

Texas 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-27, Texas 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

Texas Township is centrally located in Wayne County and nearly surrounds the Borough of Honesdale. Texas Township is the twenty-first largest municipality in Wayne County with a total of 9,214 acres or 14.4 square miles, which accounts for

approximately 1.9% of the total County land area. Following the trend of many other townships in the County, forestland was the number one land use/cover for 1959 and 2002. In both years, forestland covered more than half of the Township. Pasture/brush was the second highest land use/land cover in 1959 and 2002. Cropland was the third highest land use/land cover at the beginning and end of the study period as shown in Table 1 {below} and Charts 1 and 2 {right}.

The charts below show the percent values for the land use/land cover categories in Texas 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.

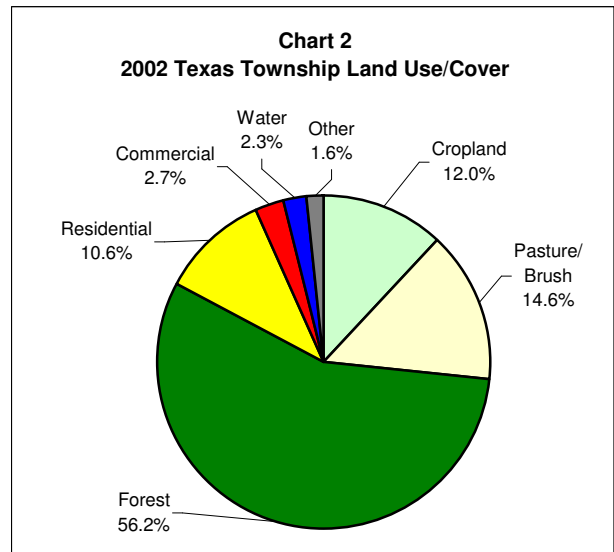
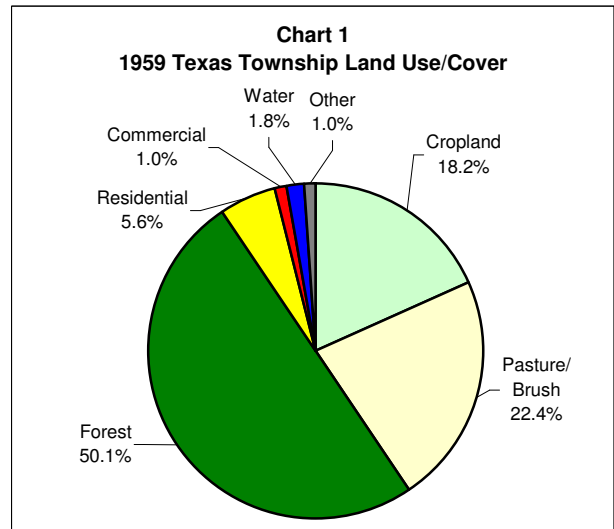


Table 1 - Texas Township Land Use/Land Cover

Land Use/Land Cover	Texas 1959 Acres	Category Percent of Total	Texas 2002 Acres	Category Percent of Total
Residential	390.66	4.2%	938.20	10.2%
Commercial	91.02	1.0%	251.05	2.7%
Industrial	7.19	0.1%	21.55	0.2%
Transportation	62.35	0.7%	30.12	0.3%
Utilities	-	0%	5.94	0.1%
Religious	9.41	0.1%	9.96	0.1%
Government/Institution	12.90	0.1%	77.37	0.8%
Recreational	2.10	0.0%	6.45	0.1%
Cropland	1,677.71	18.2%	1,102.18	12.0%
Farmstead	121.27	1.3%	37.87	0.4%
Pasture/Brush	2,062.26	22.4%	1,347.21	14.6%
Forest	4,613.26	50.1%	5,176.85	56.2%
Water	163.76	1.8%	209.12	2.3%
Mining/Extraction	-	0%	-	0%
Total	9,213.89	100.0%	9,213.87	100.0%

The above table shows acreage and percent values for the land use/land cover categories in Texas Township for 1959 and 2002.

Notice the decrease of both cropland and pasture/brush over the 43-year study period and the increase of both forest cover and residential land. Commercial land use more than doubled during this time period, and now accounts for 2.7% of the Township's total land area.

