

## Quick Look at the Atmospheric Rivers Forecast to Impact the Pacific Northwest *Updated: 11 March 2026*

A long-duration atmospheric river (AR) is forecast to bring heavy rain and snow to portions of the Pacific Northwest this week with additional AR activity possible next week.

### Forecast Highlights:

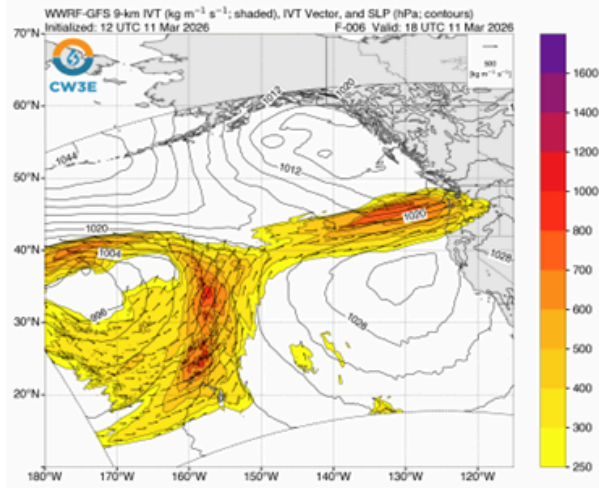
- An AR made landfall in the Pacific Northwest this morning and will continue to impact the region through early Sat 14 Mar.
- CW3E's AR landfall tool based on GEFS is showing very high confidence ( $\geq 90\%$  probability) of  $>60$  hours of AR conditions ( $IVT \geq 250 \text{ kg m}^{-1} \text{ s}^{-1}$ ) between coastal southern Washington and coastal southern Oregon.
- The West-WRF ensemble control member is currently forecasting AR 4 conditions (based on the Ralph et al. 2019 AR Scale) at 46.5N, 124W with AR 3 conditions forecast elsewhere between coastal southern Washington and coastal southern Oregon.
- Additional AR activity may follow shortly after the current AR moves onshore and dissipates, bringing another round of precipitation to the region, but there is still uncertainty in the evolution of the second AR.
- The NWS has issued **marginal risk** (level 1 of 4;  $\geq 5\%$  probability of rainfall exceeding flash flood guidance) excessive rainfall outlooks (EROs) over portions of western Washington and northwestern Oregon today through early Sat 14 Mar due to multiple days of moderate-to-heavy rainfall.
- The NWS Weather Prediction Center (WPC) is forecasting 4–7 inches of total precipitation over the northern Oregon Coast Ranges and Cascades through early Sat 14 Mar, with  $>10$  inches in the higher elevations of the Cascades.
- The WPC is also forecasting up to 7 inches of total precipitation over the higher terrain of northern Idaho and western Montana due to inland penetration of the AR.
- Freezing levels in the Washington Cascades are forecast to briefly rise above 5,000 feet today, then fall below 2,000 feet on Thu 12 Mar, leading to significant snowfall accumulations with moderate to major winter weather impacts.
- NWS Seattle has issued Winter Storm Warnings and Blizzard Warnings for the Olympic Mountains and Washington Cascades. Total snowfall accumulations of 36–72+ inches are possible over the higher terrain in the Cascades, northern Idaho, and western Montana.
- Northwest River Forecast Center hydrologic forecasts indicate that 20 gages are expected to exceed the action/bankful level, with two additional gages near Portland, OR expected to reach minor flood stage.
- In coordination with NOAA, CW3E's AR Reconnaissance field campaign is continuing a sequence of flights to sample the AR 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**

