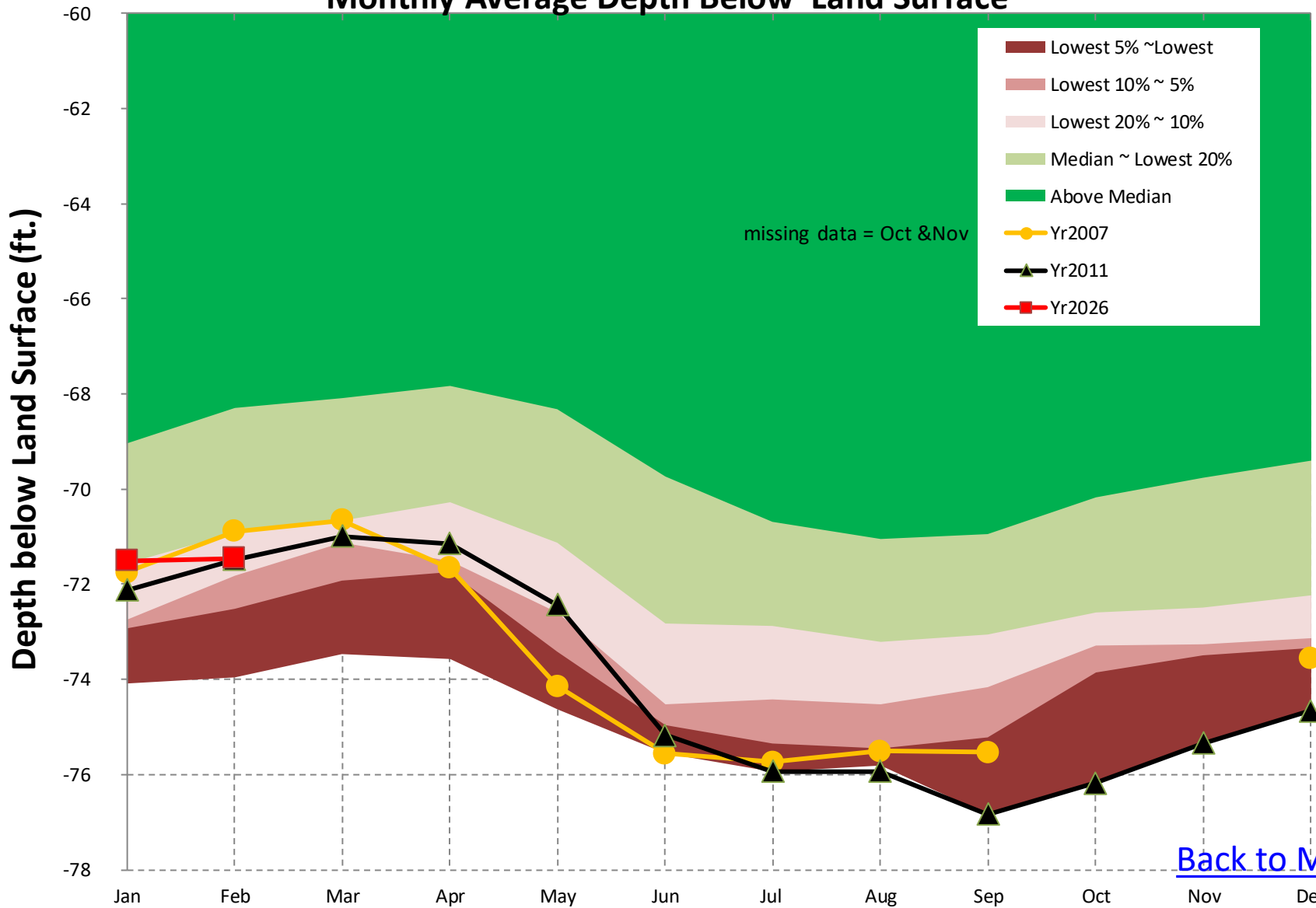
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Well #16, 11J011, Floridan Aquifer in Suwannee Basin, Monthly Average Depth Below Land Surface



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Well #17, 27E004, Floridan Aquifer in Suwanee Basin, Monthly Average Depth Below Land Surface



