

Scott Township

Wayne County Agricultural Land Use/Land Cover Study

A study examining the change of agricultural land use and land cover
in Wayne County from 1959 to 2002

This is report M-23, Scott Township; in a series of reports examining land use and land cover change in Wayne County's 28 municipalities, particularly agricultural land between 1959 and 2002. For a detail of the study procedures, see the Project Narrative.

Overview



Scott Township is located in the far northwest part of Wayne County and has its northern border adjacent to New York State. It is the fifth largest municipality in Wayne County with a total of 28,453 acres or roughly 44.5 square miles, which accounts for 5.9% of the County's total land area. As can be seen in

Table 1 {below} and Charts 1 and 2 {right}, the majority of the Township was covered by forest in both 1959 and 2002. Nearly 6,500 acres in Scott Township are owned by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, all of which is under the management of the Pennsylvania Game Commission. As one might expect, the areas of cropland, pasture/brush and farmsteads all decreased by a certain extent over the forty-plus year study period. Conversely, the amount of residential, forest, and water land use/land cover increased during this time period.

The charts below show the percent values for the land use/land cover categories in Scott Township for 1959 and 2002. The residential category includes farmsteads in each chart's total throughout this report, and the category "other" includes land use/land cover categories that were too small to illustrate individually.

Chart 1
Scott Township 1959 Land Use/Cover

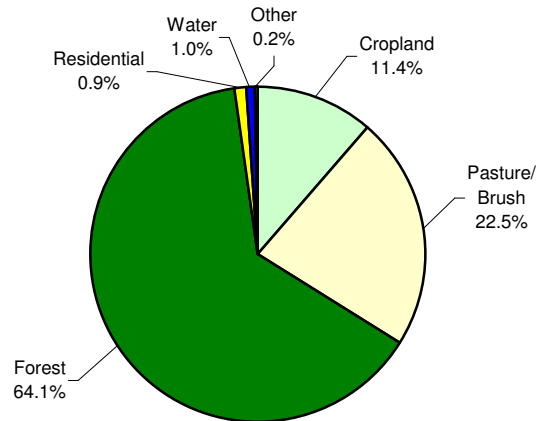


Chart 2
Scott Township 2002 Land Use/Cover

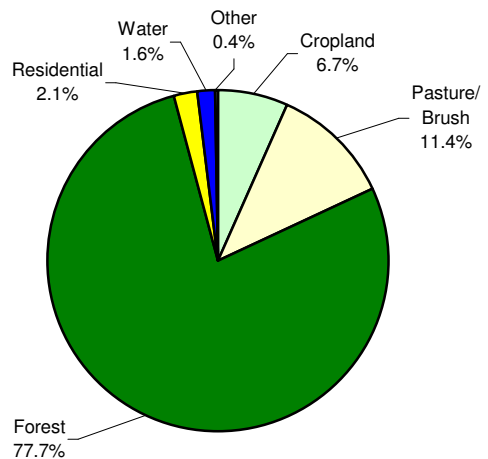


Table 1 - Scott Township Land Use/Land Cover

Land Use/Land Cover	Scott 1959 Acres	Category Percent of Total	Scott 2002 Acres	Category Percent of Total
Residential	149.47	0.5%	535.24	1.9%
Commercial	40.45	0.1%	69.94	0.2%
Industrial	-	0%	0.72	0.0%
Transportation	-	0%	-	0%
Utilities	-	0%	-	0%
Religious	0.47	0.0%	1.37	0.0%
Government/Institution	1.61	0.0%	3.14	0.0%
Recreational	1.36	0.0%	1.36	0.0%
Cropland	3,230.20	11.4%	1,917.90	6.7%
Farmstead	111.90	0.4%	63.42	0.2%
Pasture/Brush	6,394.16	22.5%	3,253.66	11.4%
Forest	18,235.25	64.1%	22,115.67	77.7%
Water	287.85	1.0%	468.92	1.6%
Mining/Extraction	0.62	0.0%	22.33	0.1%
Total	28,453.34	100.0%	28,453.67	100.0%

Notice the decrease in both cropland and pasture/brush over this time period and the more obvious increase in both forest and residential land use/land cover. Water cover also increased during the forty-three year study period.

