

Rhode Island State Climate Office

Joseph Poccia, State Climatologist | May 14, 2026

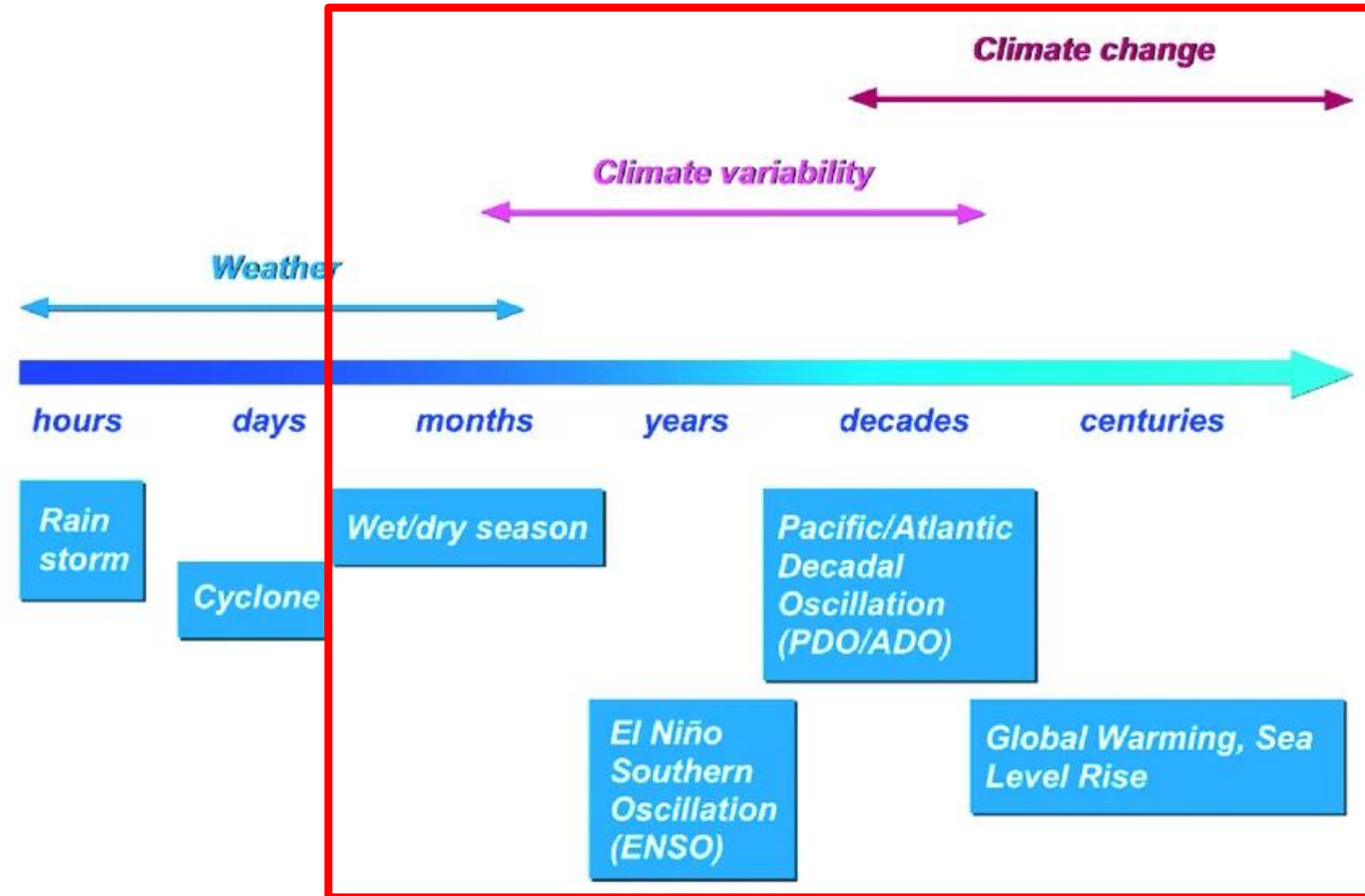


What is Climatology?

Climatology: “The description and scientific study of climate.”

