

# ***PLANNING TO SURVIVE IN THE WILDLAND URBAN INTERFACE***

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***H-GAC FALL PLANNING WORKSHOP:  
ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING FOR  
LOCAL GOVERNMENTS***

*Mike Montgomery  
Fire Marshal  
Harris County TX*



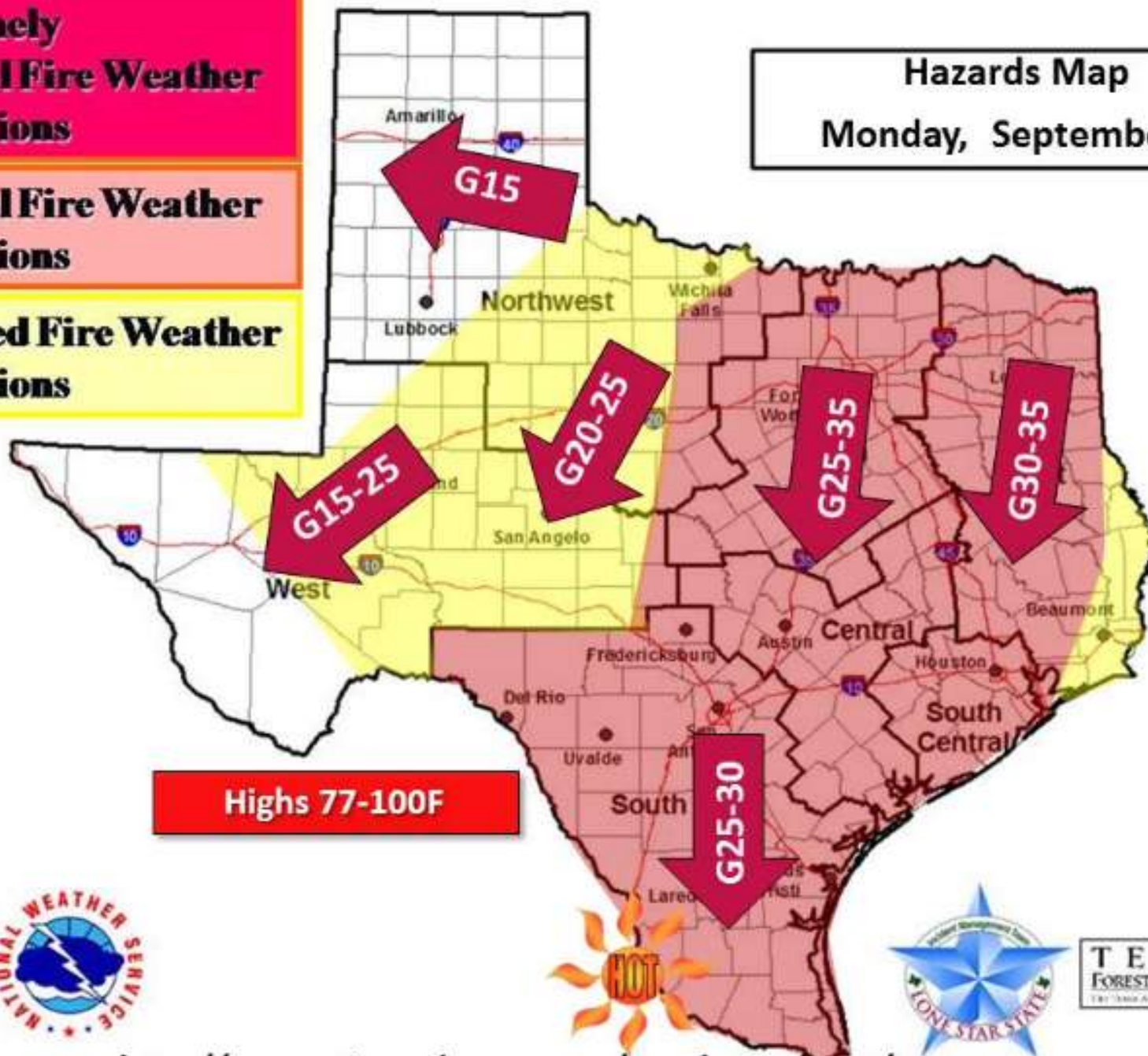


**Extremely  
Critical Fire Weather  
Conditions**

**Critical Fire Weather  
Conditions**

