

Drought Indicators Report

Georgia Environmental Protection Division
June 2017

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 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 June 14, 2017.

Drought Indicator Analysis Summary (slide 1 of 2)

- **U.S. Drought Monitor** – There are no counties with extreme drought or severe drought conditions in the northern portion of the state. Moderate drought remains in parts of 11 counties in middle and north Georgia. Severe drought conditions remain 7 counties.
- **Precipitation**– The 3 month records show the northern third of the state and much of central Georgia with above normal precipitation. Below normal precipitation is noted just south of metro Atlanta and in southwest Georgia, currently the 2 driest parts of the state, where deficits range from 2” – 4”, while near normal observed precipitation exists in east central and parts of southeast Georgia. The 6 month records show much above normal precipitation in northwest, west central, and central Georgia. Near normal to slightly below normal precipitation is noted along the coast and in northeast Georgia, while southwest Georgia has the worst deficits of up to 12”. The 12 month records show much of the state with below normal precipitation, while parts of southeast and southwest Georgia shows near to slightly above normal precipitation. Areas south and east of metro Atlanta and in the northeast show the worst deficits in the longer term 12-month time period with between 50% and 75% of normal precipitation.
- **Soil Moisture**– Much of the state shows normal to exceptional wetness, although small and isolated pockets in extreme southwest Georgia and south of the metro Atlanta show slightly dry soils. Northwest, northeast, and central Georgia show the most extreme wetness.

Drought Indicator Analysis Summary (slide 2 of 2)

- **Stream Flows** - 10 of the 34 observation sites are at or below 2007 and/or 2011 level. No gages show flows at or lower than the 5th percentile.
- **Groundwater** - Groundwater levels vary by location. 13 of the 14 of the monitoring wells EPD uses to track drought conditions are below median levels. 9 are at or above the 20th percentile and 2 below the 5th percentile of the historical record.
- **Reservoir Levels** – In the ACT, Allatoona is just barely below top of conservation in zone 2. Carters Lake has dropped to zone 1. In the ACF, Lanier remains in zone 4, while West Point and George are at the top of conservation. ACF Basin Composite storage is in zone 1. Consequently, the Corps suspended drought operations as of June 1, 2017. In the Savannah Basin, Hartwell and Thurmond are both level 3.
- **Short Term Climate Prediction** - Drought conditions Georgia are predicted to alleviate.
- **Water Supplies** - Many systems are reporting that local water supplies have recovered or nearly recovered. Lanier is the primary exception, and it is approximately 6 feet down. Systems are still generally advising a cautious approach to discretionary water use.

US Drought Monitor

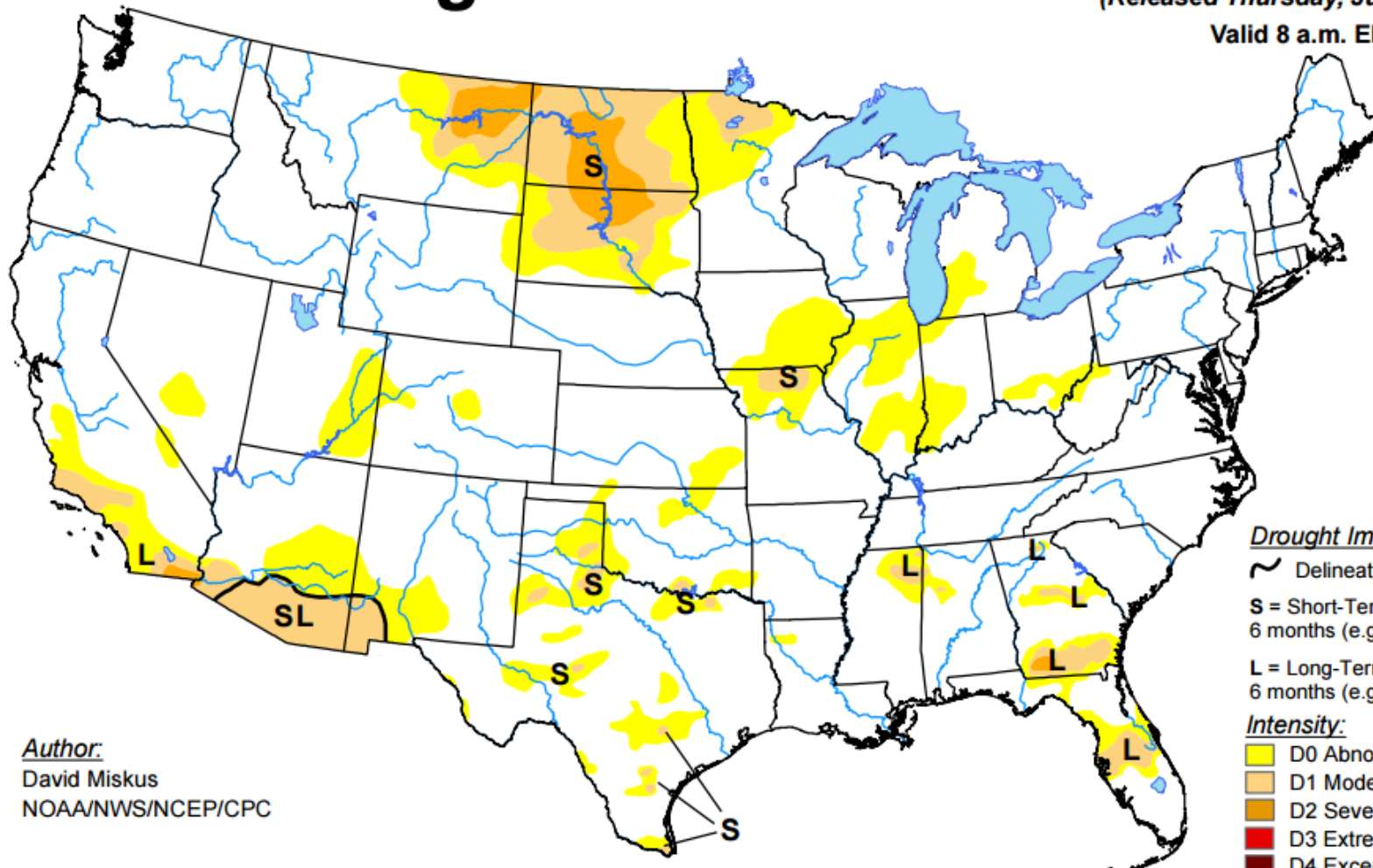
Data Source:
<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/>

U.S. Drought Monitor

June 13, 2017

(Released Thursday, Jun. 15, 2017)

Valid 8 a.m. EDT



Author:

David Miskus

NOAA/NWS/NCEP/CPC

Drought Impact Types:

~ Delineates dominant impacts

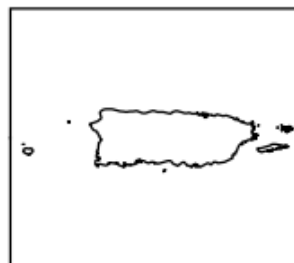
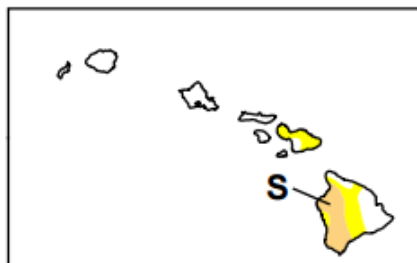
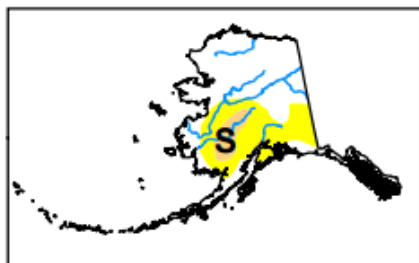
S = Short-Term, typically less than 6 months (e.g. agriculture, grasslands)

L = Long-Term, typically greater than 6 months (e.g. hydrology, ecology)

Intensity:

- D0 Abnormally Dry
- D1 Moderate Drought
- D2 Severe Drought
- D3 Extreme Drought
- D4 Exceptional Drought

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



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

U.S. Drought Monitor

Georgia

June 13, 2017

(Released Thursday, Jun. 15, 2017)

Valid 8 a.m. EDT

Drought Conditions (Percent Area)

	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	62.83	37.17	16.60	2.39	0.00	0.00
Last Week <i>06-06-2017</i>	59.69	40.31	21.10	7.20	0.00	0.00
3 Months Ago <i>03-14-2017</i>	68.50	31.50	26.59	19.08	6.94	0.00
Start of Calendar Year <i>01-03-2017</i>	11.31	88.69	73.48	39.33	19.28	0.00
Start of Water Year <i>09-27-2016</i>	35.37	64.63	45.84	34.50	14.67	1.58
One Year Ago <i>06-14-2016</i>	62.16	37.84	31.45	8.93	0.00	0.00

Intensity:

 D0 Abnormally Dry	 D3 Extreme Drought
 D1 Moderate Drought	 D4 Exceptional Drought
 D2 Severe Drought	

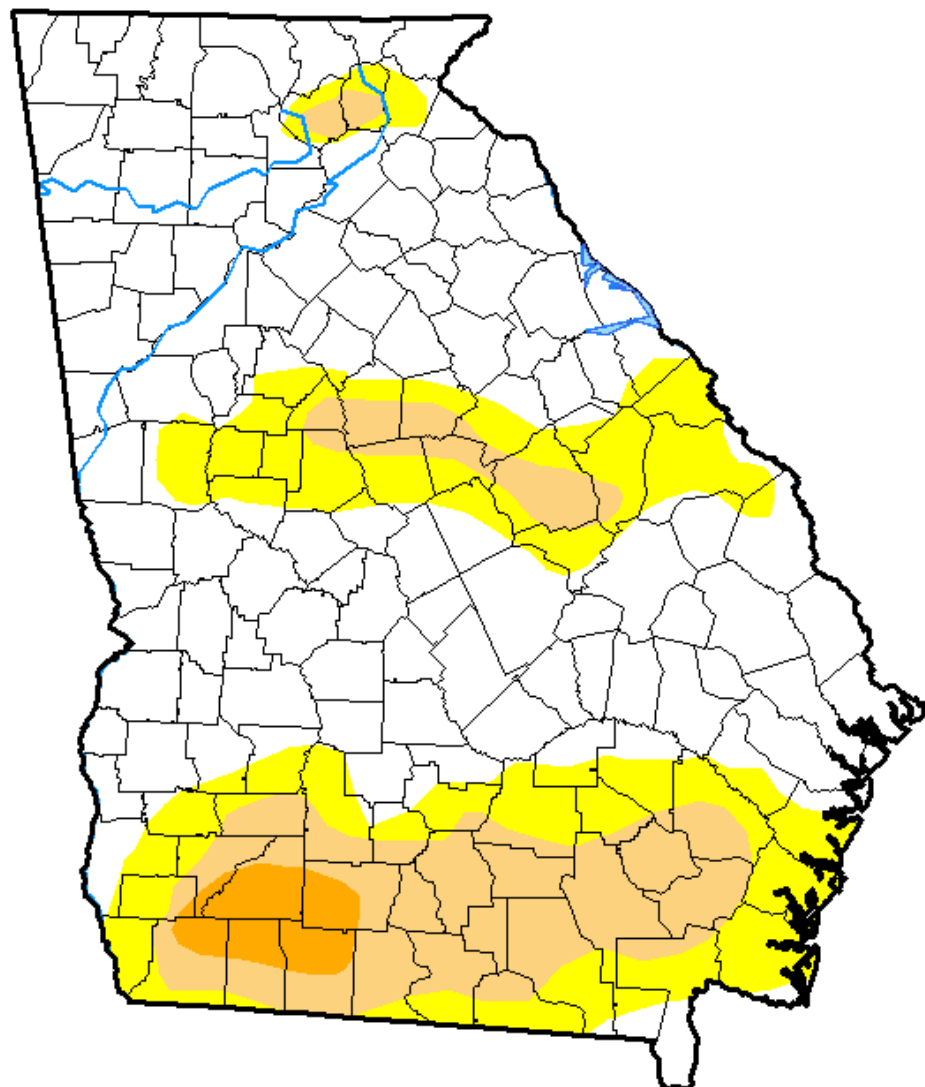
The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements.

Author:

David Miskus
NOAA/NWS/NCEP/CPC



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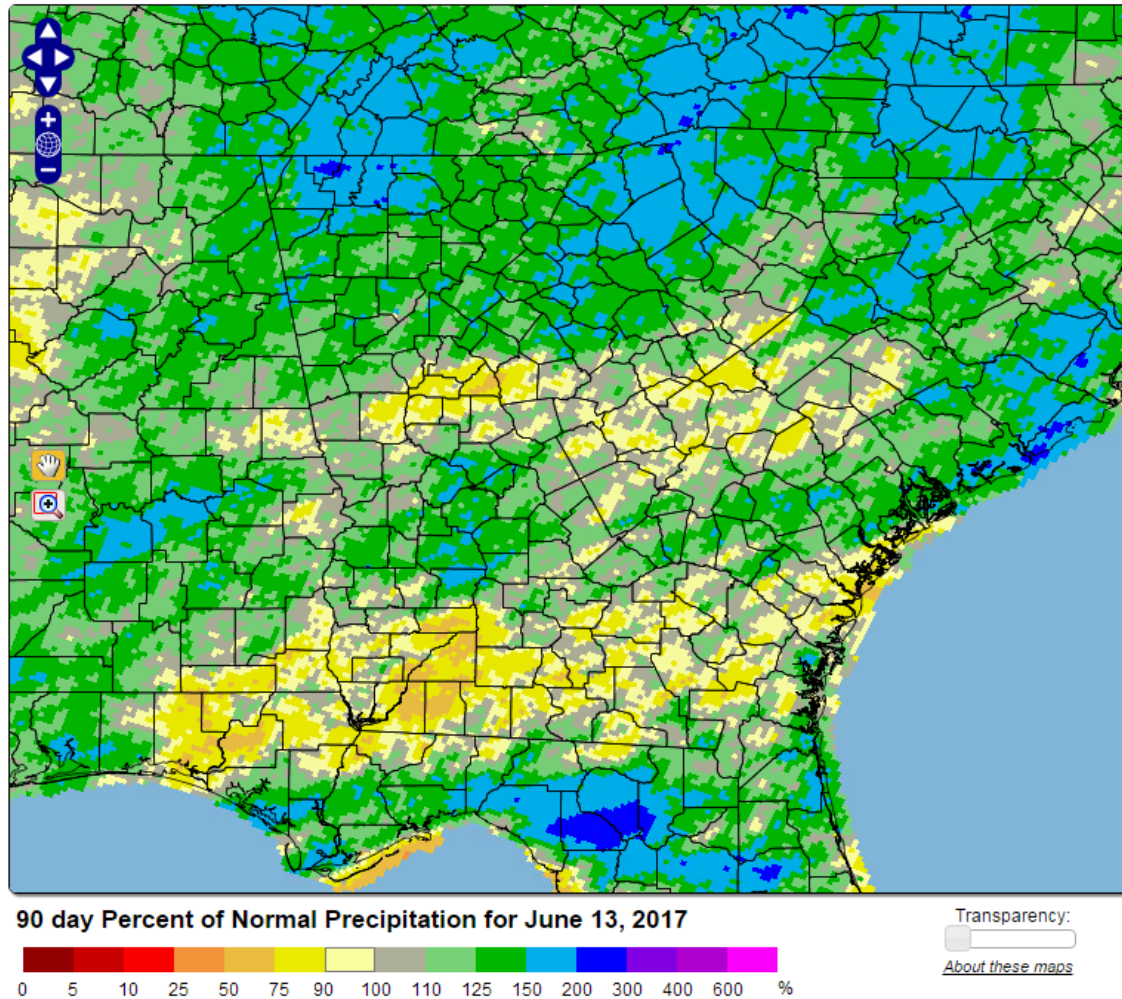


3, 6, and 12 Month Percent of Normal Precipitation

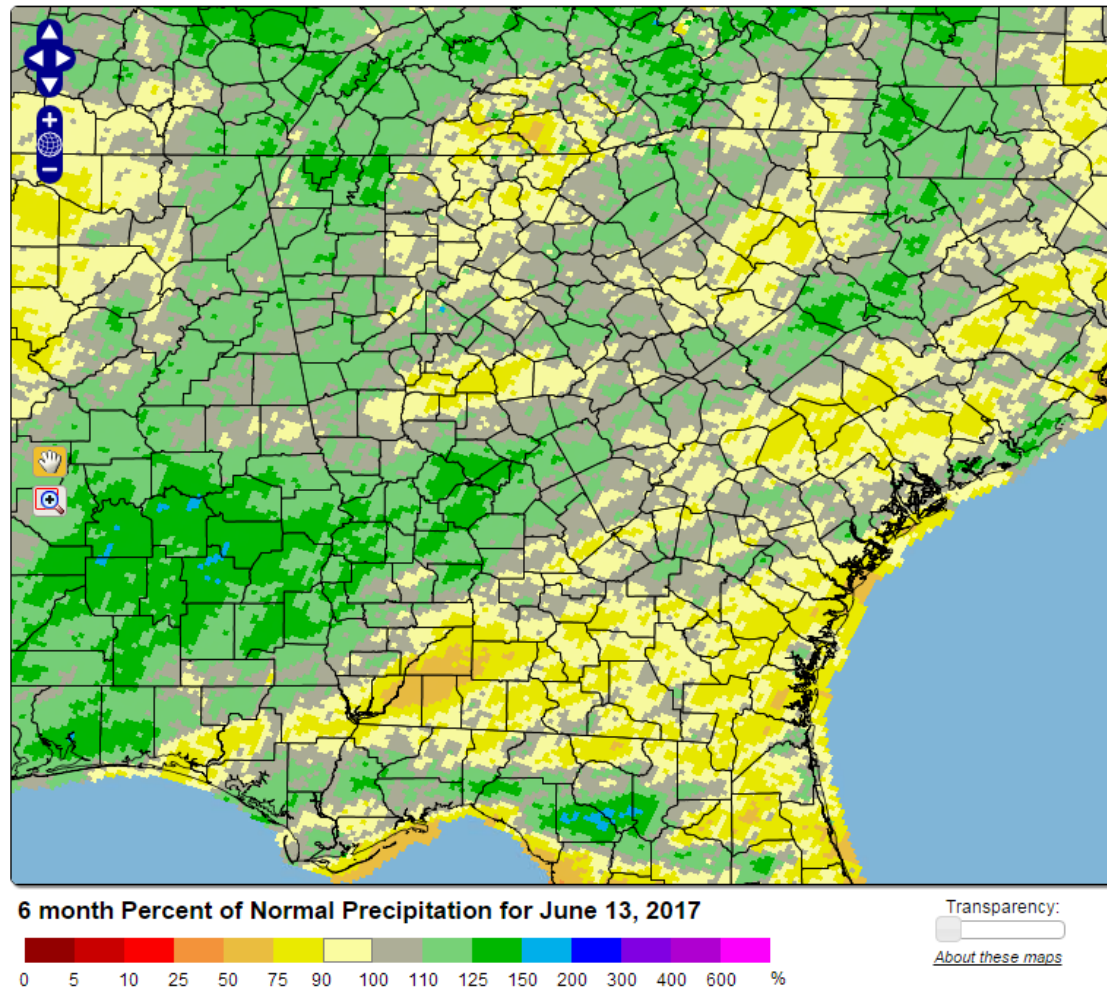
Data Source:

<http://climate.ncsu.edu/drought>

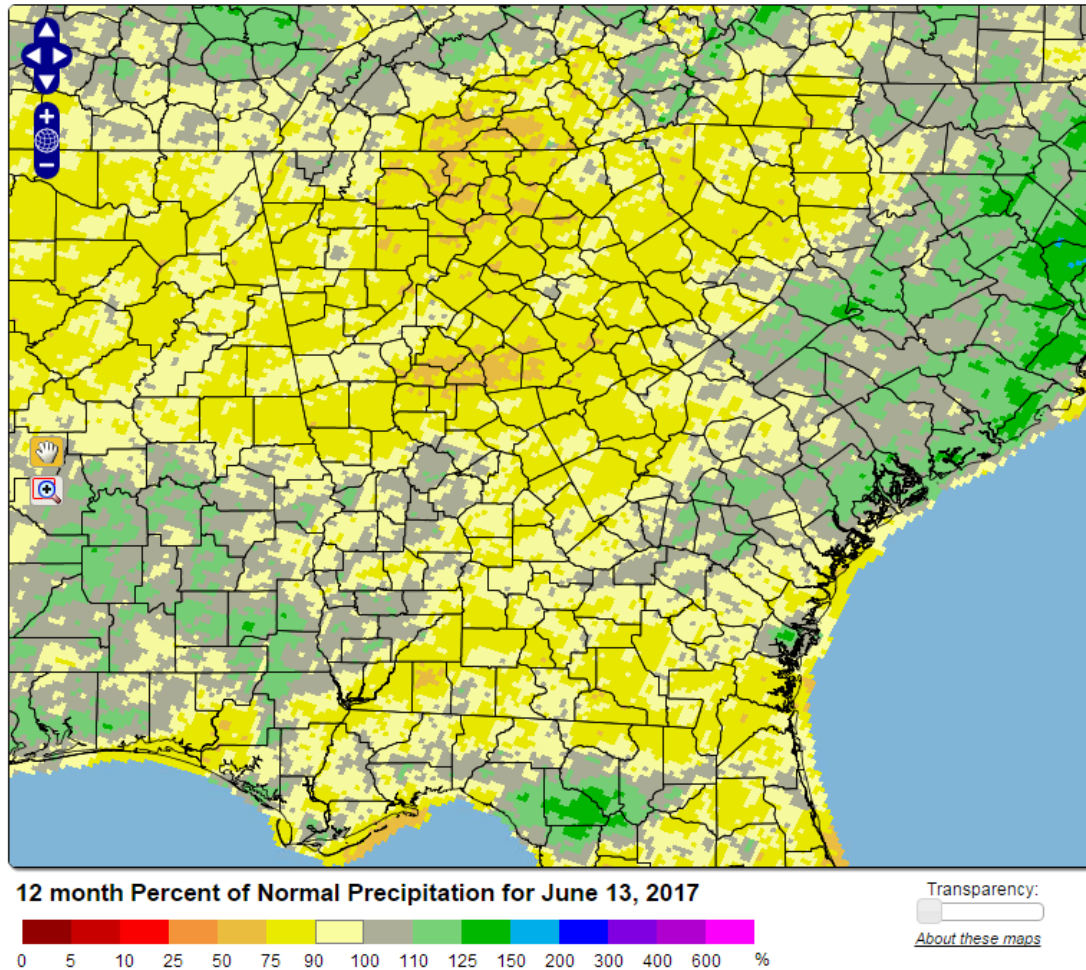
3 Month Percent of Normal Precipitation



6 Month Percent of Normal Precipitation



12 Month Percent of Normal Precipitation

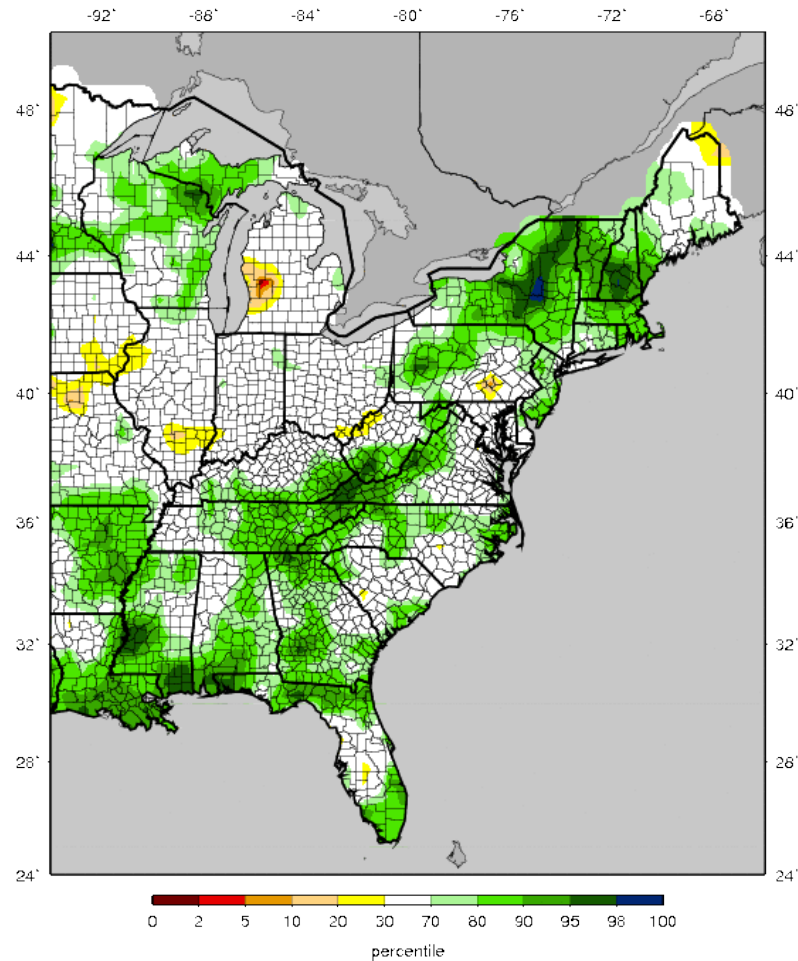


Soil Moisture Conditions

Data Source:

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

VIC Soil Moisture Percentiles (wrt/ 1916-2004)
Eastern United States - 20170612



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

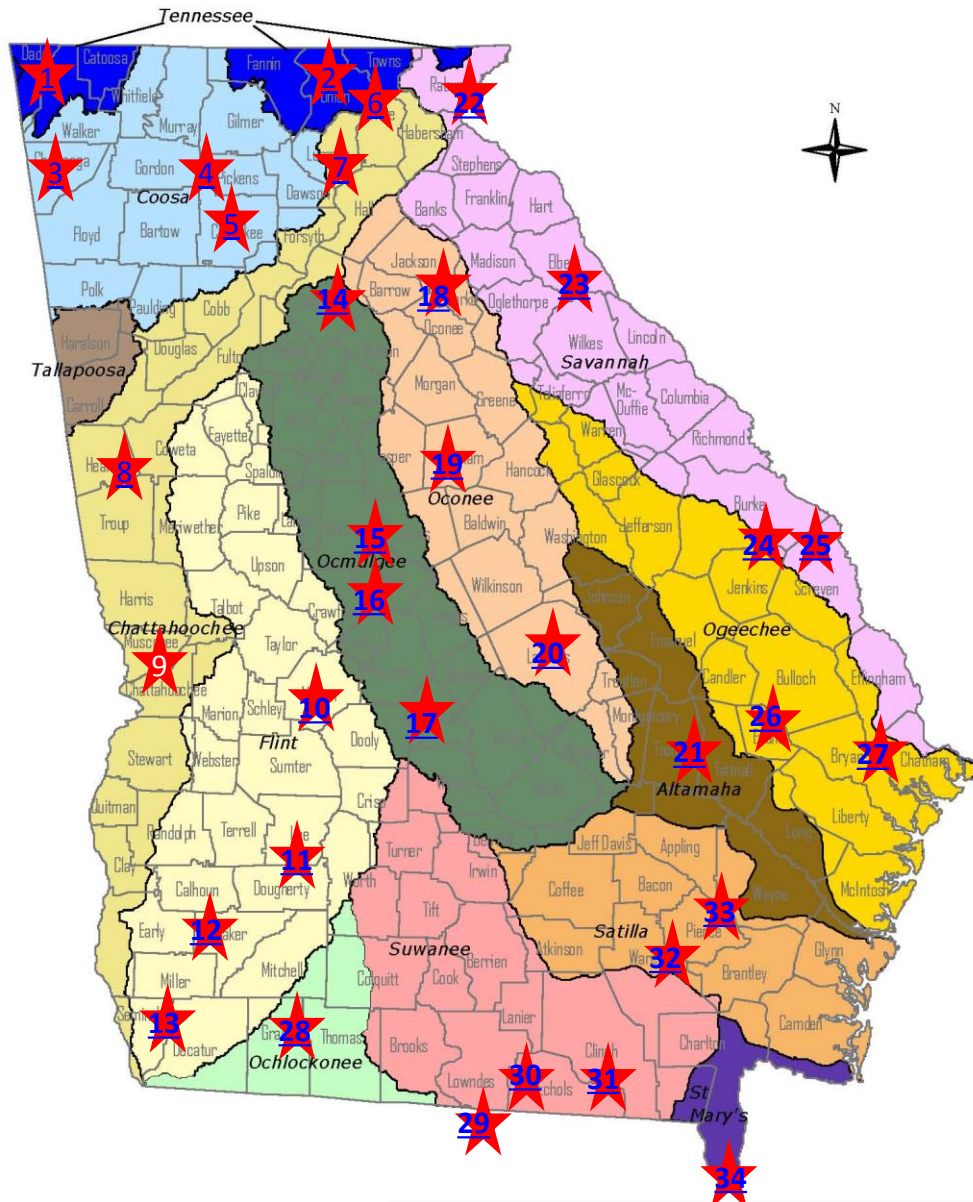
Streamflow Conditions

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



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	TUBESOFKEE 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, 2017 through May, 2017;
- 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 for May 2017 was 947 cfs. The statistical composite of all historical data for this gage shows that average streamflow in May has historically been lower than May 2017 about 20% of the time; about 80% of the time in May it has been higher.
- Average stream flow in May 2011 was 726 cfs. The statistical composite of all historical data for this gage shows that average streamflow for May has historically been lower than May 2011 only 10% of the time; 90% of the time in May it has been higher.
- Average stream flow in May 2007 was 512 cfs. The statistical composite of all historical data for this gage shows that average streamflow for May has historically been lower than May 2007 only 5% of the time; 95% of the time in May it has been higher.

