# C.M. Stripling Irrigation Research Park

## Newsletter Jan – April 2026

## In This Issue

# From our Team

By Amilcar Vargas – ***Superintendent***

From January through April, the 2026 growing season has moved quickly across Southwest Georgia. It feels like we just wrapped up our winter projects, equipment maintenance, cover crop termination, meetings etc. and suddenly we are already into planting and early crop development. Favorable conditions have kept most of us and growers on schedule. However, these condition brought different challenges for our Ag Community. Wildfires, input costs, particularly fuel and fertilizer. On top of that, limited and inconsistent rainfall due to the intense regional drought. These factors are driving many growers' decisions and taking a closer look at how efficiently they are managing their resources.

One area that continues to stand out is irrigation management. As water availability becomes more critical, ensuring that every acre receives the right amount of water is essential. Poor distribution not only wastes water and energy but can also lead to variability in yield. Adopting advanced irrigation scheduling tools will help to decide when to trigger irrigation. Options include soil moisture sensors or smartphone irrigation scheduling apps (such as CropFit App). Taking the time to evaluate pivot uniformity and using an irrigation scheduling method can make a real difference especially in a period like this.

Here at the Park, we are actively supporting our UGA faculty efforts to address these challenges. Several new research projects are underway, focusing on irrigation scheduling strategies, soil moisture monitoring technologies, and crop performance under limited water conditions. These efforts are designed to provide practical, field-based solutions that growers can use to improve irrigation water use efficiency.

On behalf of our team, we thank you for your support. We are here to help you with you work challenges like these.

# From our Team

By B.J. Washington – ***Farm Manager***

Producers across Southwest Georgia are continuing to feel the effects of prolonged dry conditions, and drought has made every stage of crop production more dependent on careful planning and timing. Land preparation and planting operations now require greater coordination to make the best of limited soil moisture and available irrigation capacity. In many cases, producers are adjusting tillage schedules, planting dates, and crop management practices to reduce stress on crops during establishment and early growth stages. These decisions are becoming increasingly important as weather patterns remain unpredictable and rainfall totals stay below normal across the state.

The prolonged dry conditions also bring concerns for pumping capacity to producers. Winter and early spring rains replenish aquifers, ponds, creeks, and streams. With little rainfall in the winter and early part of the growing season, these water resources are already seeing stress. Irrigation systems during this time require closer monitoring and careful management to prevent excessive strain on available water resources.

Here, we have been experiencing many of the same challenges as other producers in the region. Dry conditions have required irrigation both before and after corn planting to ensure adequate soil moisture for establishment. The same situation has applied to cotton planting as well.

It is critically important that irrigation systems operate as efficiently as possible at all times, especially during drought conditions. UGA Extension recommends conducting a pivot uniformity test to verify that water is being applied evenly and at the appropriate rate across the entire irrigated area. These uniformity test also ensure nitrogen is being evenly applied during fertigation events.

Sincerely,
B.J. Washington

# In The News!

To learn more, click on:

**USDA Designates 20 Georgia Counties as Natural Disaster Areas**

**USDA Designates 2 Alabama Counties as Natural Disaster Areas with Three Contiguous Counties in Georgia**

**Crop Diversity as an economic water strategy**

**The invention that changed irrigation**

**UGA Wild Peanut Lab helps M&Ms 'Protect the Peanut'**

# Consider this…

Practical guides for farm operations. More guides can be found at the **Extension Precision Ag and Irrigation Blog**

Click on:

