

NATIONAL LAND COVER DATABASE EVALUATION, VISUALIZATION AND ANALYSIS (NLCD EVA) TOOL

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ABSTRACT:

The National Land Cover Database (NLCD) serves as the definitive Landsat-based, 30-meter resolution, land cover database for the Nation. NLCD supports a wide variety of Federal, State, local, and nongovernmental applications that seek to assess ecosystem status and health, understand the spatial patterns of biodiversity, predict effects of climate change, and develop land management policy. The recent release of NLCD 2011 provides - for the first time – the capability to assess wall-to-wall, spatially explicit, national land cover changes and trends across the conterminous United States from 2001 to 2011. However, access to NLCD products and the land cover change information they provide is a concern due to the large file size and somewhat limited download options. An online Evaluation, Visualization and Analysis tool (EVA) was developed to provide advance access to NLCD land cover data and land cover change information without the need for geographic information system software or to download data. This tool summarizes national and state land change trends (e.g., forest, developed) and provides users with the option to identify and visualize land cover classes of interest. Visualization selections can also be exported to further enable users to communicate and understand land cover change patterns important to them. The evolution of the NLCD program from a mapping to a monitoring initiative, with future NLCD data products planned, means that the amount and importance of land cover change data will continue to expand. Tools such as EVA that help users visualize and analyse this growing land cover change information as quickly as possible will become increasingly more important as datasets expand and access issues are compounded. All NLCD data products and the EVA tool are available at www.mrlc.gov.