

SUWANNEE RIVER WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

MEMORANDUM

TO: Governing Board

FROM: Robbie McKinney, Hydrologic Program Manager, Office of Water Resources

THRU: Hugh Thomas, Executive Director

DATE: October 31, 2023

RE: October 2023 Hydrologic Conditions Report

RAINFALL

- Districtwide average rainfall for the month was 2.84" and was consistent with the 1932-2022 average of 2.85" (Table 1, Figure 1). The 12-month period ending October 31 reflected a Districtwide rainfall deficit of 2.77", which was a decrease in the 5.20" deficit seen at the end of September. Most District counties received between 2.5" and 3" of rainfall on average with areas throughout the District receiving more than 3.5" of rainfall (Figure 2).
- A 12-month rainfall deficit was present for many river basins, with the Aucilla and Coastal basins showing surpluses in October (Figure 3). Portions of the Suwannee, Coastal, and Aucilla basins showed surpluses greater than 6 inches this month. Most river basins also had 3-month rainfall deficits except for the Aucilla River Basin which was neutral. (Figure 4). Areas of the Suwannee, Santa Fe, and Aucilla basins had surpluses greater than 3 inches by the end of October.

SURFACE WATER

- **Rivers:** Many river stations presented in Figure 5 finished the month in either the normal (25th – 75th percentile) or above normal (75th – 100th percentile) flow ranges. The Ft. White gage on the Santa Fe River, however, trended mostly in the below normal (10th – 25th percentile) range throughout the month. River gages on the Fenholloway and Econfina began and ended the month in the above normal (75th – 90th percentile) category, while the Aucilla River at Lamont gage remained in the high (>90th percentile) flow range throughout October (Figure 6). The Alapaha River near Jennings along with the Suwannee River at White Springs gages also showed above normal flows at the end of October. Elsewhere, river gages in the District were mostly in the normal range at month's end.
- **Lakes:** Water levels decreased at most monitored lakes in the District this month (Figure 7). The median decrease in stage across all measured lakes was around 0.2' with seven lakes concluding the month below their respective long-term average. Alligator Lake had the highest stage decrease of around 2.8' this month. As a note, a new data collection site has been established for Lake Alto and is currently awaiting an elevation survey before the data can be utilized in this report.
- **Springs:** Flow measurements were made during October at 13 springs by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), District staff, and contractors. Madison Blue had flows in either the normal or above normal ranges throughout the month (Figure 8). After experiencing equipment issues beginning in September, Lafayette Blue Springs recorded flows in the normal range from the middle to the end of October (Figure 9).

GROUNDWATER

Upper Floridan Aquifer (UFA) levels across the District reflected mainly normal or high (75th – 90th percentile) groundwater levels in October (Figure 10). Wells in Taylor and Madison counties also saw levels in the extremely high (>90th percentile) range at the end of the month. Overall, groundwater levels decreased by a median of about 0.3' since the end of September and ended October with a Districtwide average around the 55th percentile.

Index wells in Madison, Hamilton, Taylor, Alachua, Bradford, and Levy counties were higher than their respective historical monthly average levels at the end of October (Figure 11). Long-term District UFA well levels ended the month in either low, normal, high, or very high categories (Figure 12a). Long-term wells with records that extend back to at least 1964 showed mainly decreasing water levels this month (Figure 12b).

CLIMATE AND DROUGHT OUTLOOK

El Niño is anticipated to continue through the winter and into spring with an 62% chance of occurrence from April to June 2024.

The NOAA three-month seasonal outlook suggests equal chances of above, below, or normal temperatures along with above-normal precipitation throughout the District from November through January.

The U.S. Drought Monitor report released on November 9, 2023, shows Abnormally Dry (D0) in all or parts of each District county with Moderate Drought (D1) in areas of Dixie, Alachua, Lafayette, Gilchrist, and Levy counties.

CONSERVATION

Water conservation continues to be necessary to sustain healthy groundwater levels and flows in District springs and rivers. All users are urged to eliminate unnecessary uses. Landscape irrigation during Eastern Standard Time (November 5, 2023, to March 10, 2024) is limited to once per week based on a District water conservation rule that applies to residential landscaping, public or commercial recreation areas, and businesses that are not regulated by a District-issued water use permit. Information about the District's year-round conservation measures is available at <http://www.srwmd.org/index.aspx?NID=337>

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Hydrologic Conditions Report is a monthly combined effort between the Offices of Water Resources and Hydrologic Data Services data collection and review programs. Acknowledgment is made to the following staff for their contributions to the timely production of this report:

- Data Collection: Jamie Gaylord, Matthew Jordan, Dylan Mock, Gene Page, and Vince Robinson
- QA/QC and Reporting: Stephanie Armstrong, Alejandro Arteaga Garcia, Susie Hetrick, Robbie McKinney, and Brandi Sistrunk
- Administrative Support/Document Preparation/IT: Paul Buchanan, Tyler Jordan, Andrew Neel, and April Olive

This report is compiled in compliance with Chapter 40B-21.211, Florida Administrative Code, using rainfall (gage-adjusted radar-derived estimates), groundwater (121 wells), surface water (35 stations), and general information such as drought indices and forecasts. Data are provisional and updated as revised data become available. Data are available at <http://www.mysuwanneeriver.com/507/Water-Data-Portal> or upon request.

Table 1: Nexrad Monthly Rainfall Totals by County (inches)

County	October 2023	October Average*	Month % of Normal	Total Last 12 Months	Annual % of Normal*
Alachua	3.03	2.87	105%	47.87	91%
Baker	2.97	2.99	99%	45.94	87%
Bradford	2.85	3.02	94%	48.75	94%
Columbia	2.95	2.69	109%	48.20	91%
Dixie	2.38	2.93	81%	52.98	91%
Gilchrist	2.48	2.83	88%	48.58	89%
Hamilton	2.97	2.65	112%	50.39	97%
Jefferson	2.69	2.76	98%	52.27	93%
Lafayette	2.86	2.78	103%	55.89	101%
Levy	2.70	2.83	96%	48.96	87%
Madison	3.21	2.69	119%	58.74	110%
Suwannee	3.05	2.68	114%	51.92	98%
Taylor	2.86	2.83	101%	55.03	97%
Union	3.09	2.88	107%	47.80	91%

*Based on PRISM LT81 monthly rainfall averages by county (1927-2021)

October 2023 District Average	2.84
October Long-Term Average (1932-2022)	2.85
Historical 12-month Average (1932-2022)	54.66
Past 12-Month Total	51.89
12-Month Rainfall Surplus/Deficit	-2.77