**Elevated Fire Weather  
Conditions**

**Hazards Map**  
**Monday, September 5**

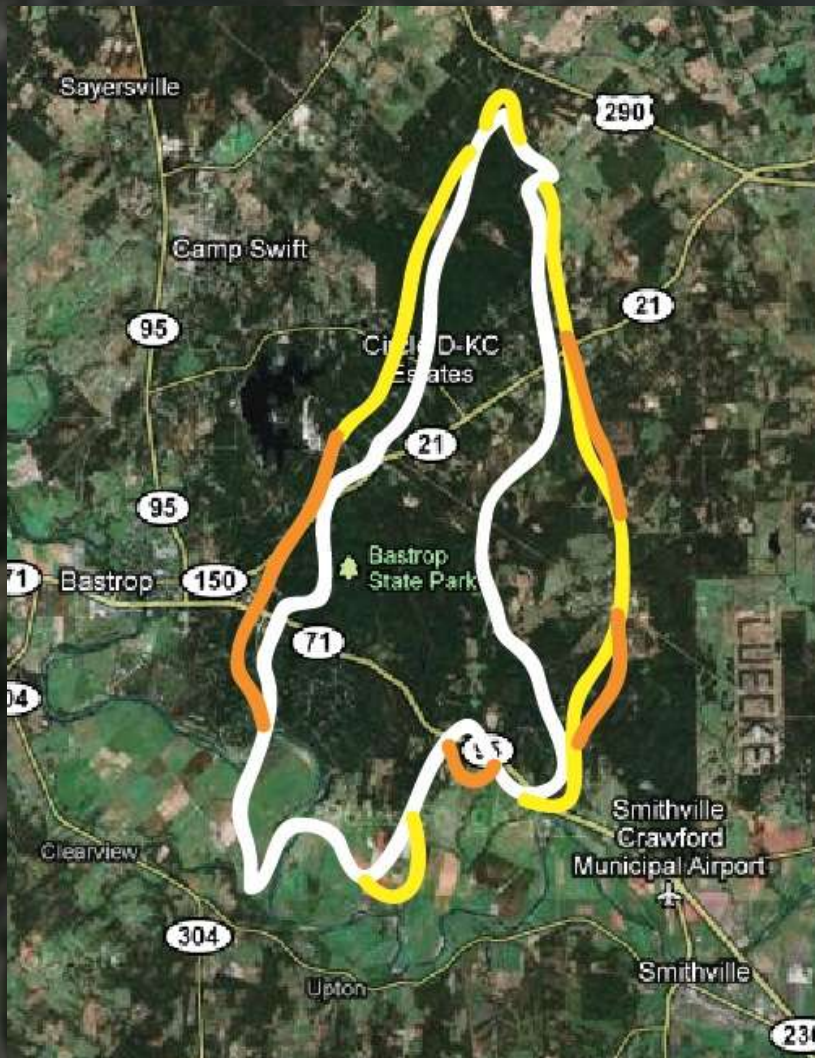


**TEXAS**  
FOREST SERVICE  
The State's Forest Land Steward

<http://innovation.srh.noaa.gov/wordpress/imet/>



# Bastrop Fire



- 34,068 acres burned
- 1,700 structures lost

# Riley Road Fire



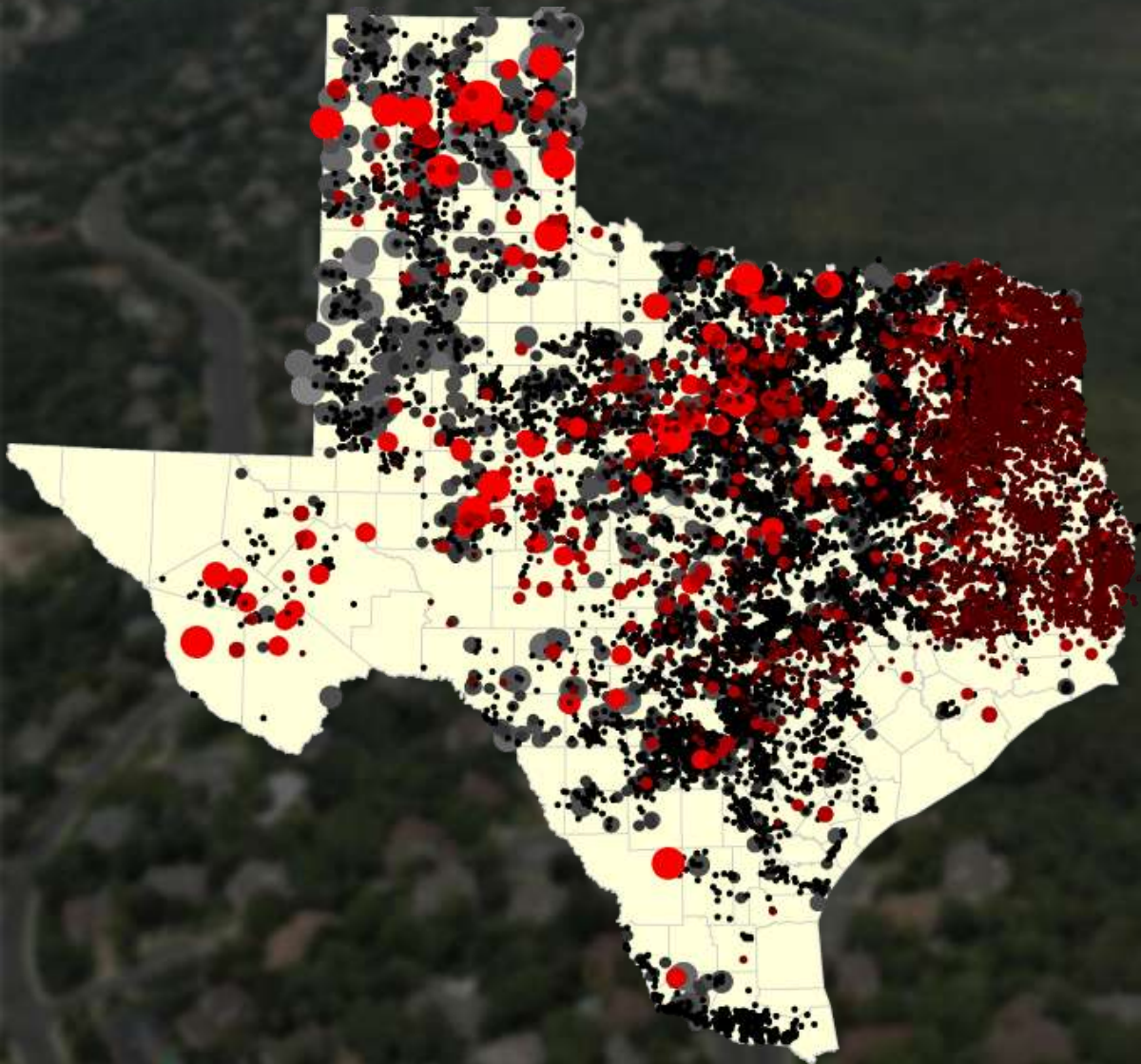
- 18,960 acres burned
- 23 structures damaged
- 76 structures destroyed