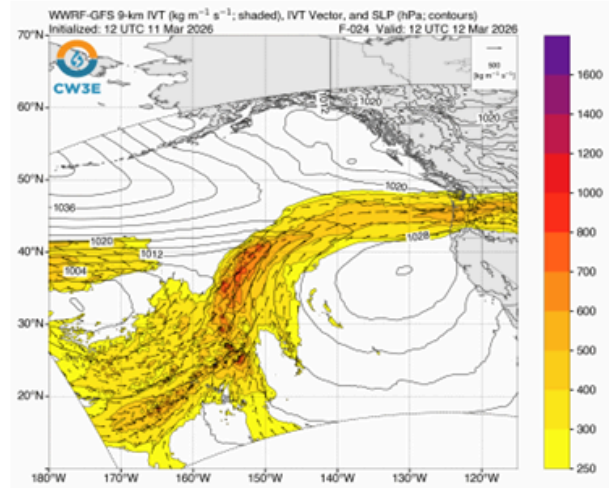
**Stay tuned to the CW3E webpage for a full AR Update**

## West WRF GFS 9-km IVT & SLP FORECAST

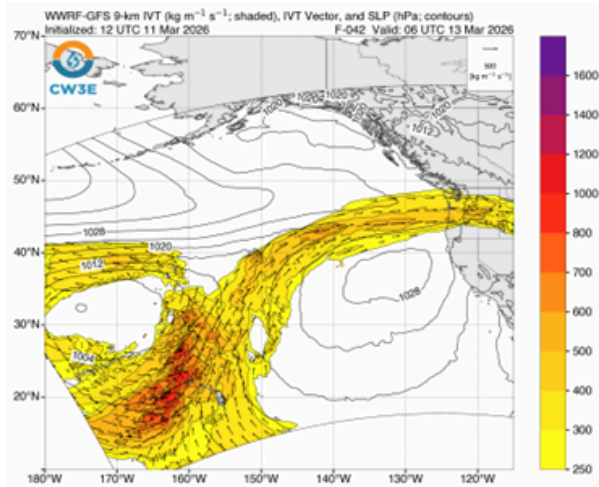
**Valid 11 AM PDT 11 Mar**



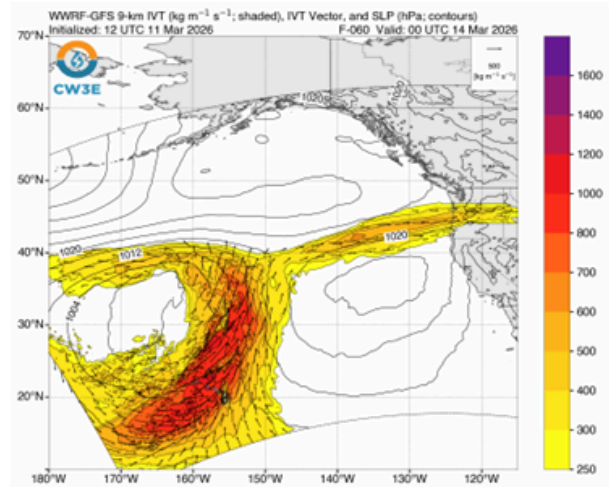