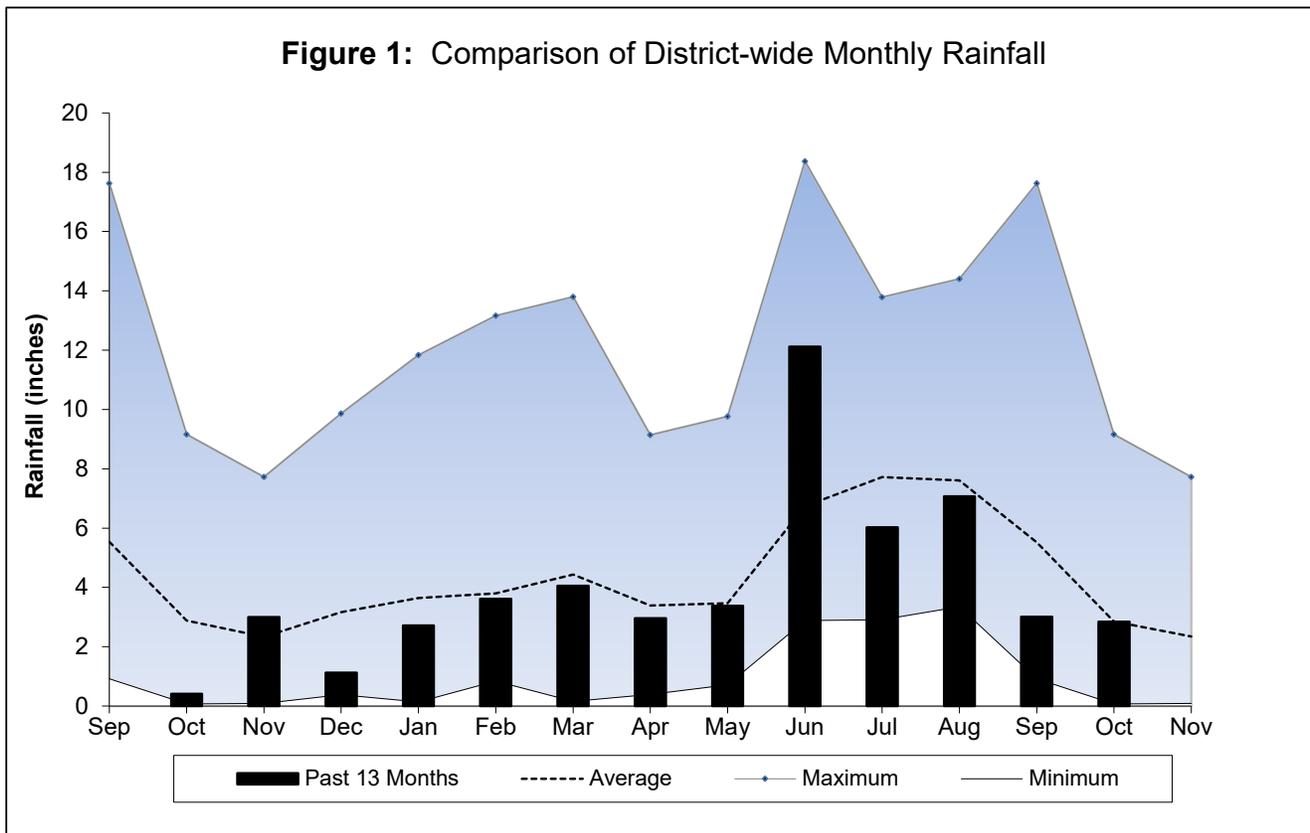


Figure 2: October 2023 SRWMD Gage-adjusted Radar Rainfall

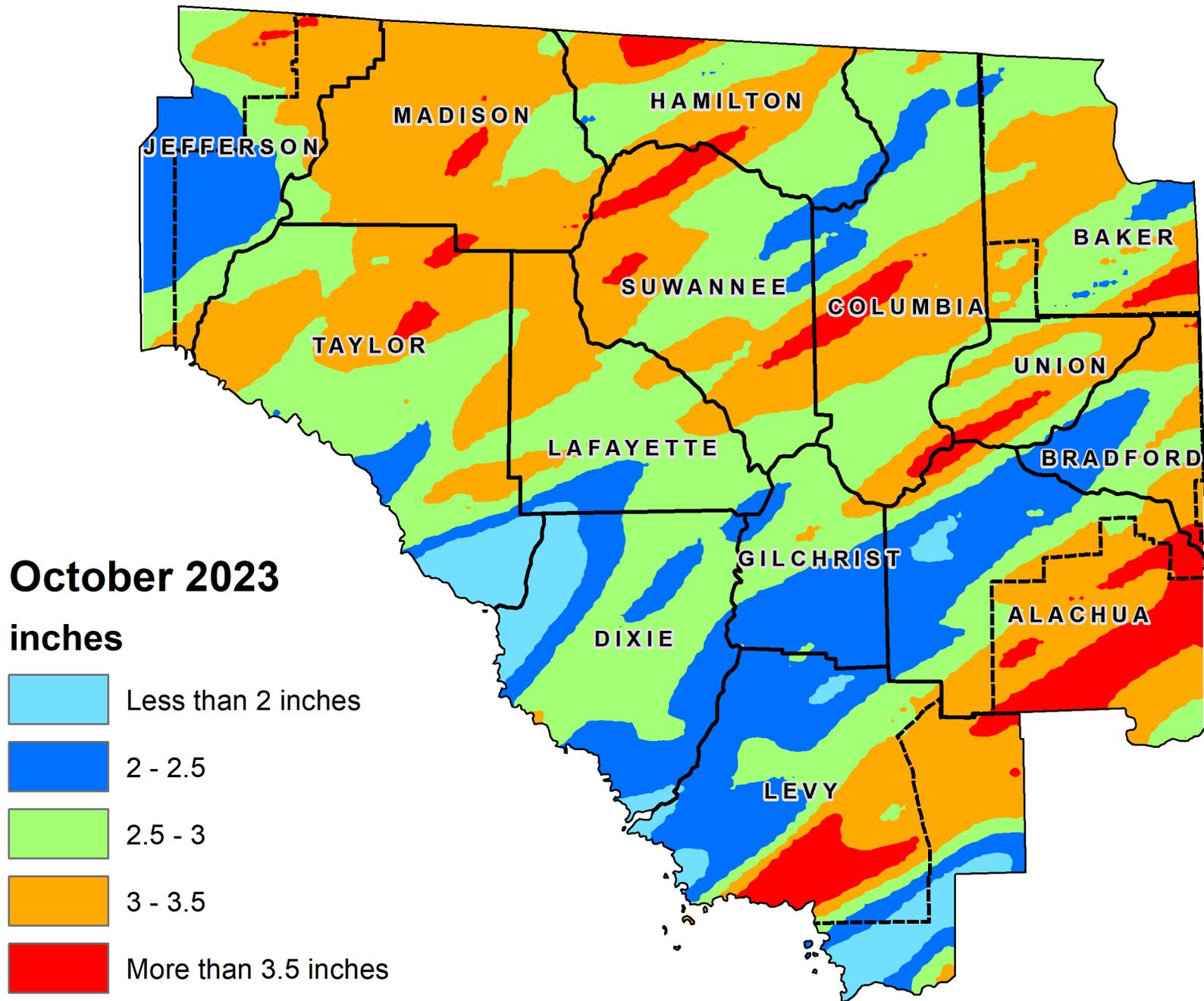


Figure 3: 12 - Month Rainfall Surplus/Deficit by River Basin through October 31, 2023

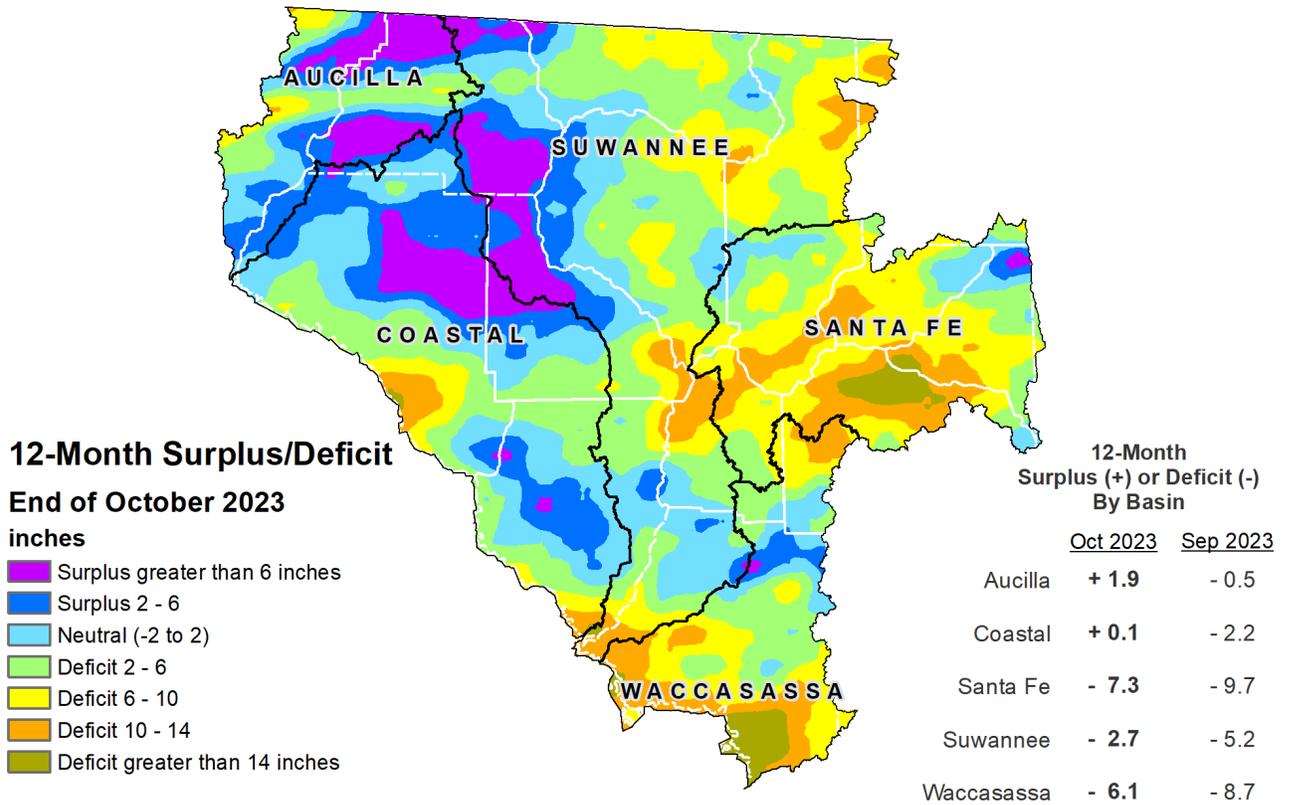


Figure 4: 3 - Month Rainfall Surplus/Deficit by River Basin through October 31, 2023

