

The National Land Cover Database, delivering land cover change data for the Nation since 2001– status and future plans

Collin Homer*

*USGS EROS, Sioux Falls, SD homer@usgs.gov

Key Words: NLCD, MRLC, land cover, land change, NLCD Special Session

Abstract:

With the recent release of National Land Cover Dataset (NLCD 2011), NLCD has now completed three major product releases since 2001, providing a 10 year land cover change story for our Nation at 5 year intervals. Having a decade of change information now available enables users to better understand the trajectory of land cover change patterns, and provides critical information to advance understanding of land cover change processes. Constructed by the 10-member federal interagency Multi-Resolution Land Characteristics Consortium (MRLC), NLCD represents a 20 year collaborative Federal government effort to combine resources to efficiently provide digital land cover for the Nation. NLCD currently supports thousands of applications in such areas as ecosystem status and health, spatial patterns of biodiversity, indications of climate change, and best practices in land management. New NLCD research is improving ways to assess and characterize longer land change monitoring patterns with historical products, adding new products and analysis into NLCD (such as percent shrub and percent bare ground), and providing new delivery, visualization and analysis tools to improve product understanding and user access. This will culminate with a new suite of product releases called NLCD 2016. This paper will provide an overview of the development of NLCD and provide a comprehensive discussion of future plans.