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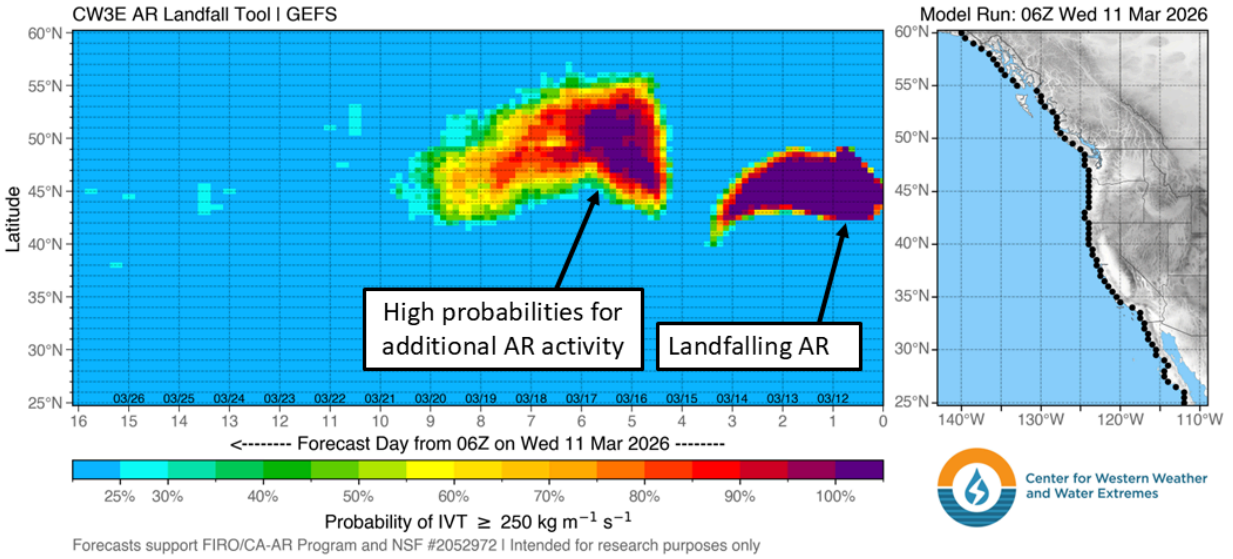
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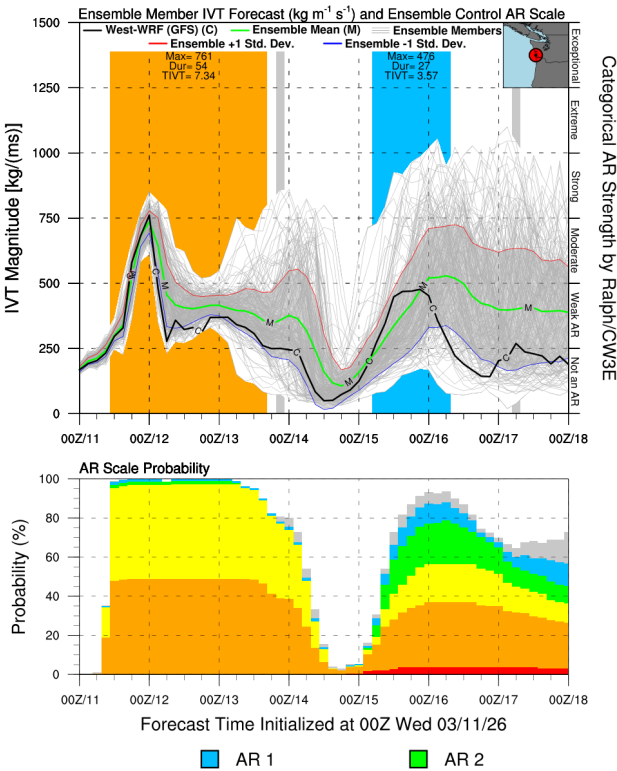
**Valid 5 PM PDT 13 Mar**