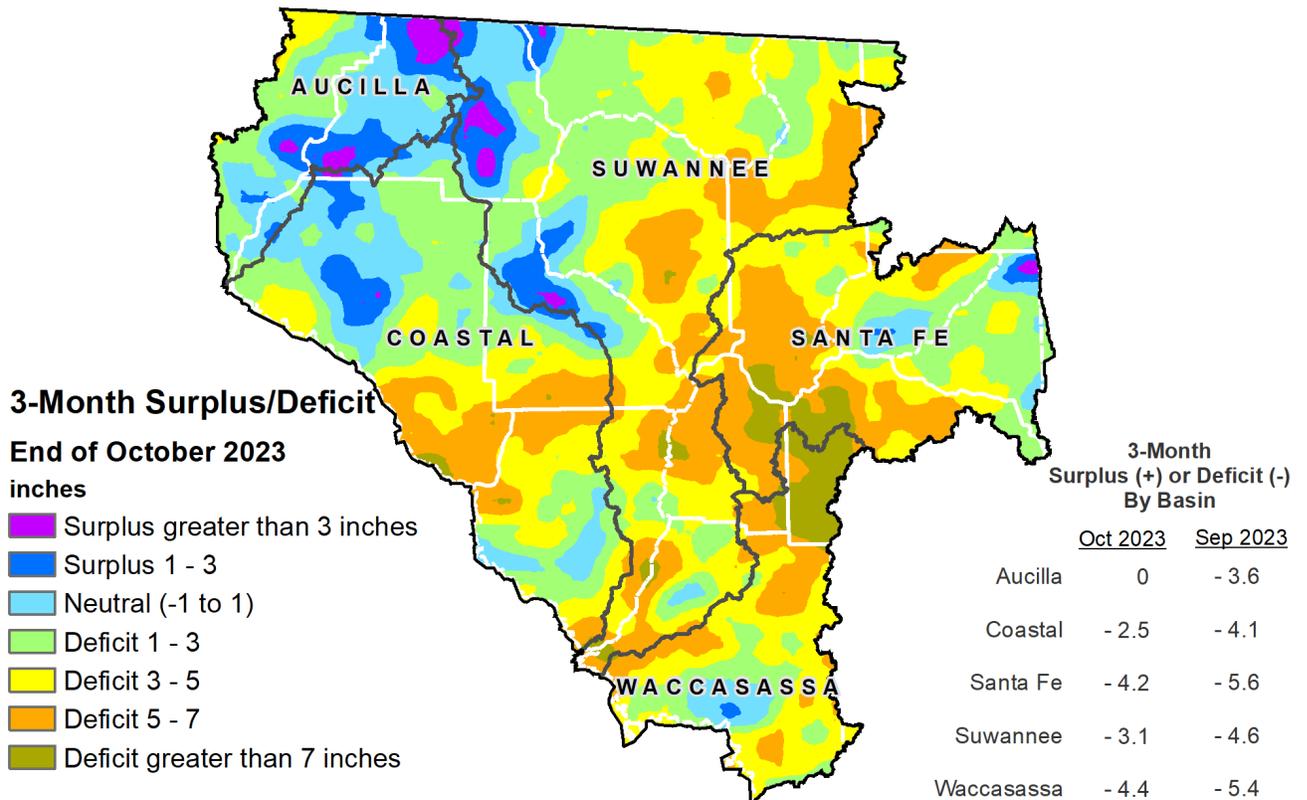


Figure 5: Daily River Flow Statistics

November 1, 2022 through October 31, 2023

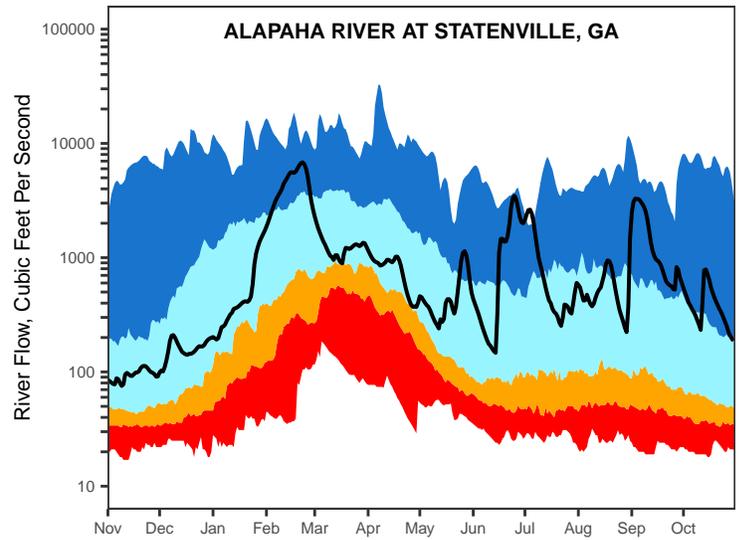
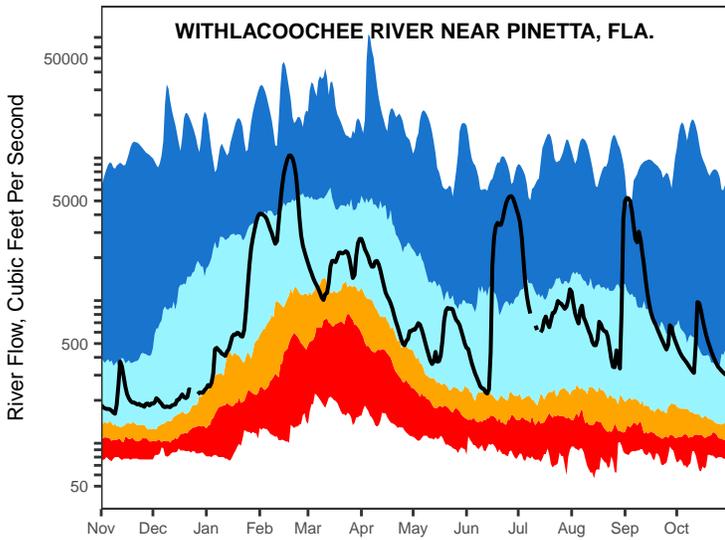
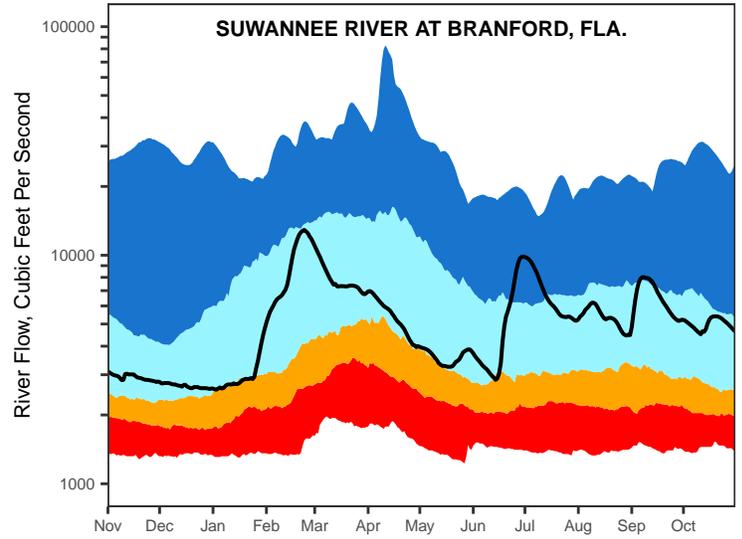
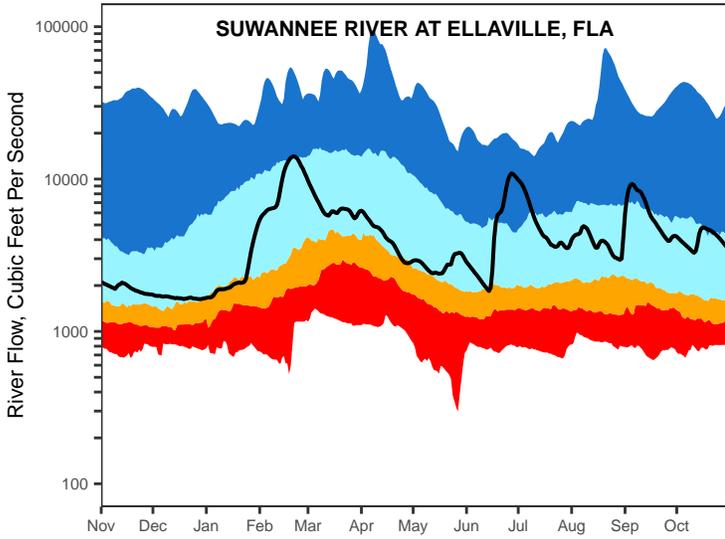
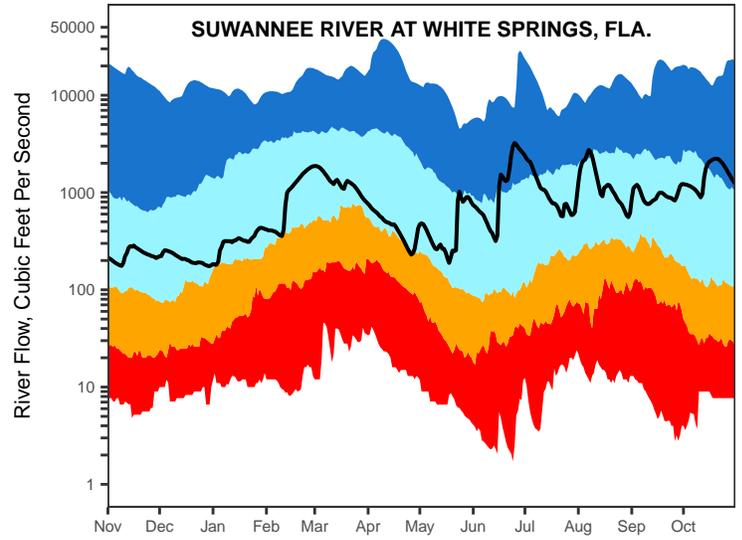
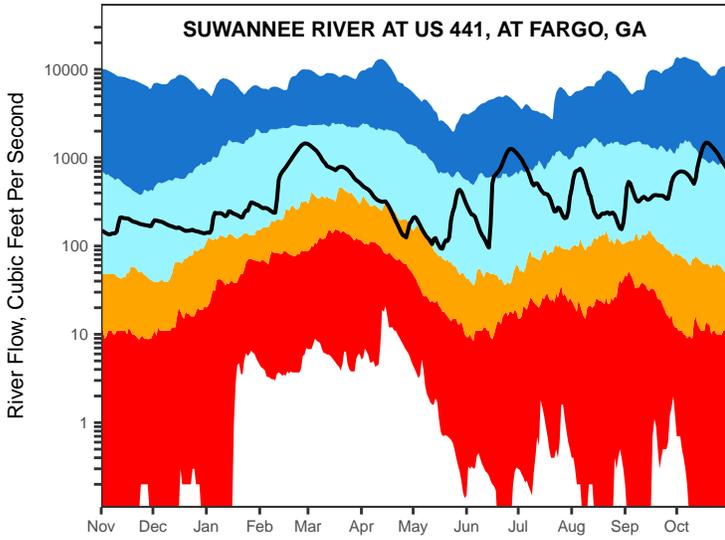
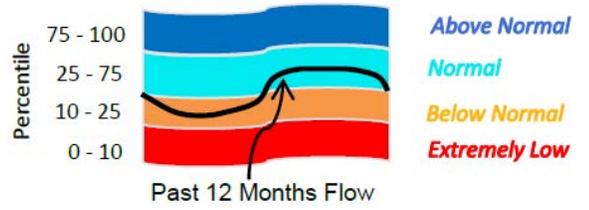
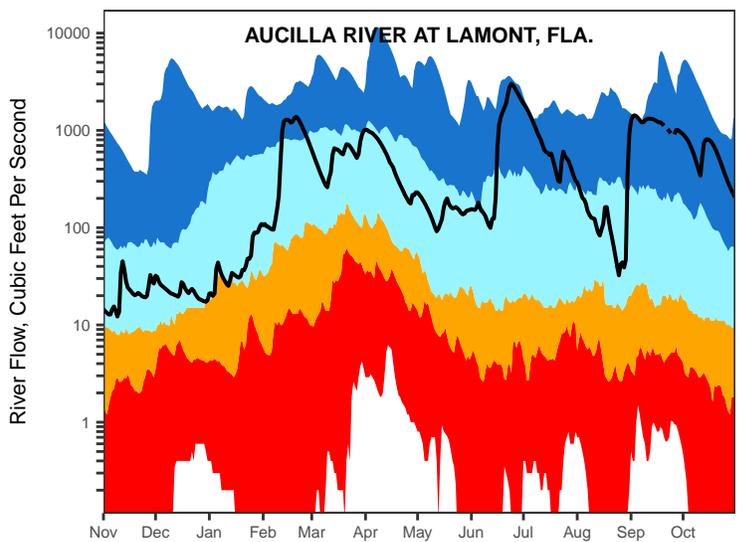
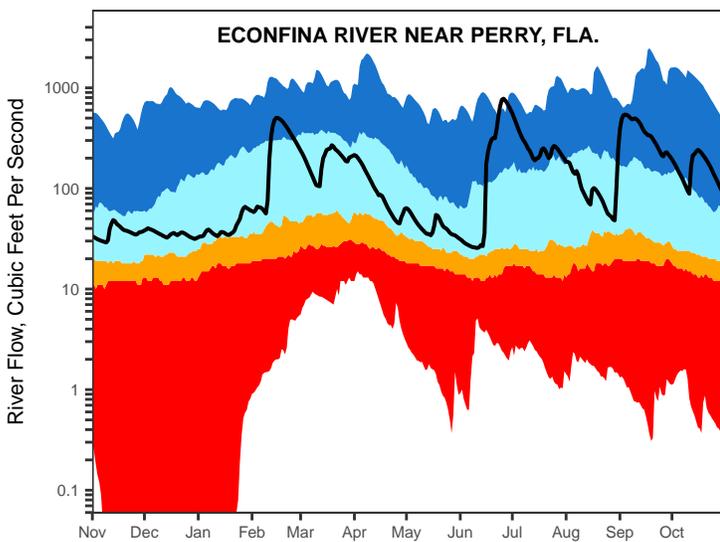
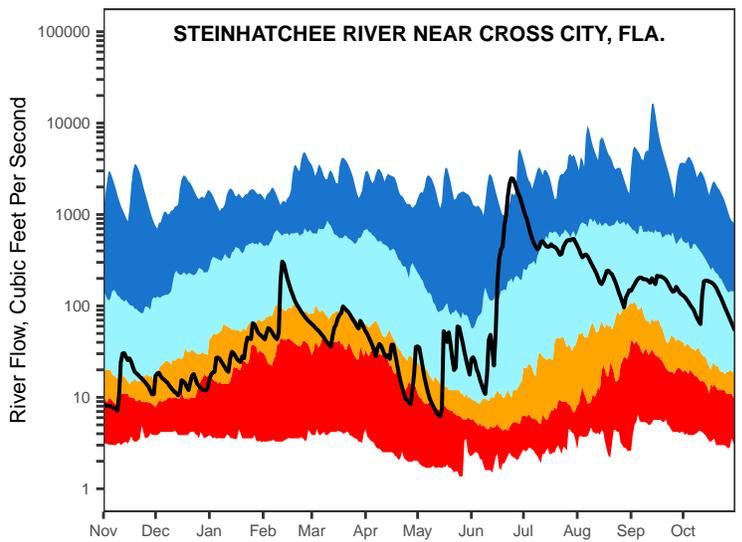
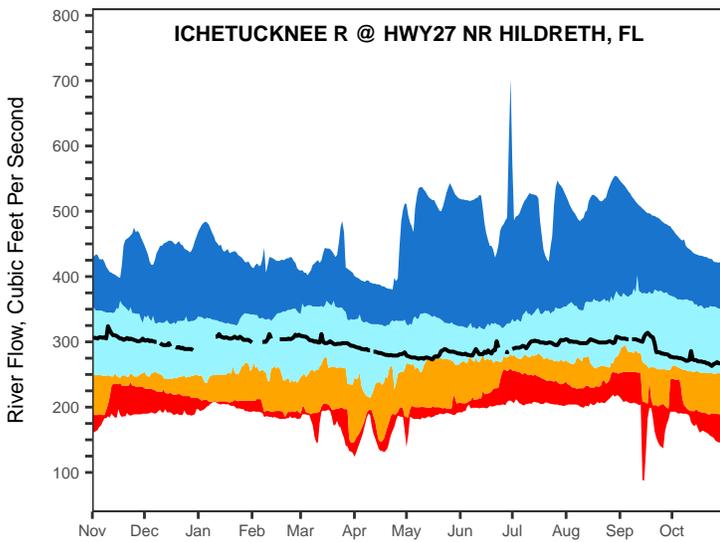
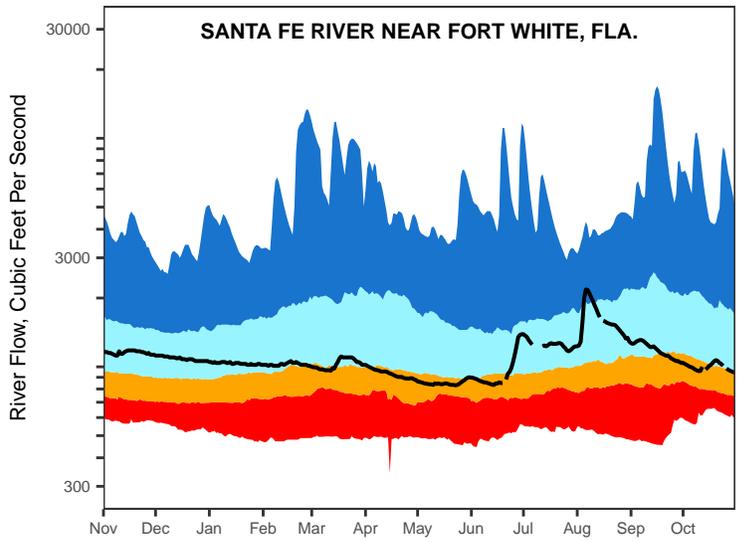
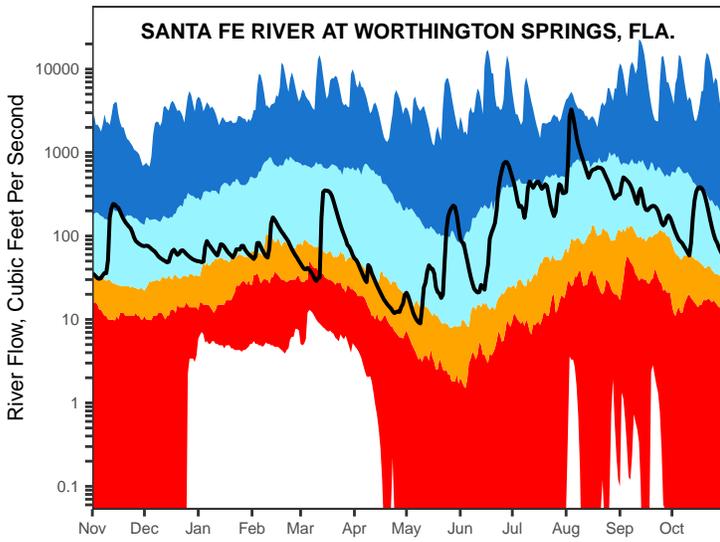
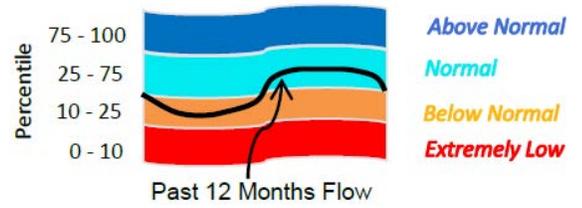