**Spring Center Pivot and Lateral Irrigation System Checklist**

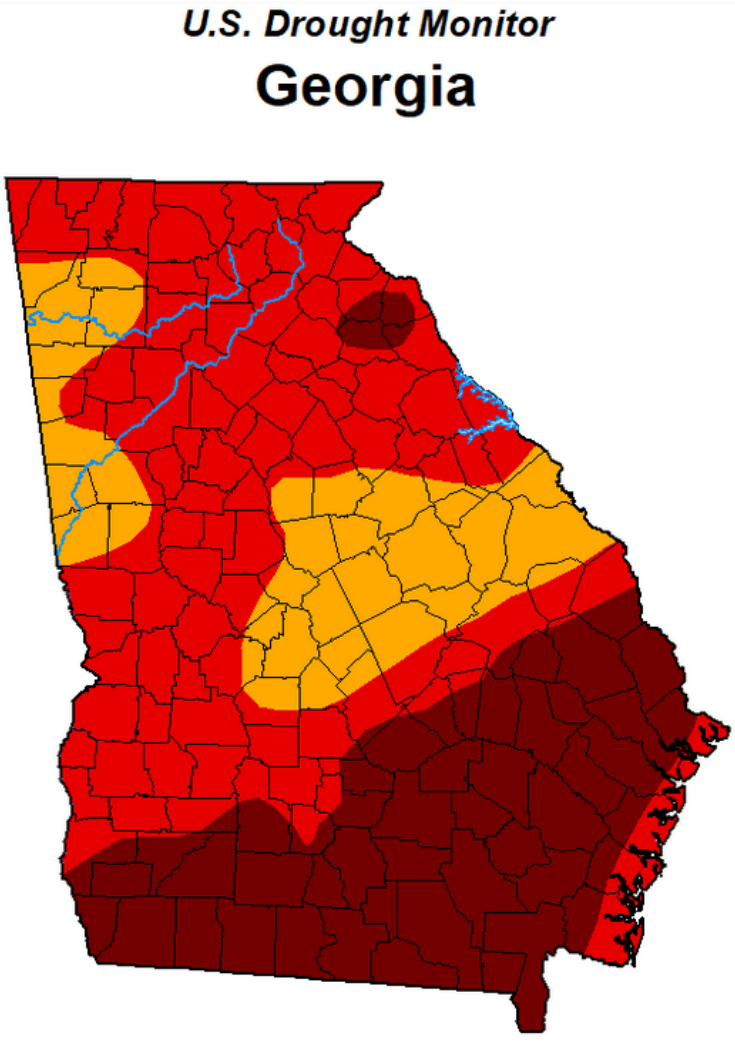
**Pivot Uniformity Testing with Mobile Irrigation Lab**

**Early Season Considerations for Peanut and Cotton Irrigation Management**

**Spring center pivot and lateral irrigation system preparation**

**Evaluating and interpreting application uniformity of center pivot irrigation systems**

# Drought Conditions

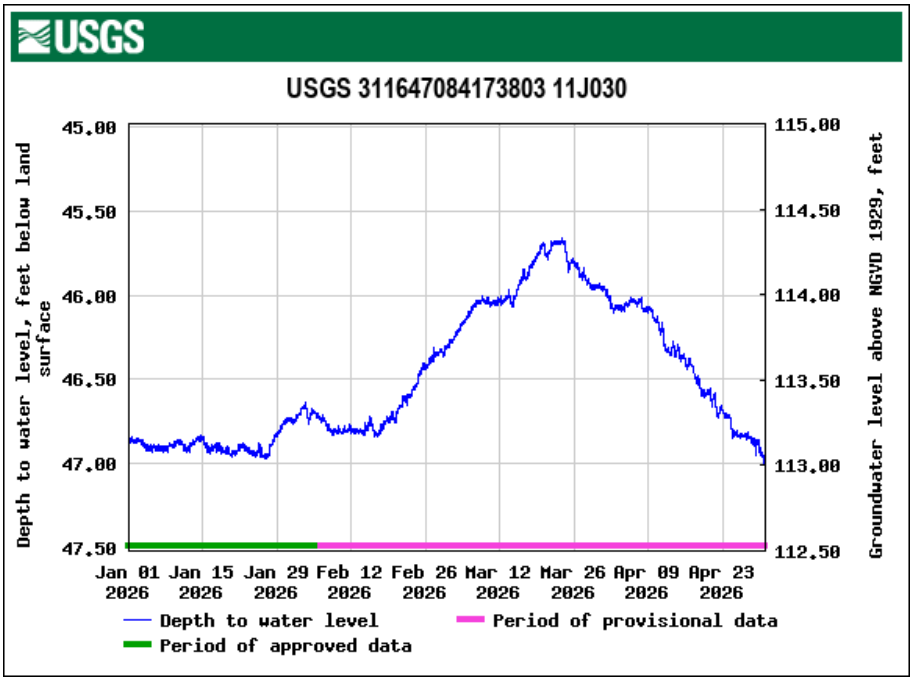



Drought Monitor map for Georgia as of May 5th. Abnormally dry conditions are high across the state, with 0% ample soil moisture conditions. (This is the 1st time in 15 years there is no white spots on the drought map.)