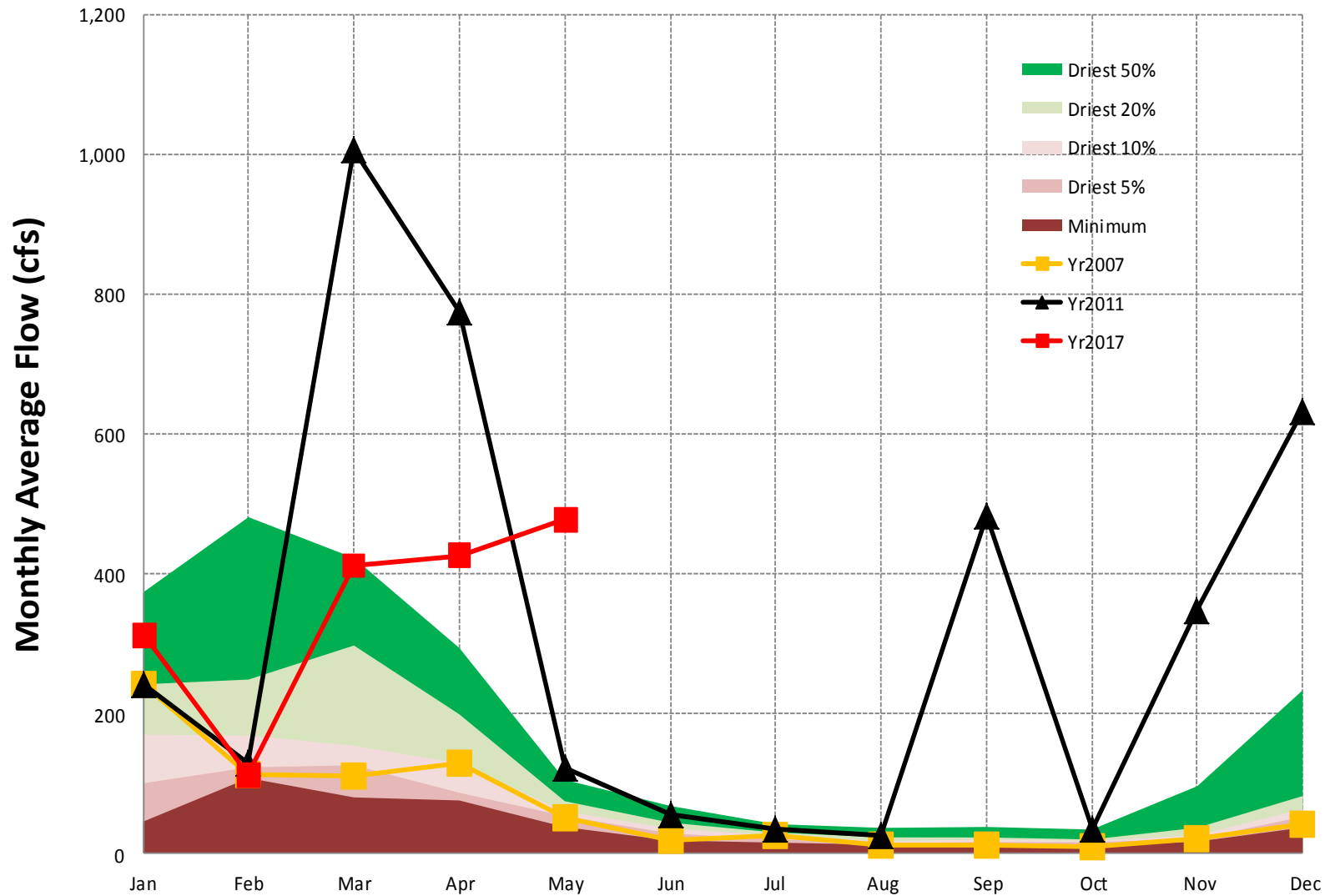
How to Read the Streamflow Graphs

Example #2: [Flint River at Albany](#)

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

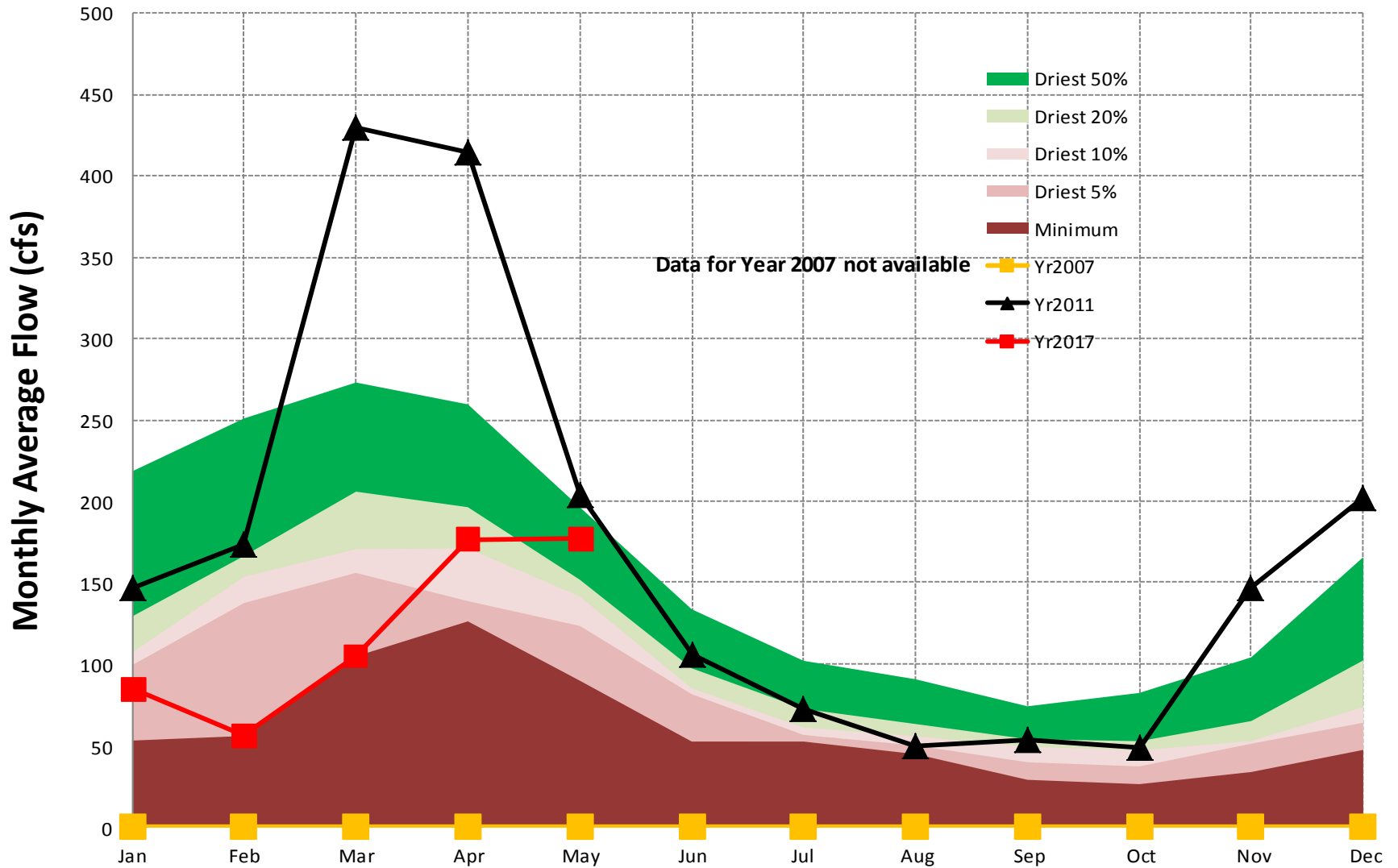
- Average stream flow for May 2017 was 4,361 cfs. The statistical composite of all historical data for this gage shows that average streamflow in May has historically been lower than May 2017 about 50% of the time; about 50% of the time in May it has been higher.
- Average stream flow in May 2011 was 1,575 cfs. The statistical composite of all historical data for this gage shows that average streamflow for May has historically been lower than May 2011 about 3% of the time; about 97% of the time in May it has been higher.
- Average stream flow in May 2007 was 1,291 cfs. The statistical composite of all historical data for this gage shows that average streamflow for May has historically been lower than May 2007 about 1% of the time; about 99% of the time in May it has been higher.

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



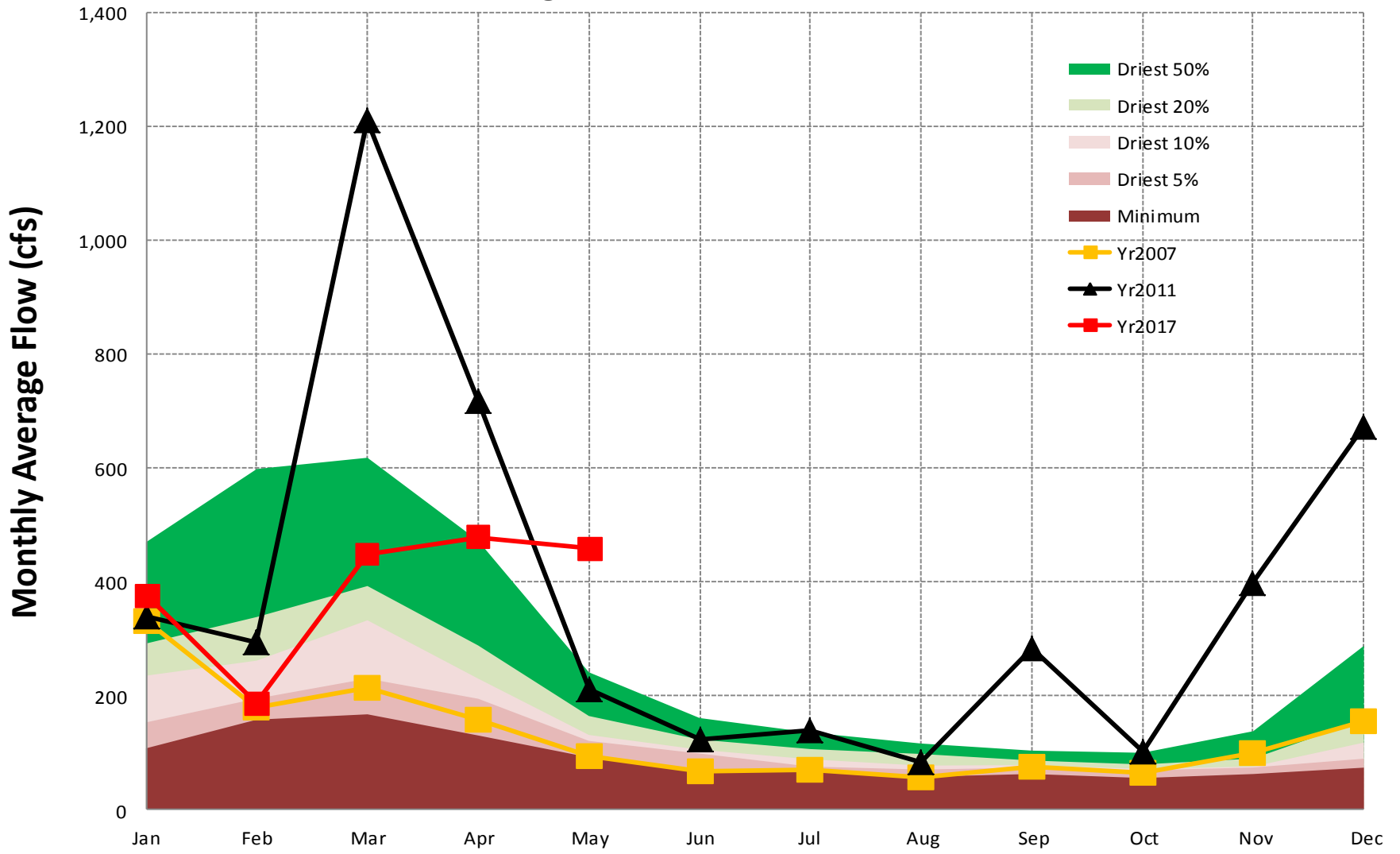
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Gage #2, USGS #03550500, Tennessee Basin, NOTTELY RIVER NEAR BLAIRSVILLE, GA



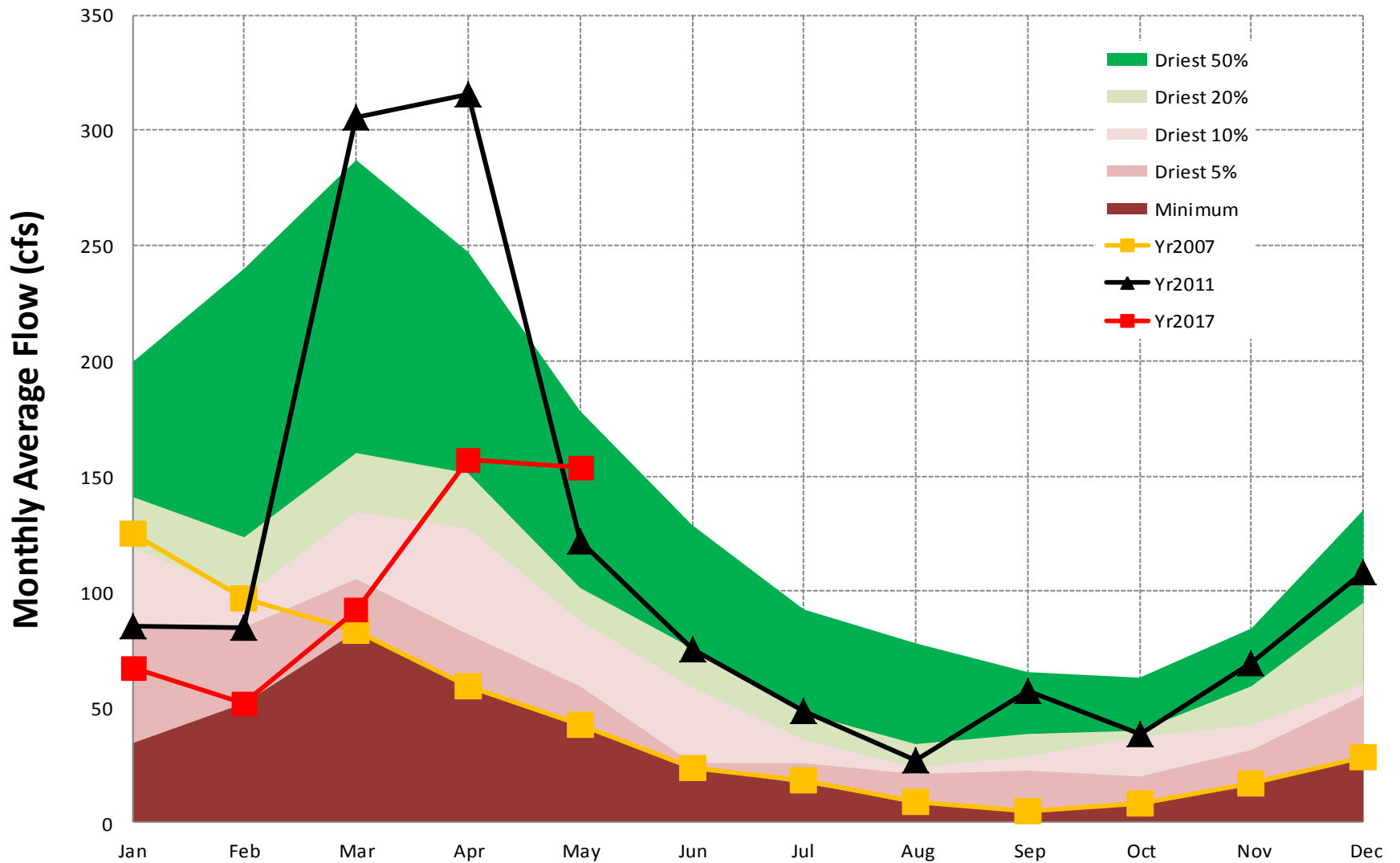
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Gage #3. USGS #02398000, Coosa Basin, Chattooga River at Summerville, GA



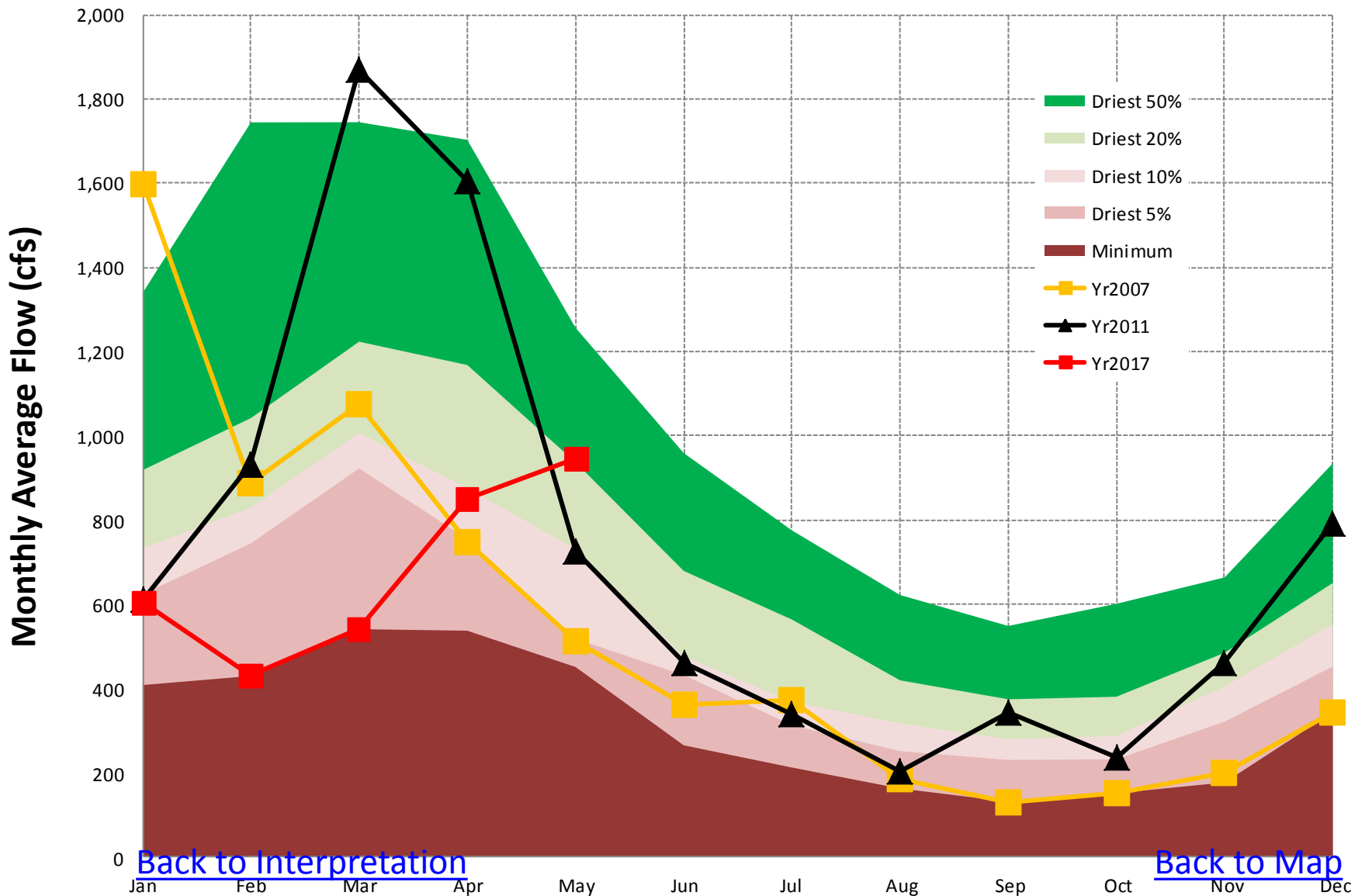
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Gage #4, USGS #02382200, Coosa Basin, TALKING ROCK CREEK NEAR HINTON, GA

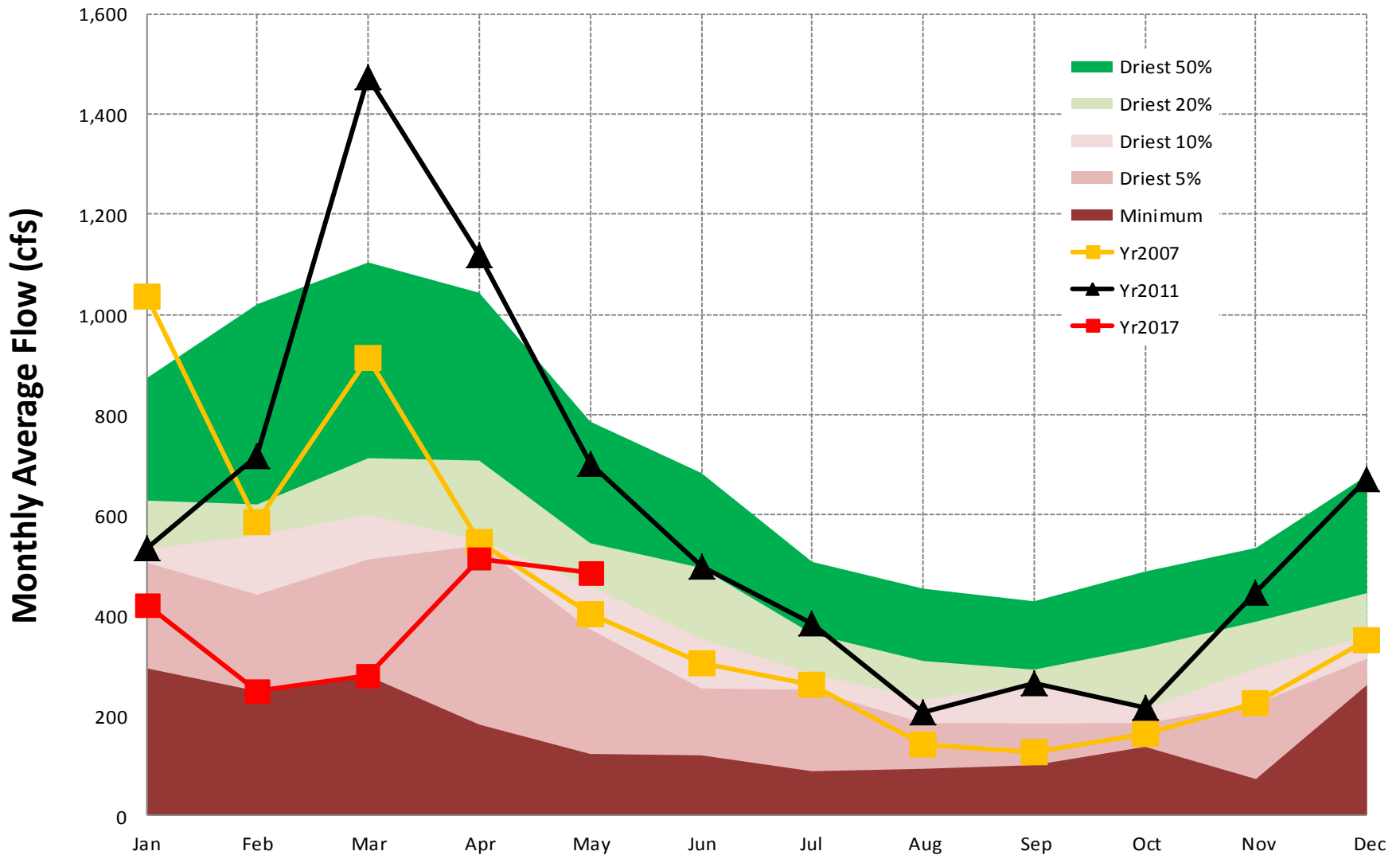


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Gage #5, USGS #02392000, Coosa Basin, Etowah River at Canton, GA

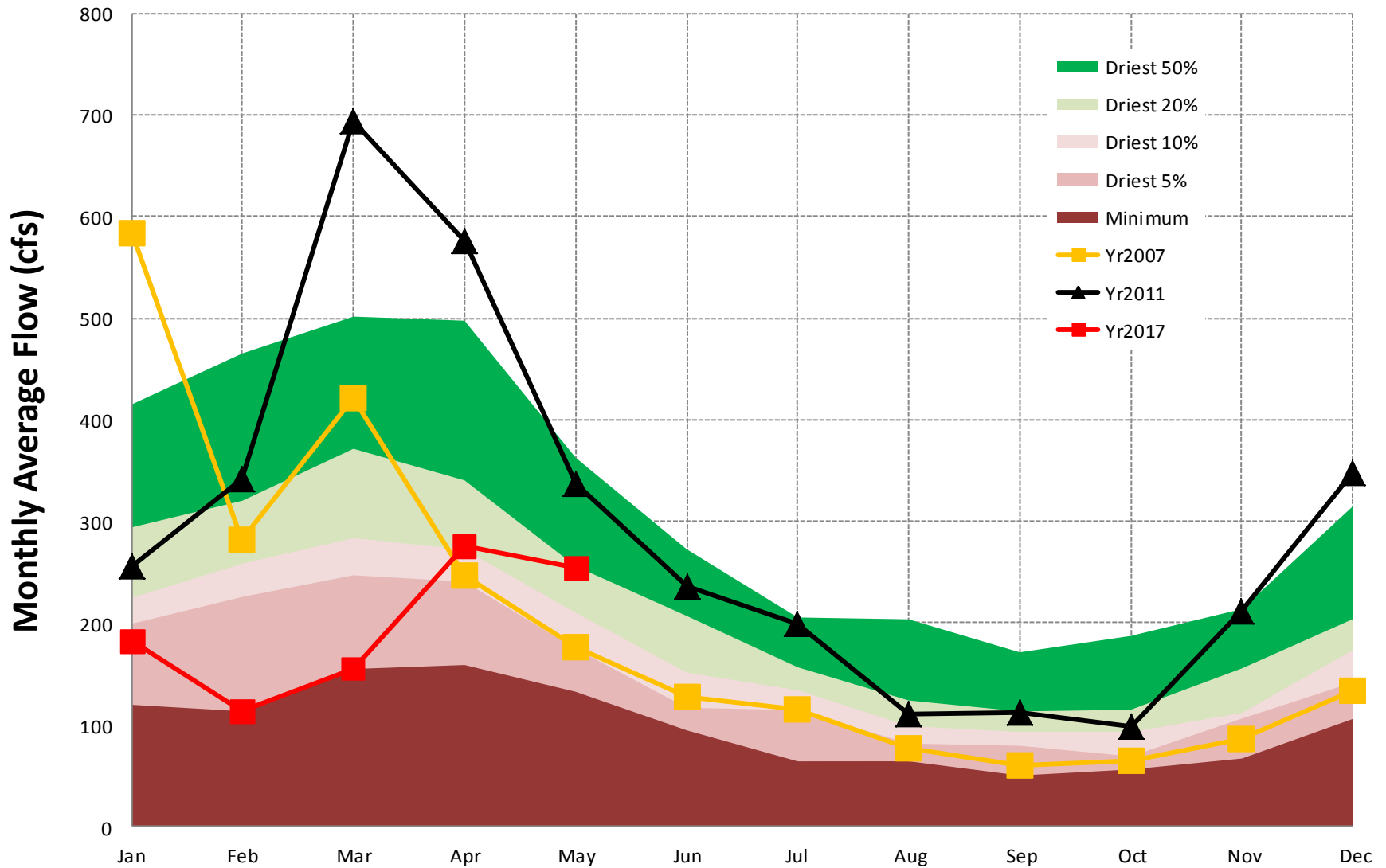


Gage #6, USGS #02331600, Chatthoochee Basin, CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVER AT CORNELIA, GA



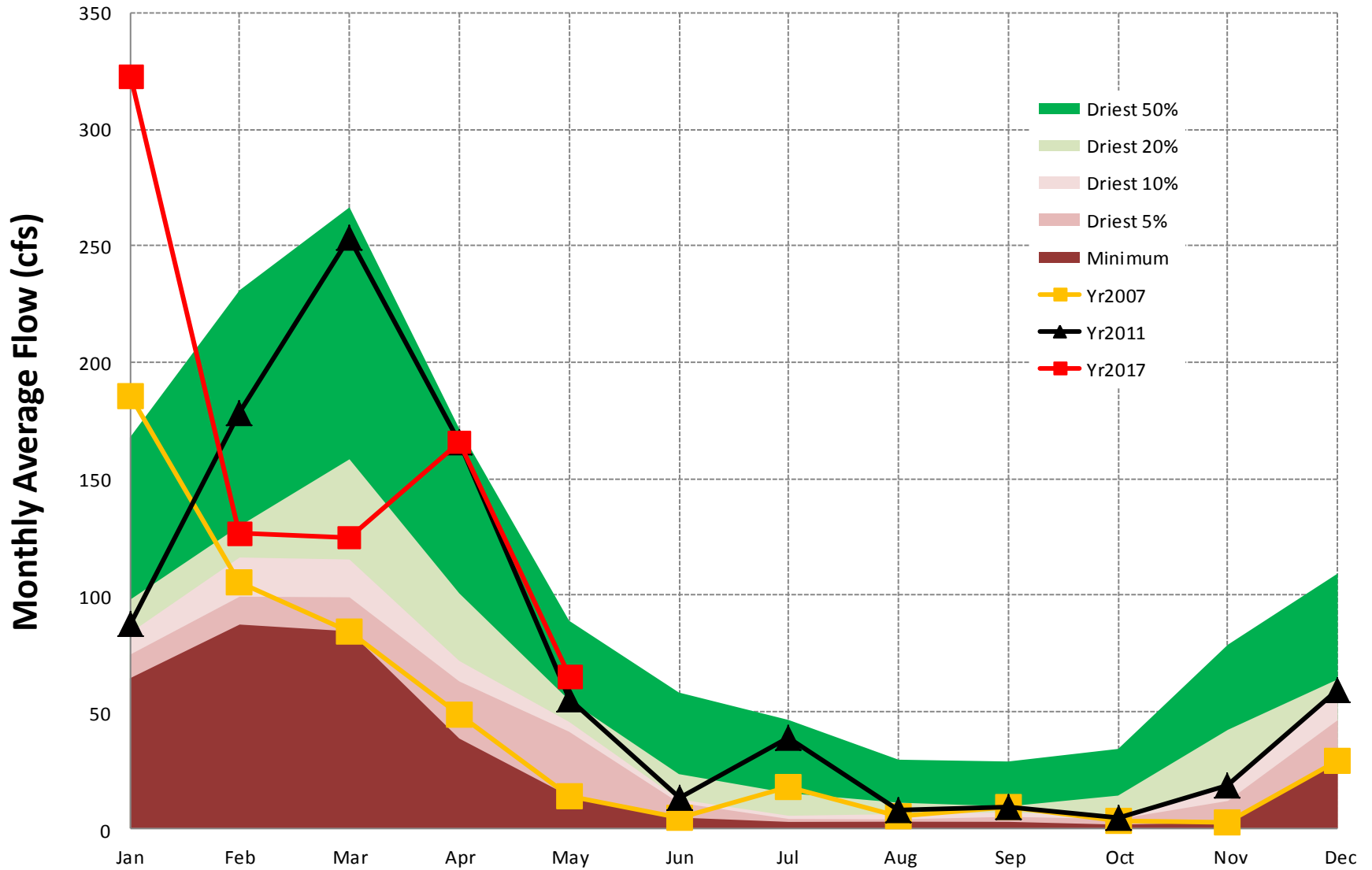
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**Gage #7, USGS #02333500, Chatahoochee Basin,
CHESTATEE RIVER NEAR DAHLONEGA, GA**



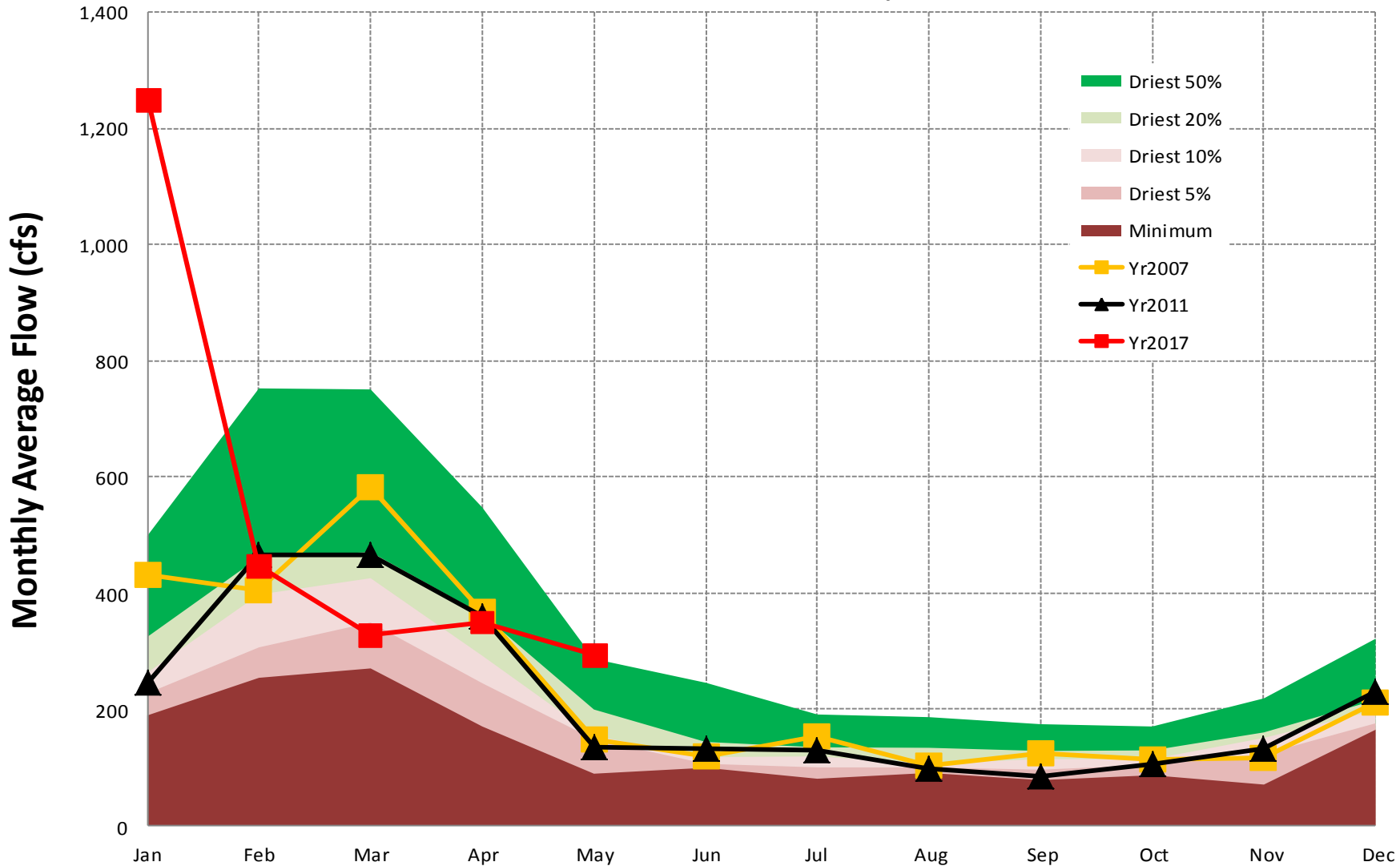
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**Gage #8, USGS #02338660, Chattahoochee Basin,
NEW RIVER AT GA 100, NEAR CORINTH**