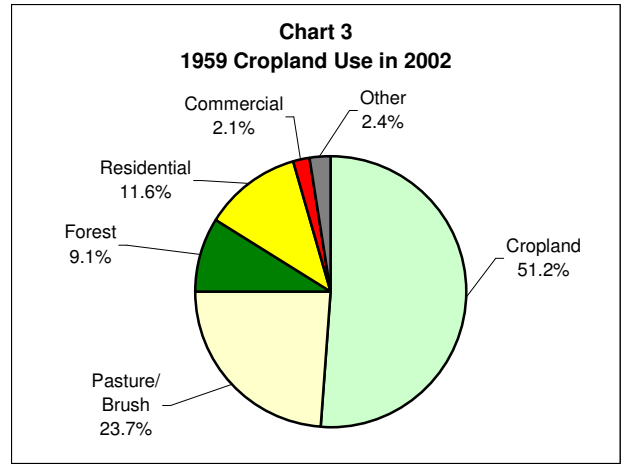
Cropland

Cropland was the third most prevalent land use/cover for the years 1959 and 2002. In 1959, cropland accounted for 1,677 acres, or nearly one-fifth (18.2%) of the entire Township. However, by 2002 there was a decrease in cropland acreage. In 2002, there were approximately 575 less acres of cropland, which covered 12% of the total Township land area. Nearly 153 acres or 9.1% of the 1959 cropland total converted to forest. Over the course of the 43-year study period, more than half (51.2%) of the cropland that existed in 1959 was still cropland in 2002, as shown in Table 2 {below} and Chart 3 {right}. Some cropland was changed to pasture/brush in the amount of 397 acres, which is 23.7% of the 1959 cropland total. Cropland that was converted to residential use equaled 195 acres, or 11.6%. Other land use/cover classifications that increased in area from land that was 1959 cropland included commercial, which gained 34 acres or 2.1%, and government/institution, which gained 38 acres, and has been shown within the "other" category.

Table 2 – 1959 Cropland Use In 2002

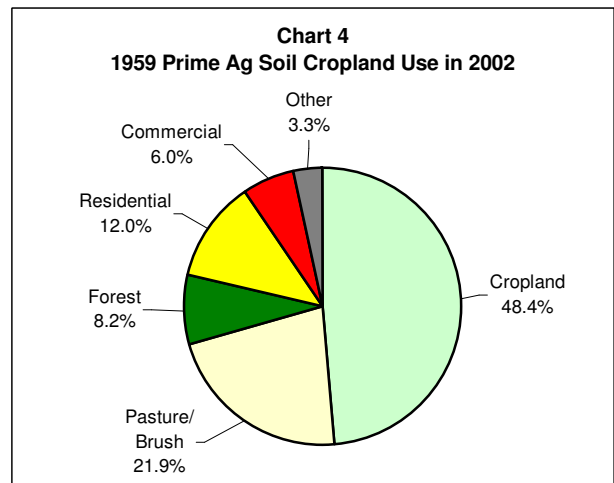
Land Use/Land Cover	1959 Cropland Classification in 2002	
	Acres	Percent
Residential	189.39	11.3%
Commercial	34.43	2.1%
Industrial	-	0%
Transportation	0.75	0.0%
Utilities	-	0%
Religious	-	0%
Government/Institution	37.60	2.2%
Recreational	-	0%
Cropland	858.00	51.2%
Farmstead	5.29	0.3%
Pasture/Brush	397.39	23.7%
Forest	152.67	9.1%
Water	1.32	0.1%
Mining/Extraction	-	0%
Total	1,676.84	100.0%

The table above shows how the area of 1959 cropland existed in 2002. Notice how most of the cropland from 1959 was still in some form of natural vegetation in 2002. Cumulatively, the amount of cropland, pasture/brush and forest equaled 84% of the 1959 cropland acreage total.