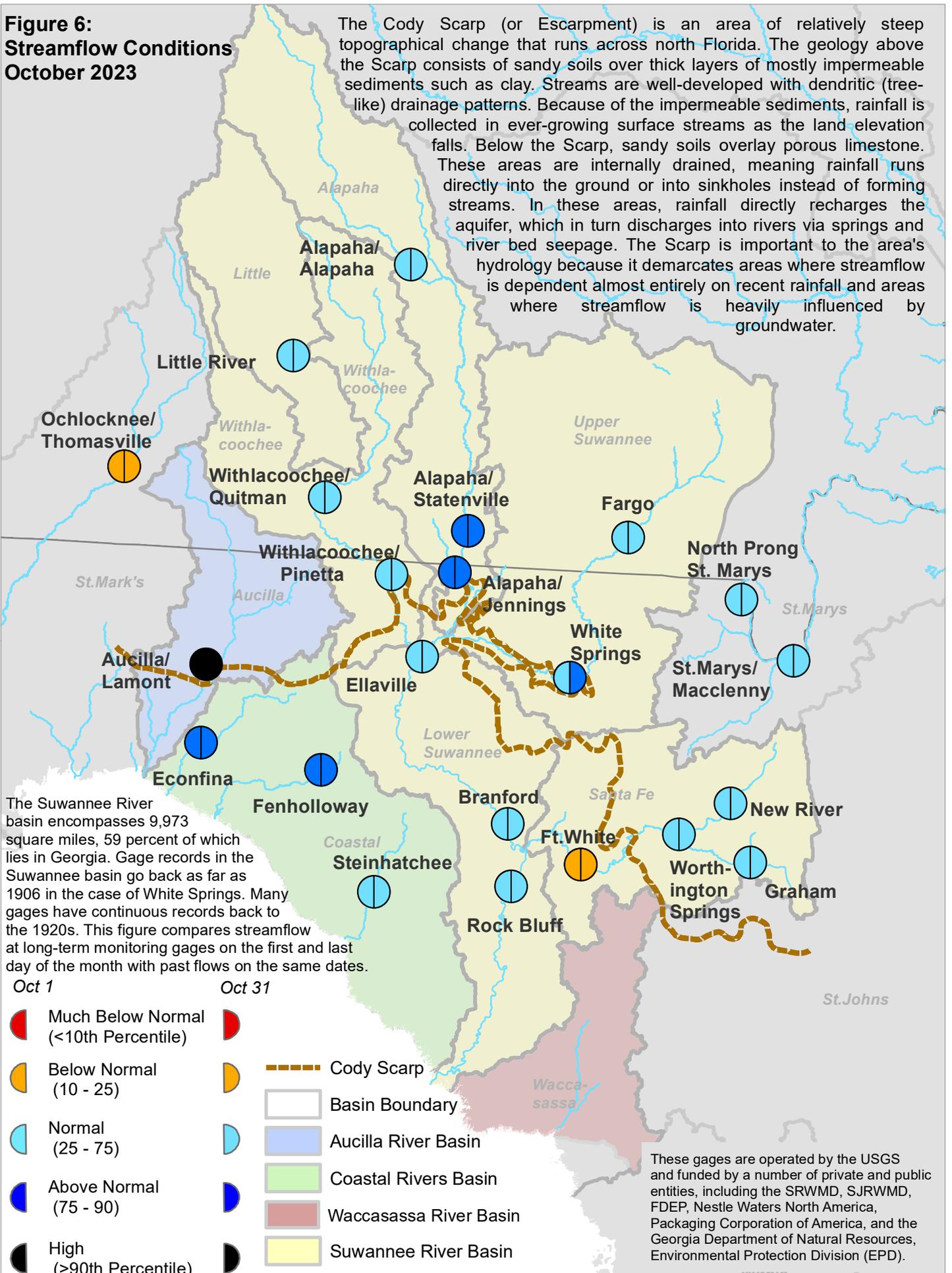
Figure 5, cont.: Daily River Flow Statistics

November 1, 2022 through October 31, 2023



**Figure 6:
Streamflow Conditions
October 2023**

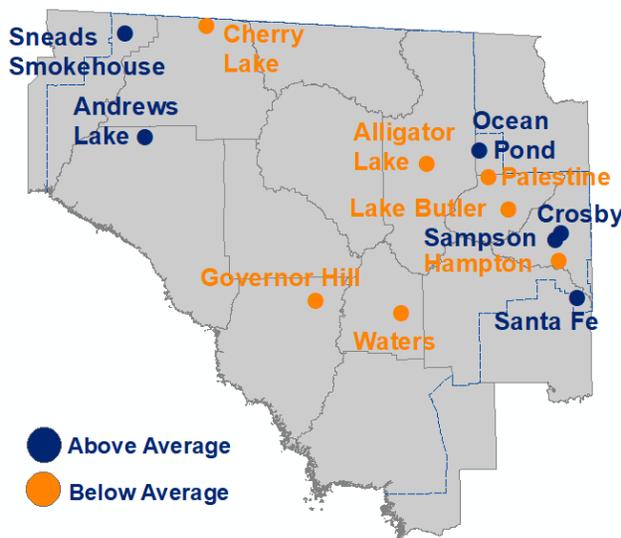
The Cody Scarp (or Escarpment) is an area of relatively steep topographical change that runs across north Florida. The geology above the Scarp consists of sandy soils over thick layers of mostly impermeable sediments such as clay. Streams are well-developed with dendritic (tree-like) drainage patterns. Because of the impermeable sediments, rainfall is collected in ever-growing surface streams as the land elevation falls. Below the Scarp, sandy soils overlay porous limestone. These areas are internally drained, meaning rainfall runs directly into the ground or into sinkholes instead of forming streams. In these areas, rainfall directly recharges the aquifer, which in turn discharges into rivers via springs and river bed seepage. The Scarp is important to the area's hydrology because it demarcates areas where streamflow is dependent almost entirely on recent rainfall and areas where streamflow is heavily influenced by groundwater.



The Suwannee River basin encompasses 9,973 square miles, 59 percent of which lies in Georgia. Gage records in the Suwannee basin go back as far as 1906 in the case of White Springs. Many gages have continuous records back to the 1920s. This figure compares streamflow at long-term monitoring gages on the first and last day of the month with past flows on the same dates.

