

## Agricultural Lands Assessment Data and Definitions

Dataset	Ranking	Description
<p><b>National Land Cover Dataset (NLCD, 2001)</b></p> <p><i>The Multi-Resolution Land Characteristics (MRLC) Consortium</i></p>	<p>Rankings of categories vary (see below)</p>	<p>The <u>National Land Cover Dataset (NLCD)</u> was developed by a group of federal partners improve the understanding of land use and land cover to be able to better evaluate changes in ecosystems and to develop baseline information needed to protect and mitigate future impacts to ecosystem health. The data set is derived from 2001 Landsat 5 Imagery (i.e., data that is developed by using satellite imagery) and includes per-pixel estimates of percent imperviousness and percent tree canopy and 36 total classes of land-cover data and derivatives of these classes using a decision tree. Our region has 14 of these classes present.</p> <p>A total of 9 categories of land use were used in the Agricultural Assessment, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developed, High Intensity</li> <li>• Developed, Medium Intensity</li> <li>• Developed, Low Intensity</li> <li>• Deciduous Forest</li> <li>• Evergreen Forest</li> <li>• Mixed Forest</li> <li>• Shrub/Scrub</li> <li>• Grassland/Herbaceous</li> <li>• Pasture/Hay</li> <li>• Cultivated Crops</li> </ul>
<p><b>Impervious Surfaces</b></p> <p>(derived from NLCD, 2001)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1</p>	<p>Impervious surface represent NLCD classification: <u>24: Developed, High Intensity</u> - Includes highly developed areas where people reside or work in high numbers. Examples include apartment complexes, row houses and commercial/industrial. <i>Impervious surfaces account for 80 to 100 percent of the total cover.</i></p>
<p><b>Developed Land</b></p> <p>(derived from NLCD, 2001)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">2</p>	<p>Developed Land represents two NLCD classifications:</p> <p><u>22. Developed, Low Intensity</u> - Includes areas with a mixture of constructed materials and vegetation. Impervious surfaces account for 20-49 percent of total cover. These areas most commonly include single-family housing units.</p> <p><u>23. Developed, Medium Intensity</u> - Includes areas with a mixture of constructed materials and vegetation. Impervious surfaces account for 50-79 percent of the total cover. These areas most commonly include single-family housing units.</p>

<p><b>Lands Adjacent to Protected Lands</b></p> <p><i>Land-of-Sky Regional Council</i></p>	<p>3</p>	<p>These lands are located within 1000 meters of all protected lands with the exception of National and State Forest Lands.</p>
<p><b>Forested Land</b></p> <p>(derived from NLCD, 2001)</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>Forested Land represents four NLCD classifications:</p> <p><u>41. Deciduous Forest</u> - Areas dominated by trees generally greater than 5 meters tall, and greater than 20% of total vegetation cover. More than 75 percent of the tree species shed foliage simultaneously in response to seasonal change.</p> <p><u>42. Evergreen Forest</u> - Areas dominated by trees generally greater than 5 meters tall, and greater than 20% of total vegetation cover. More than 75 percent of the tree species maintain their leaves all year. Canopy is never without green foliage.</p> <p><u>43. Mixed Forest</u> - Areas dominated by trees generally greater than 5 meters tall, and greater than 20% of total vegetation cover. Neither deciduous nor evergreen species are greater than 75 percent of total tree cover.</p> <p><u>52. Shrub/Scrub</u> - Areas dominated by shrubs; less than 5 meters tall with shrub canopy typically greater than 20% of total vegetation. This class includes true shrubs, young trees in an early successional stage or trees stunted from environmental conditions.</p>
<p><b>Protected Lands</b></p> <p>(Excluding National and State Forests)</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>Protected Lands are comprised of the following:</p> <p><u>National Park Service properties:</u> derived from the ‘Federal Land Ownership’ layer produced by the NC Center for Geographic Information and Analysis.</p> <p><u>North Carolina State Park properties:</u> derived from the ‘State Owned Lands’ layer produced by the NC Center for Geographic Information and Analysis.</p> <p><u>Lands holding conservation easements:</u> these properties were collected from the Southern Appalachian Highland Conservancy (SAHC), Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy (CMLC) and the NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources’ One NC Naturally database.</p>