- American Meteorological Society (AMS)

Focus: natural and human-driven forces behind **long-term** weather patterns



Brief History

1954-1973



State climatologists work in the U.S. Weather Bureau (CT and RI duties combined).

1973-1978



Federal funding ends, state climatologists transition to universities and state governments

Brief History

1978-2000



State climatologist program housed at the University of Rhode Island (URI)

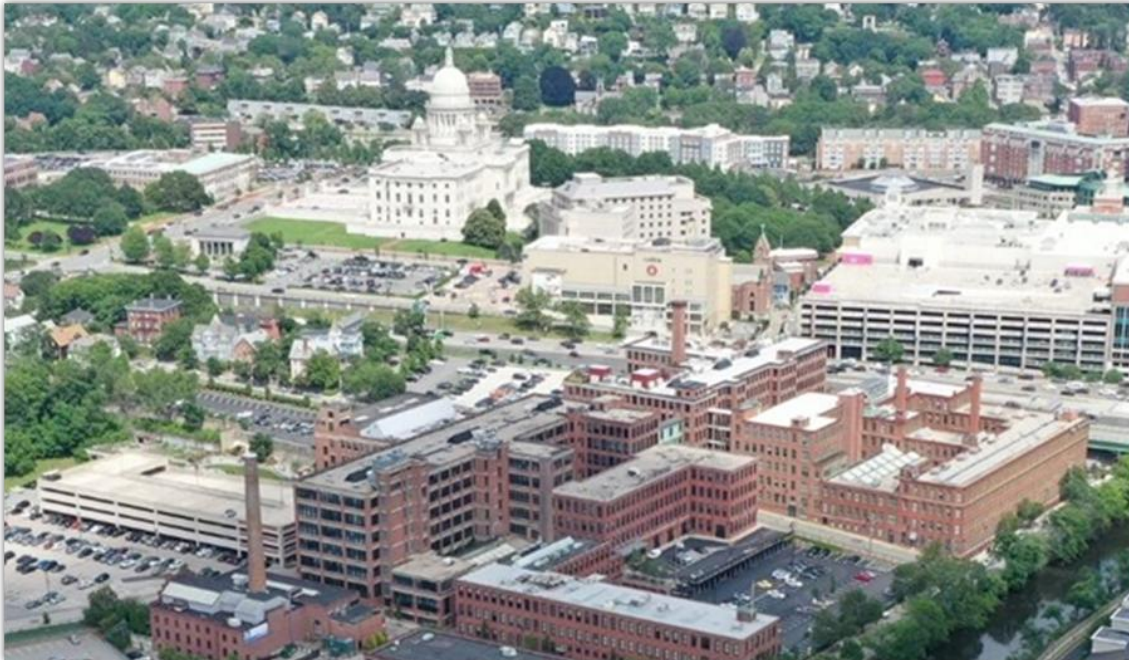
2000-2014



Program largely inactive at URI, no designated state climatologist

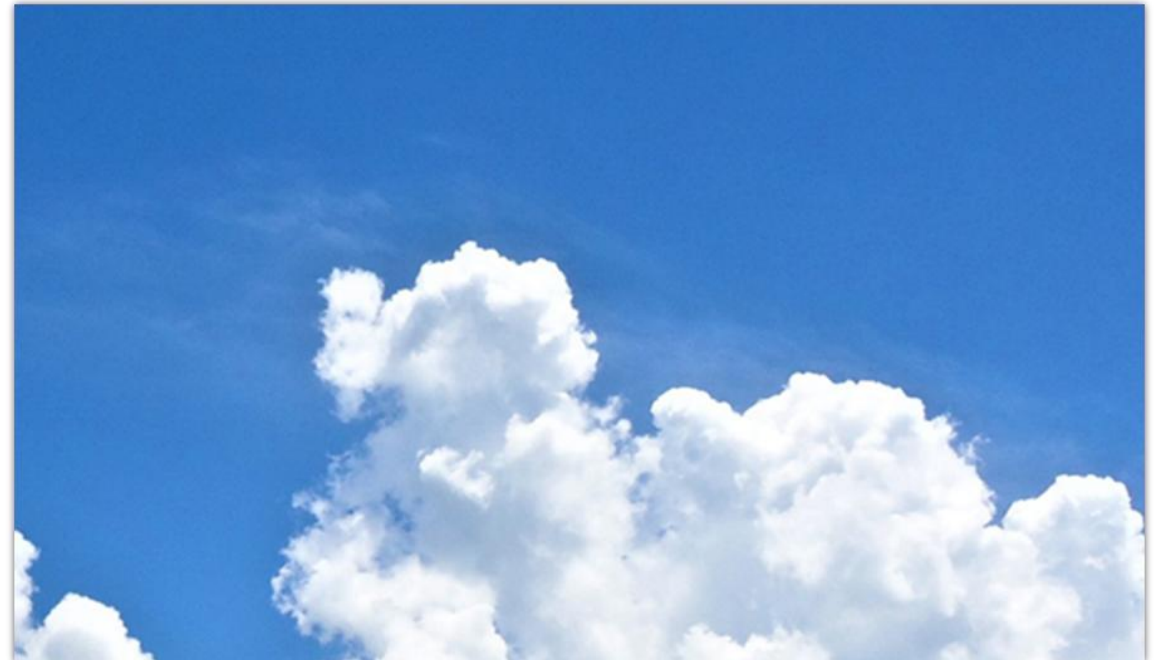
Brief History

2014-2024



DEM acquires state climatologist program,
Rhode Island State Climate Office established

2025-Present



Position of state climatologist moves to DEM's
Office of Air Resources, program expands