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Reservoir Levels

Data Source:
US Army Corps of Engineers

Coosa Basin

1. Carters
2. Allatoona

Chattahoochee Basin

3. Lanier
4. West Point
5. W.F. George

Savannah Basin

6. Hartwell
7. Thurmond

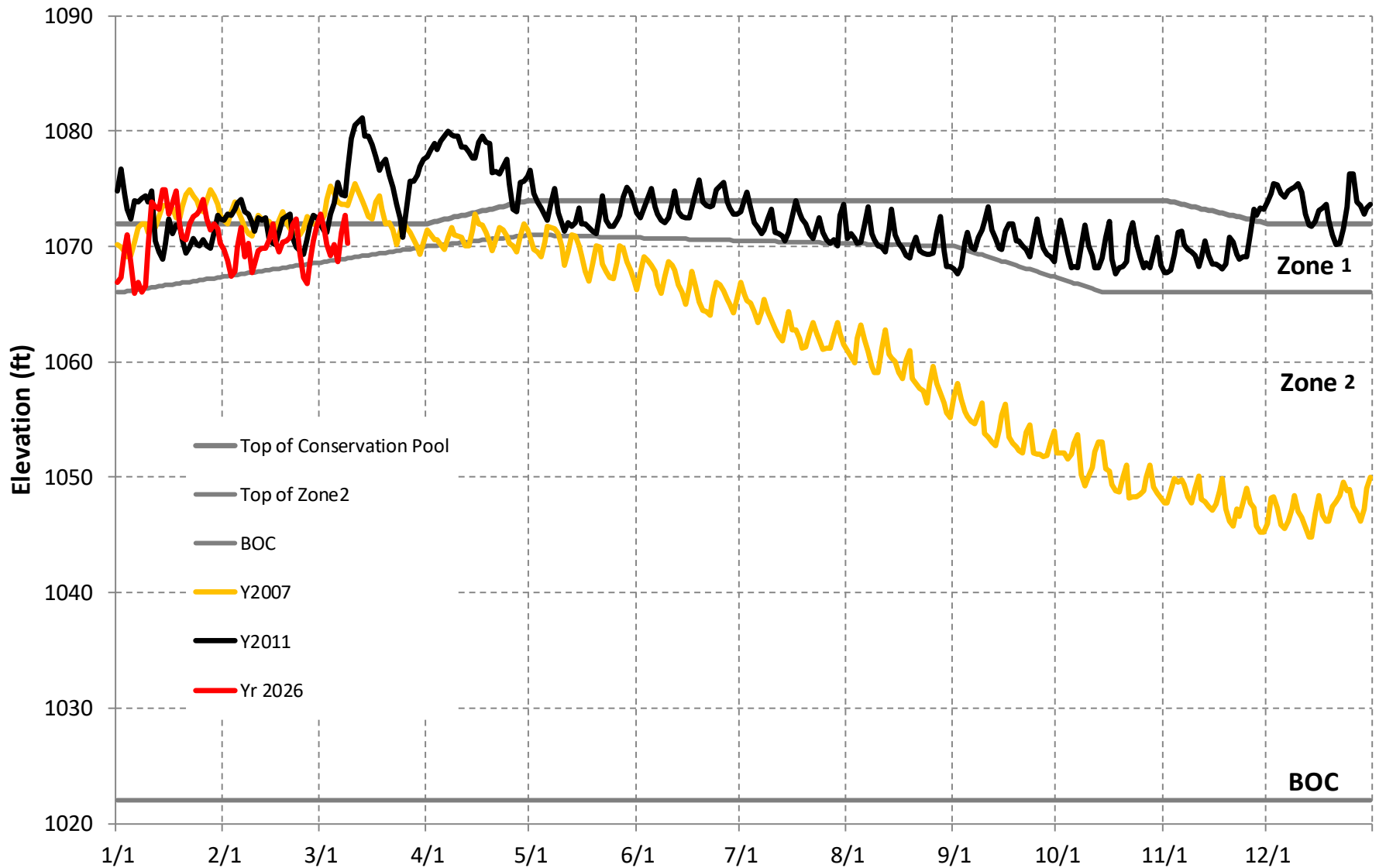


EPD monitors the water levels of seven reservoirs to assess drought conditions.