Cropland

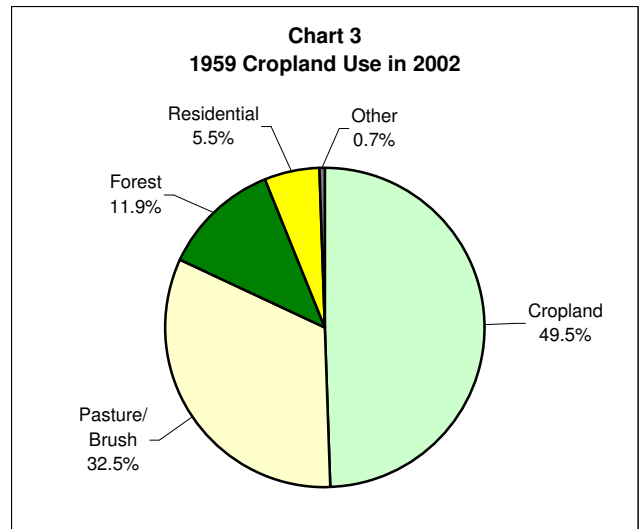
Cropland is the third largest land use in Scott Township for the years 1959 and 2002. In 1959, the amount of cropland covered 11.4% of the Township's land area or approximately 3,230 acres. By 2002, the area of cropland had decreased by 1,300 plus acres and covered 4.7% less of Scott Township. Table 2 {below} and Chart 3 {right} illustrates what became of the 1959 cropland in Scott Township.

Table 2 - 1959 Cropland Use in 2002

Land Use/Land Cover	1959 Cropland Classification in 2002	
	Acres	Percent
Residential	161.99	5.0%
Commercial	11.06	0.3%
Industrial	-	0%
Transportation	-	0%
Utilities	-	0%
Religious	-	0%
Government/Institution	-	0%
Recreational	-	0%
Cropland	1,597.99	49.5%
Farmstead	14.43	0.5%
Pasture/Brush	1,048.23	32.5%
Forest	385.93	11.9%
Water	10.57	0.3%
Mining/Extraction	-	0%
Total	3,230.20	100.0%

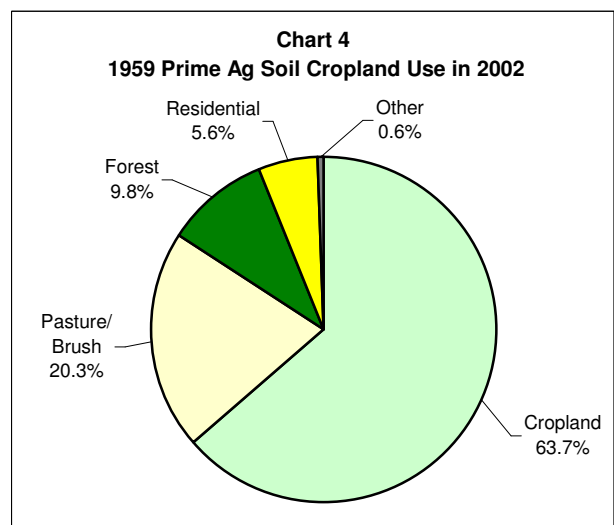
Of the 3,200 plus acres of 1959 cropland, nearly half, or 1,598 acres, was still being used for cropland production in 2002. Nearly one-third (32.5%) converted to pasture/brush, covering in excess of 1,000 acres. Another 11.9% or nearly 400 acres grew into forest by 2002. The conversion to residential land use, which includes the farmstead category, accounted for approximately 176 acres equaling 5.5% of the prior cropland from 1959.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) classifies soil as prime agricultural soil, farmland of statewide importance or non-prime soil. Details of the three classifications can be found in the County summary. The following sections will examine soils from a prime verses non-prime perspective.



