

Region 3 Fire Danger Outlook

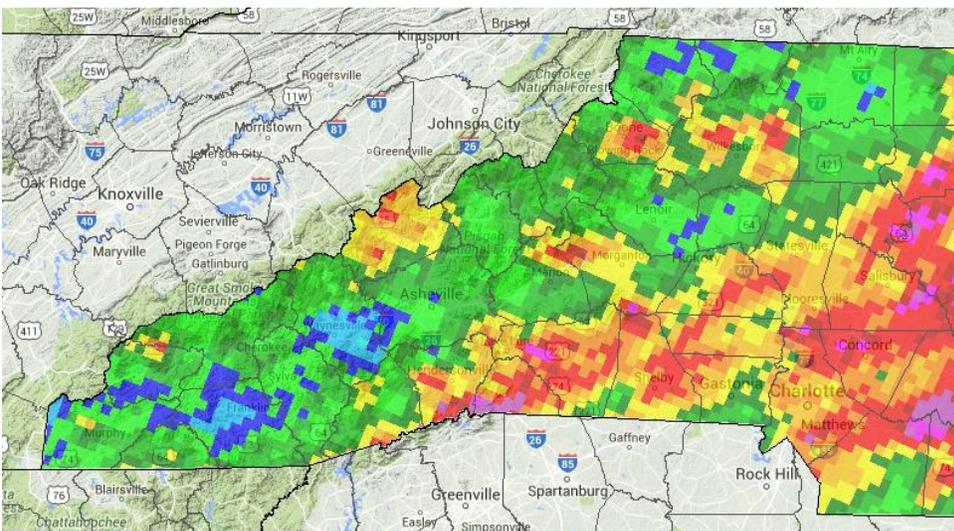
May 20th, 2016, 1000

Cabe Speary, Fire Environment Forester, 252-325-3089

Weather Outlook

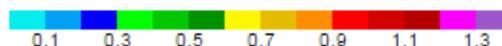
- Low pressure will advance towards the region today and move through the area tonight into Saturday. Rain will spread northeast into the area by this afternoon and become widespread this evening into Saturday. The rain could be heavy at times. An upper trough of low pressure will progress across the area on Sunday with an area of high pressure close behind it for Monday. Except clear weather Sunday night through Tuesday, with a chance of rain returning on Wednesday. From May 27-June 2 there is a 30-40% chance that temperatures will be **above** normal.
- Low RH's are forecast to be in the 60-70s today and tomorrow, with 40-50% for the remainder of the period, except 60s later in the period in GSMNP. Nighttime recovery should be good to excellent through the period.
- Winds will be 5-10 MPH with gusts to 18 today and tomorrow., increasing to 10-15 for Sunday, before dropping back to 5-10 for the remainder of the period. Transport winds will be E-SE at 15-25 MPH for Friday and W-SW at 15-25 MPH on Saturday. Mixing heights should be 2-3,000 feet today and 5-7,000 feet for Saturday.
- High temperatures will remain in the 50s and low 60s today, gradually warming through the week to the mid70s for the mountains, and lower 80s for the piedmont later in the period. From May 27-June 2 there is a 30-40% chance that temperatures will be **above** normal, except in the southern mountains where there are equal chances of above or below normal.

Precipitation, May 13th, 0700 to May 20th, 0700

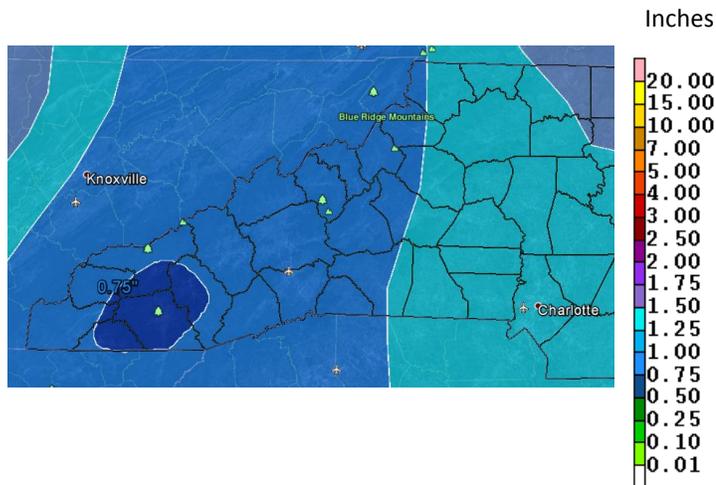


The entire region has had some rain over the past 7 days, with over an inch in a few areas. Greenup has occurred over the entire region.