Reservoir Elevation Graphs

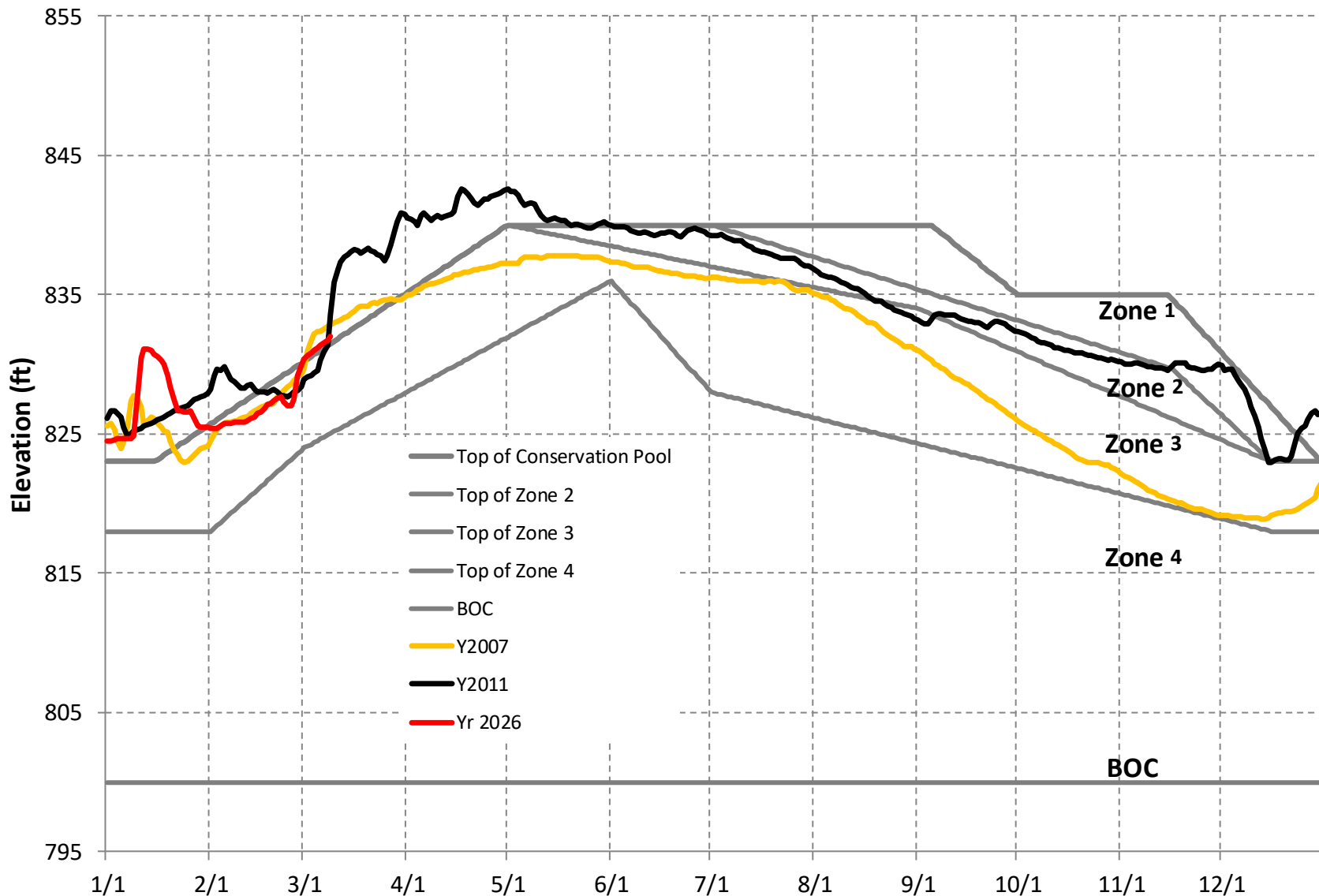
- The following graphs show the reservoir elevation curves for January 2026 through February 2026.
- Each graph also shows the Action Zone Divides (or Levels) for each reservoir
 - Zone 1 is the top layer of the conservation pool
 - Zone 2 is the layer below Zone 1
 - Zone 4 is the lowest layer in the conservation pool
 - There is no conservation storage below the bottom of Zone 4
- To put 2026 reservoir elevations into perspective, elevations for 2007 and 2011 are also shown.

