# **Drought Indicators Report**

Georgia Environmental Protection Division

December 2019

#### Background

Pursuant to the Rules for Drought Management, <u>Section 391-3-3-.04 Drought 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 November 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 December 5, 2019.

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

- **U.S. Drought Monitor** Drought improved significantly statewide. Different level of droughts exist in (1) a triangular area bound by I-85, I-20, and the Savannah River, and (2) an area along the southern border. Severe Drought (D2) exists in two small isolated areas, including the entirety or parts of Walton, Rockdale, Gwinnett, Dekalb, Henry, Newton and Oglethorpe counties. Moderate Drought (D1) exists in parts or entirety of 26 surrounding counties of D2 areas and 18 counties along the southern border. Abnormally dry (D0, the least intense level) exists in parts or entirety of the counties outside of D1 areas.
- **Precipitation** Three-month precipitation is below normal statewide, except northwest corner of the state and central-eastern GA. Six-month precipitation is slightly below normal in some parts of the north-central GA and southern GA. Twelve-month precipitation is largely above normal statewide, with below normal in parts of northwest GA.
- **Soil Moisture** Soil moisture conditions are mostly normal or above normal statewide. Some light dryness (20<sup>th</sup> 30<sup>th</sup> percentiles) exists in parts of Grady and Thomas counties.

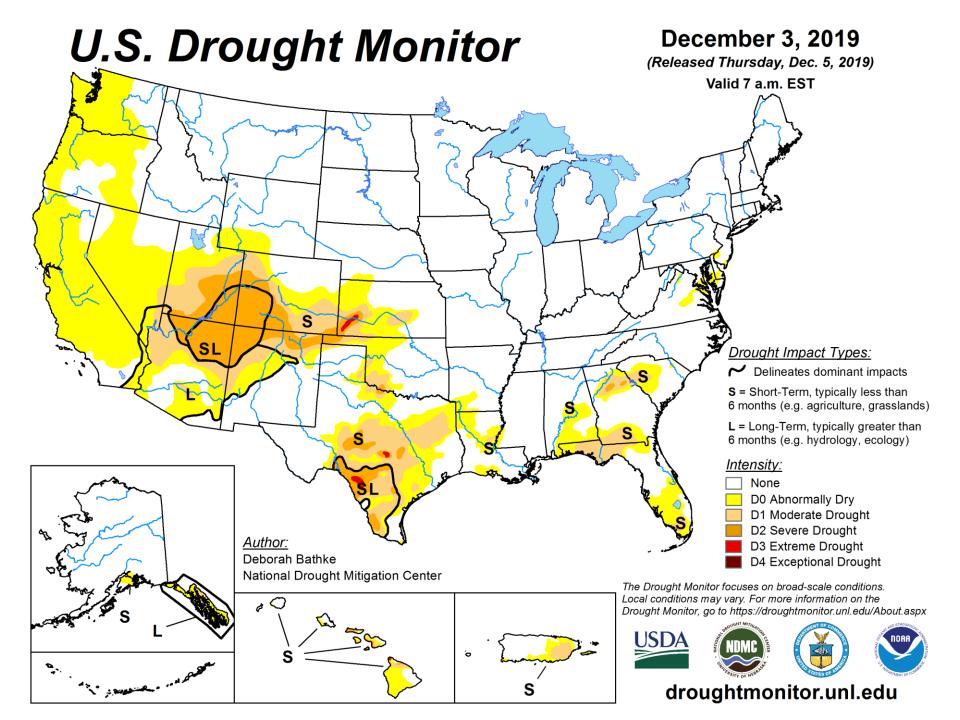
#### Drought Indicator Analysis Summary (slide 2 of 2)

- **Streamflow**\_Compared with previous month, stream flows conditions improved significantly. Half of selected USGS gages are above normal. Fourteen gages are between the driest 20<sup>th</sup> percentile and median (two in upper-middle Chattahoochee, three in lower Flint, two in middle Ocmulgee, one in upper Oconee, one in upper Savannah and five in south GA basins). Three gages are in the driest 10<sup>th</sup> 20<sup>th</sup> percentiles (each in upper, lower Ocmulgee and lower Oconee basins).
- **Groundwater Level** \_Compared with previous month, groundwater levels improved in some degrees. Seven selected wells are above normal. Eight wells are between the lowest 20<sup>th</sup> percentile and median. One well is in the lowest 5<sup>th</sup> -10<sup>th</sup> percentiles and one well is below the lowest 5<sup>th</sup> percentile (all in Floridan Aquifer system in south GA).
- **Reservoir Levels** In November 2019, most federal reservoir conditions in Georgia (ACF, ACT, and Savannah River Basins) improved. Carters, Allatoona, West Point and WF George are near or above their respective top of conservation (normal) pools. Lanier is in Zone 1. Hartwell also improved but still is lower than normal level (above Level 1 drought trigger). Thurmond still slightly below its Level 1 drought trigger.
- Short-term Climate Prediction National Climatic Prediction Center projects above normal temperature and equal chance of precipitation statewide in December 2019 February 2020. U.S. Drought Outlook predicts drought removal likely in most parts of current D2, D1 and D0 areas in late November 2019 February 2020.
- Water Supplies 103 counties are currently under Drought Response Level 1. EPD has granted Drought Response Level 2 (DRL2) Variances to City of Griffin, Coweta County, City of Forsyth, City of Senoia and Fayette County until December 31, 2019.

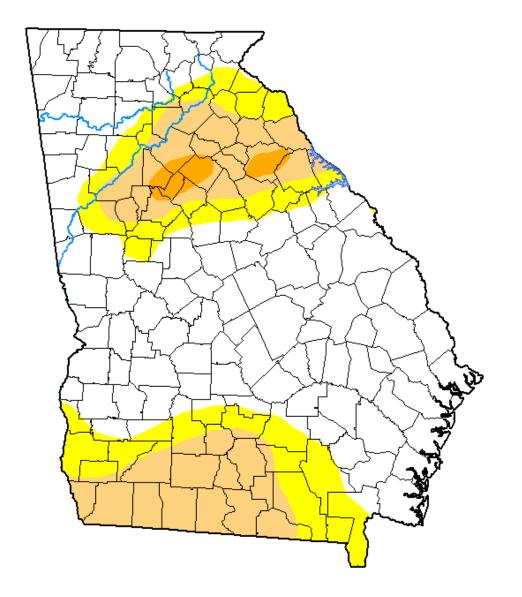
# **US Drought Monitor**

Data Source:

http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/



# U.S. Drought Monitor Georgia



#### December 3, 2019

(Released Thursday, Dec. 5, 2019) Valid 7 a.m. EST

Drought Conditions (Percent Area)

	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	63.17	36.83	20.34	1.68	0.00	0.00
Last Week 11-26-2019	55.92	44.08	23.08	2.20	0.00	0.00
3 Month's Ago 09-03-2019	72.08	27.92	7.27	0.00	0.00	0.00
Start of Calendar Year 01-01-2019	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Start of Water Year 10-01-2019	0.00	100.00	61.58	28.35	4.49	0.00
One Year Ago 12-04-2018	97.72	2.28	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

#### Intensity:

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

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

#### Author:

Deborah Bathke National Drought Mitigation Center









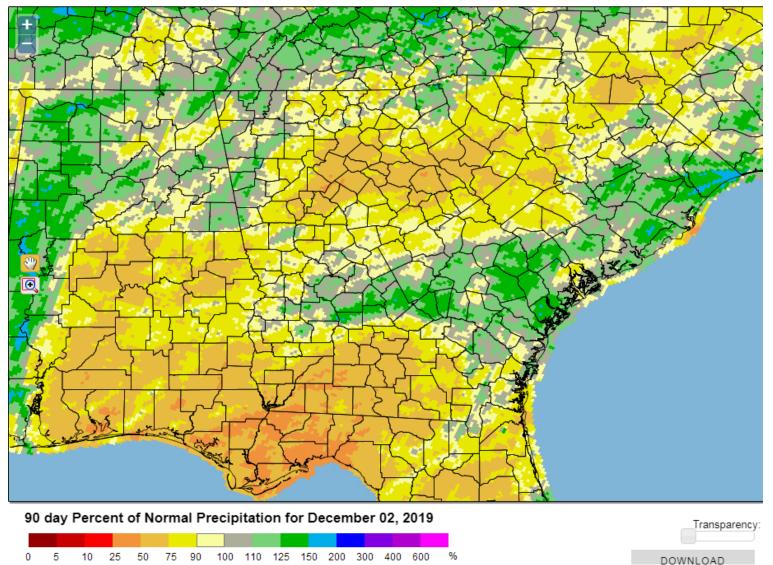
droughtmonitor.unl.edu

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

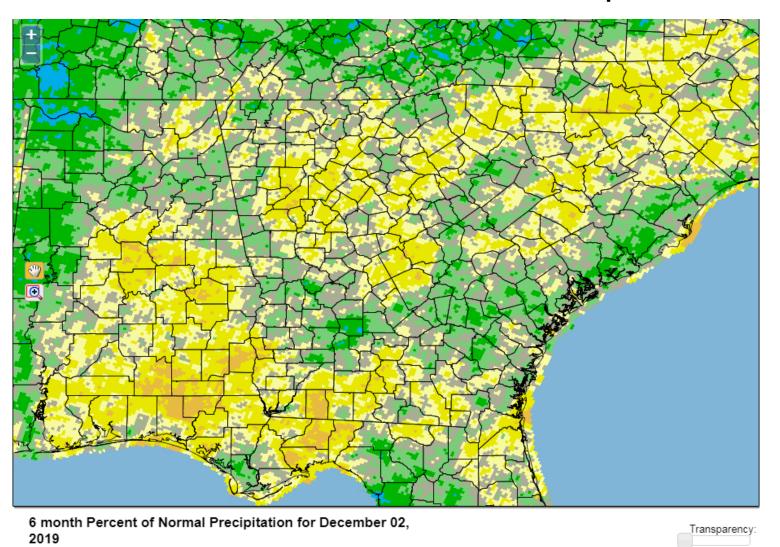
Data Source:

http://climate.ncsu.edu/drought/map

### 3 Month Percent of Normal Precipitation



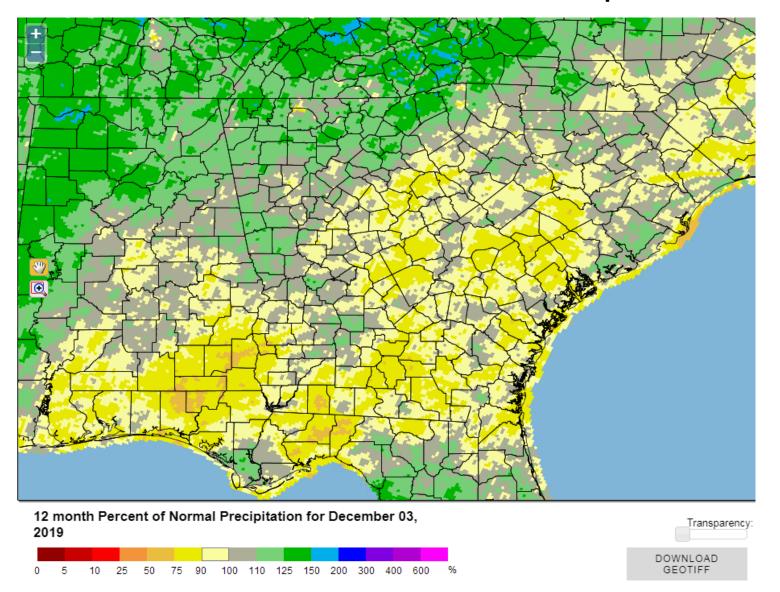
## 6 Month Percent of Normal Precipitation



75 90 100 110 125 150 200 300 400 600

GEOTIFF

### 12 Month Percent of Normal Precipitation

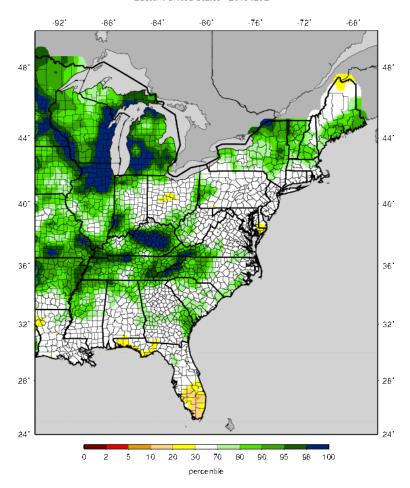


## Soil Moisture Conditions

Data Source:

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

#### VIC Soil Moisture Percentiles (wrt/1916-2004) Eastern United States - 20191202



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

# Georgia's 14 River Basins Tallapoosa, Chattahoochee Suwanee

# 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 2019 through November 2019;
- 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

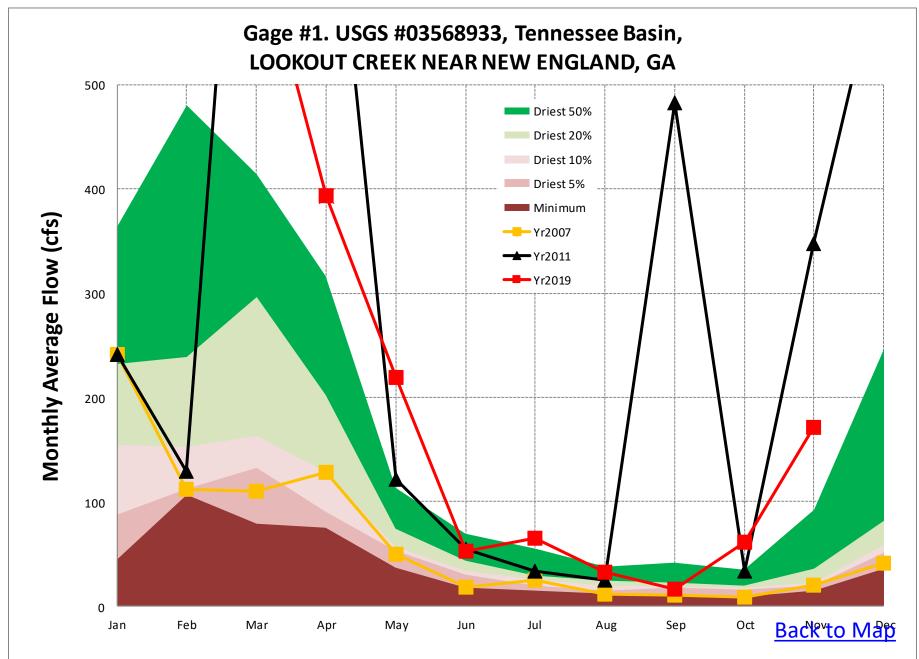
The streamflow graph for Gage #5, <u>USGS Etowah River gage at Canton</u> shows:

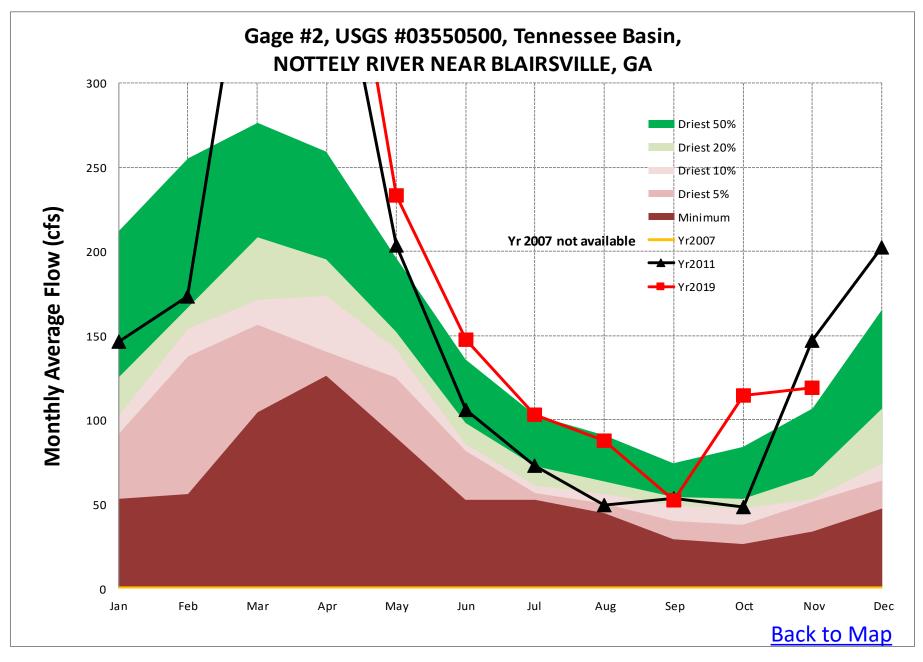
- Average stream flow for November 2019 was 741 cfs. The statistical composite of all historical data for this gage shows that average streamflow in November has historically been lower than November 2019 about 58% of the time; about 42% of the time in November it has been higher.
- Average stream flow in November 2011 was 461 cfs. The statistical composite of all historical data for this gage shows that average streamflow in November has historically been lower than November 2011 only 15-20% of the time; 80-85% of the time in November it has been higher.
- Average stream flow in November 2007 was 197 cfs. The statistical composite of all historical data for this gage shows that average streamflow in November has historically been lower than November 2007 only 1% of the time; 99% of the time in November it has been higher.