These gages are operated by the USGS and funded by a number of private and public entities, including the SRWMD, SJRWMD, FDEP, Nestle Waters North America, Packaging Corporation of America, and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Environmental Protection Division (EPD).

Figure 7: October 2023 Lake Levels



SRWMD lakes react differently to climatic changes depending on their location in the landscape. Some lakes, in particular in the eastern part of the District, are embedded in a surficial or intermediate aquifer over relatively impermeable clay deposits. These lakes rise and fall according to local rainfall and surface runoff. They retain water during severe droughts since most losses occur from evaporation. Other lakes, such as Governor Hill and Waters Lake, have porous or “leaky” bottoms that interact with the Floridan aquifer. These lakes depend on groundwater levels to stay high. If aquifer levels are low, these lakes go dry even if rainfall is normal.

The District currently monitors 14 lakes on a long-term basis; much of the data was originally provided by volunteer observers. Monitoring records began in the 1970s, except for Lakes Butler, Sampson, and Santa Fe, which started in 1957.

Feet Above or Below Historic Average

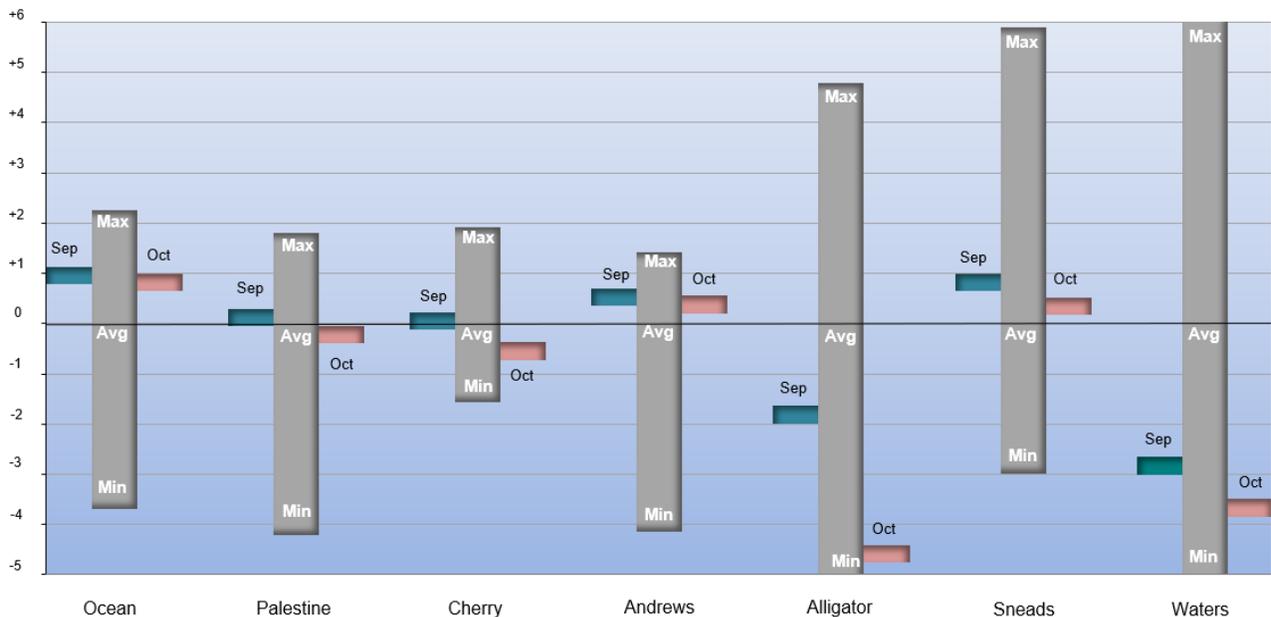
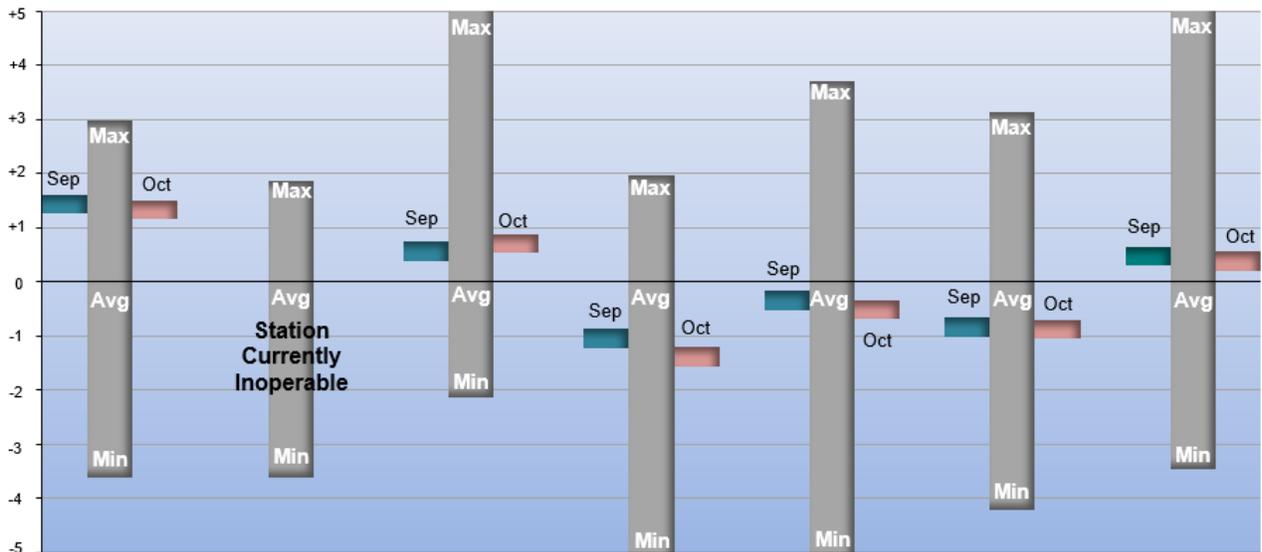


Figure 8: Flow Over the Past 12 Months, Madison Blue Springs (cubic feet per second)

Note: This graph is based on provisional data that are subject to revision

Period 12 Month 11/01/2022 to 11/01/2023

2022-23

Percentile statistics are calculated using data from 03/01/1932 to 09/30/2022

Madison Blue

■ Max-Q75

■ Q75-Q25

■ Q25-Q10

■ Q10-Min

— Archived Data

— Provisional Data

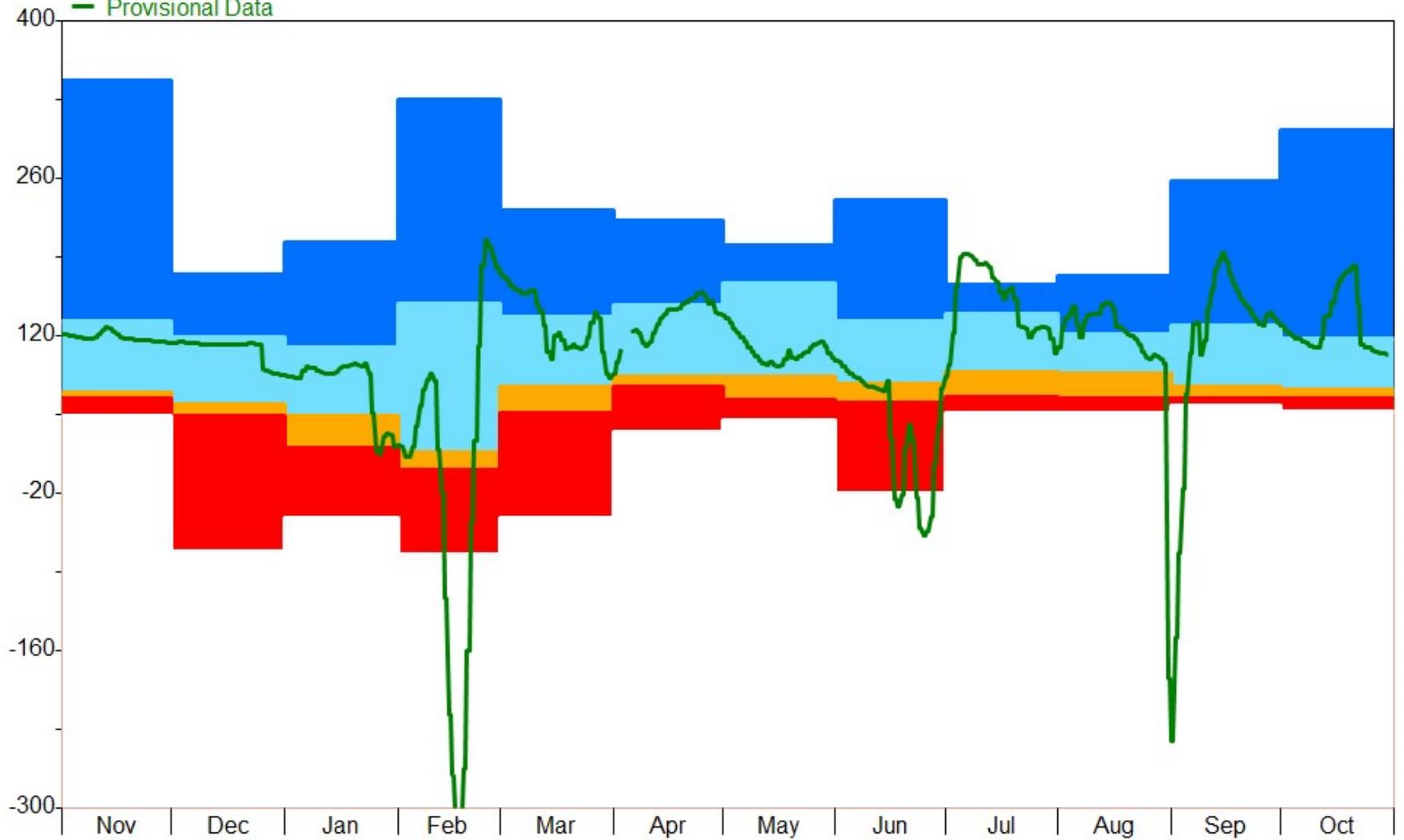


Figure 9: Flow Over the Past 12 Months, Lafayette Blue Springs (cubic feet per second)