CARTERS ELEVATION

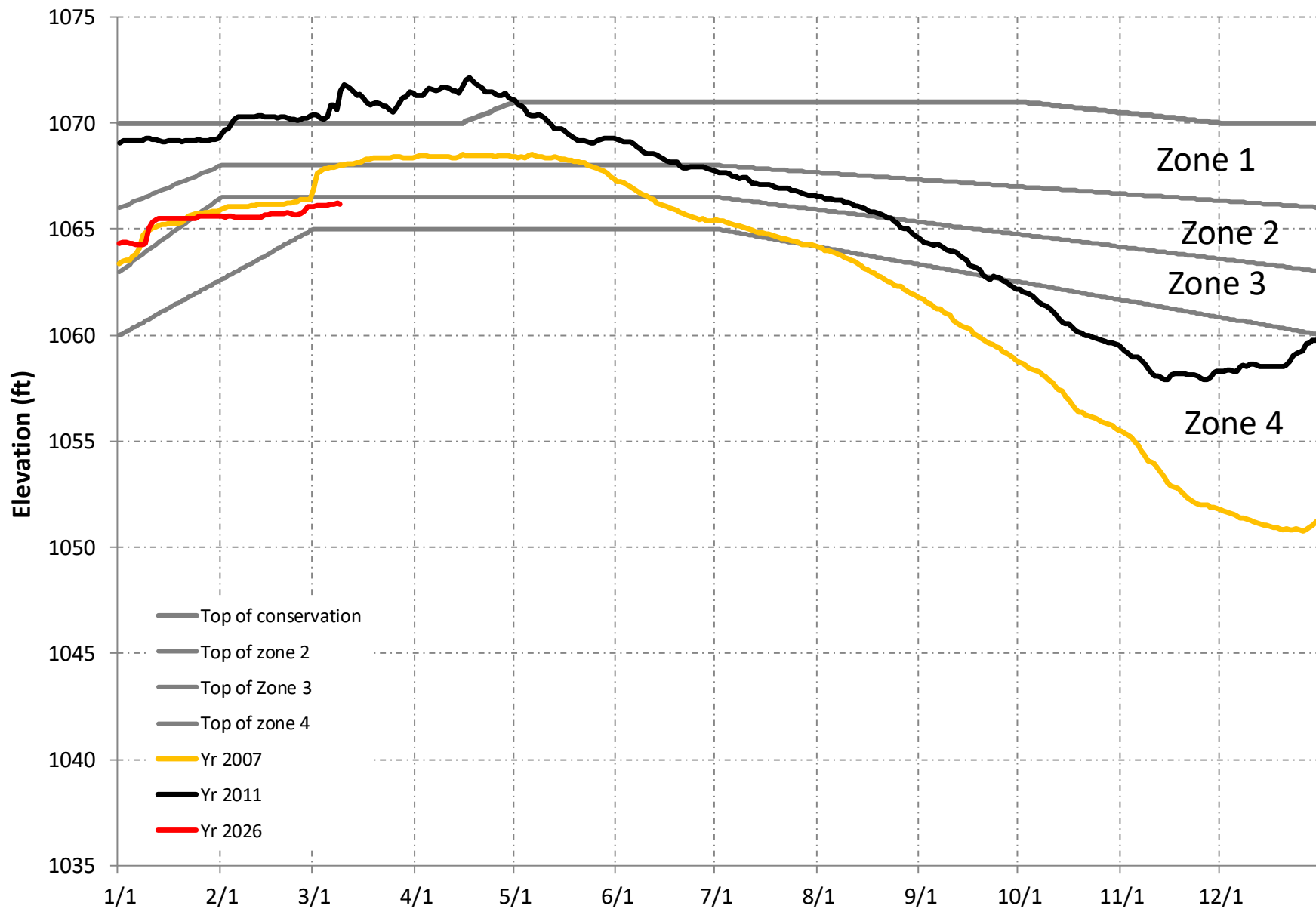


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ALLATOONA ELEVATION

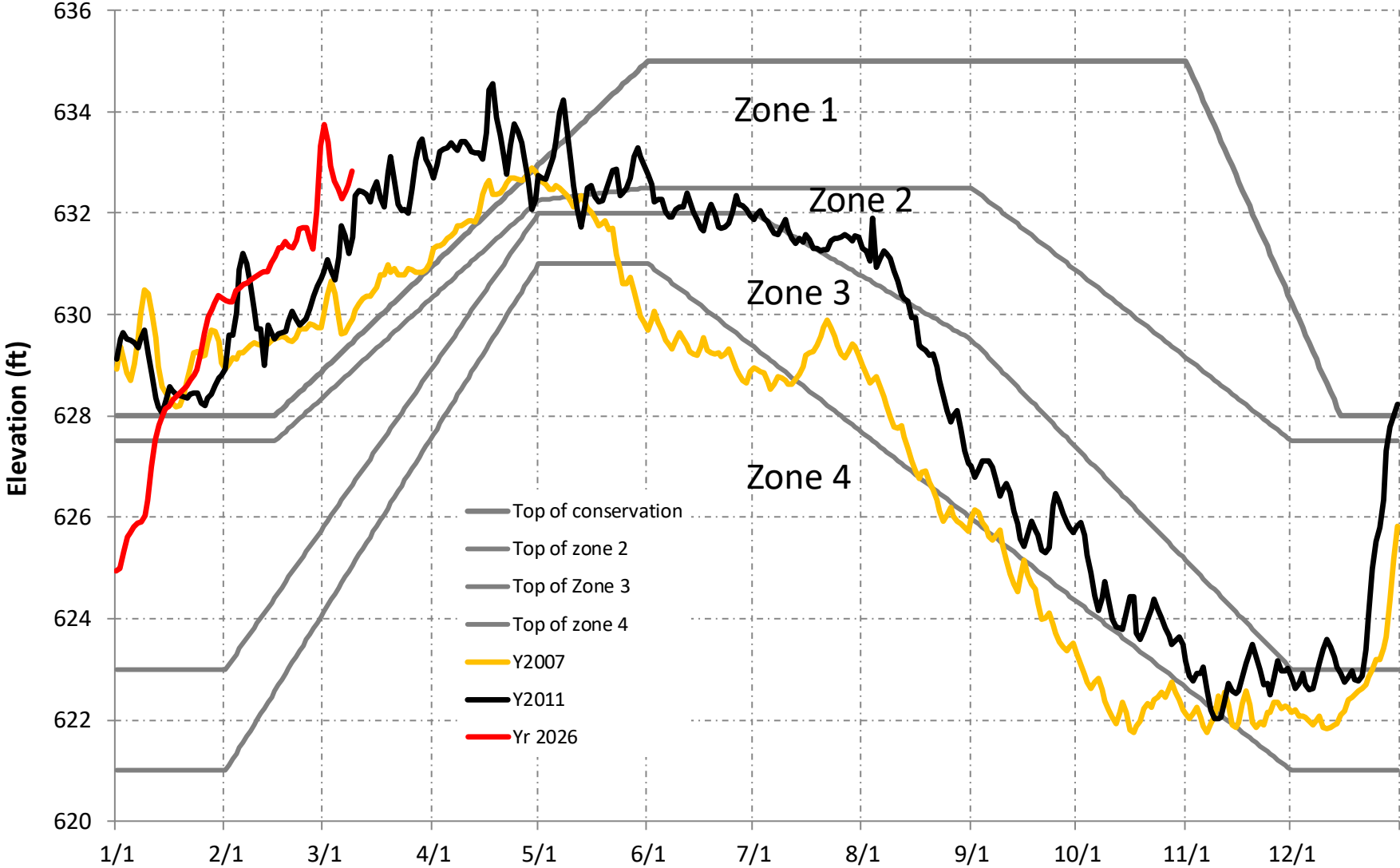