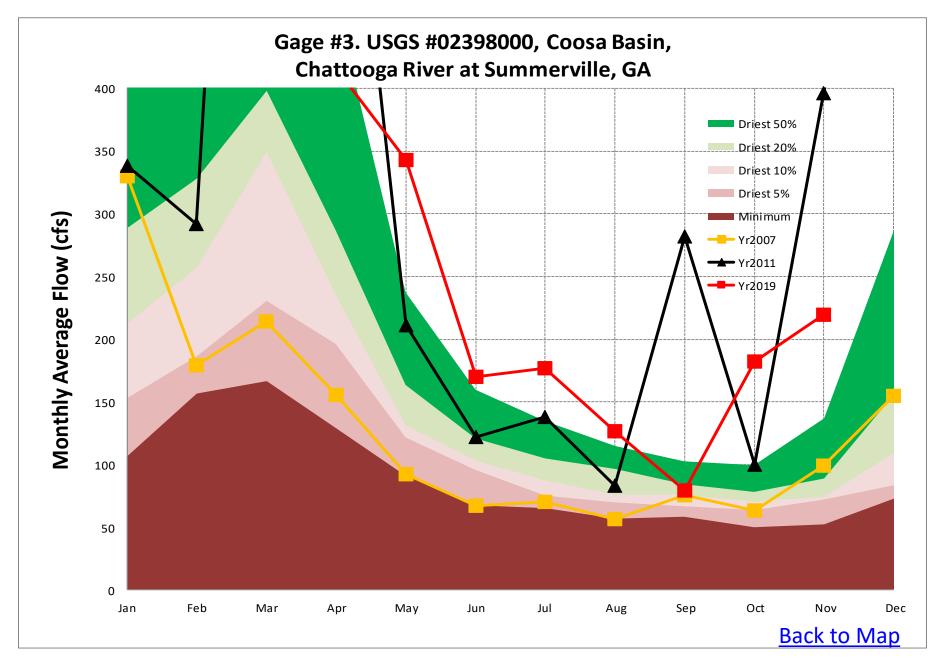
## How to Read the Streamflow Graphs Example #2: Flint River at Albany

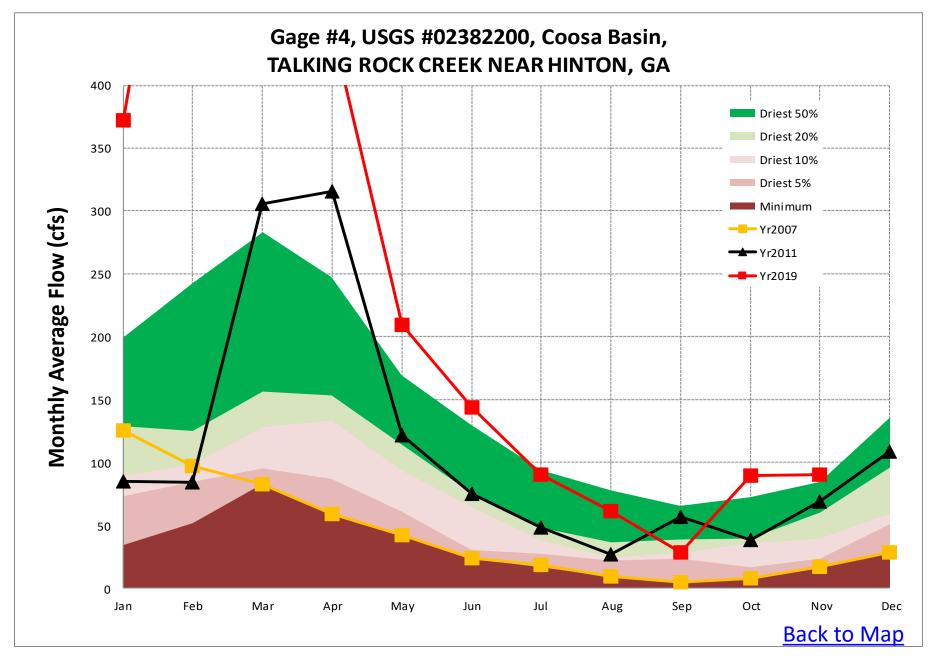
The streamflow graph for Gage #11, <u>USGS Flint River gage at Albany</u> shows:

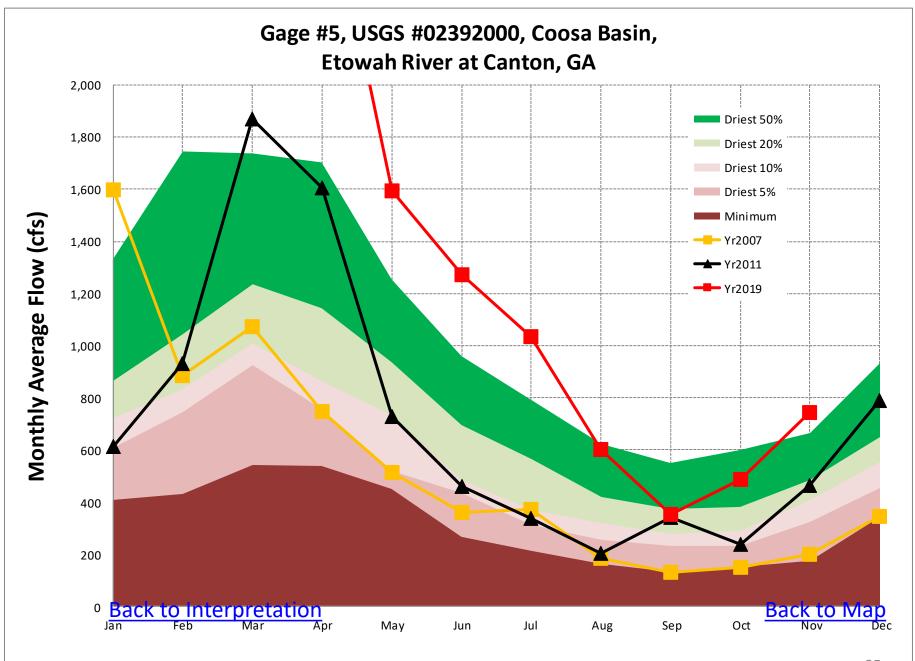
- Average stream flow for November 2019 was 2,658 cfs. The statistical composite of all historical data for this gage shows that average streamflow in November has historically been lower than November 2019 about 43% of the time; about 57% of the time in November it has been higher.
- Average stream flow in November 2011 was 1,171 cfs. The statistical composite of all historical data for this gage shows that average streamflow in November has historically been lower than November 2011 about 1-2% of the time; about 98-99% of the time in November it has been higher.
- Average stream flow in November 2007 was 1,119 cfs. The statistical composite of all historical data for this gage shows that average streamflow in November has historically been lower than November 2007 about 1% of the time; about 99% of the time in November it has been higher.

