# **Drought Indicators Report**

## Georgia Environmental Protection Division October 2016

## Background

Pursuant to the Rules for Drought Management, <u>Section 391-3-3-.04 Drought</u> <u>Indicators and Triggers</u>, 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 may include, but not be 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 October 13, 2016.

## Drought Indicator Analysis Summary (slide 1 of 2)

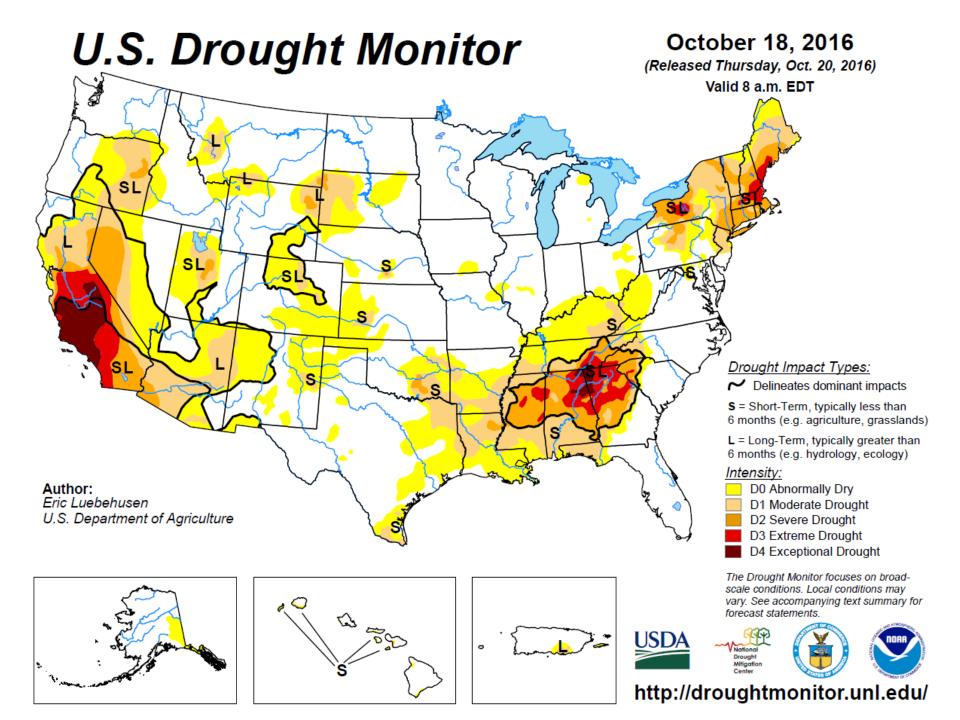
- U.S. Drought Monitor Exceptional drought (D4, the most intense level) is now indicated in all or portions of 13 counties in the northwestern portion of the state. Severe drought continues across almost all of Georgia north of the fall line. Extreme drought covers some or all of 63counties in and south of the Atlanta metro area and northwest Georgia. This week marks the 21st week of continuous severe drought in northwest Georgia, the 19th week for the Atlanta metro area, the 18th week in parts of the northeast and the 12th week in central Georgia.
- **Precipitation** 3 month records show considerable deficit, particularly in central Georgia, much of north Georgia, and south and east of the metro Atlanta area. 6 month precipitation deficit indicates dryness in multiple areas of the state, with the northern half (particularly the extreme northwest), much of west and east central Georgia, and parts of south central Georgia experiencing the greatest deficit. The 12 month records show near normal rainfall, but some long-term dryness still exists in a few counties in central, northwest, north central, and parts of southeast Georgia.
- Soil Moisture Northern portions of the state continue to show deficits, with the greatest severity in northwestern, northeastern, and central Georgia around the Macon area.
- **Streamflow** Persistently low flows continue to drop, with a majority of observation sites at or below 2007 and/or 2011 levels. Two-thirds of the gages show flows in the 20th percentile or lower. Twenty show flows in the 10th percentile or lower; flows at three are lower than the 5th percentile. The number of locations experiencing flows lower than 5<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> percentiles continue to grow, as already low flows continue to drop.
- **Groundwater** Levels vary by location. Three wells are above median levels. The remainder are below median levels, with one above the 20th percentile and three below the 5th percentile of the historical record

### Drought Indicator Analysis Summary (slide 2 of 2)

- **Reservoir Levels** A majority of the state's major reservoirs are experiencing diminishing inflows. In the ACT, reservoir levels have been relatively stable, although the levels for both Allatoona and Carters lake are forecasted to drop. ACF inflows have dropped to the point that the Corps is now relying on storage to meet the 5000cfs low flow requirement at Woodruff Dam. In the ACF, Lanier has entered zone 3, WestPoint and George are in zone 1, although George is forecasted to enter zone 2 in the next week or so. In the Savannah Basin, both Hartwell and Thurmond are in level 3 and are in drought level 2 operations.
- **Short-term Climate Prediction** The Climate Prediction Center outlook for temperature and precipitation for September-November, 2016 calls for normal temperatures and below normal precipitation for most of the state.
- Water Supplies While there are no widespread water supply issues, an increasing number of systems are reporting impacts. A growing number of systems that rely on direct withdrawals from surface water or small wells are closely watching their drought contingency plan triggers and are expressing concern about dropping water levels. As of this report EPD has granted one drought response variance and has received four additional applications, one of which is from a water system that is not in the drought response level 1 area.

# **US Drought Monitor**

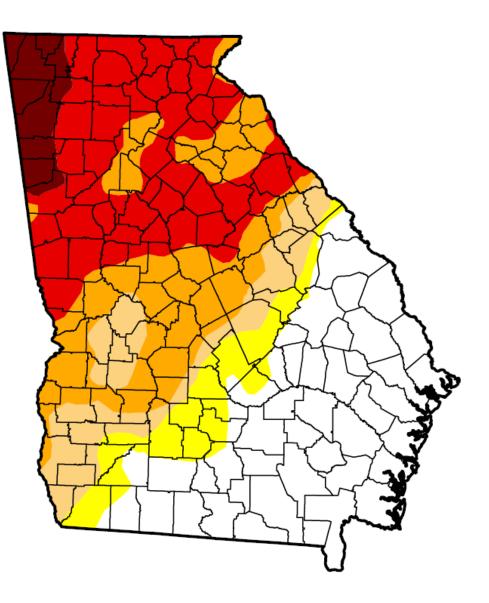
Data Source: http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/



## U.S. Drought Monitor Georgia

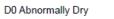
### October 18, 2016 (Released Thursday, Oct. 20, 2016) Valid 8 a.m. EDT

Drought Conditions (Percent Area)



	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	33.95	66.05	57.89	47.54	29.24	4.59
Last Week 10/11/2016	38.04	61.96	55.33	42.63	23.12	3.61
3 Months Ago 7/19/2016	34.96	<u>65.04</u>	37.55	28.48	9.65	0.00
Start of Calendar Year 12/29/2015	87.36	12.64	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Start of Water Year 9/27/2016	35.37	64.63	45.84	34.50	14.67	1.58
One Year Ago 10/20/2015	66.11	33.89	13.83	0.00	0.00	0.00

### Intensity:





D4 Exceptional Drought

D2 Severe Drought

D1 Moderate Drought

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements.

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U.S. Department of Agriculture

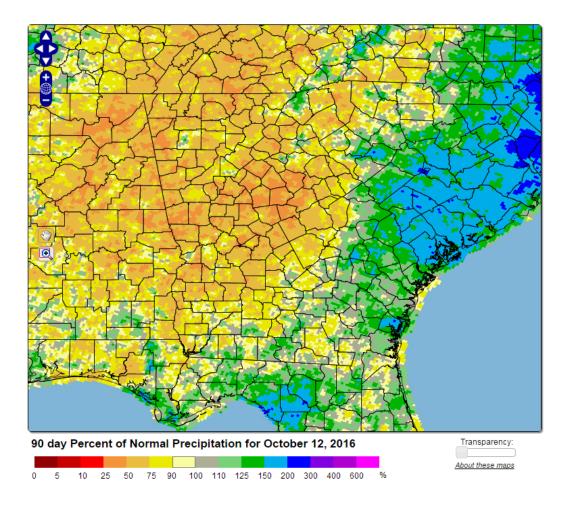


### http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/

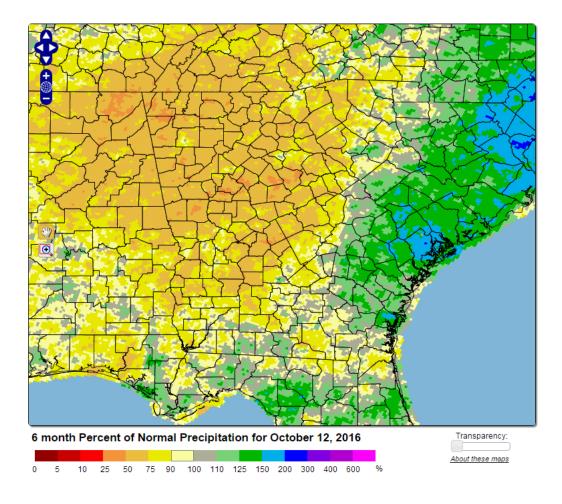
# 3, 6, and 12 Month Percent of Normal Precipitation

Data Source: http://climate.ncsu.edu/drought

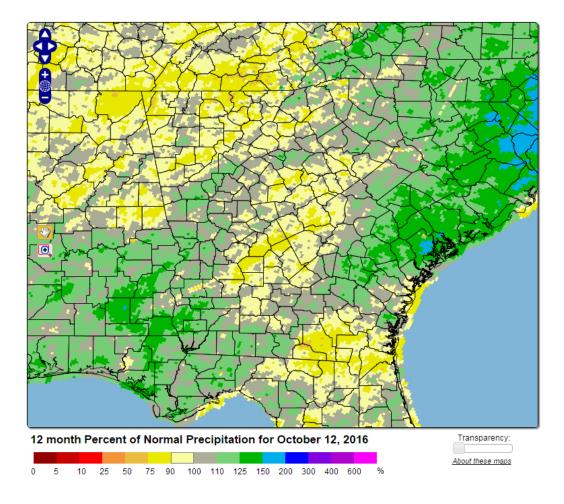
## **3 Month Percent of Normal Precipitation**



## 6 Month Percent of Normal Precipitation

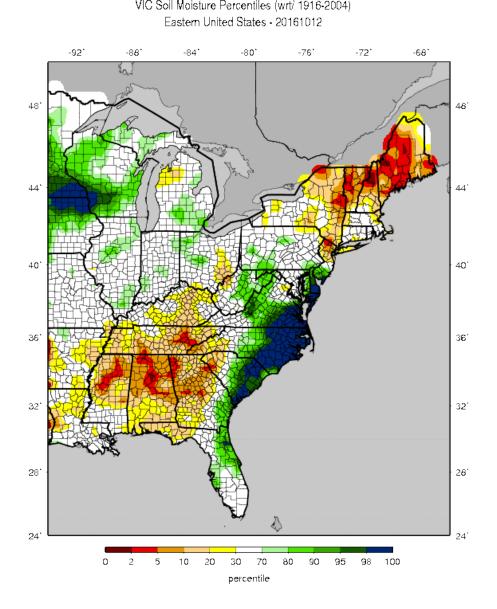


## 12 Month Percent of Normal Precipitation



# Soil Moisture Conditions

Data Source: http://www.hydro.washington.edu/forecast/monitor/curr/con us.mexico/east.vic.sm\_qnt.gif



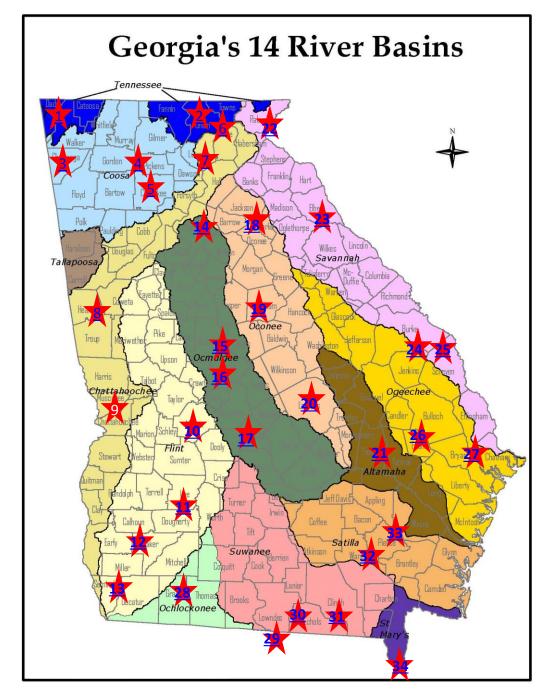
Current (daily updated) percentiles for soil moisture (SWE) with respect to the climatological period (1916-2004).

## **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



### USGS Stream Gages Monitored by EPD to Assess Drought Conditions

GAGE#	BASIN	GAGE NAME
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	SUWANEE	WITHLACOOCHEE RIVER NEAR PINETTA FL
30	SUWANEE	ALAPAHA RIVER AT STATENVILLE
31	SUWANEE	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, 2016 through September, 2016;
- 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

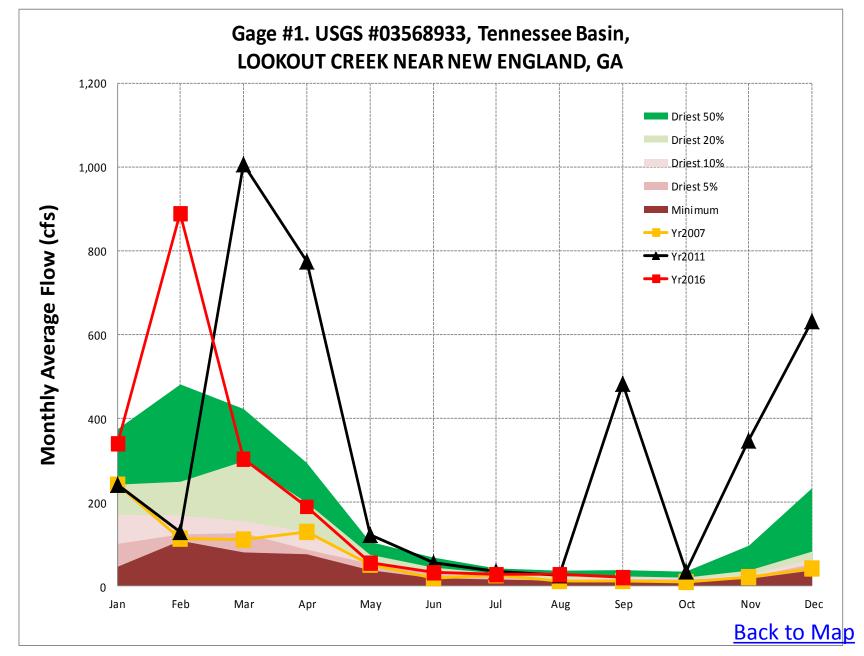
The streamflow graph for Gage #5, <u>USGS Etowah River gage at Canton</u> shows :

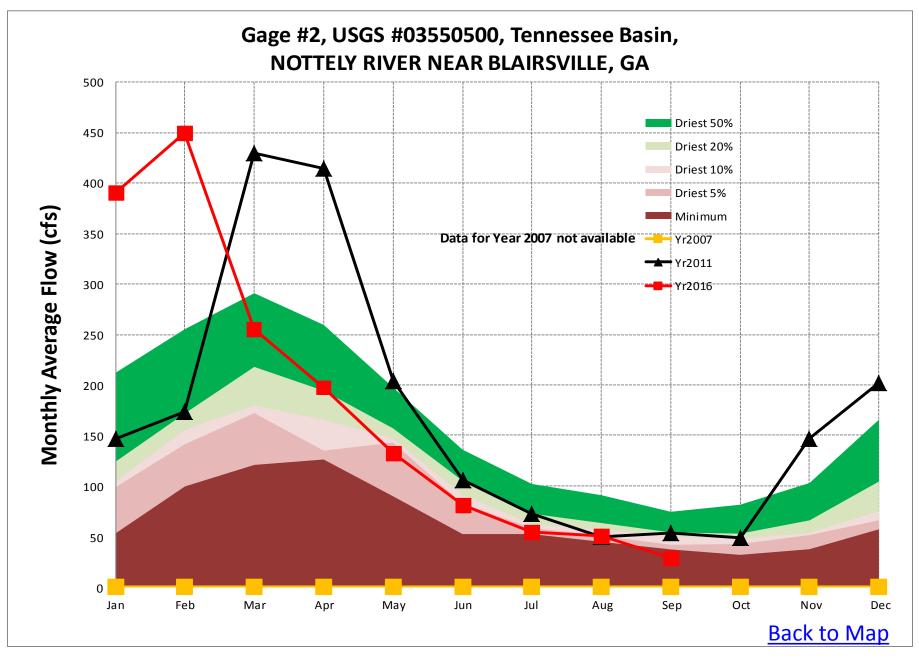
- Average stream flow for September 2016 was 219 cfs. The statistical composite of all historical data for this gage shows that average streamflow in September has historically been lower than September 2016 about 20% of the time; about 80% of the time in September it has been higher.
- Average stream flow in September 2011 was 341 cfs. The statistical composite of all historical data for this gage shows that average streamflow for September has historically been lower than September 2011 only 10% of the time; 90% of the time in September it has been higher.
- Average stream flow in September 2007 was 130 cfs. The statistical composite of all historical data for this gage shows that average streamflow for September has historically been lower than September 2007 only 5% of the time; 95% of the time in September it has been higher.
- The lowest recorded average stream flow for September was 129 cfs.