Note: This graph is based on provisional data that are subject to revision

Period 12 Month 11/01/2022 to 11/01/2023

2022-23

Percentile statistics are calculated using data from 04/23/1985 to 09/30/2022

Lafayette_Blue

■ Max-Q75

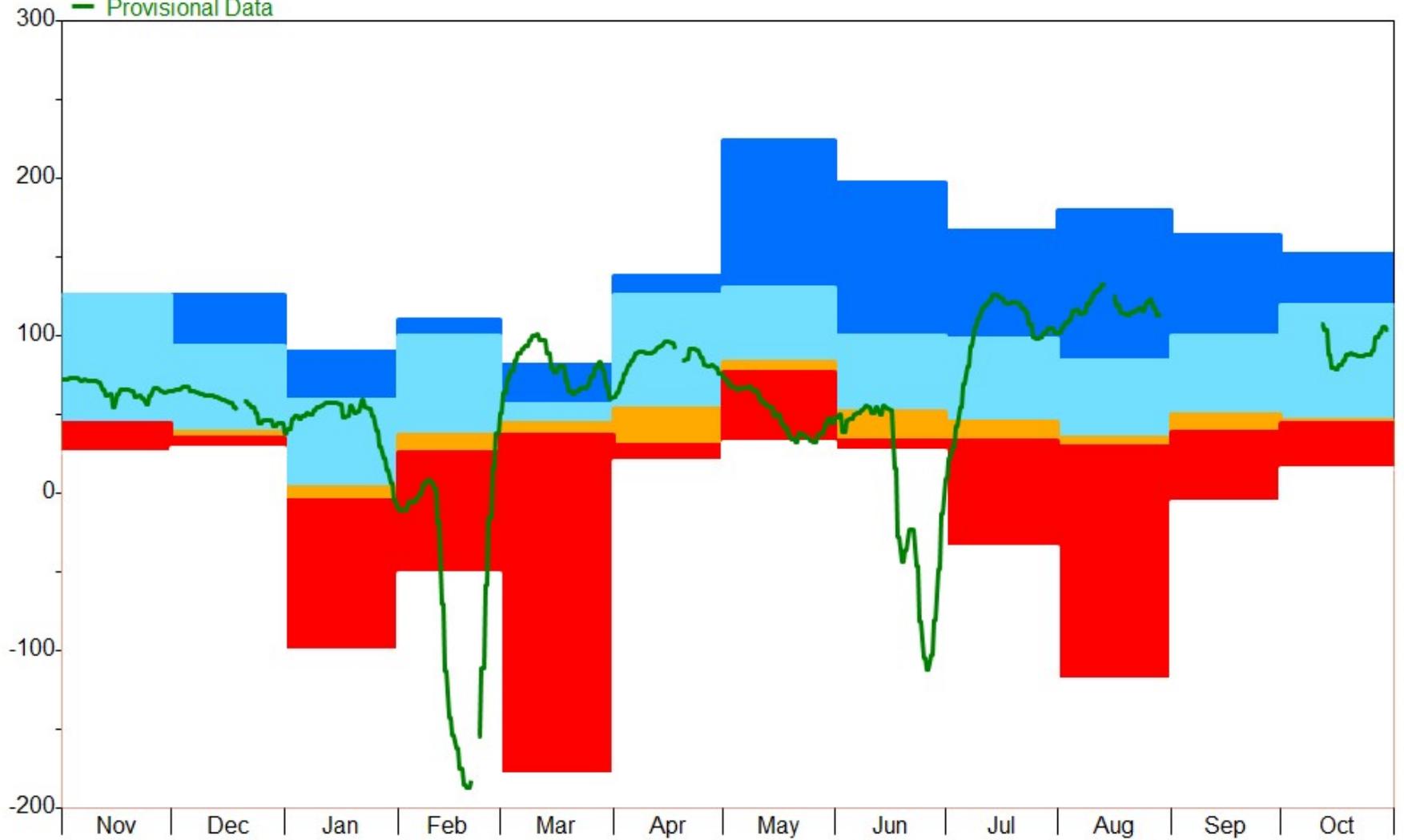
■ Q75-Q25

■ Q25-Q10

■ Q10-Min

— Archived Data

— Provisional Data



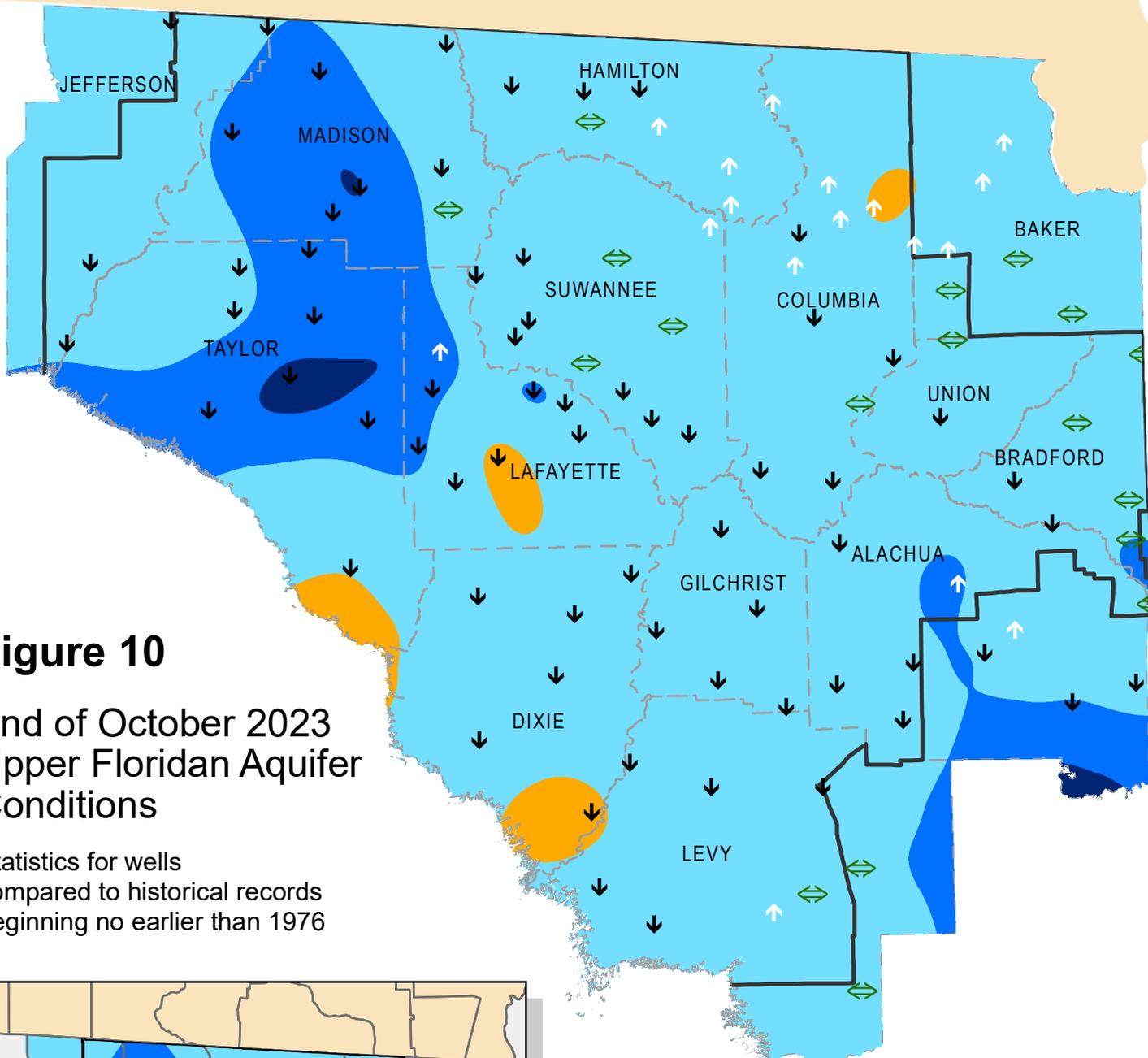
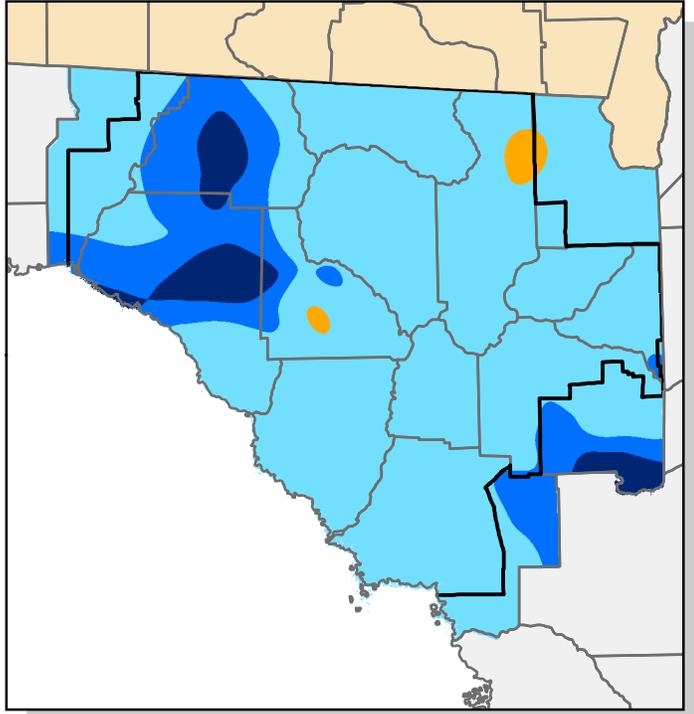


Figure 10

**End of October 2023
Upper Floridan Aquifer
Conditions**

Statistics for wells compared to historical records beginning no earlier than 1976



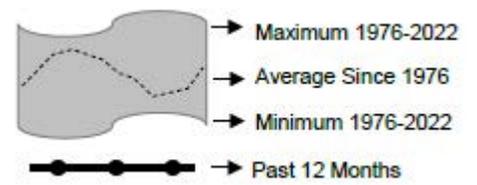
Inset: September Groundwater Percentiles

Additional wells courtesy of SJRWMD, SWFWMD and USGS

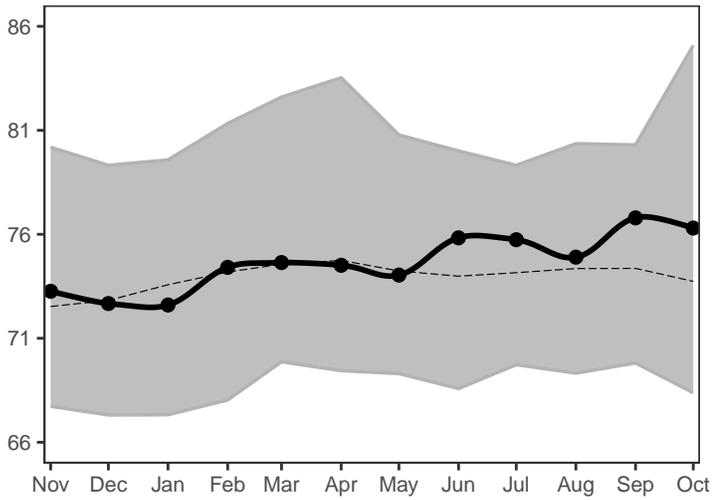
- Extremely High
(Greater than 90th Percentile)
- High
(75th to 90th Percentile)
- Normal
(25th to 75th Percentile)
- Low
(10th to 25th Percentile)
- Extremely Low
(Less than 10th Percentile)
- ↑ ↓ Increase/decrease in level since last month
- ↔ Increase/decrease since last month less than one percent of historic range
- District Boundary

