



# National Resources Inventory

## A summary of natural resource trends in Virginia between 1982 and 1997

Source Data: USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Virginia 1997 NRI (Revised 12/2000)

### About the NRI

The National Resources Inventory (NRI) is a statistically based survey that has been designed and implemented using scientific principles to assess the conditions and trends of soil, water and related resources on nonfederal lands in the United States.

The NRI also provides a record of trends in the Nation's resources over time. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) conducts these inventories every five years.

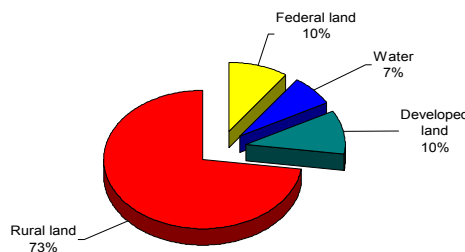
The inventory highlighted in this summary sampled 800,000 nonfederal sites across the nation to compile the database. Data was collected on nearly 24,000 sites in Virginia.

### NRI Summary

This summary includes graphic highlights and explanations of the NRI data. For more information or data, call NRCS in Richmond, Virginia at (804) 287-1646 or visit the NRCS Virginia website at [www.va.nrcs.usda.gov/Soils/nri.htm](http://www.va.nrcs.usda.gov/Soils/nri.htm)

- 1997 cropland acreage totaled more than 2.9 million acres. Cropland decreased by 480,000 acres between 1982 and 1997. Much of this decrease is attributed to development.
- Nearly 1.45 million cropland acres are considered "prime farmland." Prime farmland has the best combination of physical and chemical properties for producing food, feed, forage, fiber and oilseed crops and is also available for these uses.
- In 1997, nonfederal land totaled 22,511,800 acres. Twelve percent or 2,625,800 of these acres were considered developed.
- Federal land totaled 2,646,400 acres. This represents almost ten percent of the land area in the Commonwealth.
- Today, unparalleled growth and prosperity are leading to rapid expansion of small and mid-sized cities onto agricultural land. Since 1982, developed land has increased by 784,500 acres.

### 1997 Major Surface Areas in Virginia



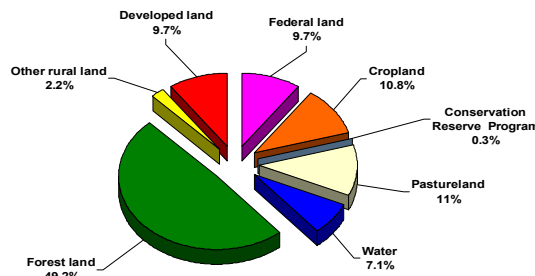
Virginia has a significant amount of nonfederally owned rural land.

Thus, private landowners and local, state, and tribal governments have the responsibility for conservation on more than 70 percent of the acreage in the state.

Nonfederal land is predominantly rural and supports a variety of land-based industries. Proper management of these lands is critical to the overall health of the Commonwealth's natural resources.

Land use is dynamic--changes in use occur between each inventory period.

### 1997 Land Use of Virginia's Nonfederal Lands



United States Department of Agriculture



Richmond Virginia

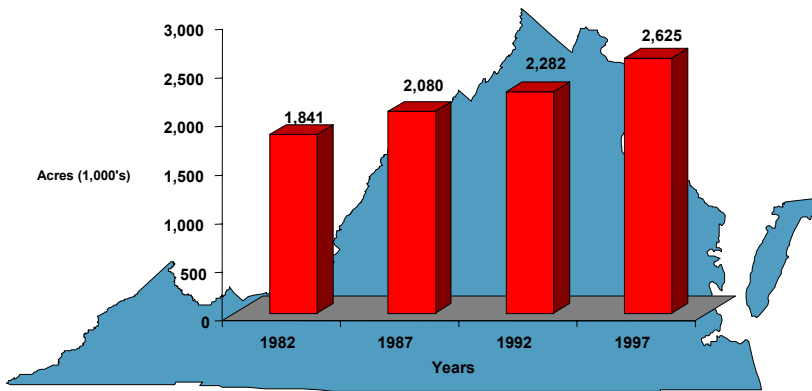
February 2001

Rev. September 2001

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## Developed Land Trends 1982-1997

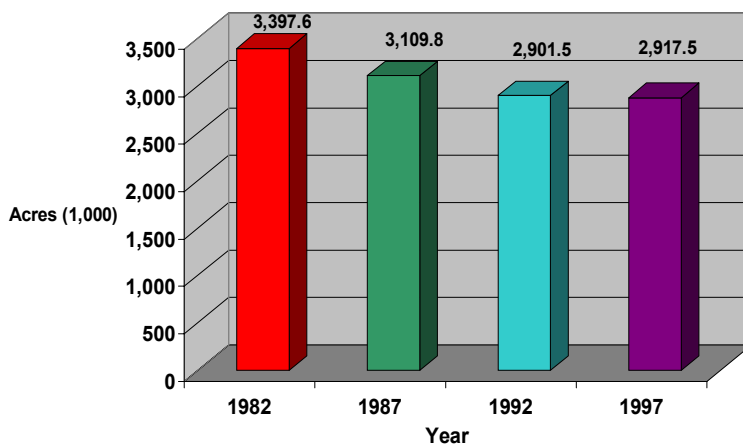


- The inventory reflects a continued conversion of Virginia's rural land to development.

- In 1997 developed land totaled approximately ten percent of the total surface area in Virginia.

- The most significant losses during the 15 year trend are conversions from forest land, followed by cropland and pastureland.

## Cropland Trends in Virginia 1982-1997

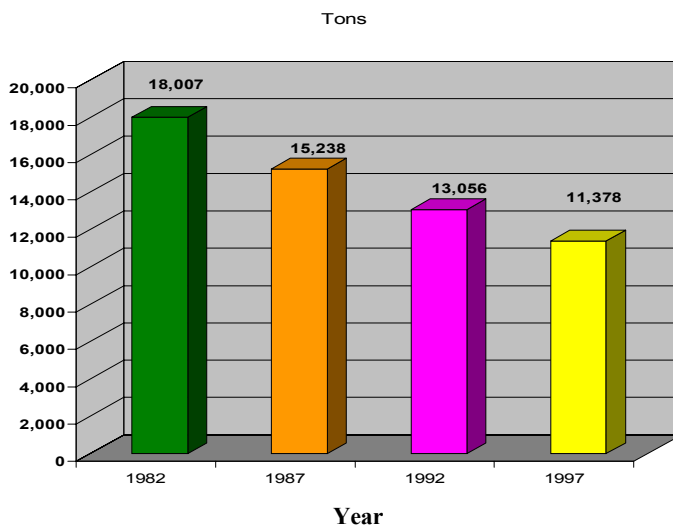


- Cropland in Virginia has declined by more than 480,000 acres from 1982 levels.

- With the decrease in total cropland, adequate protection of this resource becomes vital in maintaining sustainable agriculture.

- Almost 36 percent of the total acres converted from cropland was permanently lost to urban development.

## Tons of Soil Erosion on Cropland has dropped in Virginia 1982-1997



- Controlling erosion not only sustains the long-term productivity of the land, but also affects the amount of soil, pesticides, fertilizer, and other substances that move into the Nation's waters.

- Erosion rates on cropland have been reduced from 5.3 to 3.9 tons/acre/year, but excessive erosion continues to be a serious concern in many parts of the state.