

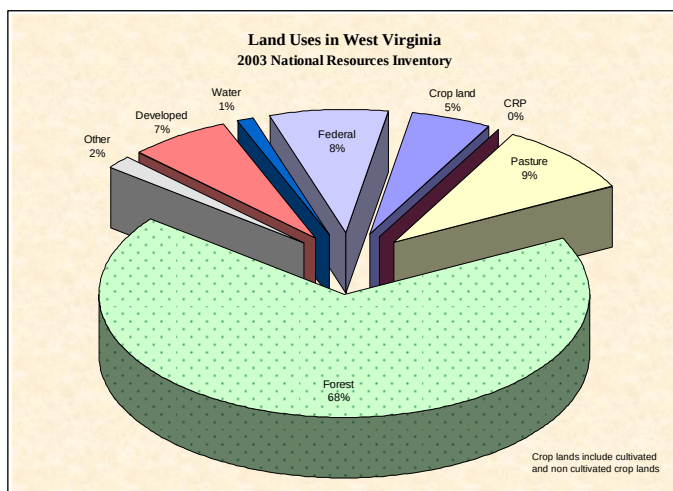


Key Findings of the 2003 NRI in West Virginia

April 2007

Land Use

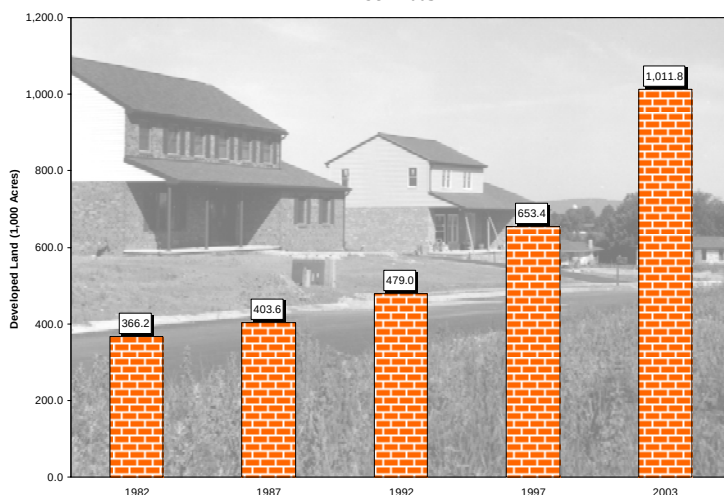
- West Virginia's total surface area is about 15,508,200 acres.
- About 92% of this total (14,296,300 acres) is non-Federal land.
- The dominant land use on private land is forest – 68.1% (about 10,556,200 acres).
- About 10.3% of private lands are pasture (1,472,400 acres), while approximately 5.7% are cultivated or non-cultivated crop land (820,600 acres).
- Since 1982, West Virginia crop land area has decreased about 25%, from 1,094,800 acres in 1982 to 820,600 acres in 2003.
- In that same time period the area of developed lands has nearly tripled, from 366,200 acres in 1982 to 1,011,800 acres in 2003 (a 176% increase).
- Between 1997 and 2003 about 358,000 acres were converted to developed areas, nearly the same amount of total developed area in 1982 (366,200 acres).



Land Use Change 1982-2003



Developed Land Trends in West Virginia 1982-2003



For more information:

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<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/NRI/>
<http://www.wv.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/>



USLE Erosion

- Between 1982 and 2003, soil erosion on cropland decreased 64% in West Virginia. Water (sheet & rill) erosion on cultivated and non-cultivated cropland in 2003 was down to 990,600 tons per year from 2,778,200 tons in 1982.
- Erosion rates on a per acre basis declined significantly between 1982 and 2003. Water (sheet & rill) erosion on cropland dropped from 2.5 tons per acre per year in 1982 to 1.2 tons per acre per year in 2003.
- In 2003, 739,000 acres (90.1% of cultivated and non-cultivated cropland) were eroding at or below soil loss tolerance rates. This compares to 970,600 acres (88.7% of cropland) in 1982.
- In 2003, 81,000 acres (9.9% of cultivated and non-cultivated cropland) were eroding above soil loss tolerance rates. This compares to 124,200 acres (11.3% of cropland) in 1982.

About the Data

Estimates presented here are based upon the latest information from the National Resources Inventory (NRI). The NRI is a longitudinal sample survey based upon scientific statistical principles and procedures. It is conducted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), in cooperation with Iowa State University's Center for Survey Statistics and Methodology.

These results are based upon the 2003 Annual NRI, which statistically updates 1997 NRI results with data collected during 2000 - 2003. The NRI was conducted on a five-year cycle during the period 1982 to 1997, but is now conducted annually. NRI data were collected every five years for 800,000 sample sites; annual NRI data collection occurs at slightly less than 25 percent of these same sample sites.

NRI data release procedures are affected by implementation of an annual data collection approach, because the scale of NRI estimates is affected by these reduced sample sizes. Estimates are being released when they meet statistical standards and are scientifically credible in accordance with NRCS policy, and in accordance with OMB and USDA Quality of Information Guidelines. The 2003 Annual NRI data are suitable for national and many regional and state level analyses.

Current estimates cover the contiguous 48 states. Future estimates will also cover Hawaii, Alaska, the Caribbean, and selected Pacific Basin islands.

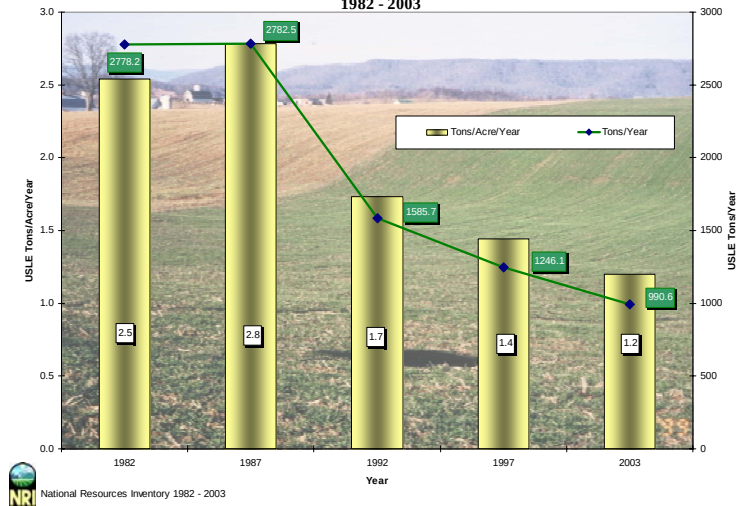
The findings on land use come from the NRI data category "Land Cover/Use," which comprises mutually exclusive categories such as cropland, rangeland, forest land, other rural land, developed land, and water areas. The NRI uses this classification to account for each and every acre of non-Federal land within the Nation. Every parcel of land is described by one and only one of these categories.

The NRI approach to conducting inventories facilitates examination of trends in land use over time because:

- the same sample sites have been studied since 1982
- the same data have been collected since 1982 [definitions and protocols have remained the same]
- the inventory accounts for 100 percent of the surface area quality assurance and statistical procedures are designed/developed to ensure that trend data are scientifically legitimate and unambiguous
- it is easy to track lands as they go from one land-use category to another.

Irrespective of the scale of analysis, margins of error must be considered. Margins of error (at the 95 percent confidence level) are presented for all NRI estimates.

USLE Erosion Rates on Cultivated and Non-cultivated Cropland 1982 - 2003



USLE Erosion Trends in West Virginia 1982 - 2003