LAKE LANIER ELEVATION



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WEST POINT ELEVATION

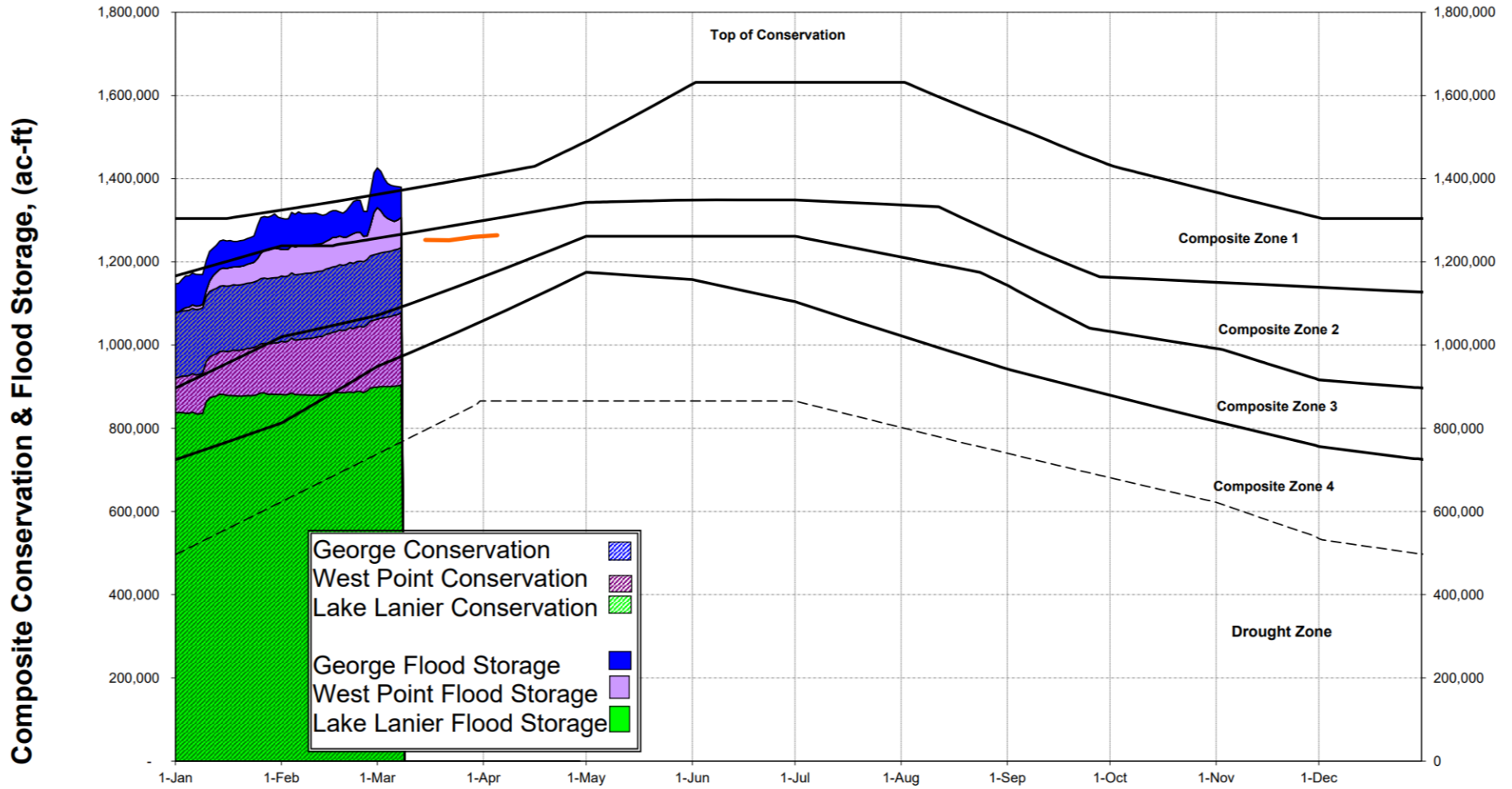