MPE Precip. estimate (in.)

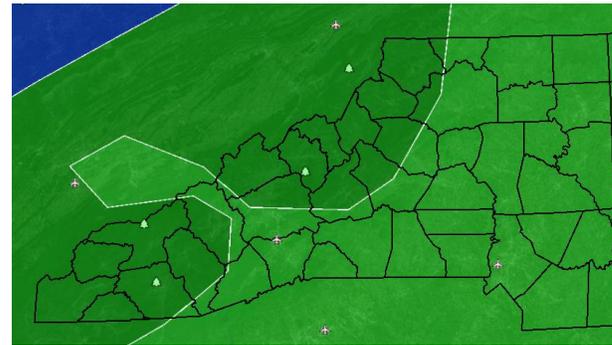


Precipitation Forecast, 0800 ET 5/20 to 0800 ET 5/23



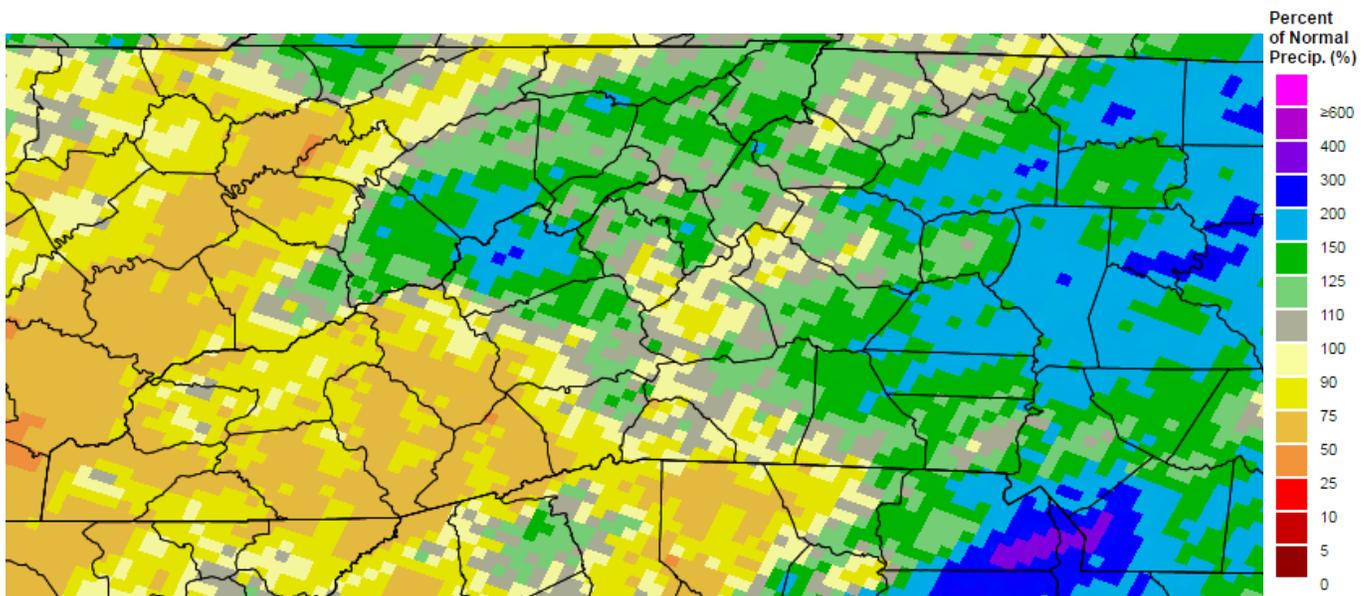
Between .75-1.5" expected over the next 3 days.