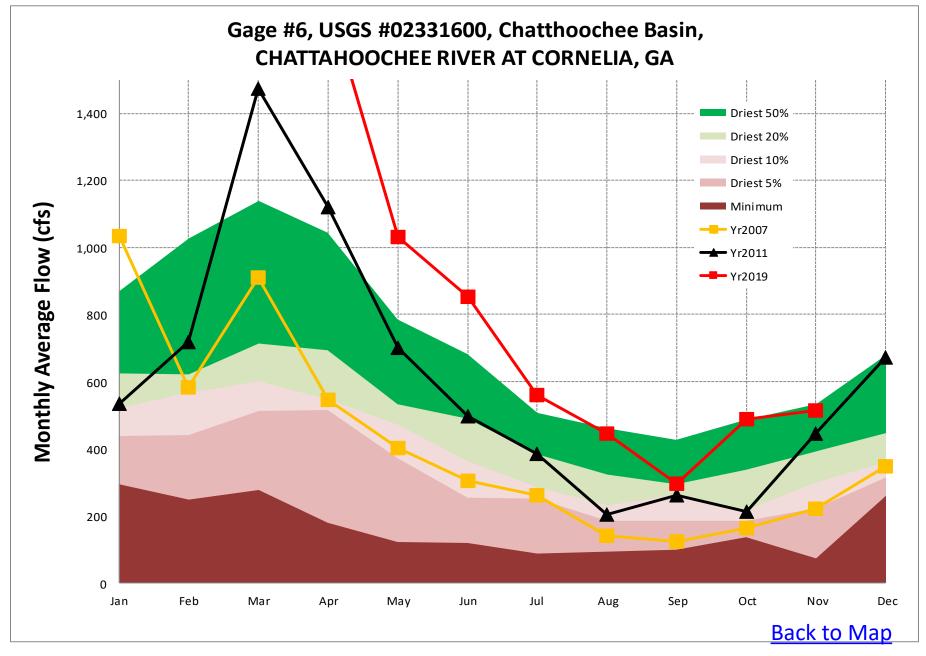


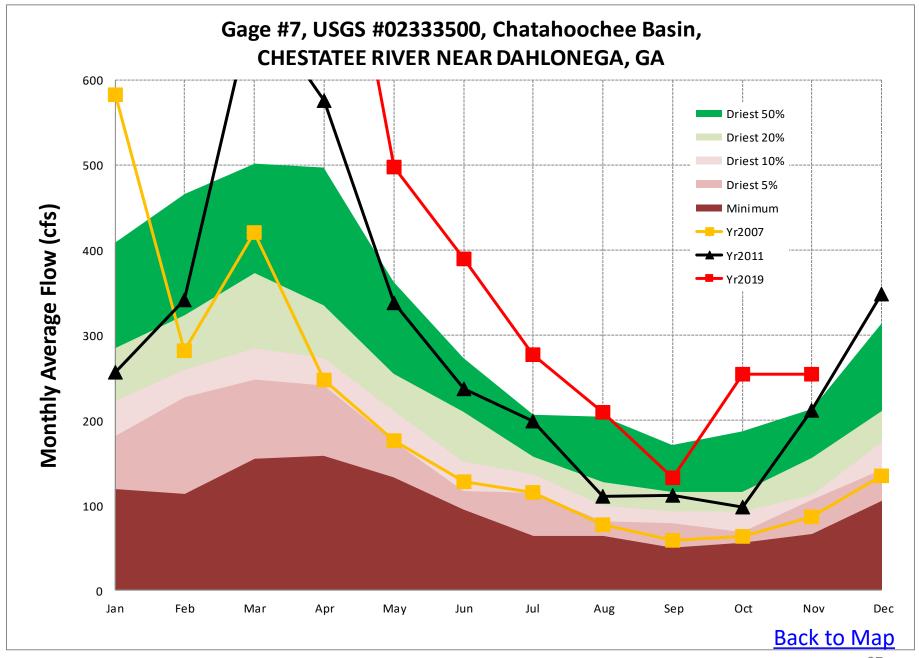


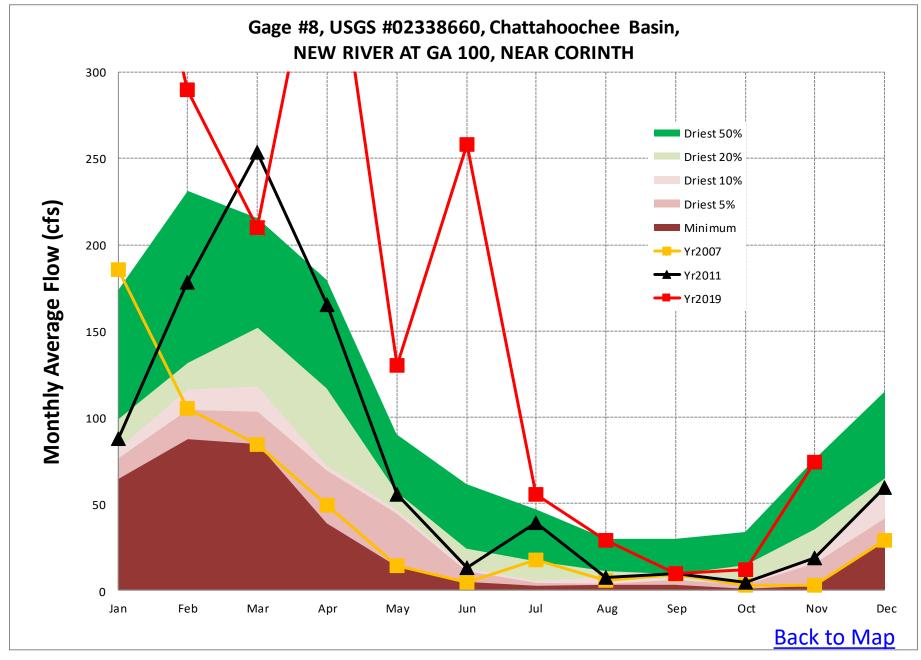


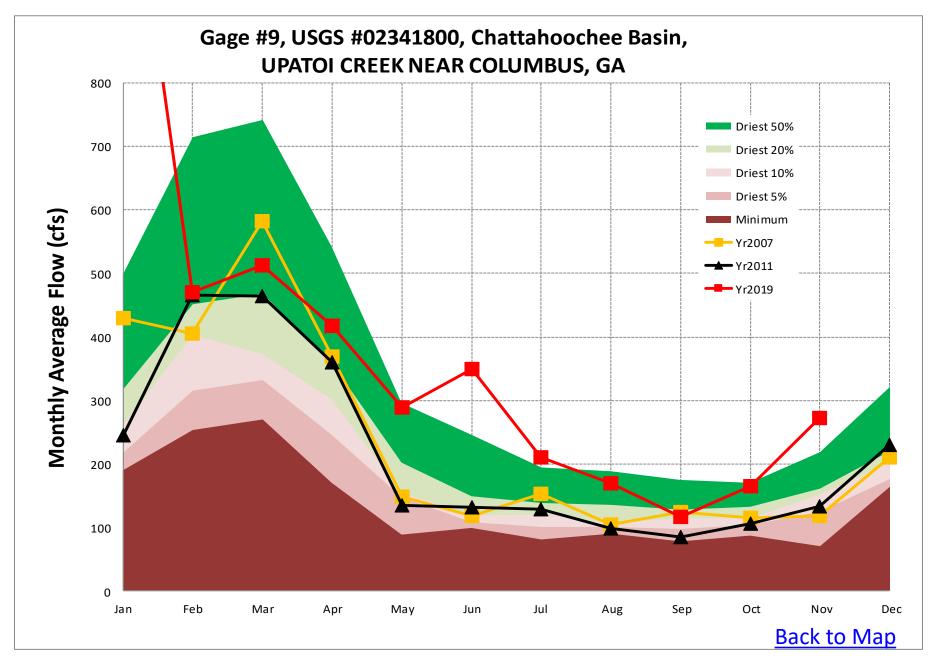


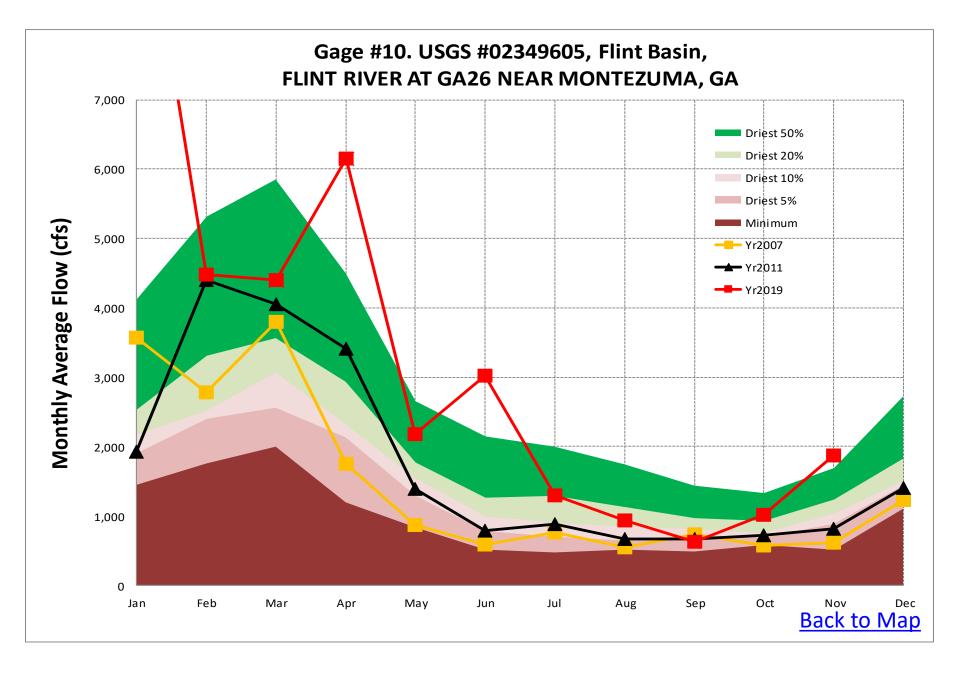


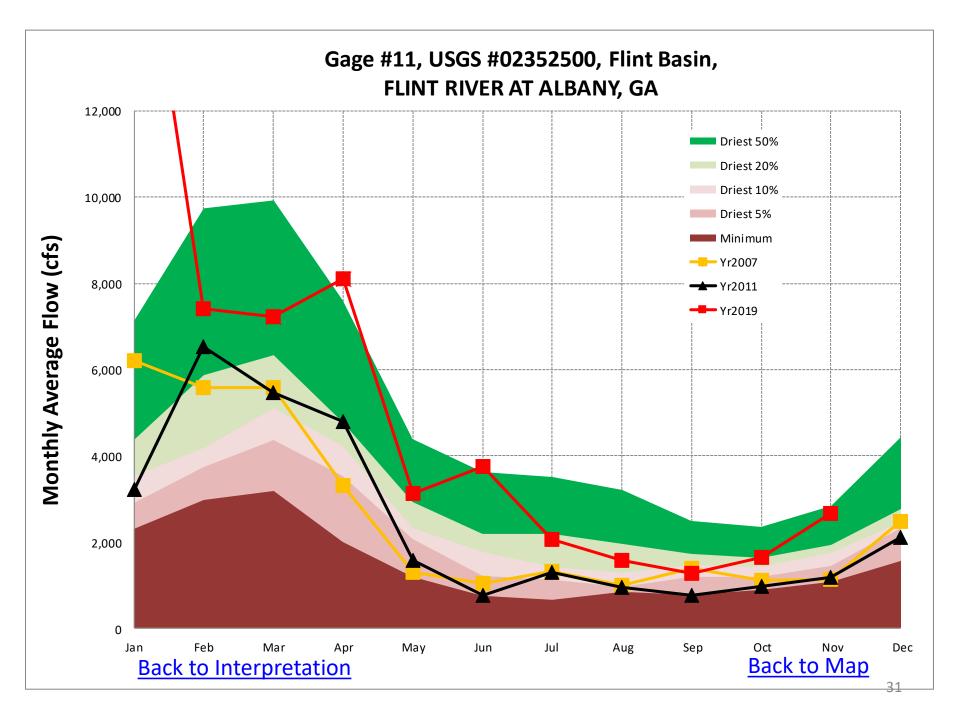


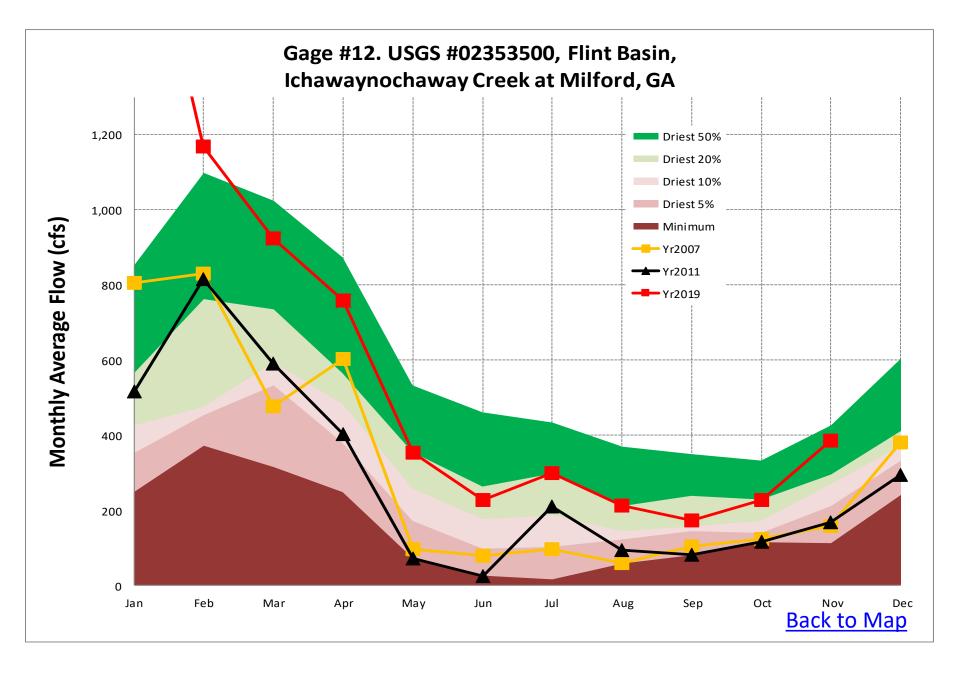


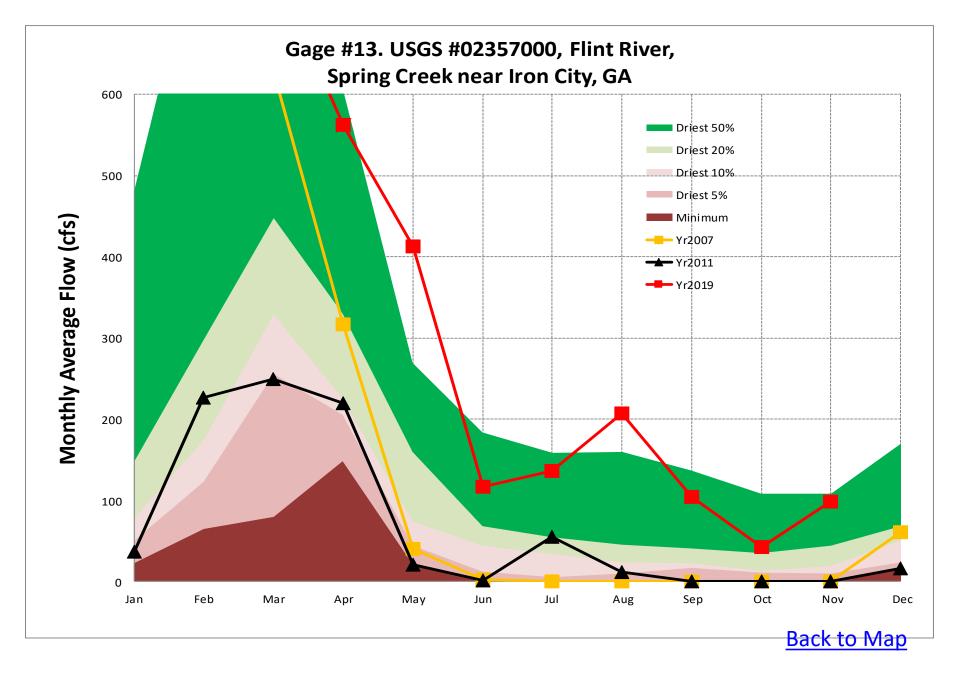


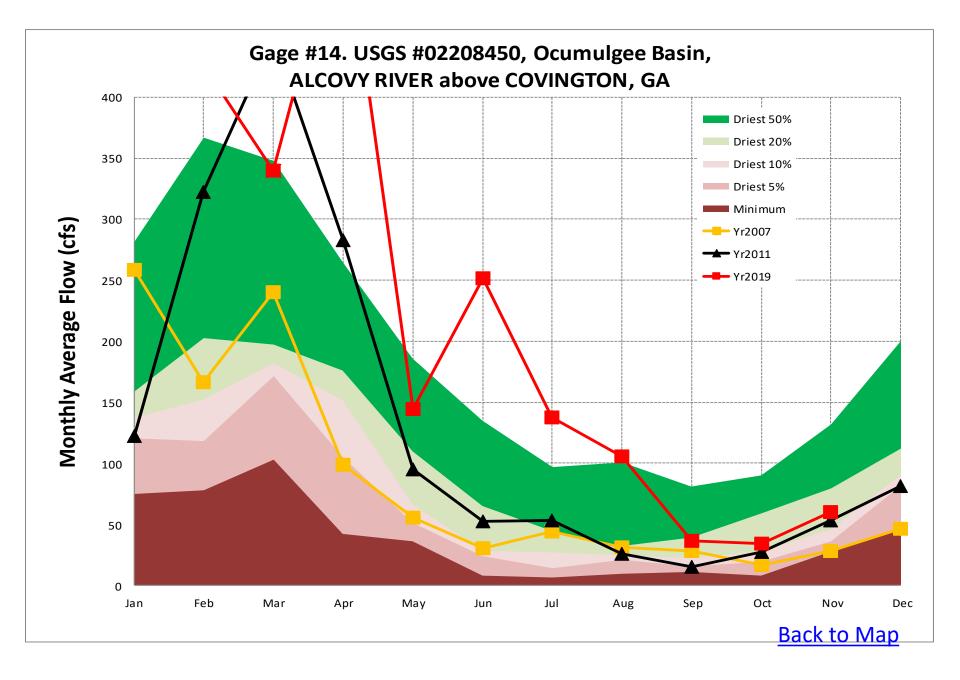


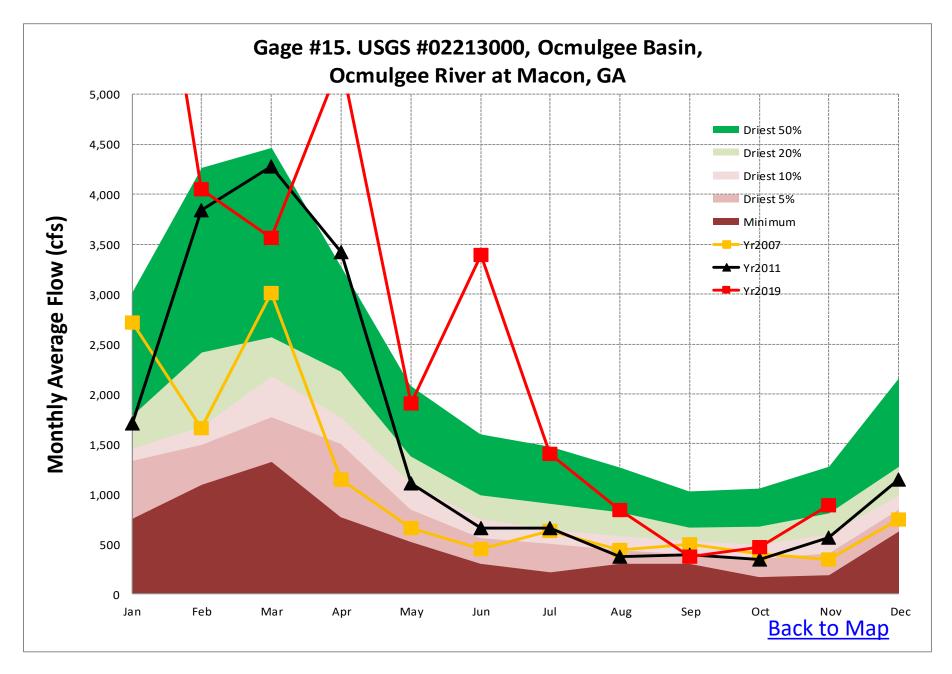


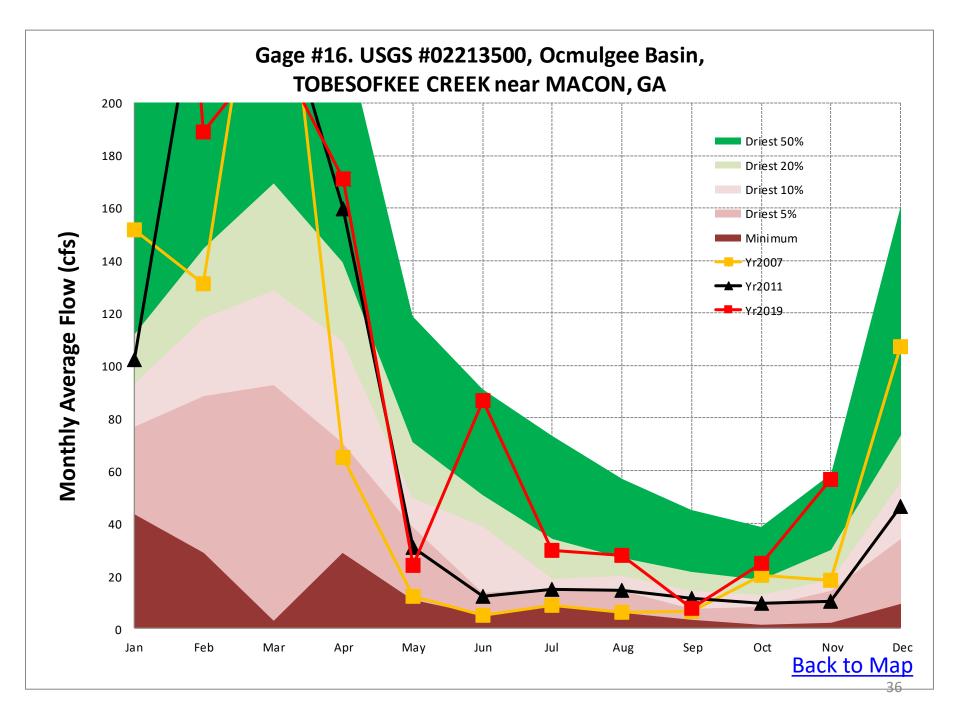


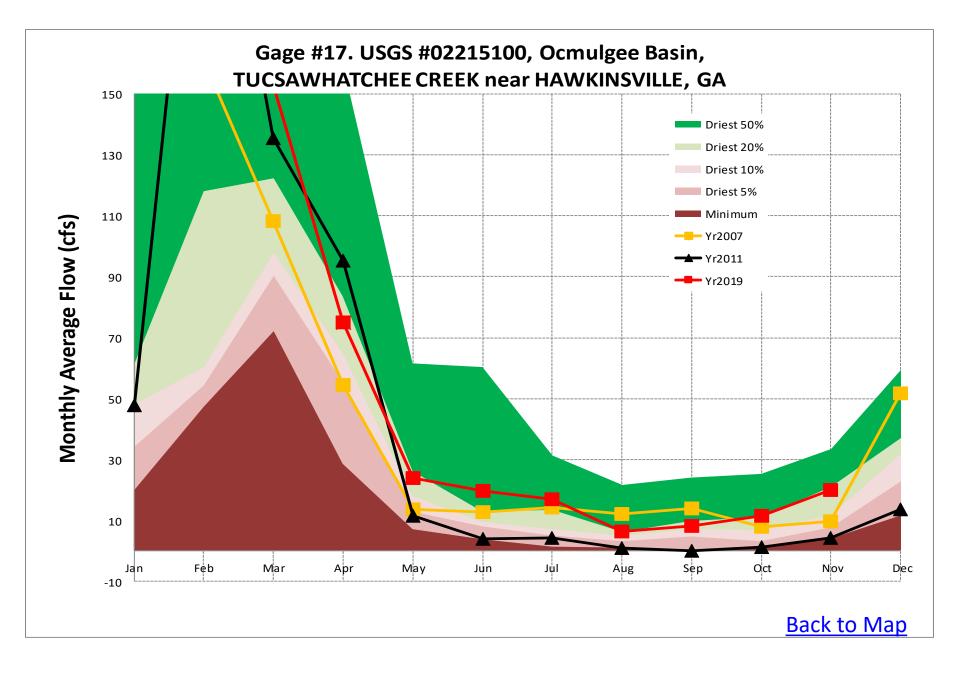


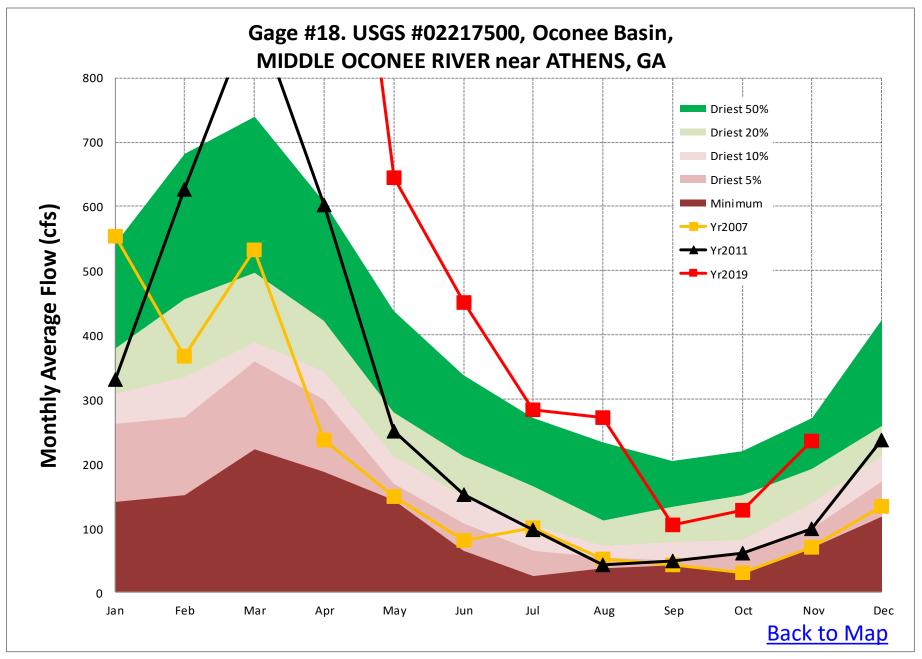


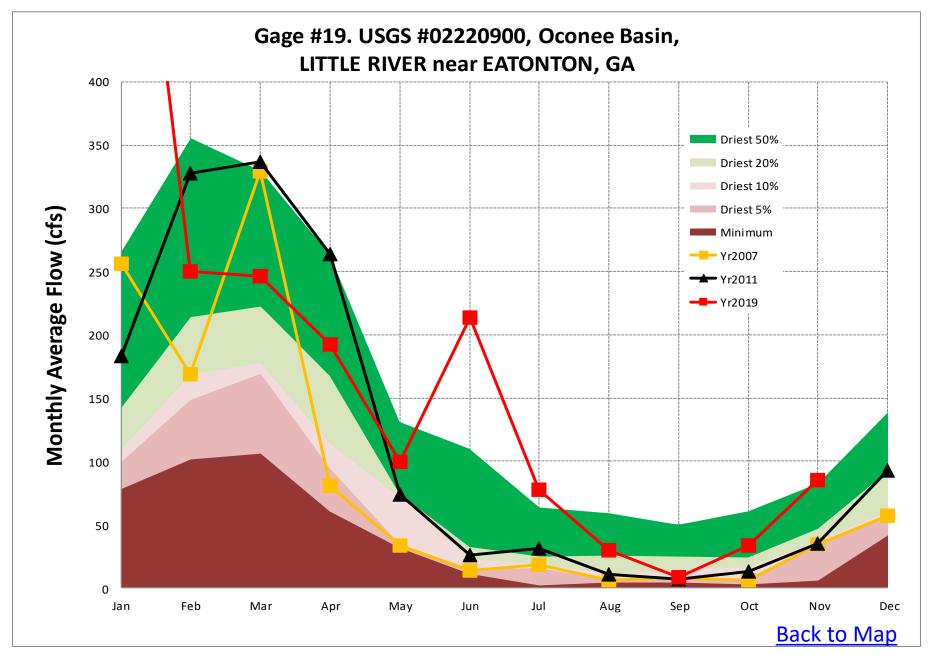


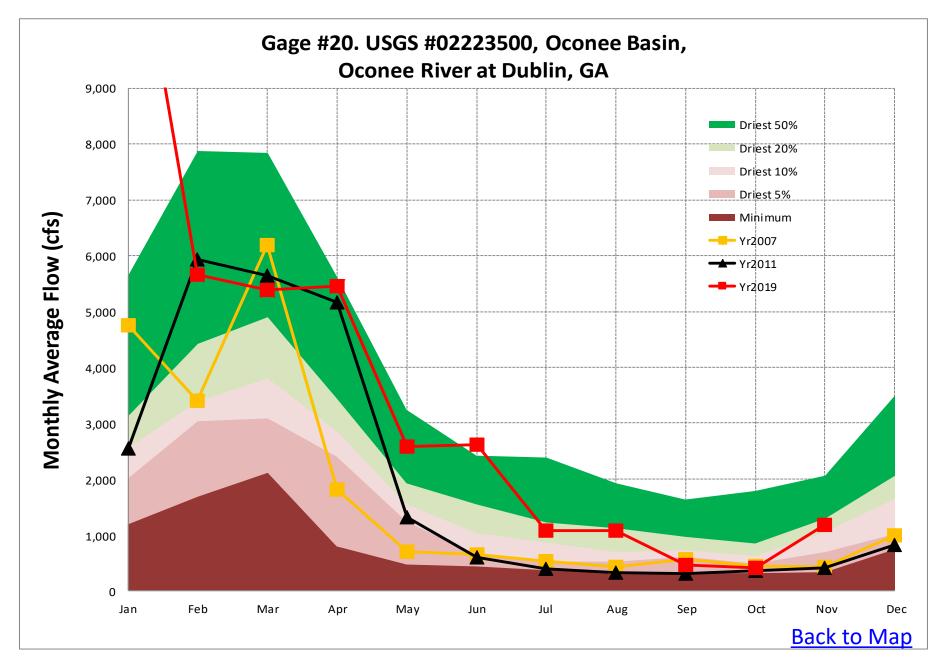