Figure 11: Monthly Groundwater Statistics

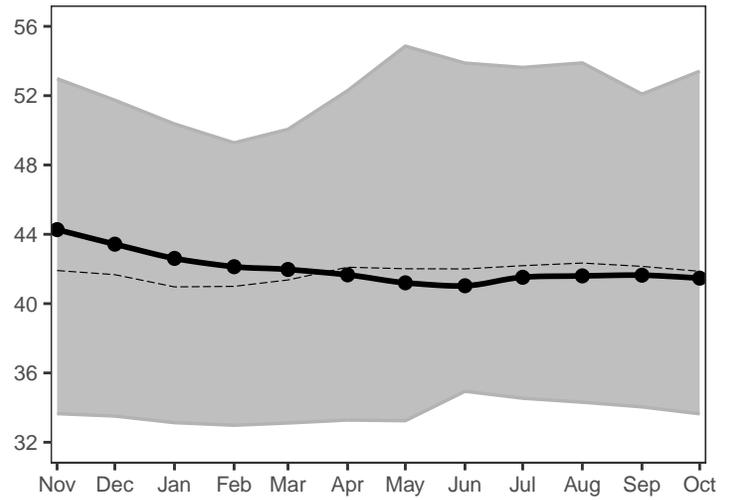
Levels November 2022 through October 2023
 Period of Record Beginning 1976



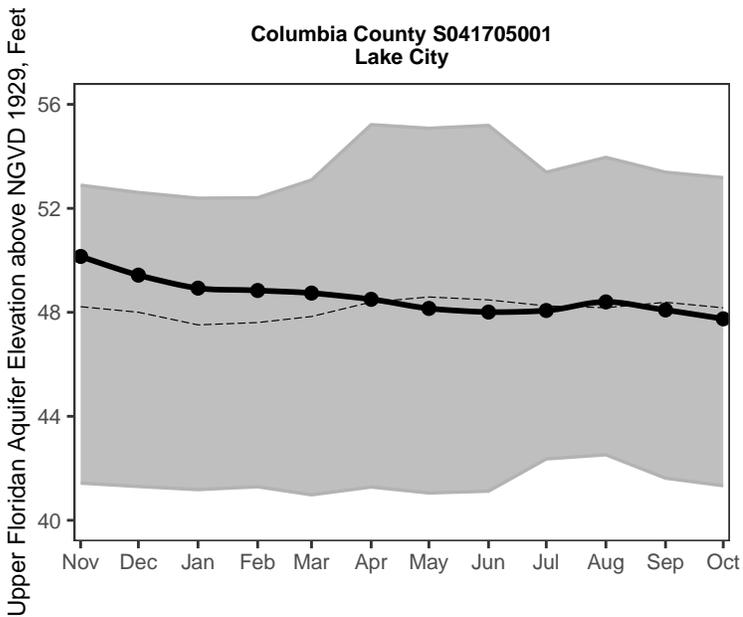
Madison County N010719001
near Greenville



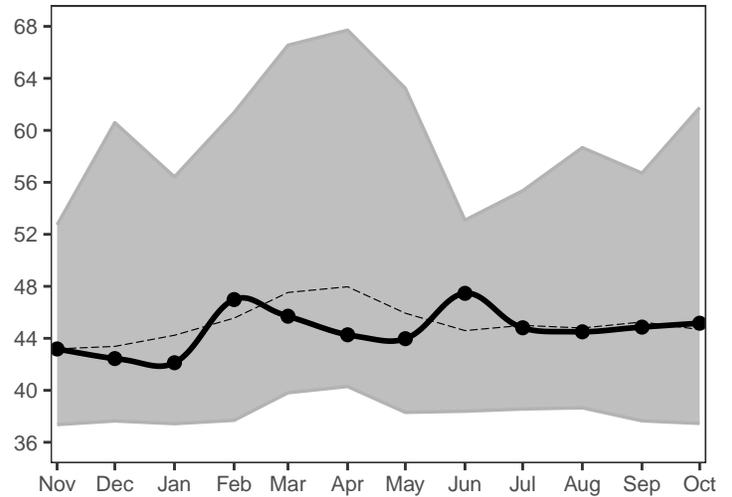
Suwannee County S021335001
near Live Oak



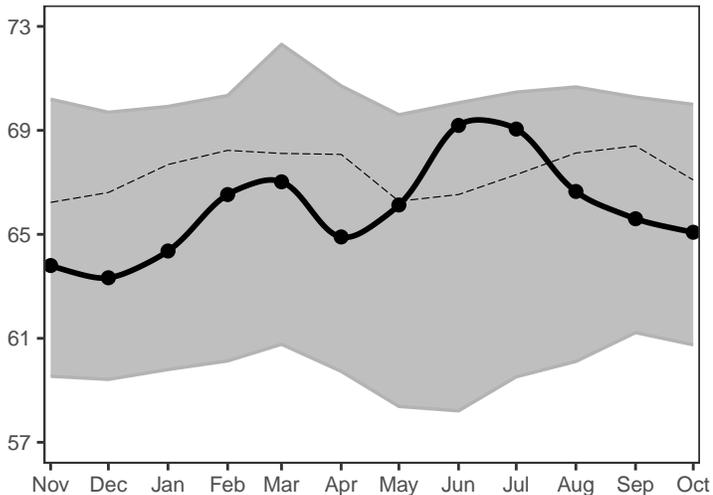
Columbia County S041705001
Lake City



Hamilton County N011422007
near Jasper



Lafayette County S061114001
near Mayo



Taylor County S040736005
Perry

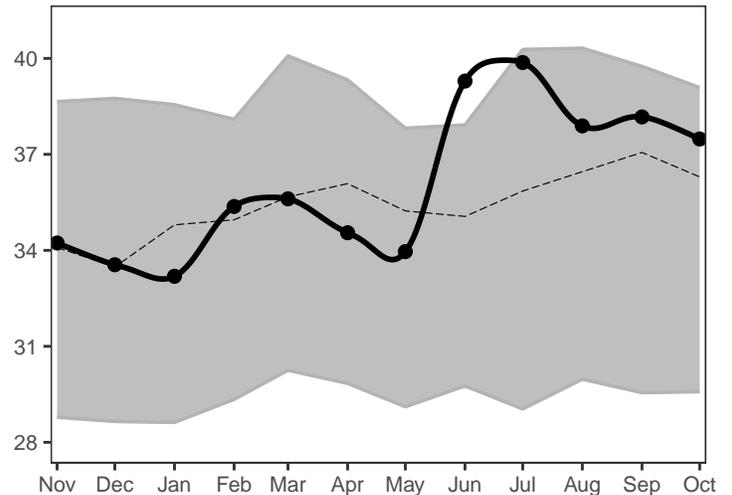
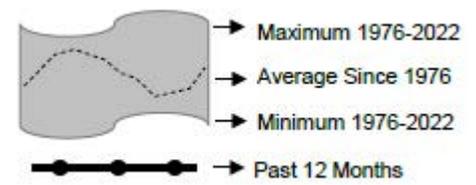
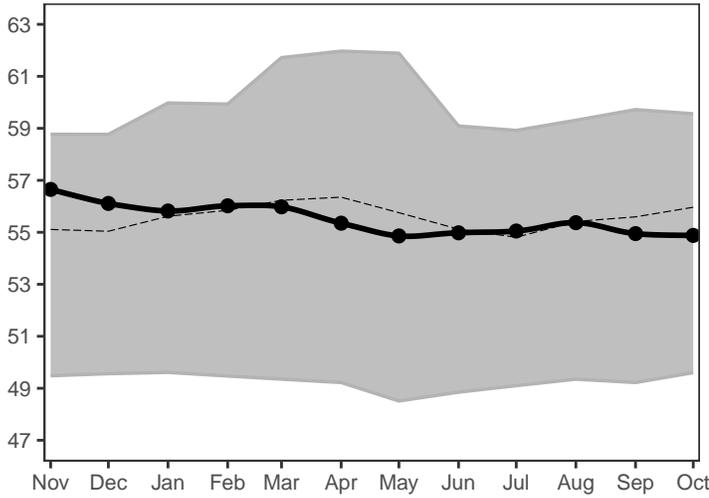


Figure 11, cont.: Monthly Groundwater Statistics

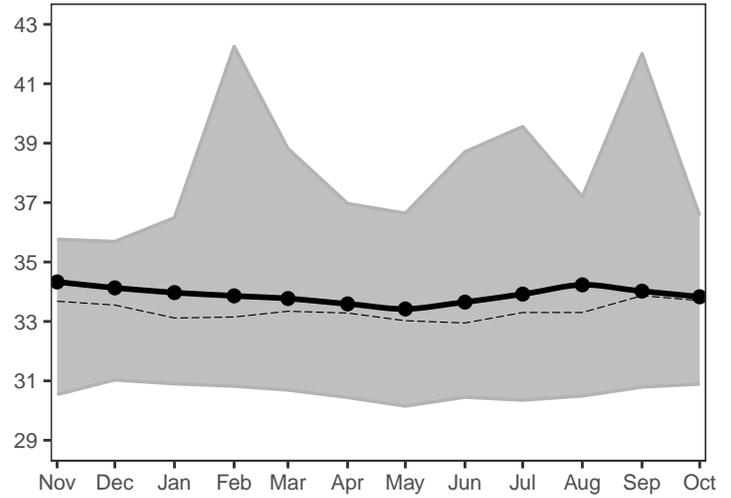
Levels November 2022 through October 2023
 Period of Record Beginning 1976



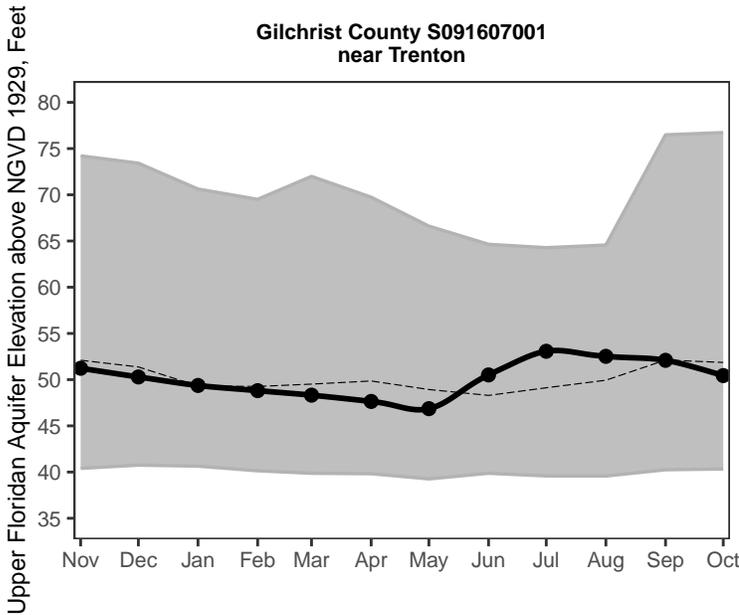
Union County S051933001
near Lake Butler