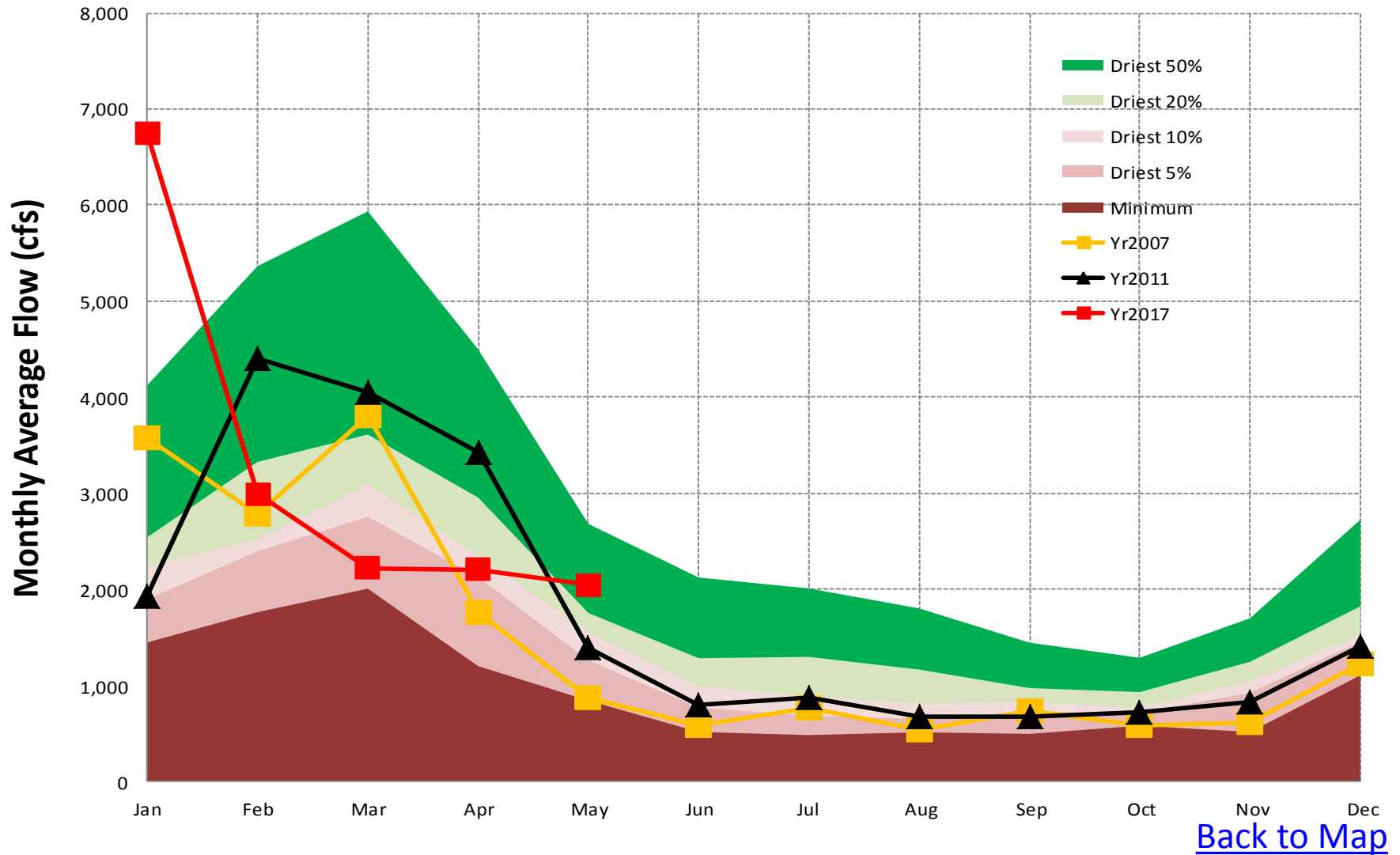
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**Gage #9, USGS #02341800, Chattahoochee Basin,
UPatoi CREEK NEAR COLUMBUS, GA**

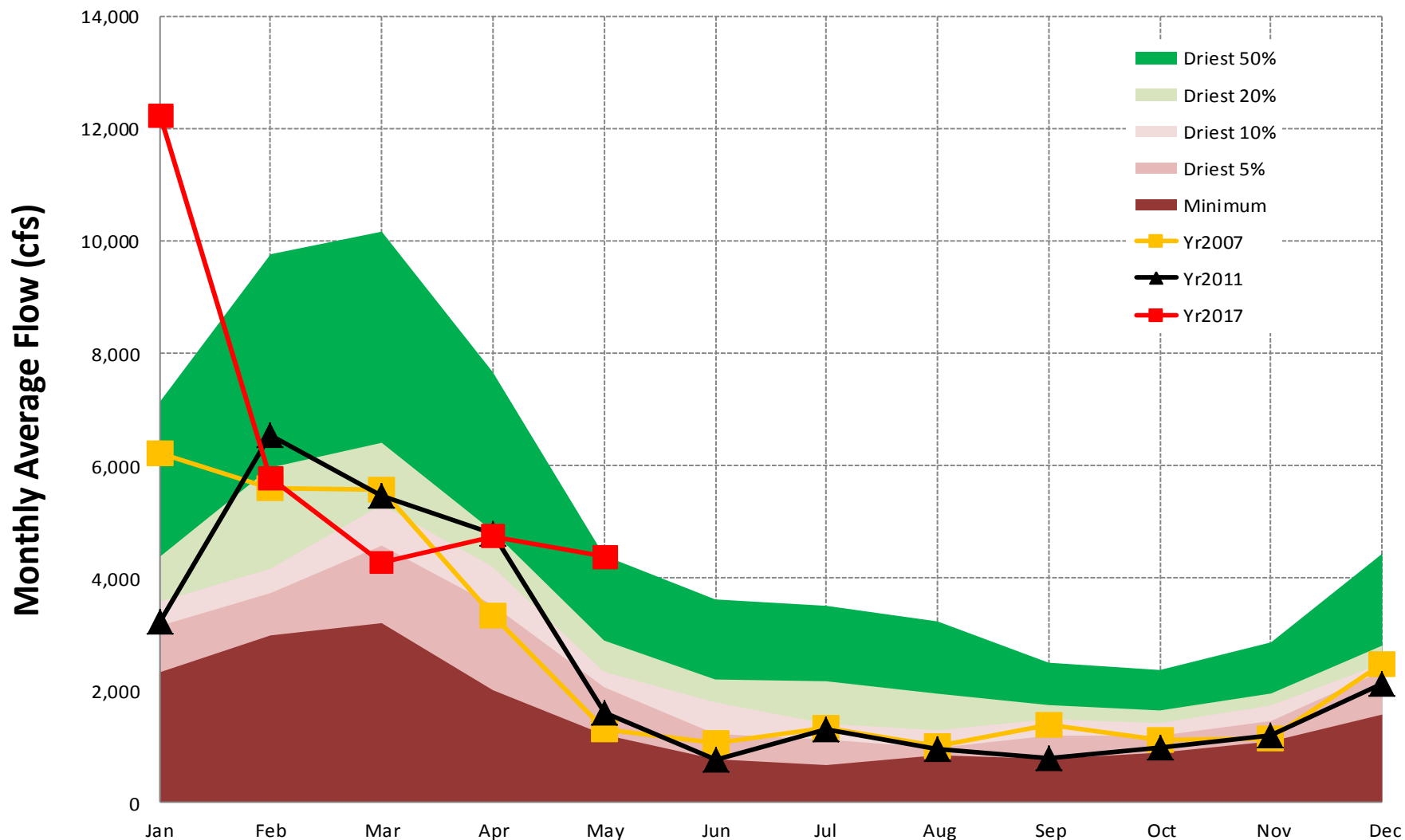


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Gage #10. USGS #02349605, Flint Basin, FLINT RIVER AT GA26 NEAR MONTEZUMA, GA



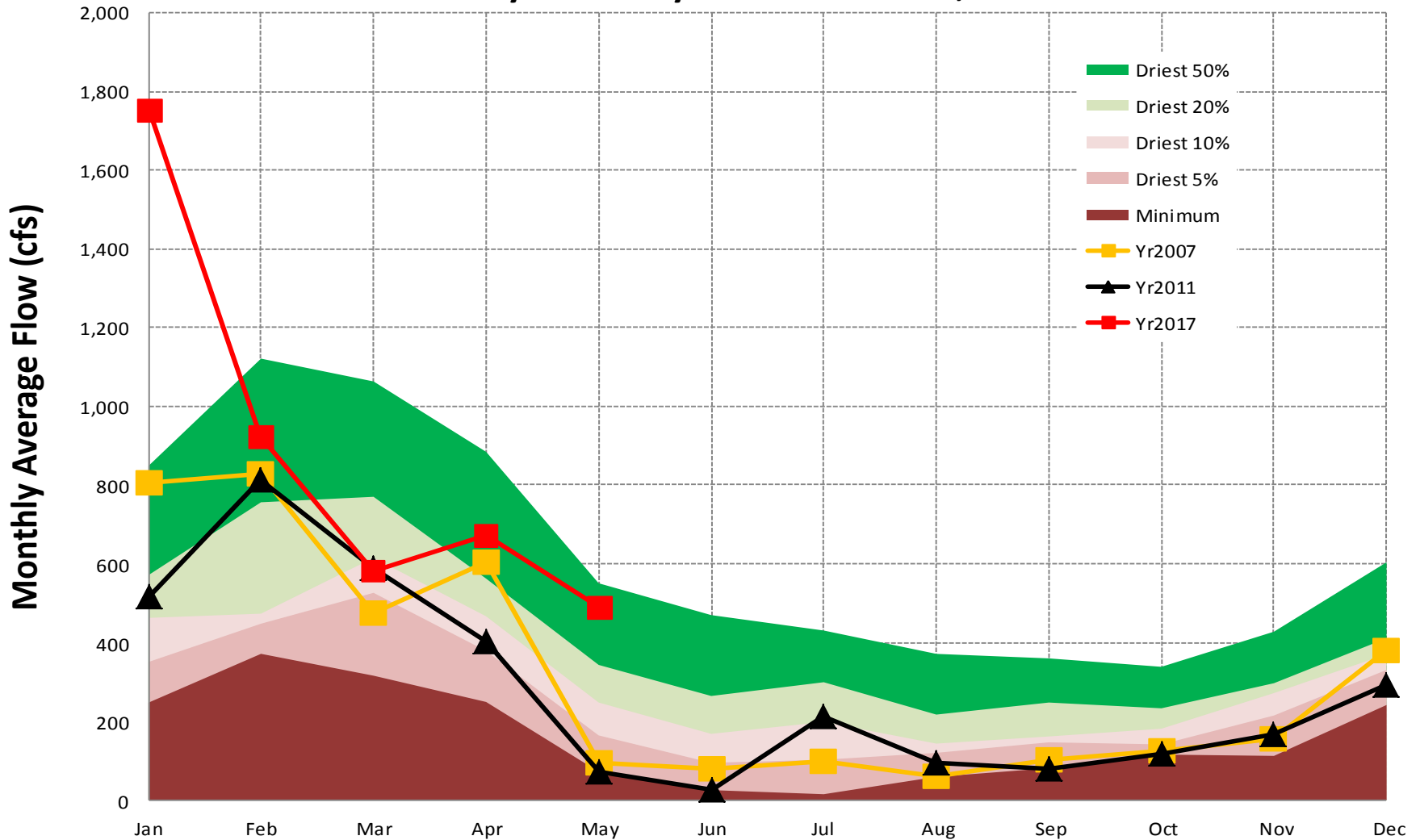
Gage #11, USGS #02352500, Flint Basin, FLINT RIVER AT ALBANY, GA



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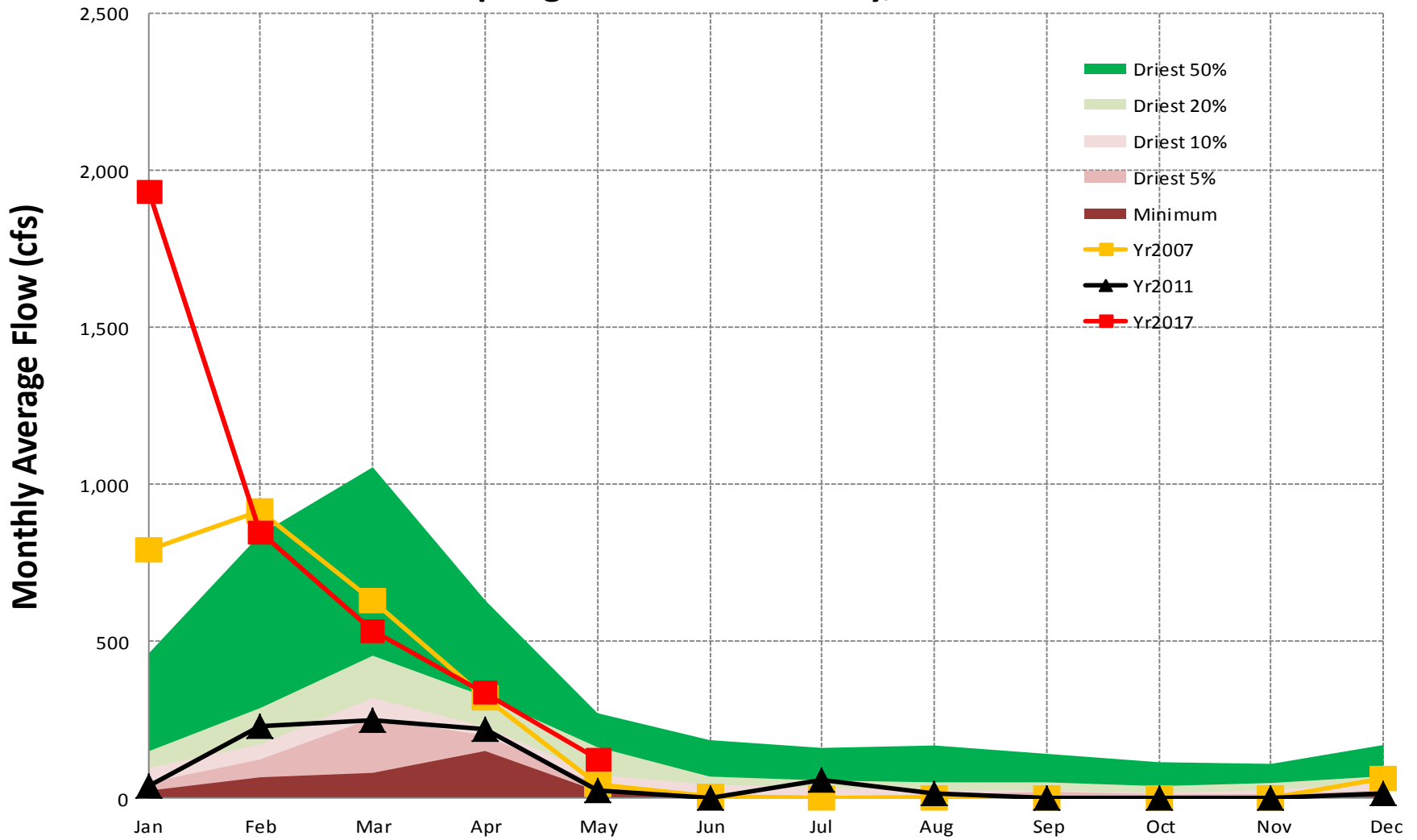
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Gage #12. USGS #02353500, Flint Basin, Ichawaynochaway Creek at Milford, GA



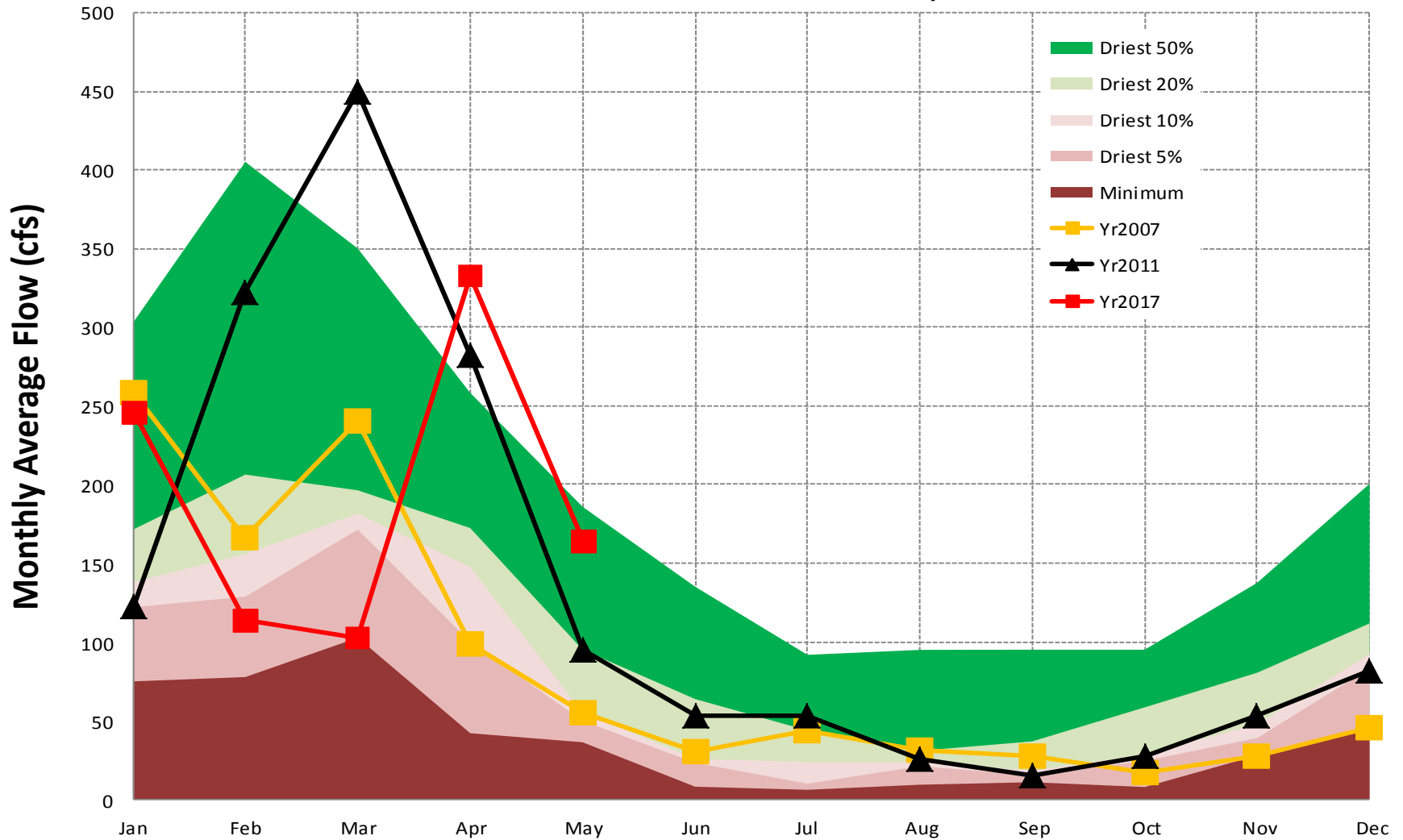
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Gage #13. USGS #02357000, Flint River, Spring Creek near Iron City, GA



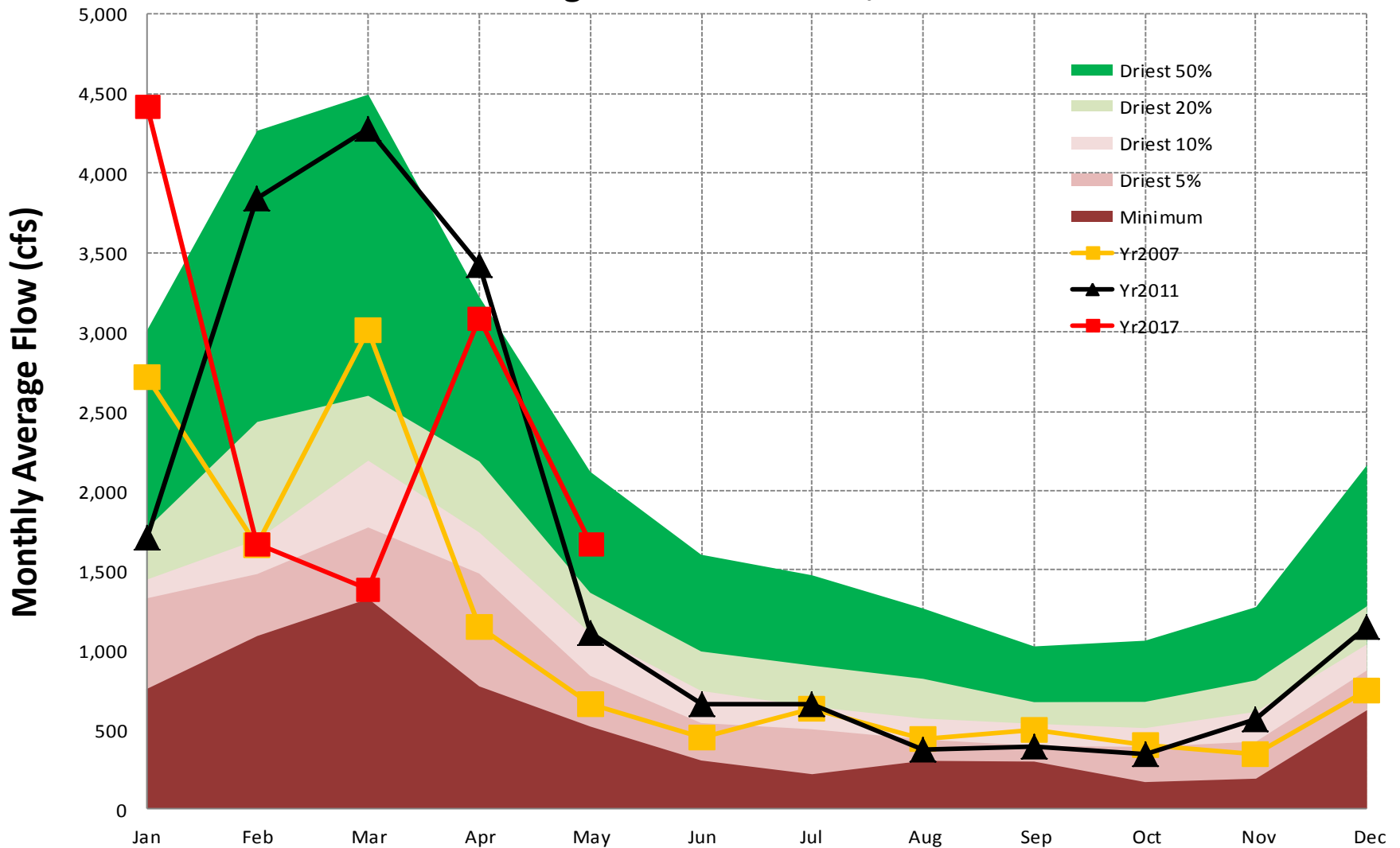
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Gage #14. USGS #02208450, Ocumulgee Basin, ALCOVY RIVER above COVINGTON, GA



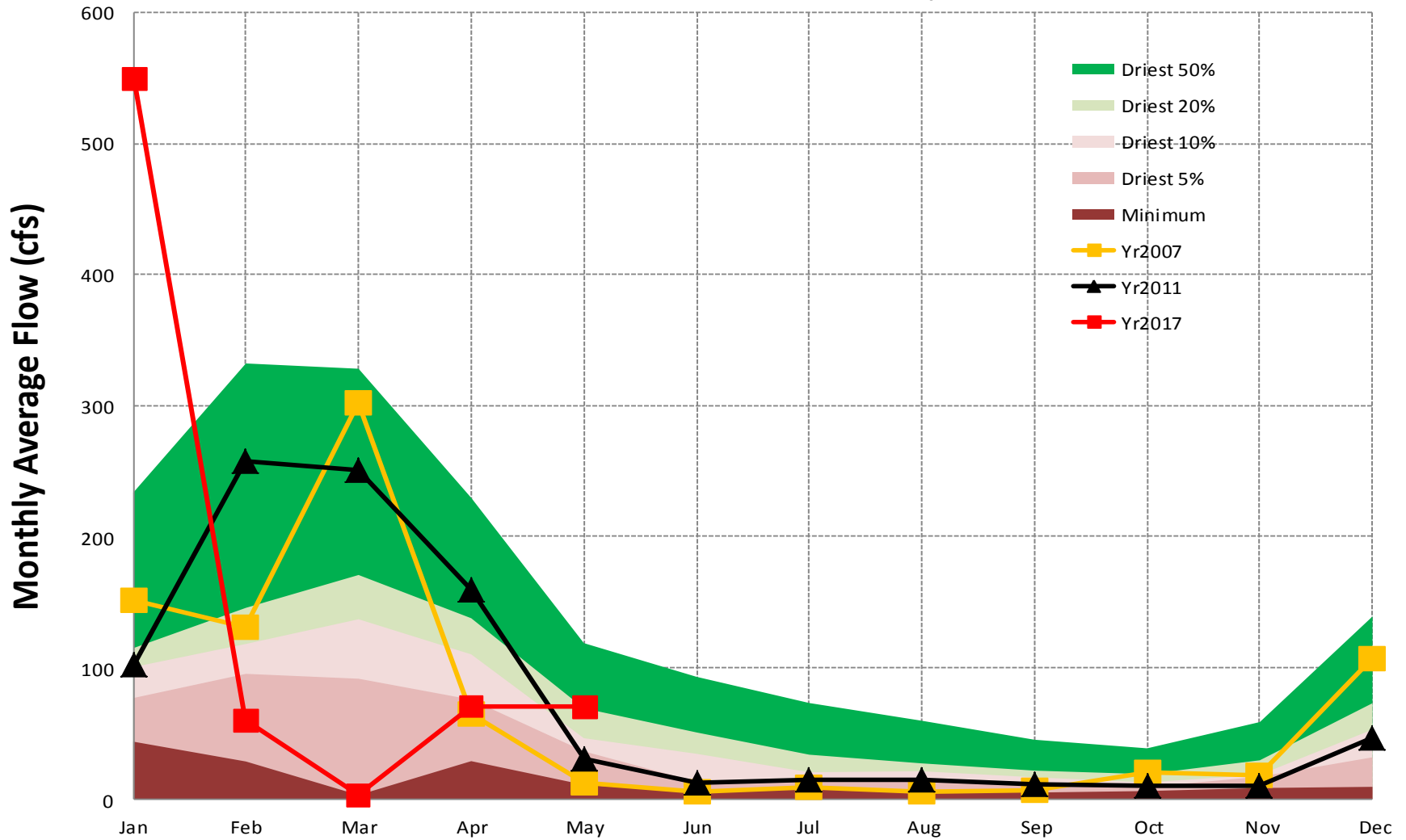
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Gage #15. USGS #02213000, Ocmulgee Basin, Ocmulgee River at Macon, GA



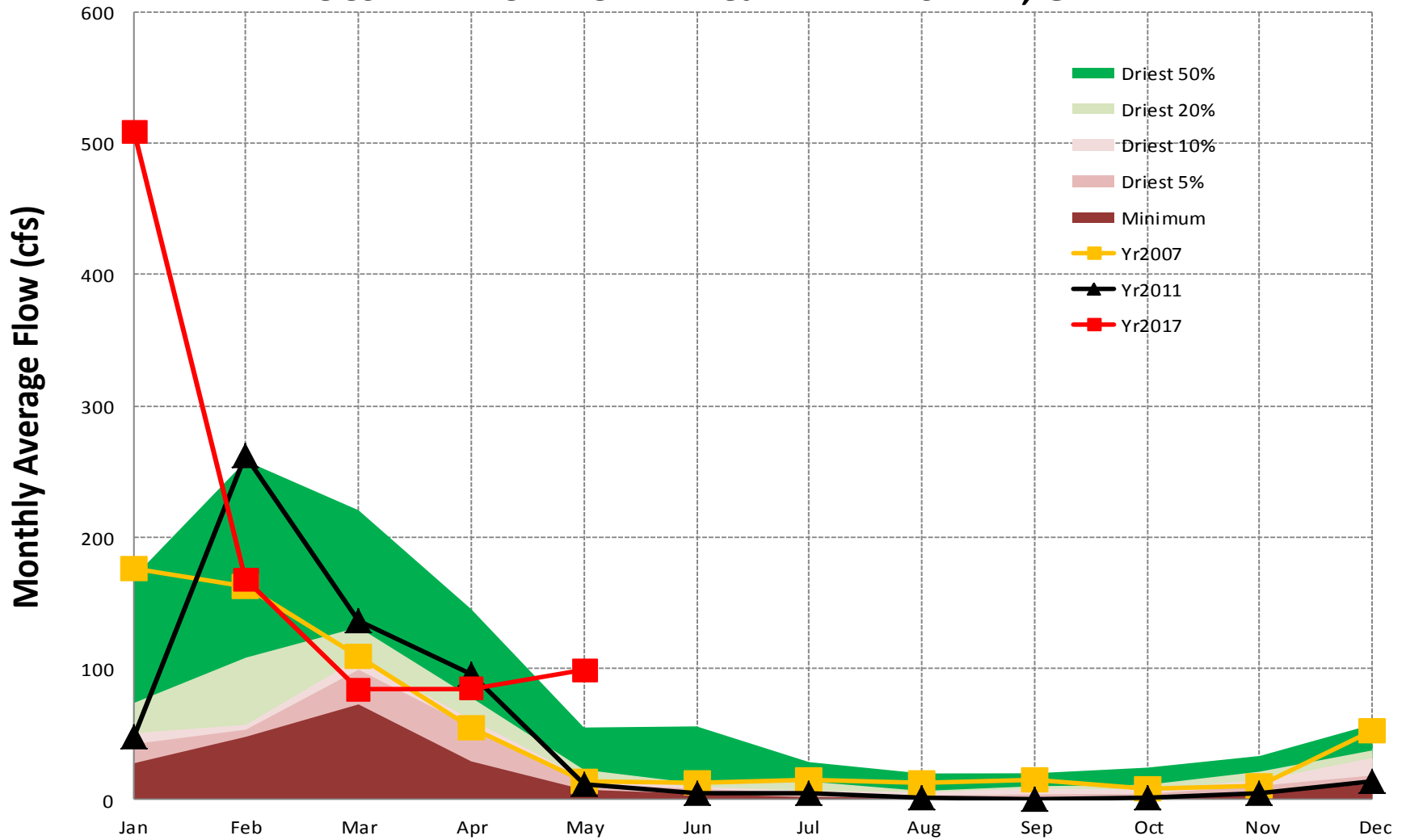
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**Gage #16. USGS #02213500, Ocmulgee Basin,
TOBESOFKEE CREEK near MACON, GA**



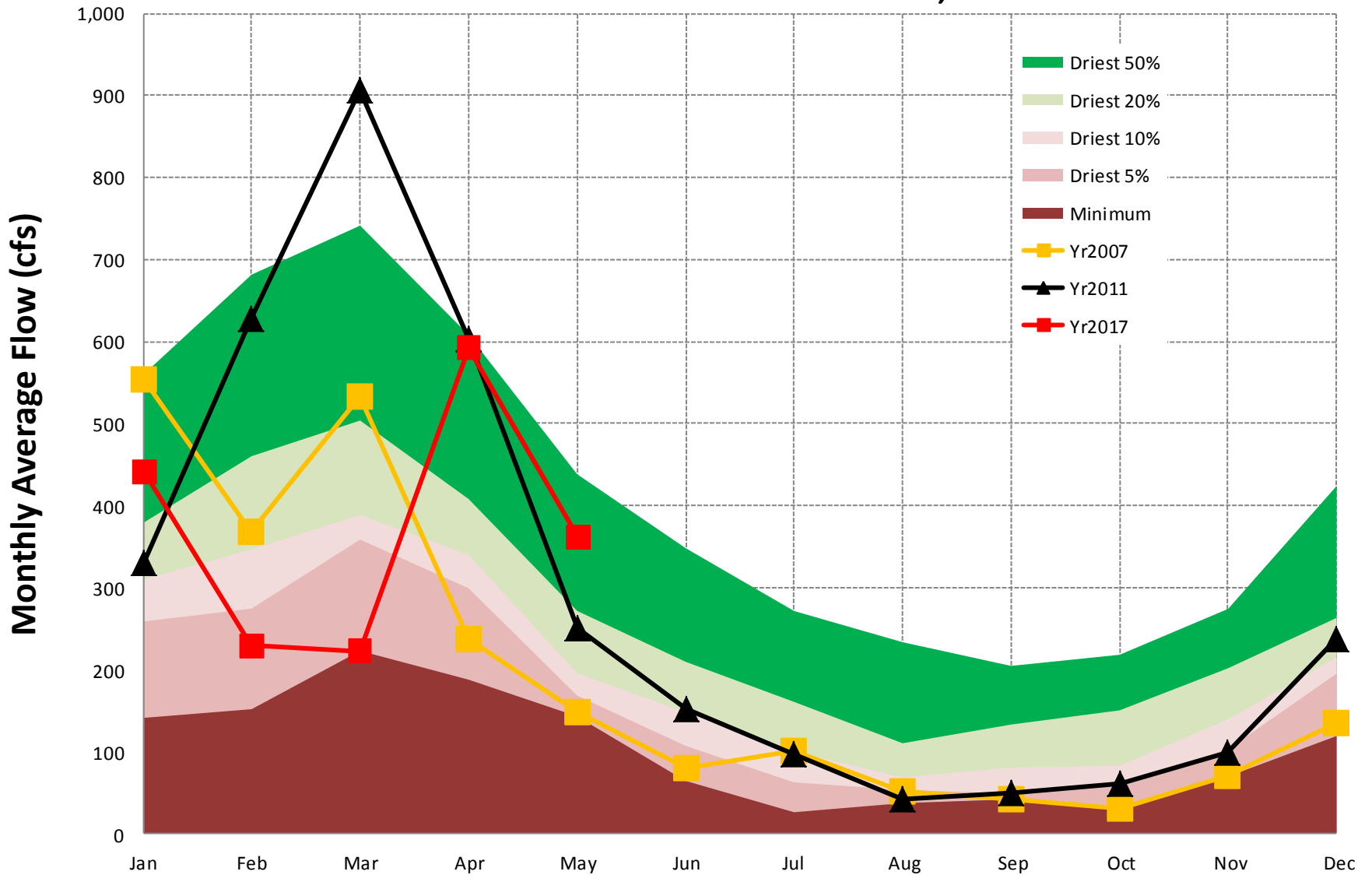
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**Gage #17. USGS #02215100, Ocmulgee Basin,
TUCSAWHATCHEE CREEK near HAWKINSVILLE, GA**