# Danger of wild fires in Texas is real

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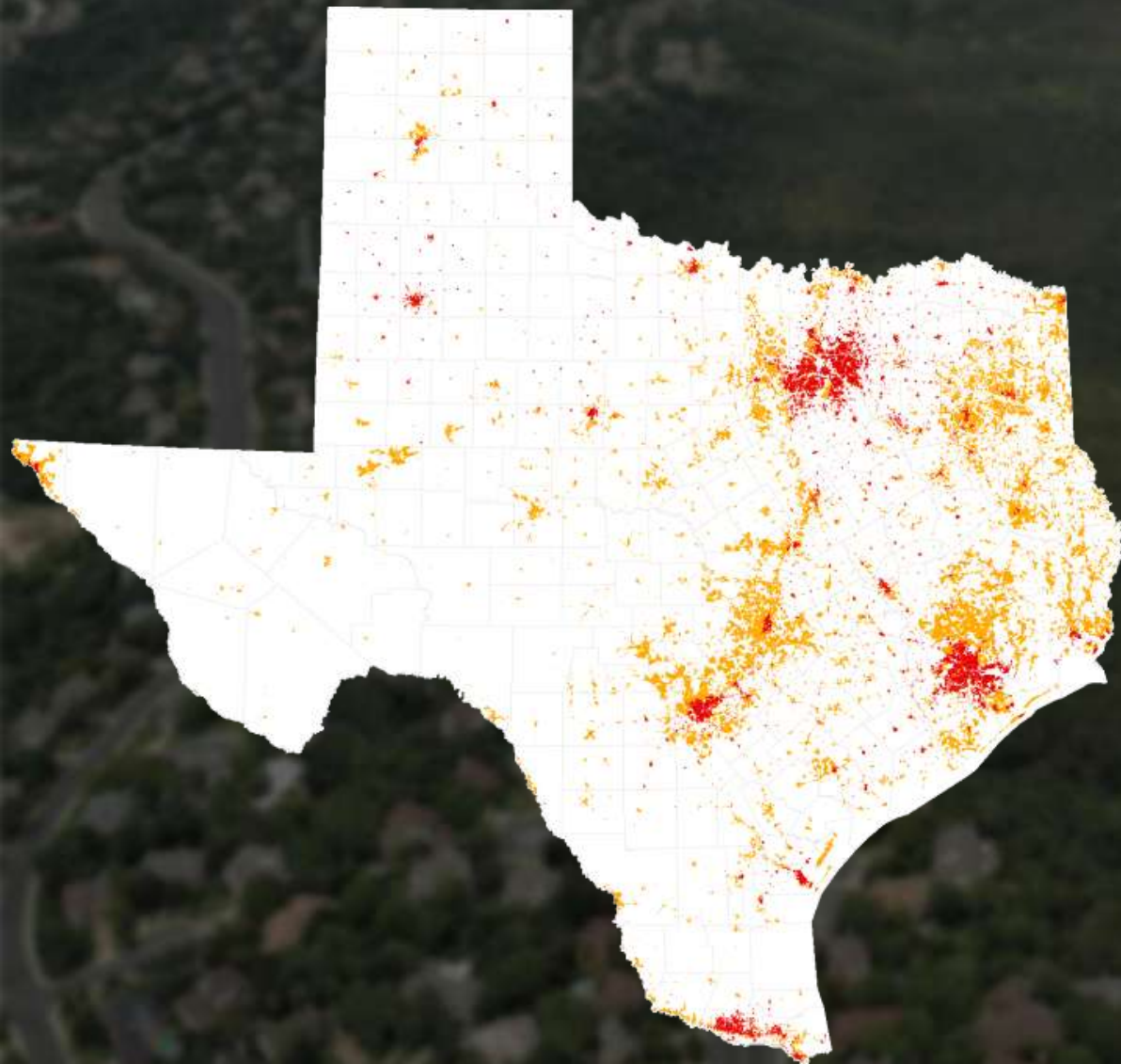
Jan 1, – Nov 7, 2011



- 26,148 fires  
*burned*
- 3,906,995 acres
- 5,065 structures  
*At a cost of over*
- \$600 million

# Wildfire is a Rural *AND* Urban issue

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- 85% < 2 miles from a community
- 90% caused by humans