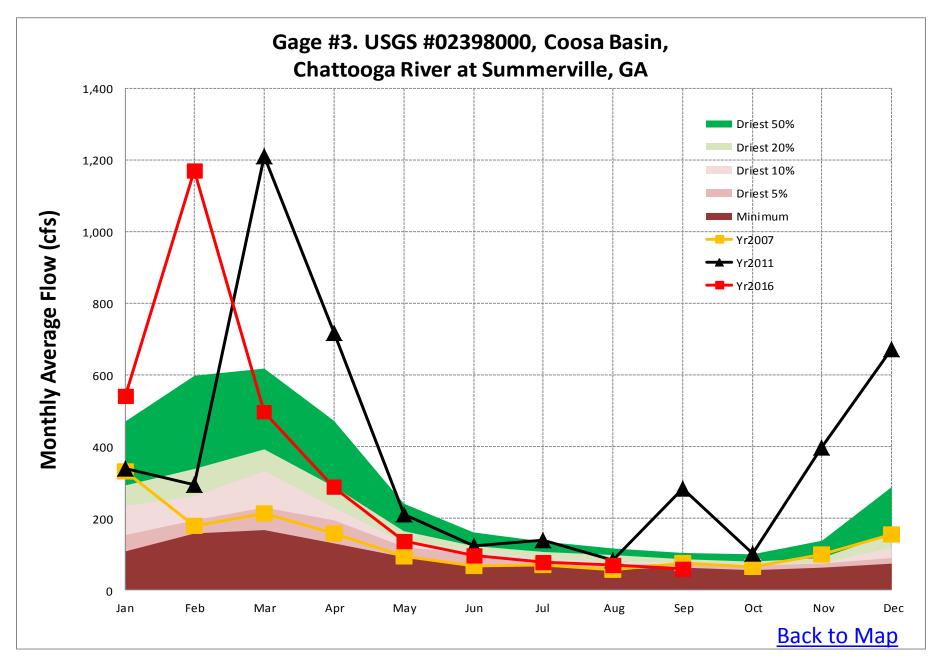
## How to Read the Streamflow Graphs <u>Example #2:</u> Flint River at Albany

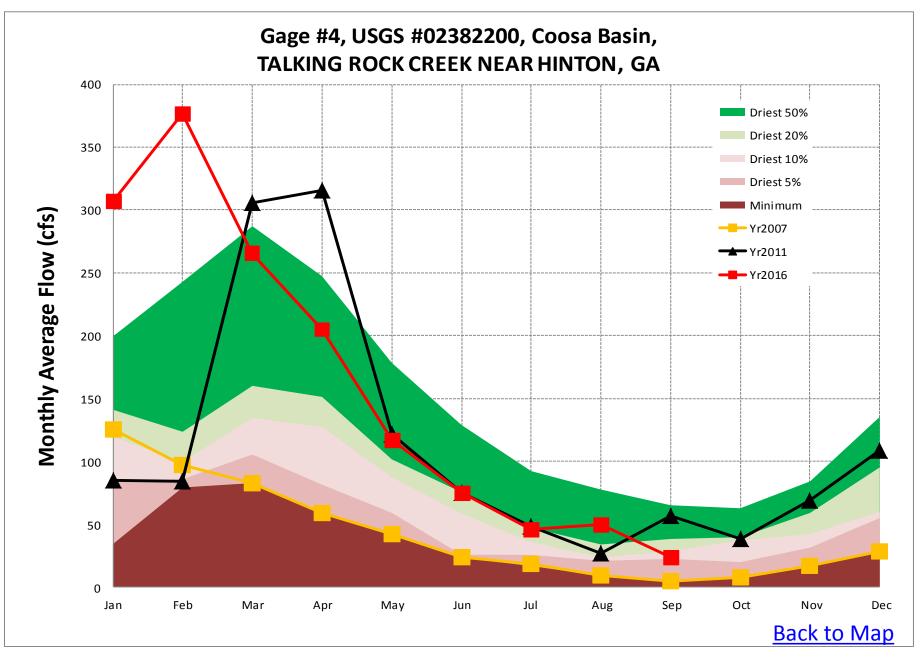
The streamflow graph for Gage #11, <u>USGS Flint River gage at Albany</u> shows:

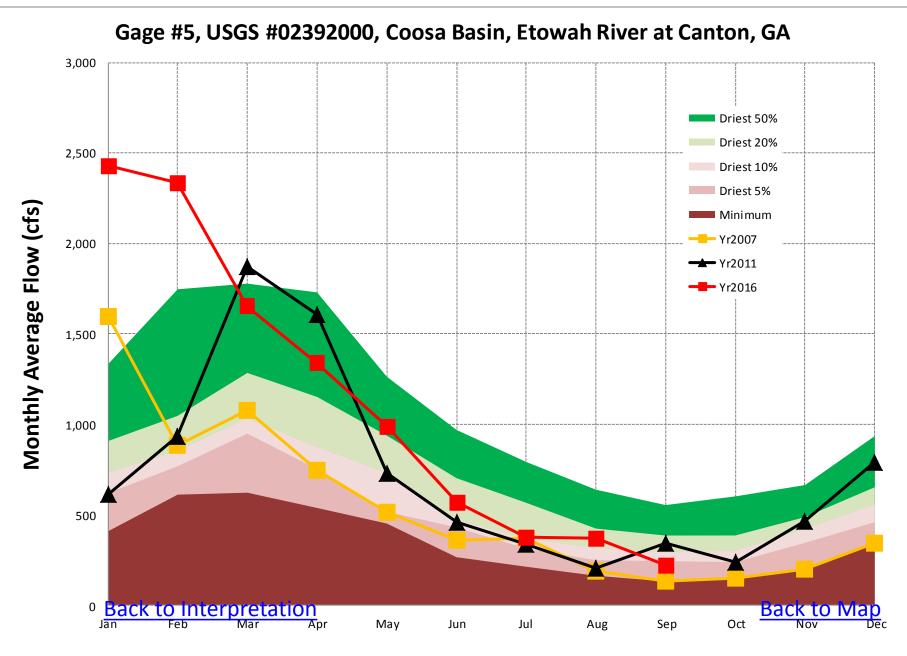
- Average stream flow for September 2016 was 1151 cfs. The statistical composite of all historical data for this gage shows that average streamflow in September has historically been lower than September 2016 about 20% of the time; about 80% of the time in September it has been higher.
- Average stream flow in September 2011 was 764 cfs. The statistical composite of all historical data for this gage shows that average streamflow for September has historically been lower than September 2011 about 10% of the time; about 90% of the time in September it has been higher.
- Average stream flow in September 2007 was 1385 cfs. The statistical composite of all historical data for this gage shows that average streamflow for September has historically been lower than September 2007 about 10% of the time; about 90% of the time in September it has been higher.