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W.F.GEORGE ELEVATION



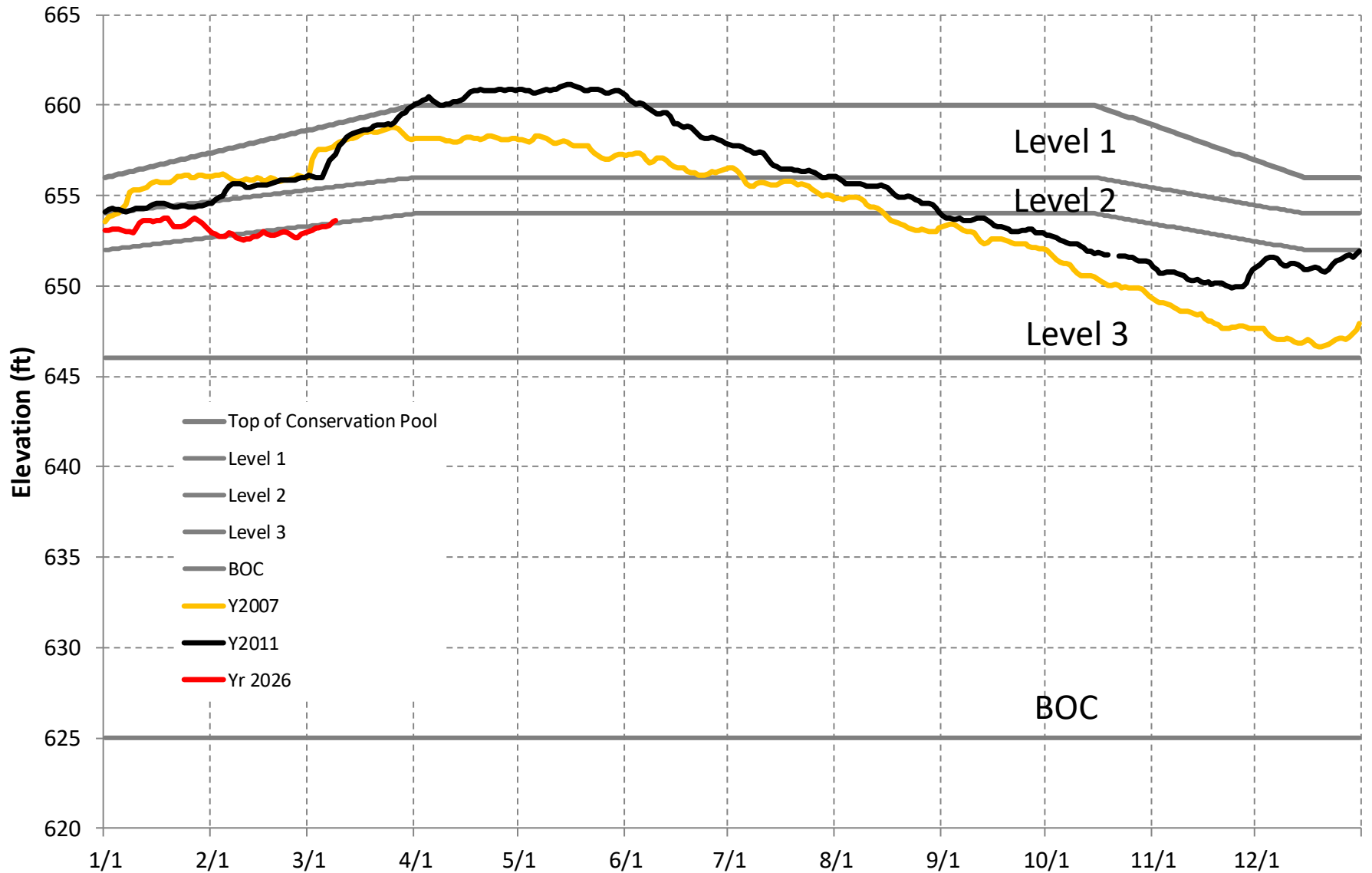
2026 ACF Basin Composite Conservation and Flood Storage