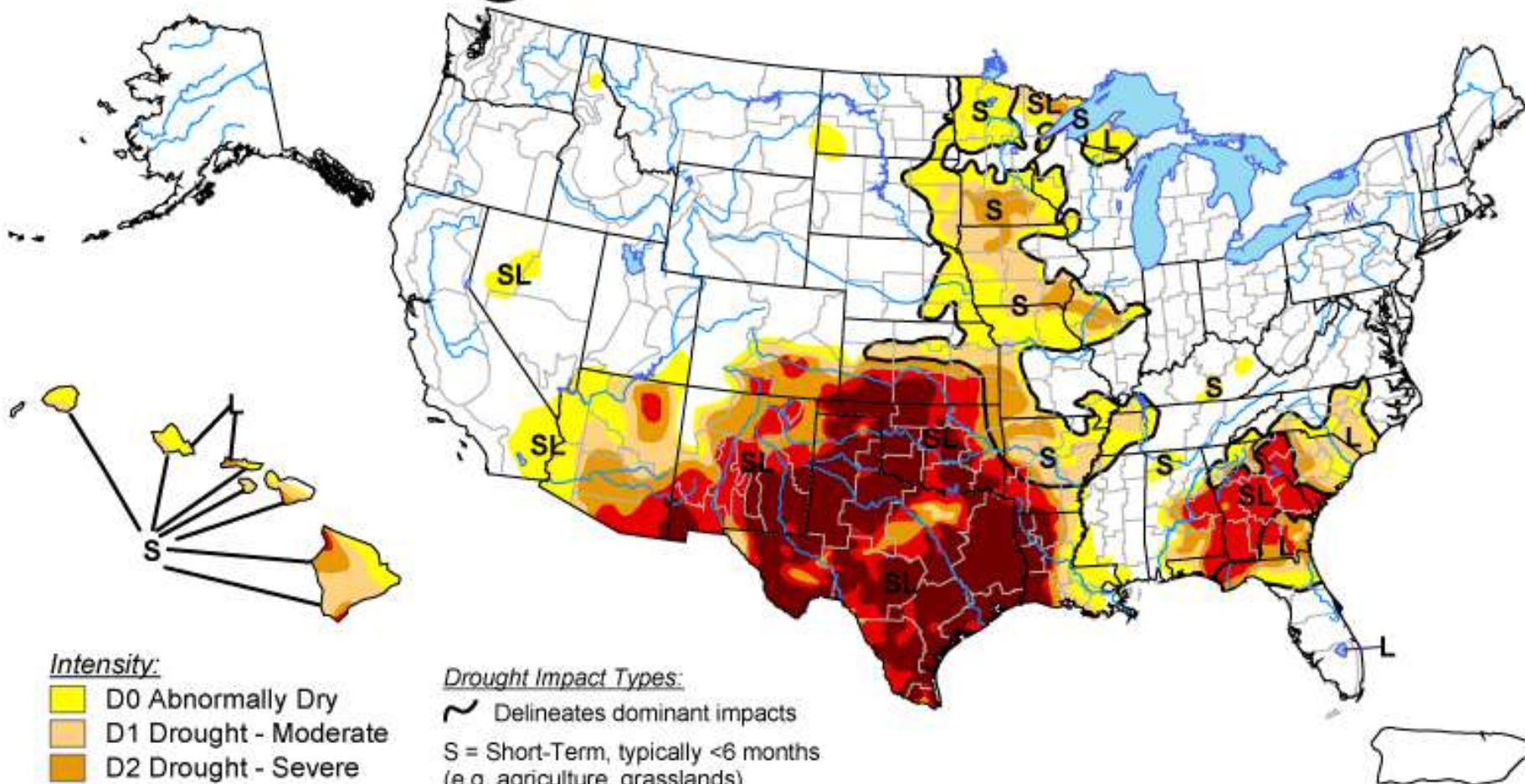
- Land use
- Climate
- Population
- Fire management








# U.S. Drought Monitor

October 18, 2011


Valid 8 a.m. EDT



## Intensity:

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

## Drought Impact Types:

-  Delineates dominant impacts
- S = Short-Term, typically <6 months (e.g. agriculture, grasslands)
- L = Long-Term, typically >6 months (e.g. hydrology, ecology)