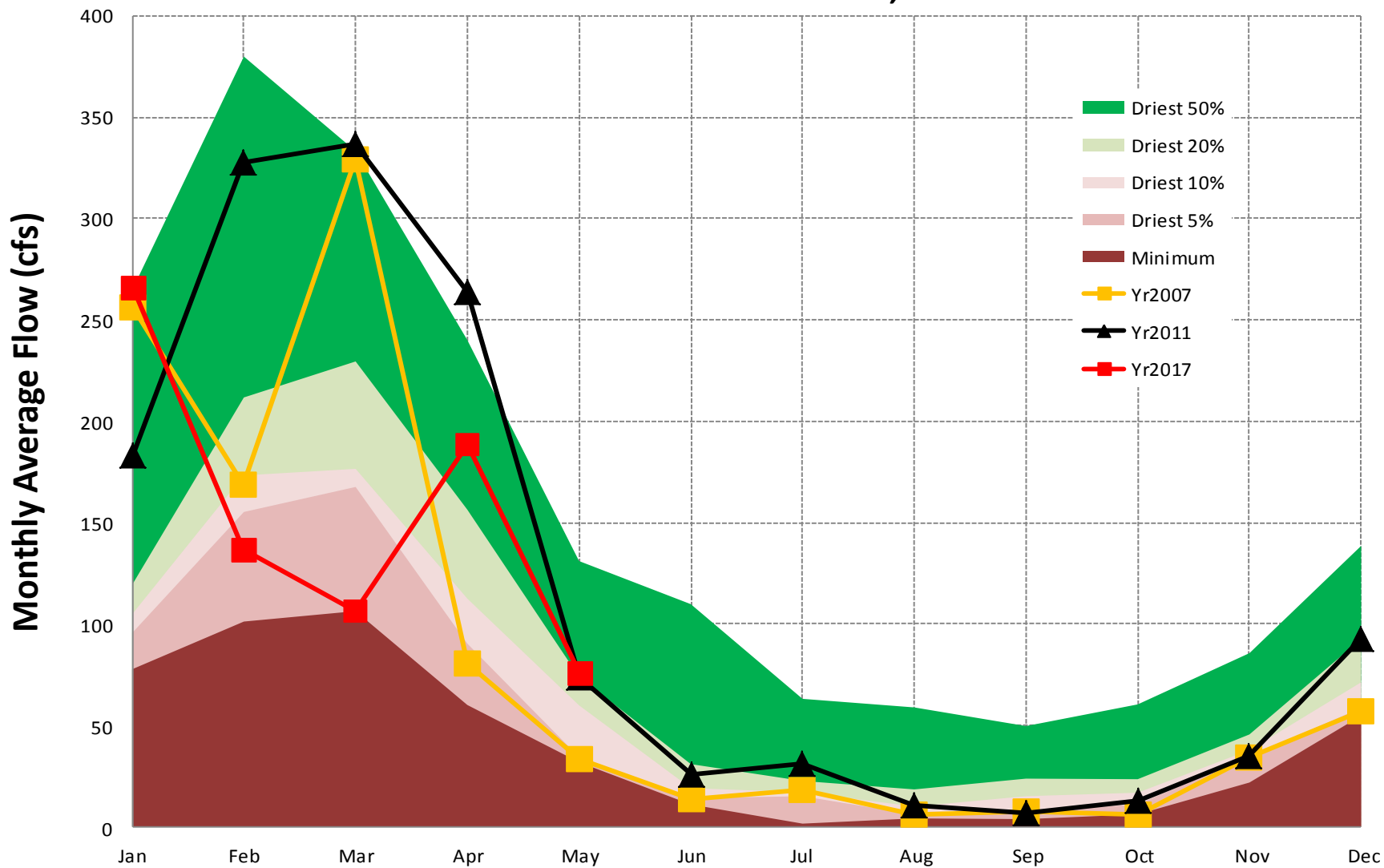


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Gage #18. USGS #02217500, Oconee Basin, MIDDLE OCONEE RIVER near ATHENS, GA

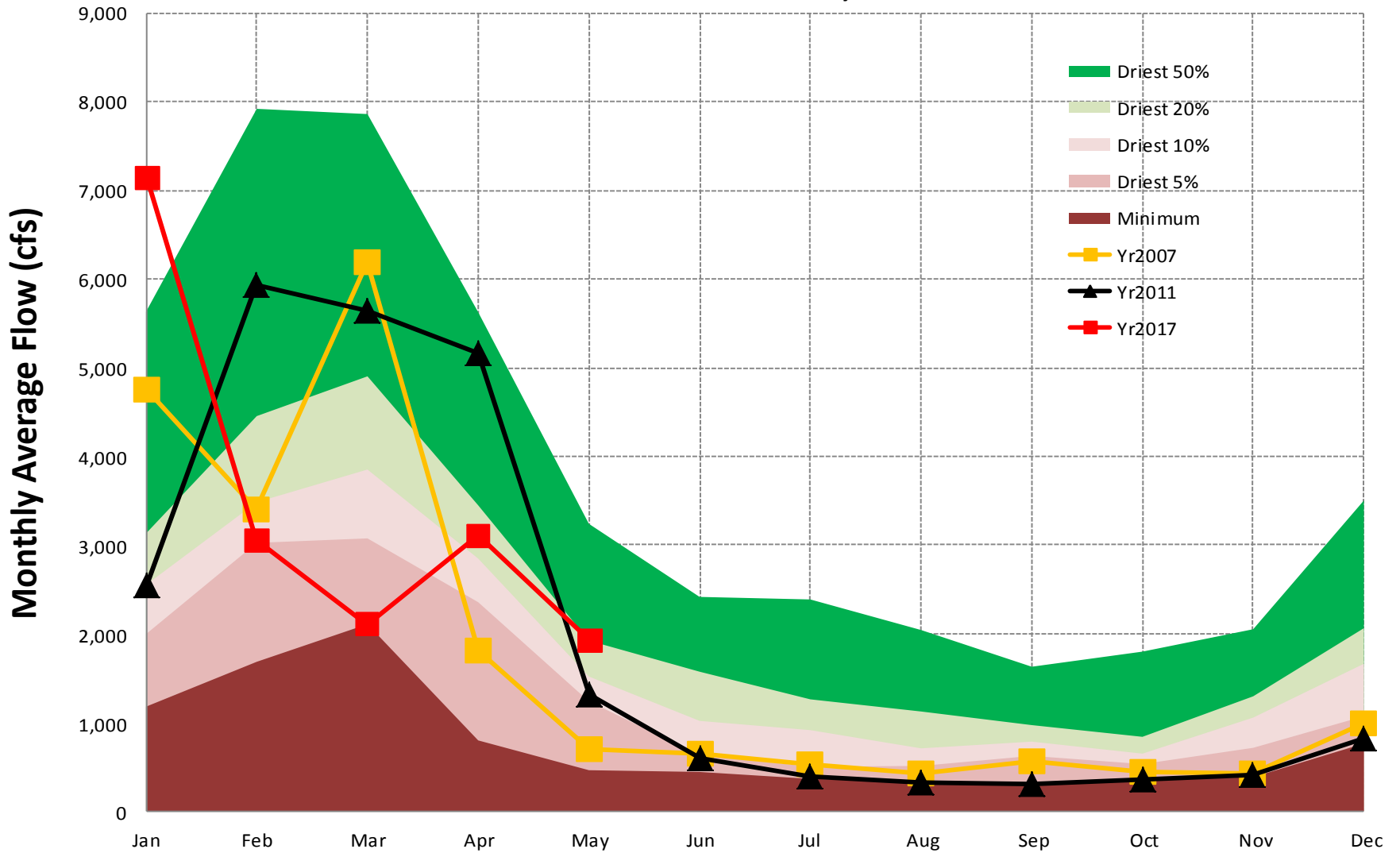


**Gage #19. USGS #02220900, Oconee Basin,
LITTLE RIVER near EATONTON, GA**



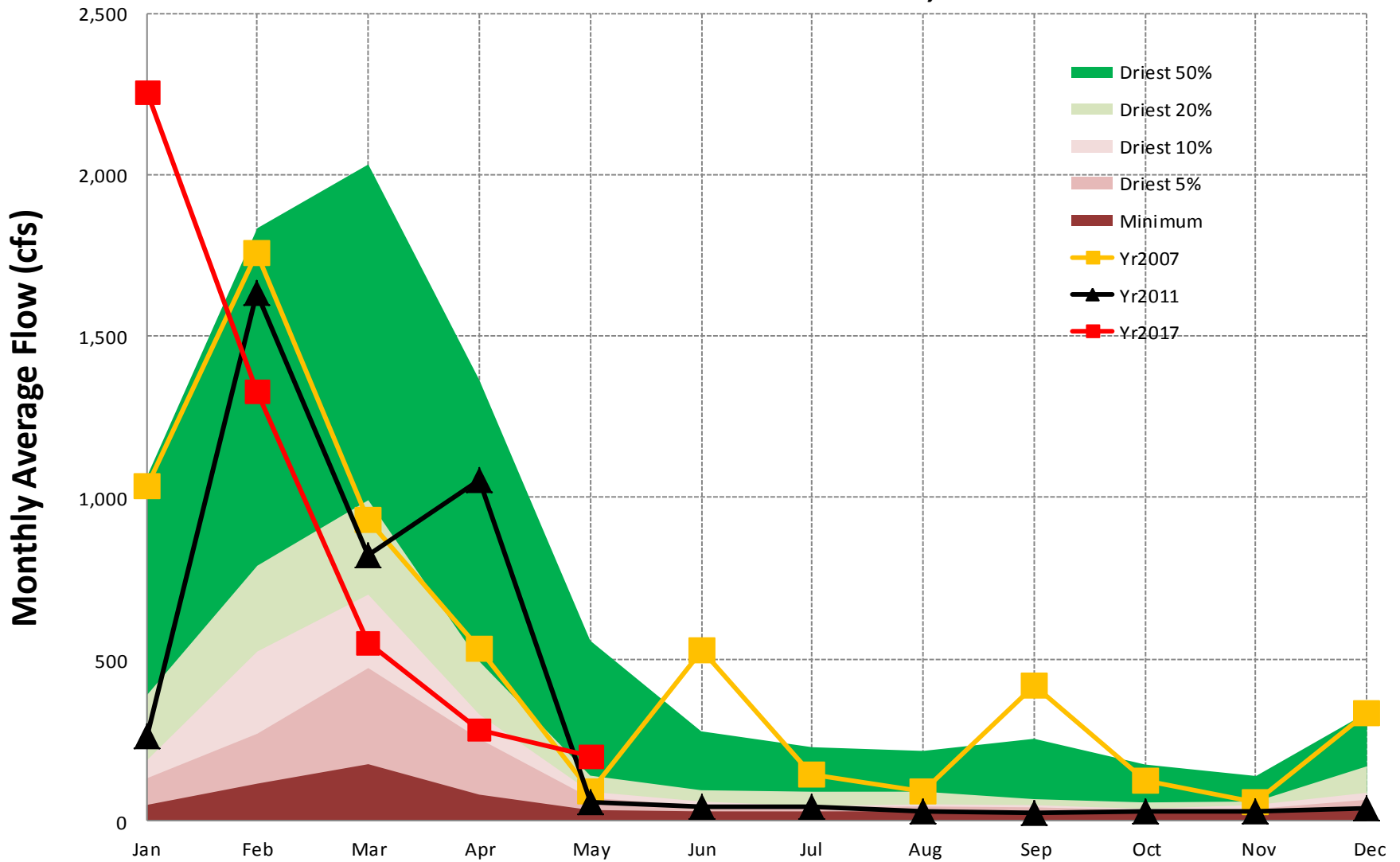
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Gage #20. USGS #02223500, Oconee Basin, Oconee River at Dublin, GA



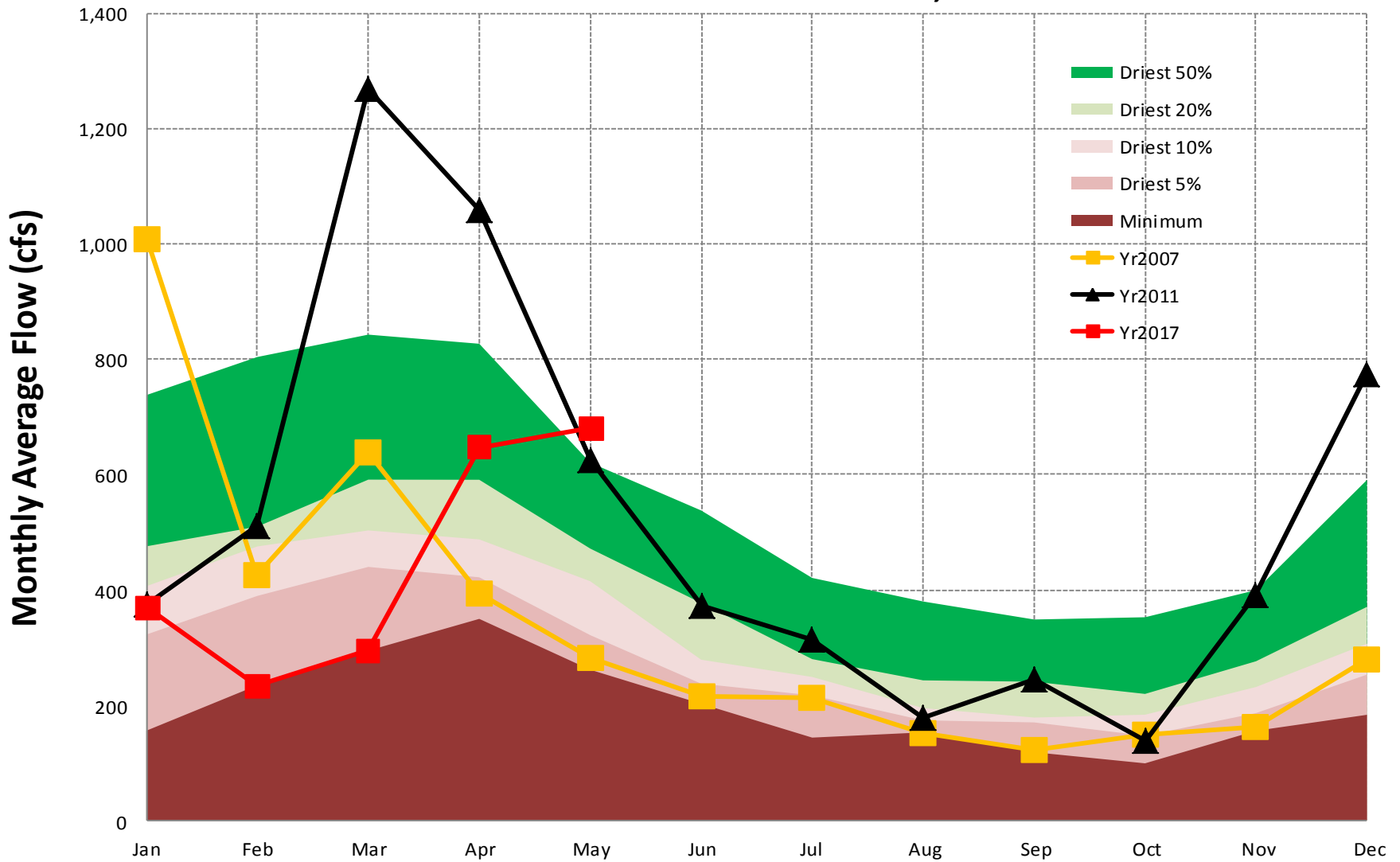
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**Gage #21. USGS #02225500, Altamaha Basin,
OHOOPEE RIVER near REIDSVILLE, GA**



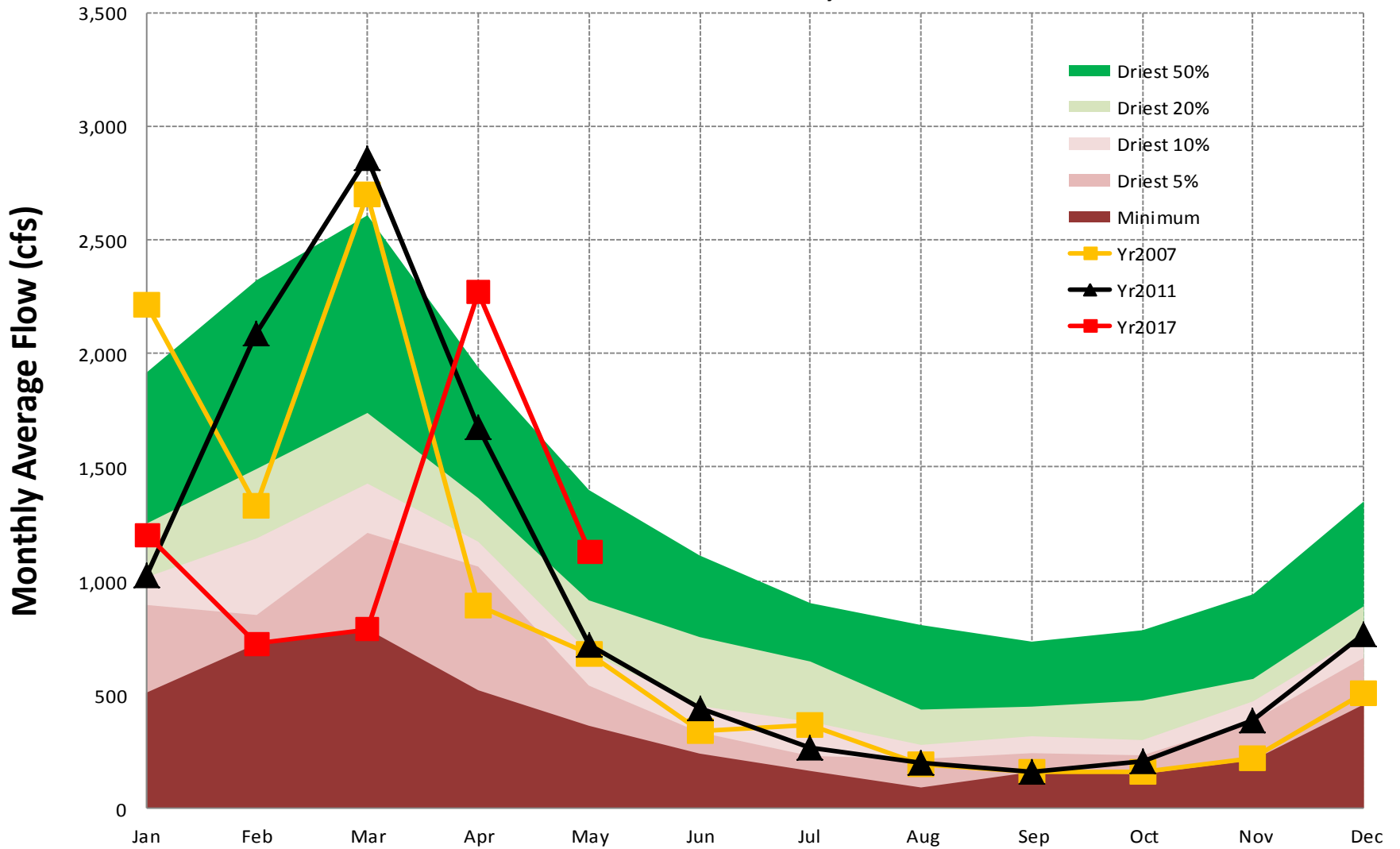
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**Gage #22. USGS #02177000, Savannah Basin,
CHATTOOGA RIVER near CLAYTON, GA**



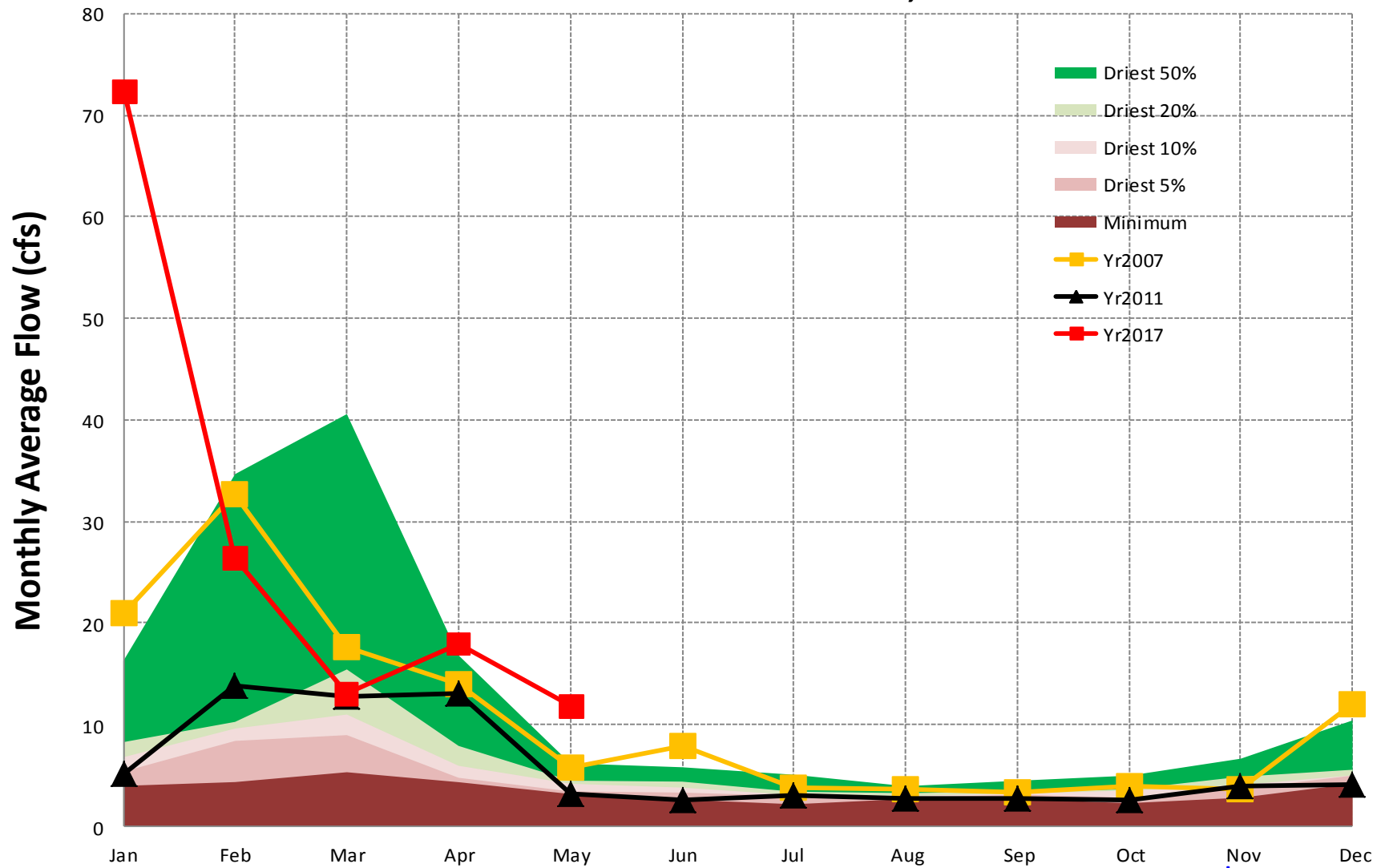
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Gage #23. USGS #02192000, Savannah Basin Broad River near Bell, GA



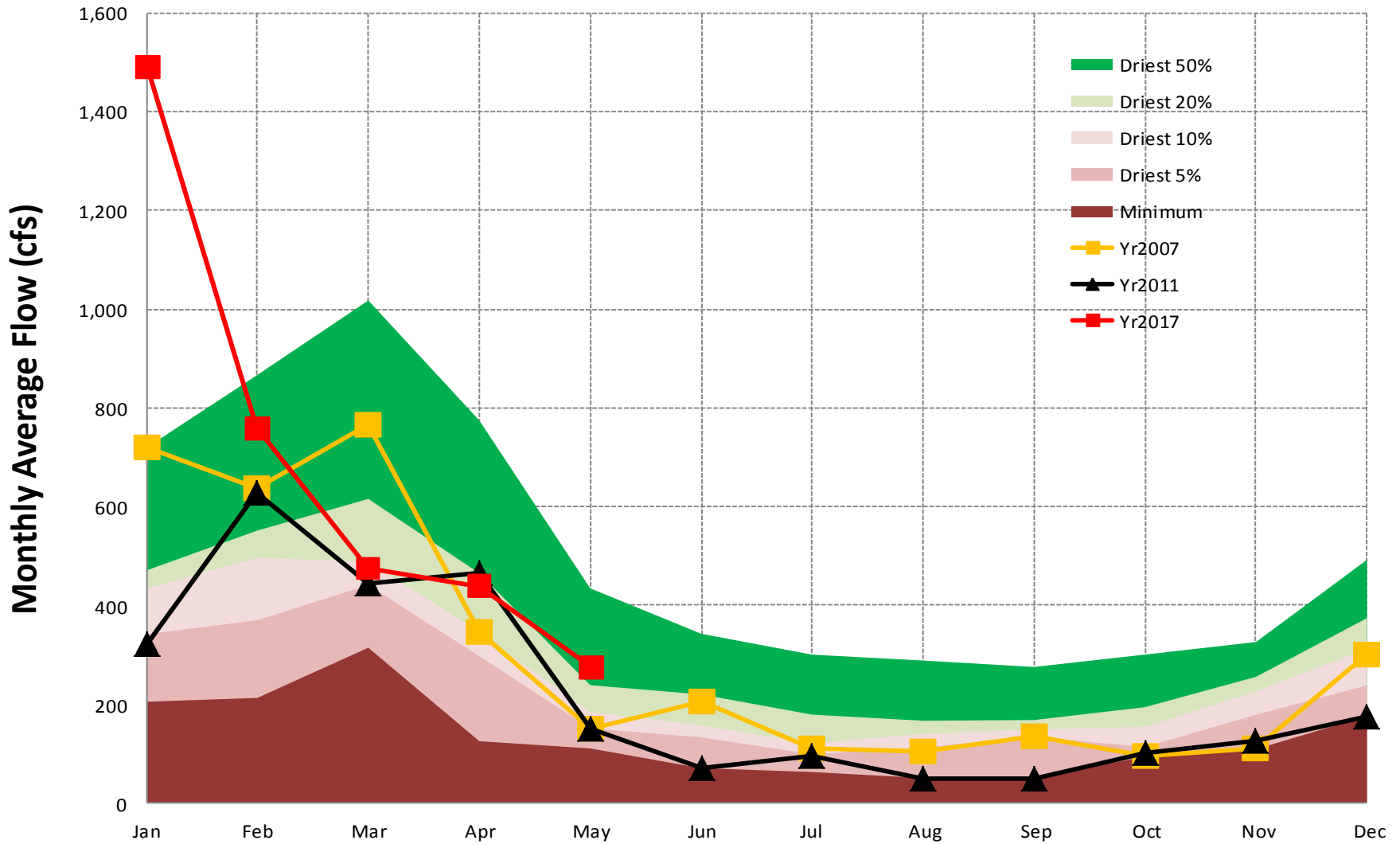
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**Gage #24. USGS #02198100, Savannah Basin,
BEAVERDAM CREEK near SARDIS, GA**



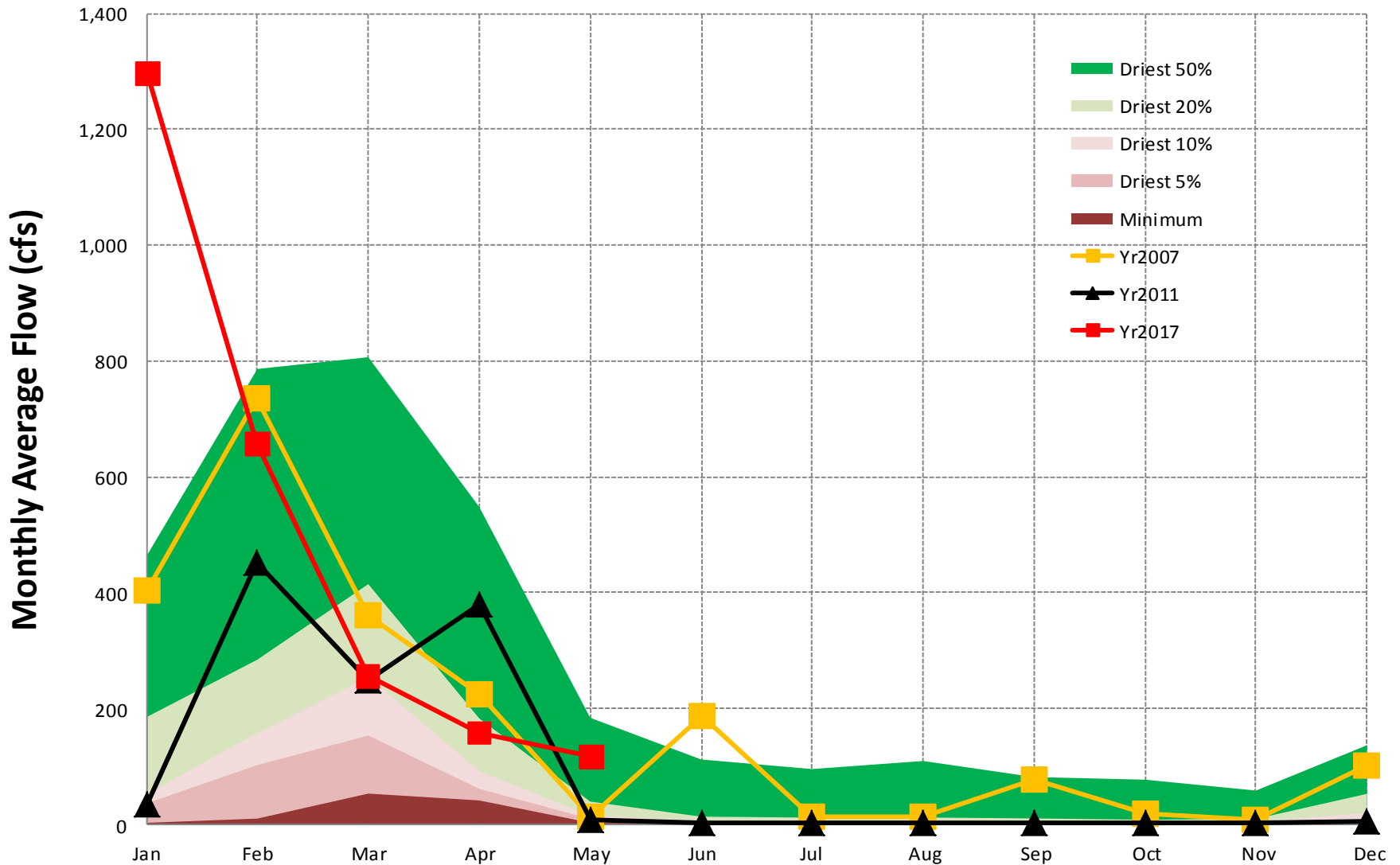
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**Gage #25. USGS #02198000 , Savannah Basin,
BRIER CREEK at MILLHAVEN, GA**