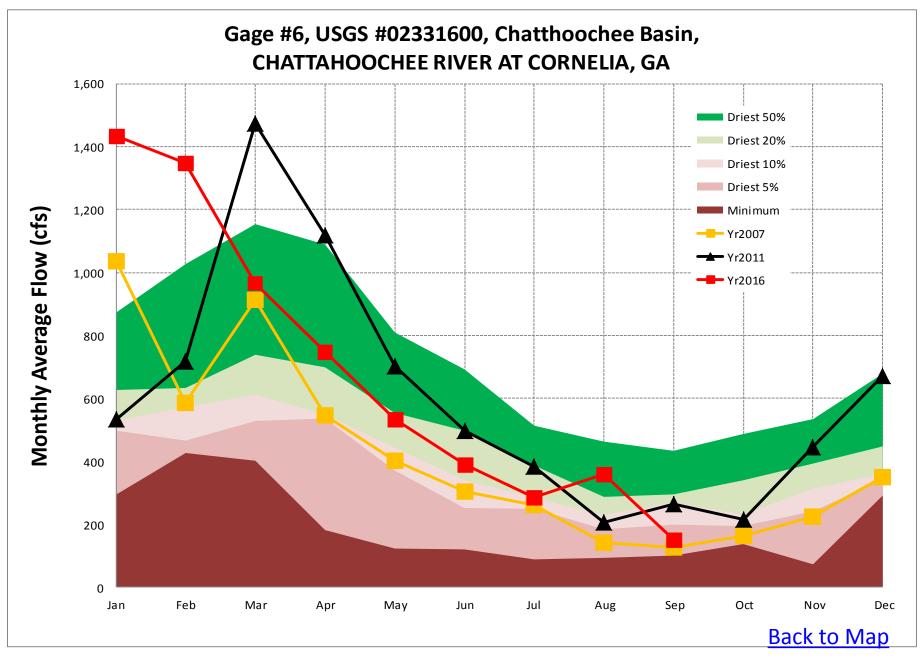


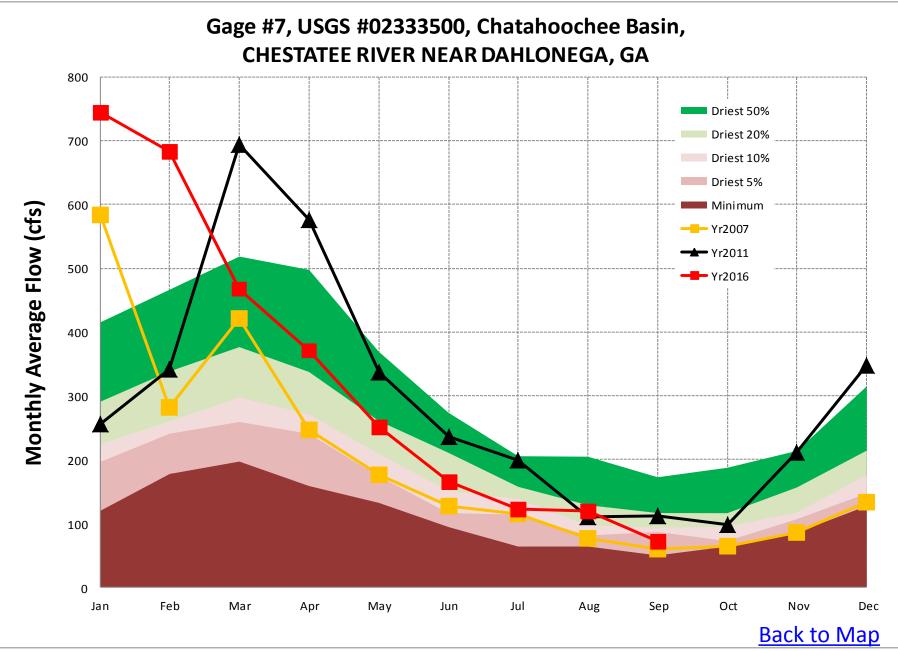


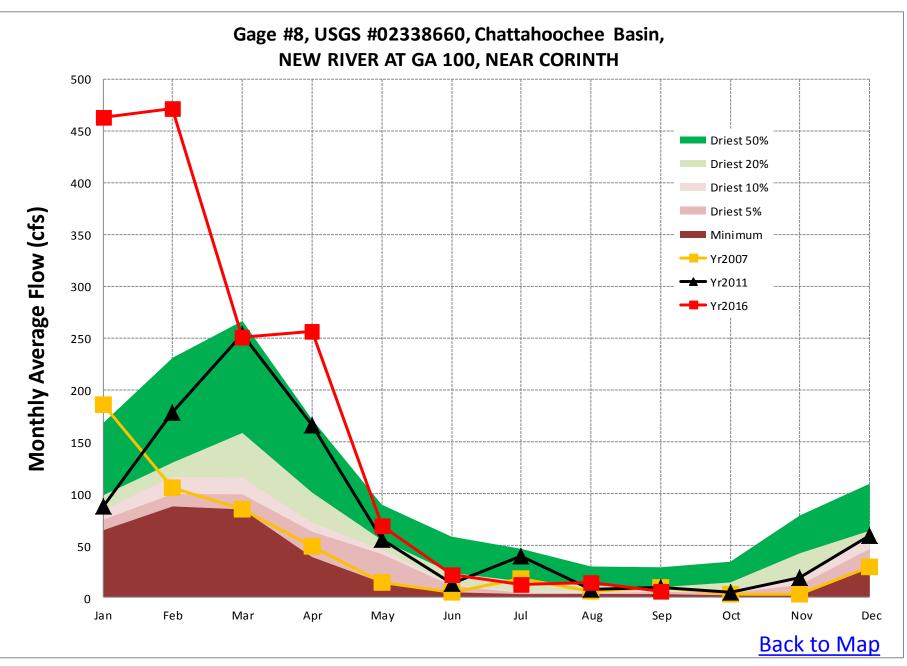


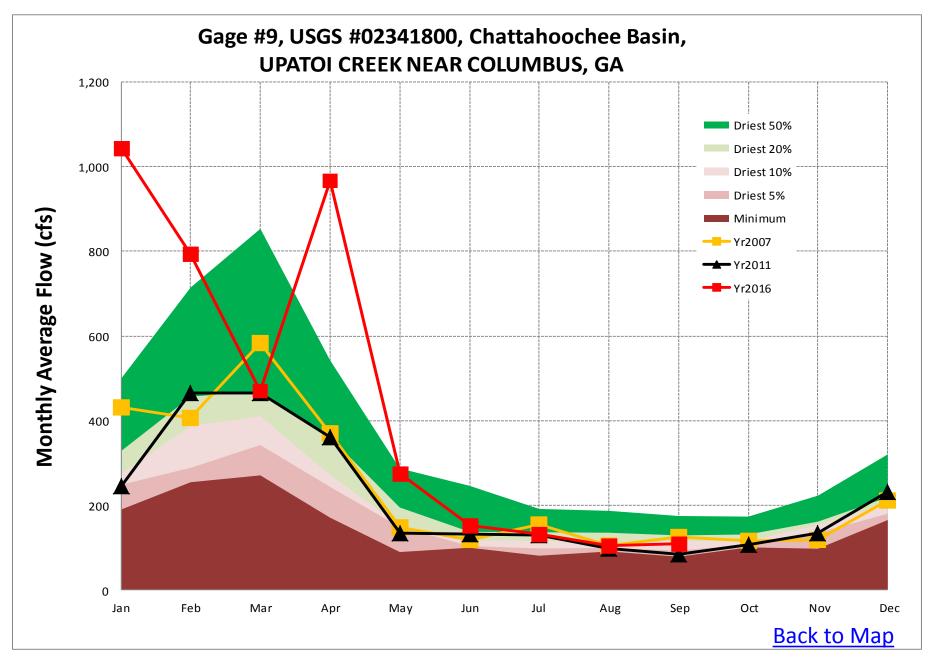


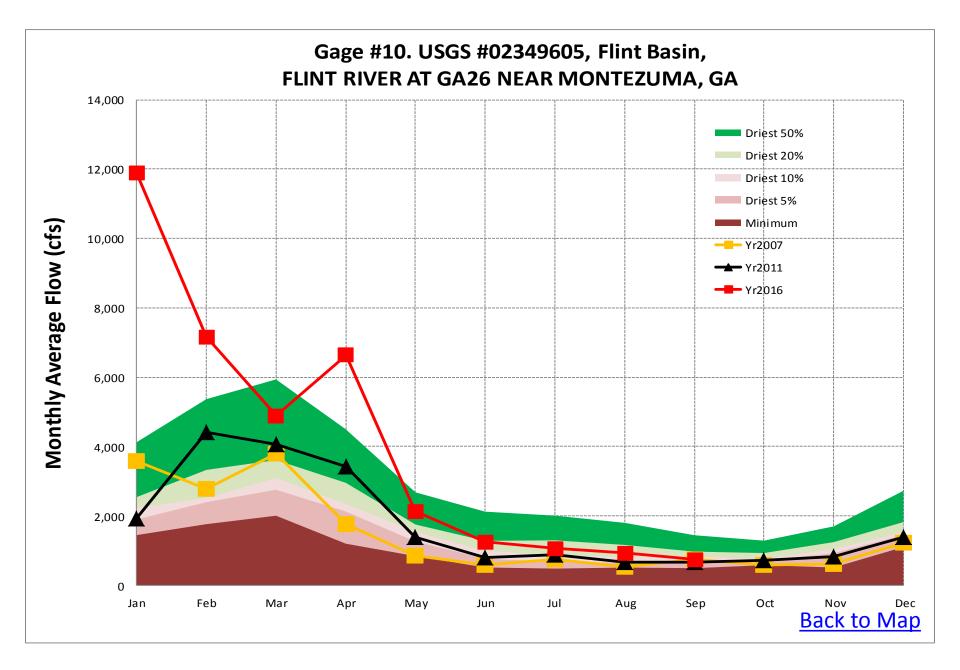


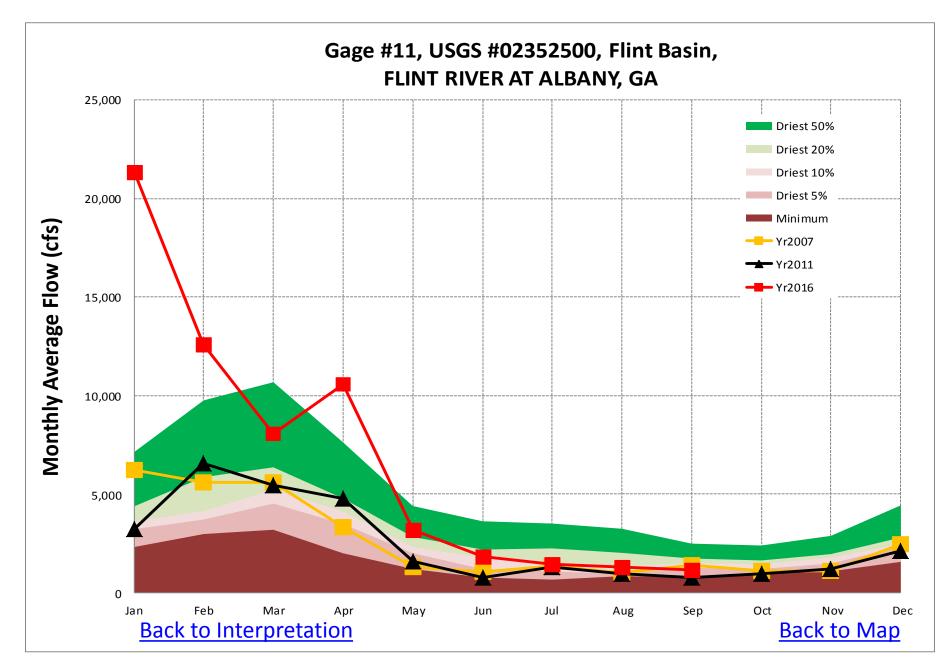


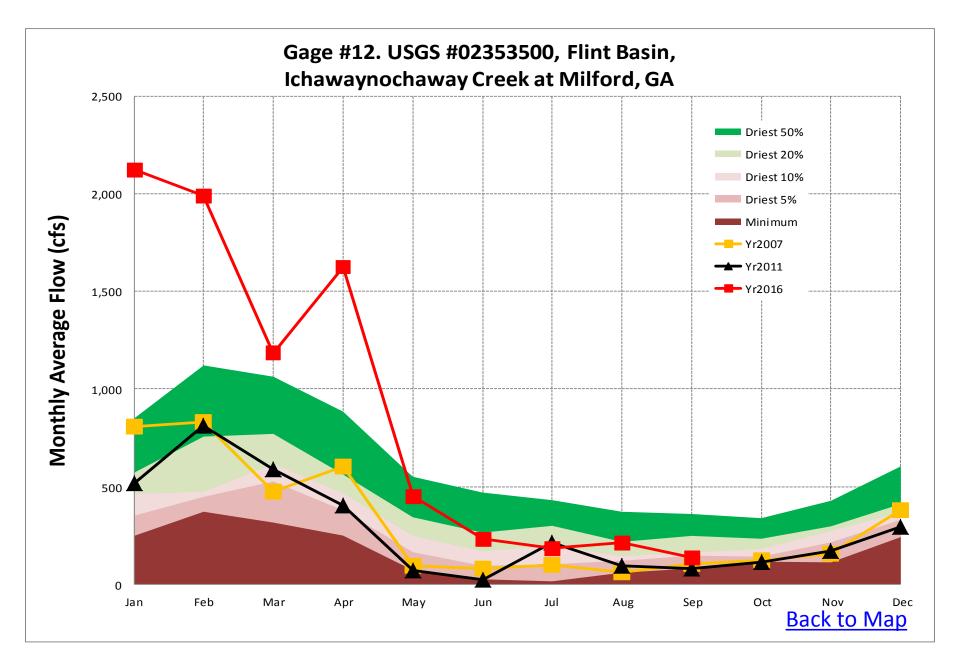


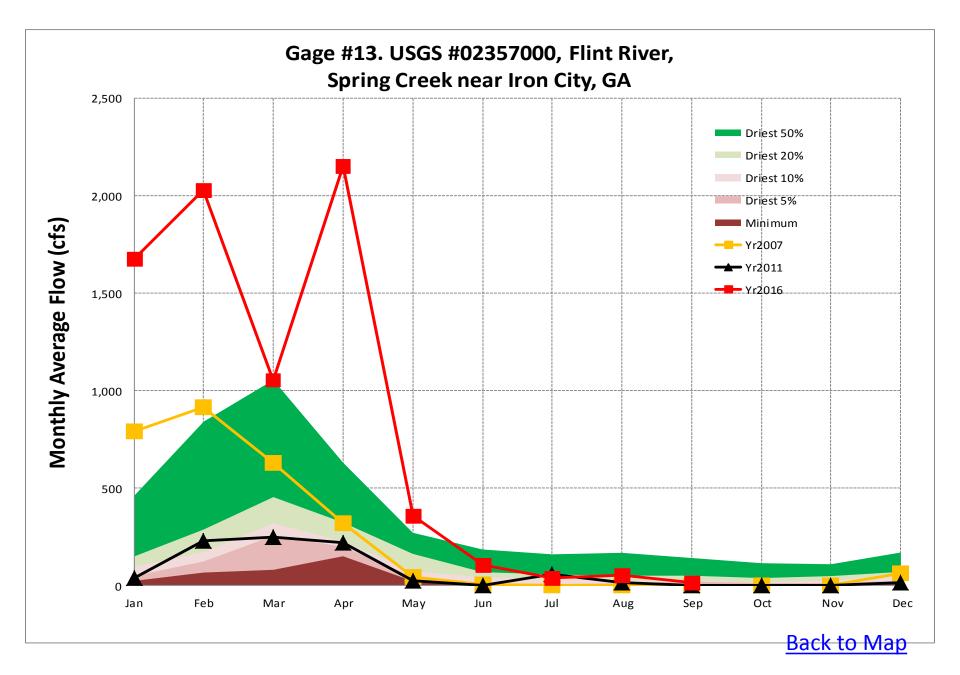


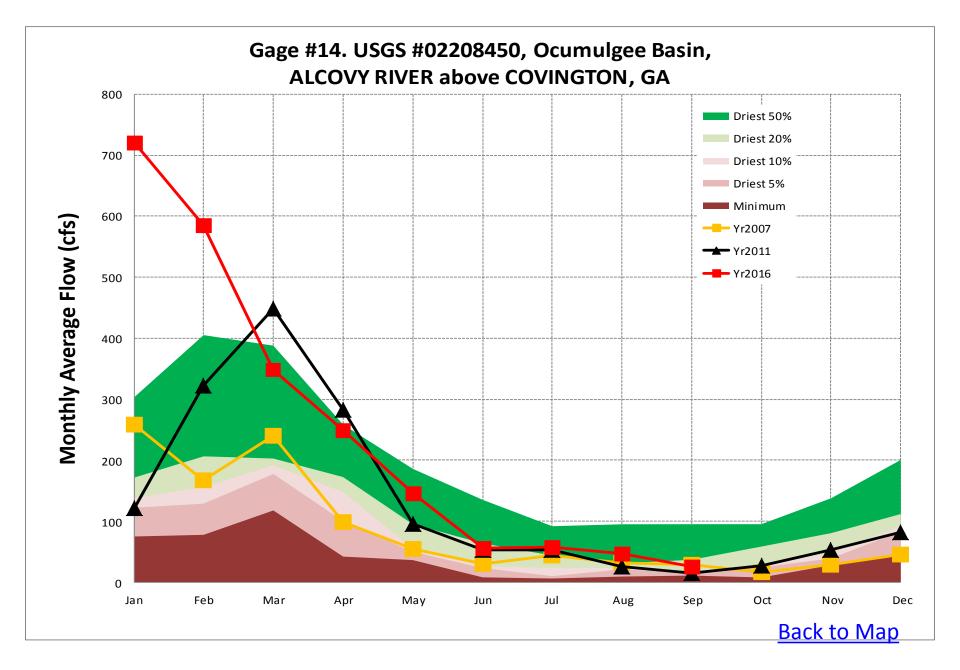


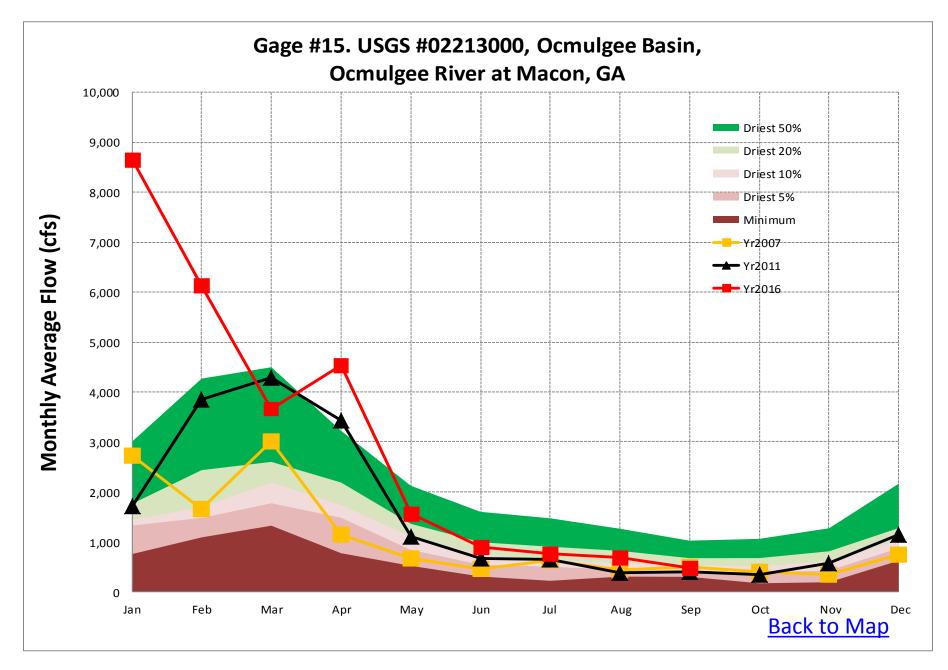


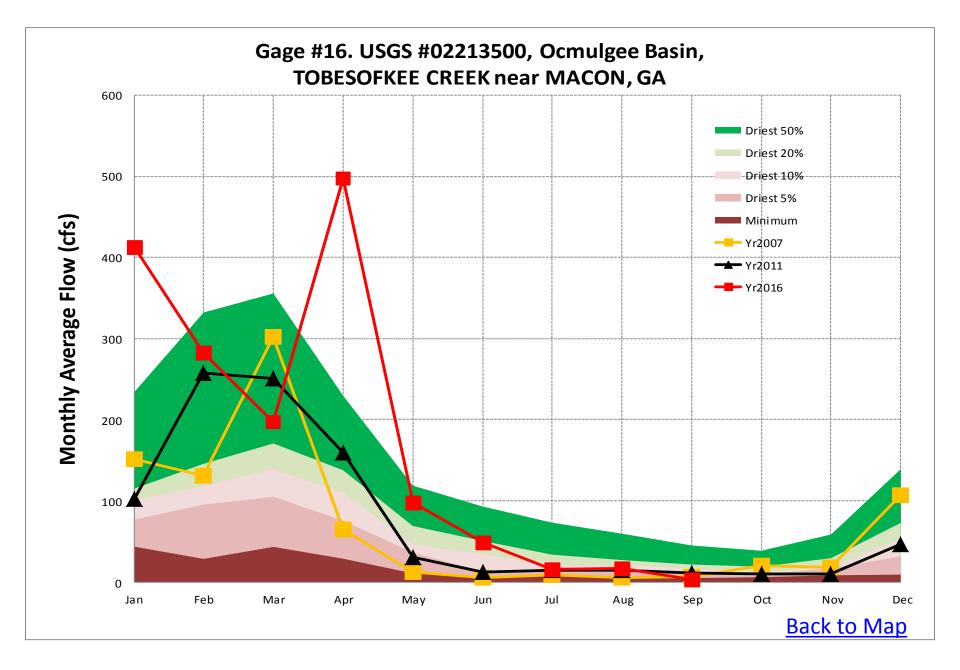


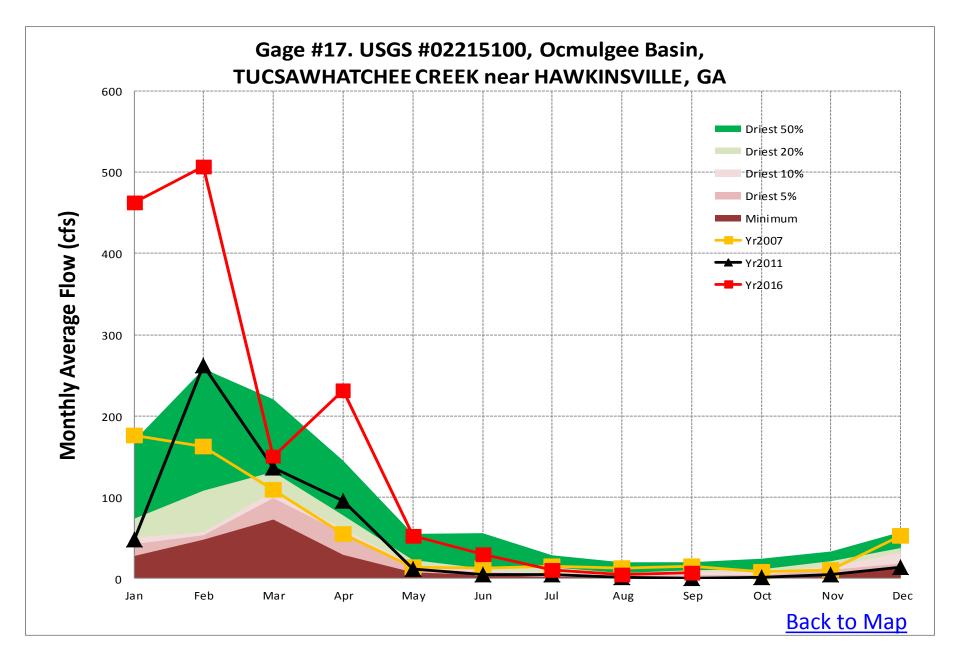


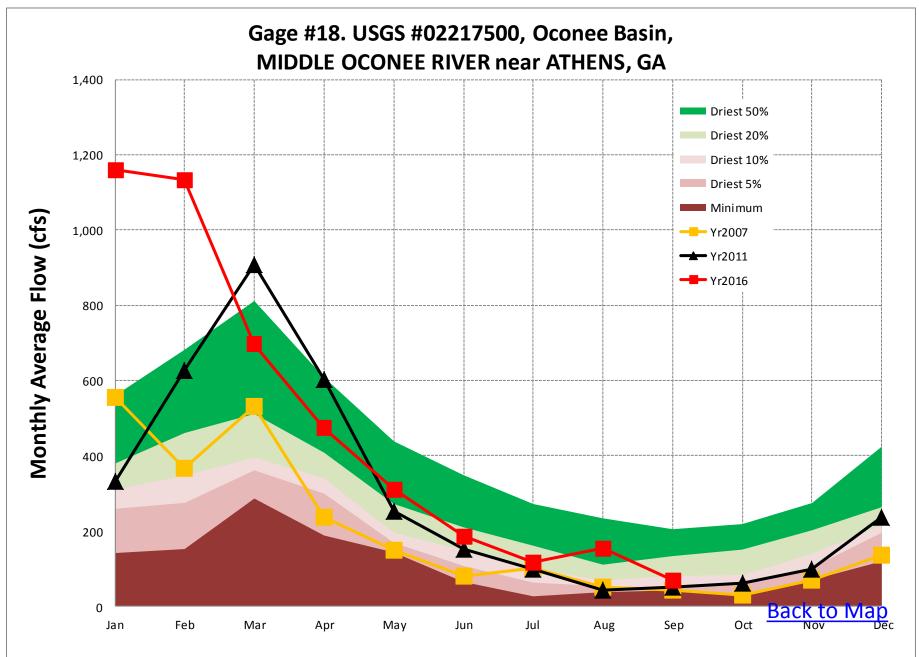


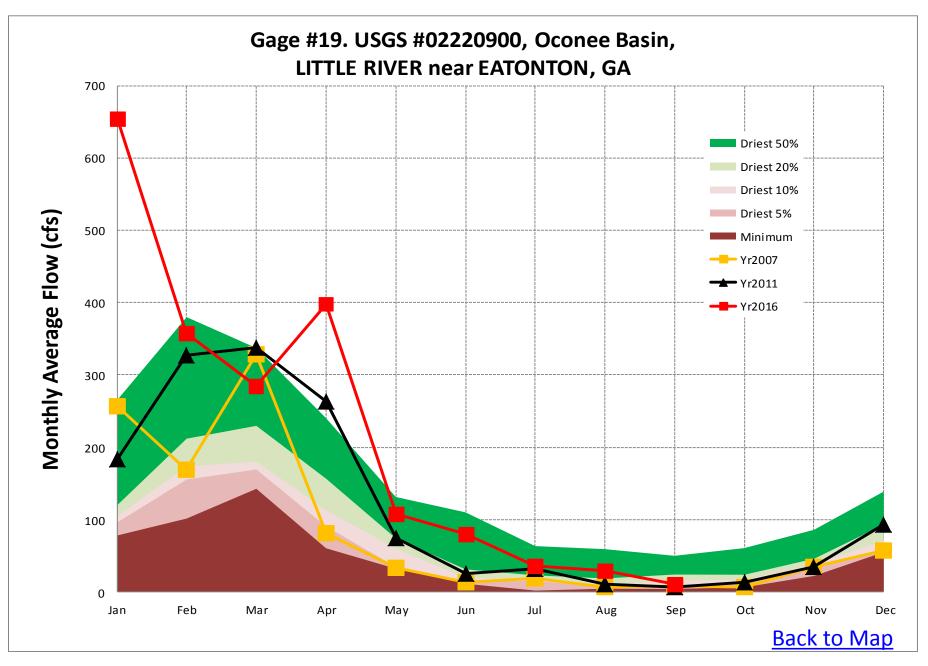


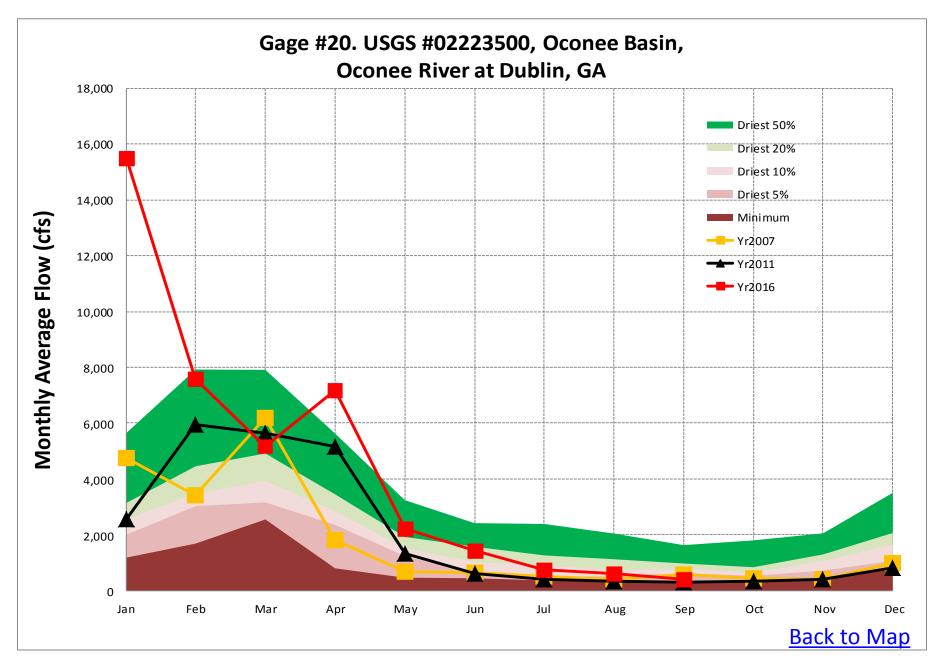