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

<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/>

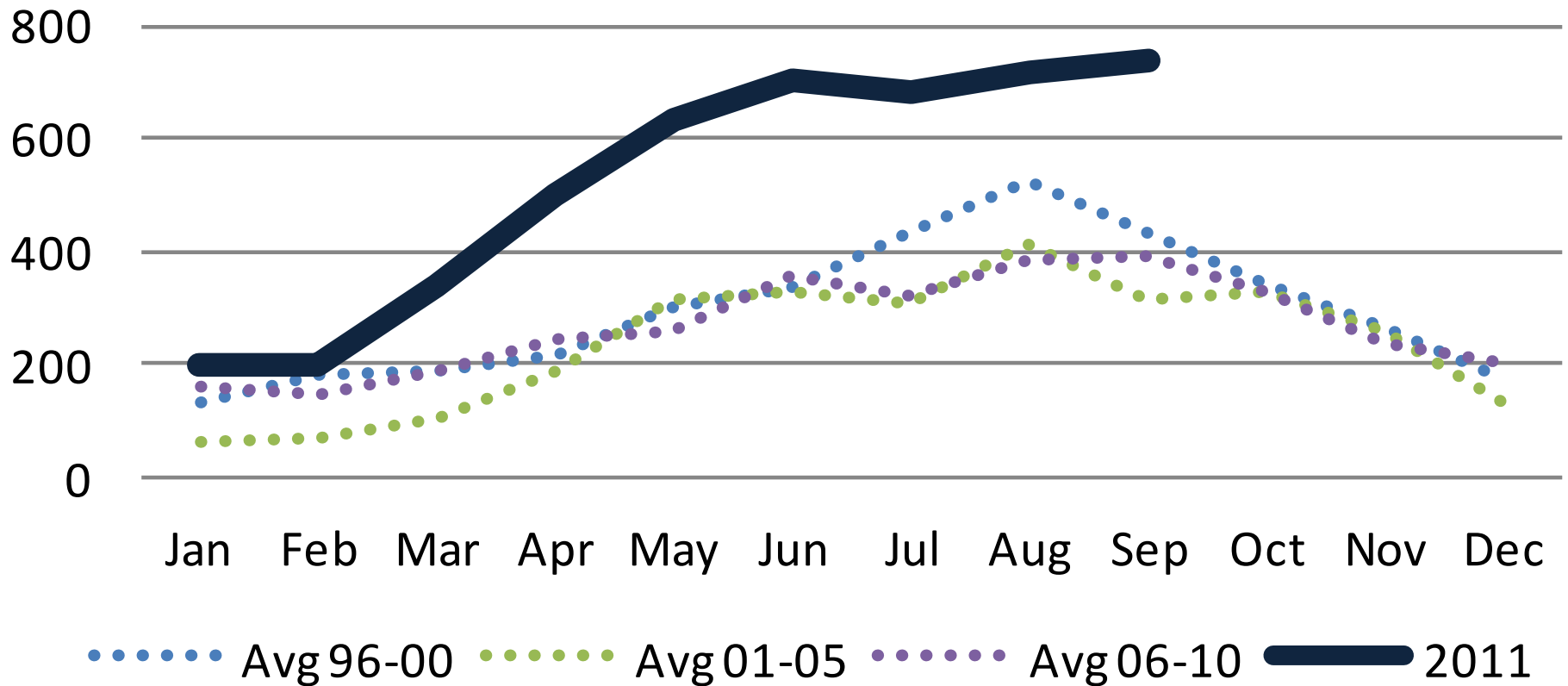