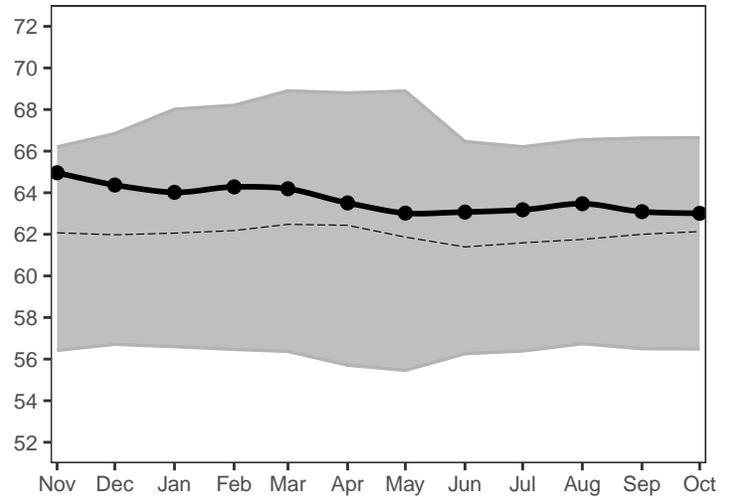
Alachua County S081703001
at High Springs



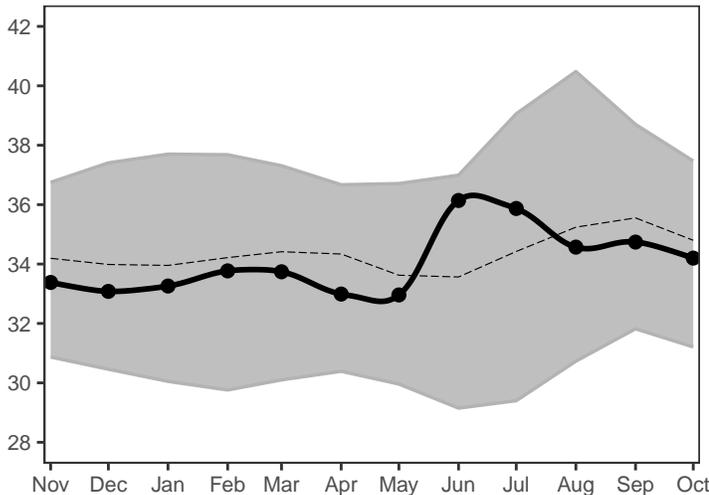
Gilchrist County S091607001
near Trenton



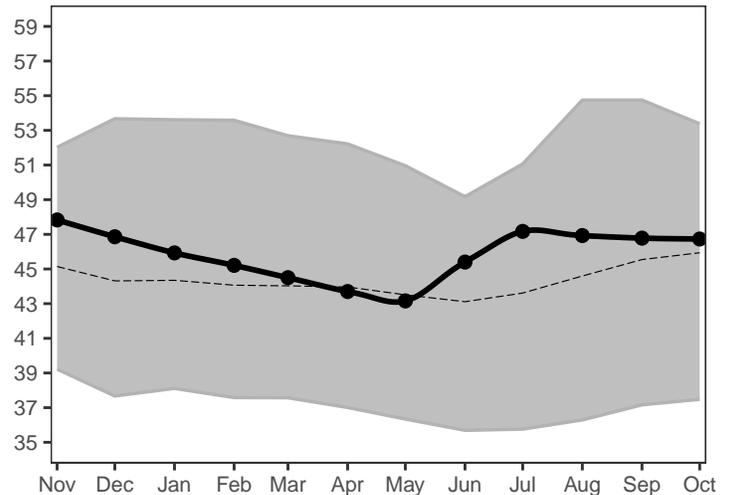
Bradford County S072132001
near Graham

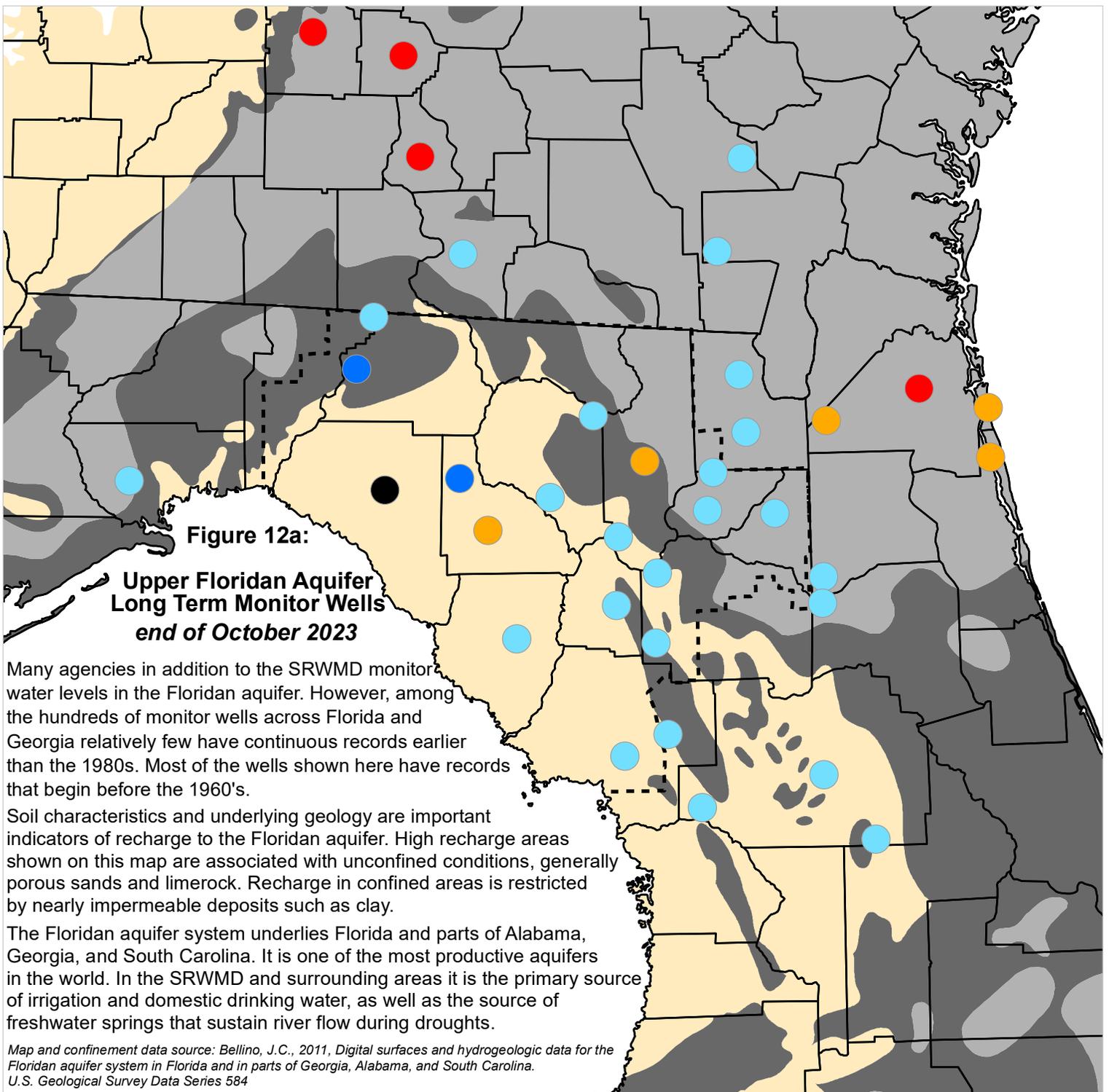


Dixie County S101210001
at Cross City



Levy County S131736001
near Bronson





Occurrence of Confined and Unconfined Conditions in the Upper Floridan Aquifer

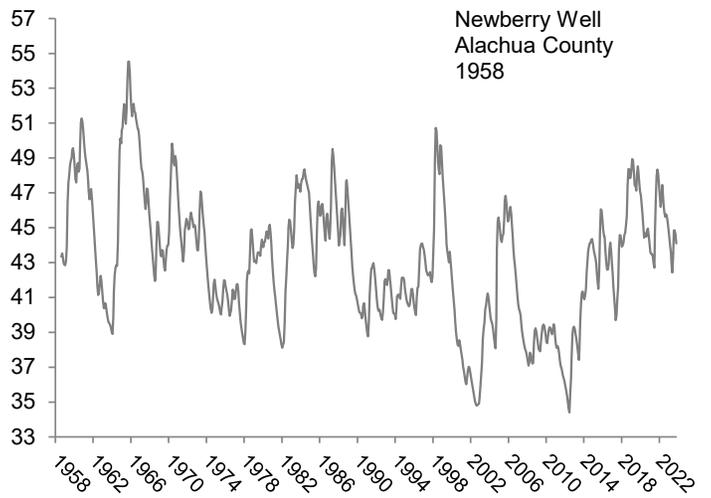
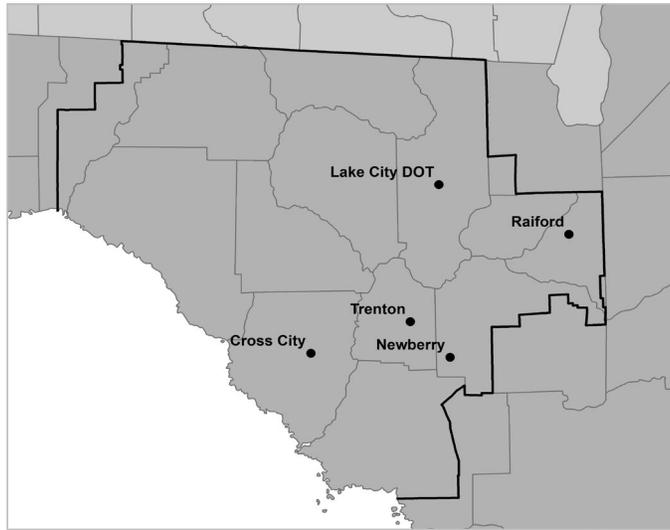
-  Confined: Upper confining unit is generally greater than 100 feet thick and unbreached. Recharge is low.
-  Semi-confined: Upper confining unit is generally less than 100 feet thick, breached, or both. Recharge is moderate.
-  Unconfined: Upper confining unit is absent or very thin. Recharge is high.
-  SRWMD Boundary

Percentile of Most Recent Water Level Relative to Entire Record

-  Very High (Greater than 90th Percentile)
-  High (75th to 90th Percentile)
-  Normal (25th to 75th Percentile)
-  Low (10th to 25th Percentile)
-  Very Low (Less than 10th Percentile)
-  Data Not Available

Figure 12b: Regional Long Term Upper Floridan Aquifer Levels

Data through October 2023



Upper Floridan Aquifer Elevation above NGVD 1929, Feet

