

The 2011 Texas Drought

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Abstract

The 2011 drought in Texas was unprecedented in its intensity. Beginning in October 2010, most of Texas experienced a relatively dry fall and winter, but the record dry March 2011 brought widespread extreme drought conditions to the state. The 12-month rainfall total for October 2010 through September 2011 was far below the previous record set in 1956. Average temperatures for June through August were over 2 ° F above the previous Texas record and were close to the warmest statewide summer temperatures ever recorded in the United States.

As the drought intensified, the previous year's relatively lush growth dried out, setting the stage for spring wildfires. Conditions were so dry during the spring planting season across much of the state that many crops never emerged from the ground. Continued dry weather through the summer led to increasing hardship for ranchers, who generally saw very little warm-season grass growth while stock tanks dried up. By early fall, trees in central and eastern Texas were showing widespread mortality, and dry and windy conditions allowed forest fires to burn intensely and spread rapidly in Bastrop and elsewhere.

Near-normal rainfall across Texas in October– December improved short-term conditions, but almost the entire state remained in drought.

Keywords


drought, Texas, rainfall, records, SPI


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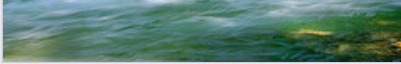
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