Our Team

Joseph Poccia



State Climatologist

Darren Austin



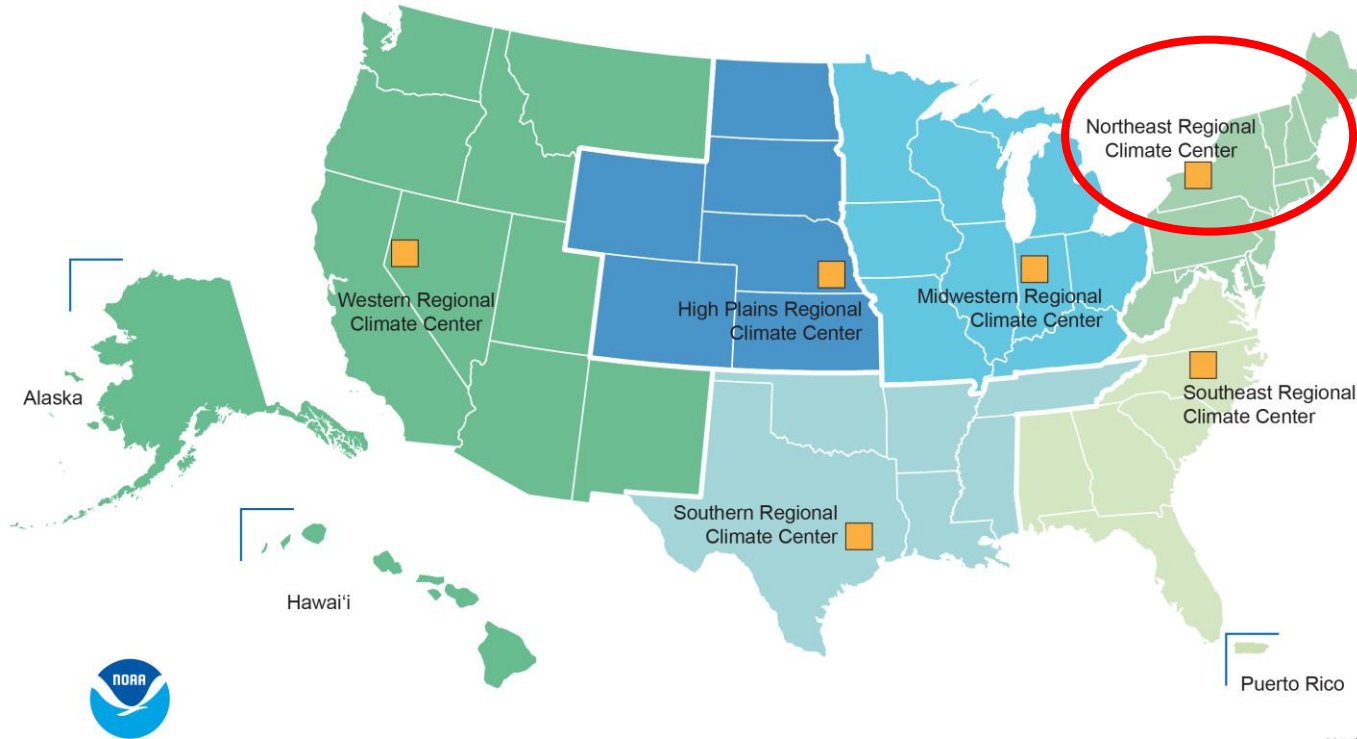
State Meteorologist

Chelsea Priest

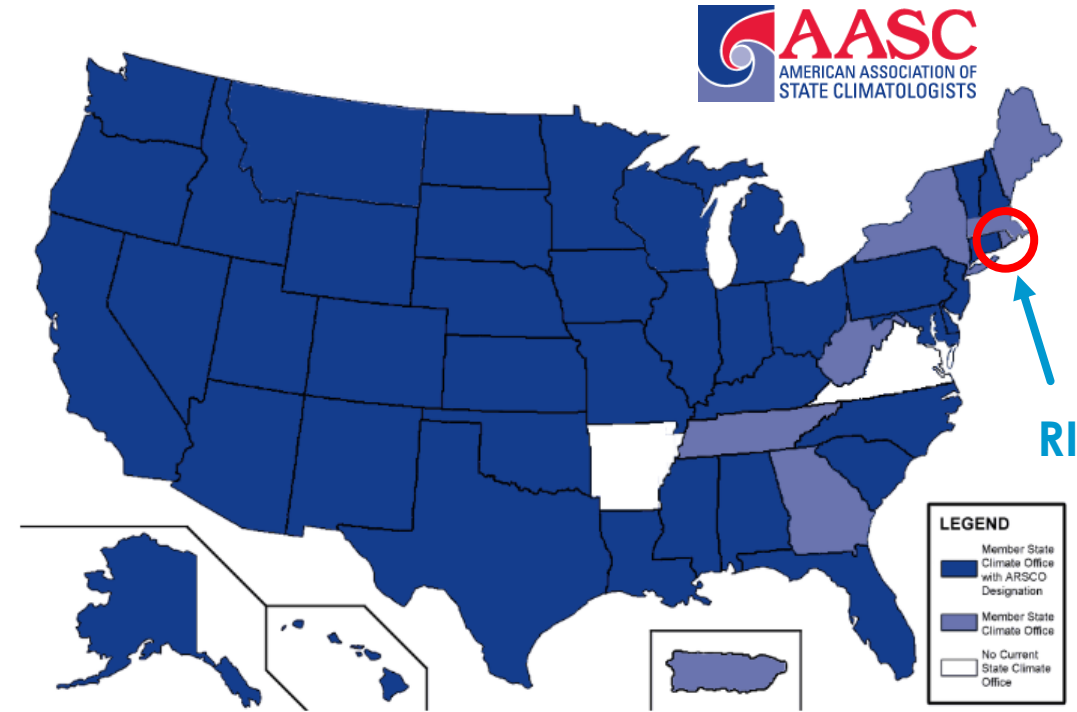


Environmental Policy Analyst

Nat'l Climate Serv. Partnership



May 2021



Initiatives



- Provide **climate data and information services**



- **Monitor drought** alongside State and Federal partners



- Advance the state's **knowledge of climate change**



Climate Data Services



- Manage **climate datasets** (QC/QA) as needed



- **Provide customer service** for climate data services



- **Document and understand** historical climate events



State Climate Extremes Committee Memorandum



 Rhode Island
State 24 Hour Snowfall Record

National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI)
Asheville, NC
March 2026