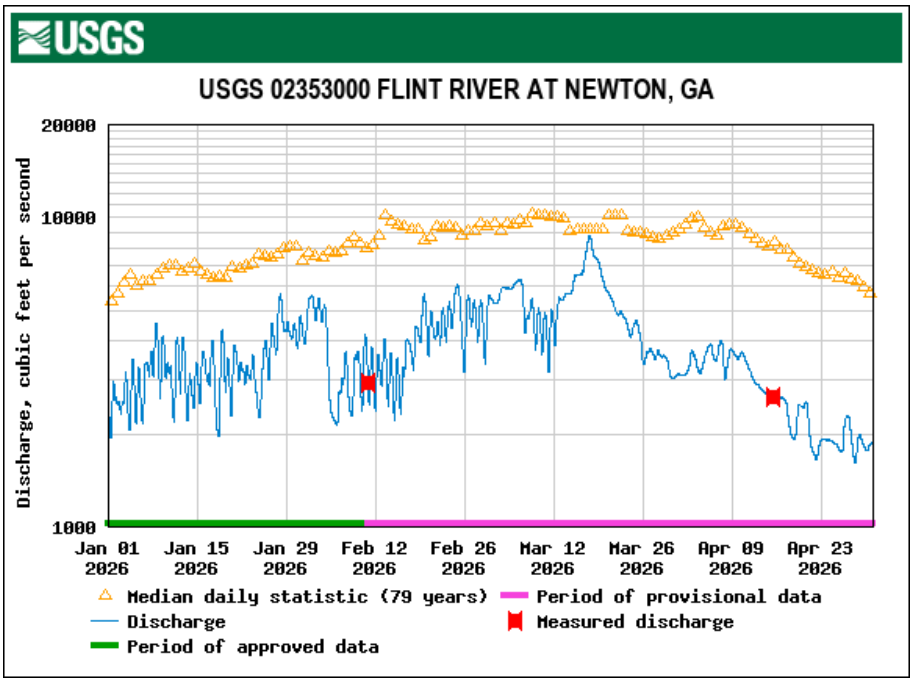
Currently, 100% of GA is abnormally dry, 100% moderate, and 100% for severe, 80.72% extreme , and 33.30% Exceptional drought. For more info:

https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/Maps/MapArchive.aspx

# Water Resources




USGS data from Jan to April 2026. Above – Groundwater level here at the Park in the Floridan aquifer. Below - Stream gage on the Flint River at Newton, GA (3 miles from the Park).



# Events

| Past meetings/visitors | |
|---|---|
| **January 13** | FRSWCD Meeting |
| **January 19** | Avery Insurance Customer Appreciation |
| **February 10** | FRSWCD Meeting |
| **February 10** | Kevin Brauer Flow-Tech Systems Visitor |
| **February 20** | Syngenta Meeting |
| **February 25** | Collins Irrigation Meeting |
| **March 05** | Clarence Jackson IGEL visitor |
| **March 10** | FRSWCD Meeting |
| **April 10** | Mississippi State University Visitors |
| **April 28** | ACF Waters Conference Visitors |

| Upcoming meeting/visitors | |
|---|---|
| **May 26** | UGA Ecology Class Students Field Tour |
| **June 9** | Athens Land Trust Field Tour |
| **June 10** | 2026 Irrigation Expo (Lyons, GA) |
| **June 16** | 4H2O Camp |
| **June 30** | Annual Corn Boil and Farm Tour at J. Phil Campbell (Watkinsville, GA) |
| **July 22** | Georgia Mountain Field Day (Blairsville, GA) |
| **July 29** | Albany State University Students Field Tour |
| **July 30** | Attapulgus Field Day (Attapulgus, GA) |
| **August 5** | Southwest Georgia Field Day (Plains, GA) |

