

...West of 98

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Whatever it was (and labels are overrated), it was magnificent. It combined traditional country and western sounds with rock, blues, and Spanish influence. In many ways, it was the musical embodiment of the melting pot that is Texas culture. They put Austin, Texas on the map as one of the world's foremost live music centers. It is no exaggeration that they contributed to making Austin and the surrounding Texas Hill Country one of the "cool" places to live, the economic impacts of which are still reverberating today.

I could give you my thoughts on some of Jerry Jeff's most important songs, but they each deserve more words than I have

remaining in this space. But for now, Jerry Jeff is gone, but his music and that sound that changed the very face of country music, will live forever. Whenever I hear it, I think back to my childhood trips to Arlington. Nolan Ryan was on the mound. Pudge Rodriguez was behind the plate. Bleacher seats at Arlington Stadium were cheap and full of entertainment for a kid with a bag of peanuts and a scorebook. But before the first pitch, there was a plate of baby back ribs at Chili's, with the imagery of Terlingua on the walls and some pretty cool dudes named Willie and Jerry Jeff.

James Decker is the Mayor of Stamford, Texas and the creator of the "West of 98" website and forthcoming podcast. He may be contacted at westof98.substack.com.



Playoffs! The Bronte Lady Longhorns volleyball team was treated to a sendoff by fans as they headed to the Bi-District game on Saturday, October 31. The Lady Longhorns came away with the win against Rochelle and advanced to the Area round against Benjamin.

Covid-19 drives more Texans outdoors

by Jessica Domel
Multimedia Reporter,
Texas Farm Bureau

Many Texans explored activities outdoors they may not otherwise have made time for as the COVID-19 pandemic led to shutdowns across the state and nation.

"From an outdoor recreation perspective, we have seen a huge uptick in interest in outdoor-related trends - hunting, fishing, boating, camping and kayaking," Carter Smith, executive director of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD), said. "People, particularly in the cities, were very anxious to get outside, really for their mental, emotional and psychological health, if nothing else."

Fishing license sales rose 25 percent year-over-year.

"I think many people were confronted with either shelter-in-place or stay-at-home orders or the choice of going fishing, and going fishing they chose," Smith said.

The fishing and hunting license year runs August 15 to August 15.

So, the increases in fishing license sales at the start of the pandemic shutdowns in Texas are included in the prior license year.

"Last year, we had about a nine percent increase in hunting and fishing license sales over our prior record year, which was in 2017," Smith said. "We were a little anxious to see what was going to happen with the advent of duck season and whether or not we'd see the trends continue with people buying licenses in mid-to-late August in anticipation of the first of September."

People continue to head outdoors.

"Our license sales to date are about nine percent above where they were last year," Smith. "We feel really good about people getting out and bird hunting and planning to get out and hunt."

Smith noted Texans were not deterred when some stores closed and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department offices

closed to the public.

"We've seen around a 70 to 75 percent increase from last year in the internet purchase of our hunting and fishing licenses," Smith said.

That reflects the increased use of smartphones and TPWD's efforts to make agency-related offerings smartphone friendly.

"The legislation that was passed last session allowed for people to be able to show, essentially, digital proof of a license in the field to our game wardens if they didn't need to tag a deer or turkey," Smith said.

Hunting and fishing licenses can be purchased on the TPWD

website, by phone or in-person at more than 1,700 retailers across Texas.

Funds from hunting and fishing license sales directly fund conservation efforts and recreational opportunities.

An administrative fee of \$5 is assessed when buying a license

online.

Due to the pandemic, fulfillment of licenses purchased online may be delayed.

Hunters and anglers who don't need tags can show the receipt from the license purchase to law enforcement, if needed.