**Released Thursday, October 20, 2011**

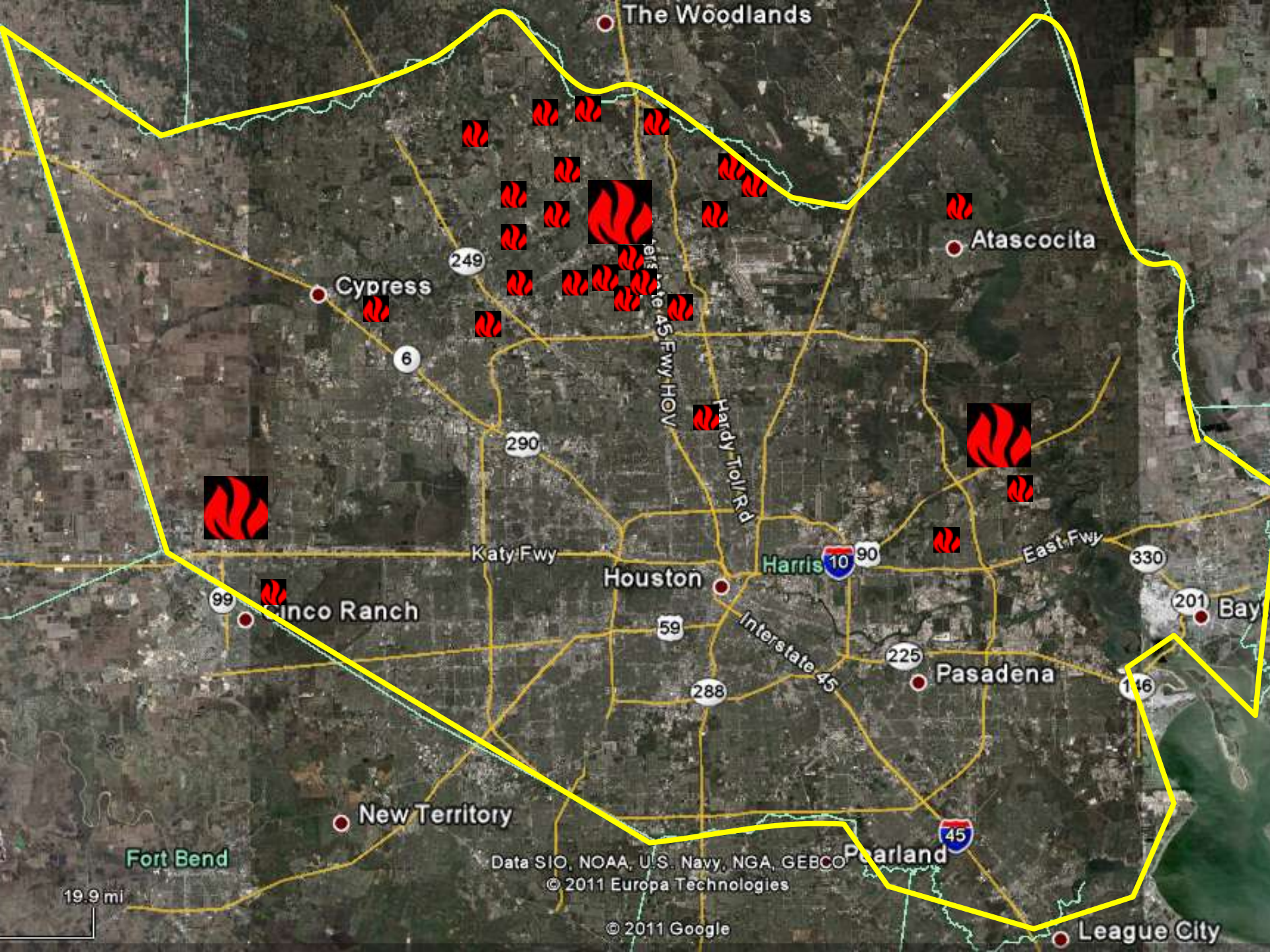
**Author: David Miskus, NOAA/NWS/NCEP/CPC**

