

# Georgia warmer and wetter than average in 2021

By Pam Knox for CAES News

In 2021, Georgia experienced its coldest year since 2014, with an average temperature of 64.5 degrees Fahrenheit. But the temperature was still well above the long-term average of 63.4 F and ranked the 20th warmest year overall since statewide records began in 1895.

The warmth was spread uniformly across the state, with no areas of unusually warm or cold conditions. Lower temperatures than recent years

The year started off warmer than normal, with temperatures above average in January through March. This was despite the major outbreak of cold air that occurred in the central U.S. in February, bringing devastating freezing conditions to Texas and surrounding areas. This pattern reversed in April, and the months of April through July were all cooler than the long-term average. This resulted in a slow start to the growing season, and many crops were behind their normal development until later in the summer due to the cold temperatures and lack of sunshine caused by persistent cloudiness. The April through September period was the 27th coldest on record — the last time it was this cold was 2013.

The cold April temperatures were due in part to outbreaks of frigid air that caused frost in many parts of the state. The frost caused by the cold air destroyed blooms on fruit crops, resulting in significant losses to farmers in some counties, espe-

cially after blossoms developed early in the season due to the warm conditions early in the year.

At the end of the year, November was much cooler than normal and had no severe weather or hurricanes, but December was almost ten degrees warmer than the long-term average. Many counties in the southern part of Georgia did not experience a killing frost by the end of 2021, which happens in fewer than one out of ten years.

Wet with significant crop impacts  
Precipitation for the state as a whole was 57.06 inches, just about 7 inches higher than the long-term average from 1895 to 2021. It was ranked the 21st wettest year on record.

Rainfall in the months of January through May was very close to average in each month, but in the period from June through October, it was at least an inch wetter than average for each month. This resulted in wet fields that were difficult to enter, which caused significant crop impacts from fungal diseases and cloudiness caused by the warm and humid conditions.

The wet conditions were not spread equally around Georgia. The wettest parts of the state were the Coastal Plain region and the far northwest corner of the state. The driest area was between Atlanta and Macon in the central part of the state. Wet conditions were especially noticeable in southern Georgia early in the year and during the main months of the growing season, affecting agriculture as

noted above.

Because of the plentiful rainfall, drought made only a minor appearance in 2021. Following a very dry November, moderate drought was introduced to east central Georgia on Dec. 7, but it was removed two weeks later on Dec. 21. Some scattered abnormally dry conditions also occurred earlier in the year, but all were gone by the summer growing period.

Claudette, Danny, Elsa, Fred, Mindy — and Hurricane Ida  
Georgia was directly affected by five tropical storms in 2021. They include Claudette (June 19-21), Danny (June 28-29), Elsa (July 7-8), Fred (Aug. 16-18), and Mindy (Sept. 8-9).

All these storms contributed to the rainfall received over the summer. Additional rainfall came from Hurricane Ida, which made landfall west of Georgia along the Louisiana coast and brought heavy bands of rain across Georgia.

Severe weather occurred during every month except for November, which saw cold and quiet conditions.

To keep up with Southeast climate news from Georgia's agricultural climatologist, visit [site.extension.uga.edu/climate](http://site.extension.uga.edu/climate).

Pam Knox serves as a University of Georgia agricultural climatologist with the Department of Crop and Soil Sciences.

## QUALIFYING FEES FOR 2022 GENERAL PRIMARY WILKES COUNTY, GEORGIA

OFFICE	AMOUNT
Chairman-Board of Commissioners -	\$1678.57
Board of Commissioners-District 3 Member	\$72
Board of Commissioners - District 4 Member	\$72
Board of Education -District 1 Member	\$72
Board of Education -District 2 Member	\$72

## NOTICE OF INTENTION TO INTRODUCE LOCAL LEGISLATION

Notice is given that there will be introduced at the 2022 regular session of the General Assembly of Georgia a bill to amend an Act recreating the Board of Commissioners of Wilkes County, approved April 17, 1975 (Ga. L. 1975, p. 2979), as amended; and for other purposes.

## WILKES COUNTY TAX COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE will be CLOSED

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 8  
for training

## How to prepare and file taxes for free

By IDA JACKSON

Have you ever heard the saying "there is nothing in life free"? However, this is not true in all situations. Some people may not realize it, but you can file your taxes for free.

Based on data from the IRS, many taxpayers who claim they earned income tax credit (EITC) pay someone to prepare their tax returns. In 2013, The National Consumer Law Center estimated that taxpayers claiming the EITC paid about \$2.3 billion per year to get their taxes prepared and receive their refund fast.

Would you like to avoid paying to have your taxes prepared and keep all of your tax refund? If so, there are free programs available to file your taxes for free. One particular program is the IRS' Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program, known as VITA.

VITA is a free program that allows you to get your taxes prepared and filed for free. The program is coordinated locally by volunteers from one or more community-based organizations.

Volunteers are certified by the IRS and must pass annual exams to prepare tax returns, and all tax returns go through a quality review process before being submitted to the IRS. VITA volunteer tax preparers are trained and certified by the IRS to prepare many types of tax returns, including those claiming the EITC and other credits.

Regardless of whether your taxes are prepared at a VITA site or by a paid tax preparer, the IRS will delay tax refunds that claim the EITC until mid to late February. In an effort to reduce identity theft, legislation was passed to delay refunds that include the EITC.

The Wilkes County Extension office will offer VITA during the 2022 tax season. Appointments are being scheduled beginning Feb. 1 through April 12. For more information or to schedule an appointment, please call Ida Jackson; FACS Agent at 706-678-2332.

Ida Jackson-Family Consumer Science Agent  
TEL: (706) 678-2332  
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## 243 anniversary of the Battle of Kettle Creek on go

Submitted by  
Walker Chewing

Scheduled for February 11, 12, and 13, this year marks the 243 year anniversary of the battle of Kettle Creek, which occurred on February 14, 1779.

On Friday, the GASSAR Color Guard will present the Colors at a 1:30 p.m. ceremony in Elijah Clarke State Park. The GASSAR Militia will salute Col. Clarke with a musket volley. Additionally, the KCBA will conduct tours of the Kettle Creek Battlefield beginning at 11 a.m. and continuing throughout the day. All the other activities will continue as normal except for the annual KCBA dinner meeting. It has been cancelled due to the Covid-19 virus.

In 1998 the National Society Sons of the American Revolution designated 10 sites within the United States as American Revolutionary War National Celebration Sites. The Kettle Creek Battlefield was one of those sites. In the same year, the Georgia Society Sons of the American Revolution began recognizing

the battle by conducting a ceremony at War Hill in Wilkes County. The GASSAR has continued its annual sponsorship of this celebration ever since. The event has grown into a three-day commemoration of the battle and the men who fought it.

In 2021, thanks to the efforts of the Kettle Creek Battlefield Association and the efforts and support of U.S. Representative Jody Hice, the Kettle Creek Battlefield was awarded affiliated status by the U.S. National Park Service. This status recognizes the important contribution the battle made to the American Revolution. The site contains the remains of 28 soldiers, whose graves are marked by white crosses where they fell.

For those who wish to stamp their "Passport to Your National Parks Book", the official cancellation stamp will be available at the trailhead kiosk at the foot of War Hill.

This year's reenactment and commemoration will be made special by the attendance of the President General of the NSSAR.

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Lee Dinning, D.O.  
Family Medicine

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