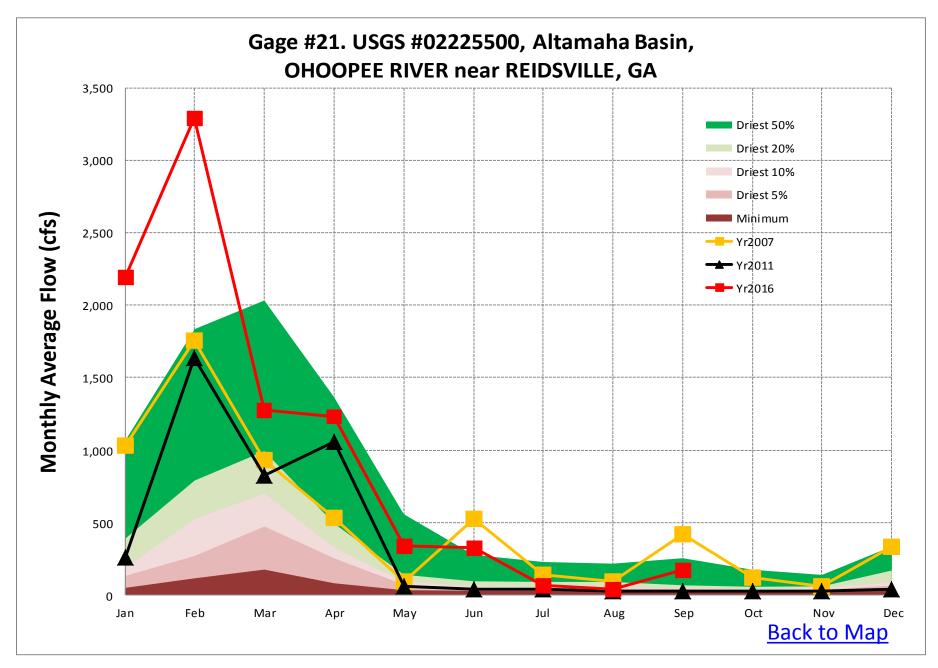


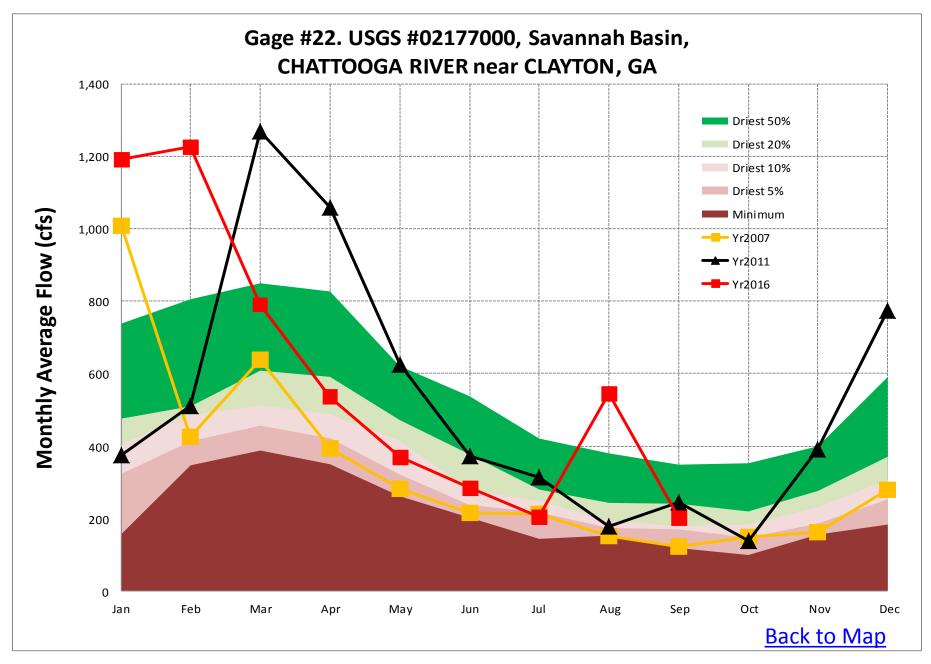


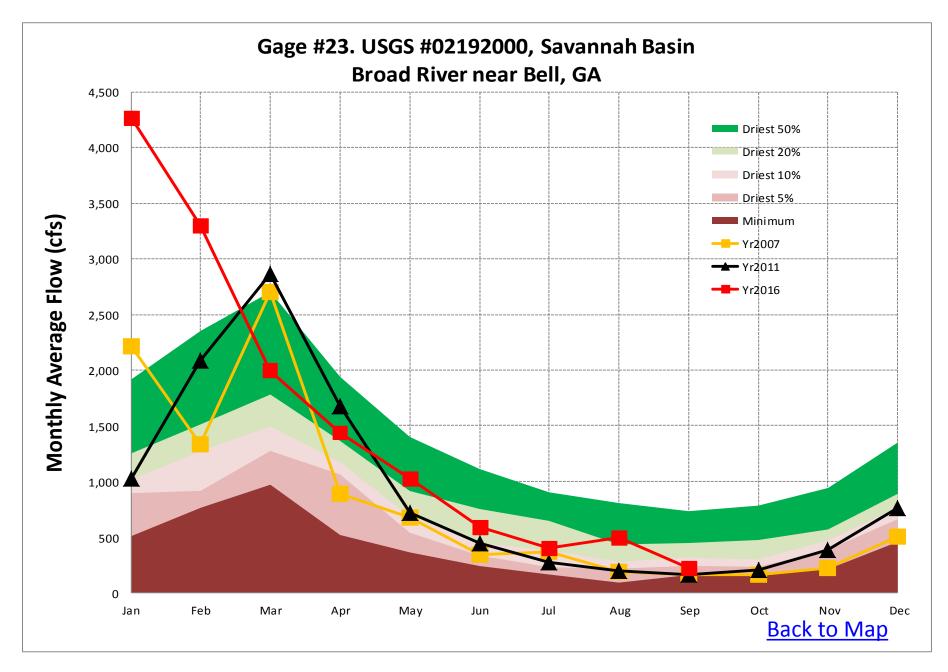


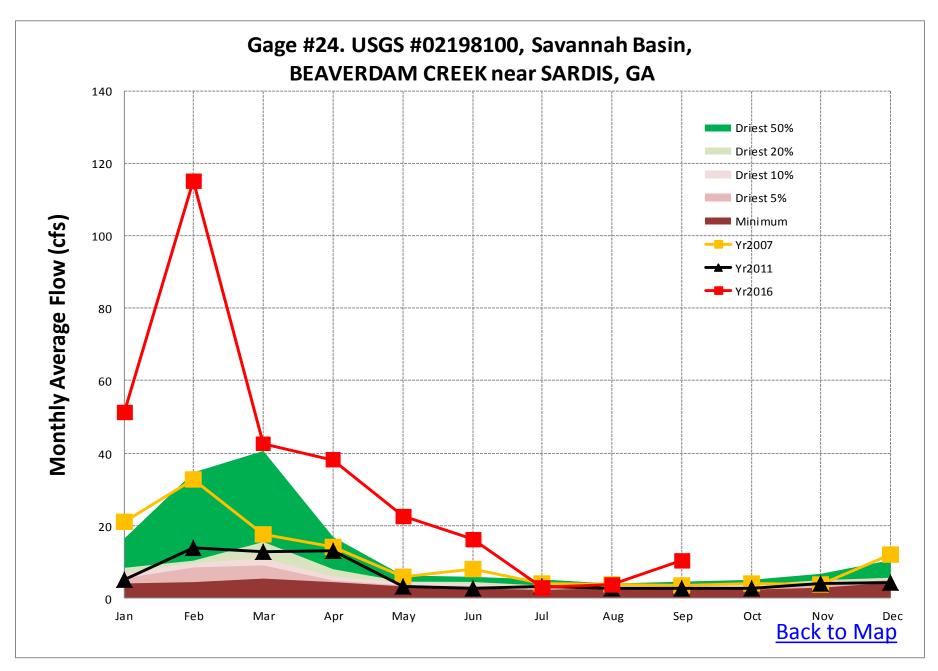


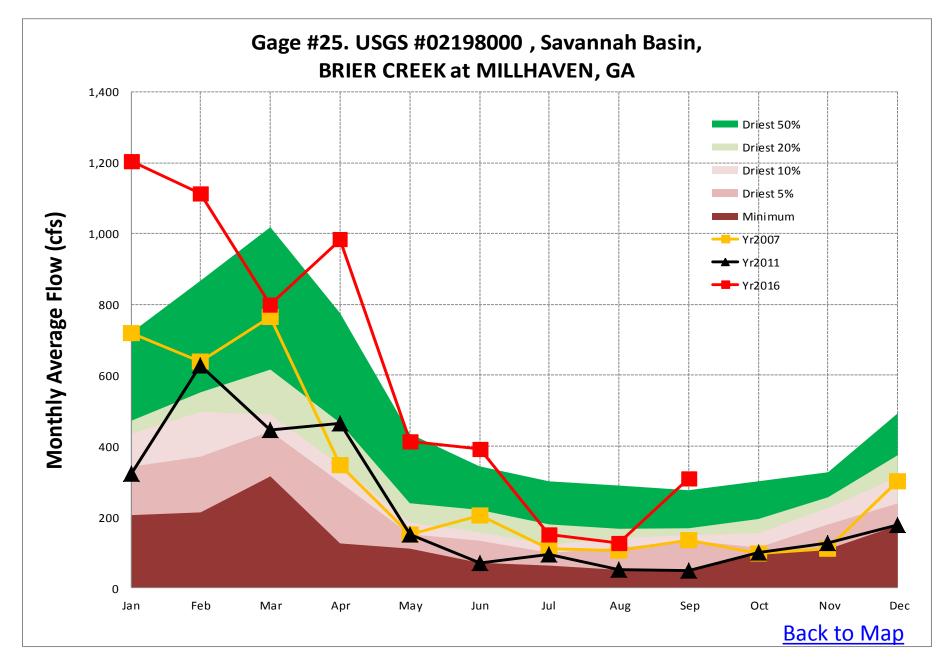


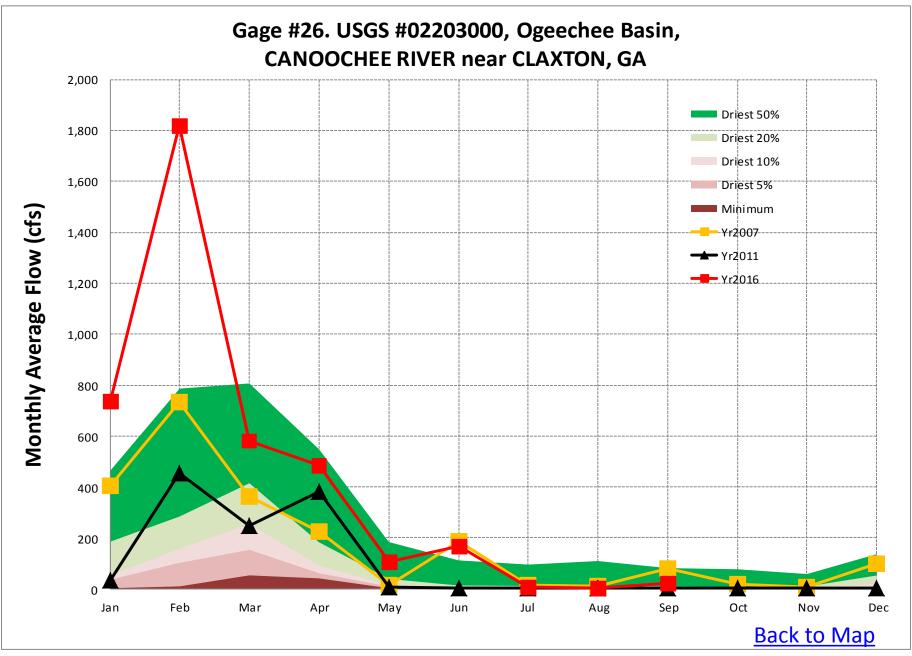


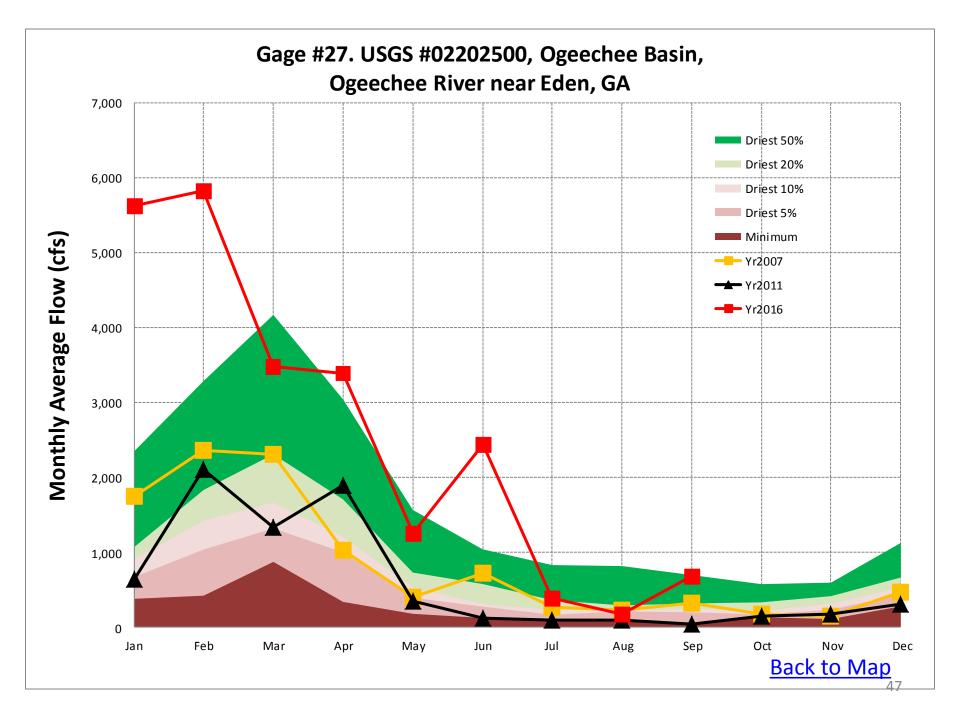


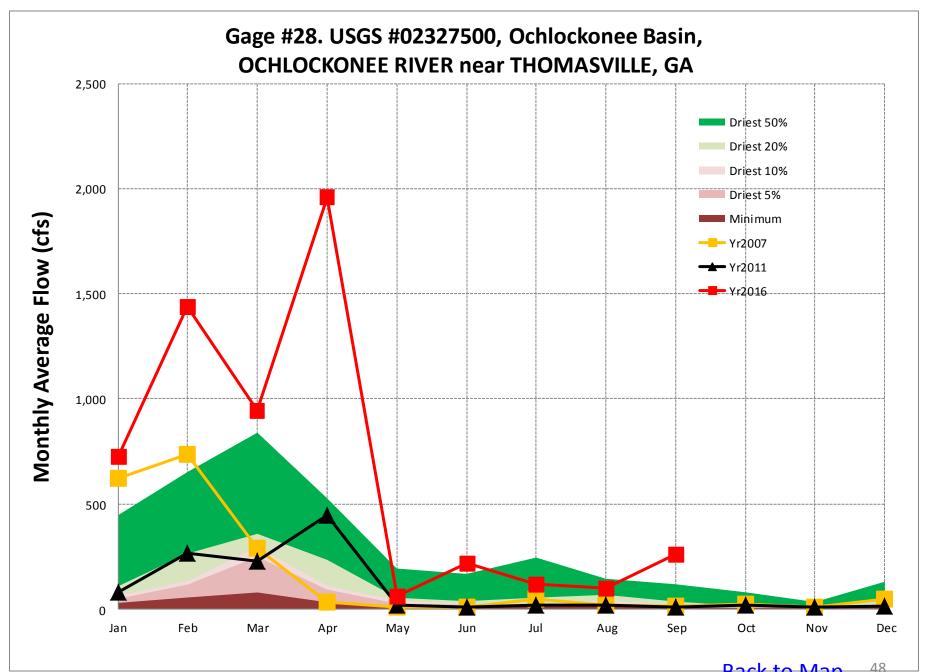


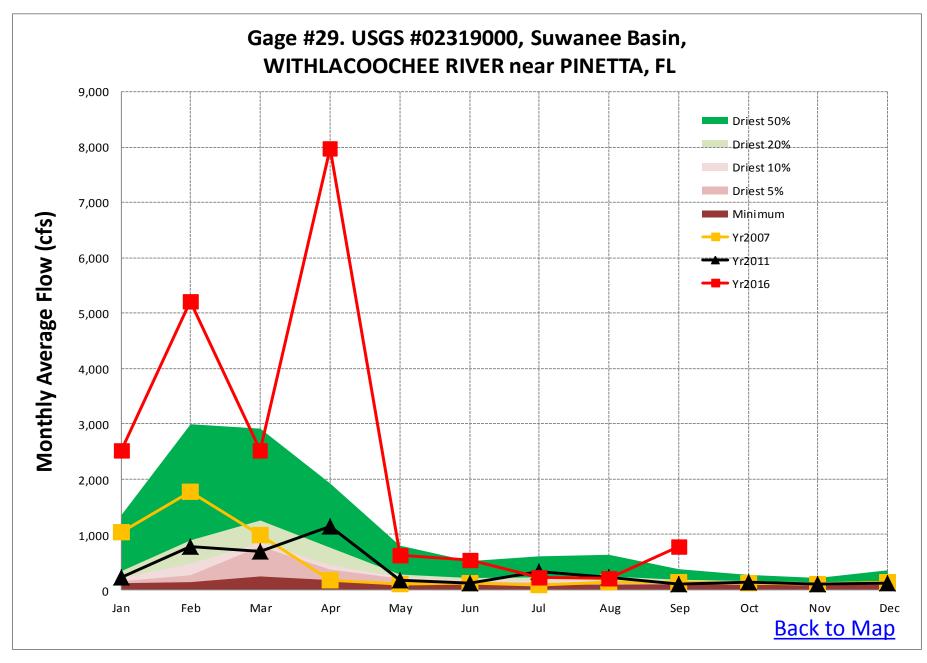


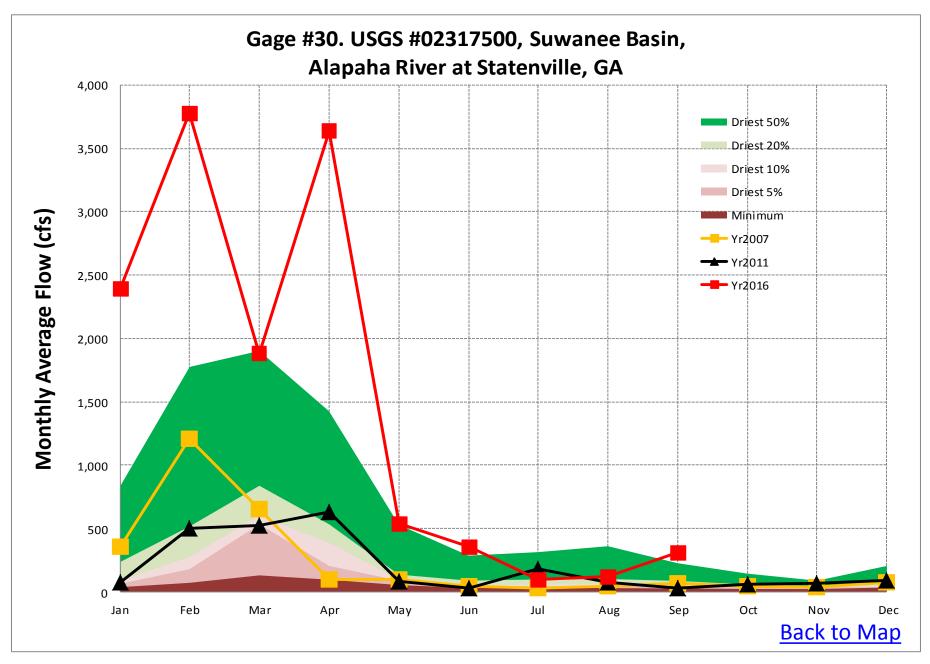


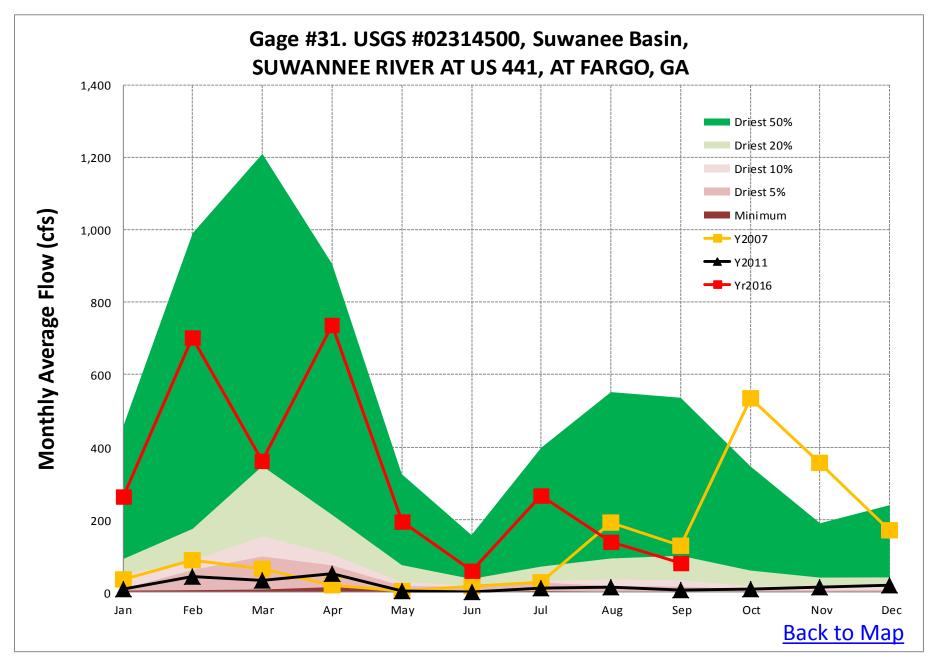


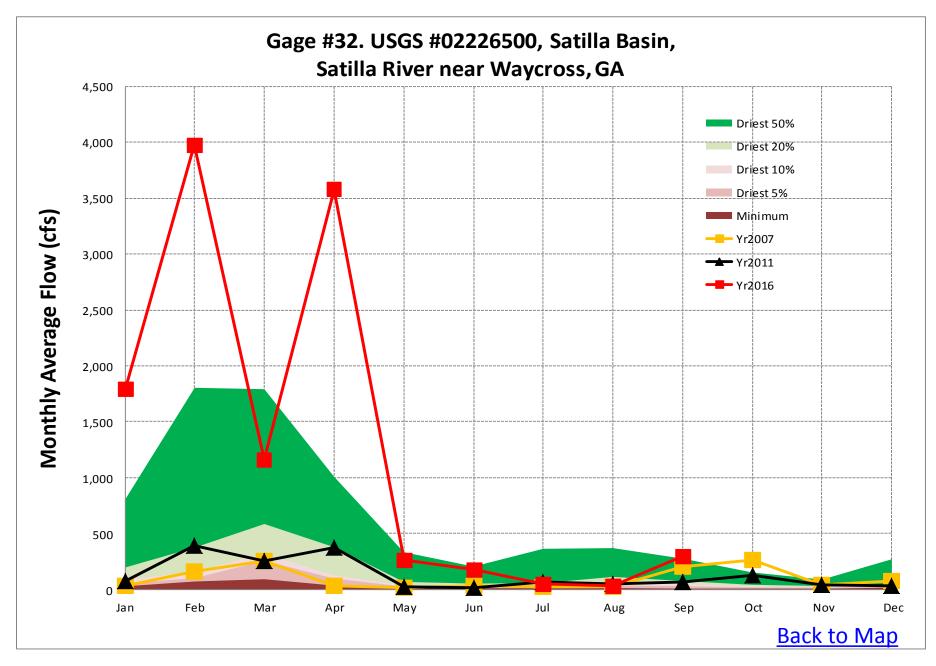


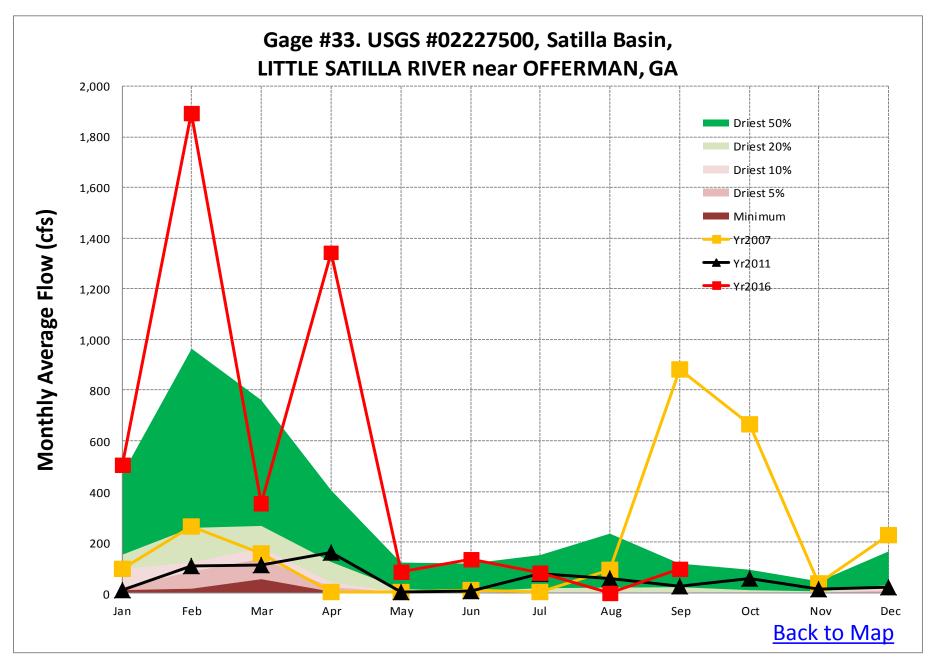


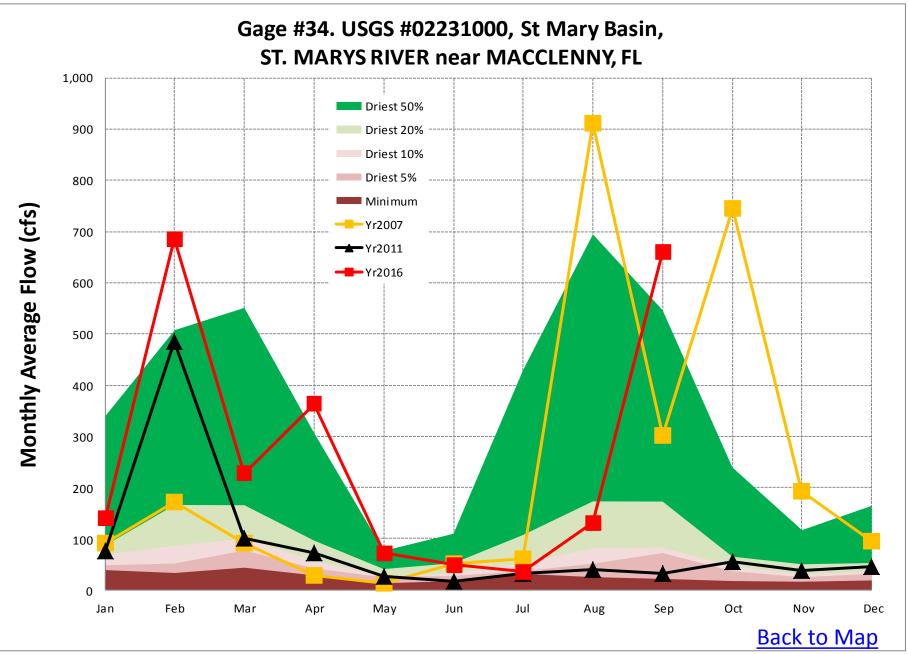