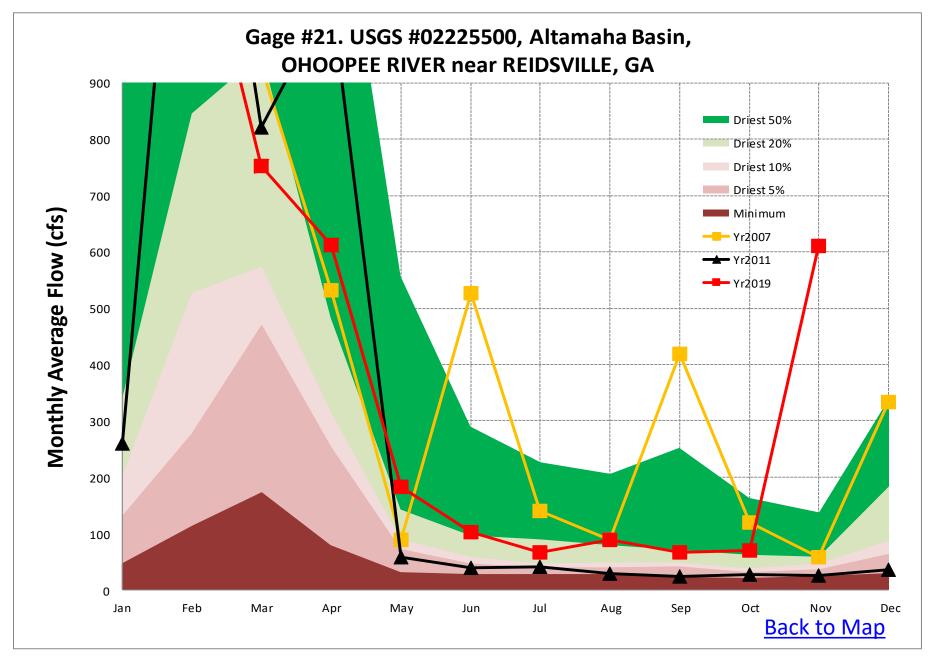


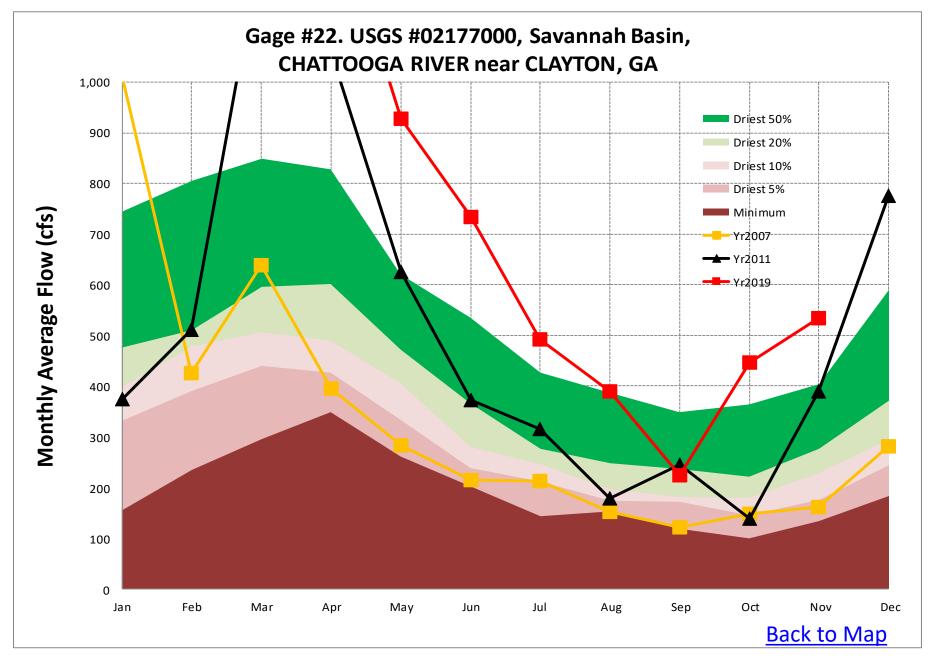


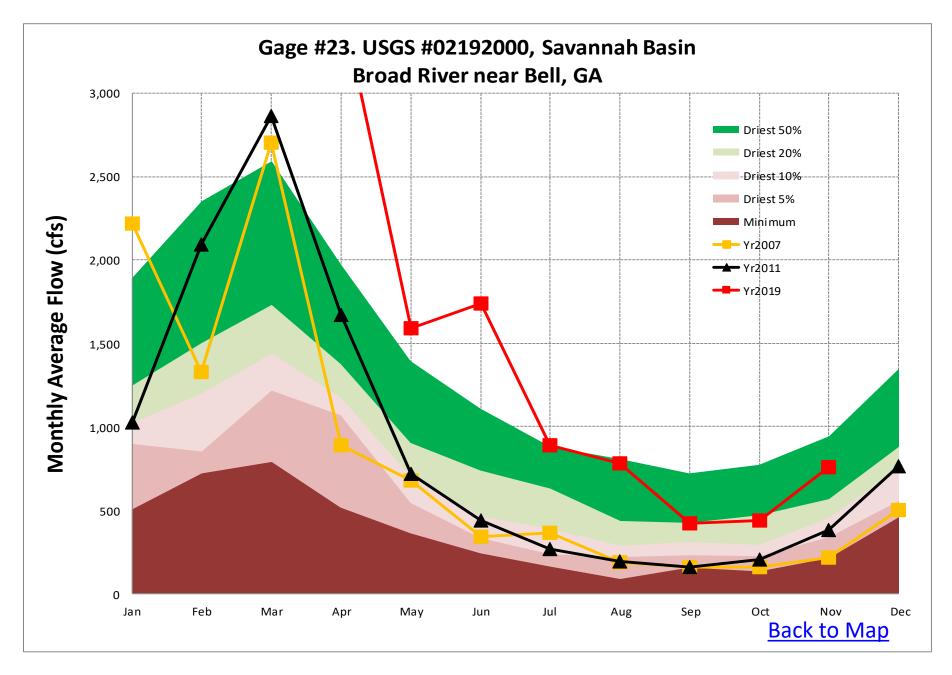


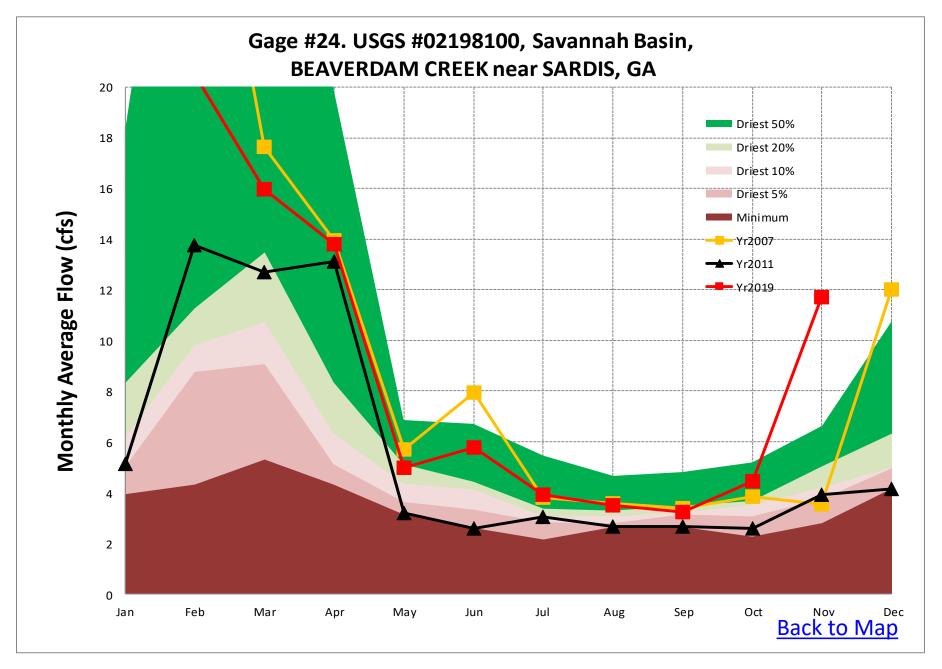


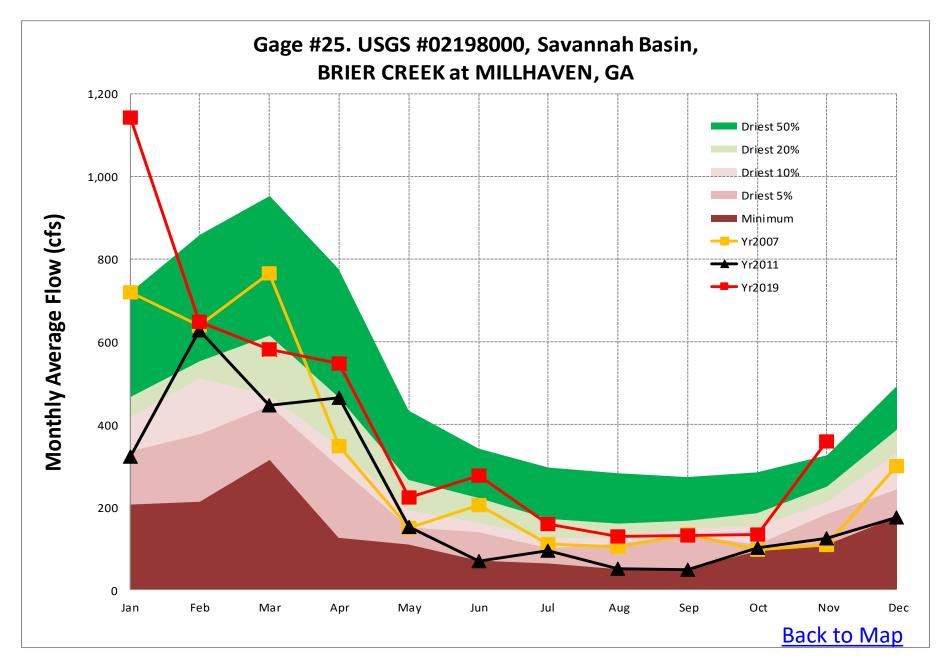


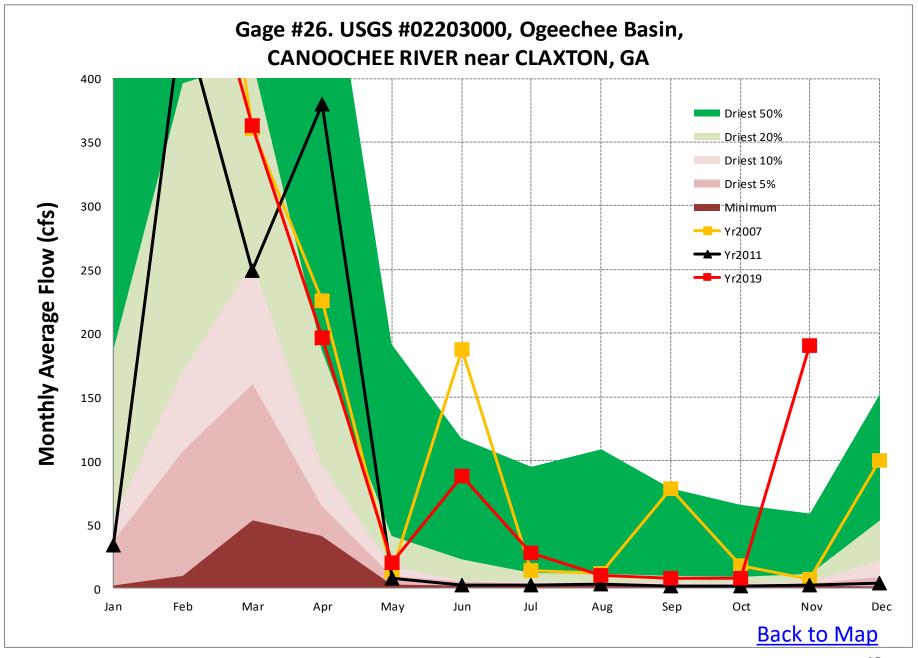


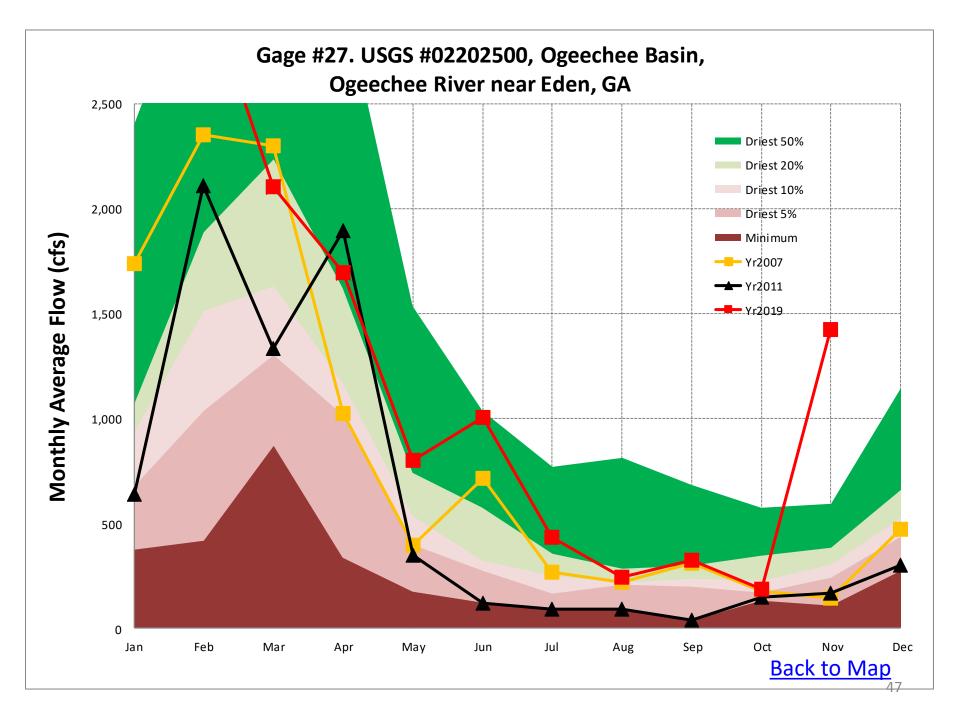


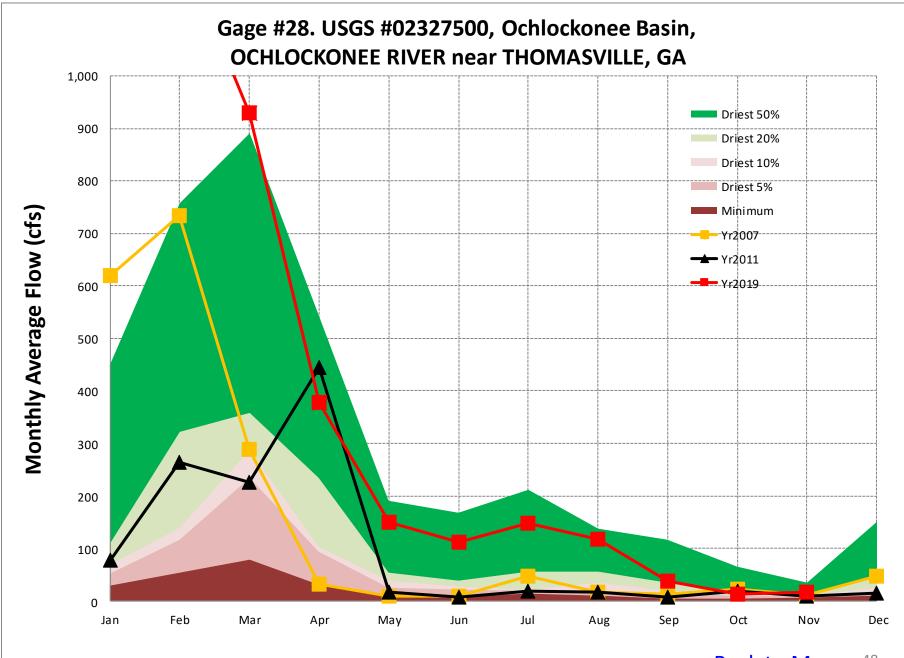


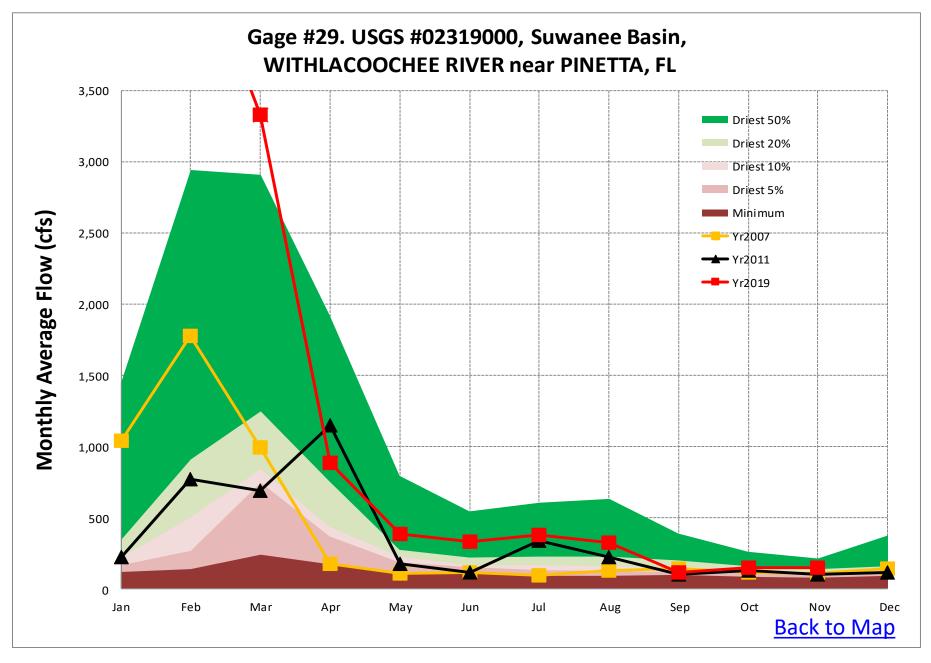


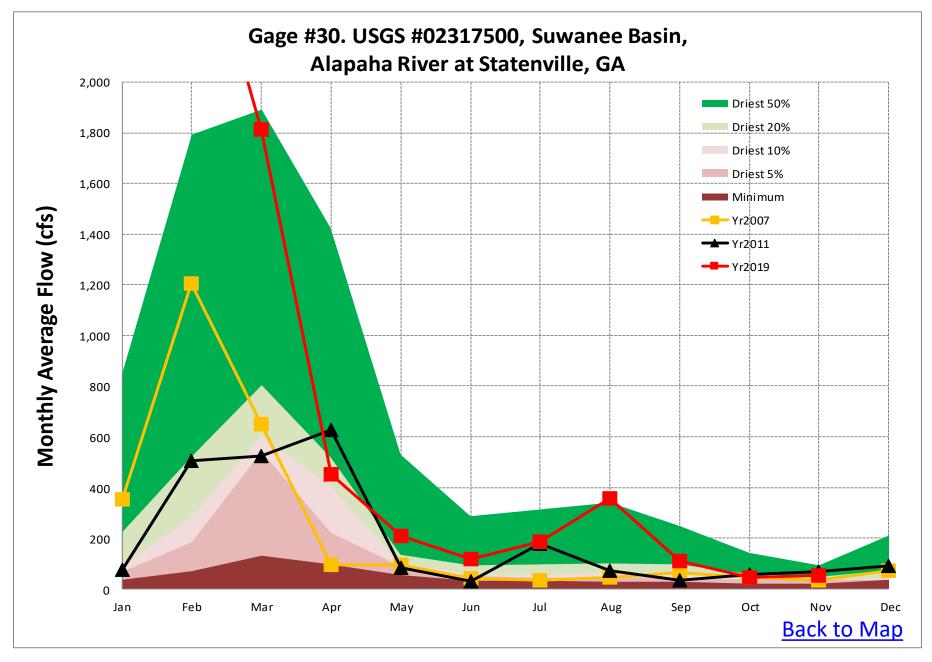


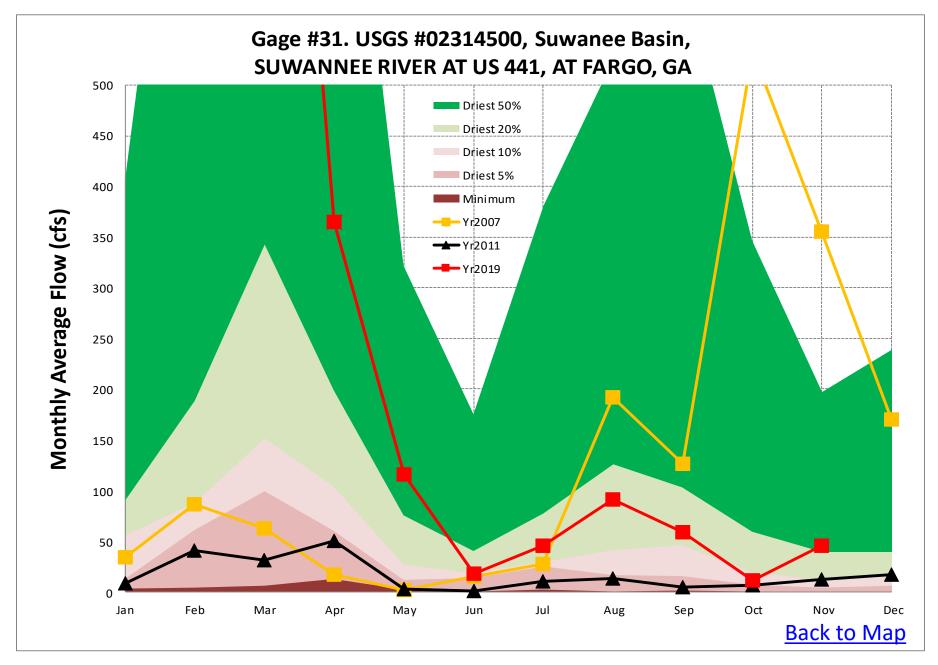


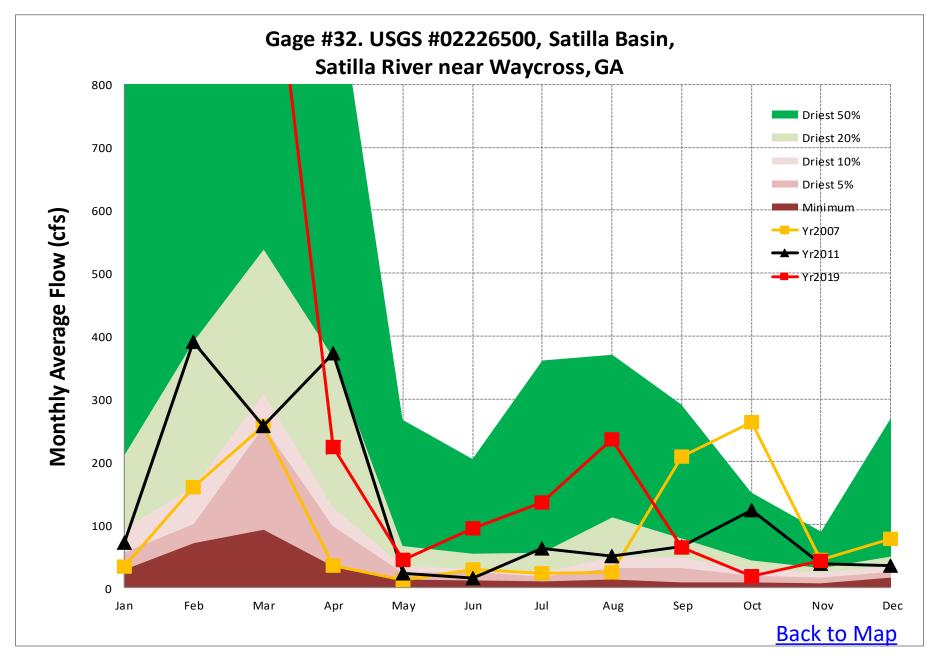


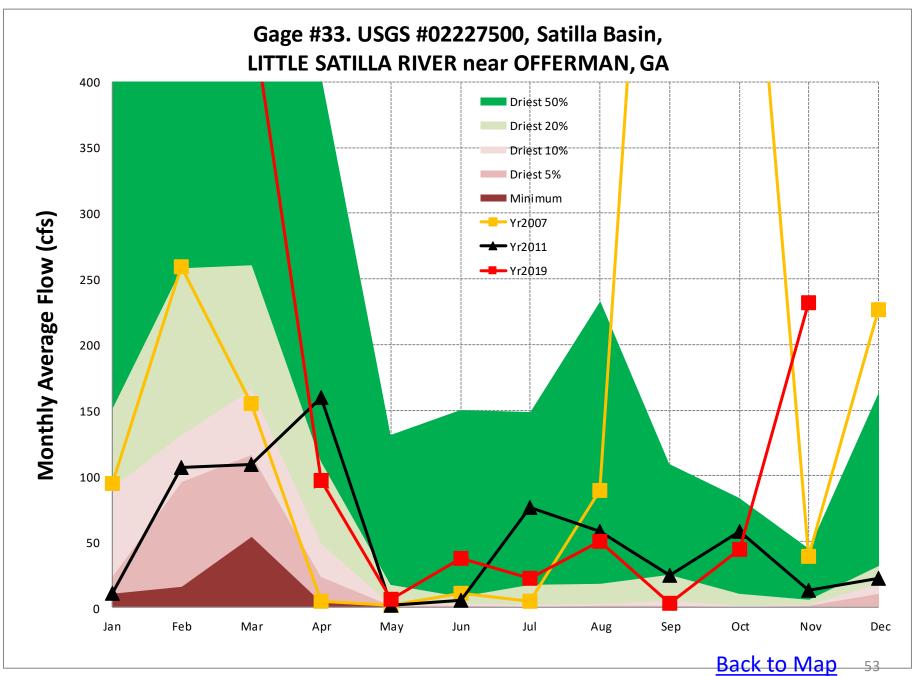


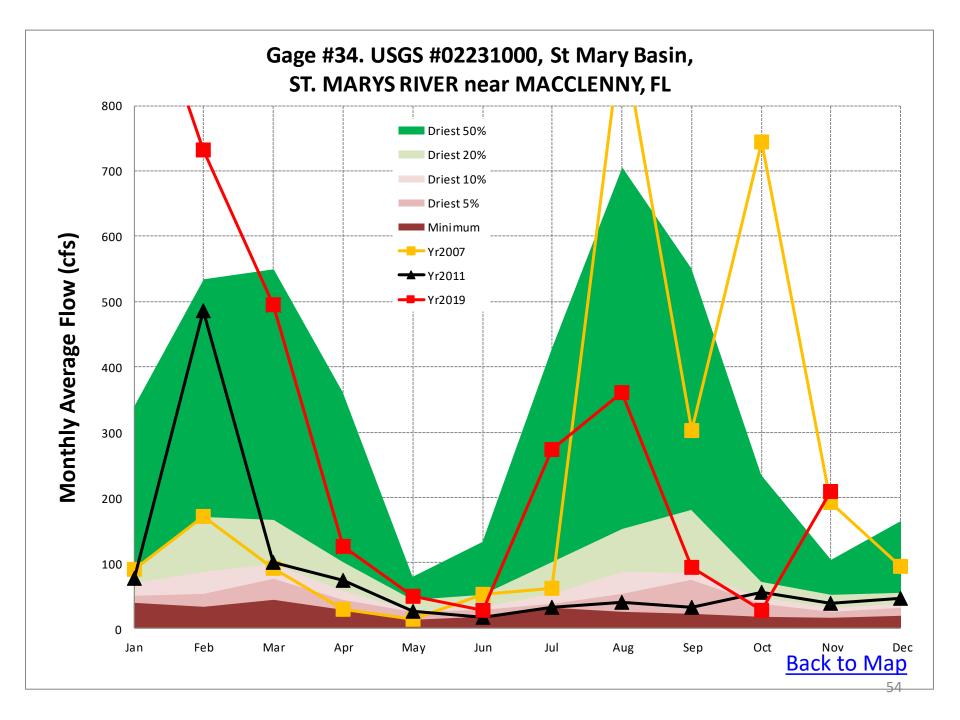












# **Groundwater Levels**

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