Click here for the CAES: Field Report Calendar

# At the Park

**Planning meeting with Dr. Porter**
**BJ Washington & Kevin Brauer (Flow-Tech Systems)**

# At the Park

## Visitors

Clarence Jacson
IGEL Program Facilitator


Dr. Himmy Lo and Emmanuel Mboma (MSc. Student) from Mississippi State University

# At the Park

## Visitors


**ACF Waters Conference 2026 participants toured our Park!**

**Sarah Elizabeth Thompson and Tyler Poythress talking about their research projects**

# At the Park

**Managing our pine plantation**
**Thanks to Scott Adam and Andrew!**

# At the Park

**Land preparation…thanks Daryl!**

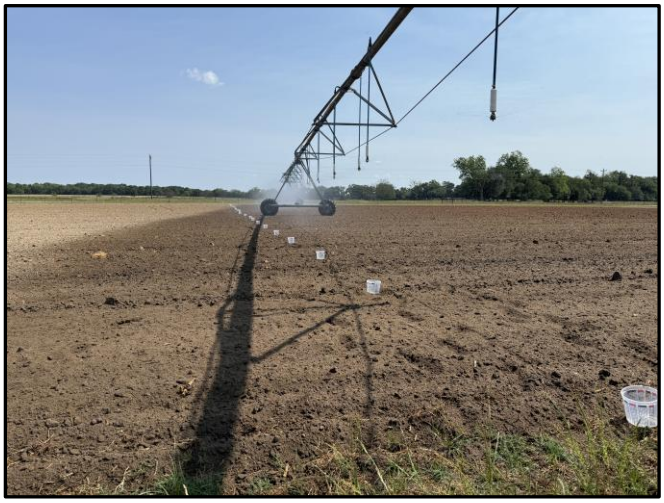
# At the Park

**Flushing our irrigation system!**

# At the Park

## Uniformity test!

**Thanks BJ, Kyle & Daryl**



**Time consuming but very important to ensure water is evenly distributed.**

# At the Park

**Our students at the Park!**

# At the Park

## Our new Precision Planter!


# At the Park

**Kyle ensuring our sprayer is ready to go!**

# At the Park

**Of course … we have issues, but we have great support and experience!**

# At the Park

**Kyle making our sign stand out!**

# At the Park

**New technologies tested at the Park.**
**BJ and Tyler assisting Kevin Brauer from Flow-Tech Systems**

# Trivia

**M&M'S Fruit Chews would eventually become what popular candy?** Starburst

**When was the first iPod released?** 2001

**What inspired the name for the iPod?** the EVA Pod (ePod) in "2001: A Space Odyssey"

**Which travels faster: Sound or light?** Light

**Roughly how many miles per hour does the earth spin?** 1000 mph

**What do you call a group of porcupines?** A prickle

**What percentage of the Earth's wildlife is found in the ocean?** 94%

**Where was the first Olympics held?** Panathenaic Stadium, Greece

**When was Diet Coke unveiled to the U.S. public?** July 8, 1982

**Who was the first woman ever inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame?** Aretha Franklin

**Which insect holds the record for the fastest flying insect in the world?** the dragonfly

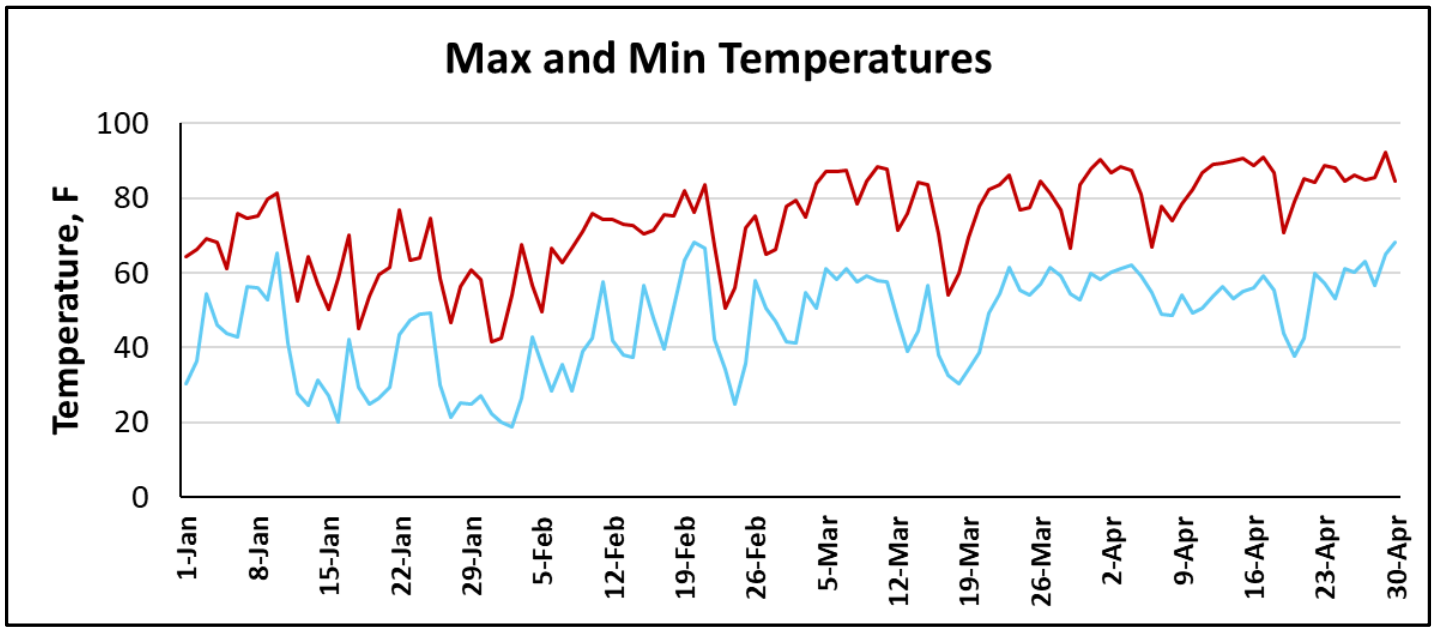
**Which classic novel by Mary Shelley follows the story of a scientist who creates a creature from reanimated body parts?** Frankenstein