# **Groundwater Levels**

Data Source: USGS

## Rationale for Choosing USGS Monitoring Wells

EPD monitors 14 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 by EPD to Assess Drought Conditions

#### **Flint Basin**

1. 11AA01

- 2. 09M007
- 3. 13L180
- 4. 12M017
- 5. 08K001
- 6. 11K003
- 7. 12K014
- 8. 13J004
- 9. 08G001
- 10. 10G313
- 11. 09F520

#### **Oconee Basin**

12. 21T001

#### Altamaha Basin

13. 26R001

#### Savannah Basin

14. 30AA04

#### **Suwanee Basin**



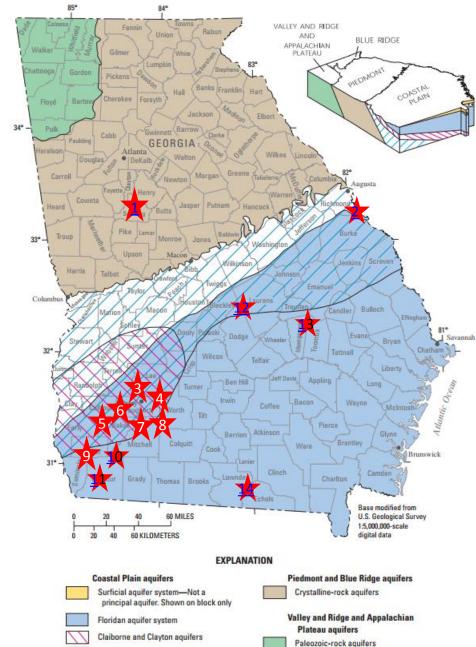


Figure 2. Area of use of principal aquifers and physiographic provinces in Georgia (modified from U.S. Geological Survey, 2006).

