



Texas Drought Update - East Texas Region February 20, 2012

Though East Texas has benefitted in recent months from much-needed rains, much of the region still is suffering from the ongoing drought.

Recent drought models classify East Texas as “drought ongoing with some improvement.” Over the next three months, forecasts look favorable with moisture trends expected to continue over East Texas. The National Drought Monitor, however, still shows drought conditions present.

Weather forecasters believe that the La Nina weather pattern — which has resulted in the continuing drought conditions across the state — is beginning to show signs of weakening, and most believe it will dissipate before the summer.

As a result, most climatologists have updated weather outlooks giving equal chances of dry, normal and wet conditions for East Texas. Typically, this means there is no clear consensus or dominant weather pattern to serve as a basis for the forecast. However, this does represent a change from the predictions for below-normal precipitation that were forecast just last month for the early summer.

What do the recent rains and updated weather models mean for tree planting in East Texas? Although much of East Texas has received beneficial rainfall amounts, landowners should proceed with caution when it comes to reforestation this season. Much of East Texas should have suitable soil moisture to facilitate tree planting over the next several weeks, but the chances of dry conditions developing during the spring and summer months could lead to increased mortality in newly planted areas.

Landowners also should be aware that the optimal planting window for the 2011-12 planting season is quickly coming to a close. Newly planted trees will have less time to adjust before the summer months, which are typically dryer and come with increased chances of drought stress and mortality.

The decision to plant should be made on a case-by-case, site-by-site basis. Landowners are encouraged to contact their local natural resource professional for assistance in deciding whether to plant now or postpone until the 2012-13 planting season.

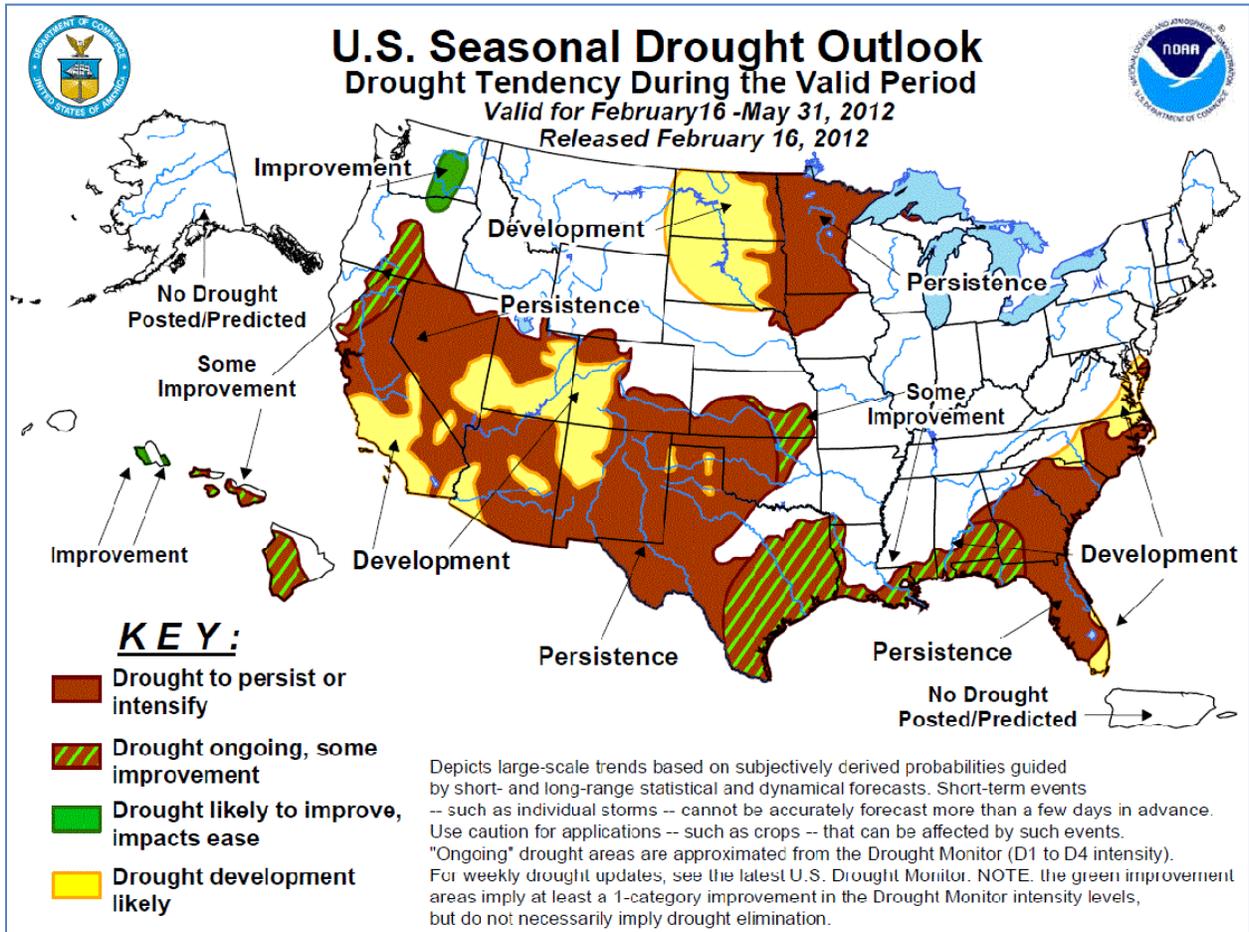
For more information, read [*To Plant or Not To Plant: New Timber Stand Drought Risk Assessment*](#). This report can help landowners make an informed decision about their management options. Or take a look at the attached National Drought Monitor map, which forecasts the conditions for the next three months.

If you need help determining if conditions are suitable for tree planting on your property, contact your local natural resource professional.

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Long-term Precipitation and Temperature Outlook - February 16, 2012

Latest National Drought Monitor Outlook through May, 2012



Latest Three-Month Temperature and Precipitation Outlook from Climate Prediction Center