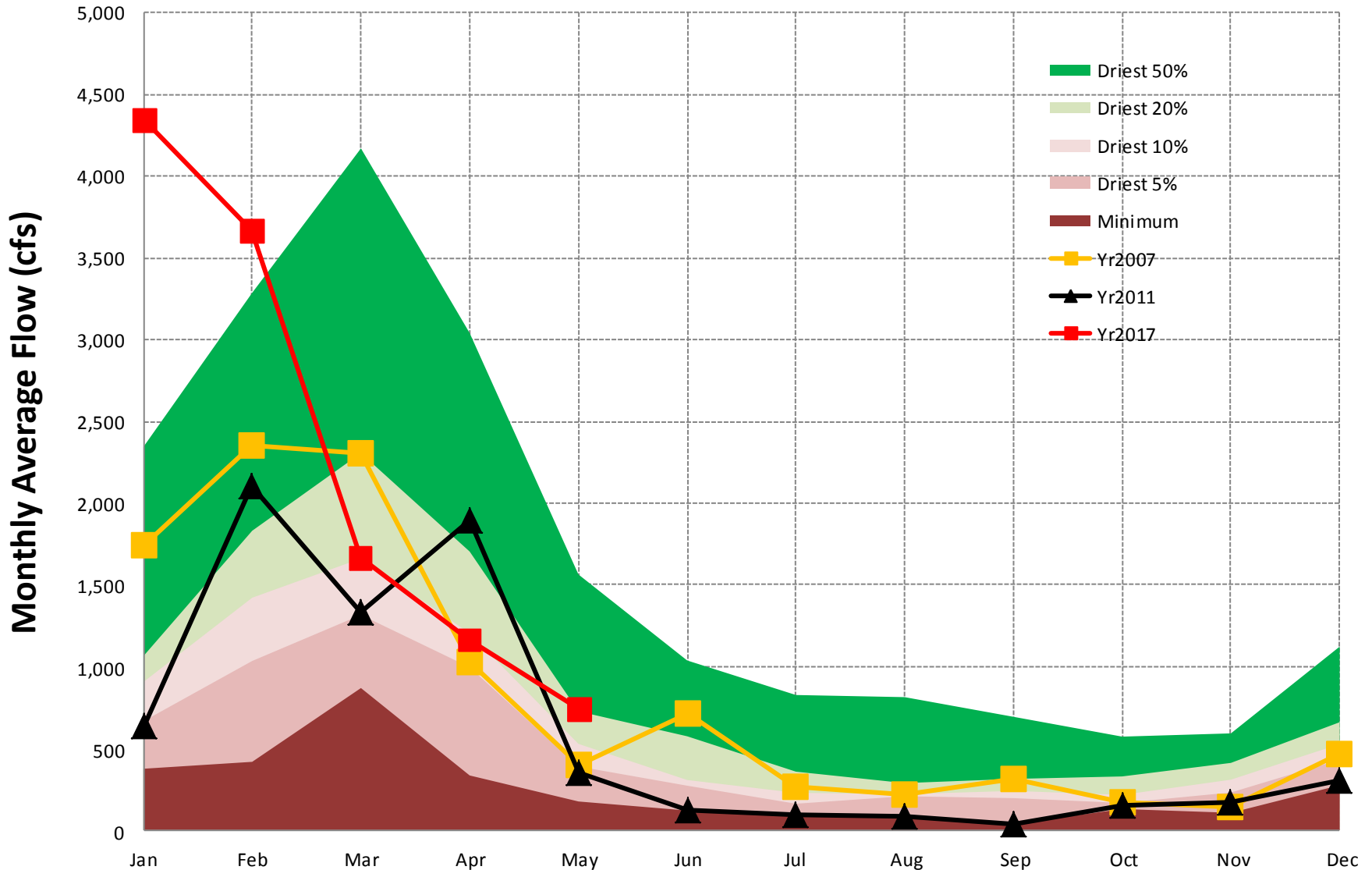
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**Gage #26. USGS #02203000, Ogeechee Basin,
CANOOCHEE RIVER near CLAXTON, GA**



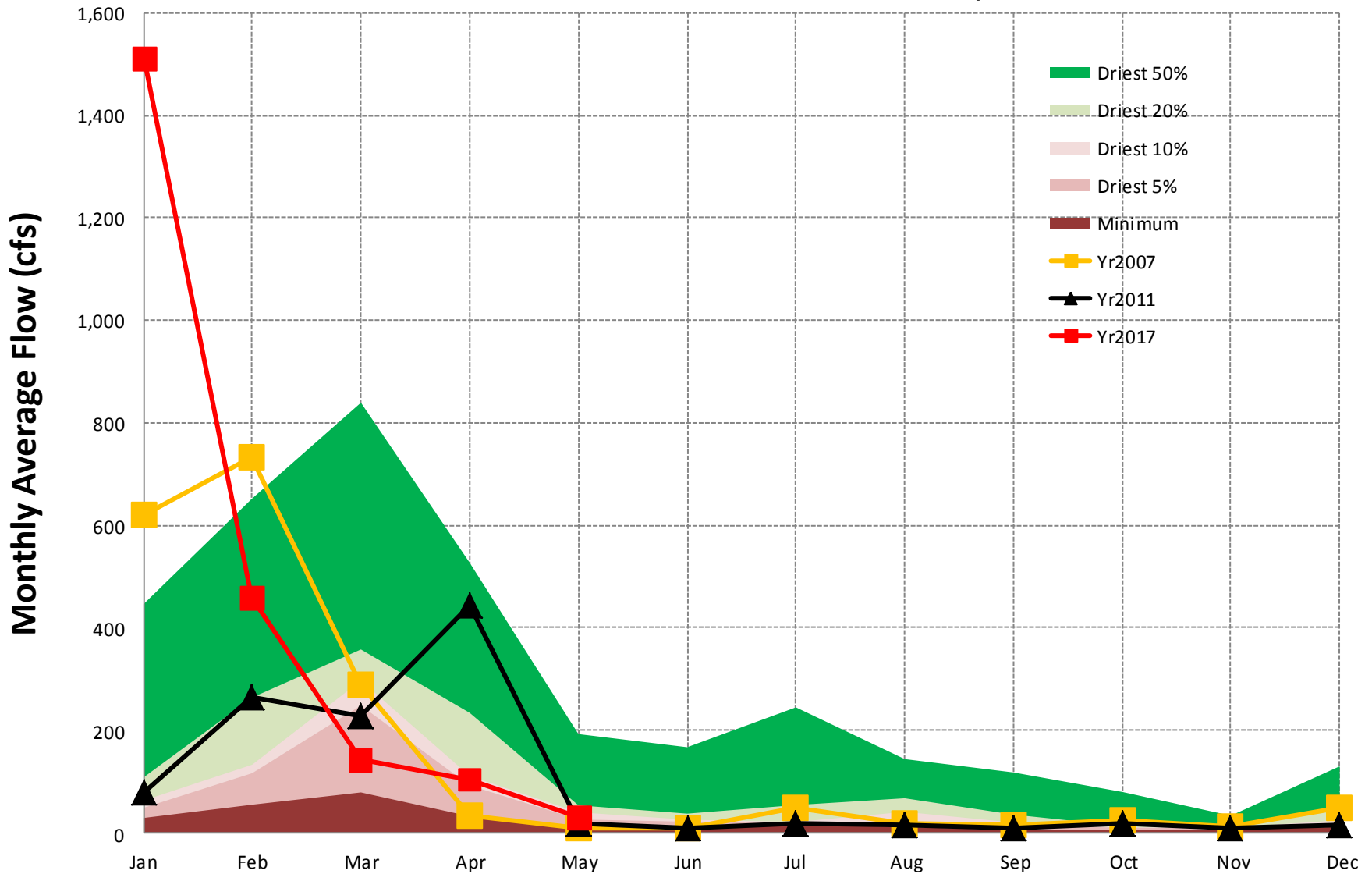
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Gage #27. USGS #02202500, Ogeechee Basin, Ogeechee River near Eden, GA

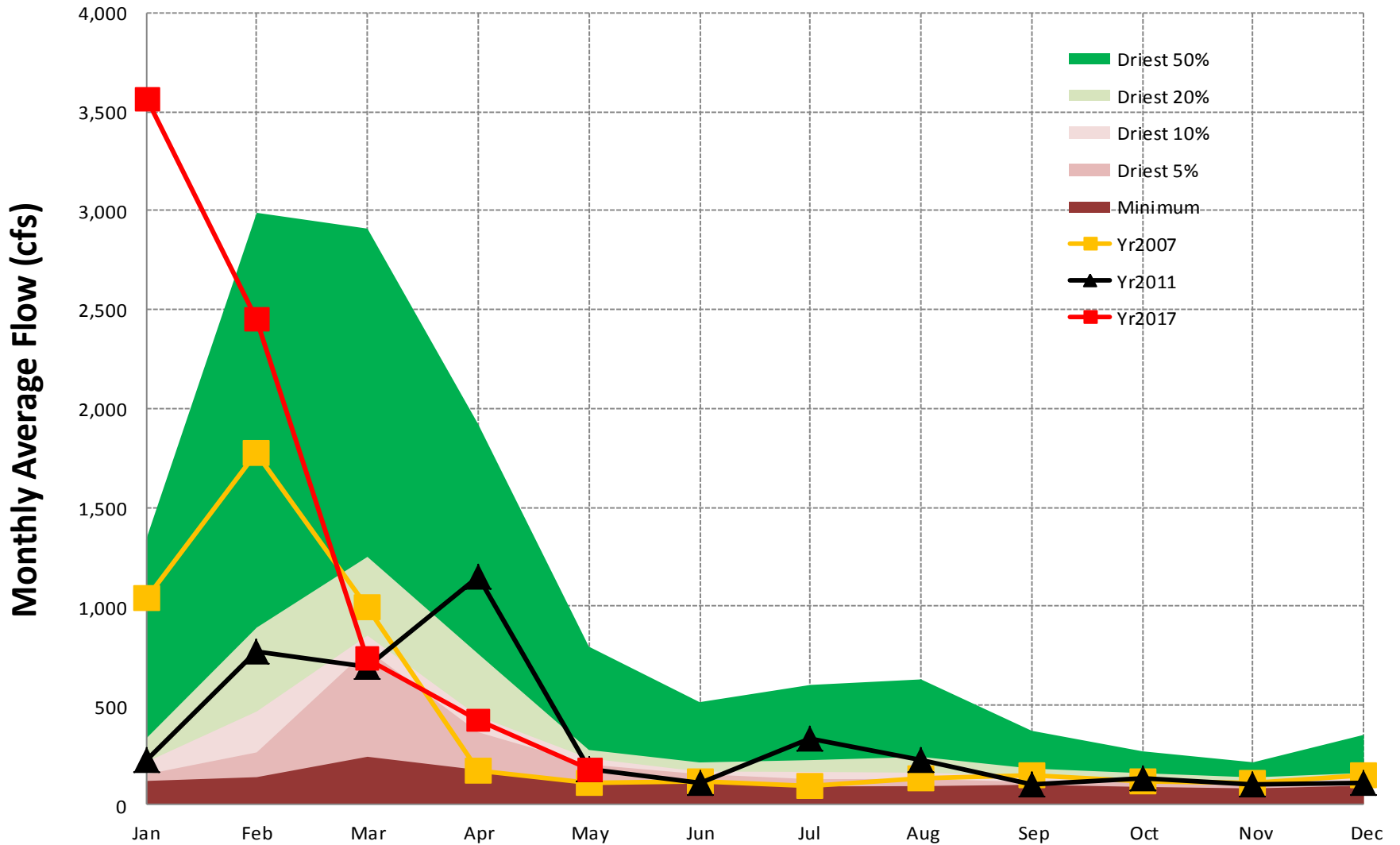


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Gage #28. USGS #02327500, Ochlockonee Basin, OCHLOCKONEE RIVER near THOMASVILLE, GA

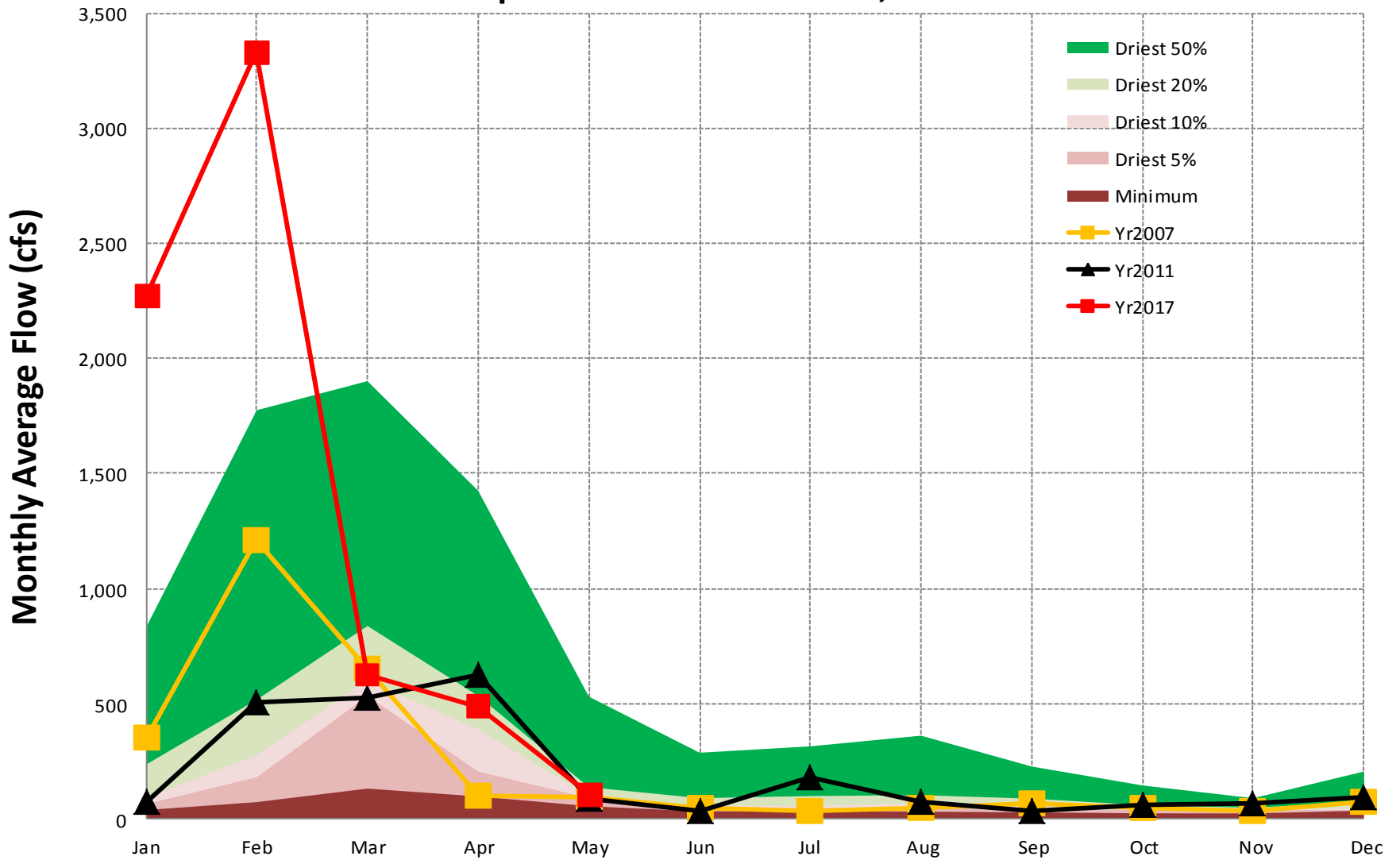


Gage #29. USGS #02319000, Suwannee Basin, WITHLACOOCHEE RIVER near PINETTA, FL



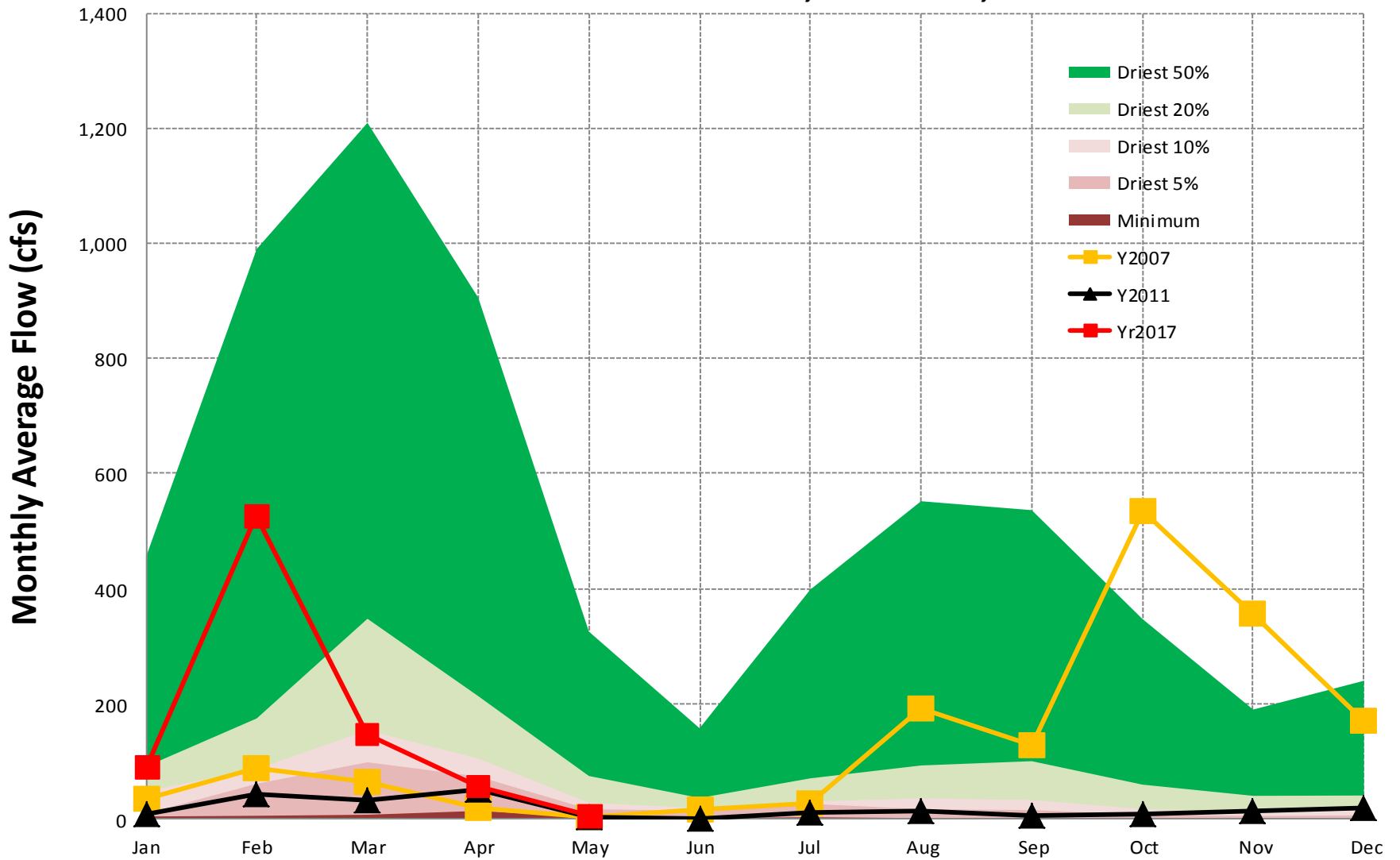
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Gage #30. USGS #02317500, Suwannee Basin, Alapaha River at Statenville, GA



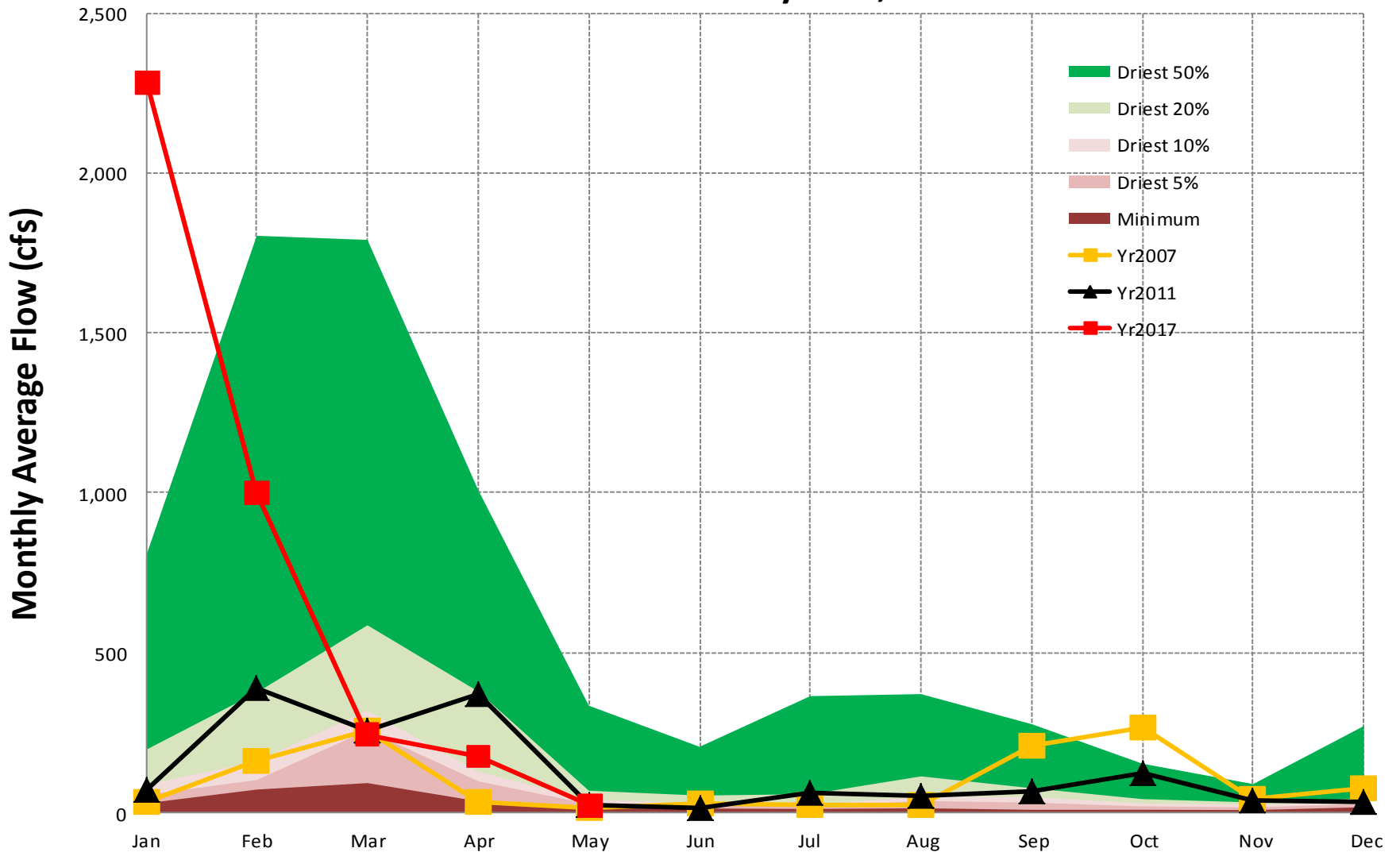
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Gage #31. USGS #02314500, Suwannee Basin, SUWANNEE RIVER AT US 441, AT FARGO, GA



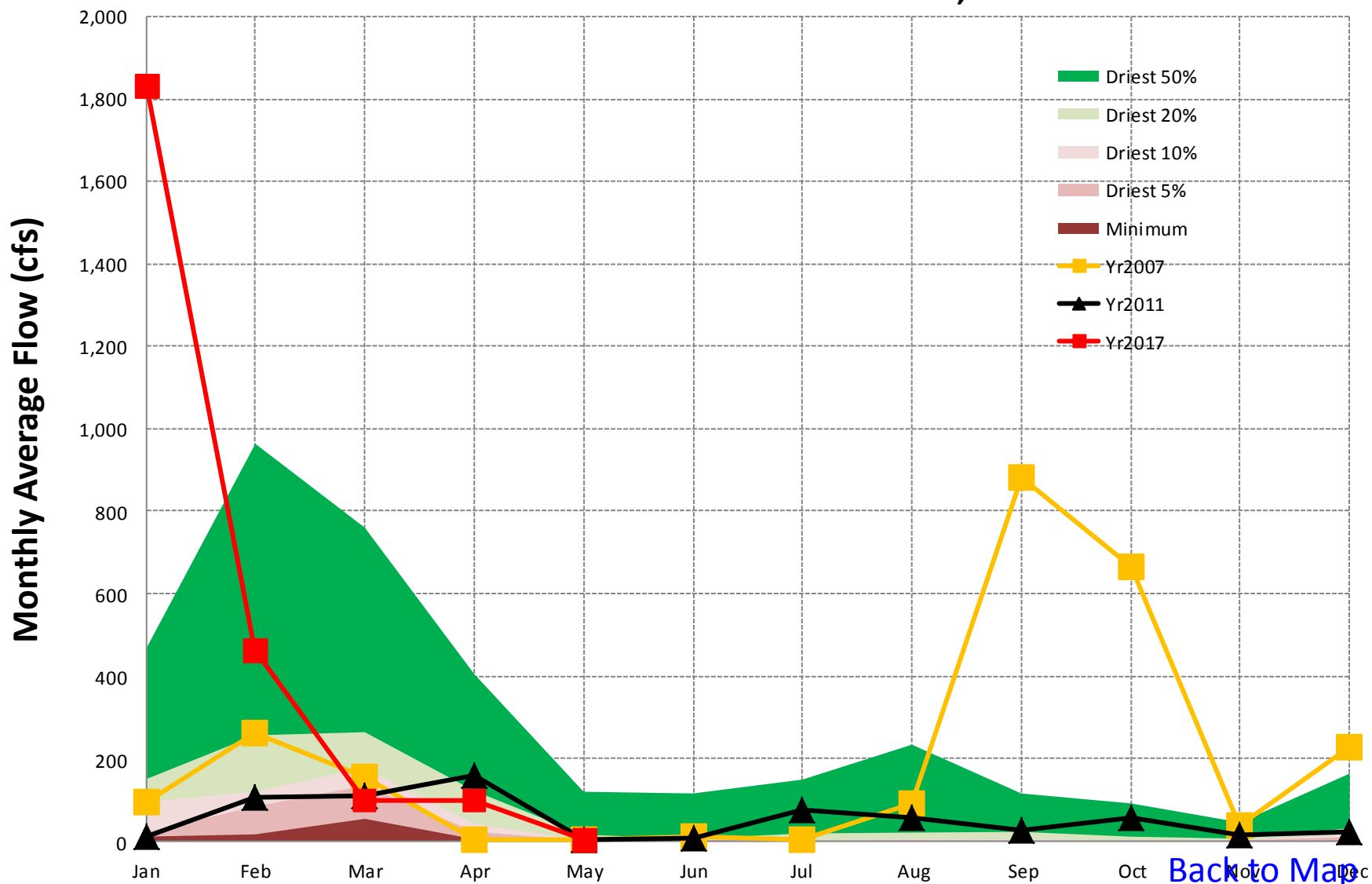
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Gage #32. USGS #02226500, Satilla Basin, Satilla River near Waycross, GA



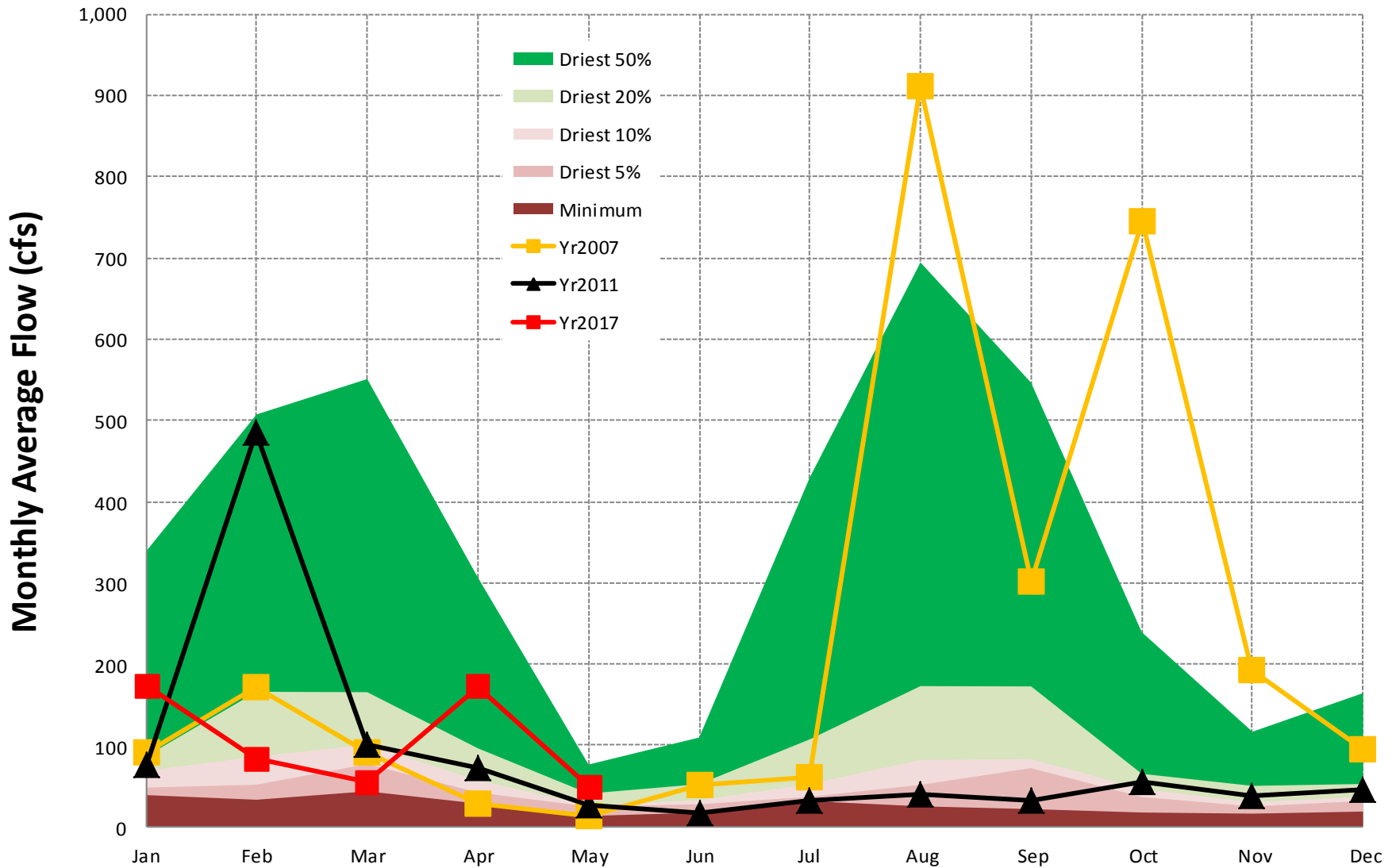
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Gage #33. USGS #02227500, Satilla Basin, LITTLE SATILLA RIVER near OFFERMAN, GA



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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 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

Savannah Basin

1. 30AA04

Flint Basin

2. 11AA01
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

Suwanee Basin

14. 19E009

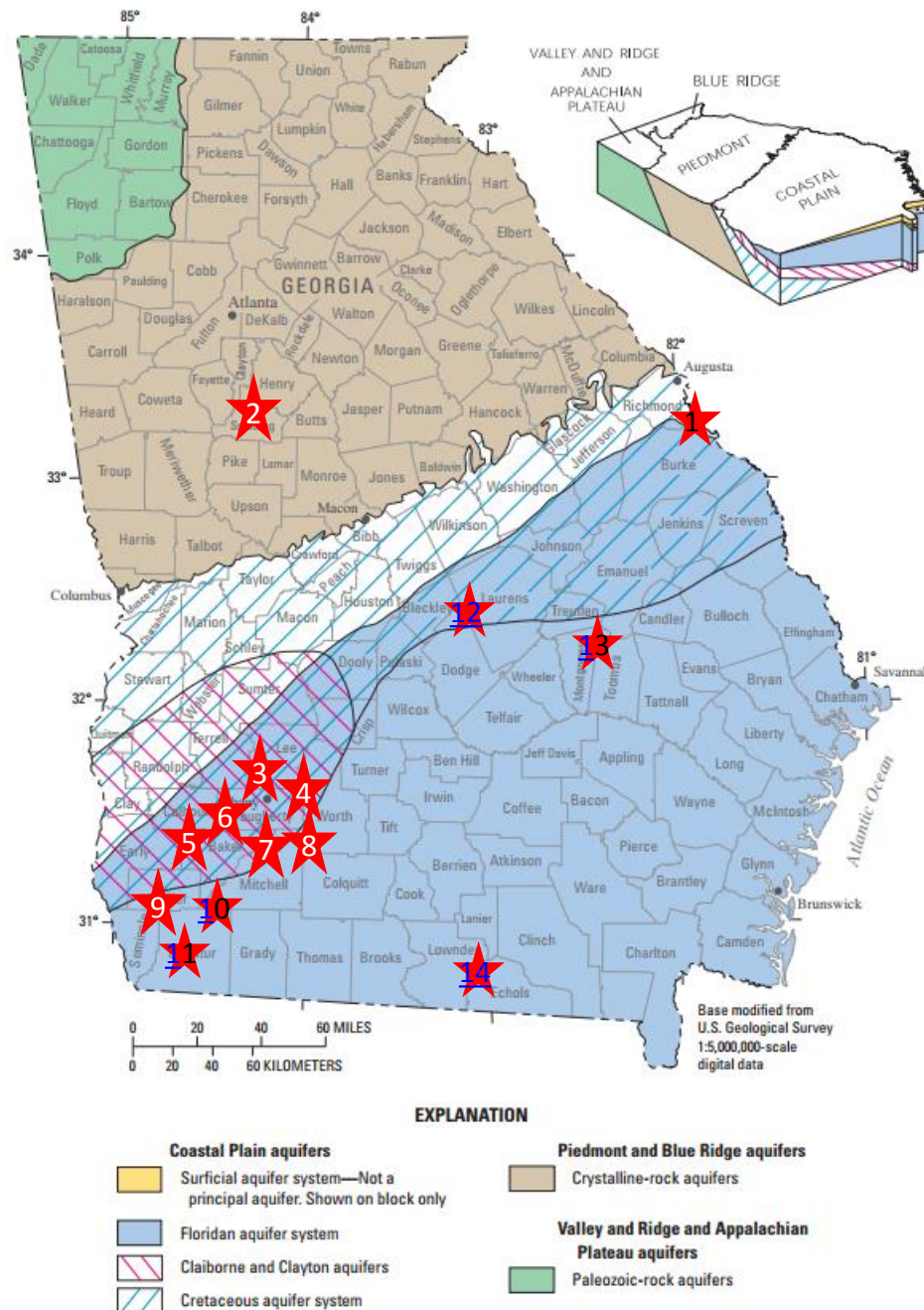


Figure 2. Area of use of principal aquifers and physiographic provinces in Georgia (modified from U.S. Geological Survey, 2006).