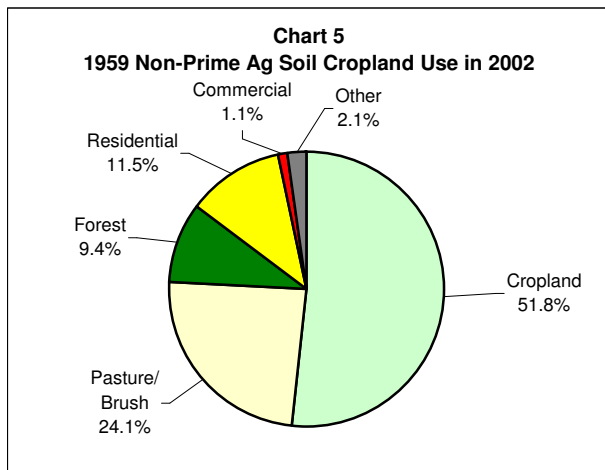
Prime Agricultural Soil

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) classifies soil as either prime agricultural soil, farmland of statewide importance, or non-prime soil. The following sections analyze soil from a prime versus non-prime perspective. In 1959, Texas Township had a total of 19% or 318 acres of cropland located on prime agricultural soil. Chart 4 {below} shows that 48.4% of the cropland on prime soil was retained (as cropland) 43-years later. This 48.4% accounted for nearly 154 acres. Approximately 70 acres, equal to nearly 22%, naturally converted to pasture/brush. Cropland on prime agricultural soil that was converted to residential land use amounted to 12.0% overall or 38 acres. Forestland that matured on prime agricultural soil cropland amounted to 26 acres, which was equal to 8.2%. A total of 19 acres was converted for commercial purposes, which represented 6.0% of the prime agricultural soil cropland.



Non-Prime Agricultural Soil

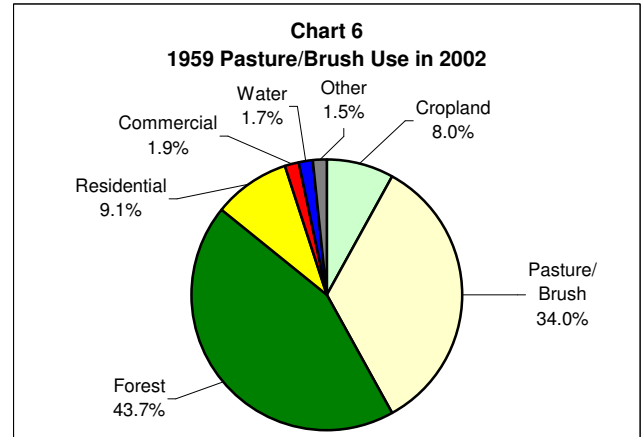
In 1959, a total of 81% equal to 1,360 acres of the 1959 cropland was located on non-prime agricultural soil. By 2002, more than half of those acres were still being used as cropland. Chart 5 {below} shows that a total of 704 acres equal to 51.8% were still used as cropland at the end of the study period. Of the remaining 48.2% of the acres, 33.5% remained as open space either as pasture/brush or forest. A total of 328 acres or 24.1% changed to pasture/brush and approximately 127 acres, equal to 9.4%, grew naturally into forest. The amount of cropland that was converted to residential land use totaled 156 acres, which was 11.5% of the 1959 cropland on non-prime agricultural soil.



Pasture/Brush

Pasture/brush was the second highest land cover classification in both 1959 and 2002 {see Table 1}. Pasture/brush had a total of 2,062 acres in 1959, which accounted for 22.4% of the total land cover of Texas Township. By 2002, this acreage had been reduced by 715 acres to 1,347 acres, or 14.6% of the total area. Over 900 acres or 43.7% of the 1959 pasture/brush grew naturally into forestland. Over one-third of the 1959 pasture/brush remained as such by 2002, which amounted to roughly 701 acres. Some former pasture/brush was changed into cropland by 2002 in the amount of 165 acres, which was equal to 8.0%. A total of 188 acres or 9.1% was converted to residential land and nearly 40 acres or 1.9% became utilized for commercial

purposes. Almost 35 acres or 1.7% became water cover as shown in Chart 6 {below}.



Forest

As was stated in the “overview”, forestland covered more than half of Texas Township in both 1959 and 2002. As shown in Table 3 {below}, forestland retained between 1959 and 2002 equaled 4,065 acres, or 88.1% overall. Pasture/brush gained some acreage from forestland in the amount of 197 acres, which was 4.3% of the total 1959 forestland. Also, 183 acres of forestland were being used for residential purposes by 2002, which represents 4.0% of the overall total. Forestland that changed to cropland was equal to 65 acres or 1.4% overall.