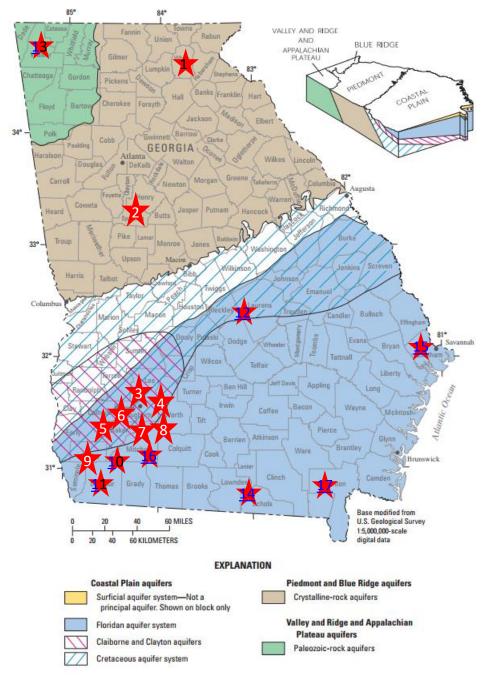


Figure 2. Area of use of principal aquifers and physiographic provinces in Georgia (modified from U.S. Geological Survey, 2006).

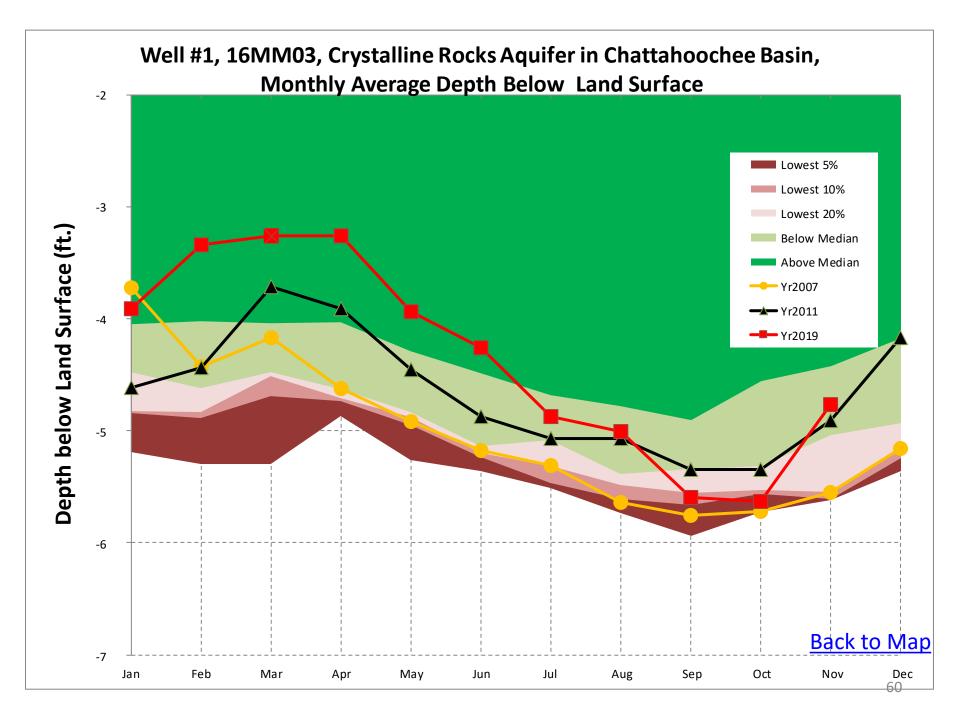
# Groundwater Level Graphs

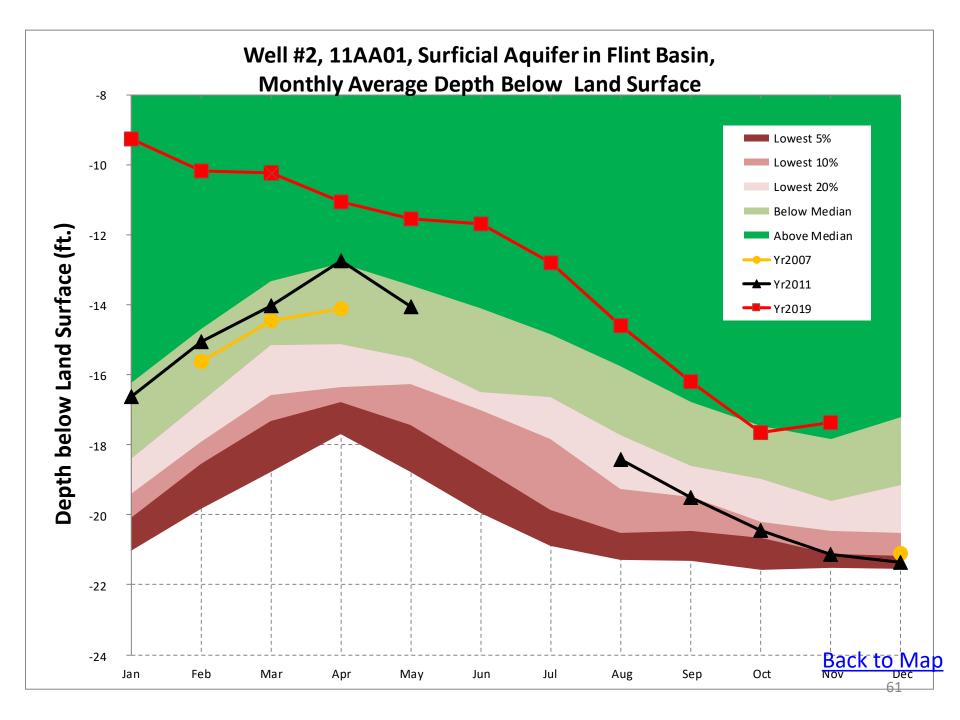
- For each of the 17 groundwater wells, EPD has prepared a graph that shows monthly average groundwater levels from January 2019 through November 2019;
- To help put these levels into perspective, for comparison purposes, each graph also shows:
  - Monthly average levels at that same well for the years 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.