Groundwater Level Graphs

- For each of the 15 groundwater wells, EPD has prepared a graph that shows monthly average groundwater levels from January, 2017 through May, 2017;
- 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.

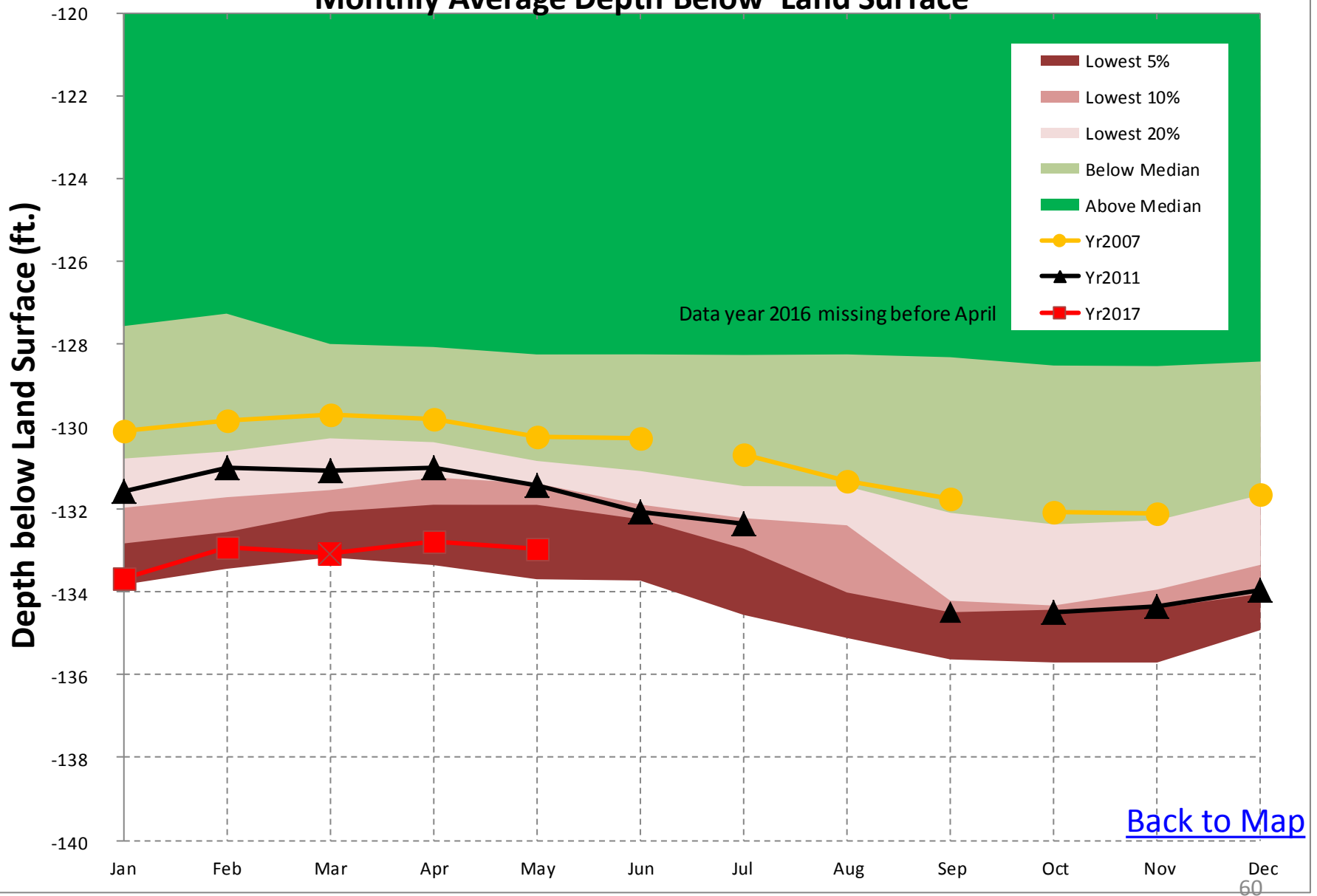
How to Read the Groundwater Level Graphs

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

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

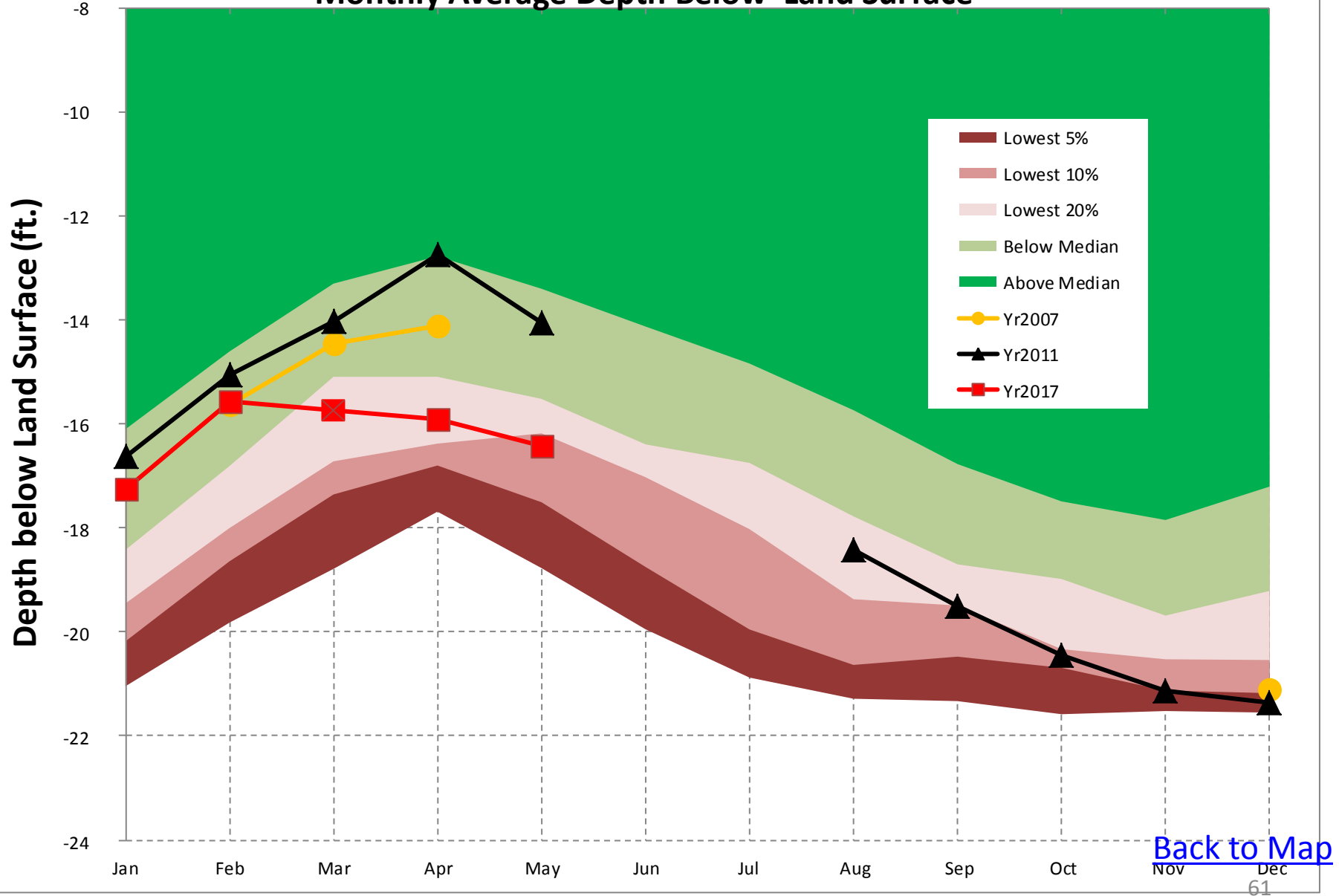
- The average monthly groundwater level for May 2017 was 49ft below land surface. The statistical composite of all historical data for this well shows that monthly average groundwater levels in May have historically been lower than May 2017 about 20% of the time; about 80% of the time in May they have been higher.
- The average monthly groundwater level in May 2011 was 52ft below land surface. The statistical composite of all historical data for this well shows that monthly average groundwater levels in May have historically been lower than May 2017 about 2% of the time; about 98% of the time in May they have been higher.
- The average monthly groundwater level in May 2007 was 53.4ft below land surface. The statistical composite of all historical data for this well shows that monthly average groundwater levels in May have historically been lower than May 2017 about 0.01% of the time; about 99.99% of the time in May they have been higher.

Well #1, 30AA04, Gordon & Dublin Aquifers in Savannah Basin, Monthly Average Depth Below Land Surface



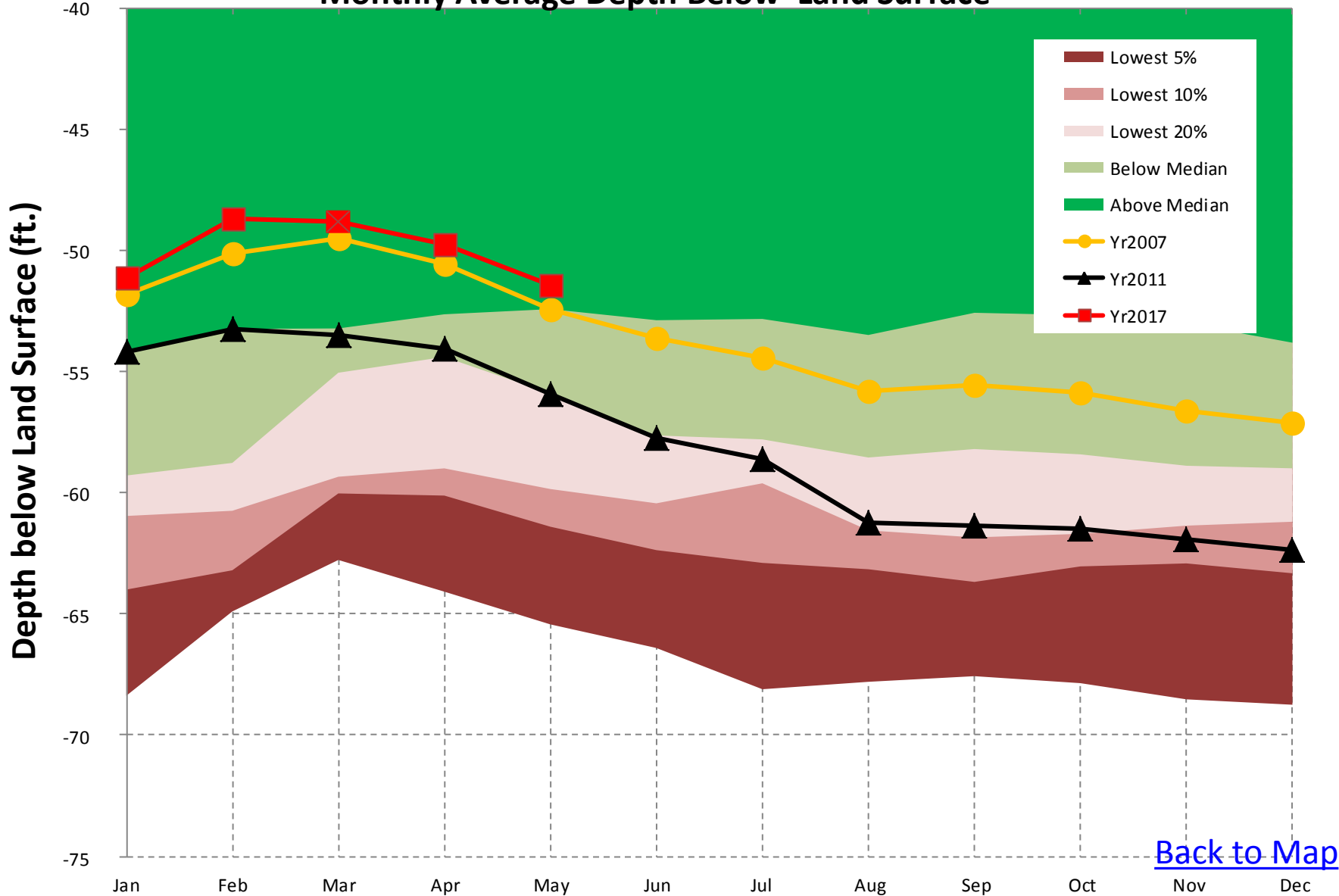
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Well #2, 11AA01, Surficial Aquifer in Flint Basin, Monthly Average Depth Below Land Surface



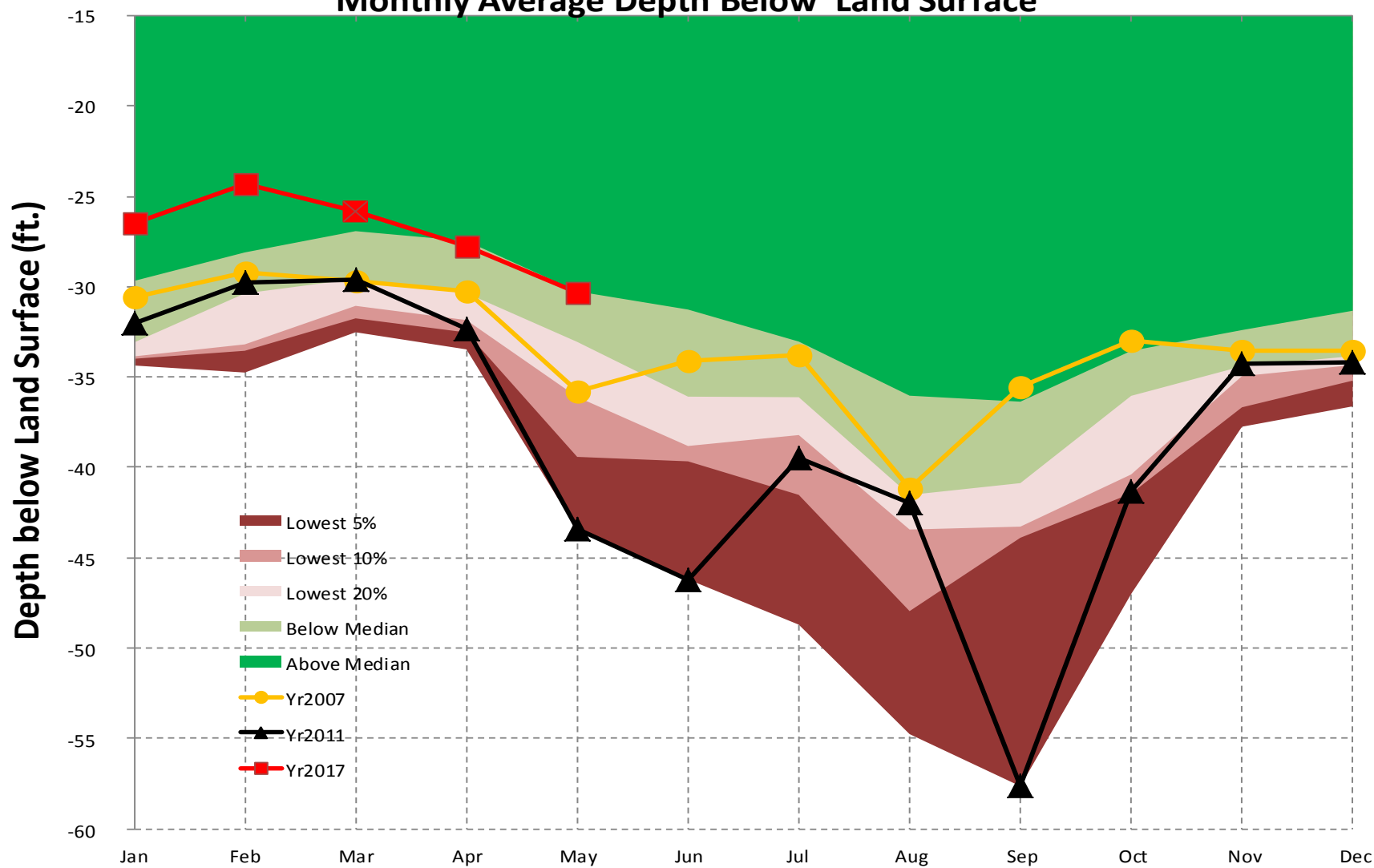
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Well #3, 13L180, Floridan Aquifer in Flint Basin, Monthly Average Depth Below Land Surface



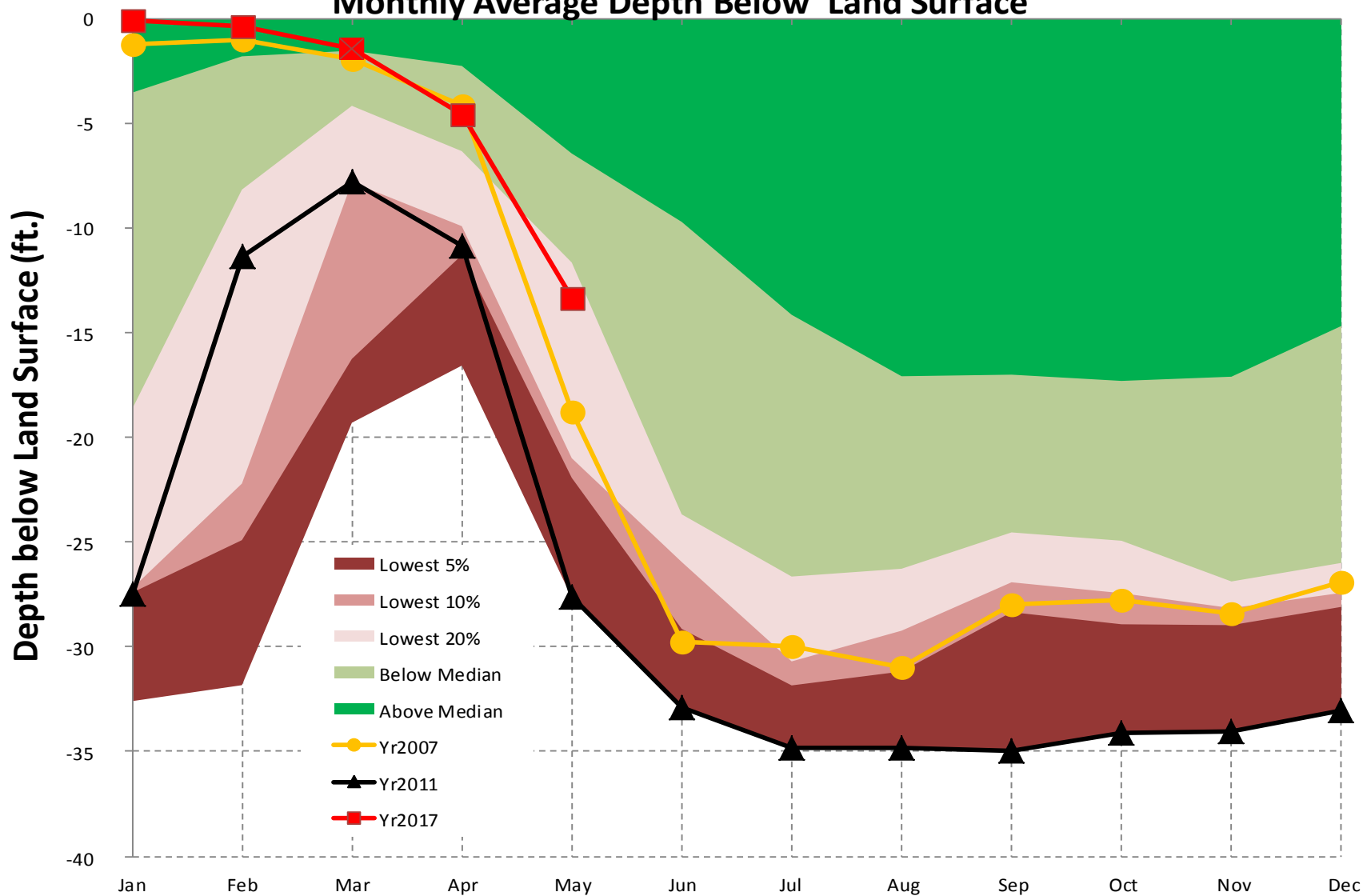
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Well #4, 12M017, Floridan Aquifer in Flint Basin, Monthly Average Depth Below Land Surface



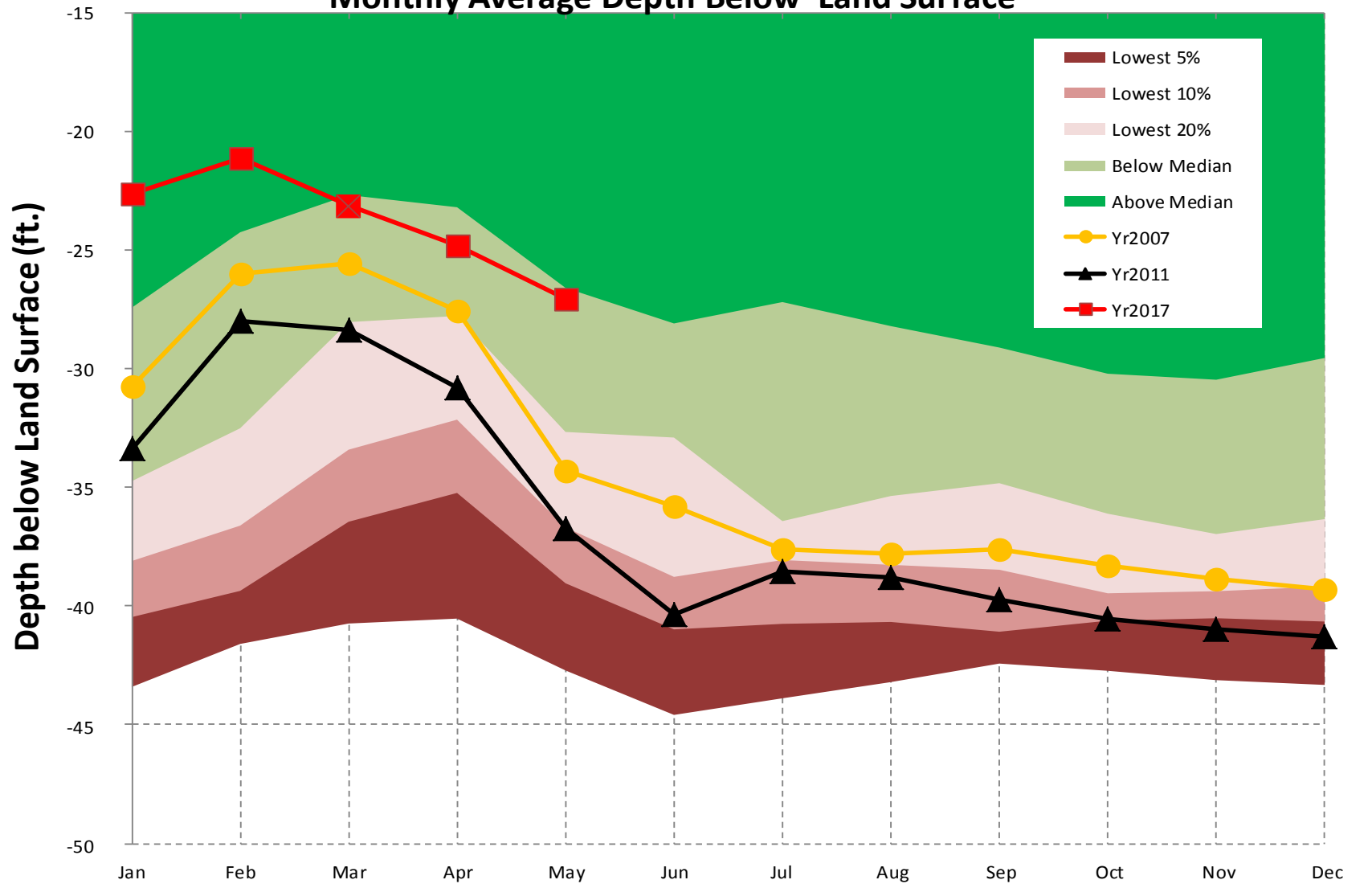
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Well #5, 08K001, Floridan Aquifer in Flint Basin, Monthly Average Depth Below Land Surface



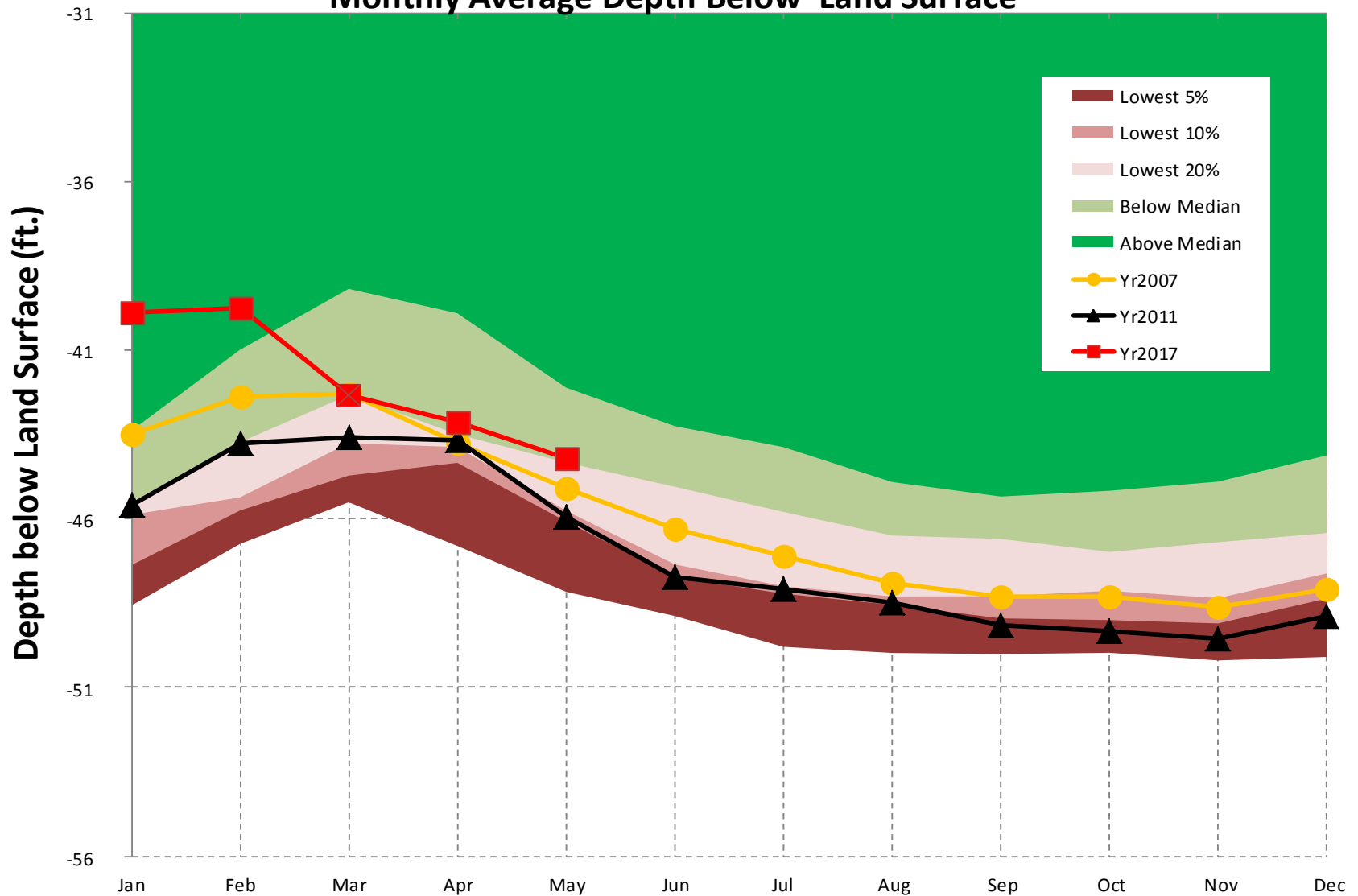
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Well #6, 11K003, Floridan Aquifer in Flint Basin, Monthly Average Depth Below Land Surface



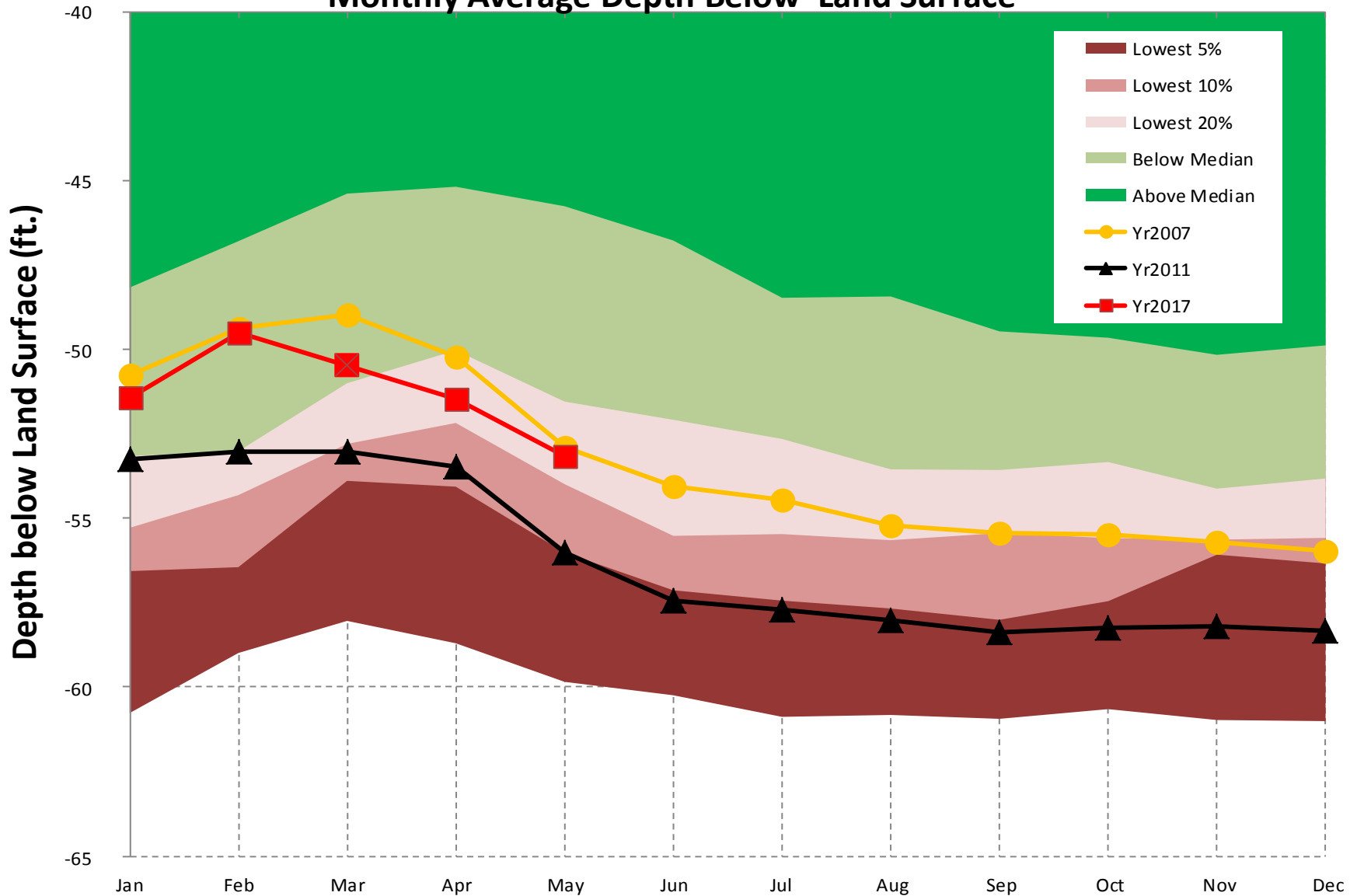
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Well #7, 12K014, Floridan Aquifer in Flint Basin, Monthly Average Depth Below Land Surface