Drought Monitoring



- Contribute weekly to the **U.S. Drought Monitor**

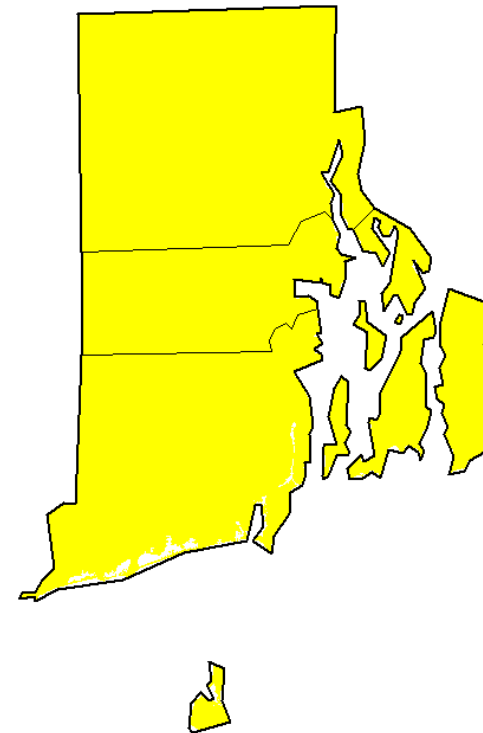


- Author an online **weekly drought summary**



- Provide expertise to the RIWRB **Drought Steering Committee**

U.S. Drought Monitor Rhode Island









May 5, 2026
(Released Thursday, May 7, 2026)
Valid 8 a.m. EDT

Drought Conditions (Percent Area)

	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	0.00	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Last Week 04-28-2026	1.03	98.97	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
3 Months Ago 02-03-2026	27.68	72.32	25.08	0.00	0.00	0.00
Start of Calendar Year 01-06-2026	28.18	71.82	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Start of Water Year 09-30-2025	6.44	93.56	21.08	0.00	0.00	0.00
One Year Ago 05-06-2025	0.00	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Intensity:

 None	 D2 Severe Drought
 D0 Abnormally Dry	 D3 Extreme Drought
 D1 Moderate Drought	 D4 Exceptional Drought

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. For more information on the Drought Monitor, go to <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/About.aspx>

Author:

Adam Allgood
NOAA/NWS/NCEP/CPC



droughtmonitor.unl.edu

Climate Change



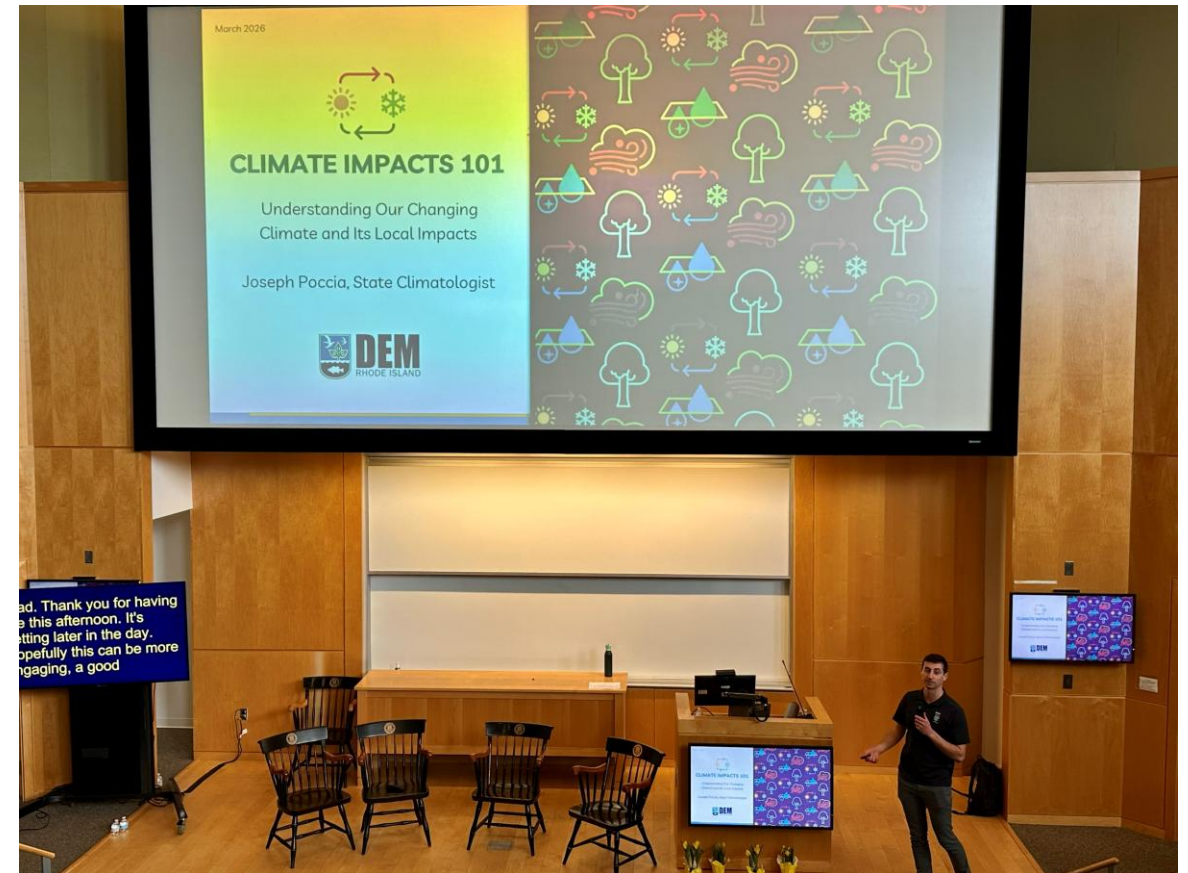
- **“Advance** the state’s understanding of the effects on climate change...”



