



Natural Resources Conservation Service

United States Department of Agriculture

316 W Boone Ave Suite 450 Spokane, WA 99201 (509) 323-2900

January 2001

# National Resources Inventory

*Resources of Washington Series*

## LAND USE STATISTICS OF WASHINGTON

1982 to 1997 (REVISED DECEMBER 2000)

Washington is the 18th largest state in the US. The total land and water surface area of Washington State according to the National Resources Inventory (NRI) is 44,035,300 acres. Washington is a diverse state with large urban centers as well as extensive areas of both irrigated and dry cropland and heavily forested mountains. Washington's land and surface water are owned and managed by private individuals, corporations, municipalities, county, state and federal governments, and Indian Tribes. There are also individual trust lands managed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

The largest single landowner in Washington is the Federal government, which has control of approximately 12 million acres. This represents about 27% of the state. While this is a large percentage, it is less than the other Western states. The US Forest Service manages most of the federal lands. Other significant federal landholders are the US Park Service, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the US Department of Energy.

The NRI has conducted statewide inventories every five years to record land use in Washington. These periodic inventories provide the data for a powerful trending database that can be used to monitor both changes in land use and the health of our non-federal land and water

resources. This FACT Sheet is designed to provide estimates of the use and changes of non-federal land in Washington.

The attached charts display the following land uses: Cropland, Conservation Reserve Land, Pastureland, Rangeland, Forestland, Other Rural Land, Urban and Rural Transportation Land, Streams and Other Surface Water, and Federal Land Ownership.

Acres included in the Conservation Reserve Land category is land that was previously cropped and has been temporarily removed from commodity crop production. These acres are not considered cropland for NRI purposes. Acres in this category were planted to a conservation cover such as grass, trees, or shrubs for environmental protection. Other Rural Lands are those used for grain storage, commercial feedlots, nurseries, farmsteads, and other uses associated with the rural landscape.

The NRI collected land use data in 1982, 1987, 1992, and 1997. Changes in this 15 year period are represented in this FACT Sheet.

Two significant long-term trends are the large gains in urban lands primarily at the expense of cropland and the increasing rate of conversion of forest land to urban lands.

Washington's rural land base continues to shrink as farm fields and forests are converted to urban uses such as housing developments, shopping malls, and roads to support this development.

These considerable losses of cropland do not impact food production in the near term, but may adversely affect Washington's long term agricultural export potential.

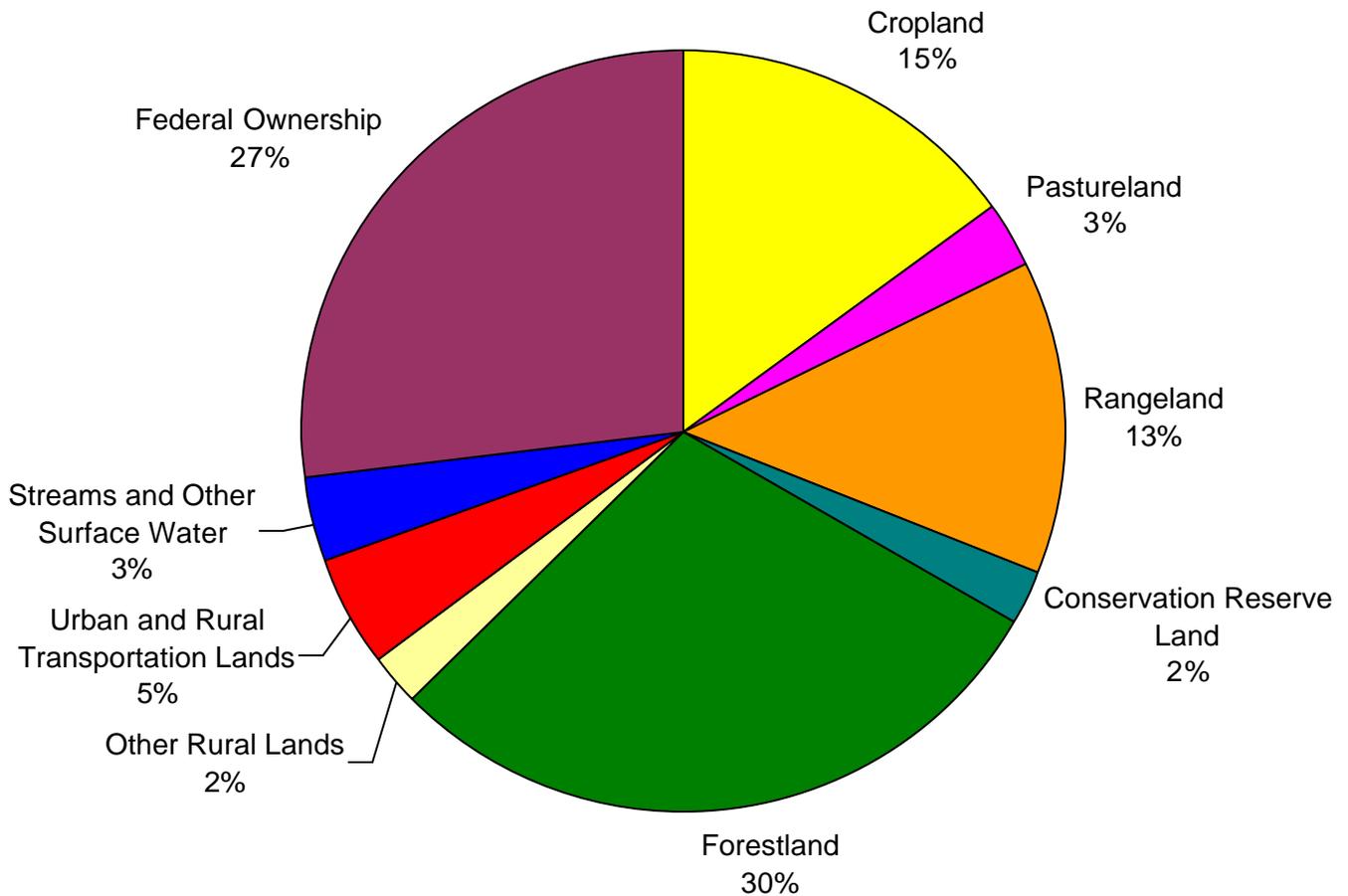
With less and less cropland available for development the conversion process has shifted to

forestlands. In fact, more forestland acres have been converted in the last 5 year period than all other rural resource lands combined.

Statewide, rural resource land conversions to urban uses is quite evident. In 23 of the 39 Washington counties urban growth has increased by 40% or more in the past 15 years.

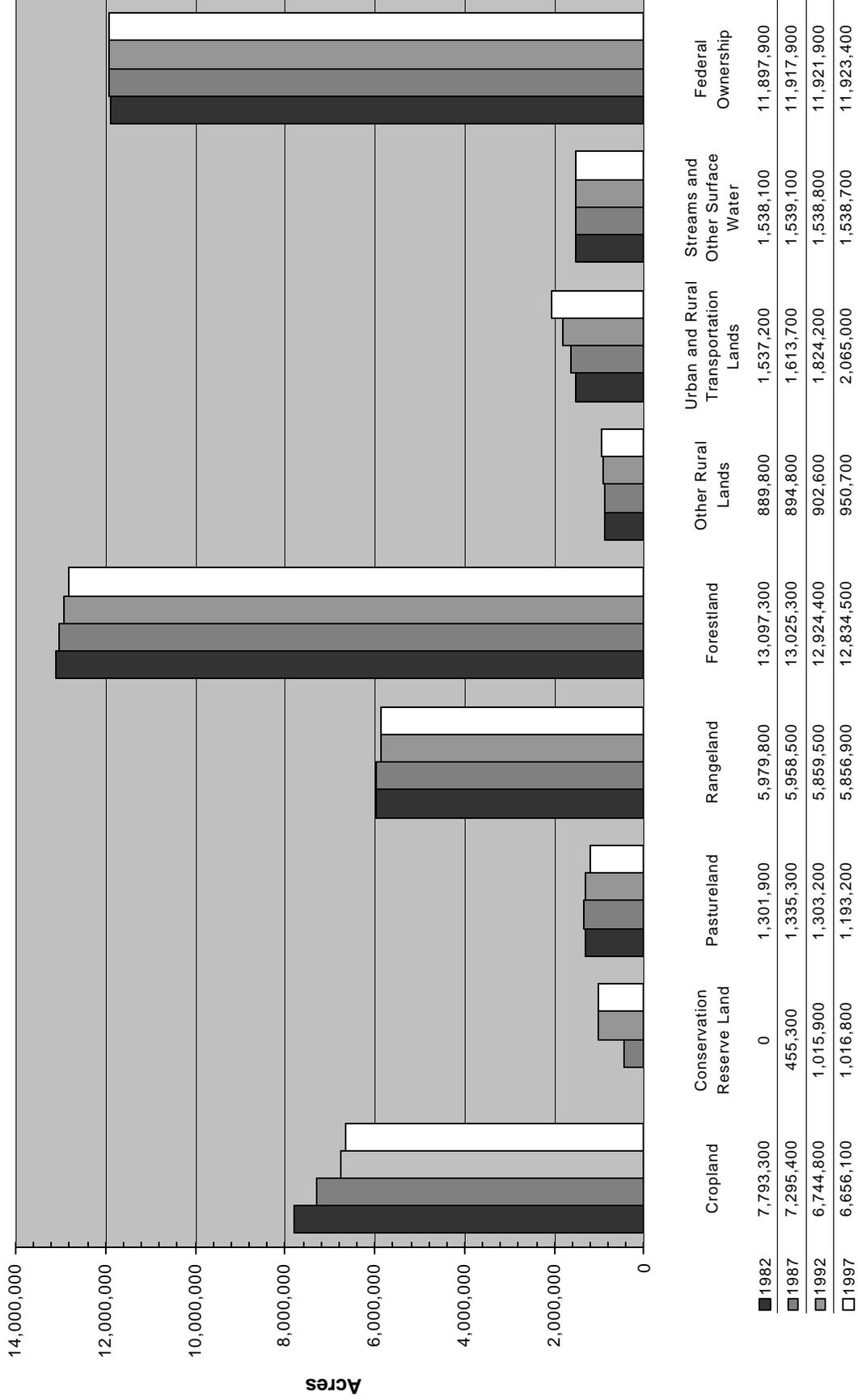
It is clear that the expanding urban population will continue to pressure all resource lands in Washington State.

### 1997 Land Use Statistics for Washington State



# Estimated Land Use Statistics in Washington State

revised December 2000



**Land Use Categories**