Stay tuned to the CWSE webpage for a full AR Update



West-WRF Ensemble Initialized: 00Z Wed 03/11/26



Location: 46.5°N 124°W

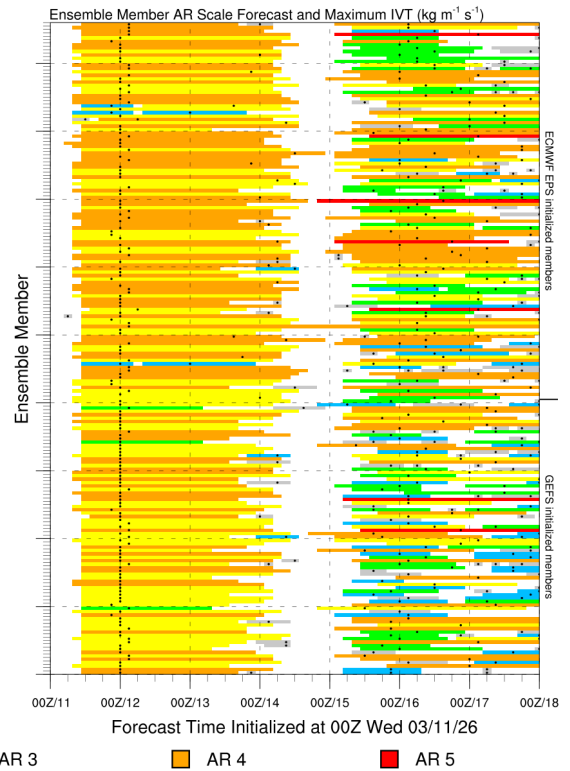
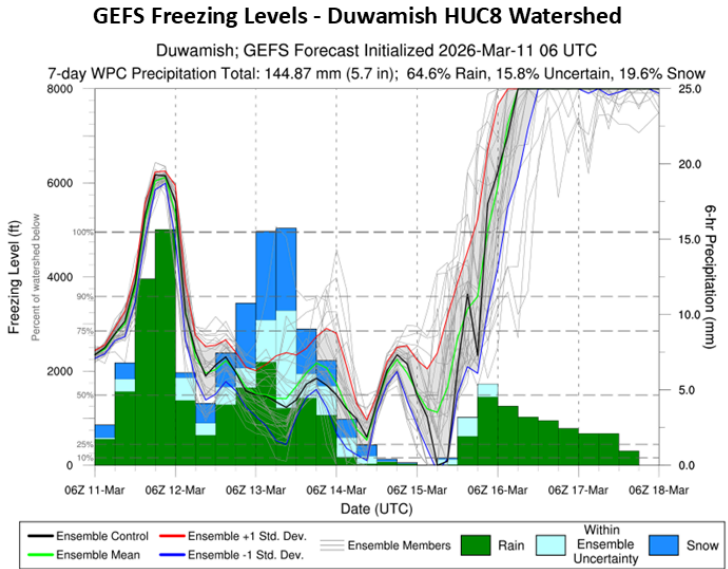
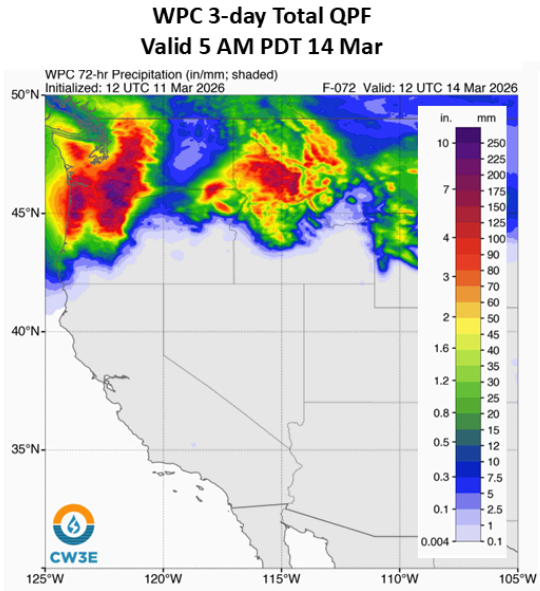
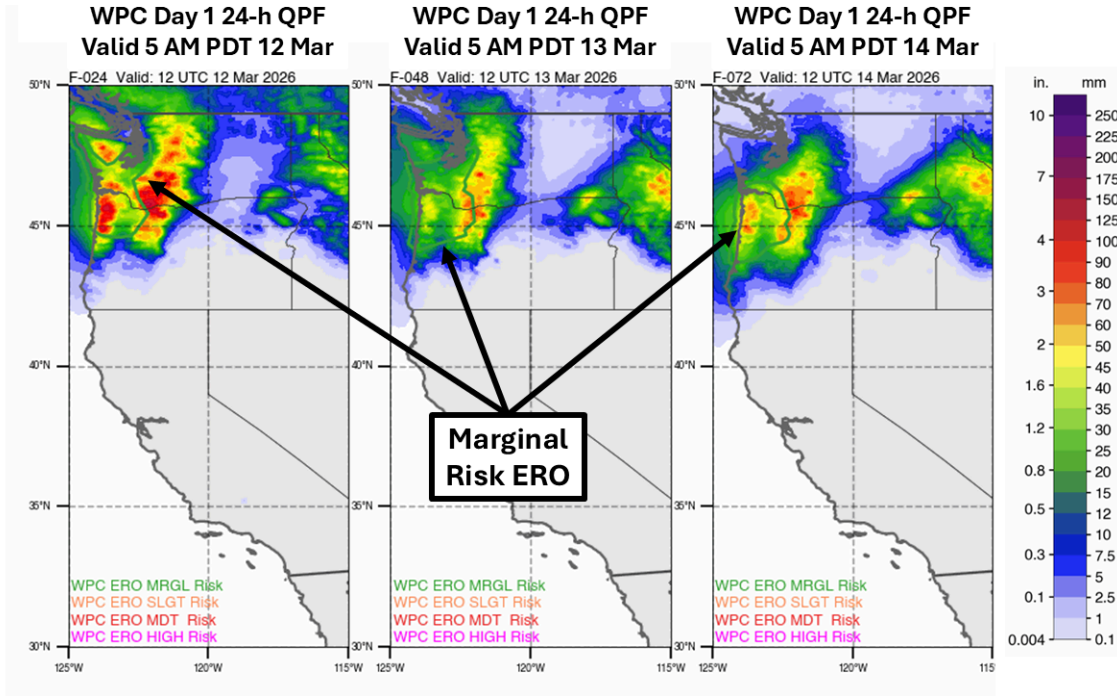