Table 3 - 1959 Forestland Use in 2002

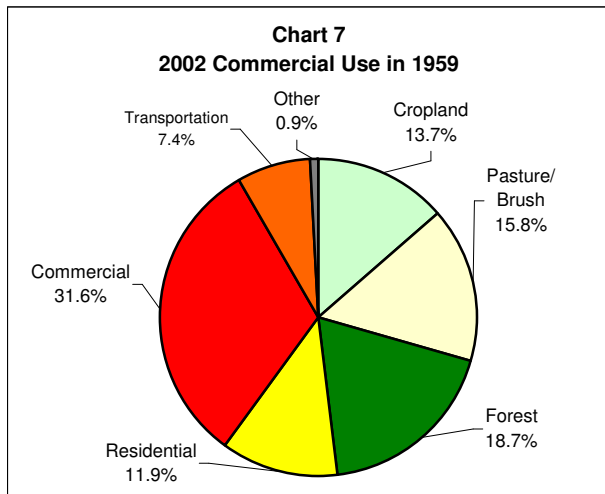
Land Use/Land Cover	1959 Forestland Classification in 2002	
	Acres	Percent
Residential	183.36	4.0%
Commercial	46.89	1.0%
Industrial	4.06	0.1%
Transportation	3.64	0.1%
Utilities	4.16	0.1%
Religious	0.56	0.0%
Government/Institution	6.88	0.1%
Recreational	2.30	0.0%
Cropland	65.06	1.4%
Farmstead	0.46	0.0%
Pasture/Brush	196.92	4.3%
Forest	4,065.04	88.1%
Water	33.95	0.7%
Mining/Extraction	-	0%
Total	4,613.28	100.0%

Residential

In 1959, residential acreage accounted for approximately 390 acres or 4.2% of the entire Township. By 2002, the residential acreage increased by nearly 550 acres to a total of 938 acres or 10.2% of the Township. Even with this residential acreage increase, there was still a higher percentage of cropland in 2002. Of the 2002 residential acreage, a total of 329 acres were already being used for residential purposes in 1959, which was equivalent to 35.1% of the 2002 total residential acreage. The amount of 2002 residential acreage that was cropland in 1959 equaled 189 acres, which was equal to 20.2% of the total. Former pasture/brush and forestland that was converted to residential land use equaled 19.7% and 19.5%, respectively.

Commercial

In 1959, commercial acreage totaled 91 acres, representing just 1.0% of the entire Township. By 2002, commercial acreage increased to 251 acres, which represents 2.7% of the Township. Chart 7 {below} shows that 31.6% or 79 acres of the total 2002 commercial acreage was also being utilized for commercial purposes in 1959.



Forestland that was changed to commercial use totaled 47 acres, which accounted for 18.7% of the total. Former pasture/brush land that became used for commercial purposes by 2002 equaled 40 acres or 15.8%. The amount of cropland converted to commercial acreage had a total of nearly 35 acres, which was 13.7% of the

total 2002 commercial acreage. In 1959, the Honesdale Airport occupied the area that is now the Route 6 plaza. The 19 acres that made up the Honesdale Airport, which was formerly classified as transportation, became commercial acreage after 1959. These 19 acres of what was formerly transportation acreage accounted for 7.4% of the 2002 commercial acreage total.

Protected Agricultural Land

Texas Township had approximately 1,960 acres enrolled in the Agricultural Security Area Program by 2002, which accounts for approximately 21.3% of the Township's land area. There were also 232 acres that had been enrolled in the Agricultural Conservation Easement Purchase Program representing approximately 2.5% of the Township. Also, a total of 3,037 acres, equal to 34.7% of the taxable acreage within Texas Township has been accepted into the Act 319 (Clean and Green) Program. These acres reduce the assessed value of the Township by \$3,751,500 or 1.8%.

Summary

The most notable change in Texas Township during the study period was the decrease of farming related activities. However, forestland increased and is the largest land use in the Township. Cropland is still the third most prevalent land use in the Township covering 1,100 plus acres or 12% of the entire Township. By percentage, Texas Township was tied for fourth with Lebanon Township for the amount of pasture/brush that was converted to cropland over the study period.

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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