

## Quick Look at the Atmospheric Rivers Forecast to Impact the Pacific Northwest *Updated: 26 January 2026*

Multiple atmospheric rivers (ARs) are forecast to bring heavy precipitation to portions of the Pacific Northwest this week.

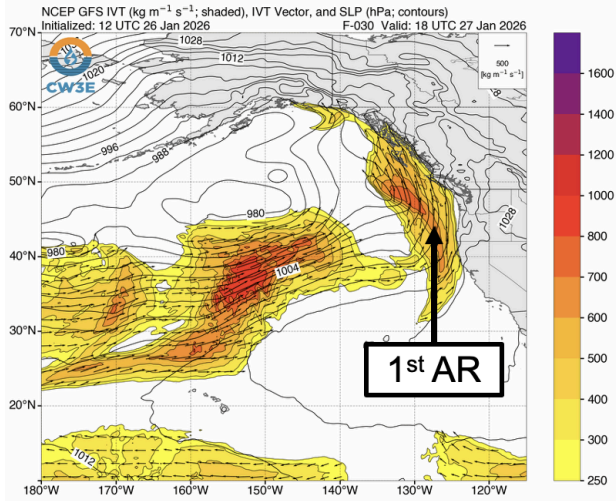
### Forecast Highlights:

- A series of ARs are forecast to propagate across the Northeast Pacific and impact the Pacific Northwest tomorrow through this weekend.
- The first AR is forecast to make landfall tomorrow, Tue 27 Jan, and bring light-to-moderate precipitation to coastal Washington, Oregon, and northern California.
- The second and third ARs are forecast to make landfall on Wed 28 Jan and Thu 29 Jan, respectively. These two ARs are forecast to produce moderate-to-heavy precipitation over the Olympic Peninsula and Washington Cascades.
- A fourth weak AR may bring additional precipitation to western Washington this weekend, but forecast confidence in this AR is lower.
- CW3E's AR landfall tool based on GEFS is showing very high confidence ( $\geq 90\%$  probability) in a brief period of AR conditions ( $IVT \geq 250 \text{ kg m}^{-1} \text{ s}^{-1}$ ) between the Olympic Peninsula and coastal northern California in association with the first AR on Tue 27 Jan.
- CW3E's AR landfall tool is also showing high confidence ( $\geq 80\%$  probability) in AR conditions over coastal Washington and northern coastal Oregon Wed 28 Jan into early Thu 29 Jan in association with the second AR, as well as late Thu 29 Jan into Fri 30 Jan in association with the third AR.
- The GEFS control member is currently forecasting an AR 2/AR 3 (based on the Ralph et al. 2019 AR Scale) in coastal Washington and northern coastal Oregon during the second and third ARs. About 40–50% of GEFS ensemble members are forecasting an AR 3 in these locations, but there is considerable uncertainty in the timing and duration of AR conditions.
- While significant hydrologic impacts are not currently expected, the NWS has issued **marginal risk** (level 1 of 4;  $\geq 5\%$  probability of rainfall exceeding flash flood guidance) excessive rainfall outlooks (EROs) over the Olympic Peninsula for Wed 28 Jan through early Sat 31 Jan due to multiple days of moderate-to-heavy rainfall.
- The NWS Weather Prediction Center (WPC) is forecasting 5–10 inches of total precipitation over the Olympic Peninsula during the next 7 days, with 2–5 inches forecast in the Willapa Hills, northern Oregon Coast Ranges, and Washington Cascades.
- Relatively high freezing levels will likely limit snowfall accumulations. Freezing levels in the Washington Cascades are forecast to rise above 5,000 feet during the second AR and remain above 5,000 feet through at least Sat 31 Jan.
- In coordination with NOAA and the Air Force, CW3E's AR Reconnaissance field campaign is planning a sequence of flights to sample these ARs offshore.