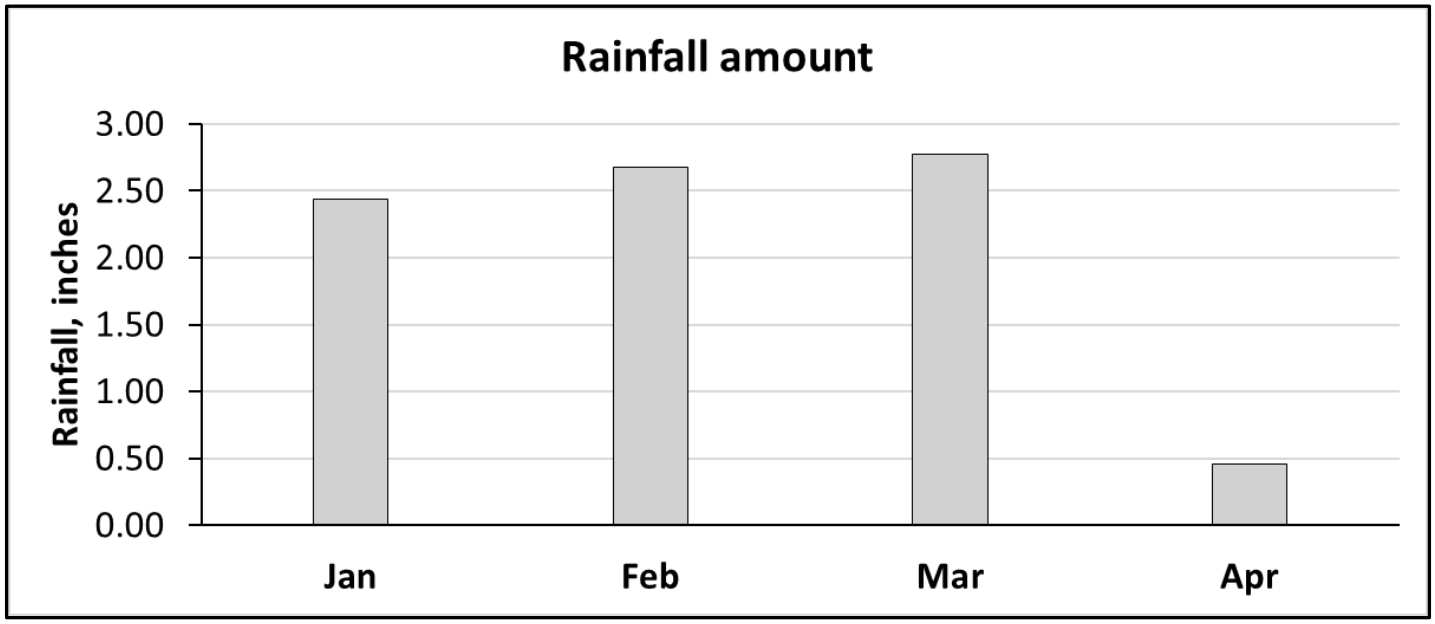
**In what year was the World Wide Web invented, revolutionizing the way information is shared on the internet?** 1989

**Who was the lead vocalist of the band Led Zeppelin, known for his powerful voice and charismatic stage presence?** Robert Plant

**What is the maximum number of points one can achieve on Pac-Man?** 3,333,360

# SIRP Weather
# Jan – Apr 2026



# Contact us

**Stop by**
8207 Highway 37 West, Camilla, GA 31730

**Give us a call** to 229 522-3623

**Visit our website & watch our live camera!**
www.striplingpark.caes.uga.edu

**Or send us an email**
Amilcar Vargas (Superintendent): amilcar.vargas@uga.edu
B. J. Washington (Farm Manager): bwashing@uga.edu
Candace Gray (Admin. Associate): sirp@uga.edu

C.M. Stripling Irrigation Research Park
*College of Agricultural & Environmental Sciences*
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

**Commit to Groundbreaking Research**
Ag research keeps Georgia agriculture on the leading edge of the industry.