Cretaceous aquifer system

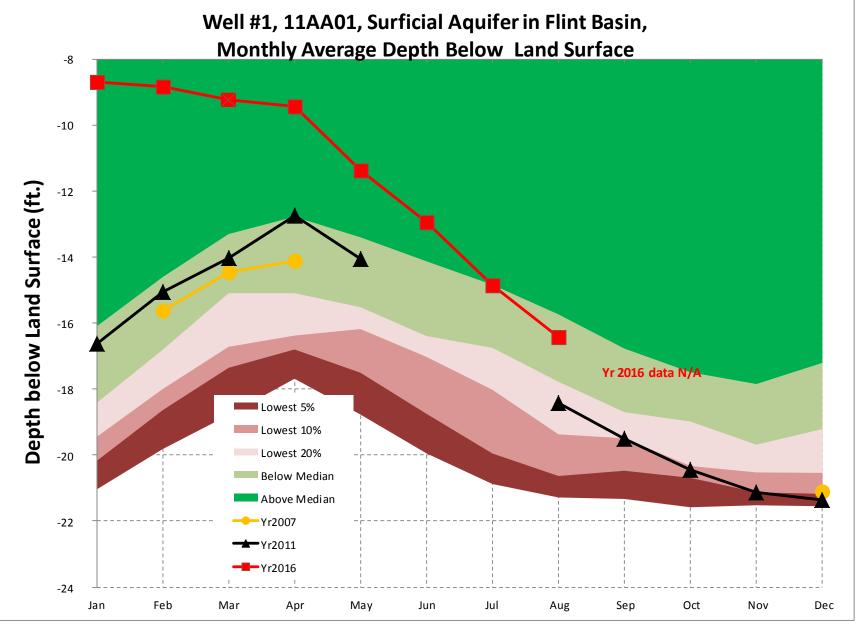
## Groundwater Level Graphs

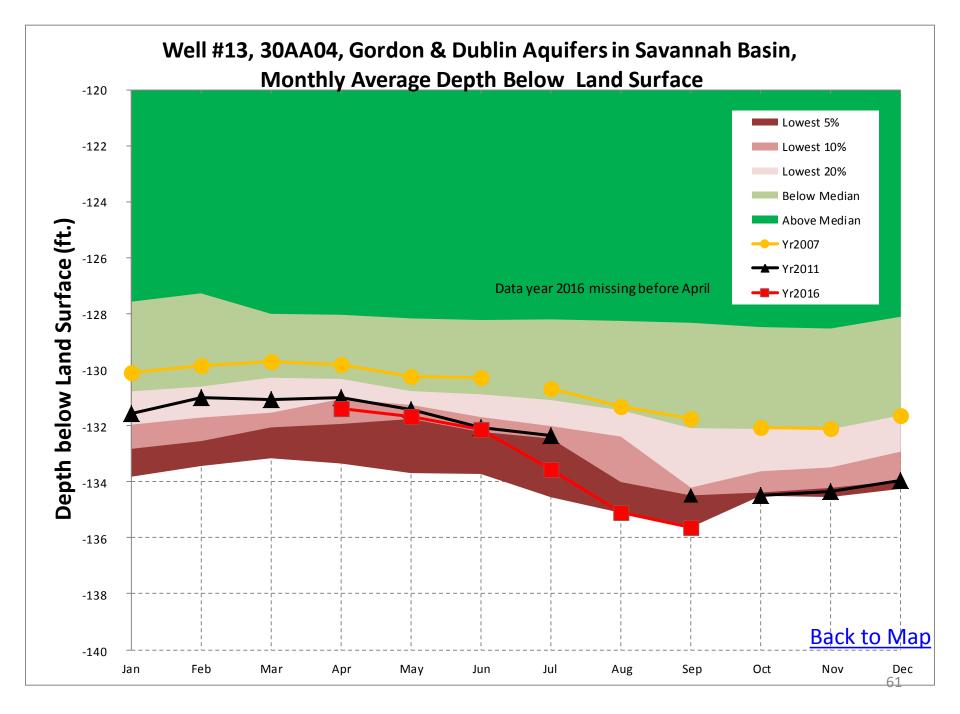
- For each of the 15 groundwater wells, EPD has prepared a graph that shows monthly average groundwater levels from January, 2016 through September, 2016;
- To help put these levels into perspective, for comparison purposes, each graph also shows:
  - Monthly average levels at that same well for the 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.

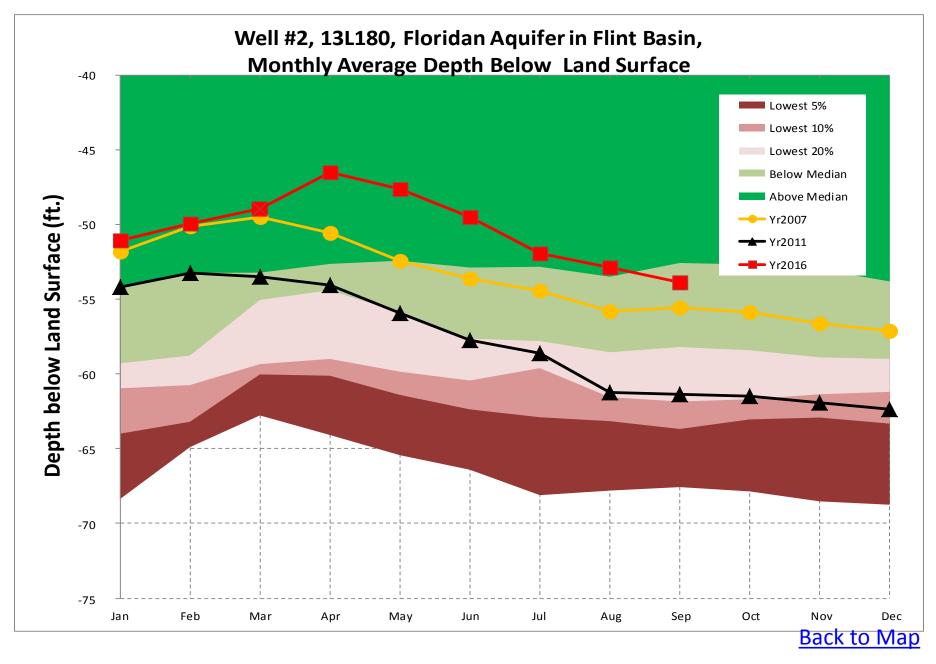
# How to Read the Groundwater Level Graphs Example: Well #11, 09F520, Flint River Basin

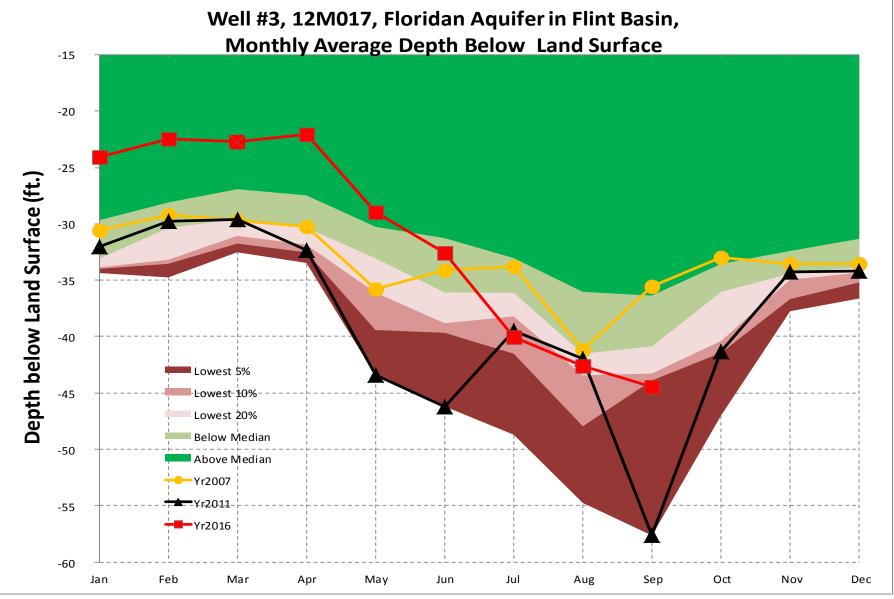
The groundwater level graph for Well #11, USGS 09F520 shows:

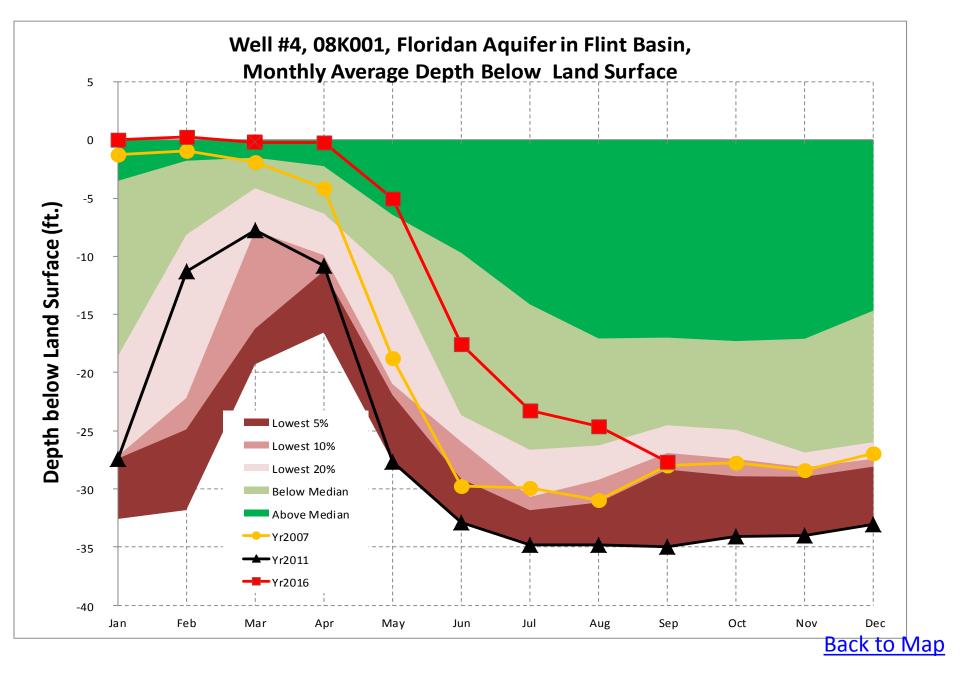
- The average monthly groundwater level for September 2016 was 48ft below land surface. The statistical composite of all historical data for this well shows that monthly average groundwater levels in July have historically been lower than September 2016 about 50% of the time; about 50% of the time in September they have been higher.
- The average monthly groundwater level in September 2011 was 51ft below land surface. The statistical composite of all historical data for this well shows that average monthly groundwater elevation levels for September equal to the historically lowest recorded average elevation for September.
- The average monthly groundwater level in September 2007 was 51ft below land surface. The statistical composite of all historical data for this well shows that average monthly groundwater elevation levels for September higher than to the historically lowest recorded average elevation for September.
- The lowest recorded average monthly groundwater level for September was 51.6ft below land surface.