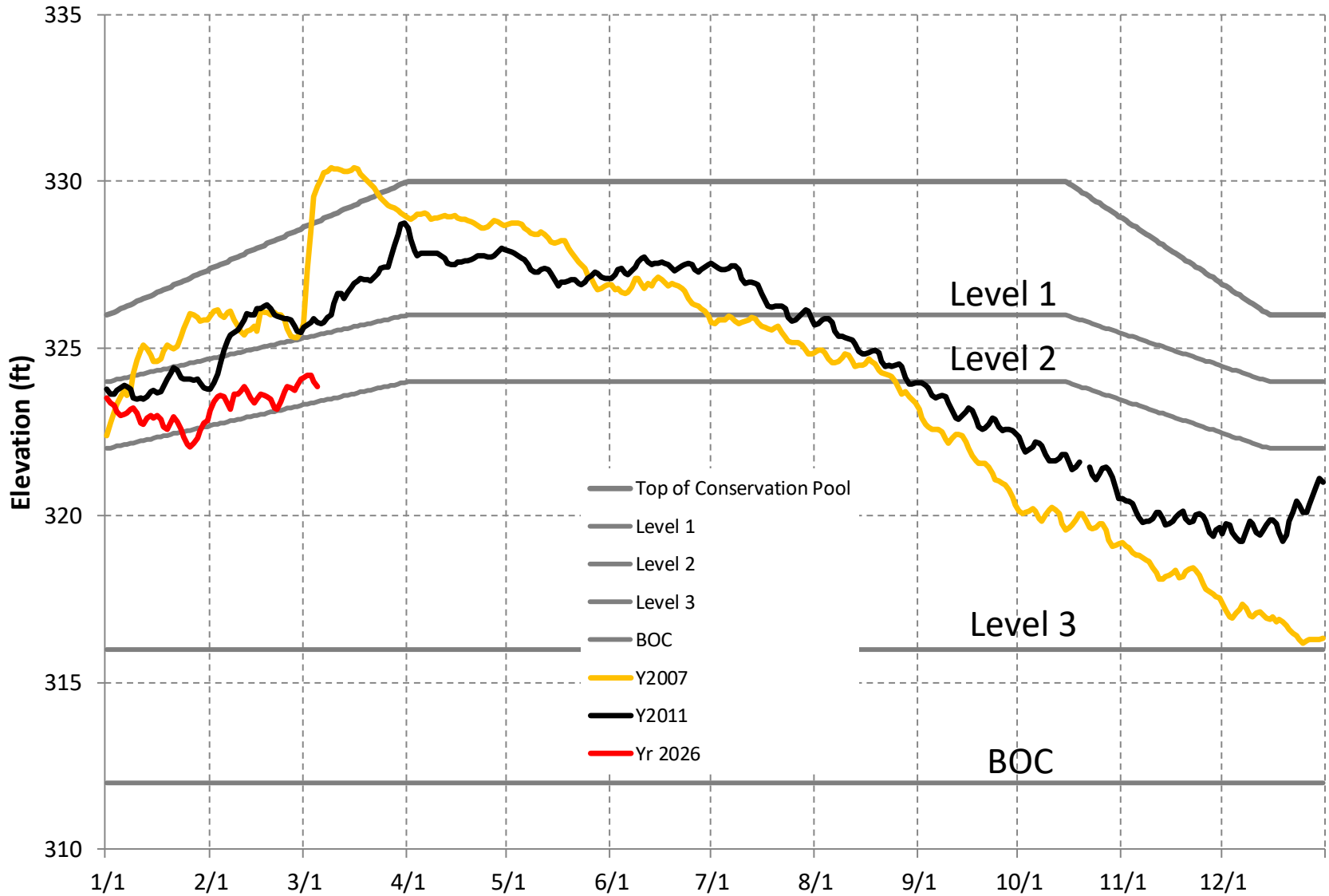
Actual data thru 3/9/2026

Add value of 1,856,000 acre-ft to include inactive storage.

LAKE HARTWELL ELEVATION



LAKE CLARKS HILL (THURMOND) ELEVATION



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Climate Prediction Center 3-month Temperature and Precipitation Probability Outlook and Seasonal Drought Outlook

Data Source:

<http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/>

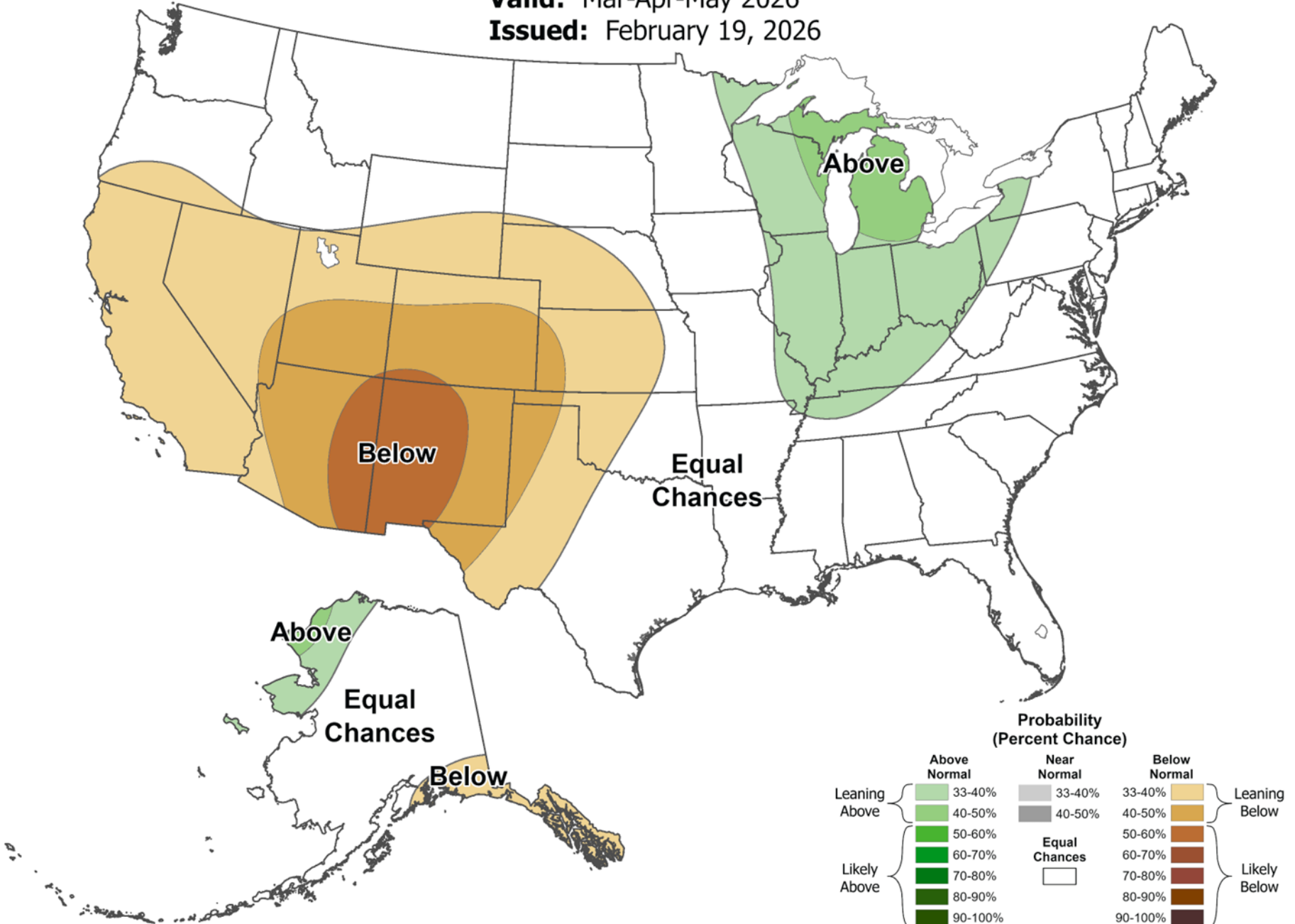


Seasonal Precipitation Outlook



Valid: Mar-Apr-May 2026

Issued: February 19, 2026

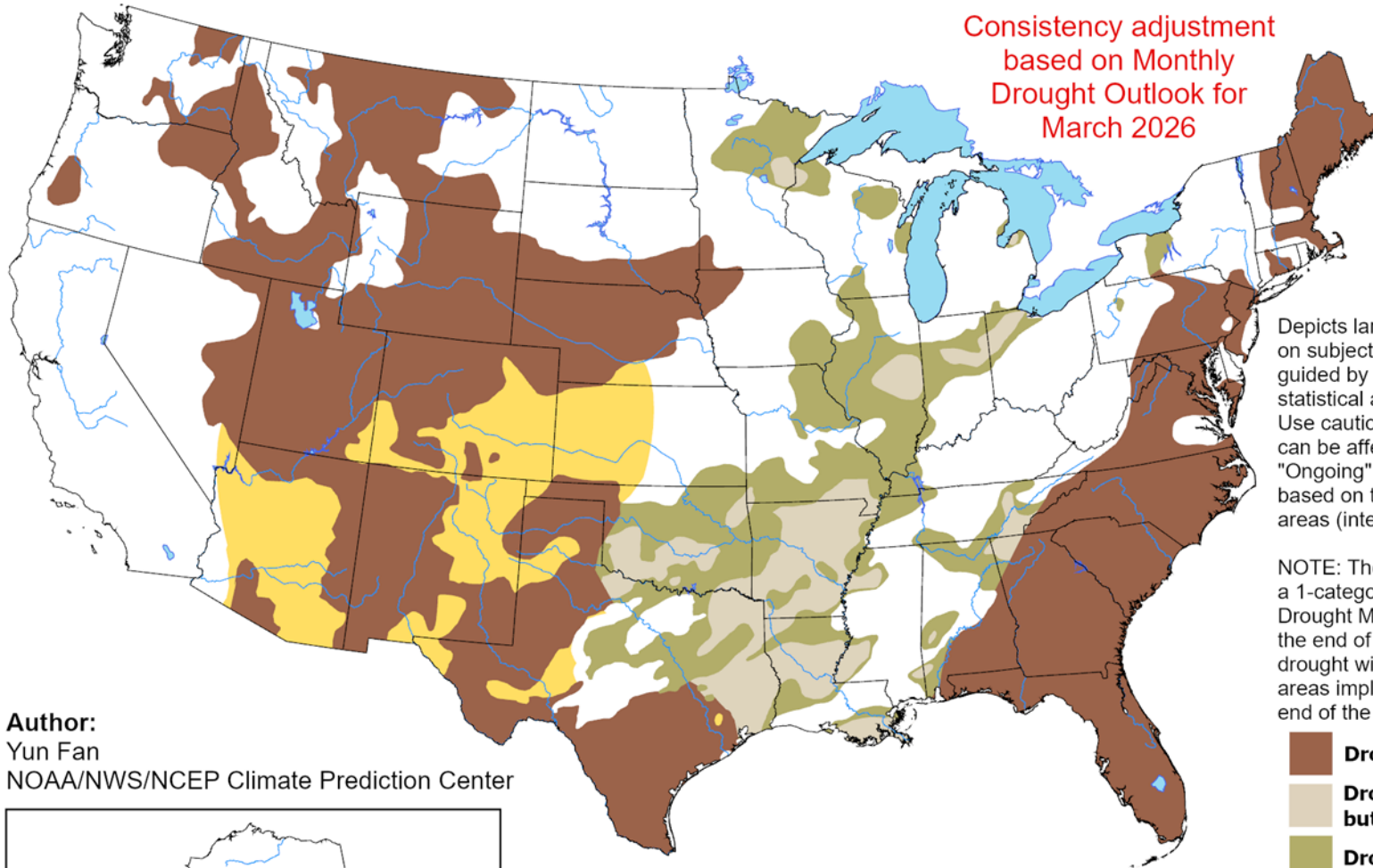


U.S. Seasonal Drought Outlook

Drought Tendency During the Valid Period

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

Consistency adjustment
based on Monthly
Drought Outlook for
March 2026

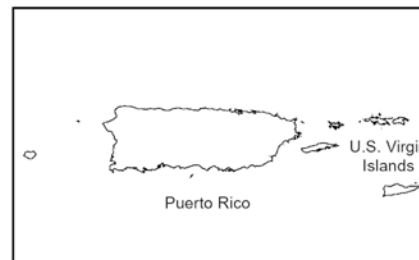
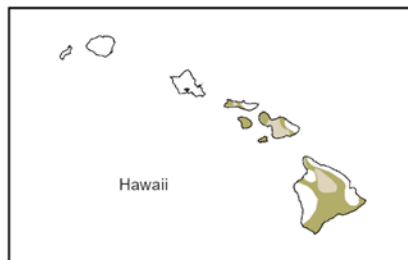


Depicts large-scale trends based on subjectively derived probabilities guided by short- and long-range statistical and dynamical forecasts. Use caution for applications that can be affected by short lived events. "Ongoing" drought areas are based on the U.S. Drought Monitor areas (intensities of D1 to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

Author:
Yun Fan
NOAA/NWS/NCEP Climate Prediction Center

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



<https://go.usa.gov/3eZ73>