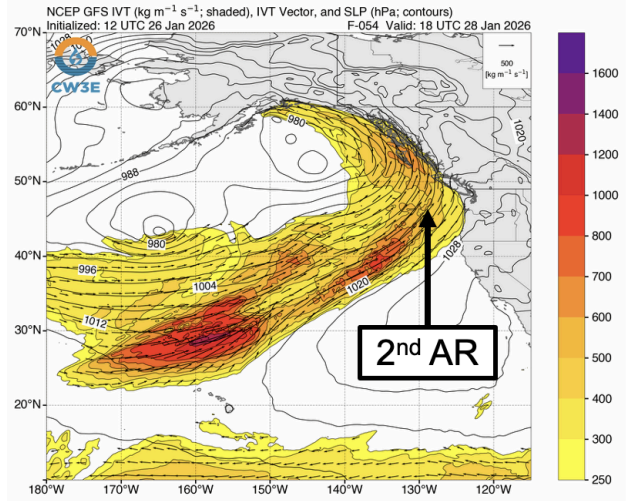
**Stay alert to official NWS forecasts, watches, and warnings at [weather.gov](https://www.weather.gov) and follow guidance from local emergency management officials**

## GFS IVT & SLP Forecasts

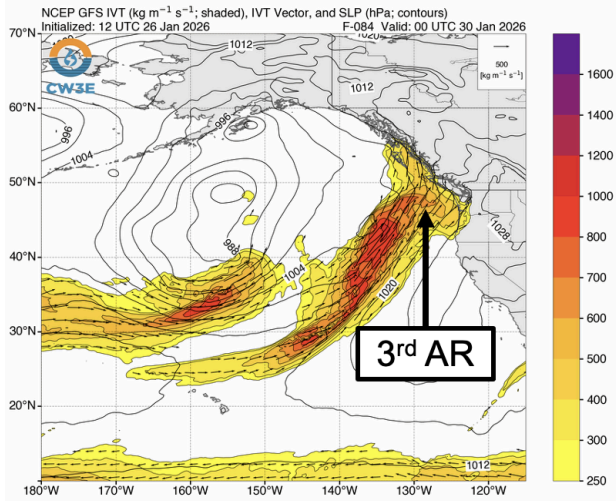
Valid 10 AM PST 27 Jan



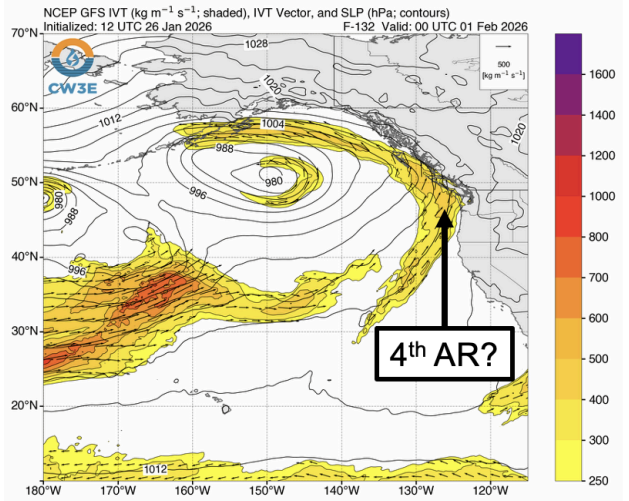