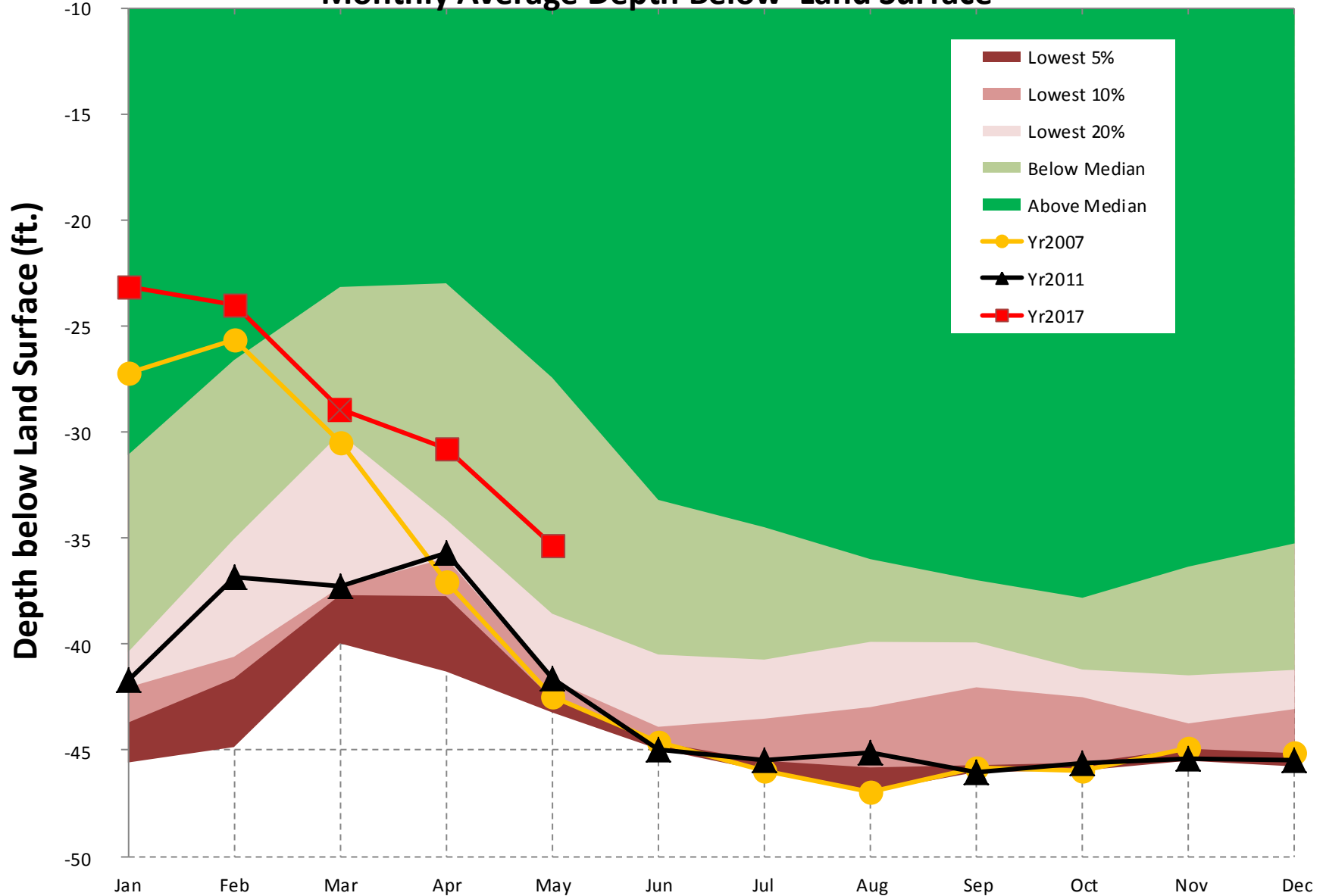
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Well #8, 13J004, Floridan Aquifer in Flint Basin, Monthly Average Depth Below Land Surface

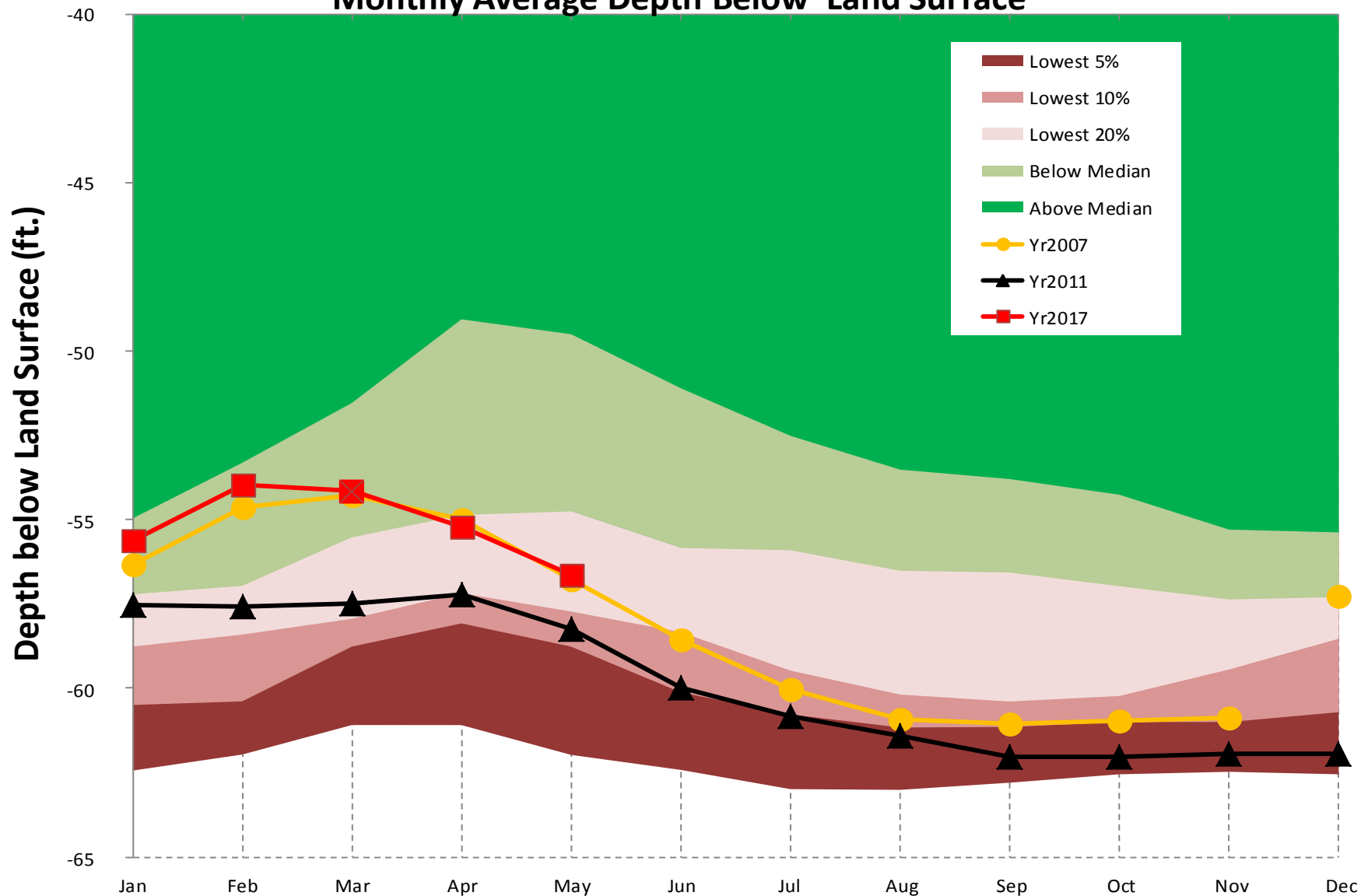


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Well #9, 08G001, Floridan Aquifer in Flint Basin, Monthly Average Depth Below Land Surface

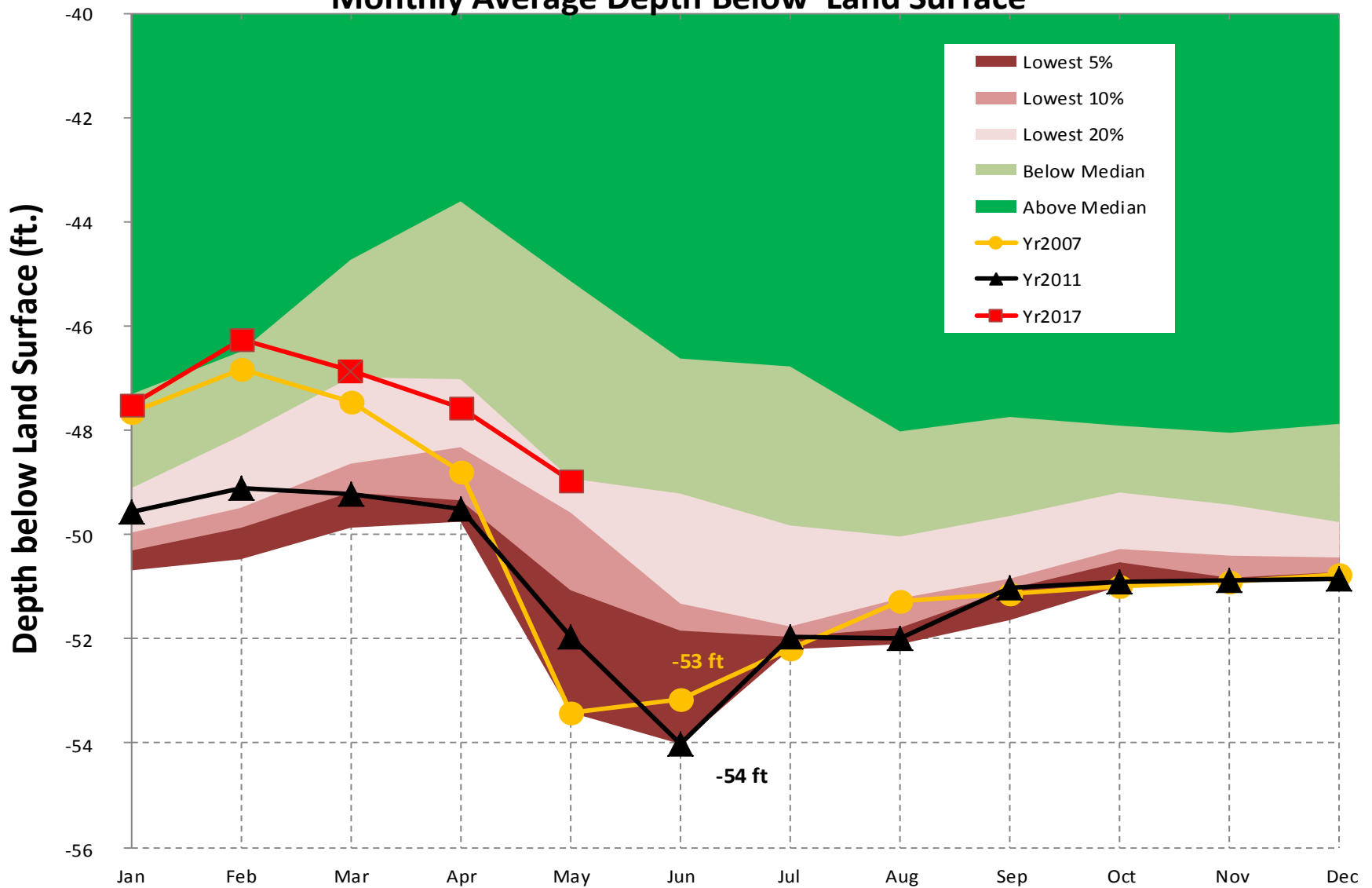


Well #10, 10G313, Floridan Aquifer in Flint Basin, Monthly Average Depth Below Land Surface



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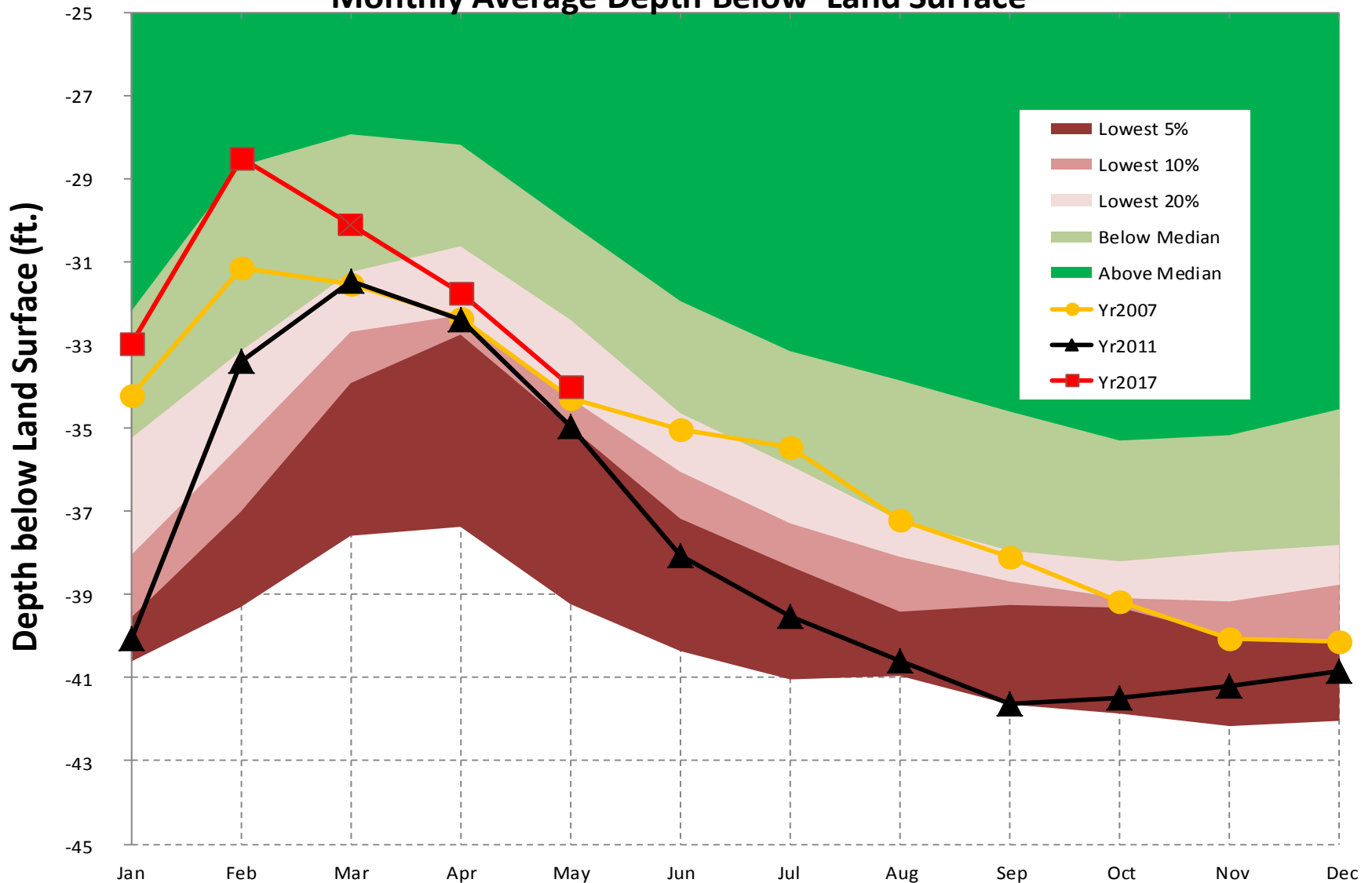
Well #11, 09F520, Floridan Aquifer in Flint Basin, Monthly Average Depth Below Land Surface



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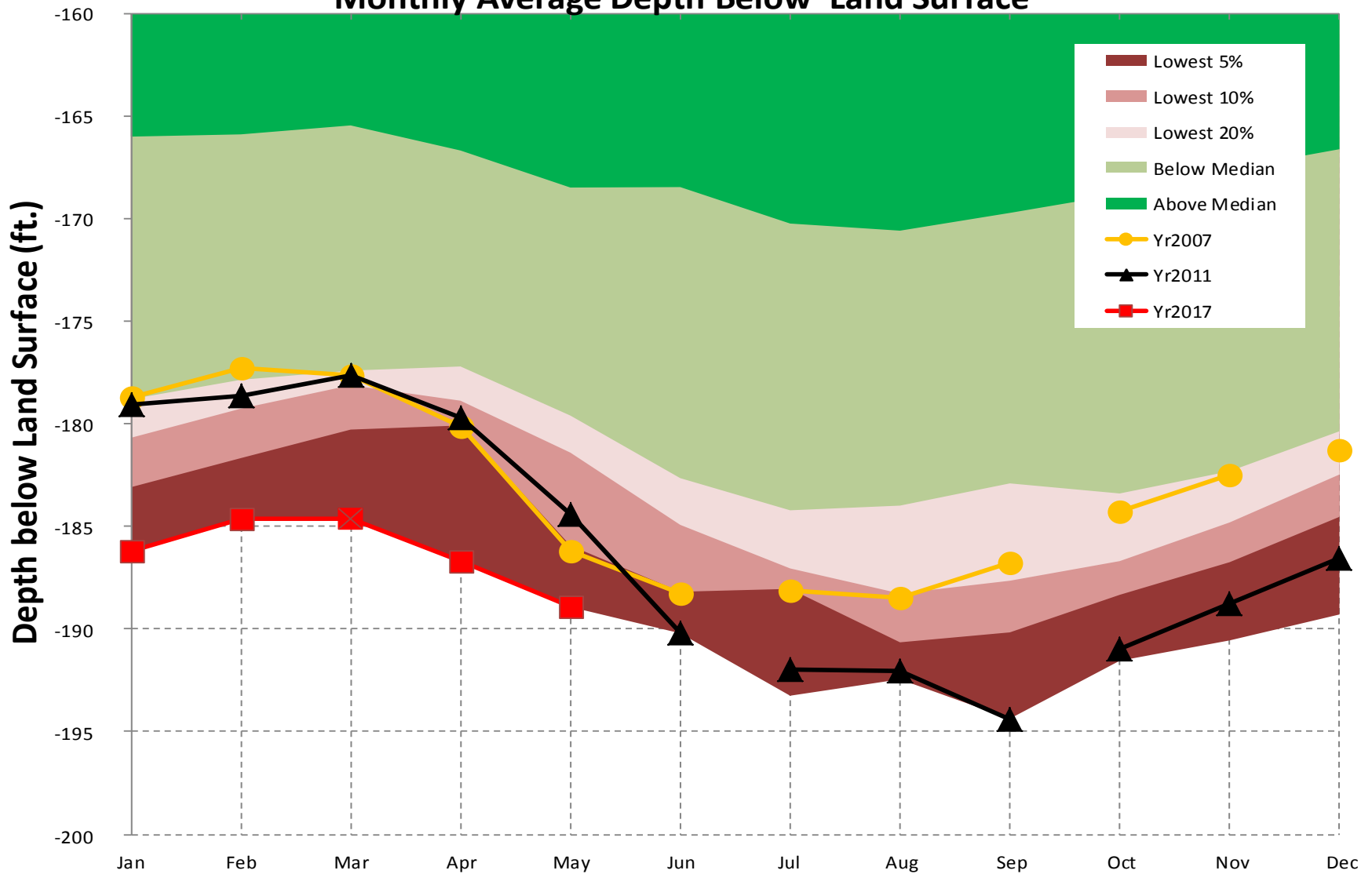
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Well #12, 21T001, Floridan Aquifer in Ocone Basin, Monthly Average Depth Below Land Surface



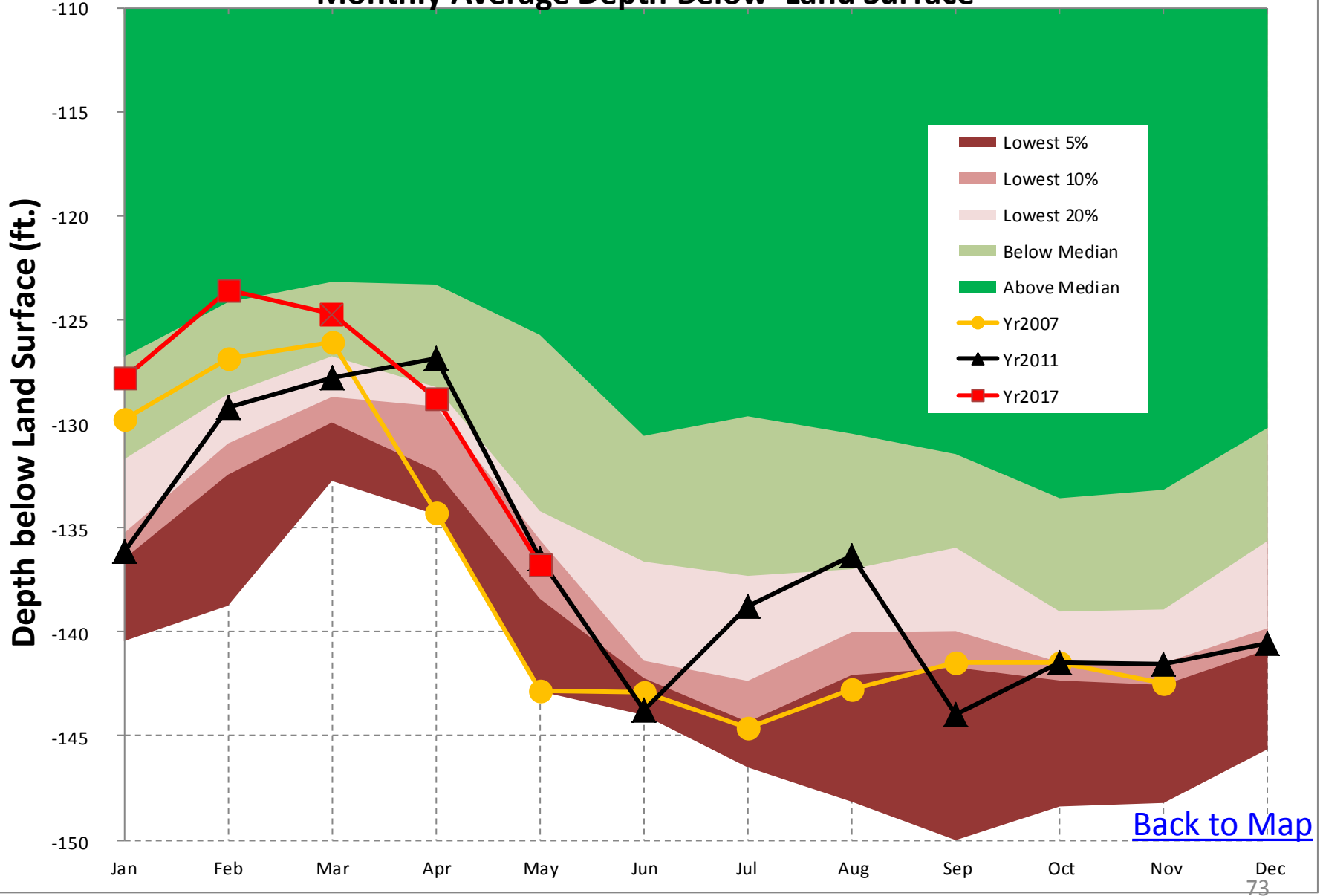
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Well #13, 26R001, Floridan Aquifer in Altamaha Basin, Monthly Average Depth Below Land Surface



[Back to Map](#)

Well #14, 19E009, Floridan Aquifer in Suwannee 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

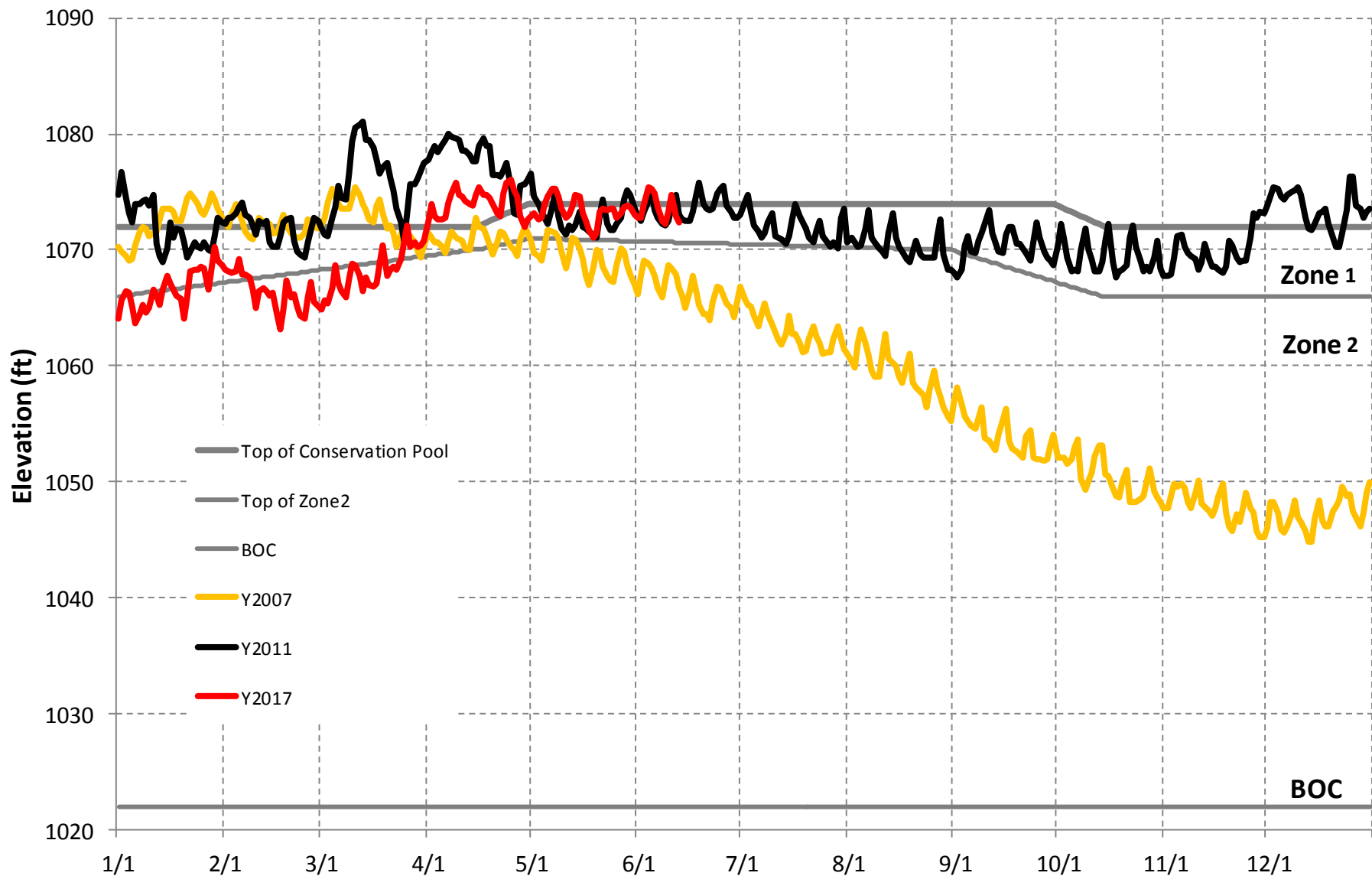


EPD monitors the water levels of seven reservoirs to assess drought conditions.

Reservoir Elevation Graphs

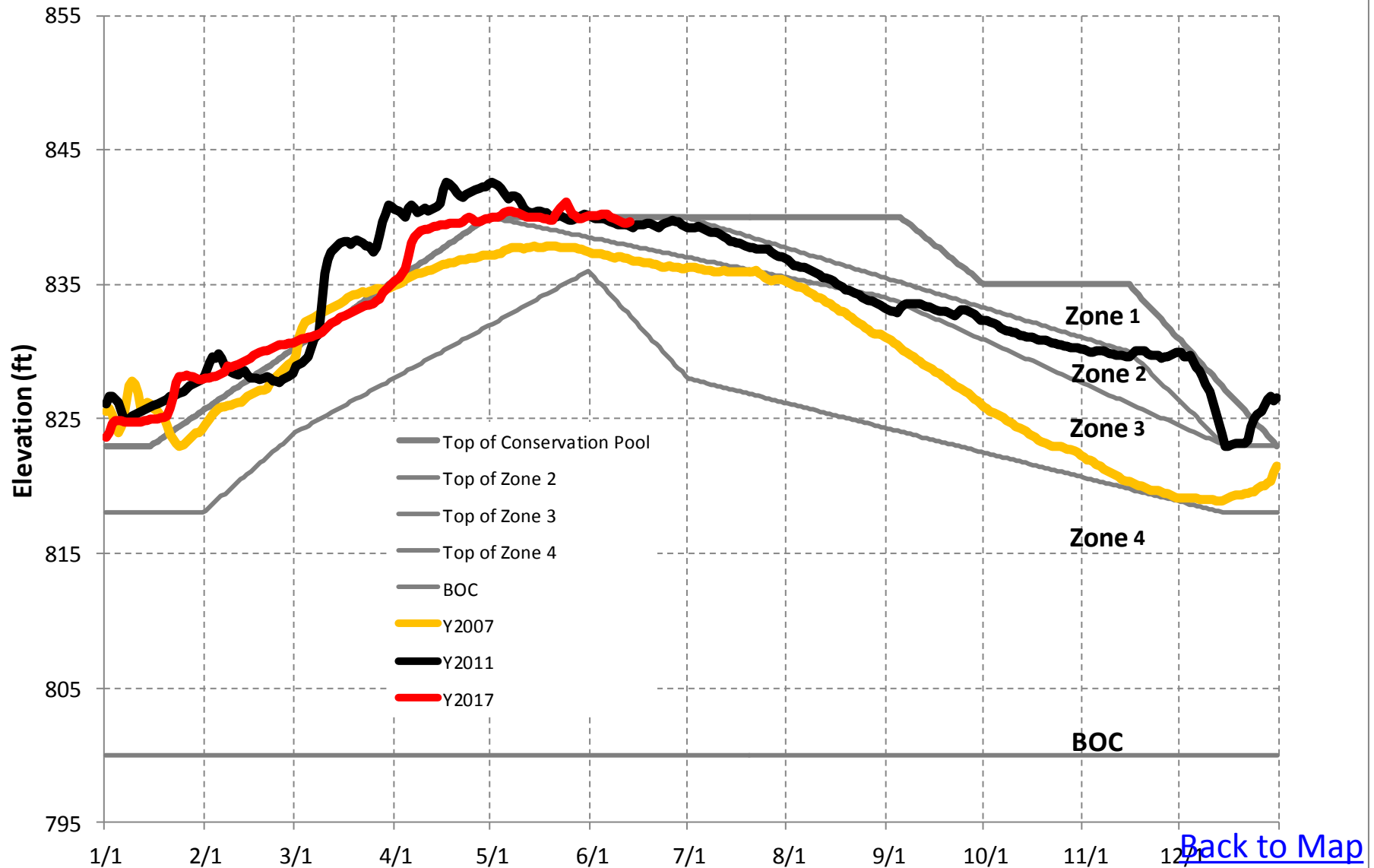
- The following graphs show the reservoir elevation curves for January, 2017 through May, 2017.
- Each graph also shows the Action Zone Divides (or Levels) for each reservoir
 - Zone 1 is the top layer of the conservation pool
 - Zone 2 is the layer below Zone 1
 - Zone 4 is the lowest layer in the conservation pool
 - There is no conservation storage below the bottom of Zone 4
- To put 2017 reservoir elevations into perspective, elevations for 2007 and 2011 are also shown.