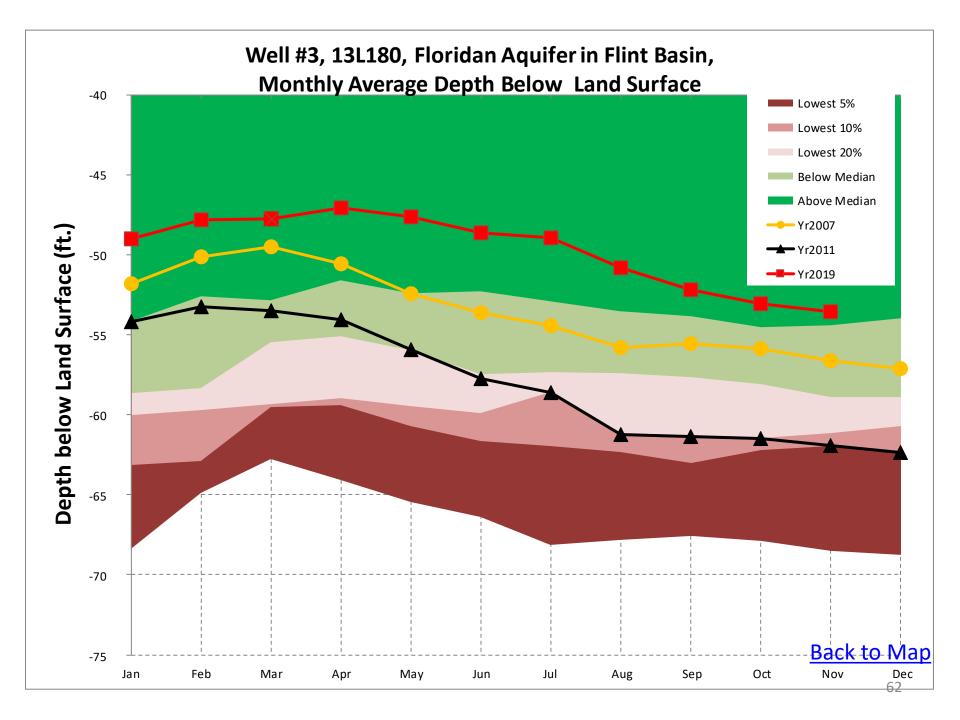
# How to Read the Groundwater Level Graphs Example: Well #11, 09F520, Flint River Basin

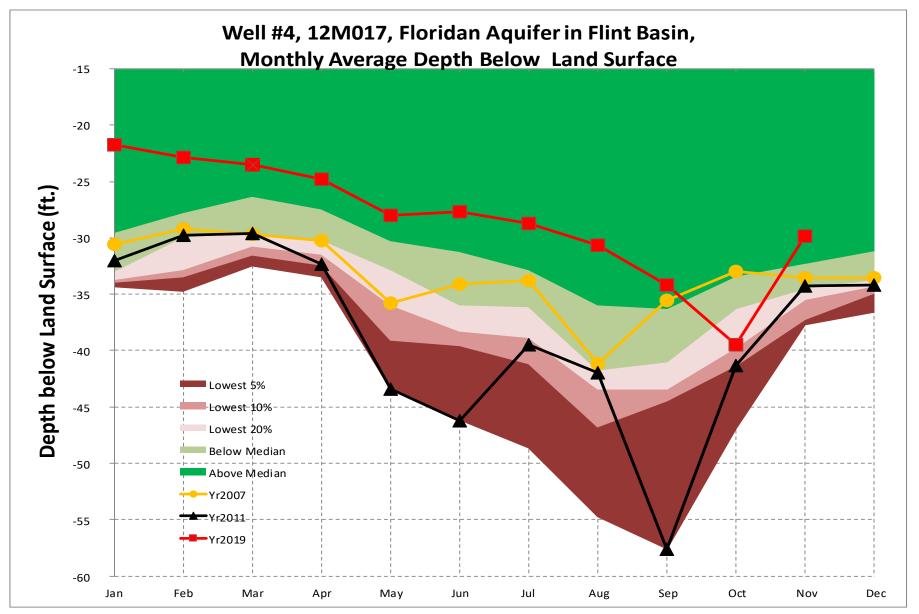
The groundwater level graph for Well #11, USGS 09F520 shows:

- The average monthly groundwater level for November 2019 was 48.7ft below land surface. The statistical composite of all historical data for this well shows that monthly average groundwater levels in November have historically been lower than November 2019 about 35% of the time; about 65% of the time in November they have been higher.
- The average monthly groundwater level in November 2011 was 50.9ft below land surface. The statistical composite of all historical data for this well shows that monthly average groundwater levels in November have historically been lower than November 2011 about 1% of the time; about 99 % of the time in November they have been higher.
- The average monthly groundwater level in November 2007 was 50.9ft below land surface. The statistical composite of all historical data for this well shows that monthly average groundwater levels in November have historically been lower than November 2007 about 1% of the time; about 99% of the time in November they have been higher.