Precipitation Forecast, 0800 ET 5/25 to 0800 ET 5/27



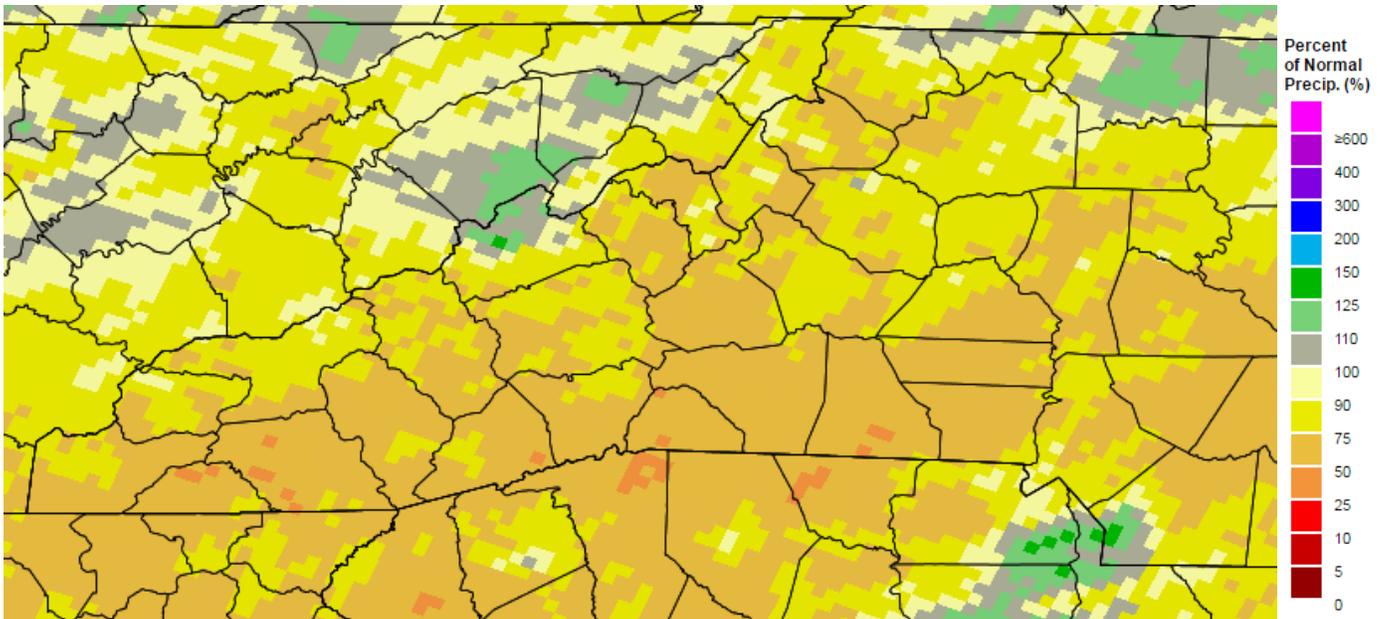
After a couple of dry days, .1-.5" are expected toward the end of the period.

30 Day Precipitation Departure (shown as percent of normal)



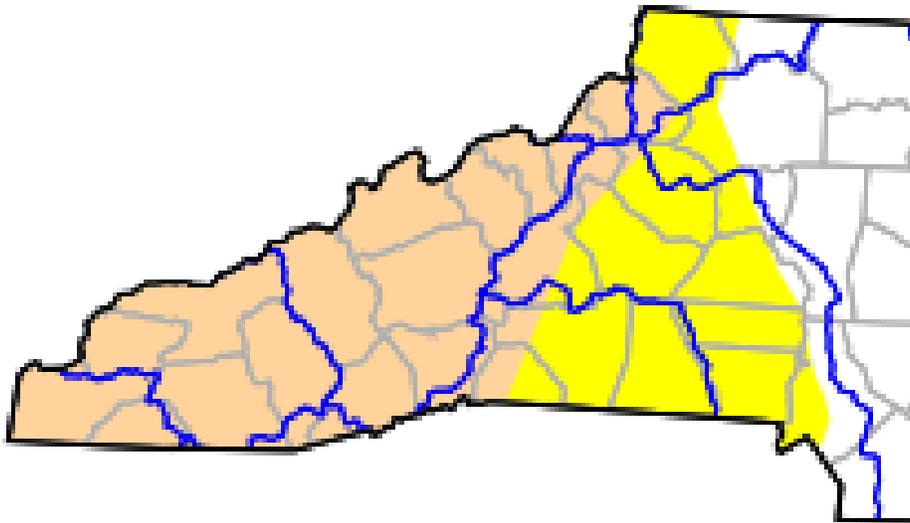
Some slight improvement since last week, but still below normal in the southern mountains.