CARTERS ELEVATION

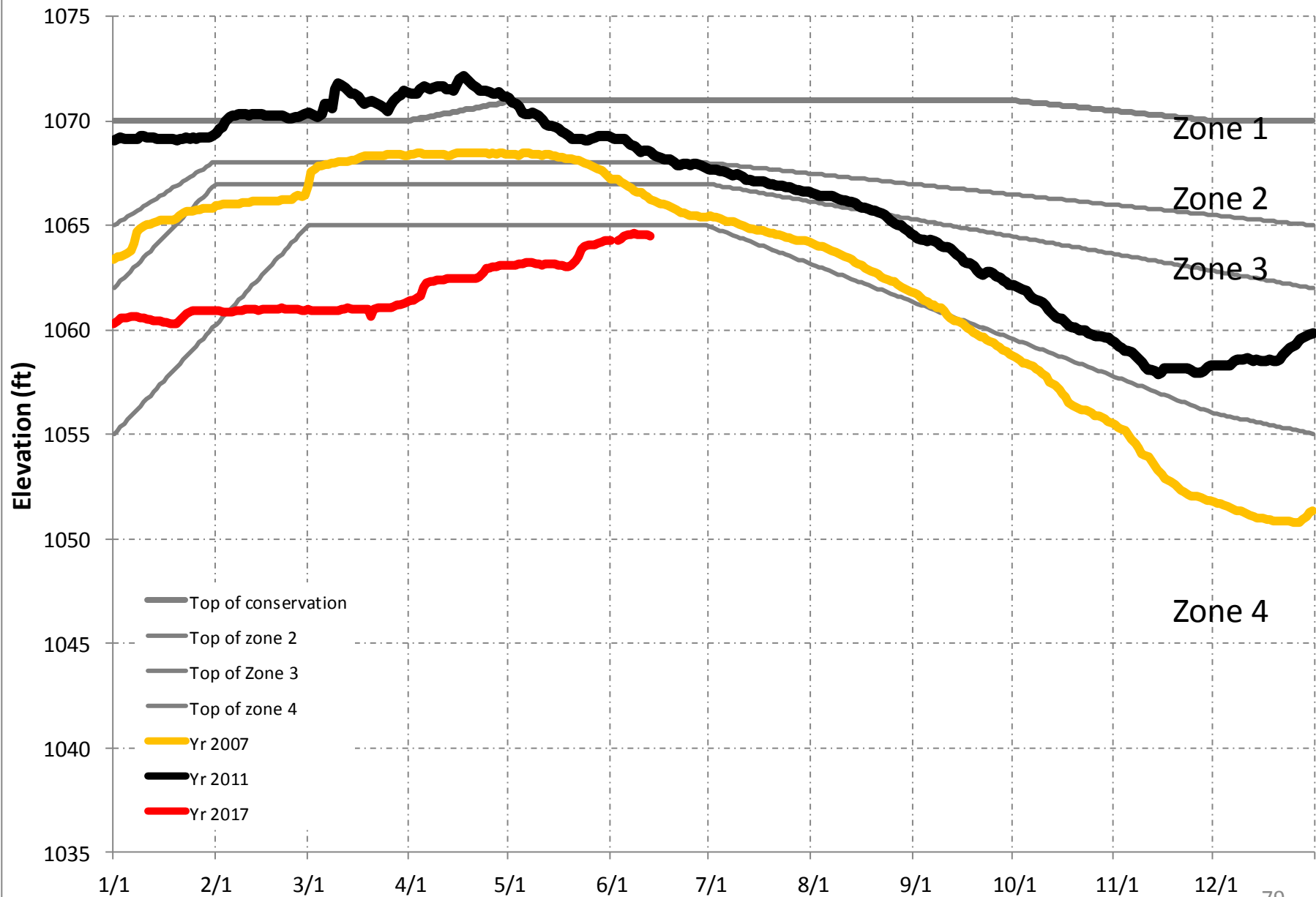


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ALLATOONA ELEVATION

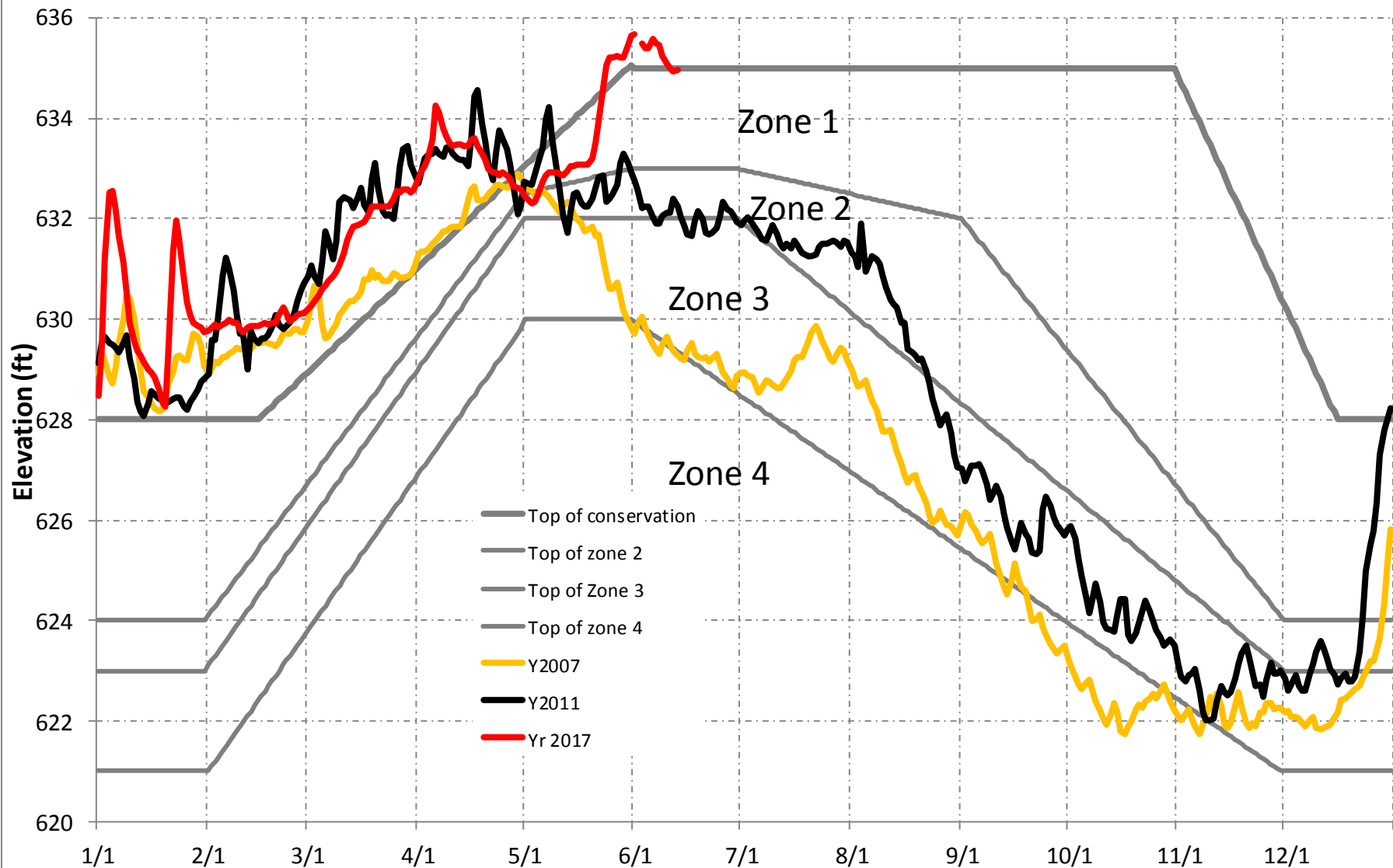


LAKE LANIER ELEVATION



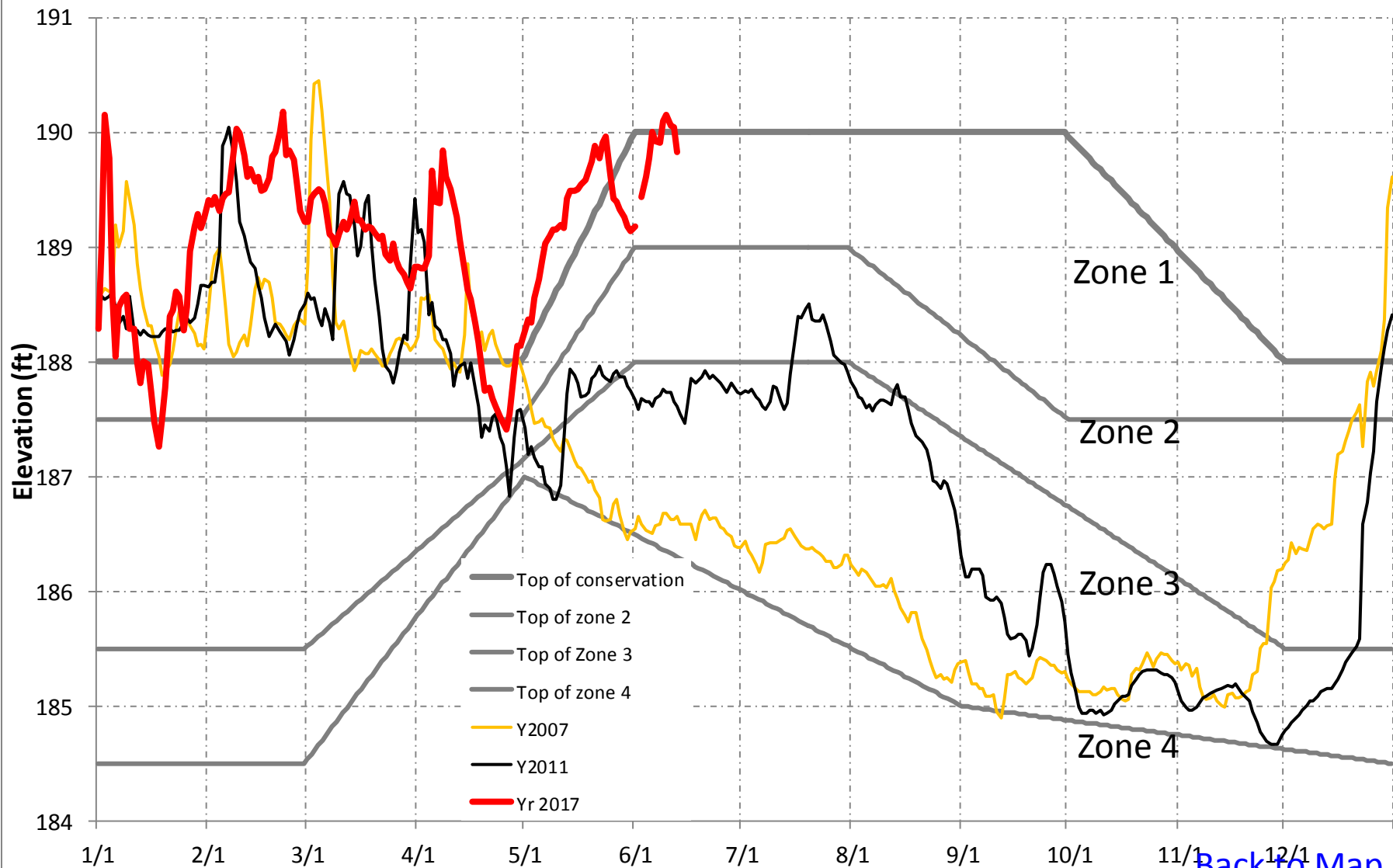
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WEST POINT ELEVATION



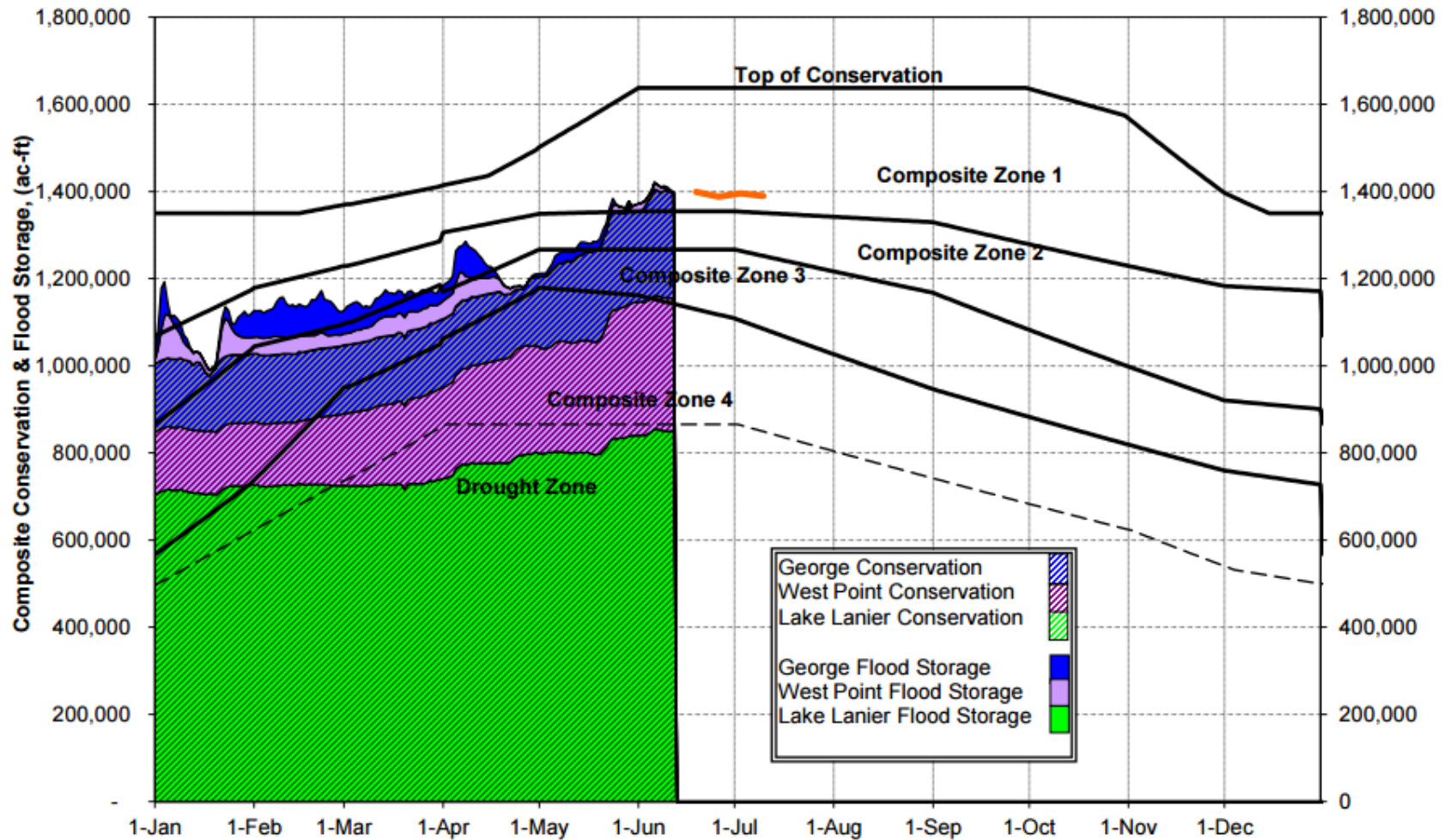
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W.F.GEORGE ELEVATION



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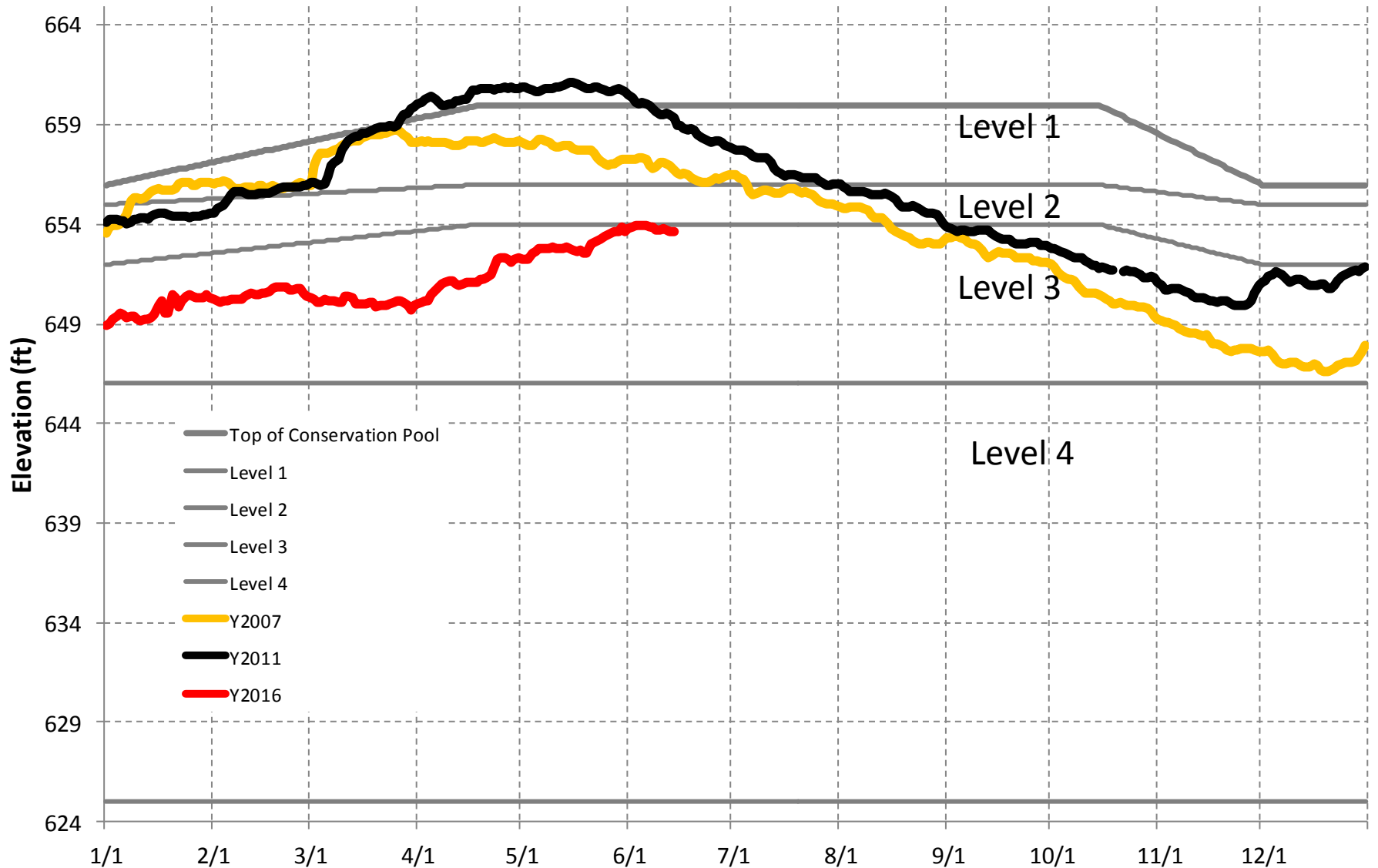
2017 ACF Basin Composite Conservation and Flood Storage



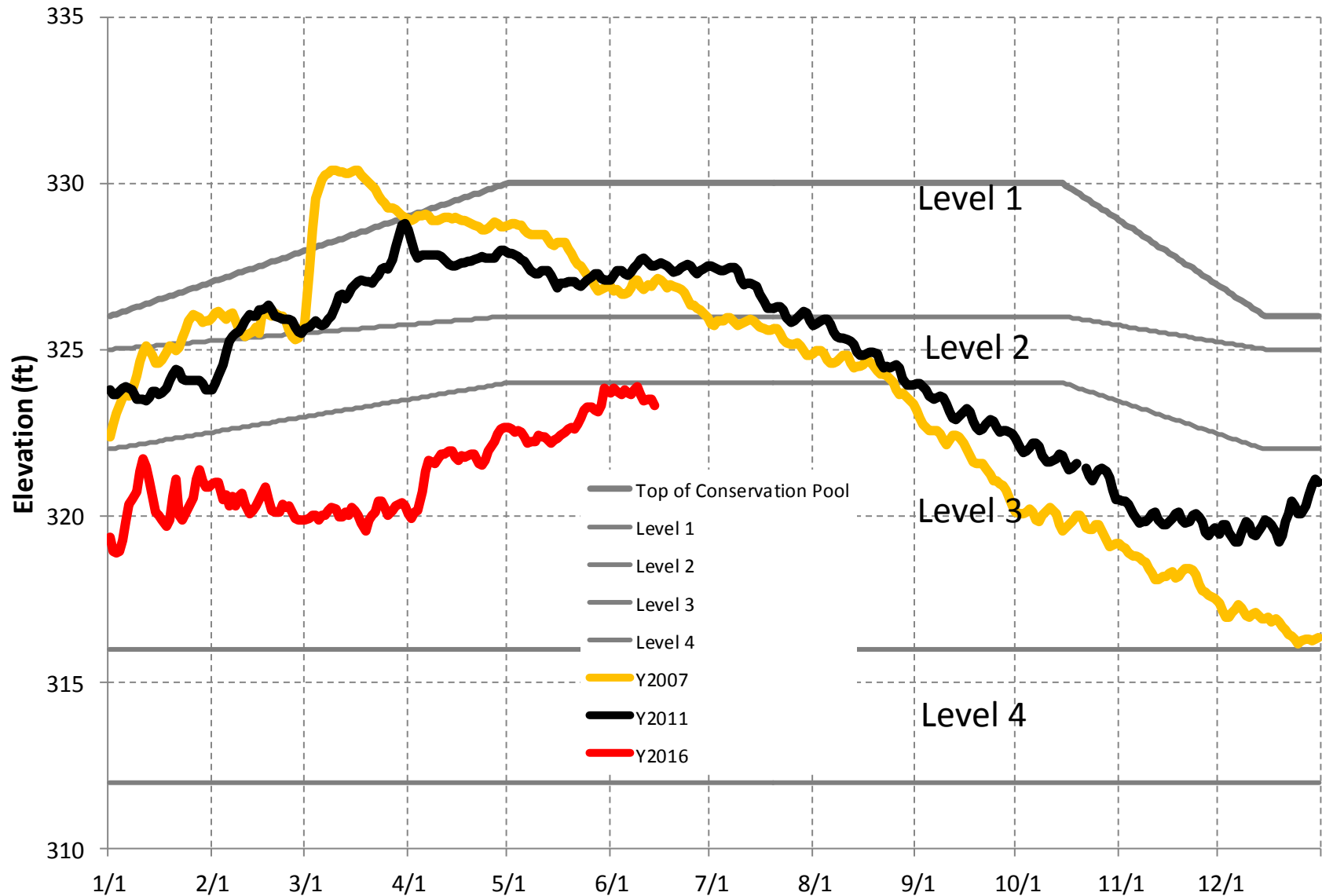
Actual data thru 6-13-2017

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

Lake HARTWELL ELEVATION



LAKE CLARK HILL (THURMOND) ELEVATION

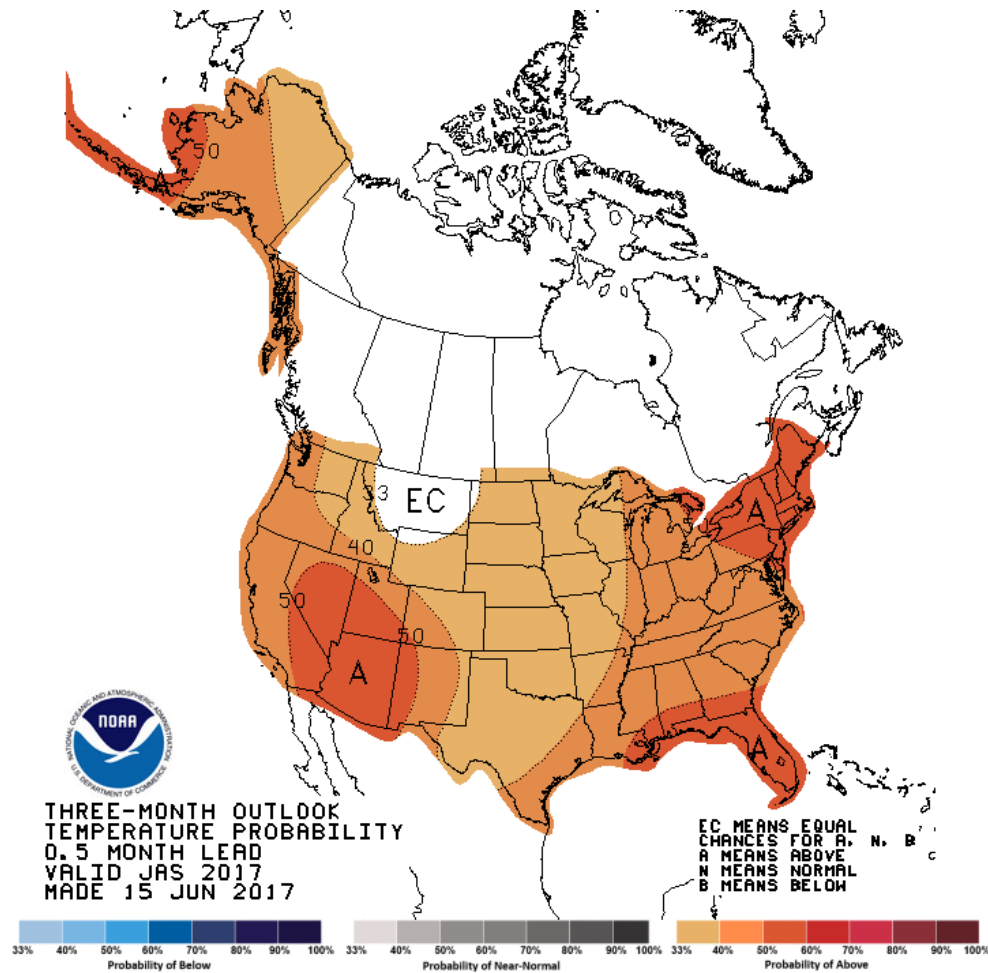


Climate Prediction Center 3-month Temperature and Precipitation Probability Outlook and Seasonal Drought Outlook

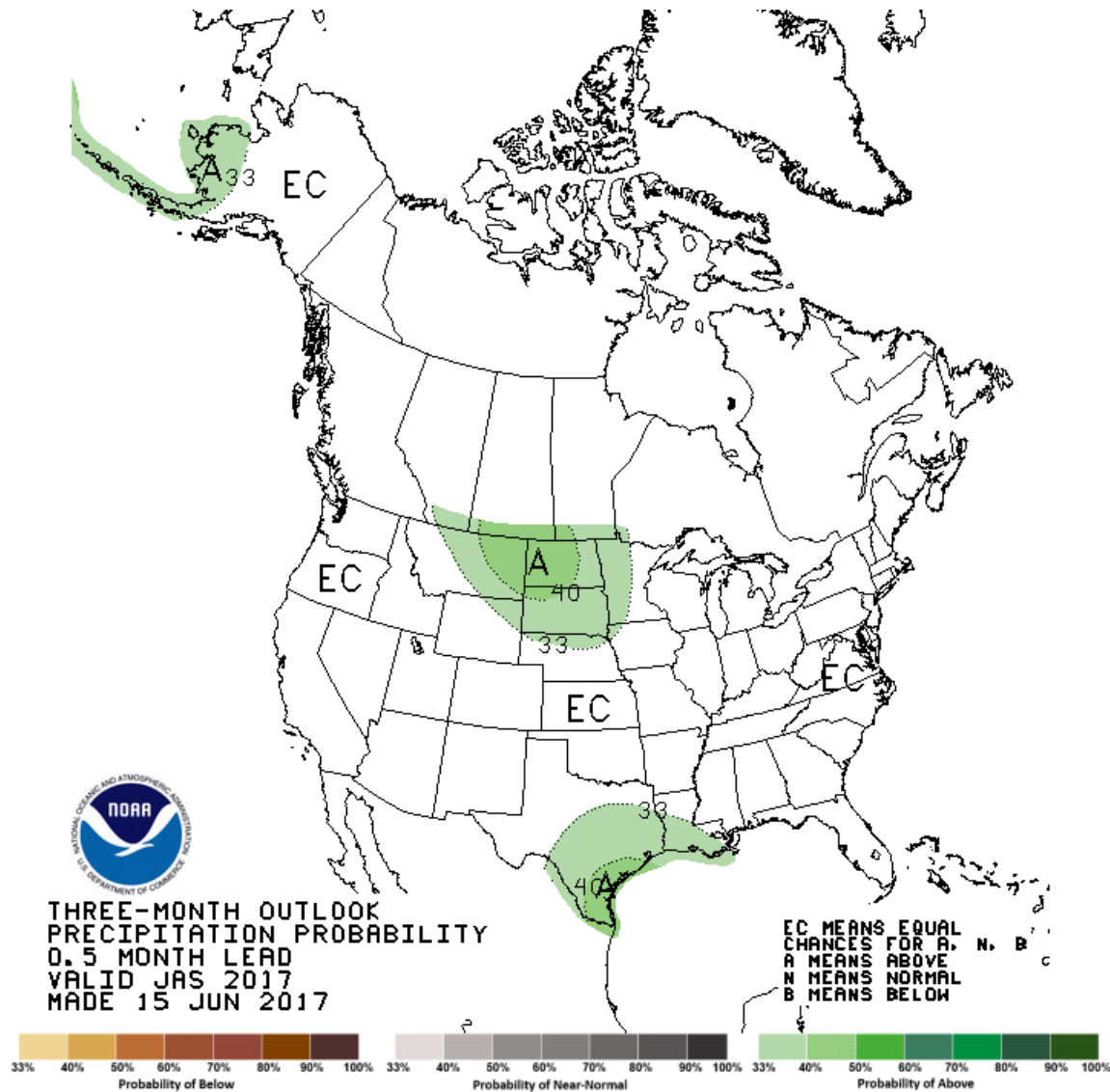
Data Source:

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

Temperature Outlook



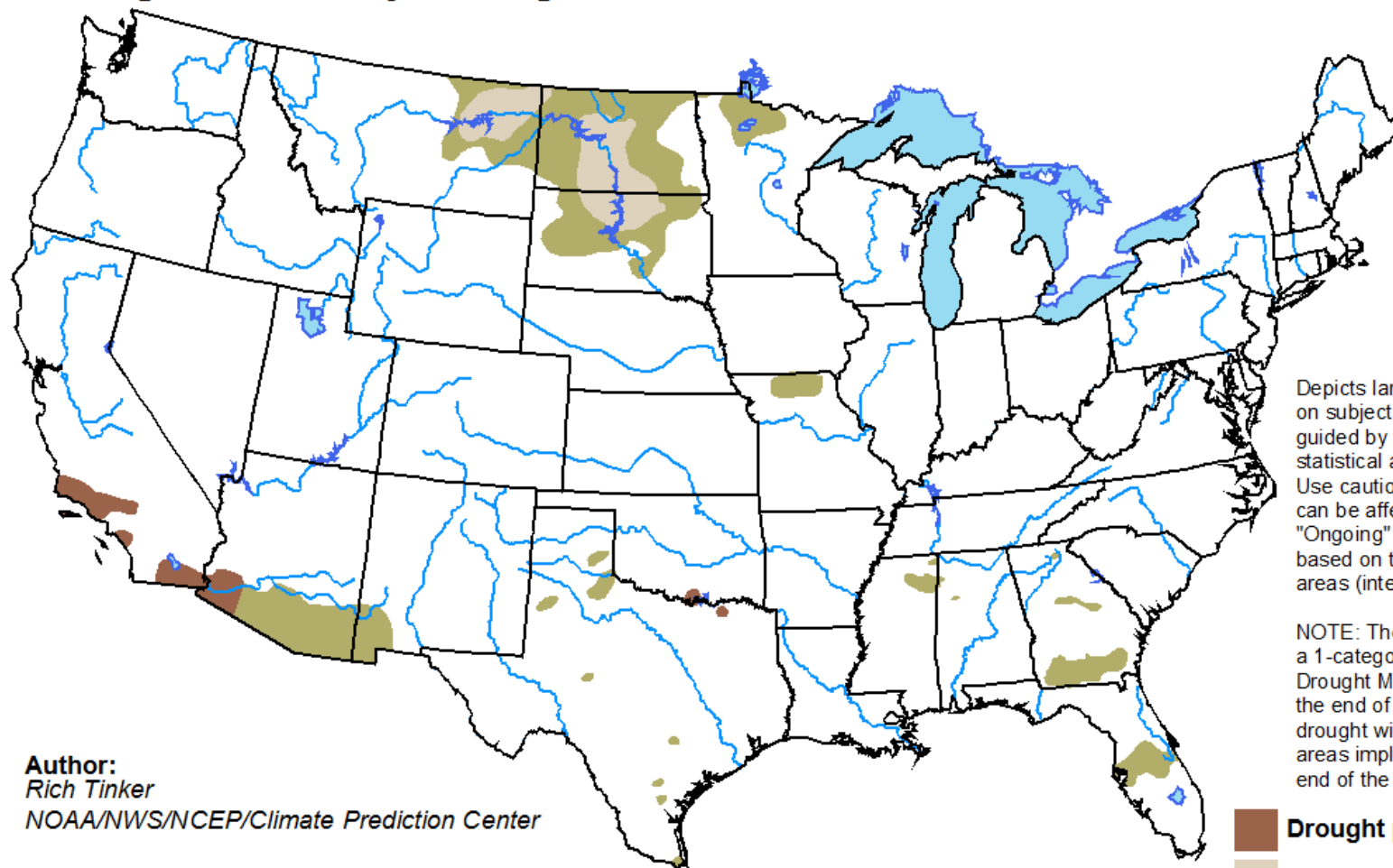
Precipitation Outlook



U.S. Seasonal Drought Outlook

Drought Tendency During the Valid Period





Valid for June 15 - September 30, 2017
Released June 15, 2017

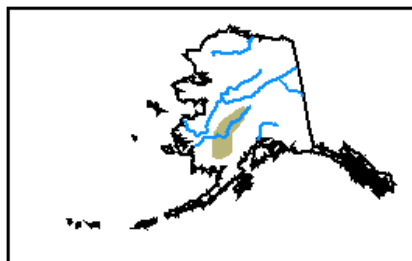


Author:
Rich Tinker
NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Climate Prediction Center

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>