<p><b>National and State Forest Lands</b></p> <p><i>NC Center for Geographic Analysis</i></p>	<p>6</p>	<p>These lands are owned and managed by either the US Forest Service or the North Carolina Division of Forest Resources.</p> <p>For US Forest properties, boundaries are derived from the ‘Federal Land Ownership’ layer produced by the NC Center for Geographic Information and Analysis.</p> <p>North Carolina State Forest boundaries are derived from the ‘State Owned Lands’ layer produced by the NC Center for Geographic Information and Analysis.</p>
<p><b>Most Suitable Agronomic Soils</b></p> <p><i>Natural Resources Conservation Service</i></p>	<p>7</p>	<p>Prime agronomic soils are derived from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Soils Data. Soil data is collected via surveys that are conducted at the County level at varying times. These surveys identify the location and extent of the soils that are best suited to food, feed, fiber, forage, and oilseed crops. NRCS policy and procedures on prime and unique farmlands are published in the "Federal Register," Vol. 43, No. 21, January 31, 1978.</p> <p>Prime Agronomic Soils used for the Agricultural Lands Assessment within the Farmland classification, and incorporate soils data from the following Farmland categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Areas are Prime Farmland</li> <li>• Farmland of Local Importance</li> <li>• Farmland of Statewide Importance</li> <li>• Prime Farmland if Drained</li> <li>• Prime Farmland if Irrigated and Either Protected from Flooding or Not Frequently Flooded During the Growing Season</li> </ul>
<p><b>Cropland</b></p> <p>(derived from NLCD, 2001)</p>	<p>8</p>	<p>Cropland represents 3 NLCD classifications:</p> <p><u>71. Grassland/Herbaceous</u> - Areas dominated by grammanoid or herbaceous vegetation, generally greater than 80% of total vegetation. These areas are not subject to intensive management such as tilling, but can be utilized for grazing.</p> <p><u>81. Pasture/Hay</u> - Areas of grasses, legumes, or grass-legume mixtures planted for livestock grazing or the production of seed or hay crops, typically on a perennial cycle. Pasture/hay vegetation accounts for greater than 20 percent of total vegetation.</p>

<p><b>Cropland</b> (continued)</p> <p>(derived from NLCD, 2001)</p>	<p>8</p>	<p><u>82. Cultivated Crops</u> - Areas used for the production of annual crops, such as corn, soybeans, vegetables, tobacco, and cotton, and also perennial woody crops such as orchards and vineyards. Crop vegetation accounts for greater than 20 percent of total vegetation. This class also includes all land being actively tilled.</p>
<p><b>Lands in the Present Use Value Program (PUV)</b></p> <p><i>Buncombe, Henderson, Madison and Transylvania County Tax offices</i></p>	<p>9</p>	<p>The Present Use Value Program (PUV) is a program designed to give relief to specific landowners for property that is being used for the production of agricultural, horticultural or forestry products. “Present Use Value” is the value of the land in its current use as agricultural land, horticultural land, or forestland. The land meeting the eligibility requirements is taxed on the present-use value instead of market value of the land. To qualify certain ownership, acreage, income, and sound management requirements must be met.</p> <p>Property Activities are separated into three types of Agriculture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Horticulture requires at least 5 acres,</li> <li>• Farming requires at 10 acres and</li> <li>• Forestry requires at least 20 acres.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Forest Lands with Prime Agronomic Soils</b></p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p><b>Cropland with Prime Agronomic Soils</b></p>	<p>10</p>	<p>The top ranking for the Agricultural Lands Assessment was developed by combining 2 separate data layers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Forest lands that also have prime agronomic soils</li> <li>2. Cropland that also has prime agronomic soils</li> </ol> <p>More detailed descriptions for each data layer are listed in the table above):</p>