

Texas Land Trends

Changes in Texas Working Lands

Texas has more than 141 million acres of private *working lands*, providing economic benefits to rural communities, vital ecosystem services for urban centers (e.g., water filtration), and habitat for wildlife species. While Texas continues to lead the nation in working land acreage, these lands are undergoing a fundamental change—one that has implications for rural economies, national security, food security, and conservation of water and other natural resources.

Published every five years following the release of the USDA Census of Agriculture data (2017 data recently released), the ***Texas Land Trends*** report is developed to provide public and private decision-makers with information needed to plan for the conservation of Texas' working lands. The 2019 Texas Land Trends report describes key findings of recent changes in topics such as land use, ownership size and property values of private working lands from 1997 to 2017. A summary of the findings are outlined below.



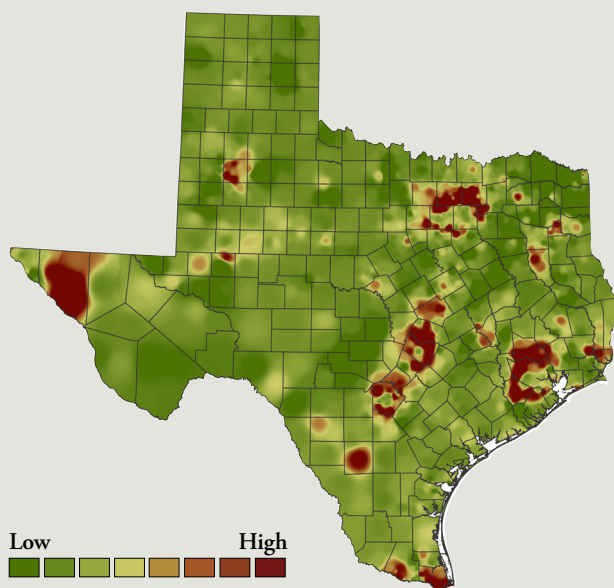
WORKING LANDS:
Privately owned farms,
ranches and forests that
account for 82 percent
of the state's land base.



Changing Land Use

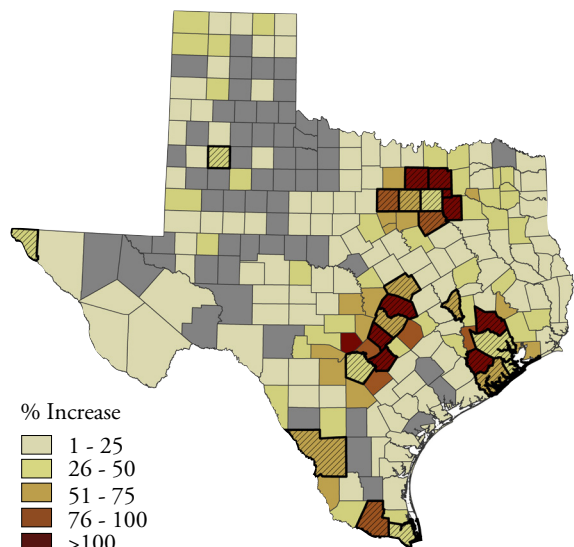
From 1997 to 2017, there was a net loss of approximately 2.2 million acres of working lands, converted to non-agricultural uses, with a substantial decline of over 1.1 million acres converted in the last five year period.

- Wildlife management acres have significantly increased in recent years, now totaling over 5.3 million acres.
- Grazing lands, which account for the majority of working lands in the state, have been steadily decreasing since 1997, losing over 4.5 million acres to other land uses.



Low High

Rate of working land conversion, 1997–2017.



% Increase

1 - 25
26 - 50
51 - 75
76 - 100
>100
Decrease

Top 25 highest total population growth county

Percent increase in population by county, 1997-2012.



Growing Population

According to 2017 U.S. Census Bureau data, Texas has seven of the 15 most rapidly growing cities in the nation.

- Since 1997, Texas' population increased 48 percent, accounting for over 28 million residents.
- Eighty-six percent of population increases occurred within the 25 highest total population growth counties.



Increasing Land Value

The largest increases in land values were observed in areas surrounding major metropolitan growth areas.

- In 2017, the average appraised market value of Texas working lands was \$1,951 per acre, an average 24 percent increase since 2012, and 291 percent increase over the 20-year period.

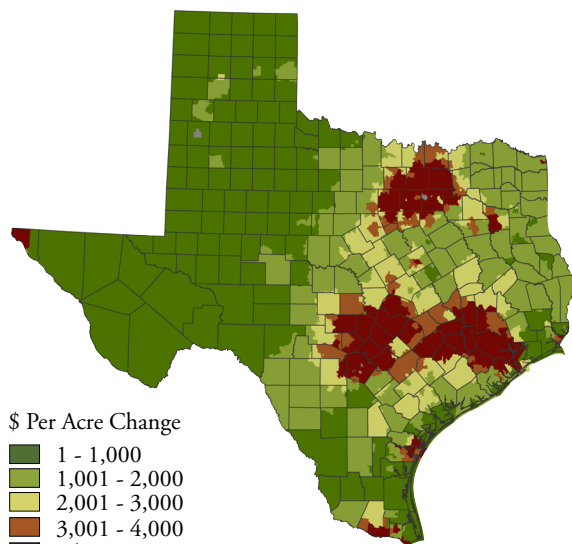


Decreasing Ownership Size

From 1997 to 2017, Texas gained about 1,000 new working farms and ranches annually, totaling over 248,000 ownerships to date.

- Average ownership size decreased from 581 acres in 1997 to 509 acres in 2017.
- Small ownerships (tracts <500 acres in size) represent 85 percent of all ownerships but only account for 16 percent of all working lands.

FULL REPORT RELEASE IN SUMMER 2019



\$ Per Acre Change

1 - 1,000
1,001 - 2,000
2,001 - 3,000
3,001 - 4,000
>4,000
Decrease

Change in market value (\$/acre) by independent school district, 1997-2017.

About Texas Land Trends

Developed by the Texas A&M Natural Resources Institute (NRI), the Texas Land Trends project includes a series of reports, an interactive website and database detailing trends in working lands within the state. Primary data sources used include the Texas State Comptroller of Public Accounts, which provided a 1997 to 2017 annual compilation of land use and land value data from independent school districts, and the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service. Population data was derived from the U.S. Census Bureau.



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