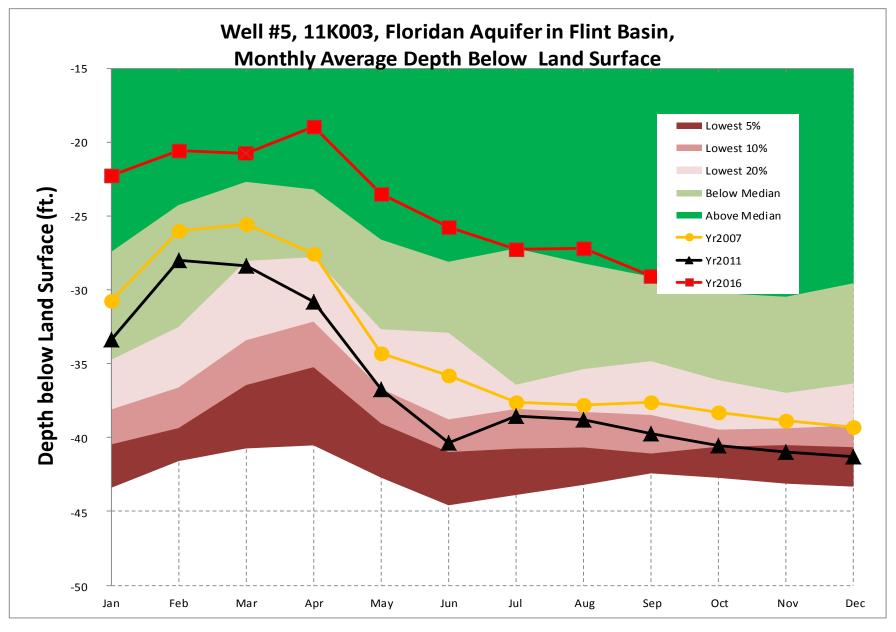


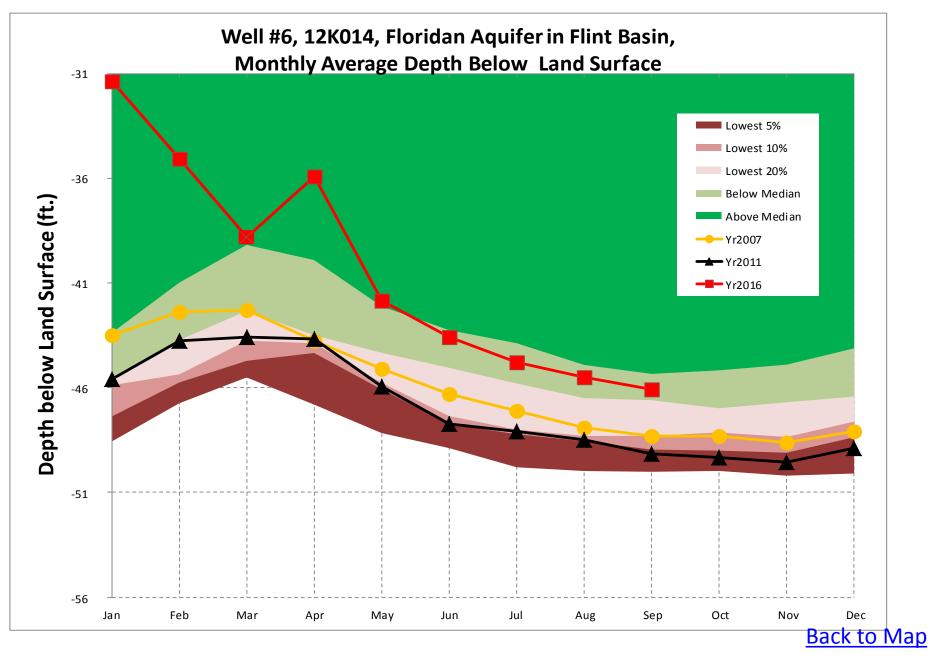


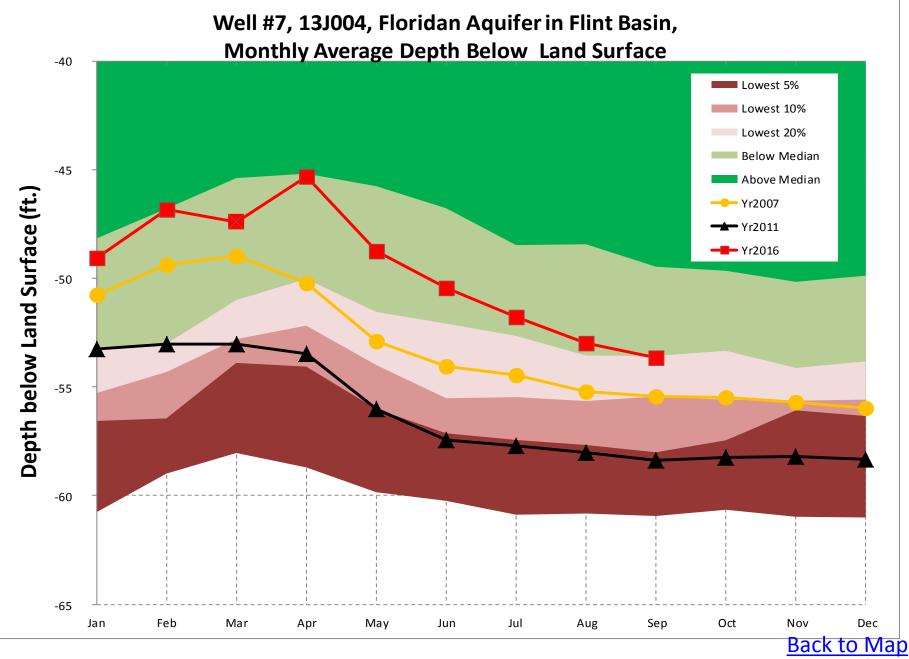


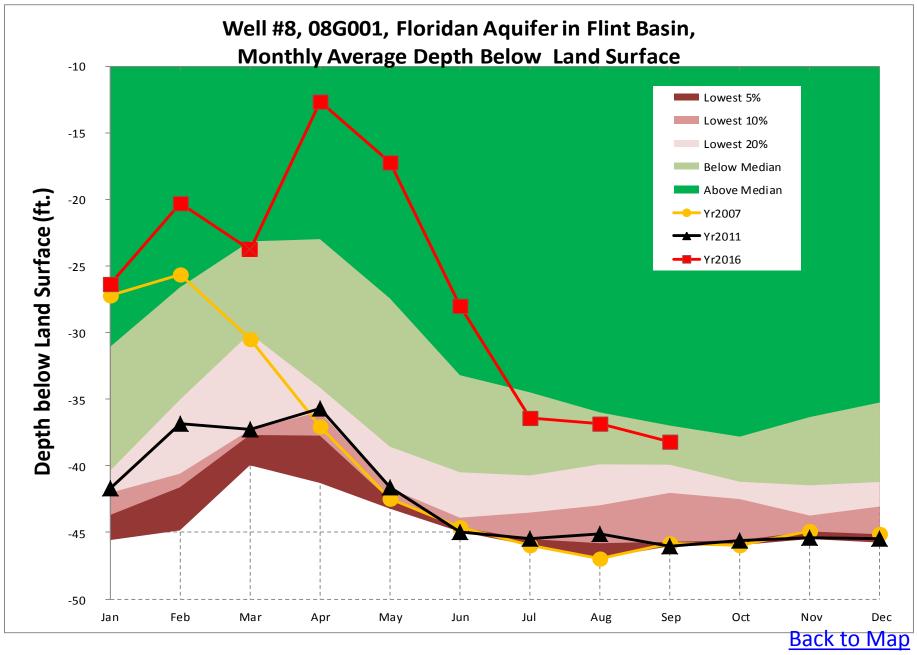


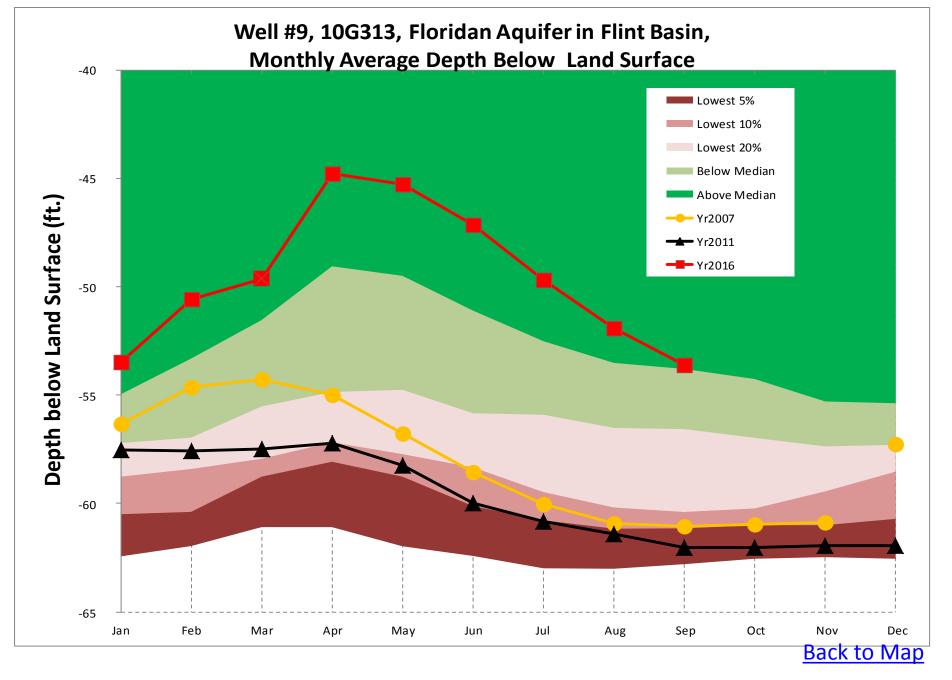


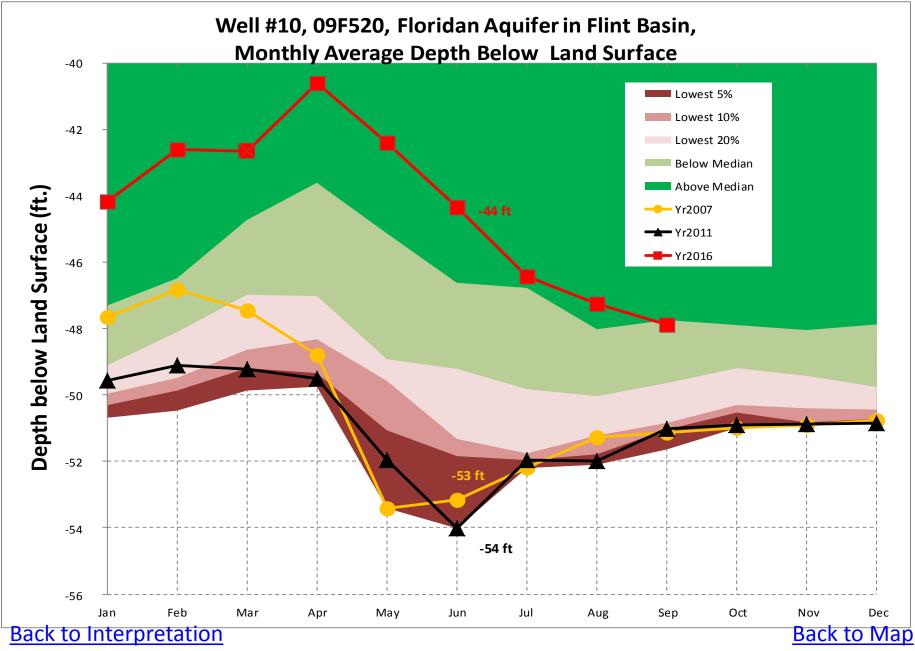


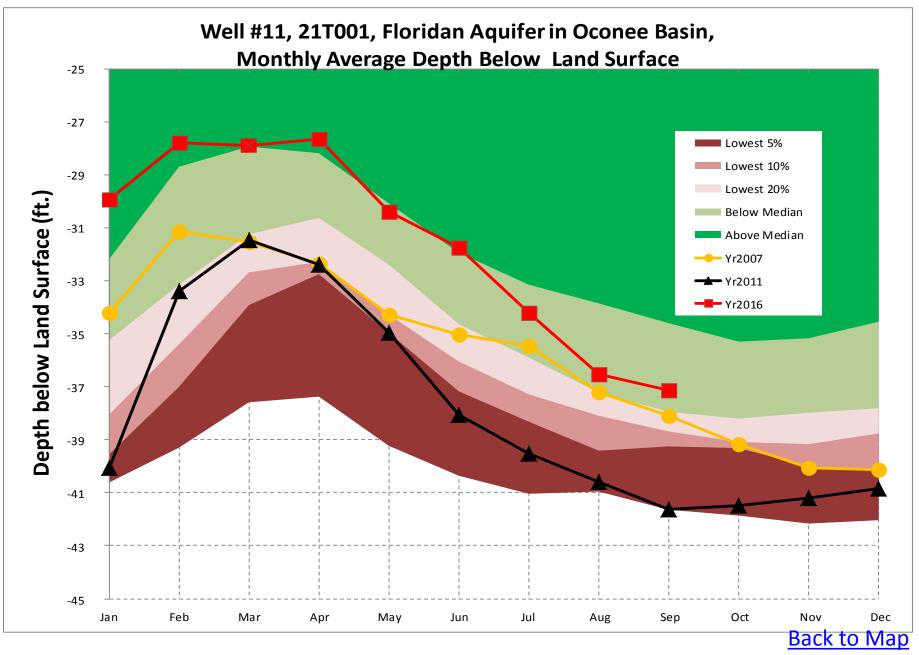


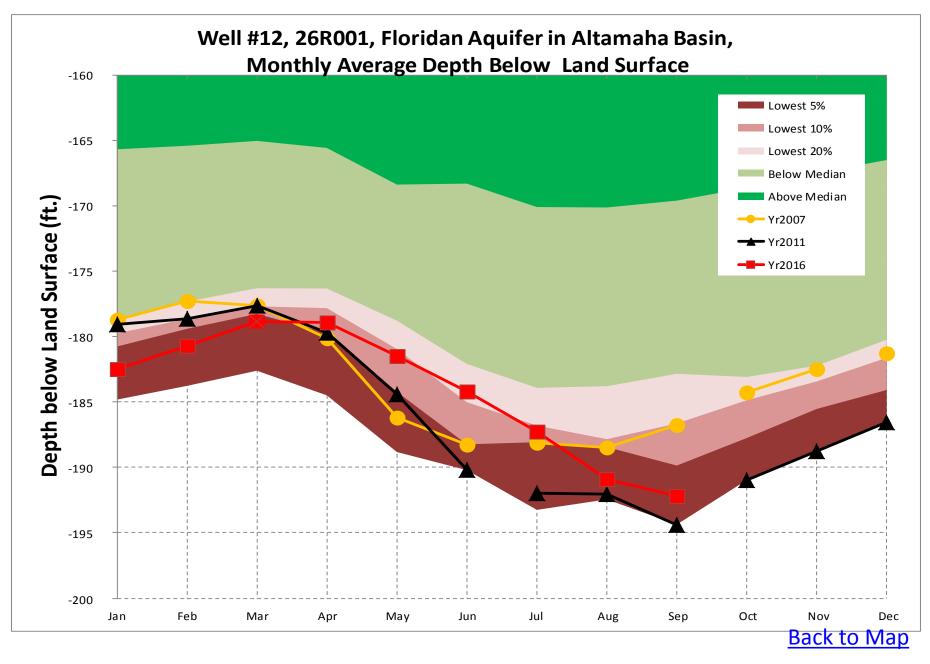


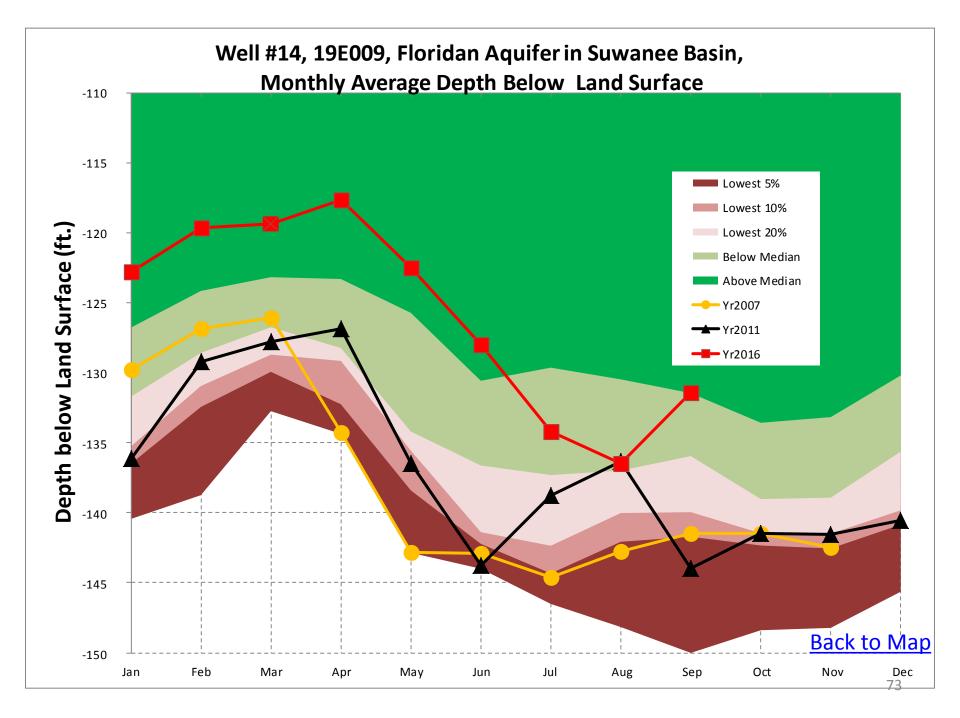












# **Reservoir Levels**

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

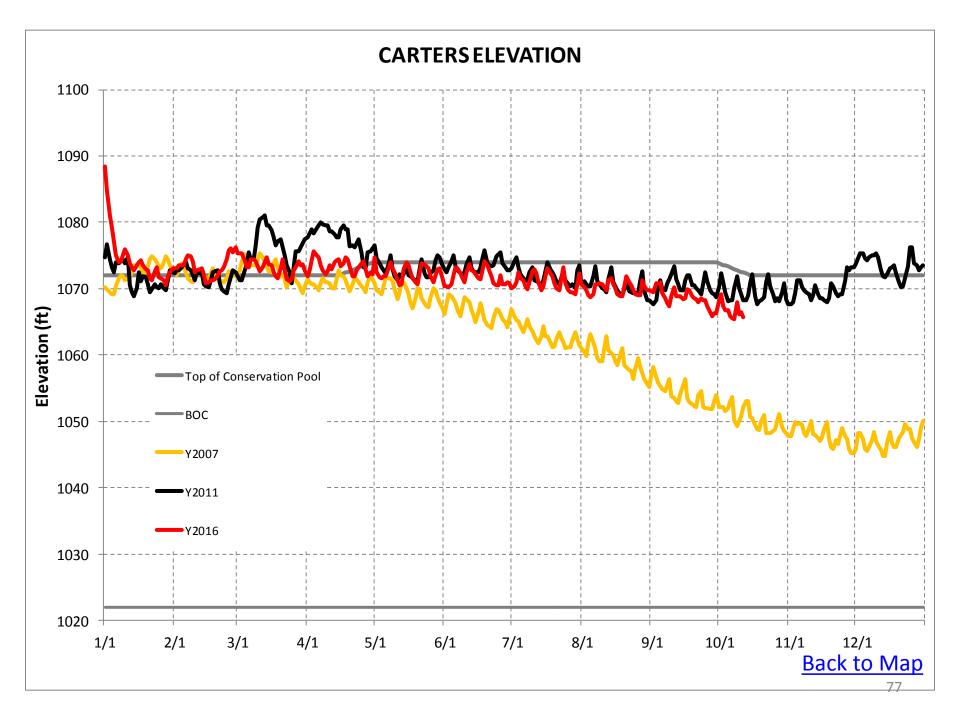
- 6. Hartwell
- 7. Thurmond

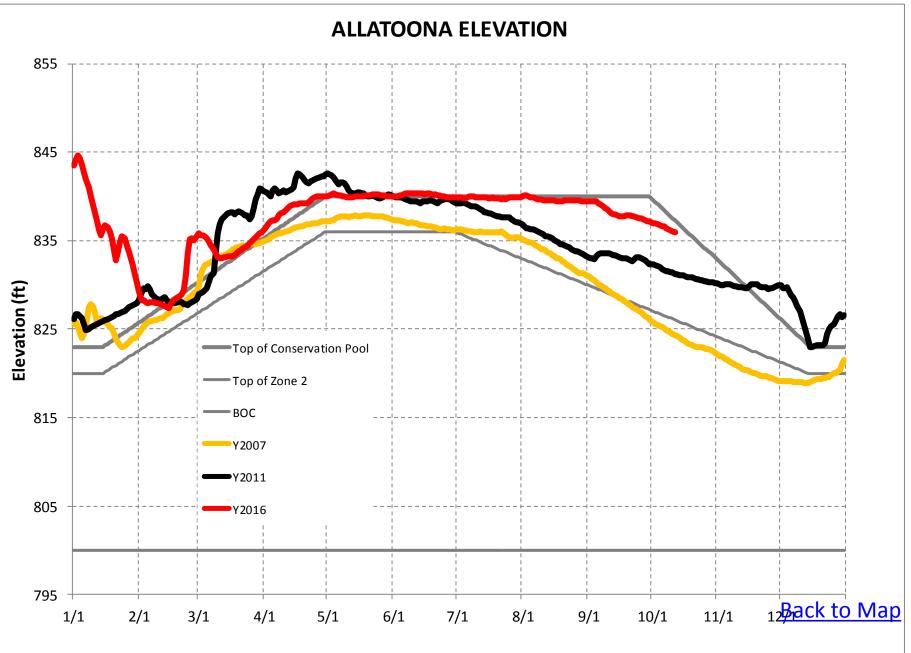


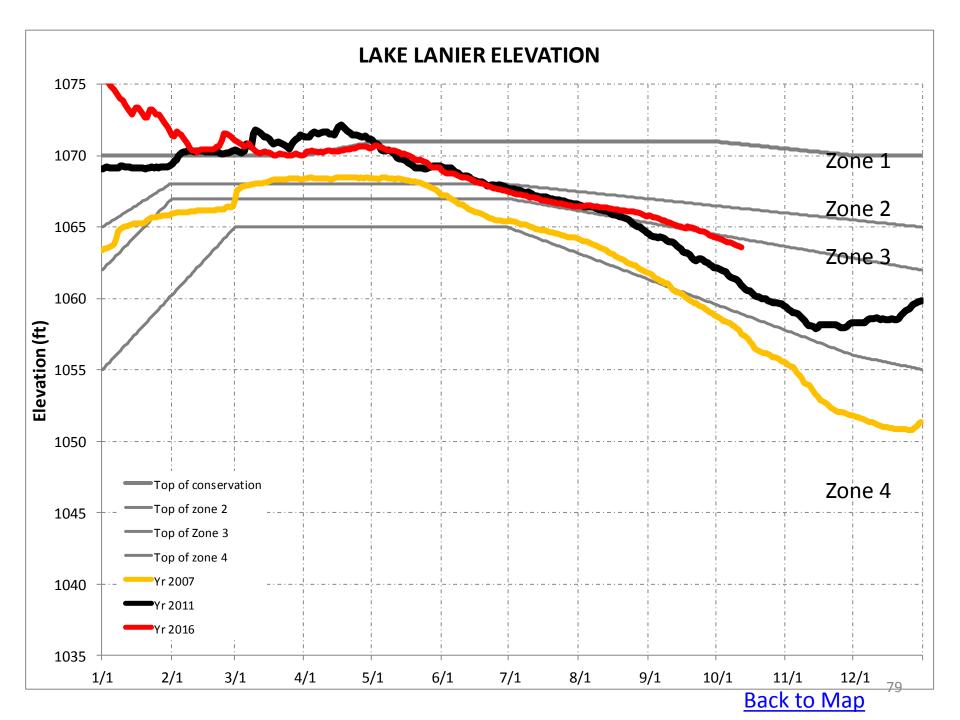
EPD monitors the water levels of seven reservoirs to assess drought conditions.