Image created: 16 UTC 03/11/2026 (191/200 members completed)

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

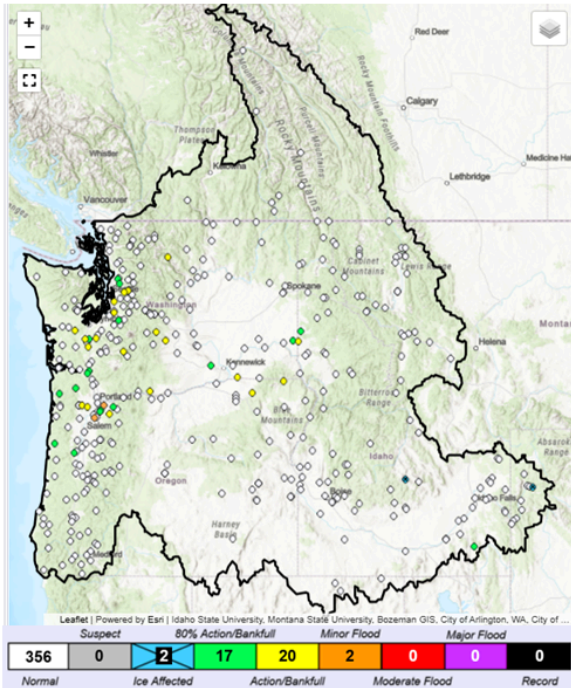
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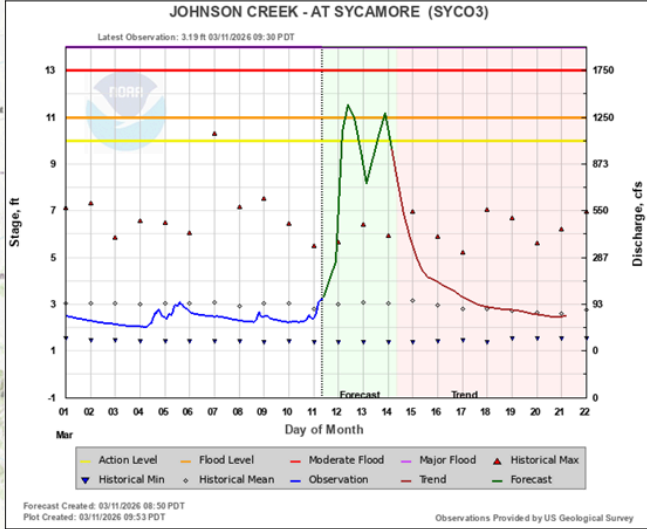
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**Northwest River Forecast Center  
River Level Forecasts**



**Johnson Creek at Sycamore**



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 forecast products can be found here:

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

Update by S. Roj

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