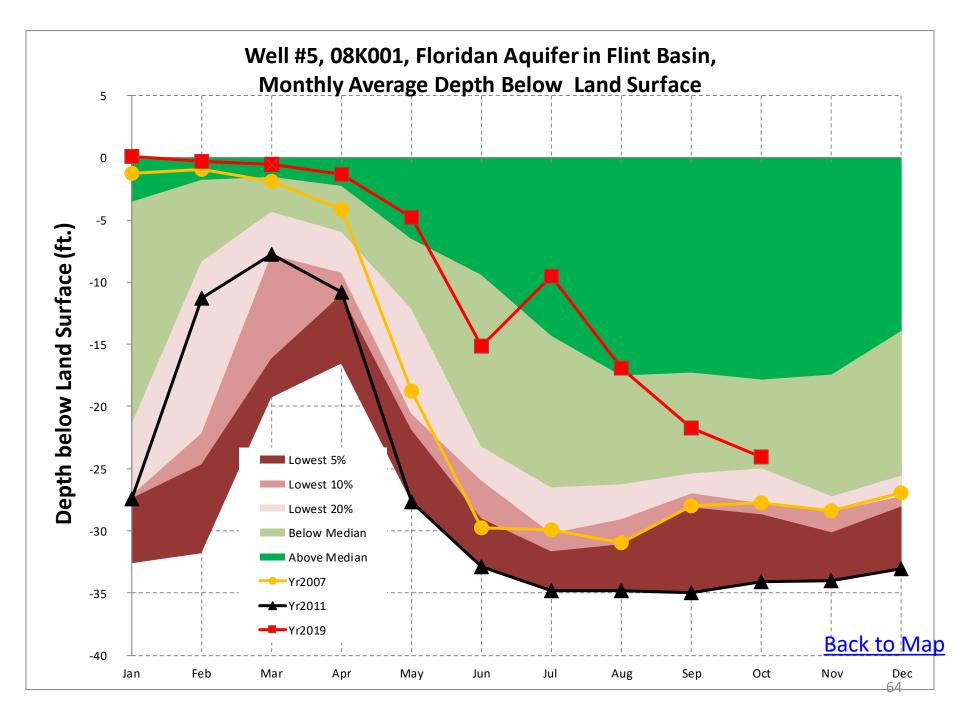


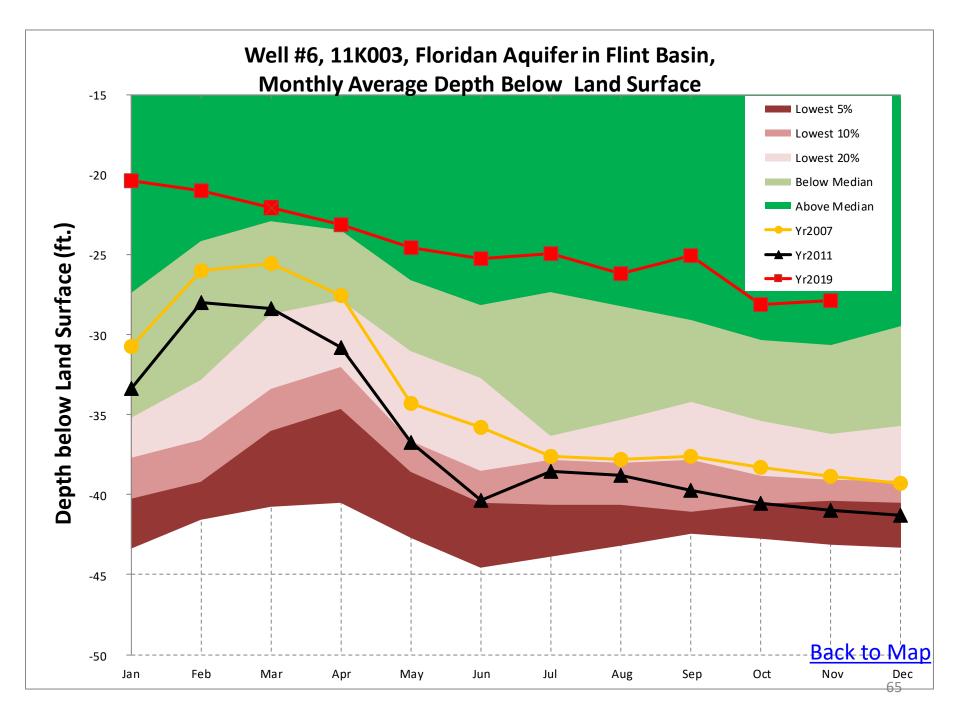


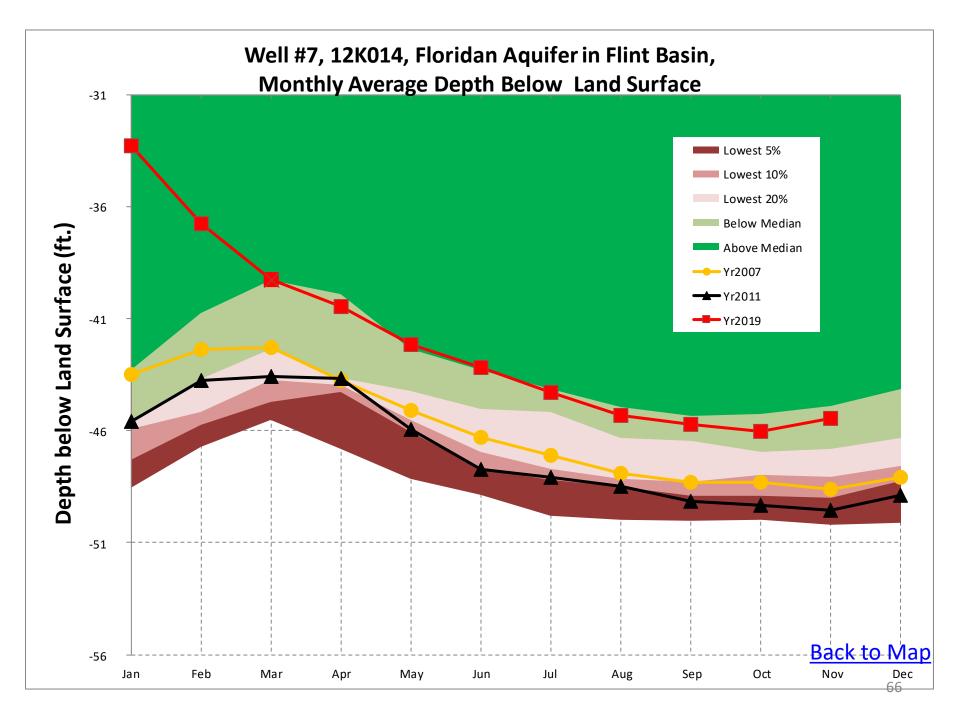


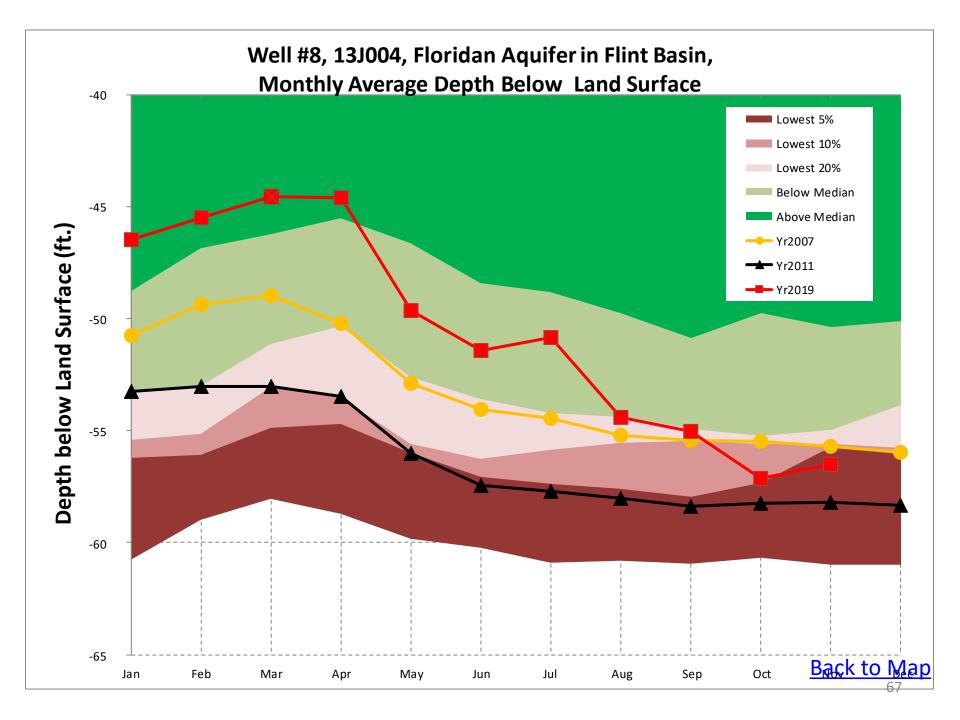


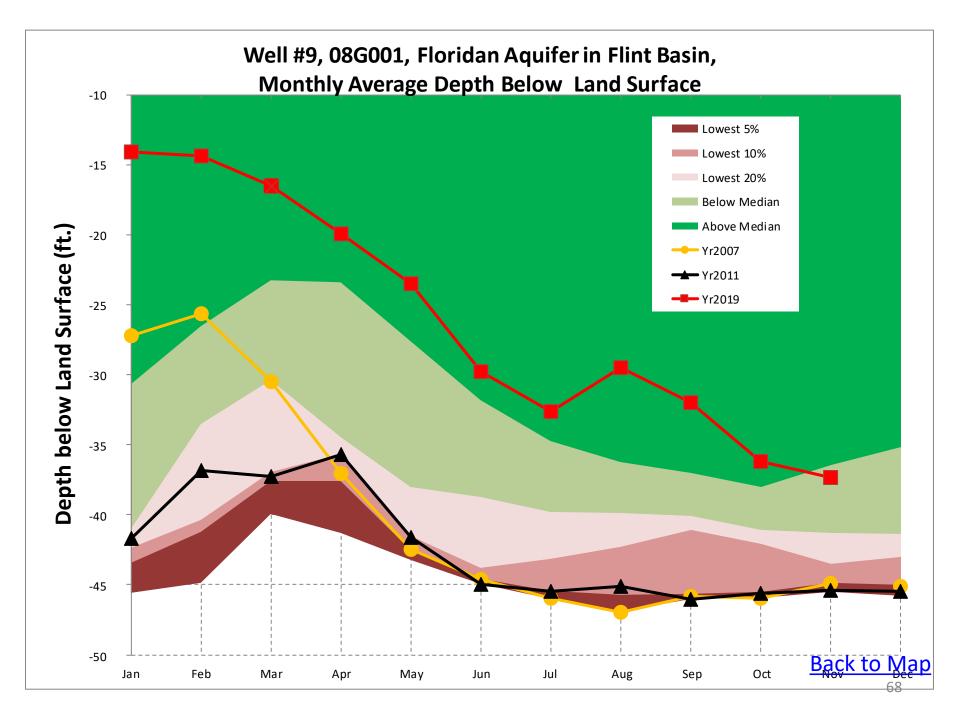
**Back to Map** 

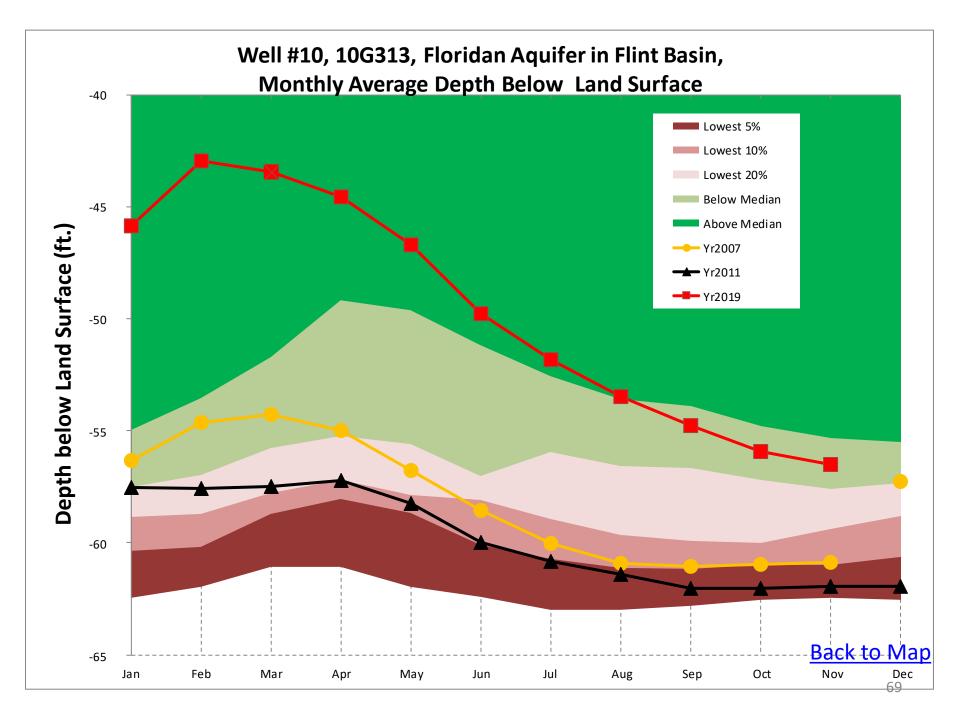


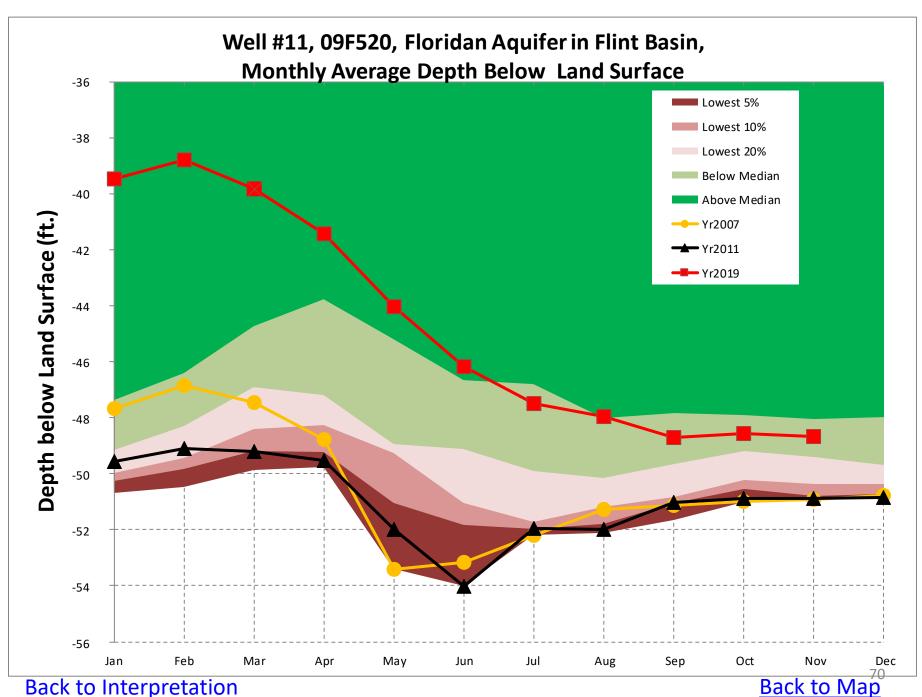




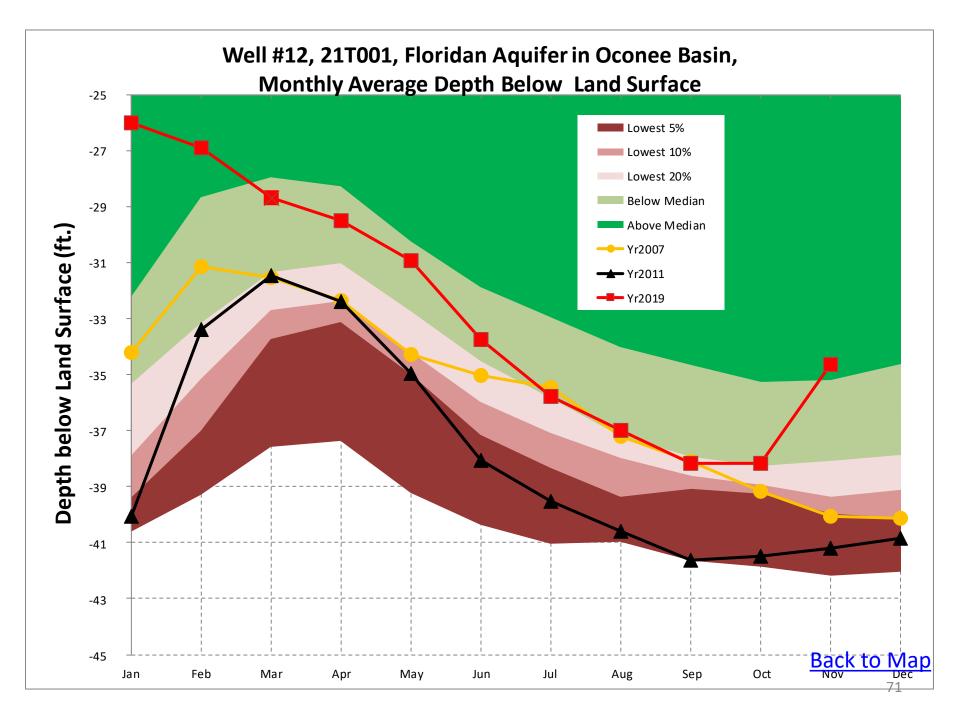


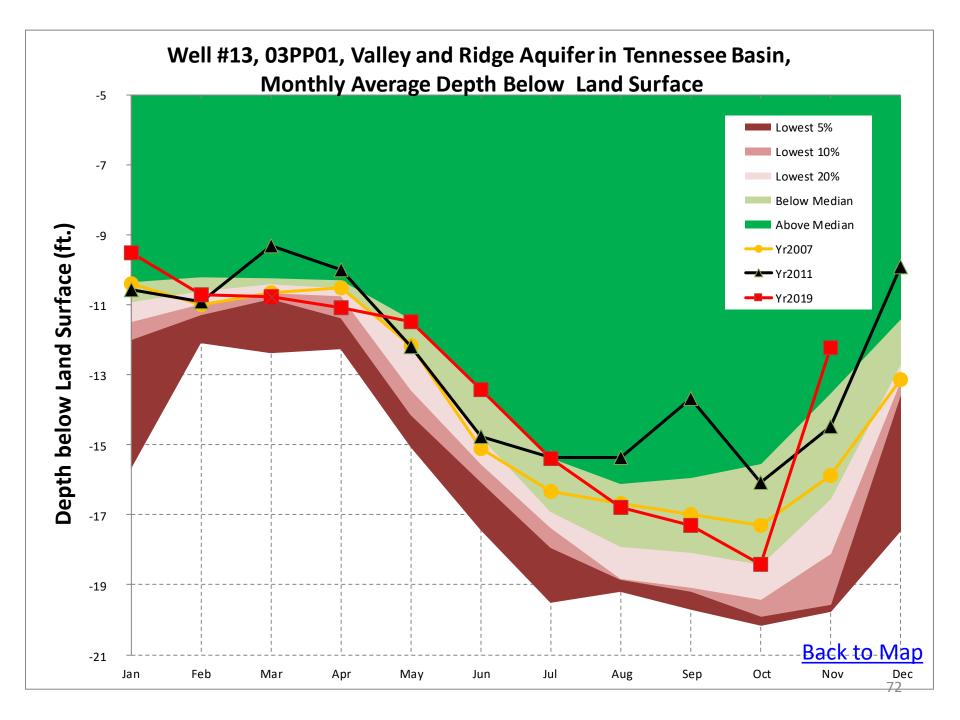


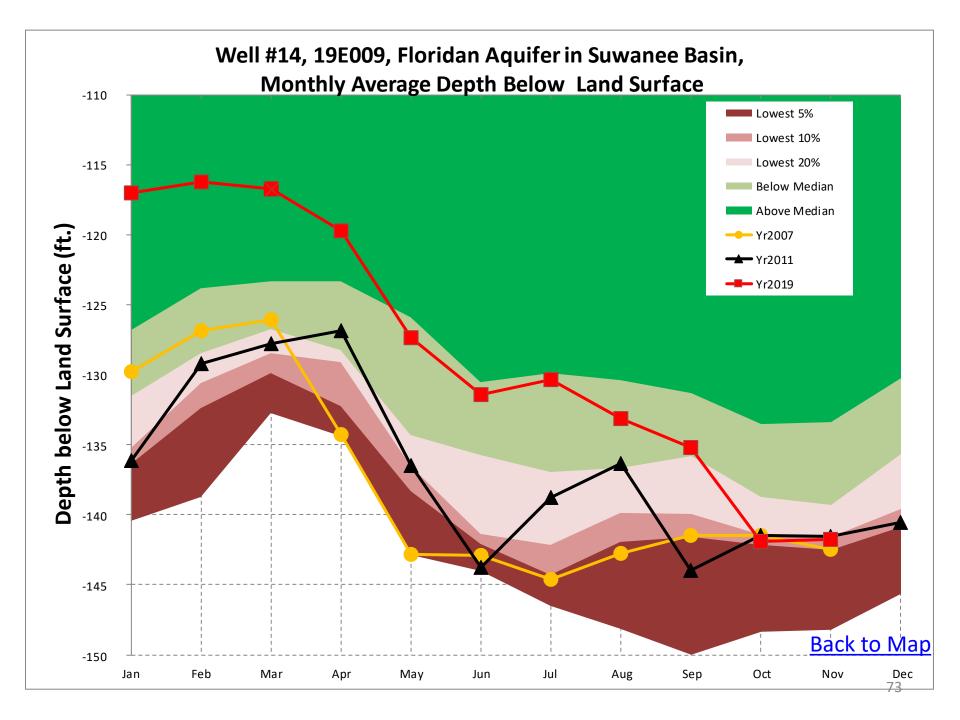


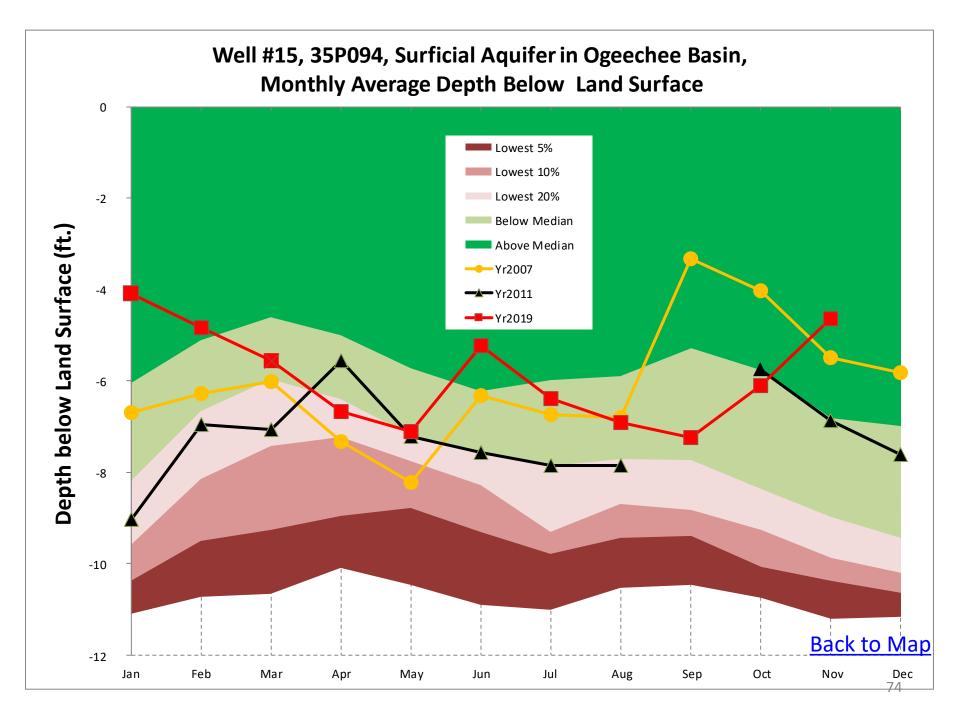


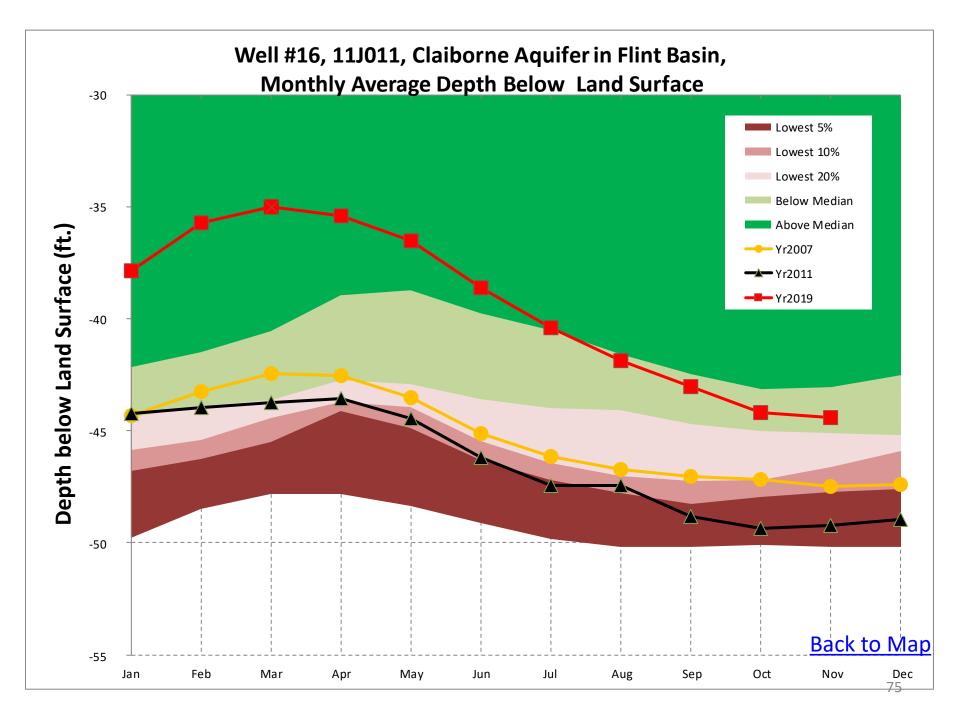
Back to Interpretation

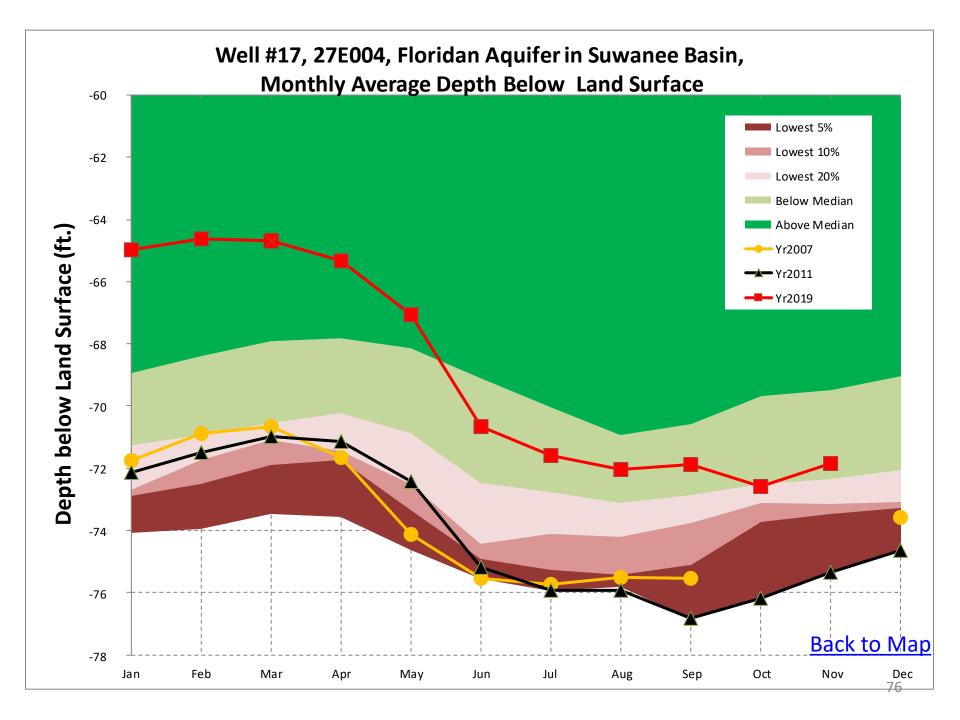












# Reservoir Levels

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

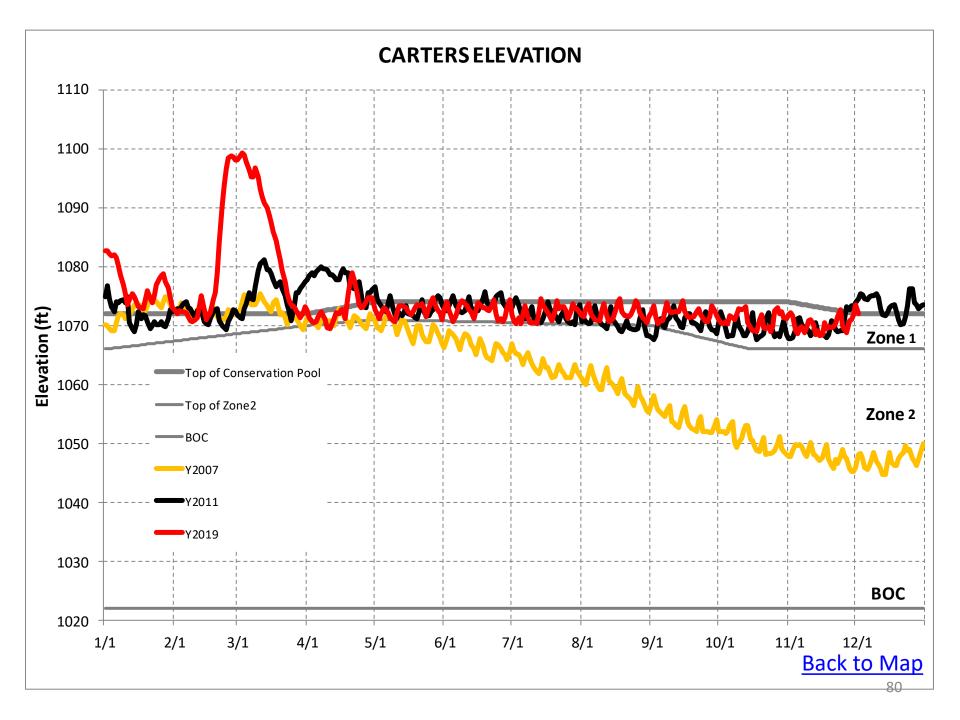
- 6. Hartwell
- 7. Thurmond

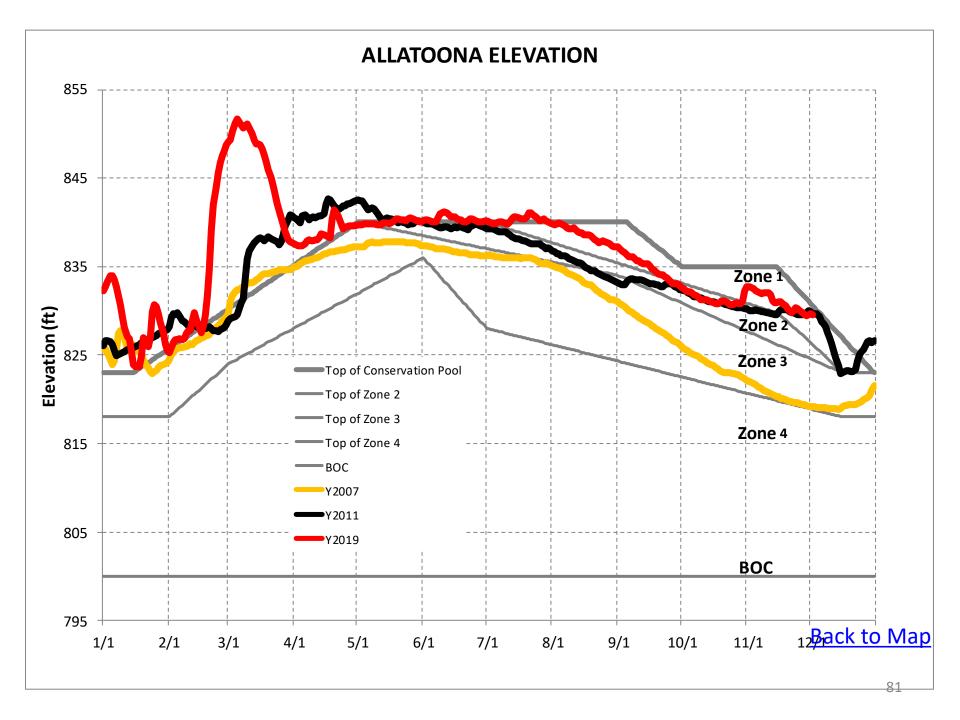


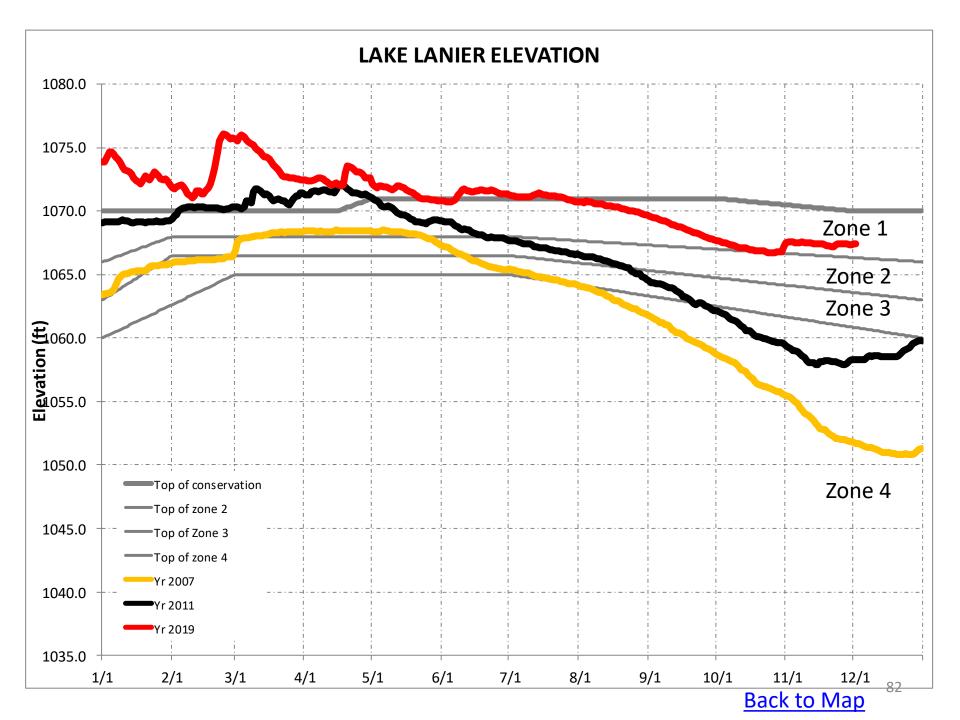
EPD monitors the water levels of seven reservoirs to assess drought conditions.

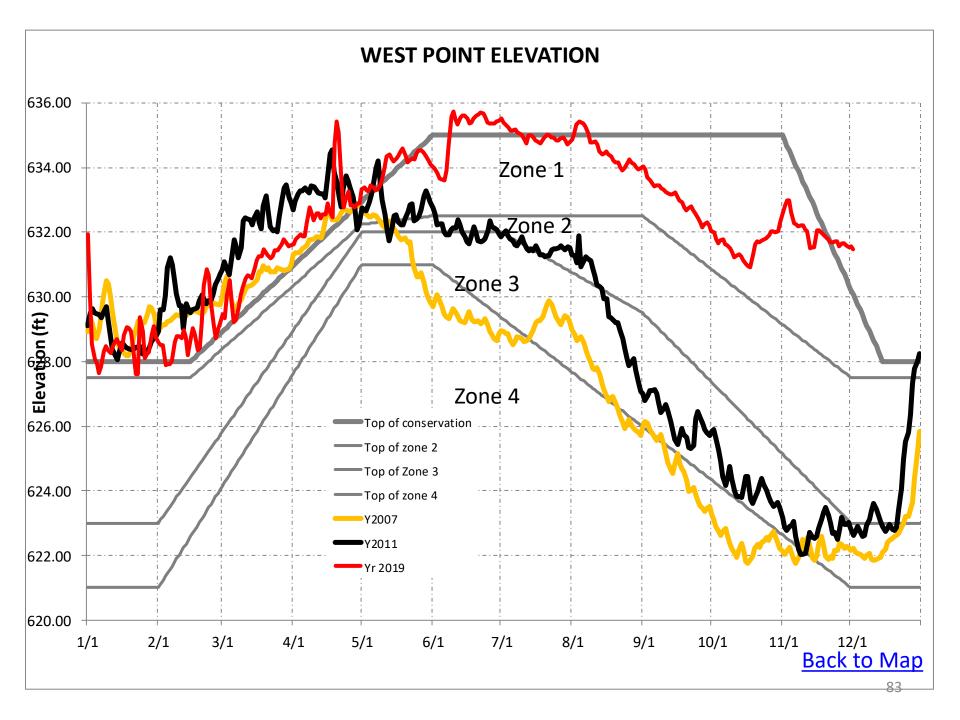
# Reservoir Elevation Graphs

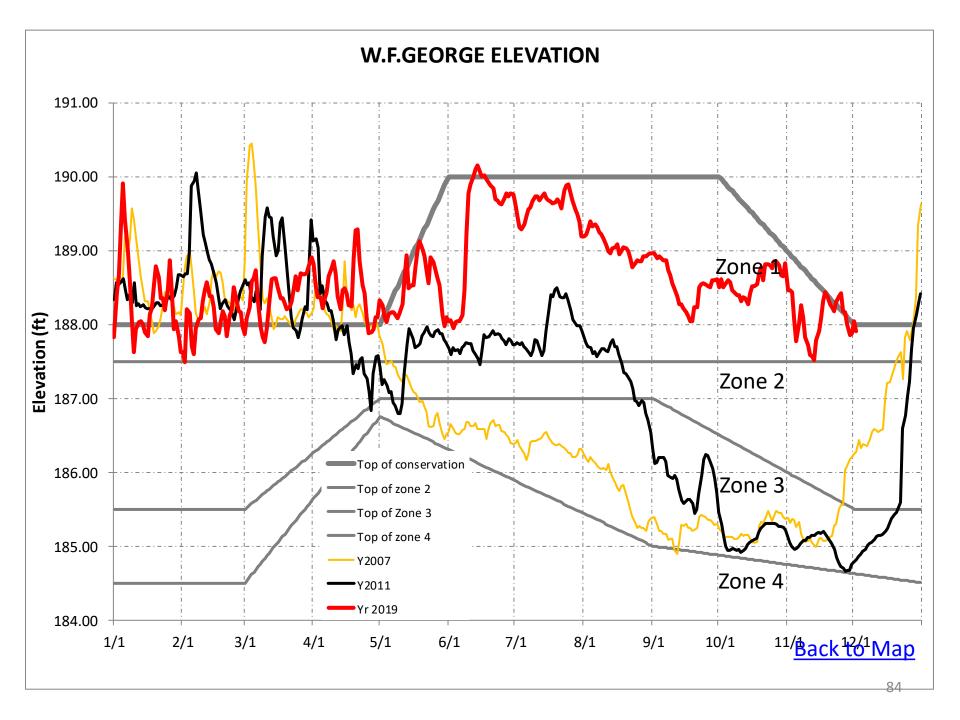
- The following graphs show the reservoir elevation curves for January 2019 through November 2019.