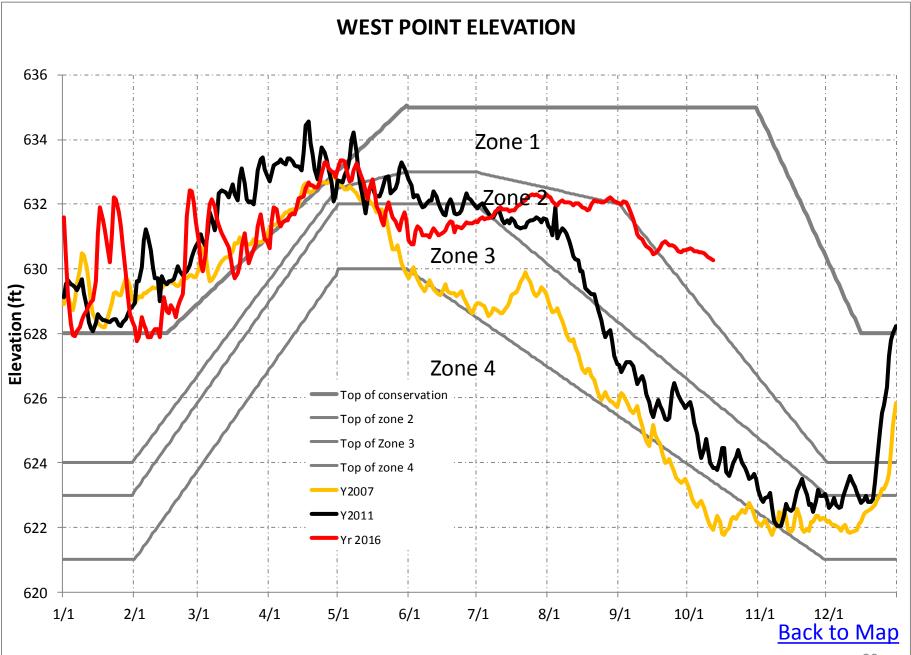
## **Reservoir Elevation Graphs**

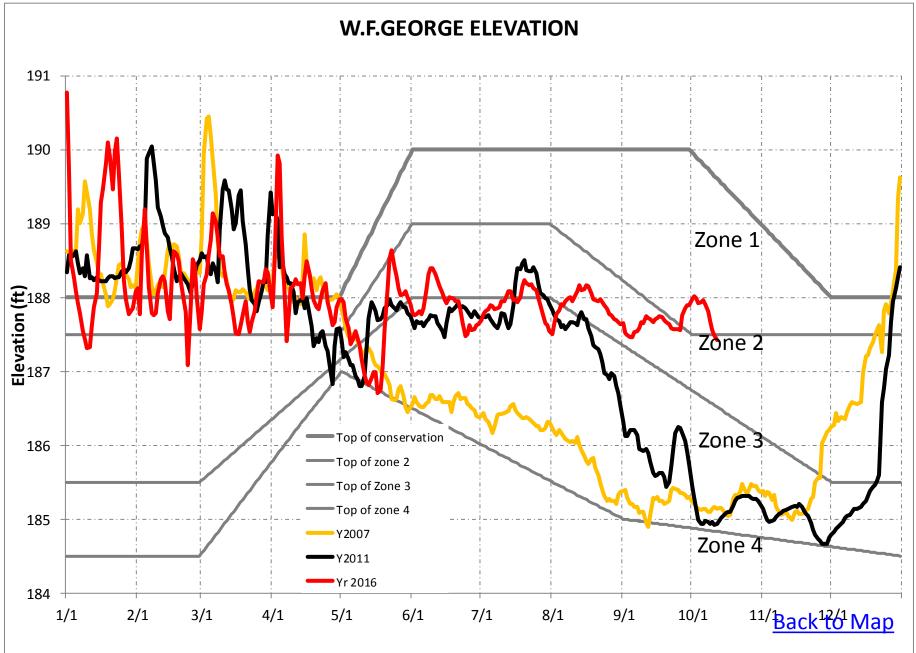
- The following graphs show the reservoir elevation curves for January, 2016 through September, 2016.
- Each graph also shows the Action Zone Divides (or Levels) for each reservoir
  - Zone 1 is the top layer of the conservation pool
  - Zone 2 is the layer below Zone 1
  - Zone 4 is the lowest layer in the conservation pool
  - There is no conservation storage below the bottom of Zone 4
- To put 2016 reservoir elevations into perspective, elevations for 2007 and 2011 are also shown.

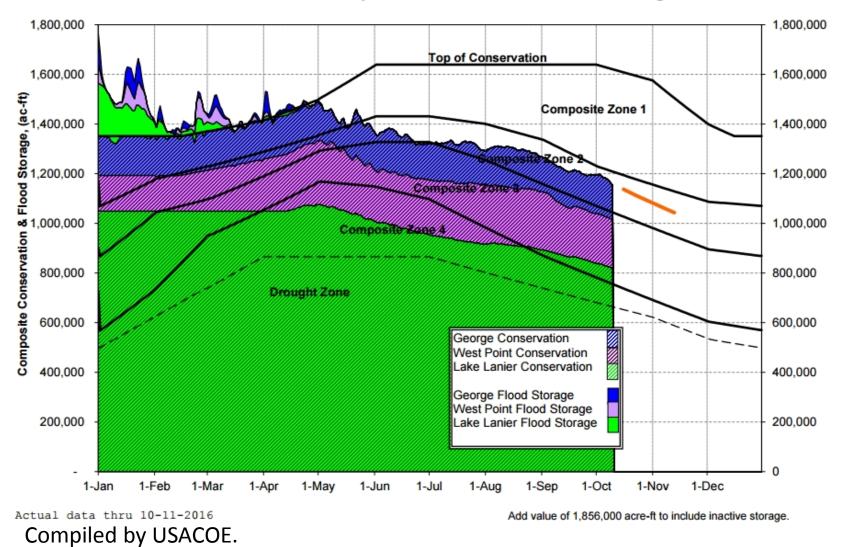






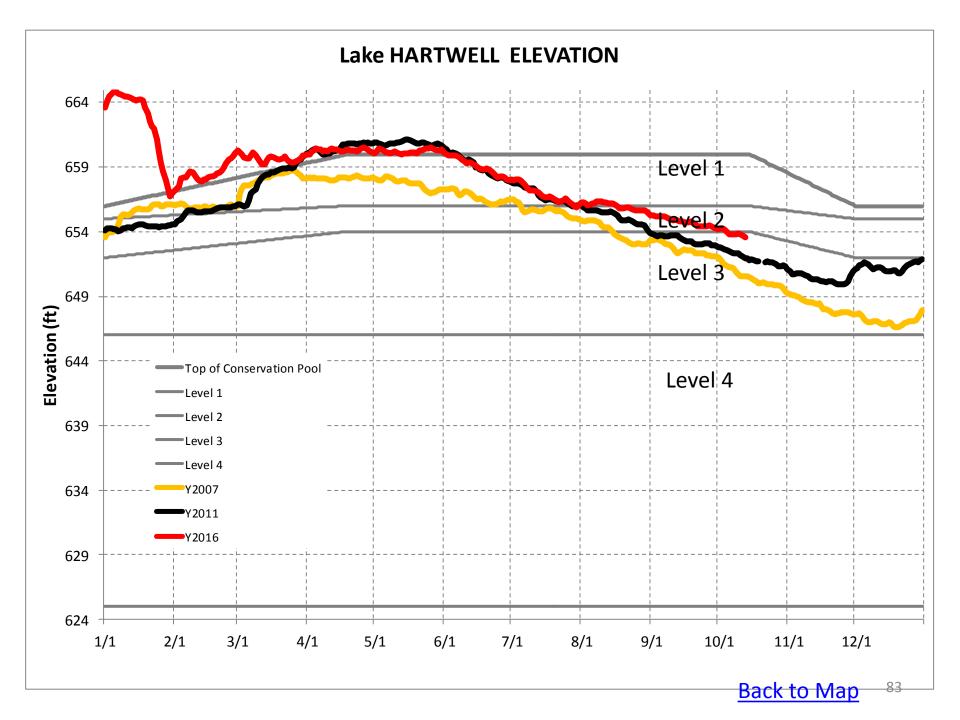


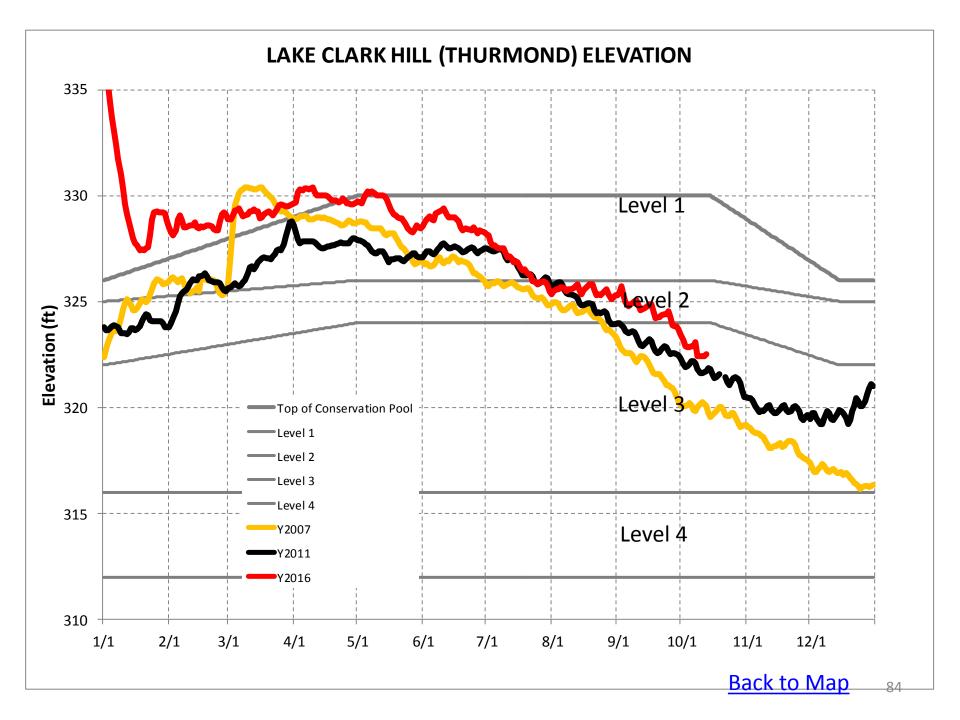




#### 2016 ACF Basin Composite Conservation and Flood Storage

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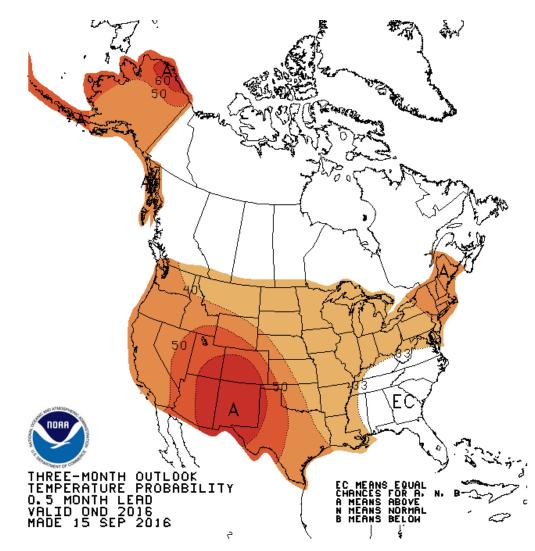


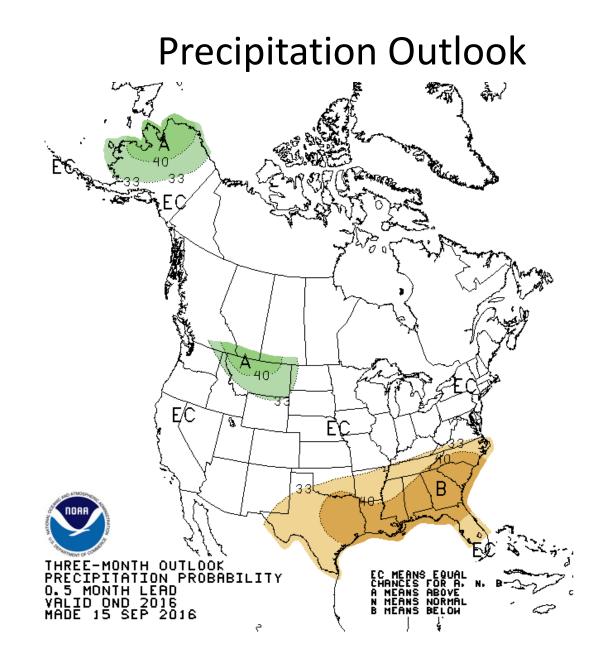


Climate Prediction Center 3-month Temperature and Precipitation Probability Outlook and Seasonal Drought Outlook

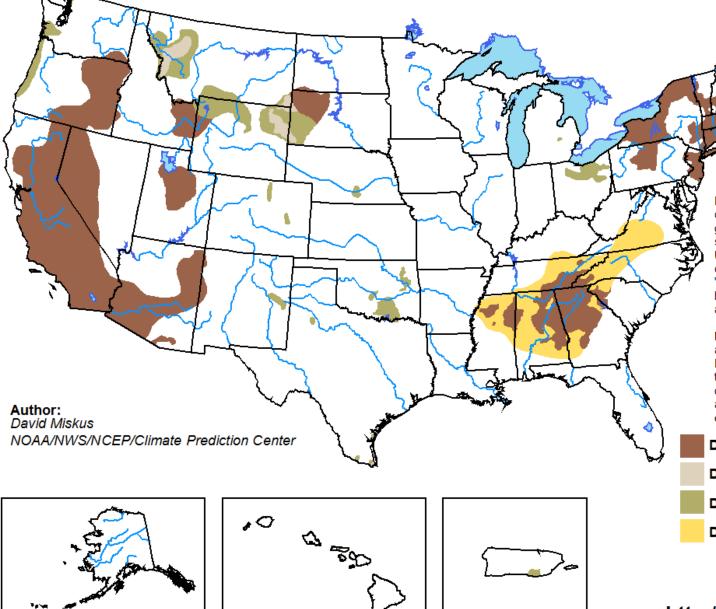
> Data Source: http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/

## Temperature Outlook





U.S. Seasonal Drought Outlook Valid for September 15 - December 31, 2016 Drought Tendency During the Valid Period Released September 15, 2016



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

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

#### **Drought persists**

**Drought remains but improves** 

**Drought removal likely** 

Drought development likely



### http://go.usa.gov/3eZ73