Valid 10 AM PST 28 Jan

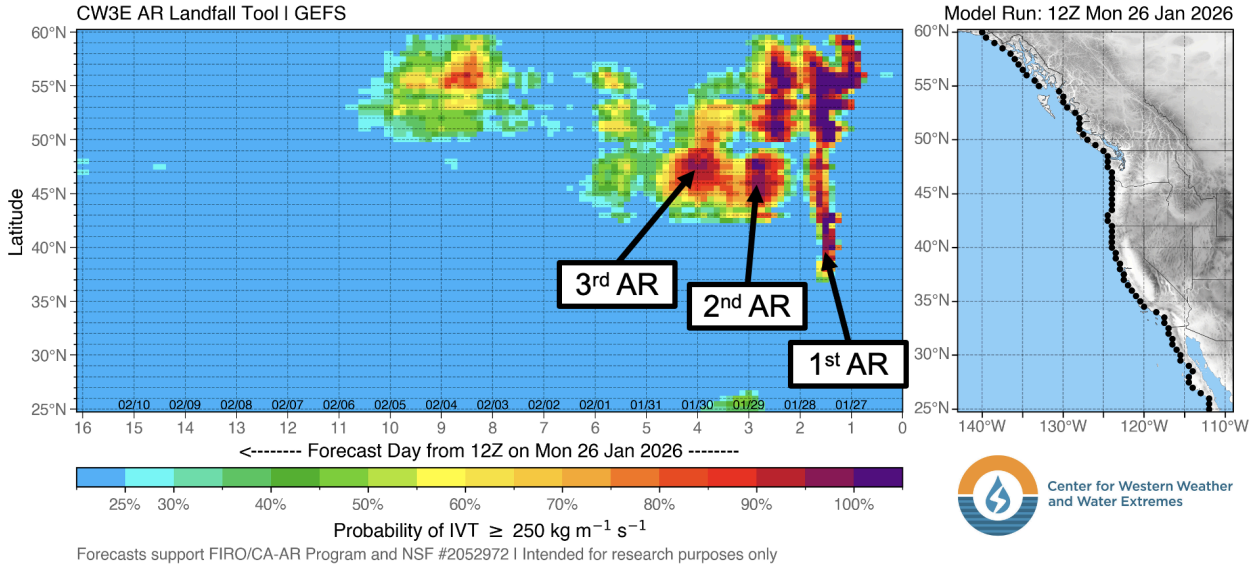


Valid 4 PM PST 29 Jan

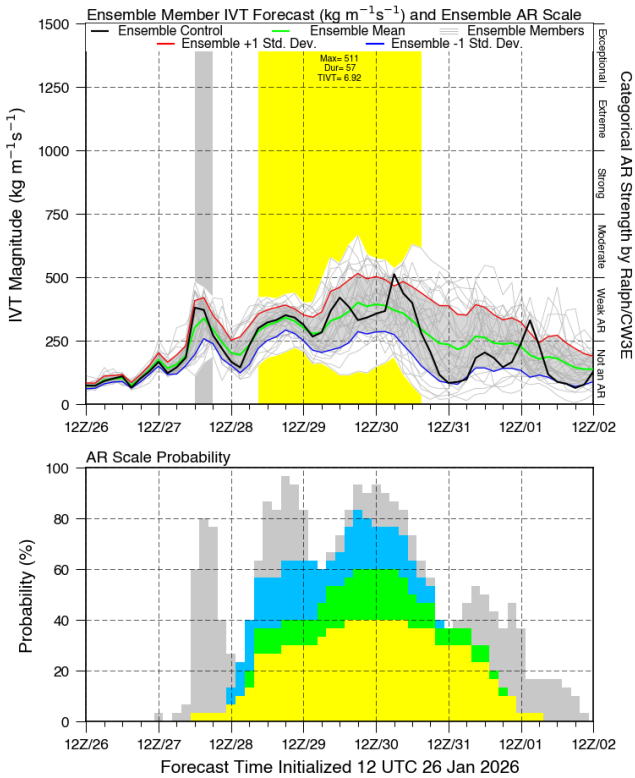


Valid 4 PM PST 31 Jan

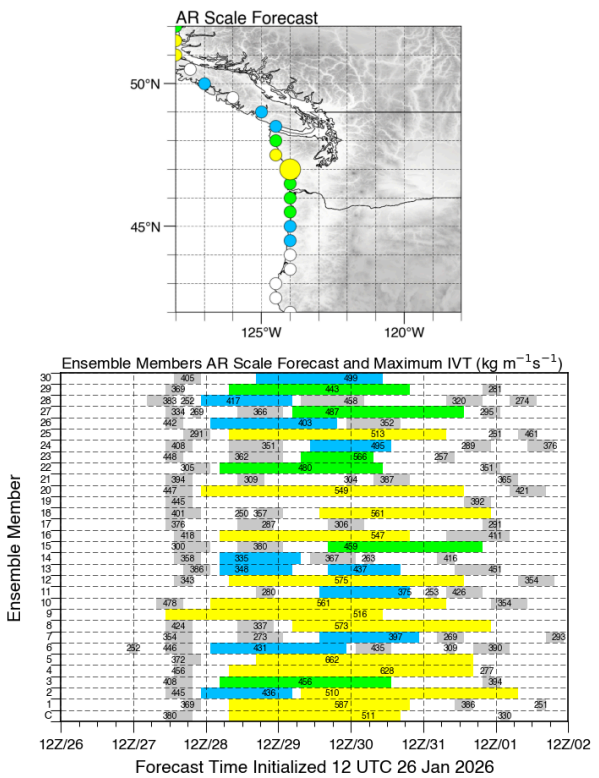




GEFS Ensemble Initialized 12 UTC 26 Jan 2026



Location: 47.0°N, 124.0°W

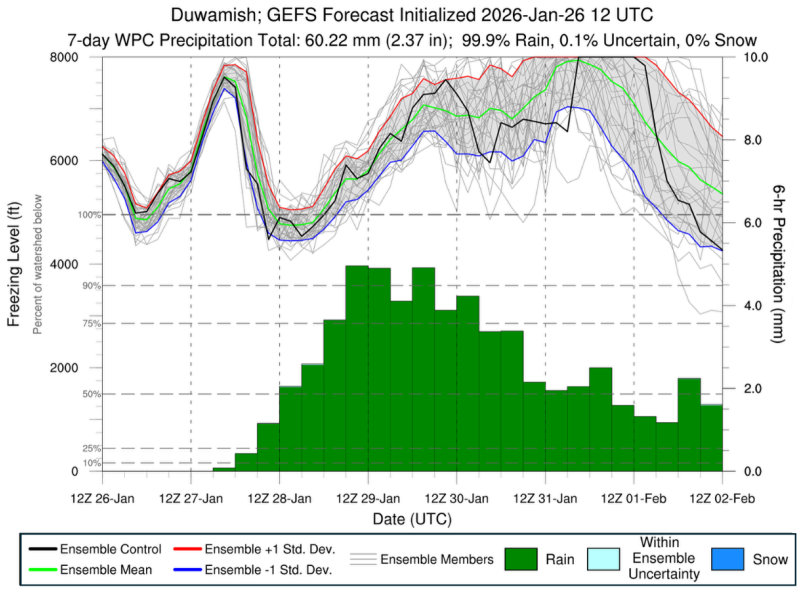
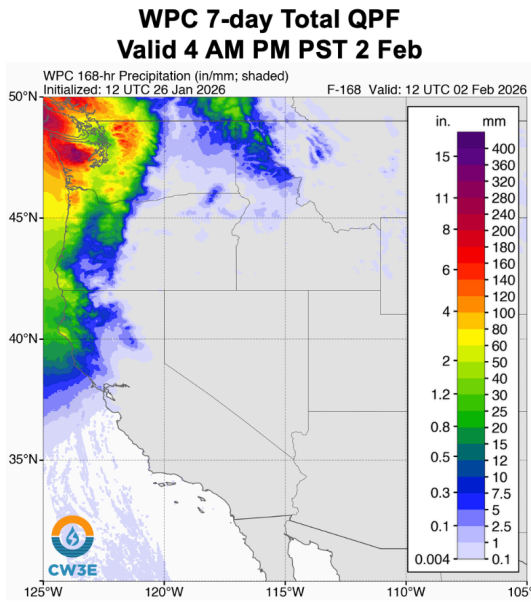