- Assist the EC4 **Science and Technical Advisory Board**



- **Give presentations** on the science of climate change



March 18, 2026 RIDOH HEZ Workshop. Credit: Tara Hoda.

Looking Ahead



- **Re-establish** North Foster cooperative observer station



- Attain **AASC-Recognized State Climate Office** status



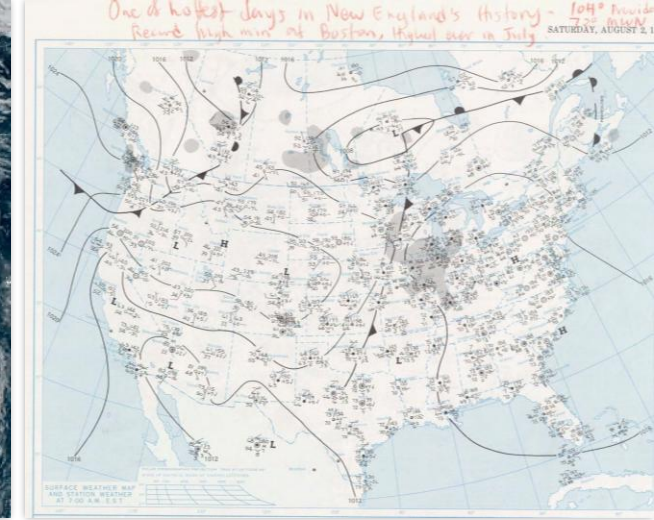
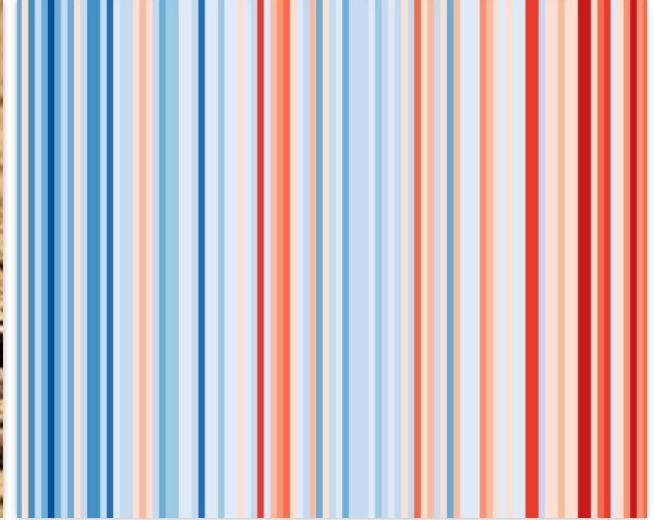
- Applied for CDS grant to **establish a mesonet**



New site of re-established North Foster "Co-Op" station.

Credit: Torry Dooley.





Questions? Thank you!

Joseph Poccia, State Climatologist | dem.ri.gov/climate