- Each graph also shows the Action Zone Divides (or Levels) for each reservoir
  - Zone 1 is the top layer of the conservation pool
  - Zone 2 is the layer below Zone 1
  - Zone 4 is the lowest layer in the conservation pool
  - There is no conservation storage below the bottom of Zone 4
- To put 2019 reservoir elevations into perspective, elevations for 2007 and 2011 are also shown.



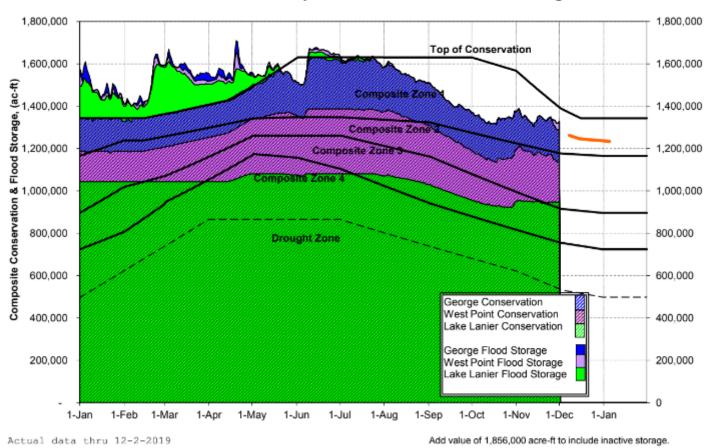


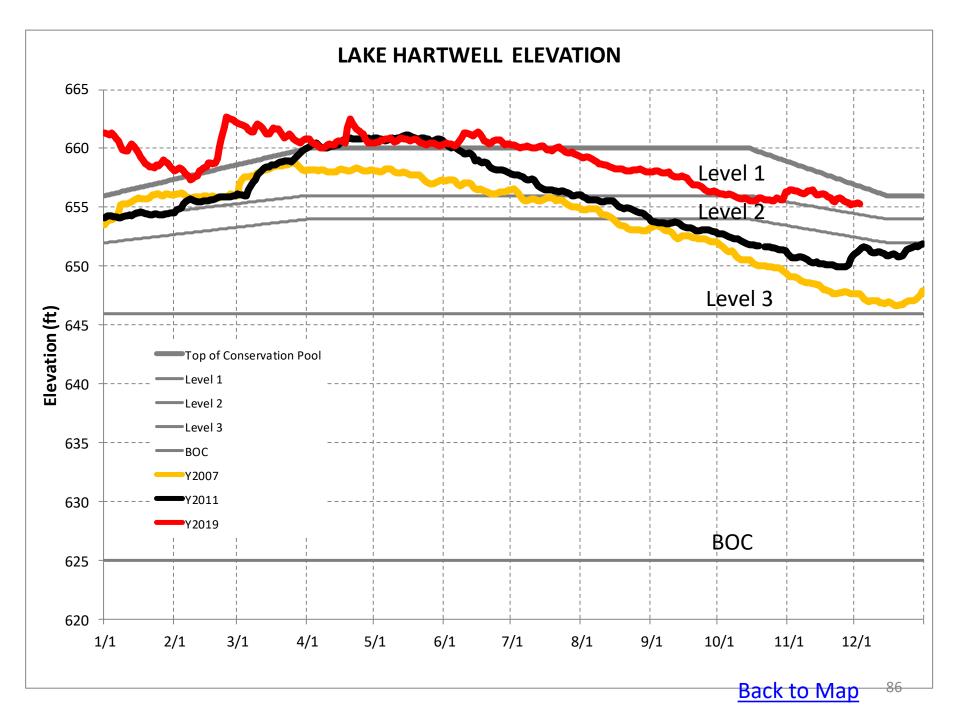


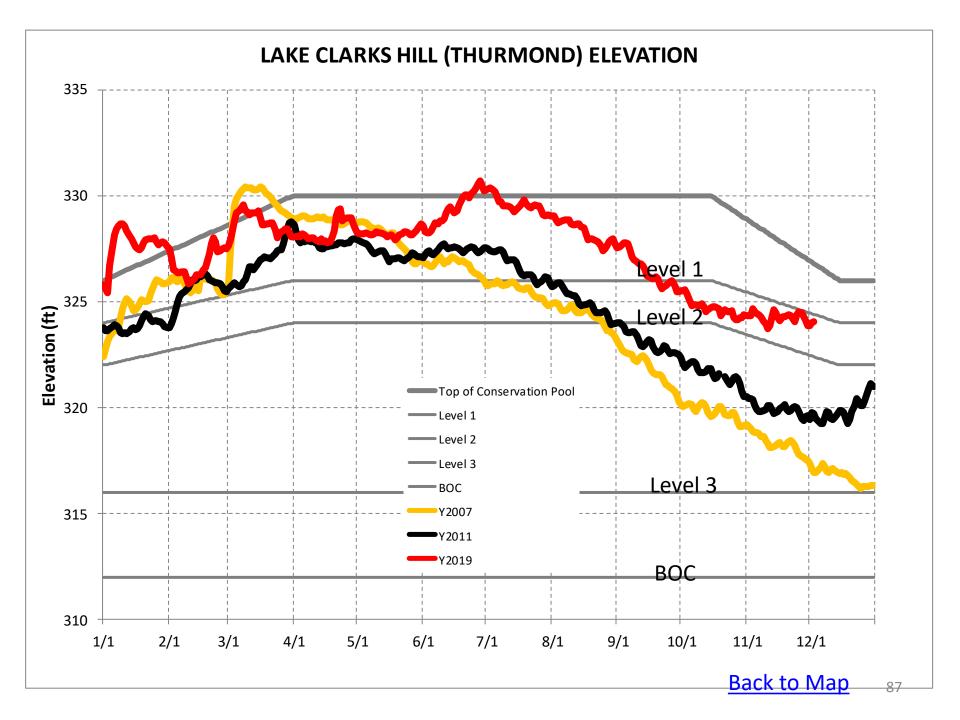




# 2019 ACF Basin Composite Conservation and Flood Storage





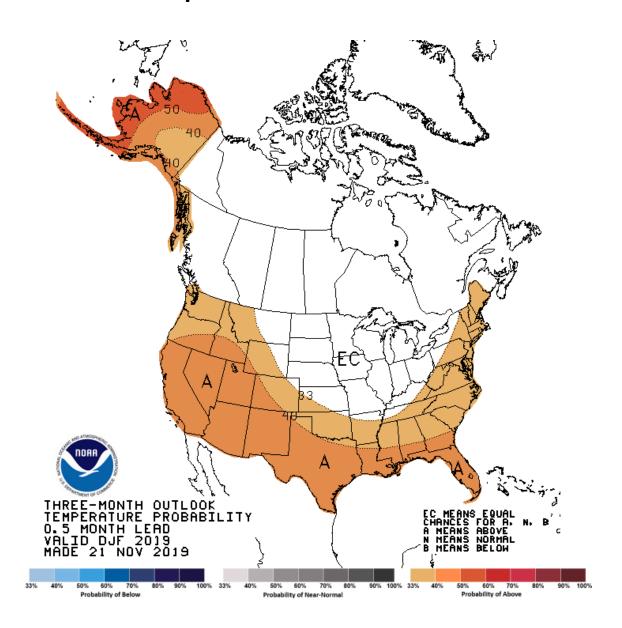


# Climate Prediction Center 3-month Temperature and Precipitation Probability Outlook and Seasonal Drought Outlook

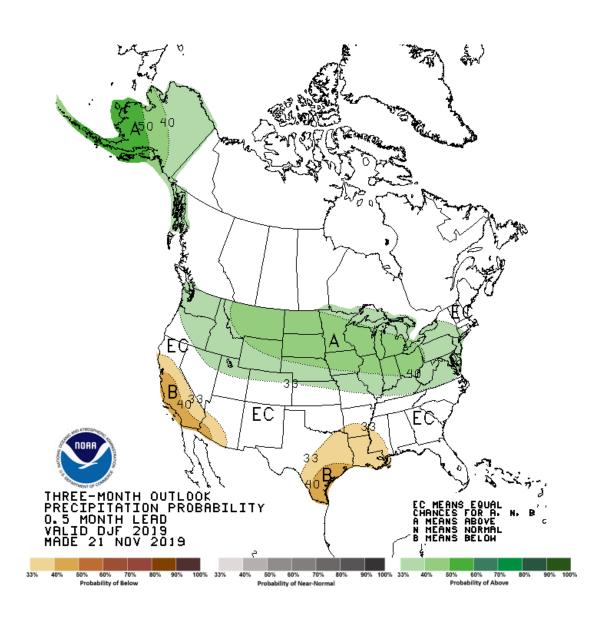
Data Source:

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

# Temperature Outlook



# **Precipitation Outlook**



U.S. Seasonal Drought Outlook Valid for November 21, 2019 - February 29, 2020 Drought Tendency During the Valid Period Released November 21, 2019