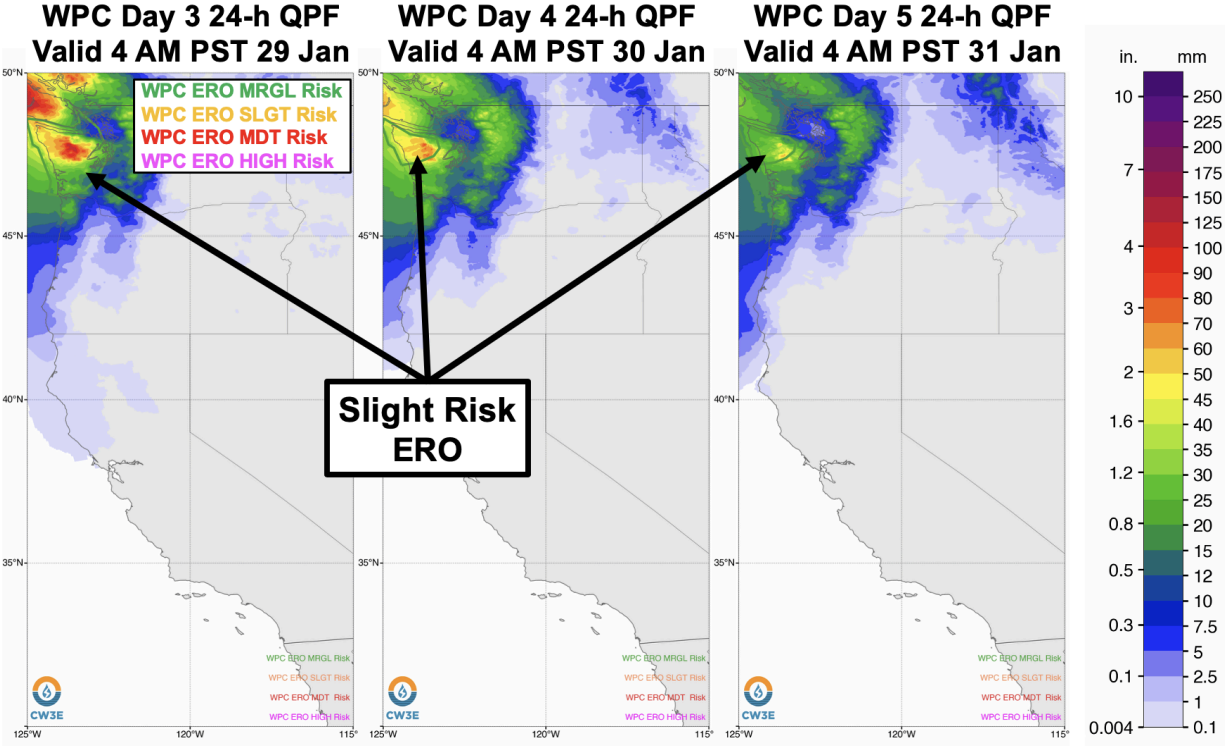


Center for Western Weather and Water Extremes  
SCRIPPS INSTITUTION OF OCEANOGRAPHY  
AT UC SAN DIEGO

AR 1 AR 2 AR 3 AR 4 AR 5

Image created 17 UTC 26 Jan 2026

More information: <https://cw3e.ucsd.edu> AR Scale based on Ralph et al. (2019); BAMS)



Additional Considerations:

- Visit [nwrfc.noaa.gov/](http://nwrfc.noaa.gov/) for specific river and stream forecasts and [weather.gov/](http://weather.gov/) for point specific watches, warnings, and forecasts.

In-depth AR forecasts products can be found here:

<https://cw3e.ucsd.edu/iwv-and-ivt-forecasts/>

Update by C. Castellano

[c.castellano@ucsd.edu](mailto:c.castellano@ucsd.edu)