90 Day Precipitation Departure (shown as percent of normal)



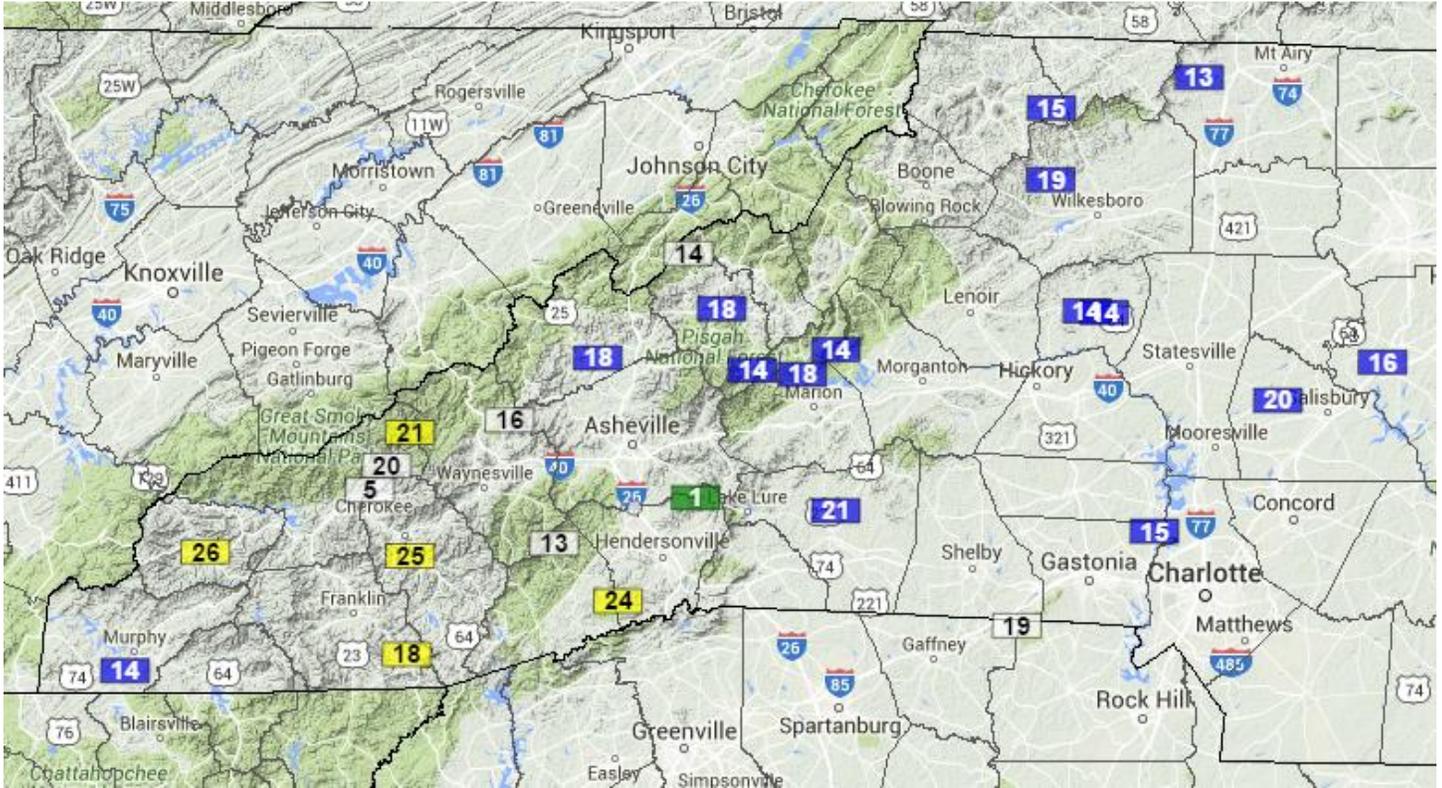
Very little change since last week in the longer term. Most of the region is still below normal.

Drought Monitor, for week starting May 17th



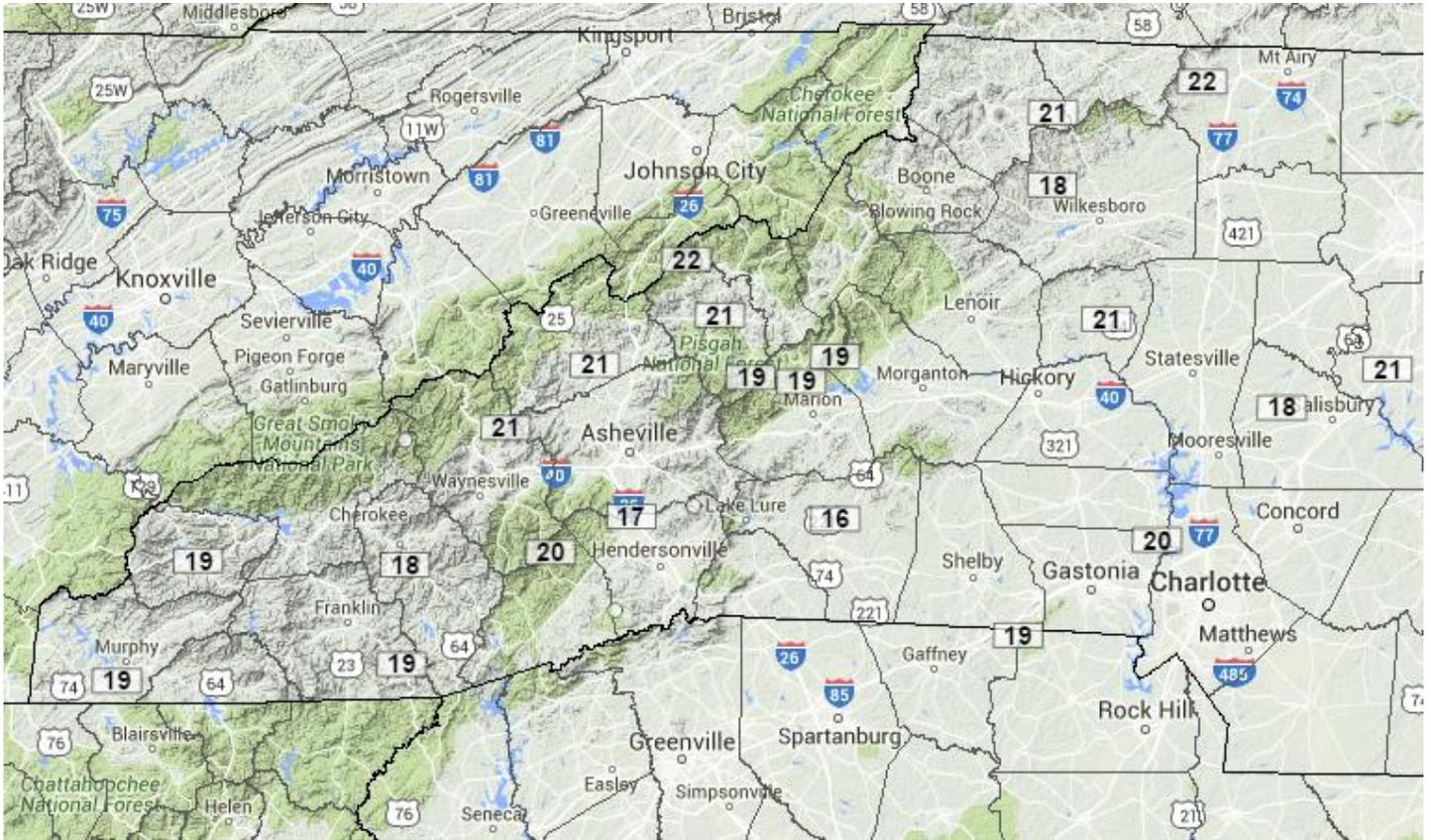
Drought Map remains unchanged for the week.

