

RR - Calif - water crisis

Killer Drought's Huge Toll Of Trees in California

Sacramento

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The drought has killed 18 million trees in California this year, about twice as many as were killed by forest fires, foresters said yesterday.

Some of the trees died for lack of water, but most were killed because their drought-stricken condition made them vulnerable to disease and insects, said Dick Smith, an entomologist for the U.S. Forest Service.

Smith said the death rate among trees this year was two to five times normal.

The trees killed by the drought were estimated to be worth about \$900 million, and would have produced enough lum-

ber to build 600,000 houses, or a city six times the size of Sacramento.

The number of trees lost to the drought was about as many as loggers would cut in two years.

Dick Hunt, an insect and disease specialist for the state Division of Forestry, said "You can't figure the actual cost of this whole calamity now. You have to look many years down the road to see the loss of the saplings and seedlings.

"Forty years from now, when you are looking for trees to cut, they won't be there. There will be brush instead."

Associated Press