Water Weekly

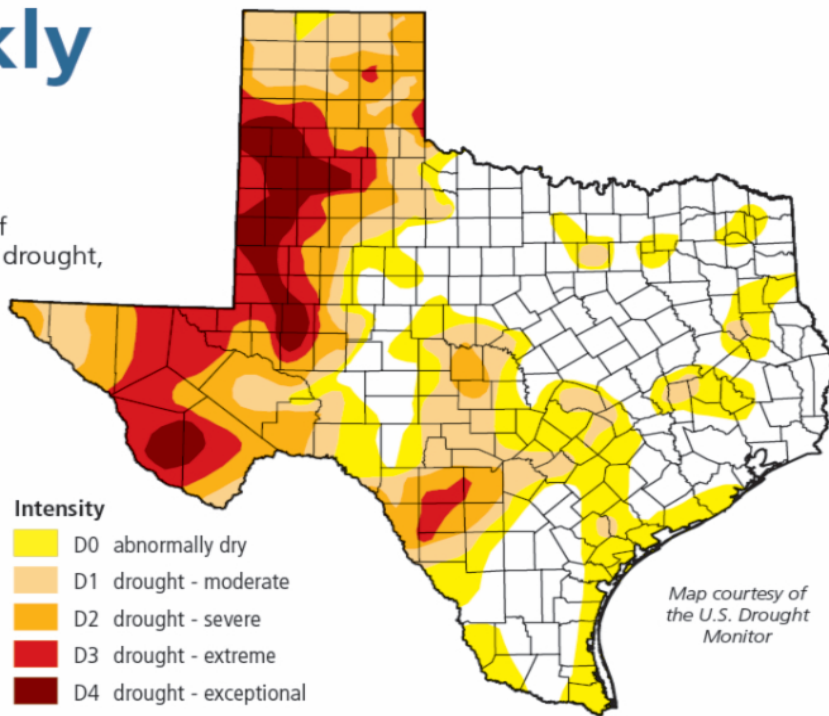
For the week of 11/02/20

Water conditions

The latest drought map for conditions as of October 27 shows continued expansion of drought, and little to no improvement is expected in coming weeks. Exceptional drought is now impacting parts of 23 counties in West Texas, about 5 percent of the area of the state.

Drought conditions

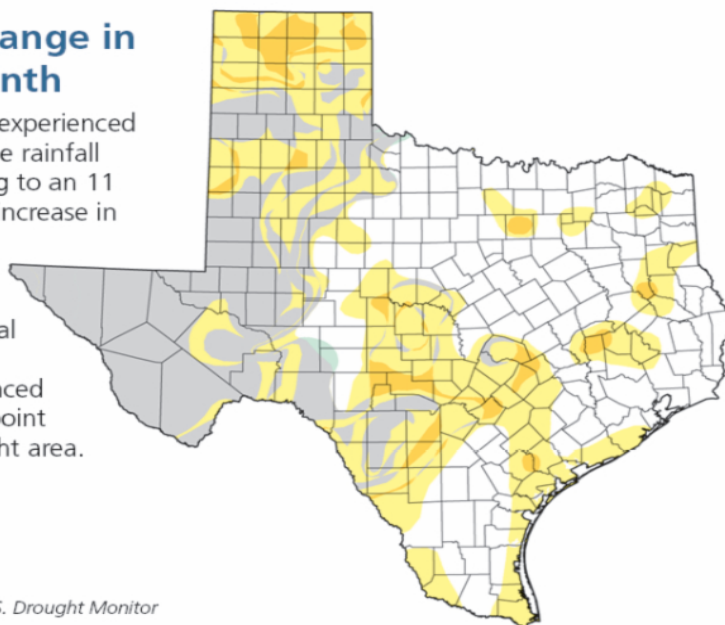
- ◆ 43% now
- ◆ 40% a week ago
- ◆ 34% three months ago
- ◆ 47% a year ago



Map courtesy of the U.S. Drought Monitor

Drought change in the last month

Most of the state experienced well below average rainfall in October, leading to an 11 percentage point increase in the area of the state impacted by drought. That was a large reversal from September when we experienced a 23 percentage point decrease in drought area.



Map courtesy of the U.S. Drought Monitor

Written by Dr. Mark Wentzel — Dr. Mark Wentzel is a hydrologist in the TWDB's Office of Water Science and Conservation.

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