# Local Drought Index

## KBDI in Harris County 2011





















☆  
17111 Hafer Rd, Houston, TX 77090

Grass and Woods Fire Area (Red Border) 

Affected Structures (Green Border)

Prattsford Ln

Williamhurst Ln

Hedgerfield Ln

Stanhope Manor Ln

Woodport Ln

Pentonsline Ln

Brightling Ln

Ella Enclave Dr

593 ft

© 2011 Europa Technologies  
© 2011 Google

30°00'38.01" N 95°26'16.06" W elev 115 ft

13

©2010















# Five Keys to Managing Incidents

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- Understand and know your hazards
- Pre-identify where you will get resources
- Create public awareness
- Create defensible spaces
- Update Emergency Management Plans
- Exercise the plan(s) regularly

# DO YOU BURN YOUR HOUSEHOLD TRASH ?

**90%** of all wildfires are caused by humans  
escaped outdoor burning is the **#1** cause

## If you must burn household trash

- Use a covered burn barrel
- Don't pile it on the ground
- Avoid accumulating trash for long periods
- Avoid burning aerosol cans
- Avoid burning on RED FLAG or WINDY days
- STAY WITH YOUR FIRE



## You Are Responsible For Your Fire !

To report someone illegally burning, call the Harris County Fire Marshal at 281-999-2200



# **ANY SPARK CAN CAUSE A WILDFIRE**

**90%** of all wildfires are caused by humans  
escaped outdoor burning is the **#1** cause

**Use CAUTION when welding or grinding**

- **Keep area clear of vegetation**
- **Wet down the work area**
- **Have a spotter watch for sparks**
- **Keep water and a fire extinguisher nearby**
- **Avoid hot work or RED FLAG or WINDY days**

## **You Are Responsible For Your Fire !**

**To report someone illegally burning, call the Harris County Fire Marshal at 281-999-2200**



# Building defensible space

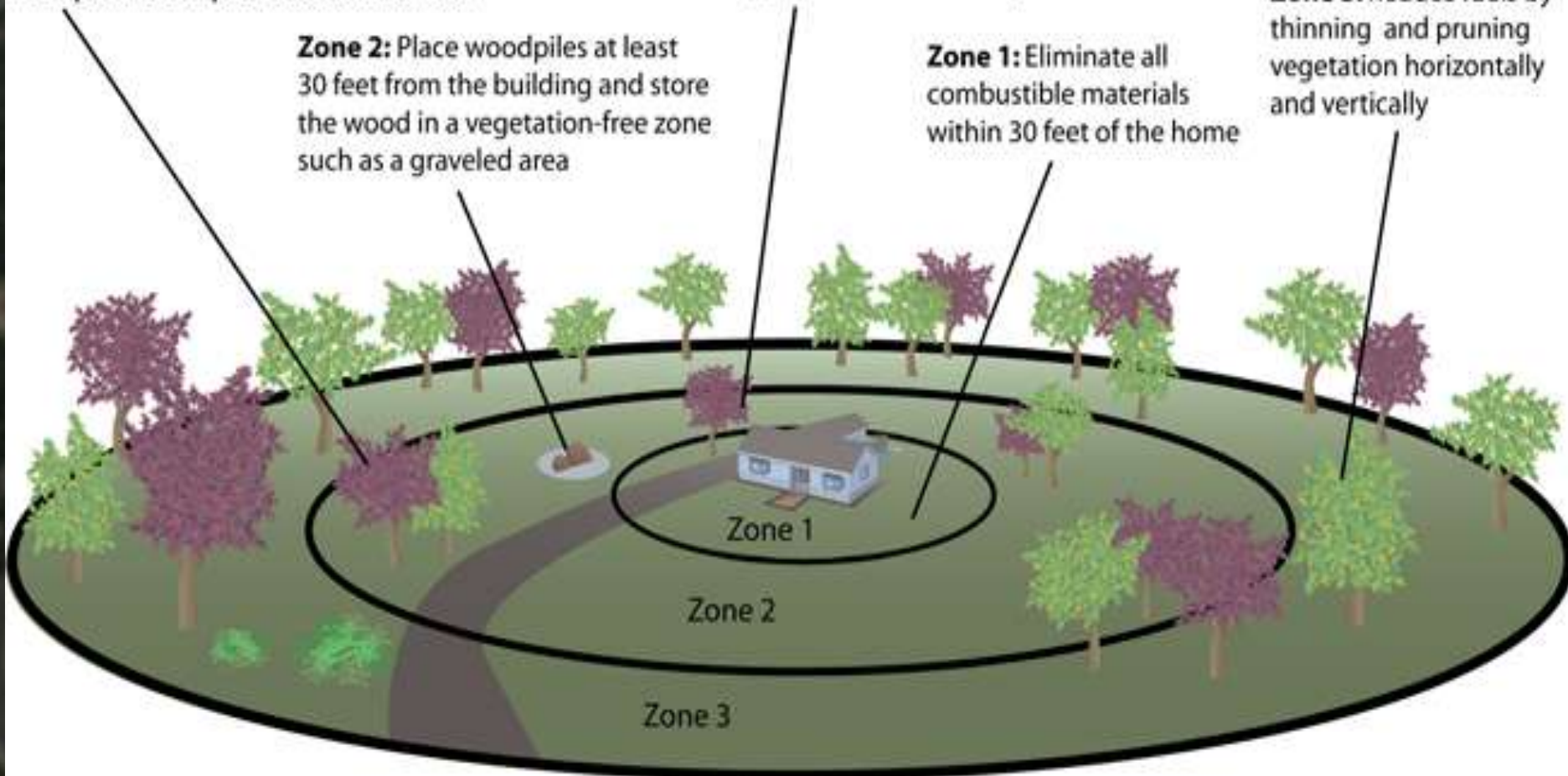
**Zone 2:** Prune and remove dead and dying branches from individual and well-spaced clumps of trees and shrubs

**Zone 2:** Place woodpiles at least 30 feet from the building and store the wood in a vegetation-free zone such as a graveled area

**Zone 1:** Remove combustible litter on roofs and gutters and trim tree branches that overhang the roof and chimney

**Zone 1:** Eliminate all combustible materials within 30 feet of the home

**Zone 3:** Reduce fuels by thinning and pruning vegetation horizontally and vertically





# Effective Planning Efforts

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- **Reforestation Act of 2003**
- **FLAME Act of 2009**
- **Wildland Fire Leadership Council**
- **Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy**
- **Texas Rural Fire Advisory Council**
- **Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP)**
- **Firewise communities / USA<sup>®</sup>**
- **Ready, Set, Go!**



# Effective Planning efforts

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## ■ Common goals

- Protect life and property
- Improve public awareness
- Mitigate risk
- Enhance emergency response
- Restore natural systems

## ■ Common plan elements

- Assess risk
- Assess capabilities
- Identify service gaps
- Develop a mitigation plan and funding





# For more information

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- **Cohesive Wildfire Mitigation Strategy**
  - <http://www.forestsandrangelands.gov/strategy/index.shtml>
- **Firewise Communities/USA**
  - <http://www.firewise.org/>
- **Ready, Set, Go!**
  - <http://wildlandfirersg.org/>
- **Texas Emerging Communities**
  - <http://www.texasemergingcommunities.org/>
- **CWPP**
  - <http://txforestservice.tamu.edu/main/popup.aspx?id=1599>







# Contact information

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*Fire Marshal's Office*

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*[www.hcfmo.net](http://www.hcfmo.net)*