

# COMMUNITIES IN CRISIS

## IMPACT OF THE 2011 DROUGHT ON THE URBAN FOREST



*Last year, Texas was ravaged by an unprecedented, unrelenting drought that drastically altered the landscape in cities and towns across the Lone Star State.*

Texas Forest Service urban foresters studied satellite imagery from before and during the drought to get a better picture of tree mortality in urban areas. The study included all cities and towns, except for the Trans Pecos Region, where tree mortality was determined to be a result of a February 2011 cold snap, rather than the drought.

An estimated **5.6 million shade trees** in urban areas across the state died as a result of the drought. As the drought continues, that number is expected to rise.

Because these dead trees are in populated areas, they're likely to become safety hazards. That means they'll need to be removed. **The estimated cost to remove them: \$560 million.**

A part of the urban forest, these trees did more than just beautify the community. They shaded streets, homes and parks. They cut heating and cooling bills. They cleaned the air and water. They even boosted property values.

**The estimated loss in terms of economic and environmental benefits is roughly \$280 million annually.**