Forecast ERCs, 1300 EST, 5/20/16



Forecast ERCs at most stations are tracking at or below normal. A few stations in the southern mountains are showing elevated levels, but not near historic highs.

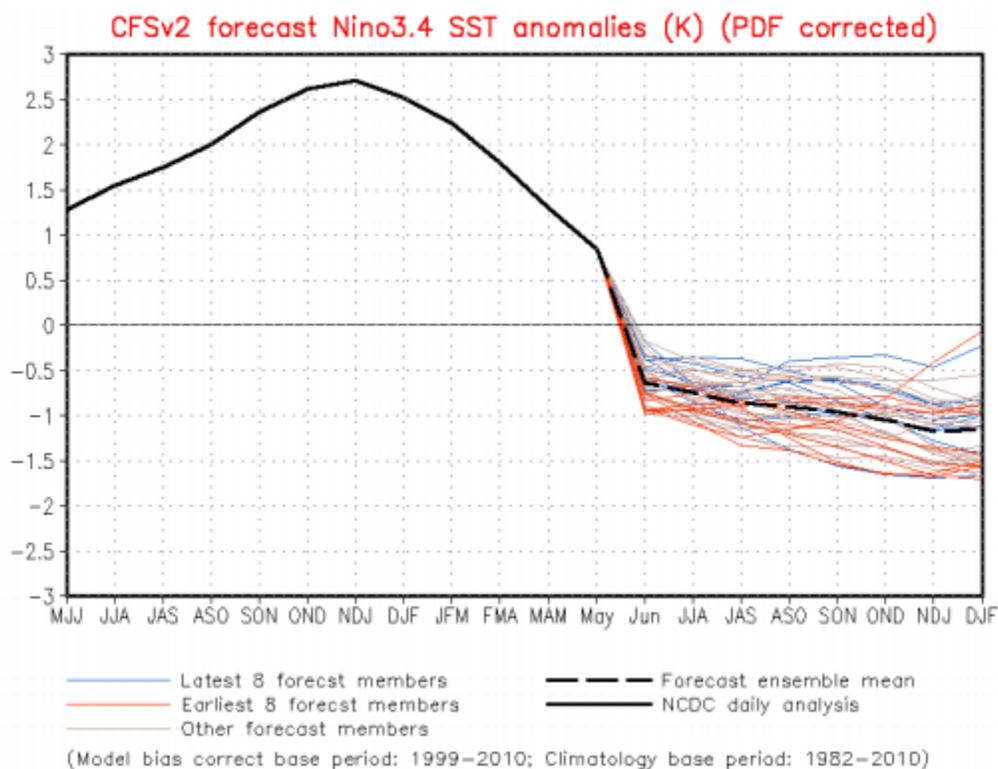
1000 HR Fuel Moistures, 1300 5/19/16



A few stations are still below the 20% threshold, but improvement is forecast over the next several days.

Latest on the El Nino

The El Nino Southern Oscillation (ENSO) has been in a strong El Nino phase for over a year. It is currently weakening and may switch to La Nina. Without going into too much detail, the oscillation is in the water temperatures of the equatorial Pacific Ocean. Why does that matter to folks in North Carolina? El Nino typically means cooler and wetter in the mid-Atlantic region and hotter and dryer in the western US. A strong La Nina will usually bring us warmer and dryer conditions, and conditions less conducive to significant fires in the western US. We had strong La Nina's in 2008 and 2011 when we had our last prolonged fire seasons. The latest forecast (May 16th) predicts La Niña is favored to develop quickly during Summer 2016, with about a 75% chance of La Niña during the fall and winter 2016-17. The graph shown below is an ensemble of models, with the black dashed line showing the median of the models. Anything -0.5 or lower is La Nina, with anything 0.5 or greater as El Nino. Go to http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/analysis_monitoring/lanina/enso_evolution-status-fcsts-web.pdf for more information.



This will be the final assessment for the Spring 2016 Fire Season. If conditions warrant, assessments will be issued during the summer and/or fall.