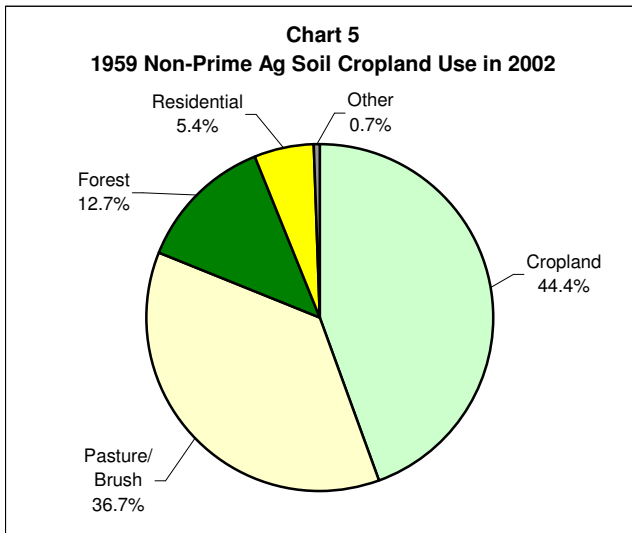
Prime Agricultural Soil

In 1959, approximately 26% or nearly 843 acres of the cropland in Scott Township was located on prime agricultural soil. Of that prime agricultural soil cropland, nearly 64% or roughly 537 acres of cropland was still cropland at the end of the study period in 2002. Approximately 30% of the cropland converted to natural types of land cover, namely forest (9.8%) and pasture/brush (20.3%). Another 50 acres combined, equal to 6% of the 1959 prime agricultural soil cropland, were converted to commercial and residential land uses. Residential use accounted for roughly 45 acres of that total and commercial land use accounted for nearly 5 acres, which is represented under the "other" category. Chart 4 {below} graphically illustrates what became of the 1959 cropland located on prime agricultural soil.



Non-Prime Agricultural Soil

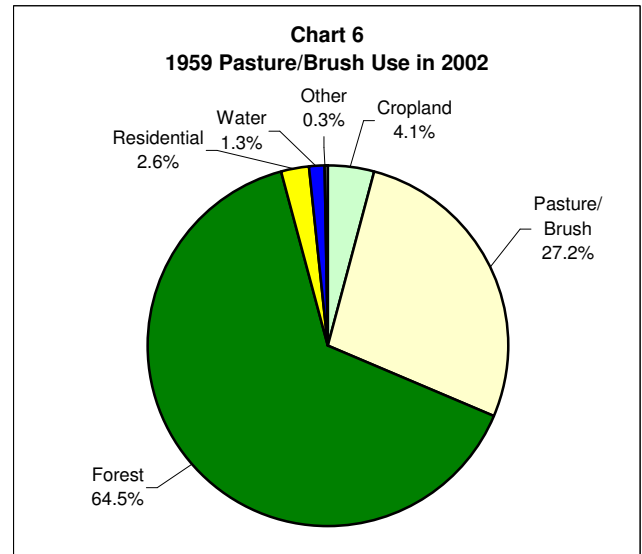
In 1959, roughly 74% or approximately 2,387 acres of the cropland in Scott Township were located on non-prime agricultural soil. As in the previous section, we will examine what became of the 1959 non-prime agricultural soil cropland. In comparison to the prime agricultural soil cropland, a smaller percentage of the non-prime agricultural soil cropland was still being used as cropland in 2002. A total of 1,061 acres equaling 44.4% of the non-prime agricultural cropland soil were still being used as cropland in 2002 {see Chart 5 below}. Nearly 50% reverted back to natural types of land cover, namely forest (12.7%) and pasture/brush (36.7%). Combined, these three land covers accounted for nearly 94% of the 1959 non-prime agricultural cropland soil. Another 129 acres, equal to 5.4%, was converted into residential use, which includes farmsteads.



Pasture/Brush

In 1959, pasture/brush accounted for 22.5% or nearly 6,400 acres of the total land area {See Table 1}. By 2002, this land cover dropped nearly in half to approximately 3,254 acres or 11.4% of the Township. Of the 1959 pasture/brush, only 27.2% remained as that land use/cover by 2002. The majority of 1959 pasture/brush grew naturally into forest by 2002. Over 4,100 acres equal to 64.5%, was forest by the end of the study period. Of the less than 10% remaining, approximately 265 acres

were converted into cropland, equal to 4.1%, and nearly 165 acres, equal to 2.6%, became utilized for residential purposes, which includes the farmstead category. Water accounted for an additional 82 acres of prior 1959 pasture/brush land, which equaled 1.3%. The "other" category includes commercial, industrial and mining/extraction {see Chart 6 below}.



Forest

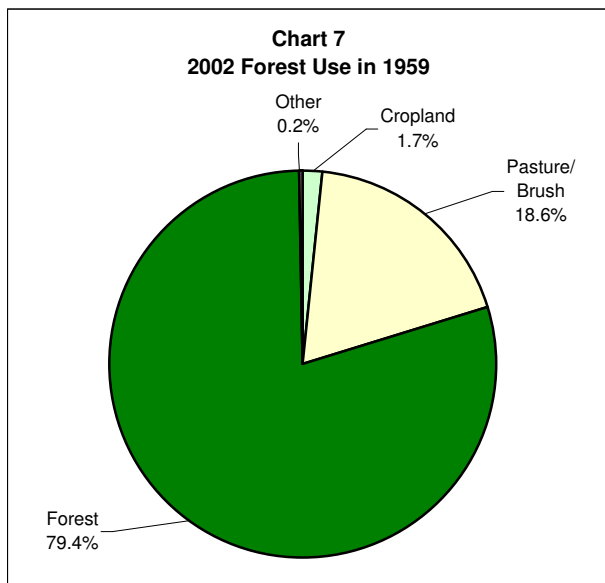
As stated in the "overview", the majority of Scott Township was covered by forest in both 1959 and 2002. In 1959, there were approximately 18,235 acres of forest, which accounted for approximately 64% of the total land area {see Table 1}. By 2002, the amount of forest had increased by roughly 3,880 acres to approximately 22,116 acres total. Nearly 6,500 acres is under the ownership of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and managed by the Pennsylvania Game Commission, which accounts for almost 30% of the forest acreage total in 2002. The increase in forest cover is mostly attributed to the maturation of the pasture/brush. On a percentage basis, almost two-thirds of the 1959 pasture/brush in Scott Township converted to forest by 2002 {see Chart 6}. Additionally, nearly all of the 1959 forest in the Township remained as forest. Of the 18,235 acres of 1959 forest, a total of 96.3% or 17,569 acres remained as forest in 2002, which ranks second only to Buckingham Township in the percentage of forest retention over the study period. Nearly 100 acres were

converted to residential use by 2002, but this only accounted for 0.5% of the 1959 forest acreage. Almost 385 acres reverted back to pasture/brush accounting for 2.1%. The remaining 1% was divided between water coverage, mining/extraction and commercial land use.

Since the majority of Scott Township is still forested land cover with a total of 22,116 acres, Table 3 and Chart 7 {below} show how this acreage existed back in 1959.

Table 3 - 2002 Forest Use in 1959

Land Use/Land Cover	2002 Forest Classification in 1959	
	Acres	Percent
Residential	25.50	0.1%
Commercial	5.91	0.0%
Industrial	-	0%
Transportation	-	0%
Utilities	-	0%
Religious	-	0%
Government/Institution	-	0%
Recreational	-	0%
Cropland	385.93	1.7%
Farmstead	4.66	0.0%
Pasture/Brush	4,121.32	18.6%
Forest	17,569.04	79.4%
Water	3.53	0.0%
Mining/Extraction	0.29	0.0%
Total	22,116.18	100.0%



Nearly 80% of the 2002 forest was already forested back in 1959, but 386 acres was previously cropland in 1959.

A total of 98% of the 2002 forest in Scott Township was natural land cover back in 1959, namely forest with nearly 17,570 acres and pasture/brush with over 4,100 acres. Less than 400 acres equaling only 1.7% of the Township's 2002 forest was previously cropland in 1959.

Protected Agricultural Land

Scott Township had approximately 5,470 acres of land that were designated in the Agricultural Security Area Program by 2002, which is equivalent to almost one-fifth of Scott Township's total land area. Also, in 1992, a total of 212 acres had been placed within the Agricultural Conservation Easement Purchase Program. A total of 5,172 acres equaling 23.6% of the taxable acreage within Scott Township had been enrolled under the Act 319 (Clean & Green) Program in order to receive a preferential tax assessment. This tax designation reduces the assessed value of the Township by 4,756,700 or 2.6%.

Summary

The most notable change in the Township during the study period was the increase in forest, which covers 13.6% more of Scott Township's land area. Over three-quarters of the Township is now forested. Pasture/brush and cropland covered 11.1% and 4.7% less of the Township, respectively. Residential land use increased by 385-plus acres or 1.4% of the total land area. Water also increased an additional 181 acres over the study period and now accounts for a total of 469 acres or 1.6% of Scott Township's total land area.

Wayne County Agricultural Land Use/Cover

This project was funded in part by the Wayne County Commissioners and by a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development. This study examines the change in agricultural land use/cover over 43 years (1959-2002). The base data is 1959 USDA aerial photos which were registered to the state plane coordinate system by Wilkes University's Center for Geographic Information Sciences. This enabled comparison with the 1997 aerial photos taken by Wayne County. To aid in the analysis of the data, local municipal volunteers worked with planning department staff members in reviewing the aerial photos and resulting land use maps. A complete list of those community volunteers who aided in the completion of this report can be found in the report summary.

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