



## Weekly Update

February 8, 2012

Hello CORE Members,

The state of Texas was racked by the worst single year drought in history in 2011. The drought is estimated to have caused the loss of several billions of dollars from the agriculture and livestock industries. Additionally, the drought is estimated to have caused the death of as many as a half-billion trees last year. The forecast for 2012 according to NOAA is for the drought to continue or intensify for much of the state.

Luckily, we here in North-East Texas have had enough rain to push us out of drought, but the majority of the state is still suffering. (See the US Drought Monitor graphic for a picture of the state and the drought)

What does this drought mean for the environment in our area and Texas more generally? For one thing, water conservation practices need to be put into place to ensure that cities and towns are able to maintain their water supplies. Already some areas in Central Texas are having to truck in water because their wells have gone dry. Fighting against hydraulic fracturing (fracking) can help save over 3.5 million gallons of water per well. Urban sprawl creates vast areas of concrete where rain water cannot penetrate. Fight for zoning laws that encourage denser construction so that more land can remain natural.

Some things you can do in your own home to conserve water include:

- Run your clothes washer and dishwasher only when they are full. You can save up to 1,000 gallons a month.
- When washing dishes by hand, don't let the water run while rinsing. Fill one sink with wash water and the other with rinse water.
- Use the garbage disposal sparingly. Compost vegetable food waste instead and save gallons every time.
- Grab a wrench and fix that leaky faucet. It's simple, inexpensive, and you can save 140 gallons a week.

For more ideas on ways to conserve water go to: <http://www.wateruseitwisely.com/100-ways-to-conserve/index.php>

See the following page for a current U.S. Drought Monitor map of Texas.

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# U.S. Drought Monitor

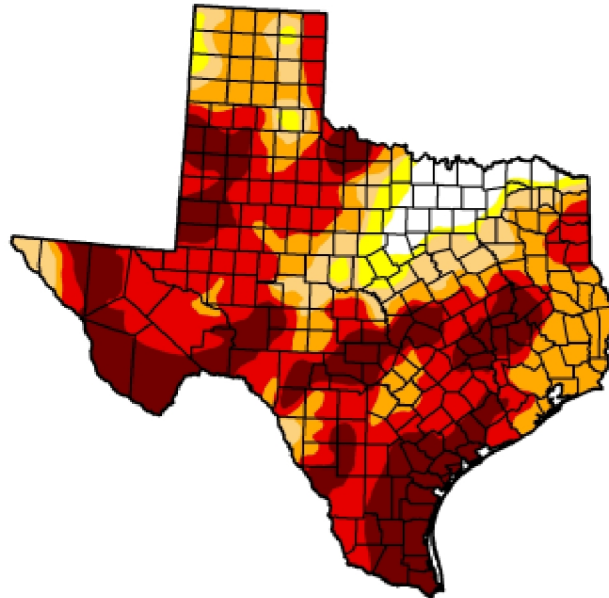
January 31, 2012

Valid 7 a.m. EST

## Texas

*Drought Conditions (Percent Area)*

|   | None  | D0-D4  | D1-D4  | D2-D4 | D3-D4 | D4    |
|---|-------|--------|--------|-------|-------|-------|
| Current                                       | 4.93  | 95.07  | 90.66  | 80.78 | 59.79 | 27.36 |
| Last Week<br>(01/24/2012 map)                 | 0.52  | 99.48  | 95.08  | 82.60 | 62.47 | 25.27 |
| 3 Months Ago<br>(11/01/2011 map)              | 0.00  | 100.00 | 100.00 | 98.18 | 90.42 | 64.95 |
| Start of<br>Calendar Year<br>(12/27/2011 map) | 0.01  | 99.99  | 97.83  | 84.81 | 67.32 | 32.36 |
| Start of<br>Water Year<br>(09/27/2011 map)    | 0.00  | 100.00 | 100.00 | 99.16 | 96.65 | 85.75 |
| One Year Ago<br>(01/25/2011 map)              | 19.47 | 80.53  | 53.00  | 31.56 | 8.66  | 0.00  |



Intensity:

- D0 Abnormally Dry
- D1 Drought - Moderate
- D2 Drought - Severe
- D3 Drought - Extreme
- D4 Drought - Exceptional

*The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements.*

<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu>



